

New deputy
magistrate is
sworn in, page 9



Wrangell, Alaska
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WRANGELL SENTINEL

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School district shares budget gap outlook with assembly

By MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

With lower enrollment creating ongoing revenue shortfalls, the school district is seeking solutions and resources to close the persistent gap — particularly as one-time federal pandemic aid money will run out in two years.

On March 7, members of the school board and district employees met with the borough assembly to present what district Business Manager Tammy Stromberg referred to as Version 1.5 of the budget. The work session lasted nearly two hours and consisted of an exchange of ideas and positive remarks as the process moves forward.

"The big topic ... is foundation revenues," Stromberg said during her presentation, referring to the enrollment-based state funding formula which this year will provide almost 60% of the district's revenues for the budget of more than \$5 million.

"(Fiscal year) 2023 foundation revenue is estimated to decrease by about \$399,000 from 2022 budgeted figures, and our actual revenue figure is going to decrease \$126,000 from our 2022 budgeted number. So, right off the bat, we have about a half a million dollars of revenue that is going away," Stromberg said.

Wrangell is down almost 50 students from its pre-pandemic count of just over 300 students.

Less revenue coming into Wrangell schools, along with higher expenditures for fuel and maintenance costs, are making it harder to close the funding gap.

One way the district has temporarily patched together its budget is by using one-time federal pandemic relief aid to pay the salaries for two principals and a grant writer over the next two years.

Mayor Steve Prysunka asked if there was any concern about continued funding for the positions once the federal money runs out.

"All we're doing with this is buying us two years of

time," said Schools Superintendent Bill Burr.

Eighty percent of the district's expenditures go toward staff salaries, he said. Significant spending cuts would be needed to cover the salaries of the principals and grant writer out of ongoing revenues after the federal money is gone.

"There's no real other way to do it, except to cut everything is — and I say this with caution — non-essential," Burr said. "So, a few of the items that you would have as non-essential would be the sports program, professional development, supplies, we could also need to remove electives."

Due to staffing cuts last year, foreign language classes were dropped at the high school and middle school, Burr said. Vocational education would be another program not deemed by the state as essential, along with fine arts programs. Core subjects such as English, math, social

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CHAMPIONS!



PHOTOS BY DUSTIN SAFRANEK/KETCHIKAN DAILY NEWS

The Wrangell High School girls basketball team celebrates their championship win against Metlakatla last Friday at the Southeast region Division 2A tournament in Ketchikan. The Lady Wolves will head to the state tournament this week in Anchorage. See story and more photos on Page 11.

Borough receives patent on Zarembo land, part of selection of 9,000 acres from state

By SARAH ASLAM
Sentinel reporter

A process that has dragged on for years for the borough to receive full ownership of about 9,000 acres of state land has reached another step.

The borough, which has already received the patent for its state lands selection of 2,000 acres on Zarembo Island, Zoning Administrator Carol Rushmore said March 7, has received from the state "survey status" of all the other entitlement parcels. Only the 2,500-acre Sunny Bay parcel south of Deer Island has been surveyed by the Department of Natural Resources.

Final transfer of the lands from the state to the

borough cannot occur until the parcels are surveyed and the maps recorded with the state.

The borough is waiting to take ownership of the remaining 7,000 acres or so: In addition to the Sunny Bay acreage, about 1,300 acres are at Thoms Place (on Wrangell Island), 460 acres at Olive Cove (Etolin Island), 700 on Wrangell Island West, nearly 900 on Wrangell Island East, 900 at Earl West Cove (Wrangell Island), 405 at Crittenden Creek (on the mainland), 150 in Mill Creek (on the mainland).

Rushmore said the borough received the survey status on March 8, after a meeting with the

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Wrangell receives \$2 million federal aid for reservoir project

By MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

Federal help for Wrangell's ailing water delivery system will soon be flowing down the pipeline.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski announced on Friday that the borough would be among the communities sharing in \$230 million directed to Alaska projects in the \$1.5 trillion federal budget bill sent to the president for signature into law.

Wrangell will be receiving \$2.08 million to build a pipeline connection between the upper reservoir and water treatment plant.

"Currently, we can only draw water off the lower reservoir," said Tom Wetor, public works director. "If we ever want to do maintenance on the lower reservoir or the dam or if we were ever cut off from that for any reason, we have no way of getting water from the upper reservoir."

Water from the upper reservoir currently is siphoned into the lower reservoir by way of a ditch system, but isn't directly connected to the water treatment plant, according to Capital Facilities Director Amber Al-Haddad. The borough has been working with Shannon and Wilson, a geotechnical engineering firm based in Anchorage. The design phase is about 95% complete, she said.

"This is one of the priorities we submitted to Sen. Murkowski and Congressman (Don) Young for the federal appropriations they were looking for input on," Al-Haddad said. "They were looking at projects to the tune of \$3 million and under."

The \$2.08 million grant will cover "about 75% to 80%" of the overall project costs, so the borough will need to commit the remainder, she said.

Continued on page 5

Winning plan for Malaspina would operate it as a maritime museum

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

The state has started negotiations to sell the Malaspina to a company owned by a business that operates a new multimillion-dollar cruise ship terminal at Ward Cove in Ketchikan.

M/V Malaspina LLC and the Alaska Department of Transportation "have agreed to negotiate in good faith on the sale of the 59-year-old vessel," the state announced Monday.

"MVM's letter of interest outlines a plan to use the Malaspina to showcase Alaska's maritime history and support a Ketchikan-based tourism business," the state said. "Among other uses, they propose keeping the Malaspina in Ketchikan and using the vessel as a maritime museum. They also propose to explore opportunities for the ship to serve as a train-

ing facility for the University of Alaska's Maritime Training Center in Ketchikan."

MVM was one of four companies that submitted proposals to take ownership of the Malaspina, which has been tied up unused in Ketchikan for more than two years. The Transportation Department did not release any information about the proposals other than the corporate names until it announced MVM's selection.

The state's request for proposals said the responses "shall be held confidential until the state closes the sale of the Malaspina."

Transportation Department spokesman Sam Dapevich last week said the four companies that submitted proposals are: MVM, Alaska-based Cannery Row Inc., Alabama-based Meridian Global, and India-based

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Birthdays & Anniversaries

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

Wednesday, March 16: Linnea Brooks, Wanda Ingram, Paula Rak, Triston Schneider; Anniversaries: Wes and Wanda Ingram, Dan and Paula Wickman.

Thursday, March 17: Tim Hunt

Friday, March 18: Jacoby Hunt.

Saturday, March 19: Michelle Brock, Presley Skye, Ryan Soeteber, Emmett Michael Villarma, Frank Warfel Jr.

Sunday, March 20: Jeannie Easterly, Becky Thomas; Anniversary: Matt and Edna Nore.

Monday, March 21: Anniversary: Vern and Nancy Cummings.

Tuesday, March 22: Rachel Stough.

Wednesday, March 23: Vickie Winslow Arndt.

Senior Center Menu

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

Thursday, March 17

Pork chops with apples, green beans, sunshine salad, rice and veggie pilaf

Friday, March 18

Liver and onions, zucchini, garden salad, potatoes, parsley

Monday, March 21

Chicken fricassee, peas, honey orange salad, dumplings

Tuesday, March 22

Tuna salad sandwich, broccoli cheese rice casserole, tossed salad

Wednesday, March 23

BBQ beef burgers, mixed veggie potato salad

Please call the senior center at 907-874-2066 24 hours in advance to reserve a seat at lunch at the center or to request delivery. The senior van also is available to transport seniors to medical appointments, reasonable errands such as collecting mail, getting prescriptions or other essential items.

Ferry Schedule

Northbound

Friday, March 18
Matanuska, 10 p.m.
Friday, March 25
Matanuska, 3:45 p.m.
Friday, April 1
Matanuska, 8:15 p.m.
Tuesday, April 5
Matanuska, noon

Southbound

Friday, March 18
Matanuska, 7:15 a.m.
Monday, March 21
Matanuska, 9:45 a.m.
Monday, March 28
Matanuska, 11:45 a.m.
Monday, April 4
Matanuska, 9 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	AM	PM	AM	PM
	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft
Mar.16	00:56	14.9	12:49	16.3	06:40	2.8	07:03	-0.7
Mar.17	01:27	15.9	01:25	16.8	07:13	1.5	07:33	-1.1
Mar.18	01:56	16.6	02:01	17.1	07:46	0.4	08:02	-1.1
Mar.19	02:24	17.2	02:37	17.0	08:20	-0.5	08:32	-0.7
Mar.20	02:53	17.6	03:14	16.5	08:55	-1.1	09:04	0.0
Mar.21	03:23	17.7	03:54	15.7	09:34	-1.4	09:39	1.0
Mar.22	03:57	17.4	04:39	14.5	10:17	-1.1	10:19	2.3

Wrangell Roundup: Special Events

WRANGELL SCHOOL BOARD will meet at 6 p.m. Monday, via Zoom: <https://bit.ly/3Ib9Po5>. Meeting ID is 818 7190 8149 and the passcode is 317382. Community members can submit comments by emailing them to kpowell@wpsd.us, or can sign up under guests to be heard at the meeting by emailing the same address before 3:30 p.m. on the day of the meeting.

PERMANENT FUND DIVIDEND application deadline is 11:59 p.m. March 31 for online applications. Paper applications must be postmarked by March 31. The Wrangell Legislative Information Office can assist with PFD issues and help people file online, or paper applications are available outside the office door. The office can copy and certify documents for applicants who do not want to mail in their original documents. The legislative office in the Kadin Building on Front Street is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays. Call 907-874-3013 with questions.

WRANGELL LITTLE LEAGUE is looking for players, board members and volunteers for the upcoming season. Registration is open until March 26. Forms can be picked up and dropped off at the Wrangell Chamber of Commerce. Contact Briana Schilling at 907-874-2855, brianna2013@hotmail.com, or Kaelene Harrison at 808-265-4482, kaeleneh@gmail.com, with any questions.

NOLAN CENTER THEATER presents "Uncharted," rated PG-13, at 7 p.m. Saturday and 4 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$5 for children under age 12, for the action adventure film that runs one hour and 56 minutes. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

FREE TAX RETURN PREPARATION every Saturday through April 14 at the Nolan Center. Sponsored by the AARP TaxAide Foundation. Open to everyone, regardless of age. IRS-certified volunteers will prepare and e-file your return at no charge. Refunds can be direct-deposited into your bank account. By appointment only. Call Paula at 907-874-3824 or 907-305-0309.

WRANGELL PARKS & REC registration for the American Red Cross lifeguard course is open through March 29. The course will run March 31 to April 3. Fee is \$150. There is a fee waiver for eligible individuals who intend to work for Parks & Recreation. Register online at wrangllrec.com or call 907-874-2444.

IRENE INGLE PUBLIC LIBRARY will hold Story Time every Friday at 11 a.m. via Zoom. Meeting ID: 935 4298 0052; passcode 8743535.

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

Want more attendance at your meeting or event? Send information for Roundup to wrgsent@gmail.com or call 907-874-2301. Or go to the Sentinel website, click on the Calendar tab, and submit your entry online.

Continuing Events

PARKS and RECREATION www.wrangellrec.com

Open swim is open by appointment, at reduced capacity. Locker rooms are available.

Weight room: 6 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 - 7:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 6 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 - 8:30 p.m. Friday; 10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Saturday

AA Meetings: North Star Group meets from 7 to 8 p.m. Tuesdays and Fridays, St. Philip's Episcopal Church.

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

March 16, 1922

So rapid has been the growth of the city library, established only a few months ago, that additional bookshelves were requested by the Library Board at the March meeting of the Civic Improvement Club. A box of fine reference books was received recently from the Washington State Library and new books are being purchased by the club each month. The last to be ordered are "The Empty Sack," by Basil King, and "The Profiteers," by Oppenheim. During January, seven new cards, 36 magazines

and 15 books were issued. The receipts were \$11.80, including a donation of \$1 by Mrs. G. E. Diemart. In February, four new cards, 21 magazines and 199 books were issued. The receipts were \$9.25. The library fund will be increased by the proceeds of the St. Patrick's Day card party and dance tomorrow night, for which extensive preparations are being made.

March 14, 1947

Wrangell Natives, 165 strong, have formed a membership of the Wrangell Cooperative Association, through which they may apply for government aid in business. Similar units have been formed in Kake, Hydaburg, Craig, Sitka, Hoonah and Douglas. Wrangell was first to apply for a charter. Under the law, individual Natives may apply for loans with which to buy boats or establish themselves in small businesses. At a meeting this week officers were elected. Herbert Bradley is president; William Willard, vice president; Walter Rudolph, secretary; and Marcus Daily is treasurer. Councilmen are Mike Lynch Jr., P. M. Casey and Louis Wigg. Albert Rinehart was elected sergeant-at-arms.

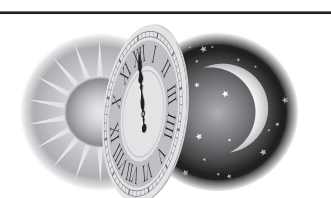
March 17, 1972

A well has been sunk and materials and equipment ordered for a 22-space mobile home park scheduled to be open by July on the old airport road, according to developer Dick Stough. The

park, Stough said, will feature 45-by-80-foot gravel-surfaced lots and underground utilities, including electricity, telephone, television and oil. The development will have a sewage disposal plant, mercury vapor lighting, a playground area, off-street car parking and a 3,200-square-foot metal utility building. The building will be erected at the rear of the park, Stough said, and will be used to house tenants' belongings, including boats. The building site is about half a mile from the ferry terminal out the old airport road. The estimated cost of the development was not disclosed. Plans also call for the sale of at least two brands of mobile homes at the park.

March 13, 1997

Progress with plans for water filtration improvements were considered closely after Mayor Roberts strongly urged the city council to hire another engineering company to look over the Wilson Engineering plans. Roberts said he wanted assurances that the water project is not being over-designed. It was the consensus of the council to get a second opinion. The council also considered the installation of water meters, but members felt that the first concern at this time should be the filtration improvements and extending water to more residents. Andrea Tavares spoke against the meters proposal, criticizing the cost of installing and maintaining the meters.



Daylight Hours

Date	Sunrise	Sunset	Hours
March 16	7:01a	6:55p	11:53h
March 17	6:59a	6:57p	11:58h
March 18	6:56a	6:59p	12:03h
March 19	6:53a	7:01p	12:08h
March 20	6:50a	7:03p	12:12h
March 21	6:48a	7:06p	12:17h
March 22	6:45a	7:08p	12:22h

State ferry system will return to Prince Rupert in June

BY LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

After a 30-month absence due to a new federal requirement for armed customs agents and the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown of Canadian waters, the Alaska Marine Highway System is scheduled to resume limited service this summer to Prince Rupert, British Columbia.

The Matanuska is scheduled for two stops each month in June, July and August, and one visit in September before the ferry system switches over to its more limited fall/winter schedule, which is still being developed.

The first sailing from Ketchikan to Prince Rupert is set for June 20.

"We intend to keep it open for travelers in the years to come," Alaska Transportation Commissioner Ryan Anderson said in a prepared statement March 7.

