



## Assembly passes emergency mask, travel ordinances

By CALEB VIERKANT  
*Sentinel writer*

In response to new COVID-19 cases in town, and with 85 reported cases in Petersburg in the past two weeks, the Wrangell Borough Assembly adopted three emergency ordinances by wide margins Tuesday night, including reinstating a community mask mandate.

The ordinances also require COVID-19 testing for interstate and intrastate travelers to Wrangell.

The community had two active cases as of Tuesday, Borough Manager Lisa Von Barga told the assembly.

Petersburg had 65 active cases as of Tuesday evening.

The mandates drew strong opinions from members of the public who spoke during the meeting. Of the seven people who spoke, four voiced opposition to the emergency ordinances and three voiced support. Mayor Steve Prysunka said the city had received numerous letters from the public on the ordinances, as well.

Common arguments against the ordinances, in particular the mask mandate, were that they are government overreach and would further divide an already divided community. Opponents also said the mandates are unnecessary, as Wrangell has had so few cases.

DJ McConachie said he saw no reason for Wrangell to worry just because there were problems “over there” in other communities.

Morgan Sanford said he did not want to see any of his liber-

ties taken away. “You treat us all like we’re stupid and unable to take responsibility for our own actions,” Sanford said.

On the other end of the argument, several community members voiced support for the ordinances. Common arguments were that the ordinances would

help keep the public safe and help get the community back to normal faster.

Valerie Massie said the mask mandate would help keep the economy moving through the pandemic by limiting the spread of the virus and helping avoid business or facility closures.

Zach Taylor, who operates the tour business Muddy Water Adventures and bus company Taylor Transportation, said all of his sources of income have been hurt by the pandemic. What Wrangell’s economy really needs is an influx of independent travelers during the tourist season,

he said. If the pandemic is not kept under control, that will not happen.

“If what happens in Ketchikan and Petersburg happens here ... we’re not going to have any independent travelers,” Taylor said.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF MARK KELLEY/MARKKELLEY.COM

### One of Wrangell’s many attractions

Just as ice floats from Shakes Glacier into the Stikine River every year, so too will visitors return to Wrangell this summer. The *Sentinel* wants to help the community get ready and visitors to know what the area has to offer. The 2021 Wrangell Guide will be printed and published online the first week of April. Call or email the *Sentinel* now to reserve your ad in the visitor guide, which this year will feature photos from award-winning photographer and frequent Stikine and Anan Creek visitor Mark Kelley, such as this shot of a Summit Charters’ boat slowly cruising among the ice chunks at the outlet from Shakes Glacier in August 2014.

## Dogs passed near Wrangell on their way south 10,000 years ago

By LARRY PERSILY  
*Sentinel writer*

It was an international effort that started on a long journey about 10,000 years ago through what is now a cave on the mainland, across Blake Channel

from Wrangell Island.

A bone chip smaller than a dime, found almost 25 years ago by a University of South Dakota researcher, was being held at the University of Alaska Fairbanks Museum of the North. It was

examined again by scientists with the University at Buffalo, State University of New York, who published their study last month in the London-based Royal Society’s flagship biological research journal.

The chip is a small piece of a leg bone from a dog that lived an estimated 10,150 years ago.

The piece of a femur is the oldest confirmed remains of a domestic dog in the Americas, according to the researchers.

The bone fragment was originally thought to come from a bear, but when the DNA was studied, the team realized it was from a dog, said University at Buffalo evolutionary biologist Charlotte Lindqvist, who was senior author of the study that also included scientists from the University of South Dakota.

“Because dogs are a proxy for human occupation, our data help provide not only a timing but also a location for the entry of dogs and people into the Americas. Our study supports the theory that this migration occurred just as coastal glaciers retreated during the last Ice Age,” Lindqvist told the university’s online newspaper, UBNOW.

It was a long journey for dogs and their companions from what is now Alaska to the Pacific Northwest.

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## Draft school budget cuts almost 12% from last year

By CALEB VIERKANT  
*Sentinel writer*

The school district’s draft budget for next year proposes \$660,000 in total reductions in teacher payroll, funding for special education instruction, supplies and materials for the classroom, student activities and other categories to bring spending closer to projected revenues.

Projected revenues for the 2021-2022 school year are roughly \$4.88 million in state, municipal and federal funds, a decrease of about \$800,000 from the approved budget for the current school year.

The drop in revenue can largely be attributed to a decrease in state foundation funding, which is based on student enrollment numbers. The district predicts an enrollment of about 259 students next year, a decrease from 300 in past years. The current enrollment is about 200, as

many students during the pandemic are homeschooling or enrolled in correspondence programs outside the district.

In addition to spending reductions, the draft budget proposes withdrawing \$131,000 from the district’s reserve account to cover the bills, taking down the reserve from an estimated fiscal year-end balance in June 2021 to \$494,000 in June 2022.

The draft budget includes about a 9% cut in salary spending for certificated staff (mostly teachers), saving \$145,000. Spending on special education instruction would be cut about one-third; student activities funding would be scaled back by \$66,000, about 25%; and the budget for supplies and materials would be down \$50,000, about 40%.

The school district did not respond to repeated requests for information on the draft budget.



# School board will meet Friday to interview superintendent candidates

By CALEB VIERKANT  
Sentinel writer

The Juneau candidate for the Wrangell schools superintendent job dropped out, leaving a field of three to meet the community in a Zoom event last week.

The school board is scheduled to interview the finalists Friday.

The three finalists are: Joseph Aldridge, superintendent of the Columbia Union School District, in Central California; Bill Burr, assistant superintendent of the Delta Junction/Greely School District, east of Fairbanks; and Ralph Watkins, superintendent

and principal of Hoonah City Schools.

Tim Bauer, of the Juneau School District, withdrew his application from consideration.

The Wrangell School District will accept community comments on the candidates until midnight Thursday, before it starts its interviews the next day.

Aldridge has been superintendent of the 500-student California district since 2017. Burr has served as assistant superintendent at the 800-student Delta/Greely School District since 2014. Watkins has served as

superintendent and principal of the 120-student Hoonah City Schools since 2016.

The Feb. 25 public forum was moderated by Tiffany Jackson, with the Association of Alaska School Boards, which is helping Wrangell School District find a new superintendent to take over for Debbie Lancaster, whose resignation will take effect June 30.

During the Zoom event, Jackson asked each candidate about their careers and leadership styles.

All three agreed that extracurricular activities are an integral part of the district's and students' well-being. They all also agreed that community partnerships are vital for providing opportunities for students.

Aldridge said state data shows that Wrangell has high-achieving students, but one area that he thinks could be improved is consistency from level to level. As superintendent, his first year would be mainly focused on learning the strengths of the schools and the teachers, and fig-

Continued on page 3

## Wrangell Roundup: Special Events

**NOLAN CENTER THEATER** presents "Wonder Woman 1984," rated PG-13. The action, adventure, fantasy movie will show at 7 p.m. Saturday and 4 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$5 for children under age 12. The concessions table will be open. Masks are required (and will be provided) as you enter the building. You may remove your mask while eating. Please wash your hands or use the hand sanitizer provided, and stay six feet apart in the lobby as well as theater seating. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

**LITTLE LEAGUE REGISTRATION** noon to 2 p.m. Saturday at City Market and IGA. Open to ages 4 to 14. The fee is \$30 for one player, or \$50 covers the family. An adult must accompany 4 year olds to registration.

**WRANGELL PARKS AND RECREATION** activities are suspended out of caution but are scheduled to reopen Monday. [www.wrangellrec.com](http://www.wrangellrec.com)

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

## Continuing Events

**PARKS and RECREATION (when activities resume Monday)**

**POOL ACTIVITIES:**

- Arthritis Foundation exercise class, 8:30 - 9:30 a.m., Monday, Wednesday, Friday
- Water aerobics, 10 - 11 a.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday
- Lap swim, 6 - 7:30 a.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday
- Lap swim, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. all five weekdays
- Lap swim, 5:15 - 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday, and 11 a.m. to 12:30 pm Saturday
- 2-lane lap swim, 10 - 11 a.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday
- Lap/tot swim, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. weekdays, and 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday
- Swim Club, 3:15 - 5:15 p.m., weekdays
- Open swim, 5:30 - 7 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday; 6:30 - 8 p.m. Friday; 1 - 2 p.m. Saturday

**WEIGHT ROOM:**

- 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 Meeting Tuesdays and Fridays 7 - 8 p.m. at St. Philips Episcopal Church.

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

**March 3, 1921**

About 160 feet of the dock, which is being built by Donald Sinclair for the convenience of fisherman and other boatmen who are patrons of the City Store, have been completed and the balance of the 200 feet, which will be the length of the main dock, will be put in when the tides permit the work to continue. The dock is seven feet wide. An inclined approach about 40 feet long will connect a substantial floating dock 80 feet in length with this main dock. The whole structure, which runs out from a platform at the rear of the warehouse, will extend out into the bay far enough to avoid rocky places at low tide.

**March 1, 1946**

Wrangell will follow the lead of other Alaska towns in joining the Alaska Statehood Association when interested persons will attend an organization meeting at the fire hall next Friday evening, March 8, at 7:30. The meeting was announced yesterday by Chamber of Commerce President James Nolan at the chamber meeting. The purpose of the association is to help pay the costs of having research done on the pros and cons of statehood, and the association has asked the territorial legislature to pay the salary of

one such researcher once the legislature has called for a referendum on statehood for next fall.

