



## MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

### Office of the Borough Manager

350 East Dahlia Avenue • Palmer, AK 99645

Phone (907) 861-8689 • Fax (907) 861-8669

[Mike.Brown@matsugov.us](mailto:Mike.Brown@matsugov.us)

### MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 9, 2022  
TO: Mayor and Assembly  
FROM: Michael Brown, Borough Manager  
RE: Manager's Weekly Post

**Alaska Legislative Update:** The House Finance Committee Substitute for the Operating Budget includes school bond debt reimbursement fully funded, plus making up for last year's deficiency. We'll continue to monitor to see how this progresses.

SB 9, rewrite of the Alaska alcohol statute, is up in House Finance on Thursday, March 10. We will continue our advocacy for more local alcohol control as the original bill does not provide any tangible benefits to the Mat-Su. Under the original SB 9, only select cities and boroughs could petition for additional restaurant or eating places – also known as “beer and wine” licenses. There is no mechanism for any local control over a request for additional licenses for breweries, dispensaries, brewpubs, wineries, package stores, distilleries, or any other type of license. As of 2021, there were zero dispensary and package store licenses available in the Mat-Su to include the Borough and all three cities. Package store licenses are common for large stores such as Costco, Fred Meyer, Carrs, etc. and dispensary licenses are typical for many restaurants allowing for liquor in addition to beer and wine to be served in an eating establishment. Also, the Borough's request is to simply have the right, as a municipality, to petition the State board for additional licenses, it does not guarantee additional licenses.

We continue to lobby for capital funding for both the Arctic Winter Games and for potential funding to use toward the voter-approved transportation systems package. We will continue to monitor development of the State's capital budget.

**Problem Reporter Update:** Animal Care reporting will be going live next week in the Problem Reporter app. This will allow residents to report aggressive animals, bites, inhumane care, loose animals, etc. that require Animal Care staff attention. We will notify the public via social media.

Staff have created a public dashboard for all problem reporter complaints where residents can view complaints and resolutions at <https://www.matsugov.us/ProblemReporterDashboard>. Some data is not disclosed, such as the complainant. As a reminder, there is an administrative overhead to managing these complaints and following up to close open items. We are continuing to work

with road service area contractors to improve the time to close an open item in the system. In some cases, closing incidents in the system may lag complaints by a few weeks. We hope to improve our processes requiring resolution and close-out by contractors in a more timely manner prior to the next winter cycle. This lag in closing items in the system is not necessarily indicative of contractors not addressing citizen complaints in a timely manner.

**Mud Mat Costs:** At the March 1 Assembly meeting, mud mat costs were discussed. Last year the Borough spent about \$40,174 on mud mats. It should be noted 2021 was a relatively low cost year for this service. Papoose Twins, one of the “impassable” roads that normally uses a lot of mud mats, was passable all year in 2021 and never needed mud mats. Although the amount varies from year to year, \$40,000 to \$50,000 is normal. We began collecting cost data on this work in 2021.

### **Public Affairs Media Flyover:**

#### **Jobs**

- *Alaska's depleted public health nurse program is evolving amid chronic job vacancies and burnout*

#### **Pod Casts/Radio**

- *Disasters Occur in Alaska Every 90 Days, Hear from the Team Who Mitigate Them on FirstHand*
- *Inside the Borough: The Animal Care Facility 2022-3-8 | Big Cabbage Radio (radiofreepalmer.org)*

#### **Roads**

- *Hatcher Pass Road likely to stay closed at least a couple more weeks after February avalanches | Road - Week (headtopics.com)*
- *Wasilla City Council listens to Parks Highway alternative corridor project presentation*

#### **Resource Development**

- *Appeals continue after a Borough board gives Talkeetna's Comsat Road rock quarry the OK...*

#### **Economy**

- *Gas prices top \$4 a gallon nationwide, all-time record could be broken this week*

#### **Future Events:**

West Susitna Access Public Meeting, from 4pm to 7pm on Wed., Mar. 23, 2022 (Presentations at 4pm, 5pm, and 6pm) -- Online: [https://bit.ly/susitna\\_access](https://bit.ly/susitna_access) or Phone: 235-215-8782, Meeting ID: 860 7777 0537, Passcode: 150663