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# WRANGELL SENTINEL

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## Assembly postpones 21% water rate increase, mulls 30%

By SARAH ASLAM  
Sentinel reporter

The borough assembly has postponed for the second time a decision on a proposed increase in water rates, and is now considering a 30% boost instead of the 21% rate hike originally suggested by staff.

The assembly last month delayed a decision on the 21% rate increase after several members said they wanted to hear more public comment on the issue.

At the April 12 assembly meeting, Assemblymember David Powell said he doesn't put much stock in future assemblies honoring the incremental rate increases over several years included in the original proposal. To ensure adequate funding for the water services budget, which is supposed to be self-supporting, he proposed amending the ordinance to apply a 30% increase this year, without the staggered increases.

After a 21% increase this spring, the original proposed

ordinance had called for annual rate hikes of 5%, 3%, 2% and 2% through July 2026.

Water rates last increased in 2019.

The assembly on March 22 approved a staggered fee increase in sewage services, effective in May. This year's 21% hike in sewage rates will take the monthly fee for a single-family residence from \$40.74 to \$49.30.

The rate increases will allow the department to start saving for anticipated changes in state and federal requirements for treating sewage and wastewater. The state and federal governments "are very likely to require disinfection" of outflows from Wrangell's sewage system, Public Works Director Tom Wetor wrote in a report for the assembly last month.

Such an upgrade could cost several million dollars.

"Secondary treatment also seems to be a realistic requirement as well," borough staff reported to the assembly.

Powell said in addition to being spread apart and taking too long, the proposed fee increase for water ser-

vices starting with 21% isn't enough. He cited a letter from Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Brittani Robbins, which she submitted as part of the public comment on the ordinance.

"The change in fees needs to happen, and honestly it needs to happen at a more aggressive rate than what has been proposed," Robbins wrote to the assembly. "While I understand the concern for community members with everything else rising, if we don't start accruing in the places needed, Wrangell will either be in massive debt to loan companies or Wrangell will just simply fall apart."

A 30% increase in water rates will be discussed at the April 26 assembly meeting.

If adopted by the assembly at 30%, the residential rate for unmetered water service would increase by \$14.15 to \$61.30 a month.

The previous suggested increase would have raised

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## Spelling bee crowns first C-H-A-M-P-I-O-N in three years

By MARC LUTZ  
Sentinel editor

With energy usually reserved for sports competitions, middle school students cheered and clapped for their classmates embroiled in a battle of words.

That is, how to spell them correctly.

Stikine Middle School held its first spelling bee in three years on April 12 in the high school gym. At stake were bragging rights and a \$50 gift certificate for J&W's Fast Food. All that stood between students and glory were words like fiesta, shingles, normality and battlement.

The rules were simple. Students were not eliminated unless they misspelled two words. To win the bee, a student would have to spell two words correctly in a row.

During the first round, sixth grader Gavin Hunt was the only one to incorrectly spell a word, which was fiesta, but he held on until round three when he misspelled energetic. Other classmates stumbled on words like preserve, vanilla and reevaluate.

Some students sped through words with ease, some took their time, thinking each word through before speaking. The competition continued for 30 minutes, with the audience rapt on each contestant's turn.

"Wait. Are these getting harder," asked sixth grader Silje Morse.



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

From left: Jackson Carney and Andrei Siekawitch listen as Clara Edens asks for clarification on a word during a middle school spelling bee April 12. Clara came in second to Andrei, who won with the word "precipice."

In the end, it came down to seventh grader Andrei Siekawitch and eighth grader Clara Edens. Andrei spelled suffrage correctly. Clara was given roulette, which she spelled with one T. Andrei was given precipice, spelling it correctly and winning the bee.

The nine contestants had to earn their way into the bee.

"We had three weeks of practice, twice a week, and they had to show up for 30-minute practice," said Jim Brooks, the teacher who ran the spelling bee. "The practices were basically little competitions, so they could

get used to the format. If they made three out of six, they were eligible for the competition."

Brooks said the middle school has held the bee since 1998 except for the past three years. High school junior Paige Baggen was the last person to win the bee before the hiatus.

## Sitka boatyard closure leads to more work in Wrangell

By SARAH ASLAM  
Sentinel reporter

Wrangell's Marine Service Center has seen a 20% to 30% increase in haul-out requests after Sitka's boatyard closed April 1.

"We've been getting overflow from Sitka since February," Port Director Steve Miller said April 13. Normally the busy time starts April, May and June, "but we've been going hard since the first of March."

Like most people in need of a haul-out, a lot of the Sitka boat owners are looking for a fresh set of zincs on the bottom of their vessels to prevent corrosion and a pressure wash. "We call it a shave and a haircut," Miller said.

Halibut Point Marine Services in Sitka operated haul-out services since 2005, said co-owner Chris McGraw on April 14.

"In 2010, we constructed a cruise ship

dock at our facility and have expanded that over the years," McGraw said. "We did an expansion last year. With the demand from the cruise ships, our haul-out space was converted into a tourism space and we chose to close the boatyard."

McGraw provided notice three years ago to the city of Sitka. Leaders there were trying to find a solution, but hadn't been able to come up with an alternative, he said. Halibut Point Marine Services hauled out its final boat at the end of March.

"We would haul about 200 boats a year," McGraw said. "In April, it usually depends on weather ... I bet you we would haul 40 boats in the month of April, and May and June are definitely the busier months. Probably 75 to 100 for each of those months."

The only two other haul-out facilities in Southeast with any capacity are Wrangell and Hoonah, he said.

"Hoonah does not have a lot of yard capacity or services. I think Wrangell is the only alternative for a lot of fishermen," McGraw said.

Halibut Point Marine Services owns and operates the cruise ship port, which can accommodate two cruise ships at a time. McGraw has a subsidiary company, Adventure Sitka, which operates three tour boats to take cruise ship passengers on excursions.

"For this summer, we have around 210 ship calls, 400,000 passengers expected, nobody knows if the ships are full yet," McGraw said. "We have some uplands facilities for retail, food and beverage, and all of this is constructed where the boatyard used to be."

Kelly Ellis, co-owner of boat repair company Wrangell Boatshop said she hasn't

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## Alaska joins airlines in dropping face mask requirement

Sentinel staff and  
The Associated Press

Just hours after a federal court judge voided the federal face mask mandate for air travel and other public transportation, Alaska Airlines, United Airlines and American Airlines on Monday afternoon said masks would be optional on their flights.

Other airlines are expected to follow suit.

Alaska Airlines said in a statement that because of the judicial decision, passengers and employees effective immediately would have the option to wear a mask while traveling in the U.S.

"While we are glad this means many of us get to see your smiling faces, we understand some might have mixed feelings," the statement said. "Please remember to be kind to one another and that wearing a mask while traveling is still an option."

The decision Monday by U.S. District Judge Kathryn Kimball Mizelle in Tampa, an appointee of former President Donald Trump, found that federal health officials had exceeded their authority in their response to the coronavirus pandemic.

"Because our system does not permit agencies to act unlawfully even in pursuit of desirable ends, the court declares unlawful and vacates the mask mandate," the judge wrote.

The mandate, recently extended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to May 3, covered transportation aboard airplanes, trains, city subways and ride-sharing vehicles.

The White House on Monday said the mask order "is not in effect at this time."

The CDC implemented the mandate in early 2021 in an effort to curb the spread of COVID-19. Alaska Airlines has required masks on flights since May 2020.

The CDC last week extended the mandate to provide more

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# Extra ferry sailing will pick up waitlist travelers in Bellingham

BY LARRY PERSILY  
Sentinel writer

With more than 260 would-be ferry passengers stuck on a waitlist for travel out of Bellingham, Washington, and sailings full until late July, the Alaska Marine Highway System has scheduled an extra run of the Matanuska to bring the people and their vehicles to the state.

The additional sailing is scheduled to leave Bellingham on May 25.

There was time in the ship's schedule, which ferry management had been holding open in hopes the Matanuska could restart service that week to Prince Rupert, British Columbia, after being gone from the Canadian port for almost three years.

But delays in making arrangements for U.S. and Canadian customs clearance and operations at the port moved the resumption of Prince Rupert service to June, leaving time for the Matanuska to make the extra sailing to Bellingham in May.

The Alaska Marine Highway System sees heavy demand "for the Bellingham sailings in the spring as people traveling to Alaska return home, report to jobs, visit family or move their households," the state said in its announcement last Friday, explaining the growing waitlist.

The ferry system anticipates the extra sailing "will fill up quickly, as there is no other mainline space available until late



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

The Matanuska leaves Wrangell on April 11 for a southbound run. An additional sailing is being added on May 25 from Bellingham, Washington, for waitlisted passengers.

July on the Matanuska, and late August on the Kennicott."

The Kennicott, which is scheduled for 11 trips to Bellingham this summer on its cross-gulf sailings that include stops in Ketchikan and Juneau, is scheduled to get back to work this weekend after winter maintenance.

By using open days in the Matanuska's schedule, the one-time disruption to travelers in Southeast the week of the

extra Bellingham sailing will be minimal and they will be rescheduled, the ferry system said.

The 450-passenger Matanuska operates a weekly round-trip between Bellingham and Southeast Alaska. The ferry system had been looking forward to bringing back the system's largest ferry, the Columbia, to add additional weekly service to Bellingham this summer. But after being taken out of service in the fall

of 2019 for repairs and to save money, the ship remains tied up in Ketchikan as the state has been unsuccessful in hiring enough crew to put the vessel back to work.

"We're not ready to make a statement on the Columbia at this time," Sam Dapcevich, state Department of Transportation spokesman, said last Friday.

Pending a decision whether to operate the Columbia at all this year, the state has not been accepting reservations on the ship, though it had announced eight months ago it hoped the ferry would go back to work in May.

Scheduling issues aside, the Marine Highway System reported it is "expecting a strong summer season as the economy picks up and people start to return to travel." The ferry system's marketing staff "are forecasting RV traffic will increase significantly this summer." Health concerns and travel restrictions cut deeply into passenger and vehicle loads the past two years.

And despite high gasoline and diesel prices causing concerns that people may not want to take long road trips this summer, the Marine Highway System, which operates with a state subsidy, said its rates for trucks and RVs on the vehicle deck may turn out to be cheaper in some cases than shipping by barge from Puget Sound to Southeast Alaska after factoring in barge company fuel surcharges.

# Borough and tour operators get ready for upcoming visitor season

BY SARAH ASLAM  
AND LARRY PERSILY  
Sentinel reporters

The community is short of public restrooms near the City Dock and could be short port security staff this summer if people don't apply for the jobs soon.

One is an immediate concern, while the restroom shortage requires a longer-term solution.

Tour operators and borough officials met last Wednesday to discuss the upcoming visitor season, which could be a challenge for borough staff and tourism operators, said Port Director Steve Miller.

"Finding a driver, finding security. No one is applying for the jobs," he said.

"I haven't jumped on that yet to figure out the amount of crew I already have and how we're going to go through it," he said. "For the normal guys that I have on my crew, they're already doing everything that needs taking care of at the harbor. It's hard to break them off to do ship security when they are supposed to be greeting passengers. We'll see how it rolls out. We know everyone is complaining about the same thing, and it's not finding enough workers."

Last week's meeting opened with a familiar topic: Not enough public re-

strooms downtown.

Brenda Schwartz-Yeager said the shortage of public restrooms often comes up at tourism planning sessions. She owns Alaska Charters & Adventures with husband John Yeager.

"We have some really good long-term solutions," such as building permanent facilities as part of the community's port development plan, she said Monday. "That's very long term and very expensive."

