Wrangell, Alaska January 12, 2017

WRANGELL SEM INEL

Volume 115, Number 2

Oldest Continuously Published Newspaper in Alaska

8 Pages

Four named to memorial committee, one more needed

By DAN RUDY Sentinel writer

Things are coming together for a planned memorial dedicated to Wrangell's seafaring community.

The Port Commission last week named two more people to the steering committee tasked with fundraising and contracting for the Mariners Memorial's construction. Fishermen Brennon Eagle and Gig Decker will be joining commission members John Yeager and John Martin on the committee. A fifth position is still vacant, and interested applicants are invited to submit a letter to the city clerk's office.

The effort to build a memorial began in 2012, when Eagle sat on the commission as its chair. The plan was to put up a site memorializing those lost at sea, to overlook the then-recently-completed Heritage Harbor. Corvus Design



PHOTO BY DAN RUDY

The Port Commission is working on an ordinance and fines that would reduce public access to the Marine Service Center yard. Signage, approved at its meeting last week, will eventually go up at its three entrance points after the summer. The commission will also be taking on boatyard lease rates in coming meetings, once the state assessor has had time to examine sites at the beginning of February.

Assembly meets over SEARHC-AICS merger

By DAN RUDY Sentinel writer

An informal workshop was arranged last week to allow members of the City and Borough Assembly meet with representatives of two medical providers planning to merge next month.

In October, Wrangell-based clinical services provider Alaska Island Community Services (AICS) announced it would merge with the larger Southeast Alaska Rural Health Consortium (SEARHC), based in Sitka.

For a symbolic price of \$1, the property for AICS' Wood Street clinic location was provided by the city in 2010 prior to the facility's construction, with the intention of eventually building a new building for Wrangell Medical Center on the adjacent property. The statutory warranty deed involved in the exchange has a reversionary clause, which would revert the property back to the city in the event it changed hands or primary use

Critical to completion of the merger is determining whether the deed's clause would come into effect by the change in administration. On January 5, AICS director Mark Walker and SEARHC senior vice president Dan Neumeister met with Mayor David Jack, city staff and several Assembly members at City Hall to discuss the future. The transition is planned to finalize before February 1, so both clinical services would need to have the deed's terms clarified before then.

"We do feel like we're in a bit of a time crunch," explained Walker. With the merger, he pointed out his employees will be able to extend their medical coverage to their immediate families, which would have to wait another month in the event of delays. They were looking at a three-percent pay increase as well he pointed out.

City manager Jeff Jabusch explained he had consulted with Wrangell's attorney about the deed. Before he could offer an opinion, the attorney wanted to see the merger's incorporation paperwork in order to determine the deed structure. SEARHC and AICS were unwilling to hand over the documents, citing confidentiality.

"We're private, nonprofit entities," Neumeister explained. "There are a lot of exhibits in there. We

don't want to show what people are making."

The SEARHC attorney was willing to speak with his Wrangell counterpart over the phone, but to do that Jabusch explained the city attorney would need to know "the wishes of the Assembly" first before engaging in talks on its behalf.

Several Assembly members expressed some unease with the merger. Becky Rooney was concerned about having a larger organization "with outside interests" coming in, while Patty Gilbert wanted to see some explicit boundaries added into the deed demarcating what services AICS/SEARHC would be able to provide, so as not to compete with WMC. AICS and WMC have a memorandum of understanding outlining their cooperative relationship, but much of the agreement is informal.

"It bothers me that there's nothing in writing, nothing enforceable," Gilbert said. "We feel very protective of our asset, the hospital."

"I would in this clause somewhere like a legal leg to stand on," Rooney agreed.

Fellow member Julie Decker disagreed, noting part of AICS success in the past has been due to its flexibility to adapt. Starting with counseling services when it first began, over the years the organization has taken on additional roles in the community and wider region, moving into clinical care services in 2004.

"This prescriptive, I think, would be too much," Decker commented.

"I have no problem with this, quite frankly, as long as everything stays the same," Jack said of the deed wording.

Presiding the meeting, he had several questions of continuity for Neumeister and Walker.

"One concern – this is personal, that I have – is a tax issue," Jack began.

At the moment, for its office and clinical space AICS provides between \$60,000 and \$70,000 each year in property taxes and other payments. Speaking with the state assessor, Jabusch reported SEARHC's clinic in Haines was tax-exempt, and that as a "quasi-government organization" its other office space could be exempt from those

Continued on page 8

was contracted to draw up designs, which after several rounds of public input were finalized at the end of 2015.

The committee will need to raise at least \$330,000 for the project, which is the estimated cost for the memorial. The Port Commission wanted to wait until the 2016 fishing season had wound down and the pace of activities had slowed before putting its special committee together.

"It's nice to get that moving," Martin commented.

The four will coordinate a time to begin meeting, starting later this month.

In other port business, harbormaster Greg Meissner reported the Harbor Department has been primarily focused on deicing and checking on water valves around Wrangell facilities, as activity at the boatyard has slowed. Meissner explained the slowdown is usual for the December-February months.

"There is literally nothing going on at the harbor in January, it's just that cold," he said. "I think it'll take off in the spring like it always does."

With the colder temperatures, keeping the various taps on but unfrozen has been a priority. Water has been shut off to the Shoemaker Bay public bathroom and the door locked. The ground has swelled around the structure, making the door unopenable. Once the weather thaws, Meissner said a crew would work to clear a pathway.

State match funding for the Shoemaker Bay Harbor facility replacement was included in Gov. Bill Walker's draft budget, announced last month. The \$11.1 million project needs \$5,000,000

of that to come from state sources, through the Department of Transportation's Harbor Facility Grant Program.

In the previous fiscal year Wrangell's proposal was number two on the ranked list, but was passed over due to lack of funding in the budget. Now number one, the full amount needs to be available in the budget line item for the project to receive its funding, the rest of which is to come from a combination of Harbor Department reserves and city bonding. Though included in the governor's budget, the amount will need to make it into House and Senate versions, as well as the reconciliation process producing a final budget.

"If they take any of that, we will be left out in the cold again," Meissner said. He has contacted the city's lobbyist in Juneau and legislative representation to reiterate that concern. "Our job now is to fight and lobby to make sure not one penny is pulled out of there."

In a best case scenario, Meissner hoped funding could be secured, contracts put out, and boats in motion by the year's end.

Meissner is drawing up signage for the Marine Service Center's three entrances, informing the public that only authorized persons are permitted on the premises. Last year the Port Commission decided to restrict access to the yard, by a combination of pedestrians, tour buses and private traffic. The latter was of particular concern, with the yard being used as a cut-through to Case Avenue. Vehicles would drive at unsafe speeds through the lot, on at least one occasion causing an accident.

An ordinance will be drawn up to reflect the wording on the new signs, which will find their way up on the surrounding fences by next fall.

