

PHOTO BY SAM PAUSMAN/WRANGELL SENTINEL

## Court proceedings

Mark Cascio, a basketball coaching consultant, instructs players on Sunday, the last session of a three-day skills clinic for eighth through 12th graders. Cascio, a title-winning high school coach in Louisiana, brought nearly 20 years of coaching experience to the clinic, sponsored by Team Wrangell of the Amateur Athletic Union. Wrangell Wolves senior Keaton Gadd (right) was among the participants in the clinic.

## Wrangell could see twice as many cruise ship passengers next summer

By SAM PAUSMAN  
*Sentinel senior reporter*

Though not yet final, the initial draft of the 2025 cruise ship schedule estimates around 40,000 passengers could arrive on cruise ships next year, an increase from just over 20,000 in 2024.

Most notably, the number of larger ships (vessels that hold over 1,000 passengers) is expected to about triple. This summer, the largest ships made three port calls in Wrangell: the Nieuw Amsterdam once in May and the Queen Elizabeth twice in July. Both ships have capacity for just over 2,000 passengers.

Next summer, there will be 11 port calls from large ships, according to the preliminary schedule provided by the borough. The largest of which is the Ruby Princess, bringing with it a

capacity of 3,082 passengers and over 1,000 crew members. The 19-deck ship is 950 feet long and will arrive in town on June 22.

The large ship scheduled for the most frequent calls in town will be the 1,250-capacity Riviera. The Riviera currently has seven visits scheduled between May and September.

While the increase from this year's 20,000-plus to next year's possible 40,000 is significant, this year has been below expectations. Initial estimates for 2024 were for a potential of 30,000 visitors, but between cancellations and cruise line bankruptcies, Wrangell lost a third of its expected visitors, according to Kate Thomas, the borough's economic development director.

Last year, cruise ship visitors made

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## Borough explores options for former hospital property

By SAM PAUSMAN  
*Sentinel senior reporter*

After a prospective buyer bailed out on purchasing the former hospital in June, the property remains a burden for the borough.

Currently, the building sits empty. It had been eating up nearly \$100,000 a year to cover heat, insurance and maintenance. On Sept. 2, the borough's Economic Development Board

brainstormed some potential options for the building's future.

After a long discussion, the board established two priorities for the property: job creation and economic development. Board Chair Bob Dalrymple acknowledged that spinning the ailing property into a financial driver will be much more difficult in reality.

"Nothing jumps out as a clear path forward on this," Dalrym-

ple said. He also noted that all previous potential buyers had wanted to demolish the building and build residences in its place.

And while nothing was finalized at the Sept. 2 meeting, the board established a series of general next steps.

In the short term, the borough is going to market the property as much as possible, utilizing its online reach to hopefully attract buyers. If that is unsuccessful, the borough will work with commercial realtors to look for a buyer. Previously, Wrangell

worked with Anchor Properties — a local realtor. This time around it hopes a national realtor would be able to reach a wider audience.

The very worst-case scenario — said Kate Thomas, the borough's economic development director — is that the borough raises a 12-foot fence and let nature run its course on the property. However, this is the last resort.

Borough officials hope they can find a buyer who might turn the property into residences, a

residential facility or something else that could help fuel Wrangell's economy.

To reduce costs of the property in the short term, Borough Manager Mason Villarma said he plans on "mothballing" the property until it sells. Last year, the borough cut the hospital's insurance coverage down to \$2 million. By limiting next year's expenditures to a minimum, Villarma expects to hold annual upkeep costs to \$15,000 to \$20,000.

Some members suggested the

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## Sitkans adapt to life without regular internet, cell service

By NATHANIEL HERZ  
*Northern Journal*

In Sitka, some hospital surgeries are on hold. Many shops and restaurants are operating on a cash-only basis. Contact with the outside world comes mostly through satellites.

A break in the sole cable that provides Sitka's internet and phone service has wreaked havoc on residents and businesses — and, at the same time, effectively launched a massive social and economic experiment: What happens for 8,000 people who have deeply integrated the internet into their lives, when the switch gets flipped off?

On the one hand: It's an enormous pain in the ass.

"It's mayhem," said Rebecca Himschoot, the lawmaker who represents Sitka in the Alaska House. "It's just been shocking how dependent we are on the internet and how hard it is to do daily functions without it."

On the other hand: It's a blissful reprieve from modernity.

"All over town, you see people walking around more, going to people's homes, hanging out and talking," said Jessica Jeremia, the director of Sitka's library, which has a satellite unit that's made it a hub for residents seeking internet. "We've been hearing that constantly from people, how nice it is. They're like, 'If I could just figure out the finances part.'"

The Great Sitka Outage of 2024 began Aug. 29, when telecommunications provider GCI detected a break in the sole fiber optic cable connecting the town to the outside world. Cell service, texting and internet all went down.

Since then, GCI has restored a bare minimum of voice and texting capacity using microwave and satellite services. But residents say

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## Capitol Christmas Tree ornament deadline moved to end of September

By MARK C. ROBINSON  
*Wrangell Sentinel*

Alaskans still making ornaments to hang on the Capitol Christmas Tree now have a little more time. The original submission deadline of Sept. 16 has been extended two weeks to Sept. 30.

"Sept. 16 ... that was the deadline we were given about a year ago when we started planning this," said Claire Froelich, interpretation and education specialist with the U.S. Forest Service in Wrangell. "But because we are now working with Alaska Airlines, our shipping is going to take less time, so now we have until the end of the month."

The original plan had been to use the U.S. mail.

The Forest Service announced in July that the U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree would come from the Wrangell Ranger District of the Tongass National Forest, only the second time an Alaska tree will light up the official spot on the Capitol lawn. The agency has called on

Alaskans to create 10,000 ornaments for the big tree and multiple smaller trees that will be on display around Washington, D.C.

"I've been prepping to make sure we have all the materials and stuff for this last push of ornaments," Froelich said, adding that she is focusing more on having recycled items and other materials available for people to paint and decorate.

She estimated that at least 2,200 ornaments have been made in Wrangell. According to a Sept. 6 post on the U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree Facebook page, the agency had received almost 3,300 ornaments from across the state, though only half of Wrangell's contributions were included in that evolving number.

Various workshops and crafting events were held at various locations over the summer around Wrangell to make the decorations, including one held in July during Bearfest, and most recently during Grandparents Day at the elementary school on Sept. 6.

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## Senior Center Menu

Open for in-person dining.

### Thursday, Sept. 12

Pork roast with rice, Harvard beets, cauliflower broccoli toss

### Friday, Sept. 13

Lemon baked chicken with potatoes, Brussels sprouts, sukiyaki salad, fruit

### Monday, Sept. 16

No meal service on Mondays.

### Tuesday, Sept. 17

Mushroom moose meatloaf, potatoes and gravy, cauliflower, perfection salad

### Wednesday, Sept. 18

Chicken a-la-king over rice, broccoli, creamy fruit salad

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.



## ALASKA AIRLINES CLUB 49 COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

**NOLAN CENTER THEATER** "It Ends With Us" rated PG-13, at 6 p.m. Friday, 6 p.m. Saturday and 4 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 13-15. The drama romance runs 2 hours and 10 minutes; tickets are \$7 for adults, \$5 for children under age 12. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

**COMMUNITY MARKET** from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 14, at the Nolan Center. Check out the locally grown and handcrafted item

**BABY RAVEN READS** 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 14 at the Nolan Center classroom. Theme is Devil's Club. Alaska Native families with children up to age 5 are invited to join for storytelling, songs and other cultural and literacy activities sponsored by Sealaska Heritage Institute.

**SCHOOL BOARD MEETING** 6:30 p.m. Monday, Sept. 16, at Evergreen Elementary School Room 101. The agenda will be available online at the school district website four days before the meeting.