The borough-maintained public restrooms building behind the Elks Lodge is small, and not real close to the dock, Schwartz-Yeager said. Visitors getting off cruise ships at the dock and climbing aboard buses or vans for tours and charter boats need access to restrooms nearby, she said.

The borough will look at positioning its portable toilets near the dock this summer, though the limited number of units may not be available depending on their use at other sites and events, Carol Rushmore, the borough's economic development director, said Monday.

Access to public restrooms in cruise ship towns "is always a huge issue," she said. "There is no magical answer."

Sitka this summer is offering grants of \$1,000 or more to businesses and other entities that will open their bathrooms to the public. The community is expecting

"If we don't address some of that infrastructure like restroom facilities, and maybe even with the port, expanding dock space ... that might be a problem, but I won't get nervous about it until we see an increase in cruise ship stops."

John Yeager,  
co-owner Alaska Charters  
& Adventures

cruise ships with capacity to carry close to half-a-million passengers this summer, more than double the pre-COVID year of 2019.

Wrangell could receive almost 19,000 cruise ship passengers this summer, if all of the ships scheduled to call on the community are full. The first ship is scheduled to arrive May 12; the Ocean Victory, with accommodations for 200 passengers.

Reaching full staffing at tourism-related businesses also is a concern this summer. It's an issue throughout Southeast, as cruise ship traffic rebounds after two

summers of pandemic closures, Rushmore said. In Wrangell, one concern is having enough fill-in staff to help cover on busy days or when regular staff is out.

Yeager said the outlook is good for the couple's business, which Schwartz-Yeager began in 1989. This will be the 18th year Yeager has been a captain and guide. The couple is beginning to see their tours fill up.

"July 3 and (July) 4, when a couple of ships are in, that will be tricky," he said, noting that Wrangell's tour and charter operators are "more than willing and capable to work together" to handle booking requests. "We've proven that in the past. We have a great group of people down there. We have to do the best we can do."

While tour operators don't have much of a say in the cruise ship scheduling, they've learned to accommodate it, he said.

"If we don't address some of that infrastructure like restroom facilities, and maybe even with the port, expanding dock space ... that might be a problem, but I won't get nervous about it until we see an increase in cruise ship stops," Yeager said. "I think we have the ability to deal with the cruise ships we have coming up."

# Assembly rejects proposal to remove cap on taxable sales

BY SARAH ASLAM  
Sentinel reporter

The borough assembly has rejected a staff proposal to remove the cap on sales taxes payable on individual purchases. Dropping the limitation, which shuts off Wrangell's 7% sales tax on the purchase price above \$3,000, could have generated an estimated \$500,000 a year in additional revenue for the borough.

The assembly April 12 accepted moving to second reading the other provisions of the ordinance that would make some administrative changes to the sales tax code, but deleted the change to the tax cap.

The ordinance is scheduled for a public hearing at the April 26 assembly meeting.

The tax limit does not affect smaller purchases but is an issue for larger items, such as outboard motors, appliances and services bills, such as work

at the Marine Service Center. Wrangell's sales tax applies to services, as well as goods.

Assembly member David Powell, who manages The Bay Co., a marine and outdoor equipment retailer, spoke out at the April 12 meeting against the provision to remove the tax cap. He said it would unfairly target his business and others in the marine service industry.

The taxable limit in borough code had been \$1,500 until 2019, when it was increased to \$3,000.

Most of the more than 100 cities and boroughs in Alaska have some limitation on sales taxes on big-ticket items, ranging from their local tax shutting off after a few hundreds of the purchase price to several thousand dollars.

Removing Wrangell's \$3,000 cap "will not influence the everyday consumer, but it will result in increased revenue from

big-ticket items and services (i.e., marine fabrication, construction, etc.)," Finance Director Mason Villarma stated in his summary of the ordinance for the assembly.

"With projected costs rising for the borough in the fiscal year 2023 budget (starting July 1) and decreases in other vital revenue streams like property taxes, this ordinance gives the borough the resources to address deferred maintenance, keep up with inflation and save for future essential capital projects," Villarma stated.

In a presentation to the assembly in February, Villarma reported that removing the limitation on taxable sales could raise almost \$500,000 a year for the borough, about a 15% boost in sales tax revenues.

A remaining provision of the ordinance going before the assembly April 26 would change how the borough divvies up

sales tax revenues. Currently, 28% goes to bond debt, schools and sewage projects, with 4% for streets and sidewalks, and 68% to the general fund. If approved, the ordinance would change the allocation to 20% toward bond debt and schools,

with 80% to the general fund.

"General fund money can be used for any purpose appropriated by the assembly, creating more freedom in addressing pressing priorities for the borough," Villarma wrote in his explanation of the ordinance.

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COURTESY OF TYSON MESSMER

High school senior Tyson Messmer stands next to one of the 10 address placards he made for homes at Panhandle Trailer Court. He made the placards for his senior project to make it easier for emergency responders, taxis and others to find homes.

## Senior project addresses need to make homes easier to find

BY MARC LUTZ  
Sentinel editor

Finding a home or business in the modern age is made easier with apps like Google Maps, but what happens when an address doesn't appear in those digital location services? The problem can be made worse if the place doesn't have an address nailed or posted on the building.

Such was the case when high school senior Tyson Messmer was trying to find someone's home at Panhandle Trailer Court. It helped him decide on his senior project.

"I couldn't find it anywhere," Messmer said. That experience and a suggestion from his former boss helped him come up with the idea to create address placards.

The placards are made of 8-by-10-inch pieces of aluminum with rounded corners. Light-blue reflective vinyl numbers cut out with a machine are mounted on the front of the metal backing.

Before the project could begin, Messmer, 17, had to overcome his shyness. He admitted it was difficult, but he made himself go to each of the more than 40 trailers, knock on the door and explain to residents what he wanted to do for them.

"Every single one of them asked how much it would cost," he said. "It's my senior project, so it's all for free."

Only 10 responded when Messmer initially knocked on doors, so that's all that have been completed, though his ultimate goal is to create address placards for all the trailers by the time he graduates, or at least by the end of summer.

The project will help emergency responders in the event they need to locate a specific trailer.

"The Panhandle Trailer Court is the perfect place to start (this project)," said John Taylor, a

volunteer firefighter and EMT. "Some have numbers and some don't. When there's a fire, that's obvious. You pull up, here's smoke. But a broken leg in No. 8? Where's that? Where's the number?"

Taylor, who's been volunteering for 35 years, estimates that about half the homes and businesses in Wrangell display the street numbers on their buildings. He's had the idea for an address project for a couple years and mentioned it to Messmer when the teen worked for him as a deckhand at his charter boat business last summer.

Taylor envisions the project as being city-wide, which could take a few years and involve several students making it their senior project.

"Just compiling the names and addresses (that need house numbers) would be a job in itself," Taylor said.

Beyond high school, Messmer plans to become an anesthesiologist, adding on 12 more years of education. "I'm up for a little challenge," he said.

Messmer has been accepted to two schools, the University of Miami in Florida and Concordia University Irvine in Southern California. Though Miami is his dream school, Concordia has offered him a \$20,000 academic scholarship, renewable for four years. It's a decision he's still considering.

When it comes to his school life in Wrangell, Messmer said he'll miss the easy classes and sports. He was on the cross country, swimming and basketball teams. He figures sports at the college level will be even more competitive, but he will try out nonetheless.

Beyond college, medical school and residency, Messmer said he's not sure where he will practice medicine, but one factor will help him decide.

"Wherever pays the most," he said. "I have a few years to figure it out."

## Water rates

Continued from page 1

unmetered water \$9.90 a month, from \$47.15 to \$57.05 in May, rising in each of the next four years to \$64.19 on July 1, 2026.

The proposed gradual increases would not provide any cushion for the unforeseen, Robbins said.

"Wrangell has been fortunate, and for lack of a better word, spoiled," she wrote. "We have managed to squeeze by with low rates,

low increases, understaffing, and 'cushioning the blow' for far too many years. If you look at the communities around us, we are nowhere near the rates they charge. This is not fruitful for the city or the community."

Ketchikan's water rate is \$63.26 per residence, after a fee increase this month. The rates in Petersburg, Juneau, Sitka and Haines range in the \$40 and \$50 per month. Anchorage is closer to \$60.

## Face masks

Continued from page 1

time to study the latest subvariant of the virus and monitor an uptick in cases.

Across the country, airlines have banned thousands of often unruly passengers who refused to comply with the mask mandate. In the statement Monday, Alaska Airlines said "guests whose behavior was particularly egregious" will remain banned even after the policy has changed.

The airline's statement also noted: "While the Transportation Security Administration is no longer enforcing its mask mandate, it may take time for individual airports to roll back their mask requirements. Out of an abundance of caution, we recommend guests defer to local port guidance when traveling, including wearing a mask if directed to do so."

United Airlines said Monday the rule would no longer

be enforced among employees or passengers on domestic and international flights to countries that don't have their own masking rules for planes.

American Airlines advised travelers, "Please note face masks may still be required based on local ordinances, or when traveling to/from certain international locations based on country requirements."

Airlines have been lobbying the government to drop the mandate.

The Association of Flight Attendants, the nation's largest union of cabin crews, has recently taken a neutral position on the mask rule because its members are divided about the issue. On Monday, the union's president appealed for calm on planes and in airports.

"The last thing we need for workers on the frontlines or passengers traveling today is confusion and chaos," union leader Sara Nelson said.

## Boatyard

Continued from page 1

yet observed a spike at her business from Sitka's boatyard closure, and said they've always received a pretty steady flow of calls from Sitka. "There's no real yard in Juneau, and Ketchikan has been kind of an unorganized mess, so we get calls from all over Southeast," she said April 14.

Wrangell's Marine Service Center has three boatlifts, the largest of which can pull a 300-ton vessel out of the water. The borough owns the center and leases space to boat owners and marine services providers.

Increased demand could turn into more dollars for Wrangell.

"The marine repair industry here brings a lot of money to town," Ellis said. "Not only in work and wages, but food and lodging for the skippers and crew, as well as lots of business for the hardware stores."

The challenge at the Marine Service Center and the Port and Harbors Department will be finding people to work, Miller said April 11. A harbor laborer position and harbor security/maintenance position were unfilled as of last Friday.

## Birding festival starts Friday, runs to May 7

Sentinel staff

The annual Stikine River Birding Festival has a busy first weekend planned.

It starts up Friday with a 1 p.m. virtual storytime at the Irene Ingle Public Library, then continuing the educational fun agenda with a Birding 101 class at 6 p.m. Friday at the Nolan Center, led by Bonnie Demerjian.

The library event will present an Earth Day theme, with activity kits available for pickup at the library. The meeting ID for the Zoom event is 935 4298 0052, passcode 8743535.

There are three events on Saturday's calendar. A community cleanup is planned for 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., sponsored by the Wrangell Cooperative Association and Paula Rak. Meet at the covered basketball court behind the elementary school.

An Earth Day walk, starting at 9 a.m. Saturday, will start at the entrance to Volunteer Park, sponsored by St. Philip's Episcopal Church.

And at 6:30 p.m. Saturday at the Nolan Center,

Zak Pohlen will talk about his trip along the Stikine River in 2019 in a search of Alaska's rarest breeding birds. Pohlen is a biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

This year's Stikine Festival will stretch over three weekends, to May 7, and will focus on educational programs.

The festival is sponsored by the borough in conjunction with the Wrangell Convention and Visitor Bureau, the U.S. Forest Service and several businesses.

Demerjian will lead a bird walk starting at 7 a.m. next Saturday, April 30, at Muskeg Meadows Golf Course. The Angerman's Inc. golf tournament will follow at 10 a.m.

Along with scavenger hunts, bird-banding exhibitions and crafting, there will also be jetboat tours up the Stikine to look for migrating birds.

