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Wrangell, Alaska  
August 14, 2024

# WRANGELL SENTINEL

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## Third-generation fire chief follows family tradition of public service

BY LARRY PERSILY  
Sentinel writer

Fire Chief Jordan Bunes grew up in a volunteer fire department family.

"It's something I knew that I always wanted to do," he said of serving as chief. "I wanted to earn my way into that," taking every training class he could over the past 20 years.

He got his chance when his father, Tim Bunes, retired on June 5 after 35 years as chief. Jordan's grandfather, Gordon, was the first of the three Bunes generations to lead the Wrangell Volunteer Fire Department.

"My dad ingrained that (community service) in me at a young age," Tim said. "The fire department is one big family, helping people."

It was always in his mind to serve as chief. "My father loved it."

Jordan, 36, started as a junior firefighter in 2004, becoming a full-time volunteer in 2008. He lived a few years at the fire station at 5.5-Mile Zimovia Highway, where the department keeps two fire engines and a res-



PHOTO BY SAM PAUSMAN / WRANGELL SENTINEL

Retired chief Tim Bunes (left) and his son, Fire Chief Jordan Bunes, are the second and third generations in their family to serve as Wrangell's fire chief.

cue truck to provide faster response to calls out the road.

Tim, 68, also lived above fire trucks, though at a much younger age than Jordan. His family lived above the downtown fire hall in the mid-1960s.

"It was kind of cool. You were right in the heat of it," Tim said, referring to when the rooftop siren would go

off and the volunteers would respond from all around town to pull the trucks out of the hall.

The department now has one full-time employee, who is the training officer, plus the half-time chief and 28 volunteers, Tim said. The count is down a little from years past, when the volunteers numbered in the mid-

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## Experts look to community for better understanding of November landslide

BY SAM PAUSMAN  
Sentinel reporter

A team of experts has been conducting research in Wrangell this week, hoping to pinpoint the cause of last November's landslides. As a part of its visit, the group gave a well-attended presentation on Saturday evening at the Nolan Center to keep the community informed on their findings.

The team's research is funded by a National Science Foundation rapid response research grant, known as RAPID.

Led by Margaret Darrow, a professor in geological engineering at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the RAPID team has already scheduled a second visit to Wrangell in the late fall where they will share some preliminary findings. University of Oregon geomorphologist Josh Roering is also help-

ing to lead the project. Roering helped develop the Sitka landslide warning online dashboard in the aftermath of a deadly 2015 slide in that community.

Data collection for the Wrangell slide is not straightforward.

At the time of the Nov. 20 slide, the nearest weather data collection station was located over 11 miles away at the airport. Because of this, the RAPID team felt that to truly understand what caused the slide, they needed to walk the slide area. Darrow, Roering and the rest of the experts spent five days collecting data and surveying the landslide "scar."

In addition to the more scientific data collection, the RAPID team is heavily reliant on eyewitness accounts. During the presentation, Roering asked

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## Long-standing special borough funds pay to develop residential and industrial lands

BY LARRY PERSILY  
Sentinel writer

Separate from the borough general fund that pays for police, the local contribution for schools, the Nolan Center, recreation programs and other public services, the borough maintains three accounts dedicated to industrial and residential development.

The combined balance of the three accounts could total about \$2.3 million by the end of the fiscal year next June 30, assuming expenses and planned land sale revenues come in as expected.

All three funds date back to the 1990s and are focused on making borough property available for private development.

The funds use revenues from land sales to cover municipal expenses like putting in streets and utilities to allow for the sale of more lots.

One account is used to fund residential land development, such as the 20 lots that will be sold next year at the Alder Top Village (Keishangita'aan) subdivision at the site of the former Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding school near Shoemaker Bay.

A different account, the Mill Property Development Fund, is dedicated to the borough's efforts to bring in private investment for redevelopment of the former sawmill property just past 6-Mile.

The smallest of the three funds is set aside to pay for developing smaller industrial lots in town, such as the eight parcels just off Bennett Street on the way to the airport that the borough is planning to sell this fall.

The assembly in July approved a \$233,000 contract with Ketchikan Ready-Mix and Quarry to put in two new gravel-surface streets from Bennett Street into the industrial subdivision. The short streets, Fifth and Sixth, will provide access to the eight lots.

The borough will bring in overhead electrical lines for the lots but will not put in water and

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## Fast times at Wrangell High: All schools open on Aug. 22

BY SAM PAUSMAN  
Sentinel reporter

School is back — at least it will be in a week.

On Aug. 22, students will walk through the doors of Evergreen Elementary, Stikine Middle and Wrangell High, marking the start of the 2024-2025 school year.

Superintendent Bill Burr said this year's projected enrollment of 260 students is an estimate, nearly identical to last year's average daily tally of 259.5.

Though school might not feel all that different for students walking the halls, the upcoming school year will not be without some changes. In personnel, Jamie Wollman and Greg Clark will both embark on their first years as principals at the elementary and secondary schools, respectively.

Wollman came to Wrangell from the western Alaska coastal community of Hooper Bay, where she was principal of the charter school.

Clark was assistant principal at Lathrop High School in Fairbanks.

Burr said both are adjusting to their new jobs quickly.

"We're really excited," Burr said. "(Wollman and Clark) are on the ground, already prepping for the shining faces coming in on the first day of school."

In the classroom, the district will debut a new English-language arts curriculum, after the curriculum committee evaluated the district's previously standing program. In recent years, the district has reevaluated a different subject's curricular content to determine if each program requires any changes. Last year, for example, a new math curriculum was instituted.

The changes to the English curriculum come in the wake of the Alaska Reads Act, a 2022 state law that requires all students to show proficiency in reading by third grade.

Burr hopes the changes not only help Wrangell meet the state's proficiency requirements, but that it inspires Wrangell students to continue reading long after they graduate.

"We want to make sure students have a reading path for their entire education career," Burr said. "And we want students to be on a path for lifelong reading."

On the physical side of things, Burr is excited about a handful of capital improvement projects in the works including a new roof for the middle school, repairs for the high school elevator, and a possible paint job for the elementary school.

Burr will also spend time this year conducting an internal review of the district, looking to identify strengths and weaknesses of the district's offerings, policies and practices that might not necessarily show themselves in standardized test scores.



## Senior Center Menu

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

**Thursday, Aug. 15**

Clam chowder, honey orange salad, Pilot Bread

**Friday, Aug. 16**

Spaghetti, steamed zucchini, tossed salad, garlic roll

**Monday, Aug. 19**

No meal service on Mondays.

**Tuesday, Aug. 20**

Chinese fruited pork over rice, baked zucchini, honey orange salad

**Wednesday, Aug. 21**

BBQ chicken, mixed vegetables, potato salad, cornbread

Call the senior center at 907-874-2066 24 hours in advance to reserve a seat at lunch or to request delivery.

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

## Ferry Schedule

### Northbound

**Sunday, Aug. 18**

Kennicott, 7:45 p.m.

**Sunday, Aug. 25**

Kennicott, 4 p.m.

**Sunday, Sept. 1**

Kennicott, 7:45 p.m.

**Sunday, Sept. 8**

Kennicott, 7:45 p.m.

### Southbound

**Wednesday, Aug. 21**

Kennicott, 7:45 a.m.

**Wednesday, Aug. 28**

Kennicott, 2:15 a.m.

**Wednesday, Sept. 4**

Kennicott, 7:30 a.m.

**Wednesday, Sept. 11**

Kennicott, 7:30 a.m.

Listings are scheduled departure times. Call the terminal at 907-874-2021 for information or 907-874-3711 for recorded information.

## Tides

### High Tides

### Low Tides

	AM		PM		AM		PM	
	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft
Aug. 14	09:31	10.4	09:04	13.6	02:33	3.1	02:15	6.4
Aug. 15	10:45	11.2	10:13	14.5	03:53	2.3	03:39	6.3
Aug. 16	11:41	12.4	11:11	15.6	05:01	1.0	04:53	5.5
Aug. 17	....	...	12:27	13.7	05:53	-0.5	05:51	4.3
Aug. 18	00:03	16.8	01:07	15.0	06:37	-1.8	06:39	2.9
Aug. 19	00:50	17.8	01:45	16.1	07:17	-2.7	07:23	1.5
Aug. 20	01:36	18.5	02:22	17.1	07:55	-3.1	08:06	1.3

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

**Aug. 14, 1924**

Dr. David E. Buckingham, of Washington, D.C., special assistant biologist, who was sent to Alaska by the Bureau of Biological Survey to investigate the fur farming industry and report on the condition of the animals, arrived in Wrangell Tuesday evening. While in town, Dr. Buckingham met with a number of fox farmers who had been previously notified of his coming by the Wrangell Commercial Club. When asked the results of his investigations in Alaska, Dr. Buckingham did not hesitate to express his satisfaction at the general healthy condition of the animals on the various fur farms of Southeast Alaska. His opinion is that the outlook for the fur farming industry in this

region is exceedingly bright. He declared that too much emphasis could not be placed on the importance of cleanliness in pens and throughout the premises. He said many of the fox farmers are to be congratulated upon having their farms so well kept. He spoke particularly of the ideal conditions he found at Neil McDonald's fur farm near Wrangell, and declared that the general arrangement and unusual conveniences of this model fur farm surpassed anything that he had expected to find on his Alaska trip.

**Aug. 12, 1949**

The Southeast Alaska seining season moves into high gear at 6 a.m. Monday, and seiners from all over Southeast

are even now lining up in the Anan Creek area to get an early chance at one of the biggest runs in years. In the Wrangell area, there is a good showing of fish from Anan Creek to Santa Anna. An airplane survey as far as Union Bay reports a strong showing of fish. Fishermen this year will have a short season, as the closing all over Southeast is Sept. 3. However, reports indicate that it looks like a good season.

**Aug. 9, 1974**

The operators of a quarter-million-dollar log salvaging operation, thought to be the largest in Southeast, are holed up in Wrangell, building on to their small empire. "It's kind of a honeymoon arrangement for everyone," Lloyd Harding

smilingly said of the operation. He is on contract with Alaska Lumber and Pulp Co. as a log salvager. Working with Harding are his father Louis and his uncle Roland Larsen. They have been working within about a 25-mile radius of Wrangell, north as far as Portage Bay and south to Anan. Together the three men can salvage 20,000 feet of timber in three hours, Harding said. Their operation includes four tugboats and the big barge they call home. Weather and tides control much of the log salvaging operation, and there are only 10 or 15 days a month when the men can work.

