VOL. II | OCTOBER 2021 CITY OF HOMER

Monthly Newsletter from the office of the City Manager

Greetings from City Hall

Election Day is Tuesday, October 5

Time to vote for Homer City Council and in the Kenai Borough elections. Polls will open at 7 am and close at 8 pm, October 5th. Polling places for the City of Homer election are: Homer No. 1 (31-350) at Cowles Chambers in City Hall, 491 E. Pioneer Avenue and Homer No. 2 (31-360) at Homer United Methodist Church, 770 East End Road. Absentee By-Mail Application Deadline is Friday, October 1 by 5:00 p.m. Absentee by Electronic Application Transmission Deadline is Monday, October 4 by 5:00 p.m. Click <u>HERE</u> for more information.

Monthly Email Newsletter

We've received a lot of positive feedback on the initial volume of our new Email Newsletter last month. If you or someone you know would like to receive future E-Newsletters you can Subscribe by emailing <u>Christine Drais</u> or <u>online</u>. To download previous issues click <u>HERE</u>.

HERC Discussions Continue

City Council held a Worksession in front of a full house Monday, September 20th to discuss next steps in the planning process to revitalize the HERC. On September 27th City Council held a public hearing and voted on Ordinance 21-58. Passed, Ordinance 21-58 appropriates \$75,000 from the HERC CARMA Fund for professional services to proceed with a focused feasibility study for a new multi-use center to continue to move the project forward. Public comments were very supportive of the project.

The HERC Campus Renovations Team requested the appropriation at the worksession to advance to the second stage (Scoping) of a five-stage plan: Vision, Scoping, Implementation, Procurement and Design/Construction of a new complex. "Homer has done a great job at lining up what its vision looks like. Now it's time to take the next step," said Public Works Director Jan Keiser at the City Council meeting.

WHAT'S NEW?

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

We hope you will discover something new today as we continue to share information on ways you can tap into what's happening at City Hall and the Homer community.

Check us out on Facebook City Hall - <u>@cityofhomerak</u> Parks & Recreation - <u>@homerparksandrec</u> Homer Public Library- <u>@homerpubliclibrary</u> Homer Police - <u>@homerakpolice</u> Fire Department - <u>@HomerVolFireDept</u>

"where the land ends and the sea begins"

FIRE DEPARTMENT RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING ACADEMY

Do you want to give back to your community? Does the *"Now Recruiting"* sign at the Fire Hall make you wonder about joining? Now's your chance. We need you.



Group photo with Homer Volunteer Fire Department before the Mass Casualty Training Event last month.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer firefighting is one of the most rewarding experiences you'll ever have -- volunteers make up of 75% of the department and are essential for effective response to the over 650 calls HVFD gets annually. No prior experience or certifications are required.

FIREFIGHTER-1 ACADEMY

Enrollment is now open for the Fall *Firefighter-1 Academy*. Completing this class equips participants for both State and National FF1 certification and to be a part of the HVFD team.

- Course Dates: October 18, 2021 February 5, 2022
- Registration: Call 907-235-3155

If you are interested, call HVFD at 235-3155, email Chief Kirko at *mkirko@ci.homer.ak.us*, or drop by to meet the crew and pick up an application. Staff is more than happy to answer any questions you may have. Information is also on the City's website <u>HERE</u>.

Fighting Fires • with Thermal Technology on the Homer Spit





JOIN OUR TEAM

In the early evening of August 20th, the HVFD received a call about a structure fire at the Harbor Grill. Quick action was taken to respond to smoke and visible fire visible seen alongside and under the building, which prompted evacuation of the building.

Upon arrival, the HVFD relieved the Harbor Grill employees who were trying to extinguish the fire using dry chemical fire extinguishers and a garden hose from a neighboring business. HVFD crews stretched a fire hose and began extinguishing the remaining fire.

Additional crew members used a thermal imaging camera to search for fire in the concealed areas. Once these hidden flames were located they removed siding and the remaining fire was extinguished.



HVFD crews extinguish fire after using thermal imaging camera to reveal concealed flames.

PUBLIC SAFETY NOTES

Letter from City Council to the Community of Homer,

The Homer City Council strongly encourages businesses, schools, nonprofits, and government agencies within the city to employ stronger COVID-19 mitigation measures at this time. Wearing a mask, socially distancing, and getting vaccinated all contribute to the overall health and safety of the community.

The rapid spread of the delta variant impacts the health of our friends, families, and neighbors while also disrupting our economy. The virus has taken a huge toll on many of us, physically and mentally. Inaction will not make it go away. The Council acknowledges that all of us, as Americans, are free to make our own choices about personal health matters; however; the pandemic gives us a reason to consider the health and safety of others when making those choices.

