



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Luck of the draw

Brittani Robbins, chamber of commerce executive director, spun the drum and announced the winners Monday of the business group's back-to-school shopping event. Ben Howe won the children's drawing, with Della Churchill winning the adult category. Shoppers filled out a card and had their name added to the drum for the chance to win prizes, which were donated by Wrangell merchants. Close to 300 cards were entered in the drawing.

Schools will review mask requirement after first two weeks

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

The school board has decided to continue with its COVID-19 mitigation plan that requires students, staff and visitors to wear face masks in the buildings, though the policy will be reviewed again two weeks after classes begin.

The plan approved at the board meeting Monday evening calls for review of the masking protocols on a monthly basis.

Classes start Aug. 31. The next school board meeting is scheduled for Sept. 13.

"Masks will be required for students, staff and guests while in school or at school events," the plan now reads. "During outdoor school activities masks are required if unable to social distance," based upon the latest guidance from the federal Centers for Disease Control, community and school active case counts, and vaccination rates, according to the school district's COVID plan.

Borough officials reported 11 new COVID-19 cases in Wrangell on Monday and Tuesday, bringing to 22 the total number of new cases in the past two weeks.

Under the school district policy, visitors and volunteers will be required to wear masks while working with staff or students.

Face masks are required of all students on school buses, according to federal law.

"We thought that, for at least the first two weeks as we are still watching students return from travel as school starts, that masking guidelines would be one thing that we could establish while looking at our mitigation in other areas," Schools Superintendent Bill Burr said at Monday's board meeting.

"We are trying to make significant changes in the actual school building ... getting us more of a normalized classroom experience for our students,"

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Census shows 10% drop in Wrangell population

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

The U.S. Census Bureau says Wrangell lost 242 residents between 2010 and 2020 — about 10% of the community's population.

The borough doesn't believe it.

"We're very concerned that the numbers are inaccurate," Carol Rushmore, Wrangell's economic development director, said last Friday, a day after the bureau released the numbers that show 2,127 Wrangell residents as of the July 2020 count versus 2,369 in 2010.

"We're trying to understand if there is any recourse, trying to understand if we can appeal," Rushmore said.

The borough will reach out to Alaska's senior U.S. senator, Lisa Murkowski, to learn what options the community might have available.

The population count helps determine how a lot of government funding is allocated between communities, including federal payments in lieu of property taxes to boroughs in the Tongass National Forest. Wrangell this year is budgeted to receive \$460,000 in those federal

payments, which represent almost 10% of the borough's general fund revenues excluding pandemic relief aid.

"We're going to be doing a deeper dive" into the census tally, comparing them to residential utility hookups and other

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Governor says Alaskans need cash; OK to take it from the Permanent Fund

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

As legislators meet in special session this week, Gov. Mike Dunleavy continues to push his plan for much larger Permanent Fund dividends, saying "cash is the ultimate program" to help Alaskans.

"Cash in the form of the Permanent Fund dividend ... is really the answer to helping Alaskans and our private economy," the governor said in a prepared statement Monday, the day lawmakers went back to work in Juneau.

While promoting his plan to pay dividends almost double the average of

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COVID outbreak hits Wrangell, rest of Southeast

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

Statewide COVID-19 case counts continued climbing early this week, with Southeast communities some of the hardest hit — including Wrangell, with 11 new cases reported Monday and Tuesday.

Because of the high case counts, state public health officials are unable to keep up with the contact tracing workload, and anyone who has been or may have been in close contact with an infected person should quarantine and get tested for COVID as soon as possible, Wrangell borough officials said Tuesday evening.

"Whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, please consider wearing a mask" when indoors other than at home, the borough said.

Wrangell has reported 22 cases in the past two weeks.

Elsewhere in Southeast, Haines reported 75 cases between Aug. 6 and 16, after not having any reported cases since April.

"We got hit with it finally," Assembly member Gabe Thomas said at the Aug. 10 borough assembly meeting.

The number of new cases has more than doubled the community's total count since the pandemic tally started last March.

Skagway also was hit by a rash of new cases, with about 20 reported in two weeks through Aug. 16, a big increase from the 33 infections reported over the previous 16 months. "There is concern for community spread," the borough reported Monday.

Ketchikan had 98 active cases as of Monday. Of those, 17 were new infections reported Monday, along with two COVID-related resident deaths posted to the community virus data dashboard on Monday. Officials have reported five deaths in the past seven days.

Statewide, public health officials reported 1,499 new cases for Saturday through Tuesday, with 132 people in Alaska hospitals as of Tuesday morning — approaching the peak number of hospitalizations from last December.

State officials say the surge in cases is driven almost entirely by the Delta coronavirus variant.

Skagway's latest cases were traced to

community spread and community travel, not cruise ships, which first began arriving in town on June 11.

The community's only full-service grocery store closed last week after three employees tested positive for COVID. The store reopened on Saturday for limited hours. Face masks were required last week for all store employees and customers, according to a company official.

Masks also were required in all municipal buildings and many private businesses in Skagway.

After a restaurant employee tested positive at the end of July, a line four blocks long stretched out from the free testing site in Skagway.

The mayor last week recommended routine COVID-19 testing for anyone whose employment brings them into contact with the public, especially as large cruise ships are scheduled to call on Skagway for a couple more months.

In Haines, borough officials suspect the Southeast Alaska State Fair, which ran July

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Wrangell Roundup: Special Events

AMERICAN LEGION is giving backpacks filled with school supplies to children in the community who don't qualify for the backpacks that Tlingit and Haida will be distributing. Supply is limited. Call 907-470-0085 to sign up. Distribution is Saturday.

MUSIC IN THE PARKS 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 26, at the City Park main shelter. Scheduled sets 6 to 8 p.m., followed by an informal jam session. Bring your own snacks, chairs and, if you want, something to grill — organizers will build a fire. "If you play an

instrument, or sing, consider joining us for this fun event," sponsored by Wrangell Parks and Recreation. If you're interested in signing up for a 15-minute music set, call 874-2444.

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

BRAVE is hosting its fourth annual Family Resilience Fair noon to 2 p.m. Sept. 11 at the Nolan Center. Learn how your community can help your family. BRAVE.Wrangell@gmail.com or 907-204-0530.

WRANGELL SCHOOL DISTRICT registration is now open online. Aug. 30 is the first day of school for students.

NOLAN CENTER THEATER presents "The Green Knight," rated R, at 7 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$5 for children under age 12, for the adventure, drama and fantasy film that runs two hours and 10 minutes. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

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

WRANGELL PARKS & RECREATION is offering jiu jitsu classes on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays for ages 18 years and up. Registration is open; classes

start Aug. 24. Contact Parks and Recreation for more information, 874-2444.

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

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

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

Birthdays & Anniversaries

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

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

Friday, Aug. 20: Steve Chrisman, Mary Lou Churchill, Dan DeBoer, Leland Helgeson, Peter Helgeson, Cameron Jamieson, Charles Petticrew, Michael Szatko, Brayden Wilsie, Cherrith Young.

Saturday, Aug. 21: Trish Kohrt; Anniversary: James and Katherine George.

Sunday, Aug. 22: Talea Keller; Anniversary: Andrew and Eliza Feudner.

Monday, Aug. 23: Zane A. Kohrt; Anniversary: Kurt and Alana Young.

Tuesday, Aug. 24: Wayne Easterly, Lilian Grace, Archer Howell, Lynn Maxand, Kenny Royster; Anniversary: Dan and Pam Roope.

Wednesday, Aug. 25: Robert Draper, Jim Early, David Gillen, Kjell Nore Jr, Emma Welch; Anniversary: Ivan and Gina Simonek.

Thursday, Aug. 26: Kelsey Erickson, Drew Ann Hoyt, Curty Kautz, Kaleb Stough Rifenburg, Rebecca Smith, Tommy Rohr-Wickman.

Senior Center Menu

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

Friday, Aug. 20

Spaghetti, zucchini, salad, biscuit

Monday, Aug. 23

Hotcha baked beef, carrots, slaw, bun

Tuesday, Aug. 24

Chinese pork, zucchini, salad, rice

Wednesday, Aug. 25

BBQ chicken, vegetables, potato salad, biscuit

Thursday, Aug. 26

Baked fish, peas, salad, sweet potatoes

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

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

Ferry Schedule

Northbound

Friday, Aug. 20

Matanuska, 5:45 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 27

Matanuska, 2:45 p.m.

Friday, Sept. 3

Matanuska, 4:45 p.m.