Reservations for travel to and from

Prince Rupert for June through September are available online at the marine highway website, with the department continuing to work toward adding service in May.

Last fall, the department said it was targeting a return to Prince Rupert in May, and had left openings in its summer schedule for the Matanuska to make two runs to the British Columbia port the third week of each summer month. It's about a 17-hour round trip, accounting for port time in Rupert.

Prince Rupert is about 90 nautical miles south of Ketchikan, about a six-hour ferry ride. It is the last stop on Canada's east-west Highway 16, about 900 road miles northwest of Bellingham, Washington, which is the southern end of the Alaska Marine Highway System. The ferry system operates weekly service year-round from Bellingham to Alaska.

Rupert was the original southern ter-

minus of the Alaska ferries when the system started up in 1963 until the state extended its route to Puget Sound in 1967. Years ago, when the state was operating more vessels, ferries would call at the Canadian port once or twice a week year-round on their Southeast route.

The state pulled its service from Prince Rupert in October 2019 when U.S. Customs and Border Protection began requiring armed law enforcement personnel during port calls. The U.S. Customs agents that accompanied the ferries from Ketchikan to clear passengers and vehicles in Rupert did not carry guns, and the state was unable to work out a deal to pay for Canadian law enforcement personnel during port calls or allow U.S. agents to carry weapons in Canada.

Then the pandemic in early 2020 shut down Canadian waters to vessel traffic.

Canada has lifted its pandemic closure to ship traffic, and a U.S.-Canada agree-

ment now allows U.S. border agents to be armed.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security several years ago determined that border crossing agents must be armed. The agents will store their guns in a secure location at the Prince Rupert terminal, Sam Dapcevic, Alaska Transportation Department spokesman, said March 9.

The department still has some work to finish before the Alaska ferry sailings resume, he said, including ensuring that security fencing is in place at the terminal and network connections are available for customs agents.

Prince Rupert officials in 2019 said about 14,000 travelers used the Alaska terminal each year. The state has a long-term lease on the dock and terminal building, which is owned by the Prince Rupert Port Authority.

Students portray Tlingit story of respect for women with play

BY MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

Raven learned the hard way that you don't mess with women.

High school and middle school students performed a shadowbox play of "Koodig-wási Shaawát (Fogwoman)" on March 8 in honor of Women's History Month and Elizabeth Peratrovich Day in the high school gym, illustrating stories of strength and resolve. By the end of the play, the character Raven was alone and hungry due to the treatment of the woman he loved.

"The moral of the story was, don't hit your wife," said Xwaanlein, Virginia Oliver, Tlingit language teacher at Wrangell schools, who organized the play. "(Fogwoman) left and she never came back. There was no reconcile there."

Fogwoman tells the story of the trickster Raven who meets a woman who seems to appear from the fog. He falls in love with her, asks her to marry him and she agrees. They settle down at the head of Anan Creek. Raven becomes restless because he's not used to being in one place with one person for very long. Even though Fogwoman treats him well — even introducing him to salmon — he wasn't very kind to her.

"Some days he would ignore her, other days he would abuse her," read Clara Edens, who narrated the play. "She could do nothing to please him. One day, in a fit of irritability, he hit her with the backbone of a salmon he had just cleaned."

With that, Fogwoman disappeared into the mist and Raven never saw her again. The salmon disappeared as well, only returning once a year.

As Edens narrated, high school and middle school students silently enacted the scenes from the story in front of a bright light and behind a large white sheet. The audience watched as their shadows illustrated the tale, which has been handed down through the generations. Between each scene, students would softly beat drums and sing a paddle song in Tlingit.

Oliver said the story was given to her by tribal elders and she honors them by playing it for others. "(Luella Knapp) and I made a pact that we would always work toward the betterment of history, children and the Native culture."

Along with the shadowbox play, students and staff honored Elizabeth Peratrovich by recounting her story and announcing the winners of the poster contest held for Elizabeth Peratrovich Day last month.

The Legislature in 1988 designated Feb. 16 as Elizabeth Peratrovich Day to honor the Native rights activist whose testimony helped win legislative approval of Alaska's Anti-Discrimination Act in 1945.

Out of 17 contest entries, six winners were chosen — three from the high school and three from the middle school. Mia Wiederspohn won first place at the high school level, Kyan Stead won second, and Della Churchill won third. At the middle school level, Katelyn Gillen won first, Sophia Martinsen won second, and Paige Hoyt won third.

First place was awarded a \$75 gift card, second place was awarded a \$50 gift card, and third was awarded a \$25 gift card. Funds for the prizes came from the Wrangell Cooperative Association through the Indian Education Program.

Though Peratrovich's fight for Native people's rights is well known, it needs to be shared again and again, Oliver said.

"You have to keep telling it," she said. "It always amazes me when I talk to elementary students each year, I ask, 'Does anybody know who Elizabeth Peratrovich is?' 'No.' And they love to hear it."

Oliver has made it her goal to keep educating students and others on the history of Alaska.

"As long as I'm here, I'll keep teaching, and hopefully, the kids I teach will teach," Oliver said. "That's what our elders taught us: You just keep teaching, and you'll sleep when you're done."



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

High school and middle school students perform a shadowbox play of "Fogwoman" at the high school gym on March 8, in honor of Women's History Month.



ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY NOW HIRING!

AMHS is on the lookout for focused, hard-working individuals for several full time, year round professional and entry level positions within our organization. Positions are available throughout Alaska in our administrative offices, terminal locations and onboard our vessels. Many AMHS positions do not require any prior maritime experience to apply!

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- Marine Engineers

AMHS offers competitive starting pay along with progressive compensation plans for advancement to higher level positions. The State of Alaska offers a full benefit package including medical and dental insurance with optional family coverage, retirement benefits, vacation and personal leave that accrues with years of service.

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FerryAlaska.com/employment

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Energy relief bidding could get out of hand

BY LARRY PERSILY
Publisher

Many Alaskans will be hurting under \$5-a-gallon gasoline, and rural residents who pay even higher prices will hurt even more.

The state treasury, meanwhile, is flush with higher oil production tax and royalty checks, depositing tens of millions of dollars more each month than expected at the start of the year.

Oil at \$100-plus a barrel is guilty on both counts — making people poorer and making the Alaska checkbook richer.

To use one to help the other, many Alaska lawmakers seem to be nervously coalescing around the idea of using much of the additional oil dollars to pay out what they are calling an “energy relief payment” to individuals later this year.

The House majority coalition was the first to go public with the \$875 million idea that the state could help people pay the rising cost of gasoline to fill their cars and trucks, diesel to fill their home heating oil tanks, and all the other bills in life that are higher and will continue to increase in the world of triple-digit crude oil prices.

The payment would be about \$1,300 per person.

The details will be worked out during the budget process in the House and Senate over the next couple of months, but the initial plan is to send out the energy relief payments as part of this fall’s Permanent Fund dividend distribution. Anyone eligible for the PFD would get the additional energy aid at the same time.

The intent and the politics of the energy relief payments are smart. Alaskans are hit hard by high fuel prices, and it’s reasonable for the state to share with the public some of its largesse from those same high prices. Not all of it, as the state needs to replenish its savings to cover for the next time oil prices drop, but share enough of it to help strug-

gling households.

Supporters also see an added political benefit, hoping the energy relief money will diminish calls for a much larger PFD this year, as the reelection-driven governor and others continue to demand. Rather than pay a large dividend by overdrawing on the Permanent Fund, the energy relief payment would draw on excess oil revenues to reach the same outcome: More money to Alaskans this fall, totaling about what the governor wants.

And it would get the money to Alaskans without baking an unaffordable dividend formula into the annual budget recipe for future years.

“The risk of an election-year spending frenzy driving up the size of the relief check is a real concern. There should be limits, even at \$100 oil.”

The worry, however, is that once the budget plan with the energy relief payment hits the floor in the House and Senate for a vote, a bidding war may erupt.

“I have \$1,300, do I hear \$1,400. Now I have \$1,400, do I hear \$1,500. Back of the room, \$1,500. Anyone, \$1,600? Yes, the legislator in the plaid jacket. Now \$1,700?”

Any House or Senate member can propose an amendment to drive the payments higher, and any political mishmash of 11 senators or 21 House members can approve an amendment. The risk of an election-year spending frenzy driving up the size of the relief check is a real concern. There should be limits, even at \$100 oil.

The consumer pain of high oil prices will not last forever, while the needs of schools, the university, snowplowing and the ferry system will last forever, and the state needs to save some of the oil windfall for those needs, too.

A bidding war in the House or Senate could turn a well-intentioned relief program into a fiscal lead weight that drags down the state budget. Let’s hope a majority of legislators keep their hands down when the bidding opens.

EDITORIAL

State misses the boat keeping proposals secret

There really isn’t a strong reason for the state to keep the proposals confidential until it closes a deal to sell — or give away — the state ferry Malaspina.

The Department of Transportation promised exactly that when it advertised for offers on the ship, promising in writing that any responses would be held confidential until the state seals the sale.

Talk about running open government aground. The department, in its letter soliciting interest in the unused, elderly 450-passenger vessel, asked a lot of potential new owners.

The state said it wanted “a detailed description of your company’s ownership, (and) a detailed description of your company’s intentions for purchasing Malaspina.” The letter also asked bidders to show they are “technically and financially capable of relocating, refurbishing, operating and maintaining the vessel.”

And in an ironic acknowledgement of the history of one of the first ferries in the fleet almost 60 years ago, the department asked bidders what they intend to do “to preserve the vessel’s historical value and positively promote the Alaska Marine Highway System.”

All good questions, and all information the department should have in selecting the winner. This is not a high-bid-wins contest — the state said it wants the ship to stay in Alaska, preferably gainfully employed at some job in Alaska.

Sadly, Alaskans will get to see none of the answers from the four companies that submitted proposals to the Transportation Department until the deal is done. Not that selecting the winning bidder should be a popularity contest of public opinion, but public information is important — even more so for skeptical residents of coastal communities who have watched the persistent dismantling of the fleet in recent years.

What’s the harm in sharing those plans with the public before a binding decision is made?

The department says it has selected the best of the four proposals and will negotiate a final deal. The plan from MVM LLC to operate the ship as a museum and in support of the tourism industry sounds good, but lacks details for the public. Now is a good time to share the information. Public support for the process should be more important than any skittishness among bidders who want to keep their plans secret.

Announcing all the proposals after the deal is closed is no way to build public trust and confidence, both of which the ferry system needs to restore.

Of course, the final decision on the future of the ship is up to Transportation Department management, same as deciding on when it’s time to get rid of old snowplows. But public interest in snowplows is small compared to a 408-foot-long ferry, and the department would have been smart to put the public’s interest ahead of the privacy interest of bidders.

Wrangell Sentinel

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ortiz supports one-time energy relief payment

The House Finance Committee has released its proposed state budget, which includes funds for an energy relief check for every eligible Alaskan. The proposal comes from high and continuously rising energy costs, a concern that I have heard from you. Alaskans are paying significantly more at the gas pump and for home utility costs.

The state has been in a dire fiscal situation for multiple years, and our restrictive budget has reflected this. However, with the sudden increase in the price of oil, there is a bump to state revenue. The Legislature will receive an updated revenue forecast later this month with more accurate assumptions and a longer-term outlook.

This is a one-time check that is possible because of our newly increased revenue forecast and because of the skyrocketing cost of gasoline and oil to Alaskans. There was a similar state energy

assistance program in 2008, when the price per barrel hit \$120. Likewise, the price per barrel exceeded \$120 earlier last week. I hope that the additional funds will help all Alaskans deal with current fiscal difficulties.

It is my goal to use the additional state oil revenue for the one-time energy relief check and also to bolster our capital budget, which has been minimal in past years.

Funding a larger capital budget will address ongoing state maintenance costs, one-time projects that will benefit municipalities, and most importantly will open up more jobs for Alaskans during this critical time. Oil prices are volatile and the increase in revenue is assumed to be temporary, but the benefits could be long-term through additional local jobs.

Rep. Dan Ortiz

Baha’is invite the public to celebrate advent of spring

Spring is in the air. The last little mounds of snow are

melting. Packets of seeds are on my shopping list. Small birds have begun to appear at my feeder. We are breaking out of our cocoons.

For Baha’is worldwide, March 21 coincides with the vernal equinox of the Northern Hemisphere and is celebrated as our New Year. An event planned in Wrangell for March 2020 was abruptly cancelled due to the outbreak of COVID. In-person events were respectfully put on hold due to many unknowns.

This year’s celebration, open to all, will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. Monday at the multi-purpose room next to the old gym. Light snacks and beverages will be provided.

There will be a short program. Everyone is invited to bring something to share — a poem, song, prayer or sacred writing, some music, a game, even a brief, uplifting video that can be connected via Wi-Fi to the large screen. Masks will be optional. The room is large enough to allow adequate space between us as we

mingle.

Naw-Ruz has been celebrated for more than 3,000 years and is enjoyed today by more than 300 million people worldwide as the beginning of the new year. It is celebrated as a joyous occasion according to local custom. In some communities, the family table is decorated with fruits, sweets, colored eggs and a wide range of symbolic objects representing springtime and new life. Individuals may dress in new or clean clothes, gather with family

and friends throughout the day, and give gifts.

To be real, there is no escaping the pain and suffering happening in many parts of the world right now. In this light, Naw-Ruz not only heralds the advent of spring, but also symbolizes a time of spiritual renewal and healing.

Contact me at kay.larson@gmail.com with questions or your ideas about the program.

Kay Larson

Policy for Letters to the Editor

- Letters should be typed or clearly written and no longer than 400 words.
- All letters must be signed by the writer and include a phone number and any affiliation with a group which pertains to the letter.

The Sentinel reserves the right to edit any submissions.

The deadline for submissions is Monday at 5 p.m. for Thursday publication.

Letters are run on a space-available basis.

WRANGELL SENTINEL

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School budget

Continued from page 1

studies and science would be the core essential classes.

"In the retail world, you start cutting your product, people stop coming to your store. You start cutting your staff, there's no service, people stop coming to your store. Then all the sudden you don't have a store," Prysunka noted.

The mayor asked if alternative funding sources had been considered, which launched a brainstorming session.

Ideas such as combining with other school districts to save on administrative costs, seeking grants and consolidating the two school campuses in Wrangell were bandied about. Bringing all the schools under one roof, however, could lead to less revenue, since state funding takes into account the costs of operating three separate buildings.

New grants may also be scarce.

The state's per-student funding formula was not changed since 2016, Stromberg said. Though some legislators are talking about an increase, any decision will come later in the legislative session, which faces a mid-May adjournment deadline.

Each year, the borough receives funding through the Secure Rural Schools program, a U.S. Forest Service program that tries to compensate rural communities for federal lands exempt from property taxes. The money can be used for schools and roads.

The borough transfers the federal aid to the district, totaling \$1.3 million for the past school year.

Finance Director Mason Villarma said the payment to schools this year will be a mix of the federal funds and borough sales tax dollars, since pulling only from the federal money fund isn't sustainable and the account would be in a deficit by 2026.

The assembly will decide on the borough contribution to the school district later this spring.

