



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

Office of the Borough Manager

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 16, 2025
 TO: Mayor and Assembly
 FROM: Michael Brown, Borough Manager
 RE: Manager's Weekly Post

2024 Online Land Sales Totals: The following is a summary of the 2024 online land sales as requested during the recent budget presentations. This is also included in the [2024 Performance Report](#) on page 8.

Online Land Sales							
Parcel #	Acres	Minimum-Bid	Sold/Final Price	Buyers Premium	Number of Bids	Number of Bidders	Number of Auction Views
24-7	20	\$70,200	\$162,200	\$8,110	61	3	1356
24-08	40	\$72,000	\$290,100	\$14,505	74	5	1353
24-09	17	\$30,600	\$235,100	\$11,755	63	7	1900
24-10	0.79	\$45,355	\$107,100	\$5,355	58	3	1540

Tax Foreclosure Sales				
	TS42 - 2021	TS43 - 2022	TS44-2023	TS45-2024
Total from sale	\$ 266,056	\$ 312,733	\$ 589,789	\$ 747,400
Bids received	177	238	279	1322
Excess proceeds	\$ 162,159.22	\$ 179,294	\$ 367,685	\$ 543,998
Claimed excess proceeds	\$ 51,875	\$ 37,530	\$ 178,634	unknown
Unclaimed excess proceeds to Land Management Fund	\$ 110,283	\$ 141,764	\$ 189,051	unknown

Brett Memorial and Big Lake Recreation Center Proposed Staffing: During the recent budget presentation, an assembly member requested additional information on Brett staffing and the proposed staffing plan for the Big Lake Recreational Center. Staff will be used to support operations at both facilities. Additionally, skating instructors will no longer be offering private lessons as Borough employees at Borough ice rinks. This allows current instructors to work directly with families and operate as contractors to rent ice time, which increases our capacity to provide the Learn to Skate program and promote instructors developing their own businesses.

Two new full-time employees and wages to support two on-call personnel are proposed for the Big Lake Recreation Center. Additionally, the Brett Manager and Operations Assistant will split time between both facilities in lieu of hiring an additional manager for the Big Lake Recreation Center. The Brett currently has four full-time employees (including the manager) and wages to support six on-call personnel.

Community Development Expenditure Increase Information: During the recent budget presentation, an assembly member asked for a breakdown of the \$2.3 million increase as shown for the Community Development Department. The following details the increase.

- \$926,000 added for Big Lake Recreation Center (BLRC) acquisition, health and safety repairs, operations, and staffing
- *Adjustment for personnel distributions in Land Management that show as an increase in expenditures, but there is a \$549,492 transfer into revenue in land management from areawide to offset this; in other words, expenditures are not increasing, a transfer that offsets the increase in expenditures was not shown on the slide during the presentation
- *\$500,000 added for Jonesville Shooting Park; these monies will be recovered as a transfer from the Land and Resource Management Permanent Fund as shown on the reconciliation page in the budget proposal, also not shown in the slide during the presentation
- Salary schedule movement and healthcare increases for existing employees

* Denotes monies over \$1M that are shown as expenditures but have been reconciled and will be recovered as a transfer.

Fire/Rescue Apparatus Over 25 Years Old: This is in response to an assembly member's question on the age of Borough fire/rescue apparatus during the budget presentation on April 9.

DES has four apparatus over 40 years old. Of the four, one has a current replacement budgeted via the capital budget in FY26 for Willow/Caswell. We may get one more replaced through redistribution.

There are 10 DES apparatuses over 30 years old (with five more over 25 years old and will reach this benchmark by 2029). Of the 10 apparatus over 30 years old:

1. Two (Greater Palmer and Butte) have replacements on order, so within 12-18 months, this number should drop to eight.
2. West Lakes has two that will reach the 30-year benchmark by 2028.
3. Of Sutton's apparatus, three are overdue for replacement, or 60% of their five assigned apparatus. One apparatus that is over 30 years old is a refurbished 1977 tender.

