

Hospital construction continues despite bad weather

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

Construction of the new Wrangell Medical Center, next to the AICS Clinic on Wood Street, has continued in spite of bad weather in recent weeks, and according to a press release from the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium, things are on track for a grand opening in early 2021.

According to SEARHC's press release, concrete slabs are complete in the first four quadrants of the construction. However, cold temperatures forced continued concrete work to be put on hold. Mike Pountney, SEARHC construction and engineering manager, said that the concrete slabs will be complete by the third week of February now, depending on the weather. Roofing work was also delayed. Underground plumbing work has been com-



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Despite recent bad weather in January delaying some aspects of the project, construction of the new Wrangell Medical Center continues to move along on schedule with the grand opening anticipated to be in early 2021. Exterior work is expected to be finished sometime in March, when work on the inside of the hospital will begin.

pleted, but the recent bad weather Wrangell experienced temporarily delayed electrical and backfill work. This is rescheduled to be complete by Feb. 1. Exterior wall framing has continued through January, ac-

ording to the press release, and almost all of the trusses have been put into place. Dawson Construction, building the hospital, is aiming to have the outer shell of the new hospital complete sometime in March before moving to interior work.

"We're excited that construction remains on schedule, in spite of the weather," SEARHC Vice President and WMC Hos-

pital Administrator Leatha Mercurieff said in the press release. "Safety is always of the utmost importance in any project, so it's promising to hear that the crews were able to shift priorities and the worksite was able to remain active. We're counting down the days until we can begin serving our patients and residents in the new facility."

Governor Dunleavy to visit Wrangell

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

The Wrangell Sentinel has heard from multiple sources that Governor Mike Dunleavy is planning to visit Wrangell next week, on Feb. 4. This information comes from both Superintendent Debbe Lancaster and Mayor Steve Prysunka, who both sent emails to the Sentinel on Monday, Jan. 27 stating the governor plans to visit Wrangell on Feb. 4.

Jeff Turner, deputy director of communications for the governor's office, said that community visits are being planned but he could not go into detail about what stops are on the itinerary, specifically.

"Once those plans are finalized an advisory will be distributed by the Governor's Communications Office with information on the communities he will visit and how Alaskans can meet with him," Turner said in an email.

Census committee reviews sample questionnaire

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

Wrangell's census committee, made up of representatives of several organizations across the community, met last Thursday, Jan. 23, to continue their discussion of how to encourage higher responses to the upcoming 2020 census. During the meeting, Economic Development Director Carol Rushmore provided sample copies of the questionnaire people will have the opportunity to answer for the census. There are nine questions, asking for a person's name, age, sex, race, phone number, whether they own or rent their residence, and how many people live with them. Along with these questions are a series of questions for people who live in the same residence, asking for similar information. Rushmore said in a previous committee meeting that the census asks for less personal information than an application for the PFD does.

In an effort to provide more information on the census, and to encourage Wrangell residents to respond to it, Rushmore informed the committee that they signed up for a booth at the upcoming Health Fair on April 4. Sarah Merritt, of the Legislative Information Office, has also been passing out information on the census to people while assisting them with PFD applications. The Friends of the Library has also applied for some funds to provide food and drinks to people during Census Day, on April 1.

In other news, Lt. Jon Tollerud of the Salvation Army reported that he recently received some funding to host census sign-ups on April 1. He said that he has been speaking to a few people that come to the Salvation Army's food pantry about sharing their stories about the federal programs that assist them, which rely on census data for resource allocation, to demonstrate the importance of the census.

During the meeting, the committee also got a look at some new stickers designed by Stephanie Cook, with the chamber of commerce. These "I Count for Wrangell" stickers will go along with Wrangell census materials.

Moving forward, in an email after the meeting, Rushmore outlined some of the next steps the census committee planned to take. These include flushing out a social media calendar, getting in touch with the school district to see how they could get involved, and seeing about getting census workers set up to assist people in the library and Salvation Army on Census Day.



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Firefighter breakfast raises money for stair climb

The Wrangell Volunteer Fire Department hosted a breakfast at the firehouse last Saturday morning, Jan. 25. The breakfast served as a fundraiser for the LLS Firefighter Stairclimb which is an annual event put on by the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, where firefighters from across the country climb Seattle's Columbia Center building, to raise money for blood cancer research and services. According to the stairclimb's website, as of Jan. 20, they have raised \$920,800 of this year's \$3 million goal. To learn more about the event, visit www.llswa.org. Pictured here are Clay and Carter Hammer, making pancakes for breakfast.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

The Sentinel extends its best wishes to the persons listed on the Wrangell Chamber of Commerce Community Scholarship Birthday Calendar.

Thursday, January 30: Audra Netro **Friday, January 31:** Crystal Crayne, Justin Churchill, Selina Rilatos, Steve Beers, Quinton Davies, Lavonne Klinke, Jess Rugo. **Saturday, February 1:** Scott Mason, Christy Harris Good, *Anniversary:* Gordon & Emily McCloskey, Erica Smith. **Sunday, February 2:** Rhiannon Wenzel, Leslie Cummings, Maria Weeg, Kaylahni Rose Weddel **Monday, February 3:** Oakley Marshall, Aaron Angerman, Aaliyah Messmer, Lindsey Gross, Danika Smith, Bryan Allen **Tuesday, February 4:** Charlotte Neff, Terry Carney, Collin Dando, Raymond Hayes, Cody Roberts. **Wednesday, February 5:** Nadra Angerman. **Thursday, February 6:** Walter Moorehead, Binky Maenhout, Tamra Claggett, Natalya Jabush.

If you would like to add a birthday or anniversary at no charge please call the Sentinel at 874-2301.