**BOATING SAFETY COURSE**, cold water survival classroom presentation 9 to 10 a.m.; boating safety pool session 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. or 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.; Tuesday, Sept. 17, at Parks and Rec center. Learn essential skills for creating and maintaining a safe boating environment. Open to 16 years and older. Free. Limited space. Must register at wrangellrec.com. Presented by Wrangell Parks and Recreation, Alaska Recreation and Parks Association and the Alaska Office of Boating Safety.

**STATE PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE** will be in Wrangell on Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 18-19, and will see clients in the clinic and conduct hearing and vision screenings at Head Start and the elementary school. Immunizations, birth control and STD screening, well-child exams for kids up to age 7, TB screening and medication, Narcan kits and medication disposal bags will be offered. The Public Health Center is in the Kadin Building, 215 Front St. Call 907-723-4611 to make an appointment in advance so the nurse knows what immunizations to bring.

**WRANGELL KIDS CLUB** 2:30 to 5 p.m. Mondays at the community center for open gym, board games and coloring; 2:30 to 5 p.m. Wednesdays at the Irene Ingle Public Library for STEM activities and crafts; 2:30 to 5 p.m. Fridays at the Nolan Center for a movie in the theater. For ages 7 to 13 years old. Runs through Dec. 16. Free.

**PRE-K ART** 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. every Monday for ages 0-5 at The Salvation Army. Experience the arts each week with a special activity prepared by Capt. Belle. Call for more information at 907-874-3753.

**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.

**"SAVING MR. BANKS"** 6 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 24, at the Nolan Center. The 2013 biography comedy drama movie is free; presented by Island of Faith Lutheran Church as part of its retro-movie program. The concession stand will be open.

**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 khoyt@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.

- **KICKBOXING**, 5:30 to 7 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays at the community center multipurpose room with Victoria Carney. Drop-in fee \$5; \$3 for seniors; or use a facility punch card.
- **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.

## Ferry Schedule

### Northbound

#### Sunday, Sept. 15

Kennicott, 6:30 p.m.

#### Sunday, Sept. 22

Kennicott, 2:15 p.m.

#### Sunday, Sept. 29

Kennicott, 7:15 p.m.

#### Sunday, Oct. 6

Kennicott, 11:15 p.m.

### Southbound

#### Wednesday, Sept. 18

Kennicott, 6:45 a.m.

#### Wednesday, Sept. 25

Kennicott, 8:15 a.m.

#### Wednesday, Oct. 2

Kennicott, 6 a.m.

#### Wednesday, Oct. 9

Kennicott, 10:15 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
Sept. 11	07:14	10.2	06:45	12.9	00:29	2.9	12:17	6.3
Sept. 12	09:03	10.4	08:26	13.0	01:48	3.0	01:43	6.9
Sept. 13	10:20	11.5	09:50	13.9	03:16	2.4	03:20	6.4
Sept. 14	11:13	13.0	10:53	15.3	04:29	1.1	04:38	5.0
Sept. 15	11:56	14.7	11:46	16.8	05:24	-0.3	05:35	3.1
Sept. 16	....	...	12:34	16.2	06:09	-1.5	06:23	1.1
Sept. 17	00:35	17.9	01:11	17.6	06:49	-2.2	07:06	-0.7

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

### Sept. 11, 1924

In spite of the distraction at the opening of school while alterations in the buildings are still going on, pupils and teachers have settled down to a business in a way that indicates a year of real program ahead. The staff of the Stikine Messenger, the high school publication, was elected by the student body Monday. George Case was elected editor-in-chief. It has been decided to change the publication from an open news sheet to a monthly publication of the magazine type. It will be attractively bound in such a way as to compare favorably with the better class of monthly magazines being put out by

other schools. It is planned that the subscription price will be \$1 per year or 15 cents per single copy.

### Sept. 9, 1949

The biggest fishing season in eight years came to an end last night as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced no further extensions would be granted. A four-day extension was granted last Saturday. Trap operators, however, have 36 hours to remove fish from their traps, which brings the deadline for completion to 6 a.m. Saturday. A. R. Brueger, operator of the local cannery, said he expects about 125,000 cases of tall cans will have been packed here by the time the

cannery shuts down. Last year's pack was 60,000 cases. Canned salmon is being stored in every available nook and cranny in town, with the Fire Hall long since being loaded to the ceiling. Brueger has chartered several boats and is taking the pack out as fast as possible but said it would take probably two months to get the entire pack removed to Anacortes, Washington.

### Sept. 13, 1974

Wrangell will have direct, long-distance telephone dialing by the close of 1975, RCA Alaska Communications officials told the chamber of commerce last week. Chamber members learned of the plans

during a briefing by RCA on a \$6 million microwave network earmarked for Southeast Alaska. The microwave system will also greatly increase reliability and capacity of long-distance calls, members were told. Included in the network would be one antenna in Wrangell, earmarked for a parcel of land in Dewey Heights. A public hearing on a conditional-use permit requested by RCA to build the tower in the residential area is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Sept. 23 before the city planning commission.

### Sept. 9, 1999

Following an earlier workshop with the city council,

the school board held a special meeting on Aug. 24 to deal with budget issues. The board adopted a resolution to replace all budget cuts that were made in the spring of the year with the exception of the superintendent's travel, and authorized the superintendent to add \$20,000 to \$30,000 from the class-size reduction grant to hire a full-time reading teacher for the 1999-2000 school year. The future of this position will be contingent upon grant funding. The board also approved authorizing the superintendent to hire two additional full-time aides for the 1999-2000 school year only, at an approximate cost of \$41,000, including benefits.

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# Timeline uncertain for wastewater outfall pipe repair

BY LARRY PERSILY  
Sentinel writer

The borough hopes to learn this week the exact location and condition of the kinked blockage in the treatment plant outfall pipeline that has forced a temporary solution — discharging the wastewater on the beach near City Park.

“It’s essentially been bent in half,” Public Works Director Tom Wetor said of the 12-inch-diameter plastic pipe, which was hooked Aug. 30 by a boat anchor and damaged as the anchor line was being pulled up.

Repairs could take a couple of months, he said Sept. 6. It just depends on how much work is needed.

The borough has been in contact with the boat owner and insurer.

Officials think the bent pipe is about 300 feet toward shore from the end of the line, which extends 1,800 feet out from the beach. The end of the pipe is in 120 feet of water, with a diffuser at the end to disperse the wastewater as it flows out, Wetor said. One of the unknowns is whether the diffuser was damaged in the accident.

If the bend in the line is in deep enough water to provide sufficient dilution of the wastewater to meet federal standards, the borough could cut the line there, attach a diffuser and put the outfall back into service, he

explained.

There is no one in town able to dive in 120 feet of water to inspect and repair the damage, Wetor said, though a local drone operator was able to take an underwater “fly by” — but officials really need a drone that can hover and move around the damage for a closer look.

In a coincidental bit of fortunate timing, a contractor was scheduled to arrive in Wrangell this week to clean the holding tanks and inspect the community’s wastewater treatment plant. The contractor was going to bring along its underwater drone, which should be able to get better images of the damage.

“We want to see it,” Wetor said.

After they know more, the borough can talk with engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency, which regulates water quality, and come up with

a repair plan. There is a Ketchikan company that could make the deep-water dive, he said.

The buried pipe is ductile iron on its run from the treatment plant and across the beach and tidelands, and then is high-density plastic pipe sitting on the seafloor out to the discharge point.

The borough has kept the EPA and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation informed of the situation, including the temporary solution on Aug. 30 of cutting the outfall pipe at the beach and discharging the wastewater there.

