

VOL. II - ISSUE IV | JANUARY 2023

CITY OF HOMER

Monthly Newsletter from the office of the City Manager



Happy New Year

FROM THE CITY OF HOMER

Mariner Park was the setting for Homer residents and visitors from all over the Southern Kenai Peninsula to ring in the New Year. The 5th Annual Crowd-Funded Fireworks Fantastical went off with a big bang thanks to show organizer Aaron Weisser, volunteers from the Homer Rotary Club and hot snacks from Captain's Coffee. Special thanks to the Homer Police Department, Port & Harbor and Public Works crews for providing logistics for the event to help the crowd moving smoothly. As usual, the fireworks show was amazing and was in sync with music played on K-Wave radio. What a fun way to ring in the New Year!

The holiday weekend was reportedly busy on the 911 front with several slip and falls on ice. The freezing temperatures combined by rain has created a slick surface just about everywhere. The Homer Volunteer Fire Department asks that we be extra careful when venturing out. Don't forget to wear your cleats and take it slow and easy when walking and driving.

Have You Made any New Year's Resolutions?

The City of Homer has great opportunities for you to engage in the community whether you'd like to get more involved with the City Council, a Commission or an Advisory Board, or participate in a Community Recreation program. There is always something going on to keep you active and engaged in the community. Follow these links to discover what's happening in the City of Homer.

- [Meeting Calendar](#)
- [Meet the Council](#)
- [Community Recreation](#)
- [Homer Public Library](#)



WHAT'S NEW?

- Library Events
- City Clerk's Office
- Community Corner
- Community Recreation
- Economic Development
- Fire Department
- Planning Department
- Public Safety Notes
- Public Works
- Meet the Staff
- Municipal Art Collection
- Stay Connected with City Council
- Join Our Team

We hope you'll discover something new today as we share the latest 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"

LIBRARY EVENTS

Lunch with a Council Member

January 10, 2023

Noon - 1pm

Kick off the New Year and join the conversation with Council Member **Rachel Lord**. Bring your questions and topics for discussion and enjoy lunch over Zoom.



February 14: Caroline Venuti

Virtual Author Talks

Join us online from 10-11am for a virtual talk with these three authors in January.

- **December 6:** Geraldine Brooks, author of *March*, *People of the Book*, and others.
- **December 10:** Frederick Backman, author of *The Winners*.
- **December 14:** Nicole Eustace, author of *A Story of Murder and Indigenous Justice in Early America*.

Art in the Library : January - March

Incredible acrylic and graphite mixed media paintings on exhibit by *Counsel Langley*.



Happy New Year
from the
Homer Public Library!

Check out the complete Line-up
of Library programs



Homer Public Library
500 Hazel Street - (907) 235-3180
circ@ci.homer.ak.us
www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/library

Community Corner

What's happening around the City of Homer

Annual Christmas Tree Lighting

Santa arrived in style atop the HVFD Fire Engine for the annual tree lighting at Homer Chamber of Commerce on December 2nd. The whole crew pitched in to decorate Engine 2 for the big event.



Chamber President Brad Anderson said, "there were many wonderful moments from that event. Our conference room was also full of kids making ornaments and writing letters to Santa. We love doing these kind of activities that bring the community together and build some memories for the kids. "

Thanks to everyone who made this a fun and successful event for the community!

Winter Fun on Beluga Lake

From ice skating to fat tire biking, ice fishing and drifting, Beluga Lake is the place to slide around and have some fun this winter. Broom Ball groups have been meeting on the lake to play, too. So, get outside with your winter gear, a big thermos of hot cocoa and have some fun!



Surplus Equipment Sale - January 2023

The City is having a Surplus Sale!

Check out the list of great items including items such as outdoor gear, vehicles, heavy duty equipment, and other miscellaneous items.

Sealed bids for City surplus equipment will be received by the City Clerk's Office at City Hall, 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, until 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 12, 2023. All bidders must submit a City of Homer Plan Holders Registration form to be on the Plan Holders List and to be considered responsive.

Sealed bids will be publicly opened and read on Friday, January 13, 2023 at 3:00 p.m.



