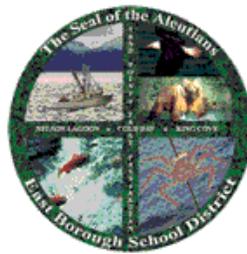
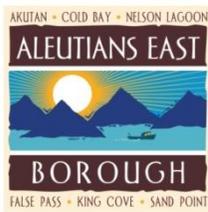


In the Loop



Bringing the Aleutians East Borough, the AEB School District and Eastern Aleutian Tribes together by sharing common goals.

Crews Make Progress on Construction of Taxiway and Apron to Terminal Building in Cold Bay

Workers are making headway on construction of the new taxiway and apron adjacent to the main runway, which leads to the Aleutians East Borough Terminal Building in Cold Bay. Crews picked up where Knik Construction left off in October, following equipment breakdowns and challenging weather conditions. Work resumed on the project on April 1st. However, even in spring, Aleutian weather can still be problematic.

“We went through a period of about ten days of winter weather,” said Kim Steed, project engineer with R & M Consulting. “We had storms and lots of snow. But during the last five days, it has warmed up considerably.”

Steed said most of the snow, if not all of it, has melted, and crews are taking advantage of the good weather.



Construction on the taxiway and apron leading to the AEB Terminal Building in Cold Bay resumed on April 1st. Photo by Kim Steed.

“We’re working away, but you always have to be aware of the weather because you never know when it’s going to change,” he said.

Between Knik Construction and R&M Consultants, there are about 40 people on the job.

“We’ve almost doubled the population out here,” said Steed. The goal is to finish the project by July 31st. To meet that goal, crews are working seven days a week, 12 hours a day.

“There’s quite a bit of work yet to be done before it’s paved and the lights are installed,” said Steed. “The pavement has to be grooved so it will drain water. Then there’s striping that has to be applied to the asphalt surfaces so pilots know where they’re going and when to stop.”

Steed said crews anticipate they will have all the pavement down by mid-June or early July.

“That’s a very, very ambitious schedule,” he said. “There are four phases to this project, and we’re in phase one right now. But all of the phases will go fairly quickly.”

Later phases of the project include crosswind runway improvements to address the runway visibility zone.



There are four phases to this project. Currently, crews are in phase 1. The goal is to wrap up by July 31st. Photo by Hap Kremer.

That requires reconfiguring the runway to enhance safety, moving the runway edge lights, adding 40 feet of additional pavement and new runway navigational aids. Crews will also repave the main runway and replace the edge lighting system.

“When we’re done here, the main runway will be a lot smoother, and there will be a better surface for everyone involved,” Steed said. “The taxiway and apron to the terminal building will also be a huge upgrade.”

City of Sand Point Updates Comprehensive Community Development Plan

Last week, Sand Point residents and community leaders filled the council chambers to take part in a forum seeking input to update the City’s comprehensive development plan. Community stakeholders from the City, Borough, School District, Eastern Aleutian Tribes, the Shumagin Corporation, the Qagan Tayagungin Tribe, and processors were among those who participated.

State statute requires first class cities to prepare a comprehensive plan as a basis for developing land use controls. In addition, comprehensive plans can provide documentation for capital project requests and grant funding. Funding sources will often look for an existing comprehensive plan.

“It’s also a good time for the City to look at the opportunities and challenges that it faces,” said



Many of the goals from the last plan have been achieved, such as the rehabilitation of the small boat harbor. Photo by Jon Isaacs.

Jon Isaacs, Senior Planner with AECOM in Anchorage. “What does the City want to set as priorities and implementation actions in the short, mid- and long-term? So this is a really good time for Sand Point to be revising its comprehensive plan.”

Sand Point City Administrator Andy Varner said the last time the plan was updated was in 2004. He said numerous changes have occurred over the past 13 years.

“Several of the goals and objectives in the last plan have been accomplished, and we can turn

the page on some of those projects, such as the rehabilitation of the small boat harbor, a new clinic and a new landfill,” Varner said. “Others require continuing effort.”

