

Legislators, governor at odds on fiscal math

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

With less than a week to go before the deadline to finish this year's third special session of the Legislature, not only are the governor and most legislators unable to agree on the amount of the Permanent Fund dividend, they also don't agree on two key numbers central to the fiscal debates.

Legislative leadership and the nonpartisan Legislative Finance Division see a billion-dollar average annual budget deficit if the governor wins his push for a Permanent Fund dividend of \$2,400 or so. The governor wants to cement the annual PFD into the constitution.

Gov. Mike Dunleavy's team, however, puts the deficit at several hundred million dollars less, based on what many legislators call unrealistic budget-cut assumptions and overly

optimistic oil revenue projections.

In another numerical disagreement, Dunleavy's revenue department told a House committee last week that \$18.6 billion was available from Permanent Fund earnings, of which the governor wants to take \$3 billion to cover his PFD spending until new revenues can appear to close the gap.

However, the Alaska Permanent Fund Corp.'s most recent financial statement, issued last Friday, shows half that — about \$9.7 billion — uncommitted and available in the earnings reserve account. Legislators moved \$4 billion from the earnings to the constitutionally protected principal of the fund, effective in July, and the corporation already has designated close to \$3.4 billion in earnings to cover its legally required contribution to

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PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Brad Traxler, 61, is preparing for a 50-mile run in Florida on Dec. 1, a decade from when doctors told him he would never walk again after a car accident. The Wrangell pastor trained last Sunday, running the loop trail at Volunteer Park.

Pastor credits strong spiritual walk for running after being quadriplegic

By MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

Brad Traxler is a walking miracle. One could go a step further and say he's a running miracle, literally.

Ten years ago, at age 51, Traxler was in an auto collision near Belle Fourche, South Dakota, breaking his neck which left him a quadriplegic. Now, at 61, he's training to finish a 50-mile run in Daytona Beach, Florida.

His doctors doubted Traxler would ever walk again.

"They felt that if I ever walked again, it would only be with assistance," Traxler said. "Actually, in rehab, they figured that if they could get me to the point where I could get from my bed to the wheelchair on a slide

board with assistance, that might be as far as I ever got."

The insurance company even decided that there was no point in paying for a second month in the hospital if that was as good as it would get for Traxler. He believed differently.

Traxler, who has ministered at the Wrangell Seventh-day Adventist Church the past two years after serving in Kenai, knew he'd walk again.

"I just totally, completely and fully believed that I was going to walk again and, of course, I give God the credit," Traxler said. It didn't hurt that before his injury, Traxler was an ultrarunner, running distances over 26.2 miles (the length of a marathon).

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PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Help Wanted signs, such as this one at City Market, are a common sight around town this year.

Employers have trouble hiring; new programs respond to help

By MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

It's a familiar storefront sight throughout Wrangell: "Help Wanted" signs placed in business windows.

For various reasons, employers are having trouble filling positions.

"We couldn't find someone to hire, even if we wanted to," said Jennifer Ludwigsen at the Totem Bar & Liquor Store, which is looking for extra workers. The business is currently down to three staff members, but finding new employees has been challenging. It isn't unique.

"A lot, especially the larger businesses, the grocery stores, the hardware stores ... the Stikine [Inn] they're strapped. They're really needing employees," said Wrangell Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Brittani Robbins. "Even the new pizza place is hard up for new employees."

The unemployment rate in Wrangell was 6.1% in July, down from 10.4% a year ago July, according to the Alaska Department of Labor. The rate started the year at 7.7%.

And while the unemployment rate is declining, plenty of jobs still are available, as can be seen throughout Wrangell or on any online job board. But getting workers has proven difficult.

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Schools end first week at 262 students

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

Wrangell school enrollment numbers are a lot better than a year ago.

As of last week, 262 students were enrolled in the elementary, middle and high schools. That's far ahead of the enrollment low of the pandemic in fall 2020, when the student count dipped below 200.

Enrollment was sitting at 206 the month before the school year ended in May.

Though the district is not back up to its pre-pandemic tally of 306 in fall 2019, this year's enrollment is "excellent," said Schools Superintendent Bill Burr.

Much of the loss of students last year was due to parents pulling their children for homeschooling during pandemic. Wrangell had the steepest enrollment drop last year of any school district in the

state.

Burr said this fall's climb back to 262 students is "a mixture of homeschooling not being best for everyone," as well as the schools serving the community.

"We have a good group, we have a good staff, we have a good community," he said. "We are working forward not to have a COVID (education) gap ... and getting our students where they need to be."

State funding, which is based on enrollment, is the largest single source of revenue for the school district budget. The higher student count "is going to help us a great deal," Burr said.

Though the district this past spring had talked optimistically at one point of maybe reaching 259 students, the budget was conservatively based on 225.

The state will take its

enrollment count for funding later in the fall. Enrollment will fluctuate as some families may have moved out of town and not yet notified the district, Burr said.

The additional students are spread evenly between the three schools, not overloading any one building or class, the superintendent said. "We are matching what staff we do have ... at the moment we are not looking at adding to teaching staff."

About \$1 million in federal pandemic aid has been allocated to the Wrangell district, with much of it used to cover the loss of state funding due to the enrollment drop last school year and this year. The school board set aside about \$350,000 of the federal aid to help next year.

The district's operating budget for the 2021-2022 school year is \$5.15 million.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

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

Thursday, Sept. 9: Josh Blatchley, Jasmine Clyburn, Marlo Marie Ellsworth, Hope Miller, Andrew Scambler, Jody Waddington.

Friday, Sept. 10: Connor Blake, Carol Haaseth; Anniversaries: Arnold and Alice Bakke, Harry and Rose Sundberg.

Saturday, Sept. 11: Nancy Cummings, Jake Eastaugh, Sanoë Harrison, Rebecca Helgeson.

Sunday, Sept. 12: Bryant Benjamin, Katelyn Early, David Rak.

Monday, Sept. 13: Wanda Banta, Frank Johnson, Kalcie Klinke, Bernie Massin, Jenny Mork, Jim Nelson Sr., John Waddington; Anniversary: Jeff and Heidi Villarma.

Tuesday, Sept. 14: Mikki Angerman.

Wednesday, Sept. 15: Jake Harris, Heather Howe, Alana Young.

Thursday, Sept. 16: Tessa Appleman, Sarah Scambler; Anniversaries: Steve and Ginny Helgeson, Brian and Yuri McCloskey, Chris and Kristie Weber, Lee and Jennifer Wiedersphohn.

Senior Center Menu

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

Friday, Sept. 10

Ham, peas and carrots, tomato soup, cornbread

Monday, Sept. 13

Hot turkey with cranberries, broccoli, carrot pineapple salad, mashed potatoes with gravy

Tuesday, Sept. 14

Meatloaf, green beans, sunshine salad, au gratin potatoes

Wednesday, Sept. 15

Venison stew, mixed vegetables, cabbage with fruit cocktail, Pilot Bread

Thursday, Sept. 16

Pork roast, harvard beets, cauliflower and broccoli, rice

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

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

Ferry Schedule

Northbound

Friday, Sept. 10

Matanuska, 4:15 p.m.

Friday, Sept. 17

Matanuska, 4:45 p.m.

Friday, Sept. 24

Matanuska, 3:45 p.m.

Monday, Oct. 4

Kennicott, noon

Monday, Oct. 18

Kennicott, 12:15 p.m.

Southbound

Monday, Sept. 13

Matanuska, 6:30 a.m.

Monday, Sept. 20

Matanuska, 6:30 a.m.

Monday, Sept. 27

Matanuska, 7 a.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 13

Kennicott, 9:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 27

Kennicott, 9:30 p.m.

All times listed are scheduled departure times.

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



TIDES

September 9-September 15

	High Tides		Low Tides					
	AM Time	PM Time	AM Ft	PM Ft	AM Time	PM Time	Ft	
Sept. 9	03:20	16.6	03:19	18.5	09:01	0.7	09:40	-2.6
Sept. 10	04:07	15.5	04:00	17.7	09:43	2.0	10:30	-1.7
Sept. 11	05:01	14.1	04:49	16.5	10:31	3.4	11:28	-0.5
Sept. 12	06:07	12.8	05:51	15.1	11:30	4.8
Sept. 13	07:34	12.2	07:17	14.0	00:38	0.7	12:48	5.8
Sept. 14	09:02	12.6	08:52	13.9	02:02	1.3	02:28	5.8
Sept. 15	10:11	13.8	10:08	14.6	03:27	1.3	04:02	4.7

Wrangell Roundup: Special Events

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

NOLAN CENTER THEATER presents "PAW Patrol: The Movie," rated G, at 7 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$5 for children under age 12, for the animation, adventure and comedy film that runs one hour and 26 minutes. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

WRANGELL PARKS AND REC is offering another round of Parent & Me swim lessons with instructor Briana Schilling. One parent plus one child between 12 months and 3 years old on Saturdays, from 10:15 to 10:45 a.m., Sept. 25 to Oct. 16. \$35 for the parent-child pair. Register at wrangellrec.com or call 874-2444.

WRANGELL PARKS AND REC is seeking volunteer coaches to help ensure youth athletes have a fun season of skills and drills, scrimmages and games. The season runs mid-September through early November for kindergarten through fifth grades. Volunteers must pass a background check, commit to 2.5 hours weeknights per week – and it's important to have a general knowledge of the sport. Call 874-2444.

BRAVE is hosting its fourth annual Family Resilience Fair noon to 2 p.m. Oct. 16 at the Nolan Center. Learn how your community can help your family. BRAVE is closely watching the Wrangell COVID-19 surge and will make safety decisions dependent on case counts closer to the fair date. BRAVE.Wrangell@gmail.com or 907-204-0530.

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

Continuing Events

PARKS and RECREATION www.wrangellrec.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

Weight room available by appointment and at reduced capacity:

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

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

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

Sept. 15, 1921

Fires invariably come in groups in Wrangell and three occurred within a short time during the past week. On Friday night, the McCulla house on Church Street had a small blaze on the roof; on Saturday forenoon, the house occupied by Mrs. Doit Burnett just off Front street was afire; and on Monday morning the Adams home, near St. Philip's gymnasium, caused the alarm. Of the three, the Burnett home received the most damage, the roof being badly burned.

Sept. 6, 1946

Republican boss Albert White has been attempting to direct some GOP fire against the so-called "sales tax," known as the state gross revenue tax, which was set up by the last Legislature

to raise funds to assist Alaska veterans of World War II. But that may be difficult, as Alaskans on the whole are paying the one percent tax cheerfully because they know it is for the boys who did the fighting while most of the rest of us sat at home. In addition, the territorial veterans administration set up under the act is doing an excellent job. Alaska veterans are getting loans to start them off in various enterprises; some are asking and getting their bonuses. A number of Alaska banks are going along with the vets program by advancing money on veteran loans, guaranteed by the territory. Fact is the Alaska World War II veterans law, one of the most liberal in the nation, is working and hundreds of veterans in the territory are cognizant of it.