**Aug. 5, 1999**

Passengers traveling between Petersburg and

Wrangell may one day be able to leave their island, shop and visit on the other, and return home the same afternoon without layovers, hotel costs and lengthy waits. During the regular city council meeting on Tuesday, Judy Bakeberg, Wrangell director on the Inter-Island Ferry Authority board, told the council that by the year 2005 there will be 38 trips between Wrangell and Petersburg scheduled per week. This would involve three mainline ships as well as 14 regional fast ferries. Referring to a meeting Bakeberg attended last week in Juneau with IFA and Alaska Department of Transportation staff, she told the council: "It was quite an amiable meeting. I was favorably impressed."



# ALASKA AIRLINES CLUB 49 COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

**BACK-TO-SCHOOL REGISTRATION** for grades K-12. Online registration is open. Check the school district website at [www.wpsd.us](http://www.wpsd.us). Classes begin Aug. 22.

**NOLAN CENTER THEATER** "Twisters" rated PG-13, at 6 p.m. Friday, 6 p.m. Saturday and 4 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 16-18. The disaster action adventure thriller runs 2 hours and 2 minutes; tickets are \$7 for adults, \$5 for children under age 12. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

**MUSKEG MEADOWS** Valley Electric nine-hole, best-ball golf tournament, Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 17-18. Tournament play starts at 10 a.m.; register by 9:30 a.m.

**SCHOOL BOARD MEETING** 6:30 p.m. Monday, Aug. 19, at Evergreen Elementary School Room 101. The agenda will be available online at the school district website four days before the meeting.

**BACK-TO-SCHOOL BACKPACKS** for non-tribal youth can be picked up 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Aug. 17, at the American Legion. Supported by the American Legion Auxiliary, Wrangell IGA and the community. Donations can be made at Wrangell IGA. For more information, call Marilyn at 907-470-0085.

**LEARN TO LINE DANCE** 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Aug. 27 at the community center multi-purpose room, with Issabella Crowley. For ages 18 years old and up. Entry fee is by donation.

**BASKETBALL SKILLS CLINIC** 5 to 8 p.m. Friday, Sept 6; 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 7; 9 a.m. to noon Sunday, Sept. 8. Coach Mark Cascio will teach shooting with confidence, effectiveness on ball defense, quick and clever transition, essential actions to score. At the high school gym. For eighth through 12th graders. Walk-in registration, \$50. Scholarships available. Call Coach Good 707-779-9505 or Coach Allen 907-305-0910 with any questions. Sponsored by the AAU Sports Team.

**ADULT PROM** 8 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 7, at Rayme's bar. A country hoedown fundraiser for Wrangell Burial Assistance. Must be 21 years and older.

**COMMUNITY POTLUCK** 6 p.m. Fridays through August at the sheltered site on Nemo Point Road. All are welcome.

**ROLL ON THE ROCK** roller skating 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Saturdays at the TouchPoint Ministries rink on Bennett Street. Children 9 and under must be accompanied by an adult. Skaters must complete a registration form. \$5 per person.

**SUICIDE INTERVENTION SKILLS TRAINING** 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Sept. 26-27. Learn the skills to help save a life. Must attend both days. Limited space available. Free, but registration is required. Email [khoy@searhc.org](mailto:khoy@searhc.org) to register. Sponsored by SEARHC.

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

**WRANGELL PARKS and RECREATION** is offering multiple activities to get your body moving. For more information on any of the activities visit [www.wrangellrec.com](http://www.wrangellrec.com) or call 907-874-2444.

- **OPEN GYM VOLLEYBALL** 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Mondays, 6 to 7 p.m. Wednesdays at the community center gym with Brian Herman. Wear sporty clothes and gym shoes. For ages 14 and up. Drop-in rates apply.
- **FUNCTIONAL FITNESS and TECHNIQUE** 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Tuesdays at the court in the pool building with Devyn Johnson. A guided workout. Learn how to use the gym equipment. For ages 18 years old and up. Daily entry fee, pass or punch card.
- **ZUMBA**, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Mondays and Fridays at the community center gym with Nene Wilson. For ages 16 years old and up. Drop-in fee \$5; \$3 senior discount; or use a facility punch card.

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FREIGHT FOR LESS



# Juneau residents dry out homes after Mendenhall River flooding

## THE JUNEAU EMPIRE

“Every room has water in it and mud,” Debora Gerrish said at her home on Emily Way in Juneau’s Mendenhall Valley, several hours after the Mendenhall River had receded from record flooding on Aug. 6. “Everything on the floor is destroyed. I’m trying to save my grandmother’s hope chest from 1913.”

A similar glacial outburst flood last year only filled the ditches on her street, though it did knock down several residences along the river. But this year’s flood saw the river crest more than a foot higher, resulting in an unexpected deluge of water into numerous homes on Emily Way and other neighborhood streets shortly after midnight.

Residents in more than 300 homes damaged by the flooding are trying to salvage and repair what they can, with the assistance of a multitude of government, nonprofit and private groups.

On Aug. 8, people who signed up at a volunteer center operated by the United Way of Southeast Alaska were on their way to the Gerrishes’ home. “We’re still trying to get stuff out of rooms that are soaking wet,” she said. “We’ve lost thousands of dollars worth of books.” On Aug. 8, she was still trying to dry out the hope chest.

She said she is familiar with the reason why her house flooded — the break of an ice dam at Suicide Basin, a process known as a jökulhlaup that’s occurred annually since 2011. However, the Mendenhall River’s peak level of 15.99 feet this year was notably higher

than last year’s then-record 14.97 feet, which far exceeded the previous record of 11.99 feet in 2016.

Jessica Nardi, another Emily Way resident, was pulling out her damaged belongings to her sunny lawn the afternoon after the flooding. She said her first floor was flooded and their cars stopped working. The extent of her damage to drywall and needed repairs is still being assessed.

“We’re very lucky though because we’re safe and we have family and friends who can help,” Nardi said.

Another Emily Way resident, Maggie Nolen, was asleep in her basement apartment when she said she heard the water gush under the door. She said in total there was three to four feet of water inside. At that point, her car was already trapped and she couldn’t evacuate.

She had time to grab her necessities and valuables and move upstairs to her landlord’s living quarters. In the morning, Nolen said her car started — although it spewed water from the exhaust pipe and its floorboards were “sopping wet.”

Her landlord, Abner Miller, said the basement is a total loss. The garage also flooded. He said he works for the city’s engineering department and he would like to see more preventative measures taken in the future. He said his long-term plan for repairing his residence will depend on how the city responds.

Volunteers were matched with residents in need or assigned to general cleanup work. Brenna Heintz and Molly Barnes helped run the volunteer center.



RICHARD ROSS VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

This image taken with a drone shows flood waters surrounding homes in Juneau’s Mendenhall Valley on Aug. 6.

They were displaced last year following the 2023 flood. They live in condominiums along the river. They said they didn’t lose any property, but lost access for a few months due to the foundation being washed away.

“I want to help people because I know exactly what this feels like,” Heintz said.

A total of 40 Alaska National Guard members were deployed as part of the emergency response efforts.

“On arrival they will focus on debris cleanup, flood recovery operations and distribution of supplies to the community in support of the local incident commander,” a National Guard statement said.

The deployment is part of a wider state response after a disaster declaration by Gov. Mike Dunleavy within hours of the river receding from its peak

level. State disaster relief for people affected by the flood is limited to \$21,250 per person/household for housing repair and an additional \$21,250 for personal property damages. Approval of federal disaster relief would raise those limits to \$42,500 for housing assistance and \$42,500 for other needs.

The next — and much bigger — question is what options might exist to prevent future disasters, especially since local climate and weather experts have stated large-scale glacial outburst floods are likely to be a more regular occurrence in Juneau due to climate change. The experts said Suicide Basin will literally disappear as a threat some years from now as the glacier continues to recede, but similar basins with ice dams are likely to emerge.

“We have already reached out to the (U.S. Army) Corps of Engineers (about) an engineering solution to this problem,” Alaska U.S. Sen. Dan Sullivan said after touring the area Aug. 8.

“We can’t have it that Juneau has this problem every summer,” he said. “That’s just not sustainable.”

Last year’s flood, also during a record river level at the time, damaged about 40 homes, including three that were partially or completely destroyed.

Climate change has caused Alaska’s glaciers to recede dramatically. Suicide Basin, once covered in ice, now fills with rain and meltwater each summer at a rate of roughly 1,900 gallons per second, said Jason Amundson, professor of geophysics at University of Alaska Southeast.

The basin has been a hazard for Juneau residents since 2011, but its scale is hard to fathom. It’s as long as four cruise ships sitting end to end, said Eran Hood, a professor of environmental science at the University of Alaska Southeast in Juneau. The basin is roughly a third of a mile wide, he said, and hundreds of feet deep.

There is bedrock on three sides — the fourth side is the Mendenhall Glacier itself.

Jason Amundson, professor of geophysics at University of Alaska Southeast, said modeling suggests that water bores a tunnel through the glacier each summer to find an outlet. Once it does, the basin rapidly drains, which can cause the Mendenhall River to rise dramatically. Each winter, the tunnel appears to re-seal, ready for the basin to fill up

again, Hood said. A time lapse camera shows how the ice-capped basin has filled with water since April. Steadily, ice and water rise hundreds of feet over months, before it drops dramatically — emptying the enormous body of water.

*The Anchorage Daily News contributed reporting for this story.*

## Fire chiefs

Continued from page 1

30s, he said. “That’s a nationwide trend.”

It’s important to bring in new residents as volunteers, which the department has done over the past several years, Jordan said. “We do have a fair amount of new blood. ... It’s a good way to immerse yourself in the community.”

Jordan, hired for the position by Borough Manager Mason Villarma, took over as chief the day after his dad retired.

The chief serves as the incident commander at fires and other call-outs and manages the department’s day-to-day operations, in coordination with the training officer, Tim said.

