

Vans get custom paint job by art students, Page 5



Wrangell, Alaska
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WRANGELL SENTINEL

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House approves budget with \$2,600 payment for Alaskans

By JAMES BROOKS
Anchorage Daily News

The Alaska House of Representatives voted Saturday to turn an oil-price surge into money for schools, repayment of tax credits the state has owed to oil explorers for years, and \$2,600 payments for Alaska residents this fall.

The House voted 25-14 to send its state operating budget proposal to the Senate, which is developing its own version. The two budget plans, which set spending for public services starting with the new fiscal year on July 1, will be negotiated into a compromise bill and sent to Gov. Mike Dunleavy, who can accept or reject any items in the budget bill line by line.

The Legislature faces a May 18 adjournment deadline. "Yes, the budget is larger than last year, but I think it's not due to any one group. We've all had a hand in that,"

said Nome Rep. Neal Foster, co-chair of the House Finance Committee.

Oil prices have surged since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in late February, and the state expects more than enough revenue to pay for the higher budget. Oil prices were climbing even before Russia attacked Ukraine, moving up from the high \$60s per barrel last August to \$90 by the end of January and about \$105 late last week.

Larger oil production tax and royalty payments have swelled the state treasury, easing the budget pressure after several years of lower prices.

Looking to stash away some of the windfall, the House budget put \$2.2 billion into the Statutory Budget Reserve, an empty state savings account. Lawmakers said that as the budget process continues, some of that money could instead be earmarked for construction,

renovation and maintenance spending, known as the capital budget. That spending bill will be written in the Senate this month.

The biggest addition to the operating budget passed last Saturday is a second year of K-12 school funding. The House plan contains money for both the 2022-23 school year and the 2023-24 school year, at \$1.2 billion per year. Advance funding for the next year is intended to reassure school districts that the money will be there.

For individual Alaskans, the House budget includes a \$1,300 Permanent Fund dividend this year, plus an "energy rebate" of \$1,300. "We expect this to be paid out at the same time as the dividend, for a total payout of nearly \$2,600," Foster said.

Dunleavy proposed a Permanent Fund dividend of about \$2,600, plus an additional supplemental payment of \$1,250.

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Their names bear repeating



2019 PHOTO/COURTESY U.S. FOREST SERVICE

Many of the Anan Creek bears have nicknames, such as Crack, given his name because he always watches for salmon from his favorite fishing spot, a crack between the rocks across the creek from the wildlife observatory.

There's a story to every Anan bear name

By SARAH ASLAM
Sentinel reporter

If visitors read the bear-sighting sheet at Anan Wildlife Observatory, which the workers fill out every season, bear names would sound more like tax forms: 7-05-A, for the first bear spotted on the stream to fish on July 5, and 7-05-B, for the second bear spotted on July 5.

Well, humans only do so well with numbering systems before our penchant for nicknames kicks in: Casino, Crack and Scuba Sue, to name a few.

Bear naming can be a controversial issue, Dee

Galla, outdoor recreation planner at the Wrangell Ranger District in the Tongass National Forest, said April 5.

"Some folks don't like anthropomorphizing the bear, because it changes the relationship with them. We understand that, but when you're out there working with the bears you need to identify them," Galla said.

To that end, Galla lets the crew pick the names but says "give it a name that describes it, not personifies it."

Continued on page 4

District hires principal for elementary school

Search goes on for principal at the high school

By MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

In a special session last Saturday, the school board approved the contract for a new elementary school principal.

Board members unanimously accepted the contract for Ann Hilburn as Evergreen Elementary School principal beginning the 2022-23 school year. Hilburn is in her first year as the special education teacher at the high school and middle school, having moved to Wrangell from Mississippi last fall.

Hilburn was part of an applicant pool of more than 30 people, which was narrowed down to eight to 10 applicants. Schools Superintendent Bill Burr said a committee of teachers, staff and community members picked the candidates for interviews.

A candidate had been selected for the high school and middle school principal position, but the application was withdrawn last week. More than 30 people applied for that position as well.

Lead teacher Jenn Miller-Yancey has been serving as assistant principal of Evergreen Elementary School

since 2019. The school district decided to return to the more traditional structure of a principal for next year.

Hilburn said she applied because she likes working with staff as well as students.

"I have a passion for helping teachers become the best they can be," she said. "Even those of us who have served for many years can still improve, make changes for our students' successes, and find enjoyment in watching them grow."

Having been a school administrator in Mississippi before coming to Wrangell, Hilburn said if she can help her staff continue to grow, then that will help students to grow. "It's a wonderful process that I enjoy being part of."

She also has taught in Texas and Idaho, and in three districts in Alaska: The Lower Yukon School District; then Gustavus, where she also served as principal; and Angoon, where she was superintendent.

Hilburn said before making any changes at Evergreen, she will take the time to get to know the staff and the students, but "changes are inevitable. If we are not moving forward, then we are moving backward. I always want to be moving forward."

Hilburn's salary is still being determined by the district. Her contract is for two years and will be paid with federal funds from an American Rescue Plan Act grant.

Mental, physical and financial self-care at center of school health fair

By MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

Schools try to prepare students for life beyond the walls of academia and sometimes that requires more than classroom education.

Last Tuesday, high school and middle school staff held a health fair that centered around not only physical and mental health but financial health and planning for the future.

Separate sessions were held for the high school and the middle school and each was brimming with students ac-

tively going to various tables, asking questions, playing games and competing with classmates. Bob Davis, the assistant principal for both schools, said the information being shared "was a little bit better for the high schoolers," but was equally beneficial for both groups, giving them something to think about.

"The kids are more interested in the prizes and goodies, but maybe it's planting seeds for later," said Megan Powell, new accounts representative for First

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Joan Sargent, a representative from BRAVE, speaks to sixth grade student Miah Houston at a health fair held at the high school gym on April 5. Businesses and organizations provided resources to high school and middle school students on a myriad of topics.

PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/
WRANGELL SENTINEL

Birthdays & Anniversaries

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

- Wednesday, April 13:** Devan Harding.
- Thursday, April 14:** Kacie Galla; Anniversary: Rod and Jean Brown.
- Friday, April 15:** Dawn Rae Welch; Anniversary: Jamie and Kim Reading.
- Saturday, April 16:** Tegan Wolten.
- Sunday, April 17:** Faye Kohrt, Alyssa Royster.
- Monday, April 18:** Matthew Chaney, Sue Nelson, Gabby Welch.
- Tuesday, April 19:** Bozworth Davidson; Anniversary: Jesse and Amber Sumner.
- Wednesday, April 20:** Kalin Kohrt, Odile Meister, Liam McCloskey.

Senior Center Menu

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

Thursday, April 14

Cheese sandwich, split pea soup, sunshine salad

Friday, April 15

Chicken cacciatore, pasta Brussels sprouts, tossed salad

Monday, April 18

Crispy chicken, steamed carrots, cauliflower broccoli toss, curry rice pilaf

Tuesday, April 19

Creole pork steaks and pasta with cauliflower, sunshine salad

Wednesday, April 20

Salisbury steak, peas, peach salad, mashed potatoes with gravy

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

Ferry Schedule

Northbound

- Friday, April 15**
Matanuska, 7:15 p.m.
- Friday, April 22**
Matanuska, 4:45 p.m.
- Friday, April 29**
Matanuska, 6:45 p.m.
- Friday, May 6**
Matanuska, 5:45 p.m.

Southbound

- Monday, April 18**
Matanuska, 8 a.m.
- Monday, April 25**
Matanuska, 8:30 a.m.
- Monday, May 2**
Matanuska, 8 a.m.
- Monday, May 9**
Matanuska, 9 a.m.

All times listed are scheduled departure times.
Call the terminal at 907-874-2021 for information or call 907-874-3711 or 800-642-0066 for recorded information.

Tides

	High Tides		Low Tides	
	AM	PM	AM	PM
	Time	Ft	Time	Ft
April 13	11:38	14.8	05:30	3.4
April 14	00:12	15.6	06:10	1.7
April 15	00:43	16.7	06:46	0.0
April 16	01:14	17.6	07:21	-1.4
April 17	01:46	18.2	07:57	-2.4
April 18	02:19	18.5	08:35	-2.9
April 19	02:54	18.5	09:17	-2.9

Wrangell Roundup: Special Events

WRANGELL SCHOOL BOARD will meet at 6:30 p.m. Monday, via Zoom. Go to: <https://bit.ly/3x5XIMu>. The meeting ID is 883 8464 0836 and the passcode is 438146. Community members can submit their comments by emailing them to kpowell@wpsd.us, or can sign up under guests to be heard at the meeting by emailing the same address before 3:30 p.m. the day of the meeting.

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES is hosting a free boating safety course at the swimming pool 6 to 7 p.m. Thursday, April 21. All ages are welcome; children under 7 must have an adult in the water with them. Space is limited. Call 907-269-8705 or email kosette.isakson@alaska.gov to sign up.

WCA IGA is hosting a community cleanup from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, April 23. Meet at the covered basketball court next to the Evergreen Elementary School. Bags and gloves will be provided. Sack lunches will be available around noon. The announcement of cash prizes will be held about 12:15 p.m.

ST. PHILIP'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH will hold an Earth Day walk at 9 a.m. Saturday, April 23, around the Volunteer Trail. Meet at the trail entrance. Open to all.

NOLAN CENTER THEATER presents "Sonic the Hedgehog 2," rated PG, at 7 p.m. Friday and 4 p.m. Saturday. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$5 for children under age 12, for the action adventure comedy film that runs two hours and two minutes. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

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

ELKS LODGE No. 1595 is hosting a community Easter egg hunt at 1 p.m. Sunday at the Muskeg Meadows Golf Course. For toddlers to 12 years old.

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

WRANGELL PARKS & REC is offering Skate night on Friday nights from 6-7 p.m. at the community center gym through April. Bring your own roller skates or inline skates. Skates available to borrow in limited quantity and sizes. Family focused. Kids 12 years and under must be supervised by a parent or adult. Open gym style activity. Wear your safety equipment. Register online at www.wrangellrec.com or call 907-874-2444.

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

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

Continuing Events

PARKS and RECREATION www.wrangellrec.com

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

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

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

April 13, 1922
The high school play, "Mary Jane's Pa," will be given in the Redmen's Hall on Saturday, April 15. It is in three acts with a cast of 15 characters and will have two performances. At the afternoon performance, which is given so that schoolchildren may see it for a lower price and for mothers who cannot attend in the evening, the seats will be 25 cents for schoolchildren and 50 cents for the mothers. No reserved seats. At the evening performance, 160 seats at the front will be reserved at 75 cents each. The general admission to the rest of the hall will be 50 cents.

The costumes and staging will be the same for both afternoon and evening performances, and the high school orchestra will furnish music for both.

April 11, 1947

Ex-G.I Herb Parsons, one of America's fastest gun handlers, will give a spectacular free public exhibition in Wrangell on May 20, it was announced today. A self-taught wizard with a Winchester, Parsons uses a shotgun to "scramble" in only two seconds all three eggs thrown high into the air. In another amazing feat, using a .22 caliber rifle, Parsons throws a hard maple block into the air, cracks the block and splinters the pieces with four bullets in an average of three seconds. Parsons stresses safety practices in the handling of firearms from start to finish of this program. As an additional feature, at the close of the exhibition, he will answer any questions and discuss shooting problems with members of the audience. Throughout the exhibition, in which he uses 10 rifles, shotguns and pistols, Parsons maintains a rapid-fire barrage of entertaining talk.

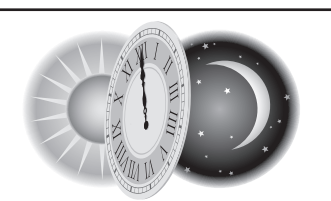
April 14, 1972

It looked this week like the plush state ferry Wickersham will be serving foot traffic only at Wrangell. Chamber of Commerce President Robert Wagoner said the stern-loading Wickersham will not be able to use the local terminal's side-loading

facilities for vehicles, and the extra dolphin that will be needed so the ship can back in will cost approximately \$90,000. "That means \$90,000 would have to be spent so the ferry can handle vehicles for a period of about two years," said Wagoner. Other local officials conferred with state Department of Public Works Commissioner George Easley, and Easley was doubtful about the dolphin. Wagoner said the dolphin needed to serve the Wickersham would not be usable after the ship is replaced by a new U.S. built ferry due to be on the run within two years.

April 17, 1997

Wrangell's Muskeg Meadows is looking less like a clearing in the trees and more like a real golf course this summer. With the addition of netting this week along the new driving range, duffers now can practice their swings to their hearts' content and not lose so many balls into the woods. The improvement is just in time for this weekend's "Best Ball Scramble," one of the events scheduled during Wrangell's First Annual Garnet Festival April 19-26. According to golf club resident Jerry Bakeberg, more bark will be put on the course this summer, if it's available from the Ketchikan Pulp Mill, and grass seeding will be done this fall or next year. A driving range shack to shelter hardcore golfers from the rain as they practice, is the next planned improvement.



Daylight Hours

Date	Sunrise	Sunset	Hours
April 13	5:47a	7:53p	14:06h
April 14	5:44a	7:56p	14:11h
April 15	5:42a	7:58p	14:15h
April 16	5:39a	8:00p	14:20h
April 17	5:37a	8:02p	14:25h
April 18	5:34a	8:04p	14:29h
April 19	5:32a	8:06p	14:34h

House budget would send extra \$143,000 to Wrangell schools

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

The state budget plan adopted by the House last weekend includes an additional \$143,000 in one-time funding for Wrangell schools, almost a 5% boost from a state aid formula that has not changed in five years.

The district has been relying heavily on federal pandemic relief money and reserves to fill budget holes the past couple of years, and plans to do the same for the 2022-2023 school year. District officials acknowledge it's not a sustainable financial plan.

State funding to school districts is based on a per-student formula, and Wrangell has been hit hard by the loss of almost 20% of its pre-pandemic student count. The state's formula funding covers about 60% of the school district's more than \$5 million operating budget.

"It will help fill the gap," Schools Superintendent Bill Burr said of the \$143,000.

However, the additional state funding, if approved by the Senate and the governor, would be only for the 2022-2023 school year. Lawmakers continue to debate a change to the formula in state statute, but supporters lack enough votes and the one-time \$57 million appropriation may be the political compromise to help Alaska's 54 school districts this next year.

The one-time payment is in the state operating budget bill approved by the House last Saturday. Senate consideration will come next. The Legislature faces a May 18 adjournment deadline.

Without a change to the formula, school districts "will have to go through this again" next year, Burr said last Thursday. Districts have been pushing lawmakers for several years to raise the funding formula.

Legislation to increase the formula is in the House Finance Committee, where Rep. Dan Ortiz supports the change. One challenge to convincing his colleagues, he said, is that some lawmakers believe spending more money on schools means less money for the popular Permanent Fund dividend. That is a tough perception to overcome, said Ortiz, who sits on the Finance Committee and represents Ketchikan and Wrangell.

Another House Finance member, Anchorage Rep. Andy Josephson, believes much of the opposition to increasing state funding for schools comes from critics of public education who support vouchers to attend private schools or homeschooling. The critics don't see the successes of public education, Josephson said.

It's wrong to blame public schools for all the underlying issues that confront education, including family struggles, economic stress, inadequate housing and society's shortcomings, he said. "Teachers are not magicians," and cannot solve everything.

Opposition to increased state aid for school districts also disregards inflation since the formula last changed in 2017, Josephson said.

House Minority Leader Cathy Tilton, of Wasilla, opposed the budget bill and said during the House debate

"Continually, we have had folks asking state representatives for more money. Every year, there's always an excuse, always a justification for spending more on education."

Rep. Ben Carpenter,
Nikiski

last Saturday there is no provision requiring the additional money be spent in classrooms. Most members of the Republican minority voted against the budget bill for multiple reasons.

Correct, there is no requirement that the additional state money go directly to the classrooms, responded majority coalition Rep. Harriet Drummond, of Anchorage. Schools are dealing with rising health care, maintenance and heating costs, Drummond said, putting a burden on district budgets that requires more funding.

House Finance Co-chair Rep. Neal Foster, of Nome, cited the tiny St. Mary's School District in Western Alaska. It would receive about \$148,000 in additional assistance under the one-time funding in the budget bill, Foster said, and he expects most of that money will go to pay the higher cost of heating fuel.

Juneau Rep. Andi Story, the sponsor of the bill to increase the funding

formula in state law, said many opponents are too fixated on student test scores, rejecting more state financial aid because they believe test scores should be higher for all the money the state contributes.

Perhaps one-third of the Legislature believes public schools are not doing their job well enough, said majority coalition Rep. Bryce Edgmon, of Dillingham. "Education is the (biggest) political football of them all," he said after a House Finance Committee hearing on school funding last Thursday.

"Continually, we have had folks asking state representatives for more money," said Nikiski Rep. Ben Carpenter, adding he opposes more spending unless he sees better outcomes in the schools. "Every year, there's always an excuse, always a justification for spending more on education," the Kenai Peninsula Republican said at the House Finance Committee hearing.

The state budget for K-12 education at public schools is about \$1.2 billion in the budget bill approved by the House, almost 25% of state spending on public services.

Separate from the budget bill is discussion among some lawmakers of sending additional state aid to school districts specifically to help with high heating fuel bills. "I think that's probably outside the realm of possibility," said Sitka Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins. "But I could be surprised."

The Anchorage Daily News contributed to this report.

WCA provides another round of federal pandemic relief aid to tribal members

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

Tribal members can apply for a fourth distribution of federal pandemic relief funds administered by the Wrangell Cooperative Association. This round of financial aid is limited to \$2,000 per household.

The application period closes May 16.

Tribal members can select to receive the assistance for utilities, groceries, heating fuel or gasoline, or a combination of any of the four choices in increments of \$500, \$1,000 or \$2,000 if the applicant prefers that the aid go all to one category.

Previous rounds were limited to covering utility bills or groceries.

People who received assistance under earlier rounds still need to apply for this latest program,

said Alexandra Angerman, CARES Act coordinator for the tribal council. They need to fill out a short form verifying that they have been hurt financially by the pandemic and still need assistance, she said last Thursday.

First-time applicants will need to complete a slightly longer form.

Tribal members can email carescoord.wca@gmail.com to request an application, go to the website wca-tribe.org and click on the COVID-19 and Fourth Distribution tabs to download a form, or come by the tribal office at 1002 Zimovia Highway from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays to pick up a form from the box on the porch.

The program is open only to tribal members living in Wrangell. Slightly more than half of the WCA's approximately 850 members live in Wrangell.

Angerman said elders can call her for assistance, and she can take their information over the phone.

The first rounds of cash assistance were funded by federal aid under the 2020 CARES Act, which distributed money to states, municipalities, tribes, businesses and others nationwide to help people get through the first year of the pandemic. This latest round of pandemic relief administered by the WCA is funded under the American Rescue Plan Act, which took effect last year.

Federal aid under both congressional appropriations has totaled more than \$22 million so far to the Wrangell borough, school district, the tribe and businesses. Several million dollars more went directly to individuals in three separate payments over 2020-2021.

EASTER SERVICES

Bible Baptist Church

Sunday:

9:30 a.m. Family Easter breakfast
11 a.m. Easter Service

First Presbyterian Church

Sunday:

11 a.m. Easter Worship

Harbor Light Church

Sunday:

9 a.m. breakfast
10:35 a.m. Easter Morning Service
Special service designed for children during regular service.

Salvation Army

Friday:

Noon Community Good Friday Service at Salvation Army

Sunday:

8 a.m. Sunrise Service at the Parks & Rec Covered Area (basketball court)

Island of Faith Lutheran

Thursday:

7 p.m. Maundy Services

Friday:

7 p.m. Good Friday Mass

Saturday:

7 p.m. Easter Vigil service at St. Philip's Episcopal Church

Sunday:

9:30 a.m. Easter Service

Saint Rose of Lima Catholic Church

Thursday:

5:30 p.m. Holy Mass

Friday:

5:30 p.m. Good Friday Mass

Saturday:

7 p.m. Easter Vigil service at St. Philip's Episcopal Church

Sunday:

11 a.m. Palm Sunday Mass

Seventh-day Adventist Church

Saturday:

11 a.m. Easter Sermon

Sunday:

8 a.m. Sunrise Service at the Parks & Rec Covered Area (basketball court)

St. Philip's Episcopal Church

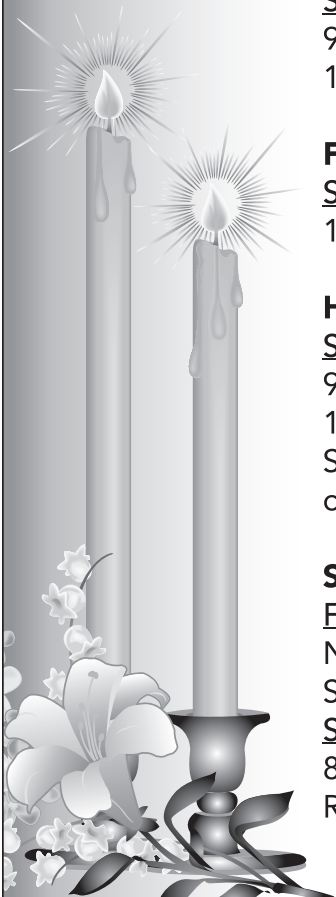
Saturday:

7 p.m. Easter Vigil service

Sunday:

10 a.m. Easter Service

Everyone is welcome to the services.



FROM THE PUBLISHER

Sentinel succeeds as a newspaper, which is what matters

By LARRY PERSILY
Publisher

Awards are always appreciated, and thank you to the chamber members who honored the Sentinel as the business of the year, announced at the annual dinner last Saturday.

I'd like to dream that the award means everyone agrees with every opinion I have shared on these pages in the past 15 months since I bought the Sentinel. Or at least agrees with me 90% of the time. I'd also like to dream my arthritis will magically go away, but then the doctor would need to treat me for being delusional.

Truth is, I'd probably settle for people agreeing with me half the time. That would be an improvement, as I fear my views on politics (practical left), technology (resistant), social media (aghast), vaccinations (I love a good needle), government (generally works well), stick shifts and food are falling so far out of step that I will never catch up, despite the long stride of someone who is 6-foot-5.

I get it. Who wants to hear some cranky old guy lecture them that people should use their phone to talk, not text; that ketchup never goes on a corn dog; that sprinkles belong on cupcakes and not atop whipped-cream coffee drinks; or that government's job is to serve everyone, not please everyone.

I guess the test of Wrangell's acceptance for my opinions may come later this year, when the Sentinel endorses candidates for U.S. House and Senate, governor and Legislature. Also, the fall ballot question on whether Alaska should convene a constitution convention to run the state's founding laws through the political shredder of 2022 divisiveness to see what comes out in little

pieces at the other end. OK, maybe a hint of how I feel about that issue.

But the business of the year award is not about opinions, nor is it really about the Sentinel as a business. On that count, I fail. The newspaper loses money and will continue to lose money for quite awhile. That's OK, and I knew that when I bought the paper. I wanted the Sentinel to provide more news, more information for the community. That takes more staff, more pages, and more spending. More people are subscribing and reading the paper, which is the goal. Thank you for the support.

"I welcome the chamber award because I believe it means that the Sentinel is succeeding at the business of being a quality community newspaper."

I welcome the chamber award because I believe it means that the Sentinel is succeeding at the business of being a quality community newspaper.

That includes telling the truth, such as: The town needs to confront the realities of declining school enrollment, a lack of housing that discourages people from moving here, and a shortage of new residents

and their new energy, which are so important for Wrangell's economic and community health. Nothing against old people like me, but a town without a strong flow of new residents to take the lead only gets smaller.

The Sentinel will be here to provide news and information for those new residents, and old, just as the newspaper has done since 1902.

There is a lot more to Wrangell than just the newspaper, and the chamber handed out three other awards last weekend that deserve everyone's praise: Sarah Merritt was honored as citizen of the year; Barb Neyman as educator of the year; and Mia Wiederspohn as Young Leader of the Year.