For a full list of festival events and contests, check out the flyer in this week's Wrangell Sentinel, or visit wrangell.com/birdingfestival/birding-festival-schedule.

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Monday	- 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Tuesday	- 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Wednesday	- 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Thursday	- 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Friday	- 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Saturday	- 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sunday	- Closed

# Chamber honors educator, youth leader, citizen of the year

BY LARRY PERSILY  
Sentinel writer

A full house at the Nolan Center listened as the chamber of commerce honored Mia Wiederspohn as Wrangell's youth leader of the year, Barbara Neyman as educator of the year, and Sarah Merritt as citizen of the year.

The chamber presentation described Merritt, who has worked at the legislative information office in town since 1996, as "an outstanding citizen ... understated, kind, solution focused, and devoted to the democratic process."

Merritt said she returned to Juneau after earning a degree in political science in South Dakota, later deciding she did not want to be a politician or a lawyer. Going to work at the legislative information office, which helps people with all aspects of managing and understanding state services and the legislative process, "was right up my alley," she said in an interview the week after the chamber's April 9 awards dinner.

"That's the way I was raised," to help people, she explained.

Merritt will be leaving Wrangell this week — but only temporarily. She will lead a contingent of six high school students in the Close Up program, accompanying them to Washington, D.C., to watch and learn about the federal government. She's been doing it for years, though there was no Close Up travel the past two years, due to the pandemic.

Her work at the high school has been ongoing since last fall, when she led a civics class, trying to teach her students to be more open-minded. The chamber described Merritt as "positive and encouraging" of the role teens will play in shaping the future.

Helping students was the focus of another chamber award — educator of the year — which went to Barbara Neyman.

"She has gone above and beyond in so many ways," parents Eric and Laurie Hagelman said in a prepared statement presented by the chamber. They described Neyman as their daughter's

"main teacher through the special education department."

"She always stays late to work with her and has run the 'night school' program for years," the Hagelmans said. "She is the reason that so many kids graduate and stick with high school. We know our daughter wouldn't have been able to do high school without her."

They said their daughter also thought Neyman deserved the award. "She says that she is very thoughtful and open-minded."

Bob Davis, assistant principal at the high school and middle school, concurred that Neyman's award-winning commitment is a big part of her strong effort to help students throughout the school district. "Barb's official title is special education secretary, but her real value is how much and how well she works with kids," he said last weekend.

The chamber's annual awards also included young leader of the year, which went to Wiederspohn, who has been working with Tlingit language

teacher Virginia Oliver to learn and record words and phrases for broadcast on KSTK.

"I was surprised but I am very thankful," Wiederspohn, a junior, said in an interview the week after the awards ceremony. "The community has been really cherishing of what I've been doing."

"Mia should be recognized for her dedication to keeping the Lingit language alive," the chamber said.

Wiederspohn credits Oliver for pushing her to learn more of the language and to share it with others in the radio recordings. The language is dying, she said, and she hopes her radio work can help prevent that from happening.

She also is active in student government, writing grants for school projects, and volunteering with BASE (Building a Supportive Environment), a student-led group dedicated to improving the school and students' lives.

The chamber awarded the Wrangell Sentinel with business of the year honors.

## Alaska trims flights through June; says no effect expected for in state

BY LARRY PERSILY  
Sentinel writer

Dealing with a shortage of pilots until more can be trained, Alaska Airlines has announced it will cut 2% of its roughly 1,200 daily flights through the end of June.

"We don't believe it will have an impact here in the state of Alaska," Tim Thompson, company spokesman in Anchorage, said April 12.

Even without changes to the daily flight schedule into Wrangell, the cutbacks could affect travelers making connections in Seattle to other Alaska Airlines' destinations.

The airline canceled several hundred flights the first week-end of April due to a shortage of pilots, creating travel headaches for several tens of thousands of passengers, in addition to airline customer service agents who worked to rebook the flyers. Flight cancellations continued into mid-April, though at a much-reduced level.

"Due to the training delays, we had 63 fewer pilots prepared to fly in April than we planned for in January," the

airline said in its April 7 statement. "We should have recognized this sooner and updated our schedule."

Alaska has about 3,100 pilots. It lost 137 of its most experienced pilots to early retirement during the pandemic, and already this year has lost more than 50 pilots or pilots in training to other airlines, according to a report in the Seattle Times on April 12. Airlines nationwide lost several thousand pilots to retirement or other careers during the worst of the pandemic travel cutbacks in 2020.

Alaska Airlines' pilot shortage has been building since early in the year, the company explained in its announcement: "During the first few months of 2022, a backlog built up in our training program. Trainings were canceled and delayed due to student or trainer illness during the Omicron surge and due to the operational impact of winter storms, and they (trainings) were not rescheduled fast enough."

The company reported it is running an academy to train

new pilots, and has doubled the capacity since last fall. "We will graduate more than 30 pilots this month, and even more in May."

The flight cancellations are not due to the informational picketing by the pilots union on April 1 in Seattle, Anchorage and other airports, the company said. The union and airline have been negotiating over a new contract for three years, and the union has said the airline is short-staffed, putting pressure on pilots to pick up extra work.

"It's important to clarify that our pilots are not on strike," the airline said in its April 7 announcement. "This informational picket was not the cause of our cancellations. We're committed to reaching an agreement for a contract that is good for our pilots ... and supports the company's ability to grow for all 22,000 Alaska and Horizon employees and all who depend on us."

Regardless of this spring flight cutbacks, the airline is planning to grow substantially in the years ahead. Alaska Airlines executives, talking with investors last month, outlined plans to add 100 airplanes to its 300-plane fleet by 2025. That includes Alaska Airlines and its regional carrier Horizon Air, and will require hiring even more pilots.

### Airport deliveries: Repair part and pizza



PHOTO BY SARAH ASLAM/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Jacob Fisher, an Alaska Airlines maintenance technician flown into town, inspects an engine on the Boeing 737 jet that spent several days in Wrangell last week after a mechanical problem grounded the southbound flight on April 10. After the part arrived and the maintenance crew finished its work, the plane left Wrangell on April 13. The airline's Wrangell manager Adam Sprehe ordered pizza from the Marine Bar to feed passengers who were delayed several hours on April 10 until the airline could get another aircraft into town to continue the flight to Ketchikan and Seattle.

## Alaska Seaplanes will start new Sitka-Wrangell service next month

BY LARRY PERSILY  
Sentinel writer

Juneau-based Alaska Seaplanes will add Wrangell to its route map starting May 26. The company, which operates a fleet of 14 single-engine aircraft, mostly nine-passenger planes, will run a daily flight from Sitka to Petersburg to Wrangell and back to Sitka.

Encouragement from SEARHC "was instrumental" in starting the Sitka-Wrangell service, Andy Kline, Alaska Seaplanes marketing manager, said last Wednesday.

SEARHC is based in Sitka where it operates the Mt. Edgecumbe Medical Center, providing acute, specialty and behavioral health care services, and to help support its other sites in Southeast, including the Wrangell Medical Center.

"We talked with them (SEARHC) quite a bit about this," Kline said.

"This new route will continue to improve the timely transportation of staff and beneficiaries to our network of health care facilities," Dan Harris, chief financial officer at SEARHC, said in a prepared statement. "Alaska Seaplanes' addition of Wrangell will give us more flexibility as we transport our people to provide and receive their care."

The new flight is scheduled to leave Sitka at 1 p.m. each day, arriving in Wrangell at 2:10 p.m. and landing back in Sitka at 3 p.m., seven days a week.

"We're intending it to be year-round," Kline said.

Alaska Seaplanes marked its 25th anniversary last week. Wrangell will become its 15th destination in Southeast. It operates seven wheeled aircraft and seven floatplanes, Kline said, recently adding two more nine-passenger Cessna 208 Grand Caravans to its fleet.

The air service will use its Pilatus PC-12, a pressurized aircraft that can cruise at 300 mph, in addition to the Grand Caravan on the new Sitka-Wrangell route.

Alaska Seaplanes has purchased a trailer at Wrangell airport to serve as its office, waiting room and freight depot. "It needs a little revamping," Kline said, but will be ready for the May 26 inaugural flight.

Tickets are available on the Alaska Seaplanes' website. Fares were listed Monday at \$339 one way between Wrangell and Sitka. The same routing on Alaska Airlines is about half the price, but involves a connection and seven-hour layover in Juneau to get from Sitka to Wrangell, and a tight connection in Ketchikan to return to Sitka.

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# Taste of Asia more than a restaurant, it's the owner's passion

By SARAH ASLAM  
Sentinel reporter

When Michelle Lopez opened Taste of Asia nearly seven years ago, it was after her boyfriend had become her ex-boyfriend.

She had come to Wrangell to be with him from Juneau, where her parents had moved from the Philippines 30 years ago. She stayed in Wrangell to make a life for herself and her kids.

When she came here, there were no places that served rice, she said. "I was so hungry. I thought maybe I should look for a place to put a little business."

The owner of the Front Street building Taste of Asia now operates out of had the ice cream shop downstairs. Lopez got a job scooping ice cream, and when the owner retired he transferred the business license to her.

"I didn't want to be an employee anymore," she said. "Jerry (Massin) gave me an opportunity to handle the shop."

The ice cream still occupies one side of the restaurant, and Lopez was able to offer sushi and one Asian meal a day, to start, adding from there. "Now we have such a vast menu on the board."

"I was proud of myself, as a single parent, I provided for my children by my own hard work." Her son, Austin, is 21, and daughter Alyssa turned 23 last Saturday.

Lopez said she had a job in a different industry in Juneau, making good money. "But my passion is designing sushi. This gave me the opportunity to

do what I really want."

She attended a culinary arts course in Seattle in 2014 that specialized in baking. "I didn't finish my course, because I felt bored about making pastries. That wasn't what I wanted."

Her "second mom" in Seattle, as she called her, was Korean and "was always making sushi." Lopez gained inspiration from her, in the artistry she puts into her California roll, dragon roll or caterpillar tempura rolls.

Her challenges in Wrangell are weather and supply issues. Finding Asian ingredients, such as eel sauce, is difficult.

"Mostly the hardest is in how you make your food valuable," she said. Shipping costs are very high. Her challenge now is if she can still offer an \$18 meal after all the price increases. Bell pepper used to be \$1 or \$3 per pound. Now they're \$2 each, she said.

During the pandemic, there was a mad dash on rice. "Everyone was panicking and buying all the rice at the store," Lopez said.

"It's a big challenge being in a restaurant business, how you provide all that without them being disappointed," Lopez said.

In addition, in a small town, people's tastes can be unpredictable.

"That's a big challenge — 2,000 people. Not everyone will eat Asian food in one day, or two days. I am always thinking about ideas for the next day, and the allergies of people. Some people have shrimp allergies, or don't eat pork, or they only want vegetarian, so we consider all of that," she



PHOTO BY SARAH ASLAM/  
WRANGELL SENTINEL

Michelle Lopez, owner of Taste of Asia, unpacks on a freight day. The challenge of offering Asian cuisine in a small town is the unpredictability, Lopez said. "Not everyone will eat Asian food in one day, or two days. I am always thinking about ideas for the next day."

said. "The hardest is looking for people to work here in a small town."

Lopez said she is very strict and strategic with her children about how the food

and rice is laid out as they help in the restaurant. "Especially if it's a sushi tray, we have to do it the right way in how we present the food."

People had told her businesses in Wrangell don't last long. "Mostly they close in one or two years," she recalled. "But I'm so glad we're still here, fighting."

"There are a lot of people who will appreciate you and there are people who don't," she said. "I am glad the town still supports us. We've been here for almost seven years now."

Lopez plans to start a renovation in May. "We are going to remodel everything, from the flooring to the walls to the chairs."

