

New group helps people get rid of junked cars, Page 3



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All smiles for school



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Evergreen Elementary School principal Ann Hilburn, left, and Leighetta Debord stop to commemorate the first day of school on Thursday, Aug. 24. Staff greeted students at the door with smiles as parents dropped off their children, many smiling and waving goodbye while others were visibly not thrilled to be back at school after their summer break.

District gets traction with electric bus grant

By Marc Lutz
Sentinel editor

The Wrangell School District has received the green light to buy an electric school bus through a federal clean energy grant.

In his report to the school board on Aug. 21, Schools Superintendent Bill Burr said the Environmental Protection Agency approved the district for a grant that will go toward a newly built electric bus and charging station.

The grant was almost a no-go just a few months ago.

Working with the district's contracted bus company, Taylor Transportation, Burr submitted the grant to the EPA about a year ago. The program requires destruction of a diesel-powered bus in order to receive the funds for an electric bus.

Wrangell was the only district in Alaska approved for the grant of just under \$400,000 and

would be the owner of the new bus. However, Taylor Transportation decided this past spring not to move forward as the operator since owner John Taylor said it wouldn't be economically feasible and there were too many unknowns, such as maintenance costs and technician availability.

"When (Taylor said) it wasn't cost-effective, we went on our own," Burr told the school board.

Though the district will own the bus, it will continue its contract with Taylor Transportation and will want the new bus used for daily rounds.

District staff is considering the parking lot of Evergreen Elementary School for locating the charging station and parking the bus when not in use.

First Student, a nationwide company based out of Cincinnati, Ohio, which holds the school bus service contracts around Alaska, got wind of Wrangell's attempts and donated a diesel bus to

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Middle school cross country team prepares for first season

By Caroleine James
Sentinel reporter

A new generation of runners is preparing to follow in the footsteps of Wrangell High School's state championship-winning cross country team. For the first time this fall, a middle school team will lace up their sneakers and get ready to race.

Laura Davies, a teacher at Stikine Middle School, is organizing and coaching the program. She hopes that it will support the existing high school team by improving young runners' endurance and preparing them to race at the regional level once they become freshmen.

"If you look long-term, we have a high school champion team," she said. By starting runners out in middle school, she can "really (support) the high school program, like a feeder program."

Davies spent the past few

weeks attending high school team practices so that her middle school program will align with theirs.

During the pandemic, she started running with her students to help them bond with each other and focus during class. Then, these informal jogs turned into a yearlong after-school running club. "I found that the kids really enjoyed it," she said. "They were eager to show up, we had a lot of kids show up."

The club helped get kids outside and exercising, while providing an opportunity for social interaction in the midst of COVID-related isolation.

Since then, Davies has worked to make a district-approved middle school cross country team a reality. "Moving forward, I wanted to establish this as a team ... that has regular practices and can hopefully go to a meet," she said.

The team's first meeting was

on Thursday, Aug. 24, and its first practice was on Monday, Aug. 28. The athletes will run three to four times a week and work toward a race at the end of the season in October — ideally, off the island, Davies said. She expects about 12 to 15 runners will participate and is happy to have parents and other community members run with the group.

Jenna Meissner, 12, has been practicing with the high school team for weeks and is also joining the new middle school program. "I like getting exercise," she said, and is looking forward to running with people her own age so that she can "(get) better and better."

In past years, she participated in Davies' running club and plans to run for the high school once she's old enough.

Though the team is sanctioned by the school district, it

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Native community continues advocating for corporation lands

By Caroleine James
Sentinel reporter

Advocates of the long-standing effort to create five new Southeast Alaska Native corporations say it's about ancestry, economic value and correcting a five-decade-old wrong.

This year, legislation before Congress would grant each of the five corporations, including Wrangell, about 23,000 acres of land from the Tongass National Forest. The proposed land selections for a Wrangell corporation are spread over about a dozen blocks around the area, as far south as Coffman Cove on Prince of Wales Island.

Similar legislation has been introduced unsuccessfully multiple times in the past 50 years.

Richard Rinehart, CEO of Tlingit & Haida Business Corp. and an advocate for the landless legislation, has ties to Wrangell dating back generations. "We've been there forever," he said last week. "Over 10,000 years. ... To have some of our original land back has a really deep cultural

meaning to us."

The legislation could also provide material benefits to Alaska Natives in Wrangell. "You only need to look at the other 12 (Native village and urban corporations) in Southeast Alaska and see what the benefits have been to those communities," Rinehart said. These corporations "have had their land and have been able to develop it and have been able to provide more benefits, more scholarships, more jobs ... that we never could."

He anticipates that a Wrangell corporation would generate jobs, provide dividends and scholarships to shareholders and invest in economic opportunities such as government contracting, smaller-scale tourism and selling carbon credits for leaving timber untouched, though these decisions would be up to its board.

The legislation's proposed land selections for a Wrangell corporation include 2,091 acres on the mainland near the Gar-

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PHOTO BY CAROLEINE JAMES/WRANGELL SENTINEL

The community will celebrate Missy Wright's 100th birthday with a party at 4 p.m. Friday, Sept. 1, at the Nolan Center. Friends report her favorite color is purple and are inviting everyone to wear something purple.

Missy Wright invites community to help celebrate her 100th birthday milestone

By Caroleine James
Sentinel reporter

Margaret "Missy" Wright is an elegantly dressed woman with a bright white coiffure and a loud, infectious laugh. The long-term care resident has been a fixture of the Wrangell community since she moved to town in the late 1980s and now, as she prepares to turn 100, is likely the island's oldest inhabitant.

She has invited the entire town to celebrate her birthday on Friday, Sept. 1, with a massive party at the Nolan Center at 4 p.m. The party theme is purple — Wright's favorite color — and attendees are encouraged to wear their favorite purple at-

tire to the event, which is going to be "bigger than prom," said granddaughter Adrienne McLaughlin.

Reaching 100 is a rare achievement. Wright will join the exclusive world population of people 100 years or older, which is under 600,000 strong — fewer than live in Washington, D.C. — spread across the entire globe, according to a 2022 United Nations report.

The almost-centenarian has been around longer than polyester, the 40-hour workweek and Mickey Mouse.

Long-term care staff and Sarah Merritt, who helps people

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Birthdays & Anniversaries

The Sentinel extends its best wishes to everyone listed in the chamber of commerce community birthday calendar.

Wednesday, Aug. 30: Anniversaries: Andrew and Lauren Helgeson, Jeff and Kay Jabusch.

Thursday, Aug. 31: Joel Peterman.

Friday, Sept. 1: Joshua Campbell, Toni Marie Oliver.

Saturday, Sept. 2: Ryan Jabusch, Kameron Stough.

Sunday, Sept. 3: Shailyn N. Nelson, Tasha Peterman, Marquisa Zrymiak.

Monday, Sept. 4: None.

Tuesday, Sept. 5: Randy Oliver, Jason Rooney, Mickey Rooney, Luke Steele; Anniversary: Matt and Margo Walker-Scott.



ALASKA AIRLINES CLUB 49 COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

MUSKEG MEADOWS will hold nine-hole best-ball golf tournaments: The Compass Line, Saturday, Sept. 2, and Alaska Vista, Sunday, Sept. 3. Both starting at 10 a.m. Register by 9:30 a.m.

COMMUNITY MARKET from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 2, at the Nolan Center. Check out the locally grown and handcrafted items.

DISC GOLF workshop from 2 to 3 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 2, at Muskeg Meadows Golf Course. Free to the public. Discs and baskets available; instruction available for all ages, all skill levels. Sponsored by the Juneau Disc Golf Club.

BOOK CLUB ROUNDTABLE from 2 to 3:30 p.m. on Sept. 9, at the Irene Ingle Public Library. The library is holding a roundtable to discuss: when and how long meetings will be; what type of club folks are interested in; who picks the books, etc. For more information contact the library at 907-874-3535.

NOLAN CENTER THEATER, no movies until Sept. 15 because of construction work. "Barbie" will run Sept. 15-17.

IRENE INGLE PUBLIC LIBRARY is now open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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

- **HIGH-INTENSITY INTERVAL TRAINING (HIIT)** on Tuesdays, 6 a.m. to 6:45 a.m. in the pool lobby. HIIT is designed to improve strength, cardiovascular fitness and build lean muscle. 14 years and up. Bring along a towel and water bottle. No registration required. \$5 drop-in fee.
- **SWIMMING POOL** is now open. The schedule is posted online. Open-swim registration is required and is available online.
- **YOUTH BASKETBALL REGISTRATION** is open. Season begins Sept. 11 for grades K-1, 2-3 and 4-5 at the community center gym. Weeknight practices and games. Register online. Coaches, scorekeepers and referees are needed.

Want more attendance at your meeting or event? Send information for Roundup to wrgsent@gmail.com or call 907-874-2301.

Senior Center Menu

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

Thursday, Aug. 31

Chicken adobo, copper pennies, spicy fruit salad, rice

Friday, Sept. 1

Moose venison with mushrooms, mixed vegetables, mashed potatoes and gravy, peach salad,

Monday, Sept. 4

Closed. Shelf-stable meal and fruit cup delivered on Friday, Sept. 1

Tuesday, Sept. 5

Sweet and sour pork, green beans, romaine and radish salad, confetti rice

Wednesday, Sept. 6

Baked chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, broccoli, carrot and pineapple salad

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

Ferry Schedule

Northbound

Sunday, Sept. 3

Columbia, 3:15 p.m.

Sunday, Sept. 10

Columbia, 1:15 p.m.

Sunday, Sept. 17

Columbia, 1:15 p.m.

Sunday, Aug. 24

Columbia, 2:15 p.m.

Southbound

Wednesday, Sept. 6

Columbia, 7 a.m.

Wednesday, Sept. 13

Columbia, 5:45 a.m.

Wednesday, Sept. 20

Columbia, 4:45 a.m.

Wednesday, Sept. 27

Columbia, 3 a.m.

All times listed are scheduled departure times.

Call the terminal at 907-874-2021 for information or call 907-874-3711 or 800-642-0066 for recorded information.

Tides

High Tides

Low Tides

	AM		PM		AM		PM	
	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft
Aug. 30	00:31	18.3	01:23	16.8	06:57	-3.7	07:07	0.7
Aug. 31	01:20	19.0	02:03	17.8	07:39	-3.4	07:52	-0.5
Sept. 1	02:08	19.1	02:42	18.4	08:18	-3.1	08:37	-1.2
Sept. 2	02:54	18.5	03:21	18.5	08:57	-2.2	09:22	-1.4
Sept. 3	03:40	17.3	03:59	18.1	09:35	-0.8	10:08	-1.0
Sept. 4	04:27	15.8	04:39	17.3	10:15	0.9	10:57	-0.2
Sept. 5	05:18	14.0	05:23	16.1	10:57	2.8	11:51	0.9

Daylight Hours

Date	Sunrise	Sunset	Hours
Aug. 30	5:48a	7:50p	14:01h
Aug. 31	5:50a	7:47p	13:56h
Sept. 1	5:52a	7:44p	13:51h
Sept. 2	5:54a	7:42p	13:47h
Sept. 3	5:56a	7:39p	13:42h
Sept. 4	5:58a	7:36p	13:38h
Sept. 5	6:00a	7:34p	13:33h

Aug. 30, 1923
Arrangements for the library benefit program and dance, which will be given by the Civic Club next Monday evening at the Redmen Hall, have been completed. Music by a newly organized orchestra under the leadership of O. A. Bronson has been secured for the dance. The seats will be arranged around the hall for the program, so that dancing can begin immediately at its close. Admission to the program and dance is 50 cents for adults, and 25 cents for children 14 years and under. Super is 25 cents extra.

Aug. 27, 1948
City Clerk Robert Wickman today reminded all young men 18 to 25 that draft registration begins next week. Registrations are being taken at City Hall. It was emphasized that all men 18 through 25 MUST register, whether they have a previous service record or regardless of whether they are in the reserves. The law states that all men between the ages of 18 and 25 must comply. Registration at City Hall will begin Monday morning, Aug. 30, and will run through Sept. 18. Although, in larger communities, certain dates have been set aside for certain age groups, Wickman said that practice will not be adhered to in Wrangell. He urges all men between those ages to register as soon as possible, and added he hoped response would be prompt.