SCAN
CODE
FOR
SURPLUS
SALE
INFO

Community Recreation

<https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/com-rec>



Mountainfilm on Tour - January 21

Mountainfilm on Tour visits Homer, Alaska on Saturday, January 21st 2023 at the Homer High Mariner Theater. Join us for an evening of inspiring and captivating films handpicked from the Mountainfilm festival in Telluride, Colorado.

Founded in 1979, Mountainfilm is one of America's longest-running film festivals and celebrates stories of indomitable spirit and aims to inspire audiences through film, art and ideas. This is the 24th year playing in Homer!

Doors open at 6pm; Show starts at 7pm. Tickets available in advance at Homer Bookstore or at the door the night of the show.



NEED GEAR?

CHECK IT OUT

AT THE

HOMER PUBLIC LIBRARY!

Mark Your
Calendar
for
Winter
Carnival
&
Parade!



Economic Development

Cities of Opportunity

Wonder why its hard to find new employees? Forget what you're hearing on the national news; Alaska has some specific challenges. Alaska's workforce is ageing and losing working age population – that's people aged 20-64. Some 8,000 workers moved out of state or aged out of the work force in the last 10 years, while the state gained more than 40,000 folks 65 and older... some because they moved here, and some because they aged in place.

On the Kenai Peninsula, our working age population is stable – we have not lost or gained folks between the ages 20-64. Although it's great we're not losing people, when you consider the growth in many industries from health care to boat building, we are not attracting the necessary new workers to the Kenai Peninsula. Employers in some trades are finding they need to provide training and begin recruiting new employees locally – such as from Homer High. A local example is the series of classes the [Homer Marine Trades Association](#) provides at the High School, and programs at the college.

Alaska has a challenge ahead; lower 48 wages have gone up and Alaska wages are not as attractive. Workers are looking for quality of life:

- How are the local schools, parks and recreation amenities?
- What's the availability of social activities, childcare, housing, etc.?

There are two takeaways here: Its time to look ahead and consider encouraging local youth to stay or return to Homer as young adults, and if our community needs to recruit workers from the lower 48, what investments are needed so our community is a place young workers can succeed? These are a just a few of the topics that will be covered in January's Industry Outlook Forum. Hope to see you there.



You are invited...
JANUARY 5
8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**INDUSTRY
OUTLOOK FORUM**

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
HOMER, ALASKA

**TO REGISTER, PLEASE VISIT:
WWW.KPEDD.ORG**

Featuring a Homer Panel of experts to discuss:

- Childcare
- Housing
- Transportation
- The future for the community of Homer

Redevelopment Training

Economic Development Manager Julie Engebretsen attended a two day training from the *International Economic Development Council on Real Estate Development and Reuse*. While Homer does not see a lot of new commercial construction, remodeling and reusing existing buildings is common in Homer – City Hall started out as a bank, and the college campus includes part of the old post office building. Understanding how city policies and regulations affect redevelopment costs will help the City update these tools and support real estate redevelopment in our community. The course also touched on public private partnership and the RFP/RFQ process for project development. Ms. Engebretsen intends to incorporate lessons learned from the class with city leases and development opportunities.

Alaska Municipal League Winter Conference / DOT Visit

Julie Engebretsen and Special Projects Coordinator Jenny Carroll traveled to attend part of the AML Conference in early December. While in Anchorage, they met with staff from DOT to discuss a range of topics including a grant opportunity to improve the Homer Airport Terminal. The city owns the building, and has a long term airport lease for the property. Like any building, the terminal needs long term investment to maintain the building and contain operating costs.

The City would like to leverage grant funds to construct an ADA restroom, address walkway problems, upgrade the air handling system, paint the exterior, and make energy improvements and other long term investments. The goal is to apply for a grant with applications due in fall 2023.

Photo: Left to right, Jenny Carroll and Julie Engebretsen at the State of Alaska DOT & PF Central Region office.