Senior Center Menu

- Thursday, January 30**
French Dip Sandwich, Peas, Mix Salad, Roll
- Friday, January 31**
Creole Pork Steaks, Brussel Sprouts, Toss Salad, Biscuit
- Monday, February 3**
Fiesta Pork Chops, Green beans, Spicy Fruit, Rice
- Tuesday, February 4**
Hotcha Baked Beef, Fried Potatoes, Rice, Slaw
- Wednesday, February 5**
Pineapple Chicken, Rice, Broccoli, Fruit slaw
- Thursday, February 6**
Chicken & Cheese sandwich, Soup, Cabbage / Fruit

Please call Wrangell Senior Center at 874-2066 by 10 a.m. for reservations. Milk, tea and coffee will be served with meals.

FERRY

Departures

Northbound

- Friday, January 31**
No sailing
- Friday, February 7**
Matanuska, 6:45 p.m.
- Friday, February 14**
Matanuska, 4:45 p.m.
- Friday, February 21**
Matanuska, 6:45 p.m.
- Friday, February 28**
Matanuska, 4:15 p.m.
- Friday, March 6**
Matanuska 05:15 p.m.

Southbound

- Monday, February 3**
Matanuska, 6:30 a.m.
- Monday, February 10**
Matanuska, 6:30 a.m.
- Monday, February 17**
Matanuska, 6:30 a.m.
- Monday, February 24**
Matanuska, 6:30 a.m.
- Monday, March 2**
Matanuska, 6:30 a.m.
- Sunday, March 8**
Matanuska 07:30 a.m.

Arrival times may vary. Call 874-2021 for verification or call 874-3711 for recorded information.



TIDES January 30-February 6

	High Tides			Low Tides			
	AM	PM	PM	AM	PM	PM	ET
January 30	04:08	14:3	04:03	13.3	09:57	3.6	10:08 2.0
January 31	04:43	14.0	04:49	12.2	10:43	3.7	10:47 3.0
February 1	05:26	13.7	05:53	11.2	11:38	3.8	11:35 4.1
February 2	06:21	13.5	07:17	10.6	12:43 3.7
February 3	07:26	13.6	08:42	10.9	00:33	5.0	01:56 3.2
February 4	08:31	14.1	09:51	11.7	01:44	5.6	03:09 2.1
February 5	09:31	15.0	10:47	12.8	02:59	5.6	04:11 0.7
February 6	10:24	16.0	11:35	14.0	04:05	4.9	05:02 -0.8

Wrangell Roundup: Special Events

Is the attendance at your meeting or event low? Send information for Roundup to wrgsent@gmail.com or call 874-2301.

Continuing Events

PARKS & REC ACTIVITIES: Mid-day closure: Monday-Friday 1:30-3:30 p.m. Closed Sunday

Pool:

- Arthritis Foundation Exercise Class: M-W-F 8:30-9:30 a.m.
 Water Aerobics: M-W-F 10:00-11:00 a.m.
 Lap Swim: M-W-F 6:00-7:30 a.m. MTWThF 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
 TuTh 5:15-6:15 p.m. Sa 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
 M-W-F 10:00-11:00 a.m.
 2 Lane Lap Swim: MTWThF 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. S 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
 Lap/Tot Swim: M-F 3:15-5:15 p.m.
 Swim Club: M-W 5:30-7:00 p.m. F 6:30-8:00 p.m. S 1:00-2:00 p.m.
Weight Room: M-Thu 6:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m., 3:30-7:30 p.m. F 6:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m., 3:30-8:30 p.m. S 10:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

MEETINGS

AA Meetings:
North Star Group Meeting, St. Philip's Church. Tuesday: 7 p.m., Thursday: 8 p.m., Friday: 8 p.m.

The Way We Were In the Sentinel 100, 75, 50 and 25 years ago.

January 29, 1920
The girl's Lend a Hand club will give a luncheon and candy sale at the gymnasium on Saturday afternoon. A musical program will be given at the time. The boys of the Grammar and High school rooms invited the girl's Lend a Hand club to hear a debate last Wednesday. John Coulter and Elton Engstrom were chosen by their class as representatives in the oratorical contest which will soon take place with the High school. The school has subscribed for the following magazines: Independent, National Geographic, Modern Priscilla, Mother's Magazine, Little Folk's Land, John Martin's Book, St. Nicholas. The High school students substitute magazine reports for their regular English work every Tuesday.

January 26, 1945
The Reliance Shrimp cannery had their first "harbor day" on Tuesday, the boats being storm bound. This is the first time the work has stopped since operations began in September. The cannery will close the first of next month to reopen on April 15. During that time extensive repairs will be made and a new cooking room built.

January 29, 1970
A four-week prospecting course will be offered in Wrangell from Feb. 3 through Feb. 27, according to Jack Johnson, superintendent of Wrangell Public Schools. The course is part of a state-wide Mining Extension Program offered by the University of Alaska. Mining extension courses have been offered since 1938 as a public service function of the university. More than 18,000 persons have attended the courses, many of whom have subsequently discovered and produced much valuable ore. Instructor for the courses will be Willow M. Burand. There is no charge and the class is open to any adult in the community, Johnson said. Persons can register by calling Mrs. Lavon White at the high school.

January 26, 1995
Wrangell Museum is open

again, marked with formal unveiling of Sen. James Nolan's bequests to the museum and community. Unveiling will be at 4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 7, but doors will open to the public in the

museum's "old gym" basement interim site noon to 6 p.m. Feb 7 and 8. Refreshments will be served during the unveiling ceremony. No admission will be charged during Tent City Days.

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Wrangell Weather

Date	High	Low
Jan. 20	34	29
Jan. 21	37	28
Jan. 22	42	37
Jan. 23	44	37
Jan. 24	43	34
Jan. 25	46	34
Jan. 26	48	40
Jan. 27	40	35

Daylight Hours

Date	Sunrise	Sunset	Daylight
Jan. 30	7:48a	4:15p	08:27h
Jan. 31	7:46a	4:17p	08:31h
Feb. 1	7:45a	4:19p	08:34h
Feb. 2	7:43a	4:21p	08:38h
Feb. 3	7:41a	4:24p	08:43h
Feb. 4	7:39a	4:26p	08:47h
Feb. 5	7:37a	4:28p	08:51h
Feb. 6	7:35a	4:30p	08:55h

Forest Service reviews basics of Forest Plan

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

The Wrangell Ranger District of the Forest Service held a workshop at city hall last week to give the public a brief overview of the 2016 Land and Resource Management Plan. The workshop was led by Sue Jennings, forest planner for the Tongass National Forest. The Forest Plan, as it is also known, guides the Forest Service in managing natural resources in the Tongass National Forest.

