

Modernizing Resident Communications Channels

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough continues to modernize and improve how we deliver public services. From permitting and tax reporting to park reservations and our website redesign, we are investing in digital tools that make services more accessible, efficient, and transparent for our citizens. This report provides a comprehensive update on several major technology initiatives underway across Borough departments.

1. Permitting, Licensing, and Self-Reported Tax Reporting

The Borough is implementing a new online platform powered by Tyler Technologies' Enterprise Permitting & Licensing software this May. This system streamlines how citizens, businesses, and contractors interact with the Borough for permitting, fire plan reviews, tobacco licensing, and self-reported taxes.

Key Benefits:

- Citizens can apply for permits, track progress, upload documents, and pay fees entirely online.
- Real-time updates let applicants know exactly where their request stands.
- Secure accounts store contact information and application history for future use.
- Citizens can communicate directly with Borough staff within the system.

GIS Integration will allow citizens to search by address or parcel, viewing nearby permit activity and increasing transparency in community development.

Finance Department Integration:

This same system will now support online filing and payment of self-reported taxes, including Area 36 tax, bed tax, and marijuana and tobacco excise taxes. This is the first time these filings can be submitted and paid online—simplifying compliance for local businesses and reducing manual work for Borough staff.

Additional Enhancements Include:

- Mobile tools for right-of-way inspectors and code enforcement
- Public visibility into permit activity
- Paperless plan review and approval processes

These enhancements will improve internal efficiency while giving citizens the modern tools they expect from their local government.

2. Update on the Borough Website Redesign

The Borough is in the process of redesigning and modernizing our main website. Our goal is simple: make it easier for citizens to find what they need and interact with Borough services—quickly, clearly, and without confusion. We plan to Go Live on the new site Matsu.gov in July.

What's Changing – And Why

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This project puts **citizens first** by focusing on how people actually use the site—not just how departments are organized. Instead of asking citizens to know which department does what, the site is being designed to guide them based on what they want to do, such as:

- “Apply for a permit”
- “Find property information”
- “Pay a bill”
- “Report a concern”

The site will also be easier to use on mobile devices, quicker to search, and better organized overall.

New Features for Citizens

- **Sign Up for Notifications**
We’re using a new tool called GovDelivery, which allows citizens to sign up for email updates on specific topics they care about—like planning updates, public meetings, or service changes. This helps keep the public informed without needing to visit the site daily.
- **Smarter Search**
A powerful new search tool will help citizens find information across the entire Borough site—including documents, services, departments, and contact info—making it much easier to locate exactly what they need.
- **Location-Based Information**
The updated site will tailor some information based on where a citizen lives, making services more relevant and easier to access.

One of the biggest improvements is how content on the site will be interconnected and automatically updated based on relationships. This means when information is updated in one place—like a project, document, or holiday hours—it will be updated everywhere it is referenced.

This not only saves time for Borough employees but also prevents outdated or conflicting information from lingering in hard-to-find places—something we know has caused frustration in the past. It’s a behind-the-scenes improvement that makes a big difference in keeping the site accurate and trustworthy.

Faster, More Empowered Publishing

Another improvement is that Borough staff can now create and publish project updates and documents faster than ever. Instead of submitting a request and waiting for IT or Communications to post something, trained staff can now publish approved content directly to the site—especially helpful for project pages, updates, or time-sensitive announcements. In the time it used to take to submit a help ticket, they can now post it themselves.

It’s a practical time-saver and a real boost for transparency and responsiveness.

Working Together Across Departments

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We've formed a Website Working Group with staff from across the Borough to help shape the site. This group is testing features, organizing content, and giving feedback to make sure the site works well for both staff and the public.

This new website is all about making it easier for citizens to do business with the Borough—whether that's finding information, receiving timely updates, or using a service. It's cleaner, faster, and designed to grow with the needs of our community.

3. Parks & Recreation Online Enhancements

The Borough has implemented two modern systems—Campspot and FinnlySport—to improve how citizens reserve campsites and register for recreation programs.

Campground Reservations

As of early 2025, Jim Creek Recreational Area and Mat-River Park reservations are handled through Campspot, a mobile-friendly app that allows:

- Interactive selection of camping spots via site maps
- Optimized availability based on bookings
- Easy online check-in, changes, and cancellations

Swim, Ice Skating, and Facility Scheduling

In early 2025, the Borough also adopted FinnlySport for managing swim lessons, ice skating registration, and facility rentals.

Features include:

- Family accounts to manage multiple children
- Online payments and class schedules
- Real-time facility availability and booking (e.g., gymnasiums, pavilions, ball fields)
- Digital displays for on-site event schedules

These systems simplify the user experience for citizens and help Borough staff manage parks and programs more efficiently.

4. Winter Weather Operations Dashboard

This winter, the Borough launched a Winter Weather Operations Dashboard—an online tool that shows when roads were last plowed, sanded, or otherwise maintained. This map-based tool provides near real-time updates and helps keep citizens informed during severe weather.

With new road service contracts in place, this dashboard ensures accountability and timely communication. We are also working with the State and local cities to expand the tool's coverage to potentially create a single, unified platform for all winter road maintenance across the Borough.

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5. Assessment & Taxation System Upgrade

The Borough is also transitioning to a new Assessment and Taxation platform this June, improving both the citizen experience and internal operations.

Key Benefits:

- A modern, user-friendly online interface
- Full integration with the Borough's financial system
- More accurate, efficient processing of property tax billing, collections, and LID management

New Citizen Portal Features:

- View tax history and billing records
- Make payments online, including future payment scheduling

By working with Tyler Technologies, we will continue to benefit from regular software improvements and support, ensuring the system grows to meet the Borough's needs.

Together, these projects reflect a Borough-wide commitment to modernizing public services, improving accessibility, and strengthening citizen engagement. Whether it's applying for a permit, reserving a campsite, or checking road conditions, these tools give our community better access to the services they rely on—while helping our staff work more efficiently.

We thank the Assembly for your continued support and look forward to sharing further updates as each of these initiatives moves forward.