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Legislature falls short in override of governor's school funding veto

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

Alaska lawmakers fell one vote short Monday to override the governor's veto of a comprehensive school funding bill, which included a permanent increase in the state funding formula for K-12 education and which could have provided an additional \$440,000 for the Wrangell

school district.

The additional funds would have covered about two-thirds of the deficit in the district's draft budget, reducing the amount of money it will need to pull out of reserves for the 2024-2025 school year.

The vote in a joint session of the House and Senate was 39-20. A two-thirds majority of

40 votes of the 60 legislators was required for an override.

All 20 of the votes to uphold the governor's actions came from Republicans. A dozen Republicans voted with Democrats and independents in the failed attempt.

Even if lawmakers had succeeded in overriding the veto, the governor still could have

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Federal grant provides additional \$2.5 million for water treatment plant

By SENTINEL STAFF

The federal appropriations bill signed into law earlier this month includes a \$2.5 million grant for Wrangell's new water treatment plant, which is under construction and scheduled for completion in June 2025.

The latest federal grant, added to the budget bill by Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski, will reduce the amount of borrowed money the borough will need to repay, Interim Borough Manager Mason Villarma confirmed Friday, March 15.

President Joe Biden signed the appropriations bill on March 9, after the measure won approval by wide margins in the House and Senate.

With the latest federal money, Wrangell has amassed close to \$16 million in state and federal grants for the \$23 million project, leaving about \$6.5 million in loans it will need to repay.

Due to its success in lining up federal and state money for the project, the borough's water fund contribution is at just \$119,000 — the smallest portion of the total funding. The borough has been working more than seven years to put together financing for the project.

The long-term loans will be repaid from water service revenues.

As the ranking Republican on the Interior-Environment Appropriations Subcommittee, Murkowski was able to add multiple Alaska projects to the budget bill, including \$4.1 million for improvements at Petersburg's Scow Bay Harbor, \$1.5 million for failing sewer mains in Ketchikan, \$2 million for water and sewer upgrades in Haines, and \$3 million to engineer and redesign the water system in Craig.

Concrete foundation work on Wrangell's new water plant started in February. The plant will have the capacity to produce up to three times as much clean water per day as the existing treatment plant.

The updated plant will include a new flotation system that uses air bubbles to remove impurities from the water fed into the plant from the community's two reservoirs.

A \$5 million state grant to strengthen the earthen dams at Wrangell's water reservoirs is pending legislative action.

Gov. Mike Dunleavy requested the funding in the budget he submitted to lawmakers at the start of the legislative session in January, but lawmakers are working on the state operating budget first and will get to the public works budget next.

The borough would use the \$5 million to "reinforce both these dams with buttresses," likely concrete, Villarma said when the governor announced the budget request.

A total rebuild of the dams would cost tens of millions of dollars.

Wrangell will lose both school principals this year

By MARK C. ROBINSON
Sentinel reporter

Ann Hilburn is leaving her job as elementary school principal in Wrangell at the end of the school year when she will move to Tok in Alaska's Interior to serve as special education director.

This was Hilburn's second year as principal after serving a year as special education teacher at the high school and middle school.

The new job with the Alaska Gateway School District in Tok "will provide the opportunity to combine what I enjoy most, serving in special education, with the administrative piece of my educational tenure," she said in an email.

The Wrangell district started advertising for Hilburn's replacement last

week.

The district is also looking for a new middle and high school principal to replace Jackie Hanson, who is leaving the same as Hilburn at the end of the school year.

Hanson is taking the job as superintendent for the Craig City School District. Most of her family lives in Craig.

Hanson was the third principal for the middle and high schools in the past three years; each served just one school year.

In confirming her departure from Wrangell, Hilburn said she would miss the students. "Your smiles warm my heart even on the coldest days. I have seen you grow and learn in every area, not just reading and math. I am proud to have been your principal."

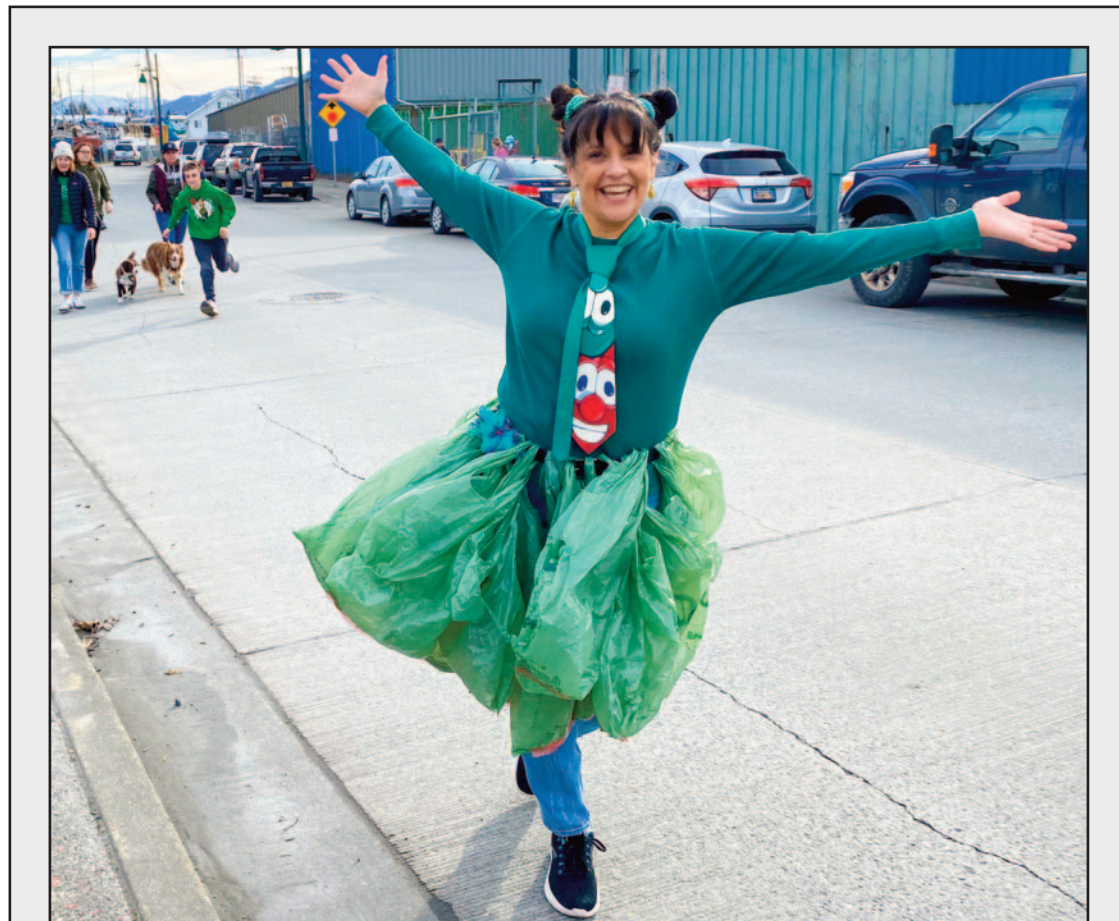


PHOTO BY BECCA CLARK / WRANGELL SENTINEL

Runners have fun raising funds

Heidi Armstrong readies herself at the start of the Shamrock Shuffle 5K on Saturday, March 16. She was among the more than 70 walkers and runners who turned out for the annual fundraiser for the Sig and Helen Decker Memorial Scholarship Fund. This year's event raised more than \$2,200.

WCA hires domestic violence prevention specialist

By BECCA CLARK
Sentinel reporter

Kevin Gadsey, hired last month by the Wrangell Cooperative Association to work on domestic violence prevention, said the problem is more traumatic in smaller communities like Wrangell, where survivors often must leave town for support and treatment.

Alaska has some of the highest domestic violence rates in the country, especially among Native communities.

While more support and resources for survivors of domestic violence are needed, a key piece of the equation is prevention, Gadsey noted. The more work that can be done to prevent domestic violence and improve the community culture, he said, the less work will be needed to help people whose lives have been upended by domestic violence.

In 2022, WCA received a \$1 million federal

grant toward domestic violence and sexual abuse prevention and advocacy. The Ketchikan nonprofit Women in Safe Homes helped WCA secure the grant. It has taken WCA a while to make a hire.

Once Gadsey gets settled in his position and determines what Wrangell's needs are, WCA is hoping to hire another specialist, said Esther Aaltséen Reese, WCA tribal administrator.

Gadsey said that while he is still working to figure out exactly what resources Wrangell needs, his work will be directed toward change at a grassroots level. He hopes to help introduce educational programs in schools and community events, provide advocacy for survivors at an individual level and work on policies and systemic change.

WCA and Gadsey will model programs and support after what other tribes around the

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Seafood consumption survey could lead to higher water quality standards

By **BECCA CLARK**
Sentinel reporter

Clean water advocates believe a seafood consumption survey among Wrangell residents might help in their push for higher water quality standards.

Together, the Wrangell Cooperative Association and the Southeast Alaska Indigenous Transboundary Commission will conduct a survey in Wrangell to determine the

quantity and types of seafood community members consume.

The goal of the survey is to update the region's outdated fish consumption rate, said Esther Aaltséen Reese, WCA tribal administrator. The metric is used by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the state to help determine water quality standards, as seafood is one of the ways people are exposed to contami-

nated water.

Currently, the state of Alaska uses an old, federally determined fish consumption rate of 6.5 grams per person per day, equal to roughly one bite of fish, in developing its water quality standards. This number came from a national survey in the 1980s — a survey that did not include Alaska or Pacific Islands, said Guy Archibald, SEITC executive director.

Archibald said there have been efforts to get Alaska to change its fish consumption rate for 30 years. He also mentioned that because the state is so large, there might need to be regional values and water quality standards, as fish consumption likely varies throughout the state.

The upcoming survey will ask Wrangell residents how much seafood they consume. Seafood includes everything that comes from the water: fish, shellfish, mollusks, herring eggs and beach greens.

WCA and SEITC are hoping to conduct the survey starting in May and continue it throughout the year. The demographics of those surveyed will reflect the age and other characteristics of the community, Archibald said. While participation in the survey is voluntary, participants will be offered a \$50 gift card toward groceries or fuel upon completion.

