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Wrangell, Alaska
September 20, 2023

WRANGELL SENTINEL

Volume 121, Number 38

Oldest Continuously Published Newspaper in Alaska

12 Pages

\$1.50

School district talks with borough about potential cost savings

BY CAROLEINE JAMES
Sentinel reporter

During the budget process next year, the school district will need to cut about \$500,000 from its current \$5.1 million operating budget to maintain financial sustainability as it prepares for the end of federal pandemic relief funding.

This could mean staffing cuts and major changes to school facilities and programs, unless new sources of money are found.

Over the past three years, the district has relied on pandemic aid to help cover its costs, but this funding is ending soon. Those federal aid grants, which will run out in fall of 2024, currently cover \$304,000 worth of salaries and benefits for the district's two principals.

Based on projections for federal rural community funding and sales tax revenues that the borough appropriates for schools, the district "will not have any money in two years if we continue to spend like we do," said Borough Finance Director Mason Villarma.

In addition, state funding, which covers more than 60% of the district's operating budget, has not kept up with inflation in recent years, and an enrollment decline of about 12% since before the pandemic has reduced the amount of state money coming to Wrangell schools.

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Municipal election candidates

Candidates in the Oct. 3 municipal election are (from top left, clockwise): Anne Morrison, Michael J. Ottesen, John DeRuyter, Esther Aaltsén Reese and Gary Morrison. See stories on Page 8.

Borough moves toward allowing construction of more rental housing

BY LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

In an effort to make more housing available in the community, the planning and zoning commission has accepted a draft set of rules to allow the addition of a detached rental unit on the same lot as a single-family home.

Such rentals currently are not allowed under municipal code.

The vote on Thursday, Sept. 14, will set the proposal for a public hearing and further consideration by the commission, which could then forward the recommended ordinance to the borough assembly for another public hearing and approval.

"As the housing market continues to see a rise in land, development and home costs, the availability of affordable housing is decreasing in Wrangell," stated a staff report prepared for last week's commission meeting.

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Bigger cruise ships plan stops here in 2024-2025

BY LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

Holland America Line, Princess Cruises and Cunard Line — among the biggest names in Alaska summer cruises — have added Wrangell to some of their longer itineraries.

The traditional seven-day Southeast Alaska cruises from Seattle or Vancouver, B.C., don't leave time for adding new ports after the companies book stops among the popular destinations of Ketchikan, Sitka, Juneau and Skagway, and cruising through Glacier Bay or Tracy Arm/Endicott Arm south of Juneau.

Longer cruises, however, allow the addition of new ports of call.

The companies' 2024-2025 plans include the largest cruise ship to ever call on the community. The 3,080-passenger Ruby Princess will stop here June 10, 2025, while on a 22-day round-trip cruise out of San Francisco, according to the company's website.

Holland America is selling cruises for 2024 that offer one stop each by the 2,106-passenger Nieuw Amsterdam (May 16, during a 14-day cruise) and

one visit by the 1,964-passenger Westerdam (July 4).

The Westerman's cruise is planned for 28 days round-trip out of Seattle to a dozen ports of call in Alaska, extending as far north and west as Dutch Harbor in the Aleutian Islands and Nome. Rates start at more than \$10,000 per person.

Wrangell is on the schedule for the Nieuw Amsterdam again in 2025, with a visit in May during another 14-day Alaska cruise.

Cunard is planning one visit to Wrangell in 2024 for the 2,081-passenger Queen Elizabeth. The ship is on the calendar for July 29, during an 11-day cruise. Cunard's website describes Wrangell as a "lesser-visited port ... one of Alaska's oldest towns."

Princess is marketing two stops in town for its 2025 cruises: One visit each by Ruby Princess and the 2,600-passenger Grand Princess.

"It's certainly an opportunity," Kate Thomas, the borough's economic development director, said last week of the cruise lines' interest in Wrangell.

She acknowledged that some residents favor seeing more cruise passengers in town, while others

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State will notify tour operators of Petroglyph Beach permit fees

BY LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

A state parks official said staff shortages and lack of information about commercial tour operations led to the situation where the state didn't realize until this summer that businesses were failing to register or pay the required permit fees to bring visitors to the Petroglyph Beach State Historic Site.

Though the Petroglyph Beach was designated a state historic site in 2000, the divi-

sion never specifically publicized or enforced the annual permit and per-person fee on commercial operators taking people to the Wrangell attraction.

"Nobody knew what they didn't know," Southeast state parks regional superintendent Preston Kroes said Sept. 11.

The state Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division is budgeted for 10 full-time employees covering all of Southeast, which includes 43 parks. As of last week, it had six peo-

ple on staff.

"Things fell through the cracks," Kroes said.

After someone complained this summer to the division that increased visitor access by boat to the site could damage the beach, the state realized it had not been enforcing the fees. The division contacted the borough and started to make plans to collect the fees for next year.

"We don't have a whole list of who does business in the park," Kroes said. "We are

going to contact everybody and notify them that we do have a requirement for commercial operations in our parks."

There will be no effort to collect the fees for this year, he said. "We're going to let bygones be bygones."

The annual permit fee is \$350, plus a \$6 fee per person brought to the site by a commercial tour operator. There is no fee for non-commercial use.

Similar to the state's cruise ship passenger tax, the expect-

ation is that businesses will pass on the fee to their customers.

The Petroglyph Beach is not the only historic site in Southeast covered by the permit-and-fee structure for commercial operators. Totem Bight State Historical Park in Ketchikan and Baranof Castle Hill in Sitka are among several similar state parks in the program.

The division collected about \$4.7 million last year in
Continued on page 5

Birthdays & Anniversaries

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

- Wednesday, Sept. 20:** Jing O'Brien.
- Thursday, Sept. 21:** Keely Good, Adam Messmer, Jason Rak.
- Friday, Sept. 22:** Lorne Cook, Terri Henson, Braidyn Davia Young.
- Saturday, Sept. 23:** None.
- Sunday, Sept. 24:** Barbara Angerman.
- Monday, Sept. 25:** Daniel Kirschner, Lisa Nickodym, Riley Walls.
- Tuesday, Sept. 26:** Roberta Floyd, Owen Powell, Calen Young.

Senior Center Menu

Open for in-person dining. Must be fully vaccinated.

Thursday, Sept. 21

German meatballs over pasta, beets with orange sauce, tossed salad, biscuit

Friday, Sept. 22

Ham and lima bean soup, salad, half a cheese and tomato sandwich

Monday, Sept. 25

Closed. Shelf-stable meal and fruit cup delivered on Friday, Sept. 22

Tuesday, Sept. 26

Barbeque beef on a bun, mixed vegetables, potato salad, fruit with cottage cheese

Wednesday, Sept. 27

New England clam chowder, honey mustard coleslaw, half a turkey, cheese and tomato sandwich

Call the senior center at 907-874-2066 24 hours in advance to reserve a seat at lunch or to request delivery.

The senior van is available

to take seniors to medical appointments, errands such as collecting mail, getting prescriptions or other essential items.

Ferry Schedule

Northbound

Sunday, Sept. 24

Columbia, 2:15 p.m.

Friday, Oct. 6

Columbia, 4:45 p.m.

Friday, Oct. 13

Columbia, 8:30 p.m.

Friday, Oct. 20

Columbia, 3:15 p.m.

Southbound

Wednesday, Sept. 27

Columbia, 3 a.m.

Monday, Oct. 9

Columbia, 4 a.m.

Monday, Oct. 16

Columbia, 7:45 a.m.

Monday, Oct. 23

Columbia, 1:45 a.m.

All times listed are scheduled departure times.

Call the terminal at 907-874-2021 for information

or call 907-874-3711 or 800-642-0066 for recorded information.

Tides

High Tides

Low Tides

	AM		PM		AM		PM	
	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft
Sept. 20	04:27	13.3	04:19	15.4	10:06	3.3	10:53	1.0
Sept. 21	05:14	12.2	05:00	14.7	10:47	4.4	11:49	1.5
Sept. 22	06:22	11.1	06:00	14.0	11:42	5.6
Sept. 23	08:04	10.8	07:35	13.5	01:02	2.0	01:01	6.4
Sept. 24	09:37	11.7	09:12	14.1	02:29	1.8	02:40	6.2
Sept. 25	10:41	13.2	10:27	15.4	03:52	0.9	04:09	4.9
Sept. 26	11:31	15.0	11:27	16.8	04:58	-0.4	05:16	2.8



ALASKA AIRLINES CLUB 49 COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

NOLAN CENTER THEATER - No movie this weekend.

FALL STORYTIME from 10 to 11 a.m. Fridays at the Irene Ingle Public Library. Stories, crafts and snacks.

BOARD TRAINING from 9 to 11 a.m on Friday, Sept. 22, at the Nolan Center. Mike Walsh of the Foraker Group will talk about roles and responsibilities of nonprofit boards. \$20 fee. Register online at www.arpa.myrec.com.

THAI FOOD DINNER on Saturday, Sept. 23. Coconut soup, orange chicken with rice combo, \$20; three egg rolls for \$10. Fundraiser hosted by the high school volleyball team for travel. You can preorder by calling 907-470-3190. Food pickup starts at 4:30 p.m. at J&W's.

BAKE SALE from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Oct. 7 at Wrangell IGA hosted by the Class of 2025; fundraising for prom and graduation.

ONLINE HOMEWORK HELP for math, English and history is available from the statewide library. Work with a live tutor or use the resources to study independently. Free, at lam.alaska.gov/sled/homework.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT, if you or someone you know needs mental health or suicide crisis support, call or text 988 or chat at 988Lifeline.org. When you call 988, you will be connected with a trained crisis counselor who can offer help, confidential support and connection to resources. #CallCareline #CrisisIntervention #SuicidePrevention #SomeoneToTalkTo

WRANGELL PARKS and RECREATION is offering multiple activities to get your body moving. For more information on any of the activities and more visit www.wrangellrec.com or call 907-874-2444.

