

Barrow, Alaska

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Barrow /ˈbəroʊ/ (Inupiaq *Utqiaġvik* /utqiɑːŋvik/ or *Ukpiagvik* /ukpiɑːŋvik/) is the largest city of the North Slope Borough in the U.S. state of Alaska and is located above the Arctic Circle.^{[4][5]} It is the 11th northernmost public community in the world and is the northernmost city in the United States of America, with nearby Point Barrow being the nation's northernmost point.

Barrow's population was 4,683 at the 2000 census and 4,212 at the 2010 census. In July 2013, the population estimate was 4,373, suggesting a slight increase.

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Geography

Barrow is located at 71°17′44″N 156°45′59″W. It is the only U.S. city on the continent of North America with an antipode on uninhabited dry land. The antipode is in Antarctica at 71°17′44″S 23°14′1″E.

Barrow

City



The city of Barrow, Alaska in July 2008.



Location of Barrow in the U.S. state of Alaska
Coordinates: 71°17′44″N 156°45′59″W

Country	United States
State	Alaska
Borough	North Slope
Incorporated	June 8, 1959 [1]
Government Mayor Borough mayor	Robert C. Harcharek[2] Charlotte Brower[3]
Area Total Land Water	21.3 sq mi (55.2 km²) 18.4 sq mi (47.6 km²) 2.9 sq mi (7.6 km²)
Elevation	10 ft (3 m)
Population (2010)	

Barrow is roughly 1,300 miles (2,100 km) south of the North Pole. Only 5.3% of the Earth's surface lies as far from the Equator as Barrow.^[6]

According to the United States Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 21 sq mi (54 km²), 18 sq mi (47 km²) of the area being land and 3 sq mi (8 km²) being water. Water makes up 14% of the total area. The predominant land type in Barrow is tundra, which is formed over a permafrost layer that is as much as 1,300 feet (400 m) in depth.^[7]

Barrow is surrounded by the National Petroleum Reserve–Alaska.

The city of Barrow has three sections, which can be classified as south, central, and north, and are known to residents as Barrow, Browerville, and NARL, respectively.

- The southernmost of the sections, known locally as the "Barrow side", is the oldest and second largest of the three; it serves as downtown. This area includes Wiley Post-Will Rogers Memorial Airport, Barrow High School, North Slope Borough School District, Fred Ipalook Elementary School, as well as restaurants, hotels, the police station, the Barrow City Hall, a Wells Fargo bank, and numerous houses.
- The Central section is the largest of the three, and is called Browerville. This has traditionally been a residential area for the city of Barrow, but in recent years many businesses have opened or moved to this area. Browerville is separated from the south section by a series of lagoons, with two connecting dirt roads. This area, in addition to the houses, includes Tuzzy Consortium Library, the US Post Office, Eben Hopson Middle School, Samuel Simmonds Memorial Hospital, the Iñupiat Heritage Center,^[8] two grocery stores, one hotel and two restaurants.
- The north section is the smallest and most isolated of the three sections, known to the residents as NARL because it was originally the site of the Naval Arctic Research Lab. It is connected to the central section only by Stevenson Street, a two-lane dirt road. What once was NARL is now Ilisagvik College. This area also includes a small broadcasting station, which is run by the college students.^[9]

• Total	4,212
Time zone • Summer (DST)	Alaska (AKST) (UTC−9) AKDT (UTC−8)
ZIP code	99723
Area code(s)	907
FIPS code	02-05200
Website	www.cityofbarrow.org (http://www.cityofbarrow.org/)



English (*Welcome to Barrow*) and Iñupiaq
(*Paḡlagivsign̄ Utqiaḡvigmun*)



Barrow Milepost



Aerial photograph of Barrow, Alaska

Climate

Owing to its location 320 miles (515 km) north of the Arctic Circle, Barrow's climate is cold and dry, classified as a polar climate (Köppen *ET*). Winter weather can be extremely dangerous because of the combination of cold and wind, while summers are cool even at their warmest. Weather observations are available for Barrow dating back to the late 19th century.^[10] A National Weather Service (NWS) Office and a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Monitoring Lab operate in Barrow. The United States Department of Energy (DOE) has a climate observation site in Barrow as part of its Atmospheric Radiation Measurement (ARM) Climate Research Facility.

