

Council informs Sen. Murkowski of Nome's needs and wants

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Author: Diana Haecker | Section: News | 943 Words

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The Nome Common Council convened for a special meeting on Monday, April 18 to welcome Senator Lisa Murkowski to town and discuss the city's federal priorities.

Topping the list was funding for the Nome Deep-draft port expansion, but also the city's ask for funds to further the combined housing project for teachers and Nome police officers, and NJUS projects to enhance the wind farm and expand water and sewer services.

In citizens comments, Nome Community Council's executive director Rhonda Schneider thanked the Senator for her support of the Housing First project.

Megan Onders encouraged the City to create a Nome Development Corporation to improving housing in Nome and figure out costly hold-ups such as water and sewer connections to new home developments.

After exchanging pleasantries and reminiscing about Nome's late Major Richard Beneville, Major John Handeland dove right in and thanked the Senator for funding earmarked in the Infrastructure and Jobs Act for the port expansion. To be clear, the \$250 million are going towards the federal side of port funding and are earmarked for the Army Corps' Civil Works program to "initiate and complete West Causeway Extension" of the port. The city is obligated to share the overall cost with federal partners and needs to come up with funds to finance the several stages of planning, design and construction of several features of the port.

When the bill passed in January through a bitterly divided Congress, Murkowski said she couldn't wait to call Nome with the good news as it was in the middle of the night in Nome when the bill passed in D.C. "We were shocked that this funding materialized," said Mayor John Handeland. "I know there was a lot of negotiations across the aisle to get this from pipedream to fruition." The city has lobbied the State Legislature to contribute money to the port expansion and also wrote several RAISE grants to the federal U.S. Dept. of Transportation. Murkowski pledged support for the project, to work with the city on the matching grant issue and to work at multiple tracks to accelerate the port expansion. She said that Washington D.C.

now pays attention to the Arctic. "You have more awareness of this port because of the significance of the Arctic right now," she said, adding that more federal "folks" will be coming to Nome to gain understanding of the region. The first on the wish list of federal visitors would be the newly appointed U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Linda L. Fagan, said John Handeland, then the Secretary of Dept. of Transportation. Handeland said as the port gets bigger, the airport may need an extension of the runway.

Shifting talk to other major needs of the city, Handeland said that Nome's affordable housing shortage takes its toll on teacher and law enforcement retention. "We see high turnover at the school and the police. Teachers are financially undervalued and can't afford to pay big rents on their salaries," Handeland said.

The City has worked with the Alaska Housing Finance Corp. and obtained a grant to design a multi-unit housing complex for teachers and police. "If you are aware of any opportunity with a federal agency, we'd be grateful," Handeland said.

The prospect of the port expansion adding to the housing pressure came up when Murkowski cautioned that Nome needs to develop a longterm plan. "How do you house the construction workers?" she asked. "You will have limited growth if you don't have adequate energy, health care and housing." She added that every community she visits in

Alaska is "maxxed out." "Buildings are old and moldy and energy inefficient. We gotta refocus on how to provide housing for people and utilize the assets we have at state, tribal and federal level," she said. Apparently, there was an effort to address housing in the Build Back Better Act, but she said "that legislation isn't going anywhere."

Part of the housing crisis are also high energy costs, exacerbated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In order to reduce Nome's dependance on fossil fuels for power generation, Nome Joint Utilities' Ken Morton presented a plan to expand the Nome Wind Farm, which currently produces seven percent of Nome's electrical power, to add two more turbines to the Banner Ridge farm, add a battery storage system and/or add four wind turbines in the vicinity of Cape Nome and install a battery system there, to potentially have 40 percent of electrical energy generated by wind, which would decrease reliance on diesel fuel by a whopping 900,000 gallons per year. The estimated project cost would be between \$14 and \$40 million.

In regard to water and sewer expansion efforts, Murkowski heard from Megan Onders that it is nearly impossible to access the federal money that is directed to make water and sewer systems safer or expand them to new areas. Onders said that NJUS would apply for the funds to bring water and sewer pipes to a new development, but the funds have to be spent within one year with the obligation to have a the newly built home there in the time span of a year. Anybody building in Nome knows that it's a near impossible task.

In final words, Murkowski said that she was shocked to find out on her trip to St. Lawrence Island a few years ago that the newest home built there was 12 years old. She said that communities need housing, or else people leave their villages, move to the closest hub, to find out that there is no housing either. "And then you end up with Housing First projects," she said. "Our first goal is to put people in homes."

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Member communities have five more years to utilize their \$1 million allocations - NSEDC's Community Energy Fund program extended

September 12, 2013 | Nome Nugget, The (AK)

Author: Tyler Rhodes, NSEDC; Communications Director | Section: Opinions | 490 Words

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NOME-The 15 member communities of Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC) will have an additional five years to access millions of dollars in funding for energy efficiency improvements through NSEDC's Community Energy Fund.