Bear names

Continued from page 1

They try not to give the bears names until they are well-known, and until most of the people working there can identify the bear, she said.

Most of the bears that come to Anan are black bears, but Scuba Sue, a brown bear, got her name from the way she fishes underwater. "She dives deep, and it's like she's a scuba diver," Galla said.

Tatanka is a male black bear. The year he got his name his coat stood out. He was black but the fur on the very top of his spine was really brown and fluffy, like a bison or buffalo — thus his name, the Lakota word for bison.

There's a bear named Vaccinium — the genus name for shrubs that grow in the acidic soil of Southeast and yield berries like blueberries and blackberries. "It ate a bunch of berries," she said.

There's Oso, the Spanish word for bear, and Not-Oso, a bear Anan staff kept thinking was Oso. Oso also had a patch shaped like a bone, a one-letter-lacking nod to osso, or bone, in the romance languages.

There's Milton, Doobie, Pot Roast, Noodles, BlortheBlonde, Toothpaste — named for a fur patch by its maw that looked like a dribble of toothpaste.

Casino had to do with its chest patches in the shape of a pip to denote the suit of cards in a playing deck. "I want to say it's a spade," Galla said.

There was Arrow, "something to do with the foot, but I can't remember," Galla said, either a patch or an injury. She's been working at the Forest Service in Wrangell since 1993. There have been a lot of names.

There was also Pizza Face. "Some of these don't last very long."

Volverine is a bear that has produced several cubs over the years, Galla said April 6.

Her name has a strange history.

"She was a known cub from a mother bear we had named Wolverine because she had a very prominent W-shaped chest patch — very easy

to distinguish when she came into the falls," she said.

Volverine was one of a pair of cubs that would come to the deck with her mother.

"The crew just started calling her Wolverine because she has a prominent V-shaped chest patch, and it stuck," Galla said.

Then there's Crack, who always fishes in the same crack in the rocks across the creek from the observatory.

Every day during the July 5 to Aug. 25 viewing season, the Forest Service has the crew take pictures, "that's how we try to identify them ... whether it's when people are there, every day we have a two-hour (observation) session."

"So like this day," Galla said, reading from the sighting sheet, "Wolverine, Twerp, Wade, Arrow and Oso. White Claw, that's pretty obvious; Scraps — that would never fish for itself, just ate everybody else's scraps. Wade, he likes to wade in the water, Wolfhead, he had a wolfhead."

Since the bears come in with the salmon, the Forest Service only has monitoring from July and August.

The Forest Service has always had four workers at Anan, but Galla said, "we're lucky this year we're going to have six. That is the ideal size for a crew." The staffers answer questions and help visitors stay safe, while allowing bears the freedom to eat.

And viewing is going to be much improved with the new deck, under construction in time for the season start.

"It has to do with the way the site developed," she said. "It started with a sheltered building they stuck on a point. Then we built decks off of that building. We had a bunch of decks, but the best viewing was outside a four-sided building. The shelter part will be toward the back of the deck, so the whole front railing, which used to be taken up by a shelter, there will be a 180-degree view up and down the Anan Creek which they never had before."

EDITORIAL

Campaign finance disclosure good for the public

A big part of a well-functioning democracy is running for office or, if you don't want your name on the ballot, backing a candidate, taking a position on a ballot issue, and writing checks for the campaigns you support.

Writing those checks to elect your favored candidates and contributing to campaigns to win, or defeat, ballot propositions that do, or do not, serve your interests and align with your beliefs is everyone's constitutional right. Freedom of expression includes the freedom to spend your money to promote your own self-interests and political views.

All that the state law says is your freedom to influence politics includes the responsibility to raise your hand and tell the public so that people can judge the candidates and ballot issues by the company they keep. Who is writing the checks to influence an election is part of the information the public deserves to know as they decide how to vote.

Open and fair elections are essential in a democracy, and hiding campaign contributions and influence money from the public is neither open nor fair.

Sadly, a group of political donors has gone to court in an effort to shut down a new state law that requires disclosure of campaign donations.

The opponents of full disclosure have sued over state campaign finance rules enacted under a 2020 voter initiative, arguing the rules are burdensome and could lead to reprisals against them and their business interests. Rather than stand up and defend their beliefs, they want the court to let them hide behind anonymity.

The disclosure rules were part of the same 2020 ballot measure that did away with closed party primary elections and instituted a system of ranked-choice voting for public offices where all candidates, regardless of party affiliation, run against each other. The theme of the citizens initiative was less political partisanship and divisiveness and more openness. That includes telling people where the money is coming from.

In particular, the lawsuit by defenders of campaign finance anonymity objects to the provision that requires reporting contributions larger than \$2,000 given to campaign groups not affiliated with a candidate. Those are the big money, dark-money, loud-money groups that drive much of the spending every election season, usually the nastiest and most uninhibited material that ends up in your mailbox and on social media.

The lawsuit is backed by the Liberty Justice Center, a national conservative organization devoted to litigation over a range of issues, including no to taxes and unions and yes to unrestricted political campaigns.

Alaska needs more disclosure and restrictions on the millions that flow into political campaigns, not less. It's unfortunate that the protectors of campaign finance anonymity think less public information is better.

Wrangell Sentinel

Budget

Continued from page 1

The House Republican minority criticized the Democratic-led majority coalition budget plan of a \$1,300 PFD and a similar amount to help Alaskans with high energy costs, asking why the Legislature wouldn't simply pay a \$2,600 dividend.

Members of the majority, including Speaker Louise Stutes, of Kodiak, have said they do not want to create the perception that future dividends will be that high, and would prefer that Alaskans understand this year's bigger total payment — more than double last year's PFD — is the exception because of high heating fuel and gasoline prices.

Minority Republicans also objected to the size of the combined payout, saying there is enough money available to pay a \$4,200 dividend, the amount called for under a distribution formula in state law. That formula has not been used since 2016. Legislators have not been able to reach

consensus on a new formula and instead debate the size of the payout each year.

The budget spends about \$409 million to buy back oil and gas tax credits held by drilling companies and their lenders. The state years ago offered tax credits — which could be redeemed for cash — to entice companies to explore for more oil in Alaska.

When oil prices were high, the state paid the credits each year, then stopped repayment in full as oil revenues fell, accumulating hundreds of millions of dollars in unpaid credits.

The House spending plan would leave \$123 million still to repay in future years.

The majority was joined in supporting the budget by minority Reps. DeLena Johnson, of Palmer; Bart LeBon, of Fairbanks; and Steve Thompson, of Fairbanks; and Rep. Sara Rasmussen, of Anchorage, who does not belong to either the majority or minority.

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Students strut their stuff with nationwide shoe art contest

By MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

Art students are decking out their deck shoes.

Wrangell High School was one of 250 schools across the country picked to participate in the Vans Custom Culture art contest and could win up to \$50,000.

It was an opportunity that almost didn't happen.

"We were supposed to get the shoes mid-February. (Vans) sent them but they got lost," said art teacher Tasha Morse. She contacted the company, which told her to keep a lookout for the shoes. If the two pairs didn't arrive, they would send replacements. Eventually, the shoes were found. The package had been sitting in the school office and no one knew where it was meant to go.

"I had a minor freak-out. We had three weeks less to work on them," Morse said.

According to the contest website, the competition was created to inspire creativity in high school students and to "bring attention to diminishing arts education budgets." Oftentimes, if schools are looking to cut budgets, arts programs are some of the first to go.

Morse said \$50,000 would go a long way to sustaining Wrangell's art program. Second- through fifth-place winners will each receive \$15,000, which would be helpful as well.

"The money would help us alleviate the huge cost of just getting items here," she said. "Shipping is very often cost-prohibitive, even on smaller items. We are in need of more acrylic paints. I would love to get more glass for mosaics and stained glass. We have a small list started on items that we would like to get."

Themes for the shoe designs need to focus on hometown pride, street culture, action sports and art, while embracing the Vans "Off the Wall" legacy.

Vans began in 1966 in Anaheim, California, made by the Van Doren brothers and their partners on their store premises. The canvas deck shoe skyrocketed in popularity in the '70s when skateboarders started using them because of the sticky rubber sole.

Students Paige Baggen, Sophia Hagelman, Rowen Wiederspohn, Cassady Cowan and Nathale Keith collaborated on the project, deciding to adorn one shoe with Tlingit form line art, fur and buttons, while the other would be covered in paintings of Wrangell.

"It was fun," said Baggen, a junior. "I



PHOTOS BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Above, from left: High school students Nathale Keith, Cassady Cowan, Rowan Wiederspohn, Paige Baggen, teacher Tasha Morse and Sophia Hagelman worked together to turn two pairs of Vans shoes into works of art. If the shoes are chosen as winners in the nationwide Vans Custom Culture art contest, the school could win up to \$50,000. One pair of shoes, below, entered by the art students is painted red with black form line drawings of a wolf and a raven and adorned with beadwork symbolizing Alaska's state flower. The cuffs are lined with fur to create a modern moccasin, teacher Tasha Morse said.

don't really paint in the style (we used) very often, so it was fun to scroll through my camera roll and find as many iconic symbols of Wrangell as possible."

After finding photos for reference, the artists narrowed down the scenes, including the view of Woronofski Island and the Fourth of July fireworks. The shoes didn't have to be wearable after designs were applied, Morse said, since they were technically sculptures, but she and the students wanted both pairs to still be wearable.

"The idea with the Indigenous shoe is it's a homage to the Tlingit button blankets," Morse said. "We worked on form line (art). Sophia worked on the first rendition of our form line wolf, then we worked on it to make it uniquely our own."

Hagelman, who created a form line eagle for a senior project painting, said just being able to work as a team and be a part of the project was her favorite aspect.

Morse spoke with Virginia Oliver, who teaches Tlingit language and culture at the school. Oliver suggested a painting a raven on the shoe opposite the wolf to balance the two. There is also blue and yellow beadwork in the shape of Alaska's state flower, the forget-me-not, along the laces. Fur trapped and killed by Wiederspohn was used on the cuffs. An extra \$500 could be earned with the use of locally sourced materials like the fur.

"It's a contemporary take on a moccasin with inspiration from button blankets," Morse said.

The designs were submitted at the end of March. Vans will narrow down the entries to the top 50 and announce those on April 25, at which time public voting begins. The top five winners will be announced the week of May 9, with the grand prize winner announced May 16.

"I think we have a pretty good chance of making the top 50," Baggen said. "At that point it's just a matter of rallying our community to vote. The chances are good."



Health fair

Continued from page 1

Bank, one of six businesses and organizations set up at the fair. She and operations officer Rebecca Smith were showing kids the benefits of saving money and how that can be useful in the future.

"We're showing them how easy it is if they redirect it from purchasing coffee every day how they would have (more than \$2,000) in savings at the end of the year," Smith said. "But you have to put it into

savings and not redirect it and spend it on something else."

It's a lesson that wasn't lost on sixth grader Silje Morse, 11, who has her own financial goals.

"One of the things they talked about was saving up to by a car for yourself," Silje said. "That's one of the things I'm actually saving up to do. I'm going to start babysitting soon when I'm old enough in a few months. I'm going to save up my money so once I'm 16 I can get a car."

Addy Esco, the schools' counselor, organized the event and helmed a table to give students resources on how to care for themselves in many aspects of life.

"It's everything from planning for their careers to dealing with stress, setting goals for themselves and practicing hygiene; all the things kids don't do very well," Esco said. "I've had a lot of kids take the resources (handout), so hopefully they'll take them and read them."

Representatives from SEARHC provided kids resources on coping skills, teen alcohol use and online safety, and two Wrangell nonprofits helped too: Hannah's Place handed out additional financial literacy information. BRAVE representatives spoke to students about healthy relationships.

Parks and Recreation Director Kate Thomas stepped away from the table to get the students active by holding various physical challenges, such as seeing how long kids could hold the plank position, an exercise that relies on core abdominal strength. About a dozen middle school students lined up for the challenge. Some of the participants dropped out not long after starting. Some held on for a minute or more.

As time went on, it dwindled down to two students, with Ben Hauser — a middle school wrestler — beating everyone with a time of eight minutes and 13 seconds.

Thomas announced that the push-up challenge would begin shortly after.

