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WRANGELL SENTINEL

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Developer withdraws offer to buy hospital property

By BECCA CLARK
Sentinel reporter

Georgia-based real-estate developer Wayne Johnson has rescinded his offer to purchase the former Wrangell Medical Center property and six adjacent lots from the borough.

Johnson had negotiated a new purchase agreement

covering the parcels, but said he withdrew his proposal due to community concerns over the new deal. He blamed a Sentinel headline for stirring up concerns.

Johnson notified borough officials on Friday, June 28, of his decision to walk away from the project.

The Sentinel reported on Johnson's requested changes to the land-purchase agreement on June 26

with the headline, "Developer now wants borough lots for free."

Johnson said although the article itself was accurate, he felt the headline was a misrepresentation and damaging to his reputation.

The newly proposed agreement stated that Johnson would pay \$200,000 for the hospital property, as per his original offer of this past spring. Then, after demolishing the old hospital building, he would receive the six adjacent borough-owned lots for free in exchange for the completed demolition.

Johnson had written to the borough in January, asking to purchase the six lots to give him enough room to build a housing development.

The original agreement between the borough and the developer stated that Johnson would purchase the six lots for their appraised value, which came in at \$316,800. It included no requirement that he demolish the old hospital building or develop any housing on the land.

Johnson, in his June 28 letter to borough officials ending any deal, said the demolition, which he had estimated at around \$1 million, would "provide substantial value to Wrangell far more than the value of the lots themselves."

Larry Persily, owner and publisher of the Sentinel, said, "The headline was accurate. The story was accurate. Mr. Johnson's original offer to the borough was to pay \$200,000 for the hospital property and fair-market value of \$316,000 for the adjoining six borough-

Continued on page 4



PHOTO BY MARK C. ROBINSON / WRANGELL SENTINEL

Lane Fitzjarrald of Parks and Recreation repainted the backboards at the basketball court near the library on June 27. He and recreation coordinator Devyn Johnson repainted the court, benches and even trash cans at the Kyle Angerman Playground last week.

Brushing
up at
basketball

Town wins \$25 million federal grant to rebuild downtown harbor floats

By BECCA CLARK
Sentinel reporter

The borough has been awarded a \$25 million Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity grant to rebuild most of the downtown harbor floats, install new pilings and improve parking.

The federal money, which requires no match from the borough, will fund most of the estimated \$28 million project that will include an overhaul of the Inner Harbor, Reliance and Standard Oil floats, new fire suppression systems, pilings and relocated parking.

The borough will likely get the remaining \$3 million for the project through the state's harbor matching program, Borough Manager Mason Villarma said June 26.

This grant brings the total amount of

money Wrangell could receive in federal and state funding this year up to \$52 million, the largest amount of money the borough has ever brought in.

Villarma said the downtown harbor is probably not as safe as it should be, nor is it suitable for growth. The new plan for the harbor will allow for larger vessels, which he said might mean more commercial fishing boats or charter vessels.

He estimated the project will take four to five years. The first year to year and a half will consist of environmental permitting and design. The construction will likely begin in summer or fall 2027, he said.

The harbor project will be huge for the community, Villarma said, noting that without this grant, there is no way

Continued on page 4

Governor signs budget; includes \$6.5 million for Wrangell school repairs

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

Gov. Mike Dunleavy vetoed more than \$230 million in spending from the state budget but left intact \$6.5 million for repairs to Wrangell school buildings, along with \$5 million for stabilization work at the community's water reservoir earthen dams and \$200,000 for the borough to start planning an emergency access route from the southern end of Zimovia Highway.

In addition to covering state-provided public services, construction projects and community grants, the budget bills signed by Dunleavy on June 27 also will provide an estimated \$1,650 to \$1,720 for every eligible Alaskan in this fall's Permanent Fund dividend.

The dividends will cost more than \$1 billion, the second-largest expenditure of state dollars after K-12 education funding.

Though he vetoed multiple appropriations for community grants, seafood marketing efforts, improved reading programs for K-3 students, snowplowing crews and boosting University of Alaska Fairbanks research work, the governor let stand a large one-year increase in state aid for public school operating budgets.

Legislators this past session compromised on a one-time boost of \$175 million in state funding for K-12 education, though school districts had been pushing hard for

Continued on page 5

Assembly postpones decision on police staffing level

By BECCA CLARK
Sentinel reporter

The assembly's June 25 meeting produced the largest turnout of community members at a meeting all year for the public hearing on the budget for the fiscal year that started July 1.

The budget item that drew the most public testimony was the proposed layoffs at the police department, which had been in the draft budget prepared by the borough manager.

Though the budget, as

approved by the assembly, lacks enough money to fund the entire police force for the full fiscal year, there will be no change in staffing levels for a few months and the assembly will consider the issue again at that time.

Assembly members agreed to hold off on any decisions until after the new police chief is on the job and after the results of a union organizing vote are known.

The International Brotherhood of Electrical

Workers filed a petition with the state for Wrangell Police Department employees to vote on joining the same union bargaining unit that represents other borough employees. The election is ongoing through the end of July.

Gene Meek, the new police chief, will start July 22.

Community members, law enforcement and public safety personnel testified at the assembly public hearing regarding the proposed layoffs of

two officers.

Overall, community members said that fewer police officers would compromise Wrangell's safety and would burden those still working.

Alisha Seward, the lone Alaska state wildlife trooper in town, gave passionate testimony about the stress of a job in law enforcement. "You do not see a whole lot of people wanting to become police officers because of the job that we do. It is so dangerous. There are people

who die on a daily basis for it," she said to the assembly.

"If you cut these two positions, and you leave these guys to deal with all that weight on them, pretty soon you may not have a police department at all," Seward warned.

James Nelson, a U.S. Forest Service law enforcement officer, said, "Public safety will never be a revenue maker for the city, but I believe it's absolutely crucial

Continued on page 9

Senior Center Menu

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

Thursday, July 4

Closed for Independence Day

Friday, July 5

Shelf-stable meal, with fruit

Monday, July 8

Shelf-stable meal

delivered on Friday, July 5

Tuesday, July 9

Baked chicken, mixed vegetables, cauliflower and broccoli salad, mashed potatoes and gravy

Wednesday, July 10

Country pork stew, peas and onion salad, roll, fruit

Call the senior center at 907-874-2066 24 hours in advance to reserve a seat at lunch or to request delivery.

The senior van is available to take seniors to medical appointments, errands such as collecting mail, getting prescriptions or other essential items.

Ferry Schedule

Northbound

Sunday, July 7

Kennicott, 3 p.m.

Sunday, July 14

Kennicott, 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, July 21

Kennicott, 1:45 p.m.

Sunday, July 28

Kennicott, 5:45 p.m.

Southbound

Wednesday, July 10

Kennicott, 9:30 a.m.

Wednesday, July 17

Kennicott, 3 a.m.

Wednesday, July 24

Kennicott, 8:30 a.m.

Wednesday, July 31

Kennicott, 3:45 a.m.