Aug. 24, 1973

The city council will attempt in a special session Sept. 10 to come up with an ordinance that would allow limited use of city streets by snowmobiles. Councilman Ken Mason reminded the council Tuesday that "winter is approaching fast" and suggested that a state law prohibiting snowmobiles from using public streets is not reasonable for Wrangell. "There are people who own these machines and do not have a truck to carry them to the outlying areas," Ma-

son said. He said the city should consider allowing snowmobiles to travel public streets enroute to snowmobile use areas. Mayor Don House said, "Well, we have snowmobiles and we're going to have more this winter. They are definitely here to stay and I think we should have some law to take care of them."

Aug. 27, 1998

At the regular city council meeting Tuesday evening Judy Bakeberg, secretary-treasurer of the Wrangell Golf Course Board, reported on the course's first 65 days of business. She reported the organization has 808 members; this includes 336 from Wrangell, 53 from Petersburg, 36 from Ketchikan, 13 from Sitka, 43 from Juneau, and 20 from other Southeast towns, for a total of 505 from Southeast. Bakeberg recalled that when the original business plan was presented, the organization estimated that for a 210-day season they would generate 5,300 rounds of golf for an average of 757 per month. Now, after 65 days, they have 1,457 rounds, averaging 729, just short of the estimate. Income has totaled \$15,812 and expenses have totaled \$16,757. The course has four employees including three full time and one part time, with three being displaced timber workers.

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FREIGHT FOR LESS

The 'Differentials' gear up to help residents remove junked cars

By CAROLEINE JAMES
Sentinel reporter

A newly formed group of automotive aficionados called the "Differentials" are volunteering to help the community rid itself of junked vehicles.

So far, the Differentials boast two sets of two-person teams that to remove tires and drain fluids from cars and trucks so that they can be shipped off the island by scrap metal recycler Channel Construction. As of Thursday, Aug. 24, the group had prepared two cars and a bus for transport.

Two more car-draining duos are slated to join the group soon, for a total of eight volunteers.

The group is named after a car part that allows wheels to turn at different speeds.

Georgia Selfridge, whose experience working with cars dates back to her youth in Meyers Chuck, got the idea for the group at a borough assembly work session on code enforcement, where municipal officials discussed tactics to dispose of the island's many derelict vehicles.

"They were talking about how one of the biggest obstacles to getting the cars taken care of ... (is) you have to drain the fluids out of the cars," she said. "A lot of people just don't do it right."

As a handywoman with a love for volunteering, Selfridge saw the borough's push to clean up cars as an opportunity to give back. She rallied her partner, Joe Gartrell, and her friends Cathy Carl-



PHOTO BY CAROLEINE JAMES/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Georgia Selfridge and Joe Gartrell demonstrate how to drain fluids from a truck at the Wrangell Cooperative Association's first Fix-It Clinic on Monday, Aug. 28. The pair is part of the newly formed volunteer group, the "Differentials," which is offering to help residents prepare junked vehicles for removal off the island.

son and Gary Sutlovich, and offered the group's services in preparing vehicles for removal.

Carlson grew up seining with her family, and the engines on the boats she worked on are "basically the same engine as a car," she said. She agreed to join the group at Selfridge's request. "I love to stay busy, so I said 'yeah,'" she recalled.

She made her debut with the Differen-

tials at the Wrangell Cooperative Association's Fix-It Clinic on Monday, Aug. 28. "I think it's a good volunteer thing," she said. She seeks out volunteer opportunities because she enjoys "giving back to the community, helping the community out. That's why we started the group."

The organization's services are geared toward people who have the desire to help clean up their yards, but lack the

money or expertise. "We're really just out to help the person who is really kind of beside themselves, doesn't know where to start," said Selfridge. "Someone who is maybe 80 or is just not used to the mechanics ... We're certainly not here to judge or wave a finger. ... We're in town, we have the time, we're not scared of it."

Working on vehicles can be intimidating — and even dangerous — without the proper tools and training, she explained. Poorly jacked cars can crush people and nobody wants a mouthful of poisonous chemicals from a siphoning job gone wrong. Plus, removing tires and siphoning off fluids requires a slew of specialized tools that the Differentials bring with them to the job, saving community members the trouble — and money — that it would take to find and use their own floor jack, drill motor transfer pump or socket wrench set.

Borough officials have quoted that it costs \$200 for an in-town professional to drain a car's fluids, but doing it on your own can be nearly as expensive if you don't already have the proper equipment. "By the time you're in 70 bucks for a tool, you might as well pay the \$200 to have someone do it for you," said Selfridge. The Differentials' services, on the other hand, are free.

Preparing a car for disposal takes one of the group's two-person teams about an hour and a half.

To contact the Differentials, call Selfridge at 206-660-8463.

Minor fire delays Columbia and ruins 10 cases of beer

By SAGE SMILEY
KSTK radio

No one was reported injured beyond minor smoke inhalation in an early morning small fire aboard the state ferry Columbia on its southbound voyage into Wrangell on Aug. 23.

All 11 passengers and crew taken off the ship for medical evaluation in Wrangell returned to the ferry as it continued its voyage to Ketchikan later that same day, according to a spokeswoman for the Alaska Department of Transportation.

The fire started in cardboard near an ice machine in the bar area, the spokeswoman said.

Ten cases of beer were lost to the fire. "Honestly, that's the extent of the damage," said Steven Harrison, a crew member aboard the ship and part of the first-response team.

"We're assuming some sort of electrical malfunction, or maybe it was just too close to the cardboard cases of beer, we don't know," Harrison said.

Officials reported the bar would reopen by this week.

The fire broke out as the Columbia was traveling through the Wrangell Narrows. The ship arrived in Wrangell close to schedule but was delayed several hours in its departure for Ketchikan as people were evaluated at the hospital and the ship inspected.

"In the bar last night, at 3:15 in the morning, a general alarm went off. They said that it was not a drill, which is pretty obvious at 3:15 we wouldn't have a drill in the middle of the Wrangell Nar-

rows," Harrison said on Aug. 23.

"All of the people on Fire Team One, we jumped up and ran for our fire suits. They told us to get dressed, and we all donned our fire suits, put on our oxygen tanks and went on oxygen because the ship was filling up with smoke."

By the time Harrison got to the fire, it had already been mostly extinguished by another crew member.

"But there was still smoldering, so we took water in and sprayed down the bar," Harrison said. "There's a lot of dirt and debris and ashes in the bar mixed with the ... fire extinguisher stuff. So it kind of made a little bit of a mess, and it's gonna take us a while to clean up."

Harrison said his six-person fire team used supplemental oxygen, which helped them avoid the effects of smoke inhalation. But other crew and passengers felt the effects.

"The crew reacted pretty quickly, but out of an abundance of caution they wanted to make sure that anyone that was nearby got seen for smoke inhalation," said Shannon McCarthy, spokesperson for Department of Transportation, which oversees the ferry system.

McCarthy said 11 people were evaluated: nine passengers and two crew members.

Emergency medical services in Wrangell transported the people to the hospital. All had been treated and released by early afternoon, according to a hospital spokesperson. McCarthy confirmed that all 11 reboarded the ship and continued south.

One day left for candidates to file for municipal election

Sentinel staff

The deadline to file for a seat on the borough assembly, school board or port commission in the Oct. 3 municipal election is 4 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 31.

And for residents not registered to vote in Alaska, the deadline to register to vote is Sunday, Sept. 3.

Two seats on the assembly and one each on the school board and port commission will be on the ballot.

As of Monday, Aug. 28, incumbent Anne Morrison had filed for reelection to the assembly, as had challenger Michael J. Ottesen; assembly incumbent Ryan Howe had not yet filed or announced his intentions.

If there are more than two candidates, the top two vote-getters on the ballot will win the seats. Each is a three-year term.

Neither school board incumbent Esther Aaltséen Reese nor

port commission incumbent Gary Morrison had yet filed paperwork by Monday morning to seek reelection. John DeRuyter had filed for school board.

Candidates must fill out a declaration form and submit it along signatures of at least 10 qualified voters to get their name on the ballot. The form is available at City Hall, which is open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays. Candidates must be registered to vote in Alaska and have been a Wrangell resident for at least the past year.

Voter registration forms are available at City Hall or online through the state Division of Elections website <https://voter-registration.alaska.gov/>. Registration through the state site can be handled completely online.

Just over 31% of the registered voters in town cast ballots in the October 2022 municipal election, an increase from the 25% turnout in 2021 and 24% in 2020.

Another chance to get rid of junked vehicles and scrap metal

Sentinel staff

Residents have another opportunity to get their junked vehicles and scrap metal off the island, and the borough is encouraging people to take advantage of the free service.

Channel Construction, which operates a scrap metal recycling service and barge in Southeast, is expected to pick up a load in Wrangell sometime in September.

"We will be sending out letters to owners of properties (vehicles) that have been abandoned and/or are a danger to the community," Borough Manager Jeff Good reported to the assembly for its Aug. 22 meeting. "We continue to work with the owners of junk vehicles to have them disposed of."

Owners may bring their unwanted cars and trucks to the borough's solid waste transfer station at the north end of the island. There is no charge,

though the owner is responsible for draining all fluids from the vehicle and removing the tires.

The transfer station is open 8:30 to 11 a.m. and noon to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Channel Construction will pick up the vehicles from the transfer station and haul them to the company's operation at the former 6-Mile sawmill property for loading aboard the barge. The Juneau-based company has a month-to-month lease for the borough-owned property, Good said, while the assembly and borough officials look toward longer-term development of the acreage.

More than 70 junked vehicles left the island aboard the barge over the past year, according to borough officials.

"It's fairly consistent," Public Works Director Tom Wetor said of the pace of cars and trucks that are dropped off at

the transfer station, though there are "occasional rushes" when a property owner cleans up a derelict lot.

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- 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 Friday at noon for Wednesday publication.

WRANGELL SENTINEL

Letters are run on a space-available basis.

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Governor should help get the work done

By LARRY PERSILY
Publisher

Employers everywhere are finding it hard to recruit and retain employees. But it sure seems that the state of Alaska, under the disengaged leadership of Gov. Mike Dunleavy, is sinking to new lows of high vacancies.

The empty desks and undone work are degrading public services and hurting Alaskans. The administration's reactions have been to express concern, provide excuses, talk about doing better and, in some offices, shuffle around available personnel to plug the biggest holes. And the governor proclaimed May 10 as State Employee Appreciation Day, without any mention of the extra workload on employees trying to get the job done with vacancy rates in double-digit percentages.

Meanwhile, the governor's fixation on the Permanent Fund dividend is proving to be more of a political popularity magnet than a job applicant attraction. Alaska continues to lose more residents than it has gained for 10 years running. Those are lost workers.

The Legislature this past spring added \$1 million to the budget for the Department of Administration to study whether salaries should be increased for state employees. No news on when that will happen.

Meanwhile, the department has its own problems. As of early August, 31 of 67 budgeted positions at its payroll division were vacant. Officials said it has been that way "for some time." The results are errors and delays in issuing paychecks for many state employees.

While advertising the open positions and offering bonuses to take a job or stay on the job, the department has gone out of state and out of country to sign a contract with a Canadian IT firm to handle some of the payroll work with remote employees in Alabama, the Alaska Beacon reported earlier this month. The state will pay \$45.50 an hour for the remote payroll analysts, much more than the \$22.69 it would

pay a state employee in a comparable position in Alaska — if it had an actual employee.

Granted, there would be benefit costs on top of the \$22.69 for a state employee, but the math is certain: The state is paying a lot more to privatize the work than it would cost if a public employee were at the desk.

The Department of Health is another one with a serious shortage of public employees to provide services, particularly for Medicaid and food stamp applicants. Delays in reviewing and approving benefits are counted in months. The Legislature stepped up with additional funding in a fast-track spending bill to hire more staff for the Division of Public Assistance. Five months later, the agency was still waiting for the hiring office to post 15 new job openings.

The Department of Transportation, which manages the Alaska Marine Highway System, has been so short of onboard crew for so long that full staffing is a distant memory.

Even though the system would like to run the Kennicott next spring, it announced earlier this month that "due to the existing shortage of vessel crews" it would not accept reservations on the Kennicott for April and May 2024.