"The Forest Plan is basically a zoning map with management prescriptions," Jennings said. "A zoning map, as you know, tells you where you can have industrial areas, where you can have multi-family dwellings, where you can have single-family dwellings, where you can have commercial businesses of any sort, that's what a zoning map tells you. The Forest Plan is the same way."

The Forest Plan has 18 zones, known as Land Use Designations, that categorize what certain sections of the Tongass National Forest can be used for.

These LUDs only apply to National Forest System lands within each LUD, Jennings added. The LUDs range in development potential from wilderness, meaning the land should be left untouched and wild, to timber production where logging is allowed. According to Jennings' presentation, there are 14 different LUDs in the Central Tongass Project, which largely covers the Wrangell and Petersburg Ranger Districts.

Some of these designations are largely self-explanatory, such as "wilderness" and "timber production." However, some require a little more explanation, and Jennings went into more detail about them. For example, the "research natural area" LUD is meant to preserve areas of ecological importance for the purpose of research and education. The "municipal watershed" LUD designates certain areas as water supply reserves for local communities. One LUD, simply known as "LUD II," also requires explanation.

"Land Use Designation II is

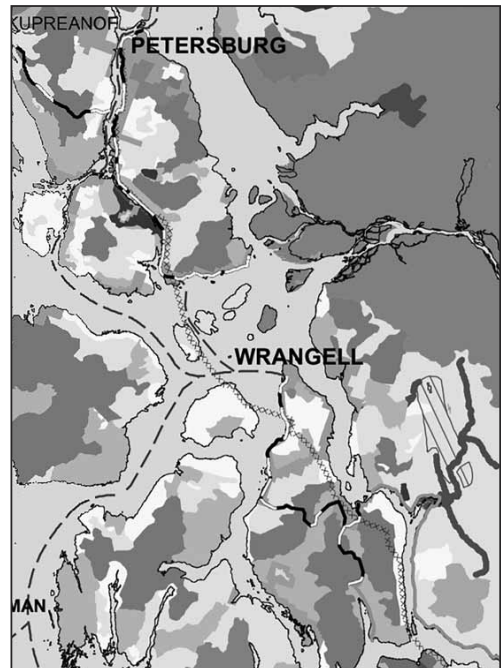
determined by an act of Congress," Jennings said. "These areas are set aside by Congress in perpetuity, and each one of them has direction according to how they were set aside, implementing direction, but generally speaking I always call it 'wilderness light,' because you can do a little bit more than you can do in wilderness but not a lot."

The Anan bear observatory, located south of Wrangell, is designated LUD II.

Besides zoning, the Forest Plan also establishes standards and guidelines for resource management, ranging from dealing with invasive species of plants, to timber sales, to air quality, and much more.

"The Forest Plan is a plan that is sustainable, meaning that the species we have today we expect to have 100 years from now," Jennings said.

A copy of the 2016 Land and Resource Management plan can be found online, as well as maps of the Tongass National Forest and the different LUDs within it. The Wrangell Ranger District can be reached at (907) 874-2323.



COURTESY OF FOREST SERVICE

A portion of the Forest Service's Land and Resource Management Plan map, developed in 2016, showing the different land use designations (LUDs) on Wrangell and Mitkof islands. The primary LUDs that are found on both islands include timber production, scenic viewsheds, modified landscape, and municipal watersheds. A copy of this map and for all of the Tongass National Forest, can be found on the Forest Service's website.

Police report

- Jan 20. Agency Assist: DOT. Agency Assist: Harbor department. Agency Assist: Alarm. Warrant Charge: Andrew Twyford.
- Jan 21. Citizen Assist: Alarm. Courtesy Transport. Noise Complaint. Courtesy Transport. Agency Assist: Alarm. Suspicious Vehicle. Warrant Arrest. Agency Assist: Ambulance. Extra Patrols. Extra Patrols. Traffic Complaint. Conditions of Release. Emotionally Disturbed Person. Agency Assist. Security Check. Unsecure Premises.
- Jan 22. Agency Assist: Ambulance. Security Check. Parking Citation. Citizen Assist. Agency Assist: Icy Roads. Fire Alarms. Welfare Check: Emotionally Disturbed Person.
- Jan 23. Agency Assist: Disorderly Conduct. Agency Assist: Search and Rescue. Agency Assist: Disorderly Conduct. Found Property. Noise Complaint: Unable to Locate.
- Jan 24. Traffic Complaint: Vehicle was moved. Traffic Complaint: Unable to Locate. Traffic: Passing School Bus with Red Flashing Lights. Agency Assist: AICS. Agency Assist: Fire Alarm. Citizen Assist: Road conditions.
- Jan 25. Citizen Assist: Open car door. Agency Assist: Public Works. Suspicious Person.
- Jan 26. Agency Assist: Power Issue. Suspicious Circumstance.
- Jan 27. Inmate Booking. Suspicious Person. Animal.

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Dan's Dispatch

By Representative
Dan Ortiz

The Alaska State Legislature began its 2020 session on January 21st. Last Friday, the Legislature held a joint session to vote on overriding two of Governor Dunleavy's vetoes of House Bill 2001 from August of 2019. The Legislature had five days once we began session to address veto overrides. HB2001 was an appropriations bill created this summer to reverse some of the items that were vetoed from the original operating budget.

