

DENALI BOROUGH

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Clay Walker, Mayor

August 2023 Mayor's Report to the Denali Borough Assembly

This report speaks primarily to non-agenda items. Agenda items will be discussed in meeting.

Anderson Complex Fires

- In coordination with DNR's Div. of Forestry, Incident Management Team Great Basin 3 is leading the response to the complex of fires. As of 8/6, over 18,000 acres have burned, there is 0% containment, 267 personnel are working the fire, and \$3.5 million has been expended. Groups are working to protect structures, construct fire breaks, and develop plans for additional protective measures as the fire moves. Fuel breaks around the City of Anderson and north of Clear Space Force Station are being improved.
- Evacuation levels have been set by the borough in coordination with the City of Anderson and the Incident Management Team. The borough is using Tri-Valley School as the evacuation shelter point. To date, GO evacuation areas are limited and nobody has sought this service.
- The team provides daily video and written updates. The Denali Borough Facebook page and website share those updates. The team hosts cooperators' meetings three times weekly in which the borough participates. Also, the team hosted a Community Meeting in Anderson on August 2, which I attended along with our Emergency Manager Forest Shreeve. For current fire info, go to: www.akfireinfo.com.

City of Anderson Updates

- Following the resignation of longtime Mayor Samantha Thompson, the Council elected Councilmember Chantal Hammond to serve as mayor. Two new Council members were appointed to fill open seats.
- I attended their July 18 special meeting. At their July 25 meeting, they confirmed the hiring of a new City Clerk. The borough is continuing to support the city as requested through the commitment of staff time, such as Forest Shreeve helping with their Public Assistance reimbursement claim and Amber Renshaw helping to train their new clerk, Ruby Davis.

Street Addressing Update

- The newly installed street signs are being checked for accuracy and we have a running list of signs to correct.
- The borough is distributing the first batch of street number signs. We are accepting and processing new applications for addresses and planning for the next order of number signs.

Denali Borough Landfill Department of Environmental Conservation Inspection

- With almost no windblown litter, well covered active pits, and well managed segregated materials, the landfill looked great for the scheduled August 3rd inspection. We look forward to another very high inspection score and thank our hard-working and conscientious staff for their efforts.

New D8 Dozer Arrival

- The long-planned replacement of our old D8, the workhorse of the landfill, is complete! Not surprisingly, the 2023 model unit is a significant upgrade in power, smoothness, technology, and creature comforts, compared to the well-worn 1997 model. One example: the new model has a back-up camera which is extremely helpful operating in an “open to the public” acceptance area. Many thanks to the Assembly for your steadfast commitment to making this upgrade.

Audit Prep work for FY23

- The borough and our auditor, Alliance, have initiated the audit work for the recently closed out fiscal year. We are excited to be in a position where key members have gained experience working together, we have strong accounting support, and the schedule is timely.

Preliminary year-end FY 23 financials

- While there still may be some changes to our preliminary FY23 numbers, first analysis is very positive. Local Government Lost Revenue Replacement Funds being realized as income in this fiscal year combined with strong tax receipt figures resulted in a record year for revenue...over \$9 million. The previous high year for revenue, in 2019, was about \$5 million. With total expenses around \$5 million, the following years should produce strong forward funding availability. The tax receipt total of \$4.87 million is also a record.

DESA Radio grant request

- As work to install the new radios in Volunteer Fire Department equipment spans into a new fiscal year and DESA (Denali Emergency Services Assn) did not expend communication grant funds in FY23, the borough is working with DESA to de-obligate unspent funds and engage an MOU to use \$10,000 to support the installation of emergency communication equipment. This may necessitate an FY24 budget amendment later.

New Congressionally Directed Spending Request for Roadside Trail Design

- The borough is pleased to learn that our request for additional Congressionally Designated Spending to advance the pursuit of highway-side paths has made progress. \$640,000 was advanced from the Appropriations Committee. While this has a long way to go, it is great to see this progress. Specifically, the proposed funding is designated to design a portion of roadside side path with a strong “federal nexus”, the Crabbie’s Crossing to Denali Park Road section.

100th Anniversary of the Alaska Railroad, August 15 in Nenana

- On behalf of the borough, I attended this anniversary celebration. The Alaska Railroad and the City of Nenana did a wonderful job putting on a fun, interesting and well-attended event. From moving passengers to coal, the Alaska Railroad plays a key role in our regional economy. The Alaska Railroad is congratulated on 100 years of serving Alaska and advancing its development.

Purple Heart Highway Designation

- On my way to Summer AML and Mayors Conference in Homer, I plan to attend a ceremony at the Veteran's Memorial where the Parks Highway will be dedicated Purple Heart Highway. I wrote a letter of support for this effort a while ago and look forward to the dedication.

Opening Day for Candidate Declarations

- August 9 begins the period when candidacy packets to declare your candidacy for an open seat will be open and available. Due to redistricting, all seven school board and assembly district seats will be up for election, in addition to the mayoral seat. More information is on the borough website under "Election Information." Please contact Borough Clerk and Election Guru Amber Renshaw with any questions.

Happy August, let the rain come!

As always, feel free to contact me or staff with any questions.

- Clay