Listings are scheduled departure times. Call the terminal at 907-874-2021 for information or 907-874-3711 for recorded information.

Tides

High Tides

Low Tides

	AM		PM		AM		PM	
	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft
July 3	12:08	13.7	11:48	17.8	05:42	-1.3	05:32	4.1
July 4	01:02	14.2	06:34	-2.1	06:25	4.0
July 5	00:38	17.8	01:50	14.6	07:19	-2.4	07:13	3.9
July 6	01:25	17.7	02:34	14.7	08:01	-2.4	07:56	3.9
July 7	02:08	17.3	03:15	14.7	08:39	-2.0	08:37	4.0
July 8	02:49	16.7	03:53	14.5	09:16	-1.4	09:17	4.1
July 9	03:27	15.9	04:28	14.3	09:50	-0.6	09:57	4.3



ALASKA AIRLINES CLUB 49 COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

FOURTH of JULY PIE SALE hosted by Beta Sigma Phi is seeking donations of homemade pies for their Fourth of July pie booth. Funds raised will go to their charitable activities. For more information, contact Olinda White 907-874-3078, Alice Rooney 907-305-0007 or Joan Benjamin 907-874-3252.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL backpacks now available for tribal youth; applications accepted through July 7. Tlingit and Haida provides backpacks in partnership with Southeast Alaska village tribes. Children must be Alaska Native and/or American Indian, between the age of preschool to grade 12, and live in the Tlingit and Haida service area. Apply online: www.tinyurl.com/TH24B2SApp. For more information, call 907-463-7158

MUSKEG MEADOWS City Market/Sentry Hardware Golf Tournament 9-hole best-ball, Saturday and Sunday, July 13-14. Tournament play starts at 10 a.m., register by 9:30 a.m.

COMMUNITY POTLUCK 6 p.m. Fridays through August at the sheltered site on Nemo Point Road. All are welcome.

ROLL ON THE ROCK roller skating 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Saturdays at the TouchPoint Ministries rink on Bennett Street. Children 9 and under must be accompanied by an adult. Skaters must complete a registration form. \$5 per person.

NOLAN CENTER THEATER no movies until mid-July.

STATE PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE will be in Wrangell on Thursday, July 11. Immunizations, birth control and STD screening, well-child exams for kids up to age 6, TB screening and medication, Narcan kits and medication disposal bags will be offered. The Public Health Center is in the Kadin Building, 215 Front St. Call 907-723-4611 to make an appointment in advance so the nurse knows what immunizations to bring.

"YANKEE DOODLE DANDY" 6 p.m. Tuesday, July 16, at the Nolan Center. Free. Presented by Island of Faith Lutheran Church as part of its retro-movie program. The concession stand will be open.

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

- **SWIM LESSONS** Monday-Friday starting July 8. Multiple two-week sessions with variable times available. Contact Parks and Rec for more details. Ages 5-12. \$40 fee. Registration required.
- **FOREST EXPLORERS** 10:30 a.m. to noon Tuesdays through Aug. 6 with Clarie Froehlich of the U.S. Forest Service. For ages 7-13; ages 6 and under must be accompanied by a guardian 14 or older. Meet at Volunteer Park. \$50 fee. Registration required.
- **KICKBOXING**, 5:30 to 7 p.m. Tuesday and Thursdays at the community center multipurpose room with Victoria Carney. Drop-in fee \$5; \$3 senior discount; or use a facility punch card.
- **ADULT SIGN LANGUAGE** 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, July 11, through Aug. 8 at the community center multi-purpose room with Franki Gablehouse. Ages 16 years and up. \$30. Registration required.

Continuing Events

PARKS and RECREATION www.wrangellrec.com

Open swim is open by appointment. Locker rooms are available.

Arthritis class, 11 a.m. to noon Monday, Wednesday, Friday.

Family open swim, 9 to 11 a.m. Saturday.

Lap swim, 6 to 7 a.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday; 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday, Wednesday and Friday; 9 to 11 a.m. Saturday.

Tot swim, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday.

Open swim, 1:30 to 3 p.m. Wednesday and Friday.

Water aerobics class, noon to 1 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday.

Weight room: 5:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday; 7 a.m. to noon Saturday

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

Want more attendance at your meeting or event? Send information for Roundup to wrgsent@gmail.com or call 907-874-2301.

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

July 2, 1924

Frederick H. Meisnest, waste product engineer with Stanley Hiller Inc., was in Wrangell this past week. Mr. Meisnest is vice president and treasurer of the Alaska Shellfish Co., recently established by James M. Bell, president and manager of the company, for the purpose of packing crabs. Both Mr. Meisnest and Mr. Bell are graduates of the College of Fisheries of the University of Washington and have had a wide experience in the fish business. Mr. Meisnest is in charge of the Seattle office of Stanley Hiller Inc., as Northwest representative. This is a company of waste product

engineers who devote their entire time to devising processes and machinery for the saving of waste materials. Mr. Meisnest is at work now devising a process to utilize crab waste. As soon as he has it completed, it will be used by Mr. Bell in the crab cannery here.

July 1, 1949

John Coulter and Monte Clemmons recently enjoyed a trout fishing expedition 17 miles up the Stikine, which not only netted them full circles but also contributed to their manly physiques — and vocabularies. Leaving Warm Springs Slough with full baskets, their outboard motor took some of the joy out

of life by refusing to start. Various remedies refused to budge, so they rowed 17 miles down river to Nore's cabin where they borrowed another outboard. But this was not Coulter or Clemmons' day with outboard motors. A short distance from Nore's the borrowed motor quit cold. So, back to the oars. They arrived home at 1 a.m. — about five hours overdue, blistered, tired but triumphant.

July 5, 1974

The Lost Valley Timber Co. has begun road construction in the Pats Creek area in preparation for what will be the first logging on the island since

1967. Chuck Oliver, owner of the timber company, said the road work began about a month ago. Although shipping is slow, Oliver said, his logging equipment is on its way. Lost Valley has a three-year contract with Alaska Lumber and Pulp to harvest 25 million board feet a year, Oliver said. Eventually Oliver plans to work 20 to 25 men, some of whom will be hired locally, he said. At present, eight men are working, three from Oregon.

July 1, 1999

Due to the new road surface recently completed on Zimovia Highway between Pats Creek and McCormack Creek, the

Wrangell Police Department has received citizen reports of speeding in the area. Responding to the need to protect the public and maintain safe speed limit levels, the police will be operating radar patrol units at various times concentrated in this area. Radar patrol units will also be operating in several other areas within the city during the summer months, concentrating on high-traffic areas like Case Avenue, Zimovia Highway and Evergreen Avenue. The Wrangell Police Department would like to ask everyone for their assistance in abiding by the traffic laws to assure everyone has a safe summer season.

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WEEKLY FARE SALES



FREIGHT FOR LESS

Enjoy some pie on the Fourth and help the teddy bears

By MARK C. ROBINSON
Sentinel reporter

As Wrangell gears up for another Fourth of July celebration, the local chapter of the international sorority Beta Sigma Phi is preparing for its annual pie sale. The sale will start at 8 a.m. Thursday at the covered patio of Arctic Chiropractic until all pies are sold.

