Office of the City Manager 491 East Pioneer Avenue

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Memorandum

TO:	Mayor Castner and Homer City Council
FROM:	Rob Dumouchel, City Manager
DATE:	September 8, 2021
SUBJECT:	City Manager's Report for September 13, 2021 Council Meeting

Sales Tax Update – 2nd Quarter of 2021

The sales tax data (provided by the Kenai Peninsula Borough) is beginning to back up the observations many of us have made regarding the strength of the local tourist and consumer markets. The graph below shows the total taxable sales for the City of Homer during the second quarter from 2017 to 2021. The dip for COVID in 2020 is quite obvious, as is the strength of the comeback in 2021. The \$69M in reported taxable sales equated to approximately \$3.4M in revenue, an increase of over \$1M from 2020.



Mass Casualty Emergency Response Drill at Homer Airport

On August 24, the City of Homer, Alaska DOT & PF and other area agencies participated in an emergency drill at Homer Airport. The drill is required by the Federal Aviation Administration for airport certification, and gives area responders the opportunity to practice their response procedures to a large number of casualties from an airplane crash or other aircraft emergency and. The exercise simulated a crash landing of a Dash 8 with 23 people on board which required rapid establishment of incident command, scene security and safety, automatic aid from other agencies, triage, medic services, and transport. Thanks to everyone who participated in the successful exercise, including Guardian Air Ambulance, Ravn, and the many volunteers from HVFD and mutual aid partners, Western Emergency Services and Kachemak Emergency Services.



City Hall Safety Training

Back in November 2020 my office coordinated with AMLJIA to host an online de-escalation training program that was delivered to more than 50 staff members. To build on that foundation, I asked the Police Department to develop a safety training program for City Hall that would involve a presentation followed by office visits to discuss individual situations. On August 20th, Sergeant Sean Perry delivered a 30-minute presentation to City Hall staff via Zoom. Afterwards he held sessions with the City Manager's Office, Finance, Clerk's Office, Planning, and IT. Each office space was evaluated and analyzed for risk and self-defense opportunities and staff were able to ask questions directly to Sergeant Perry. Based on the success of this pilot project, we will be expanding the program to other City facilities like the Library, Public Works, and Harbormaster's Office in the near future.

Visit from J&H Consulting, Homer's Lobbying Partners

Reggie Joule and Christine Hess from J&H Consulting, the City's lobbying firm, made a site visit in Homer on August 30th. We toured the HERC campus, the Homer Airport Terminal, and a number of port and harbor facilities. That evening, they presented to the City Council in a special meeting. J&H have been great partners for the City across the last year and I look forward to continuing to move City projects forward with their team.



J&H Consulting team listens to Port Maintenance Supervisor Aaron Glidden discuss maintenance operations

Electronic Payment for Airport Parking Coming Soon

The City has been installing self-service payment kiosks at various locations around town, including the RV dump station near the Public Works building, the airport, and three campgrounds. The RV dump station and the airport parking kiosks are currently operational. The kiosks will allow the public to pay for parking using cash or credit cards.



Strategic Plan for Homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula

Through the Kenai Peninsula Continuum of Care, I have been invited to participate in a pair of stakeholder meetings related to a homelessness strategic plan for the peninsula. City Planner Rick Abboud will be joining me in the discussions. I expect to have more to share at a future Council meeting.

Council Chambers Training and Improvement

Audio and video from the Council Chambers have generally worked very well, except during Council Meetings. Because of the intermittent technical difficulties with systems in the Council Chambers, I asked the Clerks and IT to get together to conduct in-depth training on the system and discuss how to make it better in the future. Additionally, we are expecting new microphones to arrive, possibly as soon as this month, which we believe may help with some of the problems we've been experiencing.



IT and Clerks working together to improve the flow of future hybrid meetings

Email Newsletter

The email newsletter launched on September 1st. We've received a lot of positive feedback on the initial volume. A copy of the newsletter is attached to this report. Those interested in receiving future newsletters can subscribe by emailing Christine Drais at <u>cdrais@ci.homer.ak.us</u> or by visiting: <u>https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/newsletter/subscriptions</u>.

