

VOL. 1 | SEPTEMBER 2021

CITY OF HOMER

Monthly Newsletter from the office of the City Manager



WHAT'S NEW?

- Public Safety Notes
- Library News
- Community Corner
- Parks & Community Recreation
- Public Works Department
- Meet the Staff
- Voter Registration Reminder
- 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 and ways you can tap into what's going on at City Hall and the Homer community.

Check us out on Facebook @cityofhomerak You'll see what's going on with City Parks, the Homer Public Library, Homer Police, and the Volunteer Fire Department. You might see someone you know.

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.

PUBLIC SAFETY NOTES



Left to right - Jenny Carroll, Public Information Officer
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.

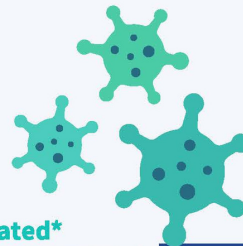
COVID UPDATE - DELTA VARIANT SURGES

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.



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.



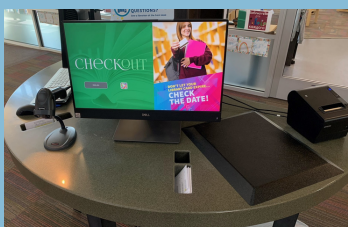
	Unvaccinated	Vaccinated*	
If you have ANY symptoms of COVID-19 and no known exposure	<p>DO NOT COME IN TO WORK GET TESTED, STAY HOME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If positive, isolate for 10 days, monitor your symptoms and contact your health care provider if symptoms become worrisome. If negative, stay home while you have symptoms. Talk to health provider and consider testing again. 		<p>Symptoms include ANY of the following:</p> <p>Cough Fatigue Fever Chills Sore Throat Rash Nausea Muscle ache Headache Decreased smell or taste Runny nose</p>
If you are exposed to COVID-19 and have ANY symptoms	<p>GET TESTED and ISOLATE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If positive, keep isolating. If negative, stay home while you have symptoms or are finished with QUARANTINE, which ever is longer. Consult health provider and consider testing again. 	<p>GET TESTED and ISOLATE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If positive, keep isolating. If negative, stay home while you have symptoms. Consult health provider and consider testing again. 	
If you are exposed to COVID-19 and have no symptoms	<p>GET TESTED and STAY HOME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get tested. Quarantine until cleared by public health (7-14 days). Testing again 5-7 days after initial exposure can reduce quarantine time. 	<p>GET TESTED and WEAR A MASK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek testing 3-5 days after initial exposure. Quarantine is not required, but wear a mask and monitor for symptoms for 14 days. 	
If you test positive for COVID-19	<p>ISOLATE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Until cleared by public health (usually about 10 days, but may vary). Notify your close contacts. Ask them to get tested and, if they are unvaccinated, to quarantine. Follow contact tracer guidance. If not contacted by tracer, you can call 907-531-3329 for education, resources and a contact tracing interview. 		
			<p>WHERE TO GET TESTED</p> <p>SPH COVID Vax & Test Site 4201 Bartlett Street 9 am –6 pm, 7 days a week 235-0235 No appt needed. Walk-ins welcome.</p> <p>SVT Health & Wellness 880 East End Road, Homer or 72351 Milo Fritz Ave, Anchor Point or 206 Main Street, Seldovia By appt only. Call 226-2228.</p> <p>NTC Community Clinic 15765 Kingsley Road 9 am –3 pm, Wednesdays through Fridays 907-420-4713</p>

*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 staff is happy to help.



Library Self-Checkout Machines



Molly of Denali visited the library August 9th.

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:

<https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/emergency-information/be-tsunami-aware-be-tsunami-prepared-know-homers-evacuation-routes-and-safe>.

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 <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/recreation> 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.



Skate Park Halfpipe Arrival

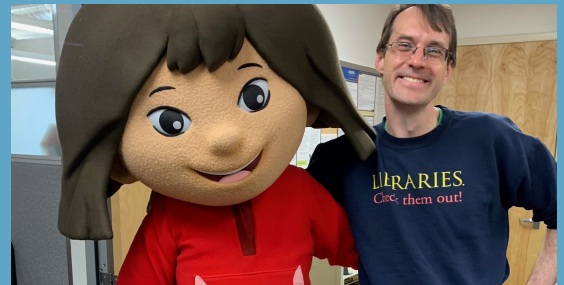
Components for the two new halfpipes have arrived for the Skate Park this month. Site preparation at the HERC and plans for assembly are moving forward, so look for more all-ages-action in this area.



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.



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!



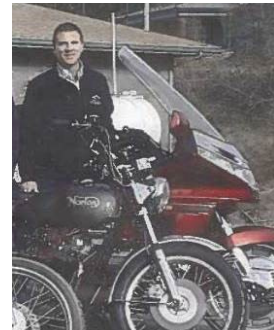
Levi Stradling

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

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

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!"



Paul Raymond

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.



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 **Online**
Sunday, September 5, 2021

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

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

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

Mayor - Ken Castner (2022)

City Council

Donna Aderhold (2021)
Heath Smith (2021)
Storm P. Hansen-Cavasos (2022)
Rachel Lord (2023)
Caroline Venuti (2023)
Jason Davis (2021)

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 [Municipal Art Collection](#) 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 - <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/prac/city-homer-municipal-art-collection>

STAY CONNECTED WITH CITY COUNCIL

Go to: [cityofhomer-ak.gov/cityclerk/stay-connected-city-council](https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/cityclerk/stay-connected-city-council)

Here you will find instructions on how to listen, provide testimony and participate in the meetings via Zoom.

Upcoming Meetings

September

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 Meeting
17th - 9:00 am	ADA Compliance Committee Site Accessibility Compliance Audit
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
[cityofhomerak.applicantpro.com/jobs](https://www.cityofhomerak.applicantpro.com/jobs)

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

City of Homer

491 E. Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603
907-235-8121
[cityofhomer-ak.gov](https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov)