

Wrangell, Alaska  
March 1, 2018

# WRANGELL SENTINEL

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8 Pages

## City to consider some reorganization after several impending departures

By DAN RUDY  
*Sentinel writer*

The Wrangell Borough Assembly and City Hall staff held a roundtable discussion Tuesday evening about reorganizing several departments in light of upcoming retirements and departures.

City manager Lisa Von Barga offered suggestions for shaking up the structures currently giving form to the Nolan Center, Public Works and Wrangell Municipal Light and Power.

The ultimate focus would be to improve the maintenance attention given to existing public facilities while keeping within other budgetary and service provision goals.

One restructuring that was suggested was with the electrical utility. Currently the municipal electrical department is run as a separate enterprise fund. Clay Hammer will be stepping down as superintendent of WMLP this spring to take a job with Southeast Alaska Power Agency.

Von Barga suggested merging it under the purview of a larger Public Works and Utilities department, with a single director in charge of power, water, solid waste, garage and general projects. The line foreman would take on some of the operational responsibilities of the superintendent, while savings could be found in merging the utility's diesel maintenance position with Public Works' garage, and cross-training the other mechanics.

Meanwhile, because of the scope of upcoming and prospective capital projects – ranging from Evergreen Road resurfacing and float replacement at Shoemaker Bay, to new water treatment plant and site development at the former Institute property – Von Barga also recommended creating a separate position tasked with managing their portfolios. Currently the director of Public Works is responsible for those, along with her other departmental sections.

Von Barga suggested that a capital projects management position fall under the purview of a

separate capital facilities department, which would also be in charge of facility maintenance. Under that model, two maintenance specialists and a facility custodian would maintain the borough's various facilities under

a department director and separate administrator. A comprehensive overview of maintenance needs around the borough would allow upkeep to be more closely followed.

There were some other ideas floated by Assembly members, as well as concerns. David

Powell did not like the idea of directly merging direction of WMLP with Public Works due to the different nature of those various utilities involved. Skills needed to manage one well would not necessarily translate well with another, he suggested.

Pryunka echoed that and pointed out the risks of failure were not just limited to Wrangell, due to its infrastructural ties to Petersburg and Ketchikan through SEAPA. Problems with Wrangell's grid could pull the plug on the others' networks, he cautioned.

Another suggested restructur-

**Continued on page 8**



Clay Hammer



PHOTO BY DAN RUDY

### Tons of blinking garbage to go

Working at the Wrangell Cooperative Association Cultural Center on Saturday, IGAP techs Kim Wickman (at back) and Chris Hatton (in front) are assisted by high school student Ashton Hayes during WCA's second annual drive to recycle unneeded electronics. The trio collected 11,670 pounds of various gadgets, which will be sent southward for reprocessing.

## A dry freeze: City announces wintertime water shortage

By DAN RUDY  
*Sentinel writer*

The City and Borough of Wrangell has issued a conservation advisory to water utility users, as increased wintertime demand outpaces replenishment of the town's reservoirs.

A water watch was declared last Friday, the first of three stages in the emergency response plan the CBW Assembly had adopted last April. During a critical water shortage in the summer of 2016 the city had lacked a clear strategy for responding to such crises across departments.

During a Stage I watch alert such as this, Wrangellites are encouraged to reduce their water use by 10 or 20 percent. Depending on the threat stage, further reductions and bans on certain types of uses are enforced to preserve the water supply.

Last year the Assembly established a three-tiered emergency response plan with a fine schedule for infractions. Demand for water is high during the summer, with increased usage driven by Wrangell's two

seafood processors. During 2016 several factors impacted water treatment production at the plant, making it unable to keep up with citywide demand.

There was not a repeat performance in 2017, in part due to a cautious approach by the city going into the summer. The city did enact its first-stage level of conservation through July and August, but a shortened fishing season and extra staffing at the water plant made demand easier to meet. The season wrapped up without incident.

Though the processors are dormant at this time of year, during the winter Wrangell sees another spike in water usage depending on the weather. Without metering on most users' connections it can be difficult to determine with certainty where the extra use is going, but Public Works' assumption is that low temperatures induce people to keep their taps open and running continuously so that water lines do not freeze.

The issue this time around is not with the water plant keeping up with demand, but

rather than of the two reservoirs it draws from. Wrangell has not received much rainfall over the course of the past month, with its precipitation largely in the form of snow. Though it will provide runoff when it melts this spring, at the moment it has not provided much hydrological benefit to the raw water supply, meaning the reservoirs are getting tapped dry. Based on the long-range weather forecast the city expects a continuing deterioration of water storage in Wrangell's two basins.

Climate conditions will continue to be monitored, and water restrictions adjusted as necessary. The Stage I watch status will remain in effect until further notice, unless replaced by Stage II warning restrictions.

Residents are encouraged to be mindful of water use. Find and fix leaking faucets, toilets and water lines, avoid washing vehicles and other nonessential uses, and properly plug or winterize outdoor taps when not in use.

For more information or to report a problem, call Public Works at 874-3904.

## Birthdays & Anniversaries



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

**Thursday, March 1:** Jamie Strain. **Friday, March 2:** Calleigh Miller, Ron Sowle, Sr., Ella Guggenbickler, *Anniversary:* Jim and Juli Gillen. **Saturday, March 3:** Brodie Gardner, Josh Rice, Sig Decker, Nicole Webster, Beth Comstock. **Sunday, March 4:** Angela Allen, Alan Cummings, Donna Loucks, Betsy McConachie, Andy Morse, Judy Guggenbickler, Samuel Comstock, Sherry Bond. *Anniversary: Dude and Debbie Torvend.* **Monday, March 5:** Pat Warfel, Kevin Roope, Jessica Davidson, Lucy Robinson, *Anniversary:* Jim and Elsie Bailey. **Tuesday, March 6:** Michael Lockabey, Andy Mickle, Sierra Ely, *Anniversary:* Mike and Gail Ottesen. **Wednesday, March 7:** Delilah Clarck, Jack Keller. **Thursday, March 8:** Rhonda Edgley, Carter Hammer.

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

## Senior Center

### Menu

#### Thursday, March 1

Veg/beef hash, tomato rockefeller, cauli/broc toss, hot roll.

#### Friday, March 2

Moose stew, tossed salad, pilot bread.

#### Monday, March 5

Moose/green pepper casserole, tossed salad, cornbread.

#### Tuesday, March 6

Chinese pork, rice, steamed broccoli, garden salad.

#### Wednesday, March 7

Moose loaf with mushrooms, mashed potatoes, carrots in orange sauce, romaine radish salad.

#### Thursday, March 8

BBQ chicken, oven fries, creamy slaw, hot biscuit.

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

Milk, tea and coffee will be served with meals.

