

Governor willing to support sales tax to pay larger PFD

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

The governor's Revenue commissioner has presented legislators with several revenue-raising options so that the state could afford a significantly larger Permanent Fund dividend and still balance its budget.

A statewide sales tax is among the options the administration presented to the Legislature's fiscal policy working group last Thursday.

Deciding the amount of the annual dividend should come first, Senate President Peter Micciche told a meeting of Alaska mayors last week. "We have to determine what dividend we can afford," and then decide how to pay for it.

Supporters of a larger dividend will have to accept the need for new or additional taxes to pay the bill, Micciche said in a virtual presentation to the Alaska Conference of Mayors, meeting in Fairbanks on Aug. 4.

While not explicitly endorsing a sales tax or any of the other options, Revenue Commissioner Lucinda Mahoney said the governor would support the revenue measures "as long as there was support from the

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PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Summer camp science for Scouts

Mariah Carney (from left), Claire Rooney and Sienna Kiesler worked on a science project at the Girl Scouts summer camp last Friday at Shoemaker Park. The campers learned about how the surface tension of water works by trying to get rubber bands to float in a bowl of water. The Aug. 2-6 camp was open to girls from kindergarten through high school senior, and included art and science projects and learning more about the outdoors.

Masks required, new tracking system in place for school buses

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

Wrangell's school bus operator is reminding parents and children that riders must wear a face mask, same as last year. But what will be new this school year is a software tool that will tell parents in real time the location of their children's bus.

Zach Taylor, of Taylor Transportation, said face masks are a federal mandate, and not something they can bend on. He asks that kids use their own masks when riding the bus, but the

drivers will provide disposable masks in case anyone forgets.

"That is a federal mandate, just like the airplanes," Taylor said Tuesday. "School buses are federally regulated as far as safety stuff, things like that. They fall under mass transit like planes."

Taylor expects that parents will be happy to know a new tracking software, called School Bus Hub, is nearly in place to provide families with up-to-date information on the location of their children's bus.

"The tracking software is actually fairly new to this company," Taylor said. "For now, parents will be able to log in and see where the bus is. Say it's snowy, and they should be able to look up on their phone and see in real time where the bus is at."

A big update to the software will be coming in a few months,

Taylor added, which will notify parents when their child gets on or off their bus.

As the school year has already started for much of the country, he said getting the software and this update together has taken a while. "We've been playing phone tag with the company, because obviously they're swamped."

Taylor said parents wanting to get their kids signed up for a bus can complete a form when they register their children for classes.

He also said that parents should follow Taylor Transportation on Facebook. That is where they will put out their latest information and provide updates.

Federal legislation could help Alaska ferry system

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

The 2,700-page, trillion-dollar infrastructure bill that passed the U.S. Senate on Tuesday could provide tens of millions of dollars, maybe more, to help the ailing Alaska Marine Highway System.

How to use the money — assuming Congress approves the final package later this year, which is far from certain — would be decided by the governor and Alaska legislators next year.

"We can't allow it to be a total replacement of the state's responsibilities," Robert Venables, executive director of the Southeast Conference, said Monday.

He hopes the state would use the additional federal funding to improve from an insufficient level of service to providing "adequate service" to meet coastal community needs, Venables said.

State general fund dollars cover a little more than half of the ferry system's \$108 million annual operating budget, with most of the rest of the money coming from ticket revenues. The budget is down about 25% from three years ago.

There is nothing in the federal infrastructure funding bill that would explicitly require Alaska to use the new federal aid to improve service, rather than replace state dollars.

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Alaska health care employers require vaccination

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

As the Delta variant spreads and as COVID-19 case counts climb throughout Alaska, more health care providers in the state are requiring that their workers get vaccinated.

Full vaccination also will be required of students living in on-campus housing at the University of Alaska Southeast and at the university campus in Anchorage.

The PeaceHealth hospital system, which operates the Ketchikan Medical Center, announced Aug. 3 that all caregivers will be required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 starting Aug. 31, unless they provide proof of a medical exemption.

"The policy will apply to all caregivers, including providers, students, contractors, vendors and volunteers," said the statement by the nonprofit corporation.

Unvaccinated individuals "will be subject to regular COVID-19 testing, as well as ad-

ditional masking, potential reassignment to non-patient care settings and other safety protocols," said the statement from PeaceHealth, which also operates hospitals in Washington and Oregon and employs about 16,000 caregivers.

"Though nearly 80% of PeaceHealth caregivers have already been vaccinated, the rise in hospitalizations in our communities is a stark reminder that we are facing a public health emergency and we must do more," PeaceHealth Chief Physician Executive Doug Koekkoek said in the statement.

PeaceHealth Alaska, which operates the largest hospital in Anchorage and several clinics elsewhere in the state, announced Aug. 6 that it will require staff to get vaccinated against COVID-19 or agree to additional safety measures.

PeaceHealth staff will have until Sept. 30 to comply with the new policy. Medical and religious exemptions will be made for staff.

"Those who do not get vacci-

nated must ... follow additional protocols," the Providence statement said. That could include additional testing, education and infection-prevention protocols.

PeaceHealth Alaska employs nearly 5,000 people. The vaccination rate as of last week among staff was just over 68% statewide, an official reported.

The rate of at least one vaccine dose among eligible Alaskans was 58.5% as of Monday, a slight gain from last week, according to the state website.

"Earlier this summer, it might have felt as though we were out of the woods regarding the pandemic," Dr. Michael Bernstein, chief medical officer for Providence Alaska, told Anchorage TV station KTUU. "However, cases have started to increase again and the new Delta variant of COVID-19 has shown to be more infectious and transmissible."

The vaccination policies of PeaceHealth and Providence

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Birthdays & Anniversaries

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

Thursday, Aug. 12: Rebekah Anderson, Wayne Harding, Silje Rose Morse, Lauran Woolery; Anniversaries: Steve and Shannon Chrisman, Eric and Darian Gerald.

Friday, Aug. 13: Chris Byford, Rachel Harris, Kyle Hommel, Michael Howell Jr., Sean Kaer, Erik Keene Kohrt, Shawna Strain, Heidi Villarma.

Saturday, Aug. 14: Alice Bakke.

Sunday, Aug. 15: Rebekah Gile, Chris Guggenbickler, Mikel Smith; Anniversary: Sanoë and Kaelene Harrison.

Monday, Aug. 16: Jenni Jackson, Diane O'Brien, Cooper Seimears, Ken Smith, Margaret Villarma; Anniversaries: Keith and Kathy Appleman, Bryant and Joan Benjamin, Ed and Gail Rilatos.

Tuesday, Aug. 17: Ryan Howell, Emily McCloskey, "Moose"; Anniversary: Derek and Adrienne Angerman.

Wednesday, Aug. 18: Juli Gillen, Rob McChargue, Darren Newman, Haley Waddington, Rowan Wiederspohn; Anniversary: Frank and Cherie Young.

Thursday, Aug. 19: Abigail Cornstock, Kailani Gustafson, Ethel Lane, Conan Rooney, Marc Simpson, Mitch Turner; Heather Vergilio; Anniversary: Greg and Tammi Meissner.

Senior Center Menu

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

Friday, Aug. 13

Fiesta pork, cauliflower, salad, biscuit

Monday, Aug. 16

Hamburgers, oven-baked fries, coleslaw

Tuesday, Aug. 17

Chicken, green beans, salad, pasta

Wednesday, Aug. 18

Pork chops, sweet potatoes, broccoli toss

Thursday, Aug. 19

Chowder, salad, herb biscuits

Please call the senior center at 874-2066 by 2 p.m. the day prior to reserve a seat at lunch at the center or to request delivery.

The senior van also is available to transport seniors to medical appointments, reasonable errands such as collecting mail, getting prescriptions or other essential items.

Ferry Schedule

Northbound

Friday, Aug. 13

Matanuska, 5:45 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 20

Matanuska, 5:45 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 27

Matanuska, 2:45 p.m.

Friday, Sept. 3

Matanuska, 4:45 p.m.

Friday, Sept. 10

Matanuska, 4:15 p.m.

Southbound

Monday, Aug. 16

Matanuska, 7:30 a.m.

Monday, Aug. 23

Matanuska, 7:30 a.m.

Monday, Aug. 30

Matanuska, 6:15 a.m.

Monday, Sept. 6

Matanuska, 6:30 a.m.

Monday, Sept. 13

Matanuska, 6:30 a.m.

All times listed are scheduled departure times.
Call the terminal at 874-2021 for information or call 874-3711 or 800-642-0066 for recorded information.



TIDES August 12-August 18

	High Tides		Low Tides		High Tides		Low Tides	
	AM Time	PM Ft	AM Time	PM Ft	AM Time	PM Ft	AM Time	PM Ft
Aug. 12	03:47	16.2	04:24	16.2	09:55	-0.8	10:20	1.3
Aug. 13	04:31	15.3	05:03	16.2	10:35	0.2	11:11	1.2
Aug. 14	05:22	14.1	05:48	16.0	11:19	1.4
Aug. 15	06:26	12.9	06:45	15.7	00:09	1.3	12:10	2.8
Aug. 16	07:49	12.0	07:55	15.5	01:17	1.3	01:13	4.0
Aug. 17	09:17	12.0	09:10	15.8	02:34	1.1	02:29	4.8
Aug. 18	10:35	12.7	10:21	16.4	03:55	-1.4	03:52	4.8

Wrangell Roundup: Special Events

WRANGELL SCHOOL BOARD will meet at 7 p.m. Monday, via Zoom. A school board self-evaluation workshop will begin at 6 p.m. Contact the district office at 874-2347 or email kpowell@wpsd.us no later than 3:30 p.m. Monday if you want to speak at the board meeting. The public is encouraged to attend. The Zoom link is available on the school district website; just click on Calendar and the link to the meeting.