Both Stromberg and Burr found the feedback from borough assembly and staff constructive.

"The engagement is a positive factor, and we enjoyed the opportunity to have a foundational conversation about funding and the factors that are influencing the future of the state and community," Burr said.

Assemblymember Dave Powell said communication over previous school administrations had vastly improved. "I'm kind of excited about the talks (going) forward, rather than telling us ... basically, 'Stay out of our business.'"

Prysunka said he asked school officials seven years ago to look down the road, but the March 7 meeting was the first time he had heard the same sentiment toward planning from the district. "It's vitally important that the school system survive."

The second draft of the budget will be presented at the next school board meeting on March 21.

Malaspina

Continued from page 1

Highseas Ltd.

MVM was incorporated and obtained an Alaska business license as M/V Malaspina LLC on March 7, the deadline for offers on the ferry. State records list Ward Cove Dock Group as 100% owner of MVM.

MVM's agent in state records is John Binkley, who also owns half of the Ward Cove Dock Group with the Spokely family of Ketchikan. The state is paying the partnership to store the Malaspina and other idled marine highway vessels.

Binkley did not return a phone call to the Sentinel. Binkley is a former Alaska cruise industry official.

The Ward Cove Dock Group converted the former Ketchikan Pulp Mill Co. property in Ketchikan into what the company calls The Mill at Ward Cove, with a dock and welcome center focused on cruise ship traffic.

The Binkley family and the Spokelys formed the Ward Cove Dock Group in 2019. The cost of building the dock, cruise terminal and welcome center has been estimated at about \$50 million. It opened last summer. The center will feature retail space, a theater and dining, along with cultural displays.

The state gave interested parties less than three weeks to submit proposals to take ownership of the 408-foot-long ferry, capable of hauling 450 passengers and about 85 cars. The notice went out Feb. 18 and offers were due March 7.

In its letter soliciting interest in the vessel, the Transportation Department asked for "a detailed description of your company's ownership; a detailed description of your company's intentions for purchasing Malaspina; indicate where the vessel will be residing; documentation demonstrating that you are technically and financially capable of relocating, refurbishing, operating and maintaining the vessel; (and) any considerations to preserve the vessel's historical value and positively promote the Alaska Marine Highway System."

None of that information has been released to the public.

The state limited its offer of the Malaspina "to U.S. buyers that intend to retain the ship in Alaska."

The notice also said, "Letters of interest that propose scuttling the vessel are not being considered at this time."

CoastAlaska public radio reported last week that a 2021 BBC news investigation found that Highseas had bought a historic British ocean liner at auction. Despite saying the ship would be used as a floating hotel in Dubai, the vessel was broken up for scrap.

The state in 2018 sold the Taku, which was built in the early 1960s, same as the Malaspina, for \$171,000 to a Dubai-based company that took the former Alaska ferry to India where it was dismantled for scrap.

The Transportation Department under Gov. Mike Dunleavy has been culling the fleet to cut costs, getting rid of ships it no longer uses. The state about a year ago sold its two fast ferries, the Chenega and Fairweather, built at a combined cost of \$68 million less than 20 years earlier, for just over \$5 million to a Mediterranean-based catamaran operator.

Almost a year ago, an official said the department had considered turning the Malaspina into an artificial reef. Sinking the ship could make long-term financial sense, the deputy commissioner told a legislative committee last March.

The Malaspina needs at least \$16 million in steel work to go back into service, plus new engines at a cost of several tens of millions of dollars, according to the Transportation Department, which has kept the vessel tied up at Ward Cove since December 2019 at an expense of about \$75,000 a month for insurance, mooring fees and other costs.

An owner of another bidder, Cannery Row, told public radio that he and his wife own a waterfront restaurant in Cordova, and the Malaspina could be set on tidelands at a former cannery property they own and its staterooms used as a floating hotel.

Meridian Global Consulting, a Mobile, Alabama-based firm, said in its letter to the state that it owns three vessels of similar size and would use the Malaspina as a floating hotel and restaurant in Alaska, according to the CoastAlaska report.

Meridian Global last year offered the state \$625,000 for the ship, before the Transportation Department set up a public bidding process, planning to use the old ferry to house security contractors working to protect international shipping off the Horn of Africa.

Zarembo Island

Continued from page 1

department commissioner. She found it surprising that Sunny Bay, south of Deer Island, was the only parcel surveyed.

"Sunny Bay is in a remote area and they hadn't had timber plans for there, so having it surveyed surprised me," Rushmore said last Wednesday. "But it was likely surveyed way back because at one point it was selected by the University of Alaska for revenue-generating lands, and in order to transfer to the university it would need a survey. I thought a few other areas would have been surveyed because of state timber sales in the area, or plans for remote home subdivisions."

But even the transfer for the Sunny Bay patent could take a year, Rushmore said.

In order to receive patents for the unsurveyed land, the borough will have to follow specific survey requirements issued by the state and submit the surveyed plats for state approval, she said.

Rushmore said the borough has set aside about \$300,000 for the survey work, part of the money the state provided when Wrangell became a borough to help with its organizational requirements, "but (it's) likely not enough," she said.

Meeting their requirements, she said, will be a "very

spendy project and time-consuming."

Once surveyed, the borough could get patents over the remaining areas, as it has for the land on Zarembo Island by St. John's Harbor which is heavily used by Wrangell residents for hunting and recreation.

Potential uses for the Zarembo Island property are farming, pastureland, residential living, private and commercial recreation, and smaller residential lots along the shoreline. Dividing the acreage into tracts of 20 to 40 acres could be possible, according to the borough's 2016 preliminary land-use summary.

Earl West Cove and Crittenden Creek were highlighted with potential for residential development.

"There was huge interest by the community to select the state lands (on Zarembo Island)," Rushmore said. "We were denied the first time. The second time, after the state completed their timber sale and got their revenue off the land, they then said 'OK.'"

Wrangell was able to select state lands when it became a borough in 2008.

"We were allowed to select 9,006 acres of certain state lands within our borough boundaries," Rushmore said. "You go through a long selection process with the state."

The borough's selection was finalized in 2016.

While the borough has management authority, it can't develop or sell the selected lands without a patent.

The state has transferred the patent on only the Zarembo Island parcel.

A patent is the primary land document that transfers title and functions much like a deed, Rushmore said.

Getting the status report back from the state and learning what areas remain for the borough to survey took three years, Rushmore said. "Changeover in staff, COVID, losing our request, etc. etc."

DNR is backlogged issuing survey instructions, she said.

Rushmore in January said they were told they should have seen a status decision in February, then it came through this month.

Even if it takes a while to get all the land surveyed and patented, the planning and zoning commission wants to get a plan in place for what to put on it.

"At some point, the land will be ours," planning and zoning commission member Don McConachie Sr. said. "We need to have some thought process, even if it changes, before we actually have it. We all know these areas. Not everybody is familiar as much as others. You need to be prepared, because it will happen, at some point. Who knows who will be on planning and zoning? Heck, we may all be gone by the time it gets done. It would be easier, for the people who have taken over, to see what the thought process was."

Reservoir funds

Continued from page 1

Finance Director Mason Villarma said the additional funding is already in place to finish the project.

"In addition to the appropriation from the legislature, we have \$380,387 in grant funding remaining from our 2016 (Department of Environmental Conservation) reservoir bypass grant (initially \$615,000)," Villarma said. "That puts us within spitting distance of our total projected project cost. Any gap in funding will likely be covered through reserves."

In addition to funding projects nationwide, the federal spending bill covers agency operations and programs through the end of the fiscal year on

Sept. 30. The measure passed the Senate 68-31 last Thursday.

While Murkowski voted yes, Alaska's other senator, Dan Sullivan, voted no, saying the process was rushed. Rep. Young voted yes when the 2,700-page measure passed the House a day before Senate action.

Other Southeast projects in the spending bill include:

- \$8 million toward construction of a new hospital in Petersburg.

- \$2 million to Southeast Conference to help establish a pilot program for electric ferries.

- \$236,000 to Women in Safe Homes (WISH) to support final stages of construction of the WISH shelter in Ketchikan, which also serves Wrangell.

- \$540,000 to provide the Met-

lakatla Indian Community with an emergency backup generator.

- Sealaska Heritage Institute: \$500,000 to help support the Kootéya Deiyi project, which will create a trail of totem poles and storyboards representing Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian clans along the Juneau waterfront. "The project is expected to help increase economic development while highlighting and preserving Native art and culture," Murkowski's office said.

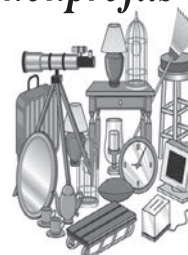
- \$780,000 to improve solid waste management, including using a shredder to reduce the volume of trash in Metlakatla.

- \$10.2 million to expand capacity at Skagway's wastewater treatment plant, which has recently experienced capacity difficulties due to increased use.

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State population estimate for Wrangell even lower than census

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

The U.S. Census Bureau and Alaska Department of Labor both say Wrangell has lost population, though the numbers don't match other statistics.

The Census Bureau last year said the community lost 242 residents, about 11%, between the 2010 and 2020 counts, going from 2,369 to 2,127 residents.

The state Labor Department said Wrangell's population loss was even steeper, down 14% from July 2011 to July 2021 estimates, falling from 2,412 to 2,096, according to this month's issue of Alaska Economic Trends magazine.

Census numbers and state estimates are used in multiple per-capita federal and state funding programs.

Regardless of the official count, the number of residential electrical meters in town has held steady or slightly increased over the past decade, according to the borough's records, and the number of annual Permanent Fund dividend applications from Wrangell has slid only a couple dozen over the past few years, according to information from the Labor Department.

And by the Census Bureau's own numbers, Wrangell gained 36 housing units between 2010 and 2019.

Perplexing to anyone looking for a vacancy in Wrangell's tight housing market, the Census Bureau and Labor Department number for occupied homes, apartments and mobile homes in town fell by more than 100 housing units between 2010 and 2020.

A drop in occupied units doesn't seem

right, said Rod Rhoades, superintendent of Wrangell Municipal Light & Power, who pays attention to the number of residential customers and observes there are few empty housing units or homes for sale in town.

Part of the cause for Wrangell's reported population drop may be the low self-response rate to census questionnaires in 2020 among residents by phone, online or mail — just 42%. The statewide average in Alaska was 55%, while the rate in Petersburg, Sitka, Ketchikan and Juneau ranged from 55% to 70%.

The response rate was 33% in Haines, which also lost population under the census count.

Both the Labor Department and Census Bureau numbers are estimates. Census workers don't walk every street, check every door, and can't require residents to complete forms. The Labor Department said it relies heavily on dividend application numbers.

"We went back and forth on Wrangell," state demographer David Howell said last week of the department's recent numbers for Wrangell. "Our (population) estimates are based off PFD applications," taking into account housing statistics from the Census Bureau, he explained.

The department also looks at birth and death rates, and people leaving or moving into the state in compiling its annual estimates.

"There was probably a housing undercount in Wrangell as well," said Eric Sandberg, who works with Howell at the Labor Department's research and analysis division.

The department determined there was a significant housing undercount by the Census Bureau in Haines, where the 2020 census put the population at 2,080, a drop of 428 residents since 2010, or 17%, while the Labor Department estimated Haines at 2,614 residents in July 2021, a gain of 4%.

"We think they (census workers) didn't drive all the roads" north of Haines, in the neighborhoods of Mosquito Lake and the Covenant Life Center, Howell said.

It is hard to compare 2010 to 2020 census counts because the federal numbers are reported in blocks, not individual street addresses, he said. The fact that the size and boundaries of blocks changed from 2010 to 2020 makes it harder to pinpoint any errors.

Not only is it hard to compare block-by-block counts from one census to the next, it's hard for communities to appeal the number.

The U.S. Census Bureau has a Count Question Resolution procedure where states and municipalities can ask for a review of the numbers. It's not possible to get a full recount, according to the rules, but a community could argue that specific housing units were erroneously excluded from the count, though that would be difficult without an address-by-address listing from the bureau.

"(The borough) must provide documentation ... indicating that the Census Bureau missed housing, not simply missed population" in the count, according to the dispute resolution fact sheet.

Any challenge would be a long, drawn out, expensive process with an uncertain outcome, said Jeff Good, Wrangell

borough manager. Though the borough disagrees with the census number, it is going to accept it, Good said.

Last year, when the Census Bureau released its numbers, the borough questioned whether the disruption in the spring 2020 count by the pandemic hurt the effort and accuracy in Wrangell.

"Was everybody really counted," or did the door-to-door census takers who returned later in the summer miss people or find some unresponsive to the data-collection effort, Carol Rushmore, Wrangell's economic development director, said last year.

Unlike Wrangell, the Haines Borough plans to appeal the census count. Haines has until June 2023 to file.

The count not only affects the federal government's funding calculations but also private-sector decisions, such as whether to open a business in Haines or which services to provide the community, Borough Manager Annette Kreitzer told the Chilkat Valley News last week.

Population is a factor in the payment-in-lieu-of-taxes program, which compensates local governments for loss of property taxes from federal lands, said Jila Stuart, the Haines Borough chief fiscal officer.

If the Census Bureau finds an error, it won't change its official number but could issue a notice of errata, including updated housing and population counts, which will be used for federal funding calculations and as the basis for later population estimates.

Post-census survey finds higher undercount of minorities than 2010

By MIKE SCHNEIDER
The Associated Press

Black, Hispanic and American Indian residents were missed at higher rates than a decade ago during the 2020 census, according to a report released last Thursday that evaluated how well the once-a-decade head count tallied every U.S. resident.

Even though the 2020 census missed an unexpectedly small percentage of the total U.S. population given the unprecedented challenges it faced, the increase in undercounts among some minority groups prompted an outcry from civil rights leaders who blamed political interference by the Trump administration, which tried unsuccessfully to add a citizenship question to the census form and cut field operations short.

"These numbers are devastating. Once again, we see an overcount of white Americans and an undercount of Black and Hispanic Americans," National Urban League CEO Marc Morial

said on a call with reporters. "I want to express in the strongest possible terms our outrage."

The results of U.S. Census Bureau's Post-Enumeration Survey showed that most racial and ethnic minorities were overlooked at statistically significant higher rates than a decade ago, with the Asian population being an exception. The survey measures whether certain populations were undercounted or overrepresented in the census. Overcounts take place, for example, if someone owns a vacation home and is counted there as well as at a permanent home address.

The Black population in the 2020 census had a net undercount of 3.3%, while it was almost 5% for Hispanics and 5.6% for American Indians and Native Alaskans living on reservations. Those identifying as some other race had a net undercount of 4.3%.

The non-Hispanic white population had a net overcount of 1.6%, and Asians had a net overcount of 2.6%, according to the results.

In the 2010 census, by com-

parison, the Black population had a net undercount of more than 2%, while it was 1.5% for the Hispanic population. There was almost a 4.9% undercount for American Indian and Alaskan Natives living on reservations, and it was 1.6% for people identifying as some other race and 0.08% for Asians. The non-Hispanic white population had a net overcount of 0.8%.

The 2020 census missed 0.24% of the entire U.S. population, a rate that wasn't statistically significant, while it missed 0.01% in the 2010 census.