**March 4, 1971**

Wrecked cars aren't wasted in this island community. Take the 1968 Chevie station wagon which belonged to Mrs. Grace Wellons before it slipped on ice at Wellons' driveway a couple months back and was ruined when it overturned (no one was hurt, by the way). The blue station wagon was towed to Bud Hodge's Wrangell Garage, where it was deemed a total loss. Hodge bought it for parts and here is where some of the pieces are now: The engine is in one of City Market's delivery trucks; a left front wheel bearing is in Carl Thrift's car; the defroster fan is in Hodge's boat; the entire front end is going to be mated soon in repair of Tom Carlstrom's wrecked '68 Chevie sedan. "That car's sure getting around," chuckled Hodge.

**March 7, 1996**

A revised snowmobile ordinance, designed to keep snow machines off some recreational fields, was sent to the city attorney for consideration after the March 6 Parks and Recreation Youth Board meeting. Board president Ron Koch said, "The issue is two-part, one part being the

outdoor recreational activity of snowmobiling — and the other part being the park facilities and grounds that the park department/park board are responsible for maintaining." Proposed changes to the ordinance would ask for snowmobilers to avoid using the shooting range. The board also recommended the sledding hill at the multi-purpose playground also be off-limits to snowmobile use. Once an ordinance is adopted, Koch said the board will present the new rulings to the public through an education and trade show in October or November.

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

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

**Thursday, March 4:** Andy Morse, Donna Loucks, Betsy McConachie, Alan L. Cummings, Judy Guggenbickler, Samuel Comstock and Sherry Bond; Anniversary: Dude and Debbie Torvend.

**Friday, March 5:** Lucy Robinson, Kevin Roope, Jessica Davidson and Pat Warfel; Anniversary: Jim and Elsie Bailey.

**Saturday, March 6:** Sierra Ely and Michael Lockaby; Anniversary: Mike and Gail Ottesen.

**Sunday, March 7:** Jack Keller and Delilah Jean Clark.

**Monday, March 8:** Rhonda Edgley and Carter Hammer.

**Tuesday, March 9:** Jerry Massin, Ashley Young, Tanner J. Thomassen, Clayton Howe and Julieann Allen.

**Wednesday, March 10:** Sumi Angerman, Rick Kohrt and Hunter McCloskey.

**Thursday, March 11:** Michael Villarma, Jim Gillen, Ann Ruks and Chloe Smalley.

*If you would like to add a birthday or anniversary, call the Sentinel at 874-2301. There is no charge.*

## Senior Center Meals Menu Delivery Only

**Friday, March 5**

Meatloaf with mushrooms, mashed potatoes, romaine salad.

**Monday, March 8**

Honey ham, yams, salad and roll.

**Tuesday, March 9**

Fish and rice balls, Brussels sprouts, carrot raisin salad.

**Wednesday, March 10**

Ham and bean soup, cheese sandwich, apricot salad.

**Thursday, March 11**

Chicken Tahitian, honey mustard coleslaw, rice with zucchini.

**Please call Wrangell Senior Center at 874-2066 by 10 a.m. for delivery.**

**Senior van also available to transport seniors to medical appointments reasonable errands like collecting mail, getting prescriptions at pharmacies or other essential need items.**

## Ferry Schedule

**NORTHBOUND**

- Sunday, March 7**  
Matanuska, 2:45 p.m.
- Sunday, March 14**  
Matanuska, 2:45 p.m.
- Sunday, March 21**  
Matanuska, 2:45 p.m.
- Sunday, March 28**  
Matanuska, 1:45 p.m.
- Sunday, April 4**  
Matanuska, 2:45 p.m.

**SOUTHBOUND**

- Wednesday, March 10**  
Matanuska, 5:30 a.m.
- Wednesday, March 17**  
Matanuska, 6 a.m.
- Wednesday, March 24**  
Matanuska, 5:30 a.m.
- Wednesday, March 31**  
Matanuska, 7:45 a.m.
- Wednesday, April 7**  
Matanuska, 5:30 a.m.

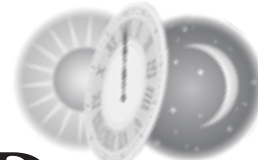
*All times listed are scheduled departure times.*

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



## TIDES March 4 - March 10

	High Tides			Low Tides				
	AM Time	Ft	PM Time	AM Time	Ft	PM Time	Ft	
<b>March 4</b>	03:58	17.2	04:39	13.9	10:19	-0.2	10:21	2.4
<b>March 5</b>	04:47	16.4	05:49	12.5	11:19	0.5	11:17	4.0
<b>March 6</b>	05:51	15.4	07:21	11.7	...	...	12:33	1.2
<b>March 7</b>	07:14	14.7	08:51	12.0	00:30	5.3	02:01	1.4
<b>March 8</b>	08:39	14.9	10:03	13.1	02:04	5.7	03:28	0.8
<b>March 9</b>	09:51	15.6	10:58	14.3	03:38	5.1	04:35	-0.1
<b>March 10</b>	10:50	16.4	11:44	15.4	04:46	3.8	05:24	-0.9



## Daylight Hours

Date	Sunrise	Sunset	Hours
<b>March 4</b>	6:32a	5:30p	11:02h
<b>March 5</b>	6:30a	5:32p	11:07h
<b>March 6</b>	6:27a	5:34p	11:12h
<b>March 7</b>	6:24a	5:37p	11:17h
<b>March 8</b>	6:22a	5:39p	11:21h
<b>March 9</b>	6:19a	5:41p	11:26h
<b>March 10</b>	6:16a	5:43p	11:31h



# Superintendent candidates

Continued from page 2

uring out how to use said strengths more consistently.

"How can we connect our teachers who are having great successes with students with teachers who are maybe having a little bit more trouble with that particular aspect of things?" Aldridge said. "What's going well, and how can we use the strengths of those teachers to really bring all of our students up, and all of our schools up?"

Watkins agreed that the data for Wrangell looks good. He attributed this to the longevity of the district's teaching staff. However, he said there are some areas that need growth. One such area he said was career and technical education.

Looking at graduation requirements, he noticed there is a one-credit requirement for career and technical education (CTE) or voc-ed. "Can we grow that?" Watkins asked. "As we look at job-ready skills, are we preparing our kids?"

Burr said attendance is a bright spot for Wrangell. A 95% attendance rate is "spectacular," he said. Graduation rates are also a good area. The goal should be

high graduation rates, high test scores, and successful programs, but he cautioned that high scores are not everything. His priority would be to keep building on previous success.

"Years ago, I had a principal say, 'Our scores are really high, and this is good enough,'" Burr said. "It's haunted me a little bit, because what is 'good enough' in education? ... Wrangell has a great foundation in CTE, in education, in graduation, all of that is wonderful. That first year [if hired] is finding out how that has been accomplished and how to move it forward."

Watkins said he would handle the budget in close collaboration with the school board, through numerous workshops. A focus on the district's overall strategic plan would also be important. The strategic plan is put together by all the community stakeholders, he said, so they need to use that as a guide when determining where money needs to go.

"Those choices should be reflective of what is going to support student achievement, is going to support student growth, staff retention, those things are important," Watkins

said.

Burr said declining budgets are a problem for communities and organizations across the state, not just for school districts. Stakeholder input and transparency would be his priorities for making budget assessments, he said, bringing everyone together.

"That means the City and Borough Assembly, that means the community, that means the canneries, that means everybody who's working for the benefit of the students and the community itself," Burr said. "We're going to have to make some cuts, but those cuts need to be shared with everybody involved. There has to be buy-in, and there has to be understanding."

Aldridge said he began his career in school administration in 2009, during the Great Recession. He was able to keep programs going through "honest conversations" about what their goals were for education. Part of those conversations, he said, included tying dollar amounts to a district's overall strategic plan.

"You know how much you're looking at for each action as you move all the way through, and it's very specific and very transparent for the community to see," Aldridge said. "I think if we take a look at things and we work hard as a staff, we work hard with our community, and we work hard with our board to figure out what are the core programs we must keep, and those are non-negotiable. ... Then we go out in layers from there."

A full recording of the candidate forum can be found at <https://vimeo.com/517249014/4f11b5df79>. More information on the candidates, their backgrounds, and a place for the district stakeholders to leave input can be found at <https://forms.gle/RNPT-fiCVG5cYzKXn8>.



PHOTO BY DOUGLAS LEVERE, UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Researchers determined that this bone fragment, found in a cave across Blake Channel from Wrangell, came from a dog that lived about 10,150 years ago

## Dogs

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"There have been multiple waves of dogs migrating into the Americas, but one question has been, when did the first dogs arrive?" Lindqvist asked. "And did they follow an interior ice-free corridor between the massive ice sheets that covered the North American continent, or was their first migration along the coast?"

The research indicates that dogs, and humans, migrated south along the coast as the retreating glaciers opened the way.

"Our early dog from Southeast Alaska supports the hypothesis that the first dog and human migration occurred through the Northwest Pacific coastal route instead of the central continental corridor," said Flavio Augusto da Silva Coelho, a University at Buffalo Ph.D. student in biological sciences and one of the paper's first authors.

"Before our study, the earliest ancient American dog bones that had their DNA sequenced were found in the U.S. Midwest," Coelho told UBNOW.