WRANGELL SCHOOL DISTRICT registration is now open online. In-person registration assistance is available 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. next Tuesday in the high school commons. Aug. 30 is the first day of school for students.

NOLAN CENTER THEATER presents "Black Widow," rated PG-13, at 7 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$5 for children under age 12, for the action, adventure and sci-fi film that runs two hours and 14 minutes. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult. Next weeked: "The Green Knight."

CANDIDATE FILINGS for seats on the borough assembly, school board and port commission close Aug. 31. Pick up the forms from the borough clerk's office at city hall, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays.

WRANGELL PARKS & RECREATION is offering jiu jitsu classes on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays for ages 18 years and up. Registration is open; classes start Aug. 24. Contact Parks and Recreation for more information, 874-2444.

TLINGIT & HAIDA HEAD START is enrolling for the 2021-2022 school year. Head Start is a free federal program for preschool children from low-income families. Apply online at www.ccthitansn.gov/services/family/headstart. For more information, contact Head Start at 907-463-7127, or email headstartenrollment@ccthitansn.gov.

COMMUNITY POTLUCK 6 p.m. Fridays through Aug. 31, at the sheltered site on Nemo Point Road. All are welcome.

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

Continuing Events

PARKS and RECREATION www.wrangellrec.com

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

Arthritis class, 8:30 - 9:30 a.m., Monday, Wednesday, Friday

Lap swim, 6 - 7:30 a.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday

Lap/tot swim, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., weekdays, 5:15 - 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday, and 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday

Open swim, 5:30 - 7 p.m. Monday and Wednesday; 6:30 - 8 p.m. Friday; 1 - 2 p.m. Saturday

Water aerobics class, 10 - 11 a.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday

Weight room available by appointment and at reduced capacity:

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

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

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

Aug. 11, 1921

Some time ago a committee of Wrangell men, interested in marking the graves of unknown sailors and soldiers buried here, applied to the government for the necessary markers. Delegate Sutherland was asked to take the matter up with the War Department. Mr. Sutherland, deserves much credit from the community for he was successful in cutting the red tape of the War Department and a letter received here this spring stated that the markers were being sent and might reach Wrangell for Memorial Day. They were not received at that time, however, but arrived late in July and have been placed on the graves, which were moved into the cemetery some time ago. The nine graves, properly marked, show the community is not lacking respect for the dead ex-soldiers

and soldiers, even though they are unknown.

Aug. 16, 1946

A modern up-to-date map of Alaska, the first of its kind ever to be issued, has been completed by the U.S. Geological Survey, it was announced today. Director William E. Wrather has already reported an amazing demand for the new maps, hundreds of advance orders having already been received from persons who had heard only word-of-mouth reports that it was in preparation. Compiled from data secured by careful ground surveys and by aerial photographs, the new map depicts the exact locations and patterns of all mountain ranges, streams, geographic boundaries, settlements, roads, railroads, coastlines, islands, lakes and other common map features. Preparation of this up-to-date map of Alaska was made possible by reason of an intensive program of mapping of the territory of Alaska and adjacent regions, carried on jointly by the Geological Survey and the Army Air Force to meet emergency wartime map requirements. Copies may be now purchased at 50 cents each from local agents or from the Geological Survey in Washington, D.C.

according to Principal Bob Prunella. The area will include a 44-by-66-foot compacted gravel area covered by a wooden, metal-roofed frame open on three sides. The structure, to cost about \$20,000, will be located on the north side of the school and will include benches and tables. Plans also call for later installation of playground equipment, Prunella said.

Aug. 15, 1996

A problem that has baffled the City Council for 15 years — what to do with Wrangell's garbage — arose again at Tuesday's council meeting, and was put off needing further study and the return of an absent council member. Basically, the city is faced with two alternatives: Buy a garbage baler to compact trash in the landfill, or ship the stuff out of state. Wrangell produces about 2,900 tons of garbage per year. Of this, an estimated 1,700 tons are household waste, and 1,200 tons consist of wood and demolition debris. City Manager Scott Seabury advised that the city might get permits to burn the wood debris here, leaving only the household waste to be shipped outside. Estimated cost of bailing garbage is \$92 a ton, according to figures from the engineering firm EMCON. For container transfer and disposal of all waste, the estimate is \$165 a ton. The option to burn some of the waste and ship the rest would cost about \$133 a ton.



Daylight Hours

Date	Sunrise	Sunset	Hours
Aug. 12	5:13a	8:33p	15:20h
Aug. 13	5:15a	8:31p	15:15h
Aug. 14	5:17a	8:29p	15:11h
Aug. 15	5:19a	8:26p	15:06h
Aug. 16	5:21a	8:24p	15:02h
Aug. 17	5:23a	8:21p	14:58h
Aug. 18	5:25a	8:19p	14:53h

Aug. 12, 1971

A covered playground area will be constructed at the elementary school in time for the opening of classes,

Alaska falls far behind national vaccination rate

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

After leading the nation in vaccination rates earlier this year, Alaska has slipped to the bottom third among the 50 states.

Alaska's rate has not moved up much in the past couple of weeks, despite an increasing number of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations statewide since mid-July — numbers that have not been this high since last winter in some communities.

The higher case count — averaging almost 300 a day in the past couple of weeks and approaching 400 on a few days — comes as students are returning to school, with administrators eager for anything closer to normal operations after last year's pandemic-disrupted educa-

tion calendar.

"The best thing we can do as adults is get vaccinated," Dr. Anne Zink, the state's chief medical officer, said of the return to classrooms. "We have an eight-fold reduction in getting COVID if you're vaccinated, and a 25-fold reduction in hospitalizations and deaths if you're vaccinated," she told Anchorage TV station KTUU.

As of Tuesday, 58.6% of Alaskans eligible for the vaccines (12 and older) had gotten at least their first shot, according to the state's COVID-19 online dashboard. That isn't much higher than the 57% rate reported on July 21.

Just under 53% of eligible Alaskans were fully vaccinated as of Tuesday's report.

The national rate for at least one dose was 69% as of Tuesday, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vermont was the most vaccinated state, with Mississippi and Alabama the least fully vaccinated states.

Wrangell was at 62% with at least one vaccine dose in people's arms, according to the state health department — the same as it has been the past few weeks.

In the first seven months of the year, 94% of the state's COVID-19 hospitalizations and 97% of deaths have been among Alaskans who are unvaccinated, health officials have reported.

"We've had to think about epidemics and infectious disease in ways you never had

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Special session preview—

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Legislature."

The objective, she said, "is to really start a conversation ... to determine what the appetite is for these measures."

Lawmakers have been struggling with crafting a long-term fiscal plan for the state for 25 years, reaching what could be a decision point this year as reserve funds have diminished and as Gov. Mike Dunleavy promotes a larger dividend, putting public pressure on legislators before next year's statewide election.

"Everybody's mad at each other," Micciche said of legislative fiscal debates, adding that it will take political courage for lawmakers to settle on a dividend and then, if needed, raise revenues to balance the budget.

"Let's find a way to make a deal that makes everybody unhappy," he told the mayors the day before the Revenue commissioner gave her presentation to legislators.

The question facing lawmakers, the senator said, is how to pay a dividend, provide public services, not overdraw the Permanent Fund, and still balance the budget each year.

Last year's PFD was \$992, and the annual payment has averaged about \$1,300 the past 10 years. The governor's plan would boost it to almost \$2,400 next year, growing to almost \$3,400 by 2030, according to Mahoney's presentation.

"The PFD cannot crater the future of the state," said Micciche, who served five years as mayor of Soldotna, on the Kenai Peninsula, before his election to the Senate in 2012.

The state budget can afford a dividend of several hundred dollars, without needing new revenues or further cuts to public services, he said. Anything more than that creates a fiscal hole that would need filling.

Other options listed in the Revenue commissioner's Aug. 5 presentation were an increase in the state's oil production tax take; legalized gambling, including a state lottery and casinos; doubling the motor fuel tax to 16 cents a gallon; and amending the state's corporate income tax structure so that Alaska would receive a lot more from digital businesses such as Netflix, Amazon, Apple Facebook and Google.

Another option is broadening the state's corporate income tax structure so that it would apply to Hilcorp, which bought out BP Alaska's North Slope operations last year, but as a privately held corporation is not taxed in Alaska as are publicly traded corporations.

This tax-broadening option would apply only to oil and gas companies, not any other sole proprietorships, partnerships or what are known as S corporations, which are closely held businesses with a limited number of shareholders.

In reviewing sales tax options, Mahoney's presentation gave as examples a 2% and 4% state sales tax on goods and services, with the revenue-raising estimates depending on exemptions, such as food, and whether the tax also would

apply to goods and services used by businesses the same as individuals.

Revenues to the state for each 1% of tax could range from \$150 million to \$300 million a year, depending on exemptions.

The commissioner did not list a state income tax as an option.