The census figures help determine the distribution of \$1.5 trillion in federal spending each year as well as how many congressional seats each state gets. Any undercounts in various populations can shortchange the amount of funding and political representation they get over the next decade.

In the years leading up to the 2020 census, advocates worried that a failed attempt by the Trump administration to add a

citizenship question to the census questionnaire would scare off Hispanics and immigrants from participating, whether they were in the country legally or not. The Trump administration also unsuccessfully tried to get the Census Bureau to exclude people in the country illegally from numbers used for divvying up congressional seats among the states and cut short the schedule for field operations that had been extended because of the pandemic.

During a conference call last Thursday, Census Bureau Director Robert Santos said many Latino communities throughout the U.S. suffered during the pandemic from joblessness and housing insecurity, and that played a role in the undercount. But he added that the Trump administration's actions also may have had an impact.

"I'm personally not surprised to see the results we see today," said Santos, who was sworn into the position at the beginning of the year.

About 70% of Native Americans live on reservations. James Tucker, the chairman of a Cen-

sus Bureau advisory committee, estimated the undercount translates to at least 100,000 Native Americans on reservations not counted and more than a \$300 million loss in federal funding for Indian Country annually.

"This undercount is not new — it is a continuous cycle of erasure of Native people from society," said Lylia Maddocks, a citizen of the Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe in Arizona who is political director of NDN Collective, a South Dakota-based advocacy group.

"In a practical sense, an undercount means that Native people are not looked at as a significant voting block when in reality, our population has proven itself to be the margin of victory in key states such as Arizona."

The pandemic disrupted census operations and schedules, and it made residents wary of opening their doors to answer questions from census takers. Wildfires in the West and hurricanes in the Gulf Coast during the door-knocking phase of the head count sent residents fleeing from their homes.

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Busy schedule doesn't keep Jake Eastaugh from returning to the mat

By MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

It's hard to pin down senior Jake Eastaugh.

Between a full schedule of work and school, the 18-year-old found time to complete his senior project by combining it with something he loves: Wrestling.

"I was putting my project off for too long," he said. Head wrestling coach Jef Rooney asked Eastaugh if he'd be interested in coaching the Wolfpack Wrestling program for his project. "I took his offer, been doing it and it's actually a lot of fun."

Eastaugh was having so much fun, in fact, that he kept coaching after his project hours were finished.

"Jake has surpassed the amount of time he needs for his project and continues to coach and lead both groups on a daily basis," Rooney said. "As all the kids learn, Jake shows a high amount of excitement and joy being able to give back to the sport we all love."

Eastaugh began his wrestling career in the Wolfpack program, which is also known as PeeWee Wrestling. It starts in kindergarten and goes through fifth grade and practice is broken into two age groups, kindergarten through first grade and second through fifth grade. As he begins to talk about his time coaching kids, Eastaugh becomes highly animated and energized.

"They're crazy competitive," he said. "There will always be tears. The kids cry

when they lose, but it's cool to see how competitive such a young kid can be. One of the really young guys was super quiet and never said anything. Now he's one of our better wrestlers and real talkative. He came out of his shell for sure."

He also spoke highly of the Wrangell wrestling program overall, saying it teaches kids to be respectful. "You've never seen a Wrangell kid get mad or throw his headgear. It's just always been really respectful. It's taught from day one."

Wrestling is obviously a passion for Eastaugh, but it's not his only interest. He's always had a talent for mechanics. Having taken shop classes since middle school, he's built his own boat and has his own shop to work on projects. His most recent project is rebuilding a 1984 Chevy truck.

Finding time for any extracurricular activity almost seems impossible for Eastaugh.

"I'm come to school for weightlifting in the morning, then I go down to (Bay Co., where I work) until 11 or 12-ish, come up for my one class, leave for lunch, come back for my two other classes, then I go down to work after school until 5 p.m.," he said. "Then I go up to (coach) wrestling until 6:30 p.m., then I go to my own shop and work until 8:30 or 9 p.m., then I go home, do homework and go to bed."

Eastaugh credits the wrestling program with his strong work ethic, something his educators have noticed for a



High school senior Jake Eastaugh coaches two members of the Wolfpack wrestling program as part of his senior-year project. Even though he is finished with the required hours on his project, Eastaugh continues to help coach the young kids, despite a busy work and school schedule.

long time.

"He's got a really good work ethic," said Bob Davis, assistant principal of the high school. "He's in school, he's working, he's putting hours into wrestling. He's been that way since middle school."

Upon graduation, Eastaugh isn't sure what he's going to do, but he's been

made an offer by his employer to work for them after being sent to mechanics school. Though he's not 100% sure if that's what he wants to do, he can see himself continuing to coach wrestling.

"It's just really impressive to see how fast kids can learn when they put their minds to it," he said.

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Elders light up the board with winter bingo games

By SARAH ASLAM
Sentinel reporter

Sunlight streamed in through the windows of the Wrangell Senior Center where a handful of elders gathered after lunch last Wednesday to play bingo until “blackout” — the second such gathering since the center reopened to group activities after pandemic safety measures eased in light of declining case counts.

Lunch wrapped up early, so the game began at about 12:30, with Solvay Gillen, site manager, calling out letter and number combinations. The bingo cards were well-loved, American Legion Auxiliary-branded, heavy, sturdy boards, with little slider tabs to toggle a transparent red square to match the number-letter combination Gillen called out, if it was on a player’s bingo card.

Emma Frost and Sue Stevens, two of Wrangell’s Tlingit elders, played with rapt focus at a table by the windows until Stevens won and got to select her prize from a table of items. Lansing Hayes, another elder, also hit bingo.

Slowly but surely the bingo dispenser emptied as Gillen worked through all the bingo balls, with winnings for everyone until blackout, when all the squares were filled on players’ cards.

Norm Canaday, 88, was there, observing and watching.

“Did you enjoy it, Norm?” asked Gillen, after the game was over.

“Yes, it brought back memories,” Canaday replied.

“Yeah?” prompted Gillen.

“Yes, of the Korean War,” Canaday said.

In addition to surviving that war, Canaday dodged flames when his home in Panhandle Trailer Court caught fire in 2020 by jumping out the back door onto a mattress his neighbors had dragged over to cushion his fall.

Gillen is Tlingit, and her husband J.C.

Gillen is Tlingit and Haida.

“I found a little niche for me,” she said Friday, of her work at the senior center. She was born and raised in Wrangell, and said the senior center has been something that has been a part of her life. “I grew up with Native Alaskan traditions, and respecting our elders is a major part of that tradition. The elders just have a place in my heart.”

Gillen took over as site manager last fall. She began working at the senior center in January 2021 as an assistant cook. She moved up to head cook, and then became site manager when the employee who had her job moved to Texas.

Prior to the senior center, Gillen worked at Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, but quit during the COVID era to homeschool her children, Annika, 9 and Leeya, 5, who is turning 6 soon. Her kids went back to school and Gillen found herself needing something to do.

“I love (the senior center) because it’s convenient for me as a parent. As soon as I’m done with my work, I can go pick up the girls,” Gillen said.

She enjoys finding services for the elders and said they feel comfortable speaking to her.

“A lot of times I find that our elders who are born and raised here prefer to chat with someone that knows their family,” she said.

Stevens, also born and raised in Wrangell, said she went Outside and earned three college degrees, but eventually came back home. Being isolated from the people she grew up with was tough.

“I haven’t come up to socialize since the pandemic started,” Stevens said. “I wanted to see some of the other elders.”

Gillen said there were no group activities during the pandemic, and when COVID-19 cases went up the center wasn’t even open for in-person



PHOTO BY SARAH ASLAM/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Site manager Solvay Gillen reads off bingo numbers for seniors who played after lunch at the Wrangell Senior Center on March 9. The participants played until “blackout” — when every combination of letters and numbers had been filled, and everyone got a turn to win a prize.

dining.

“These are the first activities we’ve started to do,” she said.

She’s hoping this is a return to pre-pandemic gatherings to “try to help our folks get out, and get closer in the community.”

Gillen plans to offer bingo every other Wednesday at the center. They plan to make art and watch “The King and I” on March 23 — “art and a movie,” Gillen said — then play bingo after lunch on March 30.

As spring and summer approach, Gillen wants to plan some outdoor excursions and fundraising activities, such as a car wash and hotcakes-to-go for breakfast.

The senior center is looking for a part-time assistant cook. Gillen also hopes to get an activities coordinator for 10 hours a week.

It’s easier to check on elders when they’re outside doing group activities, Gillen said. “See if we can get our people out and about, not bugging them at home and calling them, so there is not such a prodding into their life. Some people don’t like that,” she said.

She’s hoping a couple of tour companies can provide a ride for the elders to see Shakes Glacier up the Stikine River.

“We can plan a picnic out the road and bring a sack lunch, drive out the road and do the (Nemo) Loop ... maybe see the return of river adventures,” Gillen said.

Borough submits archeological work plan for former Institute property

By SARAH ASLAM
Sentinel reporter

It’s looking like April for archeological field work to start at the former Institute property — or so the borough hopes — as it awaits a response from the U.S. Army Corps of Engi-

neers and the State Historic Preservation Office on a draft plan submitted March 3.

The borough last September tasked Ketchikan-based R&M Engineering to help it figure out a plan for searching the former Native boarding school site for any human

remains or cultural artifacts. The Bureau of Indian Affairs operated the school 1932 to 1975.

The federal government in June ordered an investigation into former boarding schools nationwide over concerns of unreported gravesites.

The borough is looking to develop the 134-acre property near Shoemaker Bay into residential lots.

The borough already had a contract with R&M for survey and subdivision work at the Institute site and other properties in town and last fall amended the work orders to include archaeological planning at the Institute site.

R&M contracted the archeological work to True North Sustainable Development Solu-

tions, of Wasilla, which has an archeology team on staff.

“There is an archeological plan to conduct field work that was submitted to the regulatory agencies for comments but no feedback yet,” Trevor Sande, principal at R&M Engineering said last Wednesday. They’re hoping to hear back in the next week or so.

“Once the feedback is received the plan will be modified and resubmitted for final approval,” he said. “Once the agencies all concur field work will proceed. We were targeting April, so hopefully we are still on track to do the initial work then.”

Borough Manager Jeff Good last Wednesday declined to share a copy of the draft plan.

The Army Corps of Engineers has the final decision, Sande said, but will rely heavily on expertise of the State Historic Preservation Office.

Robert Meinhardt, president and principal consultant of True North, told the Sentinel in December that when a work plan is approved he will send two of his employees

to Wrangell — Walker Burgett, a forensic archeologist, and Tiffany Curtis, a historical archeologist — to conduct the field work, which will likely take a week.

Wrangell Cooperative Association tribal administrator Aaltséen, Esther Reese, last Wednesday said the borough sent her a copy of its draft field work proposal.

The borough asked the tribe for names for the development, and WCA responded with the historical name for the site — Keishangita.ʼaan in Tlingit, meaning Alder Top Village.

Historical and archaeological ground searches are required before the borough can move ahead with permitting for residential development. An Army Corps permit for wetland fill to develop the property for residential use is on hold until the issues surrounding cultural resources or artifacts are resolved.

The borough has owned the land since 1996.



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Court clerk sworn in as new deputy magistrate for Wrangell

By MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

Wrangell once again has a deputy magistrate for the first time in just over a year. The post hasn't been filled since Leanna Nash retired in January 2021 after 22 years.

Sheri LaDawn Ridgeway was sworn in via Zoom last Friday by state Superior Court Judge Amy Mead, of Juneau, the presiding judge for Southeast, and she will handle a mix of duties from ruling on minor traffic offenses to acting as justice of the peace.

Ridgeway, the state's lone court employee in Wrangell, has worked as a clerk in the court since March of 2021. Before coming to Wrangell just over three years ago, she was an attorney in Knoxville, Tennessee, and 95% of her caseload was in juvenile court, representing children and their parents.

Bella Crowley, Ridgeway's daughter, had a hand in bringing her mother to Wrangell. Ridgeway and her wife of 12 years, Jennifer, came to town for Crowley's wedding. After that, they decided to move here. They've been here since December of 2018.

Ridgeway was attracted to the job of deputy magistrate because "it was one of the only positions in town that utilizes my educational background," she said. "When I found out the position was open, I applied for it and really enjoy it."

As the only court employee, Ridgeway will continue to accept filings, process paperwork, keep files straight and other clerk-related duties.

"My title is deputy magistrate and under that title I do all those (clerk) things," she



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Deputy Magistrate Sheri LaDawn Ridgeway was sworn in last Friday and will help oversee misdemeanor and small claims cases in the Wrangell courtroom.

said. In addition, Ridgeway is authorized to issue arrest warrants, search warrants and summons in criminal cases. She can set bail, accept criminal complaints, take pleas and enter judgments in minor offenses "like traffic violations, some hunting and fishing violations, arraignments for misdemeanors, small claims and a couple other things."

She can also issue marriage licenses and perform marriages.

Police Chief Tom Radke said it will be good to have someone to handle cases in Wrangell again to help with some of the backlog. Even though criminal cases are handled in Ketchikan, taking minor offenses will lighten the caseload, he said.

"It's a logistic problem because you don't know the exact date you're going to court," Radke said. "We've got some

cases that are two, three years old. (Ridgeway) will do quite a bit here. She's new and fresh and excited with it."

Though Ridgeway isn't a licensed attorney in Alaska, that could change come May when she receives the results of her state bar exam, which she took in February. Still, she has made an impression on the court system's Southeast staff in her short time here.

"I want to thank you and welcome you in your new role in the first district," Mead said after swearing in Ridgeway (the first deputy magistrate she's sworn in). "You've been such a pleasure to work with and such an asset. I really am excited for you. Congratulations. What can we give her now? We need to assign things to her."

Borough contracts for appraisal of the former hospital property

By SARAH ASLAM
Sentinel reporter

Regard Recovery Centers, a Fort Lauderdale-based for-profit substance abuse treatment chain that has expressed interest in the former Wrangell hospital, has been waiting on a commercial appraisal of the building — and last week the borough said it's found a company to do the work.

The borough is paying Anchorage-based Reliant \$42,000 to appraise the value of the former hospital building as well as the former sawmill site at 6.5 Mile Zimovia Highway, Economic Development Director Carol Rushmore said last Thursday.

"The hospital appraisal quote was for \$22,500 and the mill property quote was for \$19,500," she said Monday.

The borough on Feb. 23 made an offer of about \$2.5 million on the 38-acre mill site, which was accepted. The sale closes June 1, said broker Bennett McGrath, of Anchor Properties in Petersburg, which represented the seller, Betty Buhler. Borough Manager Jeff Good said closure on the deal will come after the appraisal and a title search.

Regard Recovery, meanwhile, had been waiting on an appraisal of the old hospital before possibly submitting a formal proposal for the property, Capital Facilities Director Amber Al-Haddad said March 8.

The company has treatment centers in Florida, Tennessee, Kentucky and West Virginia, and last fall expressed interest in possibly converting the Wrangell hospital into its first location in Alaska.

