



72nd Annual Butte National Folk Festival

By: *Christopher J Thompson*

At high noon on July 10, 2010 Chris descended Homestake Pass as Our Lady of the Mountains welcomed him to Butte, Montana. The sun illuminated the Pintler Range as a backdrop with the brilliant colors of the Berkeley Mine flared from the side of the mountain where energy erupted from the revelry of the crowds. Taking the Montana Street exit, Chris made his way up the precipitous hill to Uptown Butte.



Reaching the top, Chris veered into the Free Parking for the Free 72nd Annual National Folk Festival, noticing a mother shaving her children's heads in preparation for this hot summer event. Admiring the proud, diverse traditions stemming from the thriving copper mining camps over a century ago, Chris made his way to the event. Families strolled by, with young children enamored with the excitement propelled by homeless musicians playing for spare change to the main acts playing on five stages throughout Uptown Butte. These bands included Hungarian Gypsies, Indian Comatic, Zydeco and, of course, an Irish Rock band to represent the strong Irish tradition of Butte.



As the crowds flocked from stage to stage they had the opportunity to take in the myriad of family activities, explore mock mining operations, or to examine the wares of various vendors and artisans. The auditory stimulations seeped in the revelers ears as typical Montana weather ranged from sun and sweltering heat to cloudbursts dousing the energetic crowds.

After Chris had taken in a full day of the three day 72nd Annual Butte Folk Festival, he smiled realizing the innovation of bettering the economy of this true American town by exposing people to diverse music and art. But his smile quickly turned to a frown as he



realized, with all the national exposure of this unique event, people across the country will likely think his Butte looks big.

Before the rest of the country floods Butte to experience this event, book a room now at the Finlan, or the more economical Eddy's or Capri Motels, and contact the Butte Chamber of Commerce for help planning your trip next summer for the 73rd Annual Butte National Folk Festival