Greetings from City Hall

Festive Lights Add Glow to the Holidays

The beautiful white lights that line the edges of many of the buildings around town add a festive glow to our dark winter days and nights. City Hall is adorned too. We invite you to come see our nautical themed Christmas tree in the lobby.

Be sure to take advantage of the many holiday and year end festivities happening in the Homer area. We encourage you to shop and dine locally.

The Giving Season - Share the Spirit

Giving back to the community and helping those in need is a mission the City has all year long. During the holidays, several City departments - City Hall, the Fire Hall, Police Department, Public Works and the Port and Harbor - will fill Christmas wish lists and food boxes, which Share the Spirit will distribute to families in need.

The Food Pantry ordered 780 turkeys to give away for Thanksgiving and Christmas through the Salvation Army and Lions Club at Homer High School.

If you’re looking for ways to give back to the community, Homer is loaded with opportunities. Whether you give the gift of food, clothing or your precious time, there is always someone will appreciate it more than you know.

Happy Holidays

FROM THE CITY OF HOMER

WHAT'S NEW?

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

We hope you'll discover something new today as we share information and ways you can tap into what's going on at City Hall and in the Homer community.

Check us out on Facebook

City Hall - @cityofhomerak
Parks & Recreation - @homerparksandrec
Homer Public Library - @homerpubliclibrary
Homer Police - @homerpolice
Fire Department - @HomerVolFireDept.

Share this link with your friends, so they can get the newsletter too - https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/citymanager/monthly-email-newsletter

"where the land ends and the sea begins"
Annual Holiday Giving Tree
Once again, the library has partnered with Homer Bookstore on the Annual Giving Tree. The Christmas tree in HPL’s lobby is decorated with ornaments with names of book titles we would like to acquire. If you’re interested in donating a title or two to the collection, consider buying it through the Homer Bookstore and having it delivered to the library. Books are a gift to the whole community.

An Evening with the Author
Join us for an evening with authors Tom Kizzia and Richard Chiappone to share a conversation about Alaskan history and fiction. Copies of their books, Cold Mountain Path and The Hunger of Crows, will be available for purchase.

When? December 10th & 11th at 6:00 p.m

Lunch with a Councilmember
Have lunch with us and bring your questions, comments and ideas to discuss with Councilmember Donna Aderhold. This first event will be conducted over Zoom, but future events will hopefully be in-person.

When? December 13, 2021 at 12:00 pm
How? Click HERE to join virtually via Zoom

Holiday Festivities
Tis the season to celebrate with friends and family. Homer has lots to do this season. Be sure to seek out fun things to do in the community.

Dec. 2 - Chamber of Commerce Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony
201 Sterling Highway, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Dec. 19 - Bring Back the Light, 5:00 p.m. #WithYouAlaska

Dec. 31 - New Year's Eve Fireworks
Mariner's Park, 8:00 p.m.

Shop Local for the Holidays!
Homer Small Businesses are ready to help you with all your gift-giving needs. Restaurants are great resources for party planning and dining out with friends and family.

Ring in the New Year on the Spit
Mark your calendar! ‘Homer’s Crowd-Funded Fireworks Fantastical’ at Mariner Park is sure to be a dazzer. Aaron Weisser, along with many sponsors and volunteers, are set to launch a fireworks display like no other to ring in 2022. Captain’s Coffee Roasters will be on site for a hot cup of coffee or cocoa. Be sure to stay tuned to City and Weisser Facebook pages for details about traffic flow and event-related information. The Fireworks start at 8:00 p.m., Friday, December 31st.
Hazard Mitigation Plan

Our community is launching an effort known as the 2022 City of Homer Hazard Mitigation Plan. Over the next few months, we will work with a consultant to assess risks posed by natural disasters and develop strategies to protect life and property in Homer from future hazard events.

Hazards addressed in our plan include the following: earthquake, climate change, flood, erosion, landslide, tsunami, wildland fire, and volcano. Once our plan is completed and approved by FEMA, our community will be eligible to apply for and receive certain types of non-emergency disaster assistance, including funding for mitigation projects identified in our plan.

To learn more about hazard mitigation planning, please visit: https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/risk-management/hazard-mitigation-planning.

As our draft plan comes together, updates will be posted on the Planning page of the City of Homer Website or you may contact Homer City Planning at 907-235-3106 or email planning@ci.homer.ak.us.