## FERRY

### Departures

#### Northbound

##### Saturday, Mar. 3

Kennicott 1:00 a.m.

##### Sunday, Mar. 4

Columbia 2:15 p.m.

##### Wednesday, Mar. 7

Kennicott 1:15 a.m.

##### Saturday, Mar. 10

Kennicott 5:30 a.m.

#### Southbound

##### Friday, Mar. 2

Kennicott 3:15 a.m.

##### Monday, Mar. 5

Kennicott 4:00 a.m.

##### Wednesday, Mar. 7

Columbia 5:15 a.m.

##### Friday, Mar. 9

Kennicott 9:15 a.m.

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



## TIDES March 1 - March 8

	High Tides		Low Tides					
	AM	PM	AM	PM	PM	Ft		
	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Ft	
March 1	0:17	17.1	12:18	19.0	6:04	0.5	6:35	-3.2
March 2	1:00	17.9	1:05	19.0	6:49	-0.3	7:15	-2.9
March 3	1:39	18.2	1:48	18.5	7:32	-0.7	7:53	-2.2
March 4	2:17	18.1	2:31	17.5	8:13	-0.6	8:29	-1.0
March 5	2:54	17.5	3:12	16.1	8:54	0.0	9:05	0.4
March 6	3:30	16.7	3:54	14.6	9:36	0.6	9:42	1.9
March 7	4:08	15.6	4:42	13.0	10:20	1.6	10:21	3.4
March 8	4:51	14.5	5:41	11.7	11:11	2.5	11:08	4.8

## Wrangell Roundup: Special Events

### Thursday, March 1

**SAIL Class:** 10:00 a.m. Senior Apartments Atrium. Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL) free class is a strength, balance and fitness class for adults 65+. For more info call 874-3375.

**Healthy Eating Demo on Healthy Food Preparation:** 11:30 a.m. Senior Apartments Atrium. Free class. Learn how easy it is to prepare healthy and delicious food. Samples will be available. For more info call 874-3375.

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

### Sunday, March 4

**Share the Gospel Story:** Come listen while Karen Tinklepaugh and Becca Cressell share the Gospel. Nolan Center classroom at 7:00 p.m.

### Monday, March 5

**Hatha Yoga:** 5:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m. Hosted at the AICS Medical Clinic.

### Thursday, March 8

**Ice Cream Social:** Enrolling Kindergarten Students 2018-2019 School Year. 6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. in the Elementary School Gym.

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

## Continuing Events

**PARKS & REC ACTIVITIES: Mid-day closure: M-F 1:30-3:30 p.m. Closed Sunday**

### POOL:

Arthritis Foundation Exercise Class:

M-W-F 8:30-9:30 a.m.

Water Aerobics:

M-W-F 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Lap Swim:

M-W-F 6:00-7:30 a.m. MTWThF 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

TuTh 5:15-6:15 p.m. Sa 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

2 Lane Lap Swim:

M-W-F 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Lap/Tot Swim:

MTWThF 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. S 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Swim Club:

M-F 3:15-5:15 p.m.

Open Swim:

M-W 5:30-7:00 p.m. F 6:30-8:00 p.m. S 1:00-2:00 p.m.

**WEIGHT ROOM:** M-Thu 6:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m., 3:30-7:30 p.m. F 6:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m., 3:30-8:30 p.m. S 10:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

### MEETINGS

**AA MEETINGS:** Smoked Fish Fri 8 p.m.; Step Study Sat. 7 p.m. at the Episcopal Church Parish Hall, Study Materials provided.

**NA MEETING:** Wed, We Do Recover 7 p.m. at the Episcopal Church Parish Hall.

**BRIDGE SOCIAL:** Fri 1 p.m. at the Island of Faith Lutheran Church 874-3440, 874-3507.

**SALVATION ARMY FOOD BANK:** Tues 10 a.m.-2 p.m. For information please call Major Michael Bates 874-3753.

## The Way We Were

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

### March 7, 1918:

The City of Seattle's call at the port of Wrangell on Friday afternoon was a most pleasant one for both the passengers and the townspeople. When it was found that the vessel would remain in port till 11 p.m. the passengers visited the photo show en masse. The passengers also engaged the North Star orchestra to play for a dance following the show to which local people were cordially invited. For more than an hour dancing was indulged in with greatest pleasure and merriment. The officers of the vessel requested the Sentinel to thank the Wrangell people for having made it so pleasant for the passengers while the vessel was in port. However the Wrangell people who were at the dance feel that in reality they were the guests of the steamship passengers. Anyway, the evening was enjoyed immensely by both passengers and Wrangellites.

### March 12, 1943:

Although the "last game of the season" between Wrangell Institute hoopsters was played some time ago, the boys are putting on one more last battle tonight in the local gym for the benefit of the Red Cross drive. The game promises to be a battle royal with each team out to give fans a score to remember them by until next season. Besides the game, Superintendent George

Fabricius announces that special features will be put on by school pupils between halves and assures patrons an interesting and amusing evening. It is hoped that Wrangell folks will turn out in force for this evening of entertainment for this worthy cause.

### March 14, 1968:

The Alaska Steamship Co.'s liberty ship Fortuna was scheduled to arrive in Wrangell this morning on its last visit here by Alaska Steam. Beginning next week, freight will be delivered here on vans using the state ferry.

### March 4, 1993:

The Alaska State Legislature is currently considering several bills that would promote and/or fund specific electrical intertie projects throughout the State. Gov. Walter J. Hickel has submitted legislation developed by the Alaska Energy Authority that would restructure AEA's financing, which, when coupled with an additional appropriation this year, would permit AEA to assist with the financing of several intertie projects, generate finding assistance for future projects and preserve the power cost equalization program for an additional 10 years.



## Wrangell Weather

Date	High	Low
Feb. 19	28	19
Feb. 20	33	19
Feb. 21	35	26
Feb. 22	35	27
Feb. 23	39	35
Feb. 24	36	32
Feb. 25	37	28
Feb. 26	39	27



## Daylight Hours

Date	Sunrise	Sunset	Daylight
Mar. 01	6:42 am	5:20 pm	10:38h
Mar. 02	6:39 am	5:22 pm	10:43h
Mar. 03	6:37 am	5:24 pm	10:47h
Mar. 04	6:34 am	5:26 pm	10:52h
Mar. 05	6:32 am	5:29 pm	10:57h
Mar. 06	6:29 am	5:31 pm	11:02h
Mar. 07	6:27 am	5:33 pm	11:06h
Mar. 08	6:24 am	5:35 pm	11:11h

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# Ferry to adjust schedule for Region V Music in Juneau

The Alaska Marine Highway System announced it has adjusted ferry service schedules for the middle of April in order to help roughly 400 students and chaperones from across Southeast travel to the Region V Music Festival in Juneau.