At the forum, participants sorted through the projects that have been completed and focused on current issues of significance. Those issues include providing support for the fishing fleet in a changing regulatory and economic environment, workforce and education, potential changes to state municipal revenue sharing and other state services, substance abuse, and improving broadband/Internet service for the region.

Varner said the city council has been engaged in discussions regarding budgets and resources, especially as the legislature considers the state's budget deficit and the possibility of decreasing municipal revenue sharing.

“Do we want to establish a permanent fund? That’s something we’ve talked about,” he said. “That’s a tool the Borough and other communities in the state use with success. Maybe it’s time to revisit that to help us supplement capital projects and matching funds as resources are dwindling at some of the other government levels.”

Another important topic of discussion focused on support for Sand Point’s fishing fleet, including workforce development, expansion of markets, product transportation options and education.



Sand Point City Administrator Andy Varner said the City is examining support services which include completing the new harbor to allow larger boats in. Photo by Jon Isaacs.

“The fisheries have changed a lot over the years,” Varner said. “We’re looking at support services such as completing our new harbor so we can get larger boats in and continue to provide basic city services to the fishing fleet.”

Substance abuse and treatment was another important subject. In the past, suggestions have been made to establish support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous.

“But that has always been a challenge in a small community,” Varner said. “So I think relying upon EAT (Eastern Aleutian Tribes) and supporting behavioral health services is important.”

The City’s Department of Public Safety (DPS) is planning to make drug enforcement a major focus as the new police chief revamps DPS. The EMS and fire squad are also undergoing improvements.

“Public safety is a concern everywhere,” said Varner. “Everybody’s concerned about that, so this was a good topic of conversation.”

Improving broadband and Internet service has also been a goal for some time.

“It’s not just for Sand Point, but for the region as a whole,” Varner said. “I think it’s a way to keep the younger generations engaged and hopefully they’ll want to stay in their communities. That can open a lot of doors to education and employment.”

The planners who worked on Sand Point’s comprehensive plan in 2004 are also drafting the new plan. Varner said consultants with AECOM will be working on follow up interviews this month.

“We don’t just rely on a meeting or two to get input,” said Isaacs. “There were stakeholders who weren’t able to make it to the last meeting, so we had some one-on-one discussions with some of the stakeholders after the meeting, and we’re going to be holding more discussions. We want to get their perspectives on what they see as some of the opportunities, challenges and issues that the plan should consider. We’ll be reaching out to some of the corporations and tribes that were not there as well as to some of the regional entities, including Aleutian Housing Authority and Eastern Aleutian Tribes.”

AECOM will also update community maps, the land use plan as well as planning and zoning ordinances. In addition, planners will reach out to Sand Point high school students to involve them in the process.

“We’re essentially putting a plan together for a city where, in theory, the students will be growing up and living,” said Isaacs, “so we plan to gather their perspectives on what they believe the comprehensive plan should address. We really want to hear that voice.”

The City anticipates a draft of the plan will be available in June.

“We’re using what was done years ago and taking a fresh look at the information,” Varner said.

Anyone who would like to provide public comment can do so by emailing Andy Varner at avarner@sandpointak.org or calling (907) 274-7561.



Public safety was another important subject. The City’s Department of Public Safety (DPS) is planning to make drug enforcement a major focus as the new police chief revamps DPS.

New Sand Point Police Chief Roger Bacon Finds Position to be Rewarding

It's been a month since Sand Point's new Police Chief Roger Bacon joined the force to head up the Department of Public Safety, and so far, he's enjoying the challenges that have come from the job. Chief Bacon hails from Unalaska. He has worked in law enforcement there since 1993. He started as an officer and moved up through the ranks as sergeant. Shortly before he left, he was serving as the night shift supervisor. Bacon was inspired to move to Sand Point and take on the challenge as the police department's chief after talking with former police chief John Lucking.

"He's a friend of mine, and I've known him for about 24 years," he said. "We talked about the community (Sand Point), and some of the needs as well as the highlights of living and working here."



Former Sand Point Police Chief John Lucking (right) shakes the hand of new Police Chief Roger Bacon (left) while handing him his badge. Moments earlier, Mayor Glen Gardner, Jr. had sworn Bacon in as Chief. Photo courtesy: Sand Point Department of Public Safety.