- **JIU JITSU** on Mondays and Wednesdays from 5:30 to 7 p.m. and Saturdays 10 to 11:30 a.m. at the community center gym for 16 years and up. \$5 drop-in fee.

- **ADULT SIGN LANGUAGE** Oct. 10 and Oct. 12-15 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the multi-purpose room at the community gym for ages 14 and older. Only 15 spots available. \$25 fee. Must register online.

- **PICKLEBALL** on Sundays, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.; Tuesdays, noon to 2 p.m.; and Fridays, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. with Jamie Roberts and John DeRuyter at the community gym. \$5 drop-in fee.

Want more attendance at your meeting or event? Send information for Roundup to wrgsent@gmail.com or call 874-2301. Or go to the Sentinel website, click on the Calendar tab, and submit your entry online.

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

Sept. 13, 1923

Wrangell's first clown and the first clown for the majority of youngsters here paraded down Front Street Saturday afternoon, leading his "Company" of the youngsters of town who took part in the pet parade. The parade was part of the Chautauqua program and the participants were in costume and carried pets of all kinds. The parade was led by Barney Google (Gertrude Goodrich) and "Spark Plug," followed by a baby elephant. These mirth-provoking features were the clever work of Mrs. H. W. Gartley and Miss Dorothy Chisholm. Both "Spark Plug" and the baby elephant won first prizes. Edna Bidwell won first prize for the most original costume. The parade started from Redman's Hall and was fun and joyous confusion from start to finish.

Sept. 17, 1948

At its meeting held at the Civic Center last Monday evening, the Wrangell Chamber of Commerce voted to circulate a petition for signatures to ask the city council to put into effect a 1% sales tax similar to the recent territorial tax which went off June 30. Virgil Neyman

presented the idea to the chamber and after considerable discussion the chamber voted on a motion by L.M. Williams Jr., to favor such a tax, with 75% of the revenue to go to the school and 25% for public health and sanitation, which would include such things as new sewers and water mains. City Councilman Peter McCormack felt that more people would favor the tax if they knew definitely where the money was going.

Sept. 21, 1973

More than 300 members of Alaska-Yukon pioneer organizations are scheduled to visit Wrangell today during a nostalgic return to the state. The travelers will be aboard the state ferry Wickersham, chartered for the voyage and on her last trip in the state marine highway fleet. The trip is billed as "Sourdough of Alaska-Yukon Return" and is the brainchild of Ketchikan-born Budd Clark, of Seattle, president of the Alaska-Yukon Pioneers. The age of the travelers goes into the 90s and dignitaries expected to be aboard will include retired U.S. Air Force Gen. Jimmy Doolittle, originally from Nome, who led the famous

Toyko bomber raid early in World War II. The ship's schedule includes stops at Ketchikan, Wrangell, Petersburg, Sitka, Haines, Skagway and Juneau. Travelers will go by railway from Skagway to Whitehorse, Yukon Territory.

Sept. 17, 1998

The City of Wrangell wants to make something very clear to the public. The water! Phase II of the long anticipated water treatment plant project is under way and engineers have promised that one thing is certain: The water that comes from our taps will no longer look like freshly steeped tea. It should be running through city pipes in June if the construction continues on schedule. Phase II, being built by McGraw's Custom Construction from Sitka, involves the water treatment plant plus a 400,000-gallon reservoir tank to be built up on the hill immediately adjacent. According to City Engineer Mark Storm, the water will be treated by three processes through several stages before going into storage tanks. If the new plant does its job as promised, Storm says, "It should make the water a little better around here."

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WEEKLY FARE SALES



FREIGHT FOR LESS

Forest Service works to lower cost of viewing platform for historic boat

By CAROLEINE JAMES
Sentinel reporter

The borough hopes to partner with the U.S. Forest Service to give the Chugach — a wooden Forest Service boat built in 1925 — an improved permanent home outside the Nolan Center, complete with a viewing deck and interpretive signs.

Currently, the boat spends most of the year wrapped in a protective plastic covering, though it is occasionally unveiled for events like the Fourth of July.

The 62-foot vessel is the last of the Forest Service's ranger fleet, which was once 11 strong. The boat was "considered the best handling (and) the most seaworthy oceangoing vessel" of the bunch, according to a Forest Service pamphlet, and once supplied field camps, transported government officials, provided welfare to isolated communities and took part in search and rescue operations.

"Chugach has played a central role in the successful administration of the nation's two largest national forests, the

Chugach National Forest and the Tongass National Forest," according to the boat's National Historic Register documents. It was listed on the register in the 1990s.

A conceptual design to present the Chugach as an accessible tourist attraction was developed in 2021, featuring a slanted roof to protect the vessel and a ramp that would lead around the boat and onto the deck.

However, Nolan Center Director Cyni Cray is concerned that the project's \$500,000 price tag — likely closer to \$625,000 this year, thanks to inflated construction costs — is too expensive and elaborate to be feasible.

"The conceptual design is the dream," she wrote in an email to the Sentinel. "However, we need to come up with something much cheaper." She hopes that in the coming design phase, engineers can scale the plans back and aim for a cost closer to \$250,000.

Design and engineering work is slated for this winter.

The Forest Service has set aside \$150,000 for the work.



PHOTO COURTESY U.S. FOREST SERVICE

The almost-100-year-old U.S. Forest Service vessel Chugach Ranger at the dock in Juneau in 2006. The boat is kept under a wrap at the Nolan Center until the Forest Service and borough can figure out an affordable plan to build a cover and viewing platform.

Though this won't be enough to complete the entire project, it can help the organization get started with the engineering plans in hopes of unwrapping the vessel by next summer.

The goal, explained Harvey Hergett, director of engineering for the Forest Service Alaska region, is to get at least a shelter constructed over the boat in the summer of 2024. "We're already

having some issues with ... mold on the inside of it," he said at a work session with the assembly Sept. 12. "Having it covered with shrink-wrap, like it is right now, is not the best thing for it."

"Once the roof is over it and we're protecting our asset, we're not worried about it anymore," added District Ranger Clint Kolarich.

However, the Forest Service isn't legally permitted to put permanent structures on land that it doesn't own and the area housing the Chugach is borough property. The first step in the development process, then, will be to finalize a lease. Forest Service representatives are al-

ready working with Borough Manager Jeff Good to establish this lease.

The next step would be to raise \$100,000 or more using a combination of grassroots fundraising and grants to supplement the \$150,000 from the Forest Services in hopes that a new design could come in at \$250,000. More grants will become available once the borough has engineering plans in hand — likely by the end of this winter.

The Nolan Center is also considering starting a GoFundMe, which would allow community members to contribute small amounts toward the project over the years.

Borough seeks federal grant to cover shortfall on water plant project

By CAROLEINE JAMES
Sentinel reporter

The borough needs to fill a funding gap of almost \$10 million before it can upgrade its water treatment plant. The new design would increase the plant's water output and storage capacity to accommodate future growth.

The low bid for construction came in at \$19.6 million, but borough officials estimate that the total cost will be closer to \$24.2 million — a figure that factors in engineering and inspection costs.

The borough has \$14.3 million available for the project, mostly state and federal money. On Aug. 31, the borough submitted an application to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for a \$9.9 million grant to cover the remainder.

The request was forwarded to USDA's Washington, D.C. office but "the response timeline from D.C. is unknown," wrote Capital Facilities Director Amber Al-Haddad in an email to the Sentinel.

USDA may choose not to fund the entirety of the grant. "If USDA does not fund our request in total, the borough would need to consider what level of additional money (it) could contribute ... in advance of the project," Al-Haddad continued.

However, Public Works Director Tom Wetor is hopeful about the borough's chances, since the federal grant program has excess funds that it needs to use up before the end of the fiscal year. The federal fiscal year ends Sept. 30.

The USDA representatives he's been working with are "optimistic that we're going to get the funding that we're asking for," he said. "There's additional money and we've been working on it for a long time."

The water plant upgrade will normalize chemical levels in the community's water and increase the plant's output and storage capacity, allowing for potential economic and population growth.

The new plant design features an automated chemical dosing process that will react to changes in water use in real time. As it stands, Public Works staff change chemical doses manually, making it difficult to react to the drop in demand that typically happens overnight.

"There should be less instances of ever tasting chlorine in your water," Wetor said of the upgraded plant in an earlier interview.

It will also help the borough prepare for future development of the Alder Top Village (Keishangita.ʼaan) subdivision and 6-Mile mill property, along with the possibility of Trident's return to operations continuing past this summer. "Those things will have a significant impact on our water usage," Wetor said.

ATTENTION SALMON FISHERS

The Board of Directors of the Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association, Inc. seeks nominations for the following three (3) year seats:

- Seine - 2 Seats
- Gillnet - 1 Seat
- Power Troll - 1 Seat
- Hand Troll - 1 Seat



Nominations must be in writing and include the permit holder's name, address, vessel name, phone number and a brief statement. Nominees must be "active" Southern Southeast Commercial Salmon permit holders. Permit holders should nominate person from their own gear groups.

SUBMIT NOMINATIONS TO:
SSRAA, 14 BORCH STREET
KETCHIKAN, ALASKA 99901

Or email: summerp@ssraa.org

For further information call (907) 225-9605

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Elected officials need to quit playacting

By LARRY PERSILY
Publisher

Close to 50 years ago, I was on the union contract negotiating team at the Chicago newspaper where I worked. The negotiating sessions with management were contentious, even nasty at times.

I recall we wanted a new three-year contract, with raises at around 6% to 8% per year. Inflation had averaged better than 8.5% in the three years since our last contract, so we thought our request was reasonable, though we also knew we would have to settle for less.

The negotiations dragged on for so long that by the time the two sides finally settled — somewhere around 3% to 4%, I remember — that we had only six months before we would have to start all over again.