It was no Midwest diet for the Wrangell dog. Carbon isotope analysis on the bone fragment indicates that the ancient Southeast Alaska dog likely had a marine diet, which may have consisted of foods such as fish and scraps from seals and whales, researchers determined.

"The bone chip was discovered in Lawyer's Cave, also called Phalanges Phreatic Tube by cavers, referring to the cave's shape and the toe bones (phalanges) of a bear found inside," according to the research paper published in the Royal Society journal.

The cave has two entrances and is about 65-feet of "non-branching crawlway from end to end," the paper said. "Lawyer's Cave is rich in other postglacial remains beyond the specimen, including bones of various mammals, birds and fish, as well as human remains and artifacts that were discovered during two excavations in 1998 and 2003."

Lindqvist's team did not plan on going to the dogs. They were sequencing DNA from a collection of hundreds of bones excavated in the late 1990s from the cave by University of South Dakota researchers. "This all started out with our interest in how Ice Age climatic changes impacted animals' survival and movements in this region," Lindqvist told UBNOW.

"Southeast Alaska might have served as an ice-free stopping point of sorts, and now — with our dog — we think that early human migration through the region might be much more important than some previously suspected," she said.

"The research adds depth to the layered history of how dogs came to populate the Americas," UBNOW reported.

### Wrangell Parks & Recreation asks all dog owners to take THE "SCOOP YOUR POOP PLEDGE"

I PLEDGE TO SCOOP THE POOP, AT HOME AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK RAIN OR SHINE.

I PLEDGE TO SCOOP THE POOP ON WALKS EVERY TIME.

I PLEDGE TO BAG IT AND PUT IT IN THE TRASH.



It's not cool to leave your stool, please scoop your dog's poop.

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Murkowski has failed as a faithful defender of conservative values

Referring to Larry Persily's opinion column, "Sen. Murkowski did her job" (Wrangell Sentinel, Feb.18), I agree we should be civil and respect the opinions of others. Yes, bullying has no place in a civilized society with democratic aspirations as well, even under one-party rule promoting censorship and the cancel culture.

OK, so Ms. Murkowski did her job, but has she represented faithfully the values of her fellow Alaskans and the Republican Party?

We all know that just doing a job does not mean the job was done well (I hesitate to use the word right). If the word "liberal" while speaking about Ms. Murkowski does not fit at all, how come she was previously labeled by The New York Times (not exactly a conservative media) and GovTrack as "the second-most liberal Republican (behind Susan Collins) to the left of a Democrat Joe Manchin"?

I am sorry, but what I see is a pro-abortion politician who voted against emergency declaration at

the southern U.S. border and is often grandstanding with the Democrats, not a defender of conservative values.

Ms. Murkowski is a member of the legislative branch, yet she has proven that the cornerstone of U.S. judicial system, the presumption of innocence of principle, is foreign to her. Yes, I am talking about the shameful Brett Kavanaugh confirmation hearings where she joined the lynching mob. I am aware she later removed herself from the voting, but was not her job to stand up for a presumably innocent person?

What about her "yes" vote to stop the nomination of a "Christian zealot" Amy Coney Barret? How about both impeachments of President Donald Trump, which were nothing but witch hunts on the level of political show trials in communist Eastern Europe and Russia under Joseph Stalin, with which I have a first-hand experience? Where did she stand then?

Let's face the facts and judge her according to her deeds, without getting emotional or nasty.

I think Sarah Palin's tweet, "I can see 2022 from my house," says it well. Let's show our displeasure or appreciation of Ms. Murkowski in midterms 2022. We can still be friends, cant we?

Ivan Simonek

## Assembly

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The mask mandate requires everyone, with some exceptions, to wear a mask or other face covering while indoors in public settings, including grocery stores, restaurants, public transportation, offices and other locations.

Exceptions to the mandate, among others, include people with medical conditions that wearing a mask would exacerbate, people exercising and those performing an activity that cannot be done safely with a mask on.

Violators could be fined \$25.

The mask mandate will sunset April 13 unless ended early or extended by the assembly. The mayor said the assembly could review any or all three mandates at any time if members felt they were no longer needed.

"I do believe that a mask helps mitigate the spread of COVID," said Assembly Member Patty Gilbert. "It's one of the least things that we can do for our community."

The other two ordinances adopted by the assembly require COVID-19 tests for out-of-state and in-state travelers.

All persons coming into Wrangell must complete a travel declaration form and self-isolation plan on the Alaska Travel Portal, [www.alaska.covidsecureapp.com](http://www.alaska.covidsecureapp.com). Alaska residents and non-residents must follow one of several options outlined in the ordinances.

The three testing options are:

The traveler can submit proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken within 72 hours of departure for Wrangell.

The traveler can submit proof that a test was taken within 72 hours of departure, and socially distance until the results come in. The traveler should also take a second test within two weeks of arrival.

The traveler can be tested at the airport, socially distance until results come in, and take a second test within two weeks of arrival.

There is an exception for Alaska residents, who can choose to quarantine for two weeks instead of testing.

A traveler will not need to obtain a test if they provide proof of a positive COVID-19 test within 90 days of departure and they currently exhibit no symptoms of the virus.

Everyone arriving in Wrangell, whether by plane or

# EDITORIAL

## We can't afford any more mistakes

In the past 17 years and at a cost of almost \$200 million, the Alaska Marine Highway System took ownership of two ferries it could not afford to run and two that it could not run everywhere they are needed.

That is painful.

The state is selling the two it can't afford to keep fueled, while spending millions to add new doors so that the other two ships can call on smaller communities in Southeast. Even then, it will take additional millions of dollars in remodeling before one of the two can truly operate as a day boat between Juneau, Haines and Skagway in Lynn Canal.

The ferry system, the state budget, the coastal communities of Alaska cannot afford any more of this. Even without such costly planning errors, far too many legislators from elsewhere in the state already see the marine highway as an expensive piece of history. We don't need to give them additional reasons to capsize the minimal service provided to coastal communities.

After the 2004-2005 delivery of the fast ferries, the Chenega and Fairweather, at a cost of \$68 million, the Marine Highway System figured out it could not afford the price at the pump to keep the diesel-guzzling ships in operation. The ships burned 600 gallons an hour to haul a maximum 210 passengers each, versus the 234 gallons an hour consumed by the venerable Matanuska, with room for 450 passengers.

The 235-foot-long fast ferries haven't run in years, and the state looks close to selling them to a Mediterranean-based catamaran operator for \$4.6 million. Yes, that is less than eight cents on the dollar of the construction cost.

The newest ferries in the fleet, the 280-foot-long Tazlina and Hubbard, were built in the past few years at a combined cost of \$120 million but needed — and still need — modifications to be fully utilized on different routes.

As the Department of Transportation works to complete design of a replacement ship for the 57-year-old Tustemena, and as the department and the Alaska Legislature agonize over an affordable ferry system budget that would meet the needs of coastal communities, we hope that the \$200 million mistakes of the past are in the wake.

Any more rough seas like that and we could find that bailing isn't enough to keep the ferries afloat.

— The Wrangell Sentinel

boat, will be able to use the airport testing site for free. The testing is scheduled to run through June.

The travel ordinances, like the mask mandate, are scheduled to

sunset April 13 unless terminated earlier or extended by the assembly.

"It's just one more way for us to be sure we're catching the virus," Von Bargaen said.

## FROM THE PUBLISHER *Why tell everyone what you think all the time*

By LARRY PERSILY  
Publisher

Though it's a little far afield from life in Wrangell, there is a life lesson in the controversy over President Joe Biden's choice to run the federal Office of Management and Budget.

A lesson to keep your thumbs at your side, unless you're hitchhiking.

The nominee, Neera Tanden, is in jeopardy of losing Senate confirmation because of tweets she sent while in a previous job as chief executive officer at the left-leaning think tank Center for American Progress. The tweets were nasty, political jabs, mostly at Republican U.S. senators, but she thumbed her Twitter account at Democrats, too.

Tanden's attacks were sharply

pointed, though accurate and certainly more civil than President Donald Trump's notoriously vindictive, deceitful, crude-and-rude tweets.

But now, as senators consider whether to approve Tanden's nomination to run the federal budget office, for which she appears well qualified, some of her past tweets have come home to roost. At least one Democrat and several Republicans have said they will oppose her nomination.

No doubt, even if Tanden had never tweeted anything more controversial than her favorite cookie recipe, multiple Republicans would have found some other contrived reason to oppose her nomination. Sadly, that is the world we live in, made worse by tweets, Facebook

posts, hyper-partisan politics and the hundreds of millions of dollars spent on inflammatory political campaigns.

All of which leads to the question: If you ever aspire to public office, if you want to work as a bipartisan leader, if you ever think you may need to sit across the table from someone you insulted with a tweet, why be so snotty in your snarky sneers? If your message is not going to make lives better for people, why blow up a bridge when a simple shaking of the roadway would serve the same purpose?

This is not just a political problem. Far too many "influencers" — the new name for celebrities who want to keep their name in lights and entrepreneurs who want to pitch their products — seem ob-

sessed with tweeting their thoughts on most everything that revolves around the sun. They fill social media with their instant opinions. Who cares! And I don't use exclamation points lightly.

When you feel an urge to tell the world what you think, stop and think: Do people care? Will your opinion make your community better? Do you propose a solution or just want to make a point? Do you have anything better to do with your thumbs at the moment?