She plans to put in booths and replace the carpet with hard flooring, and change the lighting.

There will still be ice cream, as well as Asian-inspired offerings like sushi, General Tso chicken, Mongolian beef, orange chicken, crab rangoon, and a Filipino noodle dish called pancit.

She enjoys working and cooking for herself because she has more freedom. "The freedom that I get is my mom is not watching me. Because my mom is a good cook, too. I got it from my mom."

Lopez' mom is good with desserts, and her sister is "very good with baking." The family had a small restaurant in the Philippines.

"It is freedom to run a business by myself," she said. "I didn't realize I can do it. I didn't have the belief in myself. But now I found it. I can do it. I am so thankful."

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# Earthquake activity under Mount Edgecumbe subsides after brief flurry

By SHANNON HAUGLAND  
Sitka Sentinel

The Alaska Volcano Observatory said that as of last Thursday the number of earthquakes under Mount Edgecumbe was declining.

The earthquake activity is beneath the 3,000-foot high dormant volcano 15 miles west of Sitka on Kruzof Island.

The volcano observatory sent out an information statement a day earlier about the “swarm” of small earthquakes under Mount Edgecumbe, with an accompanying message that there is no cause for alarm by the public.

“We’re getting information out and trying not to alarm people,” said David Schneider, a research geophysicist at the Anchorage volcano center.

Thursday’s report from the U.S. Geological Survey observatory said the earthquakes started at 2 a.m. April 11, and since then hundreds of small quakes, “a swarm,” have been detected, although “the large majority are too small to locate.”

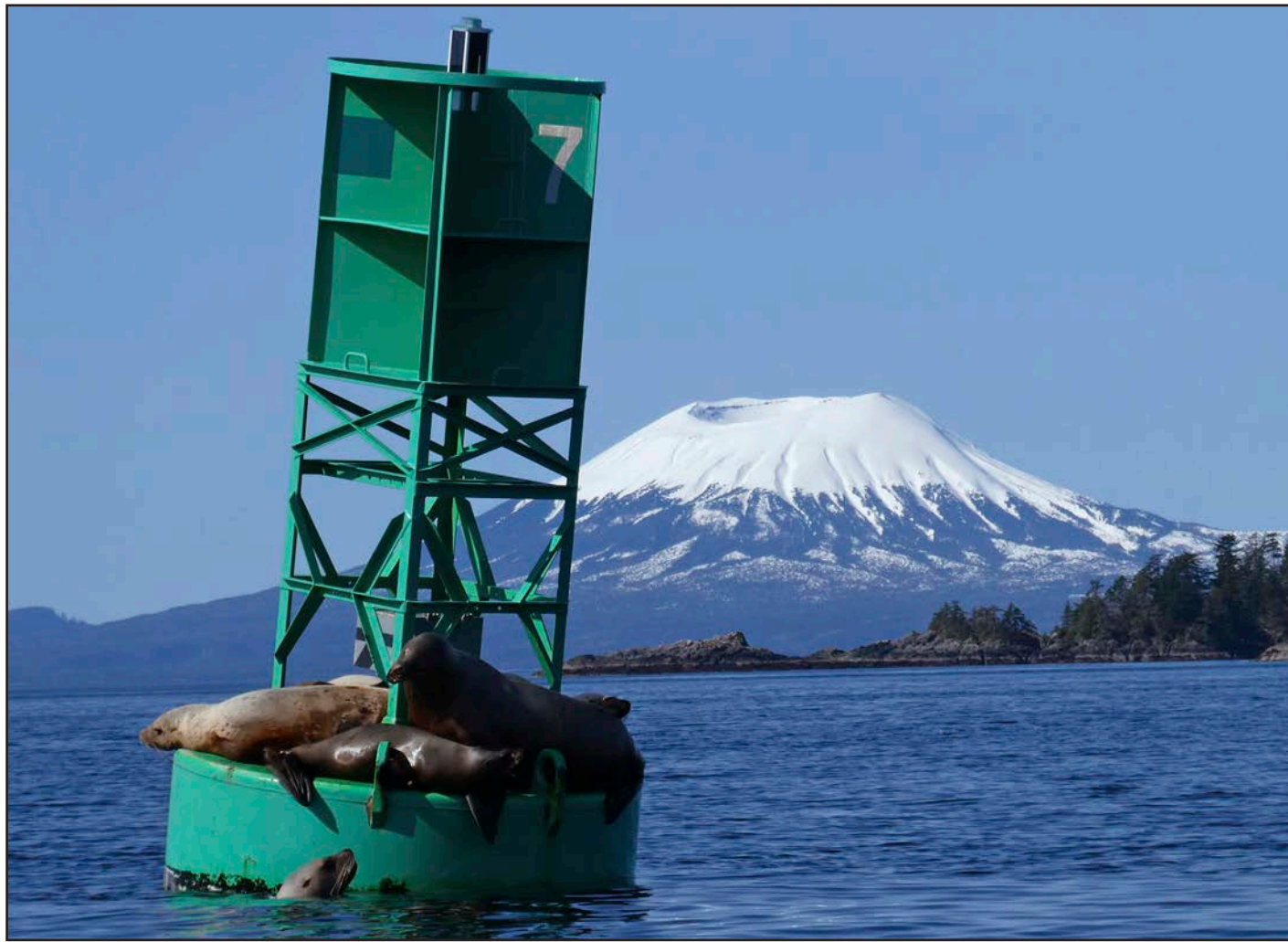
The Alaska Earthquake Information Center said the largest reported earthquake occurred at 11:04 a.m. April 11 with a magnitude of 2.8 at 6.2 miles depth. The observatory center said the rate declined over the week.

Jacyn Schmidt, geoscience coordinator at the Sitka Sound Science Center, said there is no indication that an eruption “is imminent or will happen at all.”

“It would take a lot more activity beneath the volcano,” she said.

The Anchorage volcano observatory is a cooperative program of the U.S. Geological Survey, University of Alaska Fairbanks Geophysical Institute, and the Alaska Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys.

Schneider said there are no plans to install additional instruments in Sitka, but that would be reevaluated if the earthquake activity continues or increases. He said University of Alaska Fairbanks scientists are analyzing synthetic aperture radar satellite data “which could be used to monitor any deformation that



AP PHOTO/BECKY BOHRER

With Mount Edgecumbe in the background, a sea lion pops its head out of the water next to a buoy crowded with other sea lions in this 2018 file photo. A swarm of hundreds of small earthquakes were reported near the Mount Edgecumbe volcano 15 miles west of Sitka. The reason for the swarm is not known, officials at the Alaska Volcano Observatory said.

happens.”

The analysis can tell scientists how the ground is moving over time, from year to year or week to week, and it is a common method used for analyzing volcanic deformation, movement during earthquakes, and land subsidence through groundwater withdrawal.

Mount Edgecumbe is classified as a “stratovolcano,” part of a broader volcanic field of lava domes and craters on southern Kruzof Island and surrounding submarine vicinity. There are no written observations of eruptions from the volcanic field, but Tlingit oral history describes small eruptions that occurred about 800 years ago.

The last Mount Edgecumbe eruption preserved in the geologic record was about 4,500 years ago.

There’s also evidence of a large eruption 13,000 to 14,500 years ago where up to 3 feet of ash was deposited on what is now Sitka, while 98 feet fell on Kruzof Island.

## Sitka sac roe fishery closes at half of harvest guideline

Petersburg Pilot

The Sitka Sound sac roe herring fishery closed April 10 with a final tally of approximately 26,350 tons harvested, according to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. It was just over half of the 45,164-ton guideline harvest level, but over 10,000 tons more than last year’s catch.

In the final five days of openings, approximately 6,990 tons were harvested in the waters off of Baranof Island to the south of Sitka.

OBI Fleet Manager Don Spigelmyre wrote that this year was “our best season

ever,” and that the company purchased just over 3,500 tons for the OBI Petersburg plant to process.

Though the total harvest did not reach the allowable catch, that does not mean the harvest was not successful, he said. If the guideline harvest had been met, he said, it would have oversaturated the primary market in Japan and crashed the price.

Spigelmyre also said he is expecting to see a higher price for herring than in the past few years, but the recent decrease in the value of Japanese yen will hurt the price.

## Mortgage relief program draws 10,737 applications in Alaska

Sentinel staff

A federally funded mortgage relief program to help homeowners hurt financially by the pandemic drew 10,737 applications in Alaska, with 43 from Wrangell.

The state received \$50 million in federal funds under a nationwide program to help homeowners who lost their jobs or income due to COVID-19 shutdowns or cutbacks. The Alaska Housing Finance Corp. is administering the statewide program, reviewing the applications to ensure people meet the income loss and other criteria in preparation to start disbursing aid.

The 10,737 applications represent about one in nine of the

almost 100,000 homeowners in Alaska with a mortgage, according to the housing finance agency.

The aid can go toward eligible homeowners’ monthly mortgage payments, and may also be applied to current and past-due property taxes, insurance premiums and utility bills. The application period closed April 4.

In addition to the mortgage relief program, the state housing agency had distributed almost \$260 million in pandemic relief aid to more

than 26,000 rental households across Alaska as of last Friday. Of that total, \$530,000 went to renters in Wrangell under the federally financed program to help tenants with rent and utilities.

Rent and utility assistance under the program has gone to 80 Wrangell households.

The total of 123 Wrangell households to receive rental assistance or apply for mortgage relief represents about 12% of the households in the community.

## Tug grounding near Sitka spilled 5,300 gallons of diesel

Sitka Sentinel

The state Department of Environmental Conservation has determined that about 5,300 gallons of diesel spilled from the March 21 grounding of a tugboat in Neva Strait, near Sitka. The agency calculated that about 700 gallons were recovered by surface skimmers after the accident that left the tug Western Mariner stranded on the beach and leaking fuel.

Additional fuel was removed from the water by deployment of absorbent materials, the state said.

Before the tugboat was refloated on March 30, all of the fuel in the undamaged tanks on the vessel was pumped to recovery boats. The Western Mariner was towed to the Samson Tug and Barge dock in Sitka.

The tug was towing a barge at the time of the accident.

Along with other cleanup efforts, the Southeast Alaska Petroleum Response Organization flushed the shoreline near the grounded tug and deployed absorbent booms.

“Absorbent materials and containment

boom were initially used to capture any remnant oil from the shoreline flushing operations, but the absorbent pads were not effective in absorbing the weathered silvery sheen that was flushed from the shoreline,” the department said.

Observations on beaches affected by the spill will continue this month, the department reported, and the assessment team will return to the grounding site for further inspections.

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# Murkowski outraised Trump supporter 2-1 in past three months

By MARK THIESSEN  
The Associated Press

ANCHORAGE (AP) — Alaska U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski continues to have a substantial cash advantage over her opponent backed by former President Donald Trump.

Murkowski, in office since 2002, brought in more than \$1.5 million in the three-month period ending March 31, according to a filing with the Federal Election Commission.

Murkowski ended the quarter with \$5.2 million on hand with no debt, the records show.

Republican Kelly Tshibaka, who is challenging Murkowski, raised \$673,383 during the last quarter, a total that included donations from a fundraiser at Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, which Trump attended, Tshibaka campaign spokesperson, Tim Murtaugh, told The Associated Press on Friday.

According to FEC records, Trump did not contribute to Tshibaka's campaign during the quarter. Factcheck.org reported Trump's Save America political action committee made a \$5,000 donation last July.

As of March 31, Tshibaka had \$967,600 on hand with just over \$95,000 in debts.

Murtaugh said not all campaign contributions for the Mar-a-Lago event were recorded this quarter; some came in during the fourth quarter of 2021.

