



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

Office of the Borough Manager

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 14, 2022
TO: Mayor and Assembly
FROM: Michael Brown, Borough Manager
RE: Manager's Weekly Post

Houston Solar Farm: The Assembly recently approved a Borough lease to Renewable IPP for the development of a solar farm in Houston. Governor Dunleavy, Renewable IPP, and MEA participated in a groundbreaking today for the project. The event was well attended by various elected officials including our Mayor and Assembly members Bernier and Tew. The Governor and Renewable IPP CEO, Jenn Miller, shared their gratitude for the Borough Assembly's efforts in providing the land for this opportunity. A flier is included below with a few key highlights related to this project. Additionally, thanks to Borough employee, Tracy McDaniel, and her efforts in developing this opportunity in conjunction with Jenn Miller.

RENEWABLE
Independent Power Producers

CleanCapital

MEA
MATANUSKA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

Houston Solar Farm

8.5 MW Solar Farm (6x Willow)

14,400 Solar Panels, 6,000+ Foundation Piles

Produces energy to support ~1,400 homes

Jobs: 30-40 Construction & 15-20 PT Maintenance

Occupies 45 acres, **2X energy/acre** than Willow

Cost competitive with MEA generation & fixed price contract helps stabilize rates!

CleanCapital funded & owns project, **MSB** leasing land, **MEA** purchases wholesale power & **Renewable IPP** developed, builds & maintains.

Houston Solar Farm Site

WETLANDS

TRANSMISSION LINE

W HAWK LN

W AVON LN

ORIG. LAYDOWN AREA

POWER SUPPLY

SECTORS LINE

Assessments: Recently there have been some questions regarding assessed values and the timeliness of updates related to residential values. In particular there was one local article related to Borough appraisers visiting the home of a State Legislator. The below generally describes the overall process for making assessments and areas where the Borough is working to improve consistency.

Properties in the Mat-Su Borough, and every other incorporated borough in the State of Alaska, are reassessed as of January 1st of the assessment year as required by State Statute. These assessments occur annually even though an appraiser likely does not visit every property. The Borough assigns appraisers a geographic area to review each year. The Borough has very few areas or property types that require permits, so additions or deletions to the record are found by discovery. Driving every road is the primary way to find these additions and deletions. Assessments staff also use imagery, recorded documents from the State Recorder's office, information supplied from members of the public and any other published information available to keep assessments as equitable as possible. The Borough utilizes computer aided mass appraisal processes and sales data to determine full and true values per State Statute.

Borough Assessments staff comprised of approximately 20 staff members manage over 80,000 parcels with over 43,000 of those being residential improved parcels. Staff often rely on imagery and data to assist in reassessments. Additionally, staff are responsible to respond to community requests and appeals. Generally, staff respond to areas as a follow-up and typically are not looking at a single residence unless it is related to a specific appeal. Also, when the annual reassessments are completed it will not change the year on the record for a property until that parcel has been re-inventoried. Overall, the Assessor's goal is to put boots on the ground (i.e. physically visit each property for a re-inventory as opposed to driving each area only) once every 6 years for properties accessible via the road system. Properties in remote locations and particularly vacant lands are not visited that frequently. In recent years, it has been difficult to achieve a boots on the ground every 6 years due to staffing shortages, pandemic, etc. However, staff continue to conduct annual reassessments and utilize information and imagery to assist where a re-inventory has not been possible.

Brett Memorial Ice Rink Update: The Borough received a new startup procedure from the manufacturer, which also entailed minor programming changes to the system. The manufacturer also requested mechanical changes to the system that addressed safety concerns regarding the potential for trapped refrigerant in the system. Borough staff are refilling the system today. If all proceeds well, the facility may re-open to the public on Saturday, September 24. This will allow staff to prepare the ice for use over the next week.

\$6.7 Million Grant Award for New Visitor Center: On September 13, 2022 U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo announced the Department's Economic Development Administration (EDA) is awarding a \$6.7 million grant to Matanuska-Susitna Borough, to boost tourism through the development of new visitor infrastructure and amenities. This grant is funded by the American Rescue Plan and will support development and construction of the new Gateway

Visitor Center. The EDA investment will be matched with \$1.7 million in local funds. Borough staff are preparing legislation for Assembly consideration.

Public Affairs Media Flyover:

MSBSD

- [Mat-Su school board revises guideline on transgender students restroom use](#)
Frontiersman

Community

- [Mat-Su Senior Services announces upcoming health fair](#)
Frontiersman
- [September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month](#)
Frontiersman

Election

- [Hand count to be done to verify machine counting in Nov. 8 Borough Election](#)
Frontiersman
- [November election candidate lists are final for assembly & school board seats](#)
Frontiersman

Infrastructure

- [Borough explores converting rail embankments to highway use](#)
Frontiersman

State

- [Governor announces 2022 PFD amount](#)
Alaska's News Source

Emergency Preparedness

- [Butte Fire, Mat-Su EMS and other units participate in training exercises](#)
Frontiersman

Facebook Posts

- [Mat-Su Borough Remembers 9/11 \(Video\)](#)
2.2k views

Future Events:

Sat., Sept. 24, 2022 from 10am to 3pm – 14th Annual Mat-Su Emergency Preparedness Expo, Curtis D. Menard Memorial Sports Center, 1001 S. Clapp Street, Wasilla.

Thurs., Oct. 20, 2022 from 3pm to 7pm, Mat-Su Transportation Fair, Curtis D. Menard Memorial Sports Center, 1001 S. Clapp Street, Wasilla.