Without opening up an exit point, the kinked line was causing wastewater to back up in the treatment plant. The fastest solution was to cut the pipe where it was immediately accessible, which is on the beach.

The effluent coming out of the

line has been treated at the plant — all solids are removed — and the high tide washes over the area.

“You would have a hard time knowing” anything is different on the beach, Wetor said.

Rather than take any risk with public health, however, the borough has closed off the beach, advising the public to refrain from shellfish harvesting, swimming and other recreational activities in the closed area.

The treatment plant discharges about 300,000 to 500,000 gallons of water a day, more during heavy rains when runoff and storm water drainage adds substantial volumes.

The outlet pipe is marked on marine charts, Wetor said, though the borough will consider whether buoys are an option to help prevent a similar boat anchor incident in the future.

## Water main breaks a sign of age, poor installation

BY LARRY PERSILY  
Sentinel writer

As if the borough’s Public Works Department wasn’t busy enough last week with the damaged sewage outfall line, the crew was pressed into evening work to repair a broken water main on St. Michaels Street.

The ductile iron pipe on the hill above City Market probably was 40 to 50 years old, said Public Works Director Tom Wetor. “The stuff was supposed to last 60 years,” he said, but poor installation likely led to deterioration of the pipe and the break.

A lot of utility pipe was buried around town and throughout Alaska during the heavy flow of state oil dollars to communities in the 1970s and early 1980s, but best practices were not always followed to wrap the pipe or attach anodes to protect the iron from corrosion caused by electrolysis, Wetor said.

Low-level electrical current in the ground, aided by intrusion of salt water and acidic soil, creates a hazard for iron pipe. “It’s pretty hot downtown,” he said of the underground electrolysis, which is similar to the corrosive damage on piers and pilings in salt water.

The break occurred Sept. 5, and crews worked until about 11:30 p.m. making repairs.

The pipes generally are buried four to five feet below the surface.

In its repair and replacement work, the borough uses plastic pipe that is supposed to last 100 years, Wetor said. The high-density polyethylene pipe is often used to replace aging concrete or steel pipe.

## Ketchikan continues clearing and repair work after landslide

BY KETCHIKAN DAILY NEWS

Efforts were underway to find family belongings among the debris of damaged homes last week in the area hit by the landslide that flowed through a Ketchikan neighborhood on Aug. 25.

“Each home scheduled for demolition had a list of family items that they requested contractors locate (if possible) during the process,” according to the Ketchikan Emergency Operations Center announcement issued on Sept. 6.

One of the homes involved belongs to Doug Trudeau, who requested that contractors look for the urn containing his brother’s ashes and a bronze bust made in the 1930s by an artist friend, according to the EOC announcement. Both items were found among the debris by Ernie Hamilton of Three Dog Construction.

The search for household items finished Sunday, with crews working to haul the debris from several destroyed homes to the landfill.

While cleanup work was underway, portions of the slide zone turned from mud brown to green on Sept. 6 as SECON Construction crews began spraying a slurry of U.S. Forest Service hybrid seed and mulch on the slopes below and above the Third Avenue Bypass, according to the EOC. Hydroseeding is intended to promote the growth of new vegetation to help stabilize the slope.

The slide covered about 1,100 feet as it moved mud and trees down the slope toward the homes.

The EOC said it expected that demolition of damaged homes would be completed by Monday, with electrical service restored in the area of Second Avenue by Tuesday, followed by further slope stabilization efforts this week. Reopening

of Third Avenue is expected by Sept. 30.

Residents evacuated from their homes in the vicinity of the slide were allowed to start returning last week as power was restored and each home was inspected.

“After geologist assessment, the slope above and the slope below the Third Avenue Bypass has been determined to be stable,” the Sept. 5 EOC announcement stated. “After removal of landslide debris, it was apparent that the road surface is in better condition than originally anticipated.”

The EOC reported last week that all storm drains are functioning.

The slide killed one person, a 42-year-old city worker who was in the area to help clear storm drains during the heavy rain.

And just as they did after Wrangell’s deadly landslide last November, two National Crisis Response Canines teams arrived in Ketchikan on Sept. 3 to provide support and comfort for community members.

Volunteers Terry Yeomans, with her Labrador retriever partner Tia, and Eleanor Denton, with her Labrador mix partner Bear, visited the Emergency Operations Center at the Ketchikan Fire Department on Sept. 4.

People stopped by to pet Tia, who was so relaxed that she spent much of her time nearly asleep at Yeoman’s feet, and Bear, who watched everyone with interest and wagged his tail with each person’s attention.

Yeomans lives in Eagle River, and Denton in Fairbanks. They said there are about seven active crisis response volunteers in Alaska.

Yeomans and Denton worked with individuals and groups in Ketchikan through Sept. 5.

## Capitol Christmas Tree ornaments

Continued from page 1

“There’s a bunch of places around the community that I also need to pick up ornaments as well,” Froelich said. “We definitely got a good amount.”

She has also allied with tech club students in the Teaching Through Technology T3 Alliance throughout Alaska. “They have been producing extremely beautiful, intricately designed ornaments with representation of every city, county, village and tribe in Alaska,” she said. “They’re doing that with laser-cutting, 3D printing and beautiful designs ... with the intention of having representation of all over Alaska.”

Froelich said multiple types

of ornaments have been made, using all kinds of materials, including repurposed buoys, fishing line and seashell mosaics. “We have an assortment of tree cookies, wood cutouts, salmon and bears,” she said.

There also are plenty of bear-shaped decorations to choose from. “We have big bears and then we have bears standing up,” she said, adding that she was about to get some ornaments in the shape of Smokey Bear, the Forest Service’s famous mascot.

Once the ornaments are all collected, there will still be plenty for Froelich to do, as one of the main organizers of the project. Her tasks will include

sorting, weatherproofing and providing tree hooks for them, both for Wrangell ornaments and when she travels to Anchorage later this month.

She’ll accompany the Capitol Christmas Tree, which has already been selected by the Architect of the Capitol. The tree will go on tour across the country after it’s cut down in late October. The trip from Alaska to Washington should take approximately two weeks, depending on logistics.

For details on how to participate in the ornament making, go to the U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree website at [uscapitolchristmastree.com/make-an-ornament/](http://uscapitolchristmastree.com/make-an-ornament/).

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## FROM THE PUBLISHER

### The five elements of the Sentinel are different

By LARRY PERSILY  
*Publisher*

We deliver you the Sentinel as one piece, whether in print or online. If you're reading this in print, just pretend that the sheets of paper folded together are one piece.

Regardless of how you read the paper, it has five elements: Paid advertising, news, the Sentinel's editorial, my personal opinion column and opinions from our readers. Each has different rules and standards. Each is essential for newspapers that want to serve their community.

Paid ads are pretty simple: The advertiser, be it a business or an individual or a government agency, buys space in the newspaper to tell readers what it wants, whether to sell a product or service or announce a meeting or construction bid.

We don't edit ads, except for spelling, though we make sure the type is readable and the advertiser's name stands out.

The news is the real purpose of the Sentinel. We strive to report news of interest to our readers and to do it fairly, without bias and without our opinion. News is what is happening or happened or will happen and why it happened. It's not for a reporter or editor to slant the news or selectively pick or ignore facts to influence what readers know.

We write the news after reading reports, researching history, interviewing people involved in the news and then summarizing it into a readable story — not an encyclopedia. Yes, that means some judgment in what to include and what to leave out, but those calls are made without favoritism, without an agenda.

The opinion page, which is always Page 4 in the Sentinel, is where you will find the Sentinel's editorial position on an issue, my publisher's column, and, in some weeks, opinion columns or letters written by members of the

community.