Sept. 10, 1971

Plans for a nonprofit corporation to bring live Canadian television to Wrangell were outlined by Lefty Johnson, a former local TV technician. Johnson said a transmitter could be placed on a nearby mountain to pick up the Canadian signal from Ketchikan, where equipment receives the signal from Prince Rupert, British Columbia. He said plans are to create a nonprofit corporation called Wrangell Live TV to raise about \$14,000 initially for installation of the transmitter and to run the operation. Customers for the live television would pay about \$30 a year for

the service. Johnson said donations of \$150 each from about 150 persons would be solicited to pay for the transmitter. Wrangell currently is served by cable television, which carries reruns of Seattle television. Johnson said the Canadian channel beamed to Wrangell would feature live U.S. network shows, sports, news, weather and other programs.

Sept. 12, 1996

Four members of the Wrangell Teachers Association – Dave Brown, Dean Jaquish, Dan Roope and Butch Schmidt – recently helped refurbish an abandoned cabin at Anan Lake. The project is a cooperative effort between the U.S. Forest Service, Sunrise Aviation and the Wrangell Teachers Association. Keith Appleman, of the Forest Service, said the cabin was used for many years as one of the service's recreational sites but was taken out of service about 10 years ago because it was deteriorating and the foundation needed work. Appleman phoned WTA vice president Dave Brown and asked for volunteers. WTA has done volunteer work with the Forest Service before. Butch Schmidt said, "It's nice that in our community people can work together to increase the quality of life for locals and visitors." People interested in the newly remodeled Anan Lake cabin, or other recreational opportunities, should contact the U.S. Forest Service.

Daylight Hours

Date	Sunrise	Sunset	Hours
Sept. 09	6:09a	7:22p	13:12h
Sept. 10	6:11a	7:19p	13:07h
Sept. 11	6:13a	7:16p	13:03h
Sept. 12	6:15a	7:14p	12:58h
Sept. 13	6:17a	7:11p	12:53h
Sept. 14	6:19a	7:08p	12:49h
Sept. 15	6:21a	7:06p	12:44h

Brad Traxler

Continued from page 1

The day after he was given the news that insurance would only pay for a month in the hospital, Traxler talked to his physical therapist about his plans.

"I said, 'Look, I'm going to walk out of here. Would you help me do that?' And she kind of paused for a bit and then said, 'Look, if you'll work hard, I'll do everything in my power to help you walk out of here.'"

Not only did Traxler walk out of the hospital, four years later he ran a marathon.

"I decided maybe just to glorify God a little bit more, or maybe it's just my competitive spirit, I don't know, but I decided this year to try to run a 50-miler," he said. "The Daytona 100, which also has a 50-miler with it on Dec. 1."

At the time of his injury, Traxler was a top statistic. Seventy-eight percent of spinal cord injuries occur in males, and the top reason for spinal cord injuries is vehicle crashes, according to the National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center.

About 291,000 Americans have spinal cord injuries, with 59.9% of those being quadriplegic. Although there are stories detailing quadriplegics regaining mobility, that is not normally the case, especially in older people.

And although Traxler has overcome most of the paralysis and things like difficulty swallowing, drop foot and having to wear a catheter, he still has partial paralysis and a few other issues associated with

quadriplegia.

"I'm still partially paralyzed from the chest down, but somehow, gift of God, whatever, I've been able to push through all that and have pretty good use of my hands and feet," Traxler said. "I really don't feel my feet that much when I run, which is why I have to watch very carefully when I'm running. It's mostly through sight."

Traxler wasn't the only one affected by the collision and subsequently healing. His wife of 41 years, Cheryl, was there throughout.

"She almost never left my side the whole time," he said. "She doesn't mind me running, but she hates it when I go out running on mountain trails because it's pretty dangerous and I do it a couple times a year because I can't resist it. But she supports me fully. She's been my rock through this whole thing."

Traxler's approach to pastoring has also changed since the collision. He said he's able to relate with people on a more sympathetic level, and even more so with people who have disabilities since he's now disabled himself.

"He's definitely not cocky about what's happened," said Marlin Benedict, the head elder at the church. "He's a sinner just like the rest of us. He has his faults, and he's not afraid to

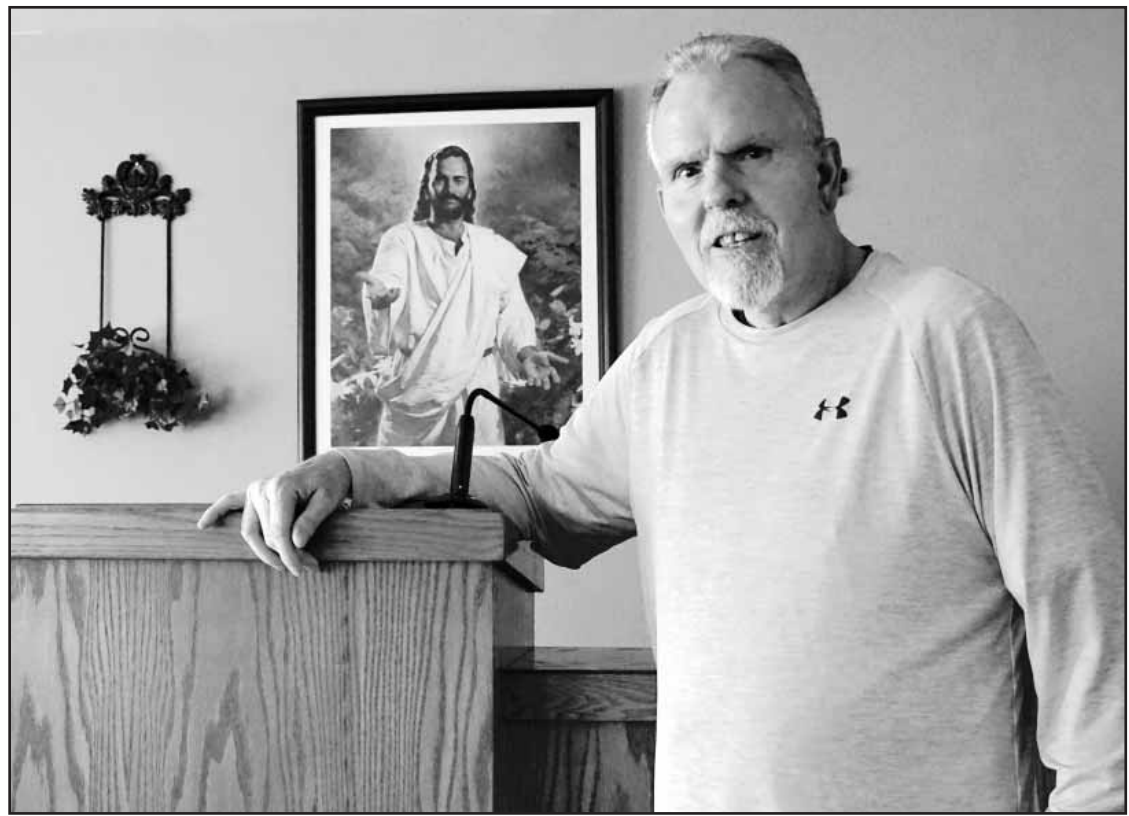


PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Brad Traxler has ministered at the Wrangell Seventh-day Adventist Church the past two years.

admit it. ... God's not done with him yet. Look at how far he's gone after being told that he's not even going to be able to move. He's a dynamic preacher."

Benedict said he likes Traxler's persistence and ability to set and meet goals, and that the pastor's struggles have been inspiring.

Traxler estimates the 50-mile run will take him 15 hours, a

best-case scenario, he said. He will continue to train, running up to 25 miles on a weekend day – a far cry from the 60 to 70 miles per week he ran before becoming a quadriplegic. Still, he continues to set goals, admitting that he might eventually aim for a 100-mile race.

"Miracles do happen. My life has just been one big miracle. When people come to me and they're struggling, and they see

a mountain in front of them, I've climbed that mountain," he said. "God has moved obstacles out of my way ... medically impossible things. I wish I had \$100 for everything they told me I'd never do again and I'm doing today."

To read more about Traxler's journey, his book "Running Miracle" is available on Amazon and BarnesandNoble.com.

COVID hospitalizations 20% above last winter

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

The state reported 186 people hospitalized around Alaska on Monday, 20% more than at the worst of COVID-19 admissions last December.

Almost two dozen patients were on ventilators, the state health website reported Tuesday.

However, in perhaps a hopeful sign, case counts across Alaska are trending down the past few days.

After averaging 540 new infections a day statewide the

past two weeks through Monday, and 580 new cases a day in the past week, the Labor Day weekend count averaged 403 new cases a day – though holiday weekend counts have in the past come in lower because of less reporting.

After counting 48 infected individuals in August, Wrangell officials reported just three new cases in the first six days of September. As of Tuesday, only two cases in Wrangell were considered active (unrecovered) cases, the borough reported.

Ketchikan saw a record 129 active cases in the community on Friday, though the tally had dropped to 80 as of Tuesday, according to the Ketchikan Gateway Borough's COVID dashboard.

Ketchikan has reported more than 1,100 total cases since the pandemic tally started in March 2020, according to the state dashboard. Wrangell was at 130 as of Tuesday.

Ketchikan reported three patients hospitalized on Tuesday. The Wrangell Medical Center does not publicly report its COVID hospitalizations.

A big concern for health care officials in Alaska is having enough staff for hospitals and intensive-care units to handle the record caseload. Alaska hospital officials told a legislative committee last week that patient space and staff are in short supply to handle the crushing load.

Officials from the state Department of Health and Social Services said last week they hope to contract with medical personnel from the Lower 48 to work in Alaska, but that will be challenging as so many states are seeing record or near-record patient numbers and staffing shortages at their own hospitals.

Idaho public health leaders announced Tuesday that they activated "crisis standards of care" allowing health care rationing for the state's northern hospitals because there are more coronavirus patients than the institutions can handle.

The move came as the state's confirmed coronavirus cases skyrocketed in recent

weeks. Idaho has one of the lowest vaccination rates in the U.S.

The move allows hospitals to allocate scarce resources such as intensive-care unit rooms to patients most likely to survive.

Medical experts have said that Idaho could have as many as 30,000 new coronavirus cases a week by mid-September if the current rate of infections lasts.

More than 500 people were hospitalized in Idaho with COVID-19 on Sept. 1, and more than a third of them were in intensive care unit beds.

Most people hospitalized in Alaska and around the country are unvaccinated.

In a push to entice more Alaskans to get vaccinated, the state is using \$1 million in federal pandemic relief money through the end of October to offer weekly \$49,000 cash prizes – and weekly \$49,000 scholarships – for adults and teens who get at least their first dose of a vaccine.

The state turned to the Alaska Chamber of Commerce to run the vaccination lottery.

After being among the leading states for vaccination rates at the start of the shots this winter, Alaska has slipped to the bottom third of the 50 states. As of Tuesday, just over 61% of eligible Alaskans had received at least their first dose.

The rate in Wrangell was at 65%, just a single percentage point better than two weeks ago.

The Associated Press and Ketchikan Daily News contributed to this report.

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Costly bridge not a good answer to state fiscal puzzle

By LARRY PERSILY
Publisher

Assembling a long-term fiscal plan for Alaska has been like putting together a jigsaw puzzle with some key pieces missing from the box.

It's frustrating and you can't win, no matter how much you try pounding the pieces to fit together.

In this case, the puzzle would fit together better with a governor who doesn't stretch the numbers to suit his arguments, and who thinks more about public services that can build the state's future and less about dividends that can build his reelection campaign.

The puzzle also is missing a few other pieces, particularly more legislators who understand that the Permanent Fund dividend should not take precedence over all else in the state budget, that it's not OK to treat the savings account as an ATM that can pop out extra cash to pay a super-size PFD.

That's not to say all of the other pieces fit perfectly, or that all the other puzzle masters are acting in unison. But at least they see the same picture on the cover of the jigsaw box and are looking over all the right pieces, which include a state income or sales tax, oil taxes, responsible spending, an affordable PFD, other taxes and making Alaska an attractive place to live. There is more to quality of life than living tax free.

Gov. Mike Dunleavy has declared that an income tax is off-limits for any fiscal plan he could support. While he is not alone in that position — many legislators and probably a majority of Alaskans would agree — he is purposely vague on what revenue pieces we would support.

The best Dunleavy can manage on sticking out his reelection neck is for his second-in-com-

mand at the revenue department to tell legislators last week that the governor "likely" would accept a sales tax, so long as it comes with big dividends in the constitution and a spending limit in the constitution.

The governor is making the work even harder by not submitting a single substantial revenue measure for legislative consideration, leaving it to lawmakers to guess at which pieces he would endorse. He sits back even as he acknowledges the state needs new revenues.

Worse yet, the effort is made even harder for legislators and the public by some misleading math — sadly, one of Dunleavy's frequent tactics.

In a presentation to a state House committee last week, promoting the governor's plan to withdraw an additional \$3 billion from the Permanent Fund to tide over the state until something else comes to the rescue, the Department of Revenue said the fund holds \$18.6 billion in available earnings.

Wrong. Not even close. Purposefully misleading to bolster the argument that the fund can afford a large PFD this fall and next and next.

As of the most recent financial statement, the Permanent Fund had a little more than half that amount uncommitted as of July 31. If you take the total value of the fund's earnings reserve account and subtract what already is allocated for next year, you are left with \$9.7 billion.

The governor wants to take one-third of that as a "bridge" to help cover bigger dividends. That leaves an awfully short bridge to cover a wide gap between spending and revenues in the years ahead.

Better to use all the puzzle pieces to build a more durable bridge.

EDITORIAL

The odds of winning are pretty healthy

At this point, anything is worth a try. If a healthy life, caring about family and neighbors, and wanting to dream about perhaps someday flying without a face mask isn't enough of an incentive, maybe a chance at winning the Alaska vaccination lottery will be just the shot in the arm some people need.

Literally.

The state has decided to use \$1 million in federal pandemic aid to offer a lottery — a weekly \$49,000 prize for eight lucky adults (age 18 and over) of the 49th state who figure a chance at cash is worth a little ache in the arm. The race to riches started last week.

In addition, eight weekly winners also will be drawn randomly from among 12- to 17-year-old Alaskans who get a shot before the contest closes on Oct. 30. No cash for the youth — instead, each will see a \$49,000 deposit into a college savings account in their name.

And to reward the parents of those winning teens, the contest will give a \$10,000 cash prize to the parents of the newly vaccinated teen. But only if the parents are vaccinated.

For those already vaccinated who are feeling left out of the cash giveaway, there is a consolation prize. Everyone who was vaccinated before the contest started on Sept. 2 can go online, drop their name in the proverbial hat of good luck, and hope to win. One winner will be drawn from among those 18 and older, and one winner for the 12 to 17 year olds.

The Alaska Chamber of Commerce is running the vaccination-promotion contest. The online entry forms are at www.giveakashot.com.

This million-dollar lottery isn't about making a social or political statement, or taking a position on medical issues, or choosing sides between the no-mask-mandate governor and advocates for face masks. The chamber of commerce program is focused on jobs and businesses doing better if fewer people catch COVID-19. The organization's president urges Alaskans to get vaccinated "to protect our economy."

As of Monday, almost 40% of eligible Alaskans still had not gotten even their first dose of a vaccine. That means more than 230,000 Alaskans are eligible to get a shot and enter the drawing.

If even half of those residents get vaccinated, the odds of winning one of the prizes would be about 1 in 7,200. Those are much better odds than being among the one in nine Alaskans who have tested positive for COVID-19 since the pandemic started.

—Wrangell Sentinel

FROM THE EDITOR

Wrangell just may be the home I've been looking for

By MARC LUTZ
Editor

I grew up in a small rural town in California where we played in the streets, kept our doors unlocked, built tree-houses, and stayed out late until our parents called us in. That all changed over the years.

Sure, I left the state here and there, but I always returned for family or just because it was familiar. With my children grown and moved away, I decided it was time to find a place that was more suited to my personality.

Let's not gloss over the fact that people in California's Bay Area have been increasingly driven out due to exorbitant real estate prices and the high cost of living. People have left the San Francisco area for the Central Valley (where I'm from) or the Mother Lode foothills. In turn, the people

who already lived in those areas saw the uptick in housing prices across the board. That has spurred many — myself included — to leave the state altogether.

More congestion and higher prices weren't the only reasons that ignited my decision. There is also the (almost) year-round fire season. It seems like the Golden State could be better described as the Fiery State lately. Though I wasn't in a town directly affected by the myriad of fires, the constant smoke and ash was a problem.

I searched for new employment in the Seattle area, North Carolina, the Midwest and other places. Some had their appeal, but there are still the usual issues that come with just too many people.

Something told me to check Alaska.

I had always wanted to visit The Last Frontier, and I know a

lot of folks who absolutely love living here. I logged onto a job board I've had luck with in the past and found an editor/reporter position with a publication in someplace called Wrangell.

The job offered plenty of the duties I'm skilled at and love to do. Check.

The population was listed at about 2,400. Double-check.

The weather wasn't scorching hot in summer and toe-freezing cold in winter. Triple-check.

"Why Alaska," Larry Persily, the owner and publisher of the Wrangell Sentinel, asked me during our first phone conversation. I went over the many reasons, but maybe the unspoken one was that it just felt right.

After an in-person interview, a few email exchanges and more phone calls, I came up to visit Wrangell over two

days in July. How can you step onto this island and not fall in love with it? My wife and I spent the brief time checking out the businesses, driving out the highway, and partaking of the pizza at the Hungry Beaver.

We found it to be a different way of life, a slower way of life. It's a way of life that moves at its own pace. And Amazon orders generally take a couple weeks to get here.

We knew this was our new home even before we left.

When I was brought on board the Sentinel, the work of moving an entire household and travel-reluctant cats some 2,000 miles away began. We were quoted nearly \$30,000 to move the contents of a 938-square-foot home. After regaining consciousness, we had to approach the moving prob-

lem from another angle.

"It's just a remote place to move," one agent told us. Plus, it would take a maximum of six weeks to get our stuff if we went with a moving company. We came up with a Plan B: Move it all ourselves. For a fraction of the cost, we rented a U-Haul, booked ferry passage, and got here (with all our stuff and some very stressed-out cats) in just over three days.

Everything from finding a home to rent to returning the U-Haul in a timely fashion to Petersburg (big thanks to Eric Yancey!) has fallen into place. The population has been welcoming and the cats have finally calmed down.

We're definitely looking forward to many years to come in our new home.

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PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

“A lot, especially the larger businesses, the grocery stores, the hardware stores ... they’re really needing employees,” said Wrangell Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Brittani Robbins.

Hiring woes

Continued from page 1

In a move intended to drive more Alaskans back into the workforce, the governor ended the federally funded extended unemployment benefits of an additional \$300 a week in mid-June.

Positions are open at places like the Nolan Center and in retail businesses such as IGA, City Market and Sea Level Seafoods. There are several vacancies with the SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium.

Cody Angerman, general manager of Sea Level Seafoods in Wrangell, said the fishery had a later start this year due to staffing.

“We actually started a little later this year – a lot of that being related to the pandemic,” he said. “Quarantining [new employees] makes it more difficult [to start earlier].”

Angerman said about 25% to 50% of Sea Level’s employees are local, which makes it easier to handle any potential pandemic-related issues. In recent years, the company has had to look beyond Wrangell to bolster its workforce.

“Finding employees is difficult throughout the country. Seafood processing facilities have had issues with that. We follow pretty strict COVID-19 mandates and protocols here.”

Due to a limited on-site crew, Angerman said one or two positive cases could shut down the entire operation. And with more than half of workers being brought in from out of the area, Sea Level has had to take extra precautions.

“Flying people in from out of state requires a lot more than it used to,” Angerman said. “We get them tested right off the plane. Depending on whether they’re vaccinated or not determines the amount of time in quarantine. We just make sure we’re following guidelines.”

Indeed, some people are hesitant to return to the workforce because of the pandemic, according to Robbins.

“I think some of it’s COVID. You have that situation,” Robbins said. “When you’re working in retail, you’re in contact with a lot of people, a lot of dirty, dirty money,” she said. “With COVID being so kind of mysterious but also frightening, I think that’s a big part of why those businesses are having a rough time.”

People are put off by the virus, she said, keeping them from wanting to work directly with the public. The other reason local businesses may be having difficulty hiring is due to a lack of benefits, she said.

Larger employers such as SEARHC offer a benefits package that includes medical and dental insurance, a perk small business owners are increasingly unable to offer due to rising costs.

“One business did say they lost a lot of their good employees to SEARHC, because SEARHC provides a living wage and benefits,” Robbins said. “I don’t have [benefits in this position], but my husband gets it because he works for SEARHC. It’s hard in this day and age with the cost of medical to take a job that doesn’t provide insurance. I understand why they don’t.”

Robbins, whose family used to own Wrangell’s IGA grocery store, said increasing costs made it harder and harder for the business to provide medical benefits to employees to the point they had to quit offering it.

Doing what they can to help, the chamber of commerce is working with its 137 members to make hiring easier with its newly developed business center.

Each week, Robbins and staff will check in with businesses to see who’s hiring. They will send out announcements on social media platforms to inform the public about the openings. Job seekers can visit the businesses or come into the chamber office, located in the Stikine Inn, to fill out an application.

For those businesses that only accept online applications, Robbins said the chamber will have a computer set up, and staff can help applicants fill out those online forms.

On a statewide scale, the Alaska Department of Labor is in the process of launching a marketing campaign called “Get Alaska Back to Work.” The campaign will inform job seekers and employers about the free state services available such as training for employees, job fairs and employment centers.

“I think the pandemic is a huge part of our current employment crisis, unfortunately,” Robbins said. “I am hopeful it will have its end. When that happens, it will be very joyous.”

Southeast pink salmon catch far exceeds forecast

By MARC LUTZ
Sentinel Editor

It’s looking to be a very good summer for pink salmon commercial fishing, much better than last year’s dismal catch.

The pink harvest in Southeast was just over 44 million fish as of Sept. 3, over 50% more than the 28 million forecast issued after the 2020 season, according to the state’s preliminary commercial salmon harvest report.

And more than five times the catch of last year.

“For pink salmon, we’re around 40 million for the harvest for the Southeast region,” said Paul Salomone, a management biologist for the commercial fisheries division of the Department of Fish and Game in the Wrangell area. “The numbers are still coming in. Last year, pink salmon barely registered.”

The 2020 pink salmon harvest in Southeast was about 8 million fish, just one-quarter of the 10-year average for the region, according to Fish and Game statistics. Last year was the 53rd lowest pink harvest in the past 58 years, as tallied in a spring 2021 report by the department.

Salomone said pink salmon return on a two-year cycle, so this year’s strong catch won’t necessarily repeat next year. However, he noted, “ocean conditions have been a little more salmon-friendly especially for pink salmon.”

Preliminary totals as of Sept. 3 for other commercial salmon catches in Southeast are Chinook, 192,000; chum, 5.4 million; coho, 986,000; and sockeye, 1.02 million.

Last year’s Chinook catch came in at 215,000; chum was 4.7 million; coho at 1.2 million; and sockeye was 458,000.

Though not as dismal as pink salmon last year, Southeast chum, coho and sockeye harvests were about 40% to 45% of the 10-year average catch, according to Fish and Game’s spring 2021 analysis.

This year has been better, though mixed. “Most of the salmon was down a little. Pink salmon was better than anticipated,” said Cody Angerman, general manager of Sea Level Seafoods in Wrangell. “We had a late run with the chum, and we’re getting more into coho here shortly.”

Angerman said the processor got a late start in May due to COVID-19, which had an effect on staffing.

Trident Seafoods did not open its Wrangell plant this season but that was due to lower-than-normal predictions on pink and chum salmon, the company said this spring, not because of COVID-19.

In the area of crab fishing, 1.4 million Dungeness have been caught so far this year in Southeast, equating to 3 million pounds of the shellfish. Last season’s totals came to 3.2 million crabs caught, at 6.7 million pounds.

State works toward restoring children’s services position

By LARRY PERSLY
Sentinel writer

The state is talking with the borough about restoring the Alaska Office of Children’s Services staff position in Wrangell, working through the details after the Legislature added funding for the job in this year’s budget.

Legislators appropriated enough money to cover half the salary, with the borough agreeing to cover the other half and provide free office space.

“The Office of Children’s Services is currently working with the Wrangell Borough to try to solidify details of the position,” Clinton Bennett, spokesman for the Department of Health and Social Services, said Friday.

“On the state side of the process, it is still being determined” who will supervise the new worker, he said. “The process is underway, but the position is not ready to recruit yet.”

When the plans are final, the job will be posted on the state website.

“We’ve had a couple of

meetings” with state officials, Borough Manager Lisa Von Barga said, adding that local organizations with an interest and a role in children’s services will meet later this month with the borough to discuss “what that position can do for the community.”

Wrangell lost its children’s services caseworker several years ago to budget cuts. Legislators approved funding for the office last year, but the governor vetoed the spending – even with the borough offering to cover half the costs.

The borough and school district both have spoken in support of restoring the caseworker job in town to help youth in high-risk situations. A local caseworker would be more helpful than calling a 1-800 number and waiting for a children’s services worker to travel to Wrangell, supporters said.

In May, while Wrangell was pushing for the state funding, Von Barga said the borough would be looking “for other community partners” to help cover some of the 50% local share of the position.



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Borough seeks bids to start repair work at skeet range

By MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

It's been quite a while since the Wrangell skeet range has had any improvements. That's about to change.

The borough recently issued a request for bids to surface the parking area, a job it estimates will not take more than \$50,000 to complete. That's only phase one of a potentially multi-phase project that will provide better access and make the site usable again.

"The skeet range is just fallen into disrepair," said Amber Al-Haddad, capital facilities director for Wrangell. "The two houses — the low house and high house — are falling in on themselves. Overgrown trees have blocked views needed for shooting. ... Trash is dumped there."

The skeet range is part of the community's outdoor shooting range on the Spur Road, just past the golf course.

Al-Haddad said the overall improvements needed at the range were estimated at \$120,000 two years ago. The National Rifle Association recently awarded a \$55,000 grant that will cover the parking area and, if

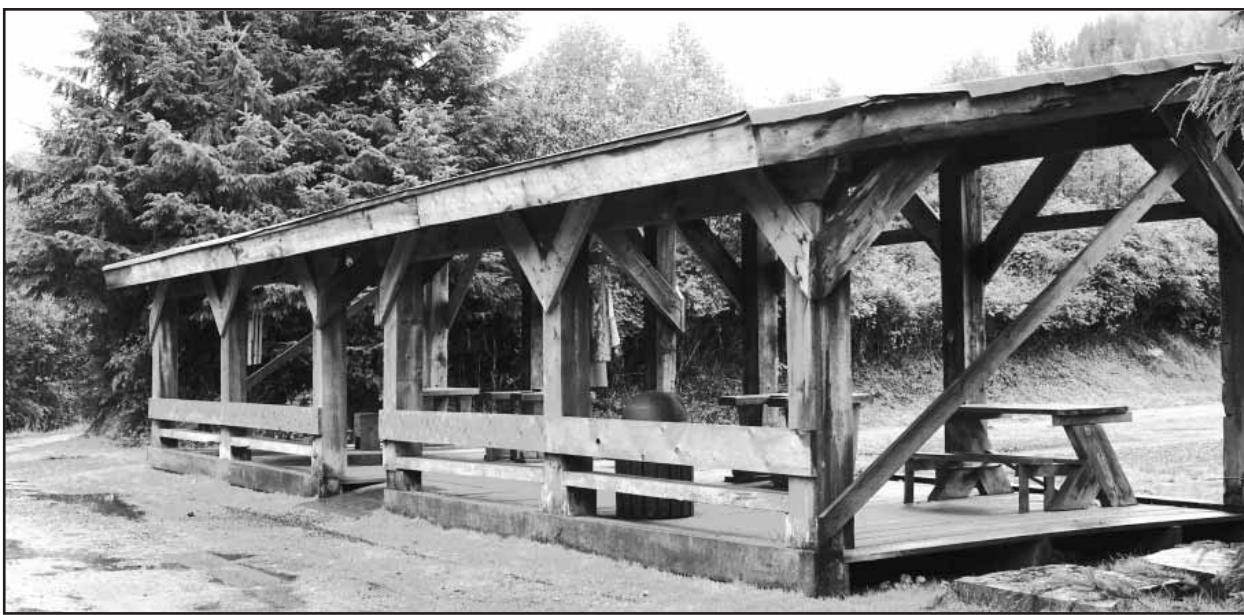


PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

The borough is starting with plans to resurface the parking area at the skeet range and hopes to later move into a second phase of improvements to rebuild the low house and high house, even adding a trapshooting setup, depending on funding.

there are enough funds left over, cleanup and site prep. The initial funds were secured by Assemblymember David Powell.

Future plans include rebuilding both the low house and the high house and developing a trapshooting setup, Al-Haddad said.

"If the funds come from the NRA, if we did receive the full amount required to finish the project, we'd have to finish within a calendar year to complete the work," Al-Haddad said.

The community has expressed interest in getting in-

involved as well.

"What I understand is [the Wrangell Rod and Gun Club] is very supportive of this," Al-Haddad said. "They reached out to [Parks and Recreation Director Kate Thomas] and said if there are portions that can be taken care of by volunteerism, they'd be happy to help."

Bids on the parking area work are due Sept. 17. The work specs include clearing the site and laying "a base course finish surface for the skeet range and parking area."

State starting up second round of rental assistance

By SENTINEL STAFF

The state is opening a second round of federally funded pandemic financial assistance for renters who are not currently receiving help from the program that started this spring.

The Alaska Housing Finance Corp., which is managing the aid program, opened the second round to pre-registration last weekend. The online portal will open to applications on Sept. 13 and will remain open through Oct. 1.

To pre-register or apply, or

for more information, go to www.AlaskaHousingRelief.org.

The housing agency has about \$125 million available in the second round to help Alaska tenants. That's in addition to the \$242 million in federal funds allocated to Alaska in the first round of the nationwide program.

Of that first-round money, the agency as of last week had distributed \$116 million to help almost 19,400 households statewide, with payments continuing to go out.

The money goes directly to landlords and utilities to cover delinquent and current accounts, and also can go toward future rent, depending on the applicant's household income. AHFC will continue issuing payments on behalf of tenants in three-month increments as the renters verify their income loss. The program has household income limits.

Alaska is among the leading states for moving out the money to assist tenants who were hurt financially by job or income loss due to the pandemic.

Households receiving aid

from the first round are not eligible for additional assistance in Round 2, though applicants who did not qualify for Round 1 or pulled their request may apply in the new round that opens up Sept. 13.

AHFC said the assistance program is intended for Alaskans who are struggling to pay rent and/or utilities, who are or have been unemployed or are otherwise struggling to keep up financially, or are living in an overcrowded or unsafe situation, such as a risk of domestic violence or sexual abuse.

In Wrangell, as of last Fri-

day, more than \$220,000 had been paid to cover past-due, current and future rent for 61 applicants who met income guidelines and could show loss of earnings due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The program also has paid out almost \$20,000 to help cover utility bills.

Congress also has appropriated money for homeowners behind on their mortgage because of income loss due to the pandemic. Alaska's share of that program is \$50 million, and AHFC hopes to win federal approval of its mortgage assistance program later this fall.