As a slightly immature 23-year-old (maybe 24) with a strange sense of humor, I figured someone at the negotiating table had to make the point: This was all theater. Whether a drama or comedy, I wasn't sure. It was a two-year-long, multi-act play of demands, heartbreak, anger, threats and strike talk that ended just as we knew it would. Which was about halfway between what we wanted and the publisher's opening offer, which was zero.

Any good actor comes in costume, and I rotated mine for the negotiating sessions. A cowboy hat and spurs, followed by a ceremonial sword and sash. I think even my friends on the union side of the table thought I was excessive, but I wanted to be just obnoxious enough so that maybe the negotiators would realize it was theater and reach a deal to end the performance.

What was particularly upsetting to the employees, however, was that the company's business manager, a big guy with a nice car who lived in a nice suburb and made good money, referred to us as "bodies," as in "how many bodies the company can afford." He must have figured that being the nastiest person in the room was a winning strategy to save money.

He forgot that employees matter; he didn't care about their history with the company; he only looked at profits.

Making people feel like they don't matter is a lousy way to negotiate.

There's a timely point to all this.

The United Auto Workers has made sizable contract demands of the Big 3 automakers in this year's negotiations. The union started with a 40% pay raise over four years; a return to a guaranteed retirement system; a 32-hour work week; and

other provisions to undo some of the givebacks that workers sacrificed during the industry recession 15 years ago.

Of course, the workers know they will not win all the arguments, but what makes it harder to reach a compromise is that the employees feel disrespected. The three companies made a collective profit of \$250 billion in the past decade. Their three CEOs earned nearly \$75 million in total compensation last year.

Taking in that much money but starting the contract talks with a total wage increase offer of as little as 9% over four years — when the country just went through double-digit inflation — is akin to calling employees "bodies." It's no way to build trust and success. It led to a strike.

The political moral to this workplace analogy should be a lesson for elected officials across the country, particularly in Congress. If they treat the other side like "bodies" to step over on their way to partisan agendas and if they behave like politics is a theater script for social media, don't expect that anyone will be eager to compromise when it's time to get something done.

Going to extremes might play well on social media, cable news and at pep rallies, but it hurts the country.

EDITORIAL

Accessory rentals could help housing shortage

There is no single answer to Wrangell's housing shortage. There is no magic 2-by-4 that borough officials can wave over the community to create new apartments and homes. Which means trying multiple small steps, such as accessory dwelling units.

The planning and zoning commission last week made the next move in advancing the housing ordinance to a public hearing. If approved by the commission and later by the borough assembly, the change to municipal code would allow property owners to put a small, detached rental on the same lot as a single-family home.

The draft approved by the commission explains: "Accessory dwelling units give homeowners flexibility in establishing separate living quarters adjacent to their homes so that they might provide housing opportunities for elderly or other family members, obtain rental income (or) provide affordable housing opportunities within the community."

Of course, there would be some limits: No rentals added to small lots that would crowd the neighborhood; a 10,000-square-foot minimum lot size; the rentals could not exceed 800 square feet of interior space. And only one rental per lot.

They would have to be built on the side or back of the lot, and could not be taller than the home on the property.

Each accessory unit would need to have its own sleeping area, kitchen and bathroom.

Mobile homes, travel trailers and recreational vehicles would not qualify. The intent is to promote the construction of full-time rental housing to help ease the chronic shortage in town.

Following that same intent, anyone who builds an accessory dwelling unit and wants to rent it out for temporary use by vacationers or as a bed and breakfast would need to pass an additional hurdle — a conditional-use permit, which would require a public hearing and a chance for neighbors to weigh in on the request.

A borough staff report prepared for the commission said it best: "As the housing market continues to see a rise in land, development and home costs, the availability of affordable housing is decreasing in Wrangell." Allowing the addition of smaller rentals on single-family lots could be a productive answer.

— Wrangell Sentinel

School funding

Continued from page 1

At an assembly and school board work session Sept. 11, borough officials and elected representatives discussed substantial cost-saving measures, like consolidating roles or facilities, sharing services with the municipal government and partnering with Wrangell Cooperative Association to pursue additional grant funding.

The idea of combining the elementary, middle and high schools into one has been suggested before. The hope is that the district could save about \$266,000 yearly on heating and maintenance for the Evergreen Elementary building — over half the amount it needs to cut from its budget by next year.

However, Capital Facilities Director Amber Al-Haddad believes this solution is impractical because the district likely wouldn't break even on its moving and remodeling costs for several years.

"When I looked at your budget for the elementary school this fiscal year,

the costs to operate that building were very low," she said. "So when you consider low cost savings ... versus the cost to make the other campus ready to accept the other students ... at some point there might be a break-even point, but it would take several years."

The disruption such a move would cause for students, she argued, would outweigh the limited financial benefits. "What are the ways that we can eliminate those ideas that impact the students and focus on things that are a little more business-centered?" she asked. "Shared services, things that aren't so impactful to the students."

Combining the district and borough health insurance plans and a combined audit were mentioned at the meeting as possible ways to save money with shared services.

Assembly and school board members have expressed concern about high school and elementary students being educated in the same space. "I

can see parents backing up and saying, "No, I don't want my 8-year-old in high school with a 17-year-old," said school board member Angela Allen. "People are going to pull their kids out and go to homeschool and then where's that money going to go?"

Superintendent Bill Burr added, "There are cost savings that could be done" by consolidating schools. "But as I've said, pretty publicly, we would not be consolidating schools for an educational reason. It would be a financial one."

Board and assembly members also criticized the idea of combining one of the principal positions with the superintendent position, since the stresses of the combined role would be unmanageable, they suggested.

Some assembly members proposed a school-sponsored child care program as a potential money-maker for the district that could also provide an economic boost to the borough — this idea was also deemed impractical.

Many child care programs are

"heavily subsidized by the federal government," explained Borough Manager Jeff Good, and much of that funding has been slashed recently. Over 70,000 programs nationwide are at risk when federal pandemic aid cuts off at the end of September.

"Child care is a tough one," he continued, and typically not profitable due to high costs.

The assembly and school board planned to meet again in November to continue their discussion of potential cost-saving measures.

"The good news is, it's forecasted," Economic Development Director Kate Thomas said of the district's financial future. "It's on paper. We can see it, we know it's coming, it's important to take heed with that and start developing a plan. A plan that if things don't change, we can swallow. Because if we wait until a point when we're passing the budget and we're right at the end of the fiscal year, it's going to be a lot more uncomfortable than it is right now."

Oldest continuously published paper in Alaska



ESTABLISHED NOVEMBER 20, 1902
Published weekly by: Good Journalism LLC
PO Box 798, Wrangell, AK 99929
Phone: 907-874-2301

POSTMASTER: send address changes to Wrangell Sentinel, P.O. Box 798, Wrangell, AK 99929

Sentinel Staff:

Publishers Larry Persily
Office Manager... Amber Armstrong-Hillberry
Reporter Caroleine James
Production Ola Richards

Wrangell Sentinel (USPS 626-480) is published weekly except the third week of July and the week after Christmas by Wrangell Sentinel, 205 Front St., Wrangell, AK 99929. Periodicals postage paid at Wrangell, AK.
Phone: 907-874-2301; Email: wrgsent@gmail.com; Website www.wrangellsentinel.com. ©Copyright 2022.

Subscription Rates

Wrangell \$46
Out of town \$70
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Online-only subscription.....\$40

Accessory dwellings

Continued from page 1

Allowing construction and establishing standards for accessory dwelling units, detached from the primary home on the lot, could help ease the rental shortage, the report stated.

The commission has been working with the borough attorney to draft the new rules.

"The purpose and intent of this chapter is to allow accessory dwelling units ... while preserving the appearance and character of existing neighborhoods," the draft code states.

"Accessory dwelling units give homeowners flexibility in establishing separate living quarters adjacent to their homes so that they might provide housing opportunities for elderly or other family members, obtain rental income, provide affordable housing opportunities within the community, or utilize their property more efficiently."

The rules would apply to most residential areas in Wrangell, Kate Thomas, the borough's economic development director, explained the day after last week's commission meeting.

The minimum lot size for a single-family home with an accessory unit would be 10,000 square feet.

The maximum floor space for an accessory unit would be 800 square feet, with a limit of one per lot.

The rental units would have to be separate from the home. For example, a rental would be

allowed under the new code above a detached garage, but not in a garage attached to the home. Such attached rentals would need a conditional-use permit, which would require a public hearing and approval by the planning and zoning commission.

A conditional-use permit also would be required if the owner wants to rent out an accessory dwelling unit as a vacation residence or bed and breakfast.

Each accessory dwelling unit would need to be a complete rental, with cooking and bathroom facilities.

Other rules in the draft ordinance include:

- A unit may not be located on a lot with a duplex or multi-family housing.
- It may not be built closer to the property's front line than the primary residence and must be built in a side or rear yard, except in the case of a new or converted detached garage.
- A unit may not be taller than the primary residence.
- The rental should share the primary residence's sewer and septic system "where practical," and shall be approved by the state Department of Environmental Conservation to handle two housing units.
- Mobile homes, travel trailers and recreational vehicles may not be used as an accessory dwelling unit.

Cruise ships

Continued from page 1

not so much. "The concern always will be maintaining local control," Thomas said, ensuring that the larger ships and additional visitors don't change the character of the community.

One challenge is "finding that threshold for Wrangell ... so we don't overrun our tour operators," she added.

It's also a matter of planning, such as when the Westerdam arrives July 4 next year. It will not be able to tie up at the City Dock due to the Fourth of July activities and will need to lighter its passengers to shore.

While the addition of several thousand visitors could help the economy, the community needs to be realistic as to how many ships and people it can handle, Thomas said. "Wrangell has a lot of infrastructure needs related to our ports and harbors," limiting their capacity.

The early draft schedule for next year lists cruise ship visits with capacity for almost 30,000 passengers stopping in Wrangell May through September, the same number as this summer's maximum passenger count.