The event is a fundraiser to provide teddy bears for children in trauma conditions like emergency hospitalization, disasters like house fires or boating accidents. The teddy bears help draw people to the event, said Alice Rooney, Beta Sigma Phi secretary.

The main organizers of the sale, the sorority's president Olinda White, vice president Lorraine Kagee, fellow member Joan Benjamin and Rooney, all agree on the perennial best-selling pie: rhubarb. "There's a lot of rhubarb and apple," said Rooney.

"Ninety-nine percent of them are all home-baked," Kagee said. "We try to avoid pies that need refrigeration; we need pies that can be outside."

While sorority members themselves will bake about 8 or 10 pies in total, White said most of the baked goods for the sale are donated by residents. "I think last year we had 75 or 80.



PHOTO BY MARK C. ROBINSON / WRANGELL SENTINEL

(From left) Alice Rooney, Lorraine Kagee, Olinda White and Joan Benjamin at a meeting of the sorority Beta Sigma Phi on June 26, a week before the service group's annual Fourth of July fundraising pie sale.

We've had years where we had up to 120."

Their supply generally moves quickly during the day. "The last few years we've sold out of pies really early," she added. "Last year ... we had only a couple of pies left by noon."

White said slices as well as whole pies will be offered at this year's sale.

Rooney, White and Benjamin recalled that one of the more notable creations for the event some years ago was the Americana pie, made by Lynne Campbell from a recipe provided in a Better Homes and Gardens article, using blueberries for the stars, and cherries and apples for the red and white stripes.

"It was beautiful," White

said, adding that as soon as Campbell brought it to the booth for donation, a customer quickly bought the whole pie.

"It was pretty," said Benjamin.

"One we hardly ever see is mincemeat pie," White said. She remembered it was once done on request.

She said the event had previously been used as a fundraiser for various local organizations like the library and Little League. "We started doing teddy bears about 25 years ago."

From the funds raised, teddy bears are regularly donated to the hospital, fire department and dental clinic. The hospital also offers storage for the excess supply. "About once a year, we go out and replenish their stocks,"

White said. "That way, they have them when they need them."

According to their official website, Beta Sigma Phi was founded in 1931 for women unable to attend college due to the socioeconomic climate of the time. The organization is non-sectarian and nonpolitical, offering the opportunity for community outreach, cultural enrichment and to develop friendships. It has chapters throughout the United States, Canada, Australia and other countries.

Although White said they provide monthly minutes and regularly report to the sorority's international office on their charitable contributions, "we do our own thing."

Kagee said the pie sale had originally been sponsored since around the 1930s by the town's Civic Club, held in what used to be the fire hall next to Ottesen's Hardware before the store acquired the space. When the Civic Club disbanded in 1983, Beta Sigma Phi took over the event.

White added that once the fire hall space became unavailable, it was held for a few years in the shed next to Stikine Drug before they moved to Arctic Chiropractic, where they've been ever since. "The owner of the building told us we can have that space for as long as we want it."

Pie donations are still welcome, and they can be nine- or 10-inch size, as well as smaller ones for single-serving. They can be dropped off any time after 8 a.m. on the Fourth at the booth.

For more information, contact White at 907-874-3078, Rooney at 907-305-0007 or Benjamin at 907-874-3252.

Feeding is part of the fun of the Fourth

By SENTINEL STAFF

The Fourth of July is about a red, white and blue parade, street games, races of all kinds for all kinds of boats, logging skills competition — and food.

With two days of events left in the holiday week, the area around the downtown pavilion, behind Wells Fargo bank and the Elks Lodge and in the direction of the Stikine Inn will be filled with booths, games and a wide variety of food.

Organizers have scheduled a little more time between events this year to allow people a chance to try out the menus on Wednesday and Thursday, July 3-4.

The food offerings this week will include barbecue, Thai dishes, the Catholic Church's "Holy Burgers," tacos, Philly cheesesteak sandwiches, coffee and the annual Beta Sigma Phi fundraising pie sale on Thursday morning.

The Fourth parade will start at 11 a.m. from the Nolan Center, moving slowly to Front Street and then taking a left and pulling off Front Street before reaching the barge ramp and freight storage area.

The color guard will stop near the Elks Lodge,

accompanied by the national anthem, said Kimberly Szczałko, treasurer for the chamber of commerce, which is organizing the events.

"I am hoping for everything as planned, no snafus," she said last week.

Entries in the parade float judging need to line up at the Nolan Center by 10 a.m. Thursday.

Szczałko said that while revving vehicle and motorcycle engines is part of the parade atmosphere, she asked drivers to be careful not to peel out after stops, taking care to watch for children who will be walking around the street to pick up candy from the floats.

The full schedule of events is in this week's Sentinel, printed in the centerfold to make it easier to pull it out and carry around.

The royalty fundraising raffle prize drawing is scheduled for right after the parade ends, and will be held at the downtown pavilion.

The final events Thursday will be the boat races starting at 4:30 p.m. off the City Dock, and the street dance starting at 8 p.m. at the downtown pavilion and Lynch Street, with Wrangell band Shotrock of Doc Rock, Glen and Kelley Decker, Elias Decker and Jason Beaty.

Borough drops marine insurance requirement after months of work

By BECCA CLARK
Sentinel reporter

After months of workshopping a proposal that boat owners carry marine insurance, the borough assembly decided June 25 to give up on the endeavor.

The proposal would have required most boat owners in the harbor to carry a minimum of \$100,000 coverage to indemnify other boat owners and the borough from fire damages or cleanup expenses.

Boat owners could opt out of the insurance and pay a monthly surcharge per foot of their vessel.

Borough Manager Mason Villarma recommended to assembly members June 25 that they postpone the ordinance indefinitely. The assembly unanimously voted down the ordinance.

After talking to members of the community, Villarma said he felt the insurance requirement isn't a good fit for Wrangell right now.

He noted that it's a tough time for fishermen — salmon prices crashed last year and crabbing isn't looking too promising this season either. Many boat owners already have insurance anyway, he said.

The harbor has spent roughly \$83,000 recovering and disposing of derelict vessels in the past five years, which Villarma said he doesn't believe is enough to justify adding the insurance requirement.

The assembly had taken up the idea of mandatory boat insurance for harbor users at the recommendation of the port commission, which had been discussing the issue the past two years.

The borough will, however, continue to look into requiring a maneuverability assessment of vessels in the harbor, to ensure that in case of emergency all boats could make it out past the breakwater. The port commission will discuss the maneuverability assessment at its next meeting.