"I think it's a step in the right direction, to put up signage," said commissioner Walter Moorhead.

Tour groups will still have limited access through the summer, but a map with selected routes will be posted to the entrances on a temporary basis. The two outfits were contacted by letter after Christmas, Meissner said.

Commissioners also gave their assent to a request to purchase tideland property by Brett Woodbury, deeming it not to interfere with access to the nearby ferry terminal. The request was also approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission, and both opinions will be weighed by the Assembly when the item reaches its desk.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

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

Thursday, January 12: Seanne Wickman, Wayne McGee, Friday, January 13: Lucas Altepeter, Kelly Bushnell, Jessica Rusaw, Sonny Guggenbickler, Saturday, January 14: Kimberly Coblentz, Victoria Southland, Antoinette Hastings, Mercedes Angerman, Ashley Powers, Barbara Bass-Luna, Emma Stickel, Anniversary: Einar and Carol Haaseth, Sunday, January 15: Russ McGee, Ava Hay, Veronica Blunt, Monday, January 16: Dane Altepeter, Josh Toombs, Rick Bradley, Austin O'Brien, Ethan Whitaker, Tuesday, January 17: Kyle Davidson, Tracy Allen, F. Iver Nore, Tammy Hay, Marina Wooden, Ben McCandless, Ryan Hayes, Wednesday, January 18: Elizabeth Castle, Hunter Wilson, Anniversary: Ronan and Mary Rooney, Thursday, January 19: Terri Stark, Jim Rinehart, Laura Paulsen, Ken Davidson, Sr., Megan Talburt, Anniversary: Chris and Dixie Booker, Steve and Helen Keller

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

Senior Center Menu

Friday, January 13:

Moose stew, cauliflower and broccoli toss, hot herb biscuit

Monday, January 16:

Closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Tuesday, January 17:

Chef salad with egg, cheese and ham potato soup, corn bread

Wednesday, January 18:

Porcupine meatballs, noodles, cauliflower, cabbage slaw

Thursday, January 19:

Spaghetti, veggie blend, green salad, garlic bread Friday, January 20:

Baked chicken, carrots a'la orange, three bean salad, hot roll

Please call Wrangell Senior Center at 874-2066 by 10 a.m. for reservations.

Milk, tea and coffee will be served with meals.

Wrangell Roundup: Special Events

Thursday, January 12

SAIL Class: 10 a.m. Senior Apartments Atrium. Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL) free class is a strength, balance and fitness class for adults 65+. For more info call 874-3375. Healthy Eating Demo on Healthy Food Preparation: 11:30 a.m. Senior Apartments Atrium. Free class. Learn how easy it is to prepare healthy and delicous food. Samples will be available. For more info call 874-3375.

Yoga: 5:30 p.m. AICS Medical Clinic. Yoga for everybody, please come and join.

Monday, January 16

Yoga: 5:30 p.m. AICS Medical Clinic. Yoga for everybody, please come and join.

Tuesday, January 17

SAIL Class: 10 a.m. Senior Apartments Atrium. Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL) free class is a strength, balance and fitness class for adults.

Thursday, January 19

Wrangell Fish and Advisory Committee Meeting: 7 p.m. Wrangell Fire Hall. The meeting agenda includes election of 5 Committee Members and executive officers, commercial fish proposals and the Federal Designated Hunter program. All are invited.

Is the attendance at your meeting or event low? Call Rachel at the Sentinel to have it placed

Continuing Events

PARKS & REC ACTIVITIES: Lap Swim: M, W, F 6:00-7:30 a.m. & 5:00-6:00 p.m., M-F 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., S 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.; Arthritis Foundation Exercise Class: at the Pool: M, W, F, 9:00-10:00 a.m.; Water Aerobics: M, W, F 10:00-11:00 a.m.; Family Swim: F 6:00-7:00 p.m.; General Swim: M & W 6:00-7:00 p.m., F 7:00-8:00 p.m., S 1:00-2:00 p.m.; Weight Room: M-TH 6:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m., 3:30-7:30 p.m., F 6:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m., 3:30-8:30 p.m., S 10:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Extra 2 Lane Lap Swim: M-W-F 10:00-11:00 a.m.

OTHER MEETINGS/ACTIVITIES/EVENTS:

AA Meetings: Tu. 7 p.m., Toss Off Th. 7 p.m., Smoked Fish F 8 p.m., Step Study Sat. 7 p.m. at the Episcopal Church Parish Hall, Study Materials provided. Wed. M & M 12 p.m. at the Catholic Parish Hall, use back entrance.

NA Meeting: Wednesday, We Do Recover, 8 p.m. at the Episcopal Church Parish Hall.

Bridge Social: F, 1 p.m. at th Island of Faith Lutheran Church 874-3440, 874-3507.

Salvation Army Food Bank: Tuesday, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. For information or questions please call Major Michael Bates at 874-3753.

The Way We Were

In the Sentinel 100, 75, 50 and 25 years ago.

January 11, 1917: There was an interesting meeting of the Wrangell Fire Department Monday night. In addition to the regular routine several matters of

new business were taken up. A motion prevailed that the Town Council be petitioned to build a fire hall, and also erect a suitable tower for drying hose. A disbursement of \$45.75 was made to cover the last three fires and the amount distributed among the members. Chief Carlson reported that the fire hydrant near the Sentinel office was frozen. Chief Carlson reported that he and Mr. Katzenmeyer had made an inspection of the stove pipes for the south side and found some in very bad condi-

January 9, 1942: Since the first defense bonds were issued in May, Wrangell citizens had purchased up to last night \$20,000 worth of them and had applied for \$15,000 more, or a total of \$35,000, according to Postmaster B.Y. Grant. Sale has been so rapid that the Postmaster is entirely out of his allotment of bonds but more will be along directly to be issued against the \$15,000 he is now holding on application and for sale to others who may wish to help their government win the

January 13, 1967: More than 200 parents, leaders, cub scouts and friends were on hand January 5 in the school gym to participate in the launching of Wrangell's new scouting program. Pack masters Ed Rasmuson and Clark Whitney were in charge of the program. Rasmuson called the meeting to order and led the cubs in the opening ceremony. The Rev. Edward Caum, representing the sponsoring ministerial assocation, presented the Cub Scout Charter to Lloyd Watkins, representing the local scout commit-

January 9, 1992: From Wrangell with love. The Soviet Union is no more. The peoples the different Russian republics have new political and economic ideals, but they may not have much faith in them if they face starvation this winter. Mike Bell, Wrangell Chamber of Commerce president, has an idea designed to help two situations: providing food for Russia, and helping the state's chambers of commerce to work together on a project. Bell wants to send canned salmon to republics in

the former Soviet Union. First and foremost, "It's a chance for businesses in Alaska to show the Russian people that free enterprise can work," Bell said. "We can show that while free enterprise can be profitable, we're not only interested in making a profit." Bell said he thought it would be a good representation of Wrangell to send \$1,000 worth of canned salmon overseas. He described the project as a "shortterm deal," which would probably take about 30 days to organize and execute. He added that if the project were successful, it could grow.

aylight

8:13a

8:12a

8:11a

8:10a

8:09a

8:08a

8:07a

8:05a

Sunrise Sunset Daylight

3:39p

3:41p

3:43p

3:45p

3:47p

3:48p

3:50p

3:52p

7:29h

7:32h

7:35h

7:38h

7:40h

7:43h

7:47h

FERRY SCHEDULE

Departures

Northbound

Sunday, January 15 Malaspina 3:15 p.m. Sunday, January 22 Malaspina 4:45 p.m. Sunday, January 29

Malaspina 9:00 p.m.