Despite the extreme northern location, temperatures at Barrow are moderated by the surrounding topography. The Arctic Ocean is on three sides, and flat tundra stretches some 200 miles (300 km) to the south. Thus, there are no wind barriers, and there are no protected valleys where dense cold air can settle or form temperature inversions in the lower atmosphere in the way that commonly happens in the Interior between the Brooks and the Alaska ranges.^[11]

Barrow has the lowest average temperatures of cities in Alaska. Although it is rare for Barrow to record the lowest temperatures statewide during cold waves, extremely low wind chill and "white out" conditions from blowing snow are very common. Temperatures remain below freezing from early October through late May.

The high temperature is above freezing on an average of only 120 days per year, and there are 160 days of sub-0 °F (−18 °C).^[12] Freezing temperatures and snowfall can occur during any month of the year.^[11]

In terms of precipitation, Barrow has a desert climate, and averages less than 5 inches (127 mm) "rainfall equivalent" per year. One inch of rain possesses approximately equal water content to 12 inches (30 cm) of snow. According to 1971–2000 normals, this includes 29 inches (74 cm) of snow,^{[13][14]} compared to 101 inches (257 cm) for Kuujuaq in Nunavik, Quebec^[15] or 84 inches (213 cm) and 77 inches (196 cm) for much warmer Juneau and Kodiak, Alaska, respectively. Even Sable Island, at around 44 degrees latitude and under the influence of the Gulf Stream, receives 44 inches (112 cm), or 52 percent more snowfall than Barrow.

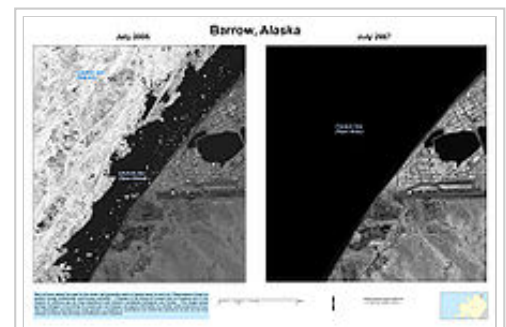
The first snow (defined as snow that will not melt until next spring) generally falls during the first week of October, when temperatures cease to rise above freezing during the day. October is usually the month with the heaviest snowfall, with measurable amounts occurring on nearly half the days and an average total accumulation of 8.8 inches (22 cm).^[12]



Icebow over Arctic ice in Barrow



Homes along the Arctic Ocean in Barrow, Alaska



Barrow sea ice, July 2006, 2007

The sun sets on November 18 or 19, and it remains below the horizon for about 65 days. This creates a polar night that lasts until the Sun returns to lightly touch the horizon (due to the refraction and scattering of the atmosphere) by January 22 or January 23. The sun then rises again completely over the horizon by the 27th or 28th of January. During the first half of the polar night, there is a decreasing amount of twilight each day, and on the winter solstice (around December 21 or December 22), civil twilight in Barrow lasts for a mere 3 hours.^{[12][16]}

In addition to its low temperatures and polar night, Barrow is one of the cloudiest places on Earth. Owing to the prevailing easterly winds off the Arctic Ocean, Barrow is completely overcast slightly more than 50% of the year. It is at least 70% overcast some 62% of the time. Cloud types are mainly low stratus and fog; cumuli forms are rare. Peak cloudiness occurs in August and September when the ocean is ice-free. Dense fog occurs an average of 65 days per year, mostly in the summer months. Ice fog is very common during the winter months, especially when the temperature drops below −30 °F (−34 °C).^[17]

Serious cold weather usually begins in January, and February is generally the coldest month, averaging −14.2 °F (−25.7 °C). By March 1, the sun is up for 9 hours, and temperatures begin to warm, though winds are usually higher. April brings less extreme temperatures, with an average of 1.8 °F (−16.8 °C), and on April 1 the sun is up for more than 14 hours. In May, the temperatures are much warmer, averaging 21.2 °F (−6.0 °C). Beginning around May 11 or 12, the sun remains above the horizon the entire day, and the phenomenon known as the midnight sun is observed. The sun does not set for about 80 days, until around July 31 or August 1. In June, the average temperature rises above freezing, to 35.7 °F (2.1 °C), and average daily temperatures remain above freezing until mid- or late September.