Legislators are scheduled to return to Juneau next week for their third special session of the year. Dunleavy has called them back to work on a list of fiscal issues. He wants them to settle on an amount for this year's dividend; consider his proposal to split equally the annual draw on Permanent Fund earnings between the PFD and public services, putting the new formula into the constitution; consider a constitutional amendment to impose a spending limit on the state; and consider new revenue measures.

Without new revenues, Dunleavy's plan for larger dividends could result in an average budget deficit this decade of almost a billion dollars a year, according to Legislative Finance Division calculations.

Micciche acknowledged in his discussion with the mayors that cities and boroughs which have depended on their sales taxes for years will not like the idea of a state tax added to the local rate. But a personal income tax could not pass the Legislature, he said, so municipalities need to understand how bad the state budget could get without new revenues and help work toward an acceptable sales tax.

Fairbanks Sen. Scott Kawasaki, who was at the mayor's meeting, agreed with Micciche's political assessment. "There is a lot of support generally for a sales tax," Kawasaki said of his colleagues, though he added that he personally supports an income tax over a sales tax.

Kawasaki, one of four senators on the eight-member House-Senate fiscal policy working group, cautioned the mayors that while they may not like a state sales tax, they need to understand there are legislators who see spending cuts as an answer, such as extending the state moratorium on reimbursing local communities for school construction debt.

"Lawmakers need to settle their differences," Micciche said, while also criticizing Dunleavy. "The governor has done a couple of silly, populist things," the senator said, such as vetoing a smaller PFD appropriated by legislators in June to force the debate over a larger dividend in the constitution.

No one should think they are guaranteed reelection by draining the treasury, Micciche said.

He is hopeful, but skeptical, that the governor and legislators can agree on a comprehensive fiscal plan during the special session, which is limited by law to 30 days.

"Alaskans are getting tired of the inaction," Micciche said.

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Be Part of the Solution

Protect Yourself and Stop the Spread of COVID-19

Southeast Alaska is seeing a rapid increase in cases of COVID-19. With the rising spread of the highly transmissible Delta variant and the influx of visitors into our communities, it is critical to protect yourself and help stop the spread of COVID-19. Continue to practice social distancing, wash your hands frequently and wear a mask indoors in public and at large gatherings.

If you haven't already, get the COVID-19 vaccine and encourage others to do the same. The vaccine is the best protection against COVID-related illness and greatly reduces your risk of hospitalization.



Sign Up Now

Vaccines are available for everyone ages 12 and up. To sign up for your vaccine or get more information about vaccination and testing services, go to covid19.searhc.org.

FROM THE PUBLISHER

There is no secret formula to the news

By LARRY PERSILY
Publisher

Maybe you're curious how we decide which stories go into the Sentinel each week.

Maybe not, but please read this anyway.

Since you are turning the pages of the Sentinel at the moment, or reading it online, it would be good for you to know why some stories are in the paper you bought (or borrowed), and it would be good for us to know what you think is missing from the newspaper.

There is nothing magical in selecting which news reports make it into the Sentinel. It's a combination of space to fit in the stories, staff time to write or edit the news, and people calling back so that we can interview them and gather the news. We can't report what we don't know.

The final ingredient in the recipe for the weekly news casserole is our judgment: Is the news of interest to readers? We don't expect that everyone will read everything in the Sentinel. But as long as we think a number of people will find the news report interesting, educational or entertaining, we'll try to fit it in the paper.

And like any good recipe, a little spice can help. We look for some variety, rather than serving the same dish every week.

The easy choices for the Sentinel are stories that publicize local events, so that the community can attend. Or telling you what the borough assembly, school board or other elected officials are deciding — those are must-haves for the paper.

But no town is an island, even if it surrounded by water. We want the Sentinel to serve as a bridge off the island, reporting on news from around Southeast, the state and Pacific Northwest that we think is of interest or relevance to many in Wrangell. Even national news that relates to local interests in Wrangell.

That includes fisheries, weather, business and politics.

That's why we include news reports about the heat wave that melted the Northwest last month; the sadness over the unreported deaths decades ago of students at boarding schools in Canada; legal battles over COVID-19 vaccination requirements for cruise ship passengers; the new, \$50 million cruise ship terminal opening in Ketchikan; landslides in Southeast communities; and the Canadian border closure.

We also ask: Is it useful and does it serve a purpose to inform readers?

A good newspaper should be informative, giving readers helpful news, such as reminding people of the deadline to sign up for health insurance coverage under new, lower-cost premiums added to the online federal portal for Affordable Care Act policies.

It is entertaining? No one can live without humor, even if it is a little biting at times. Such as the Haines camper who jumped out of her outhouse seat when a bear snuck up from underneath.

Most importantly, is it accurate and complete? Is it fair?

Just because a report is accurate doesn't mean it belongs in the newspaper. Just because it's accurate doesn't mean it is anyone's business other than the person affected. And just because it is accurate doesn't mean it's a fair portrayal of events or public policy.

Which gets me back to the beginning. Tell us if you would like to see more or less of certain news topics in the Sentinel. Tell us when you think we are wasting space that could be better used for another topic.

And tell us when you think we are unfair or make it harder on the community. Even better, send us a letter to the editor. We always have room for those.

EDITORIAL

A lot more at stake than just the dividend

Yes, the amount of this year's Alaska Permanent Fund dividend will be at stake when legislators convene in another special session on Monday.

And while the PFD is important, legislators — and Alaskans — should not let the political fights over the dividend overwhelm the importance of resolving other financial disputes that jeopardize the lives of tens of thousands of Alaskans.

In particular, there are the Power Cost Equalization (PCE) payments that benefit about 82,000 Alaskans in almost 200 rural communities across the state.

The Legislature created the program in 1984 to ensure that residents in rural communities receive help with their high electricity costs.

It was an issue of fairness, not a gift.

The state had poured hundreds of millions of dollars into other energy projects around the state. That included the Bradley Lake hydroelectric project near Homer, which serves Anchorage and the Kenai Peninsula to Fairbanks, as well as Tyee Lake and Swan Lake, which generate power for Wrangell, Petersburg and Ketchikan, along with two other costly hydro projects for Kodiak and Valdez/Glennallen.

But even with the PCE help, rural electricity bills are still painfully costly. For example, residents in Kake benefit from the program, but their electricity rates are still two to three times higher than in Wrangell. Without it, they would be five or six times higher.

Gov. Mike Dunleavy, in an ongoing political dispute of his own making with the Legislature, wiped out the payments for the fiscal year that started July 1, about \$32 million. He decided a couple of years ago that the endowment which pays the bills is not available for appropriation without a three-quarters majority vote of the House and Senate — and that did not happen this year amid political squabbles.

Without access to the endowment, there will be no PCE payments to 29,000 households and almost 2,000 community facilities in small communities. That includes Kake, Angoon, Hoonah, Prince of Wales Island communities and other Southeast towns.

Supporters of the program are in court, asking a judge to order the governor to restore the funding. But their first choice would be for legislators to put aside their differences over the PFD and politics, and find the courage to resolve the PCE problem with a three-quarters vote.

The same hope applies to a state college scholarship program that serves almost 5,500 students, which has shut down its endowment checkbook the same as PCE because the governor thinks a three-quarters vote is the correct legal answer — although many legislators believe a simple majority vote would be good enough, just as it was for years.

But settle their differences they must, for if the Legislature and governor cannot resolve it, a lot of Alaskans will be reading in the dark as they study for college they cannot afford.

— Wrangell Sentinel

Vaccination rate

Continued from page 3

to," Zink told a meeting of the Alaska Conference of Mayors last week in Fairbanks, addressing the group by a video link.

In Southeast, Metlakatla went into lockdown Monday evening after seven new cases were reported in the community of about 1,600 residents.

"We are in lockdown and urge the general public to stay home for 72 hours or until the contact tracing is complete and the cases are contained," said a notice from the Metlakatla Indian Community.

As of Monday evening, Ketchikan reported 79 active COVID cases in the community, almost 10% of the 818 cases it has tallied since the count started in spring 2020.

Half of the cases in Ketchikan are due to close contact with an infected indi-

vidual, according to the community's COVID dashboard.

In Wrangell, borough officials reported Monday the community's 12th COVID-positive case since mid-July. It followed four cases reported last Friday. Of those five, two of the individuals had recently traveled and three were "close contacts of a previously identified case," the borough said.

Statewide, officials reported more than 1,100 new cases from Friday through Monday, with 114 people hospitalized in Alaska with COVID-19 as of Tuesday. The hospitalization numbers are the highest since December.

The death count in Alaska was at 392 residents as of Tuesday.

While cases are on the upswing around the state, Sitka, which at its worst last month had more than 250 active COVID infections in the com-

munity, was down to 80 active cases as of Monday, with its daily count of new cases less than half of the peak last month.

Juneau was at 76 active cases Monday, municipal officials reported. "Three of today's resident cases are part of a cluster associated with an out-of-town youth sports event. The cluster is at 10 active cases," officials reported Monday. "All individuals in the cluster are isolating and close contacts are quarantining."

The rash of new cases has hit even the hospital in Juneau, with eight health care workers at Bartlett Regional Hospital testing positive for COVID-19 in July, according to Charlee Gribbon, the facility's infection preventionist.

The hospital has a 90% vaccination rate, Gribbon told public radio station KTOO.