Seafood consumption surveys have been conducted in Kodiak and Cook Inlet communities, but this survey will be the first in Southeast Alaska.

"Historically, tribes have been one of the few entities to be able to make changes with water quality," Reese said, noting that tribes in Washington, Oregon and Idaho recently succeeded in updating their seafood consumption rates using similar surveys.

The survey comes at a time when concerns over water quality in Southeast Alaska are growing. Reese noted that

Ketchikan has had major concerns recently — residents have observed changes in seaweed growth and fish populations and worry that it's due to cruise ship traffic.

Concerns have also been growing over mining operations in the headwaters of the Stikine in British Columbia. Reese said part of WCA's work with SEITC is to raise awareness. "Mining on the Stikine is extremely troubling," Reese said.

Archibald said the higher the water quality standards in Southeast, the higher the water quality criteria British Columbia must meet at the border. SEITC placed the Stikine as one of America's top 10 most endangered rivers in 2019.

In February, SEITC filed a 112-page brief with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, arguing that Canadian mining operations are threatening their right to a healthy environment and that Canada has failed to adequately consult tribes of the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian nations.

Reese noted that the border between British Columbia is a colonial border — a border never existed when only tribes inhabited the land. She wants the tribes to be included in permitting reviews of the mines.

Red Chris, a large gold and copper mine located in the headwaters of the Stikine, is of special concern. The mine is owned in part by Imperial Metals, a company that also owned Mount Polley, a mine that had a tailings dam failure in 2014, resulting in hazardous tailings and materials polluting surrounding bodies of water. The Red Chris mine is bigger than Mount Polley.

If Red Chris fails, Reese said it would have catastrophic consequences for Wrangell and other communities near the Stikine. The mine is about 130 miles northeast of Wrangell.

According to Salmon Beyond Borders, an Alaska-based

campaign that works to defend transboundary salmon rivers, there are over a dozen British Columbia gold-copper mines proposed or in development in the Stikine-Iskut watershed.

The Red Chris mine plans to extend mining operations until 2057 by expanding and shifting mining practices.

Archibald also mentioned that in addition to higher water quality standards for British Columbia to meet, the seafood surveys could help bring about changes to regulations on cruise ship waste, Alaska mines and contaminated site cleanup regulations.

But Archibald noted that all SEITC and WCA can do is provide data, and they have no control over whether the state will act. Reese was optimistic that the results of the survey might help apply pressure to get water quality standards updated.

"I want to encourage people to eat more wild fish — it's healthier, it's higher quality and it's available. I don't want to insinuate that there's anything wrong with the fish. I want to ensure it stays this way by having adequate water criteria," Archibald said.

The survey is funded by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs with a grant of about \$130,000, a budget that Archibald said has been difficult to stay within, as surveys like this typically take \$500,000 to pull off.

Archibald noted that ideally this survey would have started a year ago, but that it was delayed due to new rules requiring approval from the EPA and an institutional review board. Previously, surveys have only needed approval from the EPA.

Wrangell is a guinea pig in Southeast Alaska for surveys like this, especially with new regulations making the process more difficult. But Reese noted that WCA is excited about paving the way for other tribes and sharing any of the experience and knowledge they gain.

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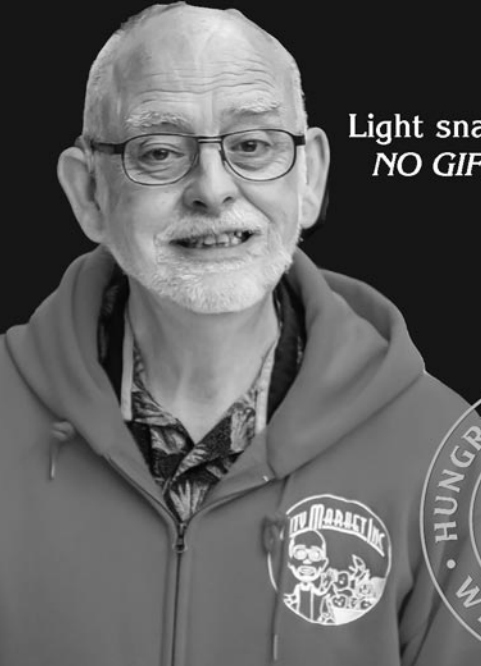
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Assembly approves sale of six lots as part of hospital property development

By **BECCA CLARK**
Sentinel reporter

The borough assembly unanimously agreed March 12 to move forward with the sale of six borough-owned lots behind the former hospital property.

The six lots will be appraised and sold at market value to Wayne Johnson, a Georgia-based real estate developer. Johnson is planning to build a 48-unit, condo-style housing development with covered parking on the former hospital property and six adjacent lots.

The sales of the former hospital property and six adjacent lots are conditional upon each other, as Johnson has said he needs all the parcels for his development, which he has estimated at \$13.5 million to \$16 million to tear down the hospital building and construct the new housing.

The borough economic development board has recommended that the assembly approve the hospital property sale; the planning and zoning commission added its endorsement on

March 14.

With assembly approval for selling the six adjacent lots, the borough will order appraisals of the property to determine the sales prices, with a public hearing and final assembly action scheduled for April 9.

The sale of the hospital property also is scheduled to come before the assembly for approval April 9.

Johnson has offered the borough \$200,000 for the hospital property, which is below its appraised value of \$830,000 and below the borough's asking price of \$470,000. Municipal code, however, allows the borough to sell property at less than appraised value in the interest of economic development, with the approval of the planning and zoning commission, economic development board and borough assembly.

If all the sales are approved, Johnson is hoping to close before May 30, with demolition later this year and construction in 2025 and 2026.

FROM THE PUBLISHER

It's always been free, now it's free to see

BY LARRY PERSILY
Publisher

The Sentinel has never charged for listings in the community calendar, which has been displayed on Page 2 for years. Easy enough for print subscribers to open the paper and see what's happening in town, whether public meetings, fundraisers, youth activities, multiple Parks and Recreation activities, movies and more.

But it did not dawn on me until last week that anyone wanting to read the calendar online needed a subscription. My apologies for never thinking about that. It's another reminder that my 72-year-old head still thinks of newspapers in the era of printing presses and smudgy ink that comes off on your hands as you turn the pages.

I can't do anything about the ink, but I can give everyone a cleaner option. It's way past the time that I accept the world has moved increasingly online, even if I resist anything more modern than a microwave, Velcro and CDs.

Therefore, as of last week, the community calendar is available free to anyone who goes to wrangellsentinel.com. No subscription required. Click on About Town at the top, then click on the community calendar — and welcome to a weekly list of things to do in town.

The staff works hard to make the calendar as complete as possible. We check the bulletin boards around town and read the handbills posted there. We pay attention to events announced on the Wrangell Community Group Facebook page and check our email constantly for requests for a spot in the calendar.

But despite all that, we need your help. We can't be everywhere and can't read everything, and it's easy to miss a Facebook posting among the many messages put up on the site every day.

When you click to post your community event on Facebook, copy it and email it to us.

When you want to publicize your fundraiser, let us know.

If you want to invite people to your public gathering, open house, children's activity or sports event, send us an email at wrgsent@gmail.com.

The calendar is free to nonprofit organizations, community groups, churches, individuals — most anything and everything except commercial enterprises.

Send us the time, date and location of your event; whether there is a fee; maybe a sentence describing the activity; any age limit for participants; and a phone number or email people can contact if they want more information.

Just remember the Sentinel comes out once a week, on Wednesdays, and we need your information by the end of the day Friday before the next week's paper. It's OK to send in your listing early so that we can give readers as much advance notice of your event as possible.

We'll edit the listing to fit — space can be tight some weeks, particularly around holidays, when the town is busy with a lot of activities. But we promise not to mess it up with our editing.

Who knows, this could prompt me to make more changes to join the 21st century. Though I have no plans to give up my fountain pens.

EDITORIAL

Governor spaces out on state responsibility

Gov. Mike Dunleavy sank to a new low last week when he vetoed a bipartisan, long-needed comprehensive education funding package that passed the House and Senate by a combined 56-3 vote.

Yet he reached for new heights in explaining his decision to deny school districts their first meaningful increase in state funding since 2017.

More specifically, he boarded the Starship Enterprise, which is as much fantasy as his theories for how to improve educational outcomes for all Alaska children.

At a March 15 press conference to explain his veto, Dunleavy called the state's per-pupil formula that funds K-12 schools the "dilithium crystals of education." The crystals don't exist in the real world, only in "Star Trek" movies and TV, where they provide the power for warp drives that propel the ship across the galaxies.

Is the governor trying to say that advocates of school funding are delusional, much like Trekkies who dress in costume for conventions and can recite the lines of every episode?

Or is he belittling the importance of an increase in the funding formula, comparing it to a super fuel that does not exist?

Or is he just wandering the galaxies of excuses in an attempt to sound witty?

None of the options are good. Regardless of his admirable recall of the Starship's intergalactic fuel, the governor has been absent from command throughout his time as the state's top elected leader.

He says the best way to avoid the dangerous asteroid belt of poor student test scores is to make it easier for new charter schools to bypass their local school boards and beam directly to a Dunleavy-appointed state Board of Education for approval.

He believes that paying one-time bonuses to K-12 teachers will teleport more staff into Alaska's schools and keep them on the job longer than providing enough funding for school districts to pay competitive wages, provide diverse classes for students and fix leaky roofs.

He seems to think the teachers union is as threatening to schools as the Klingons are to Capt. Kirk and his crew.

Maybe Dunleavy thinks of himself as Kirk, leading the state to boldly go where no man has gone before. In this case, no governor has ever so boldly held schools and students as political hostages in a fight with legislators, teachers and school administrators.

At his news conference the day after he vetoed the education funding bill, Dunleavy said it is time for the Legislature to move on from education and address other topics.

Easy for him to say. Hard for schools to accept. Maybe if they had some dilithium crystals, they could sell them to pay the bills.