Alaskans can win \$49,000 weekly prize for new vaccinations

ANCHORAGE (AP) — State officials are hoping that a weekly lottery prize will encourage more people to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

The Alaska Chamber and state officials announced Sept. 2 that they are offering \$49,000 each to one newly vaccinated adult and one youth weekly through Oct. 30.

Those vaccinated before Sept. 2 won't be left out. There will be a one-time prize of \$49,000 awarded to an adult and also to a young person who rolled up their sleeves before the contest started.

Kati Capozzi, the state chamber's president, in a statement urged vaccination "to protect our economy and give Alaska a shot at recovery."

Funding for the \$1 million campaign came from federal funding funneled through the state health department.

Entries for the first \$49,000 weekly drawing in the 49th state are due by this Saturday, and the winners will be an-

nounced five days later.

People trying to win the money must provide basic information to a secure website. The winners will be drawn randomly from age pools of people 18 and above people between ages 12-17.

The adults will win cash, and the younger winners will receive their funding through an educational savings plan, where the money will be invested for their education. Their parents or guardians will receive \$10,000 in cash if they are vaccinated.

Alaska is seeing a surge in COVID-19 cases, with about 18,000 in the past two months and more than 800 in just one day last week—the second-highest daily count of the 18-month pandemic.

About 55% of Alaska residents 12 or older are fully vaccinated, according to the state health department. About 61% of eligible Alaskans had received at least their first vaccination dose as of Monday.

State rotates in staff to help during hunting season

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

The Department of Fish and Game decided that money appropriated to partially restore a commercial fisheries job in Wrangell would be better spent this year to provide in-town assistance for moose and elk hunters who need to register their harvest.

Legislators had added \$66,000 to this year's budget, intended to go toward bringing back a commercial fisheries management position to Wrangell which lost the job to a budget veto by Gov. Mike Dunleavy more than a year ago.

But the \$66,000 would not cover the full salary for a year-round staffer, plus an office. Besides, the money was not available until after the new fiscal year started on July 1, which was too late to put to use for this summer's fisheries.

Instead, the department decided it could better spend the one-year appropriation to rotate in a wildlife division staffer to provide services in Wrangell in September and October. "We can move dollars between divisions where the need is greater," Rick Green, a special assistant to

the commissioner, said last Friday.

"As to a full-time position, we will be reassessing services needed, plus staff and infrastructure required to fulfill them, this coming spring as we develop our budget" for next year, Green added.

The wildlife staffer will issue permits and answer questions, in addition to sealing bear hides, checking in moose and elk takes, and accepting hunt reports.

Hunters are required to bring in the antlers and a portion of the lower jaw from moose, said Tom Schumacher, regional wildlife supervisor for the Department of Fish and Game in Juneau.

The antlers help determine if it was a legal take, Schumacher said, and biologists pull a tooth to help determine age.

Staff started to rotate in at the end of August, and will continue coming here from Juneau or Petersburg during the hunting season. They will work out of the U.S. Forest Service offices on Bennett Street.

"Given this was kind of a last-minute thing for us," Schumacher said, the department welcomed the Forest Service offer of free space.

Last year, when there was no Fish and Game staffer in Wrangell during the hunting season, the Forest Service and state wildlife trooper helped out by accepting the moose parts from hunters and sending photographs to the wildlife division, Schumacher said.

In addition to the popular moose hunts around Wrangell, there has been an elk hunt on Zarembo Island since 1997, after the herd built up enough in size to allow for hunts after they were transplanted there in 1987 from Oregon.

The elk hunt is small, fewer than 10 are taken each year, Schumacher said.

Because of COVID-19 restrictions, the Forest Service offices are closed to the public. Call the Fish and Game office at (907) 660-7108 and a staffer can meet you at the front door.

Rep. Dan Ortiz worked to add the funding for Wrangell's Fish and Game office to this year's budget. He plans to talk with the department to push for his original intent of using the money to reopen the office for six months, covering the summer fishing and fall hunting seasons.

Wrangell swim team competes in first meet of season

By MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

The Wrangell High School swim team traveled to Ketchikan this past weekend to compete in its first in-person meet in a year, as COVID-19 restrictions had relegated the team to virtual swim meets.

In the two-day Ketchikan Invitational Swim Meet, the seven athletes from Wrangell swam against students from Juneau-Douglas and Thunder Mountain high schools in Juneau, Petersburg, Craig and Ketchikan.

Every Wrangell athlete turned in a personal best, and a couple had multiple bests along with first-place finishes.

Renee Roberts placed first in two women's 50-yard freestyle events and first in women's 100-yard freestyle. Nikolai Siekawitch placed first in the men's 100-yard butterfly and first in the men's 50-yard freestyle. Alisha Armstrong and Siekawitch each had three personal bests. Ashleigh Loomis swam under 30 seconds in the 50-yard freestyle event, which is a goal set for all team members.

Coach Jamie Roberts said she was expecting that team members would drop their times, as they were "more than excited to finally have someone in the lane" next to them.

"After such a long time swimming against the clock, it's refreshing to swim against a person," Siekawitch said.

For the coming year, Roberts is focusing on keeping the team

healthy, completing the season, and sending a few of the swimmers to state finals.

Team results:

Alisha Armstrong - 50-yard freestyle, 10th (31.39); 100-yard freestyle, 10th (1:09.88); 50-yard freestyle, 11th (31.10); 100-yard breaststroke, fourth (1:39.89).

Jimmy Baggen - 50-yard freestyle, sixth (24.75); 100-yard freestyle, eighth (56.35); 200-yard individual medley, fifth (2:29.90);

100-yard freestyle, sixth (56.62)
Ashleigh Loomis - 50-yard freestyle, sixth (29.75); 100-yard freestyle, ninth (1:05.57); 50-yard freestyle, 10th (30.13); 100-yard freestyle, ninth (1:07.60).

Tyson Messmer - 50-yard freestyle, eighth (25.63); 100-yard freestyle, 10th (58.16); 50-yard freestyle, ninth (25.92); 100-yard freestyle, 10th (58.68).

Jack Roberts - 50-yard freestyle, third (23.53); 100-yard

freestyle, third (52.06); 50-yard freestyle, fifth (23.66); 100-yard breaststroke, fourth (1:06.83).

Renée Roberts - 50-yard freestyle, first (25.73); 100-yard backstroke, second (1:05.64); 50-yard freestyle, first (25.38); 100-yard freestyle, first (56.53).

Nikolai Siekawitch - 100-yard butterfly, first (55.84); 100-yard backstroke, third (1:03.69); 50-yard freestyle, first (22.59); 100-yard backstroke, second

(1:03.75).

Men's relay team (Baggen, Messmer, Jack Roberts, Siekawitch) - 200-yard medley, fourth on Friday (1:50.33), third on Saturday (1:52.01); 200-yard freestyle, third on Friday (1:38.11), second on Saturday (1:38.52).

There are not enough girls to form a Wrangell women's relay team. The team travels to Petersburg for its next meet Sept. 17-18.

WILMA ELIZABETH STOKES

Wilma, 92, passed away peacefully on August 28, 2021, surrounded by her family.

Wilma was born to David and Rebecca Churchill on June 25, 1928, in Craig, Alaska, Prince of Whales Island. She was the eldest of five children. Wilma enjoyed village life during a time when traditions of both tribal and small Alaska towns honored their elders and graciously respected individual rights. Wilma was an advocate for Alaska Native civil rights. She was of the Haida Nation, Raven Moiety, Yak-Laa-Naas Clan and Double Fin Killer Whale House. Wilma was a member of the Alaska Native Sisterhood and served God and country by being an active member of the American Legion Auxiliary. She served in prominent positions while serving in both organizations.

Raised as a Christian, her life was always guided by Christian principles giving her the strength to withstand the challenges she faced throughout her life. A pillar of strength to her family during the death of her sons David and Rick. She set an example dealing with this enormous grief with strength and dignity. Her challenges included raising her large family. She often said, "I am going to live to be one hundred years old to get back at you girls!" She almost made it! Wilma lived an eventful and blessed life until God chose to bring her home at 92.

She attended Wrangell Institute, one of two boarding schools established by the federal government for Alaska Native students. Craig did not have a high school and Wilma attended high school in Wrangell. It was at a Wrangell Institute Freshman Frolic dance where she met her future husband. Dick Stokes had just joined the Navy and was scheduled to ship out. The school made an exception and allowed enlisted service members to attend the dance and Wrangell high school graduates were invited to the dance. "Go Wolves!" The minute Dick laid eyes on Wilma, he thought "that's the girl for me!" This is an actual quote. A Christmas card later, mailed from New York by Dick to Wilma, sealed the deal and the couple were married upon Dick's honorable discharge. She stood by her husband's side and supported him throughout his life.

Several years after her high school graduation, Wilma was hired by Wrangell Institute and worked as a dorm supervisor until its closing. She continued her career in education by working as a G.E.D. tutor until her retirement. A person that never chose to be idle,



Wilma Elizabeth Stokes

she worked as a supervisor at Wrangell Seafoods during the summer months.

Wilma left scattered notes often written on pieces of paper found in her Bible and personal journals reflecting her innermost, heartfelt thoughts. A most poignant message she left will be shared later on in the service.

One of Wilma's most humorous and memorable comments when she was frustrated with her children, working a full-time job and running a household with eight children was "balls on a heifer!" Wilma was taken back when one of her daughter's clarified the actual meaning of her frustration expletive. When she realized its actual meaning, her face turned beet red! There was absolutely no cussing in her well-run household. She held to a tradition when well brought up young ladies practiced walking shoulders back and standing up straight. Wilma had her daughters practice walking balancing books on their heads and had them cross their legs at the ankles, not their knees.

She and Dick were very active in the community of Wrangell. They were both civic leaders for many years and made an excellent team publicly and personally. Wilma viewed life honestly and most definitely, not through rose tinted glasses. Wilma faced life head on and was a pillar to her family. She faced hardships with honesty and gained her strength from her faith in God and belief in Jesus Christ as her Lord and savior. She and her best friend Ruby Taylor never wavered in their commitment to help the church grow.

She served on the board of the local Assembly of God Church as a member of the church when it was designated a mission under Brother Gunn. She was the chair and president of various com-

munity, regional, state boards and committees. Her last civic, volunteer duty was being elected to Wrangell City Council. She continued to serve even when her health was failing. She was determined to be an advocate for her community and most importantly an example to her children and grandchildren through her actions not words.

She was an excellent mother and neighborhood watch dog — known for her acute sense of hearing, and most famously by family and neighborhood kids for her unusually sensitive sense of smell. When Wrangell had dirt sidewalks and kids played Red Rover, Wilma could literally sniff out mischief! Word of neighborhood naughtiness committed by kids and reported to respective parents traveled faster than the fastest thumb texting. To this day, Wilma's efficiency in disseminating transgressions by the Church Street gang of kids remains a mystery.