In an attempt to preserve her chances at the job, Tandem has apologized: "For those concerned about my rhetoric and my language, I'm sorry. ... I'm sorry for any hurt that they've caused."

Wouldn't it be better not to have anything to apologize for?

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# Legislature looks at size of PFDs and new revenues

By LARRY PERSILY  
Sentinel writer

The state is not going to fill its billion-dollar fiscal pothole with additional deep budget cuts, said two veteran legislative finance committee members.

The hole is too deep, and years of cuts to the operating and capital budgets already have reduced state spending on public services to a 15-year low, on a per-capita basis adjusted for inflation, according to numbers assembled by one of the

co-chairs of the Senate Finance Committee.

When dealing with the budget, legislators have had to determine if the state has a spending problem or a revenue problem, said Sitka Sen. Bert Stedman, co-chair of Senate Fi-

nance.

"Several years ago, we had both (problems)," Stedman said Monday. After years of cuts to services and programs the issue now is on the revenue side, said the senator, starting his 19<sup>th</sup> year as a legislator and in his ninth year as co-chair of Senate Finance.

"Fast forward to today, and the problem isn't on the expense side," said Stedman, who also represents Wrangell.

A chart prepared by the senator's office shows that only the Department of Corrections this year is at the high point in inflation-adjusted spending of the past 16 years — all other departments, the Legislature, judicial branch and governor's office are down from their high years, many significantly.

Much of the problem on the revenue side is falling oil revenues, and no other taxes to make up the difference.

In that context, lawmakers this session will need to look at revenues and decide how much of a Permanent Fund dividend the state can afford for this fall and how to pay for it without overdrawing the Permanent Fund earnings reserve, said Fairbanks Rep. Adam Wool, in his third year on the House Finance Committee and seventh year in the Legislature.

Gov. Mike Dunleavy's fiscal plan shows the state averaging an annual budget deficit of more than \$1 billion after this year, assuming a Permanent Fund dividend as proposed by

the governor of double the average of the past five years.

The governor proposes that lawmakers withdraw more than \$3 billion additional from the Permanent Fund earnings reserve this year to pay an extra dividend in the spring and a larger dividend in the fall. Doing that, however, would exceed a state law that limits annual withdrawals to no more than the fund is projected to earn on average each year.

Taking an extra \$3 billion from the fund would cost the state a couple hundred million dollars a year in lost investment earnings from a smaller Permanent Fund.

Overdrawing the account not only jeopardizes future dividends but also future public services, Wool said.

Adhering to the withdrawal limit on fund earnings "is your spending cap," Stedman said.

The annual transfer from the fund's earnings account covered about 60% of state services and the dividends last year. If Alaskans want a dividend in the years ahead, the Legislature needs to set the PFD at an affordable amount, Wool said.

"People do not want to overdraw the fund," he said. "Once you overdraw once," it becomes easier the next time and the next time, and pretty soon the fund — and public services and dividends — are in jeopardy.

Under the law, Permanent Fund earnings are the same as

Continued on page 12

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## Friday night deadline to apply for rental assistance

By SENTINEL STAFF

The deadline is 11:59 p.m. Friday to apply for assistance with rent and/or utilities under a federally funded pandemic aid program in Alaska.

As of last Friday, 65 Wrangell residents submitted applications for assistance under the state-operated program for Alaskans who have lost jobs or income due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

An additional 16 completed their online eligibility check but had not yet submitted an application, said Stacy Barnes, director of governmental relations and public affairs at the Alaska Housing Finance Corp.

The housing agency is managing the state's \$200 million share of the \$25 billion federal aid program, approved by Congress in December. The program is open only to renters, not homeowners.

Under the federal rules, eligible households may receive up to 12 months of aid. The funds may be used to bring renters current and to help cover future rent.

Federal rules for the assistance program require that at least one member of the household must be qualified to receive unemployment "or has experienced a reduction in household income, incurred significant costs, or experienced a financial hardship due to COVID-19."

There is a household income limit to the program, based on the area's median income. In Wrangell, the annual household income limit is \$57,120.

Household income will be determined as either the income for 2020 or the household's monthly income "at the time of application," such as for applicants who worked in 2020 but then lost their jobs or income in 2021, according to the federal rules.

The eligibility rules and online application are at alaskahousingrelief.org, or call (833)-440-0420.

The online process asks questions to help applicants determine if they qualify. A case worker will later contact applicants to request proof of financial hardship due to the pandemic, a copy of their lease, and a copy of their driver's license or other photo ID.

The utility assistance can go toward electricity, heating oil and propane, firewood, wood stove pellets, water and sewer services and garbage removal—but not telephone, cable TV or internet service.

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---

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# Petersburg hit by 85 COVID cases in 13 days

By LARRY PERSILY  
Sentinel writer

Petersburg remained in its red high-risk level as of Tuesday after 85 COVID-19 cases were reported in the community over the past 13 days.

As of Tuesday evening, 65 coronavirus cases were still active, according to the Petersburg Borough and Petersburg Medical Center.

The spike in cases started Feb. 18, with the high point of 37 infections reported Feb. 23-26. There were 11 news cases reported on Tuesday.

Results from 212 coronavirus tests were pending as of Tuesday evening.

The joint announcement by the borough and medical center emphasized "strict adherence" to the municipal mandate that requires people to wear face coverings in public buildings. The announcement also recommended six feet of distance between non-household members and

"avoiding indoor gatherings altogether is best."

Petersburg schools will remain in remote-learning mode all week, after canceling in-person instruction last week.

During the high-level community risk, officials also recommend that "non-essential businesses should suspend walk-in traffic at a minimum and consider a closure until the high-risk status has passed."

Officials advise against any travel in or out of Petersburg, except for critical needs.

The case count has declined in recent days, with nine new infections reported Saturday through Monday.

The next assessment will be on Monday, the borough's emergency operation center said.

"All citizens and businesses are requested to continue to follow the red risk level recommendations in order to stop the spread and bring our local

COVID-19 numbers down," officials said.

Contact tracers are working to identify people who may have come in close contact with infected individuals. "All positive cases are being di-

rected to isolate," officials said.

In addition to urging health-safe practices, Petersburg, population about 3,100, is offering free drop-in asymptomatic testing from 7:30 to 10 a.m. at the airport through Fri-

day. No appointment is needed.

As of 4 p.m. Tuesday, 599 people in Petersburg had received their first vaccine dose, and 626 had received both shots.

## Over 600 fully vaccinated in Wrangell

By SENTINEL STAFF

More than 600 people in Wrangell have received both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, according to the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium.

SEARHC's COVID-19 website reported Tuesday morning that 886 Wrangell residents had received their first vaccination shot. Of these, 612 had received both doses, almost one-quarter of the community's population.

Aaron Angerman, with SEARHC, said they have started to share data online about how many vaccines have been administered in their communities. He tries to update the numbers every weekday morning, he said. The postings are at [www.covid19.searhc.org](http://www.covid19.searhc.org),

under the frequently asked questions tab. Registration to receive the vaccinations can also be done at this website.

There has been a small spike in cases in Wrangell this past week, with four active cases in the community. The case count prompted the postponement of numerous community events, the closure of parks and recreation facilities, and a temporary move to distance learning by the school district.

The district moved to distance learning Feb. 26, and has announced it plans to reopen on Monday.

Petersburg, Wrangell's neighbor, has seen more than 70 new cases within the past two weeks.

## Police report

### Monday, Feb. 22

Traffic complaint.  
Traffic stop citation and failure to provide proof of insurance.  
Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.  
Welfare check.  
Probation violation.

### Tuesday, Feb., 23

Trespassing.

### Wednesday, Feb. 24

Dog at large.  
Citizen assist.  
Motor vehicle accident.  
Agency assist: Public works.  
Agency assist: Line crew.

### Thursday, Feb. 25

Motor vehicle accident.

### Friday, Feb. 26

Agency assist: Ambulance requested.  
Traffic stop: Verbal warning for failure to yield to emergency vehicle.  
Traffic stop: Verbal warning for failure to yield to emergency vehicle.  
Traffic stop: Citation issued for failure to provide proof of insurance.

### Saturday, Feb. 27

Citizen assist: Unlock vehicle.  
Arrest warrant.  
Traffic complaint.

### Sunday, Feb. 28

Dog complaint: Citation issued for objectionable animal.

During this reporting period there were four EMT calls, four traffic tops and four dog complaints.



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# Landless Natives campaign proposes Wrangell area parcels

By CALEB VIERKANT  
Sentinel writer

The Alaska Natives Without Land campaign, working to win congressional approval of a Native corporation for Wrangell, has proposed several parcels near the community for transfer, including 2,146 acres at the Garnet Ledge on the mainland near the Stikine River, 3,168 acres around the Shoemaker Bay overlook and Chichagof Peak south of town, and 3,275 acres along Salamander Creek in the inner portion of Wrangell Island.

The potential selections of U.S. Forest Service land also include 1,457 acres on the eastern side of Wrangell Island on Blake Channel, almost 5,000 acres on the east side of Zarembo Island, almost 2,000 acres around Turn Island Beach and Thoms Lake on the southern end of Wrangell Island, and almost 2,500 acres at Frosty Bay, south of Anan Creek on the mainland.

