

WATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

2014 ANNUAL REPORT



CASTING FARTHER

MEET THE ASSEMBLY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Meet the Assembly Members
Page 2 & 3

Welcome/Tundra and Grit
Pages 4 & 5

Unprecedented Construction
Pages 6 & 7

Map of Road projects
Pages 8 & 9

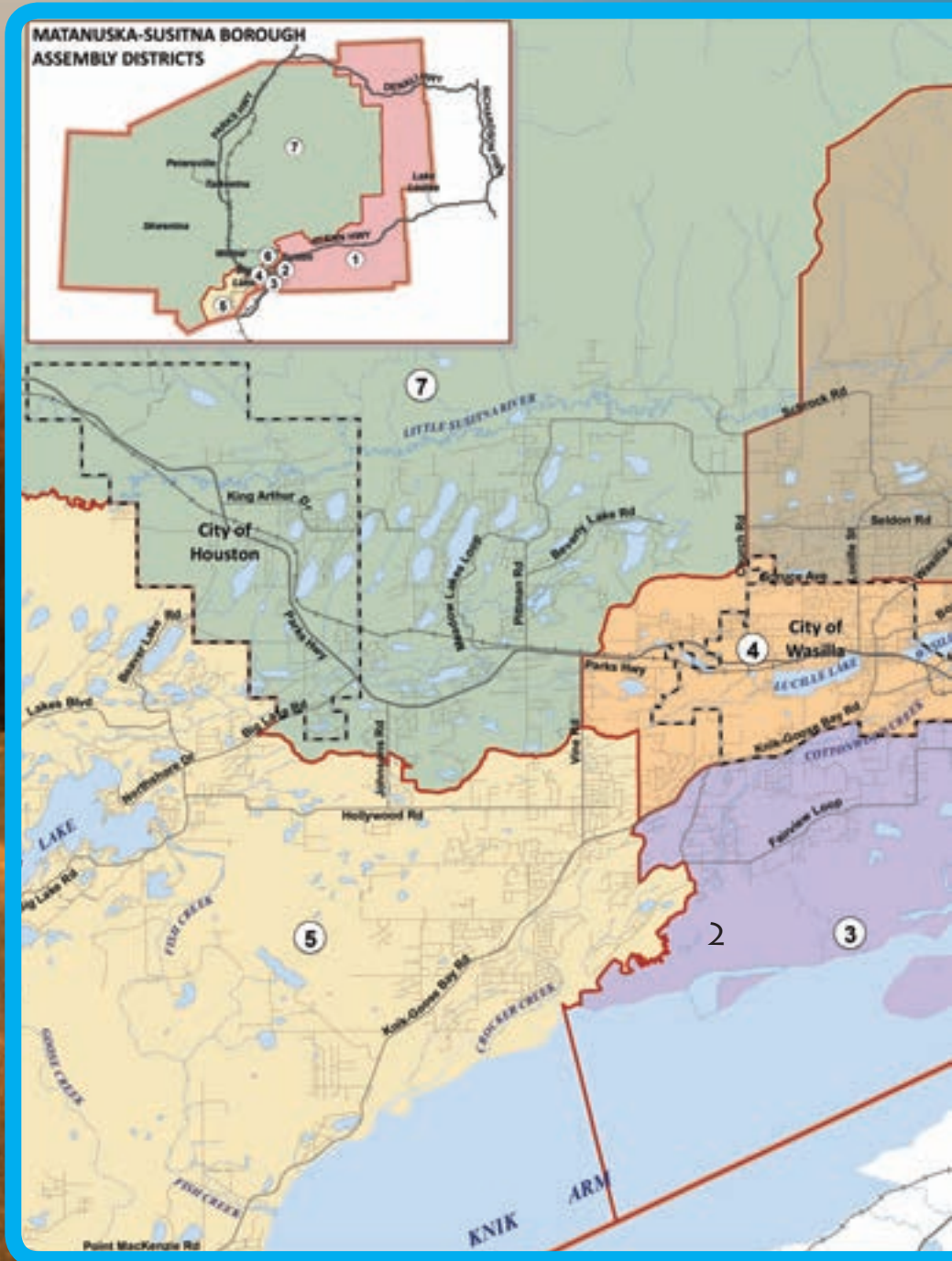
Budget Glimpse
Pages 10 & 11

Recreation & School Projects
Pages 12 & 13

Map of Schools & Public Projects
Pages 14 & 15

Fish, Bare Earth & Pups
Pages 16 & 17

Fire/Port & Rail
Pages 18 & 19



District 1

Jim Sykes
354-6962
jimsykesdistrict1@gmail.com



District 2

Matthew Beck
355-3223
matthewb@mtaonline.net



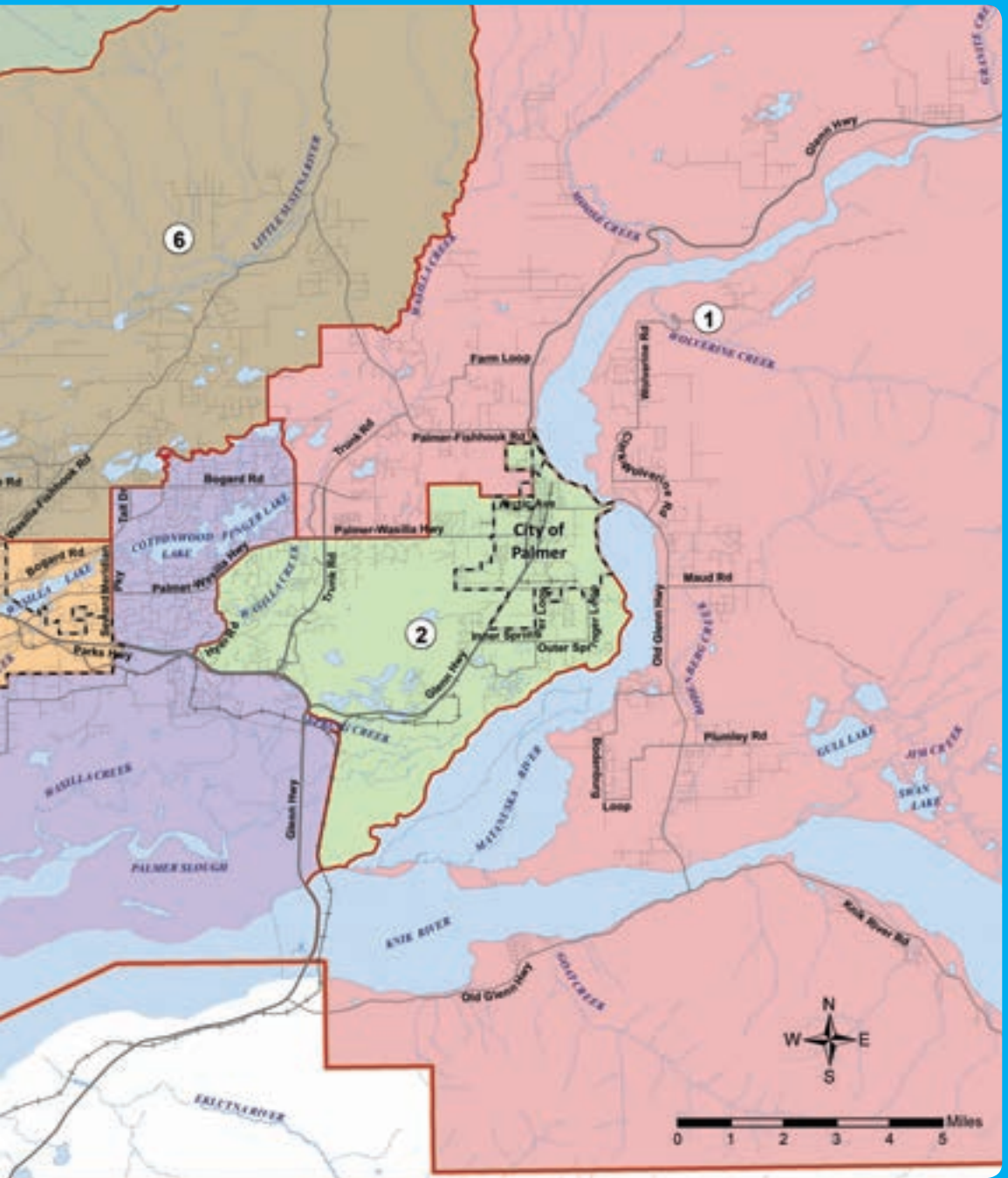
District 3

Ronald Arvin
373-6685
ronarvin@mtaonline.net



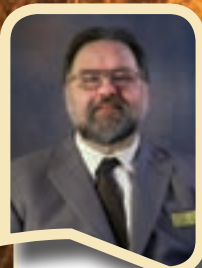
District 4

Steve Colligan
373-1502
stevecolligan@mtaonline.net



Mayor

Larry DeVilbiss
861-8682
Larry.Devilbiss@matsugov.us



District 5

Darcie Salmon
Term Ended Oct. 2014



District 5

Dan Mayfield
892-7406
Dan.Mayfield@matsugov.us



District 6

Jim Colver
746-5300
jimcolver@mtaonline.net



District 7

Vern Halter
495-1197
vernhalter@mtaonline.net

GRAB YOUR HARD HAT

We've had a tremendous 2014. State Demographer Eddie Hunsinger estimates that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough population is about to crest 100,000 residents. Mat-Su Schools—the second largest district with 18,000 students—took in 300 more students than expected. Home sales are up 18 percent, and we here at the Borough are running to catch up like a bear chasing dinner. Newly built are Valley Pathways School and the Day School, the start of \$214 million in school bond projects. Redington Jr/Sr High School off Knik Goose Bay Road is going up. We are prepping for the construction of Iditarod Elementary, Dena'ina Elementary, and the expansion at Mat-Su Career & Tech is nearly complete. Fire halls and a new Talkeetna Library are also underway.



This summer we inconvenienced about everyone with \$50 million in road construction projects, the same load as for the State Dept. of Transportation. We apologize for the detours, but are proud that we are producing safer roads. The new roundabout at Seldon and Lucille has already drawn praise from longtime neighbors who witnessed many a car wreck on the former roadway.

If you flew over Port MacKenzie Rail Extension, you'd see great strides made on the coming 32-mile link from the mainline near Houston to the port. Two companies with interest in exporting liquefied natural gas are zeroing in on setting up shop at Port MacKenzie. One company would use our coming rail to ship LNG north.

Recreation also scores. At Hatcher Pass, 7.5 km of designed trails and a new 4,000-square foot chalet have created a regional venue for Nordic skiing and tourism. Silvers returned with a robust flick of their tails. The coho run on the Little Susitna River was restored this summer to the higher fish returns of 2006, and on Fish Creek, silvers are the best since 2002. It's early, we know, but what has changed is commercial fishery regulations brought about by our volunteer Fish & Wildlife Commission. Onto another summer thick with salmon.