Southbound

Wednesday, January 11 Kennicott 4:45 a.m. Wednesday, January 18 Malaspina 4:30 a.m. Wednesday, January 25 Malaspina 4:30 a.m.

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



TIDES TABLE

January 12 -January 19

	High Tides				Low Tides			
	AM		\mathbf{PM}		\mathbf{AM}		PM	
	<u>Time</u>	<u>Ft</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Ft</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Ft</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Ft</u>
Jan. 12	0:35	16.4	12:24	19.4	6:10	1.6	6:51	-4.0
Jan. 13	1:21	16.8	1:11	19.1	6:56	1.4	7:34	-3.7
Jan. 14	2:05	16.9	1:56	18.4	7:42	1.5	8:15	-2.9
Jan. 15	2:48	16.6	2:40	17.3	8:26	1.9	8:55	-1.8
Jan. 16	3:29	16.1	3:23	15.9	9:12	2.4	9:35	-0.5
Jan. 17	4:11	15.5	4:08	14.4	9:59	3.0	10:15	0.9
Jan. 18	4:55	14.8	5:00	12.9	10:50	3.5	10:58	2.3
Jan. 19	5:44	14.2	6:04	11.7	11:48	3.9	11:47	3.5



January 8

weat	HO		
Date	High	Low	Date
January 1	30	24	Jan. 12
January 2	30	24	Jan. 13
January 3	32	24	Jan. 14
January 4	26	19	Jan. 15
January 5	30	19	Jan. 16
January 6	32	30	Jan. 17
January 7	32	26	Jan. 18

Brought to you by Alaska Airlines

Jan. 19





Lost bags put former Petersburg mayor in Ft. Lauderdale airport at time of shootings

By RON LOESCH, Sentinel publisher

A mechanical delay and lost luggage put former Petersburg mayor Dave Carlson and wife Celia at the Fort Lauderdale airport just minutes before the shootings broke out in Terminal 2 baggage claim area on Friday.

Carlsons left their Bend, Oregon home for a 10-day cruise aboard the Harmony of the Seas, 6,000 passenger cruise ship destined for the Caribbean. The mechanical put them in Ft. Lauderdale 6 hours late, without their luggage. The were told Friday morning that American





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Dave Carlson found out about the shooting in Terminal 2 at the Ft. Lauderdale Airport on Friday, while picking up bags inside Terminal 1, via the television monitor. Celia, his wife, was getting coffee at the Starbucks counter, pictured nearby, before they were ushered into a secure location at the airport following the shooting.

Airlines had transferred their bags via a Virgin Airlines flight, which they could claim at the baggage claim area of Terminal 1.

They pulled into the airport terminal at 12:52, according Carlson's Uber receipt. The shootings began at 12:55. Fortunately for the Carlsons, they were in Terminal 1, not Terminal 2.

"We could see our bags inside the baggage office which was locked," said Carlson. We decided to, "just hang around, until the office opened," he added.

In the meantime, Carlson said he heard sirens outside but didn't think anything about it until he saw news of the shootings on the airport television monitors.

Carlson said there was no panic. He texted his children that they were ok, and to turn on the news for more information.

Panic set in at Terminal 1 at about 1:30 p.m. An airline employee opened a door to a back room and herded passengers through the entry and then secured the door. Carlson got his wife and followed others to the secure area.

According to Carlson, Celia was getting coffee at Starbucks and when the panic started, "she took shelter behind a cardboard display," he chuckled.

Later, the group heard a knock on the door and there was discussion about whether to open the door. Someone opened the door, and they were faced with a contingent of cops who instructed everyone, "to keep your hands

They marched us outside the terminal to a nearby construction site where we stayed for 6-hours. No water, no bathrooms.

"I have never seen so many cop cars - 100s of them," Carlson said. "And they don't tell you anything."

There were helicopters overhead and SWAT vehicles and cop cars were everywhere, according to Carlson.

Construction workers helped provide for the displaced group of travelers in Carlson's group. They allowed the use of their Porta-Potties and they ran electrical cords so cell phones could be recharged.

More on the shooting incident

Esteban Santiago is the alleged perpetrator of the shooting spree that left five people dead and others injured in Terminal 2 of the Fort Lauderdale airport on Friday.

The 26-year-old Army veteran boarded a flight from Anchorage to Minneapolis and later Fort Lauderdale where the shootings happened in the baggage claim area of the terminal.

Santiago gave himself up to police following the shootings.

By 7 p.m. the baggage claim area was reopened and the stranded group was able to get water and use bathrooms inside.

While the airport remained closed for the entire night, Carlson said by 8 p.m. they brought busses in to transfer people to the cruise ship terminal to board departing ships.

"It took us two hours to go two miles to the terminal," Carlson said. All roads to the airport were closed, and there were abandoned cars along the freeway.

"We were able to buy tuna fish sandwiches for our dinner at about 11 p.m.," Carlson added.

The entire airport ordeal lasted about 12 hours.

"We're fine. Thank God we were in Terminal 1, he stated.

"I was impressed with the response, but it sure made a mess of things," he reflected. The Carlsons boarded the

cruise ship without their luggage but with a few items they purchased prior to boarding. American Airlines told them

they would transfer their luggage to them after the cruise was under-

"That's fine, noted Carlson, I won't have to go to Formal Night onboard."

Police report

Monday, January 2

Traffic: Curfew Warning.

Citizen Report: DUI.

Report of Harassment.

Civil Issue.

Citizen Report: DUI.

Traffic: Verbal warning for driving habits.

Tuesday, January 3

Criminal Mischief. Report of Theft.

Wednesday, January 4

Nothing to Report.

Thursday, January 5 Suspicious Person: UTL.

Friday, January 6

Nothing to Report.

Saturday, January 7

Agency Assist: Chimney Fire.

Citizen Assist.

Traffic Stop: Verbal warning for driving habits.

Sunday, January 8

Citizen Assist.