Personnel Updates

Fire: Assistant Chief, Lillian Hottmann began her employment with HVFD in February of 2020 as the EMS Assistant Chief, a position responsible for the operations and training of emergency medical responders for the department and to assist the Chief with administrative duties related to EMS. Chief Hottmann has done some really great things for HVFD over the past 18 months and brought our EMS service to a new level. Because of her we now have very comprehensive, up to date protocols that better serve our EMS system and allow us the opportunity to better serve the public. She has more than doubled our capacity to perform ALS care and made some much needed changes to the equipment used by our EMT's. She has raised the bar with each EMT's ability to care for patients and build their confidence as care providers. Because of her persistence and dedication to better the EMS system we now have the best charting EMT's in the area. Thank you Chief Hottmann for all you have done for HVFD. – Chief Kirko

Public Works: With a series of planned retirements happening this year in the Public Works Department, there are some big departures and new opportunities. See below for updates from the Public Works Director:

Dan Gardner worked for the Public Works Department in various capacities since 1991, rising to the position of Superintendent. He retired on August 23, 2021. Dan enjoys riding his motorcycle and spending time at his cabin on Caribou Lake.

Mike Zelinski has worked for Building Maintenance since 2015. As Dan Gardner has retired, Mike was promoted to fill his position as the Public Works Superintendent. Mike is an avid hockey fan and enjoys cheering on his favorite team, the North Dakota Fighting Hawks.

Enclosures:

- 1. September 2021 Newsletter
- 2. September Employee Anniversaries

VOL. 1 | SEPTEMBER 2021 **CITY OF HOMER**

Monthly Newsletter from the office of the City Manager



Greetings from City Hall

Welcome to the first monthly newsletter from the City Manager's office, a new way for us to share what's happening in Homer with you. For more frequent updates find us on our new Facebook page @cityofhomerak. You can subscribe to this newsletter and other City resources online at https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/newsletter/subscriptions



The 2nd Annual Peony Festival was a beautiful success with two weeks of events across town. Compliments to Parks Department for the lush peony beds and colorful sidewalk stencils.

A beautiful sunset on the Homer Spit

WHAT'S NEW?

- Library News
- Community Corner
- Parks & Community Recreation
- Public Works Department
- Meet the Staff
- City of Homer Roster
- Stay Connected with City Council
- Municipal Art Collection

We hope you will discover something new today as we continue to share information

Check us out on Facebook @cityofhomerak the Homer Public Library, Homer Police,

PUBLIC **SAFETY NOTES**



Mark Kirko, Chief HVFD, Rob Dumouchel, City Manager

EMERGENCY RESPONSE APPRECIATION

The Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) Office of Emergency Management sent our staff a plaque recognizing the efforts put forward by the City of Homer in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. KPB was a key partner throughout our declared emergency. We appreciate them acknowledging and recognizing the contributions made by the City to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic.

911 SYSTEM UPDATE

Homer's 911 system has been updated to the NG911 system deployed by the Kenai Peninsula Borough. The extensive changes to dispatcher workstations are in place to better respond to emergency situations.

COVID UPDATE - DELTA VARIANT SURGES

There has been a noticeable spike in COVID cases on the Kenai Peninsula in the last month with many cases located here in Homer. The City has an internal COVID working group focused on organizational issues and meets regularly. Mitigation measures have been reinstated in City facilities for staff and visitors. Masks are required in all City buildings. Testing and vaccination

opportunities continue to be available in Homer. The City has been providing logistical support of these effort as we navigate through the pandemic.



City of Homer is requiring masks indoors, ren if you are vaccinated for COVID-19. Thank you for your cooperation.

907-420-4713

Feeling Sick or Exposed to COVID-19? Now what?

This guidance applies to the general public. But if you live or work in a high-risk setting such as a correctional institution, health care facility, assisted living facility or a fish processing plant, other guidance may apply.



*A person is fully vaccinated if two weeks have passed since receiving the second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines or a single dose of Johnson & Johnson.

LIBRARY NEWS

Self-Checkout Stations Live

Checking out is easy at the new Self-Checkout Stations. All you need is your library card, PIN and the items to be checked out. Of course you can still check out at the front desk.





Library Self-Checkout Machines

Alaska Digital Library

Download ebooks and audiobooks - from anywhere! With media available 24/7, your library is always open! Download ebooks, Kindle books and digital audiobooks from the Alaska Digital Library, with a valid library card, your account's PIN (password), and an internet-enabled device. https://adl.overdrive.com/

Fiber Optic Installation

City Council authorized funds to upgrade the library's data connection, taking advantage of a federal government program to offset 70% of the costs (a savings of approximately \$20,000 from the budgeted amount). GCI has completed installation of the new fiber-optic cable which significantly boosts data transfer to 400 megabits/second in both directions from 250 Mbit/sec download and 15 Mbit/sec upload. The new cable also includes an option for future upgrades without extensive site work. The new system went live July 23rd.