July is the warmest month of the year, with an average high of 47 °F (8 °C) and an average low temperature of 35 °F (2 °C). Beginning in late July, the Arctic Ocean is relatively ice-free, and remains so until late October.^[12] The highest temperature recorded in Barrow was 79 °F (26 °C) on July 13, 1993, while the lowest is −56 °F (−49 °C) on February 3, 1924; the highest minimum is 53 °F (12 °C), while the lowest maximum is −47 °F (−44 °C).^{[12][16][18]} Barrow records an average 24 days per year where the high reaches at least 50 °F (10 °C). Even in July and August, the low falls to or below the freezing mark on 24 days.^[12]

Variation of wind speed during the year is limited, with the fall months being windiest. Extreme winds from 40 to 60 miles per hour (60 to 100 km/h) have been recorded for all months.^[11] Winds average 12 mph (20 km/h) and are typically from the east.^{[13][14]}

Climate data for Barrow, Alaska (Wiley Post–Will Rogers Memorial Airport, 1981–2010 normals)													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Record high °F (°C)	54 (12)	38 (3)	34 (1)	42 (6)	47 (8)	72 (22)	79 (26)	76 (24)	62 (17)	43 (6)	39 (4)	34 (1)	79 (26)
Average high °F (°C)	−7 (−22)	−8 (−22)	−6 (−21)	9 (−13)	26 (−3)	41 (5)	47 (8)	44 (7)	36 (2)	22 (−6)	6 (−14)	−2 (−19)	17.3 (−8.2)
Daily mean °F (°C)	−13.4 (−25.2)	−14.2 (−25.7)	−12.5 (−24.7)	1.8 (−16.8)	21.1 (−6.1)	35.6 (2)	40.9 (4.9)	39.0 (3.9)	32.1 (0.1)	17.2 (−8.2)	0.7 (−17.4)	−7.8 (−22.1)	11.71 (−11.27)
Average low °F (°C)	−19 (−28)	−20 (−29)	−19 (−28)	−5 (−21)	17 (−8)	31 (−1)	35 (2)	34 (1)	29 (−2)	13 (−11)	−5 (−21)	−14 (−26)	6.4 (−14.3)
Record low °F (°C)	−53 (−47)	−56 (−49)	−52 (−47)	−42 (−41)	−19 (−28)	4 (−16)	22 (−6)	20 (−7)	1 (−17)	−32 (−36)	−38 (−39)	−55 (−48)	−56 (−49)
Average precipitation inches (mm)	0.13 (3.3)	0.13 (3.3)	0.09 (2.3)	0.15 (3.8)	0.18 (4.6)	0.30 (7.6)	0.98 (24.9)	1.05 (26.7)	0.71 (18)	0.41 (10.4)	0.20 (5.1)	0.13 (3.3)	4.47 (113.5)
Average snowfall inches (cm)	2.8 (7.1)	3.1 (7.9)	2.1 (5.3)	3.1 (7.9)	2.7 (6.9)	0.6 (1.5)	0.2 (0.5)	0.9 (2.3)	4.6 (11.7)	8.8 (22.4)	6.0 (15.2)	3.4 (8.6)	38.3 (97.3)
Avg. precipitation days (≥ 0.01 in)	4.6	4.6	4.1	5.1	5.1	5.6	9.1	11.5	12.7	12.2	7.1	5.7	87.4
Avg. snowy days (≥ 0.1 in)	6.2	6.9	5.9	7.4	6.5	1.6	0.6	2.3	8.9	15.4	10.6	8.2	80.5
Source #1: NOAA - Wiley Post–Will Rogers Memorial Airport ^[12]													
Source #2: The Weather Channel ^[19]													

Demographics



Homes built on pilings.



A typical home in Barrow, Alaska

As of the census^[23] of 2000, there were 4,683 people, 1,399 households, and 976 families residing in the city. The population density was 249.0 people per square mile (96.1/km²). There were 1,620 housing units at an average density of 88.1 per square mile (34.0/km²). The racial makeup of the city is 57.19% Native American, 21.83% White, 9.41% Asian, 1.00% Black or African American, 1.35% Pacific Islander, 0.70% from other races, and 8.51% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 3.34% of the population.

