

Drive-through
cafe offers joe on
the go, Page 7



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Lawmakers propose 'energy relief check' of \$1,300 this year

BY IRIS SAMUELS, JAMES BROOKS
Anchorage Daily News

State House lawmakers have proposed paying Alaskans almost \$1,300 as an "energy relief check" on top of the annual Permanent Fund dividend.

As presented by the House Finance Committee on Friday, the two payments would total about \$2,500 this year for every eligible Alaskan.

The energy relief payment would use some of the state's unexpectedly high oil revenues to help residents hit by rising fuel prices, record inflation and ongoing financial recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, lawmakers in the House majority said in a written statement on March 2.

"Between the negative economic effects of COVID and escalating energy costs, our residents are suffering," said Speaker Louise Stutes, of Kodiak, in a statement. "With the influx of

new revenue, we are in a position to provide an energy relief check to Alaskans and that is exactly what the House coalition intends to do."

Alaska revenue officials are expecting hundreds of millions of dollars in new revenue this year. The House majority coalition announcement last week came as crude oil prices surged past \$100 a barrel amid the ongoing Russian assault on Ukraine, which could further enrich state coffers.

Global prices neared \$120 a barrel on Monday as the situation in Ukraine deteriorated and oil buyers feared supply shortages of crude.

The one-time relief payment would cost the state \$875.1 million, according to Joe Plesha, communications director for the House majority.

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Forest Service increases Anan permits in new plan to more fully utilize capacity

BY SARAH ASLAM
Sentinel reporter

The Forest Service is bulking up how many permits it issues to the Anan Wildlife Observatory in order to allow as many visitors to the site as people and bears can handle, while also protecting the habitat.

And it has a mid-March start date for a contractor to tear down the existing observatory to put up a new one in time for the July 5 to Aug. 25 viewing season.

The current limit is 60 permits a day during the season, District Recreation Staff Officer Tory Houser said Friday. That was

implemented back in 2003. "So many people loved Anan and were bringing clients there, that it exceeded our management," she said.

So the permit limit was put in place. The Forest Service gave out 60%, or 36 out of the 60 daily permits, in a competitive process to guide companies that applied.

The Forest Service said it has consistently fallen short of the maximum visitors the site is permitted to handle.

"From the 20 years since that happened, we've been monitoring the use," Houser said. "Of the 40% (of available permits)

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Busload of bow-wow



PHOTO COURTESY MO THOMPSON

Skagway's Mo Mountain Mutts dog-walking service uses a 14-passenger van to transport its canine customers for their 45-minute walks. The dogs receive complimentary treats and instructions to keep their tails and noses out of the aisles. See story on Page 9.

Borough, SEARHC negotiating voluntary tax payment agreement

BY SARAH ASLAM
Sentinel reporter

The SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium and the borough are negotiating another year of voluntary payment in lieu of taxes on the nonprofit's property in town.

SEARHC paid property taxes when the clinic and hospital were under construction, Finance Director Mason Villarma said March 2, even though those tribal-owned parcels are exempt from property taxes.

Construction on the \$30 million hospital started in 2019; the facility opened in February 2021. SEARHC paid \$331,000 for the 2021 tax year.

Payments in lieu of taxes, or PILTs, "are really common with nonprofits and tribal entities, any sovereign government," Villarma said. The U.S. Forest Service, for example, makes payments to boroughs in the Tongass National Forest to compensate for a lack of property tax revenues from the federally owned lands.

A negotiated, voluntary payment "is a good deal for SEARHC, because they don't want to set that precedent" of paying property taxes set by the borough, Villarma said.

A negotiated payment agreement can include terms governing the use of the money, though

borough assembly approval is required for municipal spending decisions.

The property tax rate in Wrangell is set by the borough assembly each year. Last year's rate was 12.75 mills, or \$12.75 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. That would generate a property tax bill of \$2,550 on a home assessed at \$200,000, or about \$380,000 on a \$30 million property.

Leatha Mercurieff, SEARHC's chief operating officer, and the borough administration have been in negotiations on a PILT agreement for all SEARHC properties, according to Villarma's report to the assembly Feb. 22. The latest proposal is a \$225,000 payment increasing 2% a year. It would cover all existing SEARHC properties in town.

The structured arrangement began with the new hospital construction. Before that, SEARHC paid taxes on its other, smaller properties in town, Borough Manager Jeff Good said Monday. "I'm not sure if they were actually required to, they just did."

It's certainly preferable that SEARHC contribute a payment in lieu of taxes toward the cost of borough services, Villarma said, noting that could include housing solutions. SEARHC is the largest employer in town, and the additional revenues from a payment in lieu of taxes could

Continued on page 3

Fifth grade fundraising focuses on finding forever homes for furry friends

BY MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

Students at Evergreen Elementary are looking to make a difference in the community by making a difference in the lives of pets needing forever homes.

The fifth grade class leadership group learned that St. Frances Animal Shelter was itself in need of a forever home, so they decided to begin fundraising to help the nonprofit get closer to its goal of buying or building a new shelter.

As part of the social-emotional learning program that started at the beginning of the school year, instructor Tawney Crowley said students would be taught leadership skills. It was an idea thought up by herself, lead teacher Jenn Miller-Yancey and fifth grade teacher Laurie Hagelman.

"(Laurie) said before the year started that she really wanted to instill this ethic

of service into these kids," Crowley said. A block of time was designated to focus on leadership and service. "We started by working on character traits."

Those traits, like loyalty, humility, perseverance, integrity and self-discipline, among others, were then translated into service projects.

"I brainstormed with the students the kinds of things they'd like to do, and a big group of kids wanted to work with the animal shelter," said Tracey Martin, the long-term substitute teacher who filled in for Crowley when she went on maternity leave. "I called St. Frances Animal Rescue — I didn't even know there was a shelter — and talked to Joan Sargent."

At first, the kids thought they could volunteer at the shelter. When they found out St. Frances was still trying to raise funds to get a permanent shelter in place, they started thinking of ways to raise money. St. Frances is trying to raise enough mon-

ey to either purchase an existing building or build something new. Sargent keeps whatever cats come their way at her house or they're fostered in other homes.

The fifth graders came up with the Empty Your Pockets campaign March 7 to March 21. They will place signs and donations cans around town, urging people to give. Additionally, the students will hold bake sales at City Market on March 12 and March 19.

"Some of the kids are talking about going through their neighborhoods and asking people to donate. That's not a requirement," Martin said. "They also want to do a car wash/lemonade stand/bake sale in the spring. They had tons of ideas for fundraising."

Martin said she encouraged the kids to do what they would like to on their own. "If there was a shelter, they would be there, helping. They were so disappointed there wasn't something they could go

do. They wanted to be with the animals to feed them or clean cages."

Sargent has been going to the school to talk to students about the need for a shelter and about animal safety.

"Our primary thing is that a lot of the kids don't know about us," Sargent said. "I talk (to them) about our mission in the community."

She said the enthusiasm and efforts shown by the kids at Evergreen is encouraging, especially since the process to build a shelter can take years and thousands of dollars to complete. "It's a long haul."

The process of fundraising has also been an opportunity for Crowley and Martin to teach the students how to become involved in making positive changes in the community by speaking up and working with others. They said the students tend to internalize their feelings,

Continued on page 5

Birthdays & Anniversaries

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

- Wednesday, March 9:** Jerry Massin, Tanner Thomassen, Ashley Young.
- Thursday, March 10:** Sumi Angerman, Rick Kohrt, Hunter McCloskey.
- Friday, March 11:** Jim Gillen, Chloe Smalley, Michael Villarma.
- Saturday, March 12:** None.
- Sunday, March 13:** Kaydin Mill, Morgan Linn Torvend, Savannah Wickman.
- Monday, March 14:** V. Alan Cummings, Leda Klein, Linda Brown Nore, Vern Phillips; Anniversary: Eric and Laurie Hagelman.
- Tuesday, March 15:** James Campbell, Jessica Rooney, Lucy Simonek.
- Wednesday, March 16:** Linnea Brooks, Wanda Ingram, Paula Rak, Triston Schneider; Anniversaries: Wes and Wanda Ingram, Dan and Paula Wickman.

Senior Center Menu

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

Thursday, March 10

Chicken tahitian, steamed zucchini, honey mustard coleslaw, confetti rice

Friday, March 11

Beef stroganoff, mixed veggies, sunshine salad

Monday, March 14

Cabbage rolls, rice, cucumber and onion salad, with roll

Tuesday, March 15

Ham sandwich, oriental pork noodle soup, danish salad

Wednesday, March 16

Chicken adobo, oriental noodles, honey orange salad, rice

Please call the senior center at 907-874-2066 24 hours in advance to reserve a seat at lunch at the center or to request delivery. The senior van also is available to transport seniors to medical appointments, reasonable errands such as collecting mail, getting prescriptions or other essential items.

Ferry Schedule

Northbound

- Sunday, March 13**
Matanuska, 8:15 a.m.
- Tuesday, March 15**
Matanuska, 7 p.m.
- Friday, March 18**
Matanuska, 10 p.m.
- Friday, March 25**
Matanuska, 3:45 p.m.

Southbound

- Friday, March 11**
Matanuska, 5:45 a.m.
- Tuesday, March 15**
Matanuska, 2:45 a.m.
- Friday, March 18**
Matanuska, 7:15 a.m.
- Monday, March 21**
Matanuska, 9:45 a.m.

All times listed are scheduled departure times.
Call the terminal at 907-874-2021 for information or call 907-874-3711 or 800-642-0066 for recorded information.

Tides

High Tides

Low Tides

| | AM | PM | AM | PM | AM | PM | AM | PM |
|----------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|-----|-------|------|
| | Time | Ft | Time | Ft | Time | Ft | Time | Ft |
| March 9 | 04:39 | 14.1 | 05:41 | 10.9 | 11:09 | 2.7 | 10:57 | 5.5 |
| March 10 | 05:30 | 13.1 | 07:12 | 10.2 | 12:12 | 3.5 | 11:58 | 6.6 |
| March 11 | 06:49 | 12.5 | 08:46 | 10.5 | ... | ... | 01:37 | 3.7 |
| March 12 | 08:19 | 12.6 | 09:54 | 11.4 | 01:29 | 7.1 | 03:08 | 3.1 |
| March 13 | 10:29 | 13.4 | 11:43 | 12.6 | 04:10 | 6.6 | 05:13 | 2.0 |
| March 14 | 11:24 | 14.4 | ... | ... | 05:18 | 5.5 | 05:57 | 0.9 |
| March 15 | 00:22 | 13.8 | 12:09 | 15.4 | 06:03 | 4.1 | 06:32 | -0.1 |

Wrangell Roundup: Special Events

FREE TAX RETURN PREPARATION every Saturday through April 14 at the Nolan Center. Sponsored by the AARP TaxAide Foundation. Open to everyone, regardless of age. IRS-certified volunteers will prepare and e-file your return at no charge. Refunds can be direct-deposited into your bank account. By appointment only. Call Paula at 907-874-3824 or 907-305-0309.

NOLAN CENTER THEATER presents "Death on the Nile," rated PG-13, at 7 p.m. Friday and 4 p.m. Saturday. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$5 for children under age 12, for the crime drama mystery film that runs two hours and 7 minutes. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

SENIOR CENTER is offering bingo at 1 p.m. Wednesdays.

WRANGELL PARKS & REC registration for the American Red Cross lifeguard course is open through March 29. The course will run March 31 to April 3. Fee is \$150. There is a fee waiver for eligible individuals who intend to work for Parks & Recreation. Register online at wrangllrec.com or call 907-874-2444.

IRENE INGLE PUBLIC LIBRARY will hold Story Time every Friday at 11 a.m. via Zoom. Meeting ID: 935 4298 0052; passcode 8743535.

WRANGELL PARKS & REC is offering Youth Dance Class on Saturdays through April 30 for ages 3-7 years old at the community center gym. Register online at wrangllrec.com or call 907-874-2444.

WRANGELL PARKS & REC is offering multiple activities and programs to get your body moving. For more information on any of the activities visit www.wrangellrec.com or call 907-874-2444.

Want more attendance at your meeting or event? Send information for Roundup to wrgsent@gmail.com or call 907-874-2301. Or go to the Sentinel website, click on the Calendar tab, and submit your entry online.

