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Owner of: Nikiski Village Mobile Home Park (including a Class A well, small community water system)

Nikiski Village Laundromat
The Studio Espresso Shop

North Roaders, and Proud of It!

We are the “North Roaders” of Nikiski – and, we’re different from the other people who live in the cities located in the Kenai Peninsula Borough. Originally, that term was a put-down – a slur -- against our independent spirits and homesteader’s ways. We were seen and treated as the poor country cousins of our neighboring gentrified cities. Now we wear that label with pride. We have built a sustainable lifestyle here in Nikiski that is our own. We really want to maintain that way of life.

We are the only major industrial area on the Peninsula. Soldotna and Kenai have their tourist influx to fish the Kenai River. Seward has their cruise ships and salt water fishing in the summer. Homer has it liberal politics and art colony, as well as their tourist trade. Meanwhile we keep working our dirty industrial jobs.

In Nikiski we have industry and commerce, which we welcome with open arms. What other city on the Peninsula would welcome the swarm of heliports, fleets of small planes, the huge oil plants, our all important refinery, the scattering of oil/gas platforms in our Inlet, the mammoth ships docking along our beaches, and our oil support businesses? We have a maintained escape route road and emergency alarm to keep us safe. What other community has that?

Additionally, we have our commercial fishing industry. There are fish camps up and down our beaches during the summers as far as the eye can see. We have a salmon purchasing station here. Every summer a company processes clams, which have been dug up across the Inlet and flown over to be packed. We are the home of Cook Inlet Spill Protection operation.

Some future or planned local projects:

Recently the Borough leased an ocean front lot to an oil company who has the tank yard across the Inlet. They plan to connect to that tank yard by building a pipeline across the Inlet, and up Spur Highway to our tank yard. This would move the oil directly to our loading docks to be loaded on ships or refined at the refinery. The tank yard on the other side of the Inlet is the one that was endangered by our last volcanic eruption. This is a safer, more efficient way of handling that oil.

If it's economically viable, we're the chosen location for the new LNG plant. It depends on the world markets for LNG products. We're all waiting to see what happens next on it. If it is built, it will be one of the biggest public works project in the USA. We have the deep port docks for cargo ships, the space (land) to build it, seasoned workers to support the project and the community mind set to have that facility here. It will fit right in with local culture.

We have high hopes for the closed Agrium plant. They need to do a two to three year turn around to get the plant ready to produce fertilizer again. First they have to contract for an adequate supply of affordable natural gas. They obtained tax concessions from the State of Alaska recently to grease the wheels for that project.

As a community, we in Nikiski want more industry here and more opportunities for our citizens. And we have BIG ideas!

Electric

There are some citizens that want Nikiski to generate electricity. We have a special leg up on this since every customer of an electric company is a shareholder. Homer Electric Association is a co-op. It gives us a lot of different options, without hurting a publically traded corporation with share holders. Also, HEA was purchasing power from Chugach Electric Company in Anchorage before HEA became energy independent by generating their power. One of their major generating plants is right here in Nikiski. The transmission wires between the Peninsula and Anchorage are in place. Why can't we become an electric energy exporter?

Here are some of our ideas:

The first idea is to use tide turbines like they do in Europe. Nikiski can do it much better. Our Inlet tides are some of the strongest in the world and totally superior to the tides being used elsewhere. Amazing. Twice a day, the twenty foot plus (20'+) tide comes in and then goes out. With the right placement, generation equipment could make virtually free electricity 24/7, using the gravitational pull of the moon's effect on Cook Inlet.

There was a company in the past that was ready to test the possibilities.

A second idea is wind power. Nikiski is designated as a high wind area. Yes, we do have hurricane wind storms that knock down trees and power lines... BUT, our winds are a steady source of power for wind mills – like on Fire Island.

There was company in the past that was ready to test this possibility, too.

A third idea that circulating around town is for us to have Plasma Burner for solid waste. A group of us looked into the idea, ran the numbers and unsuccessfully presented it to our current Borough mayor. Then we tried to get our Assemblymen behind it and that too was unsuccessful.

We wanted to burn the current garbage from the Borough and mine the multiple landfills in the Borough. Right now the Borough, as a policy, doesn't deal with industrial garbage or hazardous waste. We plan to, since the bulk of it comes from our community. And then expand the services by having a barge that would start from here. It could go around the coast line of the State during the summer to collect garbage and hazardous waste. Right now all the hazardous waste currently has to be sent to the Lower 48 for disposal, a huge expense.