AMHS will be rerouting the

M/V LeConte to make a round-trip run through southern Southeast to pick up and return the students. With this service adjustment, students from Ketchikan, Wrangell, Metlakatla and Klawock will be able to attend the annual festival. Students from Sitka and Haines will use a previously-adjusted ferry service schedule to access the festival.

Because the total number of students traveling to the festival exceed the LeConte's passenger capacity, around 100 other students and chaperones plan to attend the festival through other means.

"AMHS is making a tremendous route change to accommodate students traveling to the music festival. We're thrilled to be able to make this happen, and we've exhausted all options for shifting boats and service to minimize im-

acts to Southeast communities. We apologize to those travelers and businesses who are inconvenienced, and we wish all the students success at the festival," Captain John Falvey, AMHS general manager, said in a release.

Northern Southeast Alaska will retain a modified service schedule during the run:

On April 10 the LeConte's Lynn Canal service will be canceled, with passengers shifted to a modified M/V Columbia schedule servicing the same ports on the same day.

On April 11 LeConte's Hoonah and Gustavus stops will be canceled, with passengers consolidated with the following day's run.

On April 12 the LeConte's Angoon and Tenakee stops will be canceled, adding instead stops in Hoonah and Gustavus to cover commercial transport of food and


supplies. On April 15 LeConte's Lynn Canal service will be canceled, with passengers shifted to the Columbia's run on the following day. On April 16 the LeConte's Hoonah and Gustavus stops will be consolidated with its April 17 sailing. Columbia's Lynn Canal route will be retained.

On April 17 LeConte's Lynn Canal route will be canceled, shifting passengers to the previous day's Columbia sailing. Stops to Hoonah and Gustavus would be added to LeConte's run to cover commercial transport of food and supplies.

AMHS staff is currently contacting affected passengers and re-booking travel. Passengers may book travel at FerryAlaska.com, or by contacting a local terminal by dialing 1-907-465-3941 or toll-free at 1-800-642-0066.

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**at Merlin Elmer Palmer**  
**Post #6 Hall**  
*Concerning 2018 Election Slate of Officers*



**BOROUGH DECLARES STAGE I WATER WATCH**

The City and Borough of Wrangell has declared a Stage I Water Watch, effective immediately, in accordance with the Borough's Water Shortage Management Plan.

The Borough's water conservation ordinance of the Wrangell Municipal Code, Section 15.04.650 Water Shortage Management Plan, requires that the Borough Manager inform the public and Borough Assembly when water conservation is needed. The elevated need for water conservation is in response to a shortage of rainfall and its continued effect on Wrangell's raw water supply.


The long-range weather forecast suggests a continuing deterioration of water supply in the Wrangell reservoir basins. Climate conditions will continue to be monitored, and water restrictions will be adjusted as necessary. The Stage 1 Watch status will remain in effect until further notice, unless replaced by Stage II Warning restrictions.

During a Stage I Watch, citizens are strongly encouraged to reduce their water use between 10%-20%, to protect the water supply.

The City and Borough of Wrangell welcomes questions about the Stage I Watch or about ways in which you can reduce your routine water consumption. We encourage reduction in water usage as much as possible.

Public Works can be reached at 874-3904.

**Published: March 1, 2018**



## Trooper report

**February 16**

Alaska Wildlife Troopers cited Wrangell resident Jon Abrahamson, 48, for participating in a commercial Tanner crab fishery without a valid 2018 commercial crewmember's license in possession. Bail is set at \$260 in the First Judicial Court in Juneau. Troopers also cited Petersburg's Troy Thomassen, 44, for employing an unlicensed crewmember during a 2018 commercial Tanner crab fishery. Bail is set at \$260 in the First Judicial Court in Juneau.

**February 19**

Alaska Wildlife Troopers cited Ronald Soble, 61, for failing to report on his registration moose permit within the timeframe specified by the permit. The citation carries a \$110 fine in the District Court at Wrangell.

Alaska Wildlife Troopers cited Laura Kim, 32, for failing to report on her registration moose permit within the timeframe specified by the permit. The citation carries a \$110 fine in the District Court at Wrangell.

Alaska Wildlife Troopers cited Lloyd Ward, 70, for failing to report on his registration moose permit within the timeframe specified by the permit. The citation carries a \$110 fine in the District Court at Wrangell.

## Court report

**February 13**

Michael D. Hall, 49, appeared before First District Court Judicial Officer Chris Ellis to face a charge of Driving Under the Influence. The defendant pleaded guilty and was ordered to serve 20 days of jail/monitoring with 17 suspended, pay \$1,791 in fines and surcharges with \$100 suspended, and undergo screening and treatment. Hall's license was revoked for 90 days, and upon return he will be required to install and use an ignition interlock device for a period of six months.

**February 21**

Stephen W. Nesbitt, 49, appeared before First

District Court Judicial Officer Chris Ellis for five counts of making a Knowing False Statement/Omission on a Fish & Game Application, each a misdemeanor. The offenses occurred between July 6, 2015 and July 24, 2017. Nesbitt pleaded no contest to all counts, and was issued \$5,000 in fines with \$2,500 suspended, plus a \$50 training surcharge. He was also ordered to pay restitution to the State of Alaska in the amount of \$2,630. The defendant has lost his hunting and sport fishing privileges in the state for one year, provided all fines and restitution are paid, and has been placed on probation for one year.

## Police report

**Monday, February 19**

Nothing to report.

**Tuesday, February 20**

Parking: Warning given for parking.

**Wednesday, February 21**

Theft reported.

Summons served.

Illegal parking.

Suspicious incident.

Garbage complaint.

**Thursday, February 22**

Suspicious incident: 911: Officer responded, all ok.

Fire: Tree: FD notified.

Noise complaint.

**Friday, February 23**

Nothing to report.

**Saturday, February 24**

Disturbance: Officer responded. Agency Assist: Chimney fire reported.

Paper service.

Theft reported.

Caller reported intoxicated person: Officer responded.

**Sunday, February 25**

Arrested on charges of Violating Conditions of Release: Joel Franks, 52.

Dog at large citation issued to Jeannette Anderson.

There were two ambulance calls in this week.

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# Byford monofill options still in discussion

By DAN RUDY  
Sentinel writer

With a month left before work is scheduled to resume, discussions continue on the future of a stockpile of contaminated soil excavated from the former Byford junkyard.

Heading the cleanup effort that began in 2016, the Department of Environmental Conservation removed over 60 shipping containers of debris and heavily contaminated soils from the yard, which for years had been a privately-run repository for automotive and marine junk. The City of Wrangell had assumed responsibility for the property through foreclosure in 2006, and lacking the funds to pay for remediation of the heavily polluted site the state and federal Environmental Protection Agency had stepped in to assist.