"Kelly Tshibaka raised more money in the first quarter of 2022 than she did in the last quarter of 2021 and she will have all the resources she needs to defeat Lisa Murkowski," Murtaugh said in an email.

Tshibaka is a former commissioner in the Alaska Department of Administration for Gov. Mike Dunleavy. She formerly worked in the offices of inspector



AP PHOTO / MARK THIESSEN

Republican Kelly Tshibaka filed to run in Alaska's U.S. Senate race against incumbent Sen. Lisa Murkowski. Her husband, Niki Tshibaka, accompanied her to the Division of Elections office in Anchorage on April 11.

general for the U.S. Postal Service, Federal Trade Commission and Department of Justice, according to her resume.

Trump has said he would campaign for Tshibaka after vowing revenge against Murkowski, who voted to convict him in his second impeachment trial and called

on Trump to resign after the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

"He said that he'll come up into a rally for us, and I think that'll be great for voter turnout," Tshibaka told reporters April 11 after filing for office at state election offices in Anchorage.

In addition to Murkowski and Tshibaka, 11 other candidates so far have filed with the state Division of Elections to run in the Senate race. None of the others had filed fundraising reports with the FEC as of Friday.

## Competing Republicans line up endorsements for Don Young's seat

ANCHORAGE (AP) — The two co-chairs of the late-U.S. Rep. Don Young's reelection campaign have earned competing endorsements in their bids to replace Alaska's lone member of the U.S. House.

Republicans Josh Revak and Tara Sweeney are among a field of 48 candidates running in a June 11 special primary. The four candidates who get the most votes in the special primary will advance to an Aug. 16 special election to determine who serves the remainder of Young's term, which ends in January.

Young, a Republican, died last month at age 88.

Young's widow, Anne Garland Young, in a video produced by Revak's campaign, said Revak had earned Young's "trust and respect" and that "as the man of unique integrity he is, Josh will work tirelessly and honestly for our beloved Alaska in the U.S. Congress," Alaska Public Media reported.

She said she had heard Young encourage Revak to run for the seat Young had held for 49 years. Revak, an Anchorage state senator, once worked in Young's office. She said Revak told Young that "out of respect for him and his legacy, he could not and

would not seek Alaska's lone congressional seat, at least as long as Congressman Young was running."

Sweeney has been endorsed by the ANCSA Regional Association, which has set up a third-party group to support her bid, the Anchorage Daily News reported. The third-party group, known as a super political action committee, cannot coordinate its efforts with Sweeney's campaign.

The ANCSA Regional Association board is comprised of leaders of 12 Alaska Native regional corporations. A statement announcing the endorsement said the board's

decision recognized "the historic opportunity before Alaskans to elect the state's first Alaska Native and female" U.S. House member.

Sweeney is a former assistant secretary for Indian Affairs in the U.S. Department of Interior and was previously an executive with Arctic Slope Regional Corp. She understands rural and urban Alaska and knows how to work effectively in Washington, D.C. and in Alaska, Kim Reitmeier, president of the ANCSA Regional Association, told the newspaper. Reitmeier did not say if the decision was unanimous.

Other candidates include Nick Begich, a co-chair of Young's 2020 reelection campaign, who launched his own campaign for the House seat last fall and has touted endorsements from Alaska Republicans and Republican organizations.

Sarah Palin, the former Alaska governor and 2008 Republican U.S. vice presidential nominee, has been endorsed by former President Donald Trump. Al Gross, an independent, announced a bipartisan campaign leadership team that includes former Gov. Tony Knowles, a Democrat.



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# White Pass Railroad will not run into Canada this summer

By MIKE SWASEY  
KHNS public radio / Skagway

After two years of COVID-19 closure, an easing of restrictions at the border between Skagway and Yukon Territory will make it possible for tour companies to run cross-border excursions this summer. That's good news for many Skagway tour operators that take cruise ship passengers into Canada.

But Skagway's largest tour operator, the White Pass and Yukon Route Railroad, said its trains won't cross the border despite relaxed COVID testing rules and faster processing times. On April 5, the railway notified its partners that it would not operate into Canada this season.

The excursion train will run from Skagway to the White Pass summit at the

Canadian border and back.

White Pass executive Tyler Rose said there were a number of reasons why only the shorter trip.

"We just couldn't find a workable solution to it," he said. "It was logistics, some restrictions. The uncertainty around wait times — it just wasn't possible for us to provide the consistent, high-quality service without delays. And we thought it would create a significant disruption to the passenger experience."

Yukon's Minister of Economic Development Ranj Pillai said his team is disappointed in White Pass's decision.

"We essentially went through a series of problem-solving on border issues and ensuring that we would have the ability for White Pass to come back and not have delays. And you know, we solved those issues. So yeah, this week was it was very

tough to get that news," Pillai said.

The Yukon government and Yukon businesses aren't the only ones affected. White Pass partners with several Skagway-based companies to offer combination tours that involve a train ride and other excursions like kayaking, bus rides or bike tours.

Sockeye Cycle owner Dustin Craney said he's been booking tours based on the idea that the train would run to Fraser, British Columbia, where his company would meet passengers for a bike tour on the Klondike Highway. Now he has to issue about \$10,000 in refunds.

"I didn't think we had kind of any kind of guarantee from them. But we definitely had been booking tours. And I think all the indications from both the kind of the cruise line partners from White Pass and from folks locally was that it seemed like

things were coming together, depending on the Canada border situation," Craney said.

But the work done by the Yukon government to relax border restrictions has paved the way for other Skagway-based tour companies to resume their trips up the Klondike Highway to Yukon communities. Fears over long delays at the border kept some companies in limbo wondering if they'd be able to operate at all after two years of pandemic-related shutdowns.

Now some tour companies, including Chilkoot Charters and Holland America Princess, plan to resume bus tours into Canada.

Skagway's cruise season starts on April 26. But things are expected to get busy when four large cruise ships arrive in town on May 17.

## Redistricting plan crosses 25 miles of state park to create state Senate seat

JUNEAU (AP) — The appointed board tasked with drawing Alaska's legislative district boundaries has approved new state Senate districts for the Anchorage area, with the two members who opposed the plan calling it political.

The new plan puts Eagle River, north of Anchorage, and Girdwood, south of Anchorage into the same Senate district, separated by about 25 miles of uninhabited Chugach State Park.

The Alaska Redistricting Board adopted the plan by a 3-2 vote on April 13. The board had gone back to work after the state Supreme Court ruled that the board's original plan

pairing part of east Anchorage and the Eagle River area into a single Senate district constituted an "unconstitutional political gerrymander."

The new plan would join part of the Eagle River area with south Anchorage and Girdwood for one Senate district and another part of the Eagle River area to an area that includes a military base for another Senate district. The board's dissenting members said the plan would improperly give Eagle River greater representation in the Senate, with the chance for the conservative area to dominate in elections and take two of the Senate's 20 seats.

"This is still gerrymander-

"Eagle River is now going to have two senators; how is that not an advantage?"

Nicole Borromeo  
Member,  
Alaska Redistricting Board

ing, just in a different way, in my mind," board member Melanie Bahnke said.

The board had been considering two options to address concerns raised by the court. The other option would have joined the Eagle River area's two House districts into one Senate district, as has been the

case for years.

"Eagle River is now going to have two senators; how is that not an advantage?" Board member Nicole Borromeo said.

If the new plan is upheld, Republican Sen. Lora Reinbold of Eagle River and Republican Sen. Roger Holland of Anchorage would be in the

same district.

Board members John Binkley, Bethany Marcum and Budd Simpson, all Republicans, voted in favor of the new plan. Members Bahnke and Borromeo, who are independents, dissented.

Binkley and Simpson said the new map is not biased in favor of Republicans, noting Reinbold and Holland testified against it.

The state Supreme Court found that a prior map that paired a House district that included part of Anchorage's Muldoon area with an Eagle River area House district amounted to an "unconstitutional political gerrymander."



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# Banned Russian seafood enters U.S. markets through China

MIAMI (AP) — A U.S. ban on seafood imports from Russia over its invasion of Ukraine was supposed to sap billions of dollars from Vladimir Putin's war machine.

But shortcomings in import regulations mean that Russian-caught pollock, salmon and crab are likely to enter the U.S. anyway, by way of the country vital to seafood supply chains across the world: China.

Like the U.S. seafood industry, Russian companies rely heavily on China to process their catch. Once there, the seafood can be reexported to the U.S. as a "product of China" because country of origin labeling isn't required.

The result is that nearly a third of the wild-caught fish imported from China is estimated to have been caught in Russian waters, according to an International Trade Commission study of 2019 data. For pollock and sockeye salmon, the rate is even higher — 50% to 75%.

"China doesn't catch cod. They don't catch pollock. But yet, they're one of the largest exporters of these whitefish in the world," said Sally Yozell, a former policy director at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration who now is a senior fellow at the Stimson Center in Washington. "Having it labeled as a Chinese product is really not fair to the consumers and to restaurants."

Fishing is big business in Russia, one closely linked to the Kremlin and Putin's projection of power at sea. The country is one of the world's top seafood producers and was the eighth-largest exporter to the U.S. last year, with more than \$1.2 billion worth of sales, the bulk of it king crab that competes with Alaska's catch.

But it's unknown exactly how much manages to land in the U.S. by way of China, which sent \$1.7 billion in fish to the U.S. last year. Nor does the Biden administration's ban require companies importing from China to find out.

Among Russia's biggest seafood exports is Alaska pollock. A cousin of cod, Alaska pollock is the most harvested fish in the U.S., showing up in everything from imitation crabmeat to McDonald's Filet-O-Fish. Every year, giant, floating factories in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska with dozens of workers aboard catch 1.5 million metric tons of the fish, the equivalent of more than four times the weight of the Empire State Building.

But the same species is also harvested in Russia in similar amounts. Even though the U.S. forbids the use of the name "Alaska pollock" if the fish wasn't caught in U.S. waters,



THE KREMLIN VIA AP

This photo provided by the Kremlin shows the Mekanik Sizov, a 354-foot-long trawler belonging to a company partly owned by sanctioned businessman Gleb Frank. A U.S. ban on seafood imports from Russia was supposed to deny billions of dollars for Russia's war machine. But shortcomings in import regulations allow Russian-caught pollock, salmon and crab to enter the U.S. anyway, by way of China.

pollock caught by Russia and processed in China is hard to detect and fills an important gap in the U.S. market. Complicating matters further, a small share of the U.S. catch is also sent to China for processing and reimported to the U.S.

In lieu of seafood tracing, U.S. producers rely on the name recognition of Alaska pollock to signal where the fish was caught.

"Consumers can have confidence that if the name Alaska is on the box it unequivocally comes from Alaska waters," insisted Craig Morris, chief executive of Genuine Alaska Pollock Producers.

Even before the invasion of Ukraine, pressure had been building to prevent what Alaska Sen. Dan Sullivan called "authoritarian" pollock from entering the U.S. Putin banned U.S. seafood in 2014 following American sanctions to punish him for the invasion of Crimea that year. Since then, Russian exports entering the U.S. duty free have nearly quadrupled in value.

U.S. trade data analyzed by The Associated Press show that the biggest importer of Russian-caught pollock from China last year was High Liner Foods, whose shares are traded on the Toronto Stock Exchange. Other big importers include Gloucester, Massachusetts-based F.W. Bryce, a subsidiary of Japanese seafood conglomerate Nissui; Miami-based Quirch Foods; and Newport, Rhode Island-based Endeavor Seafood, whose founding partner, Todd Clark, served until 2020 as chairman of the National Fisheries Institute, the industry's main lobby group.

None of the companies responded to requests for comment about whether they would stop purchasing pollock from China or take steps to ensure it is not of Russian origin — neither of which is required by the seafood embargo.