Wrangell Sentinel

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Governor vetoed school funding bill despite wide support

On March 14, Gov. Mike Dunleavy vetoed Senate Bill 140, which would have provided the largest increase in the base student allocation state funding formula for public schools since its inception. This legislation aimed to boost the base rate by \$680 per student, about an 11% increase, a critical measure to uphold the state's constitutional duty to provide public education to all children in Alaska.

Even though the BSA has only seen a 4.92% increase since 2012, while the consumer price index has risen more than 25%, indicating a 21% decrease in purchasing power for school districts statewide, the governor still chose to veto SB 140.

Over the past nine months, lawmakers have been inundated with calls from communities and school districts across the state for a substantial increase to the BSA. Local government bodies in each community have signed resolutions or letters in support of this crucial

funding boost. As the District 1 state representative, I have recently heard through formal resolutions and/or letters from government bodies representing each community that I represent, strongly supporting increasing the BSA.

Senate Bill 140 received a lot of support in the state House and Senate due to overwhelming demand. It passed with a large majority, but Dunleavy still vetoed the bill. His decision was influenced by his desire for changes in the charter school system, which include expanding the number of charter schools in Alaska, as well as implementing a three-year teacher bonus program at a significant cost.

The governor's stance on charter schools and local control has caused disagreement with many legislators, including myself (I previously led a charter school). While supporting public charter schools, many legislators believe in the importance of local control in the establishment of such schools. The governor's preference for state authority over local decision-making in charter school matters contradicts traditional Republican principles of favor-

ing local government.

The Legislature was scheduled to meet in a joint session on Monday, March 18, to consider overriding the governor's veto of SB 140. Regardless of how that turns out, constituents are encouraged to reach out to their representatives to share their thoughts on school funding. I can be reached at 907-465-3824; rep.dan.ortiz@akleg.gov.

- Rep. Dan Ortiz

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Wrangell has never been short of opinions but we seem to be short of letters to the editor



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Sentinel Staff:

Publisher Larry Persily
Office Manager... Amber Armstrong-Hillberry
Reporter Mark C. Robinson
Reporter Becca Clark
Production Ola Richards

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Borough assembly narrows down candidates for manager

BY BECCA CLARK
Sentinel reporter

The borough assembly narrowed down the field of seven applicants for the borough manager job; a special meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, March 19, to interview the three finalists.

The finalists include current interim borough manager and finance director Mason Villarma and two Lower 48 candidates with city manager experience: Jack Harper of Texas and Alan Lanning of Colorado. Lanning has served as city manager in Cordova and interim city manager in Bethel.

The applicants were to be interviewed over Zoom in an executive session at the March 19 special meeting of the assem-

bly. All three interviews will be identical, and the assembly was hoping to conduct them all in one meeting, said Mayor Patty Gilbert.

The assembly has been trying to hire a new borough manager since last fall, when Jeff Good stepped down and Villarma took over as interim manager. But the effort was put on hold after the 11-Mile landslide in late November.

The assembly re-advertised the job in February after a weak first round of applicants.

Assembly members will compile questions and establish the interview process. After the interviews, the assembly will either pick one candidate to negotiate a contract with or select multiple

candidates for another interview, said Gilbert.

Though the interviews will be closed to the public, any assembly hiring decision would need to be taken during an open meeting.

Villarma has served as interim manager since November. He is also the borough finance director, a position he has held since September 2021. Prior to his work in Wrangell, Villarma worked as an audit and assurance associate at KPMG in Seattle. He has a bachelor of business administration degree from Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington.

Harper has nearly 31 years of municipal experience, with 22 years as city manager or assistant city manager. He has

served as city manager of Fulshear, Stamford and Hillsboro, Texas, and assistant city manager of Waco, Texas. Harper also worked as a liaison officer for the U.S. Forest Service. He has a master of public administration from Texas Tech University.

Lanning has over 20 years of experience, and served as city manager of Minturn, Steamboat Springs and Central City in Colorado; Brookings, South Dakota; and Goodland, Kansas. In Alaska, he served as city manager in Cordova 2016-2019 and as interim city manager of Bethel for a few months last year. Lanning has a master of public administration from the University of South Dakota.

Trident strikes deals to sell Ketchikan and Petersburg plants

BY SENTINEL STAFF

Trident Seafoods has announced the sale of its Ketchikan processing facilities to Silver Bay Seafoods, and the sale of its Petersburg operation to E.C. Phillips & Son.

Trident has not announced buyers for two other Alaska plants it has put on the market in Kodiak, the company's largest operation in the state, and False Pass, in the Aleutian Islands.

Seattle-based Trident is scaling back its Alaska operations amid weak seafood markets, low prices and changing consumer buying habits. The company has called it "a comprehensive, strategic restructuring initiative."

The company is keeping its Wrangell plant, with plans to put to work at least 200 people this summer to process, freeze and ship chum and pink salmon.

Trident said last week it expects the sale of its Ketchikan and Petersburg plants to close in April.

The Ketchikan facility is

"dedicated entirely to processing salmon," Trident said. That includes canned, frozen and fresh.

"We look forward to operating the Ketchikan facility, along with our other Southeast facilities in Sitka and Craig, for the 2024 salmon season," Cora Campbell, president of Silver Bay Seafoods, said in a prepared statement issued by Trident on March 13.

Silver Bay Seafoods started up in 2007 as a salmon processing facility in Sitka and now operates six processing plants in Alaska (Sitka, Craig, Valdez, Kodiak and Bristol Bay) and three on the U.S. West Coast. The company is owned by 600 fishermen who sell their catch to Silver Bay, the statement said.

Silver Bay is one of the largest processors of whitefish, salmon, herring and squid in the state, according to a news report by Ketchikan radio station KRBD.

The company's business model caters largely to the seine fleet, prompting other

gear groups in Ketchikan to wonder about their future role, the radio station reported.

Cody Cowan, a Ketchikan-based troller, said he fished for Trident until the company largely stopped buying troll-caught fish. Now, he said, there is only one buyer for his catch in Ketchikan. He hopes Silver Bay might change that.

Two days after announcing the pending sale of its Ketchikan operation, Trident reported it has reached a deal to sell its Petersburg plant to E.C. Phillips & Son. The sale includes the processing plant, bunkhouse, galley and two housing units.

E.C. Phillips & Son has year-round seafood processing operations, according to the statement issued by the two companies. "This means that the Petersburg plant could enjoy a longer season than it did under Trident's banner," Jeff Welbourn, Trident's senior vice president of Alaska operations, said in the announcement.

Established in 1926 by Ed-

ward Phillips, E. C. Phillips & Son operates out of Ketchikan and Craig.

All of the companies in-

involved in the deals have declined further comment until the sales close.



PHOTO COURTESY KEVIN GADSEY

Kevin Gadsey, shown here at a Chicago Cubs game in 2017, has been hired to work on domestic violence prevention programs for the Wrangell Cooperative Association.

New staffer

Continued from page 1

country have found to be successful.

Gadsey comes to Wrangell with extensive experience in advocacy, nonprofits and community building. He served Wrangell as an independent living specialist and disability advocate from 2005 to 2011 with Southeast Alaska Independent Living. He also served as the executive director of Ketchikan Wellness Coalition, where he worked on substance abuse prevention, mental health awareness for women and helped implement grant funding for the community.

Gadsey received his master of arts in public advocacy and (social) activism in 2014 from the National University of Ireland, Galway.

The work that Gadsey enjoys most is bringing people together and figuring out how to put people in volunteer roles that are the most fun and rewarding for them as individuals.

Part of the key to prevention, Gadsey said, is keeping things fun. He wants to facilitate community events to bring all ages together because a positive community culture can provide healing for those who have faced challenges of domestic violence.

Reese said she wants to make it clear that the resources and support provided by WCA and the new domestic violence prevention specialist are for everyone in the community, not just tribal members.

Gadsey said he will get to Wrangell in April and is excited to begin working with people

April is both Sexual Assault Awareness Month and National Child Abuse Prevention Month, and May 5 is National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. Gadsey and WCA are hoping to put on community events during that time.

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Parks and Rec converts little used racquetball court to weights and exercise area

By MARK C. ROBINSON
Sentinel reporter

The weights and exercise areas at the swimming pool and community recreation facility have expanded, with more equipment stationed in the converted racquetball court.

Parks and Recreation Director Lucy Robinson said the facility has seen an increase in use of weight-lifting and cardio equipment like treadmills and stationary bikes over the past several years, so they wanted to expand to satisfy the demand and encourage people to keep coming back.

"We've hustled our little tails off to make sure that we are getting up to speed with updated equipment so that people want to come in here and move their bod-

ies," she said. "And it has been amazing."

The expansion plan was brought to the Parks and Recreation advisory board, and the department also reached out to the community through an online survey. "We've had support since early last year, but we wanted to take a look and see what the public said," Robinson explained. "I do believe it was 75% (out of 50 responders) who wanted the change."

She said the expansion provides a larger space to accommodate workouts. "It allows for people to do specific movements without getting in each other's way."

Part of the expansion involved repurposing the racquetball court, where people would play racquetball or wallyball (known in some places as rebound volley-



PHOTO BY MARK C. ROBINSON / WRANGELL SENTINEL

Parks and Recreation staff moved some cardio exercise equipment to poolside, as part of their work to convert the racquetball court area to accommodate more exercise gear and weights.

ball), in which players could hit the ball off of the walls.

But those types of sports have been decreasing in popularity. "I liked wallyball," Robinson said. "Wrangell used to (have) avid wallyball players. There used to be things going on all the time, a lot of tournaments and such, and you just don't see

that draw much anymore."

The Parks and Recreation director pointed out that the court, which measures 1,000 square feet, sat unused most of the time. "So for me, I just couldn't justify trying to squeeze people into a small space (like the original weight room) ... when really you could be using this space and put equipment in it so it draws people into it."

Another motivator behind the change was recreation coordinator Devyn Johnson's certifications from the National Academy of Sports Medicine in senior fitness and group fitness activities for youth. "She worked hard to get her certifications," Robinson said. "So, we were really driving and focusing on strength training because strength training, they're finding, is such a crucial piece to health and wellness."

Parks and Recreation staff will continue to phase out some of the machines that aren't as multi-functional in use, and they've already moved some of the older cardio machines into the pool area.