Correction

The Sentinel incorrectly reported Aug. 5 that two of the borough assembly seats on the Oct. 5 municipal election ballot are two-year terms. They are three-year terms. A third seat on the ballot is for a one-year term.

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Infrastructure bill

Continued from page 1

A key element of the legislation for ferry communities is a provision that authorizes \$1 billion to support essential ferry service for rural communities nationwide, at the rate of \$200 million a year for five years.

Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski, a member of the bipartisan Senate group that negotiated the deal, was behind efforts to add the provision to the legislation.

The new federal aid program would be limited to ferry systems that serve at least two communities, at least 50 miles apart, which eliminates a lot of the short-haul systems around the country, putting Alaska in a prime spot to get some of the money.

The bill directs the secretary of Transportation to "establish requirements and criteria for participation in the program ... including requirements for the provision of funds to states."

While the bill authorizes \$200 million a year for five years, starting with the current federal fiscal year that ends Sept. 30, 2022, the money would be subject to annual appropriation by Congress.

And it would be subject to legislative appropriation in Alaska. "You still have to get it through the political process," State Senate Finance Committee Co-Chair Bert Stedman, of Sitka, told the Anchorage Daily News last week, speculating that any federal money could be used to merely replace what the state already spends.

Stedman in the past has bemoaned the growing urban-rural political divide in Alaska, and its damage to services important to smaller communities.

Acknowledging the politics of the state budget process, Venables said no net gain to the ferry system would be a disappointing outcome of the federal aid.

The governor's office has not specifically commented on potential uses of any additional federal aid for the ferry system.

However, Randy Ruaro, the governor's chief of staff, said in a public radio interview last week: "That's going to produce a very significant amount of funding for Alaska's ferry system. We just don't know exactly how much will come out of that formula yet. But it will be substantial. ... We're already making plans on our end on how to best get the highest and best use of the funds for the system."

The bill also would change federal law, allowing the Alaska Marine Highway System to spend federal highway dollars on vessel operations and repairs, not just new construction. Most of the fleet is decades old, with the state short of its own money to build new ships.

The bill authorizes \$570 million out of the Highway Trust Fund over the next five years for the construction of new ferries and ferry terminals nationwide.

Another provision of the bill authorizes \$250 million for pilot project to build and operate ferries that run on electricity or other lower-carbon fuel. Though the bill does not name Alaska, it says at least one grant under the program must go toward "a ferry service that serves the state with the largest number of Marine Highway System miles." The answer to that is Alaska.

Venables said he is excited about the prospect of Alaska winning a grant for such a ship



AP PHOTO/AMANDA ANDRADE-RHOADES

Alaska's senior U.S. senator, Lisa Murkowski, succeeded in adding several provisions to the trillion-dollar infrastructure package that will benefit Alaska, including more federal aid for the state ferry system. Murkowski, speaking to reporters Aug. 4 on Capitol Hill, was among a bipartisan group of senators who negotiated the deal that won Senate approval on Tuesday.

to operate in Lynn Canal, between Haines and Skagway, maybe Juneau, or between Ketchikan and Metlakatla, maybe Prince of Wales Island.

Especially for an electric-powered ship, the shorter shuttle runs would be more feasible than a longer mainline route through Southeast, he said.

Other provisions of the bill would authorize:

- \$3.5 billion, about 40% more in federal funding than current levels, to highway construction, repair and maintenance in Alaska, spread out over five years, Murkowski's office said.

- More than \$180 million to the state for clean water projects. Though a substantial down payment, the state has said it needs

close to \$2 billion to provide adequate drinking water and sewage services in rural Alaska. Wrangell needs substantial repairs to its water reservoirs and water treatment plant.

- Separately, Alaska villages would receive a share of \$3.5 billion designated for Indian Health Services water and sewage spending nationwide. That amount would be spread

across five years.

- And about \$5 billion would be available in grants under a new airport terminal improvement program, with some of the money set aside for small, rural airports, Murkowski's office said in a statement. The state of Alaska owned and operated 237 airports as of 2019, including the Wrangell airport, according to the latest figures from the state.

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Nolan Center needs more staff to cover theater and museum

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

The Nolan Center, Wrangell's museum, movie theater and community center, is suffering from a staffing shortage. The center has received some help from volunteers, but director Cyni Crary said they hope to hire for various new positions.

"We're basically down to just me," Crary said. "I had one of the theater staff helping in the gift shop, and she was doing a really good job, but she's gone for the whole month of August. I kind of lost all the help that I would have had."

Crary said they are looking for a Nolan Center coordinator, as well about two attendants and as many theater staff as possible. According to a job description on the borough website, the coordinator "develops, organizes and manages staff, contractors and volunteers in supporting the museum and community events."

Crary said the attendants would help set up for events and run the gift shop, among other tasks. They also really need people to help run the movie theater on weekends.

"The theater doesn't have enough staff right now to even have a movie all three nights,"

she said. "If we don't get staff, I'll have to cut down the number of movies that we show."

The coordinator position is full time, she said, while the attendant and theater positions are part time. She said anybody 14 and older is welcome to apply to help out at the theater.

While the Nolan Center looks to fill these roles, volunteers from the Friends of the Museum have stepped in to help. Crary said the volunteers mainly help out around the gift shop a few hours a day, particularly when cruise ships are in town and a lot of visitors stop by.

The Friends of the Museum normally helps through advocacy and fundraising for the museum, President Michael Bania said, but they are always looking for more ways to assist.

There are about 10 people on the list to volunteer, Bania said. While they mostly help run the gift shop, she said some also try to help where needed.

"We had a training session about three or four weeks ago to learn how to use the cash register and how to open and close the museum," she said. "That way Cyni is able to do what she needs to do, and we just cover the tourists and the museum."

State trooper gives advice to keep bears out of trash

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

The number of bears getting into trash and having close encounters with people or their pets is increasing, said Chadd Yoder, Wrangell's state wildlife trooper. And it's likely to get worse before it gets better, he said, as bears try to fatten up before winter hibernation.

Bears accustomed to searching garbage for food can become a serious issue, Yoder said, and he wants to educate people on what they can do to keep bears out of their backyards.

The real hot spot for bears getting into trash is between 5-mile and 10-mile Zimovia Highway, he said, particularly around Shoemaker Bay. No person has been hurt, he said, but one bear has been shot and another reportedly made threatening sounds toward a person before being scared off.

"We're trying to minimize these encounters," Yoder said. "The tough part is once a bear is habituated to food, it's hard to change its mind."

The first piece of advice is for people to try and secure their trash cans. Most cans around Wrangell do not have bear locks on them, he said, but people can use ratchet-strap tie-downs to help secure the lid to the can.

He also advised, for example, that if somebody has a chicken dinner, they freeze the leftovers and only throw them out the

night before trash day. And people could keep their trash cans, or anything else a bear would likely find interesting, either secured or indoors until pickup day.

"The other things would be like bird feeders and dog food around the house," Yoder said. "I got one report of somebody's freezer getting broken into, but their freezer was on the porch. Freezers should be secured, if on the porch, but it would be better if it were stored inside."

Bear activity will drop off when winter sets in and the bruins go to sleep, but Yoder said people should remember the tips for next year, too.

"It's Alaska. Rural Alaska. There's bears," he said. "We need to learn how to tighten up our game as a community. That way we're doing what we can to prevent there being a problem, and there being a bear habituated to human food. When one does become a problem, we'll deal with it. ... The emphasis here is if a bear would get into your trash and would have to be shot, you could be cited for feeding game. That's not the route I want to go, so I'm just trying to spread the word."

Yoder said he has flyers from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game outlining bear-proofing tips. These, and stickers, can be picked up at the information holder near his office in the Kadin Building on Front Street.



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Getting ready for the season to start

Tyson Messmer was among the high school swim team members practicing Friday in their first week of preparation for the season, which will start next month. Meets are tentatively planned for Ketchikan, Petersburg, Sitka and Juneau, culminating in the state tournament in early November. Most of the swim competition last year was virtual, due to COVID-19 travel and social-distancing restrictions, with the team racing in its home pool and sending in times to measure against other schools.

Bill Churchill services set for Saturday

Services for William I. Churchill will be held Saturday. Churchill, 88, a lifelong Wrangell resident, died July 8.

Graveside services are planned for 2 p.m. Saturday at the old cemetery, with a memorial potluck to follow at 3 p.m. at the American Legion Hall.

For the memorial, the family asks that people bring "any items or Native artwork that Bill made for you, to share for a moment."

In lieu of flowers, the family asks people to donate to American Legion Post 6 or a charity of their choice.

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Canadian border reopens to U.S. travelers

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Canada on Monday is lifting its prohibition on Americans crossing the border to shop, vacation or visit, but the United States is keeping similar restrictions in place for Canadians, part of a bumpy return to normalcy from COVID-19 travel bans.

U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents must be both fully vaccinated and test negative for COVID-19 within three days to get across one of the world's longest and busiest land borders. Travelers also must fill out a detailed application on the arriveCAN app before crossing.

The Canada Border Services Agency said travelers should plan for the possibility of additional processing time at the border.

The U.S.-Canada border has been closed to nonessential travel since March 2020 to try to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

The U.S. has said it will extend its closure to all Canadians making nonessential trips until at least Aug. 21, which also applies to the Mexican border. But the Biden

administration is beginning to make plans for a phased reopening. The main requirement would be that nearly all foreign visitors to the U.S. will have to be vaccinated against the coronavirus.