Friday, Sept. 10

Matanuska, 4:15 p.m.

Friday, Sept. 17

Matanuska, 4:45 p.m.

Southbound

Monday, Aug. 23

Matanuska, 7:30 a.m.

Monday, Aug. 30

Matanuska, 6:15 a.m.

Monday, Sept. 6

Matanuska, 6:30 a.m.

Monday, Sept. 13

Matanuska, 6:30 a.m.

Monday, Sept. 20

Matanuska, 6:30 a.m.

All times listed are scheduled departure times.

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



TIDES

August 19-August 25

High Tides

Low Tides

	AM		PM		AM		PM	
	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft
Aug. 19	11:38	13.8	11:24	17.2	05:07	-0.7	05:08	4.1
Aug. 20	12:32	14.9	06:05	-1.8	06:08	3.1
Aug. 21	00:19	17.9	01:18	15.8	06:53	-2.5	06:58	2.1
Aug. 22	01:09	18.3	02:00	16.5	07:34	-2.7	07:34	1.5
Aug. 23	01:54	18.2	02:38	16.7	08:12	-2.4	08:22	1.1
Aug. 24	02:36	17.7	03:13	16.7	08:47	-1.7	09:01	1.1
Aug. 25	03:15	16.8	03:47	16.3	09:19	-0.7	09:38	1.3

Continuing Events

PARKS and RECREATION www.wrangellrec.com

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

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

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

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

Saturday

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

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

Weight room available by appointment and at reduced capacity:

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

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

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

Aug. 25, 1921

The Wrangell Pulp and Paper Co., composed of local people with eastern connections, is busy with plans for the establishment of a pulp and paper mill in the Wrangell District. This company has made application to the Federal Power Commission for a preliminary permit for power development on certain unnamed streams and lakes discharging into the head of McHenry Inlet on Etolin Island. The Wrangell Pulp and Paper Co. has had reports made on the multiple water power sites by Donald G Campbell of the well known engineering firm of Campbell, Wells & Elmdorf, of Seattle. Representatives of the U.S. Forest Service, under the direction of the Federal Power Commission, are now surveying the sites. As soon as permits are received from the Federal Power Commission the company will be in a position to go ahead with the project.

Aug. 23, 1946

Wrangell this week had its first freight boat in 23 days. The North Sea arrived Tuesday evening with 200 tons of freight, which was more than the normal load, but for weeks before its arrival stores had been short of merchandise and fresh meat, along with other commodities. It had been something only to dream about. The lack of boat service for Wrangell was discussed thoroughly yesterday at the Chamber of Commerce noon meeting. President James Nolan pointed out the tremendous loss to merchants when articles which they could sell, and which people need and want, are lying on the dock in Seattle instead of being on the shelves. As he emphasized, it is not a scarcity of items which causes the loss, it is the inability of getting them shipped up. The Wrangell chamber is going to put up a fight for better boat service. It is going to wire the War Shipping Administration, Alaska Line and Northland Line to ask for a boat a week, at least during the busy summer season. A town cannot build up and flourish without steady trade.

with Wrangellites' birthdays and anniversaries noted. A listing will cost 25 cents. Proceeds to help Wrangell students attend college at the rate of \$100 per semester. Students receiving help currently are Gil Urata, Larry Beebe, Mike Massin and Steve Urata.

Aug. 22, 1996

Dr. Ell Sorenson, Wrangell's schools superintendent, is in the inevitable position of trying to manage a district with declining enrollment. Last year there were approximately 550 students, and the school district is, odd as it may sound, hoping to lose at least 10 percent of its student body so that the state's "hold harmless" funding provision kicks in. That provision, designed to protect school districts from any drastic cuts in funding, specifies that if a school loses 10 percent of its students, it will still be given 75 percent of the funding for those students. This allows a shrinking school district to "deflate" gently rather than causing teacher layoffs or drastic cuts in programs. If the enrollment drop is less than 10 percent, there is no assistance. Sorenson has nothing but praise for Wrangell's teachers, and their knowledge of the "real world" outside the walls of academia. He notes that about 70 percent of Wrangell's graduates go on to college or vocational education.

Daylight Hours

Date	Sunrise	Sunset	Hours
Aug. 19	5:27a	8:16p	14:49h
Aug. 20	5:29a	8:14p	14:44h
Aug. 21	5:31a	8:11p	14:40h
Aug. 22	5:33a	8:09p	14:35h
Aug. 23	5:35a	8:06p	14:31h
Aug. 24	5:37a	8:04p	14:26h
Aug. 25	5:39a	8:01p	14:21h

Aug. 20, 1971

Members of the Wrangell Civic Women's Club will begin going door to door next week to sell listings on their 1972 scholarship birthday calendar. The project works like this: A Wrangell calendar is prepared

Mask policies differ among Alaska school districts

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

Petersburg schools will open Aug. 31 with face masks required for at least the first two weeks of the semester, reviewing the policy at the next school board meeting on Sept. 14.

Based on the high count of active COVID-19 cases in Ketchikan, schools there would open Aug. 26 with face masks required of all students, staff and visitors under a draft back-to-school plan subject to school board approval.

Ketchikan's mask requirement would shift to optional when the active case count in the community drops to five or fewer. The count was 98 active cases as of Monday.

Ketchikan's policy could shift at this week's school board meeting — the last meeting before classes start.

Juneau public schools opened to classes on Monday, with face masks required for everyone inside the building. Staff and students also will be asked to

undergo daily screenings, with testing for students who participate in group activities.

Skagway started school on Wednesday with face masks required. Haines is requiring masks for all students when classes start next Tuesday.

The Sitka School District policy, as of Aug. 13, requires face masks of all students and staff when at least eight COVID cases are reported in the community in the past 14 days. Sitka has been far above that number at high-alert status since cases spiked to record levels last month, though the numbers have been in decline the past couple of weeks.

In Sitka, 90 children through age 19 tested positive for the virus in July, and 17 more have tested positive through last Wednesday, according to Public Health Nurse Denise Ewing.

"Most of those children have varying degrees of symptoms. Some of it is just really minor. And some of it, some of those have had some of our children go to the hospital and be treated

for COVID in the emergency room," Ewing told public radio station KCAW last Friday.

Many of the Southeast communities' policies encountered strong support — and opposition — at school board meetings.

"This still is in progress and we haven't finished," Cheryl File, a member of the Petersburg school board, said at the Aug. 10 meeting. "It's not set in stone yet."

Face masks are optional at schools in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and Fairbanks North Star Borough, both with vaccination rates among eligible residents at far below the statewide number.

The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District started classes on Tuesday, with a policy that "highly recommends" but does not require students and staff wear a face covering while indoors, while requiring all visitors and volunteers to wear a face mask inside during the school day.

Anchorage School District Su-

perintendent Deena Bishop said she has no plans to reconsider a board-approved policy that requires students and staff to wear masks indoors after the mayor criticized the district decision.

The mayor, who took office July 1 after campaigning for the job on a no-masks, no-mandates platform, said in an Aug. 6 Facebook post that residents "should be free to make their own decisions about their health care, about their families, and about their children's education."

Mayor Dave Bronson added: "I strongly oppose the Anchorage School District's back to school mask mandate and strongly encourage them to immediately reconsider."

Alaska has recorded about 16,000 cases of COVID-19 in youth through age 19, with about 6,000 cases in children under age 10, according to data Monday from the state Department of Health and Social Services. Total cases in Alaska across all age groups since the count started last March was 77,774 as

of Tuesday.

Face masks will be required indoors at all University of Alaska buildings in communities with "high" or "substantial" transmission under the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines — which covers almost the entire state as of this week.

The university is not requiring students to wear a mask in their housing units, but it is requiring proof of vaccination for students in dorms and apartments on the Juneau and Anchorage campuses.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Mask policy

Continued from page 1

Burr said.

The masking requirement was part of the school district policy adopted in June. In preparation for reviewing that policy, the school district conducted a community-wide survey earlier this month, asking parents, students and community members for their opinions on masking and other school operations.

The survey results, which were presented at Monday's board meeting, showed that out of 79 responses, 45 were either "somewhat" or "extremely" displeased with the mask policy; 21 people were pleased with the requirement; and the rest had no opinion.

Counting survey responses from only parents, 24 out of 45 said they felt mask-wearing should be a choice instead of a mandate.

A student survey, completed by 15 high school students, also showed that half of the respondents felt that masks should be optional. The majority said last year's mitigation practices affected their education.