The biggest of the lineup of ships planning stops here the next two summers is the Ruby Princess in 2025. The 951-foot-long, 19-deck ship was refurbished in 2018 and carries a crew of up to 1,200. Next in passenger count is the Grand Princess, which is scheduled to stop here May 20, 2025, on a 17-day round-trip cruise from Seattle, with nine port calls in Alaska.

"We are thrilled to be sailing to Wrangell," Lisa Syme, Princess Cruises vice president said in an emailed statement on Monday, Sept. 18.

Holland America, Princess and Cunard are all owned by Carnival Corp., which also operates Carnival Cruise Line and Seabourn cruises to Alaska.

Petroglyph Beach

Continued from page 1

statewide in fees for personal use of cabins, campsites and parking, in addition to payments from commercial operators. The money is not dedicated to expenses at each site, Kroes explained. The collections go into the division's budget for spending across the state.

"Parks money stays in parks," he said.

This summer's call to the division about water access to the Petroglyph Beach instead

of visitors coming in from the road raised a new issue for the parks division. "We were not aware that there were launches coming off the (cruise) ships," Kroes said.

"There is a bit of concern about the beach landings," he said, adding that the division will look into the issue and whether it risks damage to the area.

After it compiles a list of operators and knows how many people are visiting the beach, and how they are getting there,

the division will be better able to manage and protect the site, Kroes said. "We can start examining how much impact" visitors have to the area.

The state owns the six acres of waterfront property about a mile north of the ferry terminal and manages it under a 1998 land-use agreement with the borough. The state is responsible for any major repairs, while the borough handles trash pickup and light maintenance.

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Scheib revs up new car detailing business

BY CAROLEINE JAMES
Sentinel reporter

No matter how many muddy boots soil your car's seat or how many lattes you spill driving over the Case Avenue potholes, a new car detailing business in town can return your vehicle to mint condition.

Scheib's Detailing, owned and operated by Erik Scheib, offers full interior deep cleans for \$150.

"It puts me in a better mood when I'm in a cleaner car," he said, and since there wasn't a detailing business in town when he moved here this summer, he knew he could "kind of corner that market."

Though he announced the new business on Sept. 11, he didn't officially open until Sept. 15. In those four days, however, he'd already received about eight inquiries.

A full interior detail takes between four and five hours. The process starts with trash removal, then Scheib uses a tool similar to a massage gun to work grit and salt out of the bottom of the car so that they can be picked up by a vacuum. Even the grime that builds up inside of the air vents isn't safe from his dust-removal regimen — he uses grooved microfiber brushes to clear out these hard-to-reach areas.

He'll shampoo the floor and mats if they need it, then clean the dashboard, trim and center console.



PHOTO COURTESY ERIK SCHEIB

Erik Scheib, who has opened a car and truck detailing business in town, says he learned the skill from his dad and brothers.

The trim and dash get a special sealant treatment that protects them from the deteriorating effects of ultraviolet rays and adds a glossy finish. The final step is a thorough window clean.

"People are going to get their vehicle back and be like, 'holy cow,'" Scheib said.

He learned the skill from his dad and brothers, growing up in eastern Washington. Friends and relatives were often impressed by the cleanliness of the Scheibs' cars and Erik inherited his family's vehicle maintenance gene.

He loves "seeing what the difference can be and how you can make kind of a crummy dull interior turn into looking shiny and, in a lot of cases, brand new," he said.

Scheib also offers exterior detailing, though he admits that the wash job may not last long because of Wrangell's rainy weather.

Customers can opt to drop off their vehicles at his home, or he can arrange to pick them up and return them once the job is complete. In the unlikely event that a customer's vehicle is damaged while he is driving it, he assumes liability.

Because of his full-time job with the borough Public Works Department, he has limited capacity — call to schedule an appointment at 509-398-2662.

Parks and Rec expands offerings with sign language classes

BY SENTINEL STAFF

The Parks and Recreation Department will offer American Sign Language classes next month for youth and adults. "We want to expand" what the department offers the community, said Devyn Johnson.

"My goal is to offer something for everyone," she said.

Eventually, Johnson hopes to expand the department's programming to include music, art and more, not just exercise, swimming and pickleball.

The upcoming course will be the first time Parks and Recreation has ever offered sign language, she said. The five-session beginner class for people 14 and older will run Oct. 10 and 12-15, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., with the

classes for youth scheduled for Oct. 23-27. The classes will be held at the community center multi-purpose room.

The two programs are limited to 15 students each. The fee is \$25. To register, go online at Parks and Rec www.wrangellrec.com or call 907-874-2444 for more information.

Different Wrangell residents will teach the two classes.

Franki Gablehouse will teach the adults class. This year she is teaching American Sign Language online in a virtual class to Florida students, and before that she taught sign language for six years in a Florida classroom.

First, Gablehouse will teach her Wrangell students to make conversation and exchange greetings in sign, teaching the alphabet and expanding the instruction. "Most (hand) shapes stem from the alphabet," she explained. American Sign Language is expressed by movements of the hands and face.

Suellen Bahleda will teach the youth class, Johnson said.

"We all know the fall and winter months can be tough," with people stuck indoors and looking for activities, Johnson said. She hopes the sign language course pulls people out in the weather long enough to come into the community center.

Wrangell walkers cover 5,500 miles and win Southeast trophy

BY SAGE SMILEY
KSTK

Wrangell won a regional Parks and Recreation competition as local participants walked more than others in Southeast this summer. On average, Wrangell's 22 participants in the challenge tallied 252 miles each — enough to walk from Juneau to Wrangell to Ketchikan, with almost two dozen miles to spare.

In total, the 22 people walked more than 5,500 miles.

Wrangell Parks and Rec Di-

rector Lucy Robinson told the borough assembly at its Sept. 12 meeting that her department helped promote and localize the competition. "We did some fun stuff," Robinson told the assembly, "We figured out how many miles it was from one of the harbors to the (Stikine) flats and different areas of the Stikine. And then we headed north to Skagway."

Juneau's Parks and Rec Department coordinates the annual competition, running from the first of May through the first

of September. Participants log miles using an app or paper mileage trackers. Miles can be walked, jogged or run outside, and can't include other outdoor activities like biking or paddling.

Juneau started the challenge during the early pandemic as a way to get residents outside. It expanded into a friendly community-versus-community

competition over the next two years, adding Petersburg, Wrangell and Ketchikan. Next year, Sitka and Skagway are set to join in the challenge.

Alaska Airlines is a major sponsor of the competition — participants who walk over 150 miles are entered to win round-trip tickets with the airline. The trophy for the competition features a miniature Alaska Air-

lines jet. Mayor Patty Gilbert accepted the challenge trophy at the Wrangell airport in early September.

"It was an honor," Gilbert said, adding with a laugh: "Except I must confess, as I left the airport terminal, I broke a wing off. So I thought, 'This is great. The mayor accepts a trophy on behalf of Wrangell. And I'm so proud, and break it.'"

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SENTINEL SPORTS



PHOTO BY CAROLEINE JAMES/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Wrangell runners (in the center of the photo, from left) Jackson Powers, Boomchain Loucks and Keegan Hanson were among the more than 240 cross-country racers from 16 high schools who competed at the Sitka Invitational on Saturday, Sept. 16.

Wolves raced in Sitka against largest field yet

By CAROLEINE JAMES
Sentinel reporter

The Wrangell Wolves competed in the Sitka Invitational on Saturday, Sept. 16 — their largest cross-country meet before regional and state championships, with more than 240 competitors from 16 high schools.

Sophomore Boomchain Loucks came in seventh overall and first in the Wrangell boys team, with a time of 17:08.9 — only a fraction of a second away from his personal record. Senior Keegan Hanson was close behind in ninth place overall with a time of 17:14.4.

After Hanson, 12 runners finished

within less than 20 seconds of each other, and junior Daniel Harrison was right behind this group, with a time of 17:59.9 — seconds from the season record he set Sept. 9.

Sophomore Ian Nelson ran 18:42.3 at his first meet of the year and Jackson Powers rounded out the boys team top five at 19:32.9.

Jackson Carney, Cooper Powers and Trevyn Gillen also represented Wrangell at the meet.

On the girls team, freshman Alana Harrison came in 15th with a time of 22:47.3 — almost a minute faster than her first race of the season Sept. 2. Her

performance was “great in a field of really competitive runners like Grace Christian (Anchorage school) and the Sitka girls,” said coach Mason Villarma. “(It’s) pretty incredible, as a freshman, to compete at that level.”

Freshman Kalee Herman placed 45th at 25:38.4.

The boys team placed sixth overall; the girls team did not have enough runners to make it to the board. As one of the largest teams at the meet, Juneau-Douglas High School: Yadaa.at Kalé took home first-place team honors in the boys and girls races.

Though Wrangell’s times were

slower, on average, than they were at the Wrangell Invitational Sept. 9, the team is “still putting in a lot of volume, a lot of miles,” said Villarma. As regionals and state approach, the team will “taper,” or cut mileage at its practices to focus on speed.

None of the runners on the boys team have completed the 5K in under 17 minutes yet, but Villarma hopes that the Ketchikan meet on Saturday, Sept. 23, will provide that opportunity. “It’s always a fast course,” he said, “and we typically PR (personal record) there.”

The Southeast regional championship is set for Sept. 30 in Juneau.

School district looks to contract for new activities director

By SENTINEL STAFF

The school district hopes to sign up a new activities director this week after the person handling the work moved on to another job in town.

The activities director is a contract position — not a full-

time or even part-time staff job — and handles travel and other arrangements for sports, music, art and other school-sponsored activities.

Erik Scheib had been in the position just since the start of the school year when he ac-

cepted a job with the Public Works Department last week.

“Mainly, getting into Wrangell, being new here, there’s been a lot of opportunities that have been thrown my way. ... It comes down to mainly my career choice,” he

said Thursday, Sept. 14.

His new job will include snow removal, maintenance and other duties, sometimes working through the night — a tough fit with activities planning during the day at the schools. It would be hard “to

juggle both of those, I don’t think it would be fair for me and the school and kids. ... I couldn’t give 100% to both,” he said.