Continuing Events

PARKS and RECREATION www.wrangellrec.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

Weight room available by appointment and at reduced capacity: 6 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 - 7:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 6 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 - 8:30 p.m. Friday; 10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Saturday

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

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

March 9, 1922

The following excerpt from a letter of Acting Governor Thiele will interest residents of Wrangell who are being asked to join the Alaska Historical Association. "I heartily concur with you in securing an appropriation from the coming Legislature for the purpose of establishing a branch museum at Wrangell. I remember distinctly while in Wrangell visiting Chief Shakes House, and seeing a number of Tlingit curios there. Their association with the people of Wrangell should at all times remain there, and ... I will cooperate with you in doing all I can to secure a branch museum in your town." It is hoped by the committee engaged in securing Alaska His-

torical Association members that the residents of this oldest town in Southeast will demonstrate their interest in preservation by joining the association in large numbers. Subscription lists are at the Sentinel office, the Wrangell Hotel and at the U.S. Customs House.

March 7, 1947

Over 100 men are now employed in Wrangell's Alaska Asiatic Lumber mill. Many of them are local residents, but many more have come in from Juneau and the Outside, making a sizable payroll for the town. This week, Tuesday afternoon to be exact, the first pile was driven for the new 110-foot-by-120-foot planer building, which will rise from what was once a fill-in of old slab piles. It will be the biggest building Wrangell ever saw. Clearing is going on and the steel work has arrived for the dry kiln building which will be erected next to the planer plant. As rapidly as possible space is being made for the big boilers which will drive the

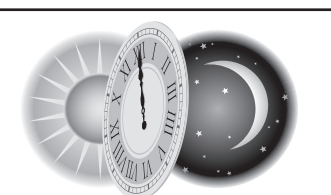
1,500-horsepower steam turbine that will generate power for the mill and the equipment which will make Wrangell's sawmill the largest in Alaska.

March 10, 1972

Work got underway this week on a \$98,393 state improvement project in Wrangell harbor. The work, being done by Tom O. Paddock Co., of Juneau, under a state Department of Public Works contract, includes: Extension and redecking of the city (Reliance Shrimp) dock, lengthening and relocating 45 feet farther south the north-south finger float adjacent to the dock, dredging of nearly 4,000 cubic yards of mud from the bay in the vicinity of the dock and the floats to give a minimum depth of 10 feet at mean low water, rebuilding of the city grid, including new piling and a new, wider walkway. Tom Forrhies, construction supervisor for the state, said the job is scheduled for completion in early June.

March 13, 1997

Tuesday night the city council passed two school funding proposals. Consideration of a proposal from the schools to fund an internet connection was discussed at length. Ed McLain, school curriculum and instruction director, stated the internet proposal would tie each of the three schools together. The program could also serve the community through evening programs. The council voted to fund the equipment, wiring, installation for a total of \$10,400, leaving the training expense to the schools.



Daylight Hours

| Date | Sunrise | Sunset | Hours |
|----------|---------|--------|--------|
| March 9 | 6:20a | 5:40p | 11:20h |
| March 10 | 6:17a | 5:42p | 11:25h |
| March 11 | 6:14a | 5:45p | 11:30h |
| March 12 | 6:12a | 5:47p | 11:34h |
| March 13 | 7:09a | 6:49p | 11:39h |
| March 14 | 7:06a | 6:51p | 11:44h |
| March 15 | 7:04a | 6:53p | 11:49h |



Borough receives nearly \$500,000 to help cover revenue losses

By SARAH ASLAM
Sentinel reporter

The borough has received a nearly half-a-million-dollar state grant, intended to help Wrangell cover some of its revenue losses due to the pandemic's hit to the economy.

The grant is \$469,785, which the borough assembly may put toward buying a new garbage truck and replacing the exterior siding of the pool building at the recreation center. The assembly was scheduled to consider the expenditures at its Tuesday meeting.

The borough had requested \$1.8 million when it applied for the grant from the Division of Community and Regional Affairs in December, but "in the application process, the grant administrators received four times the amount of eligible lost government revenue than predicted," Finance Director Mason Villarma wrote in his report for the assembly meeting.

Communities received less than their full requests.

The Legislature last year made available \$50 million to help cities and bor-

oughs replace revenue losses blamed on the pandemic-induced economic slowdown. The money came from the state's share of funding under the American Rescue Plan Act.

Wrangell's \$1.8 million request covered sales tax, port and harbors, utilities, the Nolan Center and other revenues that came in lower than expected during the pandemic.

With the latest grant, the borough's total in state and federal pandemic aid is at about \$5 million, not counting money that went to the school district, businesses, nonprofits or individuals.

The borough administration is recommending the funds go toward the community pool for exterior siding repairs and repainting, and the purchase of a new garbage truck.

Both projects have no prospects of being funded from other sources, Villarma said.

The sanitation department has two garbage trucks, and both are 12 years old, said Tom Wetor, public works director, on Monday.

"The industry standard is eight to 10 years," he said.

Over the past several years, the department has seen increased signs of aging on the equipment. Major components have started to fail. The box on the back of the truck that would be replaced is starting to rust out.

"The biggest issue is the wiring inside the truck. ... As the wear and tear starts on the wire harnesses, it becomes a tricky thing to try and troubleshoot," Wetor said. "It becomes time consuming. Last year, we increased the maintenance budget for that truck by 30%. This year, just with the cost of materials, you're looking at another 15% or so increase on maintenance."

Any time a truck is at its industry lifespan, Wetor said, the manufacturer stops making a lot of the replacement parts. "They start to save that out for new models. We have had difficulty buying new clamps for the garbage trucks."

Outside of fabricating the parts themselves, or having someone at the boatyard fabricate the parts, the sanitation department is going to continue running into trouble trying to find replacement pieces, and at significant expense, he said.

"It's our heaviest-used equipment. They are on the road every day. They operate in a toxic and corrosive environment. It's harsh on the longevity of the equipment. The new truck would allow us to get more life out of the old trucks," Wetor said.

The hope would be that the department could get a new truck this year, then look at getting another one in the next three years. "If we spread (a second purchase) out too far, we're going to be in a new model, and we don't want to have different parts," he said. "Keep it close so they are similar makes and models."

The pool building exterior siding is deteriorating and experiencing rot, Recreation Director Kate Thomas said Monday. "I believe it's the original siding that was installed with the 1985 development of this site." The exterior siding will be replaced, in-kind, and the brick façade on the exterior walkway will be removed and replaced with the same kind of cedar wood siding. "This is all exterior work, stuff you can see from the streets and roadway," Thomas said.

Forest Service considers building new cabin on road system

By SARAH ASLAM
Sentinel reporter

The Forest Service is considering building a new cabin at Highbush Lake on the Wrangell road system.

The project is listed on the Forest Service's Schedule of Proposed Actions, or SOPA, which "contains a list of proposed actions that will soon begin or are currently undergoing environmental analysis and documentation."

The agency's list invites the public to "indicate your interest in specific proposals," according to (www.fs.fed.us/sopa) the Forest Service website. People can write in and provide input.

The new cabin is a good candidate because there is an existing recreation site with a parking lot and access trail down to the lake, Tory Houser, district recreation staff officer, said Friday.

Highbush Lake is about 15 air miles

southeast of Wrangell, about 2 miles inland from the Back Channel. It can be reached on old logging roads that veer off from Zimovia Highway near McCormack Creek.

"We thought that might be a good place to consider a new cabin," she said. "The stage that we're at right now is the Forest Service is considering taking action."

There is no funding, as the Forest Service must work through its environmental review process. "We are more in the planning stages."

And since the Forest Service doesn't have a design, they don't have cost estimates, Houser said. For comparison, the Forest Service built Ravens Roost Cabin on Mitkof Island last fall in Petersburg at a cost of about \$700,000. "That one was way up on a mountain, possibly if (Wrangell's) is built on a road system, it could be a lower cost," Houser said.

In order to be faithful to the Tongass National Forest Sustainable Cabin Strategy, the

Ranger District is considering decommissioning a cabin — the one at Anan Lake.

"The idea is that, basically we would have a zero gain, if we build a new one, we would eliminate one that is not being used to its full potential. It's not an absolute — we don't have to, but we're trying to do that. We know the number of cabins we have makes it challenging to use them all. We want to make sure it's not costing a lot to maintain a non-used cabin."

If you follow Anan Creek up to where it hits Anan Lake, the cabin is on the left-hand shore of the lake, Houser said. "It's very remote, you can only get there by plane. Sadly, not too many people are flying to our cabin these days."

Any movement on decommissioning the Anan Lake cabin would be in tandem with building a Highbush Lake cabin. Houser said they hope to make a decision in the upcoming federal fiscal year which starts on Oct. 1.

A second project, which is also open for input on the SOPA page, is an environmental assessment to look at sites in Wrangell, Petersburg and Kake for new cabins that are relatively accessible, Houser said.

"We're really focusing on things on the road system. We have numbers showing it is much easier for folks to get to cabins and use them if they can drive to them. We are asking people to give us ideas of places where we should build projects," she said.

Houser said the Forest Service wants to open that input period this spring.

When the agency has that input from the public, it will put it toward a specialist or an archeologist who can vet the sites for feasibility of construction.

"We are really hoping to have a lot of community input," Houser said. "We want to ask our community users what they want, we have a robust public input process planned."

Ferry system still short of hiring target for summer schedule

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

State ferry system and Transportation Department officials plan to gather this week in Ketchikan to consider options for fulfilling the advertised summer schedule amid a continuing shortage of onboard crew.

The department failed to meet its self-imposed timeline of hiring enough workers by March 1 to ensure that the Columbia on May 1 would return to service for the first time since fall 2019. The Alaska Marine Highway System had said it needed to hire at least 166 new employees to staff up its fleet — a gap of about one-quarter of its total authorized hiring level.

Failing to make the hires by March 1 does not mean the Columbia will sit idle another summer, said Katherine Keith, the de-

partment's change management director. The ferry could start running between Bellingham, Washington, and Southeast Alaska later in May if enough onboard crew is available.

Or it may mean the ship sits idle another year.

The Alaska representative for one of three ferry worker unions is concerned there will not be enough crew to meet the full summer schedule that starts ramping up in a couple of months. Ben Goldrich, of the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association, said Keith "is doing an admirable job of trying to pick up the pieces" of inadequate past recruitment efforts but, for example, he said, the system has been short-staffed on engineers the past decade.

"I am not aware of them doing anything to recruit engineers," Goldrich said last Thursday.

Though 166 is the minimum number of new employees needed, 350 new hires in all job categories this spring and summer would be even better to allow for illnesses, vacations and to avoid overtime while operating seven ships in Southeast, Prince William Sound and Southwest Alaska, officials have said.

The Columbia, the largest ship in the fleet with room for almost 500 passengers, will not be available for bookings until management is certain the ship will have enough crew to sail.

Making the problem even worse, "we continue to lose people" due to resignations, Keith said.

As of last Wednesday, the ferry system had about 50 candidates "who have submitted applications that we are processing," Keith said. The marine highway

continues to advertise in Alaska and nationwide, and has signed a \$250,000 contract with an Anchorage-based recruiting firm to help find more applicants.

"We do understand that to staff our vessels we have to look nationwide," she said.

The maritime industry faces many of the same worker shortages as other employers across the country.

Management met last week with officials of the three unions that represent state ferry workers to search for new ideas to recruit more applicants, Keith said. That includes working with maritime academies, an Inlandboatmen's Union (IBU) training program and others, but those will take time and likely not produce graduates until later in the summer, she said.

"We do see where we have to leverage a lot of resources we hav-

en't used before," such as stepping up hiring efforts through union hiring halls, Keith said.

Almost three-quarters of the vacancies were for entry-level stewards aboard the ships, department officials reported in a presentation last month at the House Finance Subcommittee for the Transportation Department budget. Stewards are represented by the IBU.

Much of the problem is that resignations and retirements have exceeded new hires the past three years.

"Staffing goals for the summer season will not be met at current recruitment rates," the department reported in its presentation to the House Transportation Committee last month, explaining that insufficient staffing could result in scaling back the ferry system's summer schedule.

SEARHC payments

Continued from page 1

go toward the borough being able to survey and get the former Wrangell Institute property developed. "They've been pretty agreeable," the finance director said.