In addition to reviewing the survey results, the school board received several letters from community members in opposition to keeping the mask mandate in place.

Penny Allen wrote that masks, and vaccinations, should be optional and the decisions left up to students, parents and staff.

Bruce Smith wrote that he doubted the effectiveness of masks at preventing COVID-19 infections.

The board also received a petition signed by 26 community members, stating that masking should be optional.

Aaron Angerman, school board president, said a lot could change in a month before the board takes another look at the COVID plan at its Sept. 13 meeting, noting that the district can always change its policy.

"I know we have a very divided community as far as folks who support masks, folks who don't want masks," board member Laura Ballou said. "The most important thing for me, as a board member, is I want the kids in school. I want to do everything I possibly can to ensure we keep the kids in school, that they get back to as much normalcy as possible."

Ferry sailing canceled last week due to crew shortage

By SENTINEL STAFF

The Alaska Marine Highway System has been advertising statewide since June in a concerted effort to recruit new crewmembers for the vessels, though help did not arrive in time when the LeConte had to cancel its northbound sailing out of Juneau on Aug. 11 due to a crew shortage.

The cancellation "stems from a system-wide crew shortage," Sam Dapcevich, public information officer for the ferry system, told the Chilkat Valley News in Haines.

The one-day cancellation disrupted

travel plans for 84 people who were traveling to Haines or Skagway, according to public radio reports.

The vessel resumed its normal schedule the next day, fully staffed with 24 crew.

On Aug. 11, two crew members reported feeling ill, and replacement workers were not available for the sailing.

"The ship's captain evaluated the shortage and made a decision to cancel the sailing" due to an unsafe staffing level, Dapcevich told CoastAlaska public radio. The crew members did not have COVID-like symptoms and were not tested for the

coronavirus, the state said.

The ferry system — which is budgeted this year for about 500 full-time, part-time and temporary employees aboard the operating fleet of the LeConte, Matanuska, Kennicott, Aurora and Tustemena — had hired about 50 new employees as of last week. However, the new employees were waiting on U.S. Coast Guard certification or other paperwork to report for work, Dapcevich said.

Ferry employees this summer report they have been asked to stay on board for

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GET TO KNOW US

The Wrangell Chamber of Commerce
and the Wrangell Sentinel
invite you to a chamber members-only luncheon

Get to know the new chamber executive director
and staff

.....

And meet with the entire Sentinel team
and ask all the questions you want of the publisher

NOON SUNDAY, AUG. 29
AT THE STIKINE INN



WRANGELL SENTINEL

FROM THE PUBLISHER

We should have learned more in 20 years

By LARRY PERSILY
Publisher

Just over 20 years ago, half of the Alaska House of Representatives banded together — Democrats and Republicans, urban and rural — in a concerted push to balance the budget, raise new revenues and put the state on a path to a long-term, fiscally responsible future.

They called themselves the Fiscal Policy Caucus, and even wore lapel pins of an open umbrella to signify that the rainy day had arrived and Alaskans needed to protect themselves from falling oil revenues.

They studied the math, debated the issues, held public meetings across the state, and agreed to a plan that raised new revenues, protected the dividend and used a portion of Permanent Fund earnings to pay for public services — yes, the same unresolved fights still before legislators today.

The members were divided between sales tax and income tax advocates and, of course, no-tax advocates, along with supporters of higher oil taxes, promoters of big dividends and those who wanted to scale back the annual payments to Alaskans. There were budget cutters and budget builders in the room.

But they all agreed on one thing: The state was running out of time to kick the piggybank down the road, hoping something would spill out to pay the bills. After several organizing meetings, they pledged that while members could argue for their cause, grumble and gripe, groan and grimace, in the end everyone in the room would support the overall plan, even if they did not like all of the pieces.

They came out of their meetings unified. It was

a class in civics and public policy. Compromise, not demands. Trading ideas, not political hostages.

Yet, despite their hard work and political courage, House and Senate leadership patted the children on the head and said don't bother us, and certainly don't call us and we won't call you. The leaders said the plan was politically unpopular, the Senate wasn't interested in making decisions, and besides, there's always next year.

And now, 20 years later, the state is still knee deep in the mushy muskeg of a well-traveled political trail that should have been rebuilt long ago. Too many leaders, including Gov. Mike Dunleavy, took every fork in the fiscal trail but the right one, and never laid down enough planks to improve the trail.

This isn't a matter of misreading the signs, it's about only seeing the signs of the next election.

And now, 20 years later, instead of compromise we see too many legislators — and the governor — each issue their lists of demands about the dividend, taxes, constitutional amendments, spending limits, seats at the table, chairs on the dance floor.

If this month's special session of the Legislature is going to accomplish anything, if next year's legislative session is going to accomplish anything, if whoever wins the 2022 race for governor is going to do anything, Alaska's elected leaders need to study up on compromise and accept that what's best for the state may not be precisely what they want.

Better to stand under the umbrella than to get soaked in the rain because you're too stubborn to share.

Census

Continued from page 1

numbers available to the community, Rushmore said.

In addition, she said, the federal count doesn't match up with Alaska Department of Labor numbers, which the state, and Wrangell, use in between the federal census that is conducted every 10 years.

Working off the 2010 census for Wrangell of 2,369 residents, the Labor Department's Research and Analysis Division's annual estimates over the next 10 years peaked at 2,459 in 2016 before declining slightly to 2,379 for 2020.

State analysts look at Permanent Fund dividend applications, birth and death rates, people leaving and moving to Alaska and other statistics in compiling their annual estimates.

Much of Rushmore's concerns over the accuracy of the census tally in Wrangell stems back to last spring, when the pandemic disrupted in-person counting, and residents received possibly conflicting Census Bureau instructions to complete a form online.

"The question is, was everybody really counted," she said, or did the door-to-door census takers who returned later in the

summer miss people or find some unresponsive because residents thought they already had reported online, even if maybe their data wasn't tallied because of faulty Census Bureau instructions.

Wrangell is not alone in losing population over the past decade, according to the bureau. The count showed population drops in Haines (2,508 to 2,080), Sitka (8,881 to 8,458), and Prince of Wales/Hyder (6,172 to 5,753).

The census showed population gains in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough (13,477 to 13,948 in 2020), Petersburg (3,203 to 3,398), Skagway (968 to 1,240), and the Hoonah-Angoon area (2,149 to 2,365).

Overall, Alaska's population grew from 710,231 in 2010 to 733,391 in 2020, the Census Bureau reported. The state Labor Department estimate for 2020, however, shows a declining population the past four years, down to 728,903 in last July's estimate.

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough north of Anchorage gained the most people in the past decade, according to U.S. Census data. The sprawling borough anchored by the communities of

Wasilla and Palmer gained 18,086 residents between 2010 and 2020, a growth rate of just over 20%, Census Bureau figures show, putting the borough at 107,081 residents.

The Fairbanks North Star Borough lost the most people in the past decade, nearly 2,000 residents, dropping down to 95,655 residents.

Losing or gaining residents is especially important as the Alaska Redistricting Board is working to redraw legislative district boundaries, based on the 2020 census count. The board announced in April that the target population for each of Alaska's 40 House districts will be 18,335 residents, with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough expected to gain a House seat — which will come at the expense of other areas of the state.

Wrangell currently shares a House District with Ketchikan, Metlakatla, Hyder and the Prince of Wales Island community of Hydaburg.

The new legislative maps would take effect for the 2022 election.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

EDITORIAL

Governor's fiscal plan not very businesslike

For years, critics of state finances have said government should run more like a business. OK, let's see how that works.

When companies are short of revenue, they first look at how to boost sales. Makes good financial sense to go out and attract more business, draw in new customers, maybe even raise prices while staying competitive.

And companies look at their expenses. Are there better ways to run the operation that would save money.

The absolutely last thing a well-run company would do is pay out more of its dwindling cash to shareholders. Higher dividends are paid from profits, not dreams. Higher dividends can force cash-short companies to borrow money. Higher dividends put short-term financial pleasure over long-term financial stability.

But that is exactly what Gov. Mike Dunleavy has proposed and continues to promote, despite the fact that the state is like a company with falling revenues and no growth.

The governor's entire plan for Alaska to balance its budget, pay for schools, troopers and other services is based first on handing out bigger Permanent Fund dividends to Alaskans who just might decide to say "thank you" by voting for the governor in his reelection bid. It was his plan when he won the job in 2018 and that's his story and he's sticking to it for 2022.