We encourage you to wear a mask in public, socially distance when possible, and get vaccinated against COVID-19. These three easy steps can make a big difference in our collective effort to beat COVID and get back to normal. If you're uncertain about vaccination, talk to your doctor or Public Health Department for professional advice.

The City of Homer does not have health powers and is unable to create mask mandates lie you have seen in some other communities around the State of Alaska. We have, however, implemented COVID mitigation methods within City facilities. At this time, because of the high levels of community spread of the delta variant and hospitalization rates, masks are required in all City facilities regardless of vaccination status. This includes City Council members at the dais during Council meetings.

For organizations that are interested in pursuing enhanced mitigation measures, the City has developed some tools for evaluating COVID risk factors that we are happy to share with the community. For more information about the City's mitigation measures contact the City Manager's office at 235-8121 extension 2222.

If we take care of ourselves, it will help us take care of each other.

- Mayor Ken Castne**r** On behalf of the Homer City Council





COVID CLINIC 4201 Bartlett Street

Testing and Vaccines are available 7 days a week from 9am-6pm. Call to pre-register 907-235-0235. No appointment is necessary.





LIBRARY NEWS

SECOND SUNDAY SHAKESPEARE

The Friends of the Homer Library, in partnership with Pier One Theatre and Kachemak Bay Campus, invite you to participate in online readings of plays by William Shakespeare the second Sunday of each month from October thru January via Zoom at 1:00 p.m. Click **HERE**.



For full details on Art in the Library visit *Friends of the Library Facebook* or <u>Website</u>.

MEET THE AUTHOR

Join us for book readings by authors in October. Complete information may be found <u>HERE.</u>

- October 8, 6:00pm Jesse Wegman introduces Let the People Pick the President.
- October 14, 3:30pm Nadia Saloman talks about her new picture book, *Goodnight Ganesha*.

WALK -IN TECH HELP

Bring in your computer, tablet or smart phone to get one-on-one help with your complicated tech questions from City staff. Or Email your questions to <u>info@friendshomerlibrary.org</u>

> 1st & 3rd Saturdays, each month 10am-12pm

Community Corner

What's happening around the City of Homer



RECOVER: To return to a normal state of health, mind, or strength.

In a brilliant display, the 18th Homer Burning Basket, 'RECOVER -Basket of Remembrance and Unburdening' was ignited and burned as a performance of fireart. The giant basket was created by many to support the project of grassroots interactive art as a civic function. City Parks and many other organizations were involved with the project. *Matt Steffy,* City Parks Superintendent, organized a



Photo; G. Brad Lewis/volcanoman.org

Facebook fundraiser to pay for the event's insurance. "We raised \$955 in less than 24 hours, which completely covered the cost. We live in a pretty cool community."

Artist and lead volunteer Mavis Muller proclaimed, "After a gusty, rainy day, the sky cleared, rainbows appeared, the wind died down, and the basket was lit to release what we don't need and together as a community begin to RECOVER what we have lost. May the warmth of the memories we made keep us illuminated and connected."



Loved & Lost Memorial Bench Installation Plans Progress at Homer Public Library

City Public Works and Library personnel met recently with Christina Whiting, Homer artist Brad Hughes and Anesha 'Duffy' Murnane's stepfather Ed Berg to discuss logistics of placing the Loved & Lost memorial bench at the library.

Created to honor Duffy and all those missing around Alaska, the nation, and the world, the Loved & Lost memorial bench is also intended to draw attention to the immense issue of how many men, women, and children going missing in our country and around the world every year. Fundraising efforts are ongoing and all support is greatly appreciated. If you would like to donate to the project click <u>HERE</u>. For information regarding memorial benches, email <u>Matt Steffy</u> of the Parks division or call at 907-435-3139.

Parks & Community Recreation

As weather turns cooler, our thoughts look toward indoor recreation options. The City of Homer Community Recreation program has plenty of options for people of all ages. Visit <u>https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/recreation</u> for the complete list of great programs available daily at the HERC and Homer High School. *Schedule subject to change.



Pickleball players at the HERC Gym courts.