She was also an avid hunter and fisherman who loved spending time outdoors. Her annual moose hunting trips to Shakes Cabin on the Stikine River were cherished. She would wake up very early, make herself a pot of coffee, pour a cup and sit on the river bank watching the sunrise. She most assuredly prayed, giving thanks for her life and family as well as for a successful hunt!

Wilma lived as she sincerely believed. She was a strict and loving mother who cherished family and community. In her own words taken from an article published in the Wrangell Sentinel: "I like working with people. I couldn't sit behind a desk. ... I wouldn't be comfortable. It's rewarding to work with people, especially when you have some successes."

Wilma was an elegant, complex, disciplined and committed mother, friend and community member. Most importantly she was beautiful on the inside as well as on the outside.

To her family, friends, and community, I am sure she would say, I hope to see you again in paradise. Brush your teeth, stand up straight, ladies cross your legs at the ankles not your knees, have faith in God and believe in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Survivors include daughters Becky (Gary) Koenig, Loretta Crockett, Donna McKay, Wilma Stokes-Leslie, Heidi (Mark) Armstrong; 21 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband Dick, and sons Rick and David.

Cleanup costs for sunken boat reach \$3 million

JUNEAU (AP) — Costs to contain pollution from a ship that sank near Kodiak Island more than 30 years ago have reached about \$3 million in the weeks since authorities were notified of an oily sheen from the wreckage, according to the U.S. Coast Guard.

The state's Spill Prevention and Response Division has been coordinating divers and boom deployment, and the state Department of Environmental Conservation last week reported about 9,730 gallons of oily water had been recovered.

The wreckage is in Womens Bay, which the department said provides critical habitat for a number of species.

The department said there had been no reports of oiled wildlife or damage to the shoreline, as of Sept. 3.

A passerby noticed an oily sheen on the water's surface Aug. 3. Divers traced the leaks from the sunken 138-foot Saint Patrick to pinholes in the hull, where the heads of rivets had corroded away over the decades, according to state officials.

"We're making really good progress on removing fuels and this oily water from the vessel so that we can make sure that it doesn't continue sheening," said Jade Gamble, who has been leading the on-scene response and is with the Department of Environmental Conservation.

Continued on page 9

River advocates want pause to new mining projects in B.C.

By ABBEY COLLINS

Southeast Alaskans and officials in British Columbia say they're getting closer to meeting on transboundary mining issues. Until that happens, advocates on the Alaska side of the border want to see a pause in new projects upstream in Canada.

"I've always been an optimistic person," said Frederick Olsen Jr., executive director of the Southeast Alaska Indigenous Transboundary Commission. "In this issue you really have to be. We have some good allies that we've met across the border."

There are three rivers at the forefront of concerns for the

transboundary group. The Stikine, Taku and Unuk flow from British Columbia into Southeast Alaska, and there have long been concerns over mining activities in B.C. affecting these critical Alaska watersheds.

The Red Chris Mine began operating in the headwaters of the Stikine River in 2015, raising new alarms for advocates in Southeast. The open-pit copper and gold mine is about 60 miles east of the Stikine, near the community of Iskut, about equidistant from Wrangell and the Yukon Territory border.

Earlier this year, Olsen said, the commission reached out to the British Columbia Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation, asking for more engagement on mining issues.

"We're looking at that as the beginning of government-to-government meetings," Olsen said.

In an email to the Wrangell Sentinel in August, the B.C. Energy Ministry confirmed staff will take part in virtual talks with SEITC, but they haven't happened yet. Meetings will include the B.C. Ministries of Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation, as well as the provincial Environmental Assessment Office.

The state will not be involved in those conversations, said Kyle Moselle, executive director of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources Office of Project Management and Permitting. He added, however, "It's positive that Alaska tribes are reaching out to the province of B.C. and the province of B.C. is responding."

The state's top priority in regard to transboundary mining, Moselle said, is reclamation of the Tulsequah Chief Mine on the Canadian side of the Taku River watershed. The mine closed half-a-century ago, but acid rock



PHOTO COURTESY GARTH LENZ

Water quality advocates worry that an accident at the tailings dam at the Red Chris Mine east of the Stikine River in British Columbia could threaten the watershed, jeopardizing critical salmon habitat. This photo is from 2017.

drainage continues to leak into the water, according to DNR's website. The province is monitoring water quality as it works toward a cleanup plan.

While Olsen believes SEITC is close to meeting with ministry representatives, the process of getting to that point is taking time. He said leaders in B.C. are conducting internal reviews before talks can begin. In the meantime, earlier this year, the commission told B.C. officials it wants to see a pause on new permits, amendments to existing permits, and approval of new mining projects.

The commission in August, along with the Alaska nonprofit Salmon Beyond Borders, sent a resolution to community members, municipalities and tribes in Southeast that reiterates these demands. It calls for a ban on tailings dams, as well as a pause on new mining activity until the U.S.-Canada Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 and the U.N. Dec-

laration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are upheld.

The organizations are asking local communities to take action of their own.

"While I'm hopeful that B.C. will follow through on their commitments toward meeting with downstream tribes, we have yet to see that happen," said Salmon Beyond Borders director Jill Weitz.

"We have to require better standards, better recourse and bonding requirements for these companies going forward," said Weitz, pointing to the history of slow progress of Tulsequah mine cleanup.

Wrangell Borough Manager Lisa Von Barga said the resolution will be on the borough assembly agenda for its Sept. 14 meeting.

Olsen said SEITC is also waiting to hear from Canada regarding a human rights petition filed last year. The petition, filed by environmental law firm Earth-

justice on behalf of SEITC in June 2020 with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, contends that "Canada has violated petitioners' human rights by failing to prevent foreseeable harms from six hard-rock mines ... operating or being considered for approval in British Columbia, Canada, in watersheds that cross the Canada-United States border into petitioners' traditional waters."

"We're talking about an international problem. It needs international solutions," said Olsen. "We're trying to use all the tools in our toolshed to protect our transboundary waters ... our sacred waters."

In April of this year, the human rights commission told SEITC it forwarded relevant parts of the petition to the Canadian government. The notice said Canadian officials had four months to respond.

"If you do the math, that's right about now," Olsen said.

Text-to-911 service comes to Wrangell and Petersburg

By SENTINEL STAFF

It didn't cost much, but adding text-to-911 service could be a big help in certain situations, said Wrangell Police Chief Tom Radke.

The new text service could be particularly useful for boaters in trouble who may not have a strong enough cell signal for voice but just enough to send a text, he said. Same thing for people in remote areas onshore in an emergency.

The software and equipment cost Wrangell about \$4,000, Radke said last Friday. The service started up Sept. 1, after two or three weeks of testing.

Wrangell and Petersburg are the first boroughs in Alaska to offer text-to-911 service, according to an announcement by the telecommunications contractor that set up the system, Third Signal, out of Montana.

The company had been doing some work for Wrangell, which made it easier — and faster — to establish the text system, Radke said. "We were in the right place at the right time" to be the first in the state.

Currently, the text option is only available to AT&T and GCI customers. "Roaming cellphones will not be able to send text-to-911 messages, and texting parties on roaming phones will receive the 'bounce back' message," Third Signal chief executive officer Ryan Olson said in a prepared statement.

Wireless callers should always remember, "Call 911 if you can. Text 911 if you can't," Olson said, adding that texting also could be helpful for people in situations when talking on a phone might put them in danger, and for hearing- and speech-impaired individuals.

"Text abbreviations, emojis or slang should never be used. The intent of the dialogue must be as clear as possible," Olson said. "Texts sent to 911 have the same 160-character limit as other text messages."

Alaska Airlines says new workers must be vaccinated

By SENTINEL STAFF AND THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Alaska Airlines, and its subsidiary Horizon Air, have joined the list of U.S. airlines taking steps to boost the COVID-19 vaccination rate among employees.

Alaska announced last week that all new employees must be vaccinated against COVID-19 before being hired. The new rule took effect immediately.

Unvaccinated employees already on the payroll will need to participate in a "vaccine education program," the airline said. And unvaccinated employees will no longer be eligible for special COVID-19 pay if they test positive or need to take time off work after exposure to an infected individual.

The company said last week about 75% of staff at Alaska Airlines and Horizon who have shared their status are vaccinated.

"We believe having as many people as possible vaccinated is the best path for protection against COVID-19, and we will continue to strongly encourage our employees to be vaccinated," the company statement read.

As part of that encouragement, the company will give a \$200 bonus to employees who show proof of vaccination. Alaska and Horizon have about 20,000 employees.

Delta Air Lines last month said it will charge employees on the company health plan \$200 a month if they fail to get vaccinated, a policy the airline's top executive said is necessary because the average hospital stay for the virus costs the airline

\$50,000.

CEO Ed Bastian said none of the employees who were hospitalized for the virus last month were fully vaccinated.

The airline also said it will stop extending pay protection to unvaccinated workers with COVID-19 as of Sept. 30, and will require unvaccinated workers to be tested weekly beginning Sept. 12, although Delta will cover the cost. They will have to wear masks in all indoor company settings.

Delta stopped short of matching United Airlines, which will require employees to be vaccinated starting Sept. 27 or face termination.

"This surcharge will be necessary to address the financial risk the decision to not vaccinate is creating for our company," Bastian said in a memo to employees.

The surcharge will only apply to employees who don't get vaccinated and won't be levied for spouses or dependents, a Delta spokeswoman said.

Delta is self-insured and sets the premiums for its plans.

"I know some of you may be taking a wait-and-see approach or waiting for full (Food and Drug Administration) approval," Bastian told employees. "With this week's announcement that the FDA has granted full approval for the Pfizer vaccine, the time for you to get vaccinated is now."

United and Delta already require new hires to be vaccinated. Two smaller carriers, Hawaiian and Frontier, have said they will require either vaccination or regular testing for current employees.

Cleanup costs

Continued from page 8

"And we intend to get this vessel as clean as possible so that we don't have to come back."

It's not clear how the Saint Patrick sank. Officials know it went down some time in 1989 after being moored nearby for several years.

In 1981, nine people died after abandoning the Saint Patrick. Though the ship rolled in the rough seas at the time, it never foundered. It had been working as a scallop fishing boat.

The U.S. Coast Guard is using federal cleanup funds in efforts to contain any pollution from the ship.

Efforts to track down those who could be held liable to help with the costs have been fruitless, Gamble said, with many related businesses having closed since the 1980s.

"There's not been a responsible party identified as of yet," she said.