Along with the other resources, Sharon Moore, a vocational rehabilitation counsel with the Alaska Department of Labor, was on hand to help students looking for summer jobs, on-the-job training or to see what career paths might appeal to them.

"A lot of times, in a smaller town, there may not be the opportunity for employers to hire, and we can actually pay wages so that students can gain jobs skills or pick something that's in their wheelhouse if they're close to graduating to see if it's something they want to do," Moore said.

Students were able to have a card signed at each table they visited. The cards were then entered into a drawing for 12 prizes sponsored by the student-run BASE (Building A Supportive Environment) organization.



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Parks and Recreation Director Kate Thomas (center) keeps track of the time while middle school students compete in a plank challenge. Eighth grade student Ben Hauser had the longest sustained time at eight minutes and 13 seconds.

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State ferry system silent on summer plans for Columbia

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

The Alaska Marine Highway System has been hoping since last August to bring back the Columbia to service this year after an almost three-year absence, but with the start of the summer schedule only weeks away the state has not announced a decision on the ship.

The Columbia's summer return is contingent on hiring enough crew to replace staff that were laid off, retired, quit or moved to other ships since the state's largest ferry was pulled out of service in the fall of 2019.

"We're pouring a lot of effort into recruitment, but headway has been slow," Sam Dapceovich, Department of Transportation spokesman, said last Friday.

The ferry system had hoped to add the Columbia to the heavy summer travel schedule for mid-May through

mid-September, but coastal legislators said that is looking increasingly doubtful as even if the state can find crew, it takes time for new hires to obtain their U.S. Coast Guard certification for maritime work.

Transportation Department officials as far back as August have acknowledged the hiring challenges of restoring the Columbia to weekly runs between Bellingham, Washington, and Southeast Alaska. Ferry system management and Department of Transportation officials have briefed legislators several times this year on slow recruitment efforts.

Bringing the ship back to work would add one stop a week northbound and also southbound in Wrangell, almost doubling the level of service to the community.

The Alaska Marine Highway System has managed to hire about 50 new crew in the past four or five months, John

Falvey, general manager, told members of the Alaska Marine Highway Operations Board last Friday. That represents only about 20% of the new hires needed for minimal summer staffing of the full fleet, including the Columbia.

An additional 100 job applicants are working on their certification documents, but that could take two or three months and the ferry system figures it will lose half of the potential new hires in that time, Falvey said. The system's biggest shortage is passenger services workers, he said.

An Anchorage-based recruitment firm, working under a \$250,000 state contract, has brought in several new hires, Falvey said. And the ferry system is offering \$5,000 hire bonuses for some job categories.

"We've lost a lot of people," he told the ferry system advisory board of dwindling employee numbers in recent years. The ferry system over the past

three years has lost 155 more employees than it has hired, the department told legislators last month.

Alaska is not alone, Falvey said, noting that Washington state, British Columbia and New York's Staten Island ferries "are all hurting really bad."

The Columbia is still in the shipyard, undergoing its annual overhaul, which includes an additional million dollars in steel work to the half-century-old ship, Falvey said. The 500-passenger ferry should be ready mechanically by the end of May, he said.

Regardless of crew shortages, the marine highway system is on schedule to resume service to Prince Rupert, British Columbia, the third week of June, Falvey said. The Matanuska will run between Ketchikan and Rupert one week a month during the summer, the first service to the Canadian highway connection port in almost three years.

Port commission wants owners of derelict vessels to pay for disposal

By SARAH ASLAM
Sentinel reporter

The Port and Harbors Department wants to strengthen municipal code to lessen the burden of paying for derelict and impounded vessels. It drains the department's coffers when clunkers take on water or sink, leading port staff to foot the cleanup efforts and the department to foot the bill.

The port commission is asking the borough assembly to amend municipal code to hold boat owners liable for disposing of derelict boats.

The commission has also begun discussing whether to require boat owners to have insurance if their vessel is moored in a Wrangell harbor.

What they're discussing, in the words of port commission member John Martin at last Thursday's meeting, is potentially requiring everyone to be "adults." Excluding skiffs, vessel owners should be required to have insurance if they're going to moor in a Wrangell harbor, so if a boat does go down, the insurance pays for it and the port and harbors fund isn't on the hook, wiping out its funds that could go toward float maintenance or other expenses the fund is responsible to cover.

For owners who refuse to

show proof of insurance, Port Director Steve Miller proposes a "sinking fund" — that's a working title, he said — in which a surcharge of \$2, \$3 or \$5 per foot, per month would be paid by the uninsured boat owner, deposited into the "sinking fund" which would be used solely for recovery and disposal costs.

"It's never going to get cheaper to dispose of these vessels," Miller said at the meeting.

Miller acknowledged it's a tough situation, and for fishermen struggling financially, this may hurt. He doesn't want to cause more problems than they can solve, but every time a derelict vessel goes down it's a hit to his department.

When the Bee, a 60-foot derelict tug went down at Shoemaker Bay on Jan. 5, it was under the impound process the department began in September, and therefore the former owner was dissolved of liability. The Port and Harbors Department should have pulled the Bee out of the water into dry dock, Miller said, but there was no space for it.

Current municipal code on impoundment put the borough on the hook for disposal.

That led to the department paying for a \$21,000 salvage operation in January, after record

temperatures froze pumps that harbor staff had been swapping out, thawing, swapping out, thawing. A staff member was checking the pumps every day, but Miller said they're not sure what happened that first week of the new year during single-digit temperatures, maybe the Bee popped a plank, but everything froze and the Bee took a dive.

After the salvage operation, which required hiring a Ketchikan dive team, it cost the Port and Harbors Department an additional \$5,580 to get the Bee broken down and stacked up in the parking lot for recycling of the metal and burning of the wood.

That's a \$26,580 price tag — one derelict vessel in a matter of days wiped out the department's \$30,000 salvage budget. The suggested change to borough ordinance: "The owner shall be liable for the costs of disposing or destroying the vessel."

The port commission unanimously approved the amended ordinance language, which will go on to the assembly at its May meeting for consideration.

In discussing an insurance requirement, commission member Chris Bunes said it may curtail some "dreamers" from buying that third, fourth or fifth boat.

The hardest part is going to be starting this process, Miller said, but new software at the department will help flag which owners don't have insurance or whose insurance has expired.

Meanwhile, vessels that need to be destroyed in Wrangell are split about 50/50 between wood and fiberglass. The department lacks an excavator. Fiberglass boats would need to be broken down with an excavator so the pieces can fit in a shipping container. Wooden boats can be burned on island. Miller estimates the cost of disposal for derelict vessels impounded over the past five years is \$60,000 — a long-term issue for the department.

Alaska's senators split on confirmation vote for the Supreme Court

The Associated Press
and Anchorage Daily News

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate confirmed Ketanji Brown Jackson to the Supreme Court last Thursday, shattering a historic barrier by securing her place as the first Black female justice.

Cheers rang out in the Senate chamber as Jackson, a 51-year-old appeals court judge with nine years experience on the federal bench, was confirmed 53-47, mostly along party lines but with three Republican votes.

Alaska's two Republican senators split on the issue.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski was one of only three Republicans to vote in favor of confirming Jackson. Other Republicans voting in favor were Sen. Mitt Romney of Utah and Sen. Susan Collins of Maine.

Murkowski said in a statement this week that she had decided to support Jackson's confirmation after multiple conversations with her.

The decision, Murkowski said, rests on her "rejection of the corrosive politicization of the review process for Supreme Court nominees, which, on both sides of the aisle, is growing worse and more detached from reality by the year."

Alaska Sen. Dan Sullivan voted against the confirmation. In a statement released after the vote, he said, "I found her views and record to be very concerning" on the issues of judicial philosophy and limits on the "federal judiciary and federal agency powers."

The Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska supported Jackson's confirmation. President Chalvey Éesh Richard Peterson said that while Jack-

son doesn't have the most experience in Indian Country law, she is the most qualified candidate nominated to the Supreme Court in recent years.

Other tribes and tribal organizations across the state sent letters of support to the Senate Judiciary Committee last month, including the Association of Village Council Presidents, which represents 56 tribes in Western Alaska.

Jackson will take her seat when Justice Stephen Breyer retires this summer, solidifying the liberal wing of the 6-3 conservative-dominated court.

During four days of Senate hearings last month, Jackson spoke of her parents' struggles through racial segregation and said her "path was clearer" than theirs as a Black American after the enactment of civil rights laws. She attended Harvard University, served as a public defender, worked at a private law firm and was appointed as a member of the U.S. Sentencing Commission.

She told senators she would apply the law "without fear or favor," and pushed back on Republican attempts to portray her as too lenient on criminals she had sentenced.

Jackson will be just the third Black justice, after Thurgood Marshall and Clarence Thomas, and the sixth woman. She will join three other women, Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan and Amy Coney Barrett — meaning that four of the nine justices will be women for the first time in history.

Once sworn in, Jackson will be the second youngest member of the court after Barrett, 50. She will join a court on which no one is yet 75, the first time that has happened in nearly 30 years.

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Former state senator Arlis Sturgulewski dies at 94

By MICHELLE THERIAULT BOOTS
Anchorage Daily News

Longtime Anchorage civic activist and trailblazing politician Arliss Sturgulewski died last Thursday, her family said. She was 94.

Raising a young son after her husband died in a plane crash, Sturgulewski became involved in Anchorage politics in the 1970s and later served as a state senator for more than a decade, shaping important institutions of modern Alaska with a collaborative, moderate approach.

In 1986 she became the first Alaska woman to head the ticket for a major political party's gubernatorial campaign.

The moderate Republican's

campaign slogan: "Let's just call her Governor."

She lost that campaign and another run for governor in 1990 but remained active in Alaska public life until the end, said her daughter-in-law Carol Sturgulewski. On April 4, she voted in the Anchorage municipal election. On April 5, she was hospitalized after a gradual decline in health. She died April 7.

Sturgulewski was born in Ferndale, Washington, in 1927. After putting herself through the University of Washington, she drove the Alaska Highway on an adventurous vacation with a friend and stayed.

In a 2002 interview with the Anchorage Daily News, Stur-

gulewski explained how she got involved with politics.

"A woman of my generation, most of us had a college education and we worked, but we married and when children came, we generally stayed home," she said. "For a lot of us, you needed some kind of an outlet that meant something, other than PTA and Cub Scouts."

A League of Women Voters meeting convinced her that "people could affect change and make things happen." After that, "people started appointing me to things," she said.

In the 1970s, she served as a commission that oversaw the merger of the city and borough of Anchorage. She was elect-

ed to the Anchorage municipal assembly and later served in the state Senate from 1978 to 1993. Her work helped shape many facets of modern Alaska, including inflation-proofing of the Permanent Fund and establishment of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, said her son Roe Sturgulewski.

Her involvement in politics introduced her to so many people that traveling with her, it sometimes felt like every other passenger on a flight knew her.

"She was a true people person," he said.

Sturgulewski was known as a moderate Republican who supported Anchorage equal rights ordinances and abortion rights.

She was not afraid to reach across party lines in a way that is now uncommon, her son said.

"I think that that is an admirable way of governing. And I wish there was more of it in the world now," he said.

In retirement, Sturgulewski served on the boards of nonprofits and educational institutions around the state, including Sheldon Jackson College in Sitka and the University of Alaska School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences. She was among the first class to be inducted into the Alaska Women's Hall of Fame, in 2009.

Sturgulewski said his mother exemplified the idea that "participating for a common good is a worthy approach."

More federal funding still possible in Southeast sustainability grants

By SARAH ASLAM
Sentinel reporter

An official with a U.S. Department of Agriculture program that has awarded more than \$820,000 to the Wrangell borough, Forest Service and tribe said more could be on the way.

The Wrangell Cooperative Association was awarded \$620,000 from the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy, part of a \$25 million federal grant program intended to help diversify the economy of Southeast communities.

The borough was awarded \$100,000 to manage lands for the improvement of wild blueberry harvests and \$103,000 for trail upkeep.

The program also provided funding for four positions at the Forest Service Wrangell Ranger District — a recreation manager, wilderness and recreation technician, Anan Wildlife Observatory crew manager and a fisheries biologist — which the Forest Service wants to fill for the summer season.