Gavin Gibbons, a spokesman for the National Fisheries Institute, said that almost all of the group's members are now reviewing their sourcing practices. But some fear an outright ban on third-party processed seafood could lead to job losses in the U.S. and add to inflation, already the highest in decades.

"The need to hold Russia accountable for its reprehensible actions in Ukraine is undeniable," said Gibbons. "We support a strong and smart response that is targeted and avoids unnecessary economic collateral damage on U.S. workers."

While overshadowed by Russia's role as an energy powerhouse, Russia's seafood industry has increasingly been flexing its own muscle with strong support from the Kremlin.

Two of the country's largest seafood exporters — Vladivostok-based Russian Fishery Co. and Russian Crab — are owned by Gleb Frank, the son of Putin's former transportation minister and head of state-owned shipbuilder Sovcomflot. Frank is also the son-in-law of one of Russia's richest men, Gennady Timchenko, who was among the first oligarchs sanctioned following the 2014 invasion of Crimea.

The 39-year-old Frank was dubbed Russia's "Crab King" after emerging in 2019 as the biggest beneficiary of a government plan to auction fishing quotas that had traditionally

been handed out based on the previous year's catch.

With generous state loans, his companies have been at the forefront of an effort to renew Russia's aging fleet. Last year, during a Navy Day ceremony at a St. Petersburg shipyard with Putin and 50 warships looking on, he launched an advanced supertrawler capable of hauling 60,000 tons of pollock per year.

"Today the Russian navy has everything it needs to defend our homeland, our national interests," Putin said in a speech in front of a monument to the fleet's founder, Peter the Great. "We can locate any enemy, whether they're on, under or above the water. And if required, deal them an unavoidable strike."

One of Frank's biggest competitors, Oleg Khan, fled into exile after a criminal investigation for murder was reopened around the same time Frank busted onto the seafood scene. Later, a company connected to him had its offices in Russia's Far East raided and assets seized over allegations of tax fraud and crab smuggling.

Last month, after Frank himself was hit with U.S. sanctions along with his wife and father-in-law again, he sold part of his ownership stakes in both seafood companies to several associates and resigned as chairman. Russian Fishery Co. did not respond to a detailed list of questions about the U.S. embargo but Russian Crab said Frank has never played a role in management of the company.

It's not just the industry's ties to the Kremlin that are driving concern.

For years, activists have complained about Russia's poor record caring for the oceans. The

country was ranked No. 2 out of 152 nations in a recent study of global efforts to combat illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing prepared by consulting firm Poseidon and the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. Only China scored worse.

At a congressional hearing this month on the Russian seafood ban, California Rep. Jared Huffman led calls for the expansion of NOAA's Seafood Import Monitoring Program, which aims to prevent illegal seafood from entering U.S. supply chains by tracking shipments from the point of catch. Currently the program covers just 13 species, only two of which — red king crab and Atlantic cod — are fished by Russia.

"Until that happens, Russian seafood will continue to line grocery store shelves and American consumers will continue to unwittingly support Putin's war machine," Huffman said.

Peter Quinter, a former U.S. Customs Service attorney, said that the Biden administration can easily close the China loophole by requiring importers to inspect their supply chains to make sure none of their fish comes from Russia. He cited as a model recent legislation requiring retailers to obtain certification from the U.S. government that their goods were not produced using forced labor by Uyghur Muslims in China's Xinjiang province.

"They can and should fix this," said Quinter, who now advises seafood companies on compliance with American trade law. "The old days of being sure your fish is caught in a single place or country is no longer the case."

# U.S. hydropower dams may gain support in low-carbon world

By SUMAN NAISHADHAM  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In southwestern Pennsylvania, eight locks and dams that for decades helped barges move goods along the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio rivers will in a few years also generate enough power for 75,000 homes.

Rye Development, a Boston-based hydropower company, is retrofitting the dams with turbines to generate electricity and says the upgraded structures will limit damage to the rivers' water quality and fish.

The project reflects a recent thawing between the industry and conservation groups, which had long opposed dams that can prevent fish migration, alter water temperatures and cause other environmental problems. As the U.S. pushes to transition to low-carbon energy, Rye is among the companies that sees an opportunity to expand hydropower production at existing dams while working to minimize environmental harms.

The recent compromises between the industry and environmental groups are reflected in President Joe

Biden's infrastructure law, which puts \$2.5 billion toward projects including dam removals as well as upgrades at existing structures for hydropower and energy storage.

"We do recognize that (hydropower) is probably going to play some role in the transition. It's certainly better than coal," said Ted Illston of American Rivers, which has advocated for dam removals on environmental grounds.

Hydropower, which uses flowing water to spin turbines connected to generators, is the oldest and second-largest renewable energy source in the U.S. after wind power. In 2020, it accounted for roughly 7% of the electricity generated in the country.

The industry hasn't received as much federal funding and tax incentives as wind and solar, but sees room for growth. Of the 90,000 dams in the country, about 2,500 produce power. Non-powered dams could produce enough power for 9 million to 12 million homes, according to an estimate by the Electric Power Supply Association based on federal data from 2012.

Part of the challenge is that most dams in the U.S.

were built more than half a century ago. The risk of dam collapses has fueled demolitions in recent years, with more than 40% of the country's nearly 2,000 dam removals in the past century happening in the past decade. Some are also torn down largely for environmental reasons.

This year, federal regulators moved a step closer to approving what would be the largest dam demolition in U.S. history. Removal of the four hydroelectric dams on the Klamath River near the Oregon-California border would help save the river's salmon and other fish species that can't reach breeding habitat because of the structures.

The hydropower industry and conservation groups still clash over dams too. On Maine's Kennebec River, conservation groups and state environmental agencies are pushing for the removal of four hydropower dams that block endangered Atlantic salmon from reaching key habitat. The dams generate about 5% of the state's renewable energy.

Continued on page 13



PHOTO COURTESY OF NATALIA BAERTLE

Ukrainian resident Natalia Blazhko-Getman is staying at her daughter's cabin in the upper Chilkat Valley. She fled her country soon after Russia launched its invasion. She has no return ticket home to Ukraine.

## Ukrainian refugee flees to Haines to live with daughter

By KYLE CLAYTON  
Chilkat Valley News, Haines

Of the more than 4.8 million Ukrainian refugees who have fled their country since Russia's invasion started in late February, one, an 82-year-old woman from Odessa, is now living in the Upper Chilkat Valley with no return ticket home.

Alla Blazhko-Getman is living with her daughter and son-in-law, Natalia and Hans Baertle, at 26 Mile Haines Highway.

Natalia Baertle, a former high school teacher in Ukraine who moved to Alaska in 2010 after marrying, said she attempted to fly her mother out of Kiev to Frankfurt, Germany before the invasion, but Lufthansa, Germany's largest airline, had stopped flying in Ukrainian airspace. Then on Feb. 24, she started getting text messages from friends around the world asking if her relatives were OK.

"It was 5 or 6 a.m. in Ukraine," she said. "I called my sister and she told me, 'It's panic in our city right now. I cannot talk to you but we are under attack from the sea. I heard bombing.'"

Her sister lives on the out-

skirts of Odessa, a port city in Ukraine, where two residential homes were bombed by Russian troops. Her mother has an apartment in downtown Odessa, where residents were being warned by officials that Ukraine was under attack.

Because the airspace was closed, on Feb. 25, the day after the invasion, Blazhko-Getman stayed in Natalia's sister's cellar before they could arrange a ride out of Odessa to cross into Moldova, a 40-minute drive. They waited in a 30-hour-long line at the border. Moldovans prepared hot meals, tea, coffee and cookies, blankets and warm clothes for the refugees. From there they drove through Romania, Hungary, Austria and Germany before boarding a plane to Seattle from Frankfurt.

Natalia's sister decided to return home and volunteer for what Natalia calls the "volunteers for territorial defense." Natalia scrolls through her phone and shows pictures sent from relatives and friends: a mullah donned in body armor, a group of civilians filling sandbags on the shore of the Black Sea, her

cousin in full battle gear in a Kiev bunker. Natalia scoffed at Putin's claim that his forces were sent to "denazify Ukraine."

"Right now, my Ukrainian friends and relatives are part of the resistance. A lot of my Jewish friends and their rabbi didn't leave Odessa. ... People who want to be 'liberated' are making sandbags."

Blazhko-Getman doesn't speak English. Although she's visited her daughter in Alaska before, Natalia said she's lonely, bored and wants to return home. Her daily life in Odessa included walks to the Black Sea beach, shopping in markets and conversations with friends. Natalia describes her as a "social butterfly" who misses her friends and family.

"She's worrying about Ukraine," Natalia said. "Yesterday she was crying and said she needs to be there. I asked why. She said, 'I need to die there.' She thinks she will not be back before she will die."

Natalia translated for her mother, who said she was shocked that Russia would attack Ukraine, and although she supports an independent

Ukraine, said she never saw a stark difference between Russians and Ukrainians.

"It's hard to tell the difference, but I was born in the Soviet Union when we were brothers and sisters," her mom said. "I don't know what happened."

As Natalia was being interviewed, her mother told her she "shouldn't talk so much. It's dangerous." That mentality comes from living for the bulk of her life in the Soviet Union, where dissent was met with imprisonment or worse, her daughter said. When Natalia's grandfather purchased a vehicle in 1963 that his neighbors considered bourgeois, they reported him to the police. He was imprisoned for six months.

Despite hesitancy to speak about politics, mom is decidedly against Russian political influence in Ukraine. She said she's heard rumors that Putin wants to restore former Ukrainian president Victor Yanukovich, who was ousted in 2014 and is now exiled in Russia.

"No Putin, no Yanukovich in Ukraine," Blazhko-Getman said. "I don't like to talk about politics. But if Yanu-

kovich decided to return to Ukraine, and he will be supported by Putin, we will eat him alive."

Natalia said her mother is conflicted because of upbringing, and because even some of her friends and family are divided on issues related to Russia's influence on their country. Like her mother, they were taught that Russians were superior to the rest of the world, and that they were hated and mistreated by the U.S. and the West.

Natalia said she's disheartened by some of her Russian friends back home, and even in Juneau, who are still supporting Putin's invasion. She said they, and some Americans she knows, blame NATO, the West or President Joe Biden for pressuring Russia and influencing Ukrainian politics.

"We're talking about influence, who's going to be influenced in Ukraine. I'm perfectly OK if it will be the U.S. Record this. I'm perfectly OK with this," Natalia said. "Europe? OK. I don't want to be back in Russia. I want to speak freely. If I don't like my president, nobody will send me to prison."

## Hydropower

Continued from page 12

"It's very easy for individual river systems to get lost in the message of climate change and the need for renewable energy," said Shannon Ames, executive director of the Low-Impact Hydropower Institute, which grades hydropower dams based on environmental criteria.

With persisting drought affecting hydropower production

west of the Mississippi River, the industry has a more direct path to expansion in eastern states.

In Pennsylvania, Rye consulted with the Low-Impact Hydropower Institute early in its process and is among a small number of companies seeking certification from the group.

To get certified, companies must show their structures meet protections for endangered spe-

cies, cultural and historic uses of rivers, passage for fish and recreational areas. The group says its environmental standards are often stricter than state or federal guidelines.

On a recently certified dam in West Virginia on the Ohio River, for example, dissolved oxygen levels — an important measure of river water quality — were meeting or exceeding state standards, according to a

five-year study. In some states, dams certified by the organization qualify for green-energy programs.

Rye said its dams in Pennsylvania will include structures to support fish migration, and that it is building a fishing pier since federal regulators require hydropower producers to support recreation on river systems. The retrofits are expected to be operational as early as 2025.