SEARHC's voluntary payment in Wrangell may be unique in Southeast, where the tribal nonprofit operates in almost 20 communities, with its largest operations in Juneau and Sitka.

The health care provider does not make a payment in lieu of taxes in Juneau, Jeff Rogers, the city's finance director, said on Friday.

Of the 10 SEARHC-owned

properties in Juneau, some are fully exempt, but not all, Juneau's assessor Mary Hammond said Friday. "They pay taxes for portions of buildings that are being rented to third-party tenants and they pay taxes on vacant land that is not being used for parking," she said.

State law provides that while a nonprofit's properties used for charitable purposes are exempt from property taxes, land or buildings or offices rented out or used for commercial operations can be subject to taxes.

SEARHC did not reply to the Sentinel's requests for comment.

"If we can get a percentage,

even 75% of (the mill rate) that would be a win for us," Villarma said. "Because technically they don't have to pay. Hopeful we can get the majority of what would be assessed, if the mill rate would apply."

Negotiations are still underway, Good said. "The goal is once that is done, we'll present it to the assembly if there is an agreement and what that is. At this point, it's considered tribal land, which we can't tax. So I don't think it really matters what the assessment is."

Good said he hopes to hear back in the next couple of weeks.

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Alaska cannot afford to sit out this war

By LARRY PERSILY
Publisher

The state of Alaska, Congress and the president, individual companies and people do not all have the same capabilities and authority to show their disgust and dismay at Russia's unprovoked, murderous attack on Ukraine, a sovereign nation at war with no one until Russian President Vladimir Putin decided he had to prove that he is the toughest, meanest kid on the planet.

But everyone needs to do something.

The world has suffered far too many deaths, ruined countries, poverty and famine due to wars over the centuries to sit by and watch more of the same. By 2022, we should be better than that. But, sadly, with the likes of Putin and other dangerous, corrupt egos in power, the killings continue, the shelling and missile strikes continue, the disregard for human rights and free elections continue.

A bigger war is not the answer. The U.S. and European nations are correct in not sending in troops and airplanes. That would only result in more deaths, emboldening Putin to escalate his killings, forcing more countries to choose sides and further dividing the world.

There is no easy way to force Putin to reconsider his deadly personal war on Ukraine. The hope is that a series of aid packages to the endangered nation and sanctions against Russia can, in time, make a difference in two ways: Helping Ukrainians survive and, cumulatively, convincing Putin that he can't win and to accept a negotiated deal. Or maybe the sanctions will convince Russians that Putin needs to retire. Either way, pressure and aid are the best weapons to help Ukraine.

It is everyone's responsibility to help bring that pressure to end the destruction, no matter how far

from the border we live. The world is threatened when one nation decides war is an acceptable trade to gain power. And every person is threatened when innocent people are killed and no one tries to stop it.

Stopping it means stopping all purchases of Russian products, particularly oil and natural gas that provides the bulk of income to Putin's government. It means blocking financial transactions that allow Russia, its companies and its government, to trade goods and investments around the world. It means prohibiting Russian airlines from flying overhead and kicking Russia out of international sports competitions and anything else that the country cares about.

As for whether the Alaska Permanent Fund should sell off its investments in Russian companies, that may be a financial moot point — there are few buyers these days for those stocks and bonds. The same applies to other savings accounts and pension funds worldwide. No one can sell if there are no buyers. And even when there are buyers, the investments are worth a fraction of what they were two weeks ago.

But whether government entities can find buyers for the investments is not the point. Even if it takes days or weeks or months to unload the stocks and bonds at a loss, it's a moral issue, not financial. Starting a war is immoral, and holding investments in a country that starts a war is wrong.

It's our responsibility to be part of a cumulative world message to Putin. No one sanction or decision will affect the outcome. The hope is that an overwhelming reaction might make a difference, maybe. There are no abstentions.

Taking an investment loss is a price that everyone in the free world should pay as its contribution toward restoring peace and freedom. It's a lot easier for us than giving up your life, as people are doing in Ukraine.

"It's our responsibility to be part of a cumulative world message to Putin."

GUEST OPINIONS

Ukrainians deserve to govern their own country

By OLA RICHARDS

My hometown in Poland, Chelm, is 20 miles away from the border with Ukraine.

My mother called me Feb. 26 and told me refugees are coming to my hometown, mostly women with kids. It looks like most of them are just passing by to get far away from the war, but some are deciding to stay and wait for friends or family that are still held up in the Ukrainian traffic.

So far, since the invasion began, Poland has taken in over 500,000 refugees from Ukraine.

My hometown's population is around 65,000, and we are not a tourist city. We don't have a lot of hotels and beds and breakfasts, and the issues are adding up: not enough places to shelter people, empty shelves at the stores, long lines at gas stations.

The people of my town and all over the country are working together to gather essential supplies for everyone fleeing from Ukraine. My mother supports every single way to help the refugees, but at the same time she has been worried, not just about the war next door but about what is going to happen in a week, a month, a year. This is just a beginning.

I was born in 1984. I don't remember communism in Poland, just the stories from my parents and grandparents.

I was told that after World War II Polish people were controlled by the Soviet government. I was told that people were not happy about being watched all the time, being influenced by a country that they didn't want to be part of. We

struggled and fought for years for democracy.

I do remember one thing about living in communist country: long lines at the store. I remember spending hours with my mom, just waiting. I was told that everyone had jobs and money during that time but the shelves at the stores were empty. I guess all the goods were transported back to the Soviet Union.

I still remember standing in the store called Pewex, which was a chain of shops in Poland that accepted payment only in U.S. dollars and looking at a Barbie doll that I could not have. Pewex was a symbol of luxury and privilege.

In 1989, finally the situation changed. We got rid of the Soviet Union government and the

Continued on page 5

EDITORIAL

Schools and students teaching and learning well

The face mask debate is over for now — hopefully for good, if the community can stay healthy — and annual budget deliberations are starting over how much the borough will contribute to education and how the school district will spend its local, state and federal money.

Which means it's a good week to learn what students and staff are doing at Wrangell's schools.

There are a couple of examples this week that students are learning what's important in life and how to manage and succeed after graduation.

At Evergreen Elementary School, fifth graders determined they wanted to help raise money for the St. Frances Animal Shelter. It started earlier in the school year when staff decided to teach students about leadership and community and the ethics of helping out others.

Students connected with the message and the fifth graders came up with the Empty Your Pockets campaign that runs through March 21. They will place signs and donation cans around town, urging people to give to the animal shelter, and will entice the community with bake sales the next two weekends.

It's not about how much they raise. The success of the new teaching effort at Evergreen is that students see themselves as part of the community and want to help.

Being part of the bigger community after graduating high school is the focus of another effort at the school district. The high school and middle school, with help from SEARHC and other organizations and businesses in town, will put on a social-emotional fair, call it a life skills fair, on April 5.

"We've been struggling ever since COVID, or even before that with the social-emotional situation with our kids," said Bob Davis, the assistant principal of both schools. "The needs of the kids have grown exponentially," Davis said. That's everything from academics to the skills they will need later in life.

SEARHC will provide students with information on coping, anxiety, depression and anger, teen drinking and peer pressure, and staying safe online.

School counselor Addy Esco has asked the borough's parks and recreation department to have a booth with information about how physical activity can help mental health.

"I'll have a booth that's centered (on) students thinking about their future; career planning stuff, some life skills stuff, ways to help kids be well-rounded," Esco said, adding that shop teacher Winston Davies will be there to discuss career and technical education opportunities.

Davis said it's a matter of coming together as a community to help the students.

That's a good lesson to teach, and an even better one to learn.

Wrangell Sentinel

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Thank you for helping to protect our community and save lives during COVID

As COVID-19 numbers come back down and mitigation plans are slowly being lifted, I want to say thank you to all of those who helped get us this far.

Thank you to everyone who wore their mask, got vaccinated

and canceled social plans all on your own to protect those around you. In spite of foggy glasses and sore arms, you pressed on.

Thank you to everyone who put forth the selfless effort to protect our community. You helped to save lives and kept loved ones in this world.

Delton Claggett

Alaska could contribute more to world's energy independence from Russia

By FRANK MURKOWSKI

It is anguishing to reflect on the current news coverage of the Russian assault on Ukraine. Most Americans feel a sense of guilt because of the humanitarian injustice being done, and we want to provide some meaningful and timely assistance.

The contrast between the Russian leader Vladimir Putin and Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelensky is a stark and living reminder of the chasms between totalitar-

ianism and democracy. Putin is a rabid dictator; Zelensky is a freely elected leader who is rallying his country to arms.

I believe it is time that Alaskans and all Americans come together to offer a potential solution that could have a meaningful impact as Russia continues its advances. I suggest that our congressional delegation speedily move to offer a Senate-House binding resolution to have our nation cease to purchase oil or gas from Russia.

I also encourage other free nations to join us in this effort.

As of last month, the U.S. was purchasing about 550,000 barrels of Russian oil and refined products per day, at a cost to consumers of about \$50 million per day. As a matter of comparison, total production in the U.S. is 11 million barrels per day, Saudi Arabia about 10.6 million, and Russia about 10.5 million.

If other nations join with us, the Russian

cash flow would come to a halt and I believe the Russia that we know today would no longer be a threat to the free world

Our government owns two large oil prospects in the northern Alaska. The first is the 23-million-acre National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, which was established in 1923. Leases were sold and there is production occurring that flows into the trans-Alaska oil pipeline.

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Oldest continuously published paper in Alaska



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Energy relief

Continued from page 1

The measure still requires House action and Senate concurrence before it can go to the governor for signature into law. The House Finance Committee unveiled its budget plan on Friday, with further committee consideration and possible amendments before the appropriations bill could move to the full House for a vote.

House Finance Committee Co-chair Neal Foster, of Nome, said rising oil prices have a double effect in Alaska.

"It's two things. It's the coffers — we're going to get more money into the state — and people are going to feel that at the pump. So as we get more money and people are feeling the squeeze, we need to try to provide some relief for Alaskans," Foster said.

This is not the first time lawmakers

have proposed payments to Alaskans on top of the Permanent Fund dividend. In 2008, the Legislature, pushed by then-Gov. Sarah Palin, approved \$1,200 "resource rebate" checks for Alaska residents as a way for the state to share some of its multibillion-dollar oil revenue surplus.

Foster said lawmakers were influenced by the 2008 program in coming up with the current plan. Like then, the payments would go to all Alaskans eligible for the Permanent Fund dividend. Eligibility would be based on the 2022 dividend and payments could come in a single lump sum later this year, Foster added.

The 2021 dividend to Alaska residents was \$1,114.

Gov. Mike Dunleavy proposed in December using some of the surplus revenue to give out a \$1,250 spring div-

"People are feeling the squeeze (of rising energy costs). We need to try to provide some relief for Alaskans."

Neal Foster,
House Finance
Committee Co-chair,
of Nome

idend on top of his proposal for a 2022 Permanent Fund dividend of \$2,564. Lawmakers have taken no steps in support of the governor's plan for a special

spring payment.

In a Twitter post, Dunleavy said the House coalition's announcement is "better late than never."

"For months now, I have been pointing out that rising oil prices are benefiting government finances but are hurting Alaskans," Dunleavy wrote.

Independent governor candidate Bill Walker was quick to endorse the energy relief payment.

"Alaskans are getting hammered by high energy costs. Oil prices are higher than they've been in over a decade. The calculation is easy: get help out the door," Walker said in a statement.

Democratic governor candidate Les Gara endorsed the idea later in the day on social media, saying that "the House was right to announce an energy relief check."

Anan permits

Continued from page 1

that the guides didn't officially have, we have allowed people to choose to use an outfitter guide if they wanted to. We have observed that 85% of people want to go to Anan with a guide."

Even with the option for individuals to get a permit and then go find a guide, there were unused visitor slots. "We have also observed we never make our capacity of 60 (visitors) per day. Based on our own management strategy, and the weather, and the ability of the guides, we

are always coming short. We really want to bring people. We are making a decision to give 100% of those 60 permits a day to commercial groups."

As an "overbook strategy" to ensure no unused slots at the popular bear viewing site, similar to airlines that bet on some passengers not showing up, the Forest Service has made available 12 permits per day that can be booked on recreation.gov for people who want to get to Anan on their own, without needing a commercial guide.