The problem isn't just a shortage of onboard workers. The ferry system this month cut back its customer service call center hours due to staffing, advising those who try calling during the shortened hours: "Please expect long hold times."

In a report a year ago, the vacancy rates were 30% at the child support collections office, 16% at the Division of Motor Vehicles, 21% at the commercial fisheries agency and 24% at the Department of Revenue Tax Division — the people who collect money for the state.

Perhaps the governor should spend less time on national political issues and more time recruiting at job fairs, high schools and university classes, and working with legislators to improve pay and benefits for public employees. Either that or take a seat and handle ferry reservations or food stamp applications.

Perhaps the governor should spend less time on national political issues and more time recruiting at job fairs, high schools and university classes.

THE EDITOR'S DESK

I really have enjoyed my stay, but I must be moving on

By MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

When I arrived almost exactly two years ago, Jeff and Kay Jabusch told me people in Wrangell aren't necessarily wary of newcomers. Rather, they pointed out, they're hesitant to get attached since they never know who's going to stay.

I fully intended to stay. As you read this, I'm on the Columbia with my three cats, headed for Bellingham, Washington. From there, I'll disembark and head for my new home in Idaho.

A lot changed in two years. When I arrived here, I was married and had four cats and was quite healthy. The marriage ended after being here less than a year. One of my cats became ill and I had to have her put to sleep. Just over a month ago, I was diagnosed at Wrangell Medical Center with a potentially life-threatening condition.

Through all the curveballs life likes to throw at us, I kept going.

Despite the slips and falls on the ice in that first winter here, I cursed a blue streak, but I got

up and moved on, albeit slowly.

Sliding my vehicle through intersections and getting it stuck in the snow didn't dissuade me from getting my Alaska driver's license and registering my vehicle here, digging into my residency.

The ice forming on the inside of the windows of my rental house and mind-numbing utility bills didn't keep me from buying a home here.

I got to know business owners, teachers, artists, fishermen, tour guides (sometimes, they were all rolled up into just one person) and people from every walk of life. I learned more about the Tlingit culture than I ever thought possible and made many Native friends.

New Zealand Terry gave me halibut, which I breaded and fried, and it was one of the best things I'd ever tasted, next to Nancy Murkowski's halibut casserole dish, that is.

In two years, I took thousands of photos of all sorts of wildlife: Bears at Anan, deer in my yard, Wolves on the wrestling mat and on the hardwood.

I was also honored to photo-

graph weddings, blessings of the fleet, Fourth of July festivities and tossed wieners.

People trusted me with their stories, like Jacquie Dozier's lunch with Queen Elizabeth II, the family Hardangerfele that was handed down over generations to Lorraine Jenson-Kagee, or the legacy left behind by the late Ira Merrill.

There were also the gross stories I got to write, like Brian Merritt's biology lessons for fourth graders whereby he gutted a deer carcass or pulled one dead fish out of another dead fish, or the aforementioned wiener toss.

I accompanied fourth graders upriver for a field day. They bit the heads of fish, they dared each other to eat moose poop. Come to think of it, most of the gross encounters involved fourth graders. Make of that what you will.

For more than a year, I've been fortunate enough to inflict, I mean "share" my comic strip with readers. My cartoons even adorn ballcaps and T-shirts for

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EDITORIAL

Wrangell does its best work with volunteers

Wrangell certainly has its challenges. Those include a shortage of housing and available workers, weather-damaged and age-worn public buildings that need millions of dollars in repairs, limited state ferry service that makes it hard to send out a vehicle for fixes or to bring in independent summer travelers for vacations.

Despite the challenges, the community has a lot going for it — led by its volunteers. It seems there isn't an event, activity or program in town that happens without them.

Monday's Fix-It Clinic, put together by WCA's Tl'átk - Earth Branch, was all about volunteers helping people learn to patch, repair and restore old or broken items back to usable form. No sense throwing away what can be kept out of a landfill with some help from volunteer instructors showing the way with the right parts, pieces and tools.

Sometimes, volunteers respond to callouts such as the Fix-It Clinic. Other times, they see the need and get into gear on their own — such as a new group of community repair activists, the "Differentials." The mechanically inclined group is showing people how to drain and prep their unusable, unrepairable vehicles for the scrap metal yard.

Most often, the entire organization runs on volunteers, such as BRAVE, a domestic violence prevention organization whose name stands for Building Respect and Valuing Everyone. The group is putting together its sixth annual Family Resilience Fair for Oct. 14 at the Nolan Center, looking to bring together information, community resources and social services providers for the day, along with games and prizes.

Of course, volunteers can always use more help, and BRAVE is inviting community groups that want to participate or set up a booth at the fair to come to a planning meeting at 2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 2, at the public library.

But just like in a school classroom, it can't be the same people raising their hand all the time. Every organization is aware of the risk of burning out and using up the same pool of volunteers. To that end, calls for new sign-ups are as frequent as bake sales and rummage sales in town.

The Parks and Recreation Department, which manages the swimming pool, parks, exercise programs and multiple recreational activities, recently issued a call for more volunteers. "If everyone offers a little bit of their time, the same 10 people aren't having to volunteer all year-round," said Devyn Johnson, recreation coordinator for the borough department.

That's the point. If you haven't volunteered recently, now is a good time to look around, see what is needed and step up. The community will appreciate it.

— Wrangell Sentinel

GUEST OPINION

Government needs to push harder to protect our transboundary rivers

By BRENDA SCHWARTZ-YEAGER

Two years ago this fall, I testified at a Wrangell borough assembly meeting in support of yet another resolution calling on the U.S. government to be firm with British Columbia and Canada in protecting the Stikine River, as well as the Taku and Unuk rivers.

These transboundary rivers, the lifeblood of Southeast Alaska, are threatened by the more than 30 British Columbia gold mines in some phase of development. Over a dozen of them are located within the Stikine-Iskut watershed.

As I looked around the assembly chambers, I realized that most people in Wrangell, whether they know it or not, are tied to the bounty of the Stikine. Whether they're commercial fishermen or part of the visitor industry, whether they arrived last year, or whether their ancestors arrived thousands of years ago, the richness and bounty of the Stikine is intricately tied to the

culture and economic health of our region, and to each of us.

The Stikine is an ecological and economic powerhouse, providing vital habitat for all five species of wild Pacific salmon and pumping out nutrients and minerals that fuel the wetland and marine ecosystems downstream, supporting everything from forage fish to migratory birds and marine mammals.

If the Stikine was devastated by the cumulative toxic effects of multiple operating B.C. mines, or by a sudden, catastrophic mine waste dam breach at the operating Red Chris mine at the Iskut headwaters — or at the proposed Galore Creek gold mine on the lower Stikine — the effects to Wrangell, and the rest of Southeast, would be profound and long lasting. It would likely take us many decades to even understand the impacts.

It's easy for people here to not be alarmed by the mining

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Missy Wright

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prepare their Permanent Fund dividend applications, don't know of anyone on the island who's older.

When Wright was growing up in the 1920s and 1930s, there were "very few cars," she recalled, though her family had one. As the daughter of a stockbroker in Pennsylvania, she grew up "well to do," with a butler, an upstairs maid, a cook and a laundress serving her family of five. She was the oldest of three girls.

Wright attended private schools and spent much of her adulthood as a homemaker, though she did take various jobs throughout her life, including during World War II to support the war effort.

In the 1940s, shortly after she turned 18, the self-described tomboy purchased a motorcycle and rode it alone for long distances.

When she was 23, she got married, moved to North Carolina, and had three daughters. Madeleine Wright, her oldest, recalls how Wright would make homemade yogurt by combining bacteria and the cream that was on top of the milk de-

"I honestly think the secret to life for grandma is laughter and love."

Adrienne McLaughlin,
granddaughter

livered to the house.

"She's a very, very intelligent woman," Madeleine Wright said of her mother. "She loves to fish. Loves the outdoors. Loves the cool weather."

This outdoorsy, adventurous spirit served Missy Wright well when she moved from North Carolina to Wrangell to help care for her grandchildren in 1986. After visiting Anan Wildlife Observatory and going on hiking and hunting trips, "she fell in love with it," said McLaughlin, and decided to settle down in the community.

When McLaughlin was growing up, she spent most days at her grandma's house listening to golden oldies and

laughing together. In fact, she has inherited Wright's distinctive "cackle."

"She has a cackle laughter that you could pick out at Pike's Place Market," McLaughlin said of her grandmother. "She is witty. ... I wish you could know the grandma that I know. She is hysterical. We have videos of us, on point, cackling at the same time in a room."

Wright's well-ordered childhood left a lasting impression on her, leading her to instill strong Christian faith and good manners in her grandchildren. She's "very clean, very tidy, very regimented," said McLaughlin, recalling her time at her grandmother's house. "We'd have dinner every night at five."

One evening when she was growing up, before visiting a friend's house, she received firm instructions from Missy to remember to say yes ma'am, no ma'am, thank you ma'am and please.

Wright entered the long-term care unit at the Wrangell Medical Center in 2017, after a stroke limited her movement and speech. For the past six years, life in the unit has been "for the most part, very enjoyable," she said. She's the president of the resident council and spends her time playing bingo and visiting with her granddaughter.

She's "a matriarch over there," said McLaughlin. "They call her Queen Bee."

McLaughlin has a suspicion that her grandmother's secret to long life lies in her commitment to her routine and the support she receives from her community. Wright is "dressed to the nines" every morning and maintains a regular schedule of shopping trips and hair appointments, McLaughlin said.

"I honestly think the secret to life for grandma is laughter and love," she said. "The more time you spend with her, the longer she's going to be around."

Cross country

Continued from page 1

is not sponsored by it — 100% of the team's funding will come from families, fundraising and community support. "A goal long term is, if there's interest in this, to become a sponsored team," Davies said. "Many schools in Southeast Alaska have a sponsored, funded cross country team" at the middle school level.

Students don't need to prioritize running over their other sports to participate. Davies

is working with the district's many coaches to prevent practices from overlapping, and running is an excellent way to bolster cardiovascular health for swimming, basketball or wrestling. The team will focus on "getting (the runners) physically fit because a lot of these students are going into other sports," said Davies. "It's the first sport of the year."

To sign up, students can email Davies at ldavies@wpsd.us or visit her classroom in person.

Electric bus

Continued from page 1

the school district to be taken out of service — without ever coming to Wrangell.

It is the first time First Student has made such an offer.

"We were made aware of Wrangell's situation and realized we could assist by providing the district with a bus that we would be retiring in the near future," said Kevin Matthews, head of electrification at First Student.

Matthews said the company believes the entire school bus industry benefits by introducing electric school buses no matter where they're located or who operates the vehicles. "All (electric vehicle) deployments will advance our efforts to provide emissions-free transportation to students

and communities, as well as contribute to reducing deployment costs in the future," he said.

Although First Student doesn't operate any electric school buses in Alaska, it's looking to do so in the near future, Matthews said, and it will be dependent on securing funding.

"To date, these funding sources have presented limitations and/or qualifications restrictions that have prevented us from successfully securing funds for our operations in the state," he said. "However, we are committed to adding electric buses to our fleet, including in Alaska."

Burr said it will take a minimum of 210 days for Wrangell's bus to be built and delivered, getting here by late spring of 2024. "All we have to do is drive it off the dock, hopefully."

Transboundary rivers

Continued from page 4

boom over the border, as we sit nestled in the shadow of huge mountains separating us from the activity upriver. The open pits, roads, warehouses and waste piles are out of sight and out of mind. And everything is fine until it's not — until a catastrophic event, like the Mount Polley mine disaster which devastated B.C.'s Fraser River watershed nine years ago this month.

But many of us here in Wrangell have been tracking the recent B.C. mining boom closely

for almost 10 years. Despite the fact that thousands of Alaskans, as well as tribes, state legislators and Alaska's congressional delegation, have called on the U.S. government to secure binding protections for these international rivers — including, unanimously, the Wrangell assembly in fall 2021 — B.C. continues to push through new exploratory and operating mines without our meaningful input.

In addition to the Red Chris mine, almost all of the salmon habitat and wetlands along the Iskut, the main tributary for the

Stikine, is staked with mineral claims. The current owners of the Red Chris — Newmont and Imperial Metals, also owner of Mount Polley mine — plan to double the size of that mine's waste dam facility. Incredibly, this expansion doesn't trigger the need for new permits under B.C. law — even though the province's own experts predict that two mine waste dams will fail every 10 years.