Alaska Fish Factor By LAINE WELCH Fisheries columnist

Entries due Oct. 4 in statewide seafood competition

The Alaska Symphony of Seafood competition is back and the call is out for entries. The contest has showcased new products since 1994 but was canceled last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It encourages value-added seafood production and promotes high-quality Alaska products that are coming into the marketplace. And we help promote those across the coun-

try and the world. There isn't anything else like this for Alaska seafood," said Julie Decker, executive director of the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation which hosts the event.

A panel will judge the market-ready products in Seattle on Nov. 17 in several categories, including a few new ones.

"This year we'll have our

traditional categories which are retail, food service, and Beyond the Plate, which is basically non-edible products made with byproducts or fish wastes, or things of that nature. The new categories are salmon and whitefish. You can also enter in more than one category if it fits the definitions," Decker explained, adding that a Bristol Bay Choice for a sockeye salmon entry also has been added to the contest.

First place winners and the Seattle's People Choice will be announced at an open house to kick off Pacific Marine Expo set for Nov. 18-20.

The grand prize and second and third place winners will be kept under wraps until a February bash in Juneau where another People's Choice award will be announced.

All top winners get booth space and photo shoots at

Seafood Expo North America in Boston in March, where their products will compete nationally.

Deadline to enter products is Oct. 4. Apply and learn more at afdf.org/.

**Governor names
Fish Board nominee**
It took freedom of informa-

tion requests, weeks of queries to administrators and more than three months past a legal deadline for Gov. Mike Dunleavy to finally release his choice for a Board of Fisheries seat.

Dunleavy announced Sept. 3 his appointment of Indy Walton, of Soldotna, to fill the va-

Continued on page 11

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC NOTICE

For the upcoming City and Borough of Wrangell Regular Election of October 5, 2021, the following ordinance applies:

2.16.030 Write-in Candidates and Write-in Votes. Individuals who fail to file a declaration of candidacy but wish to run for office as a write-in candidate must file with the borough clerk a letter of intent no later than 5 p.m. on the Friday preceding the election (October 1, 2021) in which the candidate plans to participate.

Write-in votes cast for individuals who do not file a letter of intent will not be counted.

In order to vote for a write-in candidate, the voter must, in space provided, write in the candidate's name as the candidate's name appears on the letter of intent filed with the borough clerk. In addition, the voter must mark the oval opposite the candidate's name. Stickers shall not be used.

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

Publish Sept 9, 16, 23 and 30, 2021

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL CITY-OWNED PROPERTY FOR SALE

In conformance with WMC 16.12 and approved by Resolution No. 08-21-1606, the Borough is offering for sale the City-Owned Property, listed below, on the Public Surplus Website: <https://www.publicsurplus.com/sms/wrangell.ak/list/current?orgid=933515>

Property Descriptions:

- Lot 1A, Etolin-Spruce Subdivision, Plat 2020-8
- Lot 1B, Etolin-Spruce Subdivision, Plat 2020-8
- Lot 1C, Etolin-Spruce Subdivision, Plat 2020-8

The property shall be available for bidding on the Public Surplus Site for not less than 30 days, specifically from September 1, 2021, through September 30, 2021, 3 p.m. ADT.

Bidders' registration and fee required in advance of the online auction on the Public Surplus Website.

Visit the Borough website at:

<https://www.wrangell.com/community/public-surplus> for the terms and conditions and specifics of the auction/sale of the property.

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

Publish Sept. 9, 16 and 23, 2021

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL INVITATION TO BID Skeet Range Site Improvements

Notice is hereby given that the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, will receive sealed bids for the construction of the Skeet Range Site Improvements project. Work consists of all activities necessary to clear the existing site and provide a base course finish surface for the skeet range and parking area. The owner's estimate for all work is approximately \$50,000.

Sealed bids will be received by the City and Borough of Wrangell, PO Box 531, Wrangell, Alaska 99929, or located at the Borough Clerk's Office, 205 Brueger Street, Wrangell, Alaska 99929, until 2 p.m. prevailing time on September 17, 2021, and publicly opened and read at that time. The contract documents are available in electronic format and can be downloaded from the City and Borough of Wrangell website (www.wrangell.com) under the Bids and RFPs section.

The owner reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in a bid, or to make award as it best serves the interests of the owner.

Lisa Von Barga, Borough Manager
City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, Owner

Publish Sept. 2 and Sept. 9, 2021

CLASSIFIED/ LEGALS

HELP WANTED

Wrangell Head Start is hiring for a classroom cook. For more information call 874-2455.

FOR SALE

Remote property, Thoms Place subdivision, South Wrangell Island. 1.88 acres, waterfront. Call 907-321-3240.

FOR SALE

17-1/2 foot Lund, 115h Mercury outboard and easy-loader trailer. \$3,500. Call 907-518-1417

FREE

Recycled newspapers. Stop by the Sentinel to pick some up.

FREE ADS

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

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC NOTICE

ABSENTEE VOTING for the Regular Borough Election (to be held October 5, 2021) begins on Monday, September 20, 2021, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., (Monday through Friday) at City Hall.

Qualified Voters may vote an Absentee Ballot until Monday, October 4, 2021, at 4 p.m. for the Regular Borough Election.

For those voters who cannot vote absentee in person, you may submit an application to have your ballot mailed or faxed to you. Please stop by the Borough Clerk's Office to apply.

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

Publish Sept 9, 16, 23 and 30, 2021

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the Matter of the Estate of Lucille Merrill. You are notified that the court has appointed a personal representative of the estate of Lucille Merrill, born September 10, 1935, died July 21, 2021. All persons having claims against the deceased are required to present their claims within four months after the date of the first publication of this notice or the claims will be forever barred.

Case No. 1WR-21-14PR
Brenda Schwartz-Yeager
PO Box 1996
Wrangell, AK 99929
907-470-4000
brenda@marineartist.com

Publish Sept. 2, 9 and 16, 2021

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC NOTICE

There will be a Public Hearing before the Regular Assembly meeting on Tuesday, September 14, 2021, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. on the following item: Water Treatment Ozone Discussion.

The Regular Assembly meeting will begin at 7 p.m.

During the Regular Borough Assembly meeting on Tuesday, September 14, 2021, starting at 7 p.m., there will be a public hearing on the following item(s):

Ordinance No. 1009, an ordinance of the Assembly of the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, amending the zoning map to effect a change to Lot 12-3, Zimovia view subdivision (Plat No. 86-2) from light industrial to single-family residential.

Resolution no. 09-21-1607 of the Assembly of the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, establishing the fee schedule for the Wrangell Municipal Light and Power Department.

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

Publish Sept 9, 2021

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that on the 5th day of October 2021, in the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, a Regular Local Election will be held for the purpose of voting on the following Borough Official positions.

- Borough Assembly: Two seats, for 3-year terms
- Borough Assembly: One seat, for 1-year unexpired term until October 2022
- School Board: Two seats, for 3-year terms
- School Board: One seat, for 1-year unexpired term until October 2022
- Port Commission: Two seats, for 3-year terms
- Port Commission: One seat, for 1-year unexpired term until October 2022

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

Publish Sept. 9, 16, 23 and 30, 2021

Hubbard could be in shipyard by November to add crew quarters

By SAM STOCKBRIDGE
Ketchikan Daily News

Design plans have been finalized to add crew quarters to the state ferry Hubbard, which hasn't been in service since it was built a few years ago because its intended routes would go beyond limits for employee working hours.

The Alaska Marine Highway System is getting ready to seek bids for the project.

"We're hoping to be in a shipyard somewhere ... by the

first of November. That's our goal," John Falvey, general manager of the marine highway, said Aug. 23. "We don't know where. Could be here (the Ketchikan shipyard), could be the Lower 48."

The work is being funded with Federal Highway Administration money, Falvey said. He declined to say how much the installation might cost. The use of federal funds requires competitive bids for the work.

"We've got an engineer's estimate in mind, but I'm not going to quote that because folks will be bidding on it," he said.

Past news reports have put the estimate at about \$15 million. The state paid about \$60 million when it built the ferry a few years ago, relying entirely on state funds so that it could avoid the federal bid requirement and give the work to the Vigor shipyard in Ketchikan.

When the state started designing the Hubbard, along with its sister ship the Tazlina more than a decade ago, the pair were envisioned as day boats making runs between Juneau, Haines and Skagway. Consequently, neither vessel was built with crew quarters.

But at the start of 2019, the state revised the planned service routes to have the Tazlina run between Juneau, Haines and Skagway, and for the Hubbard to replace the older

Aurora in Prince William Sound.

The Tazlina conducted runs in the Lynn Canal that summer and in 2020, but the Hubbard has not seen service since it was completed in 2019. The ferries are each 280-foot long with room for 300 passengers and about 50 vehicles.

But without crew quarters, neither boat can efficiently operate in Lynn Canal or Prince William Sound. U.S. Coast

Continued on page 12

Former Alaska state ferries arrive in Spain

By KETCHIKAN DAILY NEWS

The two unused Alaska fast ferries — which the state sold earlier this year as surplus — have been delivered to the Spanish Island of Ibiza, according to the Diario de Ibiza news website.

Diario de Ibiza on Aug. 30 posted several photographs of the former ferries Chenega and Fairweather aboard a heavy-lift ship that left Ketchikan on July 4 and made its way to and through the Panama Canal before crossing the Atlantic Ocean and into the Mediterranean Sea.

"The two ships arrived this morning on the island, specifically to the Calo des Moro area, in Sant Antoni, under the watchful eye of many banistas (beachgoers) who were impressed by the size of the ship," wrote Leire Rodregu in Diario de Ibiza.

In March, the state sold the two Alaska Marine Highway System ferries for a total of \$5.17 million to an Ibiza-based firm that operates a seven-vessel ferry service under the brand name Trasmapi.

The China-owned, Liberian-flagged heavy-lift transport ship Red Zed I arrived in Ketchikan, where it submerged so that the fast ferries could climb aboard for the ride to Spain.

The 235-foot, diesel-powered and jet-drive catamarans were built in the mid-2000s at the Derektor Shipyards in Bridgeport, Connecticut. The combined cost was \$68 million.

The sale proceeds were transferred into the state's vessel construction fund, an account used for Alaska Marine Highway maintenance and construction.

The Fairweather and Chenega had been tied up at Ward Cove in Ketchikan the past few years, at an estimated total cost of \$1.1 million through this fiscal year for shore power, security and moorage fees.

The ships, which traveled about twice as fast as the rest of the state ferry fleet, were popular with passengers. But they struggled to perform in rough seas and burned a lot more fuel.

The ships, each powered by four diesel engines, burned through about 600 hours of fuel an hour, according to the Alaska Marine Highway System website. That's more than double the consumption rate of the Matanuska, which can carry more than twice as many passengers and vehicles as the smaller ferries.