It's not vote-buying in the Chicago way of decades ago, but it's dishonest all the same. At least Chicago politicians tried to hide their tactics. Dunleavy promotes Big Fat Dividends as the mandatory first step in a long-term fiscal plan for Alaska's future, telling a reporter that the Legislature needs to take up his proposal to cram the dividend into the state constitution. Only after that, the governor said, would he "look at other things that need to be looked at."

Wouldn't a well-run company look at revenues before doubling the size of its annual dividend, as Dunleavy has proposed.

Shouldn't the governor first look to build the economy before he drains the treasury? He could look to new revenues, particularly from non-residents who take jobs in the state. The Alaska Labor Department's latest analysis (2019) showed that 15% of the wages paid went to non-resident workers.

The governor could look to boosting revenues from the more than 1.5 million visitors who came to Alaska pre-pandemic and, hopefully, will return.

He could agree to support the first increase in the state motor fuel tax in half a century.

The governor could do a lot better than just campaigning on bigger dividends and figuring out later how to pay the bills. No smart company would do it that way.

— Wrangell Sentinel

Ferry

Continued from page 3

back-to-back assignments to help maintain adequate staffing levels.

"Given our overall fleet-wide crew shortage, we do see the possibility of more 'no sailings' or sailings being canceled due to this shortage," Dapcevic told public radio. "But considering the high number of vacancies that we have, our employees are doing a great job keeping the system operating."

Starting wage for a steward aboard the ships is \$21.36 per

hour for Alaska residents.

The state has reduced ferry service in recent years, with unions complaining that less work makes it harder to keep crew from leaving for other jobs. Though deck officers, engineers and other licensed crews have guaranteed hours, unlicensed crew members such as stewards, pursers and cooks often are laid off in the winter.

The Alaska Marine Highway System did not respond to requests for more information on staffing levels, vacancies and recruitment numbers.

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Borough approves cell tower lease at landfill

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

After a two-week delay due to an incomplete property appraisal, the borough assembly has approved the lease for a new cell tower. The first tenant of the new tower near the city landfill will be Verizon Wireless, though additional carriers could be added later.

The lease was delayed from the assembly's July 27 meeting to wait for the appraisal. Lease fees on borough land are based on property value. The lease will be \$645 a month.

The payments to the borough will increase if more cell providers are added to the tower.

The assembly approved the lease unanimously at its Aug. 11 meeting.

The assembly in July approved a lease amendment for a taller cell tower to replace an existing pole at Shoemaker Bay. The new tower at the landfill and taller tower at Shoemaker are intended to improve cell coverage in the area.

Some community members have questioned the health risks of the radio signals transmitted from cell towers, including Rosemary Ruoff, who told the assembly Aug. 11 that she is worried about possible health risks to people living near the landfill tower, and that she did not trust the experts who said it would be safe.

A health physicist working for the tower developer told the planning and zoning commission in June that people living close to the tower would experience "one microwatt per centimeter squared. ... That's about 3,300 times less than the public limit."

There was also some concern among assemblymembers Aug. 11 that the tower might interfere with radio station KSTK's signal from its transmitter at the landfill building, or possibly even public safety radios. Fire Chief Tim Bunes said he did not think that was anything to worry about, as the cell phone signals operate on a much different frequency than fire department radios.

Shoemaker will get new net repair float

By SENTINEL STAFF

The borough has awarded contracts for a new 75-foot-long net repair float at Shoemaker Bay, which will be 99% covered by federal and state funds.

The float used by fishermen at the harbor has been in terrible shape for some time, Mayor Steve Prysunka said at the Aug. 11 assembly meeting, where members approved the two contracts.

The estimated cost for the float project, and additional electrical work, is roughly \$128,000. With a \$46,000 federal grant after the 2016 pink salmon disaster declaration, and almost \$81,000 from a state grant,

Wrangell will only have to use about \$1,000 of its own harbor maintenance funds, according to a staff presentation for the assembly meeting.

The contracts were awarded to Petersburg-based Tamico, at \$64,000, and Johnson's Building Supply, of Wrangell, at \$55,686. Johnson's will supply the lumber and hardware for the project, while Tamico will supply the steel-framed net float.

The decking will be installed by harbor staff.

Harbormaster Steve Miller said in an early July interview that he hoped to see the job done by early spring.

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Jade Balansag encourages students to look for opportunities

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

Wrangell High School graduate Jade Balansag is getting her opportunity to start classes Aug. 30 at George Washington University in the nation's capital. And she is doing it with yet another honor, named last week as one of seven Local Heroes in Alaska.

Her advice to other Wrangell students is to look for their opportunities in life.

"Don't be afraid to try something new, don't be afraid to fail," the 18-year-old said. "I've basically had the same philosophy awhile now, not to be afraid and to say yes to opportunities."

No doubt change can be scary, she said. "But with change comes growth."

Balansag, who plans to study biomedical engineering, praised her community. "There is a giant support system in Wrangell."

The Local Heroes honor

comes with a \$1,500 scholarship. The award program is in its 11th year as a partnership between Alaska Communications and Boys & Girls Clubs of Alaska.

In naming her as one of Alaska's young Local Heroes, the telecommunications company cited Balansag's role as part of the support system in Wrangell.

"After three suicide attempts by fellow students ... Jade took action. She had difficult conversations with school staff, and challenged adults and peers to find ways make school a warm and inviting place," the award announcement said.

"School staff attempted to create a peer helpers group (students trained to assist peers in crisis)," Bob Davis, assistant principal at the high school, wrote in his nominating letter. "However, the peer helpers



group went rogue, rejecting the staff's vision of their group. Instead, they wanted a more holistic approach, an approach focused on prevention."

Davis explained, "The stu-

"Don't be afraid to try something new, don't be afraid to fail."

Jade Balansag
Wrangell High School
graduate

dents believed they could have a greater impact by improving the school's overall climate and atmosphere." Balansag and her fellow students "regrouped and renamed themselves" last year, building BASE (Building a Supportive Environment)," he said.

"Jade believes that the issues we face in terms of student suicide and depression are rooted in

apathy — apathy in the students and apathy in the adults and the community at large. ... She is a role model, not only for her fellow students but for adults who work with her," Davis wrote.

She moved from the Philippines to Wrangell with her family in 2011, when her father, Vincent, went to work at the hospital. But when his work visa expired, the family had to return to the Philippines for most of 2017, causing Balansag to miss much of her freshman year at the high school.

"Jade quickly earned her missing credits, found herself elected as student body president, and graduated with more than 30 college credits," Davis wrote. She graduated in May as class salutatorian. "I particularly admire her determination ... and the fact that she wears her idealism on her sleeve."

Assembly takes first step to add deputy manager

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

Acknowledging that it's not easy to run the borough as more projects are added to the borough manager's work list, the assembly has decided it may be time to add a deputy manager at city hall.

The assembly at a workshop Aug. 11 directed Manager Lisa Von Barga to start toward creating the new position, though final approval will be up to the assembly.

"This has been in discussion for well over, I believe, three years," Mayor Steve Prysunka said. "I'm just going to generally state that this position, at least my understanding, is not necessarily an assistant to the city manager in the classic sense. ... This is an assistant manager who would carry their own platform and portfolio of work, and work independently at a much higher level than a traditional assistant."

Assemblymember Patty Gilbert said consideration of the new position came up again during their recent evaluation of the borough manager. The assembly wants to try and create the new position, she said, as more and more projects get added to the city's plate.

"Lisa never asked for this, this is what we said three years ago we wanted," Prysunka said. And though Von Barga had previously voiced reservations about the idea, the assembly still wants to move forward, the mayor said.

"You absolutely are accurate that I have had concerns about this," Von Barga told the assembly. "That being said, there are a number of things that could get done far more efficiently if there was someone tasked with doing them."

There was some discussion among assembly members how the position would work,

Continued on page 7

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State resumes rural power subsidy after judge rules against governor

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

Gov. Mike Dunleavy has decided not to appeal after a judge ruled against his interpretation of state law that would have stopped assistance payments toward utility bills in almost 200 small communities across Alaska.

A state court judge on Aug. 11 sided with a coalition including the Alaska Federation of Natives and electric cooperatives that had sued Dunleavy to force release of the money.

The governor announced the next day he would not appeal the court decision.

This year's estimated \$32 million in payments will help reduce electricity bills for more than 82,000 Alaskans in about 29,000 households, though even with the state aid most of the utility bills are still substantially higher than elsewhere in the state.