He most remembers his times on search and rescue missions when he was able to help save someone. “It’s a good feeling.” Jordan agrees: “I share that sentiment.”

Though he has retired as chief, Tim is staying with the department as deputy, and he and Jordan will continue to run their business, Bunes Electric.

“I just rolled past my 50 years” with the department, Tim said, noting it was time to step aside. A lot changed over that half-century, particularly better equipment such as ambulances, search and rescue boats and communications gear. “They’re all good changes.”

A fourth-generation chief is always possible. Jordan has three children, girls ages 13 and 10, and a 4-year-old boy. His oldest girl will be eligible to join the department as a junior firefighter at age 14 if she wants. The junior members can take training classes in CPR and first aid.

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## FROM THE PUBLISHER

# Permanent Fund troubles make for sad music

BY LARRY PERSILY  
Publisher

To modernize an old expression, Alaskans are fiddling while the Permanent Fund burns.

Not literally, of course. The Permanent Fund's stocks and bonds, real estate deeds, lease agreements and investment contracts are all safely stored. But the fiddling part, that's true.

And because it's a state election year, we can expect a lot of candidates to turn up the volume on their fiddles. No matter how off-key the music, no one ever loses an election by playing happy tunes about big Permanent Fund dividends.

No one wins an election talking about principal, realized and unrealized gains, spendable and nonspendable fund balances and the fund's earnings reserve.

Though all of that is important for the \$81 billion Permanent Fund. And it's monumentally important for Alaskans who depend on the fund's investment earnings as the largest single source of state general purpose revenue for schools, roads, troopers, public health and healthy annual dividends.

The math is simple. The Legislature cannot spend the fund's principal. That includes the fund's share of state oil royalty checks, special legislative appropriations over the years to build up the principal, and earnings on those tens of billions of dollars.

The Legislature can spend for the public's benefit the accumulated investment earnings not assigned to the principal.

The annual withdrawal from the earnings reserve is limited by law, to protect the fund from excessive drawdowns on political whims.

It all works well if the fund earns sufficiently higher investment returns than inflation. But inflation has been high and there is no guarantee that investments always will be higher, or high enough. That's the future that confronts

Alaskans today.

It is possible that the fund could run short of spendable money in the earnings reserve in the years ahead to cover its annual transfer to the state general fund. That's the transfer that helps pay for everything Alaskans enjoy, such as public services, no state income or sales tax, and the beloved Permanent Fund dividend.

It's math, not mysticism. The fund will still be rich, with an estimated \$85 billion two years from now, or almost \$91 billion four years from now. But projections show less of that wealth in the spendable earnings reserve and more in the untouchable principal column on the ledger.

Think of a cash flow problem in the billions. The state would be rich, but its checking account would be short.

"Certainly, this is the canary in the coal mine," Deven Mitchell, CEO of the Alaska Permanent Fund Corp., said last month.

The inability to cover the annual transfer to help fund the state budget could come in the late 2020s or maybe early 2030s, Mitchell said. "We have a pretty long runway before it fully breaks. It's just that, if your car starts making a funny noise, it's usually cheaper to get it fixed right then than wait until it blows up."

The fund has warned elected officials and the public of the car problem for years, but Alaskans keep fiddling, placing political gains over responsible public policy while too many candidates pledge allegiance to the dividend.

The Legislature and governor need to stop fighting over the amount of the dividend and place a constitutional amendment before voters to eliminate the line between spendable and nonspendable money in the fund. And include a constitutional limit on how much can be spent in any one year, to protect the savings account for the future.

As for the dividend, leave that out of the constitution. Solve the bigger problem first.

## EDITORIAL

# No excuse to missing borough or state elections

The state has long allowed early voting, making it easy on Alaskans to never miss marking a ballot in an election year. And now the borough is doing the same thing.

Good for borough officials and the assembly to approve the change in voting procedures, good for residents and a good move for representative government, which is more representative of the public when more people vote.

Rather than require voters to make time only on election day or go through a cumbersome absentee voting process to cast their ballot in advance, the assembly has changed municipal code to allow residents to stop in at City Hall at any time during the 15 days before an election and cast an early ballot.

It's similar to how the state has run elections for years, and it couldn't be more convenient. No hassle getting time off work on election day; no juggling lunch hour or dinnertime at home; no making a special trip downtown. Just remember to vote when you're already in town someday and be done with it.

The municipal election is Oct. 1, so early voting will start mid-September. The state primary election is Aug. 20, and early voting already is underway weekdays at City Hall, through Aug. 19. The state will go through the same routine for the Nov. 5 general election.

Early voters get the same ballot as anyone else, and the security requirements are the same as election day voting. Officials confirm you are a registered voter and they check the list to make sure no one votes twice — once early and again on election day. Early voting does not favor any candidates or issues over others, it just makes it easier for people to participate in elections.

Residents may say they don't like the choices on the ballot, but that's a separate issue. The point behind early voting is that people can't say it's impossible to find time to vote when they have more than two weeks to make time before election day. It's not a lot to ask in a democracy. Early voting has been shown to boost turnout, which is the intent.

Though summer is still underway, it's time to start paying attention to this fall's lineup of municipal and state elections. Early voting means people can do it at their convenience.

- Wrangell Sentinel

## GUEST OPINION

# Alaska needs to keep fighting for access to its resource lands

BY FRANK H. MURKOWSKI

I became a senator one month after President Jimmy Carter signed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) in 1980, and over the next three decades I was involved in the law's implementation, both as a senator and later as Alaska's governor. As I write this now, nearly 45 years after ANILCA became law, I am discouraged that we are still fighting battles that should have been resolved as soon as the ink dried on this law.

A case in point is the Ambler Road, which is unambiguously authorized by the law: "Congress finds that there is a need for surface access across the Western (Kobuk River) unit of the Gates of the Arctic National Preserve from the Ambler Mining District to the Alaska Pipeline Haul Road and the Secretary shall permit

such access in accordance with the provisions of this subsection."

"Shall permit" is pretty unambiguous. The law instructs the secretaries of Transportation and Interior to provide an economic and environmental analysis to determine "the most desirable route for the right of way" within 21 months of ANILCA's passage and that this document shall not be subject to a National Environmental Policy Act review or judicial review.

All of this has been done. Yet the Biden administration has once again bowed to the pressures from Lower 48 environmental groups, which see our state as a giant park where all resource production should be off-limits. How our state's economy survives is not a question that they're burdened with.

The fight over access to the

Tongass National Forest is another example of this mentality. In each case the strategy is to prevent or limit access to resources. As for the Ambler Road, the Biden administration is requiring an environmental review for access over a 30-mile stretch of BLM-managed, state-selected land. That land should have been conveyed to the state long ago.

This is about fulfilling the promises that the Congress and president made to Alaska that are enshrined in our nation's laws — promises that have been repeatedly broken by politicians in Washington.

Infrastructure projects such as the Ambler Road create jobs, revenue and economic growth across Alaska. These jobs hold enormous potential to improve the lives of all Alaskans, including Alaska Natives who need nearby economic opportunity in

order to stay in their villages and continue to practice the subsistence lifestyles that have sustained them for countless generations.

Ambler's economic benefits would extend far beyond the north. Ore will be trucked along the road to Fairbanks, where it will be carried south by rail to the port in Anchorage. This will produce additional revenues for rail operators and will help stimulate investments and facilitate transport of goods along the rail route.

Alaska needs to fight for its rights on the Ambler issue and its rights for access throughout the state. It is outrageous that with our mineral wealth the state has only five major metal mines.

I'm encouraged to see that the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority and the

state are preparing litigation to fulfill the mandate of ANILCA regarding the Ambler Road. I'm also glad to see our congressional delegation standing up to the Biden administration over Ambler.

Alaska needs the federal government to get to yes on the Ambler Road as quickly as possible and finally fulfill the promises made to our state long ago. Alaska also needs the federal government to treat Alaska as a sovereign state, brought into the union on an equal footing, entitled to enjoy all of the promises of resource and economic development made at statehood and the commitments to achieve that resource and economic development made in ANILCA.

Frank H. Murkowski is a former U.S. senator (1981-2002) and Alaska governor (2002-2006).

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# Tlingit & Haida to install its first permanent cell tower in Wrangell

By SAM PAUSMAN  
Sentinel Reporter

It never hurts to get more gigahertz.

The Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida's broadband service, Tidal Network, will build a 5G cell tower at 3-Mile this winter for its wireless internet service. Eventually, Tidal Network plans to build a second tower on the island, but plans are not finalized, said Tidal Network Director Chris Cropley.

These projects all come on the back of a \$50 million federal grant as part of the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program. In total, Tidal Network will build over 20 towers in 20 Southeast communities where internet access is flagged as underserved or unserved.

According to Tidal Network, 17% of Wrangell's population falls into one of these two categories. Tidal's pricing will come in at around \$75 to \$100 per month. As of right now, installation will be free.

Tidal Network is not hunting profits with this endeavor. "Our goal is to provide low-cost broadband to folks where they may not have access," Cropley said.

The reason Tidal Network's costs will be low is largely in part because the federal grant will cover installation of all 20 or so towers. Cropley hopes Tidal Network's revenue stream will cover maintenance costs.

On average, each cell tower installation will cost \$500,000.

Cropley described cell towers as a vertical strip mall. One company owns the tower while others — such as cell phone service providers — lease space for their own antennas on the structure. Therefore, the company that owns it might have high upfront costs but tends to save money in the long haul.

Tidal's current plan is to construct two towers of its own, and to lease space on two other towers, one of which is located in town and the other by Shoemaker Bay.

The first steel tower is planned for this winter on an upland parcel of private property, three lots back from the highway.

Tlingit & Haida initially entered the tower business in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, when so many services and industries became reliant on accessible internet access.

"COVID showed us how important broadband was for services like education and health care," Cropley said.

The Central Council's initial solution was a pair of portable cell towers. Also known as COWS (cells on

wheels), these towers allowed Tidal Network greater flexibility for providing internet access due to their portability.

The portable towers are nothing more than a Band-Aid, Cropley said, a temporary solution to broadband issues that the new cell towers would permanently alleviate.