Outdoor Wi-Fi & Upgraded Services

Over the past year or so, the library has used CARES Act funds to upgrade remote services and streamline operations. Patrons now have access to outdoor wi-fi and will soon have the ability to submit print jobs over the internet from their personal phones and laptops. Another part of this project went live on August 3 when we switched on three new self-checkout machines!

Community Corner

What's happening around the City of Homer

Be Tsunami Aware. Be Tsunami Prepared. Know Homer's Evacuation Routes and Safe Zones



Many of us live, work, shop or play in Homer's tsunami danger zone. Tsunamis don't happen often, but preparing now could save your life. Knowing Homer's tsunami inundations zones and where to go during an evacuation ahead of time is crucial to your survival - you may only have minutes to get to safety. For more information visit our website at: <u>https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/emergency-information/be-tsunamiaware-be-tsunami-prepared-know-homers-evacuation-routes-and-safe</u>.

Like and Follow @HomerVolFireDept on Facebook for news and information on tsunami warnings.

FAA Outreach

At the June 28th Council meeting we heard of complaints about aircraft noise and flight patterns in the city. Homer is an uncontrolled airport (no air traffic control tower) and aircraft are free to operate in a variety of capacities in and around the airport as long as they do so safely. Anything related to airborne operations falls under the FAA's jurisdiction and guidance. If you see a violation of low flying aircraft or have an excessive noise complaint, you can report the tail number to the FAA Flight Standards District Office at 907-280-6800 or the FAA Hotline at https://hotline.faa.gov/



Fireweed (Chamerion angustifolium)

Kachemak Drive Speed Signs

In September 2020, Council adopted Ordinance 20-51 appropriating funds from the Police CARMA fund to purchase speed radar signs as a traffic calming measure for Kachemak Drive. The devices were acquired by the Police Department and arrangements were made with the Alaska Department of Transportation to install the pole-mounted signs. The signs are now installed and operational on Kachemak Drive.



Parks & Community Recreation

The City of Homer Community Recreation promotes community involvement and life-long learning through educational and recreational opportunities for people of all ages. To accomplish this we maximize usage of all community facilities and resources, while utilizing, expanding and uniting local business and school resources and expertise. This program is designed to recognize cultural diversity and to address social and community concerns. Visit <u>https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/recreation</u> for the complete list of great programs available daily at the HERC, Homer High School and Homer Middle School. *Schedule subject to change.



- Morning Pick Up Basketball 6-7am Monday, Wednesday & Friday HERC Gym
- **ReAKtion Club** 10am-12pm Monday, Wednesday & Thursday HERC Gym/Outdoors
- Pick Up Pickleball HERC Gym
- 3:45-5:45pm Monday Wednesday & Friday ; 9-11am Sunday
- **Cuong Nhu & Karate** Monday, Wednesday & Friday HERC Activity Room 4:30-5:30pm Youth Class & 5:45-6:45pm Adult Class
- Pick Up Ultimate Frisbee 8pm Monday & Thursday HHS Turf
- Pick Up Soccer 8pm Wednesday & Friday ; 6:30-8:30pm Sunday HHS Turf

Payment Kiosk Update

Self-pay kiosks were installed at the RV dump station near Public Works and at the Airport parking lot. Service is up and running at the RV dump station and Homer Airport. Formatting for the other units located in City campgrounds is coming soon.



STAFF CYBERSECURITY CERTIFICATION

Enterprise Cybersecurity Leadership Certification Finance

Library Director and IT Supervisor, *Dave Berry*, successfully completed the National Association of Counties' (NACo) Enterprise Cybersecurity Leadership Academy in July. The academy, led by industry experts, delivers a proven framework and insights on leading and securing a network and an organization.



Skate Park Halfpipe Arrival

Components for the two new halfpipes have arrived for the Skate Park this month. Site preparation at the HERC and plans for assembly are moving forward, so look for more all-agesaction in this area.

IlRARIES CSe them out

Dave Berry with Molly of Denali at a recent Homer Library event.

Public Works Department

One strategy noted during the Public Works section of the Council Budget Work Sessions was a plan to expand the skillsets of existing employees to bring certain tasks in-house more often. To that effect *Joe Inglis*, PW Operator, is being cross-trained to manage the construction of, and inspect, some of the City's construction projects administered by the PW Department. Not only will this be more cost effective than using third party inspectors, it will provide in-house expertise when we need it.

Aaron Yeaton, GIS Technician, is being cross-trained to produce Army Corps of Engineers permits, storm water plans, wet land delineations, ground water reports and other environmental protection-related documents, which will help the PW Department achieve its sustainability goals.

Meet the Staff

This is the section we like to highlight staff achievements, retirements, departures and new hires to the City of Homer's workforce.