INDOOR ACTIVITIES

- Morning Pick Up Basketball 6-7am Monday, Wednesday & Friday HERC Gym
- ReAKtion Club 10am-12pm Wednesday HERC Gym/Outdoors
- Pick Up Pickleball 3:45-5:45pm Monday, Wednesday & Friday ; 9-11am Sunday HERC Gym
 - Cuong Nhu & Karate Monday, Wednesday & Friday *HERC Activity Room* 4:30-5:30pm Youth Class & 5:45-6:45pm Adult Class
- Indoor Youth Programming 2:45-5pm Thursdays HERC Gym
- Pick Up Youth Boys Basketball 6-8pm Monday & Wednesday HERC Gym
- Open Tabletop Gaming 2-8pm Saturday HERC Activity Room

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

- Pick Up Ultimate Frisbee 6:30-8pm Monday & Thursday HHS Turf
- Pick Up Soccer 6:30-8pm Wednesday & Friday; 6:30-8:30pm Sunday HHS Turf

Public Works Department

PLOWS NOT PARKING. GRADERS NOT GARDENS. SNOW STORAGE NOT SUVs.

As the temperatures start to change and the snow begins to fall, we respectfully request that you keep vehicles, fences, gardens, and other private property outside of the right-of-way. The Right-of-Way is the space between the road and your property. This space is used for utilities, transportation of storm water via ditches, storage of snow when plowing, and other uses that benefit the public. Keeping this space clear allows the City's Public Works crews to provide critical services that protect property and keep you and your neighbors safe.



Did you know the City's Public Works department plows and sands 97.5 lane miles of City streets and an additional 2.54 lane miles of State roads located within Homer city limits. This expedient and efficient snow removal service gives priority to emergency and school bus routes and the most heavily traveled roads. Generally, there are two separate snow removal operations per day.

Remember, vehicles parked in the Right-of-Way may be subject to fines and even towing if creating a hazard or blocking access to utilities. Please call Public Works at 907-235-3170 for more information. Please - *Park the Right way, NOT in the Right-of-Way.*



PLEASE PARK THE RIGHT WAY NOT IN THE RIGHT-OF-WAY

FROST BOIL MAINTENANCE

You may see the Public Works crew in your neighborhood mid-October. This year, Public Works has contracted with East Road Services, Inc. to help repair frost boils. Meanwhile, our roads crew is currently working to resurface a section of road on Sprucewood Drive near the intersection with Rogers Loop.

Public Works Small Works Road Repair projects are ongoing small-scale road repairs and routine maintenance. Frost boils are an example of this repair work. In spring, road surface layers thaw, which causes moisture to permeate and become trapped. Because the ground below is still frozen and moisture is unable to infiltrate further under ground, the trapped moisture causes roads to become soggy, heave and create ruts.

Damage from frost boils is not visible this time of year because road surfaces tend to even out as gravel dries over the summer and is smoothed by road graders, but the integrity of the road surface is still compromised.

Frost boil repair is a relatively simple process. The affected road surface is removed by bulldozer and excavator, old unusable material is hauled away, and the road is then resurfaced and compacted. The challenging part is that there are a lot of roads affected by frost boils. They are a particularly bad problem in Homer because our maritime climate creates a lot of moisture to get trapped in our road surfaces.



Road surface removed on Sprucewood Drive.



Unusable material loaded into dump truck for haul off.

PARKS & TRAILS ADA TRANSITION PLAN



Owen Meyer, left, measures area at marina restrooms.

In 2019, the City created an ADA transition plan to serve as a road map for bringing City facilities into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Since then, Public Works has been working to implement the plan, incrementally correcting accessibility issues with public restrooms, signage, ADA parking and parking lot striping. Compliance plans have also been created for restrooms in the airport.

The plan only involved facilities, not the City's recreation areas. So this summer, a team of Public Works and Parks staff from the ADA Compliance committee began conducting parks and trails site surveys. Doing the work in-house helps preserve resources for actually being able to do some improvements.

You may have seen the team out working. They have surveyed Karen Hornaday Park, Jack Gist Park, Mariner Park, the Seafarer's Memorial, the Fishing Hole Campground, Bishop's Beach, WKFL Park and Ben Walter Park to identify features that are out of compliance with the ADA in order to make a plan for corrections going forward.

In Karen Hornaday Park, evaluation of the playground was a challenge because of ambiguity in the standards for what qualifies as ADA accessible playground equipment and the percentage of playground equipment required to be ADA accessible. Further training is being sought from the Northwest ADA Center so the crew can re-evaluate the playground. Once site visits are completed, findings will be compiled into a full ADA Transition Plan for Parks and Trails.

If you would like to join the ADA Compliance Committee, volunteer or stay informed please visit <u>https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/ada-compliance.</u> Our next meeting is October 14 at 4:00 p.m.

-Owen Meyer Public Works Technician <u>omeyer@cityofhomer-ak.gov</u>

Bridge Creek Reservoir





Todd Cook, left, Homer Water/Wastewater Treatment Superintendent, accepts Homer's 2016 Award for *Best Tasting Water in Alaska* from the Alaska Rural Water Association.