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# Farmers, ranchers, tribe and salmon all suffer for lack of water

By GILLIAN FLACCUS  
The Associated Press

PORTLAND (AP) — Farms that rely on irrigation from a depleted, federally managed lake on the California-Oregon border, along with a Native American tribe fighting to protect fragile salmon, will both receive extremely limited amounts of water this summer as a historic drought and record-low reservoir levels drag on in the U.S. West.

More than 1,000 farmers and ranchers who draw water from a 257-mile-long river that flows from the Upper Klamath Lake to the Pacific Ocean will have access to roughly one-seventh the amount they could get in a wetter year, a federal agency announced April 11. Downstream salmon will receive about half the water they'd get if the reservoir was full.

It's the third year in a row that severe drought has impacted farmers, fish and tribes in a region where there's not enough water to satisfy competing demands. Last year, no water at all flowed through the Klamath Reclamation Project's main irrigation canal, and thousands of downstream juvenile salmon died without reservoir releases to support the Klamath River's health.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, which manages the irrigation project, announced \$15 million in relief for affected farmers and \$5 million for Native American tribes as a result of its decision and warned farmers not to take water beyond what was ordered or risk further irrigation reductions and legal action.

The agency decides the allocations each year, taking into account court rulings that require certain lake levels to support two federally endangered fish species.

Across the American West, a 22-year megadrought deepened so much last year that the region is now in the driest spell in at



AP PHOTO/NATHAN HOWARD

Justin Grant watches water flow from his agricultural well in Klamath Falls, Oregon, in this 2021 file photo. Dozens of domestic wells have gone dry in an area near the Oregon-California border where the American West's worsening drought has taken a particularly dramatic toll.

least 1,200 years — a worst-case climate change scenario playing out in real time, a study found last month.

Inflow to the Upper Klamath Lake is at a record lows, water managers said, and water allocations could drop further if drought conditions worsen this summer.

"We wish we had better news today. Obviously, there are no winners in this critical year as all interests are suffering — fisheries, farmers tribes and waterfowl alike — but given the current hydrology that we have to work with, we did the best job we could," said Ernest Conant, the bureau's regional director.

Irrigators reacted with shock

and anger to the news and said they weren't sure they could survive another growing season without adequate water supplies. The amount of water available is less than 15% of what the farmers need, said Ben DuVal, president of the Klamath Water Users Association, who operates a farm in Tulelake, California.

"We have 170,000 acres that could be irrigated this year, and we're ready to get to work," he said. "On a single acre, we can produce over 50,000 pounds of potatoes, or 6,000 pounds of wheat. This year, most of that land will not produce any food because the government is denying

water for irrigation."

Klamath River water that is dammed in the Upper Klamath Lake is the linchpin of the nearly 200,000-acre Klamath Reclamation Project, a major agricultural powerhouse of more than 1,000 farms and ranches. Today, farmers there grow everything from mint to alfalfa to potatoes that go to In 'N Out Burger, Frito-Lay and Kettle Foods.

But the reservoir water is also source of conflict among competing demands, and amid historic drought in the carefully managed river basin there hasn't been enough water to go around in recent years. Before 2020, the last time water allocations reached such a boiling point in the Klamath Basin was in 2001, when the U.S. government sent federal marshals to the area during a drought year and farmers threatened to breach the head gates.

Under the law, the lake's water must be kept at a certain level to protect its sucker fish, a key species to the heritage of the Klamath Tribes in south-

ern Oregon. This year's water decision order irrigators to keep the lake's water above a certain level for sucker fish spawning in April and May and then at a different level for the remainder of the summer — but even at those levels, the lake will not meet federally mandated minimums for the spring months.

But federally threatened coho salmon that live in the lower Klamath River, below the reservoir, also need pulses of water from the lake to keep at bay a deadly parasite that thrives in warm and slow-moving water. The salmon are revered by the Yurok Tribe, California's second-largest Native American tribe.

One so-called "flushing flow" of water that's about half the normal amount — and half what farmers will get — will be released Friday also.

Yurok Vice Chairman Frankie Myers said the fact that salmon, sucker fish and waterfowl are competing for the region's water was a "direct sign of the ecological collapse brought by water withdrawals." He said the Yurok would never stop working to save the salmon.

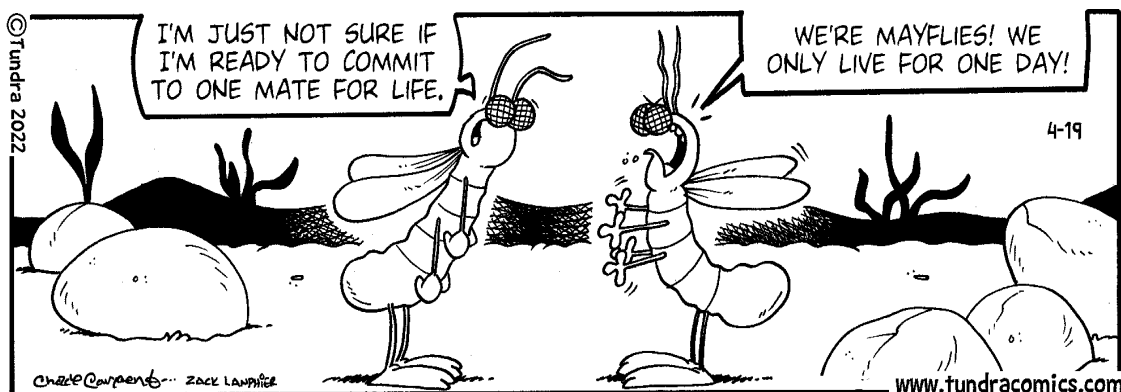
"Although we are gratified that the river is afforded minimal protections under this plan, it is no time for celebration. Salmon runs will continue to suffer under these conditions, and as climate change intensifies, such protections will become increasingly important," Myers said.

The slashed water allocations to the Klamath Reclamation Project also will impact two national wildlife refuges in the region that are replenished with irrigation runoff. The refuges host tens of thousands of migratory birds along the Pacific Flyway. Last year, environmentalists and farmers used pumps to combine water from two stagnant wetlands into one deeper one to prevent another outbreak of avian botulism like the one that killed 50,000 ducks in 2020.

Hundreds of domestic wells impacted by the increased groundwater pumping have also gone dry since late last summer.

## Tundra

by Chad Carpenter



### CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL NOTICE OF JOB OPENING Public Works Mechanic

The Wrangell Public Works Department will accept applications for the position of Mechanic through May 13, 2022, at 5 p.m. This is a permanent position with all City & Borough benefits. This position is part of the collective bargaining agreement.

The Mechanic is a journey-level position, responsible for performing a full range of equipment maintenance.

Responsibilities include performing complex work in the inspection, repair and maintenance of automotive equipment including tractors, trucks, power mowers, power sweepers, police cars and construction equipment, overhauling light engines, and diagnosing mechanical problems. Requires in-depth knowledge of the standard practices, techniques and tools used in repairing, maintaining and overhauling heavy and light equipment, gasoline, diesel, mechanical, and electric powered equipment, knowledge of the principles of internal combustion engines, and knowledge and understanding laws, codes and regulations pertaining to vehicle safety.

Applications and job descriptions may be obtained and returned to Wrangell City Hall, 205 Brueger Street, P.O. Box 531, Wrangell, AK 99929, or via email to rmarshall@wrangell.com.

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

Jeff Good, Borough Manager  
City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish April 20 & 27, May 4 & 11, 2022

# Police report

**Monday, April 11**

Agency assist: Harbor Department.  
Theft.  
Alarm.  
Stalking: Unfounded.

**Tuesday, April 12**

Civil issue.  
Theft.  
Agency assist: Fire Department.  
Traffic complaint: Juveniles riding 4-wheelers on Church Street; turning in front of oncoming vehicles.

Obscene phone calls.

**Wednesday, April 13**

Found property: Returned to owner.  
Parking complaint.  
Domestic violence order served.  
Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.

**Thursday, April 14**

Vandalism.  
Civil issue.  
Dog at large.

**Friday, April 15**

Vandalism.  
Parking complaint.  
Welfare check.  
Welfare check: Unattended death.

**Saturday, April 16**

Found property.  
Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.

**Sunday, April 17**

Dog complaint: Owner picked dog up.

**IN SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE STATE OF ALASKA  
FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT AT WRANGELL**

STIKINE RENTALS, LLC, )  
Plaintiff, )  
v. )  
THE ESTATE OF MATILDA PAUL, its beneficiaries, )  
heirs, devisees, legatees, assigns successors in interest; )  
and, anyone claiming right, title, estate, lien or interest )  
in that real property described herein, )  
Defendants. )  
Case No. 1WR-22-05CI

**SUMMONS AND NOTICE TO HEIRS**

This Summons and Notice is directed to the Estate of Matilda Paul and the beneficiaries, heirs, devisees, legatees, assigns and successors in interest and all other persons or parties unknown claiming a right, title, estate, lien or interest in the real estate described in the Verified Complaint to Quiet Title in this action, that the above-named plaintiff, Stikine Rentals, LLC, has commenced a lawsuit against you by filing a Verified Complaint to Quiet Title ("Complaint") in the Superior Court for the State of Alaska at Wrangell, to quiet legal title to real property located at Lot 10, Block 26, Wrangell, Alaska 99929, and which is more particularly described as:

Lot 10, Resubdivision of Lots 8, 9, 10, Blk. 26, USS 1815, according to Plat No. 80-7, Wrangell Recording District, First Judicial District, State of Alaska.

EXCEPTING THEREFROM: That portion conveyed to the City of Wrangell by Statutory Quitclaim Deeds recorded January 3, 1983, in Book 9 at Page 688 and in Book 9 at Page 691.

Pursuant to Civil Rule 4(e)(5), you must file an answer to the Complaint filed by the plaintiff in this civil action within thirty (30) days from the last date of publication of this Notice in the Wrangell Sentinel. This Notice shall be published once a week for four (4) consecutive weeks. Your answer to the Complaint is your response to the allegations set forth in plaintiff's Complaint, which is on file as a public document in the Superior Court at Wrangell in Case No. 1WR-22-05 CI and can be reviewed by you and copied upon request to the Clerk of Court. You must file a written answer to the allegations in plaintiff's Complaint in the Superior Court at Wrangell within the time provided hereinabove. If you fail to file an answer to plaintiff's Complaint, a default judgment can be entered against you for the relief of quiet title requested by plaintiff in its Complaint.

Should you elect to file an answer to plaintiff's Complaint, you are also required to serve a copy of your answer and all pleadings you file with the Superior Court at Wrangell, with plaintiff's attorney at the following address: H. Clay Keene, Keene & Currall, PPC, 540 Water Street, Suite 302, Ketchikan, Alaska 99901 or by email: courtdocs@keenecurrall.com. The object of plaintiff's Complaint is to determine the legal title, rights, and interest in the above-described real property, the adverse claims, if any, and the rights of all parties to that real property.

**Publish April 20 & 27, May 4 & 11, 2022**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

John Taylor and Sons Inc., DBA Summit Charters is making application for a new seasonal liquor license, per AS 04.11.180 located in Alaskan waters. Interested persons should submit written comments to their local governing body (Wrangell Borough Assembly), to the applicant, and to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board at 550 W. 7th Ave., Suite 1600, Anchorage, AK 99501, or email to alcohol.licensing@alaska.gov.

