



Happy New Year to you, Sitka!

A message from John Leach, Minicipal Administrator

As we prepare to welcome the New Year, I want to take a moment to reflect on the many accomplishments we've achieved together in 2024.

This has been a year of progress and growth, highlighted by the reinvigoration of an award-winning Parks & Recreation program, which continues to enhance the quality of life for all Sitkans. We've also made substantial strides with the remodel of our

airport, ensuring it meets the needs of residents and visitors alike. Additionally, we began construction on a new shipyard and haul-out facility, a project vital to our economic stability and long-term prosperity.

These successes are a testament to the dedication and hard work of our team members, who selflessly serve our community every day. They are not only public servants but also your friends, neighbors, and family members, working tirelessly to make Sitka a better place for everyone.

As we look ahead to 2025, we remain steadfast in our mission of, *“Provide public services for Sitka that support a livable community for all.”* Guided by our Core Values of Service, Integrity, Teamwork, Kindness, and Accountability, we will continue striving to ensure Sitka remains a vibrant, thriving community we are all proud to call home.

Wishing you and your loved ones a joyful and prosperous New Year. Together, let’s make 2025 another remarkable chapter in Sitka’s journey.



Sitka Priorities

Community Survey Highlight: We're Listening, Sitka!

Earlier this year, Sitkans shared their voices through a community survey, which highlighted the challenges and priorities that matter most. Key themes emerged, including the need for more affordable housing, relief from utility costs, improved access to childcare, greater food security, and improved tourism management. These insights have been invaluable in shaping the City's ongoing efforts and refining the Strategic Plan to address these needs.

Strategic Plan Update: Progress and Future Goals

In November, the Sitka Assembly gathered for a two-day **Goal Refinement Retreat** to celebrate progress and fine tune the focus of the community's Strategic Plan. Moving into the third year, the plan serves as Sitka's roadmap to tackle key priorities, including housing, affordability, infrastructure, and communications.

Key highlights include:

- A **land development feasibility study** is underway to identify opportunities for future housing and municipal land use.
- The successful transition of **school maintenance** operations to CBS, easing the School District's budget and streamlining services.
- \$150 million in grant-funded projects aimed at improving Sitka's infrastructure and services.

The retreat emphasized continuing efforts in areas including tourism, childcare, and food security, while also strengthening our communications and engagement efforts. Updates were made to ensure actions are clear, measurable, and focused on delivering tangible benefits for residents into the future!

To learn more about the strategic plan, check out the full [report](#).

Values Update

City and Borough of Sitka Values Update

Throughout this past year, our team took the opportunity to reflect on our house rules and core values, with the goal of creating a message that truly resonates with staff while preserving the essence of what we stand for. We integrated our house rules into a unified set of core values that reflect the heart of our work: **Service, Integrity, Teamwork, Kindness, and Accountability—SITKA.**

These updated values honor the principles of our previous framework while emphasizing what our team identified as meaningful and representative of our shared vision. This process brought our staff together and reinforced the connection between what we do and the values we live by every day.

SERVICE

We take care of our community and each other. We anticipate and meet needs, are solution-oriented, and deliver outstanding work with pride.



INTEGRITY

We uphold high ethical standards, treating everyone with respect, honesty, and fairness. We are transparent, trustworthy, and courageous in doing what's right.

TEAMWORK

We encourage collaboration, breaking down silos through open communication. We embrace diversity, inclusion, innovation, and camaraderie. By working together, everyone achieves more.

KINDNESS

We treat others with kindness and respect. Our workplace does not tolerate bullying or toxic behavior. Instead, we prioritize safety and well-being. We are friendly, considerate, and generous in our interactions.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We take ownership of our work and welcome feedback. By setting clear expectations and staying consistent, we can effectively address challenges and achieve our goals.

Sitka Staff at work for YOU

2024 Sitka Police Department by the Numbers



Firefighter Training Strengthens Rescue Capabilities

In October, Sitka's Fire Department participated in specialized training focused on handling complex rescue scenarios. With guidance from an experienced instructor, firefighters learned how to effectively combine **rope rescue operations** with **vehicle extrication techniques**—a challenging but critical skill set for responding to incidents in difficult terrains. Thanks to this hands-on class, the team is now stronger and better equipped to serve the community in even the most demanding situations!



Library Events: Mark Your Calendar!