Schools Superintendent Bill Burr said he plans to interview applicants and make a decision on the new director this week. The district has been working ahead on travel arrangements, and Burr said he does not expect any delays or issues for sports teams or other activities.

The next director will be the fourth in the past three school years. “We hope to find somebody who will stay a few years,” Burr said.

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WRANGELL SENTINEL

CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC NOTICE

For the upcoming City and Borough of Wrangell Regular Election of Oct. 3, 2023, the following ordinance applies:

2.16.030 Write-in Candidates and Write-in Votes.

Individuals who fail to file a declaration of candidacy but wish to run for office as a write-in candidate must file with the Borough Clerk a letter of intent no later than 4 p.m. on the Friday preceding the election (Sept. 29, 2023) in which the candidate plans to participate.

Write-in votes cast for individuals who do not file a letter of intent will not be counted.

In order to vote for a write-in candidate, the voter must, in the space provided, write in the candidate’s name as the candidate’s name appears on the letter of intent filed with the Borough Clerk. In addition, the voter must mark the oval opposite the candidate’s name.

Stickers shall not be used.

Kim Lane, MMC, Borough Clerk
City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish Sept. 13, 20, and 27, 2023

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Michael Ottesen, Anne Morrison run for assembly unopposed

By CAROLEINE JAMES
Sentinel reporter

Two candidates will be running for two seats on the borough assembly in the municipal election Oct. 3 — Michael J. Ottesen and incumbent Anne Morrison.

Barring a successful write-in campaign, both candidates will be elected for three-year terms.

Ottesen, a captain and tour guide for Alaska Vistas, is running for public office for the first time to bolster youth engagement in municipal government and develop the town's economy.

"I feel like we need a little bit more ... of the younger generation getting involved in more parts of the city," he said. His priorities include "anything that I can do to help develop the town and bring a new fresh look on things, whether that be the water plant, or roads, or other infrastructure around town."

He hopes to "help bring Wrangell to the fullest extent that it can be."

Ottesen acknowledges that serving on the assembly

for the first time will involve a learning curve, but he prides himself on his ability to pick up new skills quickly.

Morrison was first elected to the assembly in 2018. During her tenure, the borough has undertaken construction of new trails, the recent pool siding project and preparations for the construction of the water treatment plant. "There have been so many positive things that have happened here lately," she said. "We have a good working relationship with the school district. It's a good assembly — I think we work well together."

She's pursuing another term because "there are a lot of things I'd like to see to fruition," she said, and wants to help maintain the momentum that the borough currently has on its projects.

"Hopefully, we'll get the (conditions) report on the school buildings and be able to do something with those, because they are in dire need," she added. The Public Safety Building, 6-Mile mill site development and Alder Top Village (Keishangita.ʼaan) subdivision are also among her priorities. "I want to see some of

these things done."

Beyond her years on the Wrangell assembly, Morrison has extensive background in municipal government. She's worked for the governor's office and served on the Sitka assembly. "I kind of know how it works and how state networking works," she said. "I have a real desire to see people come together and build consensus."

Despite running unopposed, she still encourages the community to "get out and vote."

Assembly Member Ryan Howe, who teaches at Wrangell Public Schools, did not pursue reelection due to his schedule.

"If I choose not to run, it will be because of too many other time commitments," he said in an earlier interview. "I've greatly enjoyed serving. I'm heading into the final year of my school admin program, which is when I'll be doing most of my research projects and logging practicum hours; this will take up considerably more of my time."

Gary Morrison unopposed for fourth term on port commission

By CAROLEINE JAMES
Sentinel reporter

Gary Morrison is running unopposed for his fourth term on the port commission. He is seeking reelection so that he can support ongoing harbor projects and, he admits, "because no one else is doing it."

During his tenure as a commissioner, the borough completed the Shoemaker Bay Harbor project and made improvements to the community's many harbor floats.

His priorities for the upcoming term include the installation of the security system cameras at the harbors and the corrosion-inhibiting anode project at Heritage Harbor.

For the security system, "we have the money for it, it's being designed and we'd like to see that getting in place," he said.

As for the anode project, "for some reason, there were no zincs put on the pilings when they developed Heritage Harbor," he said. "They're looking at getting a design and contract out. ... I want to see that

done." The borough went out to bid on the project this week.

He'd also support some form of insurance requirement for boats that use the community's harbors. "It's really not fair for the rest of us," he said, if the borough — and by extension, the taxpayer — has to foot the bill for retrieval and cleanup when uninsured boats sink.

Morrison's 38 years of experience in leadership roles with the U.S. Forest Service taught him to "(come) to consensus on things and (look) at plans and (get) things

done," he said. As a frequent harbor user, he is also familiar with issues affecting the Port and Harbors Department.

Though it isn't an ongoing project, he would also like to see a second launch ramp installed at Heritage Harbor to mitigate crowding. "Oftentimes, there are a lot of boats waiting to get out," he said. "It would be nice if we had two ramps."

The project would require grant funding that the borough does not currently have, so Morrison plans to "just keep looking for an opportunity to do that."

School board election attracts two candidates for one three-year term

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

Voters on Oct. 3 will choose between incumbent Esther Aaltséen Reese and challenger John DeRuyter for a three-year term on the school board.

It is the only one of five school board seats on this year's ballot.

Reese, tribal administrator for the Wrangell Cooperative Association, is finishing her first year on the board after winning election last October, when she was unopposed.

DeRuyter, in his third year on the secondary school advisory committee, is making his first run for office in Wrangell.

If elected, DeRuyter said his primary goal is that the board always respond to public comments and questions.

"In my mind, the board has a responsibility at the very least" to respond to the public, including explaining when the board cannot follow through on someone's suggestion.

DeRuyter is "scaled-back retired," with a doctorate in clinical psychology, though he still has a few patients in his private practice.

When he first volunteered for the advisory committee, "only a few people were coming" to the meetings, where they would listen to the principal's report and then go home. "There was no advisory stuff going on," he said. "Nothing was brought to our attention to weigh in on."

DeRuyter said, "I started asking, 'What are we doing here?'"

Starting the middle of the past school year, the committee began to focus on what it could do to help, he said. The group has since expanded from four members to nine.

Recent discussion topics for the committee have included sharing community concerns and verifying that the district has adequate procedures in

place to determine when weather conditions are not safe for student travel by boat to out-of-town events.

In early 2022, the advisory panel recommended that the school district discontinue its face mask mandate as COVID cases had declined. The school board voted to make masks optional, starting March 2022.

Reese, who has been with WCA since 2014, the past six years as tribal administrator, did not respond to the Sentinel in time for this report. In her campaign interview last year, she said she wanted to see more family involvement in school activities, and more collaboration between the school district, borough, WCA and other entities such as the U.S. Forest Service.

CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL NOTICE INVITING BIDS Wrangell Harbors Anodes

Notice is hereby given that the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, will receive sealed bids for the construction of the Wrangell Harbors Anodes project. The engineers estimate for all work is approximately \$1.5 million.

Sealed bids will be received by the City and Borough of Wrangell, Post Office Box 531, Wrangell, Alaska 99929, located at the Borough Clerk's Office, 205 Brueger Street, Wrangell, Alaska 99929 until 2 p.m. prevailing time on Oct. 2, 2023, and publicly opened and read at that time.

The Contract Documents should be downloaded from the City and Borough of Wrangell website (www.wrangell.com) under the Bids and RFP's section.

The OWNER reserves the right to reject any or all Bids, to waive any informality in a Bid, or to make award as it best serves the interests of the OWNER.

Jeff Good, Borough Manager
City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish Sept. 13 and 20, 2023

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation

1. Publication Title: Wrangell Sentinel
2. Publication Number: 626-480
3. Filing Date: Sept. 13, 2023
4. Issue Frequency: Weekly
5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 51
6. Annual Subscription Price: \$46 in Wrangell, \$70 outside Wrangell, \$102 first class mail
7. Mailing Address: P.O. Box 798, Wrangell, AK 99929
Contact Person: Amber Hillberry, Phone: 907-874-2301
8. Mailing Address: P.O. Box 798 Wrangell, AK 99929
9. Publisher: Larry Persily, P.O. Box 798, Wrangell, AK 99929
Editor: Larry Persily
10. Owner: Larry Persily, P.O. Box 798, Wrangell, AK 99929
11. Bondholders, Mortgages and Other Security Holders: None.
12. Tax status has not changed during preceding 12 months
13. Publication Title: Wrangell Sentinel
14. Issue date for circulation data: Sept. 13, 2023.
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation.

	Avg. No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total number of copies	800	800
b. Paid Circulation		
1. Outside county mail subs	150	141
2. In-county subscriptions	300	297
3. Distribution outside the mail	150	153
4. Other mail classes	11	11
c. Total paid and/or requested circulation	611	602
d. Free distribution by mail		
1. Outside county	3	4
2. In county	1	2
3. Other mail classes	0	0
4. Nominal Rate Distribution	35	35
e. Free distribution outside the mail	39	41
f. Total distribution	650	643
g. Copies not distributed	150	157
h. Total	800	800
i. Percent paid & for requested circulation	94%	93.62%
16. Electronic Copy Circulation		
a. Paid Electronic copies	75	84
b. Total paid print copies + electronic copies	686	686
c. Total print distribution + electronic copies	725	727
d. Percent paid	94.62%	94.36%
17. Publication of Statement of Ownership required.		
Will be printed in the Sept. 20, 2023, issue of this publication.		

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Rep. Peltola's husband dies in plane crash in Southwest Alaska

By ZAZ HOLLANDER, RILEY ROGERSON AND IRIS SAMUELS
Anchorage Daily News

Alaska U.S. Rep. Mary Peltola's husband, Eugene "Buzzy" Peltola Jr., died after a plane he was flying crashed Sept. 12 in Southwest Alaska.

Peltola, 57, was the former regional director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs for Alaska, serving from 2018 to 2022. He previously spent 34 years working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Alaska.