Program coordinator Barb Miranda said there are other Wrangell projects in the works for possible funding.

"We are holding those a little bit close, because we are working with the project pipeline, (building) the paperwork, and ... we will be announcing the rest of the investments shortly," Miranda said April 1.

Among the borough's requests is a carbon-offset program, setting aside timber land to offset carbon emissions elsewhere, and parks projects.

Miranda said the \$25 million is an initial investment into the communities of Southeast and won't be the last. The agency received an estimated \$276 mil-

lion in funding proposals when it announced the effort last fall.

Spruce Root, a nonprofit that funds entrepreneurs throughout Southeast, was granted \$740,000 in this round. The Juneau-based organization provides seed money for new endeavors, such as its award to Kasse Schlotzhauer in 2020 for a Wrangell subsistence-giving program, which allowed her to purchase a commercial vacuum sealer and mass processing tables for fish.

Southeast Conference will get \$1 million from the USDA program for a regional biomass strategy and a demonstration project to manufacture wood pellets.

"Indirectly in the future, this could inform biomass solutions for Wrangell, if they are adopting pellets as a fuel source for their heat loads. We're looking at a smaller size production unit," Robert Venables, executive director of the Southeast Conference, said April 1.

"We're looking at a unit the size of a shipping container — community-sized for production," he said.

Venables said Southeast Conference will begin research and development for the wood pellet-making machinery to be located in Ketchikan, and expects it will take a year to 18 months to "really get into production."

The operation would have the capacity to manufacture about 200 tons of pellets per year, he said.

At full production, the 200-ton demonstration project could replace about 22,000 gallons of diesel fuel a year, according to a 2016 Forest Service report.

A fair bit of research will need to happen, as well as

tackling the supply chain issue to get equipment in and set up, and ultimately "develop a business plan to see under which scenarios this could be utilized in rural communities" to lower the cost of energy by using local waste streams, Venables said.

The project will cost between \$1.4 million and \$1.6 million, funded through the federal sustainability program and hopefully, another \$600,000 federal grant from the Forest Service's "Wood Innovations" program, he said.

In addition to providing funds for innovation and sustainable development projects, Miranda said the Department of Agriculture is learning to streamline federal funding efforts to better serve the small communities of Southeast, and address equity issues like match requirements.

"Some of the federal requirements around matches are hard for small communities that don't have a lot of capital," she said. The department is exploring the possibility of waiving a percentage of required matches.

"That makes a difference if you live in a small community," she said.

A funding structure "designed for the entire nation needs to be equitable for rural communities," Miranda said. "We have more barriers coming up with a cash match."

Borough has plans to install security cameras at harbors

By SARAH ASLAM
Sentinel reporter

The Port and Harbors Department plans to select a company this month to design a surveillance camera system for installation at Wrangell harbors by the end of the year.

The department has about \$407,000 from two federal grants — \$148,000 in fall 2020 and \$259,468 in fall 2021 from the Department of Homeland Security — for the design, purchase and installation of a security camera system.

It'll help keep an eye on things, and prevent theft and illegal dumping of garbage, such as a '70s-era Volkswagen Beetle chopped into pieces found in a dumpster at Shoemaker Bay nearly a decade ago. Every couple of years the department finds entire refrigerators in harbor dumpsters, Port Director Steve Miller said Monday.

"The refrigerators just barely fit with the lid open. They throw them in whole," he said.

Miller said he has a total of five people on staff, and the workers conduct dock checks seven days a week on about 20 dumpsters. The first hour of what ends up being a two-and-a-half-hour dock check is spent combing

through dumpsters, checking for illicit junk.

Boat owners working on projects will toss fiberglass chunks into the dumpsters, and parts and pieces of boats that should go in the back of their truck and taken to the dump. Line and rope are also unacceptable and people dump "bundles and bundles of rope," Miller said. "It's a never ending deal."

"We have a huge garbage bill," he said. "I know for a fact people pull into Heritage or Shoemaker and bring their household garbage."

Hopefully, with the Port and Harbors Department moving forward within the next three or four months on a design firm, they can have the surveillance cameras up and running by the end of the year to deter people from tossing unacceptable items since they'll be caught on camera, Miller said, and his staff can go back to doing their actual jobs instead of dumpster duty.

Part of the delay in getting the system selected was the pandemic, but also securing a 20% borough match for the grants.

The borough advertised for the design work and the department plans to choose the winning bidder April 15.

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A 'servant's heart' sets tone for bell-ringing senior project

By MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

Picking a senior project was just like ringing a bell for Caleb Garcia.

Since 2013, the 17-year-old has been involved with The Salvation Army, so being the volunteer coordinator of the nonprofit's Red Kettle fundraising effort made perfect sense.

Born in Indio, California, in the Coachella Valley, Garcia grew up in southern part of the state around Los Angeles, where there's no shortage of people in need. His mother, Lt. Rosie Tollerud, of The Salvation Army, said her son was always ready to help where needed.

"The church we came from, he started serving Thanksgiving meals," she said. "That was our big thing. There were so many people in need, and waking up early to do that, he didn't see it as a sacrifice. He really wanted to help people."

Garcia took on the position of kettle coordinator for the annual fundraising event that takes place from Dec. 1 through Dec. 31. He recruited and scheduled volunteers to ring a bell at Wrangell IGA and City Market, counted the donations and made the deposits. He oversaw eight individuals, two families and Evergreen Elementary students who volunteered to ring bells.

"Some of (the volunteers were returning) but his idea was using the elementary school and it worked well," said Lt. Jon Tollerud, Garcia's supervisor for the senior project. Garcia also enlisted the help of fellow high school students.

The efforts paid off, bringing in \$14,518 from the kettle donations.

Jon Tollerud said that amount is the highest it's ever been in Wrangell, \$370 more than the previous record that

happened the year before. "The three Christmases we've run it, it's gotten significantly better."

He said Garcia's personality lends itself to fundraising work.

"He has always kind of had a servant's heart, always wanting to help even people who were in better situations than him," Jon Tollerud said. "He still wanted to help and encourage them. He didn't even second guess that he wanted to use The Salvation Army as his (project), so he asked us what options there were."

Being in a small community for only a couple of years, Garcia was pleasantly surprised by the abundant giving of Wrangell.

"It makes me happy," he said. "The big thing is the older population likes seeing the younger people volunteering."

Bob Davis, Wrangell High School's assistant principal, said volunteerism is a large part of what the school wants to see in its students. "This community steps up with volunteering and we just want to continue that. I think (senior projects are) a way the school can help facilitate that."

Garcia said it takes a mixture of people not only giving their money but their time to make a difference.

"In a small community, you need a mixture of that. I guess in every community, really, but you need people who are willing to use their hands and people who are willing to use the money they have," he said.

It's that hands-on approach that is directing Garcia's future endeavors. He has enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, waiting to hear when he'll ship out after graduation. He's still not sure what he'll be doing, but he knows it will be something in logistics or working with



COURTESY OF LT. JON TOLLERUD

High school senior Caleb Garcia makes a nightly deposit after collecting donations from The Salvation Army's Red Kettles during last year's annual holiday fundraising drive. Garcia coordinated volunteers and collected the donations as part of his senior project.

his hands in some facet.

"He likes to keep busy," Rosie Tollerud said. "He started working at IGA and right away he's working, working, working. He prefers just to be busy. It doesn't matter if the workload is hard,

which is good."

After serving four years in the Air Force, Garcia is looking to attend school in the arts in some way. He's not sure if that will be as an illustrator, musician or filmmaker, but it will be creative. "I just want to make anything," he said.

New shop class plasma torch doesn't cut into tight school budget

By MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

A new plasma torch purchased by the school district will provide shop class students with a more versatile way to cut and build metal projects — and it won't cost the district a penny of borough funds.

The new computer numerical control (CNC) machine is like the shop's current CNC machine, a computer-driven router, but it uses a plasma torch,

which cuts with electrically charged, superheated gas. It will give students much more choice in projects, according to shop teacher Winston Davies.

"I've come to realize that in order to build up our welding program, this is where we needed to go," Davies said. "We have many options when cutting wood and aluminum, but steel is not as easy to cut and shape."

Davies said the plasma cutter will combine the skill sets of computer-aided design, fabri-

cation and welding. "Not every kid has the resources to build a boat in marine fab, but may want to build a barbecue pit, sign or (create) metal art."

The school board voted in a special session last Saturday to purchase the plasma cutter, made by Arlight Dynamics in Bend, Oregon, for a cost of \$34,592. Though the board approved the purchase, the funds will not come out of the school budget. Funds for roughly half the purchase

price came from a federal grant and the rest were donations from businesses in the community, the Stikine Sportsmen Association and Bearfest.

Davies said the machine

should arrive in May.

"I'm not sure if we'll get it up and running before school gets out, but hopefully, we'll at least be able to get it assembled and all ready to go for next school year," he said.



COURTESY OF WINSTON DAVIES

Kyle Hommel, left, demonstrates a plasma cutter at Svendsen Marine while a group of high school shop students watch. The school district has approved the purchase of a similar metal work machine for the shop class.

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Wind farm operator pays fine of \$8 million for killing eagles

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — A subsidiary of one of the largest U.S. providers of renewable energy pleaded guilty to criminal charges and was ordered to pay more than \$8 million in fines and restitution after at least 150 eagles were killed at its wind farms in eight states, federal prosecutors said April 6.

NextEra Energy subsidiary ESI Energy was also sentenced to five years probation after being charged with three counts of violating the Migratory Bird Treaty Act during a court appearance in Cheyenne, Wyoming. The charges arose from the deaths of nine eagles at three wind farms in Wyoming and New Mexico.

In addition to those deaths, the company acknowledged the deaths of golden and bald eagles at 50 wind farms affiliated with

ESI and NextEra since 2012, prosecutors said. Birds were killed in eight states: Wyoming, California, New Mexico, North Dakota, Colorado, Michigan, Arizona and Illinois.

NextEra, based in Juno Beach, Florida, bills itself as the world's largest utility company by market value. It has more than 100 wind farms in the U.S. and Canada and also generates electricity with natural gas, nuclear and solar power.

Almost all of the eagles killed at the NextEra subsidiary's facilities were struck by the blades of wind turbines, prosecutors said. Some turbines killed multiple eagles and because the carcasses are not always found, officials said the number killed was likely higher than the 150 birds cited in court documents.

Sports Roundup

Middle school wrestlers end season with plenty of pins and wins

BY MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

Stikine Middle School wrestlers ended the season on a high note with the most pins made in the past four years.

This year's squad consisted of 22 wrestlers. Each one was able to have at least one match where they pinned their opponent and won. Out of 337 matches, 167 ended with a pin for the wrestlers.

Coach Jack Carney reported it was the highest number of pins in the past four years.

Though the young grapplers faced plenty of tough competition, the biggest challenge may have been caused by COVID-19. Carney said the team could start to feel apathetic with training since competing against other teams has been uncertain.

"I don't know how many events have been canceled over the years for this group, but they've gotten accustomed to events or programs shutting down," Carney said. "We had at least one wrestling trip canceled due to COVID numbers on Prince of Wales, and the kids were pretty down for a couple of days."

Carney and assistant coach Lorne Cook kept the kids motivated and focused, helping to concentrate on the things they could control, while letting go of those things they couldn't. It led to some stand-out performances by the athletes.

Eighth grader Ben Hauser had a record of 17 wins and six losses, with 15 pins and two overtime wins. He won two



COURTESY OF JACK CARNEY

From left: Middle school students Everett Meissner, Sophia Martinsen, Hailey Cook, Christiana Johnson, Ian Nelson, Jackson Carney, Ben Hauser and Cody Barnes celebrate their wins after competing at the Tanana Middle School Invitational tournament in Fairbanks on Feb. 26.

tournaments, Carney said, and placed eighth at the Tanana Middle School Invitational tournament in Fairbanks on Feb. 26, which is the equivalent of the middle school wrestling state championship.

Sixth grader Kourtney Barnes had the best record of the squad this season with 19 wins and one loss, winning four tournaments and placing second at Fairbanks. She had a total 18 pins.