Will the Alaska congressional

delegation keep pushing the U.S. government to stand up for Alaskans, hold Canada accountable, and finally get us a seat at the table?

We still need binding watershed protections developed by communities and Indigenous peoples on both sides of the U.S.-Canada border for the Stikine and other transboundary salmon rivers. Tribes and communities in Alaska are calling for a permanent ban on mine

waste dams and for a temporary pause on new B.C. mining activity in transboundary rivers until binding watershed protections are in place.

The clock is ticking and the fate of our shared wild salmon and glacial rivers hangs in the balance.

Brenda Schwartz-Yeager, of Wrangell, is a marine artist, boat captain and owner of a Stikine River tour boat business.

Goodbye

Continued from page 4

KSTK's annual wiener toss. I promise that's the last time I mention that event.

In the past two years, I'd like to think I'd met all the Rooneys, but I have a feeling that would take at least five to six more years.

Also in the last two years, I've been fortunate enough to work with some of the best people I've ever known. They've become more like my family.

I believe Amber Hillberry (used to be Armstrong) and I really worked hard to create what the paper is now. Yes, we bicker, but we laugh, especially when she forgets to attach a file to her emails without fail.

I couldn't ask for a better co-reporter than Caroleine James, with her quiet subversive humor and can-do (even when she doesn't want to do) attitude.

By extension, the folks at the Petersburg Pilot, who print the Sentinel, are the good friends I don't get to see nearly enough. I admire Orin Pierson for taking on ownership of that paper and making a go of it. While Ola Richards, who runs the press,

and I are connected for life since we have the same ink running in our veins.

Of course, I am forever grateful for Larry Persily, the Sentinel's owner, for bringing me aboard and giving me the chance to make a life here. Without him, I'd never have met many of you and learned even more about journalism. I also feel like no one appreciates my pun-riddled headlines and stories the way he does.

But all good things, as the saying goes, must come to an end.

Just over a month ago I was diagnosed with something that could have made me leave not only Wrangell but the mortal coil much earlier. Thanks to Drs. Lynn Prysunka and Laura Ballou, along with all the great nursing and support staff of WMC, I'm still here to say my goodbyes to Wrangell.

However hard it is for me to go, I will still be here in a small, rodent-like way. My comic strip "Ritter's River" will continue to appear in the Sentinel.

To paraphrase the song by Supertramp: Goodbye Wrangell, it's been nice. Thanks for sharing your paradise.

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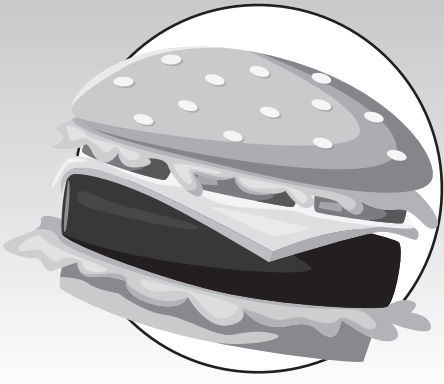
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Alaska's congressional delegation tries again with 'landless' legislation

By RILEY ROGERSON
Anchorage Daily News

WASHINGTON — More than 50 years after the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act passed Congress, proposed legislation again seeks to resolve claims with so-called "landless" Alaska Natives from five Southeast Alaska communities that were left out of the landmark law, including Wrangell.

Supporters of the effort say concerns about the environmental damages of logging and public access restricted by private ownership of the lands have stalled progress on the land-transfer legislation in past years. But they are hopeful the political atmosphere has changed enough that the bill has a chance of moving forward.

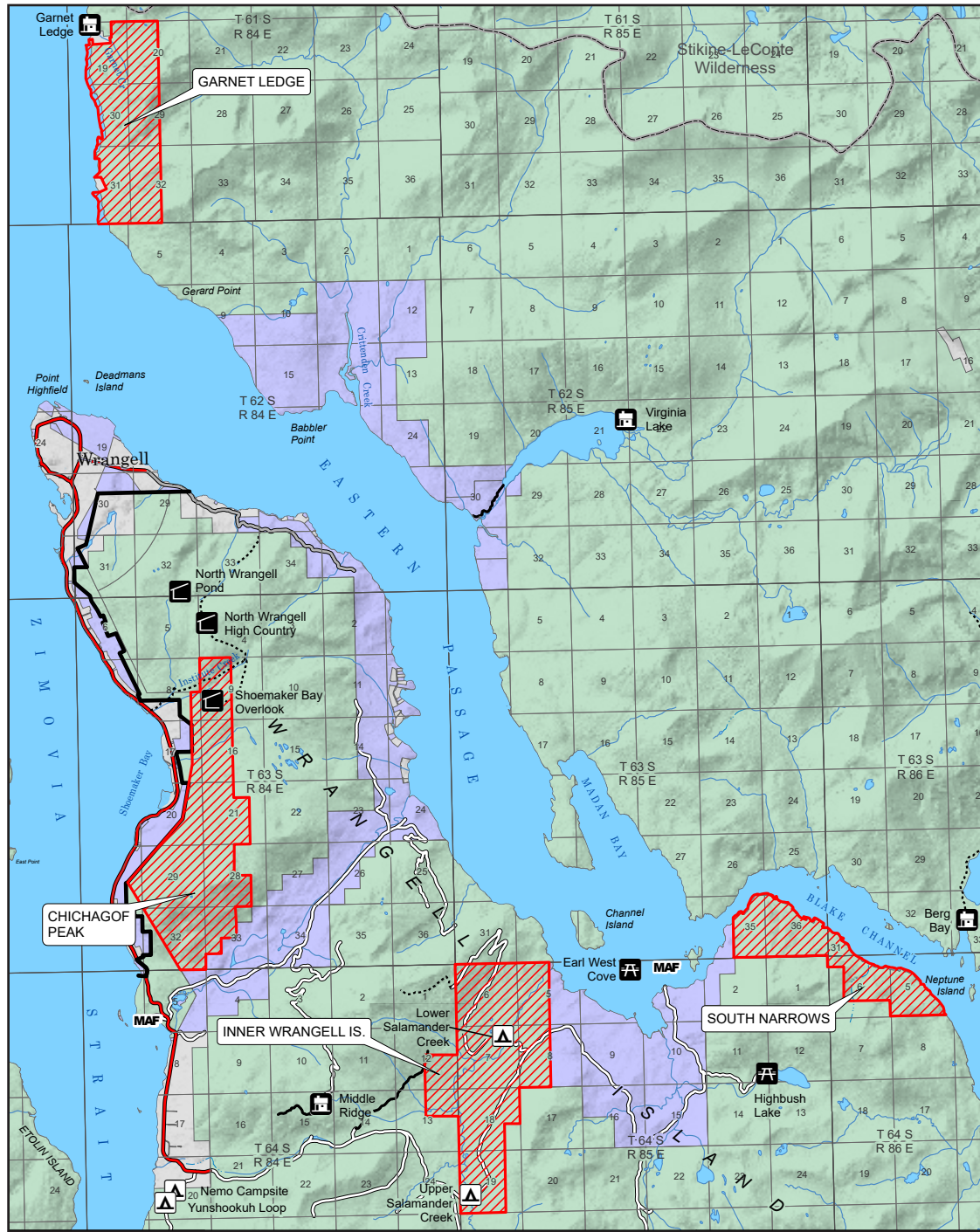
When ANSCA was signed into law in 1971, Haines, Ketchikan, Petersburg, Tenakee Springs and Wrangell were not among 200 communities where Alaska Natives were able to form village and urban corporations. That left about 4,700 shareholders of Sealaska, Southeast Alaska's regional corporation, without an urban or village corporation — and land holdings.

For decades, Alaska's delegation has sponsored legislation to create five new urban corporations. The congressional delegation introduced the latest iteration this summer, which would confer about 23,040 acres of federal lands in Tongass National Forest to each of the five new corporations.

"People like my father have passed away waiting and hoping that this would happen someday, and we really don't want to see another 50 years go by," said Richard Rinehart, a landless advocate who is affiliated with the nonprofit Southeast Alaska Landless Corp. and serves on the Sealaska Corp. board of directors.

The effort has support from the Alaska Federation of Natives, and Sealaska pledged \$500,000 to the Alaska Natives Without Land campaign in 2019.

The reason for the communities' omission in ANSCA is contested. At a Senate committee hearing last year, Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski said, "It is a matter of historical debate in terms of whether it was literally accidental or perhaps a purposeful omission there."



U.S. FOREST SERVICE MAP, PREPARED AT THE REQUEST OF SEN. LISA MURKOWSKI

Proposed land selections in federal legislation to create a Native corporation for Wrangell include acreage near the Garnet Ledge, on the north end of Wrangell Island around the Shoemaker Bay overlook and Chichagof Peak, at Lower and Upper Salamander Creek, and on Blake Channel across from Berg Bay.

Jaeleen Kookesh, Sealaska vice president for policy and legal affairs, has been advocating to address the landless claims for 25 years. A shareholder of Angoon's village corporation, Kootznoowoo, Kookesh said she is one of the "lucky ones" in Southeast that has a village corporation. "They don't have opportunities to own land in their com-

munity for economic development or just cultural purposes," she said. "It's really something that they've missed out on over these 52 years."

She said past efforts have been hamstrung by worries that the new corporations would use the newly conferred Tongass lands for logging.

Timber development is on the

table, and each new corporation would have the right to determine how to use the lands. But the timber industry in the Tongass has been in decline. Kookesh said she has heard talk of using the lands for revenue-raising carbon credit projects for leaving trees uncut, and for tourism and cultural preservation.

Conservation groups in past

years have opposed the landless legislation to conserve the Tongass. Some — though not all — have since dropped those objections. Last year, the Sierra Club announced an "actively neutral" stance, and the Wilderness Society took "a neutral position."

The Southeast Alaska Conservation Council has also pivoted on the bill. In 2015, an attorney for the group testified before a House subcommittee against the legislation. Last year though, the group submitted testimony that signaled more openness to the bill.

Kookesh hopes the political will around returning land to Indigenous communities has grown enough to push the landless policy forward now.

"I actually feel better about it this year than any other time. There's just a very strong sentiment in Congress and just across the country about getting land back to Native people," Kookesh said.

Other resistance to the bill has persisted, however. In May 2022, the Petersburg borough assembly voted 4-3 to send a letter in opposition. The statement outlined concerns, including conveying federally funded roads to a private corporation.

"The proposed land selections in the Petersburg area are well used by all residents, and there continues to be concerns regarding the future use of these valuable properties," the assembly's letter said.

This year's legislation protects access to the land through roadways, trails and forest roads for recreational and subsistence purposes, though it says the new urban corporations could impose "reasonable restrictions," including ensuring public safety and minimizing conflicts between recreational and commercial uses.

David Kensinger, a Petersburg assembly member who opposed the bill last year, said his chief concern is that the land selections are spread out rather than in a contiguous block, which he said could complicate forest management.

Randy Williams, who is president of Natives Without Land Ketchikan and a part of the Southeast Alaska Landless Corp., said picking from available lands while considering community input has been challenging.

"Everybody has a piece of the

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Landless Natives

Continued from page 1

net Ledge, 3,168 on the north end of Wrangell Island around the Shoemaker Bay overlook and Chichagof Peak, 3,275 acres around Lower and Upper Salamander Creek, about 2,000 acres near Turn Island Beach on the southern end of Wrangell Island, almost 5,000 acres on the east side of Zarembo Island near Round Point, and several other blocks in the area.

"We would prefer it (the land selections) to be on Wrangell Island, on the water or really close to the water ... (and) on the road system, so we don't have to build roads to it," said Rinehart. "Yes, that makes it more valuable, but that's kind of the point."

Wrangell business owner Lovey Brock has advocated for the legislation for years. Though she's an avid supporter of a possible urban corporation for Wrangell, she is not certain whether she will get to see one established.

"Other people that have gotten land, that were included in the land claims, they're making money off of their land," she said. "We're still waiting for land. It's been 51, 52 years we've been fighting for this. ... We saw no real reason why Wrangell was left out."