"The assumption is, on most

days, not all of those 60-plus-12 permits are going to be used," Houser said. "There is going to be weather, cruise boats won't show, whatever it is."

The hope is that overbooking will allow the site to reach capacity over the season.

And now that all 60 daily permits are going toward commercial guides — not counting the self-guided 12 openings each day — the agency is providing an opportunity for existing Forest Service-approved operators to gain more service days, and to allow new competitors to compete and

be part of the Anan guide services.

The application period opened March 1, at <https://bit.ly/3sBoK6i>, and will accept proposals until April 14 at 4:30 p.m.

Houser was part of a scouting trip to Anan last Thursday, making sure the site is ready to go for Rainforest Contracting out of Petersburg, which entered into a \$989,800 contract with the Forest Service last June to tear down and build a new observation deck. The current one has reached the end of its usable life. The contract expires Dec. 31 and covers demolition

of the existing observatory deck, construction of a new upper viewing deck, a new shelter with a toilet, new ramp access, a reroute of the access trail, and temporary connector staircase.

There's about a foot of snow on the open part of the deck, and some trees have fallen across the trail. "We have to cut those down for the contractor to get in and out," Houser said.

Rainforest Contracting is scheduled to start work March 14.

Houser said she is "terrified and excited. It's just such a huge project. I want it to go really well."

Richards

Continued from page 4

Militsiya, the occupying Soviet police force.

I have a special memory of one event from that time. My grandfather used to babysit me a lot since my mother was a single parent. I was at school, and I was maybe 6 years old. He came to pick me up, but it was too early. We were not done with the class.

He said to me, "Today is a very important day for you and our future, come with me."

And I went with him, to vote!

Everyone was so excited. I stood in the voting booth with my grandpa. He put the pencil in my hand and gave me the honor to choose who we would vote for. It was the first vote in my life, but it was also the first time in my grandpa's life that he was able to vote in a free and independent Poland.

I voted with 75% of the Polish population for the same guy: Lech Walesa. He was our first president democratically chosen by Polish people — not anyone else.

That memory was the beginning of my future in an independent country. Don't get me wrong, it was not easy. We were so broken, lost, but we united and found ways to deal with our problems.

We worked hard, we made a lot of mistakes but the beautiful thing about it is that they are our failures and victories — not anyone else's.

I want the same for Ukrainian people. I want their kids to experience the same thing I did when I was 6 years old. I wish for Ukraine to be independent, run by Ukrainian people. I want them to make mistakes, learn from them, and have a choice.

Growing up in the east of Poland meant that Ukrainians were part of my life. As a teenager, this is where we would buy our cheap alcohol or cigarettes. It was just part of an ordinary day to find a Ukrainian person in the market square to get some goodies.

I feel that all Slavic countries are like a big family full of brothers and sisters: we fight, we tease, we make fun of each other, our history is brutal and bloody but, in the end, we always make up and unite with each other.

I fear not just for Ukrainians but Russians as well. The people of Russia have been suffering for years and I feel sorry that they live in a country stuck in the past. I also believe that this war is Putin's war, not the Russian people's war.

Ola Richards works at the Petersburg Pilot newspaper.

Murkowski

Continued from page 4

The other area is in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The area covers some 19 million acres, about the size of the entire state of West Virginia. Congress designated within ANWR 8 million acres as wilderness, 9 million acres as a refuge, with 1.6 million acres for exploration and potential development.

A lease sale was held by the previous administration in 2020, and 11 of the 22 leases were sold. Even though the federal government received full payment for the leases, the current administration has now challenged the validity of the lease sale.

We have two major federal oil and gas sales with prospects for favorable production, but the ANWR leases are mired in litigation. If these leases had been allowed to proceed, the Alaska pipeline would likely be moving more oil. We might not be paying for Russian crude.

Alaska can contribute to our energy supply if given the op-

portunity. In the past, we have been too gullible in following those who proclaimed that we must totally cease oil exploration and production to halt greenhouse gasses and global warming.

The economics of the world rise and fall on energy. We should let those who promote alternative energies come forth now with substitutions and energy alternatives sufficient to replace the barrels we are importing from Russia. It will very likely save lives in the Ukraine. Let those environmentalists stand up and be counted.

In the meantime, we must take maximum advantage of the energy resources we possess. The constant barrage of petty lawsuits from the environmental community must not stand in the way of using American resources to create American energy independence. Strategic use of our existing resources will give us time to speed development and replacement by

solar, wind, hydro and geothermal technologies.

By releasing Russia's tight grip on our energy needs, we benefit our own future and that of the Ukrainian people. The balance of American energy can only contribute to the balance of political stability around the world, especially for our valiant friends in Ukraine.

Frank Murkowski served as governor of Alaska 2002-2006, and as U.S. senator for Alaska 1981-2002.

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Fundraising

Continued from page 1

but still care about what's happening to those around them.

"We looked at what's going on at the middle school and just what the social norms are up there ... and decided that we're probably going to make a bigger impact if we could enable the kids in the fifth grade going into middle school to become confident in themselves

as leaders," Crowley said. "The idea is that you flood the middle school with that mentality, and hopefully it will start to create change in the culture up there."

A goal has yet to be set by the students on how much they wish to raise, which is another realistic aspect the teachers can help them understand. "They'd probably say \$1 million," Crowley said with a laugh.



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Text delivers good news for Wrangell business owner

By SARAH ASLAM
Sentinel reporter

The owner of a Wrangell company that makes body care products learned by a text that she had won the grand prize at a state competition for commercial goods made or derived from Alaska seafood.

She had just returned to town from a trade show in New York City.

Waterbody, owned by Angie Flickinger, won the grand prize for its Deep Blue Sea Bath Soak at the 2021-2022 Alaska Symphony of Seafood awards ceremony on Feb. 24 in Juneau. Flickinger's company is among the top 10 finalists given booth space at the Seafood Expo North America trade show in Boston on March 13-15, but Flickinger said she won't be there.

Though honored to be among the regional award winners invited to the trade show, she said it's not feasible for her to go to Boston. Craig-based Seagrove Kelp Co. and Ocean Beauty Seafoods, which has multiple plants under the company OSI Seafoods across Alaska, including in Petersburg, are up for awards at the expo.

"Looking at travel costs, I don't think it's worth the time and money to go,"



PHOTO BY SARAH ASLAM/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Angie Flickinger, owner of Waterbody, displays a block of soap last Friday that she will cut into small bars for sale. Her workshop and storefront are on Shakes Street, next to the laundromat.

Flickinger said last Thursday.

The bath soak won the grand prize in Juneau after nabbing the beyond-the-

plate award at the same competition.

Her product contains Pacific sea salt and Alaska bull kelp.

Flickinger skipped the Juneau event because she'd just gotten back from that big trade show on the East Coast and had already done a lot of travel. She learned she had won when a friend at Barnacle Foods in Juneau texted her from the Feb. 24 award ceremony. "She sent me a message that night."

"It's still great to win the (grand prize) award — it was totally unexpected," Flickinger said.

As a non-seafood brand established in 2020, Flickinger said winning the grand prize says a lot about her ability to beat the competition. "I was up against some heavy hitters. A lot of the brands and entrants, like Trident (Seafoods) have been around for a long time. It feels like a major accomplishment — to be a just-starting-out body care brand — to win."

She said it feels good to be recognized in that way by the seafood industry for her skin care and body care product that uses a mariculture ingredient, a budding economic sector.

"I do use a lot of kelp, it has a lot of potential and I'm excited to keep digging into that, and finding other ways to develop markets for that ingredient and that resource," Flickinger said.

Social-emotional life skills fair to help kids with resources and opportunities

By MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

What's being labeled as a social-emotional fair is aiming to give kids skills that will be useful to them in life after school.

On April 5, Wrangell High School and Stikine Middle School will host an event that involves various organizations throughout the community to help students learn everything from stress-reduction skills to how to balance a checkbook.

"We've been struggling ever since COVID, or even before that with the social-emotional situation with our kids," said Bob Davis, the assistant principal of both schools. "Krissy Smith over at SEARHC called and said, 'Hey, we could help with a fair-type situation where we can present students with options.'"

According to Rachel Harris, administrative supervisor for SEARHC Behavioral Health, her organization will provide students with information on coping and calming skills for anxiety, depression and/or anger, dealing with teen drinking and peer pressure, and staying safe online and with social media.

Davis and Addy Esco, the

schools' counselor, would like to have a bevy of resources for the students, including career planning resources and basic life skills.

"In my opinion, the needs of the kids have grown exponentially," Davis said. "That's everything from academic skills they need later in life, and then the social-emotional situation has deteriorated. Teachers are expected to step in and we haven't been supported enough. We're trying to do more and more with less and less."

Esco said they've asked the borough's parks and recreation department to have a booth to talk about the positive effects of physical activity on mental health, and First Bank to help students understand financial things like budgeting and balancing a checkbook.

"I'll have a booth that's centered around students thinking about their future; career planning stuff, some life skills stuff, ways to help kids be well-rounded," Esco said. "There are those resources to help them get questions answered or needs met."

She said shop teacher Win-

ston Davies will also be on hand to discuss career and technical education opportunities.

"I really think it's important for kids to hear — even if it's the exact same information — from different voices," Esco said. "Someone else talk about coping skills or how to deal with stress, they might hear it from someone else rather than me every time. Sometimes kids, for any number of reasons, decide that's the voice they're going to hear from."

Esco's goal with the fair is to increase students' awareness of support systems and opportunities available to them. "I like to see kids' perspectives grow. Just try to get them to see there are other ways to get things done out there."

For Davis, it's a matter of coming together as a community for the betterment of its children.

"If we can get different organizations, different entities to come together on something like this, it becomes easier in the future," he said. "A lot of times, creating something new is the hardest. Maybe it's something that can continue and expand into the future."

Owners uncertain about Stikine Inn expansion plans

By SARAH ASLAM
Sentinel reporter

A planned expansion doubling the number of rooms at the Stikine Inn, Wrangell's only operating hotel, has been delayed for at least a couple of years due to the current economic climate.

The business owners had purchased property from the borough to expand with 30 additional rooms and tourism-related retail space, co-owner Will Goodale reported to the state in the Stikine's liquor license renewal application this winter.

The Stikine received a fill permit from the Army Corps of Engineers and had filled in an area for the hotel addition.

The owners were initially looking at a \$3 million to \$4 million expansion to build between 2020 and 2022, Jake Harris, co-owner and general manager, said Monday. He declined to speculate on a new timeline, but said in the current climate it may not be until 2025 that they move on an expansion.

"Who knows, it may evolve into a different project all to-

gether," Harris said. "There is a lot that has happened in the last couple of years."

In the current market of high building material prices and operating expenses, it's cost-prohibitive to expand, he said. "We have to see where the bottom is before we make a commitment that large."

Harris told the Sentinel in December he expected to face a 40% increase in his costs to operate the business this year.

The 34-room Stikine started as 18 rooms above the restaurant and bar when Bill and Cheryl Goodale opened it in the 1970s, Harris said.

"It had doubled at one point, and hopefully we'll double it again," he said. As owners, they have to measure the heavy guest demand for three months of the summer season and figure out how to keep the mortgage paid the rest of the year, he said.

"We have to get through the next couple of years before we can start making big leaps and bounds again," Harris said.

Police report

Monday, Feb. 28

Citizen assist.
Agency assist: U.S. Forest Service.

Tuesday, March 1

Vehicular assault.
Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.

Wednesday, March 2

Parking complaint.
Parking complaint.
Welfare check.
Agency assist: Ambulance.

Thursday, March 3

Traffic stop: Verbal warning for faulty equipment and expired license tabs.

Friday, March 4

Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.

Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.

Agency assist: U.S. Forest Service.

Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.

Saturday, March 5

Agency assist: Ambulance.
Agency assist: Ambulance.
Stolen vehicles.

Sunday, March 6

Agency assist: Ambulance.
Agency assist: Alaska State Troopers.
Intoxicated person.

There were six subpoenas served during the reporting period.

Hats off to You, Wrangell!