Five communities in Southeast — Wrangell, Petersburg, Ketchikan, Tenakee and Haines — were not included in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, a 1971 federal law that established regional, urban and village corporations across the state, granting 44 million acres of land to the Native corporations.

The debate over the exclu-

sion of the five Southeast communities has endured for decades — known as the “Landless Natives” — with several legislative attempts to amend federal law so that the communities could create Native corporations and receive land entitlements.

Alaska’s three-member congressional delegation last fall introduced legislation to remedy the shortcoming for the five communities. However, the measure died when Congress adjourned, just as every other attempt has failed over the years.

The Wrangell Borough Assembly met in a workshop with representatives of Alaska Natives Without Land and other Native organizations on Feb. 23 to discuss the potential formation of an urban Native corporation for Wrangell and its proposed land selections.

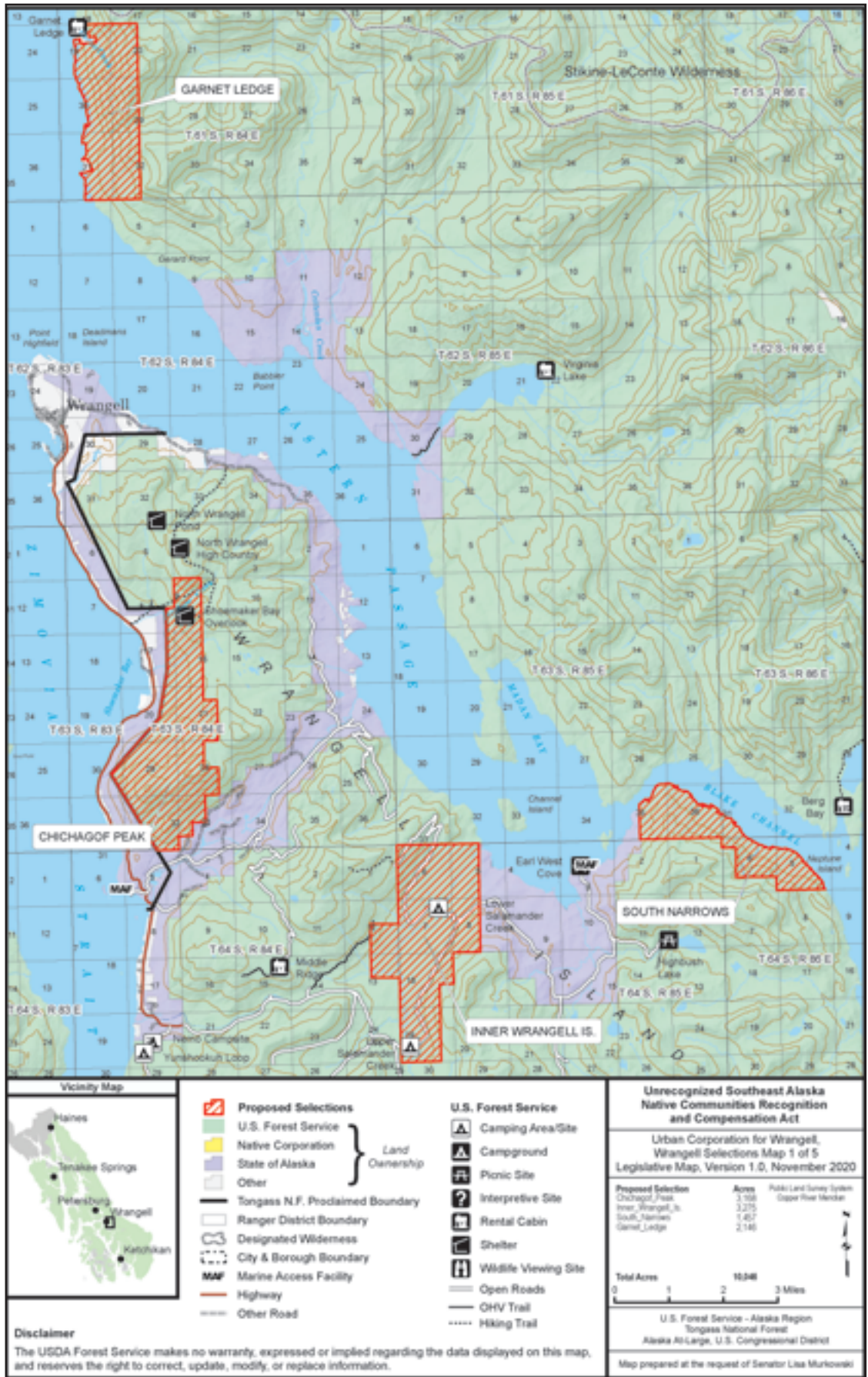
The assembly discussed what the land transfers could mean for access to recreation areas, land development and federal revenues to Wrangell.

Creating the five new Native corporations would provide not only new opportunities for Native shareholders, but the wider community as a whole, according to the Alaska Natives Without Land campaign.

Wrangell’s municipal government has supported the land-claim campaign in the past.

Maintaining access to recreational areas is something a Wrangell Native corporation and the city could work together on, Richard Rinehart, chief executive officer for the Tlingit and Haida Tribal Business Corp., told assembly members.

Easements could be granted for trails, he said, or maybe the corporation could change its



THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE PREPARED MAPS AT THE REQUEST OF ALASKA SEN. LISA MURKOWSKI.

The Alaska Natives Without Land campaign has identified several potential land selections in the area, should their effort win congressional approval to establish a Wrangell Native corporation. The parcels include land at the Garnet Ledge, near Shoemaker Bay and along Salamander Creek in the middle of Wrangell Island. The group has identified the red cross-hatched areas as possible land selections.

proposed land selections to work even better for all concerned, such as leaving under federal ownership the 40 acres around the Forest Service cabin at Frosty Bay, south of Anan Creek on the mainland, and selecting 40 acres on the other side of the parcel.

Mayor Steve Prysunka proposed another alternative, a “win-win” scenario, he said. If Alaska Natives Without Land really wanted the Frosty Bay cabin and that area, he suggested that perhaps they and the city could negotiate with the Forest Service to build a new cabin on Wrangell Island as a replacement. This would provide a newer, and closer, recreation opportunity for the town, he said.

Assembly Member Anne Morrison asked what kind of potential development might occur on the lands if they are turned over to a Native corporation.

Rinehart said that was not something he could answer with certainty. If development were to occur, he said it would be many years in the future. In addition to requiring congressional action, the corporation and its board would need to be established, the land conveyed, and planning studies conducted before anything could begin.

“Types of things that I think you could do would be small-scale tourism,” he said. “You could have aquaculture type of things, perhaps even agriculture type of things. Just different ideas I see sprouting up around Southeast Alaska for economic development. I’m sure they’d be open to any really good ideas.”

Assembly members also asked how transferring the land from the Forest Service to a Native corporation might reduce federal funding to Wrangell.

The municipality receives payment in lieu of property taxes and schools funding based

on the federal acreage within Wrangell’s boundaries. The federal payments are intended to offset lost tax revenue or growth opportunities. If land is taken from the Forest Service, it would no longer count toward calculating the annual payments to Wrangell.

Rinehart said tax revenue on developed urban corporation land could offset these losses, but Borough Manager Lisa Von Barga reminded the assembly that such development would be many years down the line.

Prysunka added that the city could not afford to lose any money, given the economic situation.

Von Barga said the city was looking for more information on possible revenue numbers.

As this was an assembly work session, no formal action was taken. More information about Alaska Natives Without Land is at [www.withoutland.org](http://www.withoutland.org).

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# Alaska Fish Factor By LAINE WELCH Fisheries columnist

## It could be better year for halibut catches and prices

The Pacific halibut fishery opens March 6, and increased catch limits combined with a cautiously optimistic outlook for the near future have fanned interest in buying quota shares of the popular fish.

The International Pacific Halibut Commission in January boosted allowable halibut harvest for 2021 by 6.5% to 39 million pounds for all users and as bycatch in fisheries of the West Coast, British Columbia and Alaska. That is higher than the take for the past three years.

For commercial fishermen, the halibut catch limit of 25.7 million pounds is an increase of 2.6 million pounds over 2020. Alaska gets the largest chunk at 19.6 million pounds, and all regions except for the Bering Sea will see increased catches.

"People are thrilled to see that, hopefully, the tide has turned after catch limits for most areas have been declining for about the past 15 years. And they are happy to know they're going to see some more pounds on their permits this year," said Doug Bowen, of Alaska Boats and Permits in Homer.

"By all accounts the market looks like it is warming up," agreed Lisa Gulliford at Permit Master in Tacoma, Washington. "Interest and flexibility from both buyers and sellers is always good news and I am hopeful this trend will continue through the year."

The optimism over the apparent better health of the halibut stock is reflected in the demand for purchasing shares of the fish, which is pushing up prices, Bowen added.

It's nowhere near the levels in 2017 when quota share prices in the Central Gulf of Alaska, for example, were at \$65 or more per pound and now are closer to \$45. Quota shares at Southeast that topped \$70 are listed in the \$45 to high-\$50 range per pound.

The increase in halibut catches is one part of the equation. The other is what the fish will bring at the docks.

"We were seeing some decline in values even before the pandemic hit, with increased imports from the east coast of Canada and halibut coming in from Russia and even farmed halibut showing up in Costco from Norway," Bowen said. "There's more competition in the marketplace. And then the pandemic didn't help with all the restaurants closed and the cruise ships tied up," he said.