EPA Superfund resources slated for the cleanup were diverted elsewhere, and an initial \$3.9 million earmarked for the project by the state DEC ended up being insufficient. Growing in scale as work continued, reclamation of the property reached \$6.5 million by the first phase's end, and a further 18,500 cubic yards of lead-contaminated, chemically treated soil remained on site for disposal.

Due to the high cost of shipping that soil out, the department had recommended instead storing the material permanently on-island in a designated monofill. Around \$5.7 million was budgeted for that part of the project, and a disused Department of Natural Resources rock pit identified as an ideal candidate for its location.

Work slated to begin last July ended up being delayed after local concerns were raised about the site's proximity to Pats Creek, a salmon-producing stream important to recreation and subsistence activities. Putting the project on hold until April 1 of this year, DEC has subsequently allowed the city and Wrangell Cooperative Association time to come up with either alternative locations or additional funding resources. By its own estimates, DEC expected shipment off-island of the material and disposal would cost an additional \$6 million.

To the present, the additional money has not materialized. DEC unit manager Sally Schlichting had come down to Wrangell January 22 to meet with city and tribal of-

ficials and explore other on-island options.

"We went down to look at some additional alternative sites that the WCA had identified," she said.

Together with WCA's environmental office staff, she examined six new sites, bringing the total number of examined alternatives for the project to 15. To be useful a site needs to meet certain criteria. A new landfill must be at least 500 feet from a drinking water well or surface water source, the area's base must naturally be at least 10 feet above the highest measured level of the uppermost aquifer or built two or more feet above the ground, it cannot be located on a slope greater than 10 percent, and with few exceptions cannot be situated in a wetland.

By that rubric the other locations were eliminated from consideration, with the DNR pit still considered the best candidate.

"Nothing else has really materialized out of those conversations for another site," explained John Halverson, DEC Contaminated Sites Program manager.

A final decision on the project has not been arrived at, with discussions still ongoing with WCA and the city.

"We're going to make a decision soon," said Halverson.

The current stockpile the soils are being kept in has a shelf life of only two years, covered in a plastic tarp weighted down with tires over at the former Byford site. Because the project was intended to prepare the yard for residential use it cannot be



PHOTO BY DAN RUDY

Approximately 18,500 cubic yards of treated but contaminated soil sits in temporary containment near the site of 2016's Byford junkyard cleanup. The site had been extensively contaminated with lead, petroleum and other substances over decades of use. While the worst bits were already shipped abroad for disposal, the remaining soil will need to find repose closer to home due to lack of funds.

permanently interred there, and the materials used to build the stockpile are unsuitable for long-term exposure.

Schlichting explained the stockpile is being inspected on a weekly basis by a contractor. Early on in the winter season some tears in the top cover have had to be repaired, but otherwise the site has been fine. Once the soil is eventually moved to its final resting place the soil beneath the stockpile will be sampled and tested to ensure there was no migration of lead.

The soil was treated with a phosphate-based compound which renders the present lead unavailable to passing water molecules. While still considered contaminated, the soil should be resistant to leaching into surrounding water systems. Once interred in the monofill, it will be covered up and sequestered off

from future development, with periodic monitoring.

If the monofill gets built as planned, some further delays and cost additions are expected. \$2 million has already been spent for the second phase, with some lease particulars and contractor costs from the delay adding to expenses. As part of its agreement to use the Forest Service's roads to and from the fill site, DEC's contractors will not be able to make trips during the weekends and on holidays. Each day's work will need fair weather, meaning less

flexibility for scheduling left by the shortened week, and a potentially lengthier project.

"The contractor is looking at that to see how they can maximize hauling," said Halverson.

Final costs will not be known until work is finally completed. Meanwhile, Halverson said DEC is still in communication with CBW and WCA, and it may schedule another presentation or public meeting before work resumes.

"We will definitely let people know what the plan is," he said.

## Share the Gospel Story

Come listen while Karen Tinklepaugh and Becca Cressell share the Gospel.  
Sunday, March 4  
Nolan Center classroom at 7:00 p.m.

### Hope you will attend

It has been my pleasure to serve at Merlin Elmer, Palmer Post #6 Commander. The post depends on its officers and members to run efficiently.

Post #6 is an active and necessary part of our community. Now our March elections are coming up as the next order of business.

Our March 8 meeting will be held at 10:00 a.m. at Post #6. There are many important issues we need to address and especially if we are going to continue on with our presence in this community. I hope you will attend.

**Commander Chuck Petticrew, Sr.**

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# City and hospital to set transition committee amid revenue problems

By DAN RUDY  
Sentinel writer

Assembly members commiserated with city and hospital staff on Monday to discuss how to move forward on new organizational arrangement at Wrangell Medical Center.

Currently the hospital is a public asset, managed by the City and Borough of Wrangell. For several years it has been contending with inconsistent revenues and cash reserve concerns, and in the event of a default the city would be liable for any outstanding debts. In 2015 the Assembly approved a reserve source of interest-free funds of up to \$500,000 for WMC to draw from in case of emergency.

At the meeting of WMC's governing board on February 21, hospital finance director Doran Hammett explained there was only enough cash in reserve to cover 25 days' operating expenses. The hospital had previously drawn \$250,000 from the city's line of credit, which made up about nine of those days. While expecting a Medicare settlement of about \$390,000 to come in by the week's end, Hammett pointed out the hospital's revenues were overall on a downward streak.

"January was not a great month," he had told board members.

A drop in admissions from the previous year led to revenues being 17 percent lower than budgeted for, and in the fiscal year since July 1 revenues have lagged behind expectations by 10 percent. Net losses for FY18 are so far more than double what had already been expected, at \$406,577 by the end of January.

"You don't need me to tell you that's not sustainable for the long run," Hammett concluded.

Discussions about a possible changing up of the Wrangell hospital's management – be it finding a managing partner or spinning it off entirely to private enterprise – have been taking place between the WMC board and Assembly since at least November. Last month Assembly members approved entering into a consultancy contract with Dorsey & Whitney, which will provide legal assistance and advice on a possible transition.

A likely trajectory they will explore is some degree of partnership with Southeast Alaska Rural Health Consortium (SEARHC), a regional healthcare provider which last year acquired Alaska Island Community Services, another provider headquartered in

## Mostly mauling the Bears

**Box scores for the games:**

Boys varsity			Girls varsity		
	Glacier Bears	Wolves		Glacier Bears	Lady Wolves
Sunday, February 25	59	61	Sunday, February 25	44	84
Monday, February 26	56	40	Monday, February 26	36	65




PHOTO COURTESY OF KYLE CLAYTON

**Riley Blatchley takes a shot during Sunday's game at Haines during Wrangell's Sunday night win away from home. The game was a close one, with the Wolves coming back during the second half. During their rematch Monday the hometown Glacier Bears evened things up with a win of its own.**




PHOTO COURTESY OF KYLE CLAYTON

**Helen Decker shoots for two during the Lady Wolves' win at Haines on Sunday. Wrangell led throughout the game, winning both Sunday and Monday night by nearly double margins. Heading back on the ferry yesterday, the team will have to scramble to prepare for its homecoming weekend games against Petersburg starting Friday.**

Wrangell. Since that deal SEARHC has reaffirmed AICS' prior commitments with WMC and the city.