According to an April 2021 letter from the Alaska Natives Without Land Campaign (ANWL), Congress never offered an explanation about why the five communities were excluded under the Alaska

Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971. The group points to political influence from the logging industry and the large non-Native population in Southeast Alaska as factors that may have influenced the decision.

Under ANSCA criteria, communities had to have a majority Native population to be eligible for a corporation and land selections, but many communities which did not meet that requirement were included in the legislation, including Kenai, Sitka, Juneau, Kodiak and Nome.

"Unlike most regions of Alaska, a large population of non-Native settlers had moved into the Southeast region by the early 20th century to exploit the natural resources of what is now the Tongass National Forest," the ANWL letter states. "It is our hope that this historical reality — the arrival of non-Native settlers into the region and their settlement in what were originally Native communities — will not be held against us."

Landless Native communities have been advocating for their cause since the 1970s. Legislation to grant land to the communities was first introduced in the 1990s — always without success.

However, Rinehart is hopeful that the political climate is changing. National environmental groups that have resisted the land transfer in the past have switched to neutral stances. "It's starting to feel like things are lining up," he said.

Brock is less optimistic. "I thought it would happen in my lifetime, but now

I'm not sure," she said. "I don't know if it will happen in my children's lifetime, but maybe my grandchildren."

In 2022, the Petersburg borough assembly sent a letter opposing land transfers from the Tongass National Forest to create new Native corporations. Assembly members cited the fragmentary distribution of the parcels and fears about moving public land into private ownership.

In recent years, the Wrangell borough has not taken an official stance supporting or opposing the legislation.

The assembly discussed the issue with Rinehart at a work session in 2021 and "we in general did not feel the need to vote an approval or disapproval on this subject," Mayor Patty Gilbert said last week. "We ... wanted to understand the process and, more importantly, the possible implications to our borough and our community."

Assembly members were concerned about land access, and that transferring land from the Forest Service to a Native corporation might decrease federal funding to Wrangell, since this funding is dependent on the amount of federal acreage in the borough's taxable boundaries.

Rinehart suggested that once the land had been developed, other tax revenue could offset the lost federal dollars. At the work session, neither he nor the borough had exact numbers on how much money would be lost or gained if a corporation were established.

At a previous town hall meeting with

borough representatives and members of the public, "one of the things that was stressed ... was concern about access to our traditional use of lands," said Gilbert. "The roads and the streams and the views and the fishing and the picnic spots and the secret berry picking spots and if we would somehow be prohibited from enjoying those activities."

The legislation mandates that the proposed corporations would provide public access to the lands they were granted, with a few exceptions. The corporations could limit access to protect cultural resources, conduct scientific research, provide environmental protection, minimize conflicts between recreational and commercial uses and ensure public safety — by preventing people from entering an active construction zone, for example.

Corporations would not be able to arbitrarily put up "no trespassing" signs, Rinehart explained.

Despite her land-access concerns, Gilbert believes the legislation could have advantages for tribal citizens and the borough. "I can see a really beneficial aspect to this," she said. "I can see them developing lodges and ecotourism activities. I think that could entice a lot of visitors here to Wrangell and make Wrangell a destination. I see a lot of possibilities, but I also see and hear concerns from citizens."

She said she is taking a neutral stance on the issue.

Family Resilience Fair looking for organizations to participate in event

By CAROLEINE JAMES
Sentinel reporter

The sixth annual Family Resilience Fair will bring games, prizes and educational resources to the community on Oct. 14 at the Nolan Center. BRAVE Wrangell, a domestic violence prevention organization whose name stands for Building Respect and Valuing Everyone, is organizing the event.

Since the fair is a little over a month away, BRAVE is seeking community organizations to get involved, specifically those that support families, explained member Kay Larsen.

"School groups, faith communities, health-related agencies ... anything with a special focus or emphasis on children and families" would be a good fit for the fair and should consider setting up a booth, she said.

Preventing domestic violence starts with building connections between community members and ensuring that people know about the resources that are available. This task can be uniquely tricky on an island, where many services don't have a brick-and-mortar location in town.

"Wrangell is served by so many organizations that aren't located in the community," explained Maleah Nore, a volunteer with BRAVE. "There are a lot of services that are provided by, say, SEARHC or the University of Alaska ... that you might not be familiar with because they don't have an office downtown or something. It's also nice to put a friendly face on the things that you're interested in."

Children, parents, aunts, uncles, elders, parents of "fur babies" and "everyone and anyone" are encouraged to attend, said Nore. Though domestic violence prevention is a serious task, organizers plan to bring a healthy dose of fun to the fair. Each booth is encouraged to set up an activity of some kind, like a prize wheel or an oversized game of connect four.

In past years, when she's had the chance to attend, Nore's favorite things about the fair have been the chance to socialize and the opportunity to learn new things. Though she prides herself on staying abreast of family resources in Southeast, she is always surprised by new programs she didn't know about.

"It is a resilience-oriented fair, but you show up and it really is just a fun time," she said.

The organization will also celebrate any new babies that were born to Wrangell families over the past year.

BRAVE is still in the early planning stages of the fair, but some programs have already committed to setting up booths, like Community Roots, a group for members of the LGBTQ community and allies. Planning will continue at the upcoming BRAVE meeting Sept. 2 at 2 p.m. in the library.

"We're trying to make sure that folks are aware of what resources and support are available so that regardless of what ... hardship they might be going through they're not going through it alone," said Nore. "The more connected people are, the less at risk they are for any type of violence or illness, you name it."

A fresh coat



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Parks and Recreation Department staffers Erik Scheib, left, and Lane Fitzjarrald work on painting, sealing and providing fixes to the outside of the community gym building on Aug. 22. In a separate project, replacement of the exterior siding at the swimming pool, along with repairs to rot-damaged wood at the building, continues under a contract with Johnson Construction. That work has been delayed while the contractor waits for materials to arrive.

Petersburg housing review sees need for over 300 more units

By THOMAS COPELAND
KFSK, Petersburg

Housing is a big concern for communities across Southeast Alaska, from Ketchikan to Skagway and every town in between.

In Petersburg, the results of a community survey indicate that more than 300 housing units may need to be built or renovated over the next decade.

The borough assembly set up the housing task force to research and address the problem. The survey results were reviewed at a task force meeting on Aug. 17, where Assembly Member Dave Kensing said: "I think we need to figure out a way to start building more housing. It's pretty simple. If we don't deal with it, we won't have as many people in town."

Kensing said that's the easy part of the solution. The hard part is what type of housing. To

answer that question, the task force launched its community housing needs survey. It ran for a month in the summer, overseen by Anchorage-based Agnew Beck Consulting.

Katie Scovic, senior manager at Agnew Beck, explained the results to the task force. "We had 366 responses. ... That's about 10% of the population and a really great rate for this kind of survey."

The survey was 10 pages long with 39 questions: A quarter of respondents aren't happy with their housing, and most of those who aren't happy are under 45 years old, working and renting. Most of them want to move into family homes, but apartments and duplexes are popular too. About 80% of all respondents want to see more land with utilities opened up for housing.

In addition, the survey shows that a lack of skilled labor and the cost of repair is holding people back from renovating their homes.

Scovic said that even those who don't fall under any of those categories still care about this issue. "The majority of Petersburg residents are satisfied with their own housing," she said. "But also the majority of residents say that housing is a community issue. And so to see both of those things, at the same time, is encouraging."

The team at Agnew Beck have been sifting through all that data to calculate what housing they think Petersburg needs.

"According to our housing need forecasts over the next 10 years, there's a need for roughly 316 housing units in Petersburg,"

said Scovic. "We're really looking at about six new units a year and 18 rehab or renovation units each year for the next 10 years."

The consultants will submit their final report at the end of September.

Kensing said time is short. "The time to do something was 10 years ago," he said. "If we want to keep a vibrant community and we just don't want a community of a bunch of retirees, we need to address the housing problem now — not next year."

Stories of housing searches are common around Petersburg.

The community has a new fourth grade teacher this fall — Sharon Paulson. She moved to Petersburg this summer. She started looking for housing soon after signing her contract in March.

"I looked on Zillow, which was laughable," said Paulson. "Someone said check on Facebook, and I saw that there really wasn't very much there. I looked with the realtor companies, both of them. I had my (school) administrators putting the word out for people. We had a list of Airbnbs to ask if maybe they would rent to us."

After nearly two months of searching, Paulson spotted a classified ad in the newspaper.

"That was the last hope that I had for being able to find housing," she said. "It really was like, if we can't find housing, we can't make this move. So when we finally did find a house and our offer was accepted, like I could visibly see the stress fall off of my husband's face."

Landless legislation

Continued from page 7

pie. And we're coming in late, basically picking up the crumbs of that pie and that's sort of our lands selection," Williams said. "So, yes, it is a checkerboard process for us. But it's one that we try to be cognizant of the community and community needs."

Rebecca Knight, a 48-year Petersburg resident, is also a vocal opponent. She has raised several issues and said her "overriding concern" is for the environment. "The basis for my opposition is multifold but the bottom line is we cannot be affording to cut any more of our precious old growth."

In Congress, few lawmakers outside of the Alaska delegation have supported the bill. In the House of Representatives, Re-

publican Minnesota Rep. Pete Stauber co-sponsored the bill with Alaska Democratic Rep. Mary Peltola, citing in part upholding the late Alaska Republican Rep. Don Young's legacy.

But Rinehart, the landless advocate, said finding other co-sponsors has been difficult. During a July trip to Washington, D.C., Rinehart and other supporters met with lawmakers and staff. While Rinehart said the conversations were "more open and trying to be understanding," no one committed to joining the legislation.

During the Senate committee work last year Murkowski withdrew the bill from a committee vote, signaling it did not have enough support to advance.

Native artist and fisherman Gary Stevens dies at 53

A memorial service will be held for Gary Albert Stevens at 5 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 31, at the Chief Shakes House on Shakes Island in Wrangell, followed by a reception and potluck at the American Legion.

Stevens, 53, passed away in June in his Las Vegas home of natural causes.

When he was 23, he started a canoe project which culminated with a dedication of the newly carved canoe in 1998. The Wrangell Canoe Committee consisted of Gary Stevens, John Martin and Bruce Jamieson who got master carvers Steve Brown and Israel Shotridge to assist Gary as an

apprentice carver with input from carvers Nathan Jackson and Will Burkhart and countless communities who came together to celebrate the dedication of the Wrangell Canoe. Funding was provided by grants from Rasmuson Foundation and community members who bought raffle tickets and shirts

His dad insisted he and his younger Mark brother go fishing whether trolling, smelt seining, salmon seining, winter bait herring or participating in the Sitka Sound sac roe herring fishery and in later years shrimp trawling. Their dad took them commercial fishing aboard the Rose Ann and Fleet, both leased from Ray Woods of Petersburg Processors. "When we bought the seiner Miss Susan, he took them out as crew members in training when they were 5 and 3 years old," his family wrote.

"At the age of 15 months Gary experienced a

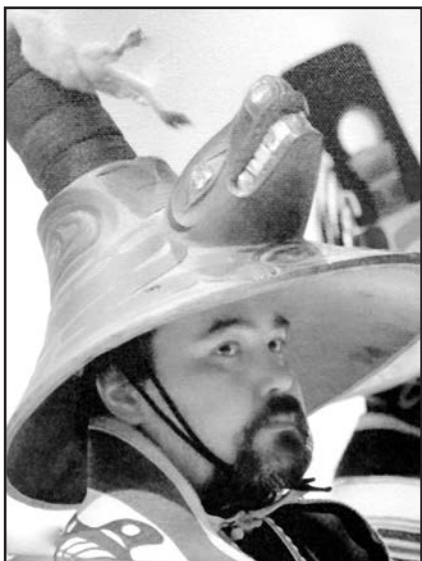


PHOTO BY ARLENE BJORGE WOODWARD
Gary Albert Stevens

near-death experience while we were leaving Lituya Bay in the Gulf of Alaska when we got our pilot house windows smashed out by two 22-foot waves," his family wrote. "He did not utter a cry as he got doused by icy cold glacier-fed water."

In addition to those listed in his obituary in the Aug. 23 Wrangell Sentinel, Gary was preceded in death by his grand-aunts Christine Jenkins, Flora Feller, Shirley Bergland, Clara Feller-Webster and cousins Diana Marie Knapp and Leslie Suzanne Simmons, Albert Feller Jr. and Robert Christopher "Bobby" Feller.