Such monumental effort at taming the frontier, whether it's roads, schools, or fish, makes all of us in the Mat-Su Borough have a stake in this beautiful place.

—*Matanuska-Susitna Borough Manager John Moosey*

Welcome to the demographic hot spot of the State. Employment growth in the Mat-Su rose 4 percent in 2014. More than a third of the new housing in the State was built here in 2013, not to mention 40 percent in 2011, according to State Economist Neal Fried. Anchorage may have lost 5 percent in school enrollment over the past five years, the Mat-Su has gained 6 percent.

We got a jump this summer on beginning construction for more than \$300 million in voter-approved bond projects for roads and schools.

The Borough is recognized around the State as the can-do, conservative place, where young families can get started on their first home for tens of thousands of dollars less than in Anchorage, and seniors and veterans can live in their home, free from Borough property taxes, at up to \$218,000, which is the average home value now.

The challenge of keeping pace without overburdening our taxpayers is one that I take seriously. I invite you to participate in tapping and developing our boundless resources as we are beginning to do at Port MacKenzie with possible fuel exports and project cargo imports. Gold, fossil fuels, and agriculture have driven this economy for the last 100 years, and I believe will propel us into the next 100 years.



—*Matanuska-Susitna Borough Mayor Larry DeVilbiss*

TUNDRA AND GRIT

Christy Marvin sees other mountain runner elites as the genetic superhumans. Yet she powers herself up and down 10,000 feet of mountain, and across 12 miles in an inhuman time: 3 hours, 31 minutes, 45 seconds. Ankle-rolling scree, neck-high grass, quad-tearing descents, lung-wringing steeps, and shifting boulders are picked over along the way in the Matanuska Peak Challenge. But the lowest of moments comes when crawling up the backside of Lazy Mountain. **“There’s something about going back up, that just throttles you, it’s the coming-to-Jesus point in the race,”** Marvin, 34, says. “Runners contemplate the meaning of their whole life as they climb up out of that valley,” she laughs, in what she sees as the toughest mountain race in the country.



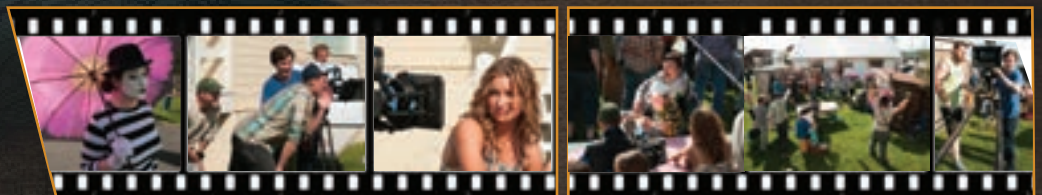
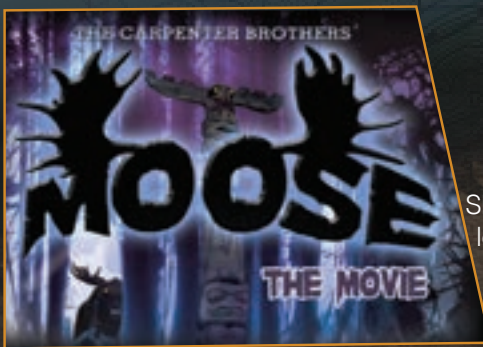
The grittiest mountain runners are from here



Mark Stigar

Marvin’s running life is a series of summit highs. In 2013, she won all six Alaska mountain races she entered. In 2014, she won all again except Mount Marathon, losing by two seconds to an Olympian. She also set a new record for women on Mat Peak Challenge, Government Peak Climb, Kal’s Knoya Ridge Run and in the Equinox Marathon. When she reaches a point of legs buckling and wanting to lie down, she says she digs deep. “You have to tell yourself that you know your body is capable of so much more than your mind thinks it is.” God and family are her bedrock. Husband, Ben, is also an elite mountain runner. A hobby of bread and cookie baking fuels her 6-days-a-week training with homemade carbs. Victory for her, win or lose, even if it’s two seconds, is that “I didn’t give up, I gave everything I had to the finish line.”