Status By Department:

1. Central: The oldest apparatus is a 2000 (25 years old), and a replacement is on order.
2. Butte: The oldest apparatus (over 30) currently has a replacement on order. The next oldest is a 2002.
3. Greater Palmer: Their only apparatus is over 30 years old and has a replacement on order. The next oldest is a 2001.
4. Sutton: One over 40, two over 30 years old. The tax base is not adequate to support the purchase of apparatus.

5. Willow/Caswell: two over 40 years old. One is budgeted to be ordered in the FY26. Three more are over 30 years old. After those, the next oldest is a 2004.
6. West Lakes: One over 30 years old, two more will be 30 within 3 years.
7. Talkeetna: One over 40, two over 30. Making revolving loan payments on a tender. The next oldest is a 2004.
8. Rescue: Three rescue apparatus are currently over 28 years old, and two more are 25 years old. A replacement cycle is outlined in the FY26 proposed budget, and this budget includes the replacement of one rescue apparatus.

Port MacKenzie 1st Quarter 2025 Report:

Vessel Traffic:

- No vessel traffic occurred during this quarter.

Maintenance:

- No major maintenance activities took place during this quarter.
- Preparations for the potential Mt. Spur eruption have been implemented.

Port Activity:

- Northern Gravel & Trucking LLC continues to utilize the port to store and distribute road salt throughout the state.
- Alaska Directional utilized the port to stage telecom supplies and equipment for their Beluga Point project.
- Cruz Construction began staging equipment and supplies in preparation for the spring 2025 barge loadout.
- Multiple private, governmental, and international agencies have toured the port to discuss potential use and business opportunities.
- The Port was invited to present to the Senate Transportation Committee in Juneau to discuss ongoing efforts to complete the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension project.

Grants

- Axiom Environmental was contracted to prepare the US DOT BUILD (Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development) Grant application and a Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) request to fund the construction of the barge haul-out ramp. These applications have been submitted, and we are waiting for the award notifications to be released.
- We will reapply for the Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) grant this year to fund the construction of the barge haul-out ramp.
- MSB staff are collaborating with the Alaska Railroad to support its renewed application for the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program.

Barge Haul Out Ramp

- The design has reached 95%, and the permit applications have been submitted. A grant application was submitted through the BUILD Program with the US Dept. of Transportation.

Port Commission

- The Port Commission held elections in January and re-elected Dane Crowley as Chair and Fred Elvsaaas as Vice Chair. The remaining Port Commission consists of Bryan Scoresby, John Pike, and Christopher Gerteisen.

- The Port Commission meeting dates for 2025 were approved as follows. April 21, July 21, and October 20.

Planning

- The port continues to work on the updated master plan and will provide updates as time allows.

Business Development and Marketing:

- The Borough is working on the following prospects:
 - Central Alaska Energy, the only leaseholder in the Port District, is still interested in developing a fuel tank farm at their site near the rail loop; we met with their leadership this month, and they are still working out internal details for how to move the project forward.
 - Nova Minerals is looking to develop critical minerals in the west Susitna region, specifically a metal known as “antimony”; they have applied for a Department of Defense grant, and if successful will move at a quick pace to develop the resource, and use Port MacKenzie for export of this commodity.
 - Contractor Use of Port MacKenzie Docks
 - The port has received interest from two major contractors seeking information, pricing, and agreement for long-term use of the port as a staging and laydown area for the upcoming Port of Alaska (Anchorage) modernization construction project.
 - Modular Home Fabrication
 - A manufacturer is currently exploring options to develop a modular home fabrication facility in the Port District uplands.
 - US Department of Defense
 - Arctic Edge 2025 planning is underway. Logistics teams have made multiple visits and inquiries in preparation for the August exercises.
 - The Department of Defense has increased its interest in utilizing Port MacKenzie for training and offloading ammunition and explosive ordinances. Logistics teams continue to visit the port.

Central Landfill Tire Collection: The Central Landfill accepts tires as part of its Construction and Demolition (C&D) program. Over the past year, approximately 11,000 tires have been shredded and utilized as a base layer beneath gas collection lines within the Landfill’s waste cell system. This shredding process is carried out using an excavator and shredder acquired through a non-matching federal grant provided by the American Rescue Plan. At present, the Landfill has an estimated 35,000 tires awaiting shredding. However, the volume of tires now exceeds the Landfill’s operational need for gas line bedding. As a result, we are actively exploring alternative reuse opportunities for shredded material. If alternative uses are not found, shredding remains a beneficial disposal method due to its impact on airspace optimization. Shredded tires significantly reduce volume, increasing landfill capacity from roughly 10 unshredded tires per cubic yard to 55 shredded tires per cubic yard.

