

Fed Shutdown; Day 1

Written by Steve Frank

Wednesday, 02 October 2013 05:50

On day one of the federal government shutdown, there was tourist traffic on the Blue Ridge Parkway, but as promised, signs at visitor attractions and campgrounds announcing the closing of those facilities. Tourists still pulled into the lot of the Moses Cone house, walked the grounds, hiked the paths, even peered in the windows, but the signs were clear—the house, Parkway campgrounds, lodges—and bathrooms—were all closed. The impasse over the budget and the Affordable Care Act—which went into effect yesterday in spite of the shutdown—led to the action. Chief Ranger for our area, Steve Stinnett said that they have given campers 48 hours notice, so there may be an occupied campsite or two, but he said that with the leaf season approaching, campgrounds were a sellout for this weekend—but may well not be available. Stinnett said his law enforcement officers will stay on the job, he said—but the action is much less severe than plans put forward Monday, plans that would have closed and locked all the gates along the parkway.