"Even with all that, we still saw pretty decent prices last year. In Homer, we probably averaged \$4.50 a pound for the whole season. Considering the pandemic and the hit to the economy, that was probably a pretty good price. And we're hoping to see a good price again this year."

Federal data show the annual average ex-vessel (dock) price for halibut has been decreasing since 2016. The price to Alaska fishermen in 2020 averaged \$4 per pound and the value of the fish-

ery totaled just under \$62 million. That compared to an average dock price of \$5.30 per pound in 2019 and a fishery value of more than \$87 million.

Meanwhile, another good sign, Bowen added, is that boat sales are "brisk."

"I don't know whether you could find a stronger vote of confidence in investing into these fisheries by buying a boat or buying quota," he said. "So yeah, there's definitely some optimism in the fishery in spite of this pandemic that's going on in the background. It's very encouraging."

The Pacific halibut fishery this year was extended by one month to Dec. 7.

### The human side of halibut economics

Who are the users of Pacific halibut and how do they use it?

Answers to that question will come from responses to a stakeholder survey that aims to provide an assessment of the economic impact of the Pacific halibut resource in Canada and the U.S.

The International Pacific Halibut Commission is the first regional group in the world to conduct such a study, claiming that understanding the human dimension is part of its mandate for optimum management of the resource.

The survey assesses halibut users in commercial, sport charter, subsistence and processor sectors. It measures economic impacts from hook to dinner plate, employment and incomes, household prosperity and contributions to regional and national economies, known more broadly as multiplier effects.

"Per dollar of landed fish, how much economic activity is generated and how much of this translates to wages and to the national GDP (GDP is gross domestic product, a measure of the U.S. economy and its growth). That encompasses effects on wages, but also effects on profits by the businesses that are supported by the commercial or recreational fisheries," said Barbara Hutniczak, IPHC lead economist for the study.

The survey also includes regional spillovers to other areas.

"For example, a vessel that is fishing in Alaska and benefiting from the Alaska-based halibut resource might in the wintertime be serviced in Washington state. In this case, the economic effects will also be in Washington state because the marina where this vessel is serviced will have additional economic activ-

ities," she explained.

The confidential survey includes sections on vessel activities, revenue and quota use, labor information and vessel operating expenses.

Hutniczak said responses are accepted on a rolling basis and the information will be updated continuously.

"I would like to encourage stakeholders to provide the information that will benefit all the sectors and show the potential of each sector in terms of supporting the local communities and economies and various other aspects that can be highlighted through your responses," she said.

Find a link to the survey at <https://iphc.int> Questions? ContactBarbara.Hutniczak@iphc.int or 206-552-7693.

Continued on page 9

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I'M TOO YOUNG.  
IS NOW REALLY THE TIME?



# Students learn more than boatbuilding in class

By CALEB VIERKANT  
Sentinel writer

While shop classes are common in schools across the country, not many offer students a chance to build their own boats. The marine fabrication class at Wrangell High School had decades of history, according to teacher Winston Davies, who said it teaches students important lessons for their lives and careers.

"This marine fab program, I think got started back in the '80s with Dave Brown," Davies said. "He was my shop teacher, and it's been going ever since. ... It's kind of a hallmark of the district."

This is Davies' first year of teaching the shop class, he said. He stepped in because he didn't want to see the program go away.

Students start by making a paper design of the boat or another project they want to spend the year building. That

was around November. Then the students purchase in some cases about \$3,000 in materials, he said, and spend the year completing their projects. They get to keep their completed projects at the end of it all.

He has five students in his class this year, he said, all juniors.

"They come into the class, they've already completed a basic welding class," Davies said. "There's way more than welding going on here."

Beyond just career skills, there are many life lessons students can take away from this class. Critical thinking is one such skill, he said, to a degree that could not be taught in another type of classroom. Building a boat involves lessons from a variety of classrooms and figuring out how to properly apply them, he said.

Time management is another important skill the students practice, as they work to



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Winston Davies (left) and Liana Carney (right) go over measurements for a boat trailer Carney is building in the marine fabrication class.

complete their projects by the end of the school year. "These guys will have something to be really proud of when they're done."

Student Liana Carney is building a trailer in class this year. She said she really enjoyed welding from previous classes, and decided to continue with it in the marine fabrication class. She plans to try to build a boat next year.

Student Jake Eastaugh is building a gas tank for a boat he already has. He has taken a lot of shop classes in the past, he said. This fabrication class has been a good opportunity to learn different types of welding, as well as to continue taking types of classes he enjoys.

Student Ryan Rooney is building a boat that he will give to his dad when it is finished.

His dad helped him with the design, he said.

Rooney said what he has learned in the class will help him through life.

"I've learned to weld better,

and you really have to have good time management," he said. "Having to do a little bit of math to do measurements and everything. Kind of good life skills."



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Liana Carney is behind the safety mask as she welds the frame of the boat trailer she is building in the high school's marine fabrication class.

## Fish Factor

Continued from page 8

### Fishing mentors wanted

The Young Fishermen's Fellowship Program is calling for fishing groups or businesses to partner with young Alaska fishermen to help them hone skills in management, advocacy, research, marketing, conservation, business and more.

It's the fifth year for the program, an offshoot of the Alaska Marine Conservation Council (AMCC).

"The program is really energized to help young fisherman bridge the gap between the water and the waterfront and to help diversify their experiences within the fishing industry," said Jamie O'Connor, AMCC Working Waterfront director. "It has included everything from direct marketing to the history of fisheries to policy and whatever creative, meaningful project our host organizations can dream up. It's a really great way for young fishermen to utilize other skills that they may have onshore."

The program has so far placed 15 fishermen under age 40 in a wide range of mentorships, many of which have led to diverse careers. They are paid a stipend that usually adds up to \$16 to \$26 per hour, depending on experience.

Interested mentors can apply through March 31, and a call for fishing fellows will follow. Mentors and fellows will then be matched up and work out flexible schedules lasting two to five months.

"If you have a project that you think could be energized by the efforts of a young fisherman, reach out to me and I can help you put a proposal together," she said.

Organizations and businesses can apply at [www.akyoungfisherman.org](http://www.akyoungfisherman.org).

## Jehovah's Witnesses video provides COVID guidance

The Jehovah's Witnesses, which has a congregation in Wrangell and meets via Zoom twice a week during the pandemic, has posted a short video on its international website, "Virus Outbreaks — What You Can Do."

"Few events in modern history have harmed the emotional well-being of people around the world as has the COVID-19 pandemic," the denomination says. "To help address this situation ... the three-minute whiteboard animation offers families practical methods to cope emotionally and spiritually with the effects

of the pandemic."

The video also reviews science-based health and safety protocols to protect against the virus.

The link is available at [jw.org](http://jw.org); click on the Library tab, then the Videos tab, The Bible tab, and scroll down to the coronavirus video.

The Jehovah's Witnesses Wrangell congregation will return to in-person meetings at its rented space in the Kadin Building when it is safe for in-person gatherings, said spokesman Cuff Blakeley.

For more information, contact Blakeley at 907-623-7177.

## Wrangell Medical Center

NOW OPEN



SEARHC is excited to announce the Wrangell Medical Center is now open for all patients.

### New address

232 Wood Street,  
Wrangell, AK 99929

### Phone number

907.874.7000

**Please note, all emergency care will be provided only at the new medical center.**



### The new facility will include all services all under one roof:

- Clinic services including primary care for all ages
- Hospital including acute and swing bed care
- Emergency Department
- Long-Term Care including private rooms and larger spaces for lounge, dining room and spa
- Rehabilitation services including physical, occupational and speech therapies
- Lab
- Radiology, including new equipment:
  - CT scan
  - X-Ray
  - 3D mammography
- Pharmacy
- Chemotherapy (coming soon)



# CLASSIFIED/LEGALS

**FOR SALE**

X-COUNTRY skis in excellent condition. Poles, bindings, boots size 9.5 women or 8 mens. \$200. 874-3676. (2x3-11b12)

**FOR SALE**

Reliance Harbor tidelands Lot 24, Block 7A, approximately 8,136 square feet. Details at radonservices@hotmail.com. (1x3-4p18)

**FOR RENT**

3-BEDROOM, 1½-bath townhouse in Wrangell, quiet neighborhood. \$1,200 per month plus tax, 1-year lease. Call 907-738-6639. (3x2.25.ufn.b22)



**HELP WANTED**

JOHNSON'S BUILDING SUPPLY is looking for a part-time yard employee to help with customers, freight and deliveries. Work schedule: Tuesday through Saturday. Pay DOE. Application can be picked up at Johnson's Building Supply. (3x2.25.ufnb36)

## Federal Subsistence Meeting

The public is invited to participate.

**March 16 - 18, 2021**

via teleconference

starting at 9:00 a.m. daily

The Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council will meet to develop proposals to change Federal subsistence hunting and trapping regulations and discuss other issues related to subsistence in the Southeast Region. Participate by teleconference, (866) 560-5984 (passcode 12960066).

For meeting materials and other information on the Federal Subsistence Management Program, visit: [www.doi.gov/subsistence](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence) or call the Office of Subsistence Management at (907) 786-3888 or (800) 478-1456.

If you need special accommodations, please contact the Office of Subsistence Management at least seven business days prior to the meeting.