Eric Strabel in the Mount Marathon Race dropped 2,800 feet in seven minutes. On 60 to 70 percent grade, “that’s basically a freefall,” says Christy Marvin of her mountain running peer. In a race video, Strabel, 32, leaps off a large boulder and glides through six feet of air to its base, more a parkour stunt in a James Bond movie than trail running. Three out of four years Strabel took title to 3,200-foot Mount Marathon, beating in 2013, Olympian Bill Spencer’s 32-year race record in 42 minutes, 55 seconds. After the first victory, the state’s largest newspaper proclaimed “Eric the Great!” across its front page. “It was all surreal, the whole experience. It’s hard to put that in perspective,” Strabel says. In the local, agonizing Mat Peak Challenge, in 2012, Strabel came in at 2:55:43 setting a course record. He’s won it twice. “It’s the hardest, most demanding, exhausting one I have done.” He lives in Anchorage, but Strabel’s roots are here. “I’ll always be from Palmer.” While his training takes him trail running in mountains, his “giant passion” is for skiing. He retired from a ski racing career with national and international success but he missed being a part of the sport. So he gave up his civil engineering job and became a coach for the Elite Ski Team at Alaska Pacific University where he says “he’d rather engineer skiers to be the fastest in the world.”



Shows made about extreme Alaskans by cable TV channels, that’s old. Now it’s a local film crew and a comic strip creator turning the cameras on fellow Alaskans in “Moose the Movie.” Wasilla resident and international comic strip talent Chad Carpenter with brother Darin wrote a campy comedy, somehow mingling flannel with sci-fi elements. The cloven-hoved ungulate we all know in the yard is now a red-eyed, two-legged menace rising extra slowly from a foggy watery underworld

to the banging of tribal drums and the ahhhs of medieval breathy men. The collision of music-driven tension with slow moving taxidermy work does set you up on the ledge of laughter. The laughs are what likely rounded up 90 extras, unending props and donations, and \$64,185 in online Kickstarter money through 508 backers. “I thought it’d be a little movie made by me, my brother, and friends. It turned into a movie made by a community,” Carpenter said in awe. All are local actors except three. Everything was donated from cupcakes to vehicles. A guitar that needs to be smashed. Done. A historic town backdrop. Granted. Anyone got a barbecue. Yes. How about an RV. Here. Now, crowd of strangers, sway your hips in silence together and pretend you have music. Awkward, but ok. The Palmer film crew, Sons of Winter Productions, will debut its first feature-length film with “Moose.” “The goal,” Carpenter said, “is to have this one successful enough to make more, and to build an industry here.” Carpenter has already done the unlikely. Tundra, the comic strip, is in more than 550 newspapers across the world, all without the help of a syndicate. “I want to apply the business model for Tundra to the movie. Instead of waiting for a studio to pick it up, we’ll do it ourselves.” Coming soon to a Wasilla theater first.

DESIGN MADE RIGHT BY PUBLIC WORKS

RSA 17: Please don't use our tax dollars to hurt us.

"I'm not going to do that." —Terry Dolan, Public Works Director

Not all road construction comes as the gift of voter-approved bonds. In the Borough's 16 road service areas, local taxes from your pocket are what pay for road maintenance and upgrades in your neighborhoods. Last summer, residents off Knik-Goose Bay Road were worried and angry about possible changes to the nearby roads of Ogard, New Moon, and Twilight. Water flowed across the roads, and corners turned at ninety degrees. Locals didn't want the Borough's fixes.



A surveyor and flagger were run off. That's when Public Works Director Terry Dolan met with a lead resident and decided to learn more at a community council meeting. Dolan felt anger in the crowd. He learned neighbors were concerned about more speeding if tight corners were softened. They were worried about proposed ditches dumping polluted road water into a nearby lake. "I heard 'please don't use our tax dollars to hurt us,'" Dolan said. "That really struck a chord with me, and I let them know I absolutely did not intend to do that." He collected their likes and dislikes of the roads and directed the design contractor to incorporate the concerns. The design contract was

unusual as it requires the design firm to **the residents as their plan, rather than as a Borough plan imposed on them,**" Dolan said.

UNPRECEDENTED ROAD CONSTRUCTION \$50 MILLION IN WORK, SUMMER 2014

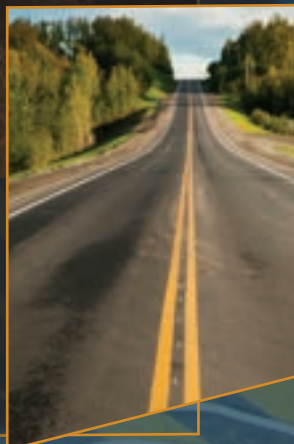
"We have so much work, we are competing with ourselves for resources"

—Mike Brown, Capital Projects Director



Vine Road:

\$10 million: completed 2014. Road widening, sight distance improvements, utility relocation, fish passage culvert installation.



Seldon Road Extension: Will provide a final leg to east-west corridor between Palmer and Houston, \$7.5 million to Beverly Lakes Road, phase 2 to Pittman Road, unfunded.





Hawk Lane: \$2 million, upgrade Hawk Lane from Victor Road to school entrances. Commuter culvert installed.

Sutton Pathway: \$650,000, connecting Sutton Elementary School to the Sutton Library by paved pathway, includes sheltered bus stop.



Rep. Bill Stoltze

Bogard Road Extension East: \$21 million, will provide a second, east-west corridor for traffic through the Borough's core, from Palmer to Church Road.

Machen Road: \$3 million, provides an additional collector road parallel to the Parks Highway to better distribute local traffic.



South Big Lake Road Realignment: \$9.7 million, built new segment of two-lane gravel road from east of Jade Lake to Burma Road & Susitna Parkway intersection.

Seldon/Lucille: \$10 million improved sight distances, new roundabout.