AICS and WMC had historically maintained a close working relationship over the years, with the clinic purchasing about a third of the hospital's total services and providing its physicians. Plans to eventually replace the hospital's current facility would have the new structure built on a campus neighboring AICS' main clinic on Wood Street.

Hopes for the arrangement continue even after AICS' acquisition, and SEARHC had last month offered to assist the borough with costs for architectural work on a combined campus.

Costs on a draft concept for the new facility were presented last November, with costs coming back considerably higher than the hospital had hoped for. With interest and updated equipment, the price tag could run between \$90 million and \$115 million over a 30-year span, depending on the design option.

Given the limited resources on the part of the borough and its hospital, last month members of the WMC board and Assembly concluded a partner such as SEARHC would be needed to make any such investment feasible.

Since receiving the WMC board's input, city staff have since worked out a non-binding agreement with SEARHC to hire a consultancy with the intention of laying out potential management models best suited to that arrangement.

Meeting Monday at City Hall, Assembly and WMC board members, city staff, and representation from SEARHC and AICS met for a joint work session. City manager Lisa Von Bargen explained they were there to converse about expectations for the process ahead, as well as how best to move forward toward reaching those goals.

A non-binding letter of intent to formally explore management options with SEARHC for Wrangell's hospital is being drawn up at the moment. City staff antic-

ipates the letter will move forward as an actionable item at the March 13 assembly meeting.

During discussions Assembly member Stephen Prysunka laid out a couple of "deal-breakers" for him in reorganizing the hospital. For him, maintaining WMC's critical-access status and long-term care facilities were the most important.

"If there's not a blue H somewhere, then we've lost out," he said.

Fellow member Patty Gilbert emphasized for herself the importance of maintaining the current level of care while keeping costs stable. However, she also had hoped for a wider courting of potential partners beyond SEARHC. At previous meetings last fall it had been noted the close ties and efficiencies currently enjoyed with AICS could be risked if the hospital's management were split with another competing party.

"I think we really short changed ourselves," she said.

Assembly member David Powell disagreed, noting that other healthcare providers had so far not rushed in to express interest. In the meantime, the delicacy of the hospital's finances coupled with the city's liability toward it suggested time was essential.

"The longer we wait, the more money it costs the city," he commented. Powell also pointed out

the importance of the hospital to Wrangell's economy. "If we lose the hospital, then we're done."

As well as putting together a letter of intent, another purpose of Monday's work session was to establish a steering committee to help manage the process. As currently proposed, a committee would include two members of the Assembly, two WMC board members, Von Bargen, WMC CEO Robert Rang, SEARHC representatives and an architect.

On the WMC board, Don McConachie suggested they call an emergency meeting to appoint committee members ahead of the March 13 meeting date. As he saw it, the sooner a committee was formed the better.

"I think this is something we should do so we have our ducks in a row," he said.

A steering committee would need to formally approved by the Assembly on March 13. After that, a feasibility study would be undertaken to determine whether a joint-campus approach for a new hospital would be workable. A larger stakeholder group of the hospital steering committee, AICS and WMC leadership, and at-large members of the community would be involved in the ensuing process. From there, a community vote on the hospital's future could eventually be an option before any formal transition.



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# Classified/Legals

## BOATS AND MARINE

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## FOR RENT

3 BEDROOM TOWNHOUSE, 2 bath, single car garage available first week in March. No dogs. Call 907-305-0619.....tfn1-25b18

2 BEDROOM APARTMENT, for rent has washer dryer hookup, unfurnished. Call 907-305-0619.....tfn1-25b13

## JOB

WRANGELL PUBLIC SCHOOL is accepting applications for the position of: Maintenance/Custodian: This is a 12-month position with benefits paid on Column F of the Classified Personnel Salary Schedule. Responsibilities include assisting the maintenance director with repairs and maintenance of the buildings, keeping our school complex clean and assisting with setting up rooms for classes, large presentations and business meetings as needed. For a complete job description and salary schedule, please contact the district office at

874-2347. POSITION: Open until filled. It is Wrangell Public School District's policy to not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, sex or disability.....2x3-8b101

PISTON & RUDDER SERVICE has a full time job opportunity for a dependable person to perform typical boat hull maintenance work. This is an outside job environment consisting of hauling, scraping, washing and the painting boat hulls.. Must have valid DL, be able to lift 80lbs. and know what time the work day starts. Email resume to: Theresa@pistonrudder.com or stop by office for application...2x3-8b65

## SERVICES

THE WRANGELL SENTINEL: See us for black and white and color copies up to 11x17. 205 Front St. 874-2301.....tfnhd

FAX SERVICES at the Sentinel. Send or receive faxes. Fax number 874-2303.....tfnhd



The Southeast Alaska Power Agency (SEAPA) is soliciting proposals from qualified firms to perform repairs to the Swan Lake Hydroelectric Project's Marine Terminal Bulkhead. Restoration of the Swan Lake Marine Bulkhead will include replacement of the sea-side ground anchor waler (Anchor Rod Strong-back), repair of deficient ground anchor treaded rod ends and replacement of all of the Bulkhead's fender system. The Swan Lake Hydroelectric Project is located approximately 22 air miles or 31 water miles northeast of Ketchikan, Alaska. Proposals are due March 29, 2018 at 4:00 p.m. AKDT. For a complete set of the bid documents with additional details, please navigate to: [www.seapahydro.org/rfp.php](http://www.seapahydro.org/rfp.php) or interested respondents may call the SEAPA office at (907) 228-2281 for a copy.

**Publish: March 1, 2018**

## CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL

Pursuant to the City & Borough of Wrangell Code, Sec. 3.04.808, notice is hereby given that the regular assembly meetings of the assembly shall be held on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month. The meetings shall be held at 7:00 p.m., in the Assembly Chambers, City Hall, Wrangell. If any such Tuesday shall fall on a legal holiday as defined by the laws of the State of Alaska, the meetings scheduled for that day shall be held at the same hour on the next succeeding day which is not a holiday. Separate notice for the regular council meetings shall not be required. There will be no regular meetings the second Tuesday in July and August and fourth Tuesday in December.

Kim Lane, Borough Clerk  
City of Wrangell, Alaska  
**Publish: March 1, 2018**

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice is hereby given that the regular board meeting of the Wrangell Medical Center Board of Directors shall be held on the third Wednesday of the month at 5:30 p.m. in the City and Borough Assembly Chambers, Wrangell, Alaska. Separate notice for the regular Board of Directors meeting shall not be required.

