



City of Homer

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Memorandum Supplemental Packet

TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION
FROM: RACHEL TUSSEY, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK II
DATE: JANUARY 11, 2022
SUBJECT: SUPPLEMENTAL PACKET

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

B. Jennifer Gibbins, Pratt Museum Director – Future Pratt Museum Projects **Page 2**

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

B. Chamber Director Report – Homer Chamber of Commerce Annual Report **Page 6**



January 7, 2022

TO: Homer Economic Development Commission

**FROM: Jennifer Gibbins
Executive Director**

RE: Support Pratt Community Pavilion Project

Action Requested

The Pratt Museum & Park respectfully requests support from the Homer Economic Development Commission for our Community Pavilion/Trails Project.

Rationale

Aligned with the “Pioneer Gateway Development/EPIC” (EPIC = Engaging People, Impacting Community) vision as Mike Ilg recently wrote in the January MAPP newsletter, re-invigoration of the Pratt campus could **catalyze** this and other partnerships and make the Pratt, and downtown Homer, *a destination in itself* that people return to time and time again—sometimes for performances or programs, sometimes to gather with friends, to walk quietly in a natural setting, to discover something, or to contribute to community knowledge. And to shop and dine in the locally owned small businesses along Pioneer Avenue and the surrounding downtown.

Project in a Nutshell

Four specific elements:

- Build an outdoor community gathering & performance pavilion
- Enhance our ADA accessible forest trails
- Improve trailhead connection with Pioneer Avenue
- Enhance appearance of the corner of our property overlooking Pioneer Avenue

Background

Since its inception in 1968, the Pratt Museum has grown into an award-winning, community-driven museum with a modest footprint and an ambitious spirit. For decades, while the main focus of the institution was exhibits, collections, and programs within the museum’s walls, the Pratt and its partners worked hard to secure the museum’s property, 9.3 acres of



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urban greenspace in the heart of downtown Homer overlooking the Pioneer Avenue small business corridor.

While the museum has long been thought of as Homer’s living room (the site of Homesteaders’ tea gatherings, art-filled celebrations, as well as tough community conversations), the Pratt campus is Homer’s original “Central Park.” The property contains seven acres of undeveloped terrain within city limits, which encompass native spruce forest and a winding, 500-foot stretch of Woodard Creek, Homer’s largest urban stream. It is a place for exercise, quiet contemplation, exploration of the natural world, birdwatching, as well as structured museum experiences such as outdoor exhibits, celebrations, guided walks and participatory programs. Nearly a quarter mile of ADA-accessible trails makes the campus welcoming to all.

Opportunity

Covid-19 hit the Pratt—and cultural institutions across the country—like an anvil, forcing a reckoning. A cascade of existential questions followed: *What are we if not four walls holding exhibits and treasured objects? How can we engage visitors when our doors are closed? How can we foster community when we cannot gather in a warm, lighted space?* For months, the Pratt has been asking—and answering—these questions, and realizing that the museum faces an enormous opportunity to weather the pandemic—and to enhance the institution for generations to come—by embracing the opportunities of its property (campus).

The “Pioneer Gateway Development/EPIC” concept is ripe; people are looking for new ways to gather, engage, and explore while maintaining social distance and staying outside. At the same time, the museum is primed to take this next step. The museum renovation is complete, and energetic new leadership from staff and board is ready to embrace new opportunities.

Already, the Pratt is leveraging its campus in new and exciting ways. The Pratt brand has been reframed as Pratt Museum & Park to signal to the local and visiting public the outdoor recreational opportunities on its 10-acre campus. Circles of colorful Adirondack chairs are staged about the property as “Covid-safe” outdoor meeting spaces and places for visitors to relax and take in the scenery. The Pratt has increased its outdoor programming through new partnerships. For example, a partnership with Pier 1 Theater has already made possible two seasons of sold out theatrical and musical performances in its forest including a highly-anticipated spooky Shakespeare production on the eve of Halloween, *Always, Patsy Cline* (musical), *Pride & Prejudice* and workshops during its summer youth theater camp. Monthly



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First Friday events (April – October) now take place outside with live music, grilled hot dogs, snacks & lemonade, kids and games – all free to the public. A recently completed comprehensive 2-year renovation of the Pratt’s Botanical and Homestead Gardens is setting the stage for a new suite of outdoor educational programs, guided walks and workshops launching in the spring of 2022.