But Canadians aren't waiting for reciprocal rules.

Joel Villanueva, owner of Primo's Mexican Grill in White Rock, British Columbia, about 2.5 miles north of the U.S. border, is more than ready for Americans to return.

"Let's get this thing going," he said. "A lot of our customers are from the United States, and we are literally minutes from across the border. We welcome our Americans, and we depend on their foot traffic."

Villanueva said he supports people coming who are fully vaccinated and doesn't think there will be a rush of Americans initially. But if his restaurant and dozens of others along the waterfront could fill some tables with U.S. visitors every day for the rest of the summer, it would be a big financial boost, he said.

Near the border in Washington state, Blaine Chamber of Commerce board member Carroll Solomon called the reopening

a step in the right direction for businesses. But she also said it was somewhat concerning because of an increase in COVID-19 cases nationwide as the highly contagious Delta variant spreads.

"For people who need to get up there (to Canada) for family reasons, it's wonderful," said Solomon, who also volunteers at the Blaine Visitor Information Center.

With all the hoops people need to jump through — being fully vaccinated, getting tested for COVID-19 and uploading that information to an app — she doesn't think that people will be going to Canada for many day trips.

"I have a lot of friends on the Canadian side and would love to go have lunch with somebody, but you can't just do that; you have to plan days in advance to make sure you can get through," Solomon said.

As far as returning to the United States from Canada, U.S. Customs and Border Protection spokesman Jason Givens said there's no requirement to show proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test.

Tent City needs more events and volunteers

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

Wrangell's Tent City Days is still a couple of months away, but organizers need volunteers to step up with event ideas so they can start putting together a schedule.

The tentative dates are Oct. 14-17.

Though the event, which started about 40 years ago, was created to celebrate the town's gold rush history and provide a late-winter break from darkness and doldrums in February, organizers recently moved it to October and now are adding a different angle to the history lesson.

"I would like to make it more of a learning time," said Jillian Privett, who is organizing Tent City Days. It will coincide this year with Alaska Day, which commemorates the lowering of the Russian flag and the raising of the U.S. flag in Sitka in 1867, as the U.S. took over the territory. Alaska Day is a legal holiday in the state on Oct. 18.

Privett said she also would like to see Tent City Days commemorate and acknowledge that while miners may have endured hardship during the Cassiar and Klondike gold rushes more than 120 years ago, the Indigenous people of the area managed through hard times, too.

"The Tlingit people had it figured out," she said.

Volunteers are needed not only to run the events, but to come up with ideas and fundraise, Privett said. "There is no bank account."

Community groups may want to sponsor events to raise money for their cause, she said.

"We're looking for volunteers to chair games and volunteers to come up with the games," said Brittani Robbins, chamber of commerce executive director, who is helping Privett with the organizing work.

The chamber was the original sponsor of Tent City Days, but it dropped the event and then the festival went dormant for a number of years until volunteer organizers brought it back to life, Privett recalled.

"Last year, we did have somewhat of a Tent City Days" in October, amid the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, she said. "We were able to pull off some virtual events," but there were no food sales and no "jail" for rounding up people who needed to post bail to get out — all in the name of fundraising.

In addition to bringing back the jail, food and street games, organizers this year would like to see someone put on a dance with live music. "Sort of like a mini Fourth of July," Privett said.

Maybe even a group would want to bring back the bed races down Front Street that were popular in the original Tent City Days.

To volunteer, or for more information, contact Privett at 907-305-1095, email tentcitydays907@gmail.com, or post on the Tent City Facebook page.

Recovery efforts continue at crash site near Ketchikan

JUNEAU (AP) - Efforts to recover the wreckage of a sightseeing plane that crashed in Southeast Alaska last week, killing six people, were

stymied again Monday by poor weather conditions, a National Transportation Safety Board official said.

Clint Johnson, chief of the

agency's Alaska region, said low clouds and fog continued to delay wreckage recovery efforts.

"They are ready to go as soon as they get a weather window," he said of the team that will handle the work.

The wreckage is in a rugged, steep area that is heavily forested, at 1,800 feet to 2,000

feet "up on the side of a mountain," Johnson said. The site near Mirror Lake is about 22 miles northeast of Ketchikan.

Investigators were conducting interviews in the case, he said.

The de Havilland Beaver, owned by Southeast Aviation, was returning to Ketchikan last Thursday from a tour of Misty Fjords National Monument when it crashed, Johnson said.

The plane's emergency beacon was activated about 11:20 a.m. when it crashed, the U.S. Coast Guard said. A Temsco helicopter reported seeing wreckage on a ridgeline in the search area, and Coast Guard crew members found the wreckage around 2:40 p.m. A Coast Guard helicopter lowered two rescue swimmers to the site, and they reported no survivors.

The plane carried five passengers and the pilot. The Alaska State Troopers identified the pilot as Rolf Lanzendorf, 64, of Cle Elum, Washington.

Troopers identified the passengers as Mark Henderson, 69, and Jacquelyn Komplin, 60, both of Napa, California; Andrea McArthur, 55, and Rachel McArthur, 20, both of Woodstock, Georgia; and Janet Kroll, 77, of Mount Prospect, Illinois.

The troopers reported Saturday that the bodies had been recovered.

Holland America Line confirmed the five passengers had been traveling on the company's ship Nieuw Amsterdam, which was nearing the end of seven-day Alaska cruise when it docked in Ketchikan.

Sightseeing excursions, such as those to Misty Fjords National Monument, are among the options for cruise passengers to explore the area while they are off the ship.

The flight operator, Southeast Aviation, released a statement last week saying it was cooperating with the agencies involved.

"All of us share in the anguish of this tragic incident, and our prayers go out to all affected," the statement said.



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Judge blocks law that prohibited cruise lines from requiring vaccinations

MIAMI (AP) - A federal judge has temporarily blocked a Florida law that prevents cruise lines from requiring passengers to prove they're vaccinated against COVID-19, saying the law appears unconstitutional and won't likely hold up in court.

The "vaccine passport" ban signed into law in May by Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis appears to violate the First Amendment rights of Norwegian Cruise Lines, U.S. District Judge Kathleen Williams wrote.

In a nearly 60-page ruling issued late Sunday, the judge

School district seeks volunteers for committees

By SENTINEL STAFF

As the new school year gets closer, the Wrangell School District is looking for community volunteers to serve on several committees to help inform and guide school leadership.

The district is seeking applicants for seven committees: Budget/finance, calendar, curriculum, career and technical education, facilities, policy and technology.

"Ideally, we'd have five to seven members at a minimum, on each," said Kim Powell, district administrative assistant. "It's open, and anyone who is interested is encouraged to serve."

The committees can include no more than two school board members, along with administration, staff, students, parents and community members.

Volunteers interested in serving can email Powell at kpowell@wpsd.us. The deadline to submit a letter of interest is Sept. 15.

Powell said committee appointments will be made at the school board's October meeting.

City Park pavilion closed for repairs

By SENTINEL STAFF

The main pavilion at City Park is temporarily closed for repairs to its fireplace.

The metal casing beneath the rock shroud around the fireplace has split, probably just deterioration with age as the metal expands from the heat every time the fireplace is used, explained Kate Thomas, Wrangell's parks and recreation director.

The expanding metal has weakened the rock grout, and officials are concerned that further use of the fireplace could result in rocks coming loose and falling out, possibly injuring people, she said.

Heat-resistant grout is on order, and staff will make repairs as soon as the grout arrives, Thomas said, adding it could be another week.

Longer term, the plan is to replace the fireplace, she said.

"Until repairs are completed, we ask that you refrain from using the park shelter," the department said in a notice to the public last week.

said Florida failed to "provide a valid evidentiary, factual, or legal predicate" for banning requirements that passengers prove they've been vaccinated. Norwegian has shown that suspending the requirement will jeopardize public health, potentially causing "super-spreader" events wherever passengers disembark, she wrote.

Florida separately sued the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention seeking to block federal cruise ship vaccination requirements. The CDC lost on appeal, but then made its guidelines non-binding, and all cruise lines operating in Florida have agreed to keep following the CDC's instructions on a voluntary basis, the judge wrote.

The CDC's current guidelines, in effect until Nov. 1, say cruise lines can sail with confirmation that at least 95% of passengers and crew have been vaccinated, the judge noted.

Florida's state attorney, Pete Patterson, previously said the law's aim is to prevent invasions of privacy and discrimination against passengers who don't get vaccinated.

The pandemic has cost Norwegian more than \$6 billion to date by forcing the company to dock its entire 28-vessel fleet and send nearly 30,000 crew members home. Each canceled seven-day voyage would cost the company another \$4 million, the judge noted.

The Norwegian Gem is set to depart from Miami this Sunday — the company's first voy-

age from Florida since the pandemic halted its operations. More than 1,200 passengers have already booked tickets, promising to prove they've been vaccinated before boarding, the judge noted.


The company already has resumed its sailings from Seattle to Alaska.

"We want nothing more than to sail from Miami, the Cruise Capital of the World, and from the other fabulous Florida ports," Frank Del Rio, president and CEO of Norwegian Cruise Line, said in a statement. "We welcome today's ruling that allows us to sail with 100% fully vaccinated guests and crew which we believe is the safest and most prudent way to resume cruise operations amid this global

pandemic,

Norwegian said that if it can't maintain its vaccination policy in Florida, it will have to cancel all voyages leaving from the state or allow unvaccinated passengers on board, and both options would cause significant financial and reputational harm.

