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New pool of money makes parks' future greener

Tuesday, December 21, 2004 - by Yvonne Ramsay

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Eric Sowl/KTUU-TV

Anchorage, Alaska - From skiing in Kincaid Park to playing in the sun at the Delaney Park Strip, the Municipality of Anchorage offers more than 14,000 acres of park land for residents to enjoy. But all of those parks need funding to keep them up and running. The mayor announced the creation of the Anchorage Park Foundation on Tuesday. The new Park Foundation is designed to not only give these parks a solid financial foundation, but to help strengthen the roots this community planted long ago.

“What's unique about parks, if you design

them right, and you acquire the land and you develop them correctly with the community connected to it, they will last multiple generations,” said Begich. “And that's an investment that you can make and see the results like 10, 20, 50, 100 years from today.”

The Parks Foundation is designed to help fund improvements for local parks and recreational facilities. It's a program similar to the library or museum foundations. According to Mayor Begich, it may alleviate the burden on property taxpayers.



Eric Sowl/KTUU-TV

“What I like about this, it's a partnership that for a dollar a property taxpayer puts on the table, they'll be able to see a match that comes along with it from a community-wide perspective, and I think they get a better bang for the dollar they put on the table,” Begich said.

The Rasmuson Foundation has already donated \$400,000 to the new Park Foundation. And Ed Rasmuson said Tuesday he hopes it allows other Anchorage residents to enjoy the parks as much as he and his family have.

“We should also encourage other contributions from the public to stimulate the necessary development within our system,” Rasmuson said. “We have a very great system here and we're very proud of it and let's just keep it up.”

“I don't care if it's a bunch of money or a little money,” Begich said. “If it's a dollar on the table, we're happy to assist them in their endeavor to help make their city better.”

The original idea for the Park Foundation came from public feedback. Now that idea has sprouted an expansion plan that will benefit not only today's generation but many generations to come.



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