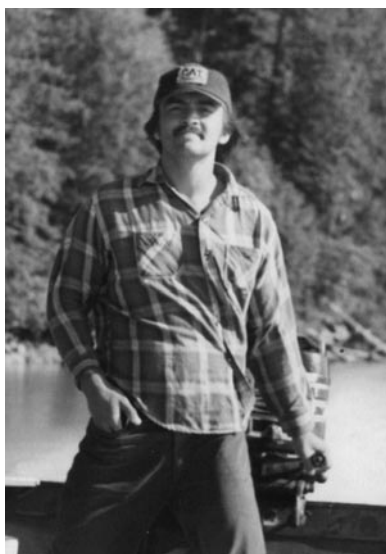
The assembly will also revisit the previously approved 3% rate increases for port and harbor fees at the next regular assembly meeting July 23.

Celebration of Life for Dan Gross, Jr.

Please join Dan's family and friends for a
Celebration of Life
July 13, 2024 at 2 pm
in the Nolan Room
at the Wrangell Elks Lodge

This is a potluck gathering, please contact Gayle Gross at 907-660-7786 if you would like to contribute or assist in any way.

The Elks Lodge will be having their regular steak night following Dan's Celebration of Life.



FROM THE PUBLISHER

Majority rules, but that doesn't mean dictates

BY LARRY PERSILY
Publisher

A long time ago, the Sentinel called out a mayor for taking an action without city council approval (this was before Wrangell became a borough). The mayor had sent a letter to a federal agency, stating the city's official position on an issue — but it was merely his personal opinion. There was no council discussion, no public notice.

It wasn't that controversial a position, but the point was that the mayor, no matter how well meaning, should not speak for the city without first making sure the elected council is in agreement.

The mayor came into the newspaper office to defend his action — politely I should add.

When told that all he had needed to do was raise the question with the council before sending the letter, the mayor asked if he could borrow our phone. As they were local calls, we obliged. This is back when long distance out of Alaska could cost 50 cents a minute, or more.

While standing in the Sentinel office, he proceeded to call assembly members one by one. He described the issue to them and asked if they were OK with the position he had taken with the federal agency.

After he had three yes "votes" from council members to add to his position, the mayor announced he had four votes on the seven-member council and the motion carried. I think his words were something like, "I don't give a s*** about the other three." He was a good mayor and he was trying, in his own way, to correct a mistake, with a touch of irreverent humor.

I recalled that memory from my internal Google drive as I was thinking about today's national politics and the growing attitude

among hardliners that once you have a majority of the votes, the minority becomes irrelevant, easily dismissed.

A mean majority can turn arrogant. They see little need, if any, to compromise or to temper their agenda to acknowledge that majority rule should not equate to a dictatorship. Whether it is a budget decision or a policy call, they believe that their righteous views must prevail, and they don't give a s*** about anyone who may think otherwise.

That attitude increases the divisive polarization in America. Winner take all may be fine for barroom bets, but it's a lousy way to run a democracy.

Political parties are guilty of catering to their hardest-core constituencies rather than looking to serve everyone. They may believe they are in the right, but acting as if that is a permission slip to do whatever they want does not create lasting support among the public. Rather, it builds resentment, and that resentment adds to a divided society. It starts a fire that smolders and then grows out of control when the wind changes direction and the losers become the winners and want to get even.

Deciding on public policy while ignoring the opinions and rights of the minority is an inherently unstable way to govern. But that's where we are headed in this country. Much of the public feels ignored. They get even by voting for the loudest candidates who cater to their anger.

Governing should not be about gloating just because you can count to 51%. It should not be about imposing your will on the minority.

To the political parties and candidates: Listen to what everyone thinks, not just the voters who agree with you.

EDITORIAL

State and federal grants do not solve everything

Wrangell is on a financial winning streak these days. It has received multiple state and federal grants to pay for construction, repairs, rebuilds and improvements. But that does not help pay the operating costs of public services and local support for the schools.

It's a distinction people need to keep in mind. Money in one pocket does not automatically transfer to another pocket.

The borough has received notice of a \$25 million federal grant to rebuild most of the downtown harbors floats. It will receive \$6.5 million from the state to go toward repairing the worst of age-related problems at the school buildings. The state will send the borough \$5 million toward rebuilding the decades-old earthen dams that hold back the community's water reservoirs.

An additional \$200,000 state grant will pay for the borough to start planning an emergency access route from the southern end of Zimovia Highway, and \$695,000 in federal aid administered by the state will help pay for a new roof at the Stikine Middle School.

Most of the money for the \$23 million water treatment plant under construction — close to \$16 million — came from state and federal grants, including a \$2.5 million federal grant appropriated by Congress earlier this year.

Meanwhile, the borough is hoping to add to its haul with requests for federal grants to repair the rot-damaged Public Safety Building and improve its sewage treatment operations to meet higher standards for clean water.

As much as people may complain about state and federal spending, Wrangell depends on that largesse to pay for necessary projects it could not afford on its own.

But all that money does not necessarily help the borough's operating budget which pays for police services, Parks and Recreation programs, the Nolan Center, street maintenance, the local contribution to the school district and more.

The main sources of revenue to pay for those programs are sales taxes and property taxes, neither of which elected officials nor the public want to increase. Yet with a shrinking population and a weak economy, sales tax receipts are starting to show the strain. And the lack of new private construction means the property tax base, while stable, is not gaining.

A sad example of the borough's budget squeeze is school funding. The Legislature and governor agreed to a substantial one-year boost in state money for K-12 education for the 2024-2025 school year, acknowledging that the funding level hasn't budged in more than seven years and schools were falling behind. But the Wrangell district will see none of the benefit of that money. The assembly deducted the extra state support from the borough's contribution to schools, retaining the funds for road repairs.

The budget answers will require hard decisions on taxes and the level of services a small town can afford. So while Wrangell can celebrate all the grants for construction work, it cannot forget that if the town wants good schools and good roads, it will have to pay for both.

- Wrangell Sentinel

Harbor grant

Continued from page 1

Wrangell could ever afford \$28 million in improvements. Under the budget approved by the borough assembly on June 25, the port and harbors account will have about \$1.5 million in reserves as of next summer.

The harbor grant is part of a \$1.5 billion U.S. Department of Transportation program under the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Carol Rushmore, who retired as Wrangell's economic development director last year, prepared the grant application under a borough contract this past winter.

The \$25 million for the harbor is only part of the money the borough has brought in over the past six months. The borough was awarded \$695,000 in federal money distributed through the state for the middle school roof, \$5 million in state dollars to help strengthen the water reservoir dams and \$200,000 from the state to start planning an emergency access road from the southern end of Zimovia Highway.

The borough also will receive \$6.5 million in state grant money for repairs to all three school buildings. That money will be combined with a Wrangell voter-approved \$3.5 million bond issue from 2022 to pay for a long list of repairs and improvements to the community's decades-old school buildings.

Legislators appropriated the school repair grant funds in May, and Gov. Mike Dunleavy signed the state budget on June 28.

The borough also has applied for \$10 million of federal funding to improve its wastewater treatment operations, \$2.5 million for construction of the emergency access road and \$2 million to rebuild the roof and siding at the Public Safety Building, though all are subject to congressional appropriation, which is uncertain.