HB2001 included \$5 million for AMHS, specifically to provide at least

some service to areas like Cordova who have been - and will be - without service for months. HB2001 also included the full amount the state is obligated to pay for school bond debt reimbursement (the Governor vetoed 50% of the funding). The State pays 60-70% of school bond debt, which funds voter-approved construction projects or emergency needs. The remaining percentage is paid for by local municipalities. Governor Dunleavy's veto of the State funded portion will not eliminate the need for funds, but simply transfer the burden to the local level. In Ketchikan, they will need to make up over \$1.2 million in lost

state funding and in Wrangell it amounts to a little under \$87 thousand. When speaking on the Floor, Senator Stedman reminded the Legislative body that paying the promised reimbursement is, while not necessarily a legal requirement, a moral obligation.

Three-fourths of the Legislature, or forty-five affirmative votes, were needed to override these two vetoes. The vote failed with 37 legislators, including Senator Stedman and myself, voting in favor of the override while 20 voted to uphold the Governor's vetoes. This means the vetoes stand and those items will not be funded. Three mem-

bers were excused or absent, the 37 'yeas' were cast by all members of the House Majority and a majority of Senators, and the 20 'nays' votes were from House Minority members and a small group of Senators from Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley.

Although we are unable to mitigate the losses from this year's budget, the Legislature is currently working on the Fiscal Year 2021 budget. If you have input for the future budget or any questions about the budgetary process and legislative actions, feel free to email me at Rep.Dan.Ortiz@AKLeg.gov or call my office at 907-465-3824.

Let Me Explain

By FRANK MURKOWSKI
Former Governor

I am almost a lifetime SE Alaskan and my wife and I are current residents of Wrangell. I moved to Ketchikan in 1943 when I was ten years old and have lived and worked in almost every major Southeast Alaska city including Ketchikan, Juneau, Wrangell and Sitka and played a lot of high school basketball in Petersburg. I continue to invest in institutions that provide services in each of those communities including Haines and Skagway. I cite these facts

because I know how sensitive SE residents are to suggestions offered by well-meaning persons who have never lived in the southern part of our great state.

There is an achievable solution that can save the ferry system from passing into oblivion. It must start right now with the Legislature and the Administration, because it's all about the level of state funds allocated to the AMHS.

I participated in the meeting of the Alaska Marine Transportation System of which I am a member, on January 15, 2020,

by telephone conference. The participants represented nearly all of the 35 communities served by the Marine Highway System. Topics ranged from compelling statements on the importance of the system to the smaller roadless communities as well as the reliance on the ferry to provide transportation for regional high school sports.

The most important single action that must be taken now is to have an operational plan that allows the AMHS to grow. Only then can it prosper. At this time we do not know at what level

the budget will be funded so we must make some assumptions.

In the case of the AMHS, the growth can only come as a consequence of a feeder system: the two are the ports of Prince Rupert and Bellingham bringing visitors to our state and Alaskans traveling north and south. These routes are where our major revenues originate. The state must maintain the weekly sailings to Bellingham and the Prince Rupert route at least twice weekly schedules. These are the feeder routes. The service can be sustained by a vigorous marketing program in the Pacific Northwest, including advertising in the Alaska Airlines magazine. Rates must be competitive. Currently, some cruise ships offer rates to Alaska less than our ferries. The reservation system must be improved, perhaps by contracting out and the ships must be flexible and crewed to handle the anticipated increase in traffic, both for vehicles and passengers.

The ferries on the PR route would run from PR to Ketchikan, Wrangell, Petersburg, Juneau and less frequently, to Sitka. Passengers to Haines and Skagway would then connect to the Alaska Class vessels the Tazlina and the Hubbard in Juneau. A favorable factor for cutting costs on this run would be the eventual development of the Cascade Point terminal

which would allow the Alaska class ferry to make the Haines run each day.

A routing and ship utilization such as this would provide the feeder traffic to Alaska with utilization of routes out of either Haines or Skagway to the interior or south on the ALCAN Highway.

For this operational plan to be successful the feeder routes must be funded by the Legislature as the top priority for the system because it will sustain the inter-SE Alaska traffic as well.

Hopefully, the AMHS will have some unallocated funds. These can be used to serve other routes based on traffic and revenue generation. The Tustumina or its replacement will continue to serve the established routes less frequently as funding allows.

The point I want to emphasize is: If we can build up the demand for the PR-Bellingham trade we can help fund other rural routes as we are able.

We should establish a working relationship with the IFF (Inter Island Ferry) operating from Ketchikan to Hollis, connecting the paved 100 miles of highway with Craig, Hydaburg and Klawock. IFF operates 2 vessels, the Stikine and the Prince of Wales. One vessel is on standby. There is an opportunity to serv-

Continued on page 5

Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

Recently I traveled to Juneau to meet with Legislators to discuss the importance of the Alaska Marine Highway. Mayors and administrators from statewide coastal communities teamed up to highlight the importance of the system. We heard stories of food shortages, missed medical appointments, and economic hardship from around the state. I found that the message was received with a sympathetic ear, but our friends from non-maritime communities believe that the ferry system serves too few at too great a cost.

The Alaska Marine Highway serves many critical roles. Perhaps the most vital is the one not currently being addressed. The Alaska Marine Highway is the State's primary coastal emergency and disaster response tool. In fact, the MV Kennicott was designed for this purpose. During the 1989 Exxon Valdez Oil Spill the MV Bartlett and MV Aurora were used as on-scene response vessels in Prince William Sound. Realizing the critical need, the MV Kennicott was built to be turned into an emergency response command center. And, it features a vehicle elevator capable of loading and unloading vehicles, equipment, and supplies without a ramp, regardless of tide levels.

The vessels have been called upon many times to assist in maritime searches. As recently as last summer, an AMHS vessel was able to save five mariners after their boat sank between Alaska and British Columbia.

AMHS routes cover 3,500 miles of coastline. Plain and simple, they are in areas when other boats aren't. Currently, marine radio Channel 16 has coverage gaps around the state. The only

way to reach the Coast Guard is by relaying distress calls through another boat that is in an area with coverage. Many times the vessel on the other end of the transmission is an AMHS ferry.