There were two ambulance calls and one dog complaint during this week.

Labor report forecasts significant job loss in 2017

By DAN RUDY Sentinel writer

A report released by the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development late last week is forecasting a 1.7-percent drop in employment this year from expected 2016 numbers.

The forecast predicts a loss of around 600 jobs in the region over the coming year, with half that to be expected from state government. Southeast lost over 500 state jobs between 2014 and 2016, after a sharp drop in oil revenues pushed the state budget into a sustained, multi-billion-dollar deficit. The drop may be the second-largest the region has experienced in a decade, after a 2.2-percent post-recessionary fall in 2009.

In the fiscal year set to start July 1, the ADLWD report anticipates cuts to slow as "low-hanging fruit" – vacant or outgoing positions which are not refilled – diminishes. Wrangell lost one such position last year with the retirement of its Public Health Nurse. A further administrative assistant position was cut as a result, with the Public Health Center office largely closed, with staff from other locations still maintaining programming peri-

odically

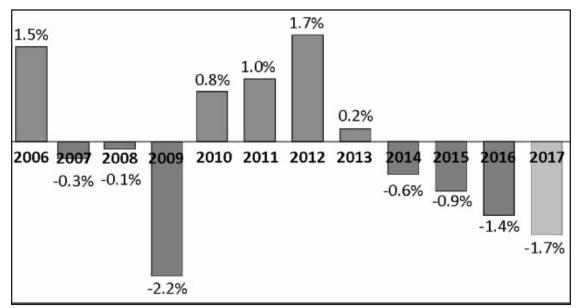
"After two years of cutting costs in government, opportunities for savings will be harder to find," writes Conor Bell, who prepared the report's Southeast forecast. "While layoffs seem certain, most state government losses will continue to come from attrition in 2017." The report ascribes this to the number of "baby boomers" – those born since the end of World War II, but before 1964 – now reaching retirement age.

At the federal level, ADLWD forecasts government employment will decline slightly in the coming year, after several years of little change. That period of stability followed a decade of near-continuous decline in federal employment within the region.

At the local level, the report anticipates reductions in state revenue sharing and education funding will impact public sector jobs. It identifies 50 such positions cut across Southeast's communities in 2016.

"Tribal government, which is counted as part of local government, will likely fare better, as it's largely federally funded," the report notes.

For its third year, the con-



SUBMITTED ILLUSTRATION/ DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

In the chart above, the percentage change for employment totals in Southeast Alaska is forecast to continue a several-year downturn. The figures indicate the percentage change over the previous year, with most of the coming year's losses anticipated in government positions.

struction sector is expected to continue declining as capital budgets are further trimmed. In all, ADLWD anticipates a drop of about 100 positions in the region from last year, but that represents a fraction of wider statewide losses of 1,200 expected this year, or 7.4 percent overall.

"While the Southeast construction industry hasn't yet sustained the full impact of the change because past funding from larger budgets has carried over, that pool is diminishing," the report notes.

One of these holdover projects expected in Wrangell is the repaving of Evergreen Road, to be undertaken by the state Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. After being delayed several times since 2013, progress on the road rehabilitation is hoped to resume this year.

The renovation of the float facilities at Shoemaker Bay Harbor may also be a boon to local industry. The \$5,000,000 Wrangell requested for a state match has been included by Gov. Bill Walker in his draft budget harbor facilities item. If that amount survives the legislative process (see Port Commission story) and finds its way into a final budget, work could begin by the year's end.

Drawing from the Department of Fish and Game's positive pink salmon forecast released last month, ADLWD anticipates the commercial fishing industry should have a "markedly better year." While this may not translate into more jobs, it may mean more money in workers' pockets, which would help boost the overall economy.

The report did not take any employment numbers into account for its overall forecast, as most fishermen are selfemployed. Also, while salmon prices have recovered from the dip of the past two years, potential import tariffs suggested by the incoming administration of President-elect Donald Trump could hurt prices. Much of the fish caught in Southeast is exported to China for processing – Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute estimated 35 percent of the state's tonnage was sent there in 2015 – before being imported back to the United States.

Summer tourism is also expected to remain strong, with more than a million cruise ship visitors anticipated coming to Southeastern ports this coming season. The visitor industry is more significant in the region as opposed to elsewhere in the state, and should help sustain other businesses like restaurants and stores that are expected to suffer elsewhere. However, these businesses are also expected to feel the pinch during the offseason, due to less local spending.

Education and health services are expected to hold steady through the year, with a slight increase expected for the latter. The forecast anticipates healthcare is likely to continue seeing growth over the long term, due to Southeast's aging population.

Southeast has an older-than average population, with its largest group in their 50s. A graying populace will continue having an effect on overall employment, with the decrease in working-age Alaskans not expected to be offset by natural increases. Outmigration may exacerbate that problem. Between the summer of 2014 and 2015, the region lost 494 residents to net migration, a longstanding trend expected to continue into the future.

In both the public and private sectors, a number of positions vacated by retirement will be ripe for reduction in the current economic climate. Though some of those may be refilled by younger, newer workers, these can be expected to be paid less well due to lack of seniority.

A full report on the state's workforce expectations can be found on ADLWD's website, at http://labor.alaska.gov/trends/jan 17.pdf.



Cole, Bethany Comstock, Caitlin Cooper, Hailie Davis, Erin Galla, Rebecca Gillen, Draven Golding, David Guggenbickler, Jacob Hammer, Madison Harding, Emelyn Ibarra, Elizabeth Johnson, Zachary Lane, Skyler Lofftus, Alyssa Martin, Tate Miller, Erik Ottesen, Brian Schwartz, Charley Seddon, Tymon Teat, Devin Till, Karl Torgramsen, Hunter Wiederspohn.

Stikine Middle School and

Wrangell High School Honor Roll

Angerman, Abigail Armstrong, Helen Decker, Sig Decker, Kellan

Eagle, Kaylyn Easterly, Abigail Gerald, Makena Hammer, Kayla

Hay, Laura Helgeson, Joe Hommel, Reyn Hutten, Luke

Kowalske, Adriana Larrabee, Josephine Lewis, Tasha Massin,

Scythia McQueen, Kiara Meissner, Hannah Miethe, Dawson

Miller, Jing O'Brien, Sam Prysunka, Zach Seddon, Trent Stokes,

Blackburn, Hannah Brown, Karri Buness, Kaylauna Churchill,

Ian Jenson, Skylar Larrabee, Tarren Legg-Privett, Antonio Lopez,

Honor Roll: Anna Allen, Sam Armstrong, Madison

Wrangell High School: Principals Honor Roll: Alex

Stikine Middle School: Principals Honor Roll: Samantha Acuna, Paige Baggen, Jade Balansag, Savana Bylow, CeAirra Glaser

Honor Roll: Jimmy Baggen, Steven Bales, Devlyn Campbell, Liana Carney, Jacob Dow, Jamie Early, Jacen Hay, Terra Hoyt, Emma Martinsen, Elizabeth McIntyre, Kendra Meissner, Tyson Messmer, Mercedes Morgan, Sophie O'Brien, Nikolai Siekawitch, Bruce Smith.