Currently, Tidal Network stores its pop-up, portable cell towers in Wrangell. These towers can be moved off the island, depending on varying demand for broadband. For example, if a greater need for broadband pops up in Ketchikan, Tidal Network may temporarily move these portable towers there.

But if the COWS are a Band-Aid, the new 5G towers are a plaster cast, a permanent solution for communities without adequate internet access.

The towers are permitted to be as tall as 150 feet, though Cropley estimates the tower at 3-Mile will be around 120 feet. Tidal Network contracted with a national cell tower company for installation.

Because Tidal Network is building a tower in a new location, there are environmental checks that need to be completed before construction can begin. Cropley does not foresee any issues, and he expects the environmental sign-off to be complete by November.

The steel tower will be shipped to Wrangell by barge, and the assembly process will likely be complete within a month of arrival, Cropley said.

## Landslide

Continued from page 1

community members to offer anything they noticed that could have been related to the slide.

Audience members who live near the area shared several anecdotes, ranging from how a backyard stream's depth changed in the aftermath of the landslide to the level of noise caused by the slide itself. Meanwhile, Roering and the team wrote everything down.

The research conducted by RAPID comes after a team of three state geologists released a February report about the Wrangell slides. According to the report, excessive amounts of rain in a short period of time eventually led to the large-scale slides, the largest of which killed six people in their homes near 12-Mile.

Aaron Jacobs, the National Weather Service meteorologist working with the RAPID team, realizes the landslides would have been impossible without such heavy levels of rain, but he hopes the team can understand the other factors that led to the severity of the slides.

During the presentation at the Nolan Center, Jacobs noted that the amount of rain collected at the airport weather station did not meet the threshold of 4 to 4.5 inches of rain in 24 hours that can trigger landslides. However, this station was far from the slide, and community members recalled water "shooting off the cliffs" in areas closer to the landslide.

The team of experts is looking to fill in the other pieces of the puzzle to determine all contributing factors. One of which is something many audience members recalled from the night of the slide: severe wind.

Wind, according to the team, does not directly lead to landslides. But when it causes large trees to sway back and forth, the trees' root systems shift too. These massive root systems stir up the ground around them, making the ground weaker and more prone to slides.

Another contributing factor, according to Roering, is the geo-



PHOTO BY SAM PAUSMAN / WRANGELL SENTINEL

Margaret Darrow, a professor of geological engineering at University of Alaska Fairbanks, listens to community members Aug. 10 as they recall details from last November's landslides.

logical formation of Wrangell's mountainsides.

They resemble stairs, with flat areas of thick soil alternating between steep bedrock cliffs. According to Roering, thick soil — which can take thousands of years to form — steep slopes and high levels of soil saturation often come together in the form of a landslide.

Roering also noted that while the rainfall numbers may not have been enough to cause a landslide, the rainfall coupled with the quickly melting snow caused the soil to saturate rapidly — something that often directly contributes to a landslide.


"The fact that the materials on the bedrock benches were so

saturated is what allowed the landslide to expand to 20 times the size of the initiation point," Roering explained.

He hopes the research on the ground can help determine which of these contributing factors was most responsible.

As for their future plans, the RAPID team wants to help set up a landslide warning dashboard similar to the one in Sitka. The team is also installing stream water monitoring systems to help understand soil saturation levels, though it often takes multiple years to collect and analyze such data.

"Our goals are to use science and translate it to be useful for communities," Roering said.



## YOU PADDLED WITH US AND WE THANK YOU!

**The Wrangell-PIA Canoe Journey Team extends our deepest gratitude to all the community members who supported us on our journey to Juneau.**

**Gunalchéesh to: Alaska Vistas, Richard and Melissa Rinehart, Alicia Armstrong, Alaska Waters, Petersburg Indian Association, Forest Service, WCA, Sea Level, and especially to SEARHC.**

**Gunalchéesh to all of the individuals who came together to host a canoe landing and especially: Nolan Center, American legion, WCA, St Philip's, Parks and Rec, ANSA, The Marine, and the Harbor Master's Office.**

**GUNALCHEESH! -  
The Wrangell-PIA  
Canoe Journey Team**



# Bad year statewide for pink salmon; less bad in Southeast

BY MAX GRAHAM  
Northern Journal

Expectations were low this year for the pink salmon runs that power Prince William Sound's commercial fishing industry.

But no one expected them to be as bad as they've been.

With just a few weeks left in the season, the sound's seine fleet has harvested just one-fourth the number of pinks that it would have caught by now in a typical year.

The small runs have forced managers to close fishing for longer periods than usual. And even during openers, fishermen are reporting abysmal harvests.

Some have quit early. Others are thinking about new jobs.

"It is incredibly slow," said Megan Corazza, a Homer-based seine fisherman who has fished in the sound for more than two decades. "It is the worst year I have ever seen with my own operation."

Pink salmon spawn in two-year cycles, and even years see lower returns than odd ones. But this summer's numbers are awful by even-year standards across the entire state, with the exception of Southeast Alaska.

The Southeast pink salmon harvest as of Aug. 9 was reported by the Department of Fish and Game at almost 9.2 million fish, about halfway to the pre-season forecast — though down substantially from the surprisingly strong 2023 odd-year catch of 39.7 million.

The total catch in Prince William Sound as of Aug. 9 was reported at 7.1

million pinks.

Statewide pink salmon harvests are down 63% compared to 2022. It's a big blow to an industry already reeling from a global market crisis that sent dock prices plummeting last year.

Though they don't get as much attention as other, more prized salmon species, pinks, also known as humpies, are a critical source of revenue for hundreds of Alaska fishermen and many of the state's big processors. They're the most abundant and least expensive species, and some years they make up well over half the salmon harvested in Alaska by sheer numbers.

They're mostly harvested by seine boats, which corral salmon using a long net stretched between the main vessel and a small skiff. A huge, mechanical pulley hauls each load aboard.

The state's biggest commercial pink harvest is in Prince William Sound, where seiners last year netted some 46 million of the fish.

This year's catch of 7.1 million, as of Aug. 9, compares to final harvests of more than 20 million in each of the past three even years.

The catch in Kodiak — the state's third-biggest pink salmon fishery — has been "pretty horrible," skipper Matt Alward said in an interview from his boat, the Challenger. There, the harvest was at just 1.4 million as of Aug. 9 — down substantially from two years ago.

Some seine fishermen generate additional income by participating in other fisheries; they might stay afloat by catch-

ing salmon with different gear like gill-nets, by picking up and delivering other boats' fish, or by crabbing. Alward usually makes extra money fixing nets in the off-season, but he won't have business this winter if other fishermen don't have enough cash to pay for his service, he said.

"I will be all right because I have a wife with a good job," he said. "If I didn't have a wife with a good job, I would be pretty freaked out."

On top of the low volume, seine fishermen said dock prices have barely inched up from last year, when a glut of salmon in global markets and a slowdown in demand caused a major downturn in price.

Corazza estimated that Prince William Sound vessels have so far netted an average of 100,000 pounds of pinks apiece, which processors reportedly are buying for some 25 cents per pound.

"All these boats out here, if they've only done pinks, have grossed 25 grand. And a lot of these boats pay \$35,000 to \$45,000 just in insurance," Corazza said. "It is a huge disaster."

Corazza said she'll be able to pay her four crew members. But she's worried about harbor fees, insurance for next year, and boat maintenance. "It's going to be super tough," she added. "I wake up every morning and I try to apply for a different job."

What caused the poor returns isn't entirely clear, but it likely has something to do with ocean conditions, according to Heather Scannell, a Cordova-based seine management biologist at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

The fact that wild and hatchery stocks — and populations across the whole state — are struggling suggests that "poor marine survival is ultimately the cause," Scannell said.

Pinks spend just one year at sea before maturing and returning to freshwater to spawn, and another state fisheries scientist who focuses on ocean conditions, Katie Howard, said there was nothing about the winter of 2023 that would account for this year's low numbers.

"There's not really anything I can point to," Howard said.

She added, however, that pink salmon are known for experiencing big swings in their abundance and that this year's declines aren't cause for immediate concern about the species.

"When we start getting concerned is when we have several years in a row where things are really worse than expected," she said.

Scannell, the other state scientist, said some commercial fishing boats from outside Alaska "saw the writing on the wall" and left Prince William Sound early.

But Ezekiel Brown, a seiner in Cordova and the board president of a regional fishermen's advocacy group, still plans to have his net in the water through the last couple weeks of the season.

"Everyone's still kind of hanging on to hope, as fishermen do, that something's going to happen," he said.

Reach contributor Max Graham at maxmugraham@gmail.com.

## Trollers likely to lose second chinook opening due to heavy sportfish harvest

BY ANNA LAFFREY  
Ketchikan Daily News

Heavy fishing on chinook salmon by sport fishermen — including nonresident charter customers — is taking away fishing time from Southeast Alaska's commercial troll fleet this summer.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced Aug. 6 that trollers in August and September will likely lose out on the remainder of the summer troll fishery allocation for chinook because sport fishermen across Southeast are on track to exceed their summer 2024 allocation by about 14,000 chinook, and because of a regulation change that the department implemented in 2022.

Regardless of the chinook issue, the summer commercial troll fishery for coho salmon will remain open in Southeast

Alaska and Yakutat until further notice, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced Aug. 6.

"Based on the second coho salmon run strength assessment, which evaluates catch rates, projected catches and early escapement data, the department has determined a troll closure is not necessary at this time for coho salmon conservation or allocation," Grant Hagerman, commercial troll management biologist in Sitka, said last week.

The summer chinook troll fishery started July 1, and a total 467 troll permit holders across the region harvested about 83,000 chinook during an initial eight-day retention period — about 16,000 more fish than the department's harvest target of 66,700 chinook for the opener.

Fish and Game manages the July 1 opener by regulation to harvest about 70% of the trollers' summer allocation of "treaty" chinook salmon, which is about 92,400 chinook for the 2024 summer season.

Harvest of migratory "treaty" chinook populations along the U.S. West Coast and Canada is delegated between the two countries by the Pacific Salmon Treaty. In Alaska, the harvest is allocated between gear groups by regulations set by the Alaska Board of Fisheries.

Trollers this year were allocated a total of 153,000 treaty chinook between their winter, spring and summer seasons, while sport fishermen were allocated 38,250 chinook.