**LEGAL**

Pursuant to the City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, Borough Charter, Sec. 4, public notice is hereby given that the following ordinance listed by title only has been adopted by the Borough Assembly. Such ordinances are currently on file in the office of the Borough Clerk and may be inspected upon request.

**ORDINANCE NO. 986 OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL, ALASKA, AMENDING SECTION 5.10.060, SALE OF SURPLUS, OBSOLETE, OR UNNEEDED PERSONAL PROPERTY, IN CHAPTER 5.10 OF THE WRANGELL MUNICIPAL CODE.**

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

**Publish: March 4, 2021**

**City & Borough of Wrangell  
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS**

**Non-Motorized Transportation System Design**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska is seeking Statements of Qualifications from experienced engineering firms for the *Non-Motorized Transportation System Design* project. The engineering firm will provide engineering design and permitting for a connector trail project. The full Request for Qualifications solicitation may be obtained at the Borough Clerk's Office, 205 Brueger Street, Wrangell, Alaska 99929, and it may also be downloaded from the City and Borough of Wrangell's website ([www.wrangell.com](http://www.wrangell.com)) under the Bids and RFPs section. Statements of Qualifications are due in the office of the Borough Clerk by 2:00 PM prevailing time on March 22, 2021.

CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL  
Lisa Von Bargen, Borough Manager

**Publish: February 25, March 4, 11 and 18, 2021**

**City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

**for In-Person Meetings**

At the Regular Assembly Meeting held on February 23, 2021, the Borough Assembly approved Emergency Resolution No. 02-21-1564. This Resolution allows for an amendment to the Municipal Code to allow for a modified plan to return to In-Person meetings of the Borough Assembly and other Boards & Commissions of the City. To view Emergency Resolution No. 02-21-1564 and the Mitigation Plan, click here or contact the Borough Clerk at [clerk@wrangell.com](mailto:clerk@wrangell.com).

**General Public information:**

- Although the Borough Assembly approved Emergency Resolution No. 02-21-1564, that outlined a modified plan for in-person participation at Assembly and Board & Commission meetings, Public Participation by Zoom Teleconference is HIGHLY recommended.

- Only SIX members of the Public will be permitted into City Hall during ANY public meeting. There will only be six seats available in the Lobby Area in City Hall for the Public. No public member will be allowed into the Assembly Chambers during any meeting. When it is the public members time to speak under Persons to be Heard, they will be asked to approach the podium that will be placed just at the entrance to the Chambers. Once the public member has spoken, they may return to their seat in the lobby or leave City Hall.

- When attending an Assembly or any other City Board or Commission Meeting, Face Coverings or Face Shields are **REQUIRED** by all Assembly Members, Staff, and the General Public – NO EXCEPTIONS! Face Coverings or Face Shields will be available for those who need one.

**For PERSONS TO BE HEARD:** for Assembly Meetings, Kim Lane, Borough Clerk will maintain a Persons to be Heard Sign-up Sheet for persons who are In-Person or attending by Zoom Teleconference. If you would like to speak In-Person or by Zoom Teleconference at the meeting, **please contact Kim Lane, Borough Clerk at 907-874-2381 or email [clerk@wrangell.com](mailto:clerk@wrangell.com)** by 4:00 PM on the day of the meeting, so that your name can be added to the list of Persons to be Heard.

**To Join by Computer:**

<https://zoom.us/j/9078742381?pwd=MTNqSEdncjRyakh2UCtMVUNxMndYUT09>

**And Enter the Meeting ID: 907 874 2381**

**Then Enter Password: 99929**

Any questions relating to this notice can be directed to the Borough Clerk at 907-874-2381 or email [clerk@wrangell.com](mailto:clerk@wrangell.com)

Thank you and stay safe!

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

**Publish: March 4 and March 11, 2021**

## OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON WRANGELL-PETERSBURG INVASIVE PLANT MANAGEMENT PROJECT

The Wrangell and Petersburg Ranger Districts are preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Wrangell-Petersburg Invasive Plant Management project. The proposal aims to increase the effectiveness of invasive plant management activities across both Districts. The proposal includes manual, mechanical, and chemical invasive plant treatments on National Forest System lands, including Wilderness areas, as well as on lands of other ownership to reduce invasive infestations mapped over 5,811 acres. The Responsible Officials for this project are: Clint Kolarich, Wrangell District Ranger, [clint.kolarich@usda.gov](mailto:clint.kolarich@usda.gov) and Ted Sandhofer, Petersburg District Ranger, [ted.sandhofer@usda.gov](mailto:ted.sandhofer@usda.gov).

The full description of the Proposed Action is available on-line under the "scoping" tab at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=59576>. If you require a paper copy or electronic media, or need additional information regarding this action, please contact Joni Johnson, Project Leader, at 907-772-3871 or [joni.m.johnson@usda.gov](mailto:joni.m.johnson@usda.gov).

**HOW TO COMMENT AND TIMEFRAME**

Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to object must meet the information requirements of 36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B.

Specific written comments on the proposed project will be accepted for 30 days following the date of publication of this notice in the *Wrangell Sentinel* and *Petersburg Pilot*, the newspapers of record for the Wrangell and Petersburg Ranger Districts. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for a proposed action documented in an EA. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

The proposed project is an activity implementing a land management plan and is subject to 36 CFR 218, Subparts A and B. Only individuals or entities who submit timely and specific written comments about this proposed project or activity during this or another public comment period established by the Responsible Official will be eligible to file an objection. Comments must be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and include supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider. Persons submitting comments must provide the following information: name and address; title of the proposed project; specific written comments; and signature or other verification of identity upon request. Other requirements to be eligible to submit an objection are listed at 36 CFR 218.25(a)(3). It is the responsibility of the sender to ensure timely receipt of any comments submitted.

Specific written comments for the Responsible Official may be submitted via mail, other delivery service, email, or fax to: Ted Sandhofer, PO Box 1328, Petersburg, AK 99833, FAX: 907-772-5995, or through our comment database at <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?Project=59576>. Electronic comments shall be in a format compatible with the current version of MS Word. Also, hand-delivered comments will be accepted at either district office (525 Bennett St. in Wrangell or 12 North Nordic Dr. in Petersburg), Monday through Friday between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. except holidays; however, for continued public safety during the pandemic, please call ahead (907-874-2323, Wrangell or 907-419-6158, Petersburg).

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.  
**Publish: March 4, 2021**



# State close to selling its 2 unused fast ferries

JUNEAU (AP) - The Alaska Marine Highway System is working to finalize the sale of its two mothballed fast ferries to an overseas bidder, officials said.

Mediterranean-based catamaran operator Trasmapi offered about \$4.6 million for the Fairweather and Chenega. The company serves the Spanish island of Ibiza.

The offer was less than half the \$10 million reserve price set by the state, public radio network CoastAlaska reported Feb. 24. The state paid \$68 million for the two ships, which started service in 2004-2005, but which were taken out of service about

a decade later due to high operating costs.

John Falvey, general manager of the Alaska ferry system, told the Senate Transportation Committee Feb. 23 that the state was working to close the sale.

The fast ferries were popular because they completed voyages in about half the time as conventional ships, but they consumed a lot of diesel to get there. The 235-foot-long ships, each powered by four diesel engines, burned through about 600 hours of fuel an hour, according to the Alaska Marine Highway System website. That's more than double the consumption rate of the

Matanuska, which can carry more than twice as many passengers and vehicles.

The marine highway system also cited poor performance in rough seas in its decision to park the fast ferries, which are tied up at Ward Cove in

Ketchikan.

The Spanish company also offered about \$411,000 for a pair of spare diesel engines, which cost the state about \$3 million new.

"The two swing engines which are in our warehouse and

hermetically sealed containers, unused, they were also part of the sale," Falvey said.

Trasmapi outbid Pacific Power Group, a Portland-based company, for the engines. Pacific Power had offered about half as much.

## Ferry schedule open for reservations

By SENTINEL STAFF

As proposed in the draft schedule a month ago Wrangell will see two ferries a week, one southbound and one northbound, under the Alaska Marine Highway System summer schedule, which opened for reservations Feb. 24.

The summer schedule runs May 1 to Sept. 30. The Matanuska is scheduled to stop in Wrangell southbound early Monday mornings and northbound on Friday afternoons on its weekly run between Bellingham, Washington, and Southeast Alaska.

That's a shift from the schedule for March and April of northbound sailings on Sundays

and southbound stops on Wednesdays.

The weekly runs are one-third the level of service Wrangell saw from 2017 to 2019, before the pandemic significantly cut into ferry runs last year. Passenger and vehicle traffic continues far below past levels, and the Alaska Marine Highway System budget is down about 25% from two years ago, with several ships held out of service to save money.

The summer schedule includes no service to Prince Rupert, British Columbia, which the ferry system stopped in 2019 over multiple issues, including federal security requirements. Meanwhile, the Canadian border remains closed to travelers during the pandemic.

## State closer to handing out federal pandemic aid for fisheries

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS AND SENTINEL STAFF

The federal government has approved Alaska's plan to distribute almost \$50 million in pandemic relief payments to the state's fishing industry. The decision came after two major revisions to the plan and more than 200 public comments from every industry sector.

Applications will be accepted from March until May and payments could begin as early as June, public radio network CoastAlaska reported Feb. 26.

