

DENALI BOROUGH

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Chris Noel, Mayor

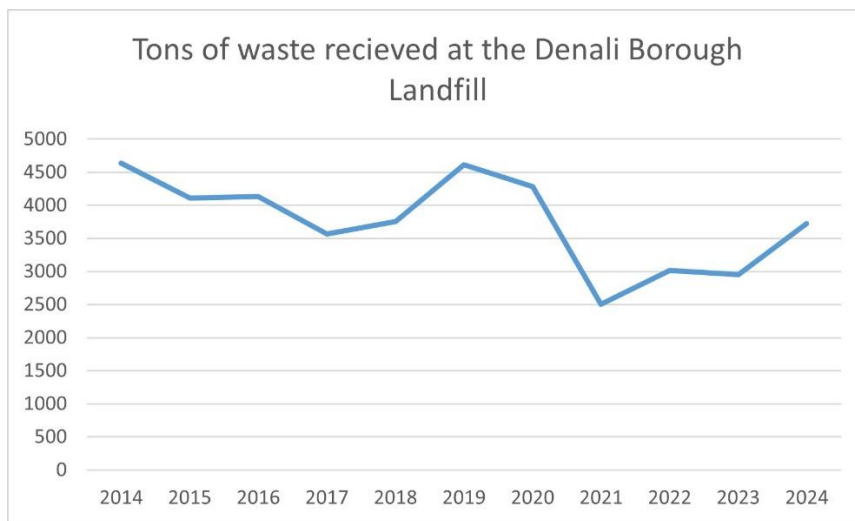
December 2024 Mayor's Report

Administrative

- Our application with the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for financial assistance to complete a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) was reviewed for merit and selected for further consideration. If awarded, the borough in partnership with the Denali Community Foundation, and the Denali Chamber of Commerce will lead the strategy development process.
- Records Retention- Following our perennial responsibility to manage the records of government, we spent a full day sorting and filing records based on the State of Alaska records retention schedule. Each category of file, for example grant applications, must be stored and maintained for the identified time frame, after which it can be destroyed. The Assembly must approve of the disposal of records annually.
- The Borough Audit is complete and for those anxiously waiting with bated breath- our auditor, Alliance CPS AK LLC will present during the February meeting.
- Save the Date for Winterfest 2025- February 22 and 23. As always this will be a fun-filled and family friendly weekend. Look out for a full schedule of events.
- Denali Borough nonprofit grant applications will open in early January. Notification will be sent to all existing grantees, and available on the borough website.

Solid Waste

- We caught up on solid waste collection data, and I'll share a summary of waste acceptance over the last ten years below:



- Wishing our outgoing heavy equipment operator Paul VanDyke all the best in retirement. Paul has been with the borough for over ten years, and he and his dog Sadie will be missed at the Landfill. We internally posted for the open position.

Land Planning

- Following a deeper dive into the status of Panguingue Lignite subdivision, we have realized that a boundary survey is necessary, prior to subdividing. We will put together a survey instruction request and submit to the state, but the process is quite lengthy.
- Among many other important take-aways from the AML Winter Conference, we learned of a Local Housing Needs Assessment recently completed for 3-4 municipalities in the State. We hope to learn more about what it takes to complete a local needs assessment, with an understanding this will help immensely with grant applications, and inform the efforts of the business community as they work on this shared problem.

Community Development

Highlighting just a few of the many updates included in Community Development Director Stephanie Ford's written report:

- The Community and Outdoor Recreation Plan is complete, and will come before the Planning Commission in January, and Assembly in February.
- Separated Pathways Update: both the highway side separated pathways, and Healy Area paths are still open for public comment. Project details are available on each project's website, and comments may be sent directly to the DOTPF project manager.
- Save the Date for the Spring health and Safety Fair – March 27th at the Tri-Valley School.\
- The Community Change Grant for ~\$18 Million in improvements to local community infrastructure was submitted on November 18th. We have heard back that due to the volume of applications, we may not hear back till Spring 2025. Applications are awarded on a rolling basis.

Emergency Management

- We hosted two public meetings to present the Final Draft of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan, collect feedback, and answer questions. Thanks to our contractor, Bintel Inc, and staff from the funding agency, the Division of Forestry and Fire Protection for their involvement. In partnership with the Division, we hope to follow up with grant requests that align with the mitigation projects identified in the plan.
- I signed a letter of intent to work with the Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHS+EM) on an update to our Multi-Jurisdictional Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. The plan update is funded by the state, and we will coordinate closely with the City of Anderson to capture hazard mitigation work completed since the last plan update, adopted September 2020.

Denali Borough School District

- I met with Superintendent Polta to have an initial discussion about the Fiscal Year 2026 school district budget.
- We also discussed holding a Joint Assembly- School Board work session, tentatively scheduled for February, 2025.

Alaska Municipal League Conference

- The 74th Annual Local Government conference was December 9 – 13 in Anchorage. The Borough was well represented by Administrative Clerk Salena Mirasole, Clerk Amber Renshaw, Treasurer Allison Johnson, and Community Development Director Stephanie Ford. In addition, we offered to assist City of Anderson Council members wishing to attend, as they navigate a change in administration. Vice Mayor Cassie Eads and Council Member Kay Hockin attended as well. Over 500 municipal officials came together to learn from each other and discuss shared challenges. We heard from Legislators about the upcoming session, and a few of the priorities of the House and Senate including education and energy security.
- Municipalities across the state are doing what they can to make the most of the broad federal funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act. The Alaska Municipal League has responded in kind, evident in the growth of the organization from 6 people just a few years ago, to more

than 30 today. The Denali Borough has directly benefited from AML's shared services including numerous grant applications, technical reports, asset management training, and ongoing economic development support.

- More than anything, the Conference was a chance to connect with peers across the state. We are more similar than different, and together, we can tackle the challenges we face.

At our darkest time of year, may you find light in the company of friends and family.

Happy holidays,

- Chris