After trollers in July exceeded their initial summer chinook harvest target, Fish and

Game estimated on Aug. 6 that about 15,000 treaty chinook still remained in trollers' allocation for the rest of the summer season.

But, under a 2022 regulatory change, that second summer troll fishery opportunity for chinook is dependent on not exceeding the all-gear harvest in Southeast. Any overharvest by the sport fishery is subtracted from the commercial troll allocation of chinook.

In 2023, the sport fleet exceeded its allocation by more than 15,000 chinook, and the state implemented new restrictions on trollers to balance for the overage.

Trollers in 2024 likely won't have any late-season opportunity to catch chinook because the heavy catch by sport fishermen again cut into trollers' allocation.

The Alaska Trollers Association on Aug. 6 decried the department's current management of chinook harvest between troll and sport fishers.

Sport chinook catches are climbing year-to-year and exceeding the allocation because "the numbers of non-resident anglers are unconstrained and growing rapidly as tourism levels rise across the region and charter businesses proliferate," the trollers association said in a prepared statement Aug. 6.

The "unlimited and growing" charter fishing industry, which is "composed primarily of guided non-resident tourists, will take over 14,000 chinook from the troll fishery (this summer) and force the elimination of the competitive August (troll) fishery," the association said.

### Empowering Seniors, Building Communities

By Jeremy T. Bynum  
Alaska House Candidate

In our communities, senior services play a vital role in maintaining the well-being and quality of life for our elderly population. As the number of seniors continues to grow, the need for comprehensive senior housing and support programs becomes increasingly important.

Senior housing options provide a safe and supportive environment where seniors can live independently while having access to essential services. These facilities offer a range of amenities, including medical care, social activities, and assistance with daily tasks, ensuring that our seniors can enjoy their golden years with dignity and comfort.

Support programs are equally crucial, offering services such as meal delivery, transportation, and in-home care. These programs help seniors maintain their independence and stay connected to the

community. We need to ensure that the sense of community and support is strong, so that seniors are not left isolated or without assistance.

Additionally, leveraging veteran services for our senior veterans can provide tailored support that acknowledges their unique experiences and needs. These services can include specialized medical care, mental health support, and community programs that honor their service and contributions.

Investing in senior services not only improves the lives of our residents but also strengthens the fabric of our communities. By prioritizing senior housing, support programs, and veteran services, our communities will be places where all generations thrive.

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## Happy 50th Anniversary Keith & Kathy





## Dietician advises parents to involve children more in lunch, snack decisions

BY LARRY PERSILY  
Sentinel writer

With school a week away, SEARHC nutrition services manager Tara Farley has healthy advice for parents who are starting to think about packing and preparing snacks and lunches for their children.

But, she adds, "You are never going to hear me say don't eat this and don't eat that." Rather, she talks of picking the best foods, moderation, cutting back on sugars and refined carbohydrates — and getting kids involved in making decisions about what to eat.

"Involve kids in packing their own lunches," Farley suggests.

For example, parents and their children can make their own trail mix as a snack, with a healthier mix of nuts and dried fruit. "When you make things yourself, you have more control."

Packaged, processed foods certainly are easier to bring home from the store but are high in refined carbohydrates, she says, even the healthier-sounding choices like many granola bars. The body turns those carbohydrates into sugars, which creates a sugar rush. But then comes the downside as the sugar surge wears off. "You lose focus, you lose energy."

Farley, who has worked as a nutritionist and dietician for 12 years, has seen an increase in obesity in children, along with a trend toward higher cholesterol and glucose counts, which can lead to serious health problems. Paying more attention to foods can help reduce the risks.

Based in Sitka, she works with children on referrals from pediatricians, meeting with families in telemedicine appointments to help direct them to healthier diets. "We work really closely with parents when they have concerns with their child's weight or eating."

She also has noticed a couple of other recent trends, both of which are unhealthy for children.

Since the economic stress of the pandemic, Farley has seen more families dealing with food insecurity — they lack the consistent financial ability to purchase an adequate supply of food. The Food Bank of Alaska estimates that as many as one in seven Alaskans deals with food insecurity.

She also has seen a concerning increase in people, especially children, increasingly rely on unhealthy snack foods at gas stations. "They are essentially their food store."

Farley acknowledges "these are tough battles for parents," but that's where snacks prepared at home would be a better option. Such as carrots with hummus or salsa rather than chips. Or the better nutrition from whole-grain bread rather than white bread.

"For parents who are struggling with time issues, it helps to do things in batches," she says, such as cutting up fruit or vegetables. And that's when getting kids to help can be a plus, making them feel part of the decisions, she adds.

## Children's vaccinations help protect the community, SEARHC doctor says

BY LARRY PERSILY  
Sentinel writer

Alaska state law requires children to get vaccinated against multiple serious diseases to attend school, but it's about more than keeping students and their classmates healthy, said the chief medical officer for SEARHC.

"You're protecting your community," said Juneau-based Dr. Cate Buley, a family medicine practitioner with 21 years of experience at SEARHC.

Vaccinations are an effective tool to prevent disease throughout the community, she said. "What we really worry about is our babies and our elders."

With the start of the school year just a week away, students are coming into the Wrangell Medical Center for checkups and vaccinations, and sports physicals too, which are required by the Wrangell School District for middle and high schoolers who play sports.

Immunizations are especially important as kids return to the classroom and spend more time indoors, Buley said.

Of particular worry to SEARHC, and state Department of Health officials, is a significant spike in whooping cough across Alaska. As of July, more cases of the bacterial infection have been reported to the state this year than in the previous five years combined.

State officials said 131 cases of the highly contagious respiratory disease have been reported so far this year, while only 26 were reported during all of 2023. There were more than 70 cases in July alone.

Symptoms are often similar to a cold but can worsen to severe coughing spells. Whooping cough, also called pertussis, can cause uncontrollable coughing, making it hard to breathe. It's most dangerous for babies and the elderly, Buley said.

The disease runs in cycles, with the last spike similar to this year's numbers in 2016.

The count of whooping cough cases nationwide dropped significantly during and follow-

ing the pandemic, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But the case count is spiking this year, back to pre-pandemic levels, the CDC said.

The best way to prevent whooping cough is through vaccination, the state health department said. It's among the diseases on the state's list of immunizations required for attendance at a public school, along with measles, mumps, diphtheria, tetanus and others.

"It's one of the best preventative health tools," Buley said.

After sliding back during the pandemic, the overall vaccination rate for the common series of childhood immunizations is trending back up, according to state Department of Health statistics. Alaska, however, ranks near the bottom in immunization rates nationwide.

State law allows vaccination exemptions for students if a licensed medical profession certifies that the immunizations "would be injurious to the health" of the child.

Vaccination against COVID is not on the state's required list.

Anyone wanting more information or an appointment can call the Wrangell Medical Center at 907-874-7000. SEARHC operates the center, along with health care services in 18 other Southeast Alaska communities.

Buley said SEARHC will hold flu and COVID vaccinations clinics this fall, offering protection from the latest variants of the diseases.

For parents who want to track their children's immunization records, or their own records, the state now offers a personal app. It's called Docket, and it works on a computer or smartphone. It's a nationwide health platform now in use in seven states.

Every health care provider in Alaska should be entering immunization records into the app, Buley said, so that people can easily verify whether they are up to date and what they may need to get current.

The app can be downloaded for free at <https://docket.care>.

## Be careful not to put too much weight on schoolchildren's backs

BY LARRY PERSILY  
Sentinel writer

Between books, a laptop or tablet, lunch and whatever else students stuff into their backpacks, the load can add up to some serious weight.

It also can add up to a sore back, shoulders and neck.

It's easy to overload a

school backpack, said Kathleen Hansen, an occupational therapist with SEARHC in Juneau, where she works with children and adults.

"Many people are very surprised to find out how much their backpack weighs," she said. Her advice is to "pack smart as they ready for school."

The new school year in Wrangell starts Aug. 22.

"There is a little bit of a formula to figure out how (weight) much is right," Hansen explained. That is about 10% to 15% of a child's body weight. "You can put a backpack on a scale," or compare it to a gallon of milk, which weighs about 8.6 pounds.

It's all about weight distribution within the pack, she said. Wide shoulder straps, a chest strap or waist strap can help spread the load. One way to pack smart is to place the heaviest items closest to the body. "It will help rebalance the weight."

Parents also should make sure their kid is using a children's size pack, rather than loading an adult pack onto their shoulders.

Hansen has been an occupational therapist for 13 years and has seen backpacks as heavy as 20 or 30 pounds on children. They "want to bring everything with them," she said.

"When you get to middle school. ... kids put more things in their backpacks." If a child is suffering from back or shoulder pain, she will talk with them about lightening their load. "What are some things that can stay at school?"

She advises parents to watch their child's posture, looking to see if they are leaning too far forward or leaning too far back because of the heavy pack. And listen to their child. "Often times, a child will say, 'I have shoulder or neck pain or lower-back pain.'"

There actually is an International Backpack Awareness Day, sponsored by the American Occupational Therapy Association. It's set for Oct. 27 this year. "There has been a lot more awareness" of the problem, Hansen said.

SEARHC has an occupational therapist in Wrangell.

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# All three candidates for state House seat will go from primary to the general election

BY LARRY PERSILY  
Sentinel writer

The Aug. 20 primary election for the state House district that covers Wrangell is a preview of the Nov. 5 general election.

All three primary election candidates to succeed Rep. Dan Ortiz in representing Ketchikan, Metlakatla and Wrangell in the House will advance to the November round under Alaska's voting system that sends up to the top four primary finishers to the general election.

Competing for the seat are Jeremy Bynum, a Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly member and Ketchikan Public Utilities electric manager; Grant EchoHawk, also a member of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough assembly and a business loan specialist with the Tongass Federal Credit Union; and Agnes Moran, executive director of Women in Safe Homes and a former Ketchikan borough assembly member.

Bynum is a registered Republican. EchoHawk and Moran list no party affiliation.

Alaska's switch to ranked-choice voting in 2022 eliminated political party primaries, running an open primary where the top vote-getters, regardless of party affiliation, advance to the general election.