2011 Road Bond Project

1. Palmer Dogwood Ave & Felton St Extension
2. Mchetanz Elementary School Access
3. Wasilla, Clapp Rd to Mack Rd Extension w/ Pathway
4. Big Lake & S. Big Lake Rds Intersection Improvement
5. Houston, Hawk Ln Upgrade & Paving
6. Seldon Rd & Lucille St Upgrade & Intersection Improvement
7. Sullivan Ave & Caudill Rd Upgrade
8. Caswell Lakes Rd, Bendapole Rd, & Caswell Loop Upgrade
9. Willow Lake Dr Upgrade, Paving, & Extension
10. Vine Rd Upgrade
11. Seldon Rd Extension & Beverly Lake Rd Upgrade
12. Old Glenn Hwy Paved Pathway
13. Sutton Elementary to Glenn Hwy Paved Pathway

2013 Bond Project

14. Clay-Chapman Road/Knik Knack Mud Shack Road
15. Lucille Street & Pathway Upgrade
16. South Trunk Road Extension Bridges
17. Seward-Meridian Parkway Intersection
18. Trunk Road Connector
19. Vine Road & Hollywood Road Intersection Improvement

MATANUSKA SUSITNA BOROUGH ROAD PROJECTS

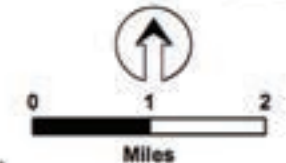


Project Budget	Mileage
\$ 4,300,000	0.6
\$ 8,300,000	1.3
\$ 7,000,000	1.8
\$ 2,000,000	0.1
\$ 2,000,000	1.9
\$ 10,000,000	2.0
\$ 5,000,000	2.5
\$ 2,200,000	4.5
\$ 1,800,000	0.7
\$ 10,000,000	3.4
\$ 7,500,000	2.6
\$ 2,500,000	2.5
\$ 1,000,000	0.5

Project Budget	School
\$ 1,825,000	KGB Middle & High
\$ 3,500,000	Tanaina Elementary
\$ 4,500,000	Machetanz Elementary
\$ 1,500,000	Cottonwood Creek Elementary
\$ 3,250,000	Pioneer Peak Elementary
\$ 1,500,000	Goose Bay & Knik Elementary

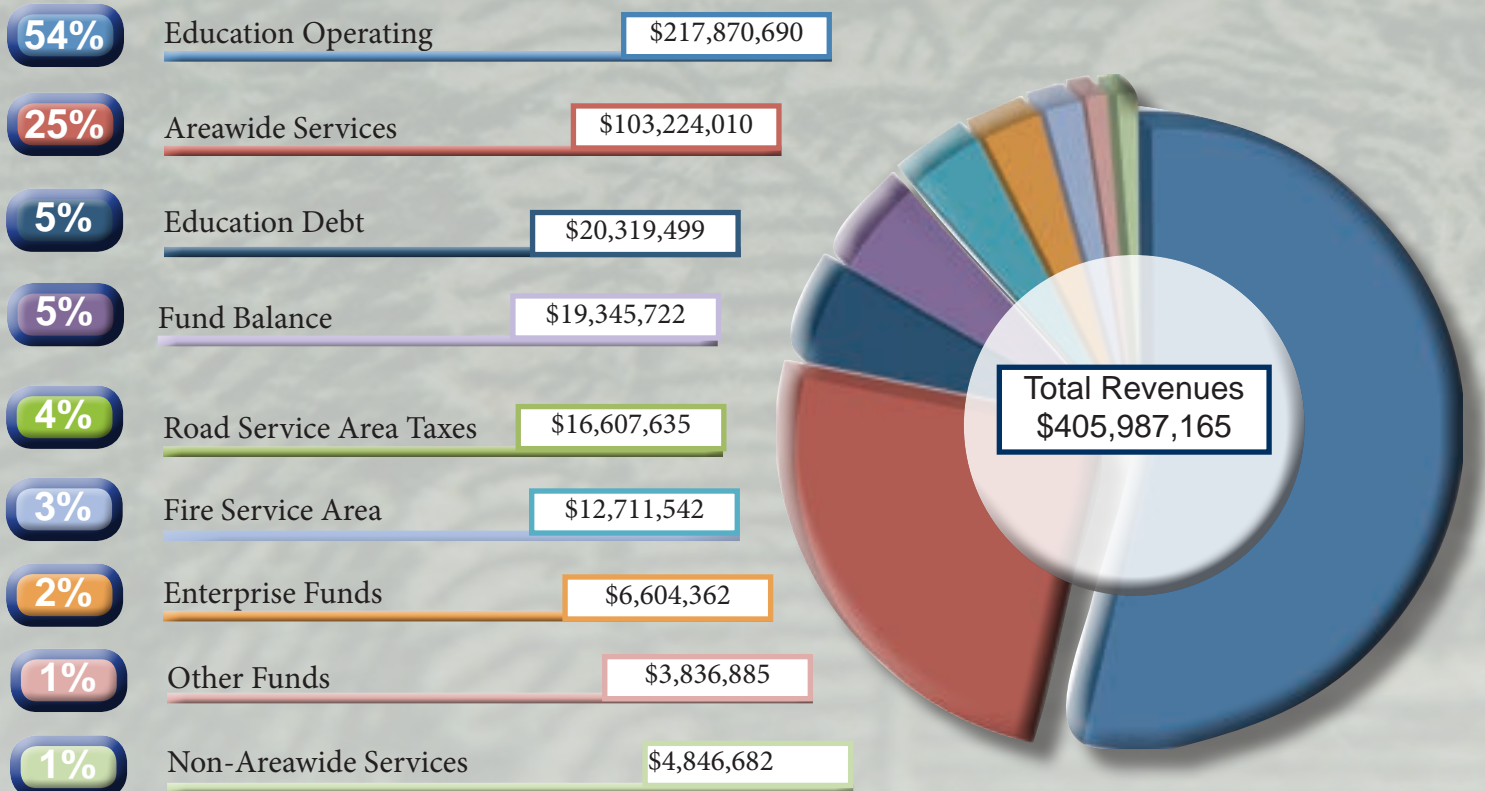
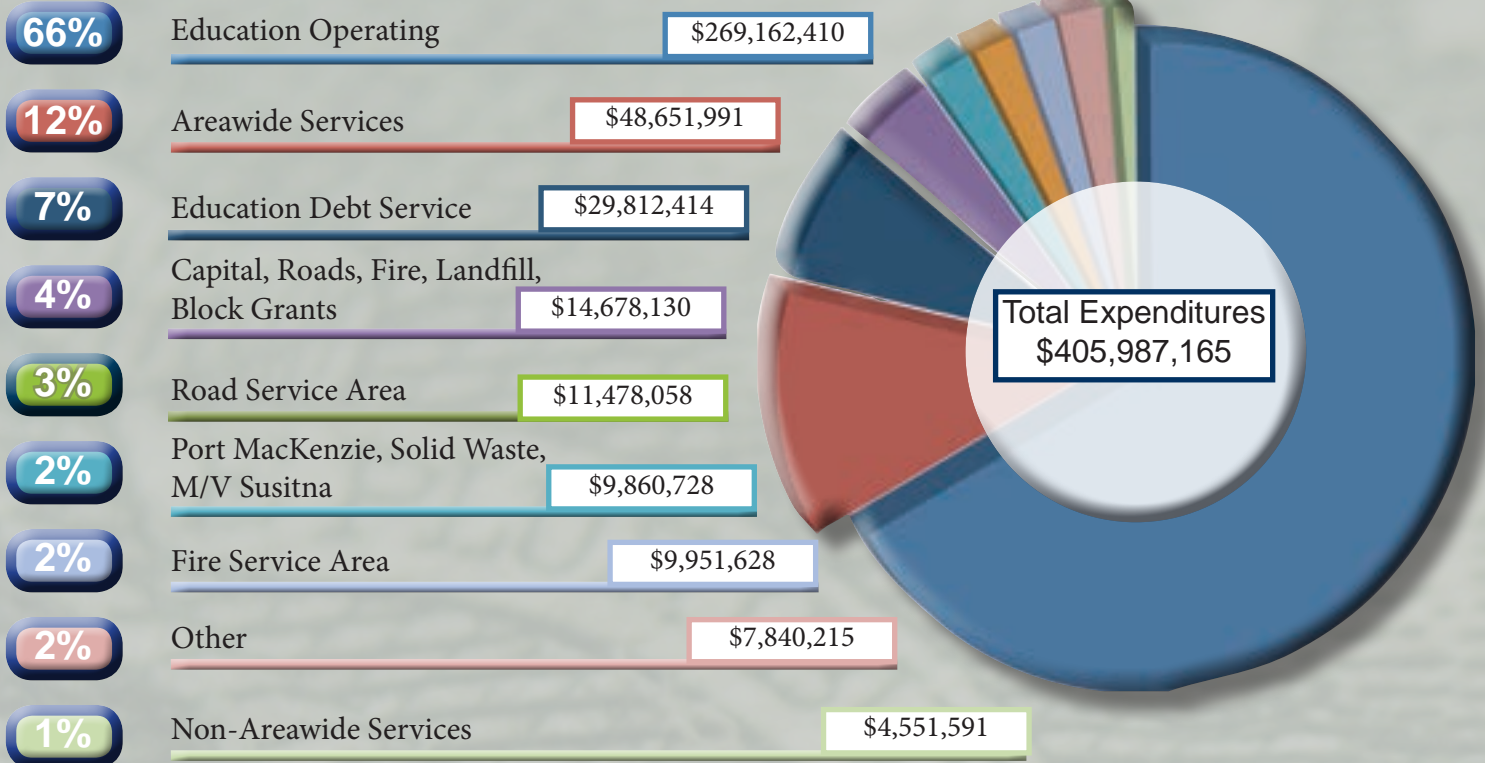
July 14, 2013 Proclamation Plan
 City Boundaries