The entire business model of cruising depends on ships being able to cross federal, state, local and international jurisdictions in days or even hours, and each of them have different laws, regulations, and protocols, the judge noted. Belize, the Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands and Honduras are among the foreign ports that require proof of vaccination to enter without quarantines or testing.



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First cruise ship docks at new Ward Cove terminal

By SAM STOCKBRIDGE
Ketchikan Daily News

The 1,094-foot-long Norwegian Encore made history on Aug. 4 as it emerged from a cloudy curtain of rain to tie up in Ward Cove, about a 7-mile drive north of Ketchikan's downtown cruise ship dock.

Before the ship pulled in, workers hurried to finish preparing the 57,000-square-foot cruise ship terminal for visitors, screwing smoke detectors into a restroom ceiling and drilling holes to install the last few rows of cable guardrails.

As the first throng of passengers walked into what had been the pulp mill — the heart of Ketchikan's economy for decades — their arrival was the culmination of a \$50 million project to expand the scope of Ketchikan's cruise ship industry beyond city limits. It also is part of transforming the community into a hub for tourism after the decline of its logging industry.

The new welcome center, which the owner, the Ward Cove Dock Group, calls The Mill at Ward Cove, occupies just one building in a large complex that once housed the Ketchikan Pulp Co. mill.

The mill began operations in 1954, closing in 1997 with a payroll of 500 workers. The closure brought an end to the pulp mill era in Southeast Alaska, and the site fell into disrepair until 2011 when Dave Spokely and his son, Andrew, bought the property from the Ketchikan Gateway Borough for \$2.1 million, hoping to use the site to start new businesses.

Movement toward a cruise dock didn't develop until 2019, when the Spokelys formed the Ward Cove Dock Group with Godspeed Inc., a company owned by Skip, James and John Binkley.

The group designed a plan to reno-



DUSTIN SAFRANEK/KETCHIKAN DAILY NEWS VIA AP

The 2-year-old, 1,094-foot-long Norwegian Encore arrives at the Mill at Ward Cove in Ketchikan on Aug. 4, the first cruise ship to dock at the former pulp mill property that is being turned into a \$50 million cruise ship terminal.

vate one of the buildings at the former pulp mill as a welcome center for a new dock to be built in Ward Cove. The cost of building the dock and the completely renovated welcome center was estimated at about \$50 million.

Work was underway in the early months of the coronavirus pandemic, with projections that the dock would be ready to accept cruise ships by summer 2021.

But in February, Canada extended a ban on large cruise ships in Canadian waters due to the pandemic. It took congressional action to allow a waiver

so that ships could bypass a stop in Canada on their cruises to Alaska.

That left Ward Cove Dock Group workers scrambling to complete the welcome center and dock in time for ships to start sailings in August — six months' worth of work to be accomplished in about two months, Director of Port Operations Shauna Lee said.

When it is completed, the welcome center will direct passengers through a forest of real trees filled with taxidermized animals. The trees will be regularly misted, and the sounds of the temperate rainforest of the Tongass Na-

tional Forest will be piped into the building to enhance the atmosphere.

The building also will feature retail space, a theater for informational presentations about Southeast Alaska and a restaurant.

Time constraints meant that only a fraction of the amenities were in place for the first ship Aug. 4.

With so much empty space, organizers made do, fashioning chairs that had arrived the week before into a rough partition that fenced off the vast undeveloped space in the building and created a wide, straight path from the entrance to the bus lot.

All told, about 1,300 passengers were aboard the Encore, said John Binkley, the president of the Ward Cove Dock Group. The Encore, completed at a German shipyard in 2019, can hold about 4,000 passengers and 1,700 crew. It was built at a cost of almost \$1 billion.

The vessel was completing a test sailing, going directly from Seattle to Ketchikan and back. Binkley estimated that when the Encore returns for a normal sailing each Thursday starting this week, it will have about 2,700 passengers on board.

All passengers aboard the test sailing were employees or friends or family members of employees at Norwegian Cruise Line's corporate offices in Miami, according to representatives from Norwegian Cruise Line, the owner and operator of the Norwegian Encore.

All passengers had to show proof of a COVID-19 vaccination, and were tested for the coronavirus before boarding the ship in Seattle.

Binkley said he was happy to see the ship and the passengers arrive. "It feels fantastic. Yeah. Couldn't be happier. It just looks so beautiful, that ship coming around the corner."

Police report

Monday, Aug. 2
Agency assist: Wildlife trooper.
Health and safety.

Tuesday, Aug. 3
Found property.
Agency assist: U.S. Forest Service.

Agency assist: Ambulance
Wednesday, Aug. 4
Citizen assist.
Agency assist: State troopers wildlife office.

Health and safety: Ravens throwing trash out of the back of a truck. Driver was contacted and picked up trash.

Vehicle unlock.
Welfare check.
Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.

Thursday, Aug. 5
Agency assist: U.S. Forest Service.
Disorderly conduct.
Welfare check.
Agency assist: Ambulance.

Agency assist: Ambulance.
Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.

Friday, Aug. 6
Found property.
Parking complaint.
Agency assist: Juneau Judicial Services.
Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.
Welfare check.

Saturday, Aug. 7
Parking complaint.
Bear complaint.
Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.
Citizen report: Driving under the influence.
Agency assist.

Sunday, Aug. 8
Missing person.
Agency assist: State troopers.
Citizen assist.
Citizen assist.
Noise complaint.
Suspicious odor.

During this reporting period there were five subpoenas served.

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Alaska Fish Factor By LAINE WELCH Fisheries columnist

Southeast halfway to projected pink salmon catch

Alaska's salmon landings have passed the season's midpoint and by Aug. 7 the statewide catch had topped 116 million fish. State managers are calling for a projected total 2021 harvest of 190 million salmon, a 61% increase over 2020.

Most of the salmon being caught now are pinks, with Prince William Sound topping the list at 35 million humpies, well over the projection of 25 million.

Pink salmon catches at Kodiak remained sluggish at just over three million so far, out of a forecast calling for more than 22 million.

Southeast was seeing a slight uptick, with pink catches nearing 14 million out of a projected 28 million.

The pink salmon harvest usually peaks in mid-August. As of Aug. 7, the statewide catch was over 57 million, out of a pre-season forecast of 124 million humpies for the season.

For chum salmon the harvest remains bleak, with Prince William Sound and the Alaska Peninsula the only regions tracking well for catches. The

statewide catch had barely topped six million out of a projected 15.3 million fish.

The coho peak is typically in early September and harvests are climbing steadily, but at a pace less than half the five-year average.

Alaska sockeye salmon catches of nearly 52 million so far have blown past the forecasted 46.6 million. Over 40 million are from Bristol Bay and more than 6 million from the Alaska Peninsula.

Salmon slump

No Alaska region has been hit harder by dismal salmon returns this summer than communities on the Yukon River, where the summer chum run of just 153,000 is the lowest on record.

"This is really quite scary for everyone. These runs are low enough that no one on the river is subsistence fishing, and so it's very dismal. Everybody in the communities on the full river drainage, are feeling the hardship," Serena Fitka, director of the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association, told radio station KYUK in Bethel.

Nearly 10,000 pounds of

chum and king salmon have been donated by Bristol Bay fishermen and processors with logistical assists by SeaShare and Kwik'pak Fisheries in Emmonak to send salmon to 11 villages.

Kwik'pak, typically a top employer each summer, has been able to put only a handful of people to work for a few days helping with the distribution, said general manager, Jack Schultheis.

Gov. Mike Dunleavy directed an \$75,000 to purchase salmon from Alaska processors for donations to the region. The Tanana Chiefs Conference and the Association of Village Council Presidents are helping with distribution.

More fish action

As always, lots of other fisheries are going on across Alaska besides salmon.

In Southeast, about 160 crabbers will wrap up a two-month Dungeness crab fishery on Aug. 15. State managers expect the catch to top 2.25 million pounds, with another opener set for October 1.

The Panhandle's spot shrimp fishery remains open in some re-

gions through Aug. 30, with a 400,000-pound harvest limit.

Alaska's halibut landings are slightly ahead of last year at this time, with nearly 9.9 million pounds crossing the docks by Aug. 7. That's 53% of the catch limit of roughly 19 million pounds.

Halibut prices usually tank during the summer but that's not the case this year and fishermen are fetching near or over \$6 a pound at most ports. Payouts at Homer were \$7.25, \$7.65 and \$7.85, depending on halibut size, with Seward buyers paying a nickel less.

Mariculture means money

Ninety new founding members responded to the call to help shape the new Alaska Mariculture Alliance, a private nonprofit successor to a five-year task force formed in 2016 by then-Gov. Bill

Walker. Their goal is to create a sustainable industry for growing shellfish and seaweeds to benefit Alaska's economy and communities.

The group represents a diverse range of experienced growers to newcomers, said Julie Decker, executive director of the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation, which administered the task force and is doing the same for the mariculture alliance. It also includes representatives from Alaska Native corporations, salmon hatcheries, the Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association and the Aleutian Pribilof Community Development Association.