Borough staff had solicited bids for the appraisal work at the hospital, but Good in his Feb. 8 borough manager's report told the assembly "we didn't get anyone to bid on the appraisal on the old hospital." Without a

bidder, the borough negotiated with Reliant for the work.

Reliant now has the notice to proceed, Rushmore said Monday. "They are making a site visit at the end of March or beginning of April," she said.

Rushmore said borough staff spoke with Regard Recovery representative Casey Odell last week, who told her the company is "working on some other projects" while waiting on the hospital appraisal report.

Odell did not respond to recent requests by the Sentinel for comment.

On Jan. 12, a couple of months after Regard Recovery first expressed interest in Wrangell, Odell said, "At this time, other projects continue to dominate the company's focus."

Since SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium moved out of the old hospital in February 2021 the borough has had to keep the building viable for a future use. That means spending \$100,000 a year to keep the vacant building heated, have staff go check on it, and pay insurance on the building, Al-Haddad said last fall.

"We have this large, 30,000-square-foot building that's been sitting empty (since February 2021)," Al-Haddad said in November. "The borough has had it in the forefront of our minds since before it became vacant, as to what we would do once SEARHC vacated it. We haven't yet come up with a plan. Until we have a plan, we have to keep that building viable to ensure that if there is future use of it, that it's in good condition."

Regard Recovery Centers would relieve the borough of that cost. The property would come on the tax rolls if owned by a for-profit company.

Parks and recreation department proposes lifeguard pay increase

By SARAH ASLAM
Sentinel reporter

The parks and recreation department wants to hire and retain lifeguards at the pool, and is asking the borough assembly to amend the current wage classification so as to offer more competitive salaries.

People shy away, Director Kate Thomas said, because the pay is low compared to the rest of Southeast, or anywhere else in Alaska, to do what is potentially a liability-incurring job — monitor the pool and dive in to help if someone is in danger.

The jobs are part time. The current starting wage for lifeguards and recreation assistants is \$10.34 an hour, minimum wage in Alaska under state law. The parks and recreation department proposes bumping it up to \$13 per hour, to start, with a wage increase to \$14 per hour as a part-time employee advances up through the pay scale.

Juneau pays its part-time lifeguards about \$18 an hour. Mt. Edgecumbe pool in Sitka offers lifeguards a starting wage of \$17.16 per hour. Lifeguards in Nikiski on the Kenai Peninsula are offered \$18.19 per hour; in Ketchikan, \$16 is offered to lifeguards and swim instructors;

and lifeguards in Haines can make between \$13.62 to \$15.18 an hour.

A letter drafted by Jeanie Arnold, the parks and recreation advisory board chairperson, to be sent to the borough supports increased wages for temporary part-time staff of the department. Lifeguards must be American Red Cross certified, which requires nearly 30 hours of instruction in first aid training, CPR, how to use a defibrillator, water rescues, and other lifesaving interventions.

All of this training is required before someone would even be eligible for their first paycheck.

"It is challenging to recruit for these positions, especially when the pay scale is so low. We have several parents on our lifeguard team that have gotten certified so that their own kids can swim without the interruption of cancellations due to staff shortages," Arnold wrote.

The parks and recreation board discussed the letter at its March 9 meeting, with the members unanimously signing off on the request. The board planned to send the letter to Borough Manager Jeff Good, Mayor Steve Prysunka and borough assembly members.

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Updated cruise ship calendar shows almost 19,000 berths

By SARAH ASLAM
Sentinel reporter

The borough released its updated cruise ship calendar on March 9, with ships reflecting a capacity for 18,777 passengers this summer, up from 17,170 in a Jan. 19 draft calendar.

That's an increase of 1,607 in berth capacity for potential visitors aboard cruise ships, or 9% since January.

The bump reflects the addition of the Alaska Dream Cruises array of vessels heading to Wrangell — the 40-passenger Alaska Dream, 49-passenger Baranof Dream, 54-passenger Admiralty Dream, 74-passenger Chichagof Dream and 12-passenger Kruzof Explorer.

Economic Development Director Carol Rushmore on Friday said while the borough was expecting Alaska Dream Cruises to make stops, it did not know in January — when the first draft went out — when or how many, as the company has not announced its schedule.

Gone, though, from the March draft schedule is the 230-passenger Hanseatic Inspiration, a German vessel which

was scheduled to make two stops in July and August.

Wrangell in 2019 saw about 21,500 cruise ship visitors before the pandemic clobbered tourism. The estimated capacity numbers for this summer are 88% of 2019's, and a welcome improvement over no ships in 2020 and minimal visits last year.

Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska's Wrangell port manager Fred Angerman Jr. handles shore operations for most of the larger cruise ships in Southeast Alaska. CLA's Ketchikan branch planned to send a crew to Wrangell on Wednesday for a load test of the City Dock gangways.

"Normally, we're the last stop, but with the ferries the way they are now, we'll be the first stop. They'll go around all of Southeast," Angerman said Friday.

It's still too early to pressure wash the gangways, he said. The port and harbors department doesn't even have the water turned on at City Dock. "Once they know winter is over, they'll turn the water on. I don't want to do it too soon," Angerman said.

"We have a lot of cleaning to do out there," Port Director Steve Miller said Friday. Miller is advertising to hire temporary workers to prep and staff up for the summer. The gangway cleaning likely will be done in April.

"We always hire a couple of people every spring to help out around the harbors and the port, get our summer floats in (at City Dock) ... and we'll have security for the larger ships," he said.

The summer floats are mainly used by jet boat and charter businesses and other tour companies to "pick up passengers and take them to destinations that they are selling tickets for," as well as a launch point for kayaks and canoes, Miller said.

Among the larger ships scheduled to stop in Wrangell are the 593-foot, 684-passenger Oceania Cruises Regatta, for one stop; the 650-foot, 450-passenger Seabourn Odyssey, scheduled for nine stops; and a new ship to Wrangell, the 460-foot, 530-passenger electric hybrid Roald Amundsen, operated by Norway's Hurtigruten Ships and touted as a "green pioneer" by the company. The

ship has three restaurants onboard and a science center with lecture halls and a library inside.

The Amundsen makes its first stop on May 23, with seven port calls on the calendar as of March 9. Its 14-day Alaska cruises start at \$6,100 per person.

Angerman said the invasion of Ukraine by Russia hasn't appeared to have an effect on the calendar yet, but is "probably affecting a lot of things we don't even know about. I do know Ukraine has a maritime school in Odessa." The city on the Black Sea was surrounded by Russian forces as of last week.

There are several maritime academies in the port city, including the National University Odessa Maritime Academy with an enrollment of 8,441 students, and Odesa National Maritime Academy, with an enrollment of 9,500.

"There has been, over the years — there have been a few captains of these tour boats that have been Ukrainians," Angerman said. "I don't know if that is the case this year or not, but obviously that is a big deal."

Canada reopens its waters to cruise ship traffic in April

By DANELE KELLY
Ketchikan Daily News

Canada's Minister of Transport has announced that cruise ships are again welcome at the nation's ports, starting April 6.

The COVID-19 pandemic stopped all cruise ship traffic in 2020 as Canada closed its waters, and the revenue hit was substantial for Alaska businesses and municipalities that rely on summer travelers. Even when cruise ships resumed limited operations in 2021, they had to bypass Canadian ports and traffic to Alaska was a fraction of past summers.

A major barrier to the ability of ships to sail between the Lower 48 and Alaska during Canada's closure was the U.S. Passenger Vessel Services Act of 1886, which requires foreign-flagged ships carrying passengers to stop at a foreign port when traveling between two U.S. ports.

Nearly all large cruise ships are registered in foreign countries, and the ships start or stop in Vancouver or Victoria, British Columbia, on their Alaska cruises to meet the requirement under federal law.

Transport Canada banned all ships carrying more than 100 passengers from its waters starting in March 2020, shutting down

cruise traffic to Alaska.

Large cruise ships were able to travel to Alaska again starting in late July 2021 due to the U.S. Congress in May passing legislation sponsored by Alaska's congressional delegation that granted a temporary waiver, allowing ships to bypass Canadian ports on the way north from Seattle.

Ketchikan in 2021 was able to salvage about 8% of a "normal" cruise season in an abbreviated large-ship season that began in July.

"We've got so many ships that call in Ketchikan that originate in Canada that it's pretty serious business," Ketchikan Visitors Bureau president Patti Mackey said last Friday.

Though Wrangell does not see nearly as many cruise ships as Ketchikan and other Southeast ports, which are visited by ships with 3,000 or 4,000 berths, the community is on the itinerary this summer for maybe half a dozen foreign-flagged cruise ships with capacity for several hundred passengers each.

Many of the smaller vessels that stop in Wrangell are U.S.-flagged and not subject to the requirement that they stop in Canada, or they spend their entire summer in Southeast Alaska and don't need to deal with the Canadian issue.

Kenai-Matanuska Republican ticket forms to run against Gov. Dunleavy

KENAI (AP) — Republican Charlie Pierce, Kenai Peninsula Borough mayor, has picked the chair of the Alaska Parole Board, Edie Grunwald, of the Matanuska Valley, to be his running mate as he campaigns for the governor's job.

Grunwald previously ran for lieutenant governor in 2018, finishing second in that year's Republican primary to Kevin Meyer, the current office holder.

Under a new voter-approved election system, which will be used for the first time in Alaska this year, candidates for governor and lieutenant governor will run as a team from the outset.

Grunwald said she resigned as chair of the parole board to run. She was appointed to the board by Gov. Mike Dunleavy and designated as chair in 2019. She had donated to Dunleavy's reelection campaign before Pierce entered the race.

Pierce, a staunch conservative, announced his selection of Grun-

wald on March 5 at a Kenai restaurant. The borough mayor, an opponent of mask mandates during the pandemic and supporter of experimental medical treatments, has expressed dissatisfaction with the Dunleavy administration's efforts toward paying a larger Permanent Fund dividend.

Grunwald said her decision to resign from the parole board and campaign against Dunleavy was "extremely awkward at first, but then, you know, we're all in this to make Alaska better," the Anchorage Daily News reported.

Dunleavy is seeking reelection but has not announced a running mate; Meyer isn't seeking reelection.

Former Alaska Gov. Bill Walker and Heidi Drygas, both independents, and former state Rep. Les Gara and Jessica Cook, both Democrats, are among the tickets that have filed to run with the state Division of Elections. Candidates have until June 1 to file for the August primary.

Governor, state senators support temporary suspension of gas tax

Anchorage Daily News
and the Wrangell Sentinel

Gov. Mike Dunleavy and Alaska state senators said Friday they support legislation to temporarily suspend the state's 8-cents-a-gallon tax on gasoline and also taxes marine and aviation fuels for one year, in an attempt to reduce the hit of rising fuel prices on Alaskans.

No such legislation had been introduced, but Dunleavy, who is running for reelection this year, called for a suspension of the taxes to be added to a bill sitting in the House Finance Committee since last year. That bill would raise the state's tax on gasoline by 8 cents a gallon. Alaska's tax rate, which hasn't changed in half a century, is the lowest in the nation.

Anchorage Rep. Andy Josephson is the sponsor of the tax-increase bill, intended to help raise more revenue for highway maintenance. He said he supports the temporary suspension as long as the underlying purpose of the bill

for a permanent tax increase remains intact.

Dunleavy's proposal to suspend all motor fuel taxes for at least 12 months would cost the state treasury more than \$50 million. He proposes immediately suspending collection of state taxes on not only motor and marine fuels, but also aviation gas and aviation jet fuel, and leaving the tax off until June 2023.

Oil prices above \$100 per barrel have driven gasoline prices at the pump toward \$5 a gallon in urban areas and higher in rural communities.

House and Senate action would be required to suspend the fuel taxes, and the effective date would depend on the legislation.

Based on the average number of miles driven per year in the state — 9,111 miles, according to the Federal Highway Administration — and the average fuel economy of an American vehicle, which is 18.1 miles per gal-

lon, suspending the state tax could save an Alaska driver around \$40 per year.

The tax is paid by fuel wholesalers and distributors, not at the retail level, making it difficult for lawmakers to ensure that any tax holiday gets passed on directly to consumers.

In 2008, the Alaska Legislature and then-Gov. Sarah Palin suspended Alaska's tax amid rising fuel prices when oil was more than \$100 a barrel. The tax was reimposed one year later.

Members of the Alaska Senate cast a non-binding opinion vote in support of a one-year tax holiday on Friday, and Dunleavy issued a statement in support of the proposal the same day.

Other states are considering whether to suspend their taxes, and there have been several proposals to suspend the federal excise tax of 18.4 cents per gallon.

Applications open for mortgage assistance program

Sentinel staff

Applications are now being accepted for a federally funded financial assistance program for Alaska homeowners.

Applications will be accepted through April 4 by the Alaska Housing Finance Corp., which is administering the \$50 million program to help homeowners hurt by income loss the past two years due to the pandemic.

As of last Friday, 13 Wrangell homeowners had preregistered for the program, out of almost 5,400 people statewide, according to Stacy Barnes, public affairs director at the agency.

The aid can go toward eligible homeowners' monthly mortgage payments, and may also be applied to current and past-due property taxes, insurance premiums and utility bills.

To qualify, a homeowner must submit proof of financial hardships directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as a loss or reduction in income. The financial aid is available only for residents whose Alaska home is their primary residence.

Income-eligibility limits apply and are based on family size and the median income in each community. In Wrangell, the income limit would be \$123,300 a year for a family of four, Barnes said.

As applications come in, the housing agency will determine the amount of need and determine a system for allocating the limited funds among eligible households.

Homeowners may check their eligibility and apply at AlaskaHousingRelief.org. The website will automatically calculate an applicant's in-

"Once the application window closes and AHFC enters the review phase, our end goal will be to work with our servicing partners to quickly distribute this relief to benefit Alaska's homeowners."

Bryan Butcher,
Executive director,
Alaska Housing Finance Corp.

come eligibility based on their home address.

Alaska has about 164,000 owner-occupied homes, more than half of which have a mortgage, the housing agency said.

"Once the application window closes and AHFC enters the review phase, our end goal will be to work with our servicing partners to quickly distribute this relief to benefit Alaska's homeowners," Bryan Butcher, the agency's executive director, said in a prepared statement.

The state housing agency has distributed more than \$251 million in financial aid the past year to help renters hurt economically by the pandemic. More than \$512,000 of that total went to 80 renters in Wrangell to help cover past-due and future rent and utilities.

SENTINEL SPORTS

Lady Wolves win Southeast, head to state tournament this week Boys lose to Petersburg in second place bid at regionals

By MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

In perhaps their toughest competition this season, the Lady Wolves high school basketball squad proved why they're the top Division 2A team in Southeast by beating both Haines and Metlakatla last week to win the regional championship, sending them to Anchorage for the state tournament this week.

It was a repeat crown for the Lady Wolves, who went to state in 2019 as Southeast champions, their first time in about 25 years.

The boys team didn't fare as well at the regional tournament in Ketchikan, beating the Craig Panthers and Haines Glacier Bears, but falling twice to the Petersburg Vikings, ending their hopes for a spot at the state tournament.

The Division 2A state tournament will start Thursday and run through Saturday at the Alaska Airlines Center on the University of Alaska Anchorage campus. The games will be streaming live on nhfsnetwork.com, a subscription-based website.