General Fund	Funded Project	Project Budget
	20. Bogard Rd East Extension	\$ 22,000,000
	21. S. Big Lake Rd Realignment	\$ 9,700,000
	22. Knik River Rd	\$ 2,100,000
	23. Machen Rd	\$ 6,000,000
	24. Port MacKenzie Rd Paving	\$ 860,000



MSB IT/GIS Division - December, 2013
 This map is solely for informational purposes only. The Borough makes no express or implied warranties with respect to the character, function, or capabilities of the map or the suitability of the map for any particular purpose beyond those originally intended by the Borough. For information regarding the full disclaimer and policies related to acceptable uses of this map, please contact the Matanuska-Susitna Borough GIS Division at 907-681-7858

COMPREHENSIVE BOROUGH BUDGET

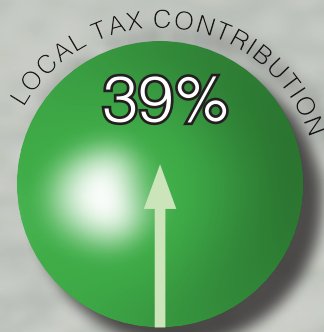


LOCAL TAXES

Over the past decade the Mat-Su Borough Assembly has increased funding to schools **39%.**

From 2005 to 2014, costs for all students increased and the number of new students increased from

15,438 to 17,769.



Mat-Su voters recently adopted an additional property tax exemption for senior citizens/ disabled veterans. Up to \$218,000 in value on a primary residence is tax exempt for this group. **CHANGE: \$2.34 M less in revenue at budget time.**

The Mat-Su is the first municipality to opt into the State's Permanent Car & Trailer Registration. Beginning in Jan. 2015, owners of vehicles & trailers eight years and older can register their property permanently and avoid paying future registration fees. **CHANGE: \$1.2 M less revenue in 2017, \$2.4 M less revenue 2018**

Mat-Su Borough Assembly Invests In Education

The Mat-Su School District is the second largest in the State. Student enrollment surpassed projections by 300 kids this year and has gone up six percent over the past five years. New schools are part of the **\$214 million in voter-approved school construction projects underway.**

Costs are going up. In 2013 the Assembly increased the tobacco tax by \$1 a pack to add funds to education. The Assembly has supported schools through strong and steady increases over the past decade.

Mill Rate

The mill rate is the amount of tax, payable per dollar, of the assessed value of a property.

The 2015 mill rate is the lowest tax rate in seven years.



PUBLIC PROJECTS



SOUTH DENALI VISITOR CENTER

COMPLETED:

- 1.5 mile paved road at mile post 135 on the Parks Highway
- 20-space parking lot with restrooms
- .5 mile trail to Denali overlook across the Chulitna River
- 32-site campground
- electrical upgrade/extension from milepost 101 to 135
- design of 15, walk-in campground sites
- design ranger station/maintenance building

Total project \$47 million

Funded \$22.4 million

The project will make tourists out of Southcentral Alaskans. A visitor center, coming to Curry Ridge, will one day welcome hikers, campers, & visitors, even in winter. The Mat-Su Borough, State of Alaska, National Park Service, and private groups have partnered on the project.



CHALET AT GOVERNMENT PEAK RECREATION AREA

Chalet Award

The Alaska Recreation & Parks Association honored the Mat-Su Borough Recreation & Library Services Division with a Facility Excellence Award, the first of its kind for the Borough. Division Manager Hugh Leslie accepted the award for the Government Peak Chalet, recognized as a flagship recreation project.



Mat-Su now has a warm place to recreate near home in winter. Residents took notice. In 2014, the membership of the Junior Nordic team spiked from 85 to 220 with the opening of the trails. There's Nordic skiing and snow shoeing by winter. By summer, hiking, mountain biking, and dog walking are on the same trails.

- >A \$1 million, 4,000-square foot ski chalet is completed and already had weddings and ski races outside its doors.
- > Five miles of trails are completed, designed by Bill Spencer, a 1988 Olympic skier, who incorporated the incredible views of the Chugach Mountains and Valley floor into the trail's GPS coordinates.
- > A 1-mile access road and parking lot are completed.
- >Synergy is building. A new three-mile single track mountain bike/fat tire bike trail went in near Pioneer Loop. Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers received a grant to build phase 1.
- >South of the parking lot, is a new .82-mile equestrian trail by Backcountry Horsemen of Alaska.
- >The Borough is working on upgrading the kitchen, installing fire suppression, and, with Mat-Su Ski Club, raising funds to light the ski trails for night time sweat.