RETIREMENTS

With a series of planned retirements happening this year in the Public Works Department, there are some big departures and new opportunities. Here are a few updates from Public Works Director, *Jan Keiser*:

Lead Mechanic *Levi Stradling* retired from his job as Lead Mechanic after 19 years of service to the City. Levi was a Master Mechanic, who kept our rolling stock rolling. He was also a Master Craftsman, with an enviable ability to fabricate parts, gizmos and widgets out of seemingly thin air, often, with YouTube How-To videos as his guide. Levi's relocating to Boise. We wish him happy trails!

Homer Port & Harbor's **Peter Alfiche** retired this month after 10 years with the City. Peter started as a Fish Dock Temp and was promoted to Operator in 2017. In addition to strong mechanical skills, Peter also has a background in carpentry and he would often think up useful things to build for the plant-such as stools and toolboxes. He also did a few larger projects, such as remodeling the bathroom lobby after a waterline broke in January 2020. Peter is well-liked, respected, and his constant smile will be missed by everyone on the Dock. - Burt Gregory, Fish Dock Supervisor.

John Wythe retired, effective July 30 after 30 years of dedicated service to the Public Works Department. As Lead Operator he was responsible for, in addition to operating heavy equipment, training, coaching, and scheduling the other operators. John says he will be pursuing his passions, which are his new tractor, grandchildren, and his cabin on Tutka Bay, but not necessarily in that order.

Dan Gardner worked for the Public Works Department in various capacities since 1991, rising to the position of Superintendent. He retired on August 23, 2021. Dan enjoys riding his motorcycle and spending time at his cabin on Caribou Lake.

PROMOTIONS & NEW HIRES

Paul Raymond, who has been with the Public Works Department for 7 1/2 years as an operator, was promoted to Lead Operator upon John Wythe's retirement. Paul has lived in Homer since 1977. Before starting work with the City, he was an operator for various construction companies in and around Homer and at the KPB Transfer Station. When asked what his hobbies were, Paul said enthusiastically, "BBQ!"

Mike Zelinski has worked for Building Maintenance since 2015. As Dan Gardner has retired, Mike was promoted to fill his position as Public Works Superintendent. Mike is an avid hockey fan and enjoys cheering on his favorite team, the North Dakota Fighting Hawks.

Owen Meyer joined the Public Works Department as fulltime Project Technician. Owen will also serve as the ADA Coordinator for PW, working closely with the City's ADA Coordinator, Renee Krause. Owen was selected by the AML to be part of its Conference of Young Alaskans (COYA) this year, which focused on critical issues facing municipal governments. Owen is an accomplished guitarist and member of Toastmasters International.



Levi Stradling



John Wythe



Dan Gardner





Owen Meyer

Meet Matt Steffy

Parks Superintendent

Matt Steffy joined the City staff in 2018. He moved to Homer in 2012 after growing up in Soldotna and living in Fairbanks and Valdez for a while. In Fairbanks and Valdez he worked for City and Borough Parks and Recreation Departments. When he first moved to Homer, Matt worked for the Homer Soil and Water Conservation District where he handled a wide variety of duties including grant writing, managing salmon habitat, monitoring weather stations, trail work and community education/outreach.



Matt says that what brought him back to Homer after living in Fairbanks and Valdez was a childhood connection that he had formed because, growing up, his family had a cabin in Peterson Bay, where they spent a lot of time. Homer appeals to him because living next to the mountains and the ocean feeds his soul and he loves the distinctive personality of Homer's community. What Matt loves most about his job is that it is what he would be doing anyway if he wasn't working. He is very passionate about Parks and Trails, feels a distinct sense of accomplishment and pride from giving back to his community and he loves being able to see the impact of his efforts on the people around him. For fun, Matt loves to play music. He plays multiple instruments including guitar, bass, mandolin, drums, banjo and anything else that makes sound. His passion for music has overflowed to his children, all of whom are very musically talented.

VOTER REGISTRATION REMINDER

The voter registration deadline has been extended to September 5. There are a few different ways you can register.

- o In person City Hall Friday, September 3, 2021
- o In person Homer Library Saturday, September 4, 2021
- o <u>Online</u> Sunday, September 5, 2021

To find out register to vote online go to: <u>https://www.cityofhomer-</u> <u>ak.gov/citymanager/dont-get-caught-</u> <u>sleeping-deadline-register-vote-sept-1</u>

Emergency Drill at the Homer Airport

On August 24, the City of Homer, Alaska DOT & PF and other area agencies participated in a mass casualty emergency drill at Homer Airport. The drill is required by the Federal Aviation Administration for airport certification, and gives area responders the opportunity to practice their response procedures to a large number of casualties from an airplane crash or other aircraft emergency. The exercise simulated a crash landing of a Dash 8 with 23 people on board which required rapid establishment of incident command, scene security and safety, automatic aid from other agencies, triage, medic services and transport.