Fire Department



Enroll Now for the Firefighter -1 Training Course

The Firefighter I Training Course is set for start mid to late February. This class will be conveniently held nights and weekends class and will include an online component. Upon completion candidates will be trained and ready to respond to interior firefighting operations, vehicle extrication, hazardous materials operations, and wildland firefighting. This class will certify you as a State of Alaska FF1, which is a great start to a new career path, or to so you can help the community in time of need.



Start the New Year off with New Adventure!

Contact Deputy Chief Joe Kahles at 907-299-5618 for more information and to sign up for the February FF1 Course.



Coastal Bluff Development

The City regulates development activity and structures in areas affected by slopes, bluffs, ravines, and the coastal edge, and provides the means for additional review and protection to encourage safe and orderly growth to promote the health, welfare and safety of Homer residents. Any development activity that happens on lots with average slopes of 15% or greater on bluffs, coastal edge and ravines, or are located within 40-feet of the top of within 15-feet of the toe of a steep slope, bluff, coastal edge or ravine are subject to additional review and trigger slope development standards listed in the Homer City Code. These additional standards can affect setbacks and add required elements to the project's site plan. The Planning department reviews proposed development to ensure that all Code requirements are met.

In December, the Alaska Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys (DGGS) published the Coastal Bluff Stability Assessment for Homer, Alaska. This DGGS study provides an overview of stability in coastal bluffs using aerial imagery and modern elevation data. Additionally, the study includes graphic representation of shoreline change from 1951 to 2019 and a coastal bluff stability. More information can be found on the [Coastal Bluff Information webpage](#).

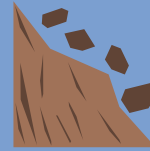


Homer is StormReady!

Homer achieved its National Weather Service StormReady Community Certification confirming our commitment to implement systems needed to protect lives and property when storms occur. Special Projects and Communications Coordinator Jenny Carroll and Associate Planner Bella Vaz worked with the National Weather Service to have Homer certified as StormReady, adding to our TsunamiReady certification. This program works to protect communities from the effects of severe weather through advanced planning, education and awareness. StormReady promotes hazard preparedness to improve public safety before, during and after weather-related emergencies.

To be recognized as StormReady, a community must maintain a 24-hour warning point and support emergency operations center (EOC) operations; support ongoing education and outreach; support more than one way of receiving warnings and alerting the public; and develop a formal emergency operations plan and hold annual exercises. The recognition program is valid for four years and can be renewed.

LOCAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN



LANDSLIDE

Landslides are physical events that happen when the land literally moves; i.e., mudslides, rockslides, debris avalanches and rock falls. Most often, they can happen as a result of weather related factors that cause a shift in the landscape. Improper development of sloping ground or the creation of cut-and-fill slopes in areas of unstable conditions are also prime landslide areas.

Hillsides and mountainous areas are most susceptible to landslides depending on variations in the geology, topography, vegetation and weather.

Landslides can happen when other hazards occur:

- Earthquakes can trigger rock falls and slides.
- Intense or prolonged precipitation that causes flooding can saturate slopes and cause failures leading to landslides.
 - Heavy rainfall
 - Snowmelt
 - Changes to groundwater levels
 - Surface water level changes along coast lines, earth dams and banks of lakes.
- Wildfires
- Stream erosion
- Saturation by water

Where are landslides likely to happen?

- Mountainous or hilly terrain with slopes greater than 20 degrees.
- In Homer, bluffs running between Skyline Drive and East End Road, and on the west end of the west end of the city, just south of the Sterling Highway (Bluff Point).

History of Landslides in Homer

At least one severe landslide occurred in Homer above Kachemak following the Great Alaskan Earthquake in 1964. Notable landslides documented since the 2010 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan include:

- 2013: Bear Creek Drive saw a 16-foot mudslide when heavy rains saturated the narrow Bear Creek Canyon. A disaster declaration was made for several rain-soaked areas in the Kenai Peninsula Borough.
- 2015: A 100-foot section of Kachemak Drive was closed a half mile up the hill from Homer Spit Road to the top of the hill near the Homer Airport pushing trees and debris into Mud Bay.

Probability of landslides?