In total, if Wrangell gets all of its wishes, Villarma estimated it could total \$52 million in federal and state money. The \$25 million for the harbor is the

largest single federal check for Wrangell since it received \$37 million in the late 1990s after Congress appropriated funds for all of Southeast Alaska to lessen the economic pain of the demise of the timber industry.

Villarma said that with all these projects in the works, he hopes more people and more jobs will come to town, "I think we're going to see a bit of a stimulus," he said.

Hospital developer

Continued from page 1

owned lots. The assembly approved the terms.

"But before closing on the deal, Mr. Johnson decided to ask for the six lots for free on the condition he would demolish the old hospital building, which he would have to do anyway to develop the property for his condominium project," Persily said on Monday. "The Sentinel stands by its reporting as accurate and fair."

The borough assembly approved the original agreement April 9. The new agreement was set to come before the assembly in a special meeting on Monday, July 1.

Johnson said in his withdrawal letter to the borough: "Since this article, with this headline, appeared I have now had several people ask me about it, and express concerns about our

intentions. In light of our sole intention of undertaking this initiative to do something positive for Wrangell, I am beyond disappointed as to how the project is now being characterized and discussed, therefore the reason for our withdrawal."

Johnson had planned to develop 36 to 40 two- and three-bedroom condos on the combined properties with covered parking and storage. He estimated the development to cost around \$15 million.

Mayor Patty Gilbert said she's "disappointed that Wrangell lost the opportunity to develop the old hospital into an economic driver for the community," but that, "the city and borough will continue to explore other opportunities for the property."

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Royalty contestants near the end of a month of hard work

BY MARK C. ROBINSON
Sentinel reporter

It's been an adventure for Alisha Armstrong and Kayla Young, who both stepped up at the last minute to become candidates in this year's Fourth of July royalty contest, selling raffle tickets and food at booths in the downtown pavilion.

They have been working for more than a month to raise money for the town's holiday celebration.

Armstrong graduated high school last month and Young will be a senior this fall. They have worked on donation lists, sponsorship letters, menus, events and gathered volunteers. It's the first time in several years that Wrangell had more than one fundraising candidate.

What has made the experience doubly challenging for Armstrong is fitting the contest activities around her job as a barista at the Stikine Inn. "I just think it's been exhausting as a whole," she said. "You know, you're selling tickets, you're selling food, you're doing activities. Just a lot of things, and I'm working on top of it."

Her days sometimes start at 5 a.m. at the Stik and then she'll finish her work at the food booth at 10 or 11 p.m. "It's only a month, though," she added.

Armstrong said the exhaustion could sometimes be amusing. "When it gets late, and you're trying to take people's orders and like, 'I'm so sorry, can you say that again?' I think that's pretty funny."

Young has enjoyed the chance to spend more time with her family while working



PHOTOS BY MARK C. ROBINSON / WRANGELL SENTINEL

Alisha Armstrong (left) said the past month has been exhausting, though she has enjoyed talking with people, particularly past royalty contestants. Kayla Young (right) said she has enjoyed time with family. "It's been really family-oriented and nice to hang out with my great-uncle and my grandparents."

at the booth. "It's been really family-oriented and nice to hang out with my great-uncle and my grandparents."

For Armstrong, one of the best parts of participating in the contest was the chance to just talk with people. "Especially the older community who have been around longer and seen many Fourth of Julys," she said.

One memorable incident for Young was on her first day in the booth when she accidentally started a fire in a small trash can before she quickly moved it outside and extinguished it with a bag of salt. "I

was freaking out," she said with a laugh.

Another challenge for the contestants was menu preparation. "It's actually really hard," Armstrong said. "We've had lots of menu changes. We've had a set menu, but sometimes you can't find that one thing in town."

She talked about one day when her booth was supposed to have fish tacos, but the frozen fish wasn't fully thawed out and they had to adjust. But it all worked out — they used the fish for seafood dishes the next day, when there were three cruise ships in town.

Young said her day-to-day menu preparation was "crazy." She generally starts getting everything ready from 8 to 10:30 a.m. As her family owns J&W's, she also sold some dinners and late-night food at the restaurant in addition to her lunches at the booth. "Every day's a little different with our specials and stuff."

She felt she learned a lot about business in the past month. "I've been doing most of this, the food ordering, getting everything out every day, and making sure you have enough food," she said. "Really understanding the money side of it."

Armstrong observed that one of the best things about competing in the royalty contest is finding unexpected common ground with former royalty contestants. "A lot of people in this town have run already, and so when you go to their house, or they come to the booth, or they buy tickets from you, they know what you're going through at the same time," she said. "I think that's pretty cool. Running for queen is almost a community in itself."

First prize for the raffle, organized by the chamber of commerce, is \$2,500, second is \$1,500 and third prize is \$1,000. The winning raffle tickets will be drawn after the parade on July 4. The candidate with the highest gross revenue will win the royalty competition. Any candidate who raises over \$50,000 will receive a bonus totaling 30% of their net profits. In years past, bonuses have been based solely on ticket sales.

Both Young and Armstrong are planning to put their earnings toward college.

Parks and Recreation cuts out Tuesday and Thursday pool activities

BY MARK C. ROBINSON
Sentinel reporter

Parks and Recreation Director Lucy Robinson has announced the elimination of several regular activities at the swimming pool, starting this month, to manage spending under a cut in the borough contribution for the department.

In an email to the community on June 27, Robinson said the cutbacks at the pool will reduce spending on part-time employees.

The cancellations include the open swim on Monday afternoons and all swim activities on Tuesdays and Thursdays, including lap/family swims and club/camp swims.

"Please note that we have eliminated the aquatics activities that presented with the lowest attendance," she added.

Robinson said afternoon and evening lap swims are currently not available anyway, as they "are historically not well attended during the summer."

"This schedule is for July. As we move forward, and the seasons change, we will bend and flex as needed," the director said in her email to the community.

"We're hoping that we can fire back in the fall," Robinson said June 28.

Swim lessons will continue weekdays, as well as access to the facility for strength training, cardio and locker rooms.

The facility's hours of operation Monday through Friday

have also been adjusted to open 30 minutes earlier and close 30 minutes earlier: Open 5:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. instead of 6 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. "Attendance/demand is higher during the morning hours throughout the summer season," Robinson said. Saturday hours remain unchanged, at 7 a.m. to noon.

Recreation Coordinator Devyn Johnson said the new hours do not apply to the community center (old gym),

which is open only for reservations, scheduled activities and events. "We currently do not have regular hours over there," she said.

Robinson reported last month that borough budget cuts would affect programs and services. The assembly-approved budget for the fiscal year that started July 1 cut \$86,000 from last year's \$640,000 borough contribution to Parks and Recreation programs and building operations.

Budget vetoes

Continued from page 1

a permanent increase in the per-pupil funding formula for state money.

The 11% one-year increase in the formula will produce an estimated \$440,000 boost in state aid for the Wrangell School District for the 2024-2025 school year.

State funding covers more than 60% of the district's operating budget.

But because the borough assembly reduced by \$440,000 the amount the schools had requested from the borough for the next school year, the district will see no gain from the increase in state funding.