The editorial is a statement by the newspaper intended to encourage the community to action, advocate a position or support the work of others, such as legislation at the state or federal or municipal level. And while editorials are the newspaper's opinion, they should reflect the priorities of the community, such as editorials calling for improved state ferry service.

The publisher's opinion column is different: It reflects my views as an individual, the same as talk radio hosts or bloggers express their personal views. I work hard to provide a mix of politics, economics, history, humor and storytelling in my columns. If I had put this much effort into my college writing classes, I would have earned better grades.

I intend my column to educate, entertain and inspire readers, not please every reader. The columns are my views of the world, not a reflection of the views of Wrangell. I realize many will disagree with my opinions, which is OK. I don't even agree with myself a lot of the time.

And when readers have opinions that they want to share, we make space on Page 4 for them. Of course, no charge. We'll edit for style and helpfully talk with you if we have any questions about statements of fact, but we will not question your opinion. That is yours to hold, not ours to mess with.

We ask that you keep your opinion columns to no more than 400 to 500 words, though shorter is better. Nothing profusely rude, nothing excessively personal, and no crude insults.

I know people don't type out letters like they did generations ago. But maybe the next time you have an opinion, sit down at the keyboard, send it to us and we'll share it with the community.

## EDITORIAL

### 'Coffee chats' need public involvement

The borough's Economic Development Department has a caffeine-fueled idea to energize the community's push for economic stability and, in time, some growth would be good, too.

The plan is for a series of "economic coffee chats" the third Friday of every month through March, starting Oct. 18. The location will vary each month.

The department is calling the informal sessions "Our Town, Our Future."

It's a good time to talk about a better future. Wrangell needs some new ideas to reverse years of population loss. Even worse, the state's latest forecast predicts the town could drop to 1,400 residents by 2050 from 2,000 now.

Businesses continue to have problems hiring enough staff, and the borough has reported that sales tax revenues are starting to show weakness.

"Join us for informal discussions on the future of our community," says in the invite in the first issue of the borough's new economic development newsletter, which is part of a comprehensive public engagement effort with the monthly meetings. "Share your knowledge, generate ideas and take an active role in shaping our future."

Residents have long talked about wanting more tourism, particularly independent travelers who book lodging, spend money on meals and take tours while in town. And the town has long debated just how much tourism is the right amount.

Industrial development, with its high-paying jobs, is a prize that most every city in Alaska hopes to attract, but the prospects are limited in a state that is far from markets and with higher operating costs than other locations.

A stronger commercial fishing industry would be great, but runs are not as strong as in the past, seafood markets and prices flop around as much as a large halibut on the deck, and it's getting harder to keep younger people in the financially uncertain business.

The marine service industry has been a plus for Wrangell's economy, but the Marine Service Center is running out of space.

In short, there are possibilities out there, but all have challenges. Which is why the community needs to put its rain gear-covered heads together and figure out what it wants, what it doesn't want, what it can tolerate, and what needs to change to help rebuild Wrangell's economy.

Coffee anyone?

- Wrangell Sentinel

## GUEST OPINION

### British Columbia regulators fail at important job of mine reviews

By BRIAN LYNCH

On July 26, KSM Mining ULC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Seabridge Gold, received its "substantially started" determination from the British Columbia Environmental Assessment Office for its Kerr-Sulphurets-Mitchell (KSM) project. KSM is a huge proposed open-pit and underground gold-copper-silver mine targeting coastal mountains of northwestern B.C., within the headwaters of both the Nass River, which lies entirely within B.C., and the transboundary Unuk River, which flows into Southeast Alaska near Ketchikan.

Why does this matter? According to B.C. regulations, an environmental assessment certificate is the key overarching approval required for a reviewable development project to go forward.

With the certificate comes a stipulation that the project must be "substantially started" within 10 years, with an opportunity for

a one-time five-year extension. The rationale behind the 10-year stipulation is that environmental analyses and the studies on which they are based should be relatively current. If a project is not launched in a reasonably timely way, environmental reviews, and the studies on which they are based, should be revisited to consider changing circumstances, new data, evolving environmental concerns, etc.

However, if a project is deemed "substantially started" by the specified deadline, the certificate remains in effect for the life of the project, be it many years or even many decades further on.

Substantially started determinations pose significant environmental risk to downstream communities by fixing environmental assessment certificates and project approvals in time, regardless of climate change, new scientific information, cumulative impacts or significant regulatory

reforms. For KSM, because of this determination, its certificate now has essentially permanent status.

This means that all environmental impact analyses that are the basis of the certificate for one of the world's largest proposed mines are now virtually locked in place. Data and studies informing the environmental impact study and the certificate approval for KSM, some already 16 years old, are now, unfortunately, good indefinitely.

These studies also took place before the disastrous Mount Polley tailings dam failure and before revamped provincial mine review processes were implemented. With climate change and fast melting glaciers (and evolving implications for salmon and other species), KSM's remote setting is in dramatic flux, an on the ground reality that can now be all but ignored by B.C. mining regulators.

The supreme irony here is that B.C.'s KSM "substantially

started" determination upends the very basis on which the policy was implemented in the first place.

The decision appears contrary to a B.C. Court of Appeal's ruling providing guidance on the meaning of "substantially started," which states: "Proponents may fail to commence a project through no fault of their own. While we might sympathize with a proponent that has tried its best but failed to make a substantial start on a project, it does not change the fact that the statutory test has not been met."

In other words, the test is about on the ground progress as opposed to external factors.

Regardless, B.C. made clear that part of its substantially started rationale for KSM is the fact that Seabridge, like most other mining companies, is seeking investment partners for its project.

This decision is about as rubber-stamp as it gets and calls into

question if B.C.'s "substantially started" policy has any relevance to mine development and oversight. The reality is the KSM mine is not yet close to getting started.

What really matters here is whether or not B.C. is giving the KSM proposal the rigorous, thorough environmental review it warrants. This "substantially started" determination suggests there is reason for concern in this regard. With high stakes for salmon runs, biodiversity and the interests of downstream communities closely tied to the Unuk and Nass watersheds, B.C.'s "substantially started" gift to Seabridge is nothing short of a travesty.

*Brian Lynch is a retired Alaska Department of Fish and Game commercial fisheries biologist currently working for Rivers Without Borders on Canadian mining issues. He lives in Petersburg.*

Oldest continuously published paper in Alaska

# WRANGELL SENTINEL

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## Cruise ship numbers

Continued from page 1

up 90% of Wrangell's tourists, according to the chamber of commerce. While the chamber hopes to diversify sources of tourism, its new director Tracey Martin is pleased with the 2025 estimates.

"This many visitors to Wrangell opens up a lot of business opportunities for locals," Martin said.

And though the numbers are high for Wrangell standards, other places like Ketchikan and Juneau receive more than a million passengers every summer, often with multiple ships making port in the same day. Even Haines, with about the same population as Wrangell, was scheduled this summer to see 85,000 cruise passengers.

Petersburg, on the other hand, has fallen behind Wrangell's cruise ship figures in recent years. In 2023, the community had around 16,000



PHOTO BY SAM PAUSMAN / WRANGELL SENTINEL

The 650-foot Seabourn Odyssey tied up in Wrangell on Sept. 5, the last of its eight stops this summer. The ship is not scheduled back next year, though its sister ship, the Seabourn Quest, is on the 2025 schedule, contributing to the estimated 40,000 cruise passengers that could come to town next year. That would be almost twice this summer's visitor count.

cruise ship visitors. That number was expected to remain stagnant this year, according to a Petersburg Pilot report.

However, Stacy Luhr, who works for Petersburg's finance department, said only 6,387 cruise ship visitors have been reported this summer. Ed Tagaban, that town's port and harbor operations supervisor, told the Sentinel he expects that

number to increase slightly in 2025, but not anywhere close to the number Wrangell expects.