Fish Factor

Continued from page 10

cant seat on the seven-member board that directs management of subsistence, personal use, sport and commercial fisheries in state waters out to three miles. The vacancy came 115 days after the Alaska Legislature on May 11 rejected his choice of Abe Williams, a regional affairs director for the Pebble Mine.

Alaska law says the governor must submit a new name to the Legislature within 30 days for confirmation, but Dunleavy moves to his own legal drummer and 15 candidates remained under wraps from the public although all applied for the board seat in June.

In a statement, the governor said Walton has 37 years of commercial salmon fishing experience at both Kodiak and Bristol Bay. He is a partner at Last Cast Lodge in Igiugig and has worked as a financial adviser with Edward Jones Investments for 19 years.

Court records show that Walton was charged with two closed-waters fishing violations in 2005 and 2012 although the fines paid weren't immediately available, reported KSTK in Wrangell. Two Bristol Bay boats, Sniper and Turbo, are registered in his name.

Frances Leach, outgoing director of United Fishermen of Alaska, said in a statement that UFA "is excited" to work with Walton who is "a strong anti-Pebble Mine voice and is spoken of highly by his fellow Bristol Bay fishermen."

But Rep. Bryce Edgmon, of Dillingham, said Walton's appointment could be controversial when he's up for legislative confirmation next year due to his support for scrapping the law that limits Bristol Bay to 32-foot vessels.

"If that's the case, he's going to encounter a lot of resistance from year-round residents of the Bristol Bay region. We've fought long and hard to keep the 32-foot limit in place. Because otherwise, local fishermen, particularly our village fishermen, would be disenfranchised and wouldn't be able to compete," Edgmon told KSTK.

Walton's first board meeting will be its Oct. 20-21 work session in Anchorage as it prepares to address fishery issues at Prince William Sound and Southeast.

Ocean watchers want feedback

The Alaska Ocean Observing System is the real-time "eye on Alaska's coasts and oceans" and it wants feedback from mariners and communities.

The AOOS is one of 11 national federally funded systems that partners with other agencies and groups to fill data gaps on ocean observations to enhance decision-making.

"AOOS runs the largest collection of ocean and coastal data in the state," said Molly McCammon, AOOS senior adviser. "A lot of it is real time data and a lot is historical biological data, and then we also run a lot of models that are used primarily for forecasting for things like wind, waves, ocean circulation, precipitation, sea ice conditions, things of that nature."

The AOOS website contains numerous portals that provide a "one-stop shop" for specific information.

"You might be a recreational boater or a commercial fisherman who wants to go out that day, and you want to know what the sea state conditions are right now and what they might be," she added.

"You can download wind and wave conditions from weather stations or wave buoys. You might also want to know about local bathymetry or the charting from nav charts. You can stack those layers and see them all together rather than having to look at several sites. We try to collect all of these different data points and put them together into something that's easy to use."

Another portal provides Alaska updates on ocean acidification, algal blooms, warming blobs, water levels and much more.

A short survey is underway to get feedback on the value of the AOOS information.

"How often do you use these things and how much value do you put on them? We're trying to quantify that," McCammon said. "We really try to focus on stakeholder needs. We're not a research program, per se. Although we do fund a lot of research, it's more on how stakeholders use the marine environment. What information do they need? How do they want to see it?"

Find the survey at www.aoots.org.

Tlingit & Haida offers grants to small business owners

By SENTINEL STAFF

Small business owners of the Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska who have been economically hurt by the COVID-19 pandemic are eligible to apply for grants of up to \$5,000 each.

The grant program is funded under the tribal allocation of the American Rescue Plan, which Congress approved and the president signed into law this past spring.

"All impacted (Tlingit & Haida) tribal citizens who are U.S. citizens, own a small business and reside in the United States are eligible to apply, including those who previously received funding under the CARES Act Small Business Grant program," Tlingit & Haida said in a prepared state-

ment announcing the new program Sept. 1.

The application period is now open and will close Dec. 31.

"Funds must be ... used by the applicant only to pay for business recovery-related expenses such as utilities, internet, phone, payroll and inventory. Only those eligible expenses incurred after March 3, 2021, or reasonably expected to be incurred by Dec. 31, 2021, are eligible," the announcement read.

The program is not limited to storefront businesses. "Many of our citizens are self-employed like fishermen, artists and consultants," said President Richard Chalyee Éesh Peterson.

To apply for more information, go to the Tlingit & Haida website at www.ccthita.org.



Legislature

Continued from page 1

the state budget for next year.

The governor's revenue numbers are "pie-in-the-sky rosy," said Fairbanks Rep. Adam Wool, a member of the House Finance Committee. "They are putting up the nicest numbers."

Oil production forecasts are "overly optimistic," Wool said, noting that today's \$70-per-barrel oil is no guarantee of tomorrow's price, besides for the uncertainty of future North Slope production dependent on federal regulatory approval and private investment.

Senate Finance Committee member Natasha von Imhof said lawmakers need to work with realistic oil price and production numbers, not "overly optimistic or overly pessimistic" projections. The best place to get those realistic numbers is the Legislative Finance Agency with its team of fiscal analysts who work for the entire Legislature, not any one member or political party, she said.

In particular, the Anchorage senator said the recent court ruling against ConocoPhillips' proposed Willow oil field development in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska could delay those new barrels coming into production, further reducing state revenue forecasts.

The annual PFD already is delayed this fall as lawmakers and the governor have not agreed to an amount or funding source to cover the payments.

The House on Aug. 31 approved a dividend of around \$1,100 — about \$100 higher than last year — but it relies in part on a state savings account which legislative leadership believes is available but which the Dunleavy administration says is not available for spending.

The dispute comes down to different legal interpretations of a recent state court ruling on the availability of state reserve funds, focusing on which accounts are available with a simple majority vote of the House and Senate and which require a three-quarters majority vote.

Supporters of the governor's dividend plan, mostly Republicans, have withheld their votes on several budget issues in an attempt to win a larger PFD, while opponents of the governor's plan object to taking more money out of the Permanent Fund for a short-term boost to dividends.

The governor has said an \$1,100 PFD is not enough, but so far lacks enough votes in the Legislature to withdraw more money from the Permanent Fund to pay more.

As of Tuesday evening, the Senate had not taken up the House proposal. It is holding committee hearings this week on dividend legislation, tax bills, and the governor's proposals to put a larger PFD and a limit on state spending in the constitution.

Legislators face a Sept. 14 adjournment deadline for the 30-day special session. The delay in approving the dividend means Alaskans will not receive the payments the first week of October, as has been the practice since the program started in 1982.

If the Legislature does not approve a dividend appropriation by the deadline, the governor last week said another special session would be needed. Speaking on a conservative talk radio show, Dunleavy said, "We're getting ready for the inevitability this session is going to produce very little, and we're going to be going right back to it."

He also suggested the next session could be held outside of Juneau. "It certainly makes sense to try a different venue because we've had it in Juneau now for the past several months and it's not working."

While looking for answers to the dividend, a House committee has been working on a state sales tax bill, which would impose a 2% state tax on top of any local taxes. Under the legislation, the state would set the taxing rules and exemptions across Alaska, taking away a large measure of local control from the 100-plus municipalities that have their own sales taxes.

The sales tax bill, however, would need to get past the House Finance Committee, the full House and the Senate to even reach the governor's desk for signature into law.

Ferry crew quarters

Continued from page 11

Guard rules limit crew to 12-hour shifts, which forces the ships to either tie up for the night or for the state to add crew quarters and put a second shift on board the vessel.

"Many of our runs stretch beyond that 12-hour day," Falvey said. "The crew cabins are going to increase ... the vessel's ability to basically run to any of our ports."

Falvey said the marine highway hopes to have the quarters fully installed within eight to ten months. The timeline will vary depending on

which company wins the contract.

"Embedded within these bids are timelines that shipyards can deliver with what they see in the design," he said. "Different shipyards, some are smaller than others, or busier than others — depends upon the size of the yard, depends upon the workload that the yard has got."

There will be other hurdles to clear, Falvey said. The Hubbard has no crew, and lacks a certificate of inspection and certification from the American Bureau of Shipping. The

ferry system figures to resolve those issues by the time the ship is ready for service.

"The goal is, hopefully, between eight to 10 months, we're sailing it out of a shipyard somewhere with a full crew on it, fully certified."

Falvey said the ferry system has not decided whether the Hubbard will run in Prince William Sound or in Southeast. "That's still a ways away."

He's also unsure how the state will proceed with work on the Tazlina. "We're going to do one boat at a time."



GIVE AK A SHOT *win \$49K*

giveAKashot.com

Protect Our Economy and Give Alaska a Shot at Recovery

2 Winners each week!

Vaccinated parents of youth winners will receive a \$10K cash prize

\$49K

cash prize for Alaskans 18+

\$49K

ALASKA529 EDUCATION SAVINGS PLAN for Alaskans 12-17

ENTER TO WIN NOW THROUGH OCTOBER 30

18 drawings for more than \$950,000 in prizes!

HOW IT WORKS:

- There will be 18 drawing pools during the 8-week sweepstakes period.
 - Two per week for those newly vaccinated
 - Two total for those vaccinated prior to Sept. 2
- Entrants will be placed into the drawing pools according to their date of vaccination and age at time of entry.

You can enter for a chance to win if you:

- Are an Alaska resident
- Are age 12 or older
- Received a first dose of any COVID-19 vaccine at any time before or during the sweepstakes period
- Received your vaccination in Alaska
 - OR if a veteran, at any VA hospital or VA clinic

Other restrictions apply. See GiveAKaShot.com for more details

Drawing 1: Sept 2-11

Get your COVID-19 vaccine and enter to win by Saturday

Wed 1 st	Thu 2 nd	Fri 3 rd	Sat 4 th	Sun 5 th	Mon 6 th	Tue 7 th	Wed 8 th	Th 9 th	Fri 10 th	Sat 11 th	Sun 12 th
✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗

Drawing 1 Eligibility Expires at 11:59 pm Sept.11

Free language interpretation services available

Muaj kev pab txhais lus dawb
 무료 언어 통역 서비스 이용가능
 Предоставляются бесплатные услуги переводчика
 Servicios de interpretación de idiomas gratuitos disponibles
 May makukuhang libreng serbisyo sa pagsasalang wika.
 Akiilngut mumigcistet nalqigutestet piavngaut

GiveAKaShot.com

SCAN HERE



If you do not have access to the internet or require language or other assistance, call the State of Alaska COVID vaccine helpline for assistance. Callers must ask that they be entered into the Give AK a Shot Sweepstakes, provide the required entry information, and provide the required acknowledgements and consents.

Call the State of Alaska COVID vaccine helpline at 1-907-646-3322 or toll-free 1-833-4-VAXLINE (1-833-482-9546) Mon-Fri: 9 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. | Sat/Sun: 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.



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