The borough's annual contribution to the school district comes from sales tax revenues and a federal aid program that helps pay for education and roads in rural communities. By taking advantage of the higher level of state aid to reduce the amount the borough contributed to the schools, the assembly was able to retain more of the federal dollars for road projects.

In a big plus for Wrangell, the state budget for the fiscal year that started July 1 includes more than \$62 million to reach far down the list of major maintenance projects at schools around the state. It was the largest such appropriation in more than a decade.

Repairs to all three Wrangell school buildings are No. 16 on the state's list, which the budget funded down to No. 25. Wrangell will receive \$6.5 million.

The borough, which owns the buildings, and the school district have been working to determine which repairs and upgrades are the top priorities. They will combine the \$6.5 million from the state with \$3.5 million raised by a bond issue approved

by Wrangell voters in 2022 to undertake more than \$10 million in work to the buildings over the next couple of years.

Wrangell also has \$695,000 in federal grant funds administered by the state to put toward a new roof at the Stikine Middle School, adding to the \$10 million.

The governor's budget vetoes included \$10 million for increased seafood marketing efforts amid weak markets and low prices for fishermen and processors; \$11.2 million to help rural schools increase access to broadband internet services (cutting one-third from the Legislature's appropriation); \$5.4 million for the graduate program at University of Alaska Fairbanks so that it can strive for status as a top-tier research university (a cut of 25% from the Legislature's spending plan); \$2.6 million in Head Start grants (half of what the Legislature approved); and \$4 million for the University of Alaska drones program (a 40% cut from the legislative appropriation).

For most, Dunleavy said his vetoes were to "preserve general funds for fiscal stability," without providing further explanation.

He also vetoed about \$1.5 million intended to improve snowplowing of state highways in South-central Alaska; several parks and trails projects; scaled back the legislative appropriation for renewable energy grant funding; and vetoed \$15 million for a short-term skilled nursing facility at the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium in Anchorage.

The budget vetoes totaled just over 3% of state general fund spending.

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



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4TH OF JULY SCHEDULE OF EVENTS



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Mia Wiederspohn takes a victory leap into the water in last year's log-rolling competition.



PHOTO BY CAROLEINE JAMES/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Jagger Campbell displays the flounder he caught during last year's scrap fish derby.



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

(From left) Ryder Ritchie, Dane and Isaac Richard ride an ATV bedecked with the American flag during last year's Fourth of July parade.



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Wilma Stokes-Leslie and granddaughter Lola Pritchett walk as Wilma and Pebbles Flintstone in last year's Fourth of July parade.

THROUGH JULY 10

4th of July Quilt Show
On display at downtown businesses
Presented by the Stikine Stitchers

JUNE 29 - JULY 3

Red, White and Blue Fair
Art, photography, crafts, jewelry, sewing, baked goods, canned foods and more.
On display at the Nolan Center
Chairperson: Ethel Dando

MONDAY, JULY 1

Demonstration - Remote Control Boat Races: 1 p.m.
City Dock
Chairperson: Greg Wood
Sponsored by: Stikine River Rats

SOLAS Lifeboat Deployment Presentation: 1 p.m.
City Dock
Presented by: Greg Wood
Sponsored by: Mike Bauer

3-on-3 Basketball: 5:30 p.m.
Kyle Angerman Playground
Sign-ups start at 5:30 p.m.
\$25 entry fee per team.
Chairperson: Christy Good
Sponsored by: Parks and Recreation

TUESDAY, JULY 2

Art Clark Scrap Fish Derby: 9 a.m.
City Dock
Two age categories: 6-9 and 10-13
Rules: Volunteers ONLY on the float. Must wear a life jacket at all times. Hand lines only. Kids must bait their own hook. All bait allowed. Derby officials decisions will be final. 6 year olds who are participating in Tiny Tots Derby are ineligible to compete.
Chairpersons: Greg and Tammi Meissner

Tiny Tots Scrap Fish Derby: 11 a.m.
City Dock
Age: 0-6 years Rules: All children must be accompanied by an adult. Must wear a life jacket at all times. Hand lines only. Bring bait. Prizes for all children.
Chairpersons: Kim Powell, Pam McCloskey, AJ Roundtree
Sponsors: Southeast Auto, Stikine Drug, Dave Mark Construction

Pie a Public Servant: Noon
Lynch Street
\$5 gets you a pie tin filled with whipped cream to throw at the public servant of your choice.
Chairperson: Liz Roundtree

Log Rolling Competition: 2 p.m.
City Dock
May be canceled for lack of volunteer chairperson.
Sign-up starts at 1:30 p.m. 18 years and up.
\$10 registration fee.
Chairperson: Lee Wiederspohn

Greased Pole Event: 3 p.m.
City Dock
May be canceled for lack of volunteer chairperson.
18 years and up. \$5 registration fee.
Chairperson: Randy Oliver

Welcome Home Picnic: 5 p.m.
Shoemaker Park
Picnic and bouncy house
Chairperson: Georgia Selfridge
Sponsored by: City Market, Wrangell IGA, Jeremy Bynum

Pie Eating Contest: 6 p.m.
Shoemaker Park
Chairperson: Georgia Selfridge

Disc Golf Tournament: 6:30 p.m.
Muskeg Meadows
Register by 6 p.m. Youth under age 14 must have a parent present.
Multiple prizes. \$10 registration fee.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 3

Target Competition: 8 a.m. to Noon
Gun Range
Firearms and ammo provided.
No personal firearms. Adults must accompany minors. Cash prizes.
Chairperson: Allen Rooney

Canoe Races: 9 a.m.
City Dock
Cork capture, short sprint, long sprint, war canoe - male, female, co-ed in each. All participants must wear PFDs.
Chairperson: Kate Thomas
Sponsored by: Erica Ottesen

Crazy Craft Race: 10:30 a.m.
City Dock
Anything that floats except a boat. Must be on/in your device and wear a life jacket.
Chairperson: Alicia Gillen
Sponsored by: Erica Ottesen

Kalee Herman (front) and Johanna Sanford (back) compete in the girls short-sprint event at last year's canoe races.



PHOTO BY CAROLEINE JAMES/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Dog Show: 1 p.m.
City Dock cul-de-sac
Registration starts at 12:30 p.m.
Chairperson: Joan Sargent
Sponsored by: Cooper's Corner

Big Wheel Races: 3 p.m.
Lynch Street
Age: 3 and up. In the event of rain, the event will be moved to the covered playground.
Chairpersons: Bailey Scheib, Stephanie Cook
Sponsored by: Wrangell Sentinel

Elks Lodge: Beer Garden: 4 to 9 p.m.
French dip sandwiches 6 to 8 p.m.