Participating Southeast communities include Kake, Angoon, Hoonah, Prince of Wales Island communities and other smaller towns.

The assistance is paid out of the Power Cost Equalization fund, established by the Legislature in 1984 as a matter of fairness after the state had put hundreds of millions of dollars into hydroelectric projects to serve Anchorage, the Kenai Peninsula and Fairbanks, Wrangell, Petersburg, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Valdez and Glenallen.

Superior Court Judge Josie Garton ruled against Dunleavy's interpretation of state law that the nearly \$1.2 billion Power Cost Equalization Endowment Fund was not available for legislative appropriation without a three-quarters majority vote of lawmakers.

Dunleavy, on advice of his attorney general and budget director — both of whom have since left state service — determined in 2019 that the PCE fund would be swept into the state's budget reserve account, unavailable for general appropriation, unless lawmakers reversed the move each year in a three-quarters vote. His decision was contrary to actions by every governor since the PCE fund was created.

Though many legislators disagreed with the governor's decision, in 2019 and 2020 lawmakers managed to achieve the three-quarters vote to protect the rural energy payments. However, they failed to win enough votes this year among political squabbles over the size of the Permanent Fund dividend.

The judge rejected the governor's view, ruling that lawmakers legally appropriated the PCE payments by a majority vote and the money should be distributed.

The state-owned Alaska Energy Authority, which helps administer the program, said Aug. 12 that it would issue payments as soon as utilities submit their applications. The program pays the utilities, not consumers.

Dunleavy's actions have also blocked payments under a state college scholarship program that serves almost 5,500 students. The governor believes it takes a three-quarters majority vote of legislators to maintain that account, too, but the scholarship program was not part of the lawsuit over the rural energy payments.

The governor did not address the scholarship program when he announced he would not pursue an appeal of the court ruling in the energy subsidies court case.



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Devlyn Campbell and his teammates on the high school cross-country team ran through a practice session Monday starting at the high school, running three laps around the nature trail and then back to the school.

Cross-country team gets ready for season

By SENTINEL STAFF

Most of last year's runners are back for the high school cross-country team, with some freshmen joining the squad too, the coach said. Practice is underway and the first meet will be sometime in September.

"It's really nice to have some younger kids join the team. I've got most of my kiddos back, so that's great," said coach Mykayla Rooney, in her second year.

This year's team consists of 15 runners, but a few need to take their physicals before they can start running, Rooney said.

"I only had two or three seniors last year, so I've got most of my team back," she said. "And I've got some freshmen who are joining."

Last year was challenging for the team, as the COVID-19 pandemic was taking off at the same time as the season was scheduled. There were a lot of virtual meets. While virtual meets are not the plan this season, there still is a chance they could happen, Rooney said.

"Our first meet is scheduled for Sept. 4 in Metlakatla, but it sounds like they're on lockdown right now, so we might just be doing a virtual meet," Rooney said.

Whether their first meet is in Metlakatla or virtual, the coach said the team's first home meet is scheduled for Sept. 11.

"It's really nice to have some younger kids join the team."

- Mykayla Rooney,
Coach

Planning underway for Family Resilience Fair Sept. 11

By SENTINEL STAFF

The community group BRAVE (Building Respect and Valuing Everyone) is making plans for its fourth annual Family Resilience Fair, scheduled for noon to 2 p.m. Sept. 11 at the Nolan Center.

The intent of the event "is to make people aware of the resources available" for dealing with stress, food insecurity, maintaining healthy relation-

ships and more. "Learn how your community can help your family," according to BRAVE.

The event will include tables staffed by nonprofits, government agencies and service providers, said organizer Kay Larson. Admission will be free.

The fair also will include a baby shower of sorts for all the children born in the past year, Larson said.

"The event will be resched-

uled should it need to be canceled due to COVID-19 concerns," she said.

BRAVE was founded in 2017 "to provide advocacy for healthy relationships in our community through prevention programs, resource referral and community engagement."

For more information about the family fair, call 907-204-0530 or email BRAVE.Wrangell@gmail.com.

Deputy manager

Continued from page 6

whether the deputy manager would report to Von Bargaen or work fully independently of her. It could cause some confusion, she said as an example, if somebody came to her with a request but could then go around her to the deputy manager if they did not like the manager's answer.

"I would be entirely uncomfortable and would not function in a situation where you brought in somebody to be a peer of mine," Von Bargaen said. "The buck stops with one person and that person is me."

Von Bargaen suggested the deputy manager could be in a position higher up than city department heads, but still re-

port to her.

Though no formal decision was made in the workshop, Prysunksa said the manager had assembly direction to start moving forward with creating the new position.

Von Bargaen said she would open up the position to in-house hiring first, to which assembly members gave their general approval.

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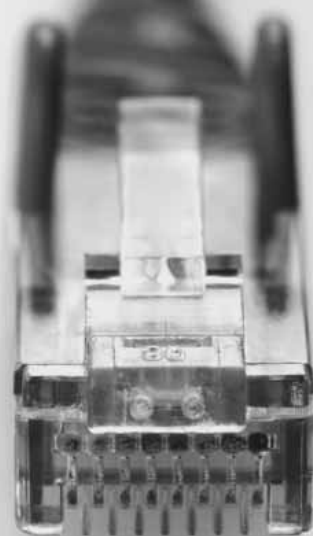
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Crews retrieve plane crash wreckage

ANCHORAGE (AP) - Improved weather conditions Aug. 11 allowed crews to access the site where a sightseeing plane crashed last week near Ketchikan, killing six people.

Clint Johnson, head of the National Transportation Safety Board's Alaska division, said the wreckage would be brought to Ketchikan.

A pilot and five passengers died in the crash on Aug. 5. The passengers were off a

cruise ship and had taken the flight to nearby Misty Fjords National Monument.

The plane crashed on the side of a mountain in a heavily forested, steep area at 1,800- to 2,000-foot elevation, Johnson has said.

The site is about 22 miles northeast of Ketchikan.

The bodies were recovered Aug. 7, but poor weather delayed retrieval of the plane. NTSB investigators have been working on the investigation of the cause of the accident.

OBITUARY

Lucille Merrill, 'always the explorer,' dies at 85

Lucille Margaret Merrill, age 85, passed away at Providence Hospital in Anchorage on July 21.

Lucille was born in Tacoma, Washington, in 1935. It wasn't long before her adventurous family took on a project that would define her life. They built a boat and sailed to Alaska on a summer voyage. One of their stops was Wrangell, and they fell in love and decided to stay and work commercial fishing.

While attending school, she would spend her summers with her family fishing. Thinking she was missing out on island life, at 16, she convinced her parents to let her spend her summer in town. Her strong work ethic landed her a job at the shrimp cannery, where she tried to keep up with the well-seasoned locals and enjoyed listening to their tales.

She graduated from Wrangell High School in 1954 and married her high school sweetheart, Skip McKibben, in 1956. They traveled to California to attend Humboldt State College, returning to Wrangell in the summers to work, and graduated in 1961.

"Always the explorer and adventurer, there are few bays or mountaintops on the entire Alaska coast that Lucille did not explore," her family wrote. "She loved the Stikine wilderness and relished her time exploring its tributaries."

Lucille was remembered as a young woman running a skiff somewhere remote by herself. While raising three children, she kept busy commercial fishing, working in the school system as a secretary and climbing mountains. She also was an excellent hunter and marksman.

In 1970 she married Ira Merrill and spent the next 45 years commercial fishing (trolling, longlining and shrimping), and collaborating on many of Ira's artistic endeavors.

Lucille was a talented artist. Although humble in her accomplishments, she mastered painting, drawing, beading and sewing furs. She loved talking to others about their art and was a constant encourager, and enthusiastically enabled all artists.



Lucille Merrill

After retiring from fishing, she devoted her time as a great animal advocate. Lucille spent many hours rescuing and finding new homes for cats, dogs and other critters.

"We all remember Lucille as endlessly energetic, often outlasting her grandchildren in sledding or fort building. She was thoughtful, helping others with their needs, and supported many conservation efforts," her family wrote. "Lucille was an exceptionally kind soul with never a negative word to say, and her smile would light up the world. Lucille will be missed by all that knew her."

Lucille was preceded in death by her parents Gene and Lib Fisher, her husband Ira Merrill, and daughter Rhonda McKibben.