Wrangell voters can choose one between Bynum, EchoHawk and Moran for House District 1 when they cast ballots from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 20, at the Nolan Center. The area's state senator, Bert Stedman, of Sitka, is not up for reelection until 2026.

Ortiz, who is in his 10th year in the Legislature, cited health reasons in deciding not to seek reelection.

In the November general election, voters will rank the three candidates one, two and three. The candidate who gets more than 50% of first-choice votes will win, unless no one reaches that threshold, in which case the candidate who gets more than 50% of first- and second-choice votes will win.

Moran, 64, a Ketchikan High School graduate, has lived in Alaska 45 years. She is a member of the First Bank board of directors; a board member of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, which manages an investment portfolio that generates income to pay for mental health services in the state; and co-founded BARK Animal Rescue in Ketchikan.

EchoHawk, 49, has lived in Alaska for 19 years, in Fairbanks, Metlakatla and Ketchikan. He is board treasurer of the Ketchikan Tribal Business Corp.; served as board president of the Ketchikan public radio station; and has served on the Ketchikan Area Arts and Humanities Council, Ketchikan Wellness Coalition and Ketchikan Public Library advisory board.

Bynum, 49, has lived in Ketchikan since 2016. He has served on the University of Alaska Southeast Ketchikan Campus Advisory Council. He has a degree in electrical engineering, electronic experience in the U.S. Air Force, and serves on the board of the Southeast Alaska Power Agency, which manages the Tyee and Swan Lake hydroelectric power projects.

All three candidates support a permanent increase in the state funding formula for K-12 public schools. The base formula has not noticeably moved since 2017, despite years of inflation, squeezing school districts that depend on state funding for more than half of their operating budgets.

The Legislature and governor this year settled on a one-time boost in state funding, which means the question will be back before lawmakers next year.

Moran believes the one-year increase for the 2024-2025 school year is about half of what districts need to cover the cost of inflation since 2017.

All three candidates are strong supporters of the Alaska Marine Highway System, and all agree the state ferries need more funding to adequately serve coastal communities.

"The only way to improve the ferry system is to help other legislators around the state understand how important it is," EchoHawk said of winning support for more funding.

Besides for more state money, Bynum believes the ferry system needs to resume service between Southeast Alaska and Prince Rupert, British Columbia. The route, which the state abandoned a few years ago, offered a lower-cost option for travelers to connect with the North American highway system than riding a ferry all the way to Puget Sound.

Moran cited the "heavy lifting" the state's congressional delegation did to win more than \$700 million in federal funding under the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act for the Alaska Marine Highway System. The multi-year funding is for new vessels and operations.

The problem, she said, is the governor's reluctance to support the state matching dollars needed to receive the federal money.

## Candidate comes to town

Alaska Rep. Mary Peltola speaks to supporters at a campaign event held at the Marine Bar last Friday, the first visit this summer by candidates for the state's lone seat in the U.S. House. Peltola, a Democrat who is seeking reelection, is up against two high-profile Republican challengers in the Aug. 20 primary election: Lt. Gov. Nancy Dahlstrom and Nick Begich, who lost his bid for the same seat in 2022.



PHOTO BY SAM PAUSMAN / WRANGELL SENTINEL

# Early voting open for Aug. 20 state primary election contests

BY SENTINEL STAFF

The state primary election is Tuesday, Aug. 20, but Wrangell voters who want to cast their ballots early can come to City Hall between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. weekdays through Monday, Aug. 19.

Just walk back to the assembly chambers and, if the state elections staff does not recognize you, present a drivers license, voter ID card or other form of identification to get a ballot.

On election day Aug. 20, the polling booths will be set up at the Nolan Center from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The state has offered early voting for years, making it easier for people who may be busy on election day or simply prefer to cast their ballots ahead of time. All of the ballots are tabulated and totals released after the polls close.

Anyone who is voting by mail needs to have their ballot postmarked no later than Aug. 20; late ballots will not be counted.

Wrangell voters will have two decisions to make on the primary election ballot: U.S. House and state House.

In the congressional race, incumbent Democrat Rep. Mary Peltola is seeking reelection. Her main challenges are Republicans Nancy Dahlstrom, who is currently Alaska's lieutenant governor, and Nick Begich, who is trying a second time to win the state's lone U.S. House seat. There are nine other candidates running for the job.

The top four finishers will advance to the statewide general election Nov. 5.

In the state House race for District 1, which covers Ketchikan, Wrangell and Metlakatla, three candidates are running to succeed Rep. Dan Ortiz, who is not seeking reelection. All three will advance to the Nov. 5 general election: Jeremy Bynum, a registered Republican; Grant EcoHawk, non-partisan; and Agnes Moran, non-partisan.

All three candidates for the state House seat are from Ketchikan.

Under Alaska's new voting system, implemented in 2022, there are no political party primaries. The top four vote-getters in the open primary advance to the general election.

## Early voting in place for Oct. 1 municipal election

BY SAM PAUSMAN  
Sentinel Reporter

Too busy to vote? That's now less of an excuse.

Early voting, in addition to voting by email, was unanimously approved by the borough assembly last month. The ordinance only affects municipal elections, not state elections. It will take effect for the borough election on Oct. 1. Both vote-by-email and early voting are just as secure as traditional election day voting.

Early voting opens 15 days before an election and takes place in Borough Clerk Kim Lane's office at City Hall. Voters need only to provide a form of identification, sign their name on the official voter register, and check off the boxes on the ballot, Lane wrote to the assembly.

Voters even get to place their ballots in the tabulator, just like traditional election day voting.

The borough has permitted early voting in the past, but the process tended to be more difficult for both voters and vote counters. Voters needed to go through more steps to early vote, including filling out an absentee ballot oath.

On the borough's side of things, officials were not permitted to process votes until election day. Now, however, the tabulator will begin to formulate vote tal-

lies as soon as the first early vote is received, though those numbers will be kept in the machines until polls close.

Lane will update the official voter register to ensure no one can vote again on election day if they've already cast an early voting ballot.

In addition to Lane's anti-fraud measures, national data proves that early voting does not bring with it a greater chance of voter fraud.

In 2023, Politico delved into the midterm election data from Vermont, Kentucky and Nevada — three states that recently expanded voting accessibility to include early voting. The states' early voting "did not lead to voter fraud, nor did it seem to advantage Republicans or Democrats," according to Jessica Piper, a Politico reporter

The borough hopes the newly adopted vote-by-email option

Continued on page 9

VOTE

# BYNUM

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# State House



**Jeremy Bynum**  
for Alaska State House  
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# Alaska election could affect which party controls U.S. House

By JAMES BROOKS  
The Alaska Beacon

Seattle has more power in the U.S. House of Representatives than the state of Alaska.

And yet, ahead of this year's congressional elections, there's as much at stake with Alaska's race than all four of the House seats in Seattle's King County combined.

The vast majority of the 435 seats in the House are firmly Democratic or firmly Republican. Alaska is among a dwindling number of exceptions that could go in any direction.

More than that, it's one of just five places in the country that voted for Donald Trump as pres-

ident in 2020 yet elected a Democrat to the House in 2022.

The House is almost equally divided between Republicans and Democrats, and in a series of interviews and speeches throughout this year, current and former candidates for Alaska's House seat have said the race could help decide which party controls the House.

In turn, that could affect the country's direction on issues ranging from abortion to oil development to international affairs.

"We are down to the tiniest margins we've ever seen, like three or four people in the House

and one in the Senate," said Rep. Mary Peltola, the incumbent Democrat, in a January interview.

Control of the House will affect whoever wins the presidential race. A Republican-controlled House would support Donald Trump or act as a brake on Kamala Harris. The opposite is true if Democrats control the chamber.

"That's exactly how I see it," said Alaska Lt. Gov. Nancy Dahlstrom, a Republican candidate for House this year.

"I have President Trump's endorsement. And so what that tells people is that when President Trump needs to talk to a congressman from Alaska, he wants to call me, and he's going to pick up the phone and call me, and he knows that we can work together, and we're going to get things done together," she said.

Candidates for the House include the Democratic incumbent, four Republicans, three nonpartisan candidates, one who didn't declare a party, an additional Democrat, a member of the Alaskan Independence Party and a member of the No Labels Party.

Election Day is Aug. 20. The four candidates who get the most votes will advance to the November general election.

Republican challenger Nick Begich said he thinks Alaska is at a "pivotal point" in its history.

"There's really two camps as I see it," he said in February.

"There's one camp that believes that Alaskans have a role as guardians of the state, that development should be diminished or eliminated. There's another group of Alaskans who believe that our responsibility in Alaska extends to increasing development and that we have a role to play in our nation ... as a source for critical minerals, base metals, energy in the form of oil and gas."

Peltola was elected twice in 2022: Once in a special election to fill the remainder of Republican Rep. Don Young's term after his sudden death, and then again for a two-year term of her own.

Through March, she voted with her fellow Democrats on 88% of the votes in the House, a figure that appears to be high, but is the fourth lowest among House Democrats.

Since Harris replaced Joe Biden as the Democratic presidential nominee, Peltola has declined to endorse her, in part because the congresswoman isn't sure that Harris would support oil drilling within the state.

Peltola has also bucked her Democratic colleagues by voting against gun control measures and this year became the first Democratic member of Congress since 2020 to be endorsed by the National Rifle Association.

Speaking in January, Peltola said that in places where one

member of Congress represents an entire state, "it doesn't give the one representative for the entire state much latitude to be championing issues that aren't directly Alaska-related."

"Alaska is so big and so young that whoever is in the position that I'm in — in Congress — we are up to our eyeballs in issues," she said.

That's why, she said, she's focused on fisheries issues, on energy topics and on consumer issues like her opposition to the grocery-store merger of Albertsons and Kroger.

Peltola differs from her principal Republican competitors on reproductive issues. Since entering office, she's co-sponsored bills that would prohibit restrictions on abortion, birth control, and in vitro fertilization.

Some Republicans have expressed interest in using a 19th century law to restrict birth control and abortions, and Republican control of the House or the presidency may cause a significant change in existing federal policy.

Dahlstrom said in an interview that she is "pro-life with exceptions of rape, incest and life of the mother," but that abortion is "best left up to the states."