Please join us at the Wrangell Chamber of Commerce's Annual Dinner Fundraiser 2022



*March 26th
5:00pm-9:00pm
at the Nolan Center
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wrangellchamberofcommerce.wildapricot.org*



Policy for Letters to the Editor

- Letters should be typed or clearly written and no longer than 400 words.
- All letters must be signed by the writer and include a phone number and any affiliation with a group which pertains to the letter.

The Sentinel reserves the right to edit any submissions.

The deadline for submissions is Monday at 5 p.m. for Thursday publication.

Letters are run on a space-available basis.

WRANGELL SENTINEL

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Great-grandma steered her to a drive-through business

BY MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

Sara Gadd brewed up a business plan in 2019 that would keep coffee and customers flowing.

At nearly 2 years old, Drive-Thru Brew has served countless customers and helped Gadd realize a dream of owning her own business doing what she loves.

Gadd, 32, was born and raised in Wrangell and grew up in a coffee-loving household. "My great-grandma's (nickname) was Coffee Gram. We come from a long line of coffee lovers. I've always drank coffee as long as I can remember."

That love of coffee is what led Gadd to focus on the type of business she wanted to open. She began researching and planning in 2019, thinking that a business focused on java would do well here. As she looked around, the only available space that would work was the site of a defunct self-service carwash on the corner of Howell Avenue and Bennett Street, just toward town from the U.S. Forest Service offices.

She bought a small trailer and rented the plot. The space later went on the market, so Gadd bought it.

The business model for Drive-Thru Brew was such that when the pandemic hit, Gadd was prepared because she was already using curbside pickup, something many food service businesses had to adopt to stay afloat. Although slow-downs in the supply chain did push back opening the business until July 2020.

In addition to hot and cold coffee and tea drinks, including mochas, lattes and chai drinks, Gadd's menu has blended



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Sara Gadd, owner of Drive-Thru Brew, serves an iced mocha from the window of the business last Wednesday.

coffee (like a shake), smoothies, juices, Italian sodas and a popular caffeinated alternative called lotus energy drinks.

"It is energy from a flower, so it's like caffeine from the lotus plant," Gadd said of the popular drink. "Usually, my non-coffee drinkers get that. Even my coffee drinkers get that sometimes."

Though she hadn't worked in the cof-

fee business before, Gadd learned all she could through the internet and went through a training with Dillanos Coffee Rosters, based in Sumner, Washington.

Food is also served at Drive-Thru Brew, but menu items aren't as consistent due to rising costs or unavailability for many things.

"With the way things are going, I think

the barge prices have gone up three times since I opened," Gadd said. "Milk has doubled since I opened. It's actually cheaper for me to walk into the store and buy it from there. A lot of the food that I used to offer, I can't get anymore, like breakfast sandwiches. I used to have a whole variety."

Since the coffee shop is located at the top of a hill, Gadd said business tends to slow down through the winter as the road can be slick and dark mornings. The winter hours are 6:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday. She might extend the open hours to 4 p.m. in the summer season.

Hailie Davis, a security officer for TSA and waitress at the Marine Bar, makes it a point to stop at Drive-Thru Brew almost every day for a caramel macchiato, but will try other drinks, like the lotus energy drink, on occasion.

"They have awesome service," Davis said. "They are very kind, welcoming, quick and consistent. I tell my friends and coworkers that they have good fresh-made coffee."

Gadd has one employee, Maddy Harding, who works weekends for her, allowing Gadd to focus on her personal life and spend time with her five children. It helps that she loves her business and thrives at what she does.

"I like being in the shop. That part is super fun," Gadd said. "Some of the stuff behind that isn't as fun, but it's still worth it."

Trade war, COVID and now Russia's attack on Ukraine eat into Alaska seafood sales

BY LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

First a trade war, then a battle against an infectious virus and now a real war are all affecting Alaska seafood exports.

Shipments to China fell from as high as 30% of Alaska's total seafood export value in the 2010s to 20% in 2020. "The U.S.-China trade war has displaced \$500 million of Alaska seafood," Jeremy Woodrow, executive director of the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute, told legislators last week.

And though people bought more seafood to prepare at home during the COVID-19 pandemic, sales to restaurants and food services fell by 70%, Woodrow said. The food service market "still hasn't fully recovered."

The Alaska product at risk in Russia's invasion of Ukraine is pink salmon roe. Eastern Europe is a major buyer of the product, he said. "It's a regional preference."

Alaska in 2021 shipped to Ukraine about \$20 million of pink salmon roe — mostly frozen, salted and packed in tubs — Woodrow said in an interview after his presentation to the House Fisheries Committee on March 3.

Last year's pink salmon harvest was excellent, producing a lot of roe for sale. This year's export sales will depend on the commercial catch and the war in Ukraine. The big pink salmon returns come in July, and it's hard to know what the market in Eastern Europe and particularly Ukraine will look like later this summer, Woodrow said.

"A little bit stays here in the U.S.," he said, but most pink roe goes overseas, including to Ukraine's neighbors Poland, Moldova and Lithuania and a smaller quantity to Japan and China. Japanese consumers prefer chum salmon roe.

Russia is a competitor to Alaska in seafood sales, and Woodrow told lawmakers that Russia is investing \$7 billion in its processing and cold storage operations, new vessels and promotions. Though, in the context of the invasion of Ukraine and global sanctions against Russia, he said,

"I'm not sure how that is going to work for them moving forward."

A bigger challenge for Alaska seafood sales — worth \$4.7 billion wholesale in 2019, before COVID — is finding other buyers for lost exports to China, Woodrow said. "That China dot (on the global sales map) is getting smaller every year since 2018." The loss of exports to China has to be absorbed elsewhere, he said.

"Southeast Asia is a growing market as an alternative to China," he told lawmakers.

After a 20-year effort by ASMI and the Alaska seafood industry, China grew into the state's No. 1 seafood export market before the trade war cut deeply into sales starting in 2018, Woodrow said. China's tariffs on U.S. seafood imports are four times higher than on deliveries from Canada, Norway or Russia, he said.

"Alaska seafood needs global market diversification now more than ever," the House members heard in ASMI's presentation.

The marketing agency receives no state general fund dollars. This year's ASMI budget is funded with \$16 million from a voluntary self-assessment on the industry and \$10 million in federal money. The agency also benefited from \$7 million in one-time money under the American Rescue Plan Act, intended to help rebuild sales hurt by the pandemic-induced slowdown.

"We are optimistic for 2022," Woodrow said. Higher value and strong market demand as the world pulls out of pandemic closures should help Alaska fisherman and processors. Export sales picked up about 7% from 2020 to 2021, but still were down 10% from pre-COVID numbers.

And ASMI is always looking for new marketing opportunities, particularly as people return to dining out and socializing with groups. "We know that Alaska will not take over the turkey at Thanksgiving," he said, but the marketing agency is working to promote seafood as people socialize more.

"We want to make sure Alaska seafood is part of the celebration."



Trisa Rooney, activities director for the high school, talks with her husband, head coach Jef Rooney, at the wrestling regional tournament in Wrangell on Dec. 11, 2021. She is resigning at the end of the school year.

PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

High school athletic director to resign at end of school year

BY MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

After 12 years working in Wrangell's schools, Trisa Rooney has decided to move on. Rooney will resign from her position as activities director at the end of the school year, citing a need to take time for herself.

"The last couple of years have definitely taken a toll," she said. "It's just been so much. I can't pinpoint just one thing, it's not totally the COVID. It's just a rough couple years."

Rooney has been the activities director for about four years, she said, and has done something different since she started working at the elementary school in 2010. After four years there, she moved to the middle school to be the librarian, a job that was a perfect fit.

"That was my ideal job. I would have stayed there forever. I love books. I love to read," she said. "Honestly, I think if I would have stayed at the library instead of taking over this job, I probably would have still stayed because it's no stress."

The activities director position is not a 9-to-5 kind of job, and Rooney is looking forward to a relaxed schedule.

"It will just be nice to take a year and lay low ... and I'm not glued to my phone waiting for a coach to call me because something went wrong with their itinerary and the bus didn't pick them up and, 'Oh, hey, the other AD (athletic director) forgot to unlock the door, and we're standing out in the freezing cold,'" Rooney said with a laugh.

It's not an uncommon sight at school events to find her directing foot traffic, making sure people have tickets to events, athletes are where they're supposed to be, and even cleaning up spills in the gym to avert accidents. Rooney doesn't stop there.

"She does the AD job, but she also does an awful lot of other things," said Bob Davis, assistant principal of the high school and middle school. "She took over our testing protocols this year. She's done over 1,400 tests. We could not have kept everything going without that. That's not typically something the AD does."

Rooney often enlisted the help of her family, including daughter, Kayla, when organizing various school activities. So much so, that Kayla automatically knew where she needed to jump in to help her mother.

With her youngest child, Ryan, about to graduate high school, Rooney and her husband, wrestling head coach Jef Rooney, would like to travel more. The activities director position hampered that ability because there wasn't any time off during school holidays and not a lot of time between spring and fall sports programs, and the nicest times to be in Wrangell are in spring and summer, she said.

There aren't any plans to replace Rooney at the moment since the district is in the middle of budgeting for next school year. Davis said the position might not be filled at the moment, saying there were a myriad of ways the duties could be fulfilled. He said Rooney often filled in the gaps to get things done around the school when there wasn't anyone else to do it.

"I cannot express how glad and grateful I am for the job that she's done," Davis said.

Rooney said since staffing is so low at the schools, she anticipates stepping in to substitute when needed, but she looks forward to a more normal schedule.

"After the last two and a half years of craziness, I'm definitely ready to relax," she said.

Senior's art project places emphasis on Tlingit culture

By MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

Sophia Hagelman discovered a love of art at 9 years old when she saw her mom's sketchbook. She took up the hobby herself and has used those skills to create her senior project.

Last fall, Hagelman completed a painting for Evergreen Elementary of the school's mascot, an eagle. The painting was created with the Tlingit culture in mind and uses the indigenous style of art.

"The elementary school didn't have very much cultural stuff, so they wanted something to put in there," the high school senior said. "I was very honored that I could do that."

She got the idea after talking with the Evergreen's social-emotional learning art teacher Tawney Crowley and her mom, Laurie Hagelman, the school's fifth grade teacher. They agreed a cultural aspect would be important for the piece, and the idea for the mascot came after.

"We knew from the beginning that we wanted to represent the Tlingit culture in our community," Crowley said. "Once (Sophia) had a general idea of what she wanted to do for her project, we knew that it would be best to contact the tribe and any additional members."

Crowley said Hagelman contacted the tribe and spoke with member Virginia Oliver, who said it would be a good idea. The intent, Crowley said, was to always be respectful and con-

scious of the culture.

From there, planning started on how Hagelman would tackle the project, which would be painted on a 4-foot by 4-foot surface. Students from all the grades at the elementary school helped. "They painted it and I would help by painting and fixing. They did really well."

Hagelman, 18, sketched out the original idea and was introduced to some retro technology to enlarge the image to the size needed.

"I helped her brainstorm ideas for design layout and tools for the job," Crowley said. "We even broke out an old school projector, which she had never seen before!"

It was a true collaborative effort, as Hagelman wasn't afraid to ask for help or advice when needed, Crowley said. "It seemed like the perfect project to play to her strengths and interests. She also took on the tedious task of drawing such a large design by hand. It took her several hours just to transfer the design."

The entirety of the job took about 24 hours spread out over several days and uses red, white and black acrylic paint. It's one of the two mediums Hagelman enjoys using; the other being pencil for sketching and shading.

Though she will continue sketching portraits and painting as a hobby — possibly even selling work in an online marketplace — her main focus after high school will be certified nurs-



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

High school senior Sophia Hagelman stands next to her completed senior project, a 4-foot by 4-foot painting of a Tlingit-style eagle. She collaborated with students at Evergreen Elementary to create the artwork depicting the school mascot.

ing assistant training. She hasn't settled on a school yet, but she's working with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) in Juneau to find the right fit.

"They help students get education, jobs, etc.," said Assistant Principal Bob Davis. "They're working with a number of our students, including Sophia, to get into different educational programs. Originally, she was looking at a CNA program

with Job Corps, but DVR said, 'Wait a minute, there are all these other options.'"

Those options included schools in Ketchikan, Juneau and Anchorage. Hagelman said she's looking closer to Anchorage, since her family is moving there after the school year is finished.

Crowley said the art project helped students unlock their creative talents, and she's hopeful for more collaborative efforts

in the future.