The overarching vision for the Pratt Park is to restore and expand its role as the vibrant heart of the downtown - an attractive and enticing natural outdoor public square which becomes a destination in itself, as well as a valued community recreational resource with amenities that are available to local residents and individual travelers, groups, organizations, schools, etc. This vision is aligned with the overarching goal of the [Kenai Peninsula 2021-2026 Comprehensive Economic Strategy](#) to support **high quality of living and quality of life** for throughout the Kenai (see KPEDD CED). Enhancing the Pratt outdoor property directly aligns with the **Homer Comprehensive Plan’s** vision of “A multi-use destination that is the heart and soul of a community can both create an identity and generate good jobs and economic growth for that city” including goals of emphasizing connections to Pioneer Avenue, Main Street and Old Town to help support and expand local businesses. Additionally, the project aligns with the plan’s three primary tourism related goals: Invest in local infrastructure, parks and civic improvements that will **serve locals as well as visitors**; support efforts to improve community attractions including the downtown; increase net benefits that tourism brings to Homer. As a centerpiece of the downtown, the Pratt is also a vital component of work currently underway by the [Homer Economic Development Advisory Commission](#) to revitalize and restore downtown Homer which has been struggling since the 1986 construction of the Homer “Bypass” which redirected visitor traffic from the town’s center and year-round commercial corridor to the seasonal Homer Spit. The Commission’s strategic vision for the downtown includes cultivating and expanding new cultural tourism, in order to grow and broaden quality of life for locals, local/visitor spending, create more business opportunities, jobs, and local government revenue. Work includes a walkable downtown linked by sidewalks, bike trails and accessible walking trails, new festivals and events such as the Homer World Arts and Homer Peony Festivals of which the Pratt is a participating partner, and a new vision for the former Homer Education and Recreation Complex (HERC), a property neighboring and linked to the Pratt by walking trails, as a welcome gateway to Homer and Pioneer Avenue.

The Pratt has been a leader in addressing some of the community’s greatest challenges—from climate change to vandalism to the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill disaster. The Pratt Park project is an



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opportunity to reignite its role as a facilitator of community-wide conversations and to convene partners to help further the vision of a vibrant, walkable downtown corridor in Homer. The goal of embracing this new value proposition and re-envisioning is to activate the outdoor space as much as the museum already does its indoor space.

Benefits of this project would include:

- Addition of new space for education/art/performances, new opportunities for participatory exhibits, programming and community created art by the Pratt and other organizations and groups.
- Enhanced ability to serve the community and visitors through a place where people can gather, recreate and linger for hours.
- Opportunities to serve as a community leader in creative placemaking efforts carried out by Bunnell Street Arts Center, the City of Homer, the Homer Chamber of Commerce, and others.
- Opportunity to serve as a community hub, via trail connections, year-round outdoor gathering space, etc.
- Increased visibility by improving campus edges adjacent to Pioneer, Bartlett, etc. through trail connections, Peonies on Pioneer garden, improved signage, etc.
- Creation of special attractions for one of the museum's most important constituent groups—young families—through creation of an outdoor play space.
- New opportunities for visiting and/or local artists.
- New business partnership opportunities, e.g. with Pioneer Avenue restaurants, coffee shops and stores for trail connection, picnic vouchers, event services, etc.



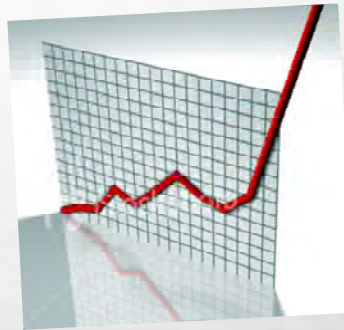
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Homer City Council 2021/2022 Marketing Presentation



**2021 WAS A
RECORD-
BREAKING
YEAR!**

AND 2022 LOOKS THE SAME



LAND TRAVELERS HAVE DISCOVERED HOMER



KPB 2021 ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Taxable Sales, Percent Change 2021 / 2019



2021 WINTER KING SALMON TOURNAMENT

- 1,562 ANGLERS
- 455 BOATS
- \$238,306 TOTAL PRIZE MONEY
- \$87,027 GRAND PRIZE FOR TOP FISH

HOMER
2nd Annual
Peony Celebration 2021
July 9-24, 2021 · Homer, Alaska

Known as the "City of Peonies", Homer has 20 Peony farms growing these very popular, lovely flowers. Homer's long summer days, along with cool soils and glacier meltwater, provide the ideal growing conditions to produce larger and more colorful blooms. Come see the Peonies at their most glorious state, in beautiful seaside setting, along with art exhibitions, great food & a celebration of Summer.

Homer Chamber of Commerce & Visitor's Center
www.HomerAlaska.org · 907.235.7740

HOMER
ALASKA

Fourth of July

Come light the
HOLIDAY
TREE!

