

NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH

Summer 2026 Newsletter

Josiah Aullaqsruaq Patkotak, Mayor

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

First off, to all the successful whaling crews on the North Slope, aḡvalay! As I reflect on this year's hunting season slope-wide, I am reminded of the significance of the North Slope Borough and its unique interwovenness with sustaining our Iñupiaq culture.

Our administration recently carried that message to Juneau, where we had the opportunity to advocate for North Slope communities during the special session to address the proposed Alaska LNG project. I was honored to share our Borough's history and provide critical context on our interests as stakeholders in these ongoing gas line discussions. We made clear that the Borough is not an obstacle and has a long history of managing responsible development, but also emphasized the need for transparency, respect, and informed consent as a part of these ongoing proceedings.

Our administration looks forward to continued involvement in these negotiations, advocating for our community's best interests and ensuring that the resources available to us — as a community and as a state — are leveraged in a way that works for everyone and promotes access to equitable benefits.

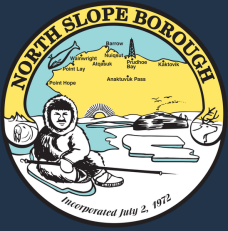
As we move into the summer hunting season and advocate for the future of our communities and resources, we think of the next generation. It is with our future in mind that I am proud to celebrate the launch of the Taiguaqta Initiative, a vital early literacy program created in partnership with the North Slope Borough School District (NSBSD). Literacy is the cornerstone of our children's future, and this program bridges the gap between learning and our rich culture.

I am incredibly proud of our students who traveled to Washington, D.C., to participate in the Native Youth Summit, where they connected with Native youth from all over the country, learned leadership skills, and represented the borough at the national level. Another recent event for our youth was the Inuit Circumpolar Council General Assembly meeting in Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada on July 22-25. Students had the opportunity to gain valuable insight into Inuit leadership, advocacy, and collaboration across different Arctic communities, learn about civic engagement, and develop a stronger understanding of the impacts of local, state, federal, and international governance.

Finally, we celebrate the 54th Anniversary of the incorporation of the North Slope Borough this month. Since our founding on July 2, 1972, we have rooted our First-Class Home Rule Government on our Iñupiaq Values and have grown and prospered throughout the decades. Let us continue to honor our shared history and the self-determination of our elders as we usher in the next generation.

Quyanaqpak,
Josiah Aullaqsruaq Patkotak, Mayor





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INTRODUCING OUR NSB NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the new edition of the North Slope Borough's community newsletter! We will be publishing a seasonal-quarterly newsletter to share highlights, raise awareness of important programs, and celebrate our shared heritage.

The newsletter will be distributed to P.O. boxes and available on the NSB website. Contact NSB Public Information at info@north-slope.org with questions or comments.

FOUNDER'S DAY 54TH ANNIVERSARY



We proudly celebrate the 54th anniversary of the North Slope Borough this month.

"Our Borough was built on the vision that we, as Iñupiat, could govern ourselves and shape our future according to our own values, a vision championed by Eben Hopson," said Mayor Josiah Aullaqsruaq Patkotak. The North Slope Borough was created by an election in 1972 and officially incorporated on July 2 of that same year. At that time, and still true today, the Borough enjoyed first-class status and exercised the powers of planning, zoning, taxation and schools. It was the first time Native Americans had taken control of their destiny through the use of municipal government. It was, and remains, one of the boldest moves ever made by an indigenous people to regain control of their lives and future.

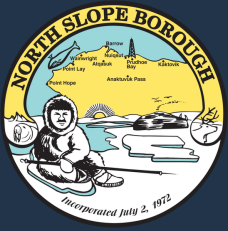
To celebrate Founder's Day, during June and July, we held events in each North Slope community, including a BBQ and giveaways. We would like to thank all staff and local leaders in each community for your hard work hosting these events.

NATIVE YOUTH SUMMIT IN D.C.

In May, North Slope Borough School District students traveled to Washington, D.C. to participate in the Close Up Foundation Native Youth Summit, which brings Native youth from Tribal communities across the country together to build leadership skills, learn about American government and Tribal sovereignty, and advocate on issues affecting Tribal communities.