Begich has said that while he supports the idea of allowing states to restrict abortion at a local level, he also would eliminate Medicaid funding for the practice and stop pharmacies from distributing mifepristone, a drug used in many abortions.

Begich and Dahlstrom both have expressed similar views about the state's need to be allowed to drill for oil and mine for minerals in order to grow its economy and benefit its residents.

While Peltola may support oil drilling in Alaska, her Democratic counterparts in Congress and the White House generally do not, Begich and Dahlstrom have said, and regardless of Peltola's views, electing her could result in further restrictions on development here.

Both Begich and Dahlstrom have expressed hopes that Donald Trump will be reelected as president. During his first term in office, Trump signed the bill that opened parts of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling, and he has pledged to renew that program, which was stopped by the Biden administration.

Begich has received support from members of the House Freedom Caucus, a group of more conservative Republicans who are sometimes at odds with the House's current Republican leadership. Dahlstrom, meanwhile, has received support from the Republican House leadership and has Trump's endorsement.

At the state Republican convention and in local meetings since, Republican officials within Alaska have thrown their support behind Begich, endorsing him for House even if it puts them at odds with Trump.

Dahlstrom, during an interview in late July, said she doesn't think those local officials speak for all Republican voters in the state.

The Alaska Beacon is an independent, donor-funded news organization. [alaskabeacon.com](http://alaskabeacon.com).

## Municipal election

Continued from page 8

will be a modern step up from the previous fax machine voting method. The process of voting by email will not differ from the fax machine process. The only difference is the method of delivery. Voters can request an electronic ballot, fill it out online, and email it back to the borough, all without ever leaving their house.

In recent elections, Wrangell's voter turnout has been as high as 40% and as low as 20%, Lane said. She hopes these new processes will allow more people to vote in local elections.

Early voting, according to Lane, is already common across the state. Fairbanks, Sitka, Anchorage, Kodiak Island Borough and Bethel have already adopted early voting measures, as has the state of Alaska.

"Election time is so exciting. I am very happy to be able to evolve and change with the times and also, with the voters' needs," Lane wrote.

## NOTICE OF PRIMARY ELECTION

### Tuesday, August 20, 2024

### Polling Places Will Be Open From 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

#### Candidate Races on Ballot

United States Representative

State Senator (Districts B, D, F, H, J, L, N, P, R, T)

State House Representative (All 40 Districts)

To find Your Polling Place Call: 1-888-383-8683 (In Anchorage call: 269-8683)

#### Early, Absentee In-Person and Special Needs Voting

Early and Absentee In-Person Voting will be available at many locations throughout the state beginning August 5, 2024. For a list of locations and information on absentee voting, visit the division's website at

<https://AKVoteEarly.alaska.gov>

or call your regional elections office below. If you are unable to go to the polls due to age, disability, or serious illness, you may use the special needs voting process by appointing a personal representative to bring you a ballot.

[www.elections.alaska.gov](http://www.elections.alaska.gov)

Region I Office	Region II Office	Region III Office	Region IV Office	Region V Office
Juneau	Anchorage	Fairbanks	Nome	Wasilla
(907) 465-3021	(907) 522-8683	(907) 451-2835	(907) 443-8683	(907) 373-8952
1-866-948-8683	1-866-958-8683	1-866-959-8683	1-866-953-8683	1-866-958-8683

Language Assistance 1-866-954-8683

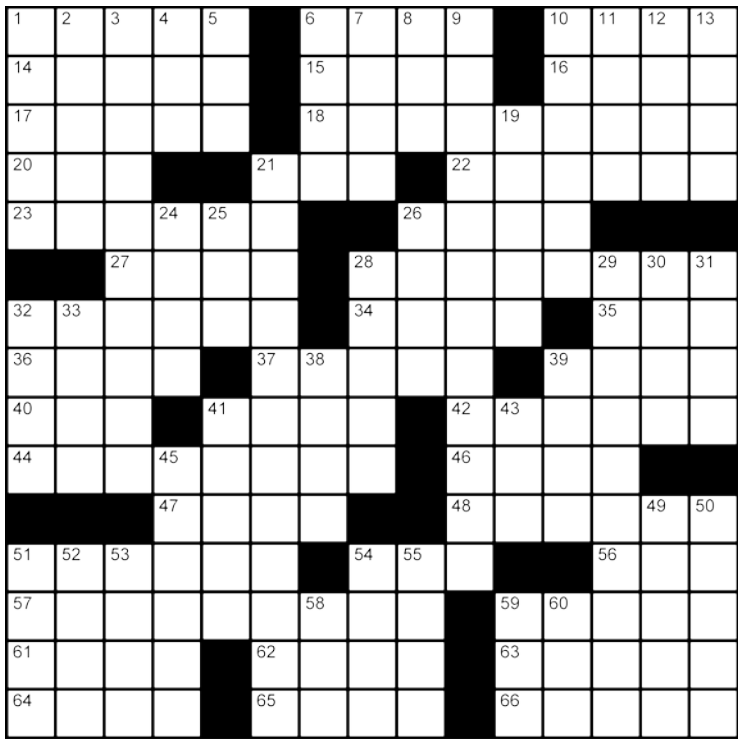
Toll Free TTY 1-888-622-3020

The State of Alaska, Division of Elections, complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If you are a person with a disability who may need special assistance and/or accommodation to vote, please contact your regional Division of Elections office to make necessary arrangements.



# Crossword

Answers on page 12



### CLUES ACROSS

- 1 Cagney's partner
- 6 Poker variant
- 10 Nipper
- 14 Got up
- 15 W L A N
- 16 "I'm --- here!"
- 17 Identifies
- 18 Papal
- 20 Slow-witted
- 21 The Tiffany network
- 22 --- quarters: precedes Taps
- 23 Symbol of disgrace
- 26 Earth
- 27 Drawn tight
- 28 "Idylls of the King" writer
- 32 The blink of an eye
- 34 Harangue
- 35 Computer brain
- 36 Ice skating jump
- 37 Put back into service
- 39 St. Paul's Cathedral designer
- 40 Follows why, by the sound of it
- 41 Iridescent gem
- 42 Scrubs
- 44 Mental illness
- 46 Waterproofed canvas (Abbr.)
- 47 Measure of sound intensity
- 48 Swellings
- 51 Music for voices
- 54 It means "central"
- 56 Globally calamitous happening
- 57 Home to Everest
- 59 Release
- 61 First lady's partner
- 62 Wander about
- 63 Understand
- 64 Lairs
- 65 Simple arithmetic
- 66 Terminates

### CLUES DOWN

- 1 Comes ashore
- 2 Anticipate
- 3 Advisory or decision-making groups
- 4 Scrape
- 5 Agreeable response
- 6 Wad of cleaning cloth
- 7 Gratuities
- 8 Mysterious radar image
- 9 Fragmented
- 10 Nervelessly
- 11 Brief let-up
- 12 On the job
- 13 Texas siege city
- 19 Sully
- 21 Butterfly larvae
- 24 Winner of three Olympic golds, --- Devers
- 25 Perform in a pantomime
- 26 Large bodies of salt water partially enclosed by land
- 28 Sincerely
- 29 Can be recycled?
- 30 Exposed
- 31 Convent inmates
- 32 E.g. Speer, Himmler
- 33 Draft cattle
- 38 Dines
- 39 Used to be
- 41 Oscar winner Tatum ---
- 43 Youth
- 45 Tank type
- 49 Top celebrities
- 50 Percolates
- 51 Large African lake
- 52 Conceal
- 53 Persian Gulf monarchy
- 54 Courteous address to a lady
- 55 Sets of beliefs
- 58 Not me
- 59 Expression of disgust
- 60 Gun owners' grp.

## OBITUARY

### Former resident Charles Martin Nore dies at 82



Charles Martin Nore

Charles Martin Nore, 82, passed away on July 6, 2024.

Charles, the oldest of seven children, was born on Sept. 9, 1941, in Wrangell to Martin and Celestine Nore.

In 1956, Charlie and his brother Mike were deckhands on the Marcele for their dad. In the summer of 1957, W.F. Smith brought the first shrimp peeling machine to Wrangell and asked Martin to fish for shrimp for him instead of seining. Charlie and Mike worked for their dad on the Marcele in 1957, 1958 and 1959.

Charlie graduated in the Wrangell High School class of 1959. In 1964 he was drafted for two years into the Army into the 1st Infantry Division, reporting to Fort Riley, Kansas. He did a tour in Vietnam. After the Army he worked at Nore's Building Supply in Wrangell, and in the summers he worked with Edwin Calbreath on the riverboats that traveled from Wrangell to Telegraph Creek, British Columbia.

He attended two years at Kinman Business University in Spokane, where he met his fu-

ture wife, Lynne Robeck. They were married in Wrangell on Aug. 30, 1969. They soon moved to Anchorage, where he worked as an accountant at Spenard Builder's Supply.

Daughter Tiffany was born on Sept. 15, 1970, and daughter Deborah was born Feb. 6, 1972. In the spring of 1973 Charlie and his family moved to Anacortes, Washington, where daughter Paula was born on Feb. 5, 1979. In Anacortes he did some fishing and was in real estate before he started his own business Nor-Vac Sweeping. After retiring, he returned to Wrangell to spend summers on his boat and do a little fishing.

He was preceded in death by his parents Martin and Celestine Nore.

Charlie is survived by his wife, Lynne, of 55 years; daughters Tiffany Nore, Deborah (Wes) Frank, Paula (Jason) McDonald; grandchildren Madelynne and Joshua; sisters Evelyn Piatt of Kenai, Alaska, Patricia Gordaoff and Jean Garcia of Sedro Woolley, Washington, and Marcie (Ozzie) Thomas of Dayton, Washington; brothers Michael (Carolyn) Nore of Anacortes, Washington, and Steve Nore of Boise, Idaho.

A celebration of Charlie's life was held on July 13 in Anacortes, Washington

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*Throughout my lifetime in Southeast, my career has focused on building healthy communities as the foundation for a thriving economy.*

- Brought more than \$20 million in grant funding to District 1 communities
- Built a child advocacy shelter to serve all of southern Southeast Alaska
- Established a new emergency services center
- Developed an effective housing program for more than 100 homeless individuals and families at risk
- Secured grants to bring counselors and social workers into schools

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## Ritter's River

by Marc Lutz



## Tundra

by Chad Carpenter



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Southeast Roadbuilders is a heavy highway contractor, accepting applications from qualified individuals for work on projects throughout Southeast Alaska.