Approximately 17% (1,504 acres) of Homer is in this hazard area. Shallow landslides can occur at any time, but are more likely to happen when the ground is fully saturated. Deep-seated landslides typically follow major storm events or severe winter storm conditions that are likely to occur in the City of Homer every 2 to 7 years.

Police Department



Dave Shealy Celebrates 25 years

Homer's finest gathered to celebrate 25 years with Sergeant Dave Shealy on Friday, December 9th. Chief Mark Robl hosted the event to congratulate and celebrate this important milestone for Dave. We're trying to keep him around another 5! We all thank Dave for his commitment to excellence, the citizens of Homer and making our community a better place.



Swearing In Officer Campuzano

Chief Robl got to swear in our newest Officer, Evangelina Campuzano on December 15th. Evangelina started with the HPD in our dispatch center this summer and just returned from 17 of the best weeks of her life, stuck on an island at the police academy. Evangelina comes to us from the US Navy where she served as Master at Arms for the last 10 years. Fun fact, she's also an accomplished and legit chocolatier and makes a blueberry air-biscuit that you wouldn't believe. Congratulations Officer Campuzano!

Life Saver Awards

On August 20th, Sgt. Sean Perry and Lt. Ryan Browning responded to a single vehicle collision in the Homer area. The driver was unresponsive and agonal breathing. Sgt. Perry and Lt. Browning were able to extricate the driver from the vehicle, which was approximately 10' down a steep embankment in the water, and began life saving measures and CPR on the side of the roadway until medics arrived.

On September 16th, Sgt. Perry and Sgt. Dave Shealy responded to a medical call where the patient was unresponsive, wasn't breathing and was turning blue. Upon arrival, both Sgt's began life saving measures and CPR prior to medics arriving and taking over.

In both cases, the patients survived. We'd like to acknowledge our amazing team of Homer Volunteer Fire Department medics whom we work with very closely. Without them, these two citizens would have probably met a very different fate. Thank you all for your commitment to community.



Lt. Ryan Browning, Sgt. Sean Perry and Sgt. Dave Shealy



Tuyanitun: Tuggeht

Designed by Ninilchik Village Tribal member and artist Argent Kvasnikoff, this public art sculpture (pronounced too-yan-eee-toon : to-get) was installed in October, 2022 to anchor a wider, upcoming revamp of Bishop's Beach Park and Pavillion. Large boulders have been placed around the base of the sculpture for added effect.

The sculpture is a community partnership between the Ninilchik Village Tribe, the City of Homer, Alaska Maritime National Refuge and Bunnell Street Arts Center to tell the story of this place, Homer, that occupies unceded Indigenous lands.

[Click here to Learn more about Tuyanitun: Tuggeht](#)

City Staff Celebrate the Holidays Together

For the first time since before the pandemic, City staff gathered together to celebrate the holidays. The last time the group had a holiday party was in 2019. Fun was had by one and all at Land's End on December 17th. Thanks to those who came out to take part in the holiday festivities. It was nice to see everyone having a good time outside of work and catching up. We even had a surprise performance by Luna Ursis with Michelle Morton and Josh Thomas played guitar and harp music.



Ryan Foster (L) with his wife Sasha, and Jenny Carroll (R).



Christine Drais (L) gets the crowd to vote on the Ugly Sweaters Contest. The ugly sweater-wearing contestants lined up to take on the cheers and laughs to see who would be crowned "Tackiest", "Ugly", "Uglier" and "Ugliest". (L-R) Amber Baldus, Melissa Jacobsen, Kevin Co, Jenny Carroll, Kim Zook, Jan Keiser and Cole Jacobsen; not picture, Angie Kalugin won "Tackiest" in her green tinsel jacket with ornaments! The four winners went home with a nice prize and new award for their trophy case. They were all pretty ugly if you ask me!



A cheery table of party people; L-R: Gavin Spudwills, Aaron Glidden, Rachel Tussey-Spudwills and Kevin Co

PUBLIC SAFETY NOTES

"Public Safety" covers a lot of areas - from health and wellness to fire safety, safe driving practices and winter tips for safe travel. Don't forget our pets too! Each month we strive to provide relevant information to help you live well and stay healthy. If you have a tip to share, please let us know - email us.