Regional championship games began last Wednesday, with the boys facing off against the Vikings for the fifth time in a row after homecoming games in both Wrangell and Petersburg. The game would determine who played for first place in Southeast.

Wrangell struggled to keep up with Petersburg from the start of the game, not scoring in the first period until nearly four minutes in when junior Jacen Hay scored a basket. The Wolves were able to close the gap, ending the period down 9-11 to the Vikings. However, Petersburg put the pressure on and widened the gap, leading by 10 at one point during the second period.

Though Petersburg's players kept tight control of the ball and put up a strong defense, they seemed to become frazzled when Wrangell would pick up speed and make rapid-fire passes. Both teams held each other at bay during the third period, barely scoring. In the fourth period, Petersburg stepped up its scoring, winning 33-25.

Petersburg went on to face Metlakatla last Friday for the championship title, ultimately losing to the Chiefs 31-25.

Wrangell still had a shot at winning the second-place berth, which would have taken them to state. The Wolves proved how formidable they could be,

playing against Craig last Thursday and Haines the following day. The Panthers became the team struggling to keep up as Wrangell kept outscoring them. Once Wrangell pulled further away in the second quarter, they never held less than a 10-point lead for the remainder of the game. Wrangell beat Craig 55-29.

The Wolves couldn't rest just yet. Two more games stood between them and heading to state.

Early last Friday, the Wolves kept up the heat from the previous day's play, taking the Haines Glacier Bears to task. Though Haines started with a strong defense, freshman Daniel Harrison broke through the line to put the first points on the board. Senior Ryan Rooney followed suit with two points. From there, the Glacier Bears never caught up.

It didn't help in the second quarter when Hay, Harrison and Rooney dropped multiple three-pointers. Wrangell won 60-43. Harrison and the Glacier Bears' Eric Gilham both scored 19 points for their teams.

In Saturday's game, it was a contentious rematch between Wrangell and longtime rival Petersburg. The Vikings came out the gate with a three-point goal by Michael Durkin. Wrangell eventually tied it up at just over three minutes in with a three-point bucket by Hay.

From there, Wrangell started to pull ahead, despite Petersburg turning up the heat late in the first half. Wrangell was on top by the end of the half, 18-12.

The third quarter started with Hay sinking a three-pointer, but the Vikings amped up their defense and narrowed the lead. The Wolves held onto a tenuous two-point lead at the end of the quarter.

Petersburg quickly tied the game at the beginning of the fourth period and then took the lead with six minutes left to play. A series of fouls by Wrangell and strong offensive play by Petersburg led to a six-point lead. Wrangell couldn't make the plays and lost 38-31, ending their season.

The Lady Wolves took to the hardwood last Thursday afternoon against the Haines Lady Glacier Bears. Wrangell unleashed their ferocity from the start, powering through Haines' defense and scoring first. They held their opponents scoreless until less than three minutes left in the first period. Haines would



PHOTOS BY DUSTIN SAFRANEK/KETCHIKAN DAILY NEWS

Above: Wrangell High School junior Kiara Harrison (11) shoots against Metlakatla High School sophomore Lexu Cook (12) and junior Alysia Nelson-Boyd (11) last Friday during the Region V 2A tournament championships at Clarke Cochrane Gymnasium in Ketchikan. Below: Senior Kendra Meissner (30) shoots under the basket against Haines senior Sadie Anderson (10) and junior Alison Benda (14) in Southeast tournament action last Thursday.

only make one other bucket, with Wrangell leading 11-4 at the end of the period.

Haines would only make three field goals in the second period. Wrangell senior Liana Carney's cross training in other sports was on display as she used her speed from running and strength from wrestling to skirt and push through the defense. She led all scorers in the game with 12.

One lesson the Glacier Bears didn't learn throughout the game was to not foul senior Kendra Meissner, as she went eight for eight at the free throw line.

Wrangell kept a strong lead and went on to win 42-25. Only the Metlakatla Miss Chiefs stood between them and regional victory.

The Lady Wolves next faced one of their toughest opponents, having split their two regular season games against Metlakatla in tight contests. Friday's game would be no different.

At first it seemed Metlakatla would take the game with a mix of strong defense and scoring from the start. The confidence the Lady Wolves exhibited the day before seemed to be lacking. The first points on the board by Wrangell came from senior Jamie Early. She missed her first two free throws but hit her next two at nearly three minutes into the first period.

Wrangell began to heat up in the second period, strengthening their defense and landing more buckets, but it wasn't enough as Metlakatla increased their scoring, ending the first



half ahead 18-10.

That would nearly be it for the Miss Chiefs.

In the third period, Wrangell was able to add only five more points, but at the same time, they kept Metlakatla from scoring a single point. The Lady Wolves took a slow, almost methodical approach in the fourth quarter, eventually taking the lead, 19-18 with just under four minutes left to play.

A two-point basket from junior Kiara Harrison widened the lead, and foul shots by Wrangell added to the tally.

Metlakatla's Chloe Guthrie

made the only points for her team in the second half with a three-pointer, the only points the Miss Chiefs scored in 15 minutes of play.

"That was key and really helped the girls' offense to get going as well," said head coach Christina Good. "We had some important baskets and defense from our bench. Our teamwork and attitude were the key to our win."

Early sank two free throws in the final seconds of the game to give Wrangell a 26-21 victory, sending the Lady Wolves to state, where they will face Hooper Bay at 8 a.m. Thursday.



Wrangell head coach Christina Good removes the game net last Friday following the girls Southeast 2A championship win against Metlakatla High School.

Celebration of life for Craig William Campbell on May 7

A celebration of life for former Wrangell resident Craig William Campbell will be held May 7 at the Wrangell Elks Club. He died Jan. 23 in Oregon.

Craig was born on April 26, 1945, in Pierre, South Dakota. Shortly after his birth, his family moved to Seaside, Aloha and other Oregon communities, where his father, John Campbell, could find more opportunities for logging work. At 3 years old, Craig was joined by younger sister Carolyn (Cari). They lived next to a grade school in Aloha, where Craig spent a lot of time with friends, playing baseball and riding bikes.

When Craig was 14, he started at Beaverton High School. Soon, brother Jon was born, and in 1958 sister Jane was born. The siblings spent a lot of time together at the Beaverton swimming pool and movie theater.

When Craig was 15, his dad decided he wanted to run his own logging camp, and an opportunity

arose in Wrangell. He went alone to Wrangell a few months early, to get things started and to find a home for the family. Craig's mother, Dona, went to Wrangell in February 1959 to visit, and the whole family moved to Wrangell in November, and soon realized another Campbell was on the way. Jim was the only sibling born in Alaska.

Craig fit right in at school, joining the basketball team, and did very well in school, his family wrote. Craig was given a scholarship to a junior college, where he met his first wife Jeannette, with whom he had two children, Lisa and David. In 1972, Craig and Jeannette divorced and Craig headed to Prudhoe Bay, where he worked until 1984, before moving back to Wrangell to be with his children.

In 1986, "he met the love of his life, Carol Elaine Woltring," his family wrote. They were married in August 1988, and lived in Wrangell until 1992,

when they moved to Colton, Oregon, so Carol could be near her family and the horses she loved. The two of them enjoyed a wonderful marriage until Carol's passing in November 2005.

A few years later, Craig moved to Molalla, Oregon, where he stayed until his death on Jan. 23, 2022.

"He was a wonderful father, grandfather, great-grandfather, husband and brother, and will be deeply missed," the family wrote. He is preceded in death by his parents, John and Dona Campbell, and his wife Carol Campbell. He is survived by his daughter, Lisa Gillen, of Wrangell; his son, David Campbell, of Lake Oswego, Oregon; sister Cari Hampton, of Wilsonville, Oregon; brother Jon, of Wrangell; sister Jane, of Palmer; and brother Jim, of Anchorage.

Craig also had five grandchildren: Jacquie, Sara, Krysta, Tyler and Charlie; and nine great-grandchildren.



CRAIG WILLIAM CAMPBELL (1970s)

President bans U.S. imports of Russian seafood

WASHINGTON (AP) — Alaska's congressional delegation welcomed Friday's announcement by President Joe Biden that the U.S. will dramatically downgrade its trade status with Russia as punishment for its invasion of Ukraine, including banning imports of Russian seafood.

Russia exported \$1.2 billion in seafood products to the U.S. in 2021. That made it the eighth-largest seafood exporter by value to the U.S. last year, the Anchorage Daily News reported. The main products were snow crab, king crab and cod, according to data from the National Marine Fisheries Service.

The U.S. ban on Russian imports also covers alcohol and diamonds.

"In Alaska, where we produce more than 60% of U.S. seafood, Russia competes directly with some of our most valuable species, such as salmon, crab and pollock, using inferior sustainability and processing practices," Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski said in the release.

"It's a big deal for crab," Jamie Goen, executive director of Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers, told the Daily News. The group represents about 350 members, including 60 boats in Alaska's crab fleet.

"Ninety percent of king crab that came into the U.S. in recent years is from Russia. ... With this ban, that's nearly a billion dollars of crab that's getting cut off," Goen said.

The broad trade shift, which revokes the

"most favored nation" status for Russia, is being taken in coordination with the European Union and other countries.

"The free world is coming together to confront Putin," Biden said. He also said countries were adding new names to a list of Russian oligarchs who are facing sanctions, and the U.S. is cutting the flow of high-end American products such as expensive watches, cars and clothing.

Stripping most favored nation status from Russia would allow the U.S. and allies to impose higher tariffs on some Russian imports, increasing the isolation of the Russian economy.

Biden's changes on Russia's trade status come as bipartisan pressure has been building in Washington to revoke what is formally known as "permanent normal trade relations" with Russia. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has pressed the U.S. and allies to take the action against Russia. It follows days after the Biden moved to ban imports of Russian oil and gas products.

This week's moves are the latest in a series of sanctions aimed at crippling the Russian economy and a sign that the U.S. and its allies will continue to use their financial heft to retaliate against Russian President Vladimir Putin. The other measures include the freezing of central bank assets, limits on exports and sanctions against Russian oligarchs and their families.

Legislation would ban marriage in Alaska by 14- and 15-year-olds

BY BECKY BOHRER
The Associated Press

JUNEAU (AP) — A bill in the Alaska House would repeal a provision of law that allows a court to grant permission for someone as young as 14 to marry.

House members last Wednesday adopted the repeal as an amendment to a bill dealing with witness requirements for marriage. A vote on the amended bill was pending and could occur this week. The measure, if it passes, would still have to go to the Senate.

The bill would leave in place another provision of law that allows for 16- and 17-year-olds to marry with parental consent.

Anchorage Rep. Sara Rasmussen offered the amendment. She said she considered it "probably one of the most significant things that we can do as a legislative body this session."

"I think about 14-year-olds. They're freshmen in high school. They are children," she said during floor debate, adding later: "We have the opportunity here today to make this change to protect children in Alaska from something that in today's time is not in the best interest of the child."

The proposal would repeal a section of law that spells out a process under which a court can grant permission

for someone as young as 14-years-old to marry. The amendment passed 33-3, with Matanuska Valley Republican Reps. David Eastman, DeLena Johnson and Christopher Kurka voting no.

The latest annual report from the state health department's Health Analytics and Vital Records Section shows there were no marriages involving individuals younger than 15 between 2016 and 2020 in Alaska. Information provided by that section shows that during that same period, there were 1,672 marriages involving a partner who was between the ages of 15 and 19.

According to the group Unchained At Last, which seeks to end forced and child marriage, six states have set the minimum age for marriage at 18.

Johnson said her mother was married when she was 14. "Have times changed? Maybe. But people haven't," she said.

"People sometimes make decisions at a young age. People sometimes have to work at a young age. Sometimes, people become adults at a young age," Johnson said. She said she has not had a swell of people in her district ask her to change marriage laws.

Anchorage Rep. Matt Claman who sponsored the underlying bill that would eliminate the requirement for at least two marriage witnesses, said he supported the amendment.

Shipyard holds ceremony for USS Ted Stevens

PASCAGOULA, Miss. (AP) — Mississippi shipyard workers, Navy sailors and the family of the late U.S. Sen. Ted Stevens of Alaska gathered for the keel authentication of a ship that is named for Stevens.

The ceremonial welding March 9 marked the foundation of Ingalls Shipbuilding's new guided-missile destroyer for the Navy, the USS Ted Stevens.

Stevens was a pilot during World War II. The Alaska Re-

publican served in the Senate from 1968 to 2008. He was 86 when he died in 2010 in a plane crash in Alaska.

"In many ways, Sen. Stevens embodies the spirit of DDG-51 class ships: steadfast, strong and built to fight in order to uphold America's ideals," Capt. Seth Miller said. The ship measures more than 500 feet in length and can run at 31 knots.

Imprinted on the vessel are the initials of its sponsors: The

late senator's wife, Catherine Stevens, and daughters Sue Covich and Lily Stevens-Becker. They watched as Ingalls welder Henry Johnson molded the letters onto a ceremonial plate that represents the spirit of the ship.

The ship is about 35% complete and is expected to hit the water by the end of the year. The Ted Stevens is the 36th Arleigh Burke-class destroyer built at Ingalls.

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Police report

Monday, March 7
Agency assist: Ambulance.
Agency assist: Alaska State Troopers.
Intoxicated person.

Tuesday, March 8
Traffic stop.

Wednesday, March 9
Nothing to report.

Thursday, March 10
Animal complaint.
Motor vehicle accident: Citations issued for failure to provide proof of insurance and for failure to exercise due care.

Friday, March 11
Motor vehicle accident.
Inmate booking.
Traffic stop.
Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.
Welfare check.

Saturday, March 12
Trespass.

Sunday, March 13
Dog complaint.
Agency assist: Alarm.
Agency assist: Ambulance.

There were six subpoenas served during the reporting period.

Easier access to tidelands

Parks and Recreation Director Kate Thomas stands at the tidelands in front of City Park, where the borough plans to build a rock staircase and add a handrail to provide easier access to the waterfront. Thomas estimates the work may cost \$2,000 to add the steps, which will blend in with the boulders that make up the naturally rocky shoreline. The department will look at what's left over in the budget from this fiscal year that ends June 30, or turn the page to the upcoming fiscal year to pay for the work. Either way, Thomas hopes the staircase can be built this summer.



PHOTO BY SARAH ASLAM/
WRANGELL SENTINEL

TSA extends face mask requirement aboard airplanes to April 18

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal officials are extending the requirement for masks on planes and public transportation for one more month — through mid-April — while taking steps that could lead to lifting the rule.

The mask mandate was scheduled to expire March 18, but the Transportation Security Administration said last Thursday that it will extend the requirement through April 18.

TSA said the extra month will give the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention time to develop new, more targeted policies that will consider the number of cases of COVID-19 nationally and in local communities, and the risk of new variants.

The TSA enforces the rule, which extends to planes, buses, trains and transit hubs.

As of last Thursday, more than 98% of the U.S. population is living in areas with low or medium COVID-19 case levels, meaning that the CDC no longer recommends face masks in public indoor settings. A decision to eventually scrap the mask requirement — one of the last vestiges of nationwide pandemic rules — has grown more likely in recent weeks as more states

relaxed their own mandates for wearing masks indoors, and the CDC eased its recommendations.