Kris Reed  
Board Secretary  
Wrangell Medical Center  
**Publish: March 1, 2018**

## Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Trust Land Office Notice under 11 AAC 99.050 of Decision to Complete AMHT-USFS LAND EXCHANGE MHT #9100897.

Notice is hereby given that, pursuant to the provisions of AS 38.05.801 and 11 AAC 99, the Executive Director of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Land Office (TLO) has determined that it is in the best interest of the Alaska Mental Health Trust and its beneficiaries to complete a land exchange with the United States Forest Service of certain Trust land. The basis for this determination is explained in a written best interest decision prepared by the Executive Director pursuant to 11 AAC 99.040.

The Trust land affected by the decision is adjacent or near to Ketchikan, Petersburg, Wrangell, Sitka, Meyers Chuck, No Name Bay and Juneau and is more particularly described in the best interest decision document referenced by this public notice. The total acreage to leave Trust ownership is approximately 18,000 acres. The Trust will acquire approximately 21,000 acres of Forest Service lands near Ketchikan on Revillagigedo Island and on Prince of Wales Island near Naukati and Hollis.

Persons who believe that the written decision should be altered because it is not in the best interests of the Trust or its beneficiaries, or because the decision is inconsistent with Trust management principles set out in 11 AAC 99.020, or any other provision of 11 AAC 99, must provide written comments on or before **4:30 PM, March 31, 2018. Comments should be submitted to the TLO at 2600 Cordova Street, Suite 100, Anchorage, AK 99503, or by fax (907) 269-8905 or email [mhtlo@alaska.gov](mailto:mhtlo@alaska.gov).** Following the comment deadline, the Executive Director will consider timely comments that question the decision on the basis of the best interest of the Alaska Mental Health Trust and its beneficiaries or inconsistency with 11 AAC 99, and the best interest decision may be changed in response to such written comments or other information. Commenting parties will be provided a copy of the final best interest decision after the end of the notice period.

To be eligible to file for reconsideration of the best interest decision, or to file a subsequent appeal to the Superior Court, a person must have submitted written comments during the notice period. Eligible persons will have twenty (20) calendar days after published notice of or receipt of the final written decision to request that the Executive Director reconsider the decision under 11 AAC 99.060(b).

Copies of the written decision are available at the Trust Land Office, or at [www.mhtrustland.org](http://www.mhtrustland.org). If you have any questions concerning this action, please contact the Trust Land Office at (907) 269-8658.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Alaska Mental Health Trust is prepared to accommodate individuals with disabilities. Please contact the Trust Land Office at (907) 269-8658 for assistance. Requests for assistance must be received at least 96 hours prior to the comment deadline in order to ensure that any necessary accommodations can be provided.

The Executive Director of the TLO reserves the right to waive technical defects in this notice or to amend, postpone, or vacate the best interest decision.

Date: 2/29/2018  
Wyn Menefee, Executive Director  
**Published: March 1, 2018**

## CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL, ALASKA PUBLIC NOTICE

With the recent resignation of a member on the Southeast Alaska Power Agency (SEAPA) Board of Directors, we are seeking *Letters of Interest* to fill the vacancy on the SEAPA Board which consists of:

**EITHER One (1) voting member OR One (1) alternate member for Wrangell until December 31, 2018**

Please note that we are seeking letters for either a VOTING Member seat **OR** an ALTERNATE Member seat.

The term will expire on December 31, 2018.

Please turn your Letter of Interest into the Borough Clerk's Office, 205 Brueger Street, City & Borough of Wrangell, P.O. Box 531, Wrangell, AK 99929, **on or before 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, March 13, 2018.**

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Borough Clerk's Office at 907-874-2381, or email: [clerk@wrangell.com](mailto:clerk@wrangell.com)

Appointments will be made at the regular Assembly meeting on March 13, 2018.  
**Publish: March 1 and 8, 2018**

## PUBLIC MEETING Central Tongass Landscape Level Analysis Project

The Wrangell Ranger District invites you to participate in a Community Input Meeting to learn about the Central Tongass Landscape Level Analysis Project (CTLLA).

**Thursday, March 8, 2018  
5-7 pm**

**Nolan Center Classroom**

A brief presentation will begin 15 minutes after the doors open, followed by an opportunity to share your ideas with Forest Service resource specialists.

Please contact Carey Case if you have any questions, 907-772-3871.

*USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.*  
**Publish: March 1, 2018**



## PUBLIC NOTICE

Wrangell Museum has been in the process of cleaning up its paperwork and ownership on items held in the collection: Please be advised that the Museum will acquire ownership of the following items if a valid claim is not received by the museum within 45 days of the last publication of this notice. All items are "Found in collection" All items have been in the museum's documented possession since prior to 1993. A list of the items is as follows: FIC #'s .235 Portrait of unknown person, .236 xylophone, .237 Chinese ginger jar, .238 whiskey bottle, .239 John Walker bottle, .240 Milk bottle, .241 Mellins food jar, .242 Battery Eveready dry cell, .243 Log Dog, .244 Kitchen utensil, .245 2 sm. bottles, .246 sm. glass bottle, .247 windmill design serving platter, .248 serving tray, .249 aluminum lazy susan, .250 Burned stick, .251 doll blanket with design, .252 button, .253 hand crafted sm beaded patch, .254 camera part, .255 fish lure, .256 shotgun shell casing, .257 Coprolite, .258 serpentine, .259 Howlite, .260 (7) rocks, .261 (3) agate, .262 chalcedony, .263 palm wood, .264 agate, .265 Geode small, .266 wood fossil, .267 Cinelarger, .268 washboard, .269 polaroid camera, .270 halibut gangions, .271 Oyster tree burl, .282 coral, .283 (7) iron pyrite, .274 pink crocheted basket, .275 shoe last, .276 & .277 glass ink stand, .278 glacier cannery trade token, .279 & .280AK 49th birthday token, .281 Seattle fair token, .282 insulator, .283 & .284 sq. nails, .285 starfish, .286 (27) petroglyph & headstone rubbings. Contact: Terri Henson, Museum Director, PO Box 1050, Wrangell AK 99929. 907-874-3770 for more information or to make claim of ownership. Claims must be supported by documentation or proof of ownership.

**Published: February 8, 15, 22 and March 1, 2018**

# Alaska Fish Factor

By LAINE WELCH  
Fisheries columnist

## In the Northwest and Alaska, only 50 to 60 E-Stops are being used out of a fleet of about 1,500 boats

The most common piece of gear on a seine vessel is also one of the deadliest – the rotating capstan winch used for winding ropes. Anyone who has ever

worked aboard a seiner has horror stories of close calls, or worse.