Thursday
December 2,
5 to 7 pm

Payton Tree Lighting!
Mead Sports Club
Hot Chocolate & Snacks
HOOPER CHRISTMAS CAROLS

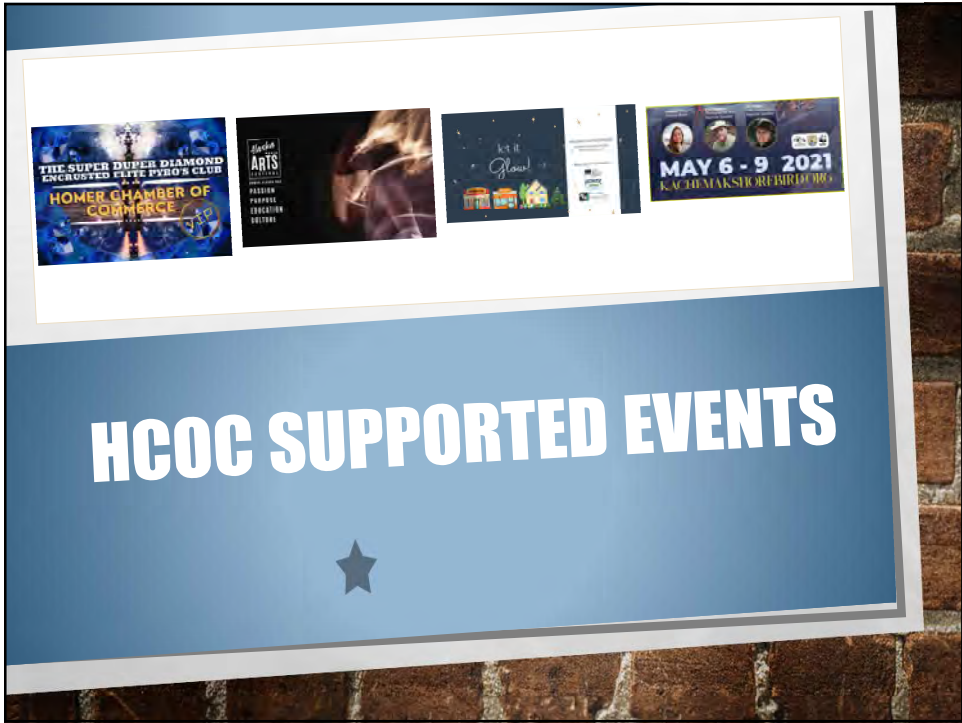
Homer Chamber of Commerce & Visitor's Center
HOMER ALASKA
201 Sterling Hwy · homeralaska.org · 907.235.7740

HOMER
2021
FOOD FESTIVAL

VENDOR SIGN-UP FORM

Don't Be Crabby,
Eat Something!

2021 HCOC EVENTS



BOOK DIRECT RESERVATION TOOL

The screenshot displays the 'BOOK DIRECT RESERVATION TOOL' interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs for 'LODGINGS', 'ACTIVITIES', and 'TRANSPORTATION'. Below the tabs, it shows '16 PROPERTIES found on Jun 6th - Jun 12th'. A search bar and filters are visible on the left. The main content area lists three featured properties:

- Seafarer Suites**: Lodging Type: All Lodging, Hotels. 320 W Pioneer Ave, Homer, AK. Average Rate/Night: \$174^{00*}. Includes a 'BOOK >> DIRECT' button.
- Driftwood Inn & Seaside Lodge**: Lodging Type: All Lodging, Cottages, Hotels, Inns, Lodges, Motels, RV Park & Campgrounds, Seasonal Rentals. 135 W Bunnell Ave, Homer, AK. Average Rate/Night: \$46^{00*}. Includes a 'BOOK >> DIRECT' button.
- Salmonberry Suites**: Lodging Type: All Lodging, Bed & Breakfasts. 3933 Main St, Homer, AK 99603. Average Rate/Night: \$200^{00*}. Includes a 'BOOK >> DIRECT' button.

Each property listing includes a photo, a 'PHONE' icon, and links for 'Map', 'Website', and 'More Info'. A 'View Rates By Date' link is also present for each listing.

BOOK DIRECT RESERVATION TOOL



BOOK DIRECT RESERVATION TOOL TOP U.S. STATES

Alaska 24.2%

California 21.98%

North Carolina 10.51%

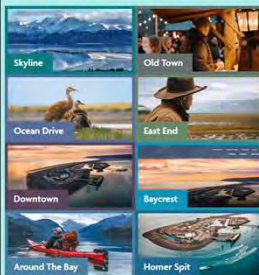
Wisconsin 4.78%

INTERACTIVE MAP FOR HOMER NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhoods Of Homer, Alaska

It's all here! Adventures of a lifetime, unique merchants, amazing animals and spectacular views await you in Homer's eight distinctive neighborhoods. Use our interactive map to help you plan your next visit.