"We typically try not to put anything new ... in there," Robinson said. "But people do like to spend time out there on deck. It's warm, it's about 86 degrees, and you've got probably a 70% to 80% humidity in there, so we've got some go-getters that go out there and run."

Mike Hoyt new IEA director at school district

By MARK C. ROBINSON
Sentinel reporter

In addition to his duties as activities director, Mike Hoyt will now also serve as the new Indian Education Act director for the school district after the resignation of DaNika Smalley on Feb. 29.

Schools Superintendent Bill Burr confirmed that Hoyt started on March 11.

Working in cultural education has been Hoyt's focus since 2011. He worked as a teacher in Nome for five years, and before that worked at culture camps operated by Goldbelt and Sealaska Heritage Institute in Juneau.

"He's got background in writing grants," Burr said. "And he's been involved in the cultural community."

Hoyt moved to Wrangell last summer and has been a frequent visitor to the town throughout his life, as both sides of his family have roots here. Since his arrival, he's been looking to expand his work with the district, in addition to his part-time job as activities director which began last September.

He wants to bring out more of the cultural aspects, history and traditions specific to this area.

Some of Hoyt's short-term goals include providing more tutoring for Native students and finding more opportunities to work with students among the different grade levels.

He also wants to work with teachers to incorporate Native culture into the classroom. "There's a lot of interest, but teachers aren't always sure how to do that."

Among his long-term goals, Hoyt wants to build up community connections, help to make people feel comfortable in the schools, and assist teachers so they know who to contact when they have questions. He wants to see higher grades and attendance levels.

Having traveled all over the state, Hoyt would like to pass on the knowledge of what he's learned in other school settings to create a better learning environment with faculty and students.

"Culture has been my passion," he said. "So, the opportunity to (share) that in Wrangell is exciting to me."

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Help Wrangell's economy GROW. SHOP LOCAL!

Police keep a camera eye on illegal trash dumping

BY LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

Illegal dumping of trash, appliances and whatever else people don't want to take to the waste transfer station has long been a problem in town.

"It's not just a Wrangell issue," Police Chief Tom Radke said last week. Radke, who spent almost 26 years in law enforcement in Minnesota before taking the Wrangell job in 2020, said he has seen it many times before.

But just because it's commonplace doesn't mean it's legal — it's not. Illegal dumping of garbage in Wrangell is subject to a \$150 fine.

"It's one of those issues we're trying to get ahead of," the chief said. In addition to educating the public about the law, the police department also puts up cameras from time to time along the Spur Road (Ishiyama Drive), including near the gun range, to keep a lookout for violators.

With the borough assembly vote last month to impose the same \$150 fine on people using harbor dumpsters for illegal trash, Radke anticipates an increase in residents stashing their

trash out the Spur Road.

"That Spur Road has always been a stepchild" that gets dumped on, he said.

The harbor dumpsters are restricted to routine garbage from boat stall renters — no construction material, hazardous waste or trash from their home ashore.

Worse than junk dumped on the side of the road or near the gun range parking lot are the cases where people toss their trash and then take target practice, as happened with a television dumped near the gun range, Radke said. "They shoot it and just leave it there, like the tooth fairy is going to pick it up," he added.

"We would appreciate it if you didn't do these things."

The camera footage is available to police if they need to track down the rightful owners of garbage found where it doesn't belong.

The minimum charge to dump trash at the borough's waste transfer station is \$20, a washer or dryer costs \$40, refrigerators and freezers are \$80 each, and tires are \$4 each, according to the fee schedule on the borough website.

Governor believes teacher bonuses and charter schools are the answers

BY CLAIRE STREMPLE
Alaska Beacon

South Anchorage high school teacher Logan Pitney said his colleagues are making exit strategies to flee their bad financial prospects in Alaska. He called Gov. Mike Dunleavy's teacher retention bonus plan a "Band-Aid on an arterial bleed."

Juneau Superintendent Franks Hauser called the governor's charter school policy change proposal a "statewide solution without a statewide problem."

They were among dozens of teachers and school administrators who rejected Dunleavy's education policy proposals at recent legislative hearings in Juneau.

There's no debate that Alaska has a teacher retention

problem. The number of statewide teacher vacancies at the beginning of the school year has more than tripled since 2020.

But the governor's policy would change how the state tackles the issue. While legislators want to boost state funding to local schools, allowing districts to approve higher teacher salaries, the governor would rather the state pay teachers annual bonuses for three years as an experiment to see if the cash would encourage them to stay.

Alaska Education Commissioner Deena Bishop said that, though studies are inconclusive about the efficacy of bonuses, it is what teachers want.

"We're looking at if that would be able for us to com-

pete, not only in Alaska with other sectors that teachers can certainly work in, but also in other states," she said.

Dunleavy recognized the teacher retention issue and assigned a task force to study and address the problem in 2020. Its research found that competitive salaries and a return to the state's defined-benefit pension system were most likely to keep teachers in their jobs. In a survey of people with active teaching licenses in Alaska, bonuses did not make the top 10 most important reasons to continue teaching, although "annual retention incentives" did.

Dozens of Alaska teachers summarily rejected the bonus plan in testimony before the Senate Education Committee.

Continued on page 8



PHOTO BY MARK C. ROBINSON / WRANGELL SENTINEL

For his senior project, high school student Cody Eastaugh assisted with volunteer efforts for two local fundraisers and is helping to clean up the shooting range off the Spur Road.

High school senior volunteers to help out with fundraisers and shooting range cleanup

BY MARK C. ROBINSON
Sentinel reporter

High school student Cody Eastaugh has worked part time for almost two years at the Bay Company, known as BayCo, which specializes in marine sales and service at its Front Street location. While trying to decide on his senior project, his boss Dave Powell came up with the idea that Eastaugh could assist him with volunteer efforts for two fundraisers and cleanup and repairs at the shooting range.

"I thought, that's a terrific idea and I should do that," Eastaugh said.

First, he helped Powell with setup, cleanup and general assistance for a Friends of the NRA dinner and auction last November. "During the auction, I was holding items (up for bid)," he said.

"It was fun, I enjoyed it," he added. "The whole setup, I was with people I knew, so it was fun, and the overall experience I'd say it was good."

Next, Eastaugh aided Powell with the Stikine Sportsmen Association's fundraiser dinner held on March 2. While he couldn't be present during the event, being under 21 with alcoholic beverages served at the dinner, the high school senior was able to help with the setup before and cleanup afterward.

Powell had nothing but praise regarding Eastaugh's assistance with both dinners: "He did a phenomenal job."

Finally, as Parks and Recreation, Friends of the NRA and the Stikine Sportsmen Association are working to restore the shooting range down past the golf course off the Spur Road, Eastaugh will assist Powell with cleanup and prep work for security measures.

"Like cameras and stuff and it's more secure, so people aren't going up there at night when you're not supposed to," he said. "Flattening ground, removing trees, cleaning up the area because I know there's a lot of trash out there."

"We're hoping to do that this spring," Powell said, who added that he and other residents want to rebuild the Wrangell Rod and Gun Club, bring back trapshooting to the range and eventually have a clubhouse there.

So far, what Eastaugh has enjoyed the most during his project has been the set-up process for the events and learning what goes on behind the scenes. "It's cool being able to take all the prizes and stuff ... and setting them on the tables," he said.

After graduation, he's considering learning auto mechanics at schools like WyoTech in Laramie, Wyoming, or Montana State University - Northern in Havre, Montana. However, he's also mindful that he already has a good job with BayCo. "If I could get outboard mechanic-certified, I could come back here, and have a designated job that I already know that I'll be making money at."

He'll miss the comradery of high school. "I like this school because it's so small that I feel like everyone knows each other, and we're all friends," he said.

On the other hand, Eastaugh admits that he's ready to venture out after growing up in such a small town. "I've been here all my life. I want to experience the world, see new things, you know?"

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WRANGELL SENTINEL



Wolves finish season with loss to Unalakleet at state tourney

By MARK C. ROBINSON
Sentinel reporter

After three days of challenging games on the court, the Wrangell Wolves boys varsity basketball team's loss to the Unalakleet Wolfpack on the morning of Saturday, March 16, left them in sixth place at the state Division 2A championship in Anchorage.

The Petersburg Vikings took the title for the first time since 2017.

The Metlakatla Miss Chiefs won the girls tournament.

Wrangell head coach Cody Angerman posted on Facebook after the game: "As disappointing as our last (tournament) game was, it doesn't define how good our team was this (regular) season. We started the season 0-5. When they won that sixth game, they turned it around, bought into what us coaches were telling them and believed in it. Making it to state is a feat many high school ballplayers don't get to experience."

The previous week, Wrangell defeated Metlakatla to win second place in the Southeast regionals while Petersburg placed first.

In their first match at the state tournament held in Anchorage, the Wolves went against the No. 2 seed Cordova Wolverines on March 14. Several days earlier, Angerman described Cordova as "a pretty scrappy team and they play hard." And it was a tight, well-played game, as both teams battled back and forth for dominance until the Wolverines were able to get a narrow win, 48-45.

Next, Wrangell came up against Ninilchik from the Kenai Peninsula on March 15. Both teams played aggressively, with the Ninilchik Wolverines in the lead at halftime, 20-15. However, in



PHOTO BY AMBER ARMSTRONG-HILLBERRY / WRANGELL SENTINEL

Senior Keegan Hanson takes a foul shot in last Friday's state tournament game against Ninilchik.

the second half, the Wolves overtook Ninilchik. By the final buzzer, Wrangell emerged victorious, 46-39.

Their final match was a consolation

game for fourth place as they went up against the Unalakleet Wolverines, coming from a small school on the Bering Sea coast southeast of Nome. At

one point in the second half, the Wolverines had a 16-point lead, but Wrangell battled back late in the third quarter and through the fourth, to cut their deficit. Still, they couldn't overtake Unalakleet, with the final score 47-35. The loss left the Wolves in sixth place.

Junior Daniel Harrison was Wrangell's top scorer during the tournament, followed by junior Kyan Stead. Sophomore Boomchain Loucks and senior Keegan Hanson also provided strong defense and support for the Wolves, particularly in their game against Ninilchik.