Adopt a Cat

You have got to be KITTEN me! Call the shelter to make an appointment to meet Myrtle, Maebe, Mabel, Muriel, Margot and Marcel or one of the others ready to go home.



Want to volunteer, foster, adopt or make a donation? Please contact **Alaska Mindful Paws at the Homer Animal Shelter** info may be found at <u>facebook.com/akmindfulpaws</u>, Call 907- 235-3141

HOMER ANIMAL SHELTER

Monday - Friday 8am - 5pm Saturday & Sunday 8am - 4pm

ADOPTION HOURS

Tuesday - Friday 12pm - 5pm Saturday & Sunday 11am - 4pm

Water Treatment

Why does my water taste different at different times of the year?

City of Homer's source for drinking water is the Bridge Creek Reservoir located at Crossman Road, off Skyline Drive. The surface area of the reservoir is 37 square acres with a maximum depth of 40 feet. The depth of the intake pipe is adjustable so operators can tap into the raw water that has the potential to offer the best water quality, once it's treated.

The Bridge Creek Reservoir is classified as "Surface Water," which is typically low in pH, alkalinity, dissolved solid and hardness. Because of this, Homer's raw water is considered very "soft" and corrosive. Surface water sources are also susceptible to seasonal water quality changes. This is generally caused by "turn over." Turn over is a biological process, which occurs each fall and spring as temperatures change. In the fall, the water near the surface of the reservoir is cooler than the water at the bottom. The cooler water sinks and the warmer water rises. This turn over stirs up the bottom of the reservoir where things like Manganese (Mn), Iron (Fe) and decaying plant life settle. The process also releases gases that have been trapped at the bottom of the reservoir. In the spring, the sun heats the floor of the reservoir causing the warm water to rise and again, turn over occurs, stirring up the bottom.

Everything in the water can affect its taste and odor. Homer's certified water treatment operators try to manage quality through the use of ultrafiltration and specialized chemical treatment. It's a balancing act! The EPA regulates what we can and can't do. Some people don't want more chemicals in their drinking water. Plus, people have different sensitivities to taste and odor so it's often tricky!

Further, other things can temporarily affect the taste of water. For example, the water operators flush the entire distribution system every year. Plus, this year, a number of new water mains were added to the system, requiring even more flushing. Our goal is to provide safe and reliable water supply to all of the City 's customers! Be assured that City of Homer's drinking meets or exceeds US EPA drinking water standards.

If you would like a tour of the water treatment plant, feel free to contact me. We like showing off the plant to students, organizations and citizen scientists who are just plain interested in how things work.

Coming soon - What exactly is in our water?



Todd Cook Water Sewer Superintendent City of Homer, Public Works <u>tcook@cityofhomer-ak.gov</u>

Port & Harbor

Large Vessel Haul Out and Repair Facility Kicks Back Into Action

Business is picking up in the Large Vessel Haul Out this fall. Fortune Seas Marine has been busy lining up work for the fall and winter months ahead. To date, we have five vessels, the Hallo Bay, Kona Kai, Deception, Summer Bay and North Pacific, hauled out and the facility is buzzing with activity.

Alaska Scrap plans to dismantle the derelict vessel North Pacific in October. Their schedule got pushed back a month due to crew shortages and other commitments, but visitors to the Homer Spit will see progress before long.



Homer's Port & Harbor office, 4311 Freight Dock Road. For more information call 907-235-3160, email *port@cityofhomer-ak.gov* or visit *www.cityofhomerak.gov/port*

ADA Van Accessible Parking Spots Get Paved

The Harbor's gravel parking lots have had designated ADA parking spots for years to ensure that harbor users with limited mobility have close access to the harbor ramps. To be fully accessible, though, parking spots should be on even, stable, firm, and slip resistant surfaces, not gravel. Paving these parking spaces is a goal identified in the 2019 ADA Transition Plan, and this September it became a reality. Dutch Boy Landscaping & Paving prepared and paved the ADA parking spots over a few crisp autumn days, offering full access to the harbor.



Homer Police Beat

Before becoming a cop, no one tells you about all the paperwork and time between calls that makes up the job. On TV, it's all action, heroism and glory. It's call to call, high speed pursuits, foot chases, murders and saving babies every day.

One redeeming fact of law enforcement, is that you never know what you're going to be doing from one minute to the next (aside from all the paperwork). Which leads us to September 15th, which started out as a fairly typical day. Not much going on, which in our line of work is a good thing, and then 911 goes off. As the station excitedly anticipates the high speed driving and dangerous call we're about to be dispatched to, the caller reports loose pigs in their yard, and not just pigs, but four 150lb hungry pigs. Animal Control is already slammed with loose dogs and not being ones to shy away from something interesting, off we go to see what's in store for us.



