MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

It seems like yesterday I took my seat as Mayor, when in fact, it was the year 2016. Seven and a half years seems like a long time, but the old saying, “Work at something you love, and it will never seem like work,” has been true for me. Taking a long look back, I realize that the many projects and decisions I was involved in, which were successful, tend to fade in memory. Continues what we’ve all started. The first and most recent is our seawall agreement, which construction will begin in late spring. This is a perfect example of a community vision shared by many for decades finally becoming a reality. And what a beautiful reality it will be knowing our community can stay in its current location with infrastructure protected and cultural sites preserved. The funding we secured is the largest in our region’s history. Our home building plans are progressing despite initial disappointment in the projected new costs due to mainly COVID delays. With some careful phasing and rational design changes, we will have the beginning of housing projects in every village in several years.

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Rick began employment with the NSB under the MJP Program initially as a Recreation Instructor. He quickly moved up to the Recreation Assistant a year later. In April 2002, Rick began providing service as a Security Guard. He again moved up and serves as the Lead Security Guard, since August 2019.

Rick ensures the facility maintains safe. He has trained many guards, permanent and temporary alike. As the Lead, he ensures all shifts are covered, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year. It is not uncommon for Rick to wake at 3 am, to report to work at 4 am when we need the midnight shift covered.

He has provided outstanding service to the North Slope Borough. Quyanaqpak Rick!

NSB HEALTH FAIR
North Slope Borough Community Health Fair starts Tuesday, Aug 22nd -24th. Support Culture, Family, and Community. Open to all ages and a free event at IHLC multipurpose room. Community Stories by Rose Domnick, Calricaraq and Historical Trama by Dorothy Bekoalok IAM kicked off the NSB Health Fair for the 2023 Healthy Ways.

Stories of Understanding the Impacts of our History and Intergenerational Trauma. Culture Protective Factors of Healing Practices and Reconciliation-Pieces that will help Healing were talked amongst the three-day events followed by round tables.

REINSTATING THE NSB RURAL JUSTICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION
Mayor Brower has tasked his office with reinstating the North Slope Borough Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission. He recognized the concerns of the North Slope Communities early in 2023 and this commission is well equipped to listen and address the concerns of the people. This commission encompasses all 8 communities as well as NSB Police department and Law department. We have Candidates from almost all communities and we encourage this commission to continue to work in the next administration.

CHAPTER 10.14. RURAL JUSTICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION
§ 10.14.010. ESTABLISHMENT.

The purpose of the Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission is to advise the Mayor and the Assembly on matters pertaining to law enforcement, judicial services, alcohol and drug importation and interdiction, subsistence abuse, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, and sexual assault.

NSB EMPLOYEE LONGEVITY 20 & 30 YEARS
Congratulations to the employees who have reached their longevity goal of 20 and 30 years of working for the North Slope Borough. "I want to express my personal appreciation for your achievements and milestones. Loyal and dedicated employees, like YOU, you are the foundation to any successful company. Thank you, for your contribution to our success." Department directors were able to receive for those who were not able to make it.

30+ years: John Datta
Ida Okpeaha
Lucy Leavitt
Christopher Rea

20+ years: Michael Soriano
Clarissa Panningona
Brian Person
Neil Lynch
Paul Renschen
Lucas Amindon
Sheila Burke
Olivia Cabinboy
Susie Sline
John Tagarook
I wanted to say something about my long-term coworker, my friend, Craig George. He was kind, gentle, humble, funny, and could teach you something without you even knowing you were in the middle of an academic lesson. It’s been a pleasure working for my hometown Department of Wildlife Management, and people like Craig were a big part of the reason. He helped so many people and helped preserve and protect an Inupiat culture that was judged and stereotyped for years by outsiders. He helped combine thousands of years of traditional local Inupiat knowledge with world-class technology and data. He was the first to publish how long whales could live and worked with men like the late Harry Brower Sr. to learn where they had their calves.

While we mourn the loss of a good colleague but better friend and we pay tribute and celebrate a life that was well lived. A life committed to the science behind marine mammals and a devotion to building consistency and fairness in his work and protecting a culture and region. Not many leave behind a legacy of such dedication and accomplishment. We say fair well, Doctor George. Captain Craig.

SUMMER 2023

Life can be challenging. But a life lived to the fullest stays in fond memories. Craig, through his dedication, humor, music, science and integrity endeared himself to many. This is particularly a difficult and painful time for his family. In extending to them our heartfelt condolences, we wish them courage and strength to bear this tragic loss.

BARROW SENIOR CENTER NAMED TO “IDA OKPEAHA SENIOR CENTER”

"For her dedication, which include programs at Aimaagvik Assisted Living and the NSB Senior Program. I hereby declare naming the Barrow Senior Center to "Ida Okpeaha Senior Center" in honor of Ida Okpeaha’s service to all seniors."