Among other roles, he served as vice mayor and council member for the city of Bethel between 2010 and 2012 and sat on various Alaska Native village corporation boards. After retiring in 2022 from his work for federal agencies, Peltola co-founded Alaska Carbon Solutions, a consulting firm focused on carbon sequestration.

Alaska State Troopers were notified of the crash about 64 miles northeast of the

village of St. Mary's around 8:50 p.m. Sept. 12, according to a statement from the state Department of Public Safety. Federal aviation authorities identified the plane as a single-engine Piper PA-18 Super Cub and said it crashed in mountainous terrain.

Peltola had flown a hunting party and equipment to a remote location and later returned after they had finished their hunt. The crash occurred soon after Peltola departed with a second load of moose meat. He was the only person on the plane.

He initially was pulled from the crash and received medical care from two hunters at the camp near where the crash occurred, but did not survive the evening, authorities said.

The National Transportation Safety Board is leading the investigation into the crash.

An emergency locator transmitter registered to Peltola was activated the

evening of Sept. 12, authorities said. The Alaska Rescue Coordination Center deployed an Alaska Air National Guard rescue team aboard an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter, which arrived at the scene about 1:50 a.m. Sept. 13, five hours after the crash.

Peltola held a commercial pilot certification originally issued in 2004, according to an FAA database. The plane that crashed was not registered in his name.

Peltola's body was brought to the State Medical Examiner's Office in Anchorage for an autopsy.

Rep. Peltola flew home from Washington, D.C., on Sept. 13 to be with their family, Peltola's office said.

Services were held for Buzzy Peltola in Bethel on Saturday, Sept. 16.

A statement from Rep. Peltola's chief of staff, Anton McParland, described Buzzy Peltola as "one of those people that was obnoxiously good at everything. He had a delightful sense of

humor that lightened the darkest moments. He was definitely the cook in the family. And family was most important to him. He was completely devoted to his parents, kids, siblings, extended family, and friends — and he simply adored Mary. We are heartbroken for the family's loss."

Rep. Peltola was first elected just over a year ago in a special U.S. House election after longtime Alaska Rep. Don Young died on a flight from Los Angeles to Seattle in March 2022. Peltola, a Democrat, was elected to a regular term last November. She became the first Alaska Native member of Congress and the first woman to hold Alaska's lone U.S. House seat.

She was sworn into office a year ago Sept. 13.

The Alaska Federation of Natives issued a statement on social media saying Buzzy Peltola's work and legacy "will always be remembered."

Marijuana industry says high tax rate an advantage to illegal sales in Alaska

By JAMES BROOKS
Alaska Beacon

In an unusual offseason hearing, a committee of the Alaska Legislature considered a proposal on Friday, Sept. 15, that could lower the state tax on marijuana sold in the state.

House Bill 119, considered by the House Labor and Commerce Committee, would shift the state's marijuana tax system from a tax per ounce to a sales tax.

The state's marijuana industry says the change is desperately needed to help marijuana businesses compete with the state's black market. "This is a very desperate situation that we're in," said Lacy Wilcox, legislative liaison for the Alaska Marijuana Industry Association, a trade group.

Since the state legalized the recreational sale of marijuana in 2014, it's been taxed at \$50 per ounce, a figure established by the ballot measure that made Alaska the third state to legalize marijuana use recreationally.

Other states have since legalized recreational sales, but at lower tax rates. When local taxes are added to the mix, Alaska taxes marijuana more heavily than any other state, the Tax Policy Center of the Brookings Insti-

tution concluded in 2022.

That's created a financial windfall for the state: In fiscal year 2021, the state collected more than \$30 million in marijuana tax revenue.

But industry experts say not all is green with the state's marijuana industry. In fiscal year 2022, tax revenue fell to less than \$29 million, the first time since legalization that marijuana tax revenue fell on a year-over-year basis.

Preliminary figures suggest that tax revenue rebounded slightly in the just-completed fiscal year 2023, but in the fiscal year that began July 1, projections indicate that it will be sharply down, legislative aide Cody Rice told the committee.

Dozens of marijuana businesses are expected to close this year, the Alaska Marijuana Industry Association has said, and many are delinquent on their taxes.

"We are all in survival mode, and we are coming together to share our pain with you," Wilcox told the committee.

Last year, Gov. Mike Dunleavy convened a recreational marijuana task force to analyze the new industry's progress, and that group delivered a report earlier this year that contained a variety of recommendations. One was a new tax system.

Brandon Emmett, a member of the marijuana industry, sat on the task force. "I can tell you with a high degree of certainty that (marijuana) is still much cheaper on the black market. Alaska's taxes and the burden on businesses from the Marijuana Control Board is causing prices to stay high and businesses to be uncompetitive," he told the committee.

Emmett said that based on anecdotal evidence, he believes "40% to 50%" of the marijuana sold in Alaska is sold on the black market because the unregulated market offers better prices.

HB 119 was written to address industry concerns. As originally drafted, it would have changed the \$50 per-ounce tax, collected by cultivators, to a 3% sales tax collected by retailers.

The bill was subsequently amended to a 10% sales tax, and industry officials said on Friday that the change is effectively a sidestep and wouldn't address their concerns.

The committee took no immediate action Friday, but the committee chair, Wasilla Rep. Jesse Sumner, said committee members may consider amendments to the bill at a meeting in October or November.

The Alaska Beacon is an independent, donor-funded news organization. Alaskabeacon.com.

CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL JOB ADVERTISEMENT Wrangell Public Works Maintenance Specialist I/Heavy Equipment Operator Trainee

The Wrangell Public Works Department will accept applications for the position of Maintenance Specialist I/Heavy Equipment Operator Trainee until the position is filled. This is a permanent position with all City and Borough benefits. This position is part of the collective bargaining agreement.

The Maintenance Specialist I is the first step on the multi-stage Maintenance Specialist career path. Promotion to Maintenance Specialist II/Heavy Equipment Operator is required within three years and is possible upon sufficient time and satisfactory performance demonstrating knowledge of how to operate heavy equipment and the ability to satisfy all requirements of that job description.

This position assists with construction, maintenance, repair and alteration of streets, sidewalks, drainage, sewer and water utilities. They operate various public works heavy equipment in performance of Public Works projects and other City department projects. Primarily assists with street and utility work, but will also be used to assist and fill in within all Public Works divisions as needed. Independent or cooperative work with others is required under the daily direction and supervision of the Public Works Foreman.

This is a full-time, hourly position with full benefits, paid at Grade 14 with a starting wage at \$20.16 per hour. Employment is based on a successful background check and pre-employment drug screening.

Applications and job descriptions may be obtained and returned to Robbie Marshall at City Hall, 205 Brueger Street (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929 or via email at rmarshall@wrangell.com.

The City and Borough of Wrangell is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer.

Jeff Good, Borough Manager
City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish Sept. 13 and 20, 2023

DEAR TAXPAYER

Each year, the City and Borough of Wrangell receives Community Assistance Program (CAP) funds from the State of Alaska's Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development. The purpose of CAP funds is to aid municipalities in delivering vital public services to their respective communities. As part of the compliance requirements associated with this funding, the Borough is required to notify taxpayers of the amount of CAP funding received and how it was used. This letter serves as said notice. Please see below for a summary of budgeted vs actual CAP expenditures for FY 2021, FY 2022, and FY 2023 as well as the FY2024 forecast expenditures:

If there are any questions or concerns regarding this notice, please feel free to contact the Borough's Finance Department at (907) 874-2381.

Mason F. Villarma, Finance Director
City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Community Assistance Program - Expenditure Summary								
Public Service	FY 2021		FY 2022		FY 2023		FY 2024	
	Budgeted	Actual	Budgeted	Actual	Budgeted	Actual	Projected	
Water/Sewer	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 96,555	\$ 96,555	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Public Safety	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 193,111	\$ 193,111	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Road Maintenance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 96,555	\$ 96,555	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 375,223
Health & Sanitation	\$ 375,807	\$ 375,807	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
General Administration	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 424,620	\$ 424,620	\$ -	\$ -
TOTAL	\$ 375,807	\$ 375,807	\$ 386,221	\$ 386,221	\$ 424,620	\$ 424,620	\$ 375,223	

CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL JOB ADVERTISEMENT Harbor Administrative Assistant Harbor Department

The City and Borough of Wrangell will accept applications for Harbor Administrative Assistant through Sept. 29, 2023, at 5 p.m.

This is a permanent position with all City and Borough benefits and is part of the IBEW collective bargaining agreement. Applicants must have a valid Alaska driver's license, be proficient with Microsoft Office programs including Excel, Word, Outlook and Access, and have excellent customer service skills.

For a complete list of duties and responsibilities a job application may be obtained and returned to City Hall, 205 Brueger Street (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929, or emailed to rmarshall@wrangell.com.

Applications will be reviewed, and interviews may be conducted, beginning Oct. 2, 2023.

Jeff Good, Borough Manager
City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish Sept. 20 and 27, 2023

Police report

Monday, Sept. 11
 Lost property.
 Agency assist: School.
 Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.

Tuesday, Sept. 12
 Traffic stop.
 Summons service.

Wednesday, Sept. 13
 Agency assist: Department of Transportation.
 Civil paperwork.
 Suspicious activity.

Thursday, Sept. 14
 Parking violation: Citation issued for parking on private property.
 Parking violation: Citation issued for parking on private property.
 Pretrial enforcement.

Friday, Sept. 15
 Found property.
 Traffic stop: Citation issued for speed.

Saturday, Sept. 16
 Civil matter.
 Suspicious circumstance.
 Traffic stop: Verbal warning for driving habits.

Sunday, Sept. 17
 Agency assist: Line crew.
 Citizen assist.
 Agency assist: Line crew.

During this reporting period there were three ambulances requested and three subpoenas served.