That led critics to question why the CDC would allow maskless people to gather in movie theaters and sports arenas but not on planes.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said last Thursday that deciding on the right policy for travel was more complicated than setting recommendations for local communities.

"If you're moving from one zone to another and picking people up ... it's a little bit different, and that requires some consultation, which is what (CDC officials) are going to endeavor to do between now and April 18," Psaki said.

CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said last week that her agency must study the science around virus transmission "but also the epidemiology and the frequency that we may encounter a variant of concern or a variant of interest in our travel corridors."

Airlines for America, a trade group that represents the largest U.S. airlines, said in a statement that it urged the administration to end the face mask rules.

Dr. Graham Snyder, medical

director of infection prevention at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, said it makes sense to be more cautious on planes, subway trains and buses because "they are designed to efficiently put a lot of people in one place," raising the risk of virus transmission.

Stephen Morse, an infectious-diseases expert at Columbia University, said a short-term extension of the rule is appropriate, but he warned that once it is dropped it will be hard to revive if COVID-19 cases surge again. He said there have been so many surprises with the pandemic that "a month may not be long enough."

The federal mask mandate was imposed in January 2021, days after President Joe Biden took office, and has been extended several times. The Trump

administration had declined to require masks on public transportation, but airlines began requiring them in mid-2020 to reassure passengers worried about contracting the virus.

Last September, the Transportation Security Administration doubled the fines for people who refused to wear a mask on public transportation to up to \$1,000 for first-time offenders and up to \$3,000 for repeat violations.

The requirement became a lightning rod for confrontation between some passengers and airline crews. Since the start of 2021, airlines have reported more than 6,000 incidents of unruly passengers, most of them involving disputes over mask wearing. That history could make it unlikely for airlines to require masks once the federal rule lapses.

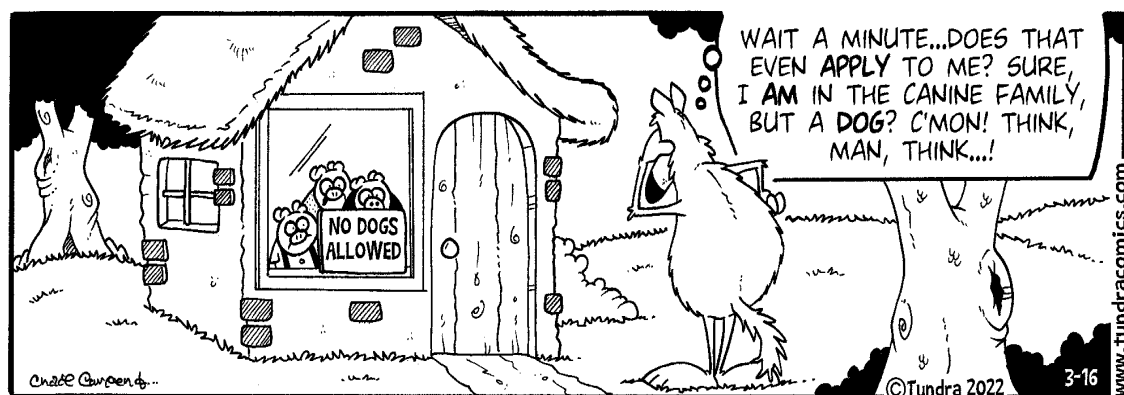
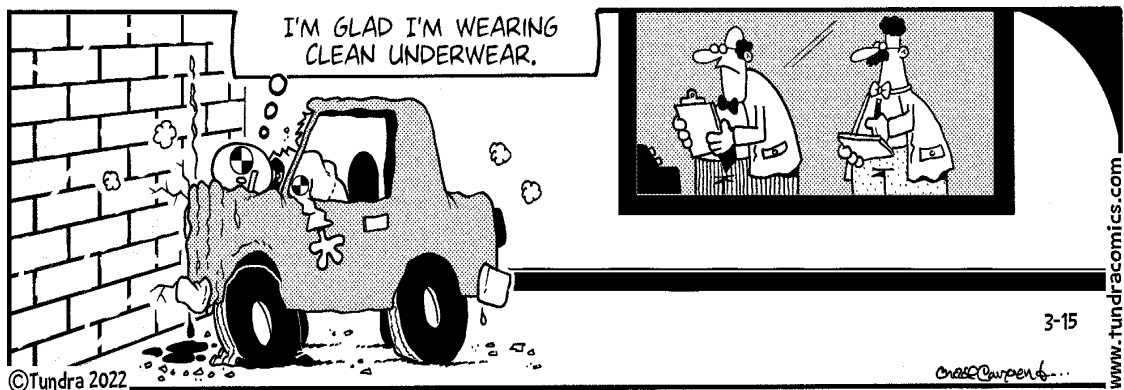
"I don't think the airlines have any desire to impose their own requirements at this point against a public that is weary of these restrictions," said Henry Hartevelde, a travel-industry analyst with Atmosphere Research Group.

Cabin crews are now divided over keeping the federal rule, according to their largest union, the Association of Flight Attendants, which declined to take a position on extending the mandate beyond March 18.

The continuation of the rule seemed to underscore the position of airlines and aircraft manufacturers that have argued since the start of the pandemic that high-quality filters and strong air flow made virus transmission unlikely in plane cabins.

Tundra

by Chad Carpenter



KSTK Art Auction

Friday, March 18
Nolan Center

Doors Open At 6, Auction Starts at 7

Tickets are \$25 and include appetizer and a ticket that can be redeemed for 1 beverage or entered into a raffle.

Bid on a Variety of Beautiful Art – Paintings, Prints, Photography, Bronze Sculpture, Beadwork, Fabric Art and More.

Tickets Available at KSTK or On the Events Tab of KSTK.org, or at the Door.
All Proceeds Support KSTK



National Park Service committed to boosting tribal role in land management

By SUSAN MONTROYA BRYAN
The Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — National Park Service Director Chuck Sams said March 8 that he and other officials are committed to boosting the role Native American tribes can play in managing public lands around the U.S.

He told members of a congressional committee during a virtual hearing that part of the effort includes integrating Indigenous knowledge into management plans and recognizing that federal lands once belonged to the tribes.

Sams was questioned about how the National Park Service could use existing authority and recent executive directives issued by top federal officials to make good on the latest round of promises to tribes regarding meaningful consultation and having a seat at the table.

Sams, who is Cayuse and Walla Walla and a citizen of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation in eastern Oregon, is the first Native Ameri-

can to lead the Park Service. He said education will be a key part of seeing changes on the ground.

"Much of this has been missing from our history books, that understanding that tribes are sovereign," he said, adding that the federal government has an obligation to ensure that tribal voices are heard.

There currently are four national parks where tribes share co-management responsibilities: Canyon de Chelly National Monument within the boundaries of the Navajo Nation in Arizona, Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve in Southeast Alaska, Grand Portage National Monument within the Grand Portage Indian Reservation in Minnesota, and Big Cypress National Preserve in Florida.

Tribal officials from New Mexico, Colorado and the Pacific Northwest also testified about the importance of including Native American voices when weighing decisions that could affect cultural sites, water supplies or even forest health.

Sams said his agency has about 80 co-

operative agreements in place with tribes now and he expects that number to grow. At Acadia National Park, the Wabanaki Nations of Maine have been involved in a multiyear project focused on traditional gathering of sweetgrass that have resulted from centuries of learned ecological knowledge.

The Nisqually Tribe is working with officials at Mount Rainier National Park to publish a report on plant gathering there. Consultation with the tribe also has resulted in a guide for developing interpretive programs.

Carleton Bowekaty, the lieutenant governor of Zuni Pueblo and a member of the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, told lawmakers that tribes in the Southwestern U.S. banded together to protect their mutual interests as part of the fight over the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah.

While some tribal communities are located hundreds of miles away from the monument, Bowekaty said the area still plays an integral role in traditional prac-

tices and ceremonies and that tribes are being asked for their traditional knowledge as the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service work on a management plan for the monument.

"What could be a better avenue of restorative justice than giving tribes the opportunity to participate in the management of lands that their ancestors were removed from?" he asked, adding that collaborative problem-solving and a candid exchange of perspectives will be crucial for co-management to work.

Doug Kiel, a citizen of the Oneida Nation and an assistant professor of history at Northwestern University, told the congressional panel about a philosophy of long-term planning that is central to many Native American tribes. He said it centers on what will be in the best interest of people seven generations from now. Land managers today can learn from thousands of years of history, he said, as the pressures of climate change and global instability mount.

State corrects birth certificate for teen who designed Alaska flag in 1927

JUNEAU (AP) — The state has issued a corrected birth certificate for the teenage designer of the Alaska flag, after researchers who were looking into his heritage found records indicating he was born more

than a year earlier than previously believed.

The change means John Ben Benson Jr. — believed to be the only Indigenous person to design a state flag — did so when he was 14, not 13.

Alaska Superior Court Judge Adolf Zeman last week ordered the state to issue a birth certificate for Benson with the birth date of Sept. 12, 1912, and for his mother's maiden name to be corrected.

The order followed a petition by researcher Michael iqyax^ Livingston, who was part of the team studying Benson's heritage that uncovered church and other records supporting the changes.

Benson is known as Benny Benson, and in 1927, he won a territory-wide contest with his flag design, which featured the Big Dipper and the North Star on a simple field of blue. It became the state flag after Alaska was admitted to the union in 1959.

Benson died in 1972.

According to a University of Alaska web page about the history of the flag, Benson ex-

plained his design in his written submission for the contest: "The blue field is for the Alaska sky and the forget-me-not, an Alaska flower. The North Star is for the future of the state of Alaska, the most northerly in the Union. The dipper is for the Great Bear — symbolizing strength."

Zeman's order notes that a panel of history experts, assembled at the request of the state's vital records section, reviewed documents submitted by Livingston and voted unanimously to recommend changing Benson's birthdate.

A birth certificate filed in 1940 had listed Benson's birthdate as Oct. 12, 1913. The timing of the filing coincided with a period in which men of a certain age were required to register for the draft, and it's possible Benson was told he needed his birth certificate when he registered, the report stated.

Livingston, a cultural heritage specialist with Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, described the work investigating Benson's birthdate as a "big adventure that kept on taking different twists and turns, and we just tried to follow the path as far back as we could."

The researchers in their report said documents they found also show that Benson, who has often been identified as Alutiiq, was actually Unangax^ . Livingston said his level of confidence that Benson was Unangax^ is "very high," given ancestry records found for his mother's side.

"We stand by our assertion, yet we remain open to feedback, to new data, and to new interpretations," said the report, which was published by the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association last Thursday.

Benson's mother died when he was young and his father sent Benson and his two siblings away, according to the report. Benson and his brother were sent to a home for orphans or other displaced children.

Livingston said there are still questions about Benson's father, including where he was from. The report noted that Benson's father is listed in some documents as being from Norway and other reports as being from Sweden.

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL NOTICE OF JOB OPENING Parks Maintenance Position Seasonal Job Posting

The Wrangell Parks and Recreation Department will accept applications for the positions of Park Maintenance I & II until the positions have been filled. First review of applications will take place on March 25, 2022. Applicants must be at least 18 years old, hold a valid Alaska Driver's License and have knowledge of power tools and be familiar with grounds maintenance and repairs. Applicants must be able to work through September. Position is full time, temporary.

Duties include both skilled and semi-skilled work in landscape, mowing, weed-eating, grounds maintenance, repairs and construction of parks, playgrounds, ball fields and cemeteries. Pay range \$16 to \$18 per hour DOE.

Applications and full job description may be obtained at and returned to Wrangell City Hall, 205 Brueger Street (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929.

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

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

Publish March 16 and 23, 2022

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL NOTICE OF JOB OPENING Temporary Workers Harbor Department

The City & Borough of Wrangell is accepting applications at City Hall to establish a pool from which to hire Temporary Laborers for the Harbor Department. Employees will be selected from applications in the pool at the time employees are needed throughout the year. There are multiple immediate openings. You must have a valid Alaska driver's license, or a valid out-of-state driver's license with the ability to obtain an Alaska license within six months. A CDL license is preferred but not required.

This position will require someone with experience in carpentry and the ability to work independently in a marine environment. Work may include, but will not be limited to replacement of bull rails, fascia boards, decking, plumbing, pile hoops and concrete patching. Duties will also include painting, pressure washing, cutting brush and grass, and working in the boat yard and office. Boat yard duties will include carrying blocking, boat stands, and various types of cleanup. Must be able to lift and carry 50 pounds. Successful applicant must be able to work in all weather conditions and weekends.

Applications and job descriptions may be obtained and returned to Wrangell City Hall, 205 Brueger St., (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929 or via email to rmarshall@wrangell.com. Pay for this position starts at \$16.54 per hour DOE.

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

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

Publish March 16 and 23, 2022

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS Ports and Harbors Surveillance System Design

Notice is hereby given that the City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, will accept proposals for engineering design services for the Ports and Harbors Surveillance System Design project in the office of the Borough Clerk until 2 p.m. prevailing time on March 31, 2022.

The full RFQ solicitation documents may be obtained at the Borough Clerk's Office, 205 Brueger Street, Wrangell, Alaska 99929 and may also be downloaded from the City & Borough of Wrangell website (www.wrangell.com) under the Bids and RFPs Section.

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

Publish March 9, 16, and 23, 2022



The Southeast Alaska Power Agency (SEAPA) is recruiting for a Temporary Office Assistant for their Ketchikan office. The job consists of reception duties, file management and staff aide. The standard office schedule is Monday through Friday, with 8-hour workdays and a 1-hour lunch break; however, some flexibility may be available for the successful candidate. This position does not qualify for additional benefits. Position requires a High School Graduate or GED equivalent. Administrative or secretarial experience desired. General computer literacy and proficiency in Microsoft Office Outlook, Word and Excel. Knowledge of clerical and administrative procedures and systems such as filing and recordkeeping. A complete job description and the electronic application process are available online at: <https://seapahydro.applicationpro.com/> SEAPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer

Published March 9 and 16, 2022



NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Board of Directors of the Southeast Alaska Power Agency (SEAPA) will hold a Special Board Meeting on March 18, 2022 at 2:00 p.m. AKDT. Due to recommendations from the Center for Disease Control and its social distancing guidelines, the meeting will be held electronically. The purpose of the meeting will be for consideration and approval of contracts. For additional information, please call 907.228.2281.

Published March 16, 2022

Advocates want to attract more Native Americans to medical professions

By DAN KRAKER

Minnesota Public Radio News

DULUTH, Minn. (AP) — Medical student Fred Blaisdell has a few months to go before anyone calls him doctor, but the Oneida Nation tribal member has already learned one lesson around the importance of Native physicians serving Native patients.

During a recent psychiatry rotation at a Minneapolis clinic, he introduced himself to a patient who lit up when she heard him speak Ojibwe.

"After that, the patient really opened up and started to talk about a lot more things that she hadn't really engaged with us before," recalled Blaisdell, 27, who is from the Detroit area but chose the University of Minnesota's medical school in Duluth for its national reputation training doctors from Native populations.