Bring Back the Light

A moment of celebration, community, solidarity and reflection

On the darkest night of the year, at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 19, 2021, you are invited to step outside with others and light a candle or turn on lights, flashlights, headlamps or a lantern. You can participate from your porch or join family, friends and neighbors for a lighted walk through your community. Don’t know of anything happening locally? Organize your own event with friends and neighbors!

The pandemic has been long and difficult, but we have much to be grateful for - especially each other! Alaskans have shown considerable strength and resiliency, and continue to adapt and care for each other. Let’s join together to shine a positive light as the return of longer days arrive and:

- Celebrate the return of the light in the sky.
- Express gratitude for family, friends, neighbors, frontline workers, teachers, business owners and more.
- Remember those who have lost their lives and loved ones, or have experienced hardship.

There’s no one way to do this, so step outside and shine a light!
Take photos or videos and share them if you like on social media using the hashtag #WithYouAlaska
**Walk like a Penguin when Walking on Ice & Snow**

Some good advice from a penguin will go a long way to prevent slips and falls this winter.

- Concentrate on maintaining your balance
  - Keep your center of gravity over your front leg
- Hands out of pockets at your sides
- Take short steps
- Toes pointed out
- Bend knees slightly
- Walk flat footed
- Slowly shuffle like a penguin
- Use shoe spikes on your boots for extra traction

**Please SLOW DOWN when driving too!**
Here is a summary of programs offered by Community Recreation. 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 - Wednesday - HERC Gym/Outdoors
- **Pick Up Pickleball** - HERC Gym
- **Cuong Nhu & Karate** - Monday, Wednesday & Friday - HERC Activity Room
  
  Please be sure to check Holiday Hours before making plans.

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**Fresh Air, Sunshine & Snow!**

A wise man said to me, "don't change your activities, change your gear!" Every season hosts a favorite outdoor activity. Winter invites us to have fun in the snow!

Homer has miles of groomed trails for snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, hiking, snowmobiling and so much more. It’s a part of our culture and what many of us look forward to all year.

Spending time outdoors, even when it's cloudy can help prevent Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), (according to webmd.com), and keep you healthy in winter months.

Here are 10 ways you can keep active outside in the winter:

1. Cross country skiing
2. Down hill skiing
3. Ice fishing
4. Snow shoeing
5. Snow machining
6. Ice skating
7. Earn to snowboard
8. Sledding
9. Take a walk
10. Work out outside - shoveling snow counts!

Best of all - bundle up, build a fire and roast some marshmallows, and drink a cup of nice hot chocolate!

**Happy Winter Homerites!**
Mother Nature played tricks over Halloween weekend, dumping about 1.5 inches of rain on the Homer area. This caused a variety of problems for the City’s infrastructure. First – it affected the sewer system. Our normal sewer flow is 300,000 to 400,000 gallons per day. We measured 800,000 gallons on Saturday, October 30! When this happens, the lift stations have to work harder to pump the extra flow to the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) and the WWTP has to work harder to treat the flow. The WWTP Operators monitor conditions and make adjustments to maintain required treatment levels.

The extra flow comes from Infiltration & Inflow, mostly from sump pumps in people’s basements and roof drains, which are connected to the City’s sewer system. We are working to identify where this inflow happens, so we can disconnect the flows from the sewer system.

The heavy rain also affects the roads. It can fill roadside ditches with water, which can wash out culverts or flow over the roads and cause hazards to drivers. Public Works Operators monitor conditions and are ready to make repairs as needs arise. For example on Sunday, October 31 the Operators repaired a culvert washout on Saltwater Drive and by the next day opened a blocked culvert on Mt. Augustine Road, so water could keep flowing. Great work crew!

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‘No Shave November’ Extended

Get a load of Homer’s finest! These hard-working, usually clean-cut officers started growing their beards November 1 for “No Shave November.” The campaign has been extended until Christmas. The group will have raised about $2,200 that will be given to Share the Spirit to help local families during the holidays. Sgt. Shealy is last year’s reigning champ and looks to have some good scruff going so far. You too can contribute to Share the Spirit by calling 907-235-7466.