“The deck winch is the most powerful thing on the boat. It’s the scariest piece of machinery that we work with. My feeling when I was caught in it was that I was completely helpless. There was nothing I could do,” said fisherman Noah Doncette who participated in a video for the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) called “The Most Powerful Thing.”

“The corner of my raincoat caught under the capstan and started wrapping around. It

snapped my head back and broke my neck,” said Randy Dobrylnia.

“I was lifting the ring and I reached over with a pair of nylon gloves. My arm went down and started going around again and again. Then it jammed me against the deck and started to pull my arm off. It all happened in seconds,” said Gunnar Neilson.

A simple device called an E-Stop has been available for over 10 years to prevent deck winch injuries.

“It’s a button that can be put on the horn of a capstan winch on a seiner. When the button is hit, it triggers a solenoid valve that stops the flow of hydraulic fluid to the winch and locks the capstan in place to prevent further entanglements,” said Ted Teske, a NIOSH Health Communications Specialist who invented the device.

“It was in response to guys being wrapped in the winch and being pulled away from the controls back at the wheelhouse. This gives them an option right on the winch itself to lock the device and keep them from getting further injured,” he explained.

Between the years 2000 and 2014 there were 16 fatalities from winch entanglements in the U.S. In 41 percent of the cases, loose clothing or gloves were cited as the first thing getting entangled in the gear.

But fishermen have been slow to adopt the devices aboard their seiners. In the Northwest and Alaska, only 50 to 60 E-Stops are being used out of a fleet of about 1,500 boats.

Teske and his team are determined to find out why.

“We are interested in talking to any seiners who have either installed one and what was the tipping point, and their experience using it, as well as guys who have considered it and did

not install an E-Stop. Both perspectives are extremely valuable for us,” Teske said. “If we can identify the barriers, we can address them through other types of interventions – whether it’s risk awareness or developing rebate programs, or talking with insurance companies to see if they might offer a lower rate for installing safety equipment on their boats.”

In a major success story for NIOSH’s Research to Practice initiative, all three major manufacturers in the Northwest now provide E-Stops as standard features on their new seine winches. Retrofits for older boats cost around \$3,800.

The E-Stop outreach is part of a new multi-year NIOSH project to increase adoption of deck safety interventions in fisheries. Contact Ted Teske at [tteske@cdc.gov](mailto:tteske@cdc.gov)

**Ocean awareness challenge** – “Our oceans in a changing climate” is the theme for the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Bow Sea Ocean Awareness program, an online contest for kids aged 11 to 18 around the globe.

The goal of the program is to create a generation of ocean advocates, said founder and president Linda Cabot, who created the program based on three guiding principles.

“One was my love for the ocean and coastal communities. The second was a belief that youth have the power to change society. The third was to understand that art and creative literacy is a very powerful and necessary skill,” Cabot explained.

She believes there is a general lack of education about the world’s changing oceans and was inspired to get young people involved by having them express environmental impacts through creative arts.

Students are encouraged to submit entries individually or in groups in writing, art, poetry, film and music.

“It can be self-driven, or

teachers can use it as projects in their classrooms,” said program director Alyssa Irizarry, adding that submissions in multiple categories are welcomed.

Last year’s contest attracted entries from 63 countries and 48 U.S. states, including several from Alaska. Irizarry said the ways in which the kids connected with ocean issues through their research and arts was “astounding.”

“They are connecting emotionally and then becoming leaders in advocating for raising awareness and finding solutions,” she said.

The program provides online resources and tools for students and teachers, along with a gallery featuring past winners.

Cash prizes ranging from \$100 to \$1,500 are awarded in two divisions, along with \$750 sponsor recognition awards.

Deadline to enter the Ocean Awareness Student Contest is June 18. Get more information at [www.fromthebowseat.com](http://www.fromthebowseat.com).

**Expo ideas** – The call is out for compelling ideas and speakers for Pacific Marine Expo, the largest commercial marine trade show on the West Coast which marks its 52<sup>nd</sup> year this November in Seattle. Topics can include but are not limited to safety, technology, marketing, boat building, climate change and more.

“We strive to provide the most critical information and education every year and an important piece is hearing directly from mariners and service providers in the industry. The feedback provided in the Call for Proposals lets us know exactly what’s important to our customers. We encourage you to be creative and think outside the box!” said Denielle Christensen, Expo Director. Deadline for submissions is March 16. Visit [www.pacificmarineexpo.com](http://www.pacificmarineexpo.com)

**Grants give back** – The Alaskan Leader Foundation is accepting applications from non-profits and projects for its annual grant giveaways in Kodiak and Bristol Bay. Funding typically goes to programs such as food banks, shelters, educational and youth programs, museums and recycling efforts.

Alaskan Leader Foundation was founded in 2000 by six Kodiak fishing families and was joined in 2007 by the Bristol Bay Economic Development Foundation. Since 2009, the group has donated nearly \$600,000 to local projects. Deadline to apply is March 30. For an application, contact Linda Kozak at 907-539-5585 or [lkozak@gci.net](mailto:lkozak@gci.net)

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# Assembly

Continued from page 1

ing was at the Nolan Center. Terri Henson currently directs operations there but will be retiring this spring. During her tenure the Wrangell Museum director position was already consolidated with her desk, and she has maintained the center and museum with only a handful of permanent part-time staff.

With Henson's departure, Von Bargen suggested that a single Nolan Center manager position would be retained, as well as a full-time assistant manager position in charge of events, collections and sales. A half-time custodian would be added as well, while other support roles would fall to temporary staff.

Sitting in on the meeting, Henson cautioned against relying too heavily on temporary staff. "Because of what the Nolan Center holds, which is quite an extensive inventory for the gift store, the extensive collection at the museum," she prefaced, having a floating staff could pose a security risk.

"You can't just have anybody. You have to have that responsible person there," she said.

Henson also suggested the city consider maintaining staffing levels, pointing to the quality of work her part-time staff have been doing with the collection and operations. A lot of extra work goes into making the Nolan Center operate, she said, estimating she herself puts in 250 hours of unpaid overtime each year to keep the center open, sometimes seven days a week and often at irreg-

ular hours.

"I've been extremely lucky with the group of people that I have right now," Henson commented.

Within the Nolan Center, consolidating its theatrical division within general operations was also recommended. Kristen Reed has managed the Nolan's theater – named Castle Mountain Entertainment – since its start in 2005. She closes the curtains on that run next week, in preparation for a move to the Juneau area.

Castle Mountain Entertainment is a city department run separately from the Nolan Center. A steering committee in the early stages of building the center had picked the name, with the intention of expanding out into other forms of entertainment. The committee disappeared but the name stuck, and it now has a manager and assistant manager, and employs school students as theater attendants.

Recommending merging those positions with other Nolan Center responsibilities, Von Bargen explained the opportunity for youth employment would still be there in the form of Nolan Center attendants. It would be a more versatile part-time position, helping to set up for functions and so forth.