Officer Tyler Jeffres herding the assailant

We find the 911 caller, who leads us to her husband and neighbors who have shooed the 150lb pigs into the thick Alders, Devil's Club and Heracleum Maximum (Pushki)...in other words, a great work space to herd animals. We armed ourselves with sticks and set out with a "here pig, pig" and some grain. For those uninitiated, pigs are very stubborn. Long story short, a very nice neighbor allowed us the use of their fenced in dog pen to corral the pigs – the only problem then was getting them there. Eventually with some make-shift tools, blockades and devilishly coy herding skills, we were able to corral the pigs and save the day.

To the things they don't show you on TV, - *Lt. Ryan Browning*

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. If you too would like to join our team, check out the job opportunities at <u>cityofhomerak.applicantpro.com/jobs/</u>





Bethany Christman was born in Kodiak and her family moved to Homer when she was a kid. Later, Bethany moved to Anchorage, where she worked for the plumbers and pipe fitters union. Bethany began her career with the City of Homer in 2019 in the water treatment plant as a maintenance technician. She transferred to her current position as Public Works Office Manager this summer. Her responsibilities involve customer service, processing invoices, issuing and processing work orders and record keeping. Bethany is the glue that holds the office together.

What Bethany likes most about her position is, "the feeling of being able to help take care of everyone in the office." Her favorite aspects of living in Homer are the proximity to the ocean and the gorgeous views. She particularly loves visiting the beaches. For fun, Bethany makes metal artwork using a plasma cutter. Many of her art pieces are of sea creatures. The rest of her time is taken up by her two 5 year old kids.

NEW HIRES

Homer Police Department welcomes two new dispatchers. *Charles Benson* joined the HPD crew on September 20. *Emily Larson*'s first day of duty will be October 5th. *Andrew Cranley* joined Public Works September 20 and will be part of the Mechanics team who keep our rolling stock rolling. The Fish Dock welcomed *Jedidia Gautier* as an Ice Plant Operator on September 27. *Samantha Cunningham* is the new Fire Department EMS Assistant Chief and started September 29.



DEPARTURES

Our friend and longtime coworker **Paul McBride**, Building Maintenance Technician, who recently passed away was honored September 23 with a memorial procession of fire engines, police and emergency vehicles from the Fire Hall on Pioneer Avenue down Heath Street to Public Works headquarters. Paul worked with the City since 2012 and will be missed by all. His passing is a big loss for our City and our condolences go out to his family. There is a GoFundMe fundraiser to help the family with final expenses. If you would like to help - Click <u>HERE</u>.





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) Caroline Venuti (2023)

Jason Davis (2021)

City Council

Bryan Hawkins, Port Director/Harbormaster Elizabeth Walton, Finance Director Janette ("Jan") Keiser, PE, 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



STAY CONNECTED WITH CITY COUNCIL



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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

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	7th - 5:30pm	Library Advisory Board Regular Meeting
	11th - 5:00 pm	City Council Committee of the Whole
	6:00 pm	City Council Regular Meeting
	12th - 6:00 pm	Economic Development Advisory Commission Regular Meeting
	14th - 4:00 am	ADA Compliance Committee
	20th - 5:30 pm	Planning Commission Work Session
	6:30 pm	Planning Commission Regular Session
	21st - 5:30pm	Parks, Art, Recreation & Culture Advisory Commission Regular Meetin
	25th - 5:00 pm	City Council Committee of the Whole
	6:00 pm	City Council Regular Meeting
	27nd - 5:00 pm	Port & Harbor Advisory Commission Regular Meeting

HOMER MUNICIPAL ART COLLECTION

The City's artwork is found in the most unexpected places. The Homer Animal Shelter sign, located on Sterling Highway, was created by Moose Run Metalsmiths and acquired in 2004.



Outside the front entryway of the Animal Shelter is the 2005 Wooden Bench with Carved Dog end pieces by Ralph Stover. A beautiful piece to sit and visit with your new furry friend.



Alaska Mindful Paws Homer Animal Shelter http://www.alaskamindfulpaws.org/ (907) 235-3141

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

- Accounting Tech. IV, Finance, Full time
- Heavy Equipment Operator I or II
- Building Maintenance Tech I or II
- Community Jail Officer, Part-time
- Parks Maintenance Laborer, Seasonal

CITY OF HOMER

491 E. Pioneer Avenue Homer, Alaska 99603 907-235-8121 <u>cityofhomer-ak.gov</u>