Lucille is survived by her children Brenda Schwartz-Yeager (John Yeager), of Wrangell; Michael Summerfield, of California; and grandchildren Emily Klosterman, Michael Schwartz, Lauren Yeager, Connor Yeager and Brian Schwartz

"Lucille expressed that she did not wish a memorial service on her behalf, so instead, please thoughtfully consider doing some of the things that she enjoyed. Take food to someone in need, compost and recycle, be kind to animals, and spending time enjoying nature." Consider donating to Saint Frances Animal Rescue <https://gofund.me/3707c08d>.

Alaska Fish Factor

By LAINE WELCH
Fisheries columnist

Flashing underwater lights show promise in reducing bycatch

Bycatch gives Alaska's otherwise stellar fisheries management its biggest black eye.

The term refers to unwanted sea creatures taken in trawls, pots, lines and nets when boats are going after other targeted catches. Bycatch is the bane of existence for fishermen, seafood companies and policy makers alike, yet few significant advances have been found to mitigate the problem.

A simple fix has recently shed light on a solution.

"Ten underwater LED lights can be configured to light up different parts of the fishing gear with six different colors, intensity and flash rates to attract, repel or guide fish through the gear while retaining the target catches," said Dan Watson, CEO and co-founder of SafetyNet Technologies, based in the U.K, which provides its Pisces light system to fisheries around the globe.

"The different light characteristics affect different species in different ways," he added. "For instance, green light is really effective for reducing turtle bycatch in gillnets. Blue lights flashing at a particular rate can deter haddock and drive them away. This programmability

means that you can use it for a number of different species and in different circumstances as well."

The Pisces lights are powered by a wireless charger, require no plugs or batteries, automatically turn on underwater only when needed, and do not weaken or weigh down nets.

Watson began working on the lights in 2009 when he was a student at Glasgow University and doing research with the Aberdeen Marine Laboratory.

"They had a paper that had been in their library for about 40 years from a researcher who had been shining flashlights into fish tanks and seeing that some species would react quite strongly, some would come toward them, some would move away, and others just weren't bothered at all," he said.

After working in partnership with scientists and fishermen, the first batch of Pisces lights was tested in 2015 in fisheries in Europe and the usage has since spread to the U.S. and other regions.

A 2015-2018 study on small-scale fishing vessels in Peru, for example, showed that LED

Continued on page 9

Police report

Monday, Aug. 9

Disorderly conduct.
Suspicious circumstance.
Disorderly conduct.

Tuesday, Aug. 10

Disturbance: Unfounded.
Dog at large: Citation issued.
Vehicle unlock.
Welfare check.

Wednesday, Aug. 11

Domestic disturbance:
Unfounded.
Found property.
Vacation check.
Hit and run.
Parking complaint.
Citizen report: Driver under the influence; arrested for driving under influence and driving with license suspended/revoked.
Animal complaint: Deer versus car.

Thursday, Aug. 12

Agency assist: Alarm.
Motor vehicle accident: No injuries.
Agency assist: U.S. Forest Service.
Agency assist: Harbor Department.
Hazardous play.
Noise complaint.

Traffic warning given for passengers riding in the back of a vehicle.

Citizen report: Driver under the influence; unfounded.
Welfare check.

Friday, Aug. 13

Vehicle unlock.
Illegal dumping.
Motor vehicle accident.
Citizen assist.

Saturday, Aug. 14

Agency assist: Ambulance.
Citizen assist.
Hazardous play.
Animal complaint.
Traffic stop.

Sunday, Aug. 15

Assault.
Agency assist: Transportation Security Administration.
Trespass
Trespass.
Civil matter.
Agency assist: Electrical.
Agency assist: Ambulance.
Civil standby.

During this reporting period there were eight subpoenas served and five agency assists for the Hoonah Police Department.

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WRANGELL SENTINEL

Fish Factor

Continued from page 8

lights on gillnets reduced bycatch of sea turtles in gillnet fisheries by more than 70%, and by over 66% for dolphins and porpoises, while not reducing the take of target species.

The lights also reduced bycatch of seabirds in gillnets by about 85%.

The study, by the University of Exeter and the conservation organization ProDelphinus, concluded that "Sensory cues — in this case LED lights — are one way we might alert such species to the presence of fishing gear in the water."

A 2020 study by Mark Lomeli of the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission in collaboration with the Northwest Fisheries Science Center showed that lights directed chinook salmon to escape panels in trawl nets in the Pacific hake fishery, the largest groundfish fishery on the West Coast. Eighty-six percent of escaped chinook used the well-lit, LED-framed openings, and the data suggest the lights can increase salmon escapes overall.

And since 2018, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission has required the use of lighting devices on the footropes of shrimp trawls. Sea trials showed that bycatch of eulachon was reduced by over 90% by weight, juvenile rockfish takes dropped by 78%, flatfish bycatch was reduced by nearly 70% and the loss of targeted shrimp was statistically non-significant at 0.7%.

"You don't need the lights to cover the entire panel on a massive net, it might be that you put them along the footrope or the headline or even potentially in the wings," Watson said. "We generally supply fishing vessels with around 10 lights and a couple of charging cases to keep them going."

"In Europe we're working with agencies to try and get the required scientific evidence for them to start to legislate the use of lights," he said. "It's still sort of in the early days. ... It takes a while to get into that adoption phase and that's where we're working at the moment."

Since May, the SafetyNet Tech team has been collaborating with the Alaska Ocean Cluster, a project of the Bering Sea Fishermen's Association, to identify captains and vessel owners interested in bringing the light show to Alaska, particularly aboard Bering Sea trawlers.

"SNTech is a great example of the opportunities we're see-

ing across the seafood and marine technology landscape," said Garrett Evridge, Alaska Ocean Cluster managing director of research and administration.

More COVID funds

Alaska fishermen and other businesses can soon apply for a new \$90 million pool of federal pandemic money that will be distributed by the state. Grant money for the program comes from the federal American Rescue Plan Act.

The Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development announced last week that applications will open sometime this fall and recipients will be chosen "based on demonstrated need."

Eligible fishing businesses include commercial fishermen who held a limited entry permit or interim entry permit in 2019 and 2020.

Applicants must be based in Alaska, have revenue between \$10,000 and \$50 million in 2019, filed taxes in 2019 and 2020, and be able to show they lost at least 50% of their net income as a result of the pandemic. Nonprofits are not eligible to apply.

Applications will be split into three groups, based on the size of their businesses. Each group will be eligible for up to 80% of their documented income loss, up to a cap of \$1 million. Applicants will be required to say how they intend to spend the money, which will be distributed as a grant that does not have to be repaid.

The funds must be spent on past, current, or future business costs and may not be retained or invested.

Find more information at the state Commerce Department website.

Fish board lineup

The state Board of Fisheries is planning on in-person meetings this fall after months of delay due to the COVID-19 pandemic. By this past March, the board was scheduled to have finished up 275 proposals for Southeast Alaska, Prince William Sound and statewide shellfish fisheries.

The meeting cycle addresses management issues for commercial, sport, subsistence and personal-use fisheries in state waters for specific regions every three years.

A work session is set for Oct. 20-21 in Anchorage. The board will meet Jan. 4-15 in Ketchikan to address Southeast and Yakutat fish and shellfish issues.



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Laughs and lunches

Michael Cook (from left), Alexis Easterly, Jenna Eastaugh, Hailey Cook and Gavin Hunt enjoy Monday afternoon, relishing the sun as they catch up during their last days of summer break before classes start Aug. 30.

Former governor Walker wants the job back

JUNEAU (AP) - Former governor Bill Walker announced plans Tuesday to run for the job again in 2022 and said his former labor commissioner, Heidi Drygas, would be his running mate.

Walker dropped his 2018 reelection bid just weeks before the November election after the resignation of his lieutenant governor, Byron Mallott, disrupted the campaign.

Republican Mike Dunleavy won the 2018 race against Democrat Mark Begich, who was trying to return to elected office after losing his reelection bid for the U.S. Senate in 2014.

Dunleavy recently filed a letter of intent to seek reelection.

Next year's elections in Alaska will be held under an entirely new format, with the top four vote-getters in the August primary moving to the November general election, and candidates for governor and lieutenant governor running as a team in the primary.

The primary will be open to all candidates in one pool. A 2020 voter initiative that set up the new election structure eliminated the traditional political party primaries.

Drygas said both she and

Walker are independents.