Honorable Mention: Will Ashton, Ethan Blatchley, Jayden Buhler, Randy Churchill, Elias Decker, Jake Eastaugh, Brandon Ellsworth, Brodie Gardner, Trevor Guggenbickler, Kyle Hommel, Germayonie Ibarra, Daniel McIntyre, Aaliyah Messmer, Logan Ritchie, Alex Rooney, Ryan Rooney, Rowen Wiederspohn, Leroy Wynne.



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WRANGELL SEN

ESTABLISHED NOVEMBER 20, 1902 Published Weekly By: Pilot Publishing, Inc. 207 North Nordic Dr., PO Box 930 • Petersburg, Alaska 99833 Phone 907-772-9393 • Fax 907-772-4871

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

Sentinel Staff:

Co Publishers Ron & Anne Loesch
Reporters...... Dan Rudy
........Jess Field
Front OfficeRachel Coblentz
ProductionOla Richards

Subscription Rates Single Copy......\$1 Local......\$42

Other Alaska......\$57
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The Wrangell Sentinel (USPS - 626480) is published every Thursday. Periodicals mail postage paid at Wrangell, Alaska 99929. Offices at 205 Front St., Wrangell, Alaska 99929; phone 907-874-2301; Fax 907-874-2303; email wrgsent@gmail.com; website: www.wrangellsentinel.com

Girls finish closely behind Metlakatla, JV wins

By DAN RUDY Sentinel writer

During Friday night's game, the Lady Chiefs started off with the lead Wrangell couldn't quite catch up to until the closing minutes. By the middle of the second quarter, Metlakatla was up 17-12 on Wrangell, but a few turnovers had the Lady Wolves get to within a point's difference. Metlakatla upped its offense, and brought the



score again out of reach by the half to 26-20.

The Lady Wolves slightly outscored their visitors during the third quarter, bringing their score to 31-36 by its end. A back-andforth of points crept up the score on both sides over the next few minutes, but several unresponded goals and a pair of free throws by Abigail Armstrong tied things up at 45, with only 1:23 left in the

The pace heated up into the final seconds, but a Metlakatla goal and extra free throw shots gave them the victory, at a close 49-47 over Wrangell.

At noon the next day, the girls played another close game. The Lady Chiefs took an early lead, but Wrangell led at the half 30-27. The two were tied up at 39 again by the end of the third, but Metlakatla managed to get in a few more points for the win, 53-50. In the game, Kaylyn Easterly netted an impressive seven free throws, of eight attempted.

The weekend put the girls now at 1-3 for the season, 1-3-0 for



PHOTO BY DAN RUDY

Freshman Kaylyn Easterly goes after a ball headed out of bounds, sparing the photographer's lens a collision at the sidelines during Friday's close game against Metlakatla.

Saturday, February 11th, 2017

Chamber Annual Dinner

Request for Nominations

We will be honoring members of the community at the dinner. If you would like to submit a nomination please write a detailed description and send it to the Chamber office. Please include characteristics of leadership, innovation, dedication, and community achievements.

- Citizen of the Year
- Business of the Year
- Young Leader of the Year

Please email or submit nominations by: 1-27-17

cyni@wrangellchamber.org

"The girls played really, really hard," commented Wrangell coach Laurie Brown. She commended the visiting team for their efforts, which made for an intense couple of games.

"They really pushed us to work on our full-court press," she said. "At this point I would say as a team they committed to good defense."

Wrangell's junior varsity girls played strong games both days as well, taking two victories. In

Friday's game the JV Lady Wolves led throughout, opening with a 20-6 lead over Metlakatla JV in the first quarter and finishing the half with a 36-15 score. The Miss Chiefs made up some ground the next quarter, but Wrangell finished with a winning score of 55-37.

The next morning, Wrangell JV again led throughout the game. Its girls finished the first half with a 30-8 lead over the visitors, and finished with a 49-27 win.

Easterly led the team both to playing Haines," she said.

games for points, fetching 16 on Friday and 14 the next day. Maddy Harding led both teams for three-pointers, netting four in all over the weekend, and 18 points overall.

The girls depart this evening for games against Haines High School. Brown said she was hoping for some good games this weekend, and that the team would continue working on its defense and transitions.

"We're really looking forward



Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Help advise the Federal Subsistence Board on the management of fish and wildlife resources on Federal public lands and other subsistence issues in your region.

Application Deadline February 3, 2017

For an application call (800) 478-1456 or (907) 786-3880 or visit www.doi.gov/subsistence











Boys take one in four-game slog

By DAN RUDY Sentinel writer

With a busy week on the road, Wrangell High School's boys basketball team brought back home one victory from a pair of tournaments.

The Wolves headed to Craig on January 4, though due to their later arrival the junior varsity squad was unable to get play time. The varsity team started out strong, leading by 12 points at the half. Craig bounced back with a whopping 33 points in the third quarter, and though Wrangell was able to retake its lead late in the game, the Panthers were able to turn the score in their favor during a series of free throws in the finishing seconds. Craig won 78-76.

"We had a problem with controlling their guards, they're pretty fast," commented Wolves coach Ray Stokes. The Panthers had plenty of fast breaks, he said, with good penetration.

In Thursday's game Wrangell was able to adjust, winning 62-46.

"We did a lot better job of controlling them and controlling the tempo of the game," said Stokes.

Their weekend was only just beginning, with the team setting off from there to Metlakatla.

"We got beat pretty good the first night," Stokes recounted. The Wolves started with a bit of a handicap, playing a scoreless first quarter.

"It was fairly hard for me to believe," the coach said. Metlakatla is one of the better rated 2A teams in the state, and its defense was tenacious. "They're a good team. We had a hard time getting

The remainder of Friday's game was more evenly matched, and Wrangell finished with a score of 31-52.

"We were very competitive with them the second night," said Stokes, keeping about on step with the hosts throughout. The Chiefs beat the Wolves 55-47.

Stokes noted some high points in the week: Trent Stokes played a solid series against Metlakatla, while Riley Blatchley had a good game

"He came out ready to play," the coach said.

"We've seen some bright spots every time," he went on, but more consistency would be desirable moving forward. "Defensively is where I think we really need to step up the work."

Wrangell was scheduled to host Haines this week, with the boys set to play games last evening and Thursday afternoon. Pending scores from that series, last week's games brings the Wolves to 1-5 for the season, and 1-3-0 for Region V.

Fish Factor

Fishery advocates are hoping for the speedy delivery of a letter to state lawmakers that asks them to dust off a law pertaining to fish habitats.