Among the many ways NSEDC works to support member communities and their residents, NSEDC has added programs to address the region's high energy costs in recent years. In addition to the Consolidated Bulk Fuel purchasing program, NSEDC implemented the Community Energy Fund in 2009 and allocated \$1 million to each NSEDC member community for energy-related projects.

The program aims to reduce energy costs for Norton Sound residents by encouraging the construction of renewable energy systems, efficiency upgrades to existing power systems, or the weatherization of public facilities. To date, seven NSEDC member communities have used all or a portion of their available funding for nine different projects. A summary of approved Community Energy Fund projects can be found below.

NSEDC's Board of Directors recognizes that it takes time to plan and develop energy infrastructure improvement projects. When first implemented, the Community Energy Fund had a sunset date requiring communities to access their allotted funding by 2014. As that sunset date neared, a sizable portion of the Community Energy Fund still remained available to many of NSEDC's member communities. At their secondquarter meeting held in Nome in August, the NSEDC Board of Directors elected to extend the program for an additional five years, giving communities until 2019 to utilize the funding.

"The Community Energy Fund has already made several projects possible that have resulted in safer and more efficient energy systems for many of our communities," said NSEDC Board Chairman Dan Harrelson. "It only makes sense to continue this program so that all our communities have the opportunity to improve their energy infrastructure and reduce costs for residents."

Nome and Unalakleet are the only two communities to have fully utilized their available funding, both putting their entire allocation toward large wind energy systems. Other communities have accessed the Community Energy Fund to improve their existing systems through weatherization of public facilities or the installation of more energy-efficient components, like streetlights and power plant generators.

NSEDC encourages municipalities and/or utility providers in member communities to explore renewable or energy-efficiency projects that could receive financial support through NSEDC's Community Energy Fund. For more information, got to www.nsedc.com or contact Community Benefits Director Paul Ivanoff III at 800-385-3190 or pivanoff@nsedc.com. Year Community Project Amount

2009 Unalakleet Wind energy generation \$1,000,000

2011 Gambell Meter base replacement \$460, 019

2011 White Mountain New energy-efficient generators \$539, 268

2012 White Mountain Waste heat recovery (municipal water heating) \$234, 500

2012 Shaktoolik Water tank efficiency upgrade \$75, 000

2012 Nome Wind energy generation \$1, 000, 000

2013 Savoonga Meter base replacement \$439, 862

2013 Golovin Streetlight replacement \$42, 378

2013 Shaktoolik Water treatment plant efficiency upgrades

\$142,000

2013 Gambell Streetlight replacement \$88, 290

Total NSEDC Community Energy Fund expenditures to date \$4, 021, 317

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Briefs

February 5, 2001 | Anchorage Daily News (AK) Author: Staff | Section: Metro | 308 Words Page: B2 OpenURL Link

Sterling Highway

Three people injured as truck slides into path of car; drivers cited

Three people were injured in a wreck around noon Saturday on the Sterling Highway when a pickup slid out of a parking lot into the path of a car, Alaska State Troopers said.

The driver of the Ford pickup, Daniel A. Reynolds, 18, of Sterling, was cited for failing to wear a seat belt and driving too fast for conditions, troopers said. Three of the four people in the car, a Pontiac Firebird, were injured. None were wearing a seat belt and the car's driver, Michael W. Sproates, 33, of Sterling, was cited for failing to have a child wear a seat belt, troopers said.

Anchorage Daily News

Sterling Highway

Kenai woman driving minivan slides into a snow berm and rolls vehicle

Two people were taken to Providence Seward Medical Center with minor injuries Friday night after a minivan slid into a snow berm and rolled on its side near Mile 38 on the Sterling Highway, Alaska State Troopers said.

Dora Nelson, 46, of Kenai was traveling east when she lost control of her Dodge Caravan on an icy curve, troopers said. Seven people were in the van and all were wearing seat belts, troopers said. Troopers estimated damage to the minimal standard standard

Anchorage Daily News

Nome

Turbine project gets government's OK after environmental assessment

The U.S. Department of Energy has approved the Nome Wind Turbine Demonstration Project.

The federal agency has conducted an environmental assessment and found no significant impact.

If the project gets funding, two 225- to 750-kilowatt generators could be installed before next winter. The project would be adjacent to the decommissioned U.S. Air Force radar station about 4 1/2 miles north of Nome atop Anvil Mountain at about 1,000 feet above sea level.

The turbines would supply less than 10 percent of Nome Joint Utility System's demand.

The Associated Press

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Staff, 'Briefs', *Anchorage Daily News* (online), 5 Feb 2001 B2 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/0F7AD9EA36F0D776>