The library is buzzing with exciting events for the coming months! Here's a glimpse of what's happening:

January 2025:

- **Adult Game Nights** (1/7, 1/21): Join us for board games and socializing, in partnership with CBS Parks and Recreation.
- **Exchange Student Presentations** (1/11): Hear stories and experiences from Sitka's exchange students.
- **Indigenous Archaeology Presentation** (1/30): Join Maggie Spivey-Faulkner for an engaging talk on archaeology and cultural heritage.

February 2025:

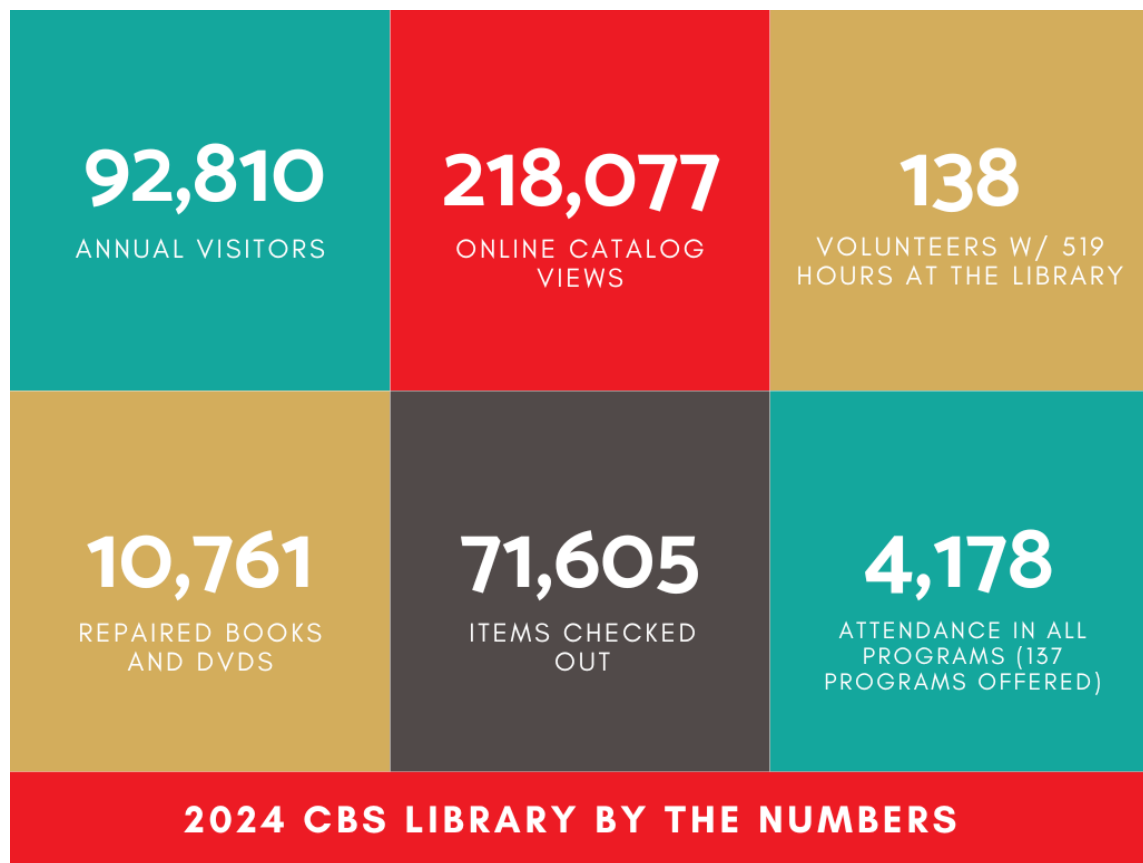
- **Adult Spelling Bee** (2/27): Hosted by Friends of the Library, this event is sure to be both challenging and entertaining!

March 2025:

- **Free for All: The Public Library Documentary Screening (3/6):** The story of how public libraries shaped America and how libraries continue to be a sanctuary for Americans everywhere.

Stay tuned for even more events to be announced soon! For event details, visit our [website](#).

2024 CBS Library by the Numbers



Sitka Community Renewable Energy Strategy

Exciting progress is underway for the Sitka Community Renewable Energy Strategy (SCRES)! We're adding educational pages to the SCRES website to provide valuable resources about Sitka's energy needs and sustainability efforts. You can explore these updates at www.cityofsitka.com/SCRES.

Starting January through March 2025, we'll also be hosting **interactive energy workshops** using an engaging energy planning game tailored to Sitka's unique

energy needs. These workshops are a great opportunity for organizations to learn more about renewable energy and contribute to future planning.