Future phases of the recreation area include trails designed for competitive skiing, worthy enough for a World Cup.



TALKEETNA LIBRARY

A 7,840-square foot Talkeetna Public Library and Resource Center is coming in summer 2015, a \$5.3 million project.

Funders: Rasmuson Foundation, Mat-Su Health Foundation, Mat-Su Legislators, Mat-Su Borough Assembly

“We’ll come here in the dark of winter for light and warmth, ... Libraries change lives and they build community and that is what we’re going to do here.” —Ann Yadon, Talkeetna Librarian



DIRT IS FLYING

First two schools finished— \$214 M bond projects

\$50 million in school construction projects in 2014

\$60 million in school projects to come in 2015



VALLEY PATHWAYS

A new 46,239 square-foot school replaces class held for 13 years in portables. **\$22.5 million**

“There’s a huge amount of trust that our public, our citizens, your moms and dads, your neighbors have in you, that the Mat-Su Borough and School District could build a great facility like this, in fact so much, they authorized \$214 million in projects boroughwide and are trusting us to deliver like we did here.” —John Moosey, Borough Manager at ribbon cutting



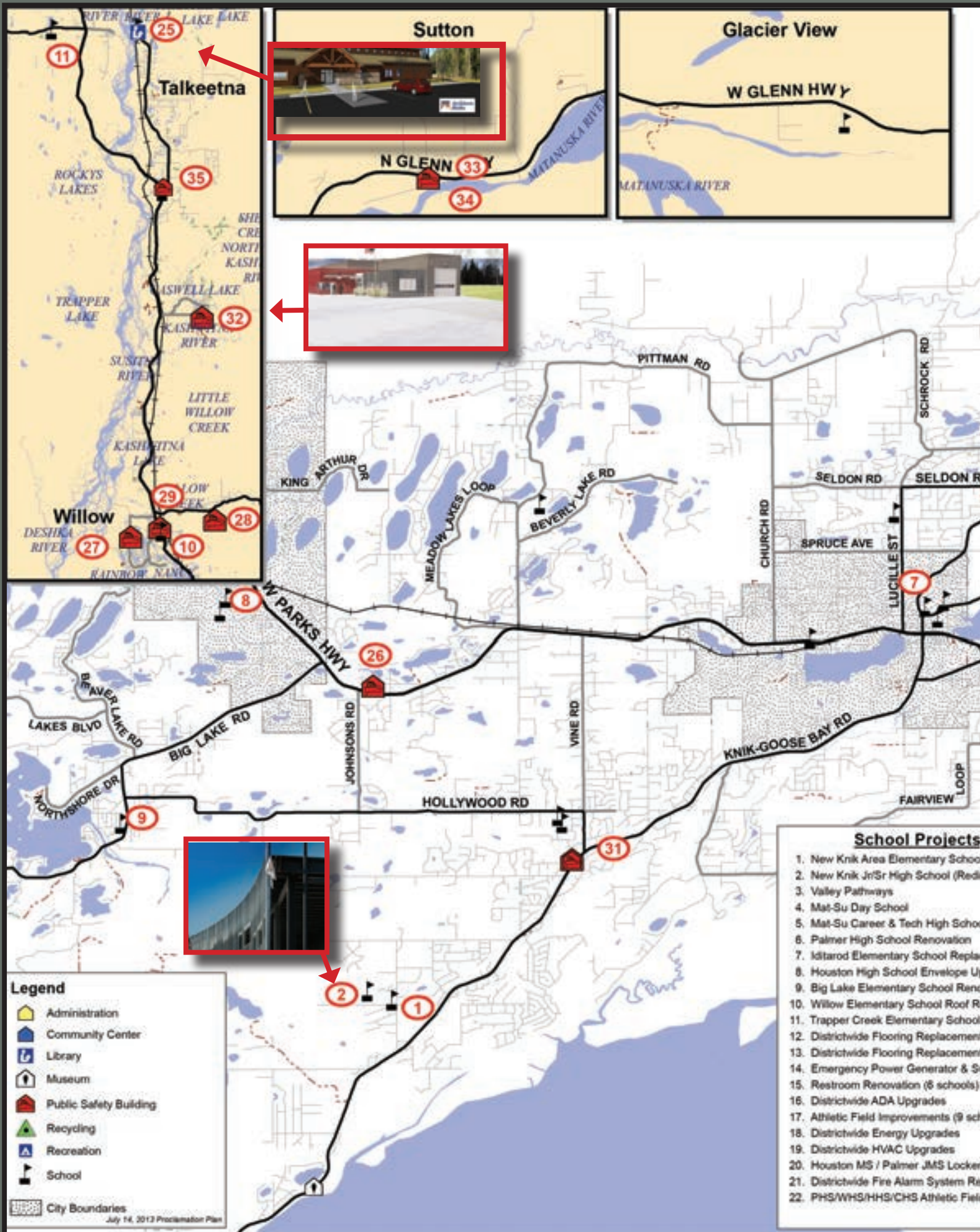
JOE REDINGTON, SR., JR./SR. HIGH

This school will decrease overcrowding in Wasilla schools. 96,000 square feet, scheduled to open Aug. 2015. **\$65.5 million**



MAT-SU DAY SCHOOL

No more portables of seven years. This project will create a 21,500 square-foot special missions school that will house some 150 students from kindergarten through 12th grade. **\$12.2 million**



Sutton

Glacier View

Talkeetna

W GLENN HWY

N GLENN

MATANUSKA RIVER



- Legend**
- Administration
 - Community Center
 - Library
 - Museum
 - Public Safety Building
 - Recycling
 - Recreation
 - School
 - City Boundaries
- July 14, 2013 Proclamation Plan

- School Projects**
1. New Knik Area Elementary School
 2. New Knik Jr/Sr High School (Redevelopment)
 3. Valley Pathways
 4. Mat-Su Day School
 5. Mat-Su Career & Tech High School
 6. Palmer High School Renovation
 7. Iditarod Elementary School Replacement
 8. Houston High School Envelope Upgrade
 9. Big Lake Elementary School Renovation
 10. Willow Elementary School Roof Replacement
 11. Trapper Creek Elementary School Renovation
 12. Districtwide Flooring Replacement
 13. Districtwide Flooring Replacement
 14. Emergency Power Generator & System
 15. Restroom Renovation (6 schools)
 16. Districtwide ADA Upgrades
 17. Athletic Field Improvements (9 schools)
 18. Districtwide Energy Upgrades
 19. Districtwide HVAC Upgrades
 20. Houston MS / Palmer JMS Locker Room
 21. Districtwide Fire Alarm System Replacement
 22. PHS/WHS/HHS/CHS Athletic Field

MATANUSKA SUSITNA BOROUGH SCHOOL AND PUBLIC FACILITY PROJECTS (PROJECTS OVER \$100,000)