There were 1,399 households out of which 56.5% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 45.2% were married couples living together, 14.8% had a female householder with no husband present, and 28.0% were non-families. 23.0% of all households were made up of individuals and 1.8% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older.

Historical population		
Census	Pop.	%±
1880	200	—
1890	152	−24.0%
1910	446	—
1920	322	−27.8%
1930	330	2.5%
1940	363	10.0%
1950	351	−3.3%

The average household size was 3.35 and the average family size was 4.80.

In the city the age distribution of the population shows 27.7% under the age of 18, 13.3% from 18 to 24, 31.6% from 25 to 44, 19.4% from 45 to 64, and 3.4% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 29 years. For every 100 females there were 107.1 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 109.5 males.

The median income for a household in the city was \$63,094.09, and the median income for a family was \$68,223. Males had a median income of \$51,959 versus \$46,382 for females. The per capita income for the city was \$22,902. About 7.7% of families and 8.6% of the population were below the poverty line, including 7.2% of those under the age of 18 and 13.12% of those 65 and older.

As of March 3, 2009, the town's website wrote of the population: "The largest city in the North Slope Borough, Barrow has 4,429 residents, of which approximately 61% are Iñupiat Eskimo."^[24]

Economy

Barrow is the economic center of the North Slope Borough, the city's primary employer. Numerous businesses provide support services to oil field operations. State and federal agencies are employers. The midnight sun has attracted tourism, and arts and crafts provide some cash income. Because transporting food to the city is very expensive, many residents continue to rely upon subsistence food sources. Whale, seal, polar bear, walrus, waterfowl, caribou, and fish are harvested from the coast or nearby rivers and lakes.^[25] Barrow is the headquarters of the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, one of the Alaska Native corporations set up following the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act in 1971 to manage revenues and invest in development for their people in the region.

Transportation

The roads in Barrow are unpaved due to the permafrost, and no roads connect the city to the rest of Alaska.^[26] Barrow is served by Alaska Airlines with passenger jet service at the Wiley Post–Will Rogers Memorial Airport from Anchorage and Fairbanks. New service between Fairbanks and Anchorage began from Era Aviation on June 1, 2009. Freight arrives by air cargo year round and by ocean-going marine barges during the annual summer sealift.^[27]

Barrow is the transportation hub for the North Slope Borough's Arctic Coastal villages. Multiple jet aircraft, with service from Deadhorse (Prudhoe Bay), Fairbanks and Anchorage, provide daily mail, cargo, and passenger services, which connect with smaller single- and twin-engine general aviation aircraft that provide regular service to other villages, from Kaktovik in the east to Point Hope in the west.^[25] The town is also served by several radio taxi services, most using small four-wheel drive vehicles.

History

1950	951	162.0%
1960	1,314	38.2%
1970	2,104	60.1%
1980	2,207	4.9%
1990	3,469	57.2%
2000	4,683	35.0%
2010	4,212	−10.1%
Est. 2014	4,393 ^[20]	4.3%

source:^[21]^[22]

In the Iñupiaq language, the location of Barrow is called *Ukpeagvik*, which means "the place where we hunt Snowy Owls".

Archaeological sites in the area indicate the Iñupiat lived around Barrow as far back as AD 500. Remains of 16 sod dwelling mounds from the Birnirk culture of about AD 800 still exist today on the shore of the Arctic Ocean. Their position on a slight rise above the high-water mark places them in danger of being lost to erosion within a short time.

Dr. Bill Streever, who chairs the North Slope Science Initiative's Science Technical Advisory Panel, writes in his 2009 book *Cold: Adventures in the World's Frozen Places*:

Barrow, like most communities in Alaska, looks temporary, like a pioneer settlement. It is not. Barrow is among the oldest permanent settlements in the United States. Hundreds of years before the European Arctic explorers showed up, starving and freezing and succumbing to hardship, Barrow was more or less where it is now, a natural hunting place at the base of a peninsula that pokes out into the Beaufort Sea. ... Yankee whalers sailed here, learning about the bowhead whale from Iñupiat hunters ... Later, the military came, setting up a radar station, and in 1947 a science center was founded at Barrow.^[28]

British Royal Navy officers came to the area to explore and map the Arctic coastline of North America. The United States Army established a meteorological and magnetic research station at Barrow in 1881. The Cape Smythe Whaling and Trading Station was established in 1893.