Title 16, the statute that outlines the responsibilities of the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game when issuing development permits that could impact those resources, has not been updated for nearly 60 years.

"The law we have now, in terms of permitting projects in fish habitat, was written the year after statehood and it has not had any substantive updates since then," said Lindsey Bloom of Juneau, one of a newly forming, diverse group called Stand for Salmon that is backing a review of the permitting process.

Last month the group proposed that the state Board of Fisheries send a letter asking the legislature to update the old statute, and the Board agreed.

Currently, the statute states that the commissioner of Fish and Game "shall issue a permit unless the activity is determined to be insufficient for the protection of fish and game resources."

Bloom and others want to see the phrase "insufficient for the protection" more clearly defined

"The language is vague and

open-ended," she said. "It doesn't contain anything specific to what the proper protection of fish and game is."

The scope and size of some of the development projects being proposed and considered today were not on the radar screen at Statehood in 1959.

"Large scale projects like Pebble and Susitna and Chuitna - anyone can see they are going to have significant impacts on fish and game. How do regulators in Alaska determine what the proper protection is?"

The Board wrote in its draft letter to the Alaska legislature: "The board recognizes the broad responsibilities of the Legislature to promote economic development and the wise stewardship of resources for all Alaskans. The board finds that clear delineation of Alaska's unwavering promise to protect salmon and fisheries habitat establishes a consistent and predictable business environment that will help all individuals and corporations wishing to do business in Alaska."

The Board of Fisheries is expected to give the letter a formal nod at its meeting next week in Kodiak.

Fishy trends to watch - Seafood is highlighted among the top 10 trends to watch this year, say global buyers at

Whole Foods Markets and other major outlets. Topping the list, reports Seafood Source, is using byproducts of all kinds, both edible and otherwise.

"Pescetarianism" will partner with a new "flexitarianism" eating trend that will add fish and shellfish to vegetarian meals, and is less rigid than typical vegan, gluten-free or other special diets.

Wellness and Japaneseinspired eating ingredients are making their way from specialty stores into more American pantries, with seaweeds topping the trend. Kelp is being called the new kale and seaweed flavored food and drink products grew by 76 percent from 2011 through 2015, according to consumer research firm Mintel.

Creative Condiments made from 100 percent cod, lobster, mussels and other seafoods will make a big splash in pastes and powders for dips, soup stocks, salad dressings and more. And oven-ready meal kits are on the upswing as shoppers opt for healthier, easy to prepare choices.

A trend of note to Alaska stems from the continued global shortfall of farmed salmon.

"It looks like farmed production this year will be down, and the large European investment banks that finance a lot of farmed salmon activity don't expect global production to go above last year until 2019," said Andy Wink, Senior Seafood Analyst with the McDowell Group.

"So, we're looking at several years of either lower or constrained supply growth for farmed salmon. That is important because farmed salmon production has grown around 5 percent a year over the last 20 years."

Fish watch - Alaska's largest fisheries get underway in January when hundreds of boats set out lines and pots for codfish in the Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands regions. Rockfish fisheries also are underway – there are more than 30 different types of rockfish.

Hundreds more boats will hit the Gulf and Bering Sea waters when pollock and other whitefish fisheries open for trawlers on January 20.

Those combined fisheries make up more than 80 percent of Alaska's seafood volume.

Divers are still going after \$4 a pound sea cucumbers in two Panhandle regions, and Southeast trollers are still catching winter kings.

Bering Sea snow crab will kick into gear mid-month with a 19 million pound catch limit.

Crabbers also will know next week if the Board of Fisheries will give the ok for a bairdi Tanner opener in one Bering Sea fishing district

by Laine Welch

Finally, halibut catches for this year will be announced when the International Pacific Halibut Commission meets Jan. 23-27 in Vancouver, British Columbia. That fishery opens in early March.

Fish funds - The Alaskan Leader Foundation is accepting funding applications from non-profit groups and projects for 2017. For 10 years, the Foundation has granted over \$500,000 to programs in both Kodiak and Bristol Bay, including shelters, youth sports, recycling, museums and more. Deadline to apply is January 31. Contact Linda Kozak at 907-486-8824 or lkozak@gci.net.



Classified/Legals

CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL

Notice to Senior Citizens and Disabled Veterans SENIOR CITIZEN & DISABLED VETERAN PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION APPLICATIONS will be accepted at Wrangell City Hall - P.O. Box 531, Wrangell, AK 99929, until 5:00p.m. March 1, 2017. A drop box is available after hours. Applications mailed must be postmarked by March 1, 2017. These forms are also available on our website: http://www.wrangell.com.

First-time **Senior Citizen** applicants will be required to provide proof of age in the form of a Birth Certificate or US Passport. You must be 65 years old or older as of January 1, 2017 to qualify.

First-time **Disabled Veteran** applicants will be required to provide proof of 50% or more disability.

THE PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION DOES NOT PLACE A LIEN ON THE PROPERTY.

Lee Burgess Finance Director

City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish: Jan. 12, 19, 26 and Feb. 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2017

BOATS AND MARINE

IFQ'S AND FISHING PER-MITS, Alaskan Quota and Permits, 907-772-4000, 1-888-347-4437.....tfn1-3b15

FOR RENT

ONE AND TWO BEDROOM

Apartments. No pets. 305-0619.....tfn6-9b8

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ST. PHILIPS RUMMAGE SALE, Saturday, January 14, 9-11 a.m....1x1-12p15

CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL Fire System Tax Exemption

Alaska statutes require a partial property tax exemption for structures with fire systems approved under Alaska Statutes 18.70.081. A complete list of the systems approved for the 2017 assessment year and applications are available at the City Hall. Applications must be filed each year for the exemption on or before January 16, 2017.

Lee Burgess, Finance Director City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish: Dec. 15, 22 and 29, 2016 and Jan. 5 and 12, 2017

LEGAL NOTICE

Forest Service planning regulations require that each National Forest in the United States prepare a Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) identifying projects which may undergo analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) within the next year. The schedule is prepared quarterly (January, April, July, and October) and mailed to persons, agencies, and organizations that have expressed interest in being informed of these types of projects.