Be Prepared with a Winter Car Emergency Kit

Driving in winter weather could leave you stranded, but an emergency car kit can get you back on the road or keep you safe until help arrives.

If you can, it's best to stay off the roads during hazardous weather whenever possible. The **National Weather Service** suggests to have a few things on hand and if you have to venture out:

- Battery booster cables
- Ice scraper and a portable shovel
- Basic first aid kit
- Emergency kit - roadside triangles, flashlights and back up batteries, reflective vest.
- Portable cell phone charger
- Extra blankets, snow boots, snow pants, food and water
- Tow strap or rope



Have you gotten your flu shot yet?

The traditional CDC flu season runs from October to May. This season started off with low activities, yet more than previous seasons at this time.

Nationally, and locally, there have been cases of influenza and other respiratory viruses going around. Flu shots are available at local pharmacies or a health provider.

Public Works



PW Celebrates the Holidays

Public Works crews gathered to celebrate the holidays over a home cooked lunch with all the trimmings by Director Jan Keiser and a couple meat-cooking elves. The annual white elephant gift exchange was a lot of fun and everyone ended up with a smile to show for it.

Winter is a busy time for the Public Works team, so a chance to stop and share a meal together is always welcome and good for morale.

Thank you PW Team for all you do all year round!



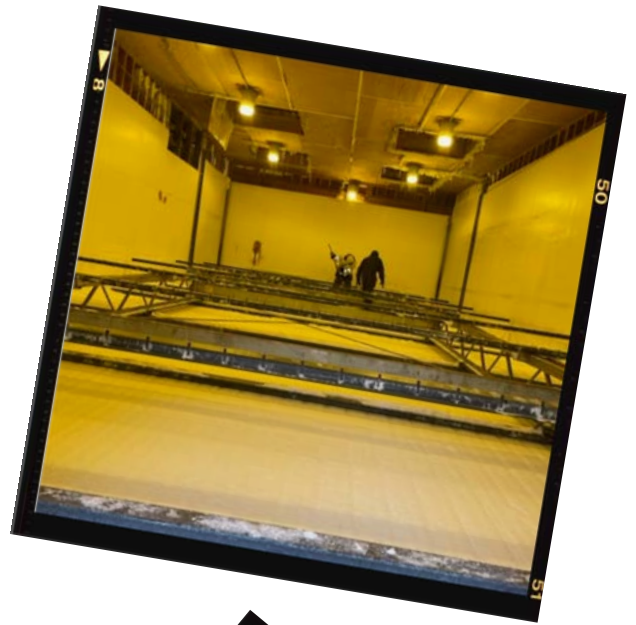
Port & Harbor



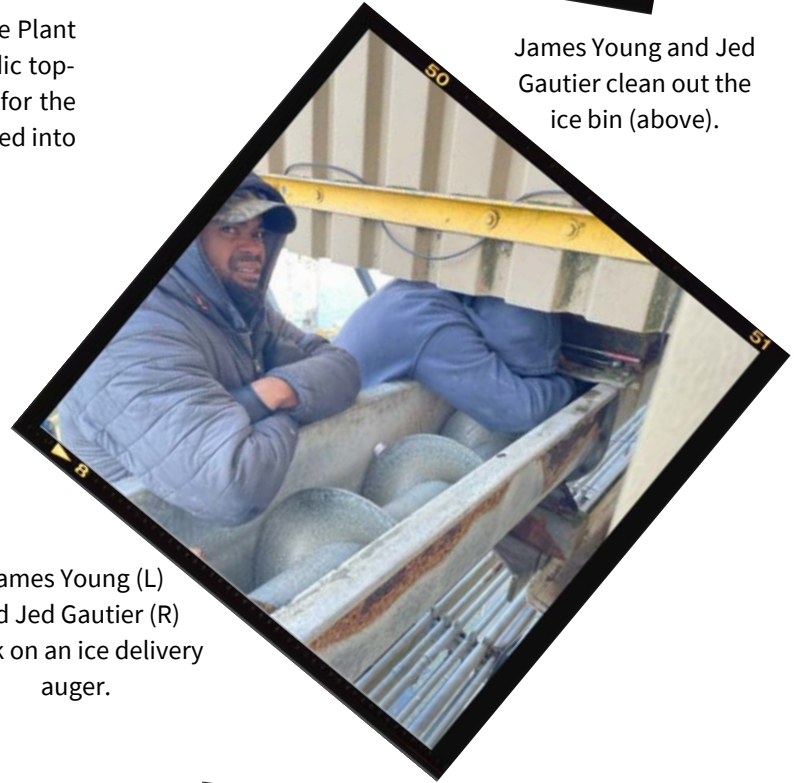
Winter Maintenance at the Fish Dock & Ice Plant