Females and Minorities are encouraged to apply. Southeast Roadbuilders maintains a Drug Free Workplace. EEO and VEVRAA Federal Contractor.

Please go to [www.colaska.com/jobs](http://www.colaska.com/jobs) to search for job opportunities.

No phone calls please.



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Secon is a heavy highway and paving contractor. Secon accepts applications from qualified individuals for work on projects throughout Southeast Alaska.

Secon is affiliated with hires through Operators Local 302 & Laborers Local 942.

Females and Minorities are encouraged to apply. Secon maintains a Drug Free Workplace. EEO and VEVRAA Federal Contractor.

Please go to [www.colaska.com/jobs](http://www.colaska.com/jobs) to search for job opportunities.

No phone calls please.

**CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL  
LEGAL NOTICE**

Declaration of candidacy for Borough Mayor, Borough Assembly, Port Commission and School Board, and signature petitions as required, will be available in the Borough Clerk's Office from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, Aug. 2 through Aug. 30, 2024.

Qualified persons may have their name placed on the ballot for the Oct. 1, 2024, City and Borough of Wrangell Regular Municipal Election by filing declarations of candidacy for Borough Mayor, Borough Assembly, Port Commission and School Board.

- Borough Mayor: One seat, for 2-year term
- Borough Assembly: Two seats, for 3-year terms
- School Board: Two seats, for 3-year terms
- Port Commission: Two seats, for 3-year terms

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

**Publish Aug. 7, 14, 21 and 28, 2024**

**CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL  
Notice to Voters**

Voter qualifications for the City and Borough of Wrangell Oct. 1, 2024, Regular Election, are as follows:

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

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

Your name must appear on the precinct list. If you are registered in another city, you must change your registration prior to Sunday, Sept. 1, 2024, to qualify to vote in the Regular Election of Oct. 1, 2024.

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

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

**Publish Aug. 14, 21 and 28, 2024**

# Police report

**Monday, Aug. 5**

Agency assist: Public Works.

**Tuesday, Aug. 6**

Found property.  
Domestic violence assault.  
Agency assist: Department of Transportation.  
Welfare check.  
Traffic stop: Driving under the influence.

**Wednesday, Aug. 7**

Theft.  
Agency assist: Fire Department.  
Traffic stop: Verbal warning for equipment violation.  
Traffic stop: Citation issued for speeding.

**Thursday, Aug. 8**

Agency assist: Search and Rescue.  
Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.  
Traffic stop: Verbal warning for driving habits.  
Controlled burn.  
Driving complaint.

**Friday, Aug. 9**

Traffic stop: Citations issued for no proof of insurance and driving without a valid license; verbal warning for taillights and expired registration.  
Noise complaint.  
Domestic violence assault.  
Driving complaint.  
Traffic stop: Verbal warning for passing on the shoulder.  
Noise complaint.

**Saturday, Aug. 10**

Trespass.  
Motor vehicle accident.  
Agency assist: Papers served.  
Drug information.

**Sunday, Aug. 11**

Found property.  
Agency assist: Fire Department.  
Agency assist: Fire Department.  
Parking complaint.

## THANK YOU

### Canoe team extends thanks for all the help with journey

It took us seven days to get from Wrangell to Juneau in the Paddle to Celebration 2024. We could not have even launched without you and your support. Gunalchéesh.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all the community supporters who donated money, and those who lent us gear, especially the U.S. Forest Service and Wrangell Cooperative Association. We extend our deepest gratitude to our friends and family who offered views, likes and shares, and cheers and prayers — you paddled with us.

The Wrangell-Petersburg Indian Association Canoe Team extends its deepest gratitude to Alaska Vistas, Richard and Melissa Rinehart, Alicia Armstrong, Alaska Waters, Petersburg Indian Association and especially to SEARHC — you paddled with us. Gunalchéesh.

And we are so grateful for the efforts hosting our landing, blessing and send-off to start the journey from Wrangell.

We offer our deepest gratitude to everyone

who donated food, everyone who cooked, everyone who donated cash and spent their time and worked on the event. Gunalchéesh.

We especially want to thank Danika Smalley, Christie Jamieson, Jeanie Arnold and Amber Wade. What you did for the canoe pullers was truly amazing. Gunalchéesh.

And for making the canoe landing possible, we send our deepest gratitude to The James and Elsie Nolan Center, American Legion Post 6, Wrangell Cooperative Association, St Philip's Episcopal Church, Wrangell Parks and Recreation, Alaska Native Sisterhood Association and the Wrangell harbormaster office. Gunalchéesh.

Thank you for helping us roll out the red carpet for our guests during the canoe landing. All of you truly demonstrated Wrangell's core value of hospitality. Gunalchéesh.

We are so indebted to so many for so much love they showed and hard work they put in. This community really came together and paddled as one. Gunalcheesh!

*The Wrangell-Petersburg  
Indian Association  
Canoe Journey Team*

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**FOR RENT**

Two-bedroom, office, two-bath, furnished and dog

friendly trailer. Saltwater view. Text only to 907-305-0464.

**HELP WANTED**

Johnson's Building Supply is accepting applications for the following position: Customer Service: Duties include counter sales, freight handling, customer deliveries, stocking

and inventory. Full-time position; will require working Saturdays. Valid Alaska driver's license, must be able to lift 50 lbs., forklift experience a plus, starting pay is DOE. Stop by Johnson's for an application.

**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 907-874-2301 or email [wrgsent@gmail.com](mailto:wrgsent@gmail.com).

**ADVERTISEMENT**

Do you have products to sell or have services to offer that you need to let folks know about? We can create your ad for the online and printed edition of the Wrangell Sentinel. Let us do the work for you so you can focus on other things. Contact Amber for pricing and more information at 907-874-2301 or email [wrgsent@gmail.com](mailto:wrgsent@gmail.com).

**CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL  
PUBLIC NOTICE  
Innovative Readiness Training Program**

The City and Borough of Wrangell intends to solicit assistance from the Department of Defense's Innovative Readiness Training Program (IRT). The assistance will include conducting a cold-water dive and salvage mission of a sunken tug and barge. The proposed assistance will take place in the vicinity of the 6-Mile deepwater port tidelands in calendar year 2025. Construction contractors, labor unions or private individuals who have questions or who wish to voice opposition to military assistance for this project may contact Mason Villarma, Borough Manager, City and Borough of Wrangell, at (907) 874-2381 or via e-mail at [mfvillarma@wrangell.com](mailto:mfvillarma@wrangell.com) no later than thirty (30) days after the first publication of this notice. Persons not filing comments within the time frame noted will be considered to have waived their objections to military assistance for this project.

Mason Villarma, Borough Manager  
City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

**Publish Aug. 14 and 28, 2024**



# Borough property development funds

Continued from page 1

sewer lines — and has no plans for the costly undertaking.

Without water and sewer lines, the lots would, for example, be a good storage location for boats, commercial fishing gear or equipment, said Borough Manager Mason Villarma.

Assuming all eight lots sell at their appraised value, which will be determined before the public sale, the proceeds would replenish the Industrial Construction Fund to an estimated \$675,000 balance next year, which could be used for future projects. The assembly created the fund in 1991, specifically to provide seed money and a continuous source of funds to develop borough land for industrial use.

Plans for development and sale of additional lots in the industrial subdivision of borough land would depend on buyer interest for this fall's eight lots, Villarma said.

The Residential Construction Fund is paying for installation of streets, water and sewer and electrical service to the Alder Top subdivision, with those costs estimated at more than \$2.5 million, Villarma reported last month.

The borough could recover about half of the development costs if all 20 lots sell at their appraised value, which will be determined and publicized before the public sale.

Even with the heavy spend to develop the former boarding school property, the account could end the fiscal year next June with about \$400,000, which the assembly could appropriate toward the next phase of putting in more residential lots at the property.

The assembly created the fund in 1992.

The Mill Property Development Fund is the largest of the three special accounts. The source of its original funding dates back to 1996, when Congress appropriated \$110 million to Southeast Alaska communities to spend as they chose to help build back their economies after the loss of the timber and pulp industry.

The borough dipped into the development fund in 2022 when it paid \$2.5 million to buy the former sawmill property from its private owners, who were looking to sell. The assembly decided the community would have a better chance of attracting a large-scale user — and new employer — for the property if the borough bought the roughly 40 acres intact rather than risk the owners might sell off the land in pieces.

The borough is leasing a small portion of the acreage to Juneau-based Channel Construction, which receives scrap metal at the site for its long-standing Southeast Alaska business of barging old vehicles and other metal out of state for recycling. The company pays \$27,000 a year on the five-year land lease.

The waterfront bulkhead at the property is in disrepair, and costly improvements would be needed for a permanent tenant or new owner, Villarma said.

Borough officials are in discussions with Alaska Marine Lines and Boyer Towing about possibly relocating their opera-

tions to the former mill site, moving out of the downtown staging area they lease from the borough. That would include moving the borough-owned barge ramp out of downtown to the 6-Mile property.

Opening up the area in front of the City Dock for other uses could be a plus for the community, specifically tourism-related businesses, Villarma said. "It's a viable sector of growth in our community."

But nothing would be rushed, with no plans to overwhelm the

community, he said, adding it would be a "steady, calculated growth in the tourism sector."

Besides opening up downtown waterfront acreage, another impetus for looking to move the barge loading and offloading facility is the condition of the barge ramp itself, Villarma said.

"The ramp is beyond its useful life, and while the flotation system was repaired in recent years," more spending will be needed to extend its life. "This is a good time to consider a new fa-

cility," he said.

To do its homework for putting in a new barge ramp, with mooring dolphins and other site work at the 6-Mile property, the borough is modeling how it might share costs with the barge lines on the project, the manager said.

If the municipality needs to raise money for its share of the

work, it could issue revenue bonds that would be paid back by lease fees on the facility, not property taxes, Villarma explained.

He said building a new barge landing could cost \$20 million if the borough contracted for the work, though the cost likely would be less if a private developer took on the project.



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