Along with boosting shellfish and seaweed farming, a priority will be getting the Alaska Legislature to pass a bill to allow for more large-scale shellfish en-

Continued on page 11

CLASSIFIED/LEGALS

THANK YOU

The WMC Foundation wants to thank all the businesses and individuals who donated to our Rally for Cancer Care event. Your generous contributions will help community members traveling for cancer care. www.wmccancer.com

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HELP WANTED

Working Against Violence for Everyone is seeking a full-time Social Justice Advocate to assist people who have been impacted by power-based violence, such as domestic violence and sexual assault in Petersburg. Check out our website at petersburgwave.org/employment for more information.

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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 874-2301 or email wrgsent@gmail.com.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the Matter of the Estate of Charlie L. Traylor: You are notified that the court has appointed a personal representative of the estate of Charlie L. Traylor, born December 3, 1934, died July 13, 2021. All persons having claims against the deceased are required to present their claims within four months after the date of the first publication of this notice or the claims will be forever barred.

Case No. 1WR-21-00011PR
Jo Ellen Wendel
PO Box 1672
Wrangell, AK 99929

Publish Aug. 12, 19 and 26, 2021

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL NOTICE INVITING BIDS Fender Pile Replacement

Notice is hereby given that the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, will receive sealed bids for the Fender Pile Replacement project. The work consists of all activities necessary to remove and replace eleven creosote timber piles at the City Dock and Barge Ramp facilities and dispose of unused or unsalvageable piles. The Borough's estimate for the project is approximately \$20,000 to \$30,000.

Sealed bids will be received by the City and Borough of Wrangell, P.O. Box 531, Wrangell, Alaska 99929, or located at the Borough Clerk's Office, 205 Brueger St., Wrangell, Alaska 99929, until 2 p.m. prevailing time Sept. 1, 2021.

Complete bidding/contract documents for this project are available in electronic form only and can be downloaded from the Borough's website, www.wrangell.com, under the Bids and RFP's section.

Lisa Von Barga
Borough Manager

Publish Aug. 12, 19, 26, 2021

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL JOB BULLETIN: Facilities Maintenance Specialist

The Wrangell Capital Facilities Department will accept applications for the position of Facilities Maintenance Specialist.

This position performs a wide range of technical maintenance and repairs of building systems, equipment and grounds throughout all Borough-owned facilities and assists other departments with special projects. Independent or cooperative work with others is required under the daily direction and supervision of the Facility Maintenance Specialist Lead. This is a permanent position with all City and Borough benefits. This position is part of the collective bargaining agreement.

Applications and job descriptions may be obtained at City Hall. To be considered, interested applicants should submit their City & Borough of Wrangell employment application, a cover letter and a current resume to Robbie Marshall at City Hall, 205 Brueger St., (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929, or by email to payroll@wrangell.com. This position is open until filled and the first review of applications will begin Aug. 25, 2021.

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

Lisa Von Barga
Borough Manager

Publish Aug. 12 and Aug. 19, 2021

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC NOTICE

Voter qualifications for the City and Borough of Wrangell, October 5, 2021, Regular Election, are as follows:

1. a United States citizen;
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;
3. at least eighteen (18) years of age;
4. a resident of the City & Borough of Wrangell for thirty (30) days preceding the election;
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 order 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 5, 2021, to qualify to vote in the Regular Election of October 5, 2021.**

You may ask the Borough Clerk to check the precinct register to assure your qualifications. Kim Lane, MMC, Borough Clerk City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

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

Publish Aug. 12, Aug. 19, Aug. 26, Sept. 2, 2021

Buried line in Columbia River would move power to urban areas

By PETER FAIRLEY
InvestigateWest

Can slicing a 100-mile trench into the bed of the Columbia River be good for the environment? The answer is a big yes, says a team of energy developers that proposes submerging power cables in the riverbed.

The developers say the cables could deliver “clean” energy that will be crucial for getting the most densely developed areas of the Pacific Northwest off fossil fuels.

A proposal by energy developer Sun2o Partners and transmission developer PowerBridge would insert the cables into the Columbia at The Dalles in Oregon. This electrical on-ramp is near the wind farms and solar farms installed along the Columbia Gorge in eastern Oregon and Washington.

The cables also would intersect the monster transmission lines at a Bonneville Power Administration substation, drawing cheaper solar power from the Southwest, steadier wind power from Montana and Wyoming, and reliable backup power

from British Columbia’s super-sized hydropower reservoirs.

But even climate-conscious developers can’t make plans involving a natural resource like the Columbia River without causing uneasiness among those concerned with ecosystems and communities. Along the Columbia, those affected would include tribal nations and unique cultural interests.

Sun2o and PowerBridge propose to bring their cables ashore in Portland, helping to electrify industries, buildings and vehicles while reducing the use of coal- and gas-fired power plants. Hence the project’s name: Cascade Renewable Transmission.

“The only places you can site solar and wind at scale are, for the most part, east of the Cascades. But the demand, the need for the electricity, is in Portland and Seattle, on the west side,” said Corey Kupersmith, the New York-based renewable energy developer who cofounded Sun2o and dreamed up the cable scheme. And power lines that link east and west are filling up fast, he said.

Anticipating environmental concerns, the developers assert they will do little harm to the Columbia, employing high-pressure pumps that make underwater cable installation quick and not so dirty. Water jets would shoot down from a “hydroplow” towed along the riverbed, stirring open an 18-inch-wide trench in the sediment.

Environmental impacts, they argue, would likely be short-term and outweighed by environmental gains: reductions in pollution from natural gas, petroleum fuels and coal. That includes emissions of carbon dioxide and methane, two greenhouse gases that are supercharging the region’s wildfires and heat waves and disrupting even the Columbia’s temperature and timing.

To Elaine Harvey, however, the Cascade Renewable Transmission pitch sounds like one more industrial enterprise in a stream of projects that have harmed her people. Such ventures decimated the Columbia River’s fisheries and fenced off

and degraded the shrub-steppe grasslands that the Yakama and other tribes and bands ceded in an 1855 treaty with the United States.

A member of the Yakama’s Kah-milt-pa, or Rock Creek, Band, Harvey lives with the legacy of dams, aluminum production, wind farms, expanding solar plants and other development. Each has infringed on her people’s right to pursue traditional practices.

As Harvey and Kah-milt-pa Chief Bronsco Jim Jr. wrote earlier this year in the newsletter of Columbia Riverkeeper: “Ours is a living culture, and we are being cheated by progress. An unrelenting cultural extinction in the name of energy development.”

However, power-system experts say the grid that sufficed in the fossil-fuel era must increase capacity if renewable electricity is to become the lifeblood of economies.

Wind blows and sunlight shines most reliably in places that are sparsely populated — areas with weak power lines. Stronger grids would enable more power to travel between regions, so those areas can help each other out.

Moving power west over the Cascades means getting access to the Bonneville Power Administration’s regional network, the U.S. Northwest’s transmission backbone. That network is maxing out as a wave of renewable power projects plug in.

And that was before Oregon passed one of North America’s most aggressive grid decarbonization plans. The bill, which Gov. Kate Brown is expected to sign this month, requires Oregon’s investor-owned utilities to deliver 80% carbon-free power by 2030, compared to less than

50% today. It mandates 100% carbon-free electricity by 2040 — five years ahead of deadlines set by Washington state and California.

Hitting a transmission barrier inspired Kupersmith to propose the underwater cables. He knew putting them in the riverbed was an option, because PowerBridge had installed two transmission lines in the Hudson River to ease power bottlenecks in New York City. And he saw a submerged cable as an end-run around opposition to overhead lines that has ended previous grid expansion efforts in the area and frequently ties up projects across the continent.

Kupersmith’s partner at PowerBridge, Chris Hocker, calls overhead lines “hideously problematic,” noting that they can take a decade or more to build. In contrast, he and Kupersmith anticipate their Columbia cables would begin pumping electricity in just five years — lightning speed for new transmission.

Of course, that depends on government and community approval. And the partners recently began conversations with the four tribes that have treaty rights in the region, including the Yakama Nation and the Cowlitz Indian Tribe.

The Yakima Nation’s Harvey wants to know where development will stop. “What is this going to lead to? Is this going to lead to wind (turbines) down the middle of the river? What’s down the line?”

This report is part of Getting to Zero, InvestigateWest’s yearlong reporting initiative on reducing carbon in the Cascadia region. InvestigateWest’s work is supported in part by the Fund for Investigative Journalism.

Fish Factor

Continued from page 10

hancement that models the state’s successful salmon hatchery programs.

“There’s been some efforts looking at restoring and enhancing king crab, geoduck clams, sea cucumbers and razor clams, but they’re mostly at an experimental level. They’re not allowed to do larger-scale projects until a regulatory framework is put into place,” Decker explained. “We’re hoping that it will be one of the first bills taken back up and moved along over the finish line in the next session.”

Policy makers are starting to talk more about the positive potential for Alaska mariculture, Decker said, and she believes “we have turned a corner” as proven by several new state and federal hires.

NOAA Fisheries has hired

Alicia Bishop as its first ever aquaculture coordinator for the Alaska Region, along with Jordan Hollarsmith as research lead, both based in Juneau. And the University of Alaska Fairbanks has hired seaweed research specialist Schery Amanzor as a professor at its College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences to provide even more expertise.

The state also has added two positions to the Department of Natural Resources to review new mariculture lease applications to reduce the backlog.