Recently, the Coast Guard came to my hometown of Wrangell to discuss the community's capacity to respond to a major incident involving a cruise ship. Cruise ships with combined passenger and crew capacities of nearly 6,000 people are now coming to Alaska. The concern for the USCG is that a major incident could overwhelm local response capabilities. If the unthinkable happens, local communities will rise to the occasion to assist with rescue and emergency care of passengers. Given the limited infrastructure resources of small coastal communities, AMHS vessels and crew will be drafted to serve as emergency transportation, housing, hospital and meal locations.

The Marine Highway and coastal communities should be working together developing disaster response plans. Replacement vessels should be built with emergency response as an integral design element. The 1.1 million cruise visitors to Alaska deserve to know we have adequate response capabilities. A partnership with AMHS and the cruise industry should be explored.

It's time to recognize all the critical needs served by the Alaska Marine Highway. In doing so, perhaps we realize access to new partnerships and funding sources to share operational costs.

Mayor Stephen Prysunka
City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

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Population in Petersburg, Wrangell rose in last decade

By BRIAN VARELA
Sentinel writer

Petersburg and Wrangell both saw an overall increase in population from 2010 through 2019, but while Petersburg's population rose between 2018 and 2019, Wrangell's population saw a drop in the same timeframe, according to data

from the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

There were 3,203 residents living in Petersburg in 2010 and in 2019, there were 3,226, according to the ADLWD. Those figures equal to a .08 percent growth for the decade and 1.12 percent growth in the last year.

"First of all, that doesn't surprise me," said Petersburg Borough Manager Steve Giesbrecht. "[Petersburg] is a really great place to live."

An increase in the local population can potentially have a positive effect on the local economy, the borough's budget and the job market, said

Giesbrecht. More people in town, means more customers for existing businesses. That transfers over to an increase in revenue coming into the borough via sales tax. Additionally, new residents may pay moorage fees, purchase services from local businesses, pay property taxes and participate in the community.

Giesbrecht said when he speaks to local businesses they tell him that they can't seem to fill open positions. Their need to hire employees reflects a need the Petersburg Borough is also experiencing. Giesbrecht said that despite offering a decent job with good pay and benefits, the borough doesn't get many applicants when advertising an open position.

"It's surprising," said Giesbrecht. "I'm guessing the job market here must be pretty good."

Petersburg also saw a natural increase in the last decade. The natural increase is the difference in the number of births and the number of deaths recorded over a period of time. From 2010 through 2019, Petersburg had a natural increase of 137 people, meaning there were 137 more births than there were deaths; however, from 2018 to 2019, the natural increase was -1.

In Wrangell, the population saw an overall increase of 37 residents in the last decade, and a decrease of 18 residents between 2018 and 2019, according to the ADLWD. There was a .14 percent growth rate in Wrangell from 2010 through 2019 and a -.75 percent growth rate from 2018 to 2019. In 2010 there were 2,369 people living in Wrangell. That number was up to 2,400 in 2019.

With the population increase over the last decade,

Wrangell Borough Manager Lisa Von Barga said the community benefits in many ways. There is a more diverse workforce for local businesses. More students in the school district translates to greater school funding from the state. The increase in local economic activity results in a higher sales tax revenue for the borough.

Von Barga said she was thankful that there was only a decrease of 18 people in Wrangell from 2018 to 2019, because a decrease in population means a reverse of the all the positive outcomes that resulted from an increase in population.

"For a small community, any reduction is significant," said Von Barga.

Southeast Alaska's overall population has increased by 709 in the last decade, but has decreased by 284 between 2018 and 2019, according to the ADLWD

There was a .11 percent population growth in Southeast Alaska from 2010 to 2019. The region had a total population of 71,664 in 2010, and in 2019, that number was 72,373. However, from 2018 to 2019, the population saw a .39 percent decline, decreasing from 72,657 to 72,373, according to the ADLWD.

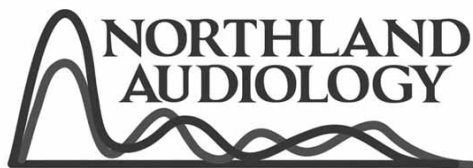
Like Southeast Alaska, the State of Alaska had a positive average growth rate from 2010 to 2019, but had a negative average growth rate between 2018 and 2019. There were 710,231 residents in Alaska in 2010. In 2019, there were 731,007 residents in the state. Since 2016, the population in Alaska has been dropping. In 2016, the overall population in the state was 739,649. The population dropped to 737,783 in 2017, and in 2018, the population was 734,055.



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT / WRANGELL SENTINEL

Harbor Light holds annual game dinner

Harbor Light Assembly of God held its annual men's game dinner last Sunday evening, Jan. 26. The dinner has been a yearly tradition for the church for 21 years. Church members, men from the Wrangell community, and a few guests from Petersburg enjoyed a night of grilled meat, raffle prizes, and hunting stories. According to Pastor Kem Haggard, on Facebook, there were 150 lbs. of ribs for the dinner, 90 lbs. of bbq chicken, six cajun fried turkeys, and numerous sides and desserts. Pictured here is John Taylor preparing ribs for the dinner.



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Continued from page 4

ice the north end void at Coffman Cove on POW Island by attracting camper traffic. Over 200 travel conventions are held in the Lower 48 each year. Presentations could be at those conventions promoting fishing, camping and hiking by local residents of the Prince of Wales area.

I believe that this concept of an efficient feeder system is the future of growing the routes and increasing the revenue. Alaska has become the #1 cruise

destination of US tourists. There is no reason that in a few years we couldn't see numbers approaching 500,000 camper tourists, but we must be competitive in cost.

A policy directive coming from the Legislature focused on growing the system would be necessary, and in addition the directive would remove the existing AMHS from the state DOT to a separate state owned corporation like the Alaska Railroad. A recent review of the debacle of the Alaska class ships in design, engineering, the Haines docking facility crew capacity and change orders points out why every consultant has stated that the ferry system needs to be set up as a state corporation in-

dependent of the DOT. We have had four governors and four changes of administration during the development of the Alaska Class vessels, and therefore, no accountability.