In addition to survivors listed in the Aug. 23 obituary, he is survived by Linnea Brooks' sons Frank Churchill Jr. and Rick Churchill; cousins Gary and Tracy Bean, James Pritchett, Russell and Rebecca Stevens, Rachel Youens, Marca Mork, Leslie Smith, Jerry Hunter Knapp, John Fowler III, Naomi Fowler, Christopher Raven Feller, Chuck, Shelley, James and Josh Jenkins, Thomas Otto Feller, Debbie Eddings, Vella Sorensen, Michelle Clark, Kendra and Brian Kloster, Brandy Jenkins Grina, Ron, Fred and Kyle Simmons, Michelle Garlick, Erma Feller, Thomas "Buzz" Feller, Samantha Feller, Robert Feller, Lacie Sheldon and many cousins from the Moreno and Miyasayo families; plus numerous nieces and nephews.

Ferry system advisory board recommends emergency hiring powers

By MEREDITH JORDAN
Juneau Empire

The Alaska Marine Highway System Operations Board — an advisory panel created last year — wants the Dunleavy administration and the state Legislature to grant emergency powers for hiring personnel to the ferry system's marine director.

The system has suffered chronic shortages of workers for more than two years, forcing cuts in service to coastal communities. Despite spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on consultants' reports, hiring bonuses and paying a private firm to recruit new employees, the system remains far short of its hiring needs.

The board approved the motion without dissent at its meeting Friday, Aug. 25.

Board members also approved a second motion, rec-

ommending that the state fund an apprenticeship and training program for new and existing ferry workers using federal and state money.

The board has been under pressure to propose hiring solutions to management. As of Aug. 18, the Alaska Marine Highway System was "still down 10 wheelhouse positions," said Sam Dapceovich, a spokesperson for the ferry system. The ferries were short 54 licensed personnel, including engineers, bosuns, able bodied seaman and junior engineers.

A leading issue in hiring personnel has been that other maritime employers pay better. That is particularly true for the Washington State Ferries, Craig Tornga, the Alaska system's marine director, told the board.

The advisory panel's motion calls on Gov. Mike Dunleavy and the Legislature to grant "emergency powers and ongoing variances to personnel processes to pro-

vide the (Marine Highway System) director the flexibility to offer comparative wages and compensation packages for targeted positions both permanent and temporary."

The state cannot unilaterally change the wage scales for ferry workers — they are covered by union contracts.

Many Alaska ferry jobs pay about 10% more than aboard the Washington State Ferries. The starting wage for a first-year ordinary seaman, a deck worker aboard the vessels, is \$25.66 an hour in Washington versus \$28.42 for the Alaska Marine Highway.

Washington workers, however, are due for a substantial raise under their contract effective July 1, 2024, to \$27.20 an hour, narrowing the pay gap with Alaska, where an ordinary seaman will go to \$29.24 under their contract next year.

State rejects initiative for legislative term limits

By JAMES BROOKS
Alaska Beacon

Lt. Gov. Nancy Dahlstrom has rejected a proposed legislative term-limits ballot measure, citing a Department of Law legal analysis that found the measure was likely unconstitutional.

"The precedent set by the Alaska Supreme Court establishes that legislative term limits violate the Alaska Constitution," she wrote in an Aug. 23 letter directed to the sponsors of the measure.

As written, the proposed ballot measure would have limited state legislators to no more than 12 consecutive years in office and no more than 20 years in total.

"I'm unhappy about it," said Elijah Verhagen of Nenana. He cosponsored the measure with Heath Smith of Homer and Trevor Shaw of Ketchikan. "To

say that it would be unconstitutional, in my opinion, is a cop-out," Verhagen said.

Proponents could challenge the state's determination, but without a challenge the term limits measure will not advance to the signature-gathering stage and will not appear before voters next year.

Various groups attempted in the 1990s to impose term limits on state legislators and Alaska's members of Congress, but each was ruled unconstitutional.

In 1994, the Alaska Supreme Court ruled that because the Alaska Constitution sets the qualifications for legislative office, and because the constitution does not set term limits for legislators, "the only way that term limits might be imposed would be a constitutional amendment."

Verhagen and Smith said they don't agree with that interpreta-

tion. Article 1, Section 2, of the Alaska Constitution states that "all political power is inherent in the people," Smith said.

"I think that should override every other consideration," he said, and based on that principle, he believes that Alaska voters should be allowed the chance to decide term limits.

Smith said he was "discouraged" by the lieutenant governor's decision and that the sponsors have begun considering whether to challenge that decision in court. "We'll see, but we're not going to give up."

An alternative approach could involve the Alaska Legislature, he suggested. Lawmakers could vote to put a constitutional amendment on the ballot.

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Federal money will fund program for students to learn canoe carving

By CLAIRE STREMPLE
Alaska Beacon

Federal money for arts, culture and educational programs will fund the creation of two dugout canoes in Southeast Alaska.

Goldbelt Heritage Foundation, the nonprofit arm of Goldbelt, the Native corporation for Juneau, will teach Alaska Native youth how to carve canoes with nearly a quarter-million dollars in grant funding from the National Park Service. The goal is to teach Tlingit culture while applying the principles of science, technology, engineering and math education to canoe making.

The National Park Service awarded the grant of \$243,457 to Goldbelt Heritage Foundation on Aug. 15.

Desiree Jackson, Goldbelt Heritage Foundation executive director, said the four-year grant will fund the start of a continuing education program that will uphold stories behind the traditional use of the canoe.

"We want to grow this momentum around youth paddling and utilization of the yaak'w (canoe) because this is another sport and activity youth should be engaged with," she said.

Goldbelt Heritage Foundation will create courses around the building of dugout canoes. "There is so much undocumented curriculum around navigation," she said. "How did we use the stars? How did

we use waypoints?"

The program is called "Daak Yaylatsaak," which means "push the boat out" in the Tlingit language. Jackson said the goal is for the program to be run through classrooms in Southeast during school, which she said is important for Alaska students as part of place-based education.

The group aims to host a regional youth canoe gathering within the next few years.

The money is part of the first round of awards for the Native Hawaiian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development grant program. The National Park Service administers the grant using funds appropriated by Congress.

National Park Service Director Chuck Sams said the project will provide educational programming while it continues traditional practices for youth in Southeast.

The National Park Service awards the grants for scholarly study and instruction of contemporary arts and culture, to establish educational programs that lead to degrees in Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian art and culture programs, or to develop arts in the community. Private, nonprofit groups that primarily serve Native Hawaiian or Alaska Native communities and are recognized by the governor of Hawaii or Alaska are eligible.

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Governor names radio show host to commercial fishing post

By NATHANIEL HERZ
Northern Journal

Gov. Mike Dunleavy has appointed a Republican advertising consultant and talk show host to a highly paid state government job overseeing commercial fishing permits.

Dunleavy this month appointed Mike Porcaro of Anchorage as one of two commissioners overseeing the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission, or CFEC — a Juneau-based agency with some 20 employees. The commission issues annual commercial fishing permits, grants and denies permit transfers in the event of illnesses and deaths and publishes fisheries reports and statistics.

Porcaro is a Dunleavy ally whose communications firm has worked for the governor's campaigns, and who has hosted the governor as a guest on his talk radio show.

Porcaro will work in his new state job remotely from his home in Anchorage, continue hosting his daily radio program from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. and run his advertising agency outside work hours, he said.

Porcaro's new job would pay \$136,000 a year if he works full time, but he may work less than that and will only be paid for the hours he reports having worked, said Glenn Haight, the other commissioner.

Porcaro, 75, has never been a commercial fisherman and didn't ask for the job, but he said he was willing to take it when Dunleavy's office made him the offer.

"All I'm doing is trying to answer a call of service, and I'm going to do the best job I can do," Porcaro said in an interview Thursday, Aug. 24.

In a prepared statement,

a Dunleavy spokesman, Jeff Turner, called Porcaro a "long-time Alaskan and successful business owner with comprehensive knowledge and participation in Alaska's business, nonprofit and public policy spheres."

"His background will bring fresh insights and perspectives to the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission," Turner said.

To keep his new job, Porcaro will have to be confirmed by the Legislature.

While many past CFEC commissioners have either worked as attorneys or had some level of experience in or around commercial fisheries, that's not a requirement: State law says appointees should have a "broad range of professional experience" and no economic stake in commercial fishing permits or boats.

Kodiak Rep. Louise Stutes, a member of the House Fisheries Committee who has tracked the commission's work, said: "It just seems like an odd appointment to me when you have no knowledge of the fishing industry."

CFEC was established in the 1970s after Alaska voters approved a constitutional amendment to limit access to the

state's commercial fisheries — a right that had previously been guaranteed to all residents.

The commission's original focus was deciding which fisheries to limit and deciding which commercial fishermen would get the valuable permits, based on their past history in the industry. But that work was largely finished by 2010: Commissioners' decisions on individual permits, known as adjudications, dropped from dozens a year to just two or three.

A pair of critical audits around that time suggested that CFEC's highly paid commissioners could be reduced to part-time or replaced by members of the governor's cabinet.

But the commissioners and commercial fisheries interests lobbied against proposed bills that would have reduced commissioners' salaries and transferred CFEC's duties to the Department of Fish and Game.

Veteran commercial fisherman and industry lobbyist Bobby Thorstenson acknowledged that a commissioner appointment is "one of the most plum jobs up there."

This article was originally published in the Northern Journal, a newsletter from Nathaniel Herz.

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- Continental breakfast
- Shuttle to and from the airport or ferry terminal

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CITY MARKET INC

Help Wanted!

City Market is accepting applications for the following positions:

- Second assistant store director
- Delivery driver
- Cashiers
- Stockers
- Deli supervisor
- Deli clerk

Sentry Hardware is also looking to add to their team.

NOTE: City Market will have detailed descriptions for each position available in the front office.

907-874-3333

Police report

Monday, Aug. 21
 Suspicious incident.
 Illegal parking.
 Trespass.
 Trespass.
 Suspicious circumstance.
 Suspicious circumstance.

Tuesday, Aug. 22
 Deer complaint.
 Drugs.
 Traffic stop.
 Traffic stop.

Wednesday, Aug. 23
 Agency assist: Ambulances requested at the ferry terminal after small fire aboard the Columbia.
 Traffic stop: Verbal warning for speed.
 Theft/unfounded: Property was moved and returned to the owner.
 Traffic stop: Verbal warning for speed.
 Traffic complaint: Disorderly conduct.
 Agency assist: Pre-trial.

Thursday, Aug. 24
 Traffic complaint: People speeding around on four-wheelers.

Agency assist: U.S. Forest Service.
 Tresspass: Report of juveniles jumping off the dock at Reliance.
 Parental issue: Dispute.

Friday, Aug. 25
 Noise disturbance: Traffic stop.
 Noise disturbance.
 Assault.
 Agency assist: Fire Department.
 Theft.

Saturday, Aug. 26
 Motor vehicle accident.
 Agency assist: Public Works.
 Traffic stop: Citation issued for speeding.
 Citizen assist.
 Fireworks complaint.

Sunday, Aug. 27
 Found property.
 Agency assist: Ambulance requested.
 Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.
 Citizen assist.
 Motor vehicle accident.
 Found property.
 Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.
 Traffic stop: Verbal warning for driving habits.

Federal agency rejects endangered species status for Southeast's Archipelago wolves

By JAMES BROOKS
 Alaska Beacon

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has again rejected a request to list Southeast Alaska's Alexander Archipelago wolves as endangered or threatened.

The wolves, found in Southeast Alaska and British Columbia, range among the region's large, old trees and are a subspecies of gray wolves.

Putting the wolves on the endangered species list, either as endangered or threatened, likely would have resulted in new restrictions on development, logging and construction in the region. The state of Alaska opposed the idea, which was put forward by three environmental groups.

"Alaska is pleased with the (Fish and Wildlife) Service's decision that listing the Alexander Archipelago wolf is not warranted at this time," said Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game by email. "The Service found these wolves are not at risk of becoming endangered with extinction, and that Alaska's management of these wolves is sustainable."