Interested in getting involved? Email us at sustainability@cityofsitka.org.



Sitka Parks & Recreation Highlights

The Parks & Recreation division has been hard at work providing engaging programs for Sitkans of all ages:

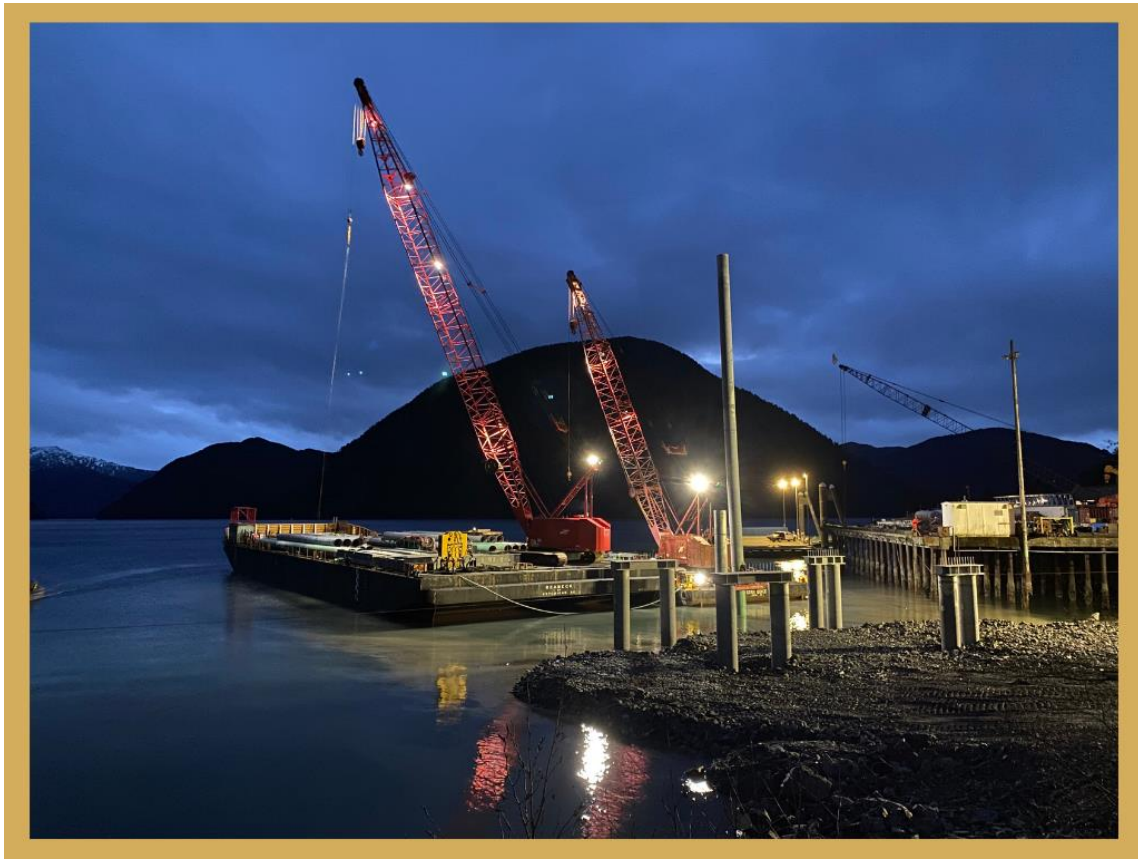
- 517 youth participated in activities like Tongass Tumblers, summer camps, and swim lessons.
- 61 scholarships were awarded through the Sitka Recreation Foundation.

City League Sports: The 2024 basketball season wrapped up with champions crowned across three divisions. Volleyball registration for 2025 starts in February—contact Elle at elle.campbell@cityofsitka.org for details.

Blatchley Pool Success: Pool usage has surged to 77% of available hours since CBS took over in July. Aqua Aerobics, led by Fran Hartman, already has a loyal following!

Senior Programs: The Swan Lake Senior Center's new Coffee Social is fostering connections among seniors in partnership with Catholic Community Services.

For more information on Parks & Recreation programs, email Recreation@CityofSitka.org.