Seventh grader Hailey Cook had 15 wins and four losses, with eight pins, two

tournament wins and a third-place finish in Fairbanks, while eighth grader Cody Barnes had 16 wins, two losses, three tournament wins, and placed fourth in Fairbanks. Seventh grader Jackson Carney won 20, lost six, had 15 pins and won five tournaments.

Ian Nelson had 21 wins and five losses this season, but Carney remarked that the eighth grader was ending his middle school wrestling career on an impressive record of 51 wins, 16 losses and 39 pins,

which is the best record he's seen since he began coaching.

Ian, Ben, Cody, Gavin Hunt, Christina Johnson, Jackson Powers, Landon Dillon and Katelyn Gillen are all graduating and moving on to high school next year, Carney said. "Most have said they're wrestling next year in high school. We have five seniors graduating out of the program this year, so these eighth graders will help replace such a tough group."

Carney lauded the efforts of athletic director Trisa Rooney and school administrators for making travel possible for the squad. He said the kids' parents are also to be commended for keeping them healthy, focused on their grades, and supporting the wrestling program through time and fundraising endeavors.

For Carney, the wins are part of the process, which is more important, he said.

"We can get too focused on whether or not we win, especially middle schoolers," he said. "But that mindset is too nearsighted and takes away from the long-term goals: Being a stronger, more resilient person, being competitive in the biggest high school and college matches, and maybe even earning college scholarships."

Carney also said he tries to keep his squad mindful of wrestling's fundamentals, positioning, practicing with intention, having a good attitude in and out of the wrestling room and supporting teammates.

"Being respectful is what makes an excellent student-athlete and team member," he said. "We talked about this a lot over the season. It paid off."

Opponents organize against rewrite of state constitution

BY PETER SEGALL
Juneau Empire

Concerned that a contentious, political rewrite of the state constitution could destabilize Alaska and jeopardize private investment, a new bipartisan group has launched a campaign to convince voters to reject a convention to change the state's founding set of laws.

Voters will be asked in November whether they want to convene a convention to rewrite the constitution, a question which the constitution requires go before voters every 10 years.

In a meeting with reporters on April 7, co-chairs of Defend Our Constitution announced more than 150 Alaskans have joined the newly organized coalition to spread the message that a constitutional convention would be unnecessary, expensive and dangerous.

"We have a lot to lose," said Cathy Giessel, a former Republican lawmaker from Anchorage who served as president of the state Senate 2019-2020.

Speakers emphasized the political diversity of their coalition, saying members had put aside differences to join in opposition to a convention. The group is chaired by current and former state lawmakers, former municipal officials, a union official and the president of an Alaska Native regional corporation, all of whom emphasize their belief a convention would be costly, contentious and potentially disastrous for the state.

Giessel was joined by fellow co-chairs former Fairbanks Republican state senator John Coghill, independent state House member Bryce Edgmon of Dillingham, Alaska AFL-CIO President Jolene Hall, former Fairbanks North Star Borough Mayor Luke Hopkins, and former Juneau Mayor Bruce Botelho.

Speakers emphasized the uncertainty a constitutional convention would create and said the existing process of amending the constitution through the Legislature had proven successful. Coghill said there are many things in Alaska's constitution that as a conservative he wants to see changed, but that a constitutional convention and potentially wholesale rewrite is a dangerous way to try to achieve those goals.

"Alaska was built on a very good foundation, could be better there's no doubt

about it," Coghill said. "But I don't think you should change the foundation just to change the house."

Coghill and others emphasized that during a convention the entirety of the state's constitution is subject to change, and political divisions within Alaska and the nation make this the wrong time to rework the state's foundational document.

"If you think it's divided (in the Legislature), just wait until you see the outside money coming in," Coghill said. "We have a lot to gain by staying where we're at."

But that's something the chairman of the Alaskan Independence Party, Bob Bird, disagrees with.

"The term that its unnecessary, that comes from people who are just fine with the status quo," Bird said in an interview. Convening a state constitutional convention is the third item on the platform of the Alaskan Independence Party.

Bird has openly advocated for a constitutional convention and said there are any number of issues where frustration with legislative deadlock made the prospect appealing. The party has drafted its own version of a state constitution and Bird said there were few reasons not to at least attempt a convention.

Opponents of a constitutional convention argue that Alaska's constitution is considered one of the best in the nation. That's because it was written at a time when its authors could look to other state constitutions amid a changing economic landscape, said Gordon Harrison, author of "Alaska's Constitution: A Citizen's Guide."

"The reason the Alaska constitution has been considered a good one is that it created strong institutions of government, it created a strong Legislature and strong governor, a strong executive branch," Harrison said.

The state constitution requires asking voters every 10 years if they want to convene a constitutional convention. In 2012, voters overwhelmingly rejected the proposal, just as they did in 1972, 1982, 1992 and 2002. But there is an increased amount of cynicism about government, Botelho said, and there seems to be a different atmosphere in 2022, one reason why the bipartisan group decided it needed to organize.

Alaskan given 32 months in prison for threatening to kill both senators

BY MARK THIESSEN
The Associated Press

A Delta Junction man who threatened to assassinate both of Alaska's U.S. senators in a series of profane messages left at their congressional offices was sentenced last Friday to 32 months in prison.

Jay Allen Johnson was also fined \$5,000, ordered to serve three years of supervised release after his prison sentence, and is barred by a protective order from contacting Sens. Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan, their family and staff members for three years.

"Nothing excuses this conduct, threatening our elected officials, an act that attacks our very system of governance," U.S. Attorney John E. Kuhn Jr. of the District of Alaska said in a statement. "The erosion of civility in our political discourse will never justify threats or acts of violence. Johnson's actions must be punished, and the Department of Justice will always work to ensure our elected officials can serve without fear of harm."

Johnson, who said he was too old and ill to carry out his threats, partially blamed his behavior on a mixture of pain medications and alcohol along with the isolation during the pandemic prevalent during the five-month span of 2021 when he left 17 threatening voicemails.

Johnson, 65, of Delta Junction, pleaded guilty in January to two counts of threatening to kill a U.S. official in January. Sentencing was carried out at U.S. District Court in Fairbanks.

The government sought a sentence of 37 months in prison, followed by three years of supervised release along with the protective order.

Johnson sought a 30-month term, or supervised release.

"The defendant's conduct is simply unacceptable in a democracy" U.S. Assistant Attorney Ryan Tansey wrote in the government's sentencing memo filed before the sentencing hearing. "As political violence and domestic extremism grow, violent intimidation of public officials must result in serious criminal consequences."

In one message left at Murkowski's office, Johnson asked, ".50 caliber

shell . you ever see what that does to a human head?"

In another message to Murkowski, he said: "I will find out all your properties, and I will burn everything you hope to have, and I will burn everything you hope to own."

Johnson also blamed the senator for the undocumented workers who have come into the country.

In a message left for Sullivan, Johnson said he was tired of politicians destroying the country. He claimed he would get out his .50 caliber and start a GoFundMe page for the shells. "And I'm coming with a vengeance," he said.

"Sadly, political violence of all stripes has become a clear and present danger to public safety and the functioning of our democracy," the government sentencing memo states. "The defendant's conduct showed his rejection of that democracy and his willingness to resort to repeated violent threats when duly elected representatives take actions with which he disagrees."

Johnson, who has had six driving-under-the-influence convictions, is not allowed to possess firearms because he is a felon. However, law enforcement seized seven unsecured firearms at his home when executing a search warrant.

The defense said the weapons belonged to Johnson's wife, Catherine Pousson-Johnson. In October, when pleading that her husband be released from jail while the legal case proceeded, she was asked if she was aware if her husband was making threats against the two senators.

"Who hasn't?" she replied. At the same hearing, she said, "My husband is an old man, and he gets very angry listening to politics on the news."

In the defense's sentencing memo, attorney Jason Weiner said Johnson takes full responsibility for his conduct and realizes that while he never intended to carry out the verbal threats, the senators did not know that.

"Between the prescribed narcotics, pain and self-medicating, Mr. Johnson was not himself," the memo says.

Report on Native boarding schools due this month

By PETER SMITH
The Associated Press

As Native Americans cautiously welcome Pope Francis' historic apology for abuses at Catholic-run boarding schools for Indigenous children in Canada, U.S. churches are bracing for an unprecedented reckoning with their own legacies of operating such schools.

Church schools are likely to feature prominently in a report from the U.S. Department of the Interior, led by the first-ever Native American cabinet secretary, Deb Haaland, due to be released later this month. The report, prompted by last year's discovery of hundreds of unmarked graves at former residential school sites in Canada, will focus on the loss of life and the enduring traumas the U.S. system inflicted on Indigenous children from the 19th to mid-20th centuries.

From Episcopalians to Quakers to Catholic dioceses in Oklahoma, faith groups have either started or intensified efforts in the past year to research and atone for their prior roles in the boarding school system, which Native children were forced to attend — cutting them off from their families, tribes and traditions.

While the pontiff's April 1 apology was addressed to Indigenous groups from Canada, people were listening in the U.S. as well.

"An apology is the best way to start any conversation," said Roy Callison, a Catholic deacon and Cherokee Nation member helping coordinate the Oklahoma Catholic Native Schools Project, which includes listening sessions for those affected by the boarding school legacy. "That's the first step to trying to get healing."

In his meeting with Canada's Indigenous delegations, the pope asked for forgiveness "for the role that a number of Catholics ... had in all these things that wounded you, in the abuses you suffered and in the lack of respect shown for your identity, your culture and even your spiritual values."

Francis "did something really important, which is name the importance of being indignant at this history," said Maka Black Elk, executive director of truth and healing for Red Cloud Indian School on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota.

That history "is shameful, and it is not something we should accept," said Black Elk, who is Oglala Lakota.

Red Cloud, affiliated with the Catholic Jesuit order, was for generations a boarding school for Lakota children. It's now a day school incorporating Lakota leadership, language and traditions. Black Elk is guiding a reckoning process that includes archival research and hearing the stories of former students.

Canada underwent a much-publicized Truth and Reconciliation process in recent years. The issue gained unprecedented attention last year after a researcher using ground-penetrating radar reported finding about 200 unmarked probable burial sites at a former school in British Columbia.

That discovery, followed by others across Canada, prompted Haaland to commission her department's report.

"This history in the United States has not been addressed in the same way it has been addressed in Canada," Black Elk said. The Interior report "will be an important first step about the work that needs to happen in this country."

Church leaders are getting ready. The report "will likely bring to light some very troubling information," said a letter circulated last fall to members of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops from two colleagues who chaired committees related to the issue. The letter urged bishops to build relationships with Indigenous communities and engage "in a real and honest dialogue about reactions to the report and what steps are needed to go forward together."

Conditions varied at boarding schools in the United States, with some described as unsafe, unsanitary and scenes of physical or sexual abuse. Other former students recall their school years as positive times of learning, friendship and extra-curricular activities.

Indigenous groups note that even the better schools were part of a project to assimilate children into a predominately white, Christian society and break down their tribal identities, customs and languages — what many Indigenous groups call a cultural genocide.

"The very process of boarding schools is violent and damaging," said Bryan Rindfleisch, an expert in Native American history at Marquette University who is helping Catholics in Oklahoma research their school legacy.

There were at least 367 boarding schools across the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries, according to the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, a Minneapolis-based advocacy group.

Most were government-run; many others were run by Catholic and Protestant churches.

The Wrangell Institute boarding school, which operated 1932 to 1975, was

run by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs. The borough, which took over the property in 1996, wants to develop the 134 acres as a residential subdivision, but first will conduct a cultural and archaeological survey of the area to ensure no artifacts or other remains are present.

Several church groups — including Quakers, Methodists and some Catholic religious orders — are backing pending legislation in Congress that would go beyond the Interior Department report. It would create a truth and healing commission, modeled on Canada's, to investigate the boarding school legacy.

The New England Yearly Meeting of Friends — a regional group of congregations — issued an apology last year for Quakers' historic sponsorship of such schools, acknowledging they were undertaken with "spiritual and cultural arrogance."

"We are deeply sorry for our part in the vast suffering caused by this system and the continuing effects," the New England group said.

The Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States has hired an archival researcher to document its own boarding school history.

Such measures are strong, but local dioceses also need to research their own histories and advocate for Indigenous peoples, said the Rev. Rachel Taber-Hamilton, rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in Everett, Washington. Taber-Hamilton, whose heritage includes the Shackan First Nation of Canada, is an Episcopal Church representative to the worldwide Anglican Indigenous Network.

"It's not enough to say, 'I'm sorry, and here's some money,'" she said. "We first have to do some very hard work of listening to the pain."

Interior Secretary Haaland will make first trip to Alaska

JUNEAU (AP) — Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, the first Native American to serve as a cabinet secretary, plans to visit Alaska this month, with a planned visit to the community at the center of a long-running dispute over a proposed land exchange aimed at building a road through a national

wildlife refuge. Haaland had planned to visit King Cove last year, but the trip never happened.

The Interior Department on April 4 said Haaland planned to visit several communities and sites in Alaska the week of April 17, including Anchorage, Fairbanks and King Cove.

Residents of King Cove have long sought a land connection through Izembek National Wildlife Refuge to Cold Bay, which is about 18 miles away and has an all-weather airport. They call it a safety issue, particularly for medivac flights.

The refuge, near the tip of

the Alaska Peninsula, more than 600 air miles southwest of Anchorage, contains internationally recognized habitat for migrating waterfowl.

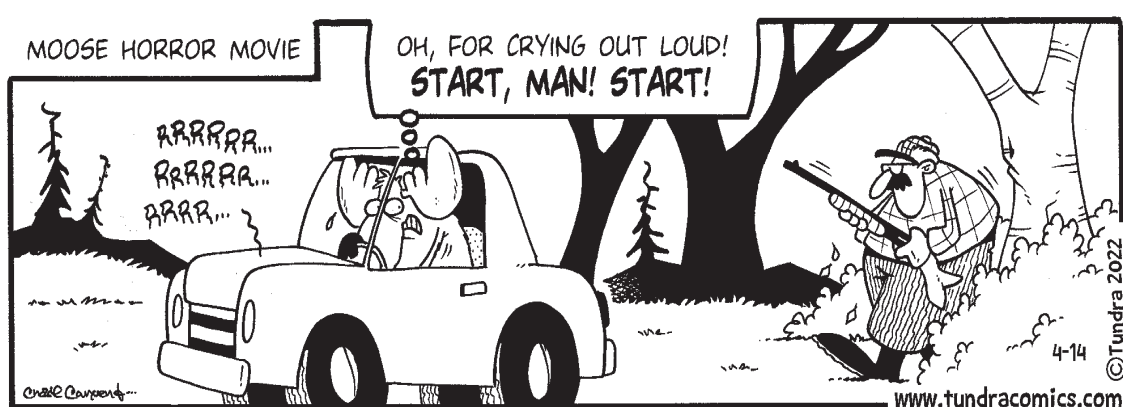
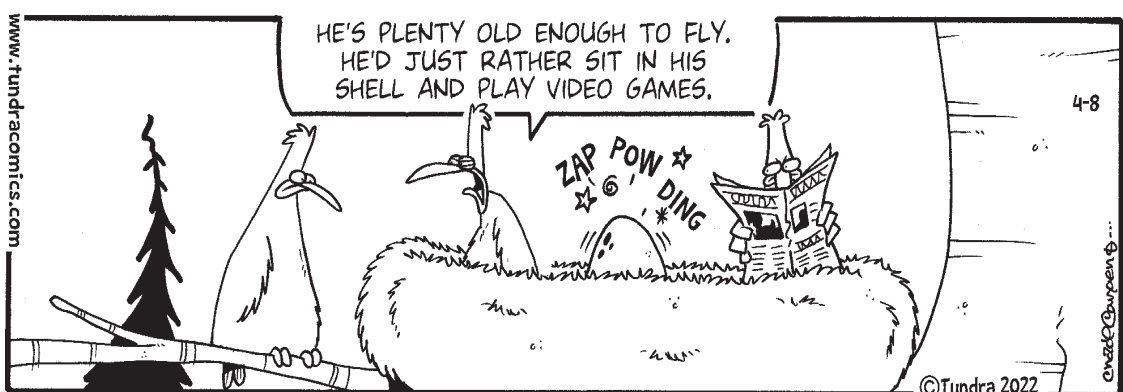
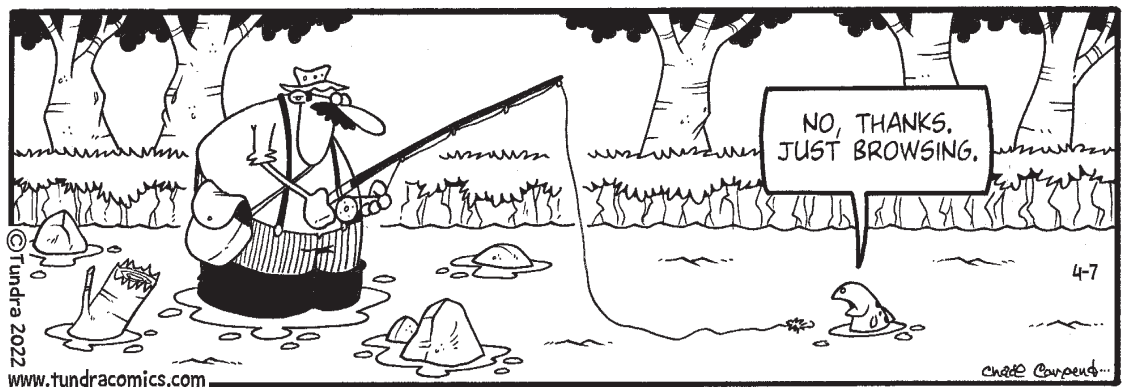
In 2013, Interior Department officials declined a land exchange, and efforts to move forward with one under the Trump administration faced legal challenges. A U.S. Justice Department attorney, in arguing a position taken under the Trump administration, last year told a federal appeals court panel that Haaland planned to review the record and visit King Cove before taking a position on the issue.

A federal appeals court panel last month reversed a decision that rejected a land swap to enable the road and sent the decision back to a federal judge in Alaska for further consideration. Conservation groups had sued over the proposed swap.

The Interior Department plays a big role in Alaska, overseeing more than half the land and employing more than 2,500 people in the state, through offices such as the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Tundra

by Chad Carpenter



Police report

- Monday, April 4**
Theft: Unfounded.
Dog at large.
Trespass: Unfounded.
Dog at large.
Vehicle unlock.
Traffic complaint.
Parking complaint.
Suspicious activity.
 - Tuesday, April 5**
Traffic complaint.
Arrest: Violating conditions of release.
 - Wednesday, April 6**
Failure to stop at the direction of a police officer.
Agency assist: Fire Department.
Agency assist: Ambulance.
Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.
 - Thursday, April 7**
Agency assist: Fire Department.
Agency assist: Ambulance.
Agency assist: State troopers.
Citizen assist.
Agency assist: Ambulance.
 - Friday, April 8**
Nothing to report.
 - Saturday, April 9**
Intoxicated person.
Citizen assist.
 - Sunday, April 10**
Dog complaint.
Agency assist.
- There were eight traffic stops during this reporting period.

Policy for Letters to the Editor

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

The Sentinel reserves the right to edit any submissions.

The deadline for submissions is Friday at noon for Wednesday publication.

Letters are run on a space-available basis.

WRANGELL SENTINEL

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Donors sue to block Alaska's campaign finance disclosure rules

By BECKY BOHRER
The Associated Press

JUNEAU (AP) — Political donors have sued over state campaign finance rules enacted under a 2020 voter initiative, arguing the donor disclosure rules are burdensome and could lead to reprisals against them and their business interests in a climate of “cancel culture.”

The disclosure rules were part of a ballot measure that overhauled Alaska's elections system and was passed by voters in 2020. Provisions of the measure calling for open primaries and ranked-choice voting in general elections were challenged previously in state courts and upheld.

At issue in the new lawsuit, which was filed in federal court last Thursday, are the disclosure rules, including disclaimers required for ads and required reporting around contributions great-

er than \$2,000 that are given to or received by third-party groups known as independent expenditure groups. The lawsuit alleges these disclosure provisions are unconstitutional.

Lawyers involved in the case — Craig Richards, a former Alaska attorney general, and Daniel Suhr, with the Chicago-based Liberty Justice Center — filed a brief in support of the initial challenges to the open-primary system and ranked-choice voting when those were before the Alaska Supreme Court. They did so on behalf of former Lt. Gov. Mead Treadwell and former Fairbanks legislator Dick Randolph.

Suhr said one reason they waited to file the federal lawsuit over donor disclosure was that they wanted to see what the state Supreme Court would do, including if it would strike the entire initiative down. The high court

in January issued an order affirming Superior Court Judge Gregory Miller's decision upholding the open primary and ranked-choice system as valid. A fuller opinion from the state Supreme Court is pending.

Miller noted in his ruling that the plaintiffs in that case did not challenge the new law's “attempt to preclude ‘dark money.’”

Suhr said after the action by the state Supreme Court, “that's when we turned to say, OK, the next step is to focus on these campaign finance provisions that really haven't been thoroughly addressed yet.”

He said the measure is “the most aggressive law of its kind in the country” and raises First Amendment issues.

Plaintiffs in the federal lawsuit are Doug Smith, of Anchorage, who was described by a spokesperson for the Liberty Justice Center as an executive in the oil and energy industry; Robert Griffin,

of Anchorage; former Republican legislator Allen Vezey of Fairbanks; Albert Haynes, of Wasilla and Trevor Shaw, of Ketchikan. The lawsuit describes each of them as sometimes donating more than \$2,000 to organizations that make independent expenditures.

Also listed as plaintiffs are the Alaska Free Market Coalition and Families of the Last Frontier, which are described as independent expenditure groups. A 2022 filing with the Alaska Public Offices Commission shows Shaw as chair of the Alaska Free Market Coalition, which describes itself as promoting candidates “who are fiscally conservative, pro-business, and supportive of free market economic principles.”

The lawsuit names as defendants members of the Alaska Public Offices Commission, which oversees campaign finance rules in the state.

Heather Hebdon, the commission's executive director, said commission staff had no comment on the lawsuit.

The group Alaskans for Better Elections, which supported the initiative, on its website said nothing in the initiative “violates the First Amendment or limits political speech or the right to freely associate with political parties.”

“Alaskans have a right to know who is spending on their elections,” the group said on its site.



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State House cuts abortion funds from Medicaid budget

JUNEAU (AP) — The Alaska House has voted to cut the state Medicaid budget in a bid to eliminate state funding for abortions in spite of constitutional questions.

House members voted 21-18 on April 6 to zero out \$350,000 in funding for Medicaid services related to abortions. The vote came during debate on the state operating budget.

The budget bill must go to the Senate for review, and the two chambers must agree on the same numbers and same provisions before it can go to the governor for his consideration.

Lawmakers previously have sought to restrict Medicaid funds for abortions, and the state has shifted Medicaid funding from other sources and continued to help pay for abortion services, the Anchorage Daily News reported.

Medicaid funded 537 of 1,226 abortions in Alaska in 2021, statistics show.

The Alaska Supreme Court has interpreted the state constitution's right to privacy as encompassing abortion rights. It ruled in 2001 that the denial of Medicaid benefits for medically necessary abortions was unconstitutional, and in 2019 struck down a law and regulation

that sought to define what constitutes medically necessary abortions for purposes of Medicaid funding.

Rose O'Hara-Jolley, Alaska state director of Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates, said the anti-abortion provision in the budget “is unethical, unconstitutional, and puts cruel and inequitable restrictions on abortion access for people with low incomes.”

Several legislators said

they believed strongly enough to vote in favor, despite the legal concerns.

“I don't really care if we have to run it through the courts a hundred times,” said Rep. Kevin McCabe, a Big Lake Republican.

The amendment was offered by Rep. Christopher Kurka, a Wasilla Republican who is running for governor.