Quarterly Driveway Permit Report:

Final Approvals	New Applications	Inspections
185	277	293

Public Affairs Media Flyover:

Borough Budget

- [Borough departments proposed budget to Assembly](#)
KTNA
- [Borough to propose property tax bump as part of annual budget](#)
Mat-Su Sentinel
- [Technology a focus for Planning department](#)
Mat-Su Sentinel

Education

- [AK Legislature passes \\$1000 per student funding boost](#)
Alaska Beacon
- [Students stage statewide walkout urging BSA increase as education funding bill passes](#)
Alaska's News Source

State

- [Alaska House votes to cut proposed dividend, huge deficit remains unresolved](#)
Frontiersman

Fisheries

- [Alaska House leaders oppose governor's fish farm bill](#)
Undercurrent News

Wildland Fire

- [Mat-Su residents can get free smoke alarms. Reflective address signs](#)
Mat-Su Sentinel

Library books

- [Mat-Su Borough reshelves graphic novel adaptation of Anne Frank's Diary to Adult section](#)
KTNA

Outdoors

- [Borough officials urge people to stay off the ice as temperatures rise](#)
Frontiersman

Mat-Su Business

- [Mat-Su hosts huge outdoorsman show](#)
Alaska News Source

Top MSB Facebook Posts

- [Mat-Su Gateway Visitor Center Groundbreaking](#)
89k views, 45K reached
- [Gateway Visitor Center Video](#)
7k views, 6k reached

Future Events:

- Sat., April 26, 2025 from 10am to 2pm, National DEA Prescription Drug Take-Back Day, Fred Meyer (Palmer and Wasilla)

Launching a New Composting Program

Prepared by: Matanuska-Susitna Borough Solid Waste Division

April 11, 2025



Executive Summary

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Solid Waste Division has initiated a composting program, made possible by a \$3.5 million federal grant that requires no local match. This new program advances landfill diversion efforts, reduces transportation costs, and makes compost accessible to the community. The following provides an overview of the program.

Program Overview

This federally funded initiative is centered on enhancing composting and recycling capabilities across the Borough. The grant supports the purchase of key composting equipment and the development and improvement of landfill infrastructure.

Key Equipment Investments

A total of \$900,000 from the federal grant is allocated to procure essential composting equipment:

- **Collection Truck – \$450,000:** Central to compost and trash collection operations, the truck reduces the number of weekly trips to disposal facilities from 10–12 to just 2, leading to annual savings of over \$90,000.



- **Collection Bins – \$167,200:** Strategically placed to support widespread community participation and efficient organic material collection.

material movement and preparation within the composting process.

- **Skid Steer Loader – \$85,000:** Facilitates



- Aerator/Turner – \$105,000: Vital for accelerating decomposition and maintaining optimal compost quality.
- Soil Screener – \$10,000: Used to refine compost by removing large debris and ensuring uniformity.



- Screening Bucket – \$20,000: Supports compost screening to ensure fine and usable output.
- Concrete Bins – \$30,000: Provides structured storage for compost at various community drop-off locations.

Infrastructure and Operational Impact

In addition to equipment purchases, the program will:

- Develop three acres at a new landfill campus
- Upgrade Central Landfill and facilities in Big Lake, Talkeetna, and Willow
- Create bin storage and compost access points at multiple community hubs, including VCRS



Community Benefits

- Free Compost Access: Residents can obtain high-quality compost at no charge.
- Free Woody Debris Disposal: Encourages yard waste diversion from landfills.
- Sustainability: Reduced landfill use and gas emissions from fewer transport trips.
- Economic Efficiency: Operational cost savings.

Conclusion

With federal funding and a carefully curated equipment plan, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's composting initiative sets a precedent for sustainable municipal waste management. The program supports landfill stewardship by transforming organic waste into a valuable community resource while delivering measurable economic benefits.