



Google Street View

## Refinery Lounge

Sixth and Old Richardson Highway, North Pole, AK (907) 488-0335  
64°44'57"N 147°21'14"W

License Issued: December 18, 1981 to Adam Polnaszek and 3 F's Corporation

**CLOSED 2019**

Amenities: Pool tables, darts, TVs, volleyball, DJ, occasional live music

Web site: None. YouTube

History and Notoriety: In 1977, construction was completed on a 25,000 barrel-per-day oil refinery in North Pole that used Alaskan crude. The plant's capacity increased to 45,000 barrels per day in 1980, 90,000 in 1985 and eventually 215,000 barrels per day. In a town that is known primarily as the home of Santa Claus, the Flint Hills Refinery was far less known but was the largest in the state. The Refinery Lounge, just a stones throw from the refinery itself, and just three minutes from the Santa Claus House, has been serving up good times for over 30 years. Unfortunately for the community of North Pole, and possibly the bar, the Flint Hills Refinery closed in May 2014 due to economic factors.

In 1992, lounge owner Jim O'Connor installed a 12-foot padded wall covered with Velcro. Customers could put on a Velcro-striped suit and a helmet, run the length of the bar, jump on a springboard and hurl themselves onto the Velcro-covered wall. In 1995,

O'Connor installed a \$12,000 mechanical surfboard. Other barroom diversions included mud and sumo wrestling, and bowling with humans. O'Connor passed away in 2004.

The clientele and atmosphere of the Refinery Lounge have varied over the years. Flint Hill employees and airmen from the Eielson Air Force Base were frequent and consistent customers. While rock music was the preferred genre during the 1980's and 90's, rap, pop, and techno lovers now drive down from Fairbanks to join in the fun.

Visiting the Refinery Lounge: This is a very well-kept modern bar. The atmosphere is quite different from the other North Pole bars (Badger Den and Moose Creek Lodge) and caters primarily to a younger crowd.

**Author's Note**: The liquor license for the Refinery Lounge (owned by Red Pants, Inc) was transferred to the **North Pole Alehouse** in December 2019. After extensive renovations, the **North Pole Alehouse** opened at this location on February 19, 2021.