Walker, who served as governor from 2014 to 2018, said he decided to run after hearing concerns from Alaskans that issues facing the state are not being fixed. Debate over a long-term fiscal policy to pay for public services and the future of the annual Permanent Fund dividend paid to residents were key issues when Walker was governor and remain so, with Dunleavy and legislators again debating the issues this week during a third special session of the Legislature underway in Juneau.

Canada will require vaccinations of all air travelers

TORONTO (AP) - The Canadian government will soon require all air travelers and passengers on inter-provincial trains to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

That includes all commercial air travelers, passengers on trains between provinces and cruise ship passengers, Transport Minister Omar Alghabra said Aug. 13.

"As soon as possible in the fall and no later than the end of October, the government of Canada will require employees in the federally regulated air, rail and marine transportation sectors to be vaccinated. This includes all

commercial air travelers," his office said in a statement.

Alghabra said additional measures are needed to encourage more people to get vaccinated and to protect the gains the country has made to flatten the pandemic curve. Cases are starting to creep up again in what Canada's top health official dubbed a fourth wave last week.

As of last Friday, more than 82% of all Canadians ages 12 and older had received at least their first dose of a vaccine against COVID-19, significantly higher than the 69% rate in the U.S.

The Canadian government

is working on a vaccine passport that can be used by travelers.

The government is also requiring vaccinations for all federal public servants in the country. The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs Dominic LeBlanc noted the federal government is the largest employer in Canada.

LeBlanc said it is the government's duty to guarantee the safety of their employees and those who they serve.



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Teen breaks 43-year-old record for largest chinook in Michigan

LUDINGTON, Mich. (AP) - Louis Martinez will never have to embellish the proverbial fish story after confirmation that he set a new state record for the

largest chinook salmon ever caught in Michigan.

The teenager from Ortonville, Michigan, reeled in the 47.86-pound salmon on Aug. 7,

while fishing on a charter boat in Lake Michigan with his mom, sister and stepdad.

The previous record — a Chinook salmon of just over 46

pounds — had stood for 43 years.

The 19-year-old Martinez, on his first fishing expedition for salmon, battled to pull the record-setting fish in for some 30 minutes off the lake's Big Sable Point, near Ludington.

"The first 10 minutes were quite a fight," said Martinez, adding that his arms began to feel sore toward the end of his struggle with the big fish.

Martinez described the captain of the boat, Bobby Sullivan, and his family members screaming with excitement as they finally got the fish on deck.

"They were all screaming,

and I was like: "What did I do?" Martinez said.

As word of a possible record spread, a crowd gathered to behold the massive salmon in Ludington and take pictures of Martinez holding it in his arms, beaming.

Jay Wesley, the Lake Michigan basin coordinator, an official for the Department of Natural Resources, jumped in a car and drove to Ludington to review the paperwork. He certified the new state record.

"I was working in my garage and told my wife, I'm heading to Ludington. I've got to see this thing," he said.



DAVID BOSSICK/LUDINGTON DAILY NEWS VIA AP

The smile on Louis Martinez, 19, of Ortonville, Michigan, is about as wide as the state-record chinook salmon he is holding. He reeled in the 47.86-pound salmon off the eastern shore of Lake Michigan, about halfway between Chicago and the Canadian border. The boat captain, Bobby Sullivan, of Icebreaker Charters (top left, wearing the hat), shares in the moment as they weighed the 4-foot-long salmon.

CLASSIFIED/LEGALS

FLEA MARKET

Saturday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the American Legion Hall. Lots of vendors, come find a treasure.

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

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2011 Chevrolet Express minivan, all-wheel drive, 153,000 miles. \$12,000, or best offer. This would make a great Zarembo rig! Call 874-4575.

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

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

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

Publish Aug. 12, 19 and 26, 2021

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC NOTICE

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

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

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

Your name must appear on the precinct list. If you are registered in another city, you must change your registration **prior to Sunday, September 5, 2021, to qualify to vote in the Regular Election of October 5, 2021.**

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

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

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

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL JOB BULLETIN: Facilities Maintenance Specialist

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

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

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

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

Lisa Von Bargaen
Borough Manager

Publish Aug. 12 and Aug. 19, 2021

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL NOTICE INVITING BIDS Fender Pile Replacement

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

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

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

Lisa Von Bargaen
Borough Manager

Publish Aug. 12, 19, 26, 2021

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC NOTICE

Declaration of candidacy for Borough Assembly, Port Commission and School Board, and signature petitions required, will be available in the Borough Clerk's Office from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, August 2, 2021, through August 31, 2021.

Qualified persons may have their name placed on the ballot for the October 5, 2021, City and Borough of Wrangell Regular Municipal Election by filing declarations of candidacy for Borough Assembly, Port Commission and School Board.

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

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

Publish July 29, Aug. 5, Aug. 19, Aug. 26, 2021

State reopens prison to handle growing inmate population

ANCHORAGE (AP) - An Alaska prison that was closed for about five years reopened Aug. 16 after a nearly \$17 million renovation, corrections officials said.

The reopening of the Palmer Correctional Facility in Sutton will add about 300 beds to the state's current prison capacity of about 5,200. The prison closed in 2016 because of a declining inmate population and as the state wanted to cut costs.

The state estimates it will cost about \$15 million a year to operate the prison.

The number of people incarcerated in Alaska increased over the past two years until it fell during the pandemic. The state's prisons are currently operating at about 95% capacity.

Criminal justice reform advocates expressed concern about the timing of the reopening and what it says about the overall direction of Alaska's justice system, with prison populations continuing to increase.

"More beds does not make us safer," said Megan Edge, spokesperson for the American Civil Liberties Union of Alaska.

Edge said it will only be a

matter of time before the reopened Palmer facility is at capacity. She said a more humane and cost-effective option would be to move people to parole and other reentry programs.

"The solution is to lower the prison population," she said. "It is not to just keep building more warehouses."

The renovated prison will be divided into medium- and minimum-security wings. It will house people serving sentences and those awaiting sentencing.

Palmer Correctional Co-Superintendent Deirdre Banachowicz said overall, the facility is more desirable for incarcerated people than others where she has worked.

"Each one of the rooms has windows in it, which is kind of unlike other facilities. You have beautiful mountain views. It's just a different environment in general," she said. "And I think it's very conducive to rehabilitation."

Edge said that money would be better spent on services to help people leaving prison to find good jobs and provide better mental health care. The state found in 2019

that it costs about \$60,000 a year to house each inmate.

A union leader also expressed concern about what the prison's reopening may mean for understaffed corrections officers who he said already work mandatory overtime and are called to work on their days off.

"It's insanity, really, to take staff away from institutions that are already compromising the safety of their staff and the inmates that they're caring for to ramp up and open a new facility," Randy McLellan, president of Alaska Correctional Officers Association, told Alaska Public Media.

The prison system has experienced an exodus of workers since the beginning of the year. The Department of Corrections said 1 in 10 corrections officer positions are unfilled.

The prison's co-superintendents said that with staff transfers and new recruits, they do not anticipate difficulty in hiring the 106 officers needed to operate the reopened prison at full capacity by October. The state is offering a \$5,000 signing bonus to entice applicants.

State failed to collect DNA samples from 21,000 criminal cases

JUNEAU (AP) - Alaska law enforcement agencies failed to collect DNA samples from more than 21,000 people arrested for or convicted of certain crimes over the past 25 years, in part because of confusion caused by changes to state law, officials said.

The state Department of Public Safety identified 21,577 individuals who were required to have a DNA sample on file but did not. Of those, 1,555 are dead, the report states.

Gov. Mike Dunleavy on Aug. 10 announced plans for the state to pursue samples in the remaining cases. It's not clear, though, how long that process might take or how many might successfully be gathered.

The state plans to begin with those convicted of a class of felonies that includes violent crimes and sex crimes, a group that is smaller than 600 people, public radio station KTOO reported.

A 1995 law first required the collection of DNA samples from people convicted of these felonies. The law has been changed eight times, expanding the number of people covered.

Deputy Attorney General John Skidmore said the revisions

have contributed to the failures.

Skidmore said there had been confusion over who should be involved in the DNA collection. And changes to the law added challenges "in terms of trying to figure out what's supposed to be collected when," he said.

Several state agencies are working on the issue.

Plans call for the Department of Corrections to collect DNA from those already in prison or jail, and for state probation and parole officers to collect samples from those on supervision.

State Public Safety Commissioner Jim Cockrell also said law enforcement now collects DNA from nearly everyone arrested for the crimes covered by the law. He said his department has begun working to find people whose samples weren't collected previously.