It's the third time since 1993 that the federal government has declined to put the wolves on the endangered species list de-

spite petitions and lawsuits filed by environmental organizations. Earlier petitions were rejected in 1997 and 2016, but the Fish and Wildlife Service had indicated that it might decide otherwise this time around. In 2021, it published a notice saying that a listing might be warranted.

It concluded otherwise on Aug. 22: "The extensive review process found that Alexander Archipelago wolf is not currently endangered throughout its range, nor likely to become so within the foreseeable future," the agency said.

Cooper Freeman is a senior advocate for the Center for Biological Diversity, a group behind all three endangered species list requests.

"We're reviewing the impacts of the decision, but the Fish and Wildlife Service continues to fail to protect these unique and imperiled wolves," he said, adding that his organization will "continue to do everything possible to keep them from sliding into extinction."

Environmental groups have been particularly concerned with wolves on Prince of Wales Island, which are subject to legal hunting and trapping. Those wolves roam among the island's old-growth forests and hunt Sitka blacktail deer be-

tween logging parcels. Resident hunters and state biologists have concluded that the hunts are sustainable, a belief challenged by environmental groups who say the state is overestimating the wolf population. That belief has driven the request for federal protections.

In its analysis, the Fish and Wildlife Service concluded that the Prince of Wales Island wolves are the most threatened group of wolves in Southeast Alaska, but scientists said that even they demonstrate "stable population trends."

Even if the Prince of Wales wolves died off — something that occurred in one of three scenarios analyzed by Fish and Wildlife — those wolves represent less than a fifth of all wolves in the subspecies in Southeast Alaska and coastal British Columbia.

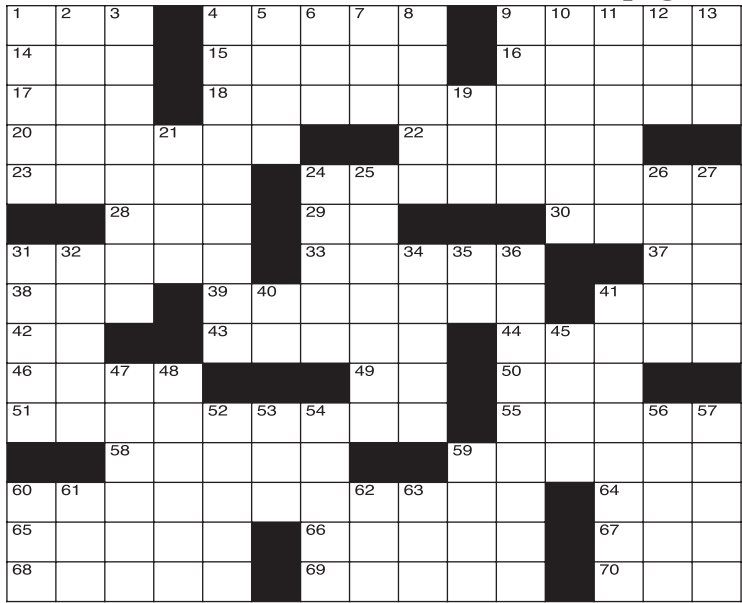
That was a key finding, said environmental groups familiar with the new decision.

"Thus, after assessing the best available information, we conclude that the Alexander Archipelago wolf is not likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all of its range," the agency said.

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Crossword

Answers on page 12



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Midway between east and southeast
- 4. At right angles to a ship's length
- 9. William Penn's business partner
- 14. ___ de plume
- 15. Accomplished soccer coach
- 16. Bone cavities
- 17. ___ juris: independent
- 18. Popular Philly sandwich
- 20. Northern Ireland county
- 22. Performing artist
- 23. SSS
- 24. Lacks flavor
- 28. Commercials
- 29. Anno Domini (in the year of Our Lord)
- 30. Qatar's capital
- 31. Indigenous peoples of Alberta
- 33. Popular footwear
- 37. Indicates position
- 38. Anglican cathedral
- 39. Aircraft part
- 41. Before
- 42. Blood group
- 43. Secretary organ
- 44. Fencing swords
- 46. The small projection of a mammary gland
- 49. Technological advancement
- 50. Male parent
- 51. Dissociable
- 55. More cold
- 58. Cape Verde Islands capital
- 59. Blood disorder
- 60. Creative
- 64. Sun up in New York
- 65. Made angry
- 66. Relieves
- 67. Brooklyn hoopster
- 68. Seasonsings
- 69. Movable barriers
- 70. Attempt

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Occur as a result of
- 2. Spiritual essences
- 3. Representative
- 4. Entering
- 5. Nobel Prize-winning physicist
- 6. Midway between northeast and east
- 7. Consumed
- 8. Tablelands
- 9. Kids' craft accessory
- 10. Not known
- 11. Sound directed through two or more speakers
- 12. A major division of geological time
- 13. Wild ox
- 19. Shock treatment
- 21. Turner and Lasso are two
- 24. Genus of flowering plants
- 25. Relating to ductless glands
- 26. Stock certificate
- 27. Satisfies
- 31. Places to enjoy a rest
- 32. Edward __, author and writer
- 34. "___ but goodie"
- 35. One hundredth of a liter
- 36. Shabbiness
- 40. TV personality Roker
- 41. Triangular upper part of a building
- 45. Speed at which you move
- 47. Offend
- 48. A reference point to shoot at
- 52. Forays
- 53. Biblical city
- 54. Blatted
- 56. Northern sea duck
- 57. Shabby (slang)
- 59. Allege
- 60. Tax collector
- 61. Whereabouts unknown
- 62. Chinese philosophical principle
- 63. Indicates equal

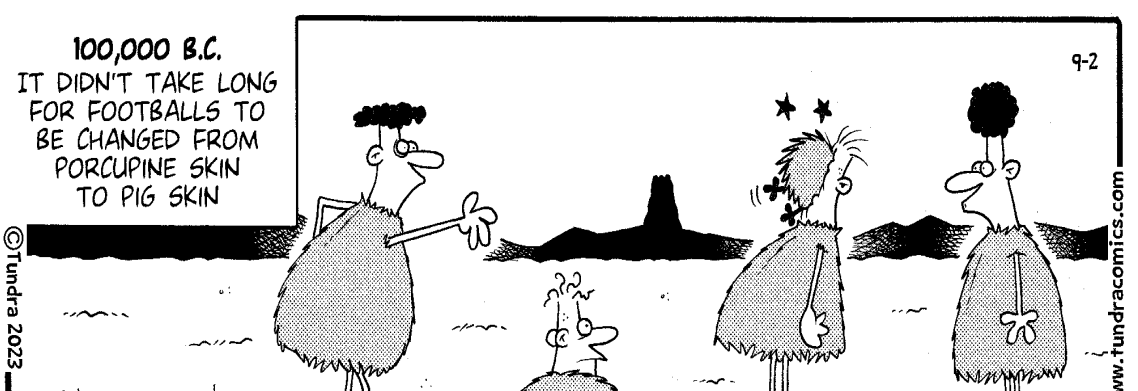
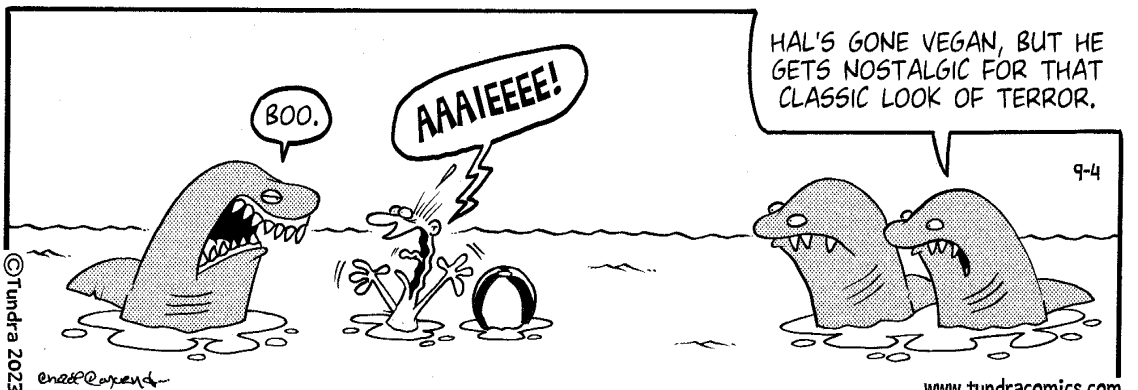
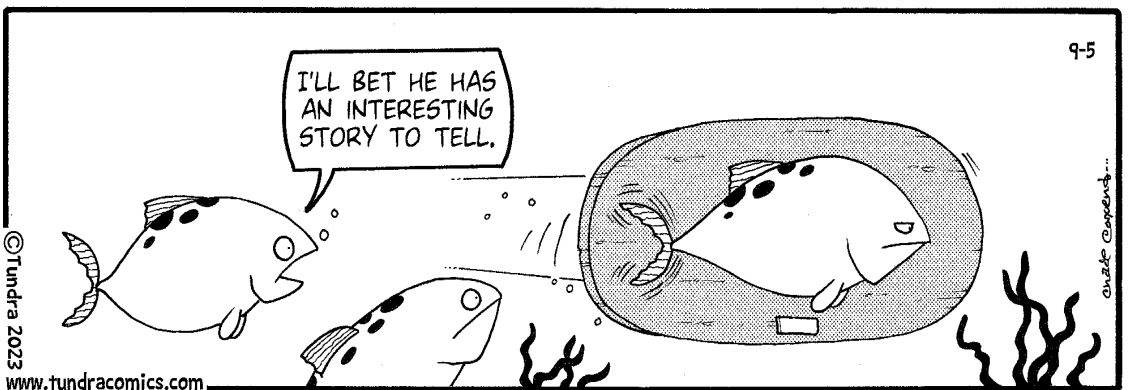
Ritter's River

by Marc Lutz



Tundra

by Chad Carpenter



CLASSIFIED

HELP WANTED

KSTK/CoastAlaska is seeking a development director. Responsible for securing financial support for KSTK and CoastAlaska stations, planning and executing KSTK events. Full time, with benefits. Send resume and letter of interest to cindy@kstk.org.

HELP WANTED

Wrangell Chamber of Commerce is looking for an executive director. Contact the chamber in person or email info@wrangellchamber.com, or call 907-874-3901 with any questions and how to apply. Pay DOE.

HELP WANTED

Wrangell Public Schools is accepting applications for the following extracurricular positions for the 2023-2024 school year:

- Art Festival Adviser
- Baseball Head Coach and Assistant Coach
- Basketball, Boys Middle School Assistant Coach
- Class Advisers:
- Freshmen Class
- Senior Class Co-adviser
- Softball Assistant Coach
- Elementary Student Council Adviser
- Yearbook Adviser

For more information and detailed job description, please contact the District Office at 907-874-2347. These positions are open until filled. It is Wrangell Public School District policy to not discriminate based on age, race, color, national origin, sex or disability.

LAND FOR SALE

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

FREE ADS

Do you have something to sell? Having a garage sale? Looking to buy something? Classified ads for individuals and community groups are free in the Sentinel. Contact Amber at 907-874-2301 or email wrgsent@gmail.com.

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

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

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

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

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

Applications and job descriptions may be obtained and returned to Robbie Marshall at City Hall, 205 Brueger Street (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 9992 or via email at rmarshall@wrangell.com.

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

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

Publish Aug. 30 and Sept. 6, 2023

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Publish Aug. 23 and 30, 2023

**CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL
JOB ADVERTISEMENT
Electric Utility Superintendent
Wrangell Municipal Light and Power**

The City and Borough of Wrangell is recruiting for an **Electric Utility Superintendent** to lead the Borough's Light and Power Department. The position will be posted for no less than 9 days and will remain open until filled. Applications will be reviewed as received.

Under the direction of the Borough Manager, the Electric Utility Superintendent plans, directs, coordinates, and supervises the activities and personnel of Wrangell Municipal Light & Power, including all construction, operations, personnel, and maintenance activities in the department.

The Superintendent performs regular evaluations and directs maintenance tasks to ensure proper generation and distribution operation, oversees the operation, maintenance and repair of the diesel generating plant and distribution system. They are responsible for all electrical maintenance, new work in power plant, overseeing and performing building maintenance, and repair duties to ensure that all power plant structures, and distribution infrastructure are safe and operating efficiently. Additionally, they provide leadership to all electrical employees, prepare an annual budget for the electrical department and reports to the Borough Manager on the electrical department's operations.