State gets caught up on old applications but behind on new food stamp requests

BY CLAIRE STREMPLE
 Alaska Beacon

Officials from the state Division of Public Assistance said its staff has worked through the backlog of applications for food stamps that stressed Alaska families for more than a year. But that success came at the cost of what officials are calling a "new" backlog.

Division Director Deb Etheridge took over leadership in the midst of the backlog and said getting through the old backlog is a success. "We've got to celebrate those wins and the staff feel really good about it," Etheridge said. The division got through the backlog two months faster than officials had projected.

But the division fell behind on newer applications while staff worked through backlogged cases. Etheridge said there are 6,000 Alaskans waiting for food aid.

She said the division prioritized getting benefits to Alaskans who had been waiting the longest. "Our federal partners made it clear that we needed to get through the old backlog — don't worry about staying current as much as getting some of those old ones off. So that's

what our focus was," she said.

Since July, the division has been processing less than 20% of new food stamp applications on time. The average decision time for benefits was more than 80 days — more than four times the division's goal and more than double the federal limit.

"There's no perfect plan," Etheridge said.

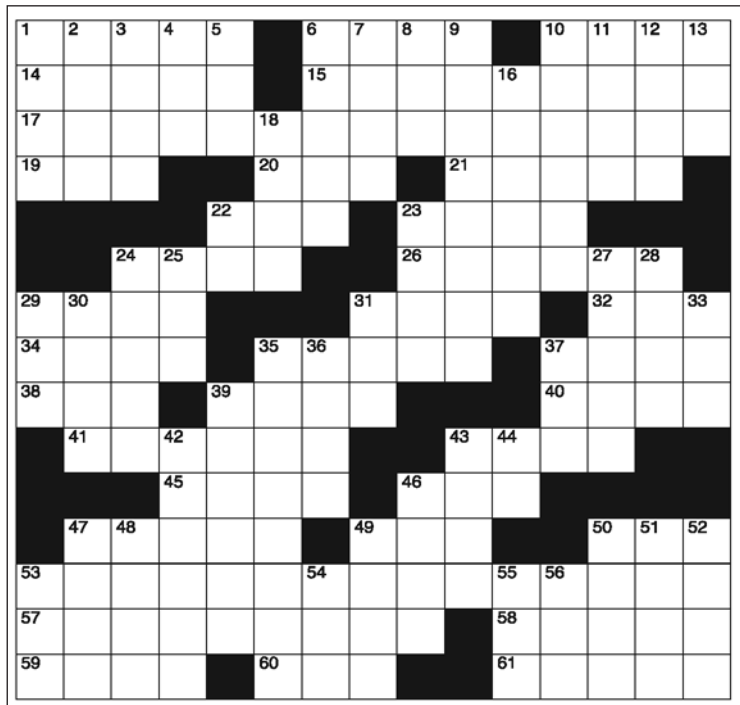
She said the oldest applications in the new backlog are from April and May, but most of them are from June. And she said they should be easier to get through for two main reasons: The staff is now practiced at moving through cases and, compared to the previous backlog, applications from two to four months ago are relatively fresh and faster to process.

The slow processing time for new applications is the cost of a much faster turnaround for renewals. Almost 40% of those applications were processed on time in July, a marked improvement from last December through this April, when the number fell below 10%.

The Alaska Beacon is an independent, donor-funded news organization. Alaskabeacon.com.

Crossword

Answers on page 12



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Type of cat
- 6. Weaponry
- 10. Western Christian Church service
- 14. Significant eruption of pustules
- 15. Baltic nation
- 17. Start of American holiday season
- 19. Unhappy
- 20. Maintains possession of
- 21. Metrical foot of one long and three short syllables
- 22. Mountain pass
- 23. Vestments
- 24. Type of dish
- 26. Escaped quickly
- 29. Zoroastrian concept of holy fire
- 31. Wings
- 32. Political action commit-
- tee
- 34. Touches lightly
- 35. Stood back from
- 37. Philippine Island
- 38. Popular winter activity
- 39. Type of amine
- 40. Small freshwater duck
- 41. Filled with love
- 43. Without (French)
- 45. Vetch
- 46. Swiss river
- 47. Describes a sound
- 49. Sign language
- 50. Hair product
- 53. Have surgery
- 57. Quality of being imaginary
- 58. Far-right German party
- 59. Drove
- 60. Former French coin of low value
- 61. Hard, durable timbers

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Body art
- 2. Middle East military title
- 3. Actor Pitt
- 4. Container
- 5. Speak incessantly
- 6. Relating to algae
- 7. Jacob __, journalist
- 8. Rock TV channel
- 9. Boat's cargo
- 10. Most wise
- 11. Within
- 12. Chinese industrial city
- 13. Scotland's longest river
- 16. Not capable
- 18. Footwear
- 22. Savings account
- 23. Capable
- 24. Vaccine developer
- 25. Tax collector
- 27. Fencing swords
- 28. Native religion in China
- 29. Promotional materials
- 30. A shot in a film production
- 31. Afflict in mind or body
- 33. A passage with access only at one end
- 35. Breathing devices
- 36. Employ for wages
- 37. Kids' TV channel (abbr.)
- 39. Popular Boston song
- 42. Made amends
- 43. Selling at specially reduced prices
- 44. Atomic #18
- 46. With fireplace residue
- 47. Unleavened cornbread
- 48. Draw out
- 49. Southwestern Alaska island
- 50. Where the Pyramids are
- 51. People of Nigeria
- 52. Smaller quantity
- 53. Destroy the inside of
- 54. City
- 55. Chivalrous figure (abbr.)
- 56. No (Scottish)

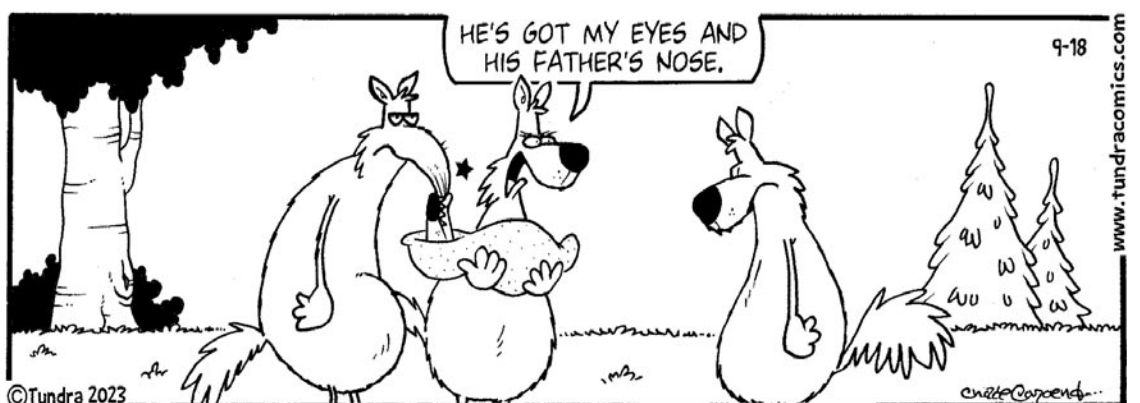
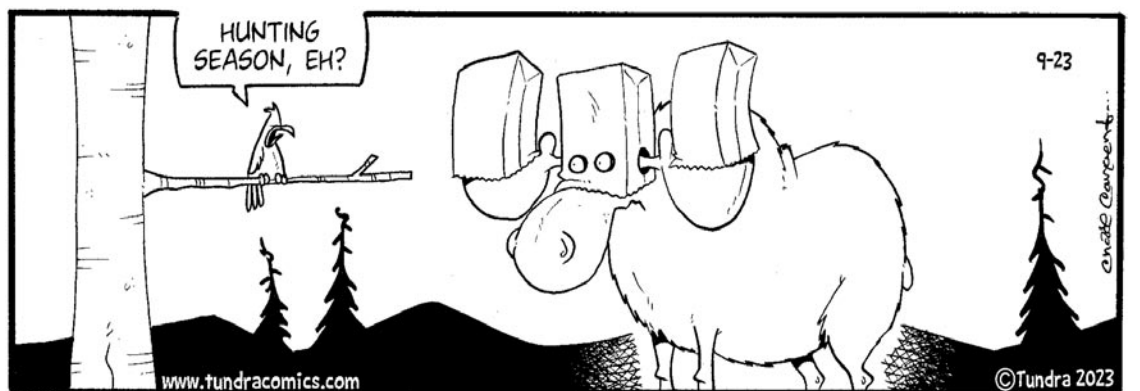
Ritter's River

by Marc Lutz



Tundra

by Chad Carpenter



Subscribe to the Sentinel.
907-874-2301.

CLASSIFIED

RUMMAGE SALE
 First Presbyterian Church will hold a garage rummage sale from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 22, and from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 23, at the church. Accepting donations now. Call 907-874-3534 or text 907-660-7112 to coordinate donation pickup or drop-off.

LAND FOR SALE
 Two Stikine River properties on the west side of Farm Island in

King Slough: 200-foot frontage, 6-plus acres, \$80,000; 8-acre backlot, lots of good access, \$60,000. Can access the main river at any stage of tide. Willing to finance. Call 907-518-0101.

FREE ADS
 Do you have something to sell? Having a garage sale? Looking to buy something? Classified ads for individuals and community groups are free in the Sentinel. Contact Amber at

907-874-2301 or email wrgsent@gmail.com.

STAY UP TO DATE
 Get a Wrangell Sentinel subscription today and enjoy the convenience of having the paper delivered to your mailbox each week. Subscribers also can enjoy free online access. Call Amber at 907-874-2301 or subscribe online at wrangellsentinel.com.

FREE
 Moving? Need fire starter? Art projects? Stop by the Wrangell Sentinel to pick up free newspapers.

Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association (SSRAA)

is looking for a seasonal
FISHERIES TECHNICIAN,
 approximately October 9 – November 17.

This position will travel to three SSRAA hatcheries to assist in marking and tagging juvenile coho.

Starting pay is \$17.97/hr DOE.