Our Neighborhoods →



Homer Spit

The Homer Spit is a long, narrow finger of land jutting 4.2 miles into Kachemak Bay. Steep with hillsides, the area seems to embrace and promise numerous recreational opportunities, from fishing and boating to shopping and dining.

With great outdoor recreation and a rich city water waterfront, the city businesses and shops of the spit are not only the heart of the spit but also the heart of Homer's local economy. The spit is a unique, busy, and vibrant area that offers a wide range of experiences and activities for visitors and residents alike. The spit is a unique, busy, and vibrant area that offers a wide range of experiences and activities for visitors and residents alike.

Area Highlights:

- Fishing
- Boating
- Homer Spit
- The Boardwalk
- Wild Surfing

COVID-SAFE TRAVEL GRANT GOALS



- 1. Reach out to Alaska residents in the Anchorage metro area and across the Kenai Peninsula to draw them to Homer promoting our events and summer activities.
- 2. Connect with people outside of Alaska who were looking for last minute travel plans to more COVID friendly destinations.
- 3. Create interest among travelers making plans for their 2022 vacations.
- 4. Invest in marketing tools that we can use long-term.

COVID-SAFE TRAVEL GRANT

- RAN RADIO ADS AND USED DIGITAL MEDIA ADS IN ANCHORAGE AND KENAI/SOLDOTNA AREAS.
- RAN NATIONAL RADIO ADS TARGETING HIGH POTENTIAL TRAVELERS
- PLACED PRINT ADS IN NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES SUCH AS FISH ALASKA AND EDIBLE ALASKA
- HIRED A SOCIAL MEDIA CONSULTANT TO BUILD OUT OUR FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM PAGES
- EXPANDED OUR ADVERTISING PARTNERSHIP WITH ATIA AND THEIR TRAVEL ALASKA WEBSITE
- ADDED MORE TOOLS TO OUR WEBSITE SUCH AS MAPPING APPS AND DIRECT RESERVATION TOOLS
- ADDED MORE IMAGES AND CONTENT FOR OUR NEW HOMER VISITOR GUIDE/MAGAZINE
- CREATED A TOURISM VIDEO THAT WILL BE FEATURED ON ALL OUR MARKETING PLATFORMS
- PURCHASED A TV MONITOR AND SOFTWARE FOR THE HOMER AIRPORT TO DISPLAY CITY & VISITOR INFORMATION, PROMOTE OUR LOCAL EVENTS AND SHOWCASE OUR LOCAL BUSINESSES



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MARKETING EFFORTS

- WEBSITE USERS WERE UP 74%, PAGE VIEWS WERE UP 16%
- WEBSITE VISITORS FROM THE ANCHORAGE AREA WERE 10% OF TOTAL VISITORS BEFORE THIS EFFORT, AND WERE AT 26% BY THE END OF AUGUST
- DIGITAL ADVERTISING GENERATED OVER 5 MILLION IMPRESSIONS
- FACEBOOK GENERATED 775,231 IMPRESSIONS (+44%) AND 72,453 ENGAGEMENTS (+28%)
- INSTAGRAM GENERATED 391,386 IMPRESSIONS (+6,516%) AND 17,574 ENGAGEMENTS (+585,700%)
- TRAFFIC TO OUR MAIN VISITOR CENTER WAS BACK TO 2019 LEVELS AND OUR VOLUNTEERS SPENT MUCH OF THEIR TIME HELPING WITH LAST MINUTE ACCOMMODATION AND ACTIVITY PLANS.



SPIT VISITOR CENTER

HOMER BUCKS

In 2021 Over
\$235,000
of Homer Bucks Were
Circulated in the Homer
Economy




2022 TRAVELERS SAY THEY WILL FOCUS ON FUN!

- INTEREST IN PURE LEISURE TRAVEL GREW TO 69.2%
- OVER 30% MORE AMERICANS EXPECT TO TAKE LEISURE TRIPS THIS YEAR THAN IN 2021
- AMERICAN TRAVELERS SAY THEY WILL **PRIORITIZE HAVING FUN AT 75.8%** OVER RELAXING, FINDING HAPPINESS AND ESCAPING STRESS