They money is coming from the federal CARES Act, a \$2.2 trillion package of pandemic relief aid, which Congress passed almost a year ago. The state first sought public comment almost five months ago on its plan to divide the \$50 million between different sectors of the fisheries industry.

"It really was a balance between getting the funds out quickly and developing a spend-

ing plan with the input of affected fishery participants," said Alaska Department of Fish and Game Deputy Commissioner Rachel Baker.

The final details of the plan were published last week.

Commercial fisheries applicants will be required to provide evidence that the coronavirus pandemic caused them to lose at least 35% of their revenue in 2020, as measured from March 1 to Nov. 30. That could include lower prices or lost sales.

Applicants must be at least 18 years old, and must have fished in 2018 and 2019.

Baker said the final plan excludes commercial permit holders who fish in Alaska but live in other states that received coronavirus relief. "Non-Alaska resident commercial harvesters who fish up here but live in a state that received a CARES Act allo-

cation must apply to their state of residence," Baker said. "They're not eligible to apply to the state of Alaska for funds."

However, non-resident charter guides are eligible for a piece of Alaska's \$50 million if they have an Alaska business license, CoastAlaska reported.

Of the \$50 million, more than \$17.5 million will be earmarked for commercial fishermen and \$16 million is designated for seafood processors, dealers, wholesalers and distributors.

Roughly \$13 million will go to sport and charter guides and about \$500,000 will go to the state's aquaculture businesses.

About \$2 million will go to rural households that had pandemic-induced problems accessing subsistence fisheries, with extra funds also available for households below the federal poverty line.



## NORTHLAND AUDIOLOGY

### & Hearing Services

# HEARING CLINICS

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**Call to schedule an appointment**

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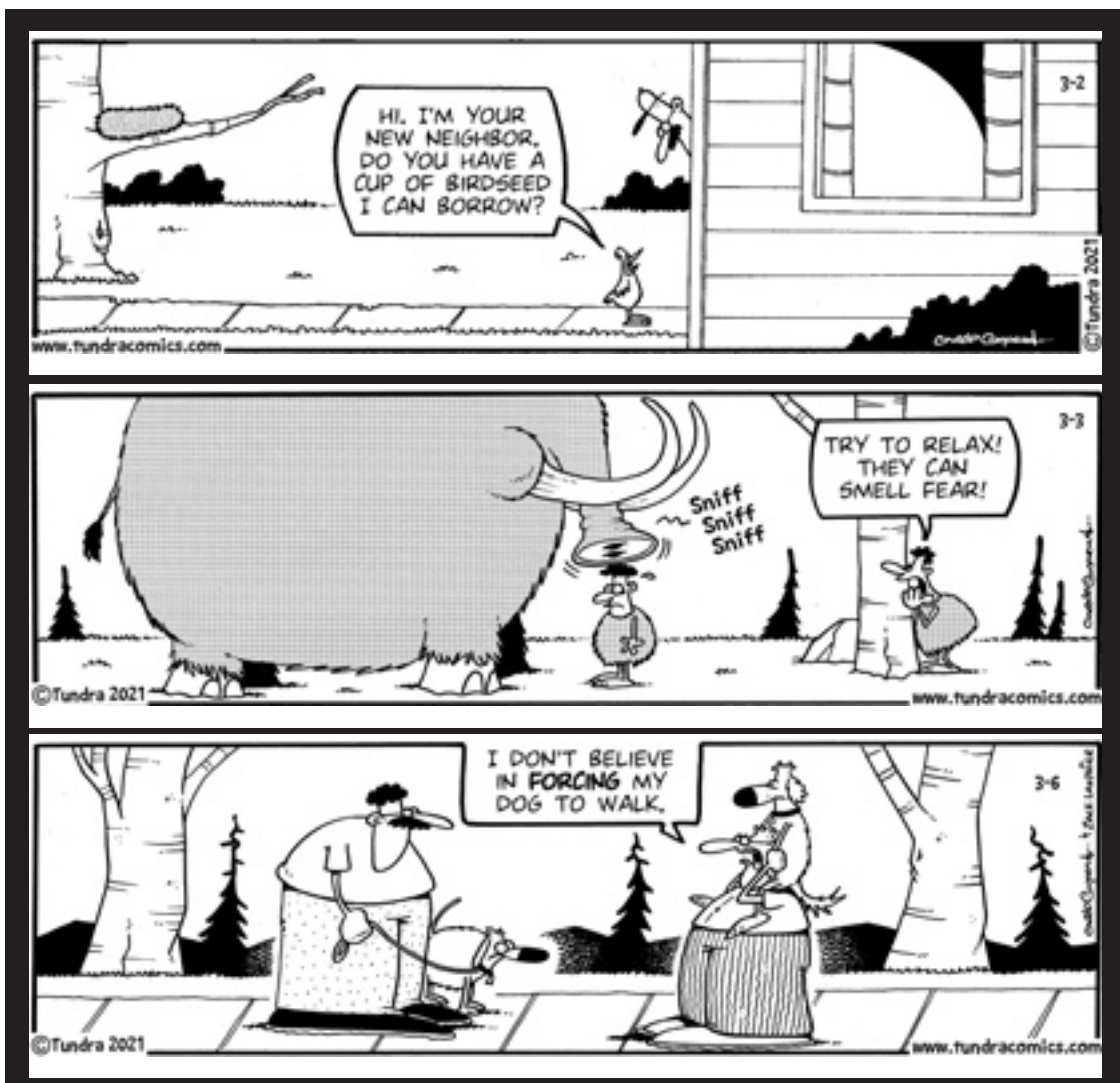
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## Call for Proposals

### to Change Federal Subsistence Hunting and Trapping Regulations


### Deadline: May 24, 2021

The Federal Subsistence Board is accepting proposals through May 24, 2021 to change Federal regulations for the subsistence harvest of wildlife on Federal public lands for the 2022-2024 regulatory years.

**Submit proposals by any of the following methods:**

1. By mail or hand delivery:  
Federal Subsistence Board,  
Office of Subsistence Management  
Attn: Theo Matuskowitz  
1011 East Tudor Road, MS-121; Anchorage, AK 99503
2. Online at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) and search for FWS-R7-SM-2020-0077, which is the docket number for this proposed rule.

*You may call the Office of Subsistence Management at 800-478-1456 or email [subsistence@fws.gov](mailto:subsistence@fws.gov) with your questions.*





# PFD

Continued from page 5

oil taxes, motor fuel taxes, corporate taxes — they all go into the state general fund for appropriation.

The Legislature needs to figure out “that sharing relationship between dividends and our core services,” Stedman said. After that, lawmakers can look at taxes. “There are no sacred cows,” he said, and that

includes an income tax, sales tax or changes to oil taxes. As Alaska North Slope oil production is down more than 75% from its peak in 1988, the state has relied on savings and,

in recent years, Permanent Fund earnings to pay the bills. Lawmakers and previous governors have talked of instituting an income or sales tax, but not done so.

Fund earnings are providing about three or four times as much money for the state budget as oil revenues, though higher oil prices of the past month, if they hold for a full year, could bring in an additional \$250 million or \$300 million to the state treasury — that’s about 5% or 6% of the budget if the PFD were \$500.

leavy’s budget plan that acknowledges a steep deficit in the fiscal year that starts July 1, 2022.

Other than saying the state needs to find “other revenue sources,” the governor has proposed no taxes or other substantial new revenues — except a statewide lottery. He wants legislators to approve a constitutional amendment for the 2022 ballot that would prohibit new taxes without voter approval.

The state is running out of time, Wool said, as it could take at least 18 months to set up a state sales or income tax and start collecting money.

“Everyone kind of knows” the state needs to institute a sales tax or an income tax, “but they’re afraid to take the leap,” he said.

## Alaska reports more cases of COVID-19 variants

ANCHORAGE (AP) - A highly transmissible coronavirus variant originally traced to Brazil has been discovered in Alaska, as have 10 cases of a strain first identified in California.

The first case of the California variant was identified in Alaska in January, and has since been discovered in nine more infected people. The report came Feb. 24 from a team of scientists assembled by the state to investigate new strains of the virus.

Researchers say the California variant is more contagious and potentially more effective at evading vaccines.

The Brazilian variant was identified in an Anchorage resident who developed COVID-19 symptoms, the Anchorage Daily News reported. The person had no known travel history.

It’s the sixth case of the variant found in five U.S. states, officials said.

Dr. Joe McLaughlin, an epidemiologist with the state health department, said there is evidence to suggest the Brazilian variant is more transmissible than the original virus and that its mutations also “appear to change the antigenic profile of the virus.”

That means it can potentially be contracted

by someone who was already infected or who has been vaccinated.

It’s also troublesome that the person in the Alaska case has no known travel history. “That does make it more concerning,” McLaughlin said. “So we are trying to do a thorough epidemiological investigation to figure out where the person actually got infected from.”

The person ate at an Anchorage restaurant with at least one other person in late January and didn’t wear a mask. The infected person developed symptoms four days later and tested positive on Feb. 8

The state also has had two cases of people with the coronavirus variant first identified in the United Kingdom.

“COVID is still circulating,” McLaughlin said, adding that more variant cases will likely be detected even as cases overall continue to decline.

“We really want people to continue following all the mitigation strategies,” McLaughlin said. “There’s a reasonably high probability that the infection may have occurred while the person was eating at a restaurant with another person, so we just want to make sure people continue to stay within their social bubbles.”



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