Visit the SSRAA web page, www.ssraa.org/employment, or call us at (907)225-9605 for more information and application instructions



CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC HEARING - PUBLIC NOTICE to Purchase Borough-Owned Tidelands

During the Regular Assembly Meeting on Sept. 26, 2023, starting at 6 p.m., the Borough Assembly will hold a Public Hearing on the following item(s):

Request from the Wrangell Cooperative Association to Purchase borough-owned filled tidelands, described as Lot 1, Plat 84-5, of the ATS 1209 Subdivision
 Kim Lane, MMC, Borough Clerk
 City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish Sept. 20, 2023

CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL Legal Notice

Pursuant to the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, Borough Charter, Sec. 4, public notice is hereby given that the following ordinance listed by title only has been adopted by the Borough Assembly. Such ordinances are currently on file in the office of the Borough Clerk and may be inspected upon request.

- a. **Ordinance No. 1045** of the Assembly of the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, amending Chapters 5.04.210, Hearing Procedures, and 5.04.230, Higher Appeals, and repealing Section 5.04.220, Appeal Records, in the Wrangell Municipal Code.

Kim Lane, MMC, Borough Clerk
 City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish Sept. 20, 2023

CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC NOTICE

ABSENTEE VOTING for the Regular Borough Election (to be held Oct. 3, 2023) begins on Monday, Sept. 18, 2023, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., (Monday through Friday) at City Hall.

Qualified Voters may vote an Absentee Ballot until Monday, Oct. 2, 2023, at 4 p.m. for the Regular Borough Election.

For those voters who cannot VOTE ABSENTEE IN PERSON, you may submit an application to have your ballot mailed or faxed to you.

Please stop by the Borough Clerk's Office to apply.

Kim Lane, MMC, Borough Clerk
 City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish Sept. 13, 20, and 27, 2023

CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL NOTICE OF REGULAR ELECTION

Notice is hereby given that on the 3rd day of October 2023, in the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, a Regular Local Election will be held for the purpose of voting on the following Borough Official positions.

- Borough Assembly: Two seats, for 3-year terms
- School Board: One seat, for 3-year term
- Port Commission: One seat, for 3-year term

The polls for said election will be open at **8 a.m. on the said day and will close at 8 p.m.** on the same day.

Each voter must have the qualifications prescribed by state law. A qualified voter shall vote only once per election and shall exercise that right at the polling place established in the designated Wrangell Precinct (James and Elsie Nolan Museum/Civic Center) and in which he/she resides within the borough boundaries of the City and Borough of Wrangell.

Kim Lane, MMC, Borough Clerk
 City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish Sept. 6, 13, 20 and 27, 2023

Alaskan
 quota & permits llc

Brokerage for
COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN

Call Marcie
FOR FISHING PERMITS
907-772-4000

Call Olivia
FOR FISHING QUOTA
907-772-7000

VESSEL DOCUMENTATION
ALASKABROKER.COM

KETCHIKAN - PETERSBURG - WRANGELL

SEAPA

Southeast Alaska Power Agency

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Board of Directors of the Southeast Alaska Power Agency (SEAPA) will hold a regular board meeting on September 28, 2023, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. and September 29, 2023, from 9 a.m. to noon at the Dorothy Ingle Conference Room at the Petersburg Medical Center in Petersburg, Alaska. During the meeting the Board may enter into an executive session for a matter that may have an adverse effect upon the finances of the Agency. For additional information, please call 907.228.2281.
Published: September 20, 2023

CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL JOB ADVERTISEMENT Wrangell Public Works Water/Wastewater Treatment Apprentice

The Wrangell Public Works Department is accepting applications for the position of Water/Wastewater Treatment Apprentice until the position is filled. This is a permanent position with all City and Borough benefits. This position is part of the collective bargaining agreement.

The Water/Wastewater Treatment Apprentice is the first step on the multi-stage Water/Wastewater Treatment Operator career path. Promotion to Water/Wastewater Treatment Operator Level 1 is possible upon acquiring the licensure, time and satisfactory performance demonstrating the ability to satisfy all requirements of that job description.

This position primarily works a Monday through Friday schedule and reports to the Wastewater Treatment Operator Lead when working in the wastewater department and Water Treatment Operator Lead when working at the water department.

Primary responsibilities include operation, repair and maintenance on the City's water treatment plant, pressure-reducing valves, tanks, reservoirs, and dams. Performs work needed to be done to ensure efficient operation of water infrastructure. Performs daily operation, maintenance, testing and reporting of the water treatment facilities. Required to maintain logs, reports and records of water treatment plant operations and maintenance. Personally operates, repairs and maintains the City's wastewater treatment plant, lagoons, lift stations and pump stations. Perform daily checks of the wastewater treatment process and periodic checks of pump stations. Performs work needed to be done to ensure efficient operations of wastewater infrastructure. Independent or cooperative work with others is required.

This is a full-time, hourly position with full benefits, paid at Grade 15 with a starting wage at \$21.08 per hour. Employment is based on a successful background check and pre-employment drug screening.

Applications and job descriptions may be obtained and returned to Robbie Marshall at City Hall, 205 Brueger St. (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929 or via email at rmarshall@wrangell.com.

The City and Borough of Wrangell is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer.

Jeff Good, Borough Manager
 City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish Sept. 13 and 20, 2023

CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC NOTICE City Board and Committee Vacancies

Persons interested in serving on the following City Boards and Committees, please submit your Letter of Interest to the Office of the Borough Clerk, City and Borough of Wrangell, P.O. Box 531, Wrangell, AK 99929. You can also email your Letter of Interest to the Borough Clerk at: clerk@wrangell.com.

Deadline for Letters of Interest is 4 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 4, 2023, for the following vacancies:

- Planning and Zoning Commission: One seat, for 3-year term
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: Two seats, for 3-year terms
- Wrangell Convention and Visitor Bureau: Two seats, for 2-year terms
- Economic Development Committee: Two seats, for 3-year terms
- Investment Committee: One seat, for open-ended term

Appointments will be made at the Oct. 10, 2023, Regular Assembly meeting. A copy of the code chapter for any of the above boards and commissions can be obtained by contacting the Borough Clerk's Office or viewed at the City's website at www.wrangell.com.

Kim Lane, MMC, Borough Clerk
 City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish Sept. 20 and 27, 2023

Alaska saw big increase in flu cases last fall and winter

BY YERETH ROSEN
Alaska Beacon

After a period when COVID-19 restrictions halted the spread of other respiratory diseases, Alaska had a big increase in influenza cases last fall and winter, state data shows.

The overall influenza case load during the 2022-23 season was much higher than in prior years, reports a new bulletin issued by the epidemiology section of the Alaska Division of Public Health. Most notably, cases spiked much earlier in the season, in November and December, before dropping.

There were five influenza deaths over the season, all among adults, according to the bulletin, the latest annual influenza

summary for Alaska.

Influenza case numbers climbed nationally as well after dropping significantly during the period when emergency protections were in place to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Preliminary estimates from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention put last season's flu burden at 27 million to 54 million, a range in line with totals from previous, pre-COVID years with relatively high case numbers.

As in Alaska, the rebound in cases followed a 2020-21 season with extremely low case totals — the lowest since current reporting began in 1997, according to the CDC. That was part of a national pattern of much-reduced respiratory illness asso-

ciated with pandemic protections.

Even without the influence of COVID-19 restrictions, influenza patterns can vary a lot from year to year.

In Alaska's 2018-19 season, for example, the spike in cases came late, with a peak in February, and there were 16 adult deaths and two pediatric deaths, according to state data. In the 2011-12 season, the spike was even later, peaking in April, and there were no reported Alaska influenza pediatric deaths, according to state data.

Meanwhile, Alaskans lag the nation in influenza vaccination by a substantial margin, the bulletin reported.

Only about a quarter of Alaskans 18 and older and only 18.7% of children up to age 17 were vaccinated during the 2022-

23 season, according to state data. In comparison, more than half of children and close to half of adults were vaccinated nationally during the past season, with rates up from the prior season, according to preliminary CDC figures.

Vaccines are generally recommended for all adults and for children and infants who are at least 6 months old. September and October are the best times to get the flu vaccines, according to state officials.

SEARHC, which operates the Wrangell Medical Center, will announce to the public when it has flu vaccines available.

The Alaska Beacon is an independent, donor-funded news organization. Alaskabeacon.com.

More than half of Alaska-born residents have moved out of state

BY THE ALASKA BEACON

More than half of Alaskans born within the state have moved away, according to an analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data published by the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas.

A state's ability to retain Alaska-born residents is an indicator of its economic health and attractiveness, and the state ranked near the bottom of the analysis conducted by University of North Florida professor Madeline Zavodny and two experts at the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas.

Using data from the Census Bureau's 2021 American Community Survey, they found

Alaska retained 48.7% of those born inside its borders, ahead of only Wyoming (45.2%) and North Dakota (48.6%).

At the opposite end of the scale, Texas retained about 82% of its native-born residents, followed by North Carolina, Georgia, California and Utah.

The study noted that the five "stickiest" states — those able to keep their residents — each had above-average job growth between 2010 and 2019, and four of the top five states had below-average levels of taxation.

The new study corroborates familiar trends in Alaska,

where the number of people moving out of the state has exceeded the number of new residents for 10 consecutive years.

A long-term study conducted by the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development found that in 2021, just 52% of Alaska high schoolers who graduated in 2005 were still state residents.

The Department of Labor's next scheduled population and migration estimates are due to be released in January.

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PUZZLE SOLUTION

T	A	B	B	Y		A	R	M	S		S	E	X	T			
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It all adds up!

25% off
all ads in the Oct. 4 Sentinel
that promote Wrangell's
Tax-Free Day
Oct. 7

Shoppers get a break that day and the Sentinel wants to give businesses a break too
Call, email or visit Amber at the Sentinel to order your ad
Deadline to order your ad is noon Friday, Sept. 29

WRANGELL SENTINEL 907-874-2301 • wrgsent@gmail.com
205 Front Street