Royalty Coronation/Talent Show: 6 p.m.
Nolan Center
Crowning of royalty and talent show
Chairpersons: Bonnie Ritchie and Haley Reeves

Show-and Shine Boat Show: 6 to 7:30 p.m.
Campbell Drive
Chance for race fans to get up close to Race Boats and ask Racers questions.
Sponsored by: Stikine River Rats Racing

Wiener Toss: 8 p.m.
Lynch Street
Chaired and sponsored by: KSTK

Fireworks

Starting at dusk (usually about 11 p.m.)
Shooting from City Dock
Two preliminary fireworks will be shot to signal that the main display will begin approximately 10 minutes later.
Chaired by: Wrangell Volunteer Fire Department
Sponsored by: Wrangell Chamber of Commerce

THURSDAY, JULY 4

Independence Day Fun Run/Walk/Bike: 7:30 a.m.
Starts at the pool entrance
Register by 7 a.m. No entry fee.
Sponsored by: Parks and Recreation

Independence Day Community Worship Service: 9 a.m.
Wrangell IGA parking lot
Chairperson: Wrangell Ministerial Association

Pie Sale: 8 a.m.
Covered patio at Arctic Chiropractic
Until sold out.
Sponsored by: Beta Sigma Phi

Elks Lodge Events
Club opens at 10 a.m. with a full bar, Bloody Marys and mimosas.
Beer Garden open noon to 9 p.m.
Horseshoe tournament at 12:30 p.m. with registration at noon. New York steaks only for dinner from 5 to 9 p.m.

4th of July Parade: 11 a.m.
Downtown
Theme: "Home Where We Belong"
National anthem 11 a.m. in front of Wells Fargo. Participants line up by the Nolan Center. Entrants after 10 a.m. will not be judged but may participate.
Float categories: businesses/organizations, families/reunions, churches.
Also: Adult costume, kids costume, horses/pets, ATV, motorcycle, bikes/trikes/wagons, cars/trucks, marching units. 1st, 2nd and 3rd place awards.
Cash prizes for each category.
Grand Marshal: Christina Florschutz
Chairperson: Kathy St. Clair
Sponsors: Wrangell Real Estate, Dando Financial

Royalty Ticket Drawing: 12:15 p.m.
Wrangell Chamber of Commerce Downtown Pavilion
Prizes: \$2,500 for first, \$1,500 for second and \$1,000 for third.

Logging Show: 1 p.m.
City Dock
Sign up at 12:30 p.m. Open to age 18 and up. Entry fee is \$40 total for all events or \$25 each event.
Chairperson: Randy Oliver

Toddler Games: 12:30 p.m.
City Hall Lawn
Age: Infant to 5
Chairperson: Barb Neyman

Junior Olympics: 12:30 p.m.
Lynch Street
Tug-of-war, 50-yard dash, cash prizes.
Age: 4-8.
Chairperson: Todd White
Sponsor: White Enterprises

Street Games: 1 p.m.
Front Street
Running races, egg run, gunny sack race, 3-legged race. Ages: 4-99 years old.
Chairpersons: Dairan Gerald, Meissner and Ottesen families
Sponsored by: Erica Ottesen

Egg Toss: 3 p.m.
Ages: 4-99 years old. Multiple categories.
Chaired by: Dairan Gerald, Meissner and Ottesen families

Boat Races: 4:30 p.m.
City Dock
Registration following boat check at 2 p.m. Safety meeting at 3:30 p.m. All times mandatory for racers.
Sponsored by: Stikine River Rats Racing

Street Dance: 8 to 11 p.m.
Pavilion/Lynch Street
Live music by local band Shotrock featuring Doc Rock, Jason Beaty, Glen and Kelley Decker, Elias Decker.

Schedule is subject to change

Contestants in KSTK's wiener toss last year might have wanted to use their hands to catch the flying hot dogs, but no hands allowed. It was an open-mouth contest.



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Families gathered along the waterfront on Campbell Drive last year to ooh and aah over the fireworks above Zimovia Strait.

The Sentinel hasn't missed a Wrangell 4th since 1902.

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Petersburg seiner sinks at Anita Bay; no serious injuries

By ORIN PIERSON
Petersburg Pilot writer

The Petersburg-based seiner Pamela Rae took on water and rolled over in Anita Bay the morning of June 25, but the five people on board all made it safely off the vessel.

"When we first got there, the vessel was already underwater and appeared to be sitting on bottom," said Jordan Bunes, chief of the Wrangell Volunteer Fire Department, which responded to the call. "It was probably in less than 15 feet of water."

Anita Bay, off the east side of Etolin Island, is about 16 miles south of downtown Wrangell.

"We found that everybody was already off the boat," Bunes said. "There was another Petersburg seiner that was on scene that stated he had witnessed the grounding of the vessel and kind of assisted with pulling the people off the boat and trying to get all the things situated. They got the seine skiff removed from the boat as the Pamela Rae was sinking."

The U.S. Coast Guard received a call shortly before 10 a.m. June 25 that the seiner was sinking. The call came from a boat that had relayed a call from the fishing vessel Barbara, which was on the scene and providing Samaritan support, U.S. Coast Guard spokesperson Lt. Matt Naylor said.

Crew aboard a U.S. Forest Service Wrangell District vessel heard the radio call and headed to the area right away. The Forest Service then called Wrangell Search and Rescue, Bunes explained.

"While I was talking to him, we were also dispatched via the Wrangell Police Department. We immediately started getting an airplane spooled up to head that way." Wrangell Search and Rescue launched a plane with two EMTs and their medical equipment and arrived on scene at 10:19 a.m.

A deckhand from the Pamela Rae, Tavis Lemay, posted on social media the night after the sinking, "It took 1.5 minutes for the boat to fill up with water, and at 2 minutes it rolled over. Most of us were in the focsle but made it out safely. I made it out only in my underwear."

He added, "We were quickly in the hands of the Wrangell Search and Rescue."

One of the crew appeared to have minor injuries and was taken by floatplane for treatment at Wrangell Medical Center.

"The Forest Service law enforcement vessel with one of our first responders on board transported the remainder of the crew," said Bunes. "We had them back to Wrangell about 58 minutes after we received the first call."

"After the situation was stabilized, the vessel was tied off to a series of net pens in Anita Bay where it remained partially sunk," said the Coast Guard's Naylor. "I believe as the tide came up it became further and further submerged."

The net pens are used at the Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association's remote hatchery release site in Anita Bay. There were no salmon in the pens.

The vessel's insurance company and the owner have been coordinating the response via Alaska Commercial Divers, said Naylor. The Coast Guard is monitoring for pollution control.

Divers arrived the day after the sinking, Naylor said. "They have already plugged all of the fuel tank vents, so there shouldn't be any fuel leaking from the vessel," said Naylor. "Some sheening has been observed ... there may still be some hydraulic oil, we don't know for sure."

"The goal will be to contain any further pollution found at the site and then refloat and defuel the vessel," said Naylor.



PHOTO BY TOMMY WELLS / CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Connor Blake caught this 22.6-pound king salmon near Fools Inlet on June 28, winning the top prize in the derby's 12-and-younger category.

Opening-day catch holds up and wins king salmon derby

By SENTINEL STAFF

Charlie Webb, of Anchorage, took first place in Wrangell's 69th king salmon derby with his 43.5-pound catch on the opening day of the derby June 15. The annual contest closed on Sunday, June 30, and no one passed Webb.