The City Ice Plant closed down for the season on November 15th, which means the Fish Dock Operators have been knocking out maintenance tasks left and right. Cranes are getting a tune-up, High Mast Lights are coming down to have a few bulbs replaced, and once the ice melted out, the ice bin was given a thorough scrub down.

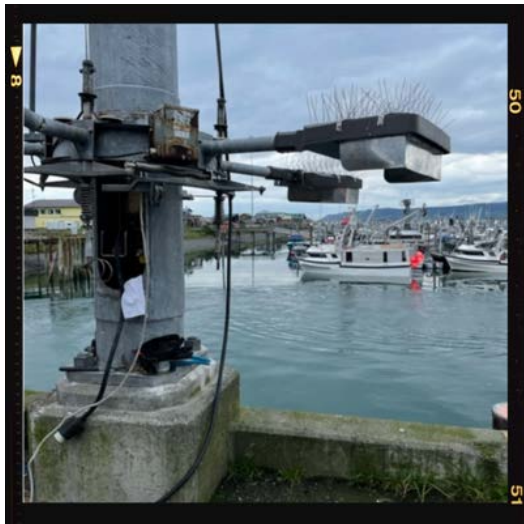
We're also taking on bigger projects-- the ammonia in the Ice Plant system has been working hard for over 40 years, with periodic top-offs. We're getting a full replacement of ammonia this year for the first time. The used ammonia is safely disposed of and recycled into fertilizer for crops.



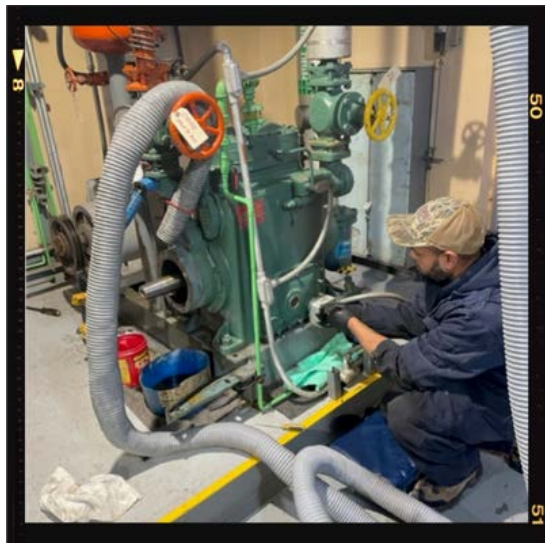
James Young and Jed Gautier clean out the ice bin (above).



James Young (L) and Jed Gautier (R) work on an ice delivery auger.



High Mast Lights lowered to replace bulbs.

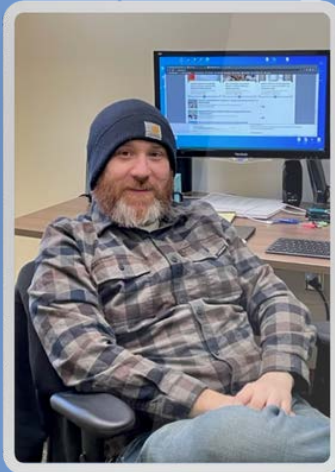


James Young services a compressor.