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Police Department

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Public Works Department

Water, Water Everywhere

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Photo (Left to right): Officer Taylor Crowder, Officer Morgan Tracy, Lieutenant Ryan Browning, Officer Charles Lee, Sgt. Dave Shealy, Officer Tyler Jeffres, Officer Kellen Stock, Officer Clint Scratchfield, Sgt. Sean Perry.
Diamond Creek Recreation Area Improvements

In 2007, the Kachemak Heritage Land Trust, with funding from a Forestry Legacy Grant, purchased over 270 acres of land from UAA near Rogers Loop Road. This was immediately transferred to the City of Homer via Ordinance 07-03. Land purchased under this program is for recreation, conservation and general forestry uses. The City of Homer then passed Resolution 10-48 to approve the land as a conservation easement with the Alaska Department of Natural Resources.

This property is now known as the Diamond Creek Recreational Area (DCRA) and is home to a maze of ski trails, which get heavy use during the winter months and are maintained by the Kachemak Nordic Ski Club. In 2013, a master plan outlined future usage strategies and potential developments for the DCRA. Two exciting developments being discussed are a disc golf course and summer walking trails. The disc golf course would start in the upper portion of the DCRA and follow the proposed summer walking trail around the perimeter of the area to avoid the wetlands in the center of the DCRA though. The trail includes an alternate route that weaves through the middle of the property between areas of wetland. The disc course would be accessed via Cirrostratus Loop and via the proposed summer walking trails.

Both trails and the disc golf course are still in planning phases, though it is probable that construction will begin in the next 2-3 years. The summer walking trails will likely begin before the disc golf course because the course will align with the walking trails.

For now though, as the winter months begin, we can all look forward to skiing on the trails already available.

Click HERE for Homer Trails & Park Map or visit the City’s Park & Recreation web page for more information.

Fire Department

EMT-1 Training Course
January 29, 2022

Sharpen up your skills or start a new career. Sign up now to reserve your spot and learn to become an EMT. Skills covered in basic training include CPS, AED use, patient assessment, splinting, airway management, bleeding and shock management, basic medications, and above all - teamwork. The course emphasizes hands-on training with daily scenarios. At the end, students will take the Alaska State EMT1 written exam. Classes start Saturday, January 29 and run through March for a total of 160 by completion.

If you or anyone you know would like to apply, stop in and pick up an application at the Homer Volunteer Fire Department at 604 E. Pioneer Avenue.

For more information and details about the program, ask for EMT Chief, Samantha Cunningham or call 907-235-3155.
How to Prepare and Protect Pipes for Winter Months

Looks like February weather showed up early this year and it ain’t leaving any time soon! Here are a few tips from redcross.org. Pipes that freeze most frequently are exposed to severe cold, like outdoor hose bibs, water supply pipes in unheated interior areas like basements and crawl spaces, attics, garages, or kitchen cabinets, or pipes that run against exterior walls with little or no insulation.

How to Protect Pipes from Freezing

Ideally, before the onset of cold weather, you can protect pipes from freezing by following these recommendations:

- Remove, drain, and store hoses used outdoors. If you don’t have a frost free hose bib, close inside valves that supply outdoor hose bibs, if available. Open the outside hose bibs to allow water to drain. Keep the outside valve open so that any water remaining in the pipe can expand without causing the pipe to break.
- Add insulation to attics, basements and crawl spaces to maintain higher temperatures in these areas.
- Insulate water supply lines located in unheated areas.
- Add products to insulate water pipes like a "pipe sleeve" or UL-listed "heat tape," "heat cable," or similar materials on exposed water pipes. Newspaper can provide a degree of insulation to exposed pipes – even ¼" of newspaper can provide protection in areas that do not have prolonged temperatures below freezing.
- Keep garage doors closed if water supply lines are inside the garage.
- Open kitchen and bath cabinet doors to allow warmer air to circulate around plumbing.
- Seal gaps around holes where pipes run through walls or floors. Use caulk or spray foam insulation to fill the gaps.
- Seal gaps on skirting around raised homes. Even the smallest holes or gaps will allow a breeze in, which lowers temps.
- Let cold water drip from faucets served by exposed pipes. Running water - even at a trickle - helps prevent freezing.
- Keep your thermostat set to the same temperature both during the day and at night. By temporarily suspending the use of lower nighttime temperatures, you might incur a higher heating bill, but you can prevent a costly repair job if pipes burst.
- If you go away during cold weather, leave the heat on in your home, set to a temperature no lower than 55° F.