Angerman praised the team in his Facebook post. "They've helped created a winning basketball culture and are helping to build a fantastic Wrangell boys basketball program."

No. 3 seeded Petersburg went undefeated during state play, first beating Ninilchik, then Cordova and finally top-seeded Hooper Bay to take the state championship. Hooper Bay placed second, Cordova came in third, Unalakleet made fourth and Metlakatla got fifth place.

For the 2A girls, No. 2 seeded Metlakatla was undefeated during the tournament, as they defeated Susitna Valley, then beat Nenana, and overcame No. 1 seeded Tikigaq 51-42 to win the state championship.

Tikigaq, the school for the North Slope Borough community of Point Hope, defeated Metlakatla by 20 points in last year's title game. The two small communities are on opposite ends of the state, almost 1,500 miles apart.

It was the first state championship for Metlakatla's girls team, which had placed second three times in the past decade.

Little League needs volunteers; season opener is set for April 1

By MARK C. ROBINSON
Sentinel reporter

The Wrangell Little League is preparing for a new season on the baseball diamond.

But first, they need a few more volunteers.

Little League player agent Kaelene Harrison said that while they've found almost all their head coaches, there are still a few open spots. "We just need to decide who's coaching what," she said last week.

The season runs April 1 through June 15.

In addition to coaches, the league was looking for volunteers to fill openings for assistant coaches, umpires and scorekeepers, as well as field maintenance and concession stand workers.

Coaches will oversee three teams of T-ball players ages 4-7, two teams of minors ages 7-10, two teams of majors ages 9-12, and one team of juniors ages 12-16. Two coaches will be assigned for each team.

On March 15, League President Brianna Schilling posted on the league's Facebook page that registration is officially open through March 30. She encouraged parents and guardians to register children by completing a form available at City Market, Wrangell IGA or the elementary school office. They can also register online at <https://playpass.com/wrangell-little-league>.

Harrison said it hasn't been decided whether the teams will travel and compete in tournaments this season, as the Wrangell league starts earlier than most teams in the area. It will depend on "if we can get kids to stick around and commit."

Applicants for the coaching slots will need to pass background checks, be at least 18 years old, show they can handle responsibility, be on time for practice and games, and teach good sportsmanship, according to the league's Facebook posting for volunteers. Having knowledge of the basics of baseball and experience in working with kids is preferable.

Registration fees are \$40 for one player or \$60 per family.

Anyone interested in filling any of the volunteer slots can contact Schilling at 907-305-0282, Harrison at 808-265-4482, or visit littleleague.org and select "West Region."

Teacher bonuses

Continued from page 7

Julianna Armstrong retired from the Anchorage School District after a 40-year teaching career. She said she owns a home, has health insurance and can afford modest travel because of her pension.

She seemed to take the bonus proposal as an insult: "Giving out occasional bribes is treating educators like naive children — 'Look down at all that money in your hand. Don't look in the distance at your empty future,'" she said. "A lump-sum payment is a lump of coal. You can't grow old depending on it."

Chris Heidemann, president of the Juneau Education Association school union, said bonuses are the wrong way to retain teachers. He said students and educators need an increase in the state's per-student school funding. Without it, he said, districts will have to close schools and lay off teachers.

While bonuses garnered little support in testimony the past two weeks from the people who would get them, there were a couple of teachers who wanted them.

Samuel Abney, a music teacher from Anchorage School District, said teachers should take any kind of money they can get. He cited the dire financial circumstances of his colleagues. "I think any meas-

ure that we can possibly get from this governor to get any kind of money that we possibly could — from a Republican governor, in this state is — we should take it and not look a gift horse in the mouth."

Dunleavy's other big push is to change state law so that his appointees on the Alaska Board of Education could approve or deny charter schools, with an aim to increase their presence in the state. The proposal would allow the state board to override local opposition to new charter schools.

Charters in Alaska are currently approved by the local school district in which they plan to operate.

Charters generally operate in larger school districts, not smaller communities such as Wrangell.

In a House Education Committee hearing, Russ Simnick of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools said Alaska is one of only five states to use this method. "We find that one of the biggest drawbacks with just allowing local education agencies is they have a lot of times a very traditional mind, and they don't have the appetite for innovation that charter schools do."

But in Senate Education Committee meetings, Alaska districts resisted the idea that they need state officials to in-

crease the number of charters.

Anchorage School District Superintendent Jharrett Bryantt said the best way to support the charter schools his district operates would be to increase the state's student funding formula.

He pointed to one charter in its district that plans to lay off two teachers, two paraprofessionals and a custodian to make ends meet next year.

Fairbanks school board President Brandy Harty has children in charter schools. She said that to her knowledge, her district has not denied a charter applicant and she couldn't imagine the state doing a better job than the district. "There doesn't seem to be a good reason to fix a system that isn't broken."

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State files \$700 billion claim over EPA blockage of Pebble Mine

By YERETH ROSEN
Alaska Beacon

The federal government should pay Alaska more than \$700 billion in compensation for the 2023 Environmental Protection Agency action that

blocked development of the massive and controversial Pebble Mine in Southwest Alaska, Gov. Mike Dunleavy's administration claims in a lawsuit filed in a federal court.

The lawsuit, filed March 14

in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims in the District of Columbia, is part of a flurry of legal actions by the state and the mine's would-be developer that seek to revive the massive copper and gold project in a salmon-rich region.

The state and company legal actions follow an unsuccessful attempt by the Dunleavy administration to have the matter decided directly by the U.S. Supreme Court. In an unusual legal maneuver, the Dunleavy administration last July petitioned the Supreme Court to rule on the matter without having lower courts weigh in. The Supreme Court in January declined to take on the case.

In its complaint filed with the U.S. Court of Federal Claims, the state cited an estimate for 100 years of production to support the \$700 billion figure. It said Alaska had been depending on Pebble development for its economic future.

Vancouver-based Northern Dynasty Minerals and the Pebble Limited Partnership, of which Northern Dynasty is the sole owner, filed parallel lawsuits with the same aims.

One case, filed on March 14 in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims, seeks compensation for loss of opportunity to de-

velop Pebble. Unlike the state case, it does not seek a specific dollar amount, but it says the Pebble Limited Partnership has spent over \$1 billion to date to acquire the property and pursue the mine's development.

The second, filed March 15 in U.S. District Court in Anchorage, seeks to overturn the EPA's January 2023 decision to invoke a rarely used Clean Water Act provision to bar permitting of the Pebble project.

The state anticipates filing its own challenge to the EPA action in U.S. District Court, the Department of Law said in a statement.

The state and company legal moves drew rebukes from Pebble opponents, who have characterized the mine project as a dire threat to the Bristol Bay habitat on which major commercial, sport and subsistence salmon harvests depend.

"The state's legal filing is unhinged, sounding more like conspiratorial rantings from some dark corner of the internet than a legitimate legal argument," Tim Bristol, executive director of the advocacy group SalmonState, said in an emailed statement.

"This is political posturing at its worst and pure legal fan-

tasy. Reality is Bristol Bay's wild salmon runs, the people who depend on them, and the jobs and income they provide," Bristol said.

Jason Metrokin, president of the Bristol Bay Native Corp., also criticized the legal actions. In a statement, he said the EPA's actions "are grounded in science and are supported by a majority of Alaskans."

"It is simply a mistake for (Northern Dynasty Minerals) and the state of Alaska to continue to pursue the development of what could be North America's largest open pit mine near the headwaters of Bristol Bay's incredible salmon fisheries," Metrokin said.

In a separate statement, Delores Larson, interim director of United Tribes of Bristol Bay, predicted that the new legal attempts would fail. "We are confident the courts will uphold the EPA's protections and reject Pebble's attempts to revive a mining project that Alaskans do not support and the science has shown time and time again would be devastating for the waters that support salmon habitat and our way of life."

The Alaska Beacon is an independent, donor-funded news organization. Alaskabeacon.com.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the matter of the estate of Alice Gloria Bakke, Notice to Creditors is hereby given that Helen Keller has been appointed personal representative of the above-named estate. Pursuant to Alaska Statute Title 13.16.450, all creditors are hereby notified to present their claims within four months after the date of first publication of this notice or said claims will forever be barred. Claims must be filed with the court (Case No. 1WR-23-00014PR) or be presented to:

Helen Keller
PO Box 133
Wrangell, AK 99929

Publish March 13, 20 and 27, 2024

CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC NOTICE to Purchase Borough-Owned Property

Notice is hereby given that an application has been received to purchase Borough-owned property.

The Wrangell Planning and Zoning Commission has reviewed this request and voted to approve the request to move forward with the sale of the six lots.

Any person wishing to protest this request to purchase the proposed Borough-owned property described as:

Lots 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 9 of Subdivision Plat Block 54, according to Plat No. 68-81 (behind old Wrangell Medical Center), Zoned Open Space and requested by Wayne Johnson.

... must file a written protest with the Borough Clerk, no later than April 4, 2024, at 4 p.m.

Written protests may be emailed to clerk@wrangell.com or delivered to 205 Brueger Street, Wrangell, AK 99929. Any such protest shall state the reason(s) for the protest in detail.

A Public Hearing will be held on April 9, 2024, during the Regular Assembly meeting that will begin at 7 p.m. in the City Hall Assembly Chambers. If you wish to comment on this request to purchase Borough-owned property, please arrive before 7 p.m. and sign up under Persons to Be Heard.

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

Publish March 20 and 27, and April 3, 2024

CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE POSITIONS OF TEMPORARY WORKERS HARBOR DEPARTMENT

The City and Borough of Wrangell will accept applications from which to hire Temporary Laborers for the Harbor Department. Employees will be selected from applications in the pool at the time employees are needed throughout the year. There are multiple immediate openings. You must have a valid Alaska Driver's License, or a valid out-of-state Driver's License with the ability to obtain an Alaska License within six months.

This position will require someone with experience in carpentry and the ability to work independently in a marine environment. Work may include but will not be limited to replacement of bull rails, fascia boards, decking, plumbing, pile hoops and concrete patching. Duties will also include painting, pressure washing, cutting brush and grass, and working in the boat yard and office. Boatyard duties will include carrying blocking, boat stands and various types of cleanup. Must be able to lift and carry 50 pounds. Successful applicants must be able to work in all weather conditions and weekends.