"The elementary kids have blown us all away with their passion for art and all-around growth in the subject," she said. "Art can be very intimidating for some and seeing an older kid enjoying and wanting to share in that enjoyment really gets these younger kids fired up. So much so that they came in on the weekend to have a paint session that lasted for several hours."

Governor joins legislators in call for state to divest from Russia

By BECKY BOHRER
The Associated Press

A growing number of state lawmakers are asking the Alaska Permanent Fund Corp. to divest assets from any Russian government or state-owned institutions amid Russia's war against Ukraine.

Senate Democrats last week were the first to initiate the call.

Then the governor joined in.

And House Speaker Louise Stutes later said the House planned to introduce legislation to order the corporation to sell its Russian investments. As an interim step, 18 members of the state House signed a March 3 letter asking the corporation to do so voluntarily.

"Russia's hostile actions toward the Ukrainian people and government must not go unanswered," the letter said.

Paulyn Swanson, a spokesperson for the corporation that manages the assets of Alaska's nest-egg fund, in a statement Feb. 28 said the corporation "is not contemplating a divestment strategy at this time."

"We are closely monitoring the situation and as always, will strive to do what is in the best interest of the Alaska Permanent Fund," she said.

Three days after Senate Democrats raised the issue, Gov. Mike Dunleavy joined calls for the state to divest from Russia. Dunleavy issued a press release on March 3, calling for a wide range of actions against Russia and to welcome Ukrainian refugees after they've been vetted.

The governor urged state agencies and the Permanent Fund Corp. to unload its Russia-based assets if and when that's appropriate.

The Alaska Department of Revenue

released a memorandum on March 3, saying that state retirement plans had around \$115 million in investments in Russia as of Jan. 31.

"Due to extremely low valuations and limited, if any, ability to transact, the prudent course is to continue to monitor the Russian exchanges and divest, when and if appropriate," the Department of Revenue's memo said.

The Permanent Fund's exposure to Russian investments represents 0.2% of its total assets. The total value of the fund, at the end of January, was about \$81 billion.

Swanson, in response to questions, said that as of Jan. 31, "\$160 million of the Alaska Permanent Fund is invested in Russian stocks, bonds and private market investments. In light of recent market dislocations, valuations are volatile."

The corporation is aware of "the developing situation with regard to Russia and Ukraine and is assessing impacts to the portfolio during these dynamic and unpredictable times," she said, adding that the corporation is monitoring the events "that are still unfolding with regard to Russia and is analyzing the appropriate response."

In the letter urging divestment, five Senate Democrats in the minority caucus cited provisions of Alaska law that declare support for a so-called nuclear freeze policy. The lawmakers said those provisions require the state to take action to reduce the risk of nuclear war and said they believe those also mean implementing "a divestment plan from Russian government or state-owned companies."



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Man saved from floating ice that carried him into Cook Inlet

ANCHORAGE (AP) — An Alaska man walking on a shoreline wound up clinging to a chunk of ice for more than 30 minutes in frigid water when the shoreline ice broke loose and carried him out into Cook Inlet.

Jamie Snedden, 45, of Homer, was rescued Feb. 26 near the community of Anchor Point on the Kenai Peninsula. He was taken to a hospital, where he was treated for hypothermia. He was expected to fully recover, state troopers said.

Snedden "was reported to have been walking along the shoreline on the ice when it broke free and drifted into Cook Inlet with the outgoing current," Troopers spokesman Tim DeSpain said in an email to The Associated Press on Feb. 28.

He was swept about 300 yards out into the inlet, near the mouth of the Anchor River.

Trooper Jeremy Baum arrived and saw only Snedden's head and arms visible above water as he clung to the ice chunk. He was not wearing any type of personal flotation device.

The fishing vessel Misty was

about 3 miles away and responded to an urgent marine broadcast seeking help. The Misty arrived about the same time as Baum, who had launched an inflatable pack raft and rowed to Snedden's location.

Snedden was pulled aboard the Misty, with assistance from the ship's captain, Shane Balkeley, and his clients.

"Without their help it would have been much more challenging to rescue Snedden and get him to EMS as quickly as we did," Baum said.

Snedden was conscious and breathing, but very hypothermic after being in the cold water between 30 and 40 minutes. The U.S. Coast Guard reported the air temperature was 30 degrees Fahrenheit, and the water was 38 degrees.

The Misty maneuvered to within 100 yards of the Anchor Point boat launch area to meet awaiting medics.

Snedden was then transferred to the Misty's 8-foot inflatable raft. Using both the smaller pack raft and the Misty's raft, Baum rowed Snedden back to shore.

Skagway dogs ride a bus to their daily walk

By MELINDA MUNSON
The Skagway News

It's raining cold, large drops that pool on the treacherous ice in Skagway, making it the kind of day that discourages dog walking. Regardless, Mo Mountain Mutts pulls up to Seven Pastures in their shiny white minibus and nine dogs of varying sizes disembark. They shed their leashes and head to Skagway River under the direction of Mo and Lee Thompson, forging their own path through the foliage. Once the pets reach the sand, they sprint, sniff, wrestle and socialize.

Mo Thompson offers advice for introductions with the canines whose names range from Whiskey to Tater.

"Don't stick your hand out, be indirect."
"Don't put your face in their face."
"While they're sniffing you, do nothing."
"You cannot win them over by trying to talk to them and touch them."

Basically, everything the average person does to greet an unfamiliar dog is in-

correct, she says.

Mo grew up in the dog world. Her stepfather was a musher and breeder involved with the American Kennel Club. As a 12-year-old, Mo showed and handled dogs. Running a full-time dog training and walking business in a small Alaska town is her dream come true.

Last year, Mo was working two jobs: cutting hair and walking dogs, picking them up with a minivan. She was approaching burnout.

"I had to choose one or the other. I mean, it's not too hard to choose between playing outside with a bunch of dogs and staying inside a building," she says.

She quit cutting hair in August 2021 and committed to dogs full time.

Lee Thompson also took a gamble, turning down a Skagway borough job with benefits to help drive and manage canines. He wants to be available when their child is born — Mo is more than seven months into her first pregnancy.

When the Thompson's van broke, the

couple invested in a 14-passenger bus that captured the attention of the Internet. Now, it's common to see clips of Mo and Lee on social media, welcoming their dogs onto the vehicle, issuing flight attendant-like directions: "please keep your tails out of the aisle" and distributing complimentary liver treats.

They have their own Instagram, YouTube and Facebook accounts. One of their TikTok videos has received more than 6.5 million views. They've been featured on Go Fetch, Right This Minute and The Mirror. MTV has also been in touch with the duo. Companies have reached out for product placement and BarkBox gifted a load of toys.

The walkers exercise three to five dog groups a day. Each two-hour slot allows for a 45-minute walk. The packs generally contain about 12 dogs.

The clients get picked up from their homes and safely secured to a bus seat by their leashes. The bus travels all two miles of Skagway's roads at about 25

miles per hour.

Dogs must have a certain level of training to participate in the walks, such as stay and recall. Some of Mo's mutts wear e-collars. She emphasizes that her collars are high-end tools. For pack walks, she uses them mostly when the animals are out of hearing range or are distracted.

For her, the hardest part of the job isn't controlling the canines, it's dealing with people.

"The dogs are always the easiest to train, it's the humans that are harder to train," she says.

Her favorite aspect is when owners "can finally see their dog's potential."

Mo says she looks forward to the return of tourists this summer.

"I love when tourists come to town, it helps me proof my distraction training. It's actually been harder to train dogs without them and I am so happy to have them back."

Safety agency recommends precautions in uncontrolled airspace

By MARK THIESSEN
The Associated Press

ANCHORAGE (AP) — A federal agency tasked with investigating plane crashes is recommending that all pilots be required to communicate their positions on a designated radio frequency when entering and exiting areas not managed by air traffic control towers throughout Alaska.

The recommendations to the Federal Aviation Administration are included in a report from the National Transportation Safety Board

following a mid-air collision that killed seven people, including an Alaska state lawmaker, near Soldotna on July 31, 2020. The report was published last Friday.

In the 2020 crash, the two planes collided just over 2 miles from the Soldotna airport, which does not have an air traffic control tower. Aircraft in the area are supposed to monitor traffic on a set frequency.

Though there are 21 airports or landing strips within a 30-mile radius of Soldotna with five different communication

"Safety recommendations are typically released at the conclusion of an investigation but every year the NTSB issues recommendations prior to that point."

Peter Knudson,
NTSB spokesperson

frequencies, a post-accident check of both planes could not determine which frequency each was monitoring.

"Because both airplanes were operating in uncontrolled airspace, it was the responsibility of both pilots to visually acquire aircraft flying in their vicinity and maintain separation from them," the report said.

The NTSB has not released a probable cause report in this crash.

"Safety recommendations are typically released at the conclusion of an investigation but every year the NTSB issues recommendations prior to that point," NTSB

spokesperson Peter Knudson said in an email to The Associated Press.

"Sometimes the completion of an accident investigation may be delayed for any number of reasons. In such cases, the NTSB sometimes decides to push ahead with the recommendations when all of the factual information is collected and the analytical work is completed, which was the case here," Knudson said.

Pilot diligence is important since only 13 airports in Alaska have air traffic control towers, the report said.

Between 2005-2020, there were 14 midair collisions in Alaska, with 12 of them in

uncontrolled airspace, the report said. The collisions resulted in 35 deaths and 15 serious injuries.

The NTSB in the report also recommended that pilots communicate their position near established reporting points and airport traffic patterns within the common traffic advisory frequency area unless the pilot is in contact with air traffic control.

The safety board also is advising the FAA to establish additional common traffic advisory frequency areas in parts of Alaska at high risk of midair collisions. It also recommends that one frequency be associated with all non-towered airports of those areas and define mandatory position reporting locations and requirements.

"The FAA will review the National Transportation Safety Board's recommendations," FAA spokesperson Tammy Jones said in an email to The Associated Press.

No more limits in Alaska on individual contributions to any political campaign

JUNEAU (AP) — Individuals will be allowed to make unlimited contributions to candidates for governor and the Legislature this year under a decision by the state commission that oversees Alaska campaign finance rules.

The Alaska Public Offices Commission on March 3, failed to support a staff proposal to set revised limits in place of tighter caps that were struck down by a federal appeals court panel last year.

The court invalidated Alaska's \$500-a-year individual donation limit to candidates, saying it was too low. The court, however, did not set new limits, and left that decision to the commission and the Legislature.

The court ruling came in a long-standing battle between free speech rights and campaign limits set by state lawmakers to curb the influence of money on Alaska politics.

A contentious draft proposal from Alaska Public Offices Commission staff, issued in November, suggested the previous limits that were in place before the \$500 cap be adjusted for inflation and restored. That included proposed limits of \$1,500 per calendar year for individuals to candidates. Campaigns had been adhering to the draft opinion until the commission weighed in.

The commission, in its March 3 decision, declined the revive the old contribution limits and also declined to index those for inflation. There were legal questions about whether it had the power to do either of those things.

The commission voted 3-2 to adopt the new contribution limits, but it required four commis-

sioners to adopt the staff recommendation.

Heather Hebdon, the commission's executive director, said given the court ruling and commission decision, individuals may now contribute unlimited amounts to candidates and non-party groups, while non-party groups can contribute unlimited amounts to candidates and other non-party groups.

The commission urged lawmakers to revisit contribution limits to balance the appeals court panel decision "with the desire of Alaska voters."

Legislators could still pass new campaign finance limits this session before their adjournment deadline in mid-May.

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Alaska Fish Factor

By LAINE WELCH
Fisheries columnist

Halibut, black cod fisheries open with hopes of high prices

March means more fishing boats are out on the water with the start of the Pacific halibut and sablefish (black cod) fisheries this past Sunday, followed by Alaska's first big herring fishery at Sitka Sound.

For halibut, the coastwide catch from waters ranging from the West Coast states to British Columbia to the far reaches of the Bering Sea was increased by 5.7% this year to 41.22 million pounds.

Alaska always gets the lion's share of the commercial halibut harvest, which for 2022 is 21.51 million pounds, a nearly 10% increase. Expectations for a good fishery are high and "rumors of opening dock prices around \$8 per pound have folks very excited," said Alaska Boats and Permits in its weekly report from Homer.