Back in Wrangell, Thomas is aware that many locals don't want downtown to feel overrun with tourists, but she also realizes the value of a tourism economy. For Thomas, the tentative 2025 cruise ship schedule reflects this.

"The borough is striving to

strike a balance between the different classifications of ships so as to maintain a culture and quality of life, while also still allowing for economic activity," she said. To that end, of the 65 scheduled port calls, 17 are small ships, 37 mid-sized ships and 11 are large.

The tentative passenger count does not port calls by Allen Marine, National Geo-

graphic Expeditions or Alaskan Dream Cruises, all of which run smaller boats that carry several dozen passengers each.

According to Thomas, 2024 was a trial year for the over-2,000 capacity passenger ships in Wrangell. She spoke to local businesses and heard "positive remarks on the days (ships that size visited)."

### Re-Elect Patty Gilbert for Mayor

Maintain our forward momentum

- Repaired many city structures
- Initiated multiple economic development projects
- Secured \$38 million in grant funding

(Awaiting an additional \$14.5 million in grants)

Keep the Progress Moving!

Vote Patty Gilbert for Mayor

Paid for by Patricia Gilbert, P.O. Box 288 Wrangell, AK 99929

## State gives trollers 10-day opening to go after kings, with 12-fish limit

BY ANNA LAFFREY  
Ketchikan Daily News

Trollers shoved off from docks across Southeast Alaska over the weekend, following an announcement from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game of a very limited 10-day commercial opening for kings.

The brief window opened Sept. 1 and was scheduled to close Sept. 10, with a limit of 12 kings per troller.

The department said it expects trollers will harvest the remaining Southeast allocation of about 4,000 fish. That's what remains of the commercial net fisheries share of Southeast kings, as seine fisheries have wrapped up and gillnet fisheries are winding down across the region.

Trollers' first summer retention period for chinook kicked off on July 1, and a total of 467 troll permit holders across the region harvested about 83,000 chinook over eight days, according to preliminary data from the state.

Since mid-July, fewer than 300 boats have been fishing across the region, which Alaska Trollers Association president Matt Donohoe, a troller out of Sitka, calls an "all-time low."

Kings this year are fetching an average of about \$6 per pound and weigh about 11 pounds on average, according to state data.

Following the strong harvest during the initial July troll opener, Fish and Game estimated in early August that only about 15,000 kings remained in trollers' allocation for the season. But trollers didn't get a second try at kings in August because sport fishermen, which includes charter fishers, exceeded their harvest allocation by more than 14,000.

Later in August, the department announced that beginning on Aug. 26 all sport fishermen in Southeast would be barred from retaining kings until Oct. 1 due to the harvest overage.

But after announcing the closure for sport fishermen, the Fish and Game commissioner signaled the department might open up a second, limited opportunity for commercial trollers to catch and keep kings left over by the net fisheries to ensure the state uses up its entire allocation under the U.S.-Canada salmon treaty.

Last year, the department on Sept. 1 opened up a similar 10-day opportunity for trollers to target 3,200 kings.

## Former hospital plan

Continued from page 1

building be used to host a proposed Southeast Alaska vocational education program the borough recently pitched to U.S. Rep. Mary Peltola for possible federal funding. Doing so would require a partnership with Alaska Vocational Technical Center, a state school based in Seward. According to Thomas, the vocational school does not have the bandwidth for this type of program right now, thus eliminating that option.

The borough also had explored using the hospital building as a temporary space for the police and fire departments if the Public Safety Building undergoes repairs in the coming years. However, Thomas said, remodeling costs and incompatible timelines make that idea unworkable.

She said the borough — which does not want to own and maintain the building for-

ever — would like to sell the property as soon as possible but knows it may take time.

Physically, the structural integrity of the building is sound, according to Thomas. But it has its fair share of issues inside. For starters, she emphasized that its unique layout as a hospital makes it difficult to market.

The building has been vacant since SEARHC moved out and opened its new Wrangell Medical Center in 2021.

A 2018 report also identified the building contained asbestos. While most of it is easily abatable, board member Brian Ashton worries that asbestos-containing pieces of the roof may require further work. Ashton, a local inventor, recommended the borough study samples from certain sections of the roof before further marketing the building.

In addition to asbestos,

Mayor Patty Gilbert admitted the decades-old old building — if it is to be fully functional again — would need new plumbing and electric systems, a new generator, new fire suppression system and new heating system.

While the board did not set a minimum price for the property, it recommended listing its 2022 appraised value of \$830,000, while inviting any potential buyers to make an offer.

The assembly last year dropped the asking price to \$470,000, and then later accepted an offer of \$200,000 from a Georgia-based real estate developer — who backed out of the deal in June.

"It's a great space," board member John DeRuyter said. "There's a ton of things that can be done with that building. It can be an economic driver on a number of levels."

### You don't know what you're getting into or what's getting into you.

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fentanyl



Now with  
xylazine

opioids.alaska.gov



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# Girls volleyball looks to build on last year's 2nd place Southeast finish

By SAM PAUSMAN  
Sentinel senior reporter

Head Coach Brian Herman wants Wrangell High School girls volleyball to be the best team in Southeast — and he knows they can be.

After finishing second in the region (and fourth at state) last year, the team is looking to take the next step up this year. The 2024 season will be the second year for the team's co-head coaching duo of Herman and Shelley Powers, and Herman noticed that the players are already looking better than they were at this point last year.

Since May, Herman and Powers have hosted open-gym sessions for the players to come out and get some on-court experience before the season starts on

Oct. 4. The sessions are not necessarily opportunities for Herman and Powers to coach, but instead they allow returning players to shake some rust off and get the rising freshman up to the speed of the high school game.

Freshmen Jenna Eastaugh and Bri Stewart have impressed coaches this summer. Herman expects both to contribute to the relatively young team this year. The Wolves lost just two seniors from last year's roster, though Alana Harrison — an impressive sophomore — will be a notable absence this year too. Harrison is expected to be back in town next season after her family headed to New Zealand for six months.

Aubrey Wynne headlines the list of the team's notable returners. Despite

coming off an ankle injury, Herman knows the team is going to rely on Wynne's output and adaptability.

"She's going to carry a lot of the load," he said. "Last year, she put up some of the best numbers I've ever had. She filled in all over the court — wherever we needed."

Starting setter Christina Johnson is also returning after being named to the all-state tournament team last season. Herman hopes senior Adeline Andrews and sophomore Alexis Easterly will be regular contributors as well.

In total, the coaches expect a roster of around 16 or 18; the impressive numbers may even allow for a JV team. Herman said he will not have an official head count until practices begin on Sept. 11.

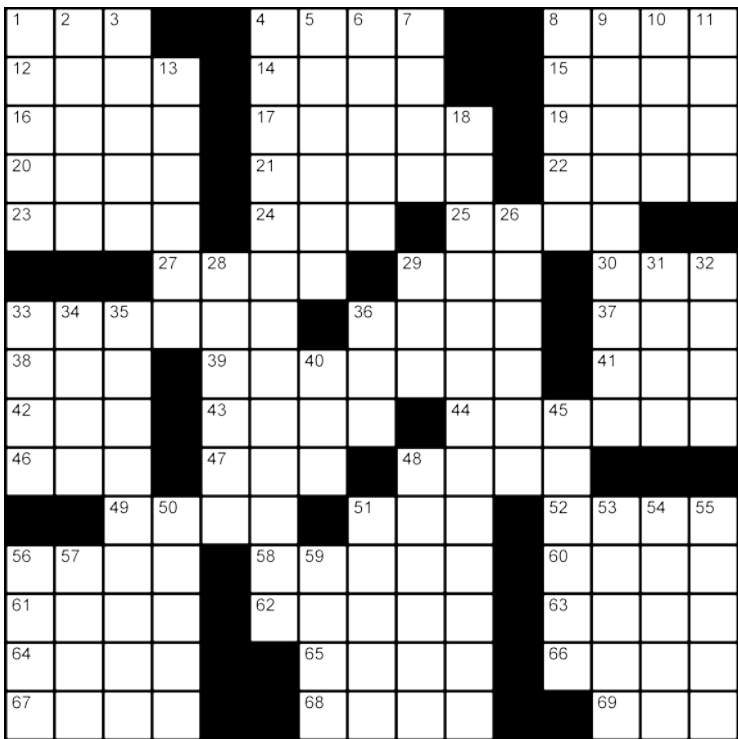
The Wolves will compete in their first tournament of the year on Oct. 4 in Juneau before traveling to Metlakatla the following week. Then, they have a month-long break before heading to Petersburg.