Applications and job descriptions may be obtained and returned to Wrangell City Hall, 205 Brueger St. (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929, or via email to rmarshall@wrangell.com. Pay for this position starts at \$18 per hour DOE.

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

Mason Villarma
Interim Borough Manager

Publish March 20 and 27, 2024

Legislature blocks governor's attempt to take over state ferry advisory board

By SAM STOCKBRIDGE
Ketchikan Daily News

Alaska lawmakers on March 12 narrowly overturned an executive order from Gov. Mike Dunleavy that would have given him the sole authority to appoint members to the Alaska Marine Highway Operations Board.

The final vote was 33-26 to reject the governor's move.

Representatives and senators met in a joint session to consider overturning a dozen executive orders issued by the governor earlier this year that would have eliminated state advisory boards or consolidated their oversight within the executive branch.

Lawmakers voted separately on each resolution to reject the governor's actions, requiring support from a majority of lawmakers; they overturned eight of the 12 orders.

Dunleavy's 12 executive orders are equal to the number of all executive orders issued in

the previous 20 years.

As established when Dunleavy signed into law the marine highway board in 2021, the Legislature gets to appoint four of the board's nine members; the governor gets to appoint four members; and one seat is reserved for the deputy commissioner of the Alaska Department of Transportation.

The board was intended to help insulate the ferry system from political control and micromanagement from whoever is governor; its recommendations are advisory and non-binding.

Dunleavy's executive order would have given the governor the authority to appoint the entire board, along with the ability to dissolve the current board membership on July 1.

The March 12 vote to overturn Dunleavy's attempt to take control of the board was heavily partisan. Every Democrat and independent member

of the Legislature voted to overturn the order; the votes siding with the governor came exclusively from Republicans, though coastal Republican lawmakers representing Kodiak and Sitka voted against the governor, as did three Anchorage and Fairbanks Republican senators.

Kodiak Rep. Louise Stutes, who was one of the primary sponsors of the bill that created the advisory board in 2021, defended the importance of keeping the Legislature involved in appointing its members.

"This is a very successful board with a diverse group of board members with diverse ideas," Stutes said later. "This, to me, is exactly what we're looking for: a group of people that do not all think alike and are able to think outside the box and ask tough questions."

In addition to stopping the governor's changes to the marine highway advisory board, legislators rejected other executive orders that would have eliminated state boards regulating midwives, barbers and massage therapists, and would have eliminated citizens advisory boards for a large state park in Southwest Alaska and the Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve in Haines.

The most controversial order was overturned on a 58-1 vote. It would have dissolved the Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives, transferring its licensing and oversight authority to the state Department of Commerce.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the matter of the estate of Arnold Elmer Bakke, Notice to Creditors is hereby given that Helen Keller has been appointed personal representative of the above-named estate. Pursuant to Alaska Statute Title 13.16.450, all creditors are hereby notified to present their claims within four months after the date of first publication of this notice or said claims will forever be barred. Claims must be filed with the court (Case No. 1WR-23-01PR) or be presented to:

Helen Keller
PO Box 133
Wrangell, AK 99929

Publish March 13, 20 and 27, 2024

Police report

Monday, March 11
 Agency assist: Pretrial.
 Complaint: Dog chasing cars.

Tuesday, March 12
 Traffic stop: Citation issued for expired registration, verbal warning for parking in a crosswalk.
 Agency assist: Protective services.
 Traffic hazard: Debris in roadway.
 Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.

Wednesday, March 13
 Criminal histories.
 Agency assist: Fire Department.

Thursday, March 14
 Inmate booking: Assault, unlawful contact.

Friday, March 15
 Traffic stop: Citation issued for expired registration

Saturday, March 16
 Traffic stop: Driver to sort out issue with Division of Motor Vehicles next week.
 Found property: Turned in at police station.
 Agency assist: U.S. Forest Service.
 Traffic stop: Verbal warning for faulty taillights.
 Prowler.

Sunday, March 17
 Nothing to report.

NOAA report points to growth in Alaska mariculture efforts

BY YERETH ROSEN
 Alaska Beacon

While Alaska's mariculture industry is small by global standards, production of farmed shellfish and seaweed in the state has increased substantially in recent years, according to a new status report released Feb. 23 by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Applications for Alaska mariculture permits averaged about six a year from 2014 to 2018 but increased to about 14 a year from 2019 to 2023, said the State of Alaska Aquaculture report, issued by the NOAA Fisheries.

Oysters have been a pillar of Alaska mariculture for many years, and sales of Alaska oysters grew from about 4.5 million in 2000 to about 7 million in 2022, according to the report.

The other main mariculture products in Alaska are blue mussels and sugar, ribbon and bull kelp, the report said. In all, 42 invertebrate and seaweed species have been permitted for farming in Alaska.

Finfish farming is illegal in the state. Seaweed production has grown dramatically in Alaska. It went from almost nothing in 2017 to nearly 900,000 pounds in 2022, the report said.

The global seaweed market is worth close to \$10 billion, according to a recent analysis. Production is overwhelmingly dominated by China and other Asian countries, and farmed seaweed is being used for various industrial and pharmaceutical purposes as well as for food, according to a World Bank analysis.

Within the United States, Maine is the leading producer of seaweed, with more than 1 million pounds of product in 2023 and more than 40 active seaweed farming sites in 2023, according to a recent report issued jointly by Sea Grant programs in multiple coastal states. But Alaska's in-

dustry has grown sufficiently to bring the state to second place by 2023, with over 875,000 pounds produced from 30 active sites last year, according to the Sea Grant report.

The new NOAA Fisheries report notes that several initiatives have been launched in recent years to expand the industry in Alaska. The Alaska Mariculture Task Force, created by the governor in 2016, established a goal of developing a \$100 million industry by the 2030s.

Toward that goal, Alaska mariculture programs have been granted federal and state funds to stimulate development of the industry

In 2022, the Alaska Mariculture Cluster was awarded \$49 million in federal money from the infrastructure legislation pushed by the Biden administration. The cluster was formed by the Southeast Conference, a regional economic development organization, and includes nearly 20 municipal, nonprofit, university, Native and tribal corporation partners from across the state.

The program also has \$15 million in cash donations and in-kind matching funds to use over the next three years to help seaweed farmers and oyster growers start or expand and improve their businesses, find markets and take on a bigger role in the state's economy.

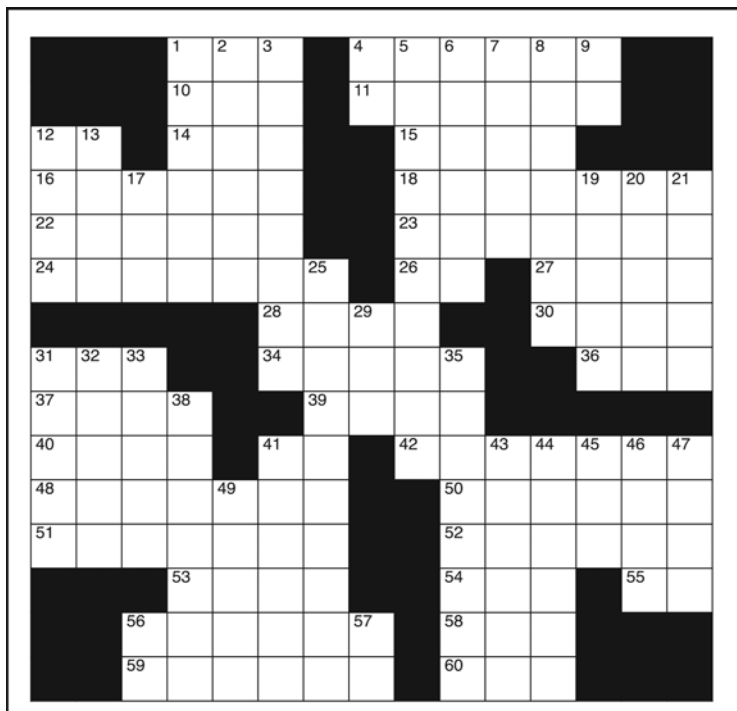
The money also will be used to set up a revolving loan fund for growers and farmers and pay for research and development of new products to boost sales.

In addition to the funding, NOAA and the state are in the process of identifying more areas suitable for mariculture through an Aquaculture Opportunity Areas program announced last year.

The Alaska Beacon is an independent, donor-funded news organization. Alaskabeacon.com. The Wrangell Sentinel contributed reporting to this story.

Crossword

Answers on page 12



CLUES ACROSS

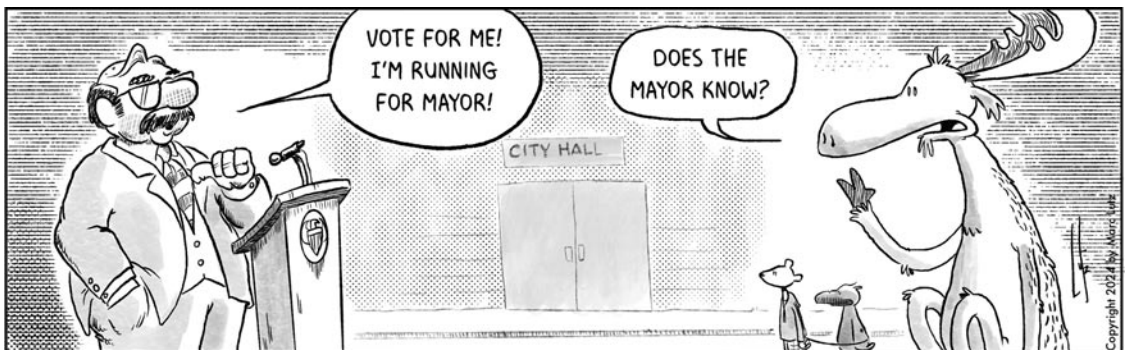
- 1. Small Eurasian deer
- 4. Irish county
- 10. A major division of geological time
- 11. Broadway actor Lane
- 12. Canadian province (abbr.)
- 14. Human gene
- 15. Two
- 16. A famous one is blue
- 18. Utter repeatedly
- 22. Ring-shaped objects
- 23. Spoils
- 24. Occurs
- 26. Commercial
- 27. Near
- 28. Products you may need
- 30. Pledge thrown down as a challenge
- 31. TV network
- 34. Silk or cotton garments
- 36. Soviet Socialist Republics
- 37. Retired American football coach Dean
- 39. Hot dish
- 40. A type of gin
- 41. Atomic #84
- 42. Sawhorse
- 48. About ground
- 50. Medicine man
- 51. Seedless raisin
- 52. Capital of Albania
- 53. Appendage
- 54. OJ trial judge
- 55. By the way (abbr.)
- 56. Bicycle parts
- 58. Barbie's friend
- 59. Moved one's neck to see
- 60. Commercials