How to Prevent Frozen Pipes

- If you turn on a faucet and only a trickle comes out, suspect a frozen pipe. Likely places for frozen pipes include against exterior walls or where your water service enters your home through the foundation.
- Keep the faucet open. As you treat the frozen pipe and the frozen area begins to melt, water will begin to flow through the frozen area. Running water through the pipe will help melt ice in the pipe.
- Apply heat to the section of pipe using an electric heating pad wrapped around the pipe, an electric hair dryer, a portable space heater (kept away from flammable materials), or by wrapping pipes with towels soaked in hot water. Do not use a blowtorch, kerosene or propane heater, charcoal stove, or other open flame device.
- Apply heat until full water pressure is restored. If you are unable to locate the frozen area, if the frozen area is not accessible, or if you cannot thaw the pipe, call a licensed plumber.
- Check all other faucets in your home to see if you have additional frozen pipes. If one pipe freezes, others may freeze, too.

Don’t Forget...

Sewer lines are just as susceptible to freezing as other components in your plumbing system. To keep drain pipes from freezing, follow the same recommendations for water lines. If you intend to be gone for an extended period of time during winter, it’s a good idea to fill P-traps and floor drains with RV antifreeze. RV antifreeze will not adversely affect the Sewer Treatment Plant operations. Local hardware and building supply stores should have everything you need to protect your pipes this winter. Shop local to support our locally owned businesses!

- Todd Cook
  Water Sewer Superintendent
Season's Greetings from the Homer Animal Shelter

Cold temperatures sure keep us hoppin’ at the shelter! But our current four-legged residents are cozy and warm while awaiting their new forever homes.

While we continue to operate by appointment, we still allow people in to socialize with our animals. We ask that you call first, as we limit the number of visitors in the building.

Looking back, 2021 has been another odd year of pandemic proportions. From January of this year through the end of October, we facilitated 82 adoptions; 120 stray dogs and cats; reunited 82 animals with their owners; and took in 36 owner surrendered pets.

We would like to remind our lovely, local pet owners that the holidays are a wonderful, yet sometimes stressful time for pets. We recommend having a safe space for pets to go and hide, or rest, when extra people are in the household, or during outdoor festivities (like fireworks). We expect a lot from our animals, but sometimes they don’t adjust to new situations like we’d like them to.

When it comes to holiday plants and delicious holiday treats, please visit www.aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/people-foods-avoid-feeding-your-pets and for a list of food and plants to avoid, www.aspca.org/resource/four-holiday-plants-cause-more-worry-warranted.

As for how to keep your kitty from climbing the holiday tree, we have yet to figure that one out, so let us know if you come up with a solution!

As always, our staff, volunteers, and residents greatly appreciate the support we get from the Homer community. Whether it’s pet-food donations, supplies, or simply a kind word, your generosity is what keeps us going.

Peace and love from all of us here to you and yours.

Sincerely,

Jillian Rogers, Director
Rebecca Bartee, Assistant Manager
Carly Ott, Animal Advocate
North Pacific Update
After some delays, Alaska Scrap finished dismantling the derelict vessel North Pacific last month. They broke apart the vessel and transported scrap steel to a pile on the chip pad, which was then broken down to a size that can be resold. Other refuse went to the transfer station. It was fascinating to watch the ship being dismantled after being broken in two like a toy by a large crane. Alaska Scrap is working with Port staff to schedule the loading of a scrap steel on to a barge load out across the Deep Water Dock later this winter.

Meeting with USCG Rear Admiral Moore
City staff recently had a discussion with U.S. Coast Guard Rear Admiral Nathan Moore. RADM Moore is the Commander of the 17th Coast Guard District and is responsible for Coast Guard operations throughout Alaska, the North Pacific, the Arctic Oceans, and the Bering Sea. We had a very productive discussion with RADM Moore in which he shared current Coast Guard goals and objectives for our region, and were able to bring him up to speed on Homer issues including development of the large vessel expansion. We look forward to continuing to work RADM Moore and his staff in the future.

Emergency Trauma Technician Biennial Training
The harbor is a huge facility that serves commercial, charter, and recreational boat owners, as well as thousands of tourists each year. Inevitably, some of those harbor users will need emergency medical attention. Our Harbor Officers are often the first responders on an emergency scene, and can provide essential first aid as well as a comforting word to the patients. For the EMTs arriving on scene, our officers can be an extra set of hands, and knowledgeable guides to navigate the harbor facility to locate a patient, or even extricate them from a vessel by crane.