Assistance for servicing the smaller rural routes should be reviewed to see if a regional system with funding being obtained through AIEDA, with partnership from regional native corporations and private operators or communities could be established similar to the service of the historic mail boats which previously operated in Southeast Alaskan waters.

A strong feeder system from Prince Rupert and Bellingham to Alaska connecting with our SE mainlines in Ketchikan can turn the ferry system into a successful and needed marine transportation service. Most importantly, it can sustain the backbone of our mainline system so necessary in transitioning to the already authorized SE Alaska Transportation Plan.

We cannot wait another year to make the necessary policy changes and get the AMHS truly serving the needs of the roadless communities of Southeast Alaska.

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Alaska Fish Factor

By LAINE WELCH
Fisheries columnist

Economic Value of Alaska's Seafood Industry 2020 by Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) now available

Which Alaska region is home to the most fishing boats and where do most of Alaska's fishermen live?

Answers to those questions and many others can be found in the annual report Economic Value of Alaska's Seafood Industry 2020 by the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI). The colorful, easy to read report, prepared by the McDowell Group, gives a fishing snapshot by Alaska region, including employment rates and tax revenues, and breaks down the industry's impacts to the nation and the world.

Here are some highlights:

The seafood industry contributed \$5.6 billion in economic output to Alaska's economy in 2017/2018, including harvesting, processing, and support sectors.

About 58,700 workers were directly employed by Alaska's seafood industry, earning \$1.7 billion in wages annually.

There were 29,400 skippers, active permit owners and crew who fished in Alaska, of which 16,319 (56%) were Alaska residents.

Most of Alaska's fishermen (38%) live in the Southcentral region, more than any other area.

Alaska processors employed 26,000 workers on average at 166 shore based plants, 49 catcher processors and 10 large floating processors. Most fish is sold by processors as headed/gutted whole fish (41%) followed by fillets (20%), surimi (13%), roe (10%), canned (5%) and only 3% for meal/oils.

Alaska is home to over 9,000 fishing vessels. More than one third (3,259) are in the 23-32 foot range; 2,206 boats range from 33-49 feet in length.

Southeast Alaska is home to 2,462 fishing boats, nearly a quarter of the statewide fleet and more than any other region.

Nearly 5.7 billion pounds of seafood worth \$2 billion at the docks was harvested in 2017/2018 fisheries. Processors turned it into 2.8 billion pounds of product worth \$4.7 billion.

Salmon was the most valuable catch for fishermen at \$744 million, followed by Alaska pollock at \$461 million.

Alaska pollock accounts for 44% of the global supply; Alaska salmon accounts for just 13% of global supply.

The Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands region accounts for 55% of Alaska's fishery value and 81% of the volume.

Bristol Bay typically accounts for 42% of the world's sockeye salmon harvest.

Seafood industry tax revenues topped \$172 million in 2018 of which 43% went to the state, (\$73 million), 30% to local governments (\$51 million), 23% to salmon hatchery management (\$40 million), and 5% to the federal government (\$8 million).

Seven of the 10 largest shoreside processors invested a total of over \$100 million per year in capital expenditures from 2012 to 2016 and spending has continued to increase.

Alaska's fishing fleet also has expanded. An average of 75 new boats were added to the fleet annually from 2013-2018, an average investment of more than \$50 million per year.

Alaska produces two-thirds of the nation's seafood harvest and is home to nine of the top 20 U.S. ports for value. Seafood also is Alaska's biggest and most valuable export at over \$3 billion, going to 97 countries in 2018.

The economic impacts of Alaska's seafood industry are sustained without one penny of support from the state. ASMI, the lone marketing arm, is funded entirely by an industry-paid 5% marketing assessment based on the dockside value of the catches and federal funding for American export industries.

Drilling for safety - Since 1994 it's been the law that skippers and crews conduct monthly safety drills if they fish beyond three miles.

"And those monthly drills have to cover man overboard, flooding, fire and abandoned ship, those four scenarios," said Jerry Dzugan, executive director of the Sitka-based Alaska Marine Safety Education Association.

AMSEA training helps fishermen get accustomed to doing the safety drills and stay up to speed with using survival equipment like EPIRBs, life rafts, radios and immersion suits.

"The Coast Guard recognizes the certificate cards that we give to people who have completed the course as meeting the requirements of being a

drill conductor," he added.

Dzugan said safety awareness has increased over the past 20 years and tragedies like the loss this month of five fishermen on the *Scandies Rose* spikes interest in training - for a while.

"We tend to get into our old habits again. But I think every time this happens, the *Destination, Big Valley*, the list goes on, people are more conscientious of safety. We've seen a lot more interest among younger fishermen who are just entering the fisheries," he added.

Nearly 50% of fishing deaths are due to boat stability issues, Dzugan said, and up to one-third from falling overboard. Most of those deaths could be prevented with use of new comfy, workable life jackets.

"I see and I hear about more people using them, but it's still nowhere near a majority. Some of that is due to the fact that a lot of people aren't aware of the extremely wearable devices that are out there," Dzugan added.

Eight fishermen died in Alaska in 2019, according to Scott Wilwert, USCG District 17 Fishing Vessel Safety Program Manager.

AMSEA has safety drill trainings in coming weeks at Sitka, Kodiak, Ketchikan and Yakutat. See the line up at www.amsea.org -

Fishing for fish art - The Alaska Forest Service is fishing for entries in state fish art contests.

"We are just thrilled to see such a diverse assortment of art coming into our offices in Juneau. Our employees are going to be engaged as judges. This is something really fun for us," said Bobbie Jo Skibo, U.S. Forest Service regional partnership coordinator in Alaska and new state host of the fish art competition.

The free art contest is a project of the conservation charity Wildlife Forever and its Fish On! Program. Since 1987, Wildlife Forever has funded conservation works in all 50 states and Canada with more than 1,500 projects.