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Make up for
- 2. Baltimore ballplayer
- 3. Salary
- 4. Influential world body
- 5. Engravers
- 6. Declared as fact
- 7. One who steals
- 8. Jewelry
- 9. Hospital employee (abbr.)
- 12. Nonsense (slang)
- 13. Town in Galilee
- 17. Value
- 19. A fake name
- 20. Sheep in their second year
- 21. Town in Surrey, England
- 25. Appropriate for a particular time of year
- 29. Creative works
- 31. Recesses
- 32. W. Pacific island group
- 33. Tolkien character
- 35. Ancient symbol co-opted by the Nazi party
- 38. Pioneer
- 41. Scribe
- 43. Painted a bright color
- 44. Lowest members of British nobility
- 45. Actress Thurman
- 46. Type of sugar
- 47. Crest of a hill
- 49. N. American people of British Columbia
- 56. Device
- 57. The Mount Rushmore State

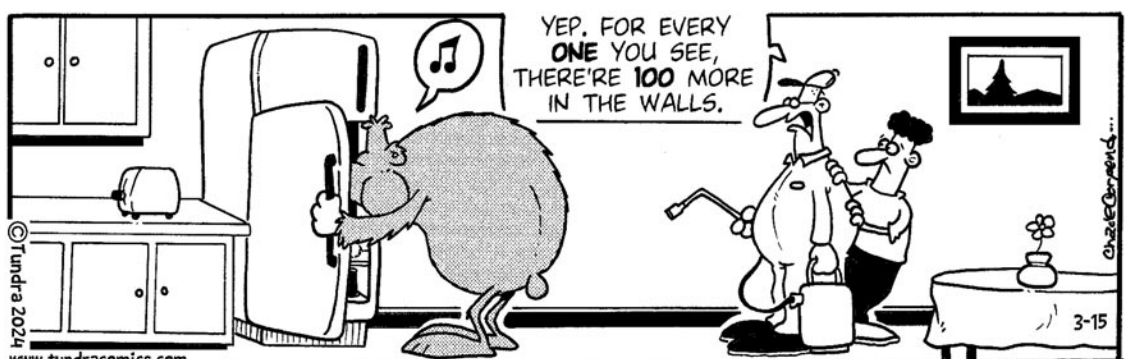
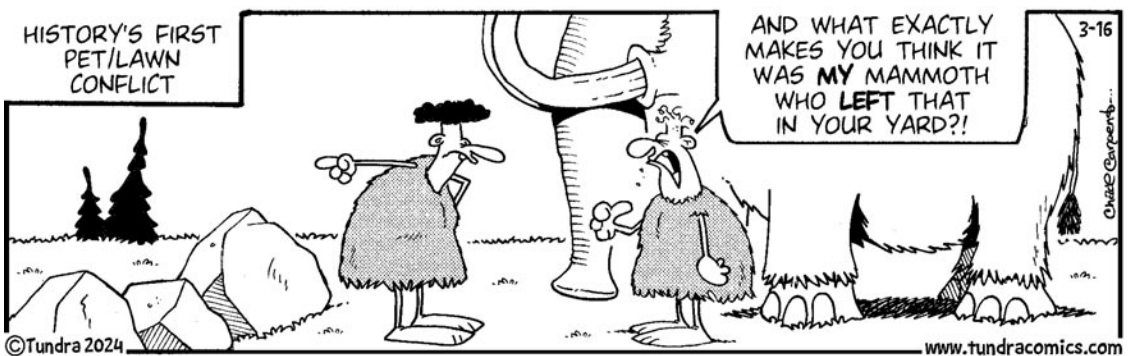
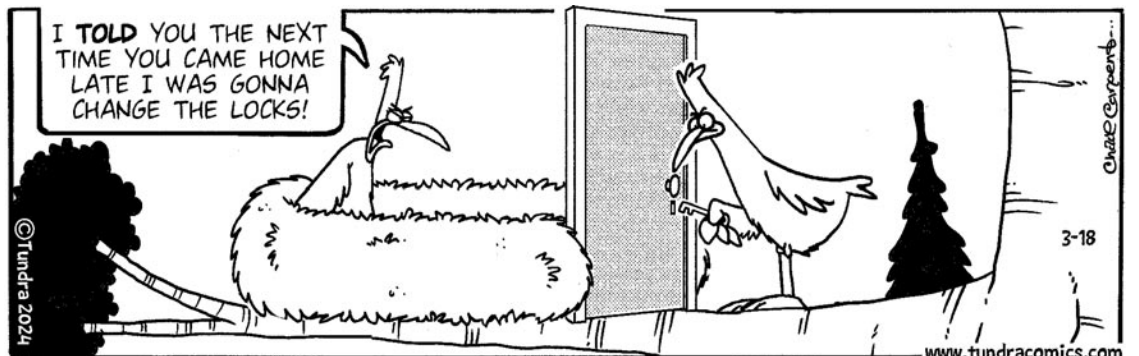
Ritter's River

by Marc Lutz



Tundra

by Chad Carpenter



CLASSIFIED

HELP WANTED

Tourism Coordinator at Wrangell Cooperative Association. Complete job description and applications are available at 1002 Zimovia Highway, by emailing receptionist.wca@gmail.com, or at www.wcatribe.org. Contact Esther Ashton at 907-874-4304 with any questions. Open until filled. First review date: March 22.

HELP WANTED

Wrangell Public Schools is accepting applications for the following position: Elementary

School Principal for the 2024-2025 school year. The principal will provide leadership to ensure high standards are met and oversee compliance with district policies, success of instructional programs, and operation of all campus activities. Minimum Qualifications include: Alaska Type B Administrative Certification with appropriate endorsements; knowledge of thorough understanding of school operations; working knowledge of curriculum and instruction; skill in evaluating instructional programs and teaching effectiveness; skill in

managing staff, operations, projects and budgets; strong organizational, communication, public relations and interpersonal skills. This position provides leadership for a Grade K-5 school campus; guides instruction and supports an effective learning environment; oversees the implementation of standards-based curriculum; coordinates services which support student growth and development; provides for staffing and professional development to meet student learning needs; uses assessment and evaluation information in making decisions; communicates with diverse groups and individuals with clarity and sensitivity; acts in accordance with established laws, policies, procedures, good business practices; understands the influence of social, cultural, political and economic forces on the education environment and uses this knowledge to serve the needs of children and families; facilitates the participation of parents and families as partners in education; demonstrates high ethical standards and dedication to the profession. For more information and

detailed job description, please contact the District Office at 907-874-2347. This position is open until filled. It is Wrangell Public School District policy to not discriminate based on age, race, color, national origin, sex or disability.

WANTED

Looking for any old Nintendo entertainment system games, especially Wolfenstein. Call Dianne at 907-738-9687.

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.

FREE

Recycled newspapers. Stop by the Sentinel to pick up some.

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**CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL
PUBLIC HEARING
PUBLIC NOTICE**

During the Regular Assembly Meeting of Tuesday, March 26, 2024, starting at 7 p.m. in the Wrangell Borough Assembly Chambers at 205 Brueger Street, Wrangell, Alaska, there will be a **PUBLIC HEARING** on the following item(s):

- a. **Ordinance No. 1052** of the Assembly of the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, amending Section 5.14.025, Annual Review and Approval of Fee and Rate Schedule required, in the Wrangell Municipal Code.
- b. **Ordinance No. 1053** of the Assembly of the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, amending Sections 16.08.030 – Applications, 16.10.030 – Applications, and 16.12.040 – Sale of Real Property or Tidelands, and establishing a new process for these rates and fees in the Wrangell Municipal Code by adding the fees to the established Fee and Rate Schedule.
- c. **Resolution No. 03-24-1848** of the Assembly of the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, approving the amended Permits and Applications Section of the Fee and Rate Schedule.

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

Publish March 20, 2024

**CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL
PUBLIC HEARING
PUBLIC NOTICE**

During the Regular Assembly Meeting of Tuesday, April 9, 2024, starting at 7 p.m. in the Wrangell Borough Assembly Chambers at 205 Brueger Street, Wrangell, Alaska, there will be a **PUBLIC HEARING** on the following item(s):

- a. A Resolution of the Assembly of the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, approving the conveyance of the Old Wrangell Medical Center and Real Property as described as Lot A, Block 54 of the W.M.C. Replat, Parcel 02-031-351, Zoned Open Space, to Wayne Johnson, DBA Wrangell Heritage House Development, LLC, and to apply WMC 16.12.012 – Disposition of Real Property for Economic Development Purposes for a fixed amount of \$200,000 for the purpose of demolishing the Old Wrangell Medical Center.
- b. A Resolution of the Assembly of the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, approving the Tidelands Lease to Channel Construction, identified as Lots 7 and USS3000, of the USS 3534 Subdivision, zoned Waterfront Development according to Plat 29-20, for the purpose of constructing two shops for equipment and other
- c. A Resolution of the Assembly of the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, approving a Short-Term Tidelands Lease to Channel Construction, identified as a portion of the Lot PSS, of the USS 534 Subdivision, zoned Waterfront Development according to Plat 29-20, for the purpose of using the existing shop for parts storage and working on repairs to construction equipment.

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

Publish March 20, 27 and April 3, 2024

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**CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL
ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE POSITION OF
CRUISE SHIP FACILITY SECURITY OFFICER
HARBOR DEPARTMENT**

The City and Borough of Wrangell will begin to accept applications until 5 p.m. April 19, 2024, at City Hall for the position of Cruise Ship Facility Security Officer to establish a pool of applicants to hire as a Temporary Worker. You must have a valid TWIC card and an Alaska Driver's License, and a High School Diploma or GED.

