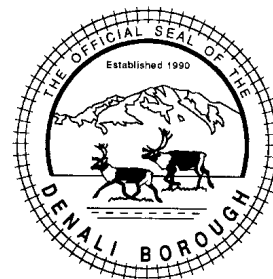


DENALI BOROUGH

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Chris Noel, Mayor

September 2026 Report

This report primarily speaks to non-agenda items; agenda items will be addressed during the Assembly Meeting.

Items of Interest

- **Borough Elections-** Candidate packets are now available in the borough office for the borough municipal election, to be held November 3rd. The following seats are open this year: Mayor, Assembly Seat A - District 1, E – District 3, and G – District 5, and School Board Seat B – District 2, F – District 4, and G – District 5. More information, including candidate packets and a voting district map are available at denaliborough.org/election.
- **Polychrome Bridge Ribbon Cutting-** Denali National Park and Preserve hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony for the Polychrome Bridge project, and I was thrilled to be on the second fully loaded bus to cross the newly constructed bridge. Thanks to our bus drivers, Nancy Russell and Jen Reifler for taking the group safely across the new bridge. Congratulations to all of the partners including Granite Construction, Jacobs Engineering, KWH Constructors, Western Federal Highway's, the National Park Service Regional Office, and the team at Denali National Park- what an incredible accomplishment. The Park road will fully reopen to bus traffic in 2027.
 - Come celebrate the completion of the Polychrome Bridge project with cake and community, September 10th at the Denali Visitor Center.
- **Alaska Defense Forum-** The fourth Annual Alaska Defense Forum brought together military, government, and industry partners to collaborate and discuss Alaska's ongoing role in the national defense space. I was a first-time attendee and appreciated the opportunity to reconnect with Clear SFS Commander Lt Col. Williams, we talked about our efforts to increase the tour of duty opportunities at Clear, and what it will take to bring accompanied service members into our community. There was discussion, broadly, about data centers and the ongoing need for energy to power installations into the future. We learned about Intergovernmental Service Agreements, and the opportunity the play for local governments or Tribes to partner directly with installations to provide essential services.

Emergency Planning

- **Bear Creek Fire Road Repair Project-** Culverts are completed in the June Creek subdivision, and Hawks Enterprises is actively laying down geotextile fabric and placing screened roadbed material. They are willing to work directly with homeowners who wish to have work done on private property.
- **Brush Drop Off-** Thanks to our partnership with the Division of Forestry and Fire Protection, brush drop is still available at the transfer station and landfill. Stay tuned for updates about opening the McKinley Village DNR gravel pit for drop off.
- **Cantwell Fire and EMS Meeting-** On September 1st, Cantwell VFD hosted a public meeting to discuss current levels of service and recruit volunteers. We heard about the ongoing challenge, particularly for volunteers to staff an ambulance for calls that can last over 10 hours- it's just not practical for a volunteer to cover this responsibility. I have a follow up meeting scheduled with Interior Region EMS Council, and with the Mat-Su Borough. Appreciation to our local fire Chiefs Morin and Scoles who attended and provided input, advice, and options moving forward. It is clear that "what got us here won't get us there," and like the summer medic program at Tri-Valley Volunteer Fire Department, some sort of paid medic presence is needed to lift the burden from volunteers.

Community Development

- **Fall Flu Vaccine Clinic** - We will be working in partnership with Public Health Nurses to offer a flu vaccine clinic again this fall. The clinic is scheduled for 3-6 pm on Thursday, October 22nd at the Tri-Valley Community Center in Healy. Vaccines will be offered free of charge. The Public Health Nurses have also changed the way they will be handling registration, and we anticipate wait times will be much shorter this year.
- **Housing Needs Assessment** - The Denali Borough's draft Housing Needs Assessment is now available for public review on housing needs assessment webpage. This report looks at current and future housing needs across the Borough and will help guide local housing decisions going forward. The MHP team will be making a site visit in late September to meet with borough staff and community partners to discuss the report and its implementation. The MHP team will make a presentation to the Borough Assembly and Planning Commission at the joint work session scheduled for September 23rd. We are collecting public comment on the report through September 30th.
- **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)** - Over the past two months, the Agnew::Beck team has been seeking feedback from industry leaders, CEDS committee members, and potential partners on the SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) and recommended Strategic Direction (Goals, Objectives, and Strategies) for borough economy. We plan to release the draft CEDS for public comment on October 1st.
- **Antler Ridge** - Work on the new trail at Antler Ridge is anticipated to start this week. The half-mile Forest Loop trail will offer an ADA-accessible and new family friendly option at Antler Ridge. Please watch out for crews removing brush and trees in preparation for trail construction next summer.
- **Healy Area Shooting Range CORC Work Session** - The CORC will hold a work session at 7pm on October 13th with community members who may be interested in starting a non-profit to establish and manage a Healy Area Shooting Range.

Land Planning

- **Quota Appraisal**-Following a citizen land sale petition, the borough received an appraisal back on eight ~5 acre lots proposed for residential sale. The appraisal, and accompanying best interest finding will be included on the agenda of the Joint Planning Commission/Assembly work session on September 23rd. The appraisal indicated an average per lot value of \$11,900, slightly higher for those with rough access, and slightly lower for those without constructed access.

Solid Waste

- **Water Leak at the Landfill Shop** – On September 6th, operators discovered a water leak in the upstairs bathroom at the landfill shop. The bathroom and laundry facility sit over top the landfill office, with our scale infrastructure, Toyo stove, and office furniture. Unfortunately, the scale computer was directly impacted, and we closed the landfill on September 8th. We will work with our insurer to file an appropriate claim. We are working with a local contractor, Yanert Valley LLC, to open the walls and will perform a complete assessment once the wet material is removed.

Denali Borough School District

- **Alaska Association of Student Government Conference (AASG)** - We are working closely with the Tri-Valley School as they prepare to host the AASG Conference September 25-27th. The conference will bring together over 300 students from across the state to debate resolutions, address issues, and initiate change in our school and local communities. The borough will support the school in showing off Healy, and the greater Denali Borough to students from across Alaska.
- **The Big Check** – The Denali Borough hosted Superintendent Burr and school district office staff for our annual lunch and presentation of “The Big Check,” an oversize edition of the full budgeted local contribution towards our district of \$3,265,846. This represents our communities strong ongoing support for our brick and mortar school, and the Denali PEAK homeschool program.

Staffing

- The application period for Emergency Manager closed and we are in the process of reviewing applications.

Wishing all a pleasant fall and smooth preparations for the winter season,

- Chris