In 1888, a Presbyterian church was built at Barrow, and in 1889 a whaling supply and rescue station was built, which is now the oldest wood-frame building in Barrow. In 1901, a United States Post Office was opened.

In 1935, the famous humorist Will Rogers and pilot Wiley Post made an unplanned stop at Walakpa Bay 15 mi (24 km) south of Barrow while en route to Barrow. As they took off again, their plane stalled and plunged into a river, killing them both. Two memorials have been erected at the location, now called the Rogers-Post Site. Another memorial is located in Barrow, where the airport has been renamed the Wiley Post–Will Rogers Memorial Airport.^[29]

The indigenous people are primarily Iñupiat. In 1940, they organized as the Native Village of Barrow Iñupiat Traditional Government (previously, Native Village of Barrow), which is a federally recognized Alaska Native Iñupiat "tribal entity", as listed by the US Bureau of Indian Affairs circa 2003. They wrote a



Alaska Airlines 737-400 combi aircraft at Post/Rogers Memorial Airport, December 2007. Note that it is twilight. Even though the sun does not rise in December, it gets close enough to the horizon to provide illumination.



Polar bear walking on tarmac at Wiley Post-Will Rogers Memorial Airport in Barrow, Alaska



Air Force station at Point Barrow

constitution and by-laws, under the provisions of the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934. An IRA corporation was also created.

Barrow was incorporated as a 1st Class City in 1958.

Residents of the North Slope were the only Native people to vote on acceptance of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and rejected it. The Act was passed in December 1971 and, despite their opposition, became law. The Ukpeaġvik Iñupiat Corporation (UIC) is the for-profit village corporation mandated by the Act.



Sod house remains in Barrow

In 1972, the North Slope Borough was established. With millions of dollars in new revenues from the settlement and later oil revenues, the borough has created sanitation facilities, water and electrical utilities, roads, fire departments, and health and educational services in Barrow and the villages of the North Slope.

In 1986, the North Slope Borough created the North Slope Higher Education Center. Renamed Ilisagvik College, it is an accredited two-year college providing education based on the Iñupiat culture and the needs of the North Slope Borough.

The **Tuzzy Consortium Library**, in the Iñupiat Heritage Center, serves the communities of the North Slope Borough and functions as the academic library for Ilisagvik College. The library was named after Evelyn Tuzrolyuk Higbee, an important leader in the community.

Barrow, like many communities in Alaska, has enacted a "damp" law prohibiting the sale of alcoholic beverages. It allows for import, possession and consumption.^[13]

In 1988, Barrow became the center of a worldwide media attention when three California Gray Whales became trapped in the ice offshore.^[30] After a two-week rescue effort (Operation Breakthrough), two of the whales were freed by a Soviet icebreaker.^[31] Journalist Tom Rose details the rescue, and the media frenzy which accompanied it, in his 1989 book *Freeing The Whales*.^[32] The movie *Big Miracle* is based on the rescue and was released on February 3, 2012.^{[33][34]}

Etymology

The city's name is derived from Point Barrow, which was named after Sir John Barrow of the British Admiralty by Frederick William Beechey in 1825. The location has been home to the Iñupiat, an indigenous Inuit ethnic group, for over 1500 years and is called *Ukpeaġvik*, or "place where snowy owls are hunted", in the Iñupiaq language.^{[35][36]}

Media

KBRW (AM)/KBRW-FM^[37] radio station broadcasts in Barrow on 680 kHz AM and 91.9 MHz FM. KBRW is also broadcast via FM repeaters in all of the North Slope Borough villages, from Kaktovik to Point Hope.

The *Arctic Sounder*^[38] is a newspaper published weekly by Alaska Newspapers, Inc., covers news of interest to the North Slope Borough, which includes Barrow, and the Northwest Arctic Borough which includes Kotzebue, in northwestern Alaska.

Sports teams

On August 19, 2006, the Barrow Whalers of Barrow High School^[39] played the first official football game in the Arctic against Delta Junction High School.^[40] Barrow recorded its first win two weeks later; the coaches and players celebrated the historic win by jumping into the Arctic Ocean, just 100 yd (91 m) from the makeshift dirt field.