Projects	Project Budget
School (Dena'ina)	\$ 26,529,000
(Redington)	\$ 65,455,000
	\$ 22,515,000
	\$ 12,426,000
School Addition	\$ 16,150,000
tion	\$ 5,500,000
Replacement	\$ 25,214,000
ipe Upgrades	\$ 600,000
Renovation	\$ 3,000,000
roof Replacement	\$ 758,000
chool Roof Replacement	\$ 1,200,000
ement (7 schools)	\$ 685,000
ement (8 schools)	\$ 3,118,963
r & Switch Gear (9 schools)	\$ 2,600,000
ools) and Wash Basins (4 schools)	\$ 863,000
	\$ 1,500,000
(9 schools)	\$ 6,481,000
s	\$ 3,162,000
	\$ 7,100,000
ocker Replacement	\$ 335,000
m Replacement	\$ 600,000
c Fields	\$ 12,000,000
Total -	\$217,771,963

Public Facility Projects	Project Budget
23. Borough Admin Bldg HVAC Upgrades	\$ 1,000,000
24. Public Safety Building 5-1	\$ 8,000,000
25. Talkeetna Public Library	\$ 4,450,000
26. West Lakes FSA Station 7-3	\$ 3,500,000
27. Willow FSA Warm Storage - Crystal Lakes	\$ 500,000
28. Willow FSA Warm Storage - Four Mile Road	\$ 388,000
29. Willow FSA Addition Station 12-1	\$ 100,000
30. Valley Community Recycling Upgrades	\$ 1,200,000
31. Wasilla Lakes FSA Station 6-2 Training Complex	\$ 1,200,000
32. Caswell Lakes Fire Station	\$ 2,200,000
33. Sutton Ambulance Building	\$ 150,000
34. Sutton FSA Water Tank	\$ 220,000
35. Talkeetna FSA Drafting Tank Station 11-2	\$ 112,000
36. Wasilla Lakes Facility Upgrades - Multiple Stations	\$ 252,000
37. West Lakes FSA Facility Upgrades - Multiple Stations	\$ 150,000
Total -	\$ 23,422,000

Projects 12 through 22 and 36 and 37 involve multiple schools/facilities and are not depicted with label numbers on the map

MSB Capital Projects Department
January, 2014

This map is solely for informational purposes only. The Borough makes no express or implied warranties with respect to the character, function, or capabilities of the map or the suitability of the map for any particular purpose beyond those originally intended by the Borough. For information regarding the full disclaimer and policies related to acceptable uses of this map, please contact the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Capital Projects Department.

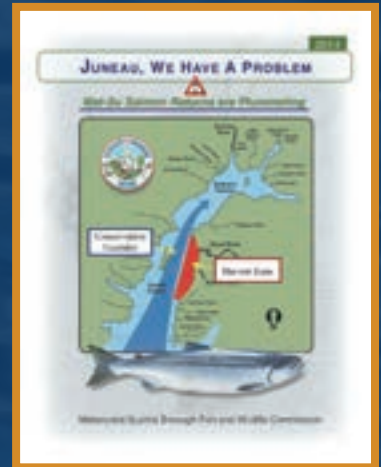
FISH REVOLUTION



Above: Two fishermen carry heavy Coho filled cooler on Little Susitna River. Below: Kissing the bicep for cohos. A day of bounty for young Mat-Su sports fishermen, left to right, Emily Hinman, 9, Leily Hinman 9, and Cassie King 9.



It didn't take long for the three 9-year-old girls in a boat on the Little Susitna River on the first day of bait this past summer to reel in two silvers each, their limit. On Fish Creek off Knik-Goose Bay Road, a family splattered in mud laughed as they slipped and hauled out their bounty of cohos in a heavy ice chest. More people were getting fish this summer on these waters close to Knik Arm. The escapement for cohos on the Little Susitna River was the best it's been since 2006, on Fish Creek, the greatest since 2002, according to Alaska Fish & Game. The little girls and the mud-slick family had no idea that a group of mostly-retired men and a tireless outdoorswoman known as the Mat-Su Borough Fish & Wildlife Commission had bird-dogged a meeting that ran 13 days, which was stuffed full of testimony and resolutions and high stakes: food on the table and money in the bank. The volunteer Commission told Alaska's highest fish board its news of declining salmon upriver amidst record commercial catches downriver. They told them, it takes fish to make fish.



Please let the coho through. And the Board of Fisheries listened. Game-changing regulations were adopted that restricted the drift gillnet commercial fleet to fish closer to shore where their sought after sockeye swim, so the northernbound coho can return to spawning grounds in the Mat-Su. We know it's early to lay claim to a direct link, but the uptick in silvers is promising.



The State Legislature funded \$2.5 million in 2014 for fish passage and prioritizing salmon research

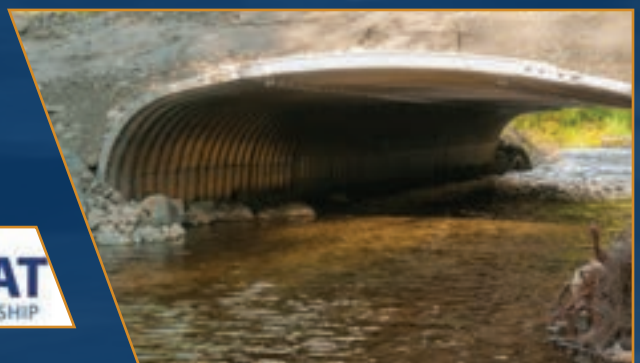
Another two new fish passage culverts went in this past summer, this one on Caswell Road near Willow, a \$218,981 construction project, and another on Vine Road a \$512,130 project. Since 2001, nearly 100 fish culverts have gone under Mat-Su roads to allow fish to pass. In 2014, the figure tallied \$8 million with funds from the Borough, the State, and US Fish & Wildlife.

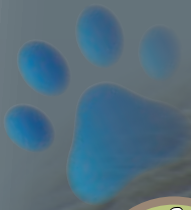
2014 National Fish Habitat Partnership Award Winner

The exceptional leadership of the Mat-Su Borough and staff is making substantial and positive contribution to fish habitat conservation, the award states.



UNDER THE FISH CULVERT





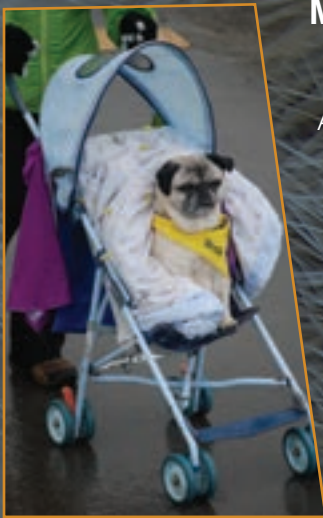
WALK AND ROLL FOR ANIMALS



On a gray May day, dampened with rain, some 243 Mat-Su residents walked a 5K along Trunk Road exercising with their companion animals, and sharing smiles with like-minded locals over the terrier with her own umbrella or the pug pushed in a baby stroller. The walk helped increase awareness for the Animal Shelter and to raise funds to provide a low cost spay/neuter program. Advocates for Dog and Puppy Wellness, Far Country Animal Hospital, Country Legends 100.9 FM co-sponsored the event. The 5K walk is one of the many outreach programs by Animal Care staff, led by Susan Fujimoto, that gives down-on-their-luck pets a chance to find a home.