Copies of the schedule addressing projects on the Admiralty Island National Monument and the Hoonah, Juneau, Misty Fiords/Ketchikan, Petersburg, Prince of Wales, Sitka, Wrangell and Yakutat Ranger Districts are available at District and Monument offices and the Forest Supervisor's Offices located in Ketchikan, Sitka, and Petersburg. The schedule for the entire Tongass National Forest can also be viewed on the Internet at http://www.fs.fed.us/sopa/forest-level.php?111005

If you wish to be included on the mailing list to receive copies of future quarterly schedules, please contact:

Karen Iwamoto, SOPA Coordinator, Tongass National Forest, 204 Siginaka Way, Sitka, AK. 99835, 907-747-4230, E-mail: kiwamoto@fs.fed.us

The Department of Agriculture (USDA) is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Publish: January 12, 2017

B.P.O. ELKS #1595

Meets the 1st and 3rd Wed. www.wrangell-elks-lodge-1595.com

Exalted Ruler Randy Oliver Visiting Elks always welcome

Castle Mountain Entertainment Presents Sing

Rated PG • 1 hr 48 min Matthew McConaughey Animation/Comedy/Drama

SHOWTIMES: Jan 13-15 FRI 7 pm

SAT · 7 pm SUN · 7 pm

Tickets: \$5 for 12 & under, \$7 for 13 & up Buy movie gift certificates at the Museum gift shop Check out more movie info at www.imdb.com

POSTED FUEL PRICES

WRANGELL

LNM: \$3.43

Alpine Mini Mart: \$3.43

PETERSBURG

SE Island Fuel: \$3.49

Petersburg Motors: \$3.39

Unleaded gas prices posted Tuesday, January 10

CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL JOB ADVERTISEMENT Temporary Administrative Assistant Public Works Department

The City and Borough of Wrangell Public Works Department will accept applications for the position of Temporary Administrative Assistant from December 27th, 2016 through January 13th, 2017.

This position is for an immediate temporary 20-hour per week hire, with work lasting approximately two months. Applicant will perform administrative and office support activities for the Public Works Department. Duties may include fielding telephone calls, receiving and directing visitors, word processing, creating spreadsheets, and filing. Extensive software skills, internet research abilities and strong communication skills are required.

A job application may be obtained and returned to City Hall, 205 Brueger Street (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929. Rate of pay depends on experience.

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

Borough Manager

Jeff Jabusch

Publish: December 29, 2016 and January 5 and 12, 2017

Bird count crimped by weather, finds 45 species

By DAN RUDY Sentinel writer

Wrangell's birders tallied up 45 different species last month during their annual holiday

Venturing out on December 17, 30 volunteers had planned to take part in the Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count, the 117th one held in the conservation organization's history. Wrangell has been a long-time participant, with the 2016 count being the island's 75th.

"We actually had more people participate than some larger

places, like Juneau," commented Meanwhile, counts that normally Bonnie Demerjian, an organizer for the local event. "At least, the intent was there."

Ultimately, only 23 birders were able to make it out that weekend. A combination of snowfall and freezing temperatures made for slow going by foot, but rough waters prevented four of five groups planning to go out by boat from doing so.

As many of the island's bird species live on the water, the lack of boat coverage had an impact on the count, bringing the total variety down from 2015's 51. cover the Back Channel, Woronkofski Island and Etolin Island had to be largely called

"It makes a huge difference," Demerjian said.

Even so, the group spotted 3,324 birds in all on local routes and at feeders, down only slightly from last year's 3,690. At 873, by far and away the most abundant species were the Barrow's goldeneye, a type of sea duck. There were six varieties and 1,455 individual ducks counted in all.

Also common were the island's ravens and northwestern crows, with 96 of the former and 577 of the latter spotted. Juncoes, rock doves, black turnstones, mergansers, herons, geese and scoters were just some of the variety found around the island.

The data Wrangell's volunteers collected is submitted to Audubon and filed. Christmas counts occur in all 50 states, all Canadian provinces, several Latin American countries and several islands in the Pacific and Caribbean, which together helps shape an understanding of how winter bird species are faring across borders.

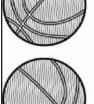
Another bird count is set in February, Audubon's Great Backyard Bird Count. Participants are asked to count birds for as little as 15 minutes on one or more days during the fourday event, reporting sightings to the database online at www.birdcount.org.

"You pick your own area, and when you want to do it," Demerjian explained. Like the Christmas bird count, information benefits researchers and helps inform policy advocacy.

Introducing the WHS 2017 Wolves Basketball Teams



Wolves









The 2016 - 2017 Wrangell Wolves: from left to right

Hank Voltz - Team Manager, Sam Armstrong #10, Jacob Hammer #32, Dawson Miller #23, Tarren Legg-Privett #20, Trent Stokes #4, Sam Prysunka #33, Tymon Teat #24, Brian Schwartz #22, Trevor Miller #34. Not pictured Garrett Miller - not participating due to injury, Head Coach Ray Stokes and Assistant Head Coach Jason Clark.



Lady Wolves









back row





The 2016-2017 Wrangell Lady

Wolves: from left to right









January 20-21 January 27-28 February 3-4 February 17-18 March 3-4 March 9-12

Boys Craig **Petersburg** Metlakatla @ Haines

@ Petersburg

Regionals @ Juneau STATE

Girls

Craig **Petersburg** @Metlakatla **Haines**

@Petersburg

Best of luck to the Wrangell Wolves from the following businesses:



Bay Co. Bobs' IGA **Breakaway Adventures** City Market Elks Lodge #1595

March 16-18

First Bank - Member FDIC IBEW Local #1547 Kadin Building LLC **NAPA**

Petro 49 Sea Level Seafoods

Sentry Hardware & Marine Sitka Vision Clinic Stikine Drug Stikine Inn Stikine Sportsmen's Assoc.

Sunrise Aviation

Tongass Federal Credit Union Tyee Travel Wrangell Medical Center Wrangell Sentinel

Assembly gives input over state budget

By Dan Rudy Sentinel writer

At its regular meeting Tuesday, the City and Borough Assembly met with returning Rep. Dan Ortiz (I-District 36) to talk about the state budget.

He had previously stopped by on similar visits to the councils in Hydaburg, Metlakatla and Ketchikan, and was hoping to get input from Wrangell's before the upcoming session, which begins next week.

"Marching orders, if you will," he said.

The biggest issue on all legislators' plates this session will be the budget deficit, which is hovering at around \$3.6 billion this year. Revenues for the state largely come from its oil royalties and production taxes, which a combination of high prices and high production translated into a high point in 2007.

These persisted more or less for several years, plunging in the state since 2012 with a drop in both oil and production. State revenues went from over \$9 billion that year to a little over \$1.2 billion anticipated for this current fiscal

While oil prices are anticipated to recover somewhat, Ortiz pointed out the diminished production levels – which are expected only to continue to decline – mean the budget will not be saved through a rebound in that resource alone.

"They're going to have to go way up before we get out of deficit spending levels," he said.

The state was slow to adapt to ever-diminishing annual revenues, and as such has maintained a multibillion-dollar deficit for several years running, drawing on savings to make up the difference. At present, the remaining undesignated budget reserves at the Legislature's disposal would be exhausted within little more than a year's time if spending is left as is. Going forward, talk among legislators has been indicating a shift to the structure of Alaska's Permanent Fund earnings, as well as implementation of a combination of income, fuel and statewide sales taxes.