Reed was pleased with this direction. "As a first job in the community, I feel that's another thing the theater provides," she said. "It's a good place to get their feet wet."

In the case of the Nolan Center, part of the impetus for streamlining operations is



PHOTO BY DAN RUDY

**High school industrial arts teacher and resident of six years Drew Larrabee was appointed to serve on the Wrangell City and Borough Assembly on Tuesday, to serve until October's elections. He fills the seat vacated by Becky Rooney, who had served since October 2014.**

consideration of cost. In the theater's case, revenue in FY16 and FY17 fall just short of expenditures, progressively drawing each year on its allotted reserves. Staffing makes up about a quarter of total expenditure for it, with more than half going toward acquiring films and concessions.

The Nolan Center itself is largely funded by a combination of general fund and endowment contributions. Of its FY16 budget of \$319,000, revenues from civic center and

museum activities came to \$145,580, a little less than half. The lion's share of cost to the facility is its utilities and facility expenses rather than staffing wages.

Economic development director Carol Rushmore explained that the center had initially been envisioned as being financially self-sustaining, with a business plan adopted to guide it. But a recession and changing cruise ship scheduling had shifted things significantly, not just lowering revenue but also impacting the endowment.

"At the time we were receiving one very big cruise ship a week," she said. When that left, a lot of the business plan had set sail with it.

Henson told the Assembly that the Nolan Center's contribution to the economy is greater than what its revenues might suggest. "It's what the center brings in to the community," including bed rentals, meals and other purchases brought in by visitors.

Be that as it may, with Henson's departure soon at hand Assembly member Stephen Prysunka suggested revisiting the center's business plan might be a good idea before the transition.

"We're kind of hiring to an invisible plan," he said. "Where we dropped the ball is we didn't revisit it when it changed."

In all, the talk lasted an hour but will not be the last. At Powell's recommendation, Von Bargen will return with additional insights and new information at a future meeting date.

## Open mic for Alaskans on operating budget draft

By DAN RUDY  
Sentinel writer

Wrangell residents will have an opportunity to offer their two cents on the state operating budget currently in development in the Alaska House.

The basis for the draft budget was proposed by Gov. Bill Walker last December. Being considered now in the House, bill number 286 will see a number of amendments to it that have been put forward by the chamber's representatives and various subcommittees.

"We're in the process of finalizing what we'll be looking at right now," said Rep. Dan Ortiz (U-District 36), who sits on the House Finance Committee.

Testimony from around the state begins this afternoon, with a second round of teleconferences scheduled for Friday. During tomorrow afternoon's session Wrangell residents will be allotted time to speak between 4 and 5 p.m., with a speakerphone set out in the Legislative Information Office, on the second floor of the Kadin Building on Front Street.

"We're sharing it with five other communities," LIO officer Sarah Wittlesey-Merritt said of the hour-long timeframe.

During that time House Finance will also be hearing from Bethel, Cordova, Kotzebue, Nome and Valdez. In order to deal with concerns as efficiently as possible, the committee asks that testimony be limited to two minutes per speaker.

"They're going to be very strict about that," Whittlesey-Merritt added.

Pushing to pass its own version of the budget sometime next month, the House will be taking its input from the public before Finance adds amendments that reflect those concerns. Once that

process is done, a finished product will undergo a floor vote before heading to the Senate.

"There's that opportunity statewide for people to weigh in on where things stand with the budget," said Ortiz, who encouraged constituents to participate.

Legislature leadership will try to finish its session after an allotted 90 days, though it can go for 120 before requiring a special session. Four such additional sessions were called last year, running through much of the calendar. While an attempt to get things put together in a more timely schedule this year is on the table, the issue of finding a fiscal solution to the budget seems fertile ground for disagreement.

"The big issues are funding for closing our fiscal gap, and what'll we have in terms of a percent-of-market-value draw," explained Ortiz.

Faced with an approximately \$2.5 billion spending deficit this year, the Legislature has for the past four years been covering operational spending for similarly multibillion-dollar deficits with reserve savings and agency cuts. With the budget reserve funds now nearing exhaustion, legislators have been looking to the Alaska Permanent Fund as a possible out.

Valued at \$66 billion by January's end, the Fund currently allows for earnings to be drawn into a reserve account, through which annual dividends are apportioned out to state residents. Gaining traction in both chambers as a possible solution to its budget crisis would be a percent-of-market-value (POMV) draw from the Fund to partially pay for state operations. A 5.25-percent draw based on a five-year market value average of the Fund has been suggested, last session in the form of Senate Bill 26, which was not adopted.

"I think there's still some division throughout the Legislature," Ortiz commented. However, he saw consensus remaining on a POMV model, though questions of the size of the draw and pro-

portion allotted to the dividend would still need to be worked out.

"I do think by the end of the session we will have voted across the board for a POMV draw," he

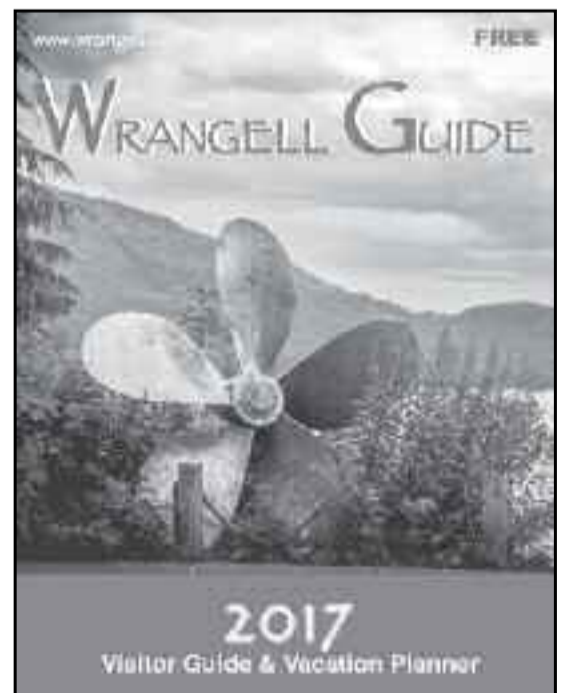
predicted, though he would not hazard a guess when that would be. "We're making progress. I feel like there's a lot of support for getting out without the added special sessions."

## CAN SUMMER VISITORS FIND YOU?

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FULL COLOR AD SPACE



#### FEATURES IN THE GUIDE INCLUDE:

- CHARTER OPERATOR & LODGING DIRECTORIES
- WRANGELL ISLAND ROAD & RECREATION MAP
- WRANGELL WALKING TOUR

The Guide is filled with photos, stories and information about Wrangell and the surrounding area. It makes a great resource for tour operators, travel planners and independent travelers.