“They have now gone from an average review process of 572 days down to 274 days,” Decker said.

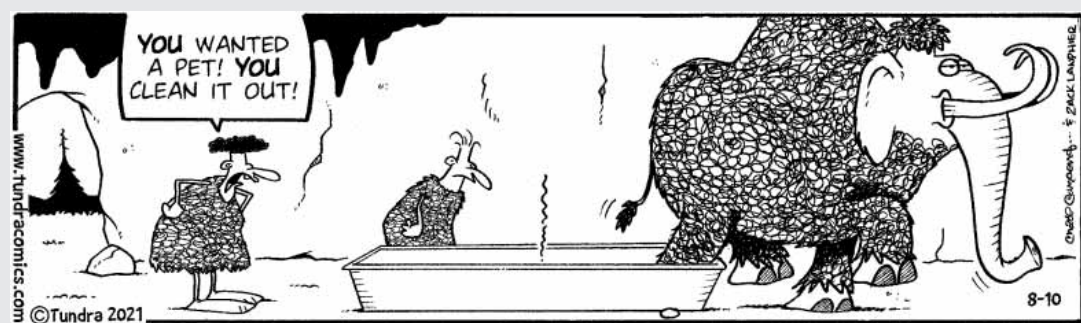
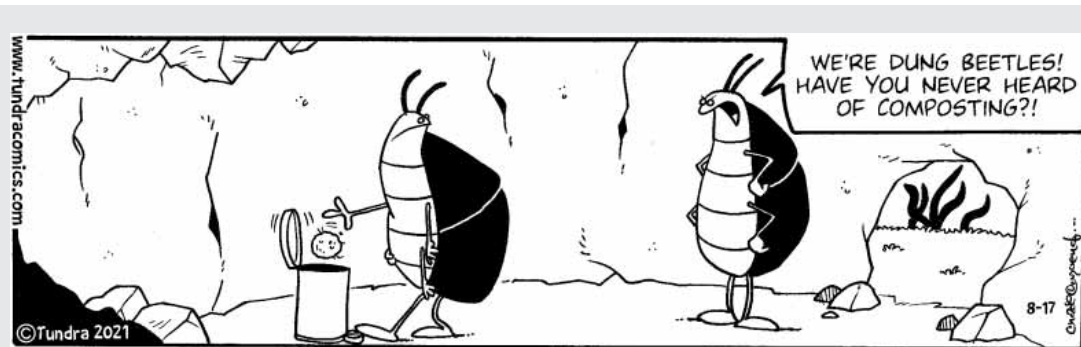
There are 76 active aquatic farm and nursery permits in Alaska, plus 35 pending new applications that add up to over 1,631 underwater acres.

Only 28 growers are making sales so far.

The ultimate goal of the new mariculture alliance is to facilitate a \$100 million mariculture industry by 2038, and many believe that’s very conservative due to increasing demand, especially for seaweeds.

Fish boosters

The Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute is seeking members for its advisory committees to help develop global strategies for the Alaska seafood brand. Committees include salmon, halibut-sablefish, whitefish, shellfish, international marketing, domestic marketing, communications, customer advisory panel and seafood technical. The deadline to apply is Sept. 24. Contact struitt@alaskaseafood.org/



Federal agency will conduct new review of ANWR leases

JUNEAU (AP) - The federal Bureau of Land Management announced Aug. 3 it is moving ahead with a new environmental review of oil and gas leasing in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge after the Interior secretary said she found "multiple legal deficiencies" in an earlier review.

That prior review, under the administration of then-President Donald Trump, provided a basis for the first lease sale on the refuge's coastal plain, held in the final days of Trump's presidency.

A state of Alaska agency was the main bidder in the January lease sale, committing to pay about \$50 million in bonus bids and annual lease fees for the 10-year term — even if it never

spends anything more to explore or develop the acreage, or finds oil.

Regardless of the federal decision to again review the lease sale, the head of the state agency last week called the leases "valid and enforceable."

The federal land agency said there will be a public process to determine the scope of the new review and identify major issues related to a leasing program, which the government has put on hold. The state has objected to the hold.

President Joe Biden, in a January executive order, called on the Interior secretary to temporarily halt activities related to the leasing program, review the program and, "as appropriate

and consistent with applicable law, conduct a new, comprehensive analysis of the potential environmental impacts of the oil and gas program."

Interior Secretary Deb Haaland in June said her review identified deficiencies in the record underpinning the leases, including an environmental review that failed to "adequately analyze a reasonable range of alternatives" to the oil and gas development plans.

She announced plans at that time for the new review and halted activities related to the leasing program while the analysis was pending.

Conservationists welcomed a new review but also called on Congress to repeal the provisions

of law calling for lease sales.

A law passed in 2017 called for at least two lease sales within the coastal plain, with the first before Dec. 22, 2021, and the second before Dec. 22, 2024, the land agency has said. The first lease sale was rushed ahead in the final days of the Trump administration.

Alaska political leaders have long pushed to open the coastal plain to development. Drilling supporters view development as a way to boost oil production, generate revenue and create or sustain jobs.

Critics have said the area off the Beaufort Sea provides habitat for wildlife including caribou, polar bears and birds — and should be off limits to drilling.

The Indigenous Gwich'in consider the coastal plain sacred and have expressed concern about impacts to a caribou herd they rely on for subsistence.

The main bidder in the lease sale was the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, a state corporation.

The authority holds seven, 10-year leases, said Alan Weitzner, the corporation's executive director.

Weitzner said the corporation received a letter from an Interior Department official notifying it of a suspension of operations on those leases, and that the review would "determine whether the leases should be reaffirmed, voided or subject to additional mitigation measures."

Vaccinations required

Continued from page 1

follow by a month announcements by the leading tribal health organizations in Alaska that their staff will be required to get vaccinated.

The two largest, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and Southcentral Foundation, are requiring staff get vaccinated by Oct. 15 or risk losing their jobs. The two Anchorage-based providers together employ more than 5,000 people.

The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium reported last week that at least 80% of its staff already were vaccinated.

Since last month, the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium, which operates the Wrangell Medical Center, has re-

quired all employees, volunteers and contractors to show proof of vaccination against COVID-19 or risk losing their jobs or access to the facilities.

Medical exceptions will be allowed, as well as for "persons whose sincere religious observances and practices related to life, purpose or death oppose vaccines," according to the policy. "Documentation from a religious leader will be required."

Employees who choose not to be vaccinated and have not received an approved exemption "will be considered 'voluntarily separated' from employment with SEARHC," the policy said.

"Over 98% of SEARHC employees are compliant with the

vaccination policy," Maegan Bosak, senior director of lands and property management, based in Sitka, said in a July 2 email.

SEARHC has more than 1,200 employees in 19 Southeast communities, with about 120 in Wrangell.

In addition to health care providers nationwide — which have led the move to requiring vaccinations for their employees — non-medical businesses are increasingly adopting similar policies.

United Airlines, Frontier Airlines, Walgreens, Google, Facebook, Microsoft, Walt Disney, Walmart, CNN and Tyson Foods have announced vaccination requirements for all or some

employees.

Starting with the fall semester, students who live on campus at the University of Alaska Anchorage are required to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19.

Students will have 45 days to get fully vaccinated if they want to remain in housing, or they can request waivers.

The University of Alaska Southeast expects 400 students in its residence halls and apartments in Juneau this fall, and will give students 10 days after moving in to meet the vaccination requirement.

Masks are required on all University of Alaska campuses for the fall semester, regardless of vaccination status, including

in classrooms at all times, according to the school's policy.

The Alaska court system last week announced it is now requiring every visitor to wear a face mask, regardless of vaccination status.

Alaska Supreme Court Chief Justice Daniel Winfree issued the order last week, stating that masks are necessary because of increased COVID-19 case counts and the prevalence of the more contagious Delta variant throughout the state.

He also referred to information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which shows that fully vaccinated people can spread the Delta variant just as fast as non-vaccinated people.

Governor urges Alaskans to get vaccinated

ANCHORAGE (AP) - Gov. Mike Dunleavy has urged Alaskans to get vaccinated, amid a spike in COVID-19 cases driven by the Delta variant.

"There is a safe, free and widely available tool to put COVID-19 in the rearview mirror," Dunleavy said in a statement Aug. 4. "That tool is the vaccine."

Alaska has reported hundreds of new COVID-19 cases a day since mid-July, with several more deaths bringing the state close to 400 since the pandemic started 18 months ago. Infection rates and hospitalizations have been trending up.

As of Monday, the vaccination rate for eligible Alaskans had inched closer to 59% with at least their first dose. After a strong response to getting the shots earlier in the year, the vaccination numbers plateaued in the mid-50s%

for weeks before picking up again recently.

After leading the nation early on, Alaska is now in the lower half of the states for vaccination rates.

Alaska health officials said during the first seven months of this year, 94% of the state's COVID-19 hospitalizations and 97% of deaths were among unvaccinated Alaskans.

Dunleavy, who was infected with COVID-19 in February and was vaccinated in June, joined Dr. Anne Zink, the state's chief medical officer, in urging eligible Alaskans to get vaccinated.

Zink said vaccines are the best way to keep Alaskans out of hospitals or from losing their lives to COVID-19.

"Nothing is more effective in fighting this virus and getting us all back to normal than this game-changing tool," she said.

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