On August 17, 2007, the Whalers football team played their first game of the season on their new artificial-turf field. The historic game, attended by former Miami Dolphins player Larry Csonka, was the first live Internet broadcast of a sporting event in the United States from north of the Arctic Circle.^[41]



Artificial turf field of Barrow Whalers football team

Since the team's formation, it has gathered a record of 33-24, and most recently, the team reached the semi-final round of the Alaskan State Small School Football Championship.^[42]

Depictions in popular culture

Johnny Horton referenced Barrow in his song *When It's Springtime in Alaska (It's Forty Below)*.

Barrow is the setting for a series of horror comic books titled *30 Days of Night*. The stories center on vampires who take advantage of month-long annual polar night in the town to openly kill and feed at will, massacring most of the townspeople. A commercially successful film, named after and based upon the comic, was released on October 19, 2007, followed by a straight-to-video sequel on July 23, 2010.

Karl Pilkington is sent to Barrow in the second season of *An Idiot Abroad*.

On The Ice, a film released in 2011 about teenagers dealing with a tragic accidental death, was entirely filmed in Barrow with locals acting in most roles.

Big Miracle, a 2012 film, stars Drew Barrymore, is based on the true story of whales trapped under ice near Point Barrow, and features scenes in and characters from Barrow.

The *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* episode "T.R.A.C.K.S." has Phil Coulson threaten Ward with a transfer to Barrow to guard Emil Blonsky's cryo-cell.

Stephen Fry visited the town and its people during the last segment of his documentary, "Stephen Fry in America."

Special events

- 24.7.2015Barrow, Alaska - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
- Kivgiq, The Messenger Feast. In more recent times this has been held almost every year, but "officially" is held every two or three years in late January or early February, and is called at the discretion of the North Slope Borough Mayor. Kivgiq is an international event which attracts visitors from around the Arctic Circle.
 - Piuraagiaqta, The Spring Festival which celebrates breaking a path in the ice for boats to hunt whales. Held in mid-April and includes many outdoor activities.
 - Nalukataq, The Blanket Toss Celebration. Held on multiple days beginning in the third week of June to celebrate each successful spring whale hunt.
 - July 4, Independence Day. In Barrow this is time for Eskimo games, such as the two-foot high kick and ear pull, with the winners going on to compete at the World Eskimo Indian Olympics.
 - Whaling. Generally happens during the second week of October.
 - Qitik, Eskimo Games. Also known as Christmas Games, are from December 26 through January 1.

Health care

Samuel Simmonds Memorial Hospital, located in the city of Barrow, is the primary healthcare facility for the North Slope region of Alaska. Individuals in need of medical care in the city of Barrow are able to access the hospital by road. However, because no roads lead in or out of Barrow, individuals in surrounding communities and towns (such as Point Hope, Prudhoe Bay, and Wainwright) must be airlifted in by plane, helicopter, or air ambulance. The hospital underwent construction and was relocated across the city in 2013. It is now nearly four times larger than it was before. The facility operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and is the northernmost hospital/medical facility in the United States.^[43]

Sister cities

Country	City
 Argentina	Ushuaia (southernmost city in the Americas)

See also

- Arctic Slope Regional Corporation
 - Frederick William Beechey and Sir John Barrow
 - The blob (Chukchi Sea algae)
 - National Petroleum Reserve–Alaska
 - Native Village of Barrow Iñupiat Traditional Government
 - North Slope Borough and Alaska North Slope
 - Point Barrow whales
 - Ukpeaġvik Iñupiat Corporation
 - Umiak

Notes

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External links

- CityOfBarrow.org (<http://www.cityofbarrow.org/>) - Official City Website
- Iñupiat Heritage Center (IHC) (<http://www.inupiatheritage.org/>) - Official Museum Website
- CAC (Civil Applications Committee)/USGS Global Fiducials Program web page containing scientific description and interactive map viewer featuring declassified high-resolution time-series imagery (http://gfp.usgs.gov/sites/barrow_ak_asi/index.html)
- North Slope Borough (<http://www.north-slope.org/>)
- North Slope Borough School District (<http://www.nsbsd.org/>)
- Iñupiat Heritage Center (IHC) (<http://www.inupiatheritage.org/>)
- Barrow, Alaska (https://www.dmoz.org/Regional/North_America/United_States/Alaska/Localities/B/Barrow) at DMOZ



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