The Borough's second largest expense is solid waste disposal. What if we were able to take that waste, burn it until there was nothing left, AND generate electrical power? What could we do, as a community, with all that extra electrical power?

We'd like to make another run at this idea.

Across the Inlet, there are some really big, active volcanoes that have unlimited steam generating potential. Could we explore tapping into some of that energy like they do in Iceland?

Other ideas:

Some of us also have some other business ideas for our community:

Since we have the refinery here, their oil slug waste is the perfect material for making tires. Why not build a tire plant next door to it, which would recycle that waste material too? And think of the jobs we could create!

This is just the tip of the ice berg. We have a LOT of ideas. The best part is that we have the infrastructure within our community to support these ideas and many others. We have our well established industrial base located adjacent to, and in Cook Inlet. Add to that, we have our deep water ports, our world class oil/gas deposits, the expanded electrical grid, the heliports, the small craft

airports, support businesses and our abundant fishing interests. We still have plenty of open space to expand our base. Most of all, we have the residents' will to create additional commercial and heavy industrial interests – all located right here in our community, Nikiski.

Lifestyle

As far as our lifestyle goes, the Nikiski city plan calls for minimal government. We want to keep our 4 wheelers, our snow machines and our trail system. As a community, we want to control any building & safety zoning, and other restrictions imposed on us.

MOST OF ALL, WE DON'T BE ABSORBED INTO THE CITY OF KENAI!

Right now we have one representative on the Borough Assembly – which equals only one lonely vote. We North Roaders march to a different drummer compared to the rest of the Peninsula. That different paradigm is glaring on a Borough level. In order to get anything done for our community or to protect our lifestyle, we have to get the attention and approval of a majority of Assembly members and/or permission from the Borough staff. Often, we don't even speak the same language, or share the same concerns. To put it bluntly, we often feel like a red headed, unloved stepchild at a family reunion. We need to a lot more voice to direct our future.

A personal story

I am a good example. I was a single woman when I moved here permanently fourteen years ago. Before, I was a part time Nikiski resident, starting in 1987.

My husband, Matt, was my fishing buddy and he became my best friend. When he decided to court me, he didn't take me out to expensive dinners, or buy me candy and store bought flowers. Matt showed up with hands full of wild

flowers. He took me on long 4 wheeler rides through the summer nights. Our dogs went with us. We fished the summers on the rivers and in the lakes. We ice fished the winters. We hunted. We went berry and mushroom picking. We cut piles of firewood and raised a garden together. We married twelve years ago, and we still live that lifestyle. It fits us very well. We don't want to give it up. The planned city protects us.

Local Challenges:

Here in Nikiski, the postman doesn't deliver to all of our residents. Many of have post office boxes and our zip code is 99635. The post office here in Nikiski doesn't deliver anything.

When the postman does deliver in our community, the mail comes through Kenai and they use a Kenai address and zip code.

So the post office computer changes our town and zip code automatically when we order stuff to be sent to us. Then those packages end up in Kenai, and the post office there sends them back. No, they won't hold them to be picked up. So, this is a constant battle to get packages sent to our Nikiski post office.

As side note on this -- I had a U-haul dealership for a year. And their computer could only list me under one zip code. Some of us have a Nikiski zip code and some have Kenai zip code. They were sending Nikiski people to Soldotna when I was right here on Spur Highway. When I argued with U-haul, they changed it from our Nikiski zip code to the Kenai zip code. UG! That was no solution. The zip code problem became so continuous that I finally gave up the dealership. That's one less business and service here because of a government glitch.

Gaps in Services

One reason for pushing the request for our new city border to the Kenai City line is because we have a service gap in our senior services. I was on the Board of

Directors for the Nikiski Senior Center for a couple years. I learned that there is a no man's land between the service districts. Our district ends before the Kenai City Senior area begins. We could not provide our Meals-on-Wheels program to people living in that gap area and Kenai too had the same problem. We need to close that gap with our new city plan.

Summary

In summation, I want your Commission to approve our application. We are a distinct community of people, businesses and interests which are demonstratively unique here on the Kenai Peninsula.