All 18 members of the House's Republican minority voted in support. Joining

them were Republican Rep. Sara Rasmussen, of Anchorage, who isn't part of a caucus, and two members of the bipartisan House majority, Republican Rep. Kelly Merrick, of Eagle River, and Rep. Josiah Patkotak, an Utqiagvik independent.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the matter of the estate of Linda S. Jack, aka Sue Jack, Notice to Creditors is hereby given that Jennifer A. Dalton has been appointed personal representative of the above named estate. All persons having any claims against the decedent are required to present their claims within four months after the date of first publication of this notice or said claims will forever be barred. All claims must be presented to:

Case No. 1WR-22-00003PR
Jennifer A. Dalton
PO Box 2037
Wrangell, AK 99929

Publish March 30, April 6 and 13, 2022

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the matter of the estate of Gilbert Marshall Gunderson, Notice to Creditors is hereby given that Eleanor R. Knecht has been appointed personal representative of the above named estate. All persons having any claims against the decedent are required to present their claims within four months after the date of first publication of this notice or said claims will forever be barred. All claims must be presented to:

Case No. 1WR-22-00004PR
Eleanor R. Knecht
PO Box 259
Wrangell, AK 99929

Publish March 30, April 6 and 13, 2022

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the matter of the estate of David L Jack, Notice to Creditors is hereby given that Jennifer A. Dalton has been appointed personal representative of the above named estate. All persons having any claims against the decedent are required to present their claims within four months after the date of first publication of this notice or said claims will forever be barred. All claims must be presented to:

Case No. 1WR-22-00002PR
Jennifer A. Dalton
PO Box 2037
Wrangell, AK 99929

Publish March 30, April 6 and 13, 2022



The Southeast Alaska Power Agency (SEAPA) is recruiting for a Temporary Office Assistant for their Ketchikan office. The job consists of reception duties, file management and staff aide. The position will be for up to 6 months with a standard office schedule of Monday through Friday, with 8-hour workdays and a 1-hour lunch break. Flexible hours will be considered for the right candidate. This position does not qualify for additional benefits. Position requires a High School diploma or GED equivalent. Administrative or secretarial experience desired. General computer literacy and proficiency in Microsoft Office Outlook, Word and Excel preferred. A complete job description and the electronic application process are available online at: <https://seapahydro.applicationpro.com/> Salary range is \$20 - \$25/hour (DOE) SEAPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer

Publish April 13 and 20, 2022

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the 2022 Assessment Rolls for the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, as of January 1, 2022, have been completed. The Borough Assembly shall sit as a Board of Equalization on Monday, May 9, 2022, 5:30 p.m., Wrangell Assembly Chambers & By Zoom Teleconference, and continue each day thereafter until its scheduled business is completed.

NOTICE OF APPEAL (with respect to any alleged error in the valuation, overcharge, or omission of the assessor) shall be filed with the Board of Equalization within thirty (30) days after the date on which the assessor's Notice of Assessment was given to the person appealing. The Notice of Appeal shall be in writing, on the designated form, specifying the grounds for appeal.

Appeal Forms are available at City Hall or online at www.wrangell.com (under Forms and Applications).

IT IS THE TAXPAYER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO NOTIFY THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL OF:

1. Properties not included in assessment notices
2. Change of ownership of property not shown on assessment notices

NOTICE OF APPEALS MUST BE FILED ON OR BEFORE APRIL 18, 2022, in person at City Hall or emailed to: cmiller@wrangell.com.

Publish March 30, April 6 and 13, 2022



NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Board of Directors of the Southeast Alaska Power Agency (SEAPA) will hold a Special Board Meeting on April 19, 2022 at 2:00 p.m. AKDT. The meeting will be held electronically. The purpose of the meeting will be for consideration of award of contracts and presentation of an audit engagement letter. During the meeting, an executive session may be held to discuss one of the contracts. For additional information, please call 907.228.2281.

Published April 13, 2022

Pope apologizes for abuse at church-run schools in Canada

By NICOLE WINFIELD
The Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis has made a historic apology to Indigenous Peoples for the “deplorable” abuses they suffered in Canada’s Catholic-run residential schools, and said he hoped to visit Canada in late July to deliver the apology in person to survivors of the church’s misguided missionary zeal.

Francis begged forgiveness during an audience April 1 with dozens of members of the Metis, Inuit and First Nations communities who came to Rome seeking a papal apology and a commitment from the Catholic Church to repair the damage. The first pope from the Americas said he hoped to visit Canada around the Feast of St. Anna, which falls on July 26.

More than 150,000 Native children in Canada were forced to attend state-funded Christian schools from the 19th century until the 1970s in an effort to isolate them from the influence of their homes and culture. The aim was to Christianize and assimilate them into mainstream society, which previous Canadian governments considered superior.

The Canadian government has admitted that physical and sexual abuse was rampant at the schools, with students beaten for speaking their Native languages. That legacy of that abuse and isolation from family has been cited by Indigenous leaders as a root cause of the epidemic rates of alcohol and drug addiction now on Canadian reservations.

After hearing their stories all week, Francis told the Indigenous that the colonial project ripped children from their families, cutting off their roots, traditions and culture and provoking inter-generational trauma that is still being felt today. He said it was a “counter-witness” to the same Gospel that the residential school system purported to uphold.

“For the deplorable conduct of those members of the Catholic Church, I ask forgiveness of the Lord,” Francis said. “And I want to tell you from my heart, that I am greatly pained. And I unite myself with the Canadian bishops in apologizing.”

The trip to Rome by the Indigenous was years in the making but gained momentum last year after the discovery of hundreds of unmarked graves outside some of the residential schools in Canada. The three groups of Indigenous met separately with Francis over several hours, telling him their stories, culminating with the collective audience on April 1.

The president of the Metis National Council, Cassidy Caron, said the Metis elder sitting next her burst into tears upon



AP PHOTO/ANDREW MEDICHINI

Former national chief of the Assembly of First Nations in Canada, Phil Fontaine, stands outside St. Peter's Square at the end of a meeting with Pope Francis at the Vatican on April 1.

hearing what she said was a long-overdue apology.

“The pope’s words today were historic, to be sure. They were necessary, and I appreciate them deeply,” Caron told reporters in St. Peter’s Square. “And I now look forward to the pope’s visit to Canada, where he can offer those sincere words of apology directly to our survivors and their families, whose acceptance and healing ultimately matters most.”

First Nations’ Chief Gerald Antoine echoed the sentiment, saying Francis recognized the cultural “genocide” that had been inflicted on Indigenous people.

“Today is a day that we’ve been waiting for. And certainly one that will be uplifted in our history,” he said. “It’s a historical first step, however, only a first step.”

He and other Indigenous leaders said there was far more for the church to do on the path of reconciliation, but that for now Indigenous leaders insisted on being involved in organizing the papal visit to make sure Francis stops in places that hold spiritual importance to their people.

Nearly three-quarters of Canada’s 130 residential schools were run by Catholic missionary congregations.

Last May, the Tk’emlups te Secwepemc Nation announced the discovery of 215 gravesites near Kamloops, British Columbia, that were found using ground-penetrating radar. It was Canada’s largest Indigenous residential school and the discovery of the graves was the first of numerous, similar grim sites across the country.

Even before the grave sites were discovered, Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission specifically called for a papal apology to be delivered on Canadian soil for the church’s role in the abuses.

In addition, as part of a settlement of a lawsuit involving the Canadian government, churches and the approximately 90,000 surviving students, Canada paid reparations that amounted to billions of dollars being transferred to Indigenous communities. The Catholic Church, for its part, has paid over \$50 million and now intends to add \$30 million more over the next five years.

Francis said he felt shame for the role that Catholic educators had played in the harm, “in the abuse and disrespect for your identity, your culture and even your spiritual values,” he said. “It is evi-

dent that the contents of the faith cannot be transmitted in a way that is extraneous to the faith itself.”

After the papal apology, the audience continued with joyous performances of Indigenous prayers by drummers, dancers and fiddlers that Francis watched, applauded and gave a thumbs up to. The Indigenous then presented him with gifts, including snowshoes.

Francis’ apology went far beyond what Pope Benedict XVI had offered in 2009 when an Assembly of First Nations delegation visited. At the time, Benedict only expressed his “sorrow at the anguish caused by the deplorable conduct of some members of the church.” But he did not apologize.

The Argentine pope is no stranger to offering apologies for his own errors and for what he himself has termed the “crimes” of the institutional church. Most significantly, during a 2015 visit to Bolivia, he apologized for the sins, crimes and offenses committed by the church against Indigenous Peoples during the colonial-era conquest of the Americas.

White House report criticizes barriers to Native American voting

By FELICIA FONSECA
The Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — Local, state and federal officials must do more to ensure Native Americans facing persistent, longstanding and deep-rooted barriers to voting have equal access to ballots, a White House report said.

Native Americans and Alaska Natives vote at lower rates than the national average but have been a key constituency in tight races and states with large Native populations. A surge in voter turnout among tribal members in Arizona, for example, helped lead Joe Biden to victory in the state that hadn’t supported a Democrat in a White House contest since 1996.

The Biden administration’s report, released March 24, comes a year after he issued an executive order promoting voting rights and establishing a steering committee to look at particular barriers to voting in Indigenous communities. Those include state laws and local practices that disenfranchise Indigenous voters, unequal access to early voting and reliance on a mail system that is unreliable, the

report stated.

“For far too long, members of tribal nations and Native communities have faced unnecessary burdens when they attempt to exercise their sacred right to vote,” the White House said.

The administration called on Congress to pass voting rights legislation, including the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and another focused on Native Americans. But those bills are going nowhere. Republicans wouldn’t support them, and Democratic Sens. Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona have been unwilling to override a Republican filibuster to allow the legislation to pass.

In several states, Republican legislatures and governors recently have passed dozens of restrictive laws dealing with voting and elections. They have limited the use of mail voting, which proved hugely popular during the pandemic, implemented strict voter ID requirements, eliminated ballot drop boxes and created several penalties for local election officials who could be accused of violating certain laws.

The U.S. Supreme Court

ruled last year in a broader case over Arizona voting regulations to uphold a prohibition on counting ballots cast in the wrong precinct and returning early ballots for another person. Native American voting rights advocates saw it as another notch in a long history of voting discrimination.

Democrats say the new laws are designed to target their voters, although the mail voting restrictions also tend to hurt Republicans.

In the absence of action, the Biden administration is seeking changes at more local levels while maintaining pressure on Congress. The White House pointed to enhanced safeguards for Native American voters in Nevada, Washington and Colorado and suggested other states follow their lead.

The report further recommended that jurisdictions serving Native voters offer language assistance even when they’re not legally required to. And the U.S. Postal Service should consider adding routes or boosting personnel in Indian Country, the report said.

The White House highlighted efforts within federal agencies that include the Interior Department working to des-

ignate tribal colleges in New Mexico and Kansas as voter registration centers. The Treasury Department will provide voter education through its income tax assistance centers, the White House said.

And the U.S. Department of Justice has more than doubled its voting rights enforcement to ensure election officials are complying with federal law, senior administration officials said. The administration noted, though, that the protections in the Voting Rights Act to prohibit racial discrimination in voting no longer are adequate.

Tribal leaders in Alaska told the steering committee that despite successful litigation to ensure language assistance, the services haven’t reached their communities, according to the committee’s report. A tribal leader on the Blackfeet reservation in Montana said a county election official did not comply with a directive to provide drop boxes on the reservation until three days before the election, the report states.

Poverty among Native Americans, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians, hostility between Indigenous and

non-Indigenous communities, and cultural disrespect also impact voting patterns in Indigenous communities, the administration noted.

The White House report will be translated into six Indigenous languages: Navajo, Ojibwe, Cherokee, Yu’pik, Lakota and Native Hawaiian.

The report builds on the work of other groups, including the Native American Rights Fund that outlined the challenges to voting in Indian Country, deepened by the pandemic: online registration hampered by spotty or no internet service, ballots delivered to rarely-checked post office boxes and turnout curbed by a general reluctance to vote by mail.

Despite the challenges, Native American voting rights groups increasingly have mobilized over the years to boost turnout that is about 13% lower than the national average, according to the White House. The states will have the largest percentage of Native Americans and Alaska Natives are Alaska, Oklahoma, New Mexico, South Dakota and Montana.