Preferred education and experience include completion of an electrical apprenticeship program or trade school diploma, as well as extensive industrial maintenance and electrical work experience. Requires experience with contract bidding, good verbal and interpersonal skills, thorough knowledge of required electrical codes and standards as well as the ability to inspect building electrical systems. Mechanical knowledge and skill to oversee operations, maintenance and repair of diesel generators safely and efficiently is expected.

This is a full-time, salaried position with full benefits, at Grade 30. The full job description and employment application can be found online at www.wrangell.com/jobs.

To be considered, submit a cover letter, résumé, and completed employment application via e-mail to rmarshall@wrangell.com, or in person to City Hall, 205 Brueger St., Wrangell, AK 99929.

The City and Borough of Wrangell is an equal opportunity employer.

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

Publish Aug. 23 and 30, 2023

**STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF FORESTRY & FIRE PROTECTION
SOUTHEAST AREA OFFICE
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Kaikli Cove Timber Sale (SSE-1381-K)**

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry & Fire Protection (DOF), gives formal notice per AS 38.05.945 that it intends to negotiate with a purchaser under the authority of AS 38.05.118 using a request for proposal process for the purchase of commercial timber in the Kaikli Cove Timber Sale (SSE-1381-K). The timber will be marketed to a list of local mills and interested parties maintained by the DOF Southeast Area Office. The saw log volume to be offered totals approximately 825 thousand board feet (MBF).

The DOF is offering one timber sale composed of two units for negotiated purchase, the Kaikli Cove Timber Sale, administratively referred to as SSE -1381-K. The area of the sale is proximate to the community of Naukati on Prince of Wales Island. The timber sale area is within Section 17 and 18, Township 69 South, Range 80 East, Copper River Meridian (CRM). The sale area is within the Craig D-4 NW USGS quadrangle. The main access for this sale area is from the existing Prince of Wales Road System, specifically the Naukati (2060000) Road. The timber is predominately old growth composed of western red cedar, western hemlock, Sitka spruce and Alaska yellow cedar on approximately 49 acres.

Proposers must submit a copy of their current Alaska Business License. The business license copy may accompany the proposal. For a proposal to qualify, proposers are required to submit a bid deposit amount of 5% of the total bid value. The successful purchaser is also required to deposit a performance bond with the State of \$10,000.00 and a stumpage deposit of 5% of the total sale value at the signing of the contract. The term of the contract is three years.

Copies of the Request for Proposal information package are available for review at the division's Area Office, the division's web site along with the State Online Public Notice System at <http://notice.alaska.gov/212189>.

If your firm is interested in purchasing this sale, please provide this office with a completed proposal. Send to the attention of Greg Staunton at the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, 2417 Tongass Avenue, Suite 213, Ketchikan, Alaska 99901 no later than 2 p.m. September 18, 2023. Proposers are responsible for assuring that their complete proposal is delivered on time.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SUBMIT COMMENTS CONTACT:

Alaska Division of Forestry and Fire Protection	Contact:	Greg Staunton
2417 Tongass Avenue, Suite 213	Phone:	907-225-3070
Ketchikan, AK 99901	Email:	greg.staunton@alaska.gov

The State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry & Fire Protection complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Individuals with disabilities who may need help with bidding should contact the Division of Forestry & Fire Protection at (907) 225-3070 to make any necessary arrangements.

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Thousands of Alaskans lose Medicaid as state reviews eligibility

By CLAIRE STREMPLE
Alaska Beacon

The number of Alaskans covered by Medicaid has dropped by more than 14,000 since April, after federal protections for the health care benefits ended with expiration of the COVID-19 emergency declaration.

The number losing their benefits may increase as the state continues the process of determining who still meets eligibility requirements — the reviews were halted during the national emergency declaration.

And while many Alaskans are losing their coverage or waiting to hear if they will, the state's Health Department continues working to clear a backlog of new Medicaid applicants that has piled up at the Division of Public Assistance since last year.

The federal government recently told the Department of Health that it is concerned about the lost-coverage rate and also how delays in processing new applications may impede equitable access to

care and exceed time limits for determining whether applicants for Medicaid are eligible.

Medicaid is the primary health coverage for low-income Americans. As of the end of the state's 2022 fiscal year last June, almost 500 Wrangell households were receiving Medicaid benefits — close to half the households in the community.

State officials say they're making progress on processing Medicaid applications, but another issue — a simultaneous backlog in food stamp applications — has been a priority.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services sent letters to all states that assessed their performance on three measurements — call center performance, paperwork issues and slow processing times. Most are behind on at least one. Only Alaska, Florida, Montana, New Mexico and Rhode Island are behind on all three.

The periodic checks on whether people remain Medicaid-eligible, known as "re-

determinations" or "renewals" were halted by the federal government at the beginning of the pandemic in 2020 and restarted in May. Eligibility depends on income and other factors, such as pregnancy.

The state has processed nearly 19,000 of the roughly 260,000 redeterminations it must make in the next year and a half. Of the redeterminations the state has reported, nearly 30% of Alaskans lost coverage because of problems with their paperwork. The federal government said the high rate indicates that people aren't getting notices to renew, that they cannot understand them or that they are unable to submit their new forms.

Workers have completed a small part of a large task of redeterminations and already many Alaskans have lost coverage. Medicaid enrollment in Alaska dropped by 14,398, from 264,649 on April 30 to 250,251 by the end of July, according to state statistics.

The state began the renewal process in spring. In May and June, it looked at 4,000 re-

newals each month. In each of those months, roughly 3,000 Alaskans came off the Medicaid rolls as a result, whether because they were found ineligible or had not completed their paperwork.

Deb Etheridge, who became the director of the Division of Public Assistance earlier this year, said she is working with a data consultant to better understand the reasons behind the paperwork issues.

The backlog of food stamp applications affects roughly 19,000 Alaskans. State workers say the backlogs are a result of chronic understaffing and deep workforce cuts as well as outdated computer systems. As a result of the efforts to dig out from under the two backlogs, the state is late in processing 40% of new Medicaid applications.

"Until we're sort of cleared of that backlog, they're always going to be factored into our timeliness" handling new applications, Etheridge said.

She said the state has already made progress on the food stamp backlog, with only 3,000 applications left

to determine their eligibility. Etheridge aims to have those processed by October.

Alaska has more time than other states to finish processing Medicaid renewals. Most states have 12 months to process Medicaid renewals and remove people who no longer qualify for coverage. However, Alaska's high rural population contributed to a federal extension that gives the state 18 months to review the roughly quarter-million residents who are enrolled in Medicaid.

Etheridge said people usually have 90 days to get late paperwork to the state after they lose Medicaid coverage, but while these renewals are happening the state has doubled that to 180 days.

The Legislature in March approved a fast-track spending bill to hire more staff for the Division of Public Assistance. Five months after the funding was appropriated, Etheridge is waiting for the state to post 15 new job openings.

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

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PUZZLE SOLUTION

First-time state report lists 24 missing Alaska Natives

By CLAIRE STREMPLE
Alaska Beacon

According to a new state report, nearly 200 Alaska Native or American Indian people went missing between the beginning of April and the end of June in Alaska. Two dozen of them have not been found.

Violence against American Indian and Alaska Native people far exceeds the national average and Alaska has one of the highest rates of missing and murdered Indigenous people in the United States. The problem especially affects women and girls. In Alaska, calls for justice preceded Gov. Mike Dunleavy's formation of a Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Council in December 2021.

The Alaska Department of Public Safety had a seat on the council and officials learned that communities and nonprofit organizations wanted more access to data, said department spokesperson Austin McDaniel. The department began work this spring on the Missing Alaska Natives and American Indians report as a result.

"We took a hard look at listen-

ing to some of the pieces of data that these groups were looking for," he said. "This is certainly the first effort by the Department of Public Safety, as well as the state troopers to go through and produce a report that is this granular and detailed."

McDaniel said the report is a public tool for policymakers and the community to better understand the scope of the issue in the state. So far, the Department of Public Safety is working through the Alaska State Troopers and with the Anchorage Police Department, but McDaniel said officials hope to expand their work by partnering with other police departments in the state.

The report, which the state plans to publish quarterly, includes information from multiple law enforcement databases. McDaniel said one important piece is the circumstances of the missing individual. There are three categories: environmental, suspicious and non-suspicious. Environmental refers to people who go missing in the wilderness. Suspicious cases are those where law enforcement have reasonable belief that a crime

is linked to the case, such as kidnapping, trafficking or murder. Non-suspicious cases are those where no crime is suspected.

Those are data points that Charlene Aqpiq Apok, executive director of the research nonprofit Data for Indigenous Justice, said she has been asking the state's law enforcement to provide for years.

"It's a step in the right direction. I think we have a long way to go in building trust in our community, especially on this issue," she said. "Having improved data should also equate to improved services and improved relationships and improved response to the cases of missing folks here in Alaska."

She said she's happy to see the state publicly report new data fields because the numbers represent real experiences and people who are loved and missed by their families and communities.

Apok began tracking missing and murdered Indigenous people in 2018, she said, when the Alaska Federation of Natives wanted to read the names of loved ones at a rally and discovered that there was no list. She said families came forward with names and stories. Apok was then entrusted with the list. She formed Data for Indigenous Justice in 2020 and released a first Alaska-specific report the following year.

Apok said she hopes to see the state report more data about the race and ethnicity of missing people, since there are more than 200 tribes in the state. She said she would also like to see the person's home city or village, since that can differ from where the report is made.

The state's report is one of the key pieces of its response to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous People movement, McDaniel said, but it isn't the only piece. Since 2022, the Department of Public Safety has added four Missing and Murdered Indigenous People investigators to its staff. The agency has also updated its missing persons operations to include posting its data publicly to a federal database called NamUs within a month, "which was not a common practice for any agency in Alaska here until recently," he said. "That was something that some of the community stakeholders were asking for."

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**WRANGELL COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION
NOTICE OF JOB OPENING
Domestic Violence Prevention Specialist**

The Wrangell Cooperative Association is seeking a Domestic Violence Prevention Specialist. This position will dedicate 100% of their time to the project by providing support to and participating in the Coordinated Community Response/Domestic Violence Task Force, developing and presenting violence prevention training and education for students and staff in the Wrangell School District, providing community-based training to allied professionals, and working to increase referrals to existing programs providing supportive services to victims of violence.

This is a position is full time at 37.5 hours a week. Salary Grade 9, at \$24.76 an hour.

A complete job description and application are available at the WCA Office at 1002 Zimovia Highway, or online at wcatraibe.org/hiring. Call 907-874-4304 with questions. This position will be opened until filled.

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**WRANGELL COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION
NOTICE OF JOB OPENING
Cultural Heritage Director**

The Wrangell Cooperative Association is seeking a Cultural Heritage Director. This position's main responsibility is to balance three critical aspects of cultural heritage management: preservation of cultural sites, regenerative tourism and economy, community cultural programming.

This position is full time at 37.5 hours a week. The salary grade depends on experience.

A complete job description and application are available at the WCA Office at 1002 Zimovia Highway, or online at wcatraibe.org/hiring. Call 907-874-4304 with questions. This position will be opened until filled.

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**CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL
NOTICE TO VOTERS**

Voter qualifications for the City and Borough of Wrangell, October 3, 2023, Regular Election, are as follows:

1. a United States citizen; and
2. registered and qualified to vote in the State of Alaska elections and registered thereat for at least thirty (30) days immediately preceding the municipal election; and
3. at least eighteen (18) years of age; and
4. a resident of the City and Borough of Wrangell for thirty (30) days preceding the election; and
5. not disqualified by reason of having been convicted of a felony involving moral turpitude, and if so, that civil rights have been restored, nor disqualified because judicially determined to be of unsound mind.

Voters are cautioned to make certain their residence address is correct on their State Voter Registration. City law requires that each voter shall be registered to vote in the precinct in which that person seeks to vote in municipal elections.

Your name must appear on the precinct list. If you are registered in another city, you must change your registration **prior to Sunday, September 3, 2023, to qualify to vote in the Regular Election of October 3, 2023.**

You may ask the Borough Clerk to check the precinct register to ensure your qualifications.

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

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