They will round off the regular season on Nov. 23 at the Southeast tournament in Craig, where the top two teams will qualify for the Dec. 5 state tournament in Palmer.

Currently, there are no scheduled home meets, but Herman is trying to organize matches against Petersburg during the month-long break in scheduling. Talks of an alumni game are also in the works. Both options would give the team an opportunity for a traditional senior night, Herman said.

## Crossword

Answers on page 8



### CLUES ACROSS

- 1 Raises
- 4 1 G
- 8 Strikebreaker
- 12 Siestas
- 14 Egg layers
- 15 Father of a leveret
- 16 Superstar
- 17 Wanes
- 19 Old Peruvian native
- 20 Aligned
- 21 Open
- 22 Enormous
- 23 Abominable snowman
- 24 Scrutinize
- 25 Study
- 27 Mardi ---
- 29 Evil
- 30 E.g. A O L
- 33 Four pecks
- 36 Secret Chinese society
- 37 Bingo!
- 38 Time in Boston
- 39 Merchant ship's capacity
- 41 Immediately
- 42 Dentists' grp.
- 43 "Death --- Expert Witness" (P D James)
- 44 Is adjacent to
- 46 Homo sapiens
- 47 Frequently, poetically
- 48 Mailed
- 49 Specialty food store
- 51 Contemptuous exclamation
- 52 Mantle
- 56 State of constant change
- 58 Lily Munster actress
- Yvonne De ---
- 60 Not his
- 61 Captain Jack Sparrow actor
- 62 Online missives
- 63 Senses of self-importance
- 64 Wild about
- 65 Look after
- 66 Seedy joint
- 67 Talks lovingly
- 68 Singles
- 69 Could be bobby, red or white

### CLUES DOWN

- 1 One
- 2 Army chaplain
- 3 Gush forth
- 4 Presidential workplace
- 5 Chucks
- 6 Outbreak
- 7 Junkie
- 8 Destructive Hindu deity
- 9 Those north of the 49th
- 10 Curves
- 11 Police officer's patrol route
- 13 Snow carriage
- 18 Wrestling maneuvers
- 26 Enter stealthily
- 28 Provide new equipment
- 29 Long feathery scarf
- 31 Get lost!
- 32 Minor chessman
- 33 Smile
- 34 Federal farming regulator
- 35 Confront
- 36 Channel revived as Heartland
- 40 --- King Cole
- 45 Engraved with acid
- 48 Salty
- 50 Montreal ---, now the Washington Nationals
- 51 Gray matter
- 53 Breastplate of Zeus or Athena
- 54 Brigham Young University city
- 55 Antique auto
- 56 Depositors' protective grp.
- 57 Longtime "Tonight Show" host Jay
- 59 Rounds

## Cross country boasts strong showing in Craig

By SAM PAUSMAN  
Sentinel senior reporter

Wrangell High School's cross-country teams raced well last Saturday and improved their results from the season's opening race two weeks ago.

The boys team finished first in all divisions in Craig, anchored by another Boomchain Loucks victory. Loucks, a junior, won the boys 5K handedly, and improved on his personal best race time by nearly 14 seconds.

The girls side showed improvement as well — something coach Mason Villarma has emphasized as the focus of their season. Wrangell finished second in their division thanks to a sixth-place finish from junior Kalee Herman. In back-to-back meets, Herman has been the highest finisher for the girls.

Loucks has now won both meets he's raced in this season. The Sept. 7 race in Craig was supposed to be the third of the year, but after a heavy rain led to the cancellation of Wrangell's only scheduled home meet on Aug. 31, the Craig Invitational was just the second time Wrangell

runners raced against rivals this year.

"Boomchain has the fastest 5K in all of Southeast (and) 11th across all divisions in the state," Villarma said. "He hasn't even got to race anyone (who is competitive), so it will be fun to see what he can do as he faces stiffer competition."

Ian Nelson, another junior, was just two seconds away from a top-five boys finish. Daniel Harrison and Jackson Powers finished within one second of each other, rounding out Wrangell's top 10 finishers at eight and nine, respectively.

Petersburg finished second in the boys team scoring, with Mt. Edgecumbe, Craig and Ketchikan filling out the top five.

For the girls, sophomore Bella Ritchie finished eighth while freshman Kailyn McCutcheon finished just behind her teammate in 10th. The race was dominated by Petersburg, with the Vikings finishing in the first four positions of the girls 5K.

The Wrangell cross-country team will travel next to the Sitka Invitational meet, scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 14.

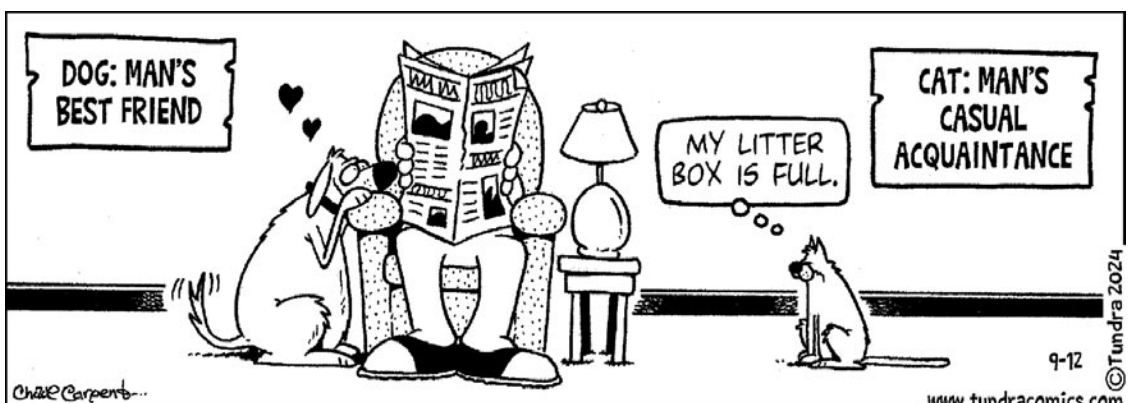
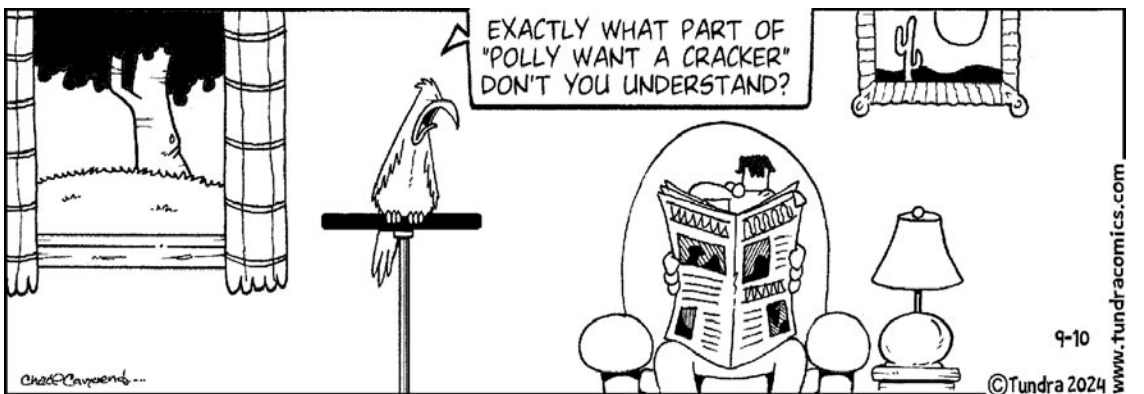
## Ritter's River

by Marc Lutz



## Tundra

by Chad Carpenter





# Forest Service creates online dashboard for subsistence users

By SENTINEL STAFF

Southeast Alaska subsistence users who want current information on sockeye escapement numbers, deer seasons and detailed maps now have a single website providing all the information.