It's a crime to refuse to provide DNA that is required under the law. The law allows for those who have samples taken to request that their DNA be removed from the system under certain circumstances, like if they're released without being charged or found not guilty, or if their case is dismissed.

Chlorine leak kills farmed salmon in Norway

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) - About 96,000 farmed salmon are believed to have died when a leak in a tank sent 4,000 gallons of chlorine into a fjord in Arctic Norway.

Roger Pedersen, a spokesman for the salmon farming company Grieg Seafood, said the leak happened at one of its fish slaughterhouses in the town of Alta and the fish were in a waiting cage nearby at the time.

"We are connecting this to a chlorine leak," Pedersen told Norwegian broadcaster NRK, adding the company was now handling the dead fish "in a responsible way and was investigating why the leak occurred."

The chlorine is used to disinfect the water after the slaughtering.

On Twitter, police in northern Norway said that "significant quantities of salmon are dead" and that the leaked liquid had flowed into the Atlantic Ocean.

Police spokesman Stein Hugo Joergensen told NRK that there was no danger of any toxic chlorine gas on land. As for the cause for the leak, it was still being investigated.

Alta sits 109 miles northeast of Tromsø, the largest city in Arctic Norway.

Grieg Seafood describes itself as one of the world's leading salmon farming companies. It has farms in Norway, Canada and off Britain's Shetland Islands. Its headquarters are in Bergen, Norway.

Giant Asian hornet spotted 100 miles north of Seattle

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) - The second sighting of a so-called murder hornet this year was reported by a person in Whatcom County this week, the Washington state Department of Agriculture said Aug. 12.

Entomologists confirmed the sighting. The resident's report included a photograph of the hornet attacking a paper wasp nest in a rural area east of the town of Blaine, about two miles from where state workers eradicated the first Asian giant hornet nest in the United States last October.

The world's largest hornet can sometimes be lethal to humans.

"This hornet is exhibiting the same behavior we saw last year — attacking paper wasp nests," said state entomologist Sven Spichiger, who has been leading the fight against the invaders. "If you have paper wasp nests on your property and live in the area, keep an eye on them and report any Asian giant hornets you see. Note the direction they fly off to as well."

The Department of Agriculture will set traps in the area — about 100 miles north of Seattle — in an attempt to catch a live hornet, tag it, and track it back to the nest. The government of British Colum-

bia will also set traps in Canada because this detection was approximately half a mile from the border, the state said.

Public sightings of Asian giant hornets continue to be critical to locating the pest, officials said.

This year there have only been two confirmed reports in Washington, and both were from public reports. There have been no confirmed reports in Canada.

The 2-inch-long invasive insects, first found near the U.S.-Canadian border in December 2019, are native to Asia and pose a threat to honeybees and native hornet species. While not particularly aggressive toward humans, their sting is extremely painful and repeated stings, though rare, can kill.

The world's largest hornet is much more of a threat to honeybees that are relied on to pollinate crops. They attack hives, destroying them in mere hours and decapitating bees in what scientists call their "slaughter phase." How they got here from Asia is unclear, although it is suspected they travel on cargo ships.

The federal government has placed the giant hornets on the list of quarantine pests, giving Washington state more tools to help eradicate the invasive species.



Permanent Fund

Continued from page 1

the past 10 years without any new revenues to cover the state spending deficit, Dunleavy continues to push for withdrawing an additional \$3 billion from Permanent Fund earnings to pay the bills.

The governor calls the \$3 billion a "bridge" to the time Alaska can pay its own way for public services and dividends. However, legislative fiscal analysts and Finance Committee leaders argue that the governor's plan is shortsighted, forcing the state into large deficits or deep budget cuts.

Though the governor said the state does not need new revenues, the eight-member, bipartisan fiscal policy working group of House and Senate members on Monday recommended the state most certainly needs new revenues to maintain services, deal with unfunded construction and maintenance needs, and pay a dividend.

The Permanent Fund was worth \$81 billion at the start of the state fiscal year on July 1, providing more than \$3 billion this year for the state general fund to pay for public services and dividends. It could be worth more than \$95 billion by the end of the decade, according to the fund's projections, so long as earnings meet expectations and lawmakers do not take out additional withdrawals beyond the annual

limit in state law.

While advocating for taking more money out of the Permanent Fund this year, Dunleavy is continuing his opposition to taxes and failing to show exactly where he would cut state spending to balance the budget.

Only after legislators consider his proposal to put the larger dividend into the state constitution would he be willing to "look at other things that need to be looked at," Dunleavy said this week.

Sitka Sen. Bert Stedman, co-chair of the Senate Finance Committee, said he sees that approach as an attempt to try to "leverage" the dividend above all else.

After years of budget deficits and borrowing from depleted state savings, a comprehensive fiscal policy for Alaska "must be negotiated and agreed to as whole," and not taken up piecemeal, according to the legislative fiscal policy working group report.

Dunleavy's statements this week appear to contradict testimony the state Revenue commissioner gave two weeks ago to legislators. In presenting a list of potential new revenue options, including a state sales tax, Commissioner Lucinda Mahoney said the governor would support the revenue measures "as long as there was support from the Legislature."

The Legislature's fiscal pol-

icy working group did not recommend specific revenue measures but said the Legislature should consider raising additional annual revenues of \$500 million to \$750 million, about 10% to 15% of the state general fund budget, and work toward additional budget cuts ranging from \$25 million to \$200 million, stretched out over multiple years.

The Legislature, Dunleavy and past governors already have cut annual state spending by several hundred million dollars in recent years.

Unless the Legislature and governor can agree on fiscal answers for at least this year, there will be no dividend this fall for the first time since the program started in 1982.

Legislative leaders tried to pass an \$1,100 PFD in May, but failed to win enough votes for the super-majority required, mostly falling short among House Republicans. That left a dividend of \$525, which the governor vetoed to zero, calling \$525 a "joke" and telling

legislators to come back to work and approve a larger payment.

In addition to battling over the amount of the dividend, lawmakers have until Friday if they want to vote on overriding any of Dunleavy's budget vetoes.

The governor on June 30 vetoed partial or all of the funding from the Legislature's version of the budget for the state ferry system, public broadcasting, pre-kindergarten programs, social workers and nurses at the Department of Health and Social services, school maintenance projects, legal aid for low-income Alaskans, and several other programs.

It requires a three-quarters majority vote of the Legislature to override a veto, an exceedingly high hurdle in the divided House and Senate. Though the special session can run 30 days, a veto override vote must be held in the first five days.

The first item on the gover-

nor's agenda for the special session is to win legislative approval for a constitutional amendment that would dedicate half of the annual withdrawal of Permanent Fund earnings to dividends, which would result in a payment to individual Alaskans of almost \$2,400 this fall.

It takes a two-thirds vote in both the House and the Senate to place a constitutional amendment on the ballot for voters to decide.

House Speaker Louise Stutes told reporters she didn't currently see enough support in the Legislature for a constitutional amendment for the dividend.

Stutes sent Dunleavy a letter Monday, admonishing him for holding this year's dividend and "other essential programs hostage while we work toward a solution," calling the governor's tactics "unconscionable and counterproductive to compromise."

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

COVID outbreak

Continued from page 1

29 to Aug. 1, was a spreader event.

Mayor Doug Olerud told the assembly that he knew holding the fair came with a risk, but he "felt comfortable enough that people would follow established protocols to keep us from having a large-scale outbreak."

"That didn't happen," Olerud said.

Southeast Alaska State Fair board president Spencer Douthit noted the fair's "unfortunate timing" with the spread of the Delta variant in Alaska.

The state fair was less crowded than in years past but had more than 700 attendees on its most crowded day. People danced close together at the main stage during the day and packed the town's bars at night. Several hundred people arrived in Haines by ferry during the fair.

The borough administration building and library were closed to the public last week.

"Our public health system is absolutely overwhelmed," interim Borough Manager Alekka Fullerton told the assembly. The borough is asking people who test positive to notify close contacts themselves because "there are not enough hours in the day" for the borough's sole public health nurse to make the calls, Fullerton said.

The outbreak caused the cancelation of several community events, the closure of businesses and renewed pleas for masking and distancing.

As of Aug. 11, Chip Lende, owner of Lutak Lumber, said his business was open but employees all volunteered to wear masks for the first time in months. "We're encouraging all patrons to get masked up while in the store, if only for the next few weeks until we get through this spike," Lende said. "We don't like masking any more than anyone else does."

The Chilkat Valley News in Haines and Skagway News contributed to this report.



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