The average dock price for Alaska halibut in 2021 was \$6.40.

Alaska fishermen also are seeing increased abundance of sablefish and the combined 2022 Gulf and Bering Sea catch limits were increased by 32% to 76 million pounds.

A herring spawn-on-kelp fishery opens March 17 at Craig and Klawock, with a harvest limit of 5,060 tons.

The roe herring fishery at Sitka Sound that typically kicks off in late

March has the highest harvest level ever at 45,164 tons.

The Tanner crab fishery at Southeast that began on Feb. 11 should close by March 9. No word yet on catches but managers reported "historically high crab levels" and the take should easily top last year's 1.27-million-pound harvest. Crabbers have fingers crossed that the Southeast price will mirror Kodiak's healthy \$8.50 per pound.

Southeast crabbers also can pull up golden king crabs with a harvest limit of 75,300 pounds, a nearly 24% increase from last year. The goldens weigh 5 to 8 pounds on average and last year averaged \$11.55 per pound at the docks.

Seat still open on Board of Fisheries

The state Board of Fisheries meeting is just days away, but Gov. Mike Dunleavy has yet to reveal who might fill a vacant seat on the seven-member panel.

The board will convene March 10-22 in Anchorage to address Southeast/Yakutat commercial, sport, subsistence and personal-use fishery management issues.

Dunleavy appointed Indy Walton, of Soldotna, to the board in September but

he resigned in December due to health reasons. By law, the governor has 30 days to make another appointment. Requests for information to Dunleavy's office have gone unanswered.

The governor also is silent about his selections for two seats on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. By law, names must be forwarded to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce by March 15. The council oversees management of more than 140 fish and shellfish species.

Wonders of fish 'wastes'

Scottish researchers are turning salmon wastes into a key component in nylon.

Plastic experts from Impact Solutions have partnered with the University of Edinburgh, seafood producer Farne Salmon and Trout and the Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Centre to use biological enzymes to extract the fatty components of fish waste. They are then turned into a mixture of adipic acid, a precursor to nylon.

Adipic acid also is used in a wide range of products including petrochemical and polyurethane-based items such as building insulation, furniture cushions, cosmetics, lubricants, pharmaceuticals, food

additives and flavorings.

"This project marks the start of an exciting journey to find a sustainable alternative for a key component found in the fabric of our clothes. The initial feasibility study has led us to an exciting juncture where we can begin to see the potential of generating value from a material that would otherwise be discarded," Impact Solutions Development Manager Simon Rathbone told SeafoodSource news.

The researchers want to maximize the value of the process by looking at other components that can be extracted from fish wastes, such as fatty acids and fish oils.

"Our waste streams have been a major focus in recent years and wherever possible we have found routes to divert them to businesses who have the foresight and technology to utilize them as raw materials for further processing," the team added.

The researchers noted that more than one billion pounds of waste is created annually by the U.K. processing industry. In Alaska, the wasted skins, heads, oils and other fish parts top three billion pounds and could add over \$700 million to the industry's revenue stream, according to a report on specialty products by the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute.

Alaska will receive \$58 million from opioid settlement

Juneau Empire

Alaska's share of a \$26 billion nationwide settlement with opioid distributors and a manufacturer is \$58 million, the state Department of Law announced March 1.

According to the Department of Law, 15% of the \$58 million — roughly \$8.7 million — will go to the nine cities and boroughs in Alaska that participated in the lawsuit. The remaining funds will be used by the state to help Alaskans recover from opioid

addiction, the release said.

The payments will stretch over the next two decades, under terms of the settlement.

"All of us know someone who suffered from opioid addiction, and this crisis has taken its toll on our communities," said Attorney General Taylor in a statement. "This agreement sends a message to the companies that would put profits ahead of people."

The governor's Advisory Council on Opioid Remediation, which was established last year, will make recom-

mendations on how to spend the money in a report due Dec. 1, the release said. That council is comprised of nine voting members and four non-voting members from the Legislature.

According to the agreement, the nine municipalities within Alaska that participated in the suit and will receive their own payment are Anchorage; the city of Fairbanks; Fairbanks North Star Borough; Juneau; Kenai Peninsula Borough; Ketchikan Gateway Borough; Kodiak

Island Borough; the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the city of Wasilla.

Alaska's share is part of a \$26 billion settlement between pharmaceutical wholesalers Cardinal, McKesson and AmerisourceBergen, and manufacturer and Johnson & Johnson, which together faced more than 4,000 lawsuits in state and federal courts, according to the Department of Law.

The companies will begin releasing funds to a national administrator on April 2, ac-

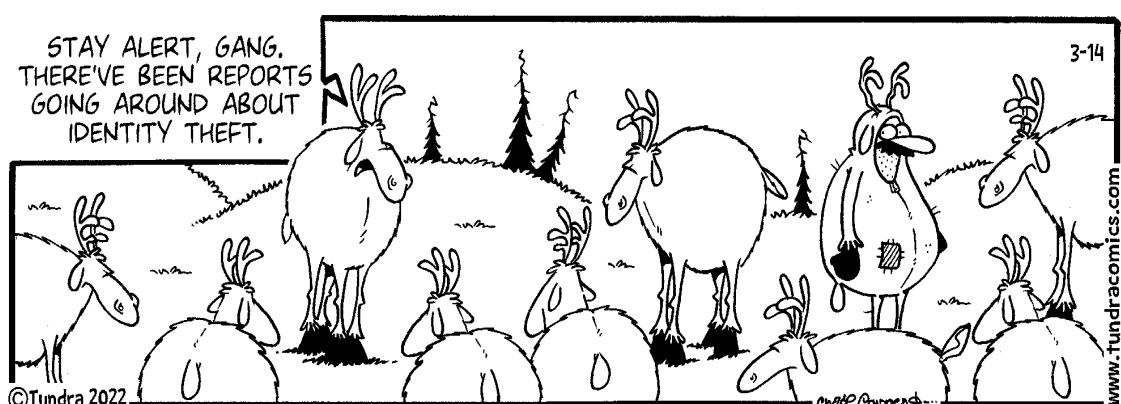
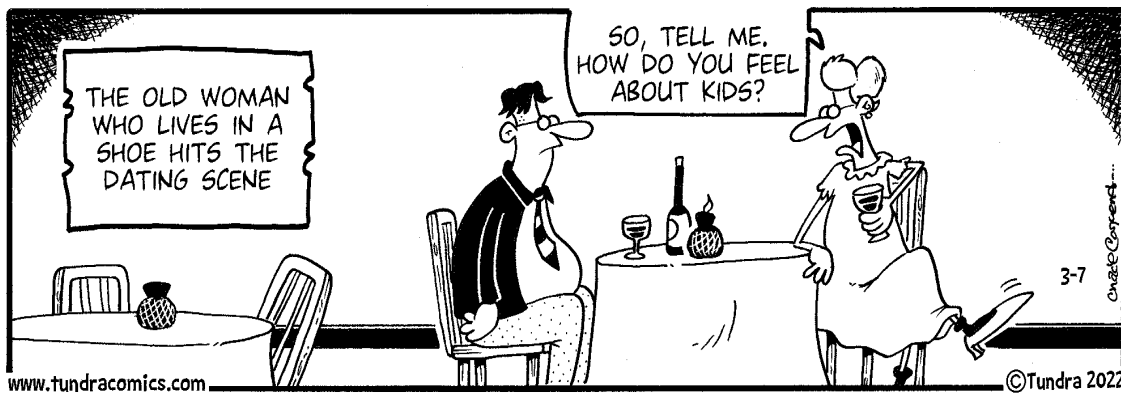
ording to the Department of Law, and money will start going to states in July.

Funds going to the state of Alaska will have to be appropriated by the Legislature and will have to go toward opioid remediation per the settlement agreement.

In 2017, then-Gov. Bill Walker issued a disaster declaration for the opioid epidemic following a rise in opioid-related overdoses and deaths.

Tundra

by Chad Carpenter



Legislators unlikely to block split of the state's largest department

JUNEAU (AP) — A proposal from Gov. Mike Dunleavy's administration to split in half the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services — the state's largest department — appears likely to take effect later this year. House and Senate leaders said it does not appear there are enough votes to block the move.

Reorganization of the department, with more than 3,200 positions, has been billed as a way to improve operations and delivery of services. The proposal came through an executive order from the governor, and rejection of the order would require a joint session and support from 31 of the Legislature's 60 members.

The Anchorage Daily News reported on March 1 that opponents of the split say the effort has been rushed and that people served by the agency haven't been adequately consulted. The department's commissioner has disputed those assertions.

The proposal has received support from medical advisory boards and a group representing hospitals and nursing homes.

The Legislature's legal division last month identified dozens of problems with Dunleavy's executive order. "This executive order greatly exceeds the length and scope of prior executive orders ... that merged or split executive branch departments," legislative attorney Andrew Dunmire wrote in a Feb. 14 memo.

Legislators had requested

the review.

Regardless of the memo, Dillingham Rep. Bryce Edgmon said 31 votes to block the change "don't exist in joint session. I think we know that."

Senate President Peter Micciche, of Soldotna, said he did not believe there is support at this time from Senate members for a joint session.

Prior governors considered breaking up the department but never advanced a plan to do so. Dunleavy proposed a split last year but withdrew that plan after his office cited "technical issues" with it.

His revised executive order was introduced in January.

Some legislators and public interest groups view the split as a way to address management concerns at sub-agencies such as the Office of Children's Services, Alaska Psychiatric Institute and Division of Public Assistance.

Some critics worry about possible service impacts.

Wasilla Sen. David Wilson said he supports the split. He said ideally the Legislature would introduce and pass a "cleanup" bill to fix any problems with wording in the order. But he and others have expressed concern that such a bill could be amended by lawmakers to include COVID-19 vaccination issues, causing it to fail amid the politics of vaccine debates.

Interior Department wants to suspend mining road decision

ANCHORAGE (AP) — The Interior Department has asked a federal court to let the agency suspend its right-of-way decision for a controversial, state-promoted mining road in Northwest Alaska.

The department is conducting a further review of its original decision issued under the Trump administration. The agency signed the right-of-way permit in the final days before President Joe Biden took office.

Federal officials filed the request Feb. 22 with the U.S. District Court for Alaska, seeking to fix what it called "significant deficiencies" in the original project review, the department said in a statement.

The agency wants to "reconsider the analyses related to National Environmental Protection Act, National Historic Preservation Act and Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act." During the review, the road's

right-of-way permit would be suspended, the department said.

The 211-mile road to the Ambler Mining District in Northwest Alaska would cross the Koyukon, Tanana Athabascans and Iñupiat Native lands. It would also cross Bureau of Land Management land as well as parts of Gates of the Arctic National Preserve.

The state is helping to pay for initial design and engineering of the road in an effort to open

up the lands to mining. The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority is leading the road-building effort, which would cost several hundred million dollars.

Native tribes in the region oppose the road, which would cross lands they rely on for subsistence hunting and fishing.

The Tanana Chiefs Conference, a consortium of the 42 villages of Interior Alaska, voiced support for the department's

decision to conduct further review, and urged the state to drop the project.

"The 200+ mile Ambler road represents a fundamental threat to our people, our subsistence way of life and our cultural resour-

es," Brian Ridley, the conference's president, said in a statement.

Alaska Sens. Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan as well as Rep. Don Young all condemned the move under the

Continued on page 12

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS Ports and Harbors Surveillance System Design

Notice is hereby given that the City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, will accept proposals for engineering design services for the Ports and Harbors Surveillance System Design project in the office of the Borough Clerk until 2 p.m. prevailing time on March 31, 2022.

The full RFQ solicitation documents may be obtained at the Borough Clerk's Office, 205 Brueger Street, Wrangell, Alaska 99929 and may also be downloaded from the City & Borough of Wrangell website (www.wrangell.com) under the Bids and RFPs Section.

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

Publish March 9, 16, and 23, 2022

NOTICE OF ABANDONED VEHICLE

To the owner and/or lien holder of the abandoned 1982 Ford van in Shoemaker Harbor, Wrangell, AK 99929. This vehicle has been abandoned for more than six months. Kim Peterson intends to claim the vehicle on March 16, 2022, unless he hears from you. If the vehicle is yours, please contact:

Kim Peterson
PO Box 967
Wrangell, AK 99929

Publish Feb. 16, 23, March 2 and 9, 2022

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS Nolan Center Emergency Standby Generator Upgrades Design

Notice is hereby given that the City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, will accept proposals for engineering design services for the Nolan Center Emergency Standby Generator Upgrades Design project in the office of the Borough Clerk until 2 p.m. prevailing time on March 31, 2022.