After discussing the opportunity with Lucking, Chief Bacon was convinced to apply for the job.

"So far, it's been wonderful," he said. "I've been getting my household set up. My dog and I are exploring the town on a daily basis, so it's been fun."

As he acclimates to the community, Bacon has jumped in with both feet to take on the challenges he and his department are facing.

"The opioid epidemic that's sweeping the state is definitely a problem here," Bacon said. "It's a priority for the mayor, city council, and it's a priority for me. The police department will focus heavily on drug enforcement and drug interdiction."

Bacon said another challenge for the department is attracting and retaining quality law enforcement officers.

“That’s something the city and the mayor have taken steps toward fixing,” he said. “I think we’re headed in the right direction there to make Sand Point a more attractive place to live. It’s also important to become a member of the community, as opposed to just being a short-term employee.”

Bacon said the city and the police department have examined the pay matrix and have made adjustments. In addition, they have devised other incentives to encourage officers to remain in the community, especially for those with families.

“We’re looking for employees that will have more of a community engagement focus,” he said.

Bacon said another goal is to improve organization within the department, so he’s hoping to acquire a records management system. He said former Police Chief Lucking was on board with integrating a system previously used by the State of Alaska. However, that system has since been discontinued, so he’s looking into a private records management system.

“Unfortunately, it’s expensive,” he said. “So we’ll be considering funding options such as grants, which would be ideal. It’s definitely something that’s needed in this department for organization purposes and the ability to spot trends.”

Another need within Sand Point’s Department of Public Safety is to rebuild the Fire Department and the EMS division.

“Right now, it’s in a state of disarray,” he said. “The Fire Department is pretty much non-existent. The EMS Division is functioning, but it really needs a shot in the arm. That’s one of the things I’ll be focusing on in the very near future. We have flyers out seeking volunteers, and we have some training (for emergency trauma technicians) coming up. So hopefully, we can get more people qualified for those positions.”

Bacon said pay incentives, such as a \$50 stipend per run for volunteers who respond on an ambulance or with the fire department, will be very helpful.

“I’m very happy to see that the city has recognized the importance of volunteers,” he said. “The stipend is a pretty good incentive for people to volunteer.”

While Bacon is finding the position of police chief to be rewarding, he’s also enjoying the opportunities Sand Point has to offer during his time off.

“I’m looking into buying a four-wheeler, and I’m talking with people in town about what’s the best brand and the least expensive way to get it here,” he said.

Bacon is also eagerly anticipating the opportunity to participate in other outdoor recreational activities.

“I have my bow here, and I’m looking forward to hunting this fall,” he said. “I’m also counting down the days until the Sand Point Silver Salmon Derby. I’m a big fisherman, and I enjoy doing that. I have some fly rods being sent to me, so I can also try my hand at fly fishing.”

Bacon said he’s excited for the summer and fall to get here. In the meantime, he’s enjoying the beautiful scenery Sand Point has to offer.

“The house I’m living in has a beautiful view of the bay,” Bacon said. “I really couldn’t ask for anything better than that.”

APICDA “Reboot” Conference Seeks Input from Residents

*By Ellen Krsnak,
Director of Communications and Media for APICDA*

The Community Development Quota (CDQ) program began in 1992, and many of APICDA’s existing programs have been in place since then. The world has changed a lot in the last 25 years, and so have the needs of the CDQ communities and their residents. To effectively evaluate their current programs and determine what changes might be necessary, APICDA sent a questionnaire to every adult resident seeking their thoughts and concerns, their views of community strengths and weaknesses, and their opportunities. The feedback from this questionnaire will play a major role in APICDA’s upcoming Community Outreach Conference later this month.



APICDA has changed the conference agenda significantly from past years to host a facilitated listening

session to discuss the recommendations from community residents. This change in format will allow for deeper conversations, planning, and an opportunity to set tangible objectives that advance the mutual goal of community sustainability. APICDA is calling this the “Reboot” Conference because it is time to “reboot” APICDA and their programs to meet today’s needs. The questionnaire data will be confidentially compiled by the Foraker Group, a non-profit that specializes in strengthening non-profits in Alaska. Dennis McMillan, founder of the Foraker Group, will serve as the moderator for the conference.