"There's a lot of young people who consider themselves artists but not outdoors people. Using this contest we can reach new young people to encourage them to become stewards of the out-

doors," said education director Julia Luger, adding that entries have come from more than 16 countries.

The state fish art contest is open to kids from kindergarten through grade 12 and can include any Alaska fish. For a new Alaska Fish Heritage category, Skibo said Chinook salmon should be the star.

"Here in Alaska, Chinook is our state fish and that's something a lot of people don't even know. The Forest Service is proud of the Chinook salmon we grow. We manage headwaters down to the sea and we want to make sure we promote the conservation and stewardship for that resource. There's so many benefits to so many people that we really wanted to put forward a fish heritage award to celebrate that here in Alaska," she said.

Young artists also can enter an international competition called the Fish Migration Award.

Skibo said the art challenges help bring conservation messages into the classroom.

"We do land management and policy and there's a lot of things going on, but I'll tell you what, it's connecting to our constituent, the youth, the people in our communities and this is a really unique way for us to be able to do that."

Winning artwork gets widely displayed and artists get various prizes from the Guy Harvey Foundation and Bass Pro Shops, the title sponsor. Deadline to enter the fish art contests is March 31. Visit www.wildlife-forever.org

Correction

In last week's story about the Fish and Game Advisory Committee meeting, some errors were made. The committee elected several new members, but this is not the total makeup of the committee. Brennon Eagle opted to not seek re-election, not Bruce Eagle. Dave Rak was made the new secretary of the committee, not Dave Brown.

Classified

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Date: August 26, 2020. For more information and a detailed job description, please contact the District Office at 907-874-2347. Positions open until filled. It is Wrangell Public School District's policy to not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, sex or disability.....1x1-30b177

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PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Wrangell and Petersburg face off in middle school wrestling tournament

Wrangell and Petersburg faced each other on the wrestling mat last weekend, for a middle school wrestling tournament. Wrangell walked away with 67 wins, 47 losses, and 53 pins. Carney wrote on the Wolves Wrestling Facebook page, as well as seven individual rosin champions. Pictured here is Gavin Hunt of Wrangell (left) and Davis Stocks of Petersburg (right), each attempting to get an advantage over the other. Wrangell and Petersburg will get to face off again soon, at the Stikine Invitational in Petersburg this weekend.

Lady Wolves victorious in Haines

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

The Wrangell Lady Wolves walked away from last week's games in Haines, against the Glacier Bears, with two big wins. Transportation to Haines proved to be a hassle, according to Jenn Miller-Yancey, who accompanied the team, but this clearly did not throw the team off their game.

The first game was on Friday, Jan. 24, and the Lady Wolves pulled far ahead of Haines, allowing them to only score three points. The final

score of the first quarter was 3-22, and the game would not go any better for Haines from there. Wrangell continued to hold a large lead, which only expanded as the game continued. The final score of the game was 15-65, a landslide victory for the Lady Wolves.

Despite this first win, Saturday's game the next evening was much closer. Haines managed to claim a narrow lead in the first quarter, 9-7, but fell behind Wrangell again in the second quarter at 16-19. The

two teams stayed a three-point away from each other in the third quarter, as well, with a score of 27-30. The Lady Wolves managed to pull a little farther ahead in the last quarter, but it was still a close and very competitive game. The final score was 36-43, another win for Wrangell.

"It was two very different games, as you can tell by the scores," said Coach Laurie Brown.

Brown said that they only travelled with part of the team to these games, so each player

Wolves take two losses against Glacier Bears

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

The Wrangell Wolves faced two losses to the Haines Glacier Bears last weekend, Jan. 24 and 25. According to Jenn Miller-Yancey, who accompanied the team on their trip to Haines, travel was a bit of a hassle this weekend due to bad weather. The games continued on schedule, however, and while they did not win, the Wolves played hard.

On Friday, the first game opened with the Glacier Bears taking a 10-point lead in the first quarter at 18-8. Haines continued to expand their lead through the game, despite Wrangell's best efforts to catch up. The score in the second quarter was 34-17, and 45-25 in the third quarter. The final score for the game was 56-39, a win for Haines.

Saturday's game was more of the same. Haines took a commanding lead in the first quarter, and while the Wolves played hard they could not manage to catch up. The Wolves made a comeback in the fourth quarter, making a total of 16 points, but by then the Glacier Bears were too far ahead for it to make much of a difference. The final score was 52-34, another loss for Wrangell.

Coach Cody Angerman complimented Haines on their team, saying they were very tough opponents with a strong basketball program. He added that while they did not win, his players did show improvement from previous games. He is working with them to really focus and commit each moment of the game, aiming to win games one quarter at a time.

"You can't take a play off, you can't take a quarter off," he said.

The Wolves were delayed in getting home after the games, due to the *MV Matanuska* being unexpectedly held up for repairs. They caught a charter to Juneau with Allen Marine on Monday evening, Jan. 27, and from there took the morning flight back to Wrangell on Tuesday.

"I've never experienced something like this, traveling here," Angerman said on Monday afternoon, adding that he was eager to get out of the snow and back to Wrangell.

The Wolves will be going up against Craig this weekend, Jan. 31 and Feb. 1.

got a lot of time on the court. It was a good experience, all in all, and she said she was very proud of their performance.

The Lady Wolves were slightly delayed in getting home, according to Miller-Yancey. The ferry that was supposed to take them home, the *MV Matanuska*, broke down unexpectedly on Saturday. The Alaska Marine Highway System chartered Allen Marine to

transport the teams from Haines to Juneau on Monday evening, where both the girls' and boys' basketball teams caught a Tuesday flight back home to Wrangell.

This weekend, the Lady Wolves will have their first home games of the season against Craig, on Jan. 30 and Feb. 1.

"They'll be really good games," Brown said.



Wrangell Medical Center Awarded Grant

The Walker Foundation is pleased to announce the Wrangell Medical Center construction project as its 2019 grant recipient.