Natural disasters like Hurrigan Katrina remind us not to underestimate the bond between human and pet

Mat-Su Animal Care, year-to-date stats Nov. 7, 2014

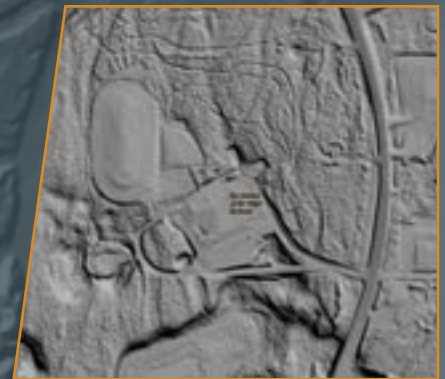


- Animal Care Manager Carol Vardeman
- 1,021 animals were adopted and 278 were taken in by animal rescue groups.
 - Caring people brought in 683 stray dogs, and 423 were reunited with their owners.
 - 650 stray cats were brought into the shelter, 57 found their original owners.
 - 220 kittens were brought into the shelter. 70 kittens were cared for by generous volunteers.
 - 740 animals were brought in by people who didn't want them or couldn't care for them any longer.
 - Animals stay an average of 19 days in the shelter until either their owners are found or they are adopted.



COOLER THAN GOOGLE EARTH

A couple recently came in to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's permit center wanting to learn more about some land the two were interested in buying. The permit center techs pulled up the Borough's new imagery and LiDAR information and immediately showed them an aerial image as well as a newly accessible bare earth image, one cleared of vegetation and all structures. "You guys are cooler than Google Earth," they said. The information on the lay of the land helped them make a decision on whether to buy. Bare earth and imagery can help the public to learn all sorts of things about land in the Mat-Su Borough. For example, a general contractor may want to look at the slope of a road in advance if he is hauling a heavy load. A developer may want to learn the best access point before planning a subdivision road. A responder in a flood may want to know the lay of the land to stage resources on higher ground. The list goes on. The hillshade was created as part of the recent LiDAR project, which was managed by the GIS Division. Hillshade and imagery are available for most of the road accessible areas. A link is on the front of the Borough webpage under property & maps at www.matsugov.us.



FIRE, PORT AND RAIL

50TH ANNIVERSARY— ALASKA SHIELD SECOND LARGEST RECORDED QUAKE

The largest emergency response drill ever undertaken in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and Alaska took place here in March, led locally by Mat-Su Emergency Manager Casey Cook. 24 months of prep time translated into a three-day execution of how to respond to the next big quake. The emergency operations center at the Mat-Su Public Safety Building in Wasilla was the brain center of the exercise. A field hospital, equipped with surgeons and 20 beds, went up overnight at the fairgrounds by Samaritan's Purse. Simulated patients needing acute care moved through the hospital for two days. A large mobile hospital was set up quickly inside Raven Hall by the National Guard, led by the Alaska Dept. of Health & Social Services to handle a simulated patient surge. Two helicopters landed at Mat-Su Regional Medical Center, among them, a Blackhawk transported a Nebraska National Guard hazardous materials crew to a staged hazardous materials scene at fire station 5-1. Red Cross shelters at schools and the ever helpful ARES, Amateur Radio Emergency Services, collaborated as well on making our community ready.



Mat-Su Firefighters Help Kenai . A dozen Mat-Su Firefighters supported firefighting operations on the Funny River Fire for two weeks last May. The Kenai area fire burned some 196,000 acres. Photo, Jake Riley.

HONORING OUR CHIEFS



Standing ovations for our firefighters at the Assembly meeting in Palmer in Sept. Left to right: Butte Assistant Fire Chief Jason Edmison, Butte Fire Chief Eric VanDusen, Butte Assistant Chief Louis LaRousse, and Caswell Lakes/Willow Fire Chief Mahlon Greene.

CENTRAL MAT-SU FIRE RANKS TOP 17 PERCENT IN NATION

Central Mat-Su maintained its 4/10 ISO rating, despite incredible population growth. "This is a very big deal to maintain the 4 rating," said Central Mat-Su Fire Chief James Steele. "All the big commercial stores were not here, our call volume was 50 percent of what it is now, and the population was at least a third less," Steele said. Just one community, Knik-Fairview, in the Wasilla-Lakes Fire Service Area grew by 123 percent in an 11-year period, and is the fifth largest community in Alaska.





WEST LAKES FIRE STATION 7-1

An arc of water, 100 feet up the platform of a fire truck, rained down on a grassy yard outside the fire station on May 29, displaying what Big Ben can do before a group of firefighters in uniform, who were exchanging laughs, and craning necks to take in the force of the 1,500-gallon-per-minute spray. The platform fire truck is new to West Lakes Fire Department, thanks to oil giant BP. West Lakes Fire Chief Bill Gamble said the truck will be valuable for suppressing fire on large structures such as the nearby Three Bears grocery store, schools, and the Meadow Lakes Mall.



THE RURAL WEST LAKES FIRE SERVICE AREA improved its ISO rating to a 4/10 in October, also placing it in the top 17 percent of fire departments nationwide.

CASWELL STATION 13-1

“This defines the community more and puts it on the map.” —Vern Halter, Mat-Su Borough Assembly Member



PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING 5-1

A 26,000-square foot structure will accommodate both fire and ambulance services to include drive thru apparatus bays, living/sleeping quarters, training room, administrative offices, & secure storage. **\$8 million**



PORT MACKENZIE

Port MacKenzie supports Furie natural gas project. In July, 16 miles of concrete-coated pipe was offloaded onto the barge dock at Port MacKenzie for an underwater natural gas pipeline to be built by the company Furie Operating Alaska, 16 miles northwest of Nikiski. WestPac Logistics handled the stevedoring and will help load off shore vessels to shuttle the pipe to the work site next season.



“This is a very important ship for Alaska. It establishes Port MacKenzie as a very good place for this type of cargo. We’ll see more pipe come through here.” CEO King Hufford said. See aerial shots of the ship on the borough’s YouTube channel.

PORT MACKENZIE RAIL EXTENSION

FUNDED \$184 million

\$303.5 million

- Segment 1—complete, 4.9 miles embankment
- Segment 2—in right-of-way and design stage
- Segment 3—complete, 6.5 miles embankment
- Segment 4—grade 55% complete, 7.4 miles embankment
- Segment 5—design complete, right-of-way acquisition stage
- Segment 6—complete with rail, 1.8 miles of embankment

BULK RESOURCES, PROJECT CARGO, AND COMPETITIVE FUEL

The Mat-Su Borough and the Alaska Railroad Corporation jointly co-manage construction of a new 32-mile rail link from Houston to Port MacKenzie.



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

MATSUGOV.US