The full RFQ solicitation documents may be obtained at the Borough Clerk's Office, 205 Brueger Street, Wrangell, Alaska 99929 and may also be downloaded from the City & Borough of Wrangell website (www.wrangell.com) under the Bids and RFPs Section.

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

Publish March 9, 16, and 23, 2022

PUBLIC NOTICE RURAL ALASKA COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM INC.

Wrangell Community Garden Improvements Contract

Rural Alaska Community Action Program Inc. (RurAL CAP) is soliciting bids for improvements to the Wrangell Community Garden. The lump-sum bid shall include all materials for installation of new fencing, gravel fill, equipment to move existing compost bin and dirt pile, and labor, as shown in the drawings.

To receive the Invitation for Bid (IFB), contact WCA IGAP Coordinator Val Massie, phone 425-345-1275, or email igacoord.wca@gmail.com. Full disclose of all components of the project will be available through WCA IGAP Coordinator.

To be considered for this contract, bids must be emailed to Darrel Behymer, RurAL CAP Procurement Coordinator at dbehlymer@ruralcap.org, by 4 p.m. local time on March 14, 2022.

Publish March 9, 2022

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL INVITATION TO BID Lift Station Generator Enclosure

Notice is hereby given that the City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, will receive sealed bids for the Lift Station Generator Enclosure. Work consists of all activities necessary to construct Lift Station Generator Enclosure and install ER Generator.

Sealed bids will be received by the City & Borough of Wrangell, PO Box 531, Wrangell, Alaska 99929, or at the Borough Clerk's Office, 205 Brueger Street, Wrangell, Alaska 99929, until 2 p.m. prevailing time on March 30, 2022.

Complete bidding/contract documents for this project are available in electronic format only and can be downloaded from the City & Borough of Wrangell website (www.wrangell.com) under the Bids and RFPs Section.

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

Publish March 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2022

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION OF FORESTRY Notice of Intent to Claim Abandoned Timber Property

In accordance with Alaska Statutes 45.50.210 through .325, it is the intent of the State of Alaska to claim all abandoned timber property in the waters and on the tidelands of the state one mile west of St. John Harbor on Zarembo Island to South Craig (approximately one mile south of Roosevelt Harbor), including but not limited to the Kashevarof Islands; Bushy, Shrubby, West, Middle, East and Blashke. It is the intent of the state to make the claimed timber property available for salvage under 11 AAC 71.005 through .910, Timber and Material Sale Regulations.

Parties wishing to comment may do so to the Alaska Division of Forestry, 2417 Tongass Ave., Suite 213, Ketchikan, AK 99901, phone 907-225-3070. Comments must be received within 30 days following the first date of the this notice to receive consideration.

Greg Staunton, Southeast Area Forester
Department of Natural Resources

Publish March 9, 16 and 23, 2022



The Southeast Alaska Power Agency (SEAPA) is advertising for the position of Temporary Brushing Technician/Laborer. Base location is Wrangell, Alaska with work not to exceed (6) months. Work is performed as required along SEAPA's power line right-of-way corridor, with some prep and other work as required at other SEAPA-owned facilities. Majority of the work is conducted in remote wilderness locations, with minimal support. Position requires a broad range of experience, skills, and clear demonstration of the ability to successfully perform essential duties and responsibilities. Qualifications for the position include a High School Diploma and valid Alaska driver's license. The position is open until filled.

A complete job description and the electronic application process are available online at:

<https://seapahydro.applicantpro.com/>

SEAPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Published March 2 and 9, 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 standard office schedule is Monday through Friday, with 8-hour workdays and a 1-hour lunch break; however, some flexibility may be available for the successful candidate. This position does not qualify for additional benefits. Position requires a High School Graduate or GED equivalent. Administrative or secretarial experience desired. General computer literacy and proficiency in Microsoft Office Outlook, Word and Excel. Knowledge of clerical and administrative procedures and systems such as filing and recordkeeping. A complete job description and the electronic application process are available online at: <https://seapahydro.applicationpro.com/> SEAPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer

Published March 9 and 16, 2022

CLASSIFIED/ LEGLALS

HELP WANTED

Wrangell Public Schools is accepting applications for multiple positions. All positions are open until filled.

- **Custodian:** This is a full-time, year-round classified position with benefits, 7.5 hours per day. Salary placement is on Column F of the 10- to 12-month Classified Salary Schedule. Job duties include but are not limited to keeping our school complex clean and assisting with setting up rooms for classes, large presentations and business meetings as needed; and assisting with minor repairs. A High School Diploma or equivalent is desired.
- **Elementary Library Paraprofessional:** This is a part-time, nine-month position working 5.75 hours per day with students one-on-one or in small groups in the library at Evergreen Elementary School. Salary placement is Column C on the nine-month Classified Salary Schedule. The successful applicant must have an associate degree or equivalent (or higher) or the ability to pass the para-pro assessment (administered by the district).
- **Elementary Special Education Paraprofessional:** This is a part-time, nine-month position working 5.75 hours per day with students one-on-one or in small groups at Evergreen Elementary School. Salary placement is Column B on the nine-month Classified Salary Schedule. The successful applicant must have an associate degree or equivalent (or higher) or the ability to pass the para-pro assessment (administered by the district).

HOUSE FOR SALE

3-bedroom, 3-bath, 2,100-plus square foot home in Gresham, Oregon. 1.5 miles from Portland, 18 minutes to Portland airport, 4 minutes to MAX bus station. \$475,000. Text Bill, 503-847-3911.

FREE

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

FREE ADS

Do you have something to sell? Having a garage sale? Looking to buy something? Classified ads for individuals and community groups are free in the Sentinel. Contact Amber at 907-874-2301 or email wrgsent@gmail.com.

Scientists warn of tougher drought conditions in Oregon and Idaho

By GILLIAN FLACCUS
The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Climate scientists in the U.S. Pacific Northwest warned March 3 that much of Oregon and parts of Idaho can expect even tougher drought conditions this summer than in the previous two years, which already featured dwindling reservoirs, explosive wildfires and deep cuts to agricultural irrigation.

At a news conference hosted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, water and climate experts from Oregon, Washington and Idaho said parts of the region should prepare now for severe drought, wildfires and record-low stream flows that will hurt salmon and other fragile species.

Drought covers 74% of the Pacific Northwest and nearly 20% is in extreme or exceptional drought, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. An unusual ridge of high pressure off the U.S. West Coast scuttled storms in January and February that the region normally counts on to replenish water levels and build up a snowpack that feeds streams and rivers in later months, the experts said.

"This year we're doing quite a bit worse than we were last year at this time, so one of the points is to make everyone aware that we're going into some tough times in Oregon this summer," said Larry O'Neill, Oregon's state climatologist. "Right now, we're very worried about this region, about the adversity of impacts we're going to experience this year."

The predictions are in line with dire warnings about climate change-induced drought and extreme heat across the American West.

A 22-year megadrought deepened so much last year that the broader region is now in the driest spell in at least 1,200 years — a worst-case climate change scenario playing out in real time, a study found last month. The study calculated that 42% of this megadrought can be attributed to human-caused climate change.



AP PHOTO/NATHAN HOWARD, FILE

Matt Lisignoli walks through an irrigation canal near Madras, Oregon, that ran dry in early August after the North Unit Irrigation District exhausted its allocated water. Climate scientists in the Pacific Northwest are warning that the region can expect even tougher drought conditions this summer than in the previous two years.

In the Pacific Northwest, the worst impacts from the drought this summer will be felt in Oregon, which missed out on critical winter storms would normally moisten central and southern Oregon and southern Idaho. Scientists are debating the cause of the shift in the weather pattern and some believe a warming northern Pacific Ocean could be part of the cause, said O'Neill.

"Climate change may be changing this storm track, but there is yet no consensus on how it is affecting the Pacific Northwest," he said.

The National Interagency Fire Center recently designated all of central Oregon as "above normal" for fire danger starting in May — one of the earliest starts of fire season in the state ever. Most of central and eastern Oregon is in exceptional or extreme drought, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor, and parts of eastern Washington and west-

ern and southern Idaho are in severe drought.

Seven counties in central Oregon are experiencing the driest two-year period since the start of record-keeping 127 years ago. Overall, Oregon is experiencing its third-driest two-year period since 1895, the experts said.

Most reservoirs in Oregon are 10% to 30% lower than where they were at this time last year and some are at historic lows, signaling serious problems for irrigators who rely on them to water their crops.

Southern Idaho is also experiencing severe drought and a major reservoir in the Boise Basin has below average water supply, said David Hoekema of the Idaho Department of Water Resources.

"It takes more than just an average year to recover and it doesn't appear that we're going to have an average year," he said. "At this point, we expect

southern Idaho to continue in drought and we could also see drought intensify."

Some of Oregon's driest areas are already running into trouble.

After a water crisis last summer that left dozens of homes with no water, more domestic wells in southern Oregon's Klamath Basin are running dry. State water monitors have measured a troubling drop in the underground aquifer that wasn't replenished by winter precipitation, said Ivan Gall, field services division administrator for the Oregon Water Resources Department.

His agency has received complaints of 16 domestic wells that have run dry since Jan. 1 and is scrambling to figure out how many more wells might go dry this summer in a cascading crisis, he said. Farming season in the agricultural powerhouse

began last week.

Last summer, farmers and ranchers in the basin didn't receive any water from a massive federally owned irrigation project because of drought conditions and irrigators instead pumped much more water than usual from the underground aquifer to stay afloat, Gall said.

The tension over water gained national attention when, for a brief period, anti-government activists camped out at the irrigation canal and threatened to open the water valves in violation of federal law.

"We're going to start this year's pumping season 10 feet lower than we did last season, which is a problem," said Gall, who is already fielding calls from worried water users. "I think it's going to be another rough water year in the Klamath Basin."

Government will build \$187 million border station on Alaska Highway

TOK (AP) — A new border station estimated to cost \$187 million will be built on Alaska's eastern boundary with Canada, the U.S. government announced last Friday. The Alaska Highway border crossing is about 50 miles east of Northway Junction, the closest community in Alaska.

The funding for design and construction of the ALCAN Border Station will come from the federal infrastructure law, the U.S. General Services Administration said in a statement.

The agency said the current border station, built in 1971, is the most isolated port of entry

between the U.S. and Canada. It experiences extreme weather conditions.

"After more than 50 years, it is time to bring this port into the 21st century," U.S. Rep. Don Young, of Alaska, said in the GSA statement.

The project calls for a modern, energy-efficient station that will include operations facilities and housing for U.S. personnel. The new station will consolidate primary and secondary inspection areas in one building and shield U.S. Customs and Border Protection personnel from the weather.

Ambler road

Continued from page 11

Biden administration.

"This decision will harm Alaska, including the Alaska Natives who support and will benefit from this project," Murkowski said.

Gov. Mike Dunleavy also criticized the suspension request, saying it ignores extensive environmental studies.

Environmental law firm Trustees for Alaska has sued over the project, and said in a statement that the government should throw out the permits

entirely. The nonprofit group represents Native villages as well as hunting and fishing groups, among others.

"This project never should have been authorized in the first place, and the agencies can't fix their broken analysis by papering over their mistakes after the fact," said Suzanne Bostrom, senior staff attorney with Trustees for Alaska. "This administration should be prioritizing the health of communities and the Arctic, not politics and profits for outside corporations."



COVID positive? Now what?

If you test positive for COVID-19, here's what to do to protect yourself and others:

- Contact your health care provider and ask about treatment options. Treatments work best when started right away, so don't delay!
- Stay home and isolate for at least five days.
- Get plenty of rest and stay hydrated.
- Take over-the-counter medications such as acetaminophen to reduce symptoms.
- If your symptoms worsen, contact your health care provider.

If you don't have a health care provider, call the COVID-19 helpline at 907-646-3322 or your local public health center for guidance.

Visit dhss.alaska.gov for more information and COVID-19 resources.