To keep our skills fresh, the Port & Harbor staff convene for a week of classes to recertify as Emergency Trauma Technicians every two years. No other harbor in the state makes the commitment to train their officers as a cohesive team. Instructor Samantha Cunningham, the Assistant EMS Chief at Homer Volunteer Fire Department drilled staff from every port department on essential skills and taught the most up-to-date techniques for CPR, trauma, hypothermia, and even emergency childbirth! We are now prepared for whatever 2022 has to throw at us.
Meet the Staff

David Bernard
Homer Public Library, Library Tech III

This Louisiana transplant moved to Homer with his wife in 2011. David Bernard holds a Master of Arts in English and Creative Writing from Wichita State University in Kansas and a Bachelor’s degree in English from Roanoke College in Virginia. He puts this knowledge and passion to work to keep a steady stream of interesting materials flowing onto the library’s shelves. Dave enjoys ordering the latest releases of movies, books, music to keep things fresh at the Homer Public Library. He also is in charge of cataloging various collections and likes helping people find something new and great to discover.

David enjoys living in Homer because it is quiet and close to the wilderness and outdoors. He and his wife Mandy, and dog “Eveline” – a husky mix – like to hike the many trails in the Homer vicinity. They recently hiked Resurrection Pass, a 38-mile adventure through the Kenai Mountains. David also likes to bake and is known for his donuts and pizza. Mmm.

Working at the library always brings an unusual question or two. David said one of the strangest questions asked, “what time does the bus leave to go to Yosemite?” With patience and a good sense of humor, he educated the caller that Yosemite is located in California, not Alaska, and then he Googled the answer.

City New Hires

Public Works welcomed Pedro Ochoa as Building Maintenance Technician I. Pedro, a member of the Alaska Army National Guard’s Infantry Airborne, has worked for the City of Homer for multiple years as a temporary employee, first with the PW Water & Sewer Department and most recently with Port & Harbor. Pedro is a graduate of Homer High School and has a Associates of Arts degree from the UAA’s Kachemak Bay Campus. Pedro is an elite runner, having represented the National Guard in marathon events across the country.

Shout-out to Our City Advisory Body Student Representatives!

Our City Advisory Bodies are made up of Homer residents who volunteer their time and expertise to serve their community. That representation wouldn’t be complete without the voices of our youth. Homer-area high school students are eligible to serve as consulting, non-voting members and we’re happy to have them!

Photo (from left to right) Library Advisory Board Student Rep Bristol Johnson; Port & Harbor Advisory Commission Student Rep Hannah Stonorov; and Parks, Art, Recreation & Culture Advisory Commission Student Rep Sidney Flora.
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 (2024)
Jason Davis (2022)
Shelley Erickson (2024)
Storm P. Hansen-Cavasos (2022)
Rachel Lord (2023)
Caroline Venuti (2023)

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

STAY CONNECTED WITH CITY COUNCIL
Go to: 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

December
1st - 5:30 pm Planning Commission Worksession
6:30 pm Planning Commission Regular Meeting
2nd - 5:30 pm Parks, Art, Recreation & Culture Advisory Commission
       Special Meeting
7th - 5:30 pm Library Advisory Board Regular Meeting
8th - 5:00 pm Port & Harbor Advisory Commission Regular Meeting
13th - 4:00 pm City Council Special Meeting as Board of Adjustment
        5:00 pm City Council Meeting of the Whole
        6:00 pm City Council Regular Meeting
14th - 6:00 pm Economic Developement Advisory Commission Regular Meeting

HOMER MUNICIPAL ART COLLECTION
City Hall Lobby Area

The Fisheries (1993) by Cheri Goverston Greer is a numbered and framed print that hangs
below the Swimming Salmon woodcarving was gifted to the City for the Sister City Silver
Anniversary in 2009.

JOIN OUR TEAM
The City of Homer has current Job Openings.
Sign up for Job Alerts or Apply Online at
cityofhomerak.applicantpro.com/jobs

CURRENT JOB LISTINGS
- Deputy Fire Chief
- Police Officer, Full time
- Port & Harbor Admin. Assistant, Full-time
- Community Jail Officer, Part-time

City of Homer
491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska 99603
907-235-8121
www.cityofhomer-ak.gov