This may be the most important conference APICDA has ever held! The threats facing rural Alaska are huge – especially in the CDQ communities given their size, their remoteness, and the very high costs of living and operating. State revenue sharing is declining, proposals to shift costs from the state to the municipality abound in the legislature and schools are threatened. Rural Alaska’s entire way of life is threatened.

The conference will be held April 25 - 26, 2017, at the Anchorage Downtown Marriott Hotel. For more information about the event, please contact Max Malavansky, Conference Coordinator, at (907) 929-5273 / (888) 927-4232 or mmalavansky@apicda.com.

Annual Swim Trip to Sand Point Provides Life-Saving Instruction for Borough Students

Every year in April, students from throughout the Aleutians East Borough flock to Sand Point to master life-saving swimming and boating skills. This year, 28 students (20 from King Cove and 8 from False Pass) immersed themselves in instruction that could someday save their lives. Sand Point is the only community in the Borough with a swimming pool, providing the perfect aquatic classroom experience.

“I’m guessing 90 percent of these kids are from fishing families,” said Jason Bjornstad, pool manager.



Twenty-eight students (20 from King Cove and 8 from False Pass) participated in the annual swimming and boating safety instruction in Sand Point. Photo by Lennie Brandell.

That fact alone makes it critical for the kids to learn how to swim and know what to do if they find themselves in life-threatening situation.

“A lot of these kids will eventually spend a big part of their lives out on the water,” said Paul Barker, 4th grade teacher and chaperone from King Cove.

Students learned how to master the breast stroke, the front crawl and the elementary back swim.



All the kids passed the swim test. Photo by Lennie Brandell.

“I think it’s important to learn the fundamentals of swimming,” said Bjornstad. “If they ever fall into the water, they’ll be able to swim and safely get out of a dangerous situation. It’s a great thing that they’re able to come here and learn these skills.”

The kids from King Cove are mainly 4th – 6th graders.

“We separate the kids who need to learn how to swim and the ones who already know how, so Jason can teach them different strokes, and he advances them to

make them better swimmers,” said Barker. “After coming for a few years, they become more proficient at swimming.”

The school in False Pass is small, so all the students went on the swim trip, spanning grades one through eight. The school’s graduating senior came along to offer his assistance with the kids, in addition to teacher Kevin Barnett and chaperone Claire Fredric. For the students, the experience left a lasting impression.

“Learning how to swim was hard, but then easier, and I felt at home in the water,” said False Pass student R. Mulkey.

“You have to learn how to swim or you will sink,” said E. Hoblet of False Pass.

“It was very important information that will be useful for surviving and for saving others,” said D. Hoblet.

In the past, the school district planned for five days of intensive swimming instruction. This year,

the plan was to scale it down to three. However, because they were weathered in, they stayed an extra day. That additional time was something the kids didn't seem to mind.

"They were all gung ho. They wanted to be in the pool ten hours a day," Bjornstad said. "I had to tell the kids, you have to get out of the pool and dry out once in a while."

All that enthusiasm paid off in a big way.

"It's amazing what the kids accomplish when they're here, especially since many of them have never been in a pool before," said Bjornstad. "This year, we had 100 percent of the kids pass the swim test. They were all able to dive into the deep end by the time they left."

This year, the Coast Guard also played a role in the swimming and boating safety instruction.

"They called me about a month or so ago and wanted to know if they could be a part of it," Bjornstad said.

The Coast Guard personnel taught the students about the importance of life jackets and the Kids Don't Float program. They also showed them how to put on survival suits, what they're made of and how they keep you warm in the water.

"All of the instruction is very engaging for the kids," said Barker.

Bjornstad said the annual swimming and boating instruction is successful largely because of the teachers and parent chaperones who go along on the swim trip ever year.

"I probably couldn't get most of this done without them," he said. "They deserve a lot of the credit."