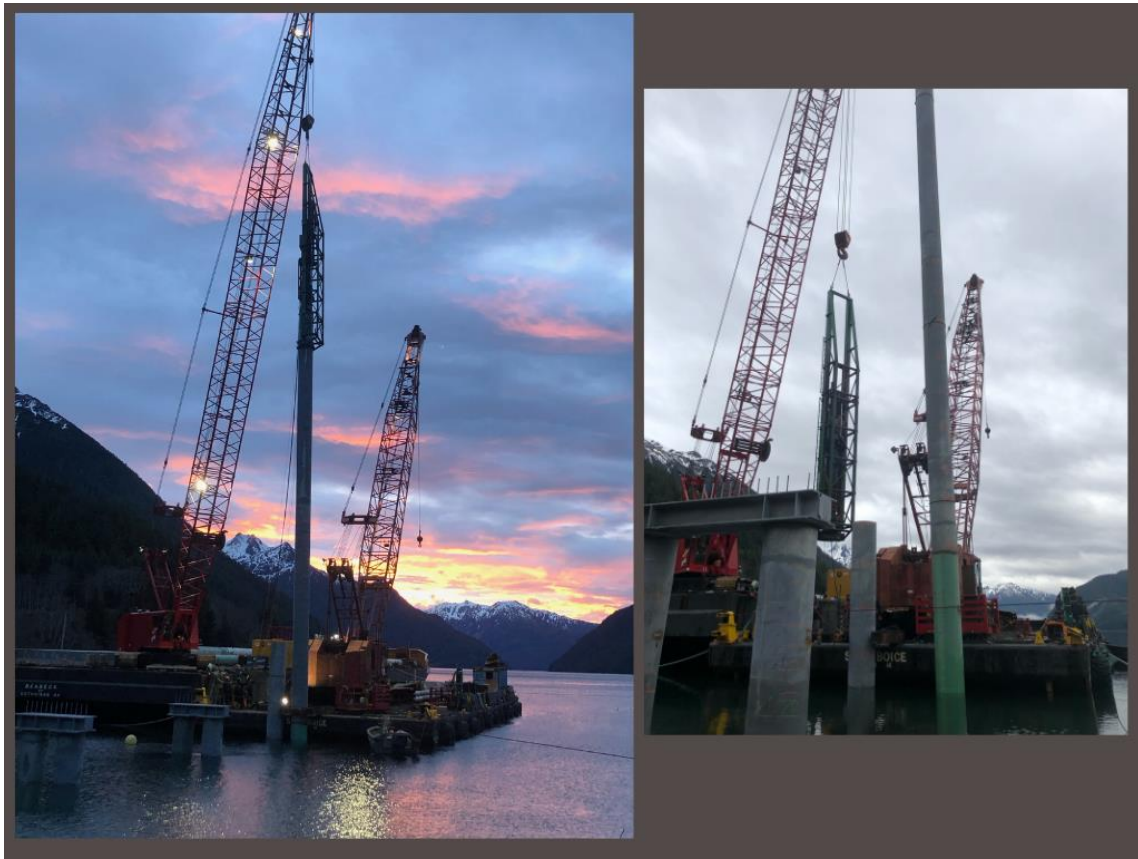


GPIP BOAT HAUL OUT DEVELOPMENT

You may have seen construction underway, as we are developing a 150-ton haul out facility, which has the capacity of hauling out a majority of the vessels in the Sitka fleet.

Seen in the photos, Western Marine Construction is busy driving 36" diameter pilling almost 200-ft into the ground to support a 300-ton boat hoisting pier for lifting vessels out of the water.

Phase 2 of this project will include the expansion of the Upland Shipyard. Stay tuned for future updates!



Municipal Administrator's Corner

School Maintenance and Pool Management Transitions

Big changes are happening! CBS has taken over school maintenance operations, combining teams for greater efficiency and consistency in building care. Blatchley Pool management has also shifted to CBS, with potential new programs like swim lessons, as well as the return of aqua aerobics. The transition reflects the city's commitment to meeting community needs while optimizing resources.

Winter Weather Preparedness

Winter is here, and Sitkans are encouraged to prepare for cold temperatures, snow, and storms. Focus on four key areas: [stay informed](#), build an [emergency kit](#), [create a family plan](#), and prepare your home and transportation.

Don't forget to clear sidewalks of snow and ice, as required by city code.

For snow removal concerns, contact Public Works at 907-747-1804.

Stay safe and ready, Sitka!

To learn more visit our [website](#).



Tune into KCAW with John Leach each month!

Municipal Administrator, John Leach, has been taking on hot topics in Sitka, live on KCAW radio. Tune in on Thursday, January 16, at 8:16am, for his next update! <https://www.kcaw.org>.