The Foundation looks to annually award causes that improve community health and is excited to support a project that aims to ensure continued primary, emergent, acute and long-term care services in Wrangell for decades to come.

 SEARHC | healthy is here.

Two WHS grads make honor roll at MSU

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

Montana State University recently released its honor roll for undergraduate students in the fall 2019 semester. According to a press release from MSU, 4,904 students made the honor roll this past semester, either in the President's List or the Dean's List. To be eligible for the honor roll, students must be enrolled in at least 12 college credit hours of classes, and maintain a high grade level. This semester, two former students of Wrangell High School made the honor roll: Kayla Hay and Ian Jenson.

Hay made the President's List, meaning she maintained a perfect 4.0 grade point average. Currently a sophomore, she said this was her toughest semester at the university. She is pursuing two majors, in general science and German teaching. She hopes to get into the teaching field one day, Hay said, and depending on how her classes go she will graduate from MSU in 2022 or 2023. When she graduates, she said she hopes to return to Southeast Alaska to work as a high school teacher. Graduating from Wrangell High School in 2018, she said she hopes to return to her old school someday, specifically.

"I'd love to come back and teach in Wrangell, but that depends on where the jobs are," Hay said.

Ian Jenson made the Dean's List in the fall 2019 semester, maintaining a 3.5 GPA. He graduated from Wrangell High School in 2018, the same year as Hay. Also like Hay, he is pursuing a career in teaching. He is majoring in secondary education, with minors in teaching economics and teaching government. He pointed to one of his former high school teachers, Jack Carney, and his parents as inspirations for his career choice.

"I'd like to be a history teacher as soon as I graduate," Jenson said. "I'd like to end up in Wrangell at some point."

Jenson recently transferred to MSU, previously taking classes with the University of Alaska Southeast. The fall 2019 semester was actually his first at MSU. While the Dean's List is a good achievement, Jenson said he wants to improve the farther along he gets in his college career.

"I hope that it [my GPA] will actually get better," he said. "My goal is to be on the President's List this next semester."

University of Alaska holds financial aid workshop at Wrangell High School

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

As high school draws to a close for senior students, many of them start putting serious thoughts towards the future. For some, pursuing postsecondary education will be their next step. However, there is the question of how to pay for it. As many people know, higher education is expensive. To help students, and parents, better understand the ins and outs of financial aid, the University of Alaska Southeast hosted a workshop at Wrangell High School last week.

"I want you to walk away, even if you're not going to UAS, with some general knowledge about financial aid because it is a really important thing for education," said Carrie Kline, leading the workshop.

The first topic covered in the workshop was just the general cost of attending a school. There is more to paying for higher education than just tuition. The "standard costs" of attendance include tuition and student fees, room and board, and textbooks and other supplies. Kline said

that there were also other costs students needed to consider like transportation costs, expenses related to potential disabilities, and other personal expenses. All these costs combined make up the total estimated cost of attendance, Kline said, and students should consider them before pursuing higher education.

Kline also added that there is more to higher education than just college. There are many paths people can choose after high school, such as the workforce or career training, vocational programs, the military, and a variety of different degree programs. The term "financial aid" is a broad topic, as well, which Kline said covers things like loans, scholarships, grants, and work-study programs.

A large portion of the financial aid workshop was dedicated to the FAFSA. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is one of the first steps a student takes in the financial aid process. This form helps students, and their prospective universities determine what types of financial aid they qualify for. The FAFSA

form needs to be re-submitted each year that the student wants to receive financial aid, Kline said, and opens on Oct. 1 of each year. Kline said that, like all financial aid, the best option is to apply as soon as possible. Completing the FAFSA form provides opportunities for numerous grants, work-study programs, and loans.

"This is all federal aid, this is stuff that the Department of Education can provide to you," Kline said. "I mentioned state aid as being one of the things why you need to apply early for your FAFSA, because there are some grants and scholarships that are based on when you apply. Most campus-based aid ... they look at your FAFSA for that information, as well."

FAFSA applications can be completed online, at www.studentaid.gov. Kline said this is the recommended application method, but there are options such as a paper form, a downloadable PDF file, or even a FAFSA app.

Loans were another big topic of the workshop. There are

many options out there for people considering taking out a loan to pay for higher education, Kline said. Federal loans come from the FAFSA, for example, as well as many non-federal loans offered by states and other organizations.

"There are lots of people that will try to loan you money, so shop around if you do need to get a loan," Kline said.

It is important to read the fine print when taking out a loan, she said. Federal loans have a time period before repayments become required, for example. An unsubsidized loan begins accruing interest as soon as the loan is accepted, while the interest on a subsidized loan is covered by the Department of Education while a student is enrolled, at least half-time, in college. When it comes to paying back loans, there are also multiple options. The biggest piece of advice about loans, however, is to pay it back and avoid defaulting. Defaulting on a loan can lead to one's wages or PFD payments being garnished, damage to credit ratings, and harassment

from collection agencies.

"Again, shop around," Kline said. "Always look for those scholarships first."

During the workshop, Kline also explained some of the differences between scholarships and grants, ways students can try to save money, and work-study programs schools may offer.



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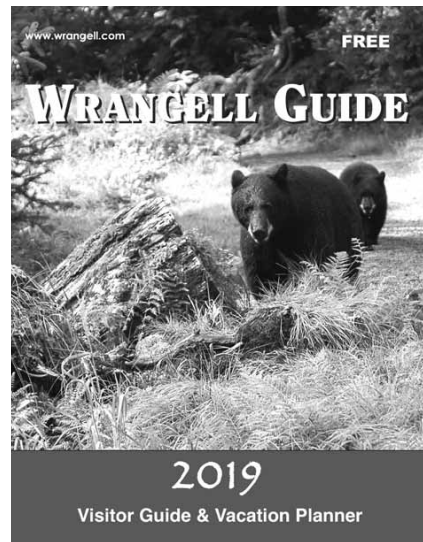
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