School leaders say the need for doctors like Blaisdell is huge and growing in an era of COVID-19 and other health worries. It's led the university to launch a new effort to boost the number of Native physicians and other care workers in Minnesota and across the country.

Last year, nearly 21,000 students graduated from medical schools in the United States. Only 160 of those new doctors — fewer than 1% — were Native American, Minnesota Public Radio News reported.

"It's not just physicians, right? We don't have enough Native PAs (physician assistants). We don't have enough Native nurses. We don't have enough Native pharmacists," said Dr. Mary Owen, director of the U's Center of American Indian and Minority Health. "We tend to work in teams, so it's hugely important that we develop all these different health professions."

Owen and others seeking to recruit Native students for medical schools say part of the challenge is to create better pathways between two-year tribal colleges and four-year institutions.

"Students have a history of feeling like the university isn't for them. They doubt that jobs are for them, because they don't see themselves in careers," said Anna Fellegly, vice president for academic affairs at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College in Cloquet, Minnesota.

"And so it takes a different type of service to (get) the students to just allay some of that fear," she said, "take the mystery out of processes and get the ground firmly underneath their feet."

The work also needs to start much earlier. In Minnesota, only about 56% of Native high school students graduate in four years.

Dr. Arne Vainio, a member of

the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe who has practiced on the Fond du Lac reservation for the past 24 years, said he's always encouraged young people to pursue careers in medicine but now he starts even earlier.

"I talk to newborn babies about medical school," he said. "The parents always listen. But I make sure that I'm talking directly to the baby about that. And, you know, let them know they have options. And then when they come in for visits, we talk about that again."

When young people see him, a Native American doctor, it allows them to envision themselves in the same position, he said, adding that when he was a little kid, a lot of the Native men he saw were truckers. "And that's all I wanted to be."

He credits a group of peo-

ple who always encouraged him and held him accountable. "They're the ones that derailed my dream of being a truck driver, and I ended up in medical school instead."

Owen, 56, said her journey to become a physician began when she was a patient at the Alaska Native Medical Center in Anchorage, in the late 1980s. "I didn't see any Native doctors or even Native nurses at that time," she recalled.

A member of the Tlingit Nation in Alaska, Owen said that played a role in pushing her to go to medical school. "That anger propelled me, actually — anger at our lack of representation."

She went on to earn her medical degree from the University of Minnesota. She then returned to Alaska to serve her tribal community. She came back to

the University of Minnesota in 2014 in part to address the same issue she recognized 30 years ago.

Last year, Owen assembled hundreds of Native American health professionals for a summit on the issue. That led to the creation of regional hubs that are working to grow the number of Native health care profes-

sionals in specific areas around the country.

That's critical because some areas have more severe shortages than others. For example, she says Indian Health Service facilities in the Upper Midwest have a nearly 50 percent vacancy rate for physicians.

Continued on page 16

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL INVITATION TO BID Lift Station Generator Enclosure

Notice is hereby given that the City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, will receive sealed bids for the Lift Station Generator Enclosure. Work consists of all activities necessary to construct Lift Station Generator Enclosure and install ER Generator.

Sealed bids will be received by the City & Borough of Wrangell, PO Box 531, Wrangell, Alaska 99929, or at the Borough Clerk's Office, 205 Brueger Street, Wrangell, Alaska 99929, until 2 p.m. prevailing time on March 30, 2022.

Complete bidding/contract documents for this project are available in electronic format only and can be downloaded from the City & Borough of Wrangell website (www.wrangell.com) under the Bids and RFPs Section.

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

Publish March 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2022

EBI CONSULTING PUBLIC NOTICE

Vertical Bridge Development, LLC is proposing to construct a 150-foot-tall self-supported telecommunications tower with a 10-foot-tall lightning rod for an overall structure height of 160 feet at 3 Evergreen Ave., Wrangell, AK 99929 (56 29 06.5 N / 132 23 17.7 W). The tower is anticipated to have no lights.

Interested persons may review the application for this project at www.fcc.gov/asr/applications and enter Antenna Structure Registration (ASR) Form 854 File Number A1195994, and may raise environmental concerns about the project by filing a Request for Environmental Review with the Federal Communications Commission.

Requests for Environmental Review must be filed within 30 days of the date that notice of the project is published on the FCC website.

The FCC strongly encourages interested parties to file Requests for Environmental Review online at www.fcc.gov/asr/environmentalrequest. Parties wishing to submit a request by mail may do so by addressing the request to:

FCC Requests for Environmental Review
Attn: Ramon Williams, 45 L Street NE
Washington, DC 20554.

Publish March 16, 2022

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC NOTICE

There will be a Work Session from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. before the Regular Assembly meeting on Tuesday, March 22, 2022, on the following item: Discussion on the Borough's Insurance Renewal.

Following the Work Session, the Regular Borough Assembly meeting will begin at 7 p.m. During the Regular Assembly meeting, there will be public hearing on the following items:

Resolution No. 03-22-1674 of the Assembly of the City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, amending the fee and rate schedule for the Wrangell Port and Harbor Department and implementing a structure for increasing fees and rates.

Ordinance No. 1020 of the Assembly of the City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, amending certain sections in Chapter 15.04, Water, and establishing a new process for fees and rates by removing the fees and rates from the Wrangell Municipal Code and adding them to a fee and rate schedule.

Resolution No. 03-22-1675 of the Assembly of the City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, creating the fee and rate schedule for the Wrangell Water Department and implementing a structure for increasing fees and schedules.

Ordinance No. 1021 of the Assembly of the City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, amending Sections 15.08.060 and 15.08.240 in Chapter 15.08, Sewers, and establishing a new process for fees and rates by removing the fees and rates from the Wrangell Municipal Code and adding them to a fee and rate schedule.

Resolution No. 03-22-1676 of the Assembly of the City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, creating the fee and rate schedule for the Wrangell Sewer Department and implementing a structure for increasing fees and schedules.

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

Publish March 16, 2022

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION OF FORESTRY Notice of Intent to Claim Abandoned Timber Property

In accordance with Alaska Statutes 45.50.210 through .325, it is the intent of the State of Alaska to claim all abandoned timber property in the waters and on the tidelands of the state one mile west of St. John Harbor on Zarembo Island to South Craig (approximately one mile south of Roosevelt Harbor), including but not limited to the Kashevarof Islands; Bushy, Shrubby, West, Middle, East and Blashke. It is the intent of the state to make the claimed timber property available for salvage under 11 AAC 71.005 through .910, Timber and Material Sale Regulations.

Parties wishing to comment may do so to the Alaska Division of Forestry, 2417 Tongass Ave., Suite 213, Ketchikan, AK 99901, phone 907-225-3070. Comments must be received within 30 days following the first date of the this notice to receive consideration.

Greg Staunton, Southeast Area Forester
Department of Natural Resources

Publish March 9, 16 and 23, 2022

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS Nolan Center Emergency Standby Generator Upgrades Design

Notice is hereby given that the City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, will accept proposals for engineering design services for the Nolan Center Emergency Standby Generator Upgrades Design project in the office of the Borough Clerk until 2 p.m. prevailing time on March 31, 2022.

The full RFQ solicitation documents may be obtained at the Borough Clerk's Office, 205 Brueger Street, Wrangell, Alaska 99929 and may also be downloaded from the City & Borough of Wrangell website (www.wrangell.com) under the Bids and RFPs Section.

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

Publish March 9, 16 and 23, 2022

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL NOTICE OF JOB OPENING Cruise Ship Facility Security Officer Harbor Department

The City & Borough of Wrangell will accept applications until 5 p.m. March 30, 2022, at City Hall for the position of Cruise Ship Facility Security Officer to establish a pool of applicants to hire a Temporary Worker. You must have a valid TWIC card and an Alaska driver's license, and a High School Diploma or GED.

This position performs duties as a part of the Department of Homeland Security Port Security Plan. The nature of the work requires that the employee maintain effective working relationships with other borough departments and employees, state and federal officials, business and community organizations and the public.

Must be able to lift and carry 50 pounds. Successful applicant must be able to work in all weather conditions and throughout all hours of the day or night.

Applications and job descriptions may be obtained and returned to Wrangell City Hall, 205 Brueger Street (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929. Pay for this position is a set rate of \$22.00 per hour.

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

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

Publish March 16 and 23, 2022

CLASSIFIED/ LEGALS

HOUSE FOR SALE

3-bedroom,3-bath,2,100+-square-foot home in Gresham, Oregon. 1.5 miles from Portland, 18 minutes to Portland airport, 4 minutes to MAX bus station. \$475,000. Text Bill, 503-847-3911.

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California tribe declares state of emergency over missing women

By GILLIAN FLACCUS
The Associated Press

YUROK RESERVATION, Calif. (AP) — The young mother had behaved erratically for months, hitchhiking and wandering naked through two Native American reservations and a small town clustered along Northern California's rugged Lost Coast.

But things escalated when Emmilee Risling was charged with arson for igniting a fire in a cemetery. Her family hoped the case would force her into mental health and addiction services. Instead, she was released over the pleas of loved ones and a tribal police chief.

The 33-year-old college graduate — an accomplished traditional dancer with ancestry from three area tribes — was last seen soon after walking across a bridge in a remote sliver of the Yurok Reservation.

Her October disappearance is one of five instances in the past 18 months where Indigenous women have gone missing or been killed in this isolated expanse of coastline between San Francisco and Oregon. The crisis has prompted the Yurok Tribe to declare a state of emergency and brought increased urgency to efforts to build the first comprehensive database of such cases in California.

"Just in this last year, I knew three of the women who have gone missing or were murdered — and we shared so much in common," said Blythe George, a Yurok citizen and assistant sociology professor helping document the problem. "You can't help but see yourself in those people."

The recent cases spotlight an epidemic that is difficult to quantify but has long disproportionately plagued Native Americans.

A 2021 report by a government watchdog group found the true number of missing and murdered Indigenous women is unknown due to reporting problems, distrust of law enforcement and jurisdictional conflicts. But Native American women face murder rates almost three times those of white women overall — and up to 10 times the national average in certain locations, according to a 2021 summary of research by the National Congress of American Indians. More than 80% have experienced violence.

Emmilee is an enrolled Hoopa Valley tribal member who traces her ancestry to the Yurok and Karuk nations.

Many see in her story the ugly intersection of the trauma inflicted on Native Americans by their white colonizers and their marginalization in a justice system established by European conquerors. Her case has shaken the community but gotten no outside attention.

Virtually all of the area's Indigenous residents, including Emmilee, have relatives who were sent to boarding schools as children as part of a government assimilation campaign. That trauma echoes in the form of drug abuse and domestic violence that sends a disproportionate number of children to foster care, said Judge Abby Abinanti, chief judge of the Yurok Tribal Court.



AP PHOTO/NATHAN HOWARD

Judy Risling wipes away a tear as she talks about the disappearance of her daughter Emmilee Risling on Jan. 21 in McKinleyville, Calif. The 33-year-old college graduate — an accomplished traditional dancer with ancestry from three area tribes — was last seen more than four months earlier, walking across a bridge near a far corner of the Yurok Reservation. Her disappearance is one of five instances in the past 18 months where Indigenous women have gone missing or been killed in an isolated expanse of Pacific coastline between San Francisco and Oregon.

An analysis by the Yurok and Sovereign Bodies Institute, an Indigenous-run research and advocacy group, found most of the region's missing Indigenous women had been in foster care themselves or had children taken from them.

"You say, 'OK, how did we get to this situation where we're losing our children?'" said Abinanti. "There were big gaps in knowledge, including parenting, and generationally those play out."

For years, Emmilee was a source of pride for her family and the region, learning the dances that knit the community to generations of tradition.

Her family has the rare distinction of owning enough regalia that it can perform the group dances without borrowing any adornment. At 15, she traveled to Washington, D.C., for the opening of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian.

Emmilee attended the University of Oregon on a scholarship and helped lead a prominent Native student group. When she became pregnant, she had the baby and then completed her degree.

She then took a job back home working with disadvantaged families, and doted on her son.

But over time, her family says, they no-

ted changes.

Emmilee showed up late for work and became combative, then fell in with an abusive boyfriend. She gave birth to a daughter in 2020, but ultimately lost custody of both her children.

Her parents, bewildered by her rapid deterioration, think she developed a mental illness compounded by drug use and domestic abuse.

Emmilee was picked up many times by sheriff's deputies and tribal police, but never charged, as she walked naked in public. The only in-patient psychiatric facility within 300 miles was always full. Once, she was taken to the emergency room and fled in her hospital gown.

"People tended to look the other way," said Judy Risling, her mother. "There were just no services for her."

In September, Emmilee was arrested after she was found by a small fire in the Hoopa Valley Reservation cemetery.

Her family and the Hoopa Valley Tribe's police chief asked a Humboldt County judge to keep her in custody and get her help, but she was released. Her public defender argued she had no criminal convictions and couldn't be detained because of her mental state alone.

Days later, Emmilee disappeared.

One of the biggest hurdles in Indian Country once a woman is reported missing is unraveling who is in charge amid a jumble of federal, state, local and tribal police departments.

Emmilee's case illustrates the complexities: She was a citizen of the Hoopa Valley Tribe and was arrested on its reservation, but she went missing on the neighboring Yurok Tribe's reservation. The Yurok Police Department is in charge of the investigation, but the Humboldt County Sheriff's Department will decide when to declare the case cold.

Recent efforts at the state and federal level seek to address some of the challenges.

Former President Donald Trump signed a bill that required federal, state, tribal and local law enforcement agencies to create or update their protocols for handling cases. President Joe Biden signed an executive order to set up national law enforcement guidelines that would help track, solve and prevent crimes against Native Americans.

A number of states, including California, Oregon, Washington and Arizona, are also taking on the crisis with studies, funding for tribes or proposals to create Amber Alert-style notifications.

Emmilee's family, meanwhile, is struggling to protect her children, now 10 and almost 2, from the trauma of their mother's disappearance.

The boy has been having nightmares and recently voiced everyone's worst fear.

"It's real difficult when you deal with the grandkids, and the grandkid says, 'Grandpa, can you take me down the river and can we look for my mama?' What do you tell him? 'We're looking, we're looking every day,'" said Gary Risling, choking back tears.

"And then he says, 'What happens if we can't find her?'"

Doctors

Continued from page 15

"I think if we can grow, if we can get more Native students from this area, through school, into practice, they're more likely to serve and stay in this area," said Owen, who's also board president of the Association of American Indian Physicians. "We know that Native students like to go to school in areas closer to their homes."

That includes University of Minnesota medical student Genevieve Bern, who counts Vainio as a mentor. Watching how he interacts with his young patients has inspired her to also encourage young patients to pursue careers in health care.

"That's something that I hope someday I'll be able to have those conversations with Native youth," she said.

Bern, 28, grew up in Worthington, Minnesota. She's Native Alaskan, but she said her culture wasn't a big part of her childhood growing up. She's since enrolled in her tribe and started to learn the language, and when she graduates, she plans to work in some way with Native people.

"It's part of who I am," she said, "and it just has always felt like it's like what I'm supposed to give to my community."

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