Welcome Aboard

Matthew Dominguez IT Support Specialist



This Phoenix, AZ transplant moved to Alaska in March of 2022. Matt worked for a large school district in Phoenix as PC/Network Tech for seven years. His main responsibilities were

to build and maintain servers and mentor the junior techs. He studies Network Engineering at DeVry University. Prior to his time as a 'tech guy', Matt served in the Army for eight years as an Infantryman. Some of his hobbies are fishing, hunting, and exploring with his dog.



December Anniversaries

We would like to recognize City staff members with anniversaries this month. Thank you for the dedication, commitment and service you've provided the City and taxpayers of Homer over the years. You all are an integral part of what makes the City of Homer a great place to work and the community.

Mark Robl	Police	38 Years
Bryan Hawkins	Port	23 Years
Todd Cook	Public Works	13 Years
Sean Perry	Police	8 Years
Mike Zelinski	Public Works	8 Years
Josh Mershon	Port	3 Years
Regina Johanos	Library	2 Years
Jenna Luchaco	Public Works	1 Year
Del Masterhan	Port	1 Year

The City of Homer has current Job Openings!

Sign up for Job Alerts or Apply Online at:
cityofhomer.ak.applicantpro.com/jobs

Meet the Staff

This section is to highlight staff achievements, promotions, retirements, departures and new hires to the City's workforce.



Homer Police Officer Joe Eshom



Joe Eshom joined the Homer Police Department earlier this year. He started his law enforcement career with Phoenix Police Department back in 2004. From there, Joe went to the King County, WA Sheriff's office where he worked in the ATF Violent Crimes Task Force until he and his family felt the pull of Alaska. Joe is also United States Marine Corp veteran where he served four years. Everyone say "hi" to Joe. We're glad you're here! This photo was taken at the December 15 swearing in of Officer Evangelina Campuzano, left.

Your Pics



Bethany Christman, Public Works Administrative Assistant, with her kids in front of City Hall sharing their holiday spirit!



Aaron Yeaton, Public Works GIS Technician.

City of Homer Roster

Rob Dumouchel, City Manager
Melissa Jacobsen, MMC, City Clerk/Deputy Director of Administration
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/City Engineer
Dave Berry, Library and IT Director
Mike Illg, Community Recreation Manager
Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager

Mayor - Ken Castner (2024)

City Council

Donna Aderhold (2024)
Jason Davis (2025)
Shelley Erickson (2024)
Storm P. Hansen-Cavasos (2025)
Rachel Lord (2023)
Caroline Venuti (2023)

Commissions & Boards

ADA Advisory Board
Economic Development Advisory Commission
Library Advisory Board
Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission
Planning Commission
Port and Harbor Advisory Commission

MUNICIPAL ART COLLECTION

Learn more about the municipal art collection at:
<https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/prac/city-homer-municipal-art-collection>

"Homer's Where the Heart Is"



Next time you visit Homer City Hall, be sure to take in this beautiful painting by Cheri Goverston Greer of 1992, that is located in the lobby. From eagles, and puffin to moose and sea otter, you'll recognize all the heartwarming features of Homer.

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

January

- | | | |
|----|--------|--|
| 4 | 5:30pm | Planning Commission Worksession - <i>Canceled</i> |
| | 6:30pm | Planning Commission Regular Meeting |
| 9 | 4:00pm | City Council Worksession |
| | 5:00pm | City Council Committee of the Whole |
| | 6:00pm | City Council Regular Meeting |
| 10 | 6:00pm | Economic Development Advisory Commission Regular Meeting |
| 16 | 5:30pm | Port & Harbor Advisory Commission Worksession |
| 17 | 5:30pm | Library Advisory Board Regular Meeting |
| 18 | 5:30pm | Planning Commission Worksession |
| | 6:30pm | Planning Commission Regular Meeting |
| 23 | 5:00pm | City Council Committee of the Whole |
| | 6:00pm | City Council Regular Meeting |
| 25 | 5:00pm | 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

- Public Safety Dispatcher I, Full-time
- Community Jail Officer, Part-time
- Temporary Firefighter/EMT-Basic/EMT-Advanced



City of Homer

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