Barrow Senior Center building, located at 5452 North Star Street, renamed the building to “Ida Okpeaha Senior Center” in honor of Ida Okpeaha for her service to all the Seniors. Ida started her career with the North Slope Borough Health Department in 1993 as a temporary Homemaker and transferred to Van driver in 1994. Later she took a job as a transportation supervisor from 1994 to 1997. Currently she is Dispatcher for the senior center. She has been working for the North Slope Borough Health Department for 29 years to date and is retiring in October 2023. She does an outstanding job for the Health Department and demonstrates a positive attitude and exceptional skill in her work. Ida goes above and beyond without hesitation and is a proven leader and role model for her peers at work.

GUESS WHO ANSWERS

Heather Dingman

Heather started working as a Health Program Administrator for the North Slope Borough in 2006. In her eight years working with the Health Department focusing on Project Administration, she’s proved her availability to work under heavy workloads and under pressure. With her degree/background in Flight Services, she took on the job of Director of Search and rescue in 2021. She quickly adapted to her position. Director Dingman has coordinated with the Coast Guard for tabletop exercises, training, and future meetings to ensure the NSB Search and Rescue team is updated and trained for offshore, as well as, ensuring we are actively communicating with the Coast Guard. Director Dingman has been instrumental in the upkeep of the inland SAR training from the National Association of Search and Rescue (NASAR), who came to Barrow to specifically train our entire SAR team as well as the Volunteers from outer-lying Villages. Emergency Services Employees and volunteers work through the most challenging issues. Heather’s dedication to the SAR team, medivacs, and rescues has been endless. Quyanaqpak Heather!

CHIEF THOMAS R. OPIE FIRE STATION

Tom Opie was awarded a Certificate of Recognition for his dedication to the Fire Department and his lifetime commitment to firefighting across the North Slope. This award was given to him at the NSB’s 50th anniversary. The name revealed at the Barrow Fire Station was on September 27, 2023; the building name was revealed to Tom Opie, his family, and the NSB Fire Department, who had worked together for the residents of the entire North Slope.
We all live and what it takes to make and keep the Arctic our bit prouder and with an even greater appreciation for where we are.

As I look at our villages, I can see how far they have come with respect to how many entities work together. The staff in our communities, from public workers to first responders, have enduring respect and gratitude.

Elected officials in our region only get things done with much help from staff. From being a presence on NSB boards and commissions to creating successful Kivgiqs, it all happens because our staff goes above and beyond the call. I see staff attending and working at all of our events, public works crews organizing pre-dawn during storms, and SAR crews staying up all night. I have met with department heads and witnessed the true love they display for what they do for our towns.

These are just some of the memories I take with me and look forward to repeating for many years of the North Slope Borough. Hopefully, my involvement has made a positive difference. I know I did nothing alone but rather as part of a team. I was honored to serve with dedicated and energetic staff. I was privileged to be associated with dynamic and forward-thinking staff members.

In my 32 years of public service, I have always come away a bit prouder and with an even greater appreciation for where we all live and what it takes to make and keep the Arctic our home.

In closing, allow me to express a sentiment you have heard in many of my reports to the Assembly and the public. Our people exist in a world of dual realities. The Iñupiat culture and communities depend on a healthy ecosystem. We also depend on modern infrastructure and resource development as the foundation of our regional economy. We take the potential effects of resource development activities on our region seriously. But I continue to say one thing. Ataatchimukta - Let us unite as one as we move forward and remember there is no issue important enough to put neighbors against one another. No idea not worth a civil debate, no challenge that cannot be met with mutual understanding and consideration. Remember, live a well-rounded life, be careful out there, and above all, be kind to each other, and may God continue to bless our region.

The ceremonial signing recognized the tremendous partnership that emerged amongst the stakeholders. This funding represents the largest amount of federal money the region had ever received in the history of the Borough and will protect the Government’s hub and most populated community for many decades. The federal appropriation was for 494 million dollars, and the Borough will only be responsible for 10 percent of any additional costs going forward. The region for decades has been experiencing experiences frequent and severe coastal storms, resulting in flooding and erosion that threaten public health and safety, the economy of the community, critical infrastructure valued at more than $1 billion, access to subsistence areas, as well as cultural and historical resources. The project will reduce the risk of storm damage to about five miles of coastline by constructing a rock revetment at the bluff area, building a protective berm, and raising Stevenson Street.

“The signing of this document and agreement is a great endeavor for our participation and input that we generated within our communities,” Mayor Brower said. “It has been many years in the making, and previous North Slope Borough administrations were addressing the same concerns going back to the late 1970’s.”