King Cove parent Lennie Brandell accompanied his two sons, Jager-Sean (6th grade) and Lennie (4th grade) on the trip. He's been a chaperone for the past 14 years.

"Teaching these kids how to swim in a short amount of time and having them learn about the different types of life jackets is critical to saving lives," he said.

In addition to the instruction, Brandell said the kids also enjoyed the social aspect.



This year, the Coast Guard added to the instruction by teaching the students about the Kids Don't Float program, the importance of life jackets and how to put on survival suits. Photo by Lennie Brandell.

“It brings the kids closer together,” he said. “As a parent, it’s also important to enjoy this time with your kids because they grow up so fast.”

Akutan City Employee Organizes Rescue, Spay/ Neuter Clinic for Pets and Strays

When City of Akutan Utility Clerk Rachelle Tcheripanoff saw the number of unwanted pets in her community, she knew she had to do something.

“I noticed there were a lot of animals in town, and many of them weren’t fixed,” she said. They kept repopulating. Some people ended up keeping them.”

She said her plan was set in motion soon after her in-law’s dogs had puppies.

“Once the litter was weaned, we went onto Dutch List (an online program) and found out there were a lot of people in Dutch Harbor/Unalaska who were interested in puppies,” she said.

From there, she met a couple who took one puppy from the litter and offered to help with fostering and finding homes for other puppies that weren’t wanted.

“I know it’s very expensive to get a pet fixed and get vaccinations,” Tcheripanoff said. “Akutan is a small town, and we don’t get a vet that comes in annually.”

After speaking to a vet technician in Dutch Harbor, she contacted Rachel Alinsunurin with Alaska Whiskers and Tails.

“So when I had a litter, I would contact Rachel and coordinated with her to send the litter to Dutch Harbor,” she said.

Tcheripanoff took account of how many animals there were in Akutan. She counted 40 cats and kittens and 6 puppies that needed homes and were sent to Dutch Harbor. Tcheripanoff said Alinsunurin worked with PenAir to arrange for the dogs and cats to travel to Anchorage free of charge and then go to rescue facilities in the surrounding area. At that point, she contacted Lisa Carpenter, the director of Alaska Whiskers & Tails in Wasilla.

“She does a lot of fostering of pets, and she loves animals with a passion,” said Tcheripanoff. “She saw all of the cats and dogs that I was sending out because they kept repopulating. I mentioned

that we would be very interested in a spay and neuter clinic in Akutan. So we came up with a list of between 20 to 30 animals that could get spayed or neutered if a veterinarian was able to come to town. That was all the information she needed.”

Tcheripanoff said Carpenter applied for and received a grant for a spay and neuter clinic. When Veterinarian David Colwell of Aleutian Pet Care went to Dutch Harbor, he extended his stay, thanks to the grant, and flew to Akutan to conduct the clinic, which also included vaccines for dogs and cats.

“So if a pet owner could afford to pay for the spay or neutering, we would ask them to pay,” she said. “But if not, we wanted to make sure that all the animals in town would get fixed, if their owners wanted that to happen.”

It was important to Tcheripanoff to get the ball rolling on rescuing unwanted pets as well as organizing the spay/neuter/vaccination clinic.

“I just wanted to provide an alternative for people who had too many animals or who had litters they didn’t want,” Tcheripanoff said. “I wanted to be able to rescue them and find homes for them somewhere else.”

Tcheripanoff said she also wanted to make sure animals in her community are treated well and could get the care they need.

“I have a dog and a cat, and I consider them to be my fur babies,” she said. “This means a lot to me because I love animals.”

Got News?

If you have news you’d like to share or if you’d like to subscribe, please email ltanis@aeboro.org or call Laura Tanis at (907) 274-7579.





*Thank you for reading **In the Loop**. If you would like to subscribe or unsubscribe, please send an email to ltanis@aeboro.org. For more information about our communities, our people, and our fisheries, please visit us at www.aleutianseast.org and www.aebfish.org. For the latest news, find us on Facebook:*

[*Link to AEB's Facebook page*](#)

[*Link to King Cove's Facebook page*](#)