Students had the opportunity to identify challenges facing their communities, develop solutions, and present their ideas to policymakers on Capitol Hill. Along the way, they made meaningful connections and built friendships with Native youth from across the country. We are proud of our students for representing the North Slope with leadership, pride, and strong voices as they gained experience in civic engagement and advocacy.





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UPDATE ON KEY ISSUES: *Housing*



NSBSD students with teacher-tutors proudly pose in front of a one-bedroom tiny house they built in Utqiagvik.

This spring, the North Slope Borough School District partnered with District Career and Technical Education for a Construction CTE Intensive. Hosted at the Qatqiññaġvik Learning Center, students had the opportunity to build a one-bedroom tiny house from start to finish.

Across a four-session series, students worked together, gained hands-on experience, and learned crucial skills like foundational work and framing. They were able to continue their studies with a teacher-tutor leading daily work sessions.

Throughout the process, the students demonstrated determination, problem-solving skills, and collaboration. We are proud of all they accomplished. Thank you to all community partners who helped make this program possible.

BOROUGH SERVICES SPOTLIGHT:

Police Department Community Engagement

The North Slope Borough Police Department is taking a proactive, engaged, and community-based approach to policing. Police Department staff have attended and participated in many school and community events, including participating in the job fair at Barrow High School, hosting Coffee with a Cop events throughout all communities, attending school prom and graduation events, providing haircuts, and holding an ATV safety class in Anaktuvuk Pass.

The department also participated in Easter events and supported local recreational activities like game nights and youth programs. Administrative and dispatch staff also contributed by coaching the Barrow Whaler Angels cheer team.

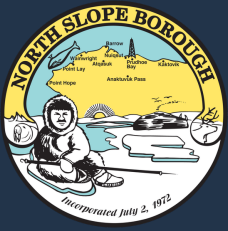
In addition to proactive outreach, officers began implementing the evidence-based Law Enforcement Against Drugs & Violence (LEAD) program in schools this spring, focusing on substance abuse prevention, conflict resolution, and community policing for K-12 students. We appreciate our officers continuously going above and beyond traditional duties to support families and foster open dialogues with residents.



Coffee with a Cop event at Point Hope.

NSB Police Department Prevention Travel Schedule

- July 22-24: Point Lay
- July 27-29: Atqasuk
- July 29-31: Anaktuvuk Pass



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OUR IÑUPIAQ VALUES:

Iłagiigñiq (Family and Kinship)

This edition's Iñupiaq value is Iłagiigñiq, which means family and kinship. We are spotlighting the recently launched Taiguaqta Initiative. Introduced in June by Mayor Patkotak in partnership with the NSBSD, this initiative is an early and elementary (K-3rd) literacy program that promotes reading through culturally relevant, age-appropriate books that reflect Iñupiaq values and lived experiences. Educational research, including the Alaska Reads Act, has identified reading proficiency by the end of third grade as one of the strongest predictors of lifelong success.



Embodying our value of Iłagiigñiq by supporting our families, this program provides children with new, culturally responsive, and age-appropriate books every three months. By integrating traditional stories and local lived experiences into everyday reading, the Taiguaqta Initiative nurtures a love for learning while reinforcing Iñupiaq values and strengthening the vital connection between education, family, and culture.

Upcoming Events

- July 13-15: Assembly Meeting at Point Lay, Community Celebration at Point Lay
- July 30-August 1: Community Celebration at Nuiqsut
- August 4: Assembly Meeting at Utqiagvik

North Slope Borough Assembly

Crawford A. Patkotak, President <i>Barrow</i>	Frederick F. Brower, Member <i>Barrow</i>
Trina Paul, Vice President <i>Barrow</i>	Michael Donovan, Member <i>Barrow</i>
Eva Kinneeveauk, Member <i>Point Hope</i>	Thomas Napageak, Jr., Member <i>Nuiqsut</i>
Stanley D. Brower, Member <i>Wainwright</i>	Cilia Attungowruk, Member <i>Atqasuk & Point Lay</i>
Avaiyak Burnell, Member <i>Barrow</i>	Robin J. Kaleak, Member <i>Kaktovik & Anaktuvuk Pass</i>
Martin Edwardsen, Member <i>Barrow</i>	