Weighing in, Assembly members were strongly against implementing a sales tax. At seven percent, Wrangell's is already among Alaska's highest rates, which would stack up with any instituted at the state level.

"We've even sent resolutions against that," Assembly member Becky Rooney pointed out.

Fellow member Dave Powell, himself a business owner, pointed out a sales tax would likely be harmful to local sales of nonessential items. "Ticket items are going to go right out of this town," he hypothesized. "It would help the state, but you're going to destroy some towns."

Mayor David Jack saw an income tax in a more favorable light, pointing out the state had a number of seasonal workers and project staff who earned their livings here but lived elsewhere. "If they work in this state they should pay

Assembly member Patty Gilbert wanted to know whether the state would be able to ensure continued revenue sharing with municipalities, funding levels for which has dropped off markedly in recent years. Ortiz replied the arrangement would likely depend on whether a stable source of income could be hammered out for the long-term.

"That uncertainty trickles down to communities," Gilbert noted, particularly when it came time to drawing up municipalities' own yearly budgets.



And the winners are....

During Friday night's halftime at the Wrangell-Metlakatla varsity game, time was taken to present awards to last year's Elks Hoop Shoot. Thirty-eight kids in several age groups participated, making the best of 25 baskets at the gym before being treated to a hamburger lunch afterward. At the back, 12-13 year olds Ryan Rooney (3rd place), Jayden Buhler (1st place), Emma Martinsen (3rd), Renee Roberts (2nd), and Jamie Early (1st); at center, 10-11 year olds Devlyn Campbell (2nd), Kyle Hommel (1st), Mindy Meissner (3rd), McKinley Gillen (2nd), and Kayla Meissner (1st); and at front, 8-9 year olds Ian Maleski (3rd), Evertt Meissner (2nd), Keaton Gadd (1st), Hailey Cook (2nd), and Shailyn Nelson (1st) received their awards.

Members Steve Prysunka and Mark Mitchell pointed out agency funding was still quite high compared to 15 or 20 years previously, after a sharp rise in the decade following 2005. Agency operations are distinct from capital project and operating budget items, which have been the most impacted by the past three years' cuts.

Ortiz pointed out that, when adjusted for inflation, spending levels now are about on par with those in the early 1980s. The latest growth coincided with a combination of health and education spending, some of which was to meet unfunded federal mandates. Still, he admitted: "Government got fat, there's no doubt about it."

"I'd like to see those cut a little more. I think you're going to have to cut till you're bleeding," said Mitchell. After that, he would be more amenable to additional taxes. He also recommended the Legislature look at encouraging business in the state by streamlining licensing and regulatory requirements where possible.

On the upside, Ortiz said there were some potential positives to find within the general gloom. "I'm positive about the prospects of this upcoming session."

Funding for Shoemaker Bay Harbor float replacement, for instance, will be a priority for Ortiz during the coming session. The \$5,000,000 Wrangell's Harbor Department requested of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities' harbor grant program has been included in the governor's budget draft released in December. The amount will need to run the gauntlet between the House and Senate bill drafts before a final budget is drawn up.

"As long as that money stays in this year's budget, that's gonna happen," Ortiz told the Assembly.

Newly appointed to serve on the House Finance Committee, he felt he would be well-placed to advocate for the funds' retention. Ortiz noted the money should prove easier to defend now that the amount has been allotted than it would be to request its addition.

His other regional concern would be to seek to preserve funding levels for the Marine Highway System, which saw cuts in the previous two budget cycles and has had to reduce scheduled services to coastal communities as a

In the audience for another item during the meeting, Stikine Inn owner Bill Goodale testified his business had been adversely affected by the shortened scheduling and several maintenance issues over the summer. He reckoned cancellations and reschedulings may have cost the business \$100,000 in just one season, which would have been worse overall were it not for an unusually busy tail end.

"The ferry system seriously hurt us last year," he summarized.

SEARHC-AICS

Continued from page 1

whether the organization would pay property taxes was legally out of the city's hands, being a state managed matter.

"We've already gone on the record to say we wouldn't do that," Neumeister commented, of SEARHC seeking an exemption. Its president-CEO, Charles Clement, came to Wrangell in November and made that assertion to the Assembly and wider public. He had pointed out SEARHC is a licensed 501(c)3 nonprofit like AICS, and that its tribal exemption would not apply in the case of Wrangell's

Jack continued with his concerns: "(Question) two is what will happen in a couple of years. Will it become a Native

"I appreciate the question about Native preference," Neumeister responded. "We have a real history of total access, regardless of race, color, or creed."

He noted as one example their facility

in Metlakatla, which served community Chamber of Commerce had recently issued payments. On the other hand, he noted members in Craig regardless of their affiliation. Walker added that SEARHC would assume AICS's grant commitments in the merger, several of which require equal

> Jack's final question was whether the transition would result in any conflicts with the current relationship between AICS and WMC. "I want to see that continue," he said.

> Neumeister explained that relationship would in some ways be improved. Its current sharing of services and personnel would continue as is. On the revenue side, as a federal-level entity, SEARHC expects to remain largely unaffected by potential cutbacks to Medicaid coverage in the event of an ACA rollback. The organization also has better access to bringing in medical specialists, who would likely use WMC's on-hand laboratory and facilities as need-

Walker and Neumeister both pointed out the WMC governing board and local letters of support for the prospective merger. Speaking with hospital CEO Robert Rang afterward, he confirmed that he had confidence in the transition, adding that the permanent addition of his position to the AICS advisory board post-merger was

"That helps with that transparency that they're assuring us with," Rang said.

After the merger, the AICS managing corporation would disappear, though its name would be retained.

"It is a true merger, and the corporate board would cease to exist," Neumeister explained. "In place of that we have an advisory council that we will set up."

Walker would also be retained on the council, which will aim to amplify local input and forward concerns for continuing care, advising SEARHC administrators. During discussions, Neumeister also offered the addition of a seat reserved permanently for an Assembly member to keep them informed and involved.

Even with these assurances, Gilbert pressed for inclusion of more rigorous assurances to be written into the deed. Neumeister felt a revised MOU with the hospital would be a more appropriate place for that than the deed document, a feeling echoed both by Jack and the city's attorney.

"Health care is changing," Neumeister commented. "We're trying to create a level of fluidity here." In addition to having the two attorneys discuss the merger details and some revisions to deed wording, he said SEARHC would get together with the hospital to update their MOU.

"What may sound like a good handcuff today might not be a good handcuff five or six years from now," he added.

"You can always loosen a handcuff, but you can't always slap one on after the fact," Gilbert replied.

The Assembly will expedite its update of the deed documentation, holding a special meeting ahead of its January 24 session if necessary to get the item back to both parties ahead of their planned merger.