This position performs duties as a part of the Department of Homeland Security Port Security Plan. The nature of the work requires that the employee maintain effective working relationships with other Borough departments and employees, State and Federal officials, business and community organizations and the public.

Must be able to lift and carry 50 pounds. Successful applicant must be able to work in all weather conditions and throughout all hours of the day or night.

Applications and job descriptions may be obtained and returned to Wrangell City Hall, 205 Brueger St. (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929. Pay for this position is a set rate of \$23 per hour.

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

Mason Villarma
Interim Borough Manager

Publish March 20 and 27, 2024

**STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF FORESTRY & FIRE PROTECTION
SOUTHEAST AREA OFFICE
PUBLIC REVIEW
FIVE-YEAR SCHEDULE OF TIMBER SALES
STATE FISCAL YEARS 2025-2029**

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry & Fire Protection (DOF) Preliminary Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales for the Southern Southeast Area is available for public review. Per AS 38.05.113, this is a scoping document that outlines the proposed timber sale activity to be undertaken on State land over the next five years. The Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales is not a decision document.

The public is invited to comment on any aspect of the Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales. Comments should be mailed to the DOF and must be received by the close of business at the DOF's office no later than **April 8, 2024**, to be included as comment to the file in the adopted schedule. This document can be viewed at the Area Office in Ketchikan, the public libraries in Craig, Edna Bay, Ketchikan, Petersburg and Wrangell, the State of Alaska's online public notice website <http://notice.alaska.gov/214508>, as well as the DOF's website <http://forestry.alaska.gov/>.

After public comment has been received and reviewed, the Division of Forestry & Fire Protection may proceed with planning the proposed timber sales and associated developments. When each sale is prepared and ready for review, notice of the proposed decision and the opportunity for public comment will be given for that specific timber sale, as is required under state statutes and regulations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SUBMIT COMMENTS CONTACT:

Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection Contact: Greg Staunton
2417 Tongass Avenue, Suite 213 Phone: 907-225-3070
Ketchikan, AK 99901 Email: dnr.dof.sse@alaska.gov

The State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry & Fire Protection Complies with Title II of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990. Individuals with disabilities who may need auxiliary aids, services, or special modifications to participate in this review may contact the number above.

Publish March 13 and 20, 2024

Higher oil prices add about 2% to estimated state revenues

BY JAMES BROOKS
Alaska Beacon

A new state revenue forecast based on modestly higher oil prices gives the Alaska Legislature some additional breathing room as lawmakers craft a new state budget.

The forecast, released March 13 by the Alaska Department of Revenue, updates a fall estimate and predicts that the state will collect \$140 million more in revenue than previously expected during the 12 months that begin July 1.

That represents about a 2% gain in state revenues. That will help legislators as they write a budget bill that must be passed and become law before July 1, the start of the state fiscal year.

It's not all gravy, said Palmer Rep. DeLena Johnson, co-chair of the House Finance Committee. While having additional money "certainly doesn't hurt anything," Gov. Mike Dunleavy is already planning to present some extra spending requests to the Legislature, she said.

Sitka Sen. Bert Stedman, Johnson's counterpart on the Senate Finance Com-

mittee, said it's also important to note that the new forecast also increases revenue expectations for the current fiscal year.

For the 12 months ending June 30, the Department of Revenue expects an additional \$58 million.

Under the budget law passed last year, some of that extra money is reserved for a bonus to this year's Permanent Fund dividend. Stedman said he now expects that bonus to be slightly more than \$200, which will be added to whatever amount legislators set as this year's dividend.

The bonus is tied to any surplus in state revenues for the current fiscal year. Higher-than-expected oil prices means more tax and royalty dollars to the state treasury, which means a larger add-on to this fall's PFD.

After subtracting the dividend bonus, Stedman said there's about \$170 million in additional dollars available between the two fiscal years.

Fairbanks Sen. Click Bishop was among the lawmakers who said they hope some of the money will be spent on maintenance projects statewide. "We've got a lot of need out there," he said. "That

snow removal number statewide, maybe we've got some wiggle room now to help with snow removal."

"In Western Alaska, it's embarrassing to look at the black mold in those schools ... fire alarm systems that are defunct, etc. So hopefully we can throw a lifeline for deferred maintenance at our K-12 schools," Bishop said.

Oil revenue represents only about a third of the state's general-purpose income, but it's extremely variable from year to year and even month to month, dependent upon fluctuations in price and production.

The Alaska Department of Revenue uses 30 days worth of data from oil markets to estimate prices in the future. The forecast released March 13 shows prices about \$2 per barrel higher than the forecast issued in December.

Production cutbacks by OPEC oil-producing nations and Yemeni rebel attacks on ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz on their way to the Red Sea and Suez Canal have driven up oil prices in recent months.

An annual transfer from the Alaska

Permanent Fund to the state treasury is the state's No. 1 source of revenue, accounting for more than half of its general-purpose revenue, but the stability of that transfer is overshadowed by the sheer changeability of oil prices, causing legislators to pay close attention to forecasts as they set the state's annual budget.

Last year, members of the House Finance Committee drafted a balanced budget before the annual spring revenue forecast, only to see the document turn into a deficit after the forecast came in lower than expected.

This year, the committee is waiting for the forecast, amendments from the governor, and a decision by the governor on a multipart education funding bill.

The House's version of the budget should be in front of the full House by the end of the month, Johnson said, and is expected to be sent to the Senate for amendments and debate on April 12.

The Alaska Beacon is an independent, donor-funded news organization. Alaskabeacon.com.

State finally caught up on delayed food stamp applications

BY CLAIRE STREMPLE
Alaska Beacon

The Alaska Division of Public Assistance said March 5 it has caught up on food stamp applications. That means no Alaskan is waiting an unlawful amount of time for food aid for the first time since 2022. But there are people waiting for other benefits programs, includ-

ing heating assistance.

The state Division of Public Assistance worked to eliminate its most recent backlog of more than 12,000 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program applications in about four months, after struggling to stay current on applications for more than a year.

Division Director Deb

Etheridge, who took on her role at the height of the backlog in 2023, said her dedicated backlog staff will now direct their attention to processing food stamp applications much faster — and catching up on slowdowns for other programs.

"Let's keep those (food stamps) current and get those other ones brought up to date,"

she said. "But this in no way amounts to the lift that we had with the SNAP program."

The state's Heating Assistance Program is designed to offset costs for Alaskans with low incomes. Nearly 2,000 applicants have been waiting more than a month for their application to be processed. Last year, the division processed about 6,000 total applications.

In the last benefit cycle, roughly 4,800 Alaska households benefited from the program, which is available only to those whose income is 150% of federal poverty guidelines. The

state pays the benefit directly to the household's fuel or energy supplier, as a credit.

Etheridge said this year, the application process was slowed down because of the effort to get food stamps back on track. She said the Division of Public Assistance may bring in seasonal employees next winter to help with the uptick in applications at that time and prevent slowdowns.

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School funding veto

Continued from page 1

used his veto power to reduce or eliminate money from the state budget when it reaches his desk at the end of the legislative session. Republican Gov. Mike Dunleavy last week essentially threatened just such an outcome.

"You could override and have this bill, but it doesn't guarantee money in the budget in the end," Dunleavy said at a news conference last week.

Money to cover the state's contribution to local school district operating budgets is subject to appropriation by the Legislature each year and a potential veto by the governor each year.

Lawmakers last year approved a one-time increase in state funding to school districts, which Dunleavy reduced by half with his veto pen.

In addition to objecting to the bill's sizable boost in the funding formula, the governor has demanded that legislators also approve two of his education priorities to win his support for a funding increase.

Dunleavy wants legislation that would allow new charter schools to bypass local school boards and come to the state for approval, and he has campaigned for one-time teacher bonuses to recruit and retain staff rather than a permanent increase in state funding for districts.

Most lawmakers have been reluctant to accept the governor's demands, responding that charter schools should be a local issue, and that a permanent increase in state aid for school operating budgets would help more than one-time teacher bonuses.

Neither of the governor's proposals have won enough legislative votes for passage.

Lawmakers have been working since the start of the session in January to craft legislation to raise the state's per-student funding formula, known as the base student allocation, which has not changed more than half a percent in seven years.

Though school districts and public education advocates across Alaska pushed for an increase to cover the years of inflation, the Legislature

settled on about an 11% boost in the base formula, which would cost the state an estimated \$176 million for the 2024-2025 school year. That represents about 2.5% of the state general fund budget.

The vetoed legislation also included a larger state contribution to districts for their school bus expenses (\$7 million), additional funds to assist in reading improvement programs (\$5 million), more money for correspondence programs used by homeschoolers (\$13 million), a new charter school coordinator position at the Alaska Department of Education, and a provision to increase internet speeds in rural schools.

The legislation did not include Dunleavy's proposal for teacher bonuses, nor did it go as far as the governor wants for new charter schools to bypass local school boards.

The bill passed the House and Senate in February by a combined 56-3 vote. Though education supporters expected to lose votes, they had hoped they could still muster 40 for the override on Monday.

The labor federation Alaska AFL-CIO and teachers union NEA Alaska asked supporters to send letters, calls and texts supporting an override. The Alaska Council of School Administrators ran internet ads targeting possible swing legislators.

The Alaska chapter of Americans for Prosperity, a limited-government group, had praised the veto and asked legislators to sustain it.

Both of Wrangell's legislators — Sitka Sen. Bert Stedman and Ketchikan Rep. Dan Ortiz — voted to override the governor's veto, as did all of the House and Senate members from Southeast.

The Wrangell school board was scheduled to meet Monday evening, March 20, to consider its budget. The school district is required to submit its budget to the borough assembly by May 1. The assembly has until late June to adopt an overall budget and set the property tax rate.

The Anchorage Daily News and Alaska Beacon contributed reporting for this story.

**Memorial services for
Patty Kautz
Saturday, March 23
1 to 4 pm at the Marine Bar
Come and share your stories.**

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