The U.S. Forest Service on Sept. 2 went live with its new subsistence dashboard.

"This tool was created in response to feedback and requests by tribal organizations and subsistence users throughout Southeast Alaska," Tongass Subsistence

Program Manager Robert Cross said in a prepared statement. "We heard how difficult it was to find subsistence data and understand regulatory boundaries, so we got to work on a solution."

The website includes up-to-date sockeye escapement numbers, downloadable maps of regulatory areas, deer harvest rules and any special wildlife notices.

"The goal of the subsistence dashboard is to provide all the already publicly available data in a single, convenient location

online, rather than spread throughout reports and papers published by a variety of state and federal agencies," the Forest Service said.

The website is at [bit.ly/4edh13g](https://bit.ly/4edh13g).

Staff have been working more than a year to create the dashboard, Cross said in an interview last week. It was clear the agency needed a better way to provide information to the public, he said.

All of the Tongass National Forest is considered a fishing and hunting subsis-

tence area, he explained, with areas closed or restricted as needed to preserve the resource. Such as the Stikine River, which was closed — for the eighth year in a row — to subsistence fishing for king salmon May 15 through June 20 to help preserve weak returns of the fish.

Though the Tongass is a subsistence area, Ketchikan and Juneau residents are excluded from subsistence hunting and fishing under the federal definition of rural users.

## CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL, ALASKA Public Notice

ABSENTEE VOTING for the Regular Borough Election, to be held October 1, 2024, begins on Monday, Sept. 16, 2024, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, at City Hall.

Qualified Voters may vote an Absentee Ballot until Monday, Sept. 30, 2024, at 4 p.m. for the Regular Borough Election.

For those voters who cannot VOTE ABSENTEE IN PERSON, you may submit an application to have your ballot mailed, emailed or faxed to you. Please stop by the Borough Clerk's Office to apply.

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

**Publish Sept. 11, 18 and 25, 2024**

## CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL, ALASKA Public Notice

For the upcoming City and Borough of Wrangell Regular Election of Oct. 1, 2024, the following ordinance applies:

2.16.030 Write-in Candidates and Write-in Votes. Individuals who fail to file a declaration of candidacy but wish to run for office as a write-in candidate, must file with the borough clerk a letter of intent no later than 5 p.m. on the Friday preceding the election (Sept. 27, 2024) in which the candidate plans to participate.

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

In order to vote for a write-in candidate, the voter must, in the space provided, write in the candidate's name as the candidate's name appears on the letter of intent filed with the borough clerk. In addition, the voter must mark the oval opposite the candidate's name.

Stickers shall not be used.

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

**Publish Sept. 11, 18 and 25, 2024**

## Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Trust Land Office Notice under 11 AAC 99.050 Decision to Initiate Trust Carbon Offset Program

Notice is hereby given that, pursuant to the provisions of AS 38.05.801 and 11 AAC 99, the Executive Director of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Land Office (TLO) has determined that it is in the best interest of the Alaska Mental Health Trust and its beneficiaries to initiate a Trust Carbon Offset Program on certain Trust land in southeast Alaska. The basis for this determination is explained in a written best interest decision prepared by the Executive Director pursuant to 11 AAC 99.040.

The Trust land affected by the decision is located in southeast Alaska. Further descriptions of the parcels can be found in the written best interest decision.

Persons who believe that the written decision should be altered because it is not in the best interest of the Trust or its beneficiaries, or because the decision is inconsistent with Trust management principles set out in 11 AAC 99.020, or any other provision of 11 AAC 99, must provide written comments on or before 4:30 p.m., Oct. 11, 2024. Comments should be submitted to the TLO at 2600 Cordova Street, Suite 201, Anchorage, AK 99503, or by fax (907) 269-8905 or email [mhtlo@alaska.gov](mailto:mhtlo@alaska.gov). Following the comment deadline, the Executive Director will consider timely comments that question the decision on the basis of the best interest of the Alaska Mental Health Trust and its beneficiaries or inconsistency with 11 AAC 99, and the best interest decision may be changed in response to such written comments or other information. Commenting parties will be provided a copy of the final best interest decision after the end of the notice period.

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

Copies of the written decision are available at the Trust Land Office, or at <https://alaskamentalhealthtrust.org/trust-land-office/>. If you have any questions concerning this action, please contact the Trust Land Office at (907) 269-8658. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Alaska Mental Health Trust is prepared to accommodate individuals with disabilities. Please contact the Trust Land Office at (907) 269-8658 for assistance. Requests for assistance must be received at least 96 hours prior to the comment deadline in order to ensure that any necessary accommodations can be provided.

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

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Jusdi Warner  
Executive Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date  
Publish date: Wrangell Sentinel Sept. 11, 2024

## Police report

### Monday, Sept. 2

Agency assist: Municipal line crew.

Traffic stop: Citation issued for failure to provide proof of insurance.

Traffic stop: Citation issued to motorcyclist for not wearing a helmet.

### Tuesday, Sept. 3

Traffic stop: Citation issued for improper start from stop.

Driving complaint.

Sexual assault.

Dangerous play.

### Wednesday, Sept. 4

Summons served.

Agency assist: Public Works.

Driving complaint.

Speeding complaint.

Agency assist: Search and Rescue.

### Thursday, Sept. 5

Found property.

Missing person.

Agency assist: Probation.

Civil matter.

Criminal trespass.

### Friday, Sept. 6

Motor vehicle accident.

### Saturday, Sept. 7

Traffic control.

Traffic stop: Citation issued for no proof of insurance and verbal warning for no registration.

Bar check.

### Sunday, Sept. 8

Agency assist: Ambulance.

Agency assist: Ambulance.

During this reporting period, there were four agency assists for the Hoonah Police Department, five additional traffic stops, three dog complaints and four parking complaints.

## CLASSIFIED

### FOR SALE

2009 Ford E-350 bus with 86,341 miles. Runs well and has had all scheduled maintenance. Call Catholic Community Service at 907-874-2006 for more information. \$15,000 OBO.

### 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).

**Raincountry Contractors**  
**Septic tank pump**  
**service available**  
**until October 30, 2024**  
**907-650-7028**

### LETTERS WANTED

Do you have an opinion that you would like to share? Send us a typed or clearly written letter up to 400 words with your phone number and we will get it published in the paper. Contact Amber at 907-874-2301 or email [wrgsent@gmail.com](mailto:wrgsent@gmail.com).

## CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL, ALASKA Notice of Regular Election

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on the 1st day of October 2024, in the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, a Regular Local Election will be held for the purpose of voting on the following Borough Official positions and Propositions.

