

DENALI BOROUGH

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Clay Walker, Mayor

March 2022 Mayor's Report to the Denali Borough Assembly

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

Local Government Lost Revenue Relief Grant Program

- As orally reported at the last Assembly meeting, the Denali Borough was awarded \$3,381,476 of critically necessary relief from the State of Alaska. The mechanics of receiving the funds and reporting are being worked out by the Division of Community and Regional Affairs. The borough is very grateful that the state is sharing a portion of its' over \$1 billion in State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. These are the same funds from which we were directly awarded \$203,000 a year for two years. So, altogether we will receive over \$3.7 million to be used to replace the over \$7 million in revenue we lost the past two years. Expect to have ordinances relating to the allocation of these funds in the coming months. As a municipality who suffered steep losses, these flexible funds can be used for the provision of governmental services, which include education and contributions to non-profits and public safety.

Department of Environmental Conservation 2021 Denali Borough Landfill Inspection Report

- The full report is available within the meeting packet online. The summary from the report: "The landfill continues to be managed and operated excellently and received a compliance score of 99% during the inspection. Thanks for running a great operation once again." Congratulations and thanks to Scott Wright, Operations Manager, Paul Van Dyke, Operator, and Travis Olson, Seasonal Equipment Operator, for their dedication to "running a great operation".

Healy Spur Road Abbreviated Design Study Report

- The borough received the Abbreviated Design Study Report for the Healy Spur Road Rehabilitation project which was requested by the borough and for which the borough is providing the 9.03% local match. The project, currently in the design phase, rehabilitates the first 1.25 miles of the road, from the Parks Highway to Carbon Road. The design calls for eleven feet wide lanes flanked by six feet wide shoulders which can accommodate non-motorized users. Additionally, the design report includes a preferred alternative of changing the speed limit to 35 mph through this section of road. The project website is: <https://healy-spur-road-rehabilitation-akdot.hub.arcgis.com/>

Alaska Municipal League (AML) Legislative Conference. Juneau, February 16-18

- Myself and Assembly members Dominic Canale and Tallon Shreeve had a productive couple days of conference and legislative meetings in our Capitol City. AML put together a strong lineup of speakers which included Legislators, Commissioners, and the Governor. Our meetings with a legislators Fairbanks to the Mat-Su Valley went very well. It was great to be back in the Capitol

building with in person meetings. We presented our legislative priorities, capital budget request, and thanked all for their support through the past two difficult years.

Department of Health and Social Services Memorandum of Agreement Funding

- Since June 2021, this unique funding stream has allowed the borough to support the provision of COVID-19 testing and vaccination services borough-wide. We contracted with Horizon Medical Services, who did a great job delivering services. At this waning point of the pandemic (notable, today March 3, Fairbanks Memorial Hospital reported no COVID patients), the funding stream is running out. By the end of March, the funding will be fully expended. At this point in time, we expect to be able to fulfill future testing needs through the provision of at-home tests and expect employers to work with health care providers to meet their needs going forward.
- March testing and vaccination hours are found on the Horizon website and at-home test kits are available at the borough office.

Winterfest and Community Service Award

- Thanks to those who helped make Winterfest a success! Denali National Park hosted multiple events on Saturday, the borough hosted a fun and filling Community Dinner and Bingo Saturday night, and Tri-Valley Community Library hosted activities on Sunday.
- For the Saturday night event, thanks to Doyon/Aramark, Holland America/Princess and Three Bears for the food and serviceware donations. Thanks to the Alaska Coffee Bean for beverages and to the Healy Hockey Bantams for setting up and the Tri-Valley Freshman Class for cooking and serving dinner. The Native Village of Cantwell, specifically Rene Nicklie, brought and called the bingo, which was roundly enjoyed.
- The Denali Borough Mayor's Community Service Award for 2021 went to Vanessa Juszczak, who helped the borough, our businesses, and the broader community, in recovering from COVID economic impacts. The 2022 Community Service Award went to Eileen Holmes, in memorial, for her many years of service and big contributions to the communities.

Notable Past Month Meetings

- **Parks Highway PEL (Planning and Environmental Linkage Study) Final Project Advisory Committee Meeting February 24**
This DOT project, which has worked to identify, prioritize, and plan transportation projects in the Cantwell to Ferry area which "improve safety, mobility, and livability within and between our communities" will issue the final report study in the next month.
- **Denali NPS Update February 25**
Acting Superintendent Brooke Merrell provided an update to interested parties on three park projects this summer:
 1. The Polychrome Area Improvement Project is currently on track to have NEPA compliance work completed this spring and Phase 1 work contracted for summer 2022 start and 2023 completion of the new bridge expanse.
 2. The Ghiglione Bridge, east of the East Fork River, will be replaced this summer.
 3. The Parks Hwy. MP 231 Wayside and Trailhead will be constructed this summer.To facilitate access and ease parking problems, Savage River Shuttle Buses will depart every 15 from the entrance area. Savage River area users are asked to leave their car and take the free bus.

Happy March, happy return of the light. As always, feel free to contact me or staff with any questions.

-Clay