Thanks to everyone who participated in the successful exercise, including Guardian Air Ambulance, Ravn, and the many volunteers from HVFD and mutual aid partners, Western Emergency Services and Kachemak Emergency Services.



Thanks to HVFD and KESA volunteers for participating. We missed the crew from WES who were on another call during the drill.



Luis Yoder, IC Trainee from --- performed Incident Command duties under guidance of HVFD Chief Mark Kirko. Chris Chandler, DOT PF Airport Responder Unit stands by.



Medic transport drill for casualties.

City of Homer Roster

Rob Dumouchel, City Manager Melissa Jacobsen, MMC, City Clerk Andrea Browning, Personnel Director Rick Abboud, City Planner Mark Robl, Chief of Police Mark Kirko, Fire Chief

Mayor - Ken Castner (2022)

Storm P. Hansen-Cavasos (2022)

Donna Aderhold (2021) Heath Smith (2021)

Rachel Lord (2023)

Jason Davis (2021)

Caroline Venuti (2023)

City Council

Bryan Hawkins, Port Director/Harbormaster Elizabeth Walton, Finance Director Jan Keiser, Public Works Director Dave Berry, Library Director Nick Poolos, Info. Technology Manager Mike Illg, Community Recreation Manager

Commissions & Boards

Planning Commission Economic Development Advisory Commission Library Advisory Board Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission Port and Harbor Advisory Commission **Standing Committees** ADA Compliance Committee **Special Committees & Task Forces** Public Works Campus Task Force



HOMER MUNICIPAL ART COLLECTION



A Soulful Eye, Melisse Reichman. Photo, Jim Lavarakas, Far North photography

This life-size, six-month-old humpback whale sculpture by Melisse Reichman measures 110" x 30" x 52," was acquired in September 2014 and is located at End of the Road Park.

In collaboration with the City of Homer Parks, Art, Recreation & Culture Advisory Commission, artwork included in the <u>Municipal Art Collection</u> has been donated, gifted through bequests or through the Sister City relationships to the City or purchased and or commissioned through the City's 1% for the Arts Program. We hope you will take some time to view these beautiful and interesting pieces located in Homer.

Slide shows of each City location may be seen at - <u>https://www.cityofhomer-</u> <u>ak.gov/prac/city-homer-municipal-art-</u> <u>collection</u>

STAY CONNECTED WITH CITY COUNCIL

Go to: <u>cityofhomer-ak.gov/cityclerk/stay-connected-city-council</u> Here you will find instructions on how to listen, provide testimony and participate in the meetings via Zoom.

Upcoming Meetings

<u>September</u>

1st - 5:30pm	Planning Commission Work Session
6:30pm	Planning Commission Regular Meeting
7th - 5:30pm	Library Advisory Board Regular Meeting
13th - 5:00 pm	City Council Committee of the Whole
6:00 pm	City Council Regular Meeting
14th - 6:00 pm	Economic Development Advisory Commission Regular Meeting
15th - 5:30 pm	Planning Commission Worksession
6:30 pm	Planning Commission Regular Session
16th - 5:30pm	Parks, Art, Recreation & Culture Advisory Commission Regular M
17th - 9:00 am	ADA Compliance Committee Site Accessibility Compliance Audi
22nd - 5:00 pm	Port & Harbor Advisory Commission Regular Meeting

JOIN OUR TEAM

The City of Homer has current Job Openings. Sign up for Job Alerts or Apply Online at <u>cityofhomerak.applicantpro.com/jobs</u>

CURRENT JOB LISTINGS

Deputy Fire Chief EMS Assistant Chief Full-time Public Safety Dispatcher I Ice Plant Operator I Part-time Community Jail Officer (28 hrs) Temporary Parks Maintenance Laborer

leeting

City of Homer

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Memorandum

TO: MAYOR CASTNER AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Andrea Browning

DATE: September 13, 2021

SUBJECT: September Employee Anniversaries

I would like to take the time to thank the following employees for the dedication, commitment and service they have provided the City and taxpayers of Homer over the years.

Aaron Glidden	Port	17	Years
Ryan Browning	Police	11	Years
Nick Poolos	Admin	10	Years
Tracie Whitaker	Police	7	Years
Lisa Linegar	Police	6	Years
Tamara Fletcher	Port	5	Years
Jakob Richter	Fire	2	Years