Borough Mayor: One – (2-Year Term)

Borough Assembly: Two – (3-Year Terms)

School Board: Two – (3-Year Terms)

Port Commission: Two – (3-Year Terms)

### PROPOSITION 1

#### Ratification of Ordinance 1063

Amendment to Section 2-3 of the Home Rule Charter to remove the prohibition on compensation for assembly members as set forth in Ordinance 1063.

### PROPOSITION 2

#### Ratification of Ordinance 1065

General obligation bonds for major renovation of Public Safety Building as set forth in Ordinance 1065.

The polls for said election will be open at 8 a.m. on the said day and will close at 8 p.m. on the same day.

Each voter must have the qualifications prescribed by state law. A qualified voter shall vote only once per election and shall exercise that right at the polling place established in the designated Wrangell Precinct (James and Elsie Nolan Museum/Civic Center) and in which he/she resides within the borough boundaries of the City and Borough of Wrangell.

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

**Publish Sept. 4, 11, 18 and 25, 2024**



# Sitkans without internet—

Continued from page 1

service remains sporadic and dysfunctional.

A cable ship hired by the company has arrived to start repairs this week.

Elon Musk's satellite internet company, Starlink, appears to be a prime beneficiary. Starlink's sleek satellite receivers have been proliferating in Sitka.

The Central Council of Tlingit and Haida, sent about 15 Starlink units to Sitka the day after the outage. They were distributed to hospitals, schools, city government and rescue services, the council said in a statement. Others went to the local public radio station and newspaper.

Those weren't the only Starlink units to land in Sitka after the break.

While some businesses and residents already had Starlink before the outage, others went to great lengths to acquire them afterward.

With no systems available to purchase in Sitka, Keith Grenier hopped on a jet to Seattle. He and his business partner at a mechanical contracting business bought eight Starlink units there before flying home and "handing them out to all of the people who were behind."

Even getting on the plane in Sitka, however, was challenging. Grenier said he drove out to a remote part of town where his phone could receive data, pulled up his boarding pass on the Alaska Airlines app and took a screenshot that he could use to get past security.

"It was, like, three hours of trying to navigate this stuff just to leave the island," he said. "There were rumors about having to have a paper boarding pass."

Grenier's home, and driveway, are now hotspots for friends and family in need of cell and internet service.

Other residents are holding out as conscientious Starlink objectors, refusing to send money to a company owned by Musk — a billionaire who's increasingly aligned his politics with Donald Trump's.

For those without access to Starlink units, however, keeping up normal business can be a huge hassle.

Numerous companies are accepting only cash, while others collect customers' credit card information, then bring their payment processing devices to Starlink hotspots every hour or day to run the transactions. Himschoot said she heard from a business owner who had one of those purchases declined.

"It's one bagel sandwich," she said. "But that's a real hit when your margin's really slim."

There are long lines for cash at the bank, Himschoot added. She's also worried about constituents who may miss deadlines to apply for or renew state benefits and services. And, she added: How do elders connect to the van service to get to health care?

Certain elective procedures at Sitka's hospital, run by the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium, are also still on hold, especially for "patients with complex medical needs that require telemedicine support," according to a consortium spokesman.

GCI is providing its customers with a free month of service, a spokeswoman said. The company is also offering people what she called "alternative entertainment," since they "don't have access to their technology." It's providing free admission one day this weekend to Sitka's athletic and wellness center, as well as to a dance performance.

The library, meanwhile, has become the local watering hole, attracting scores of visitors with its free, Starlink-based internet. "People are hanging around our building 24 hours a day," said Jeremia, the director. "They're parking out on the street; the parking lot is full."

Over 10 days, nearly 900 people updated their library cards, she added, and DVDs and books have been flying off shelves. "People were hustling all over town to find a DVD player."

While the communications blackout has been "devastating" for residents who work from home, she said, it's also brought people together, with the library full of visitors "talking and sharing stories and giving advice."

"For three minutes of texting, you end up with an hour of conversation with people you haven't seen for a while — they're all there," Himschoot said. "People are just spending a lot more time doing what we used to do without the internet."

For now, she added, "It's kind of a golden moment, in some ways."

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**PUZZLE SOLUTION**

# Tlingit & Haida sends multiple Starlink units to help out Sitka

BY SHANNON HAUGLAND  
Sitka Sentinel

With repair of the damaged GCI fiber optic cable expected sometime in the next week, a lot of Sitkans are relying on Starlink thanks to help from the Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska.

Sitka lost internet service Aug. 29 when an undersea cable broke.

"Our teams have successfully restored basic mobile voice and text services using alternative technology," GCI reported Sept. 3. "However, customers are unable to use mobile data, internet and UConn TV services."

The telecommunications provider said a fiber repair ship that arrived at the site of the cable break last week would take until sometime this week to make repairs, "depending on the complexity of the situation and other challenges that may arise."

Jenifer Nelson, GCI director of rural affairs, said she could only say that the break occurred between Sitka and Angoon. "There's a lot that is unknown to us until we can get to the cable and get the cable up out of the water."

GCI is using a series of satellite and microwave technologies to restore some basic services.

Tlingit & Haida had a handful of Starlink systems in Sitka, which it distributed to places like

the Sitka Public Library, SEARHC Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, public radio station KCAW and the Tlingit & Haida offices.

Richard Peterson, president of the Central Council of Tlingit & Haida, also authorized the distribution of Starlink systems for temporary use at various essential businesses in Sitka. Some 15 were shipped from Juneau, and a Tlingit & Haida employee helped explain and troubleshoot around town.

More were shipped to cover day care centers, the Coast Guard, Mt. Edgecumbe High School and Sitka school district buildings to give teachers, staff and students internet access once the buildings reopened after the Labor Day holiday.

Tlingit & Haida is not charging for the temporary use of the Starlink systems.

Meanwhile, residents asked traveling friends and family members to bring back Starlink systems from their travels out of town, and many ordered systems online. Businesses in town sold what they had in their inventory and airline employees noted a number of Starlink setups coming into town through their freight services.

City officials said the use of the library's Wi-Fi is for essential use only and not designed to support high bandwidth activities such as gaming or streaming movies and music.

# Ketchikan police chief resigns rather than face criminal charges

BY ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS

Ketchikan's police chief has resigned under an agreement that dismisses criminal charges against him stemming from a 2022 off-duty altercation in a restaurant that injured another man.

Jeffrey Walls, 48, signed the agreement with state prosecutors on Aug. 27. He stepped down as chief effective Sept. 10.

Walls was hired as Ketchikan police chief in 2021. Before that, he worked at the New Orleans Police Department for 24 years.

He was accused of injuring a man during an encounter at the Salmon Falls resort restaurant in September 2022.

Walls and his wife were sitting at the bar when a stranger twice fell into or pushed their chairs, according to charges

filed in the case. Witnesses told investigators Walls pursued the man after he walked away, pushed him and caused his head to hit a stone wall, then placed him in a chokehold while the man bled from a head wound, the charges said.

Walls claims he lawfully used force to detain the man before on-duty officers could arrive, according to information in court filings.

The other man was initially arrested on charges of assault, harassment and being drunk on a licensed premise based on documents signed by Walls and his wife, according to filings in that case. Those charges were later dismissed.

Walls was indicted on a felony assault charge three times by grand juries. The felony was dropped after a judge dismissed the indict-

ments after finding issues with the state's grand jury presentations. Walls remained charged with five misdemeanors, which did not require a grand jury.

The agreement dismisses the misdemeanor charges in exchange for his resignation and a voluntary disqualification from holding law enforcement jobs in Alaska.

Walls was placed on paid administrative leave for more than eight months after the case began. He was reinstated as chief when the felony indictment was dismissed in August 2023.

In his resignation, Walls wrote that he is retiring "for personal reasons." He plans to move to the Lower 48 to help with family health matters and explore jobs in a new field, his attorney said.

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