**Publish April 20 & 27, May 4, 2022**



The Southeast Alaska Power Agency (SEAPA) is recruiting for a Temporary Office Assistant for their Ketchikan office. The job consists of reception duties, file management and staff aide. The position will be for up to 6 months with a standard office schedule of Monday through Friday, with 8-hour workdays and a 1-hour lunch break. Flexible hours will be considered for the right candidate. This position does not qualify for additional benefits. Position requires a High School diploma or GED equivalent. Administrative or secretarial experience desired. General computer literacy and proficiency in Microsoft Office Outlook, Word and Excel preferred. A complete job description and the electronic application process are available online at: <https://seapahydro.applicationpro.com/> Salary range is \$20 - \$25/hour (DOE) SEAPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer

**Publish April 13 and 20, 2022**

**CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL, ALASKA  
PUBLIC NOTICE  
Public Hearing and Work Session**

There will be a Work Session before the April 26, 2022, Borough Assembly meeting beginning at 6 p.m. on the following item(s):

**AMI Metering Presentation.**

Following the Work Session, the Regular Assembly Meeting will begin at 7 p.m.

During the Regular Assembly Meeting, there will be public hearing on the following item(s):

- a. Resolution No. 03-22-1675 of the Assembly of the City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, creating the fee and rate schedule for the Wrangell Water Department and implementing a structure for increasing fees and rates. (Amended and postponed from the April 12, 2022, Assembly meeting.)
- b. Ordinance No. 1022 of the Assembly of the City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, amending certain sections in Chapter 15.16, Cemetery, and establishing a new process for fees and rates by removing the fees and rates from the Wrangell Municipal Code and adding them to a fee and rate schedule.
- c. Resolution No. 04-22-1688 of the Assembly of the City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, establishing the fee schedule for the Wrangell Cemeteries.
- d. Ordinance No. 1023 of the Assembly of the City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, amending certain Sections in Chapter 5.08, Revenue and Finance, in the Wrangell Municipal Code. (as amended.)

The public is encouraged to attend.

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

**Publish April 20, 2022**

**CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL  
NOTICE OF JOB OPENING  
Port & Harbor Maintenance**

The Wrangell Harbor Department will accept applications for the position of Port & Harbor Maintenance through April 29, 2022, at 5 p.m. This is a permanent position with all City & Borough benefits and is part of the IBEW collective bargaining agreement.

This position has considerable responsibility for operations at Port and Harbor Facilities. The post comes with autonomy, but also the duty to coordinate and cooperate with those outside the Harbor Department.

This position provides daily maintenance of all Port and Harbor Facilities and maintains a preventative maintenance program for all Port and Harbor Facilities. The work is performed under the supervision of the Port & Harbor Director but considerable leeway is granted for the exercise of independent judgment and initiative. The nature of the work requires that an employee maintain effective working relationships with other city departments and employees, State and Federal officials, business and community organizations and the public. Performs duties as part of the Department of Homeland Security Port Security Plan.

Requires knowledge of marine construction and maintenance operations. Requires basic carpenter skills. Requires boat handling skills. Requires basic computer skills. Requires the ability to weld steel and aluminum, or ability to learn those skills. Requires basic plumbing skills.

A High School Diploma or GED is required. Must have a valid Alaska driver's license, valid TWIC card, and basic First Aid/CPR certification or the ability to obtain all within six months.

Applications and job descriptions may be obtained and returned to Wrangell City Hall, 205 Brueger Street, P.O. Box 531, Wrangell, AK 99929, or via email to [rmarshall@wrangell.com](mailto:rmarshall@wrangell.com).

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

Jeff Good, Borough Manager  
City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

**Publish April 20 and 27, 2022**

**CLASSIFIED/  
LEGALS**

**HELP WANTED**

Roe Production Manager (Petersburg, AK). Responsible for maximizing product value of all species of Pacific Salmon Roe for quality roe products. Required bachelor's degree in Food Production/Marine Production System Science + 5 yrs as Roe Operations Manager or similar. Experience required: inspect roe quality; supervision of staff; grading Green Roe; monitoring/maintaining quality; review quality control testing in production areas + sodium nitrate testing; record keeping. HACCP Manager Training certification required. Application to [gdoner@TridentSeafoods.com](mailto:gdoner@TridentSeafoods.com).

**RADIO SHOW**

Tune in to KSTK at 7 p.m. Sunday for "Goodnight, Wrangell" bedtime stories with local host Cindy Martin. For a full schedule see [KSTK.org](http://KSTK.org).

**FREE**

Savin C3535 large office copier/printer. Includes years of black and color ink toner cartridges that won't dry out. Has some quirks, but it's free. Call Amber at 907-874-2301 or stop by the Sentinel to take a look.

**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).



**Digital Literacy Specialist/  
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**Deadline to apply:**  
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[humanresourcerequests@ccthita-nsn.gov](mailto:humanresourcerequests@ccthita-nsn.gov) or call 907.463.7708.

# Researchers listen for orcas in Puget Sound to help their survival

By LYNDA V. MAPES  
The Seattle Times

ABOARD THE SOUND-GUARDIAN, Puget Sound (AP) — Over the side it goes with a splash: three ears tuned for the sounds of orcas, and the noise that threatens their survival.

In the deep, this trio of hydrophones rests on the sea bottom, recording the sounds of Washington's Puget Sound, including endangered southern resident orcas. The listening array, developed and deployed in March by SMRU Consulting, is attached to a buoy that marks its location, just about a mile offshore, north of Carkeek Park.

The equipment will be in place for three months, in a proof-of-concept experiment to determine if the hydrophones and software can readily pick up the sounds of orcas, record underwater noise and share the data through a cellular transmitter, The Seattle Times reported.

If it all works, listening arrays like this can supplement orca sightings by human observers reported on existing networks, already being used by the Washington

State Ferries to steer clear of the killer whales. Ultimately, the hope is to deploy multiple arrays in Puget Sound to alert ships to the presence of orcas, so they may voluntarily slow their engines to cut their noise, or change course.

A slower ship and more distant ship is a quieter ship — and that matters to orcas.

With now only 74 orcas in the J, K and L pods, the southern residents are among the rarest whales in the world. There are at least three threats to their survival: lack of Chinook salmon, their favorite food; pollution; and noise that makes it harder for them to hunt.

Orcas hunt by echolocation — sophisticated biosonar by which they locate, chase and nail their prey. But the noise of ships, ferries and other underwater racket masks the sounds they need to hear to hunt.

The Port of Vancouver in British Columbia already has a program in place to help quiet the waters it shares with whales. The port in 2017 launched its ECHO program, which includes a voluntary slowdown for ships in Haro Strait and Boundary Pass.

In 2021, the cumulative voluntary participation rate

by the marine transportation industry was 90% on transits in Haro Strait and Boundary Pass, reducing underwater noise intensity by 50%, according to ECHO program reports by the Port of Vancouver and Vancouver Fraser Port Authority.

A sister program called Quiet Sound, a project of Washington Maritime Blue, a Seattle nonprofit, is in the works.

The Quiet Sound program is in its initial stages and includes several efforts, from technology development to eventually implementing a slowdown zone in central Puget Sound, said Rachel Aronson, the program director. Quiet Sound launched in January with \$600,000 from state and federal agencies, ports and foundations.

The program grew out of a recommendation from the orca task force empaneled by Gov. Jay Inslee in 2018.

A first step toward a vessel slowdown initiative is a field trial for the hydrophones to help determine when orcas are in the area. So on a recent morning, Jason Wood, managing director at SMRU, was out on the SoundGuardian, King County's environmental research vessel, to check

on the equipment.

Wood worked with Bob Kruger and other crew members to haul the device aboard, to replace its batteries and check it over.

Then Kruger helped lower the equipment, weighing about a ton, back into the water with an overhead crane, setting it gently on the bottom, to keep right on listening. No southern residents have been picked up on the device yet.

Efforts to quiet the waters come as the Salish Sea is poised to see more vessel traffic.

Issues with the global supply chain and cargo congestion at ports recently have caused a big increase in the number of container ships and bulk carriers sitting at anchor, including in the Salish Sea.

In addition, 22 new or expanding terminal and refinery projects have been proposed, permitted or recently completed that will increase vessel traffic, according to a 2021 report by Lovel Pratt, marine protection and policy director for Friends of the San Juans, an environmental nonprofit.

Twelve of the 22 projects would add at least 2,634

annual vessel transits to and from Salish Sea ports in British Columbia, in prime summer foraging habitat of the southern resident killer whales.

In all, 46% of the projected increase in vessel traffic comes from the Trans Mountain oil pipeline expansion, which will draw more tanker traffic to the area, and the Port of Vancouver's proposed Roberts Bank Terminal 2, a new container shipping terminal proposed for the Fraser River Delta — where orcas hunt and a crucial Chinook run returns.

If all of the proposed, permitted and recently constructed projects in British Columbia are developed, it would result in at least a 25% increase in large, oceangoing commercial vessel traffic, compared with 2020 transits, according to the analysis.

Canada's Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion alone will add 696 annual tug escort transits between the pipeline terminus in Burnaby, B.C., and the entrance of the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

With human impacts only continuing to increase, noise is one problem that can be immediately addressed, Wood noted. It takes many years to rebuild salmon runs. PCBs were banned in 1979 but are still bleeding into the environment.

But slowing a vessel can cut the noise it makes right away. And with enough participants, the effect can make a difference in the orcas' ability to feed.

"It's pretty amazing," Wood said of the success so far of the ECHO program. "That noise reduction converts to foraging time the orcas get back."

## NOTICE OF SPECIAL PRIMARY ELECTION

Saturday, June 11, 2022

### Candidate Race on Ballot

United States Representative

On Saturday, June 11, 2022 there will be a special primary election to fill the vacancy in the office of United States Representative. This election will be conducted by mail. There will be no polling places open for regular in-person voting on election day. The deadline to register to vote or update your voter registration is May 12th.

Ballots will be automatically mailed to qualified registered voters beginning April 27th. You will vote by selecting one candidate. You must sign your ballot envelope, provide an identifier and a witness signature, and return or mail your ballot by June 11th. If you will not be at your current mailing address or do not receive a ballot, you can contact the Division of Elections.

The Division of Elections' regional offices will offer early and absentee in-person voting beginning May 27th. They will be open on weekdays between 8AM and 5PM, on weekends with limited hours, and on election day between 7AM and 8PM. For the full schedule and a list of additional early and absentee in-person voting locations throughout the state, visit the Division's website at [AKVoteEarly.alaska.gov](http://AKVoteEarly.alaska.gov).

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

<u>Region I Office</u>	<u>Region II Office</u>	<u>Region III Office</u>	<u>Region IV Office</u>	<u>Region V Office</u>
Juneau	Anchorage	Fairbanks	Nome	Mat-Su
(907) 465-3021	(907) 522-8683	(907) 451-2835	(907) 443-8683	(907) 373-8952
1-866-948-8683	1-866-958-8683	1-866-959-8683	1-866-953-8683	1-844-428-8952

Language Assistance 1-866-954-8683 Toll Free TTY 1-888-622-3020

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

## Goldbelt may work with Juneau on new ski area gondola

JUNEAU (AP) — Juneau has purchased a gondola in Austria for the city-owned ski area, but questions remain about long-term plans. Officials have expressed interest in working with the Goldbelt Native corporation on the project.

City officials recently signed a purchase agreement to buy the gondola system for \$1.33 million.

Deputy City Manager Robert Barr said the city is seeking bids from transport companies to bring the gondola to Juneau. Eaglecrest Ski Area has been looking for ways to expand summer operations and create opportunities for a more sustainable year-round model.

City leaders last week authorized City Manager Rorie Watt to negotiate an agreement with Goldbelt, which operates a tram near downtown and owns land near Eaglecrest.

Watt said Goldbelt has expressed interest in providing funding for up to \$10 million for the installation of the gondola and "other related improvements."

"The rough proposal is that Goldbelt would provide funding in exchange for a contractual agreement to receive a percentage of summer ridership on the gondola," Watt wrote.