ATIA INDUSTRY OUTLOOK PRESENTATION

Photographer: Frank Hastings







Homer Winter Carnival Celebration
FEB 12, 2022 - FEB 13, 2022




Homer Winter King Salmon Tournament
APR 09, 2022 - APR 09, 2022
Homer, Alaska
Homer, AK 99603




Kachemak Bay Shorebird Festival
MAY 05, 2022 - MAY 08, 2022
Homer, Alaska
Homer, AK 99603



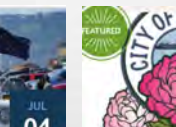
Homer Restaurant Week
MAY 17, 2022 - MAY 22, 2022
Homer, Alaska
Homer, AK 99603



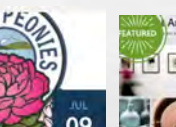
Homer Food Truck Festival
JUN 18, 2022 - JUN 18, 2022




Homer 4th Of July Parade
JUL 04, 2022



3rd Annual Homer Peony Celebration
JUL 09, 2022 - JUL 30, 2022




Alaska World Arts Festival
Arts, Literature, Workshops
SEP 10, 2022 - SEP 21, 2022



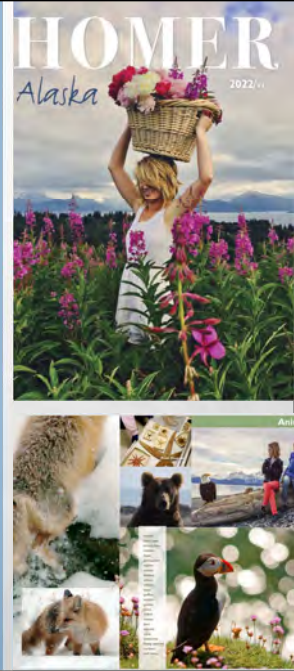
Annual Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony
DEC 01, 2022 - DEC 01, 2022
Homer Chamber of Commerce
Homer, AK 99603

2022 MAJOR EVENTS

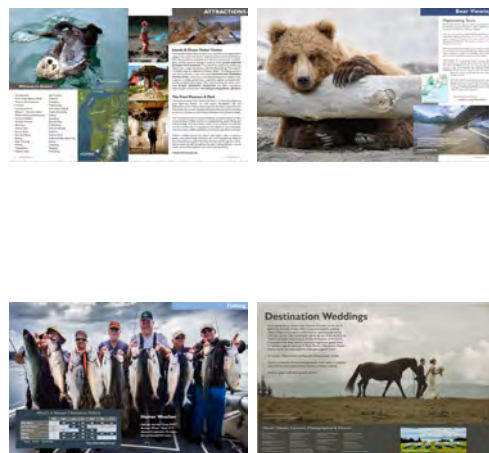


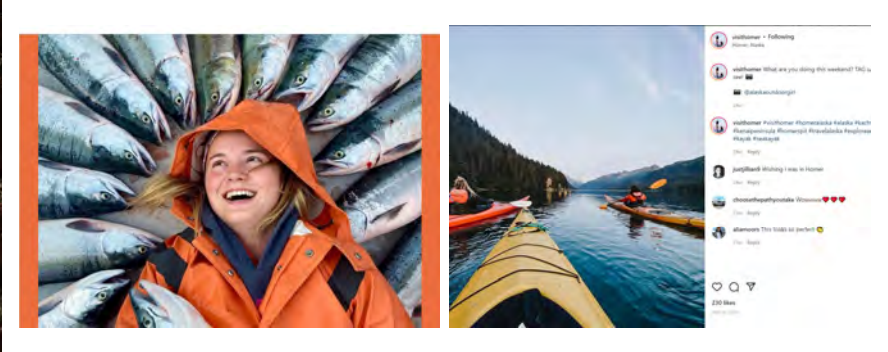
HOMER VISITOR GUIDE & MAGAZINE

- UPGRADED COVER AND INSIDE PAPER STOCK
- REDESIGNED GUIDE USING MORE IMAGES AND LESS COPY.
- GOAL IS TO SHOW MORE OF THE ACTIVITIES YOU CAN FIND IN HOMER IN ADDITION TO OUR WORLD CLASS FISHING.
- WILL FEATURE THE HOMER NEIGHBORHOODS
- DIGITAL VERSION WILL BE ADDED TO THE WEBSITE WITH BUSINESS HYPERLINKS



HOMER VISITOR GUIDE & MAGAZINE





SOCIAL MEDIA WILL BE USED MORE TO PROMOTE FUN ADVENTURES

★



RV AND CAMPING ARE A FAMILY FRIENDLY AND SAVE WAY TO VACATION

