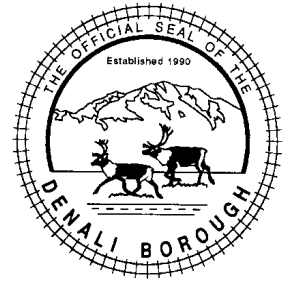


DENALI BOROUGH

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Chris Noel, Mayor

September 2024 Mayor's Report

Administrative

- In partnership with the Alaska Municipal League, the borough hosted an Asset Management training on August 21st. Representatives from Golden Valley Electric Association (GVEA), the Denali Borough School District, Usibelli Coal Mine, and nonprofit partners learned about the growing field and best practices. The case was clear that proactive asset management saves time and money in the long term. Lessons learned will guide our efforts in managing a new trailhead, and in the future as we take on long term operations and maintenance of separated nonmotorized pathways. Our industry partners have more experience in this field and must balance competing demands for ongoing maintenance with emergent issues.

Solid Waste

- The rental excavator has been hard at work removing overburden from the gravel stockpile area to the southeast of the landfill fence. We are weighing the benefits of keeping the excavator for one additional month to maintain momentum and uncover as much gravel as possible before freeze up.
- The 966 Caterpillar loader developed an issue in early September and was stranded in the field. Landfill staff attempted an emergency repair but were unable to resolve the issue. NC Machinery diagnosed the issue and a faulty circuit board was the culprit. A new part is on order.
- Kudos to the City of Anderson on lot cleanup efforts. The before and after pictures tell a story of much community effort, transforming an eyesore into a new vacant lot that is ready for re-development.

Land Planning and Community Development

- The Denali Area Airport Study is still underway, and Community Development Director Stephanie Ford and I participated in a check-in meeting with representatives from DOT and Doyon. Look out for an additional public meeting in Healy on October 8th. Visit a new Arc GIS Story map at this link <https://arcg.is/1mHmHv0>.
- Senator Murkowski introduced a bill (S.2615) that would amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, removing the provision that Village Corporations must convey lands in trust to the State of Alaska, for future Municipal Corporations. This situation applies to the land under which the Cantwell School and Cantwell Transfer Station sit, both currently held in trust for a future city. This could lead to a challenging scenario related to building ownership and site control. We will watch this bill, and look for an opportunity to advocate for the state to retain land (in trust) where there are existing public facilities.

Items of Interest

- Treasurer Allison Johnson and I shared lunch with Superintendent Polta, school district staff, and Acting School Board Chair Dawn Adams. We presented a ceremonial check for the full borough contribution to the district of \$2,775,068.
- Holland America Princess (HAP) Director of Sustainability and Community Relation Bonnie Westlund invited borough staff to an orientation and tour. WE learned more about the critical link Denali plays in

the land-based portion of a cruise package. Around 60% of Denali's visitors start or end their trip on a boat. One way to think about the overnight accommodations in the Nenana Canyon is that on any given summer day, that area is our largest city with over 5000 visitors and employees on site. HAP has been a long-term partner in the Denali Zero Landfill Initiative, and they continue to pioneer waste reduction methods.

- GVEA New ERA Award- Golden Valley Electric Association announced the exciting award of over \$206 million in 0% interest loans through the US Department of Agriculture's Empowering Rural America (New ERA) program. GVEA proposed to construct a new battery storage system, upgrade transmission lines and substations, and refinance Healy Unit 2's remaining debt as part of the grant proposal. If awarded, Healy Unit 2 would be retired and become a stranded asset. GVEA is committed to considering community impacts during award negotiations, and the award is preliminary subject to final negotiations.

- Chris