Wrangell's Connor Blake won the 12-and-under youth division with his 22.6-pound king, caught near Fools Inlet on June 28.

It was the first king that Connor has ever caught and kept, said Tommy Wells, executive director of the chamber of commerce, which organizes the fishing derby.

The chamber was still working Monday to determine the prizes for the adult division, along with scheduling an awards night, Wells said.

Prizes in the 12-and-under category are \$100 for first, \$75 for second and \$50 for third, sponsored by the Totem Bar.

Almost 160 people purchased tickets to fish in the derby, with 27 turning in kings at the weigh station over the two-week contest.

Webb caught his winning king near Point Warde while fishing with Alan Cummings of All In Charters. Of the 23 fish entered in the adult division, seven were caught around Point Warde. Webb's fish is the largest winner since 2017.

Wrangell's Diana Nore took second with a 38.1-pound king, also caught at Point Warde.

Third place went to Mike Ramsey, of Cheyenne, Wyoming, at 37.3 pounds, caught near Anan Creek. Wrangell's Iver Nore and Sigrid Vanek came in fourth and fifth with their 33.7-pound and 33.56-pound kings, both hooked at Point Warde on the same day, June 18.

Of the 23 entries in the adult division, seven were caught by out-of-town visitors.

Wrangell's Stuart Woodbury and Carsyn Christian took second and third in the youth division with their 20.9- and 19.9-pound catches.

Underground water and sewer pipes are aging out

By BECCA CLARK
Sentinel reporter

Wrangell is facing a network of aging underground utilities. Some pipes are up to 70 years old, said Tom Wetor, public works director.

Since the first of the year, at least five water and sewer line leaks have sprung up around town.

Wetor explained that a lot of the underground utility work was done in the 1980s and is beginning to age out.

He explained that the environment in Wrangell is particularly harsh and causes pipes to degrade faster than they should. A lot of the pipes in town are made of ductile iron, which he said were estimated to last 50 to 60 years when they were installed. But he said many of those pipes are

aging out at 30 to 40 years.

The goal, Wetor said, is to replace all the underground pipes with high-density polyethylene plastic pipes, which are supposed to last forever. But he added that it will take a long time before all the underground infrastructure is upgraded.

Replacing the pipes is a high priority need, Wetor said, but lining up funding is extremely challenging.

Much of the funding for road projects comes from the federal Secure Rural Schools account, of which the borough planned to spend half a million dollars on McKinnon Street this year. The federal money, which is limited and uncertain each federal budget year, goes to fund the school district and road work.

Wetor said the borough goes

after grants for roads all the time, but a lot of the grants for roads don't cover water service, and grants for water often don't cover roads, he explained. It doesn't make sense to pave new roads over old infrastructure, he added, requiring that the borough line up sufficient funding for everything before starting anything.

He said the borough faces two costly options for repairing and rebuilding roadways and what is underground: Spend a million dollars on new equipment and add another person or two to the Public Works budget, or hire contractors for the work. Though he noted that the limited number of contractors in town are busy and not always available to take on new work.

Health and food preservation cooked up for late July

By MARK C. ROBINSON
Sentinel reporter

Sarah Lewis from the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service will return to Wrangell July 27-29 to teach more health and food preservation classes for free.

Lewis, based in Juneau, will travel on her family's boat, the Pacific Sapphire, to visit nine communities in Southeast Alaska during the month to teach a variety of home skills and food preservation classes. "More reliable than the ferry and less expensive than flying," she said.

The Wrangell classes are a collaboration with the federal Tribes Extension Program, 4-H, the Wrangell Cooperative Association and SEARHC.

Lewis said the classes will be held at the high school home economics classroom.

The sessions are free, and include cooking for brain health as well as bone health, food preservation basics, making your own natural home cleaners, how to preserve food in an emergency


if your freezer fails, testing pressure canner gauges and a class on food preservation safety for local food leaders (though the general public is invited to attend as well).

A licensed architect with a master's degree in social work, Lewis has transformed her background into a career as the university extension service's Juneau-based health, home and family development agent, sharing her knowledge of food preservation, home energy efficiency and emergency preparedness techniques. She has been teaching such workshops throughout Southeast since 2013.

Lewis last taught workshops in Wrangell in December 2022.

For schedules and registration links, visit <https://bit.ly/SoutheastCES2024>. Any accommodation requests related to a disability should be made five business days in advance.

For more information, contact Lewis at 907-455-2010 or sarah.lewis@alaska.edu.




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State Supreme Court allows public spending on private schools to continue

BY IRIS SAMUELS
Anchorage Daily News

The Alaska Supreme Court on June 28 overturned a lower court decision that found two statutes governing Alaska's publicly funded homeschooling programs violated the state constitution by sending public funds to private and religious schools.

The ruling is a victory for Gov. Mike Dunleavy, who has sought to defend the statutes and keep them on the books. But it is largely procedural, and the attorney who originally challenged the constitutionality of the statutes vowed to continue fighting the practice of spending correspondence school allotments on private school tuition.

Over 22,000 Alaska students are enrolled in correspondence programs, which allow families to be reimbursed for costs totaling up to \$4,500 per student per year related to homeschooling materials and curriculum. But under statutes first proposed more than a decade ago by Dunleavy when he was a state senator, the allotments were increasingly being used to cover the cost of private school tuition.

Anchorage Superior Court Judge Adolf Zeman in April found that that practice violated the Alaska Constitution, which prohibits spending public funds "for the direct benefit of any religious or other private educational institution."

One day after hearing oral ar-

guments in the case, the Alaska Supreme Court overturned Zeman's ruling, siding with attorneys for the state who argued the case was incorrectly brought against the state Department of Education rather than specific school districts that had allowed correspondence funding to flow to private schools.

The Supreme Court declined to rule on the question of whether spending allotment funds at private schools is constitutional. They found that because school districts — rather than the state — design correspondence students' learning plans and approve allotment uses, the lawsuit should have included a specific school district as a defendant.

The original case was brought against the state last year by a group of parents represented by Anchorage attorney Scott Kendall. Kendall said June 28 he planned to speak with his clients about pursuing a lawsuit that includes a school district, with the aim of providing a definitive answer on whether allotments can be used to cover the cost of private school tuition.

Kendall called the Alaska Supreme Court decision "primarily a procedural order" and said the questioning by justices during oral arguments on June 27 "strongly implies" that they would find the practice of spending allotment funds on private school tuition unconstitutional.

Kendall said "there is more than one school district that has

essentially publicly advertised the use of allotments for tuition as a service they provide. So there will be multiple potential targets to choose from."

Denali Borough School District, for example, at one point stated on its website that a majority of the roughly 700 students enrolled in its correspondence program, called PEAK, "were dual enrolled with one of the many private schools in Anchorage."

Alaska Attorney General Treg Taylor called the court order "a win for the rule of law." Taylor's wife, Jodi Taylor, has openly advocated for the use of allotments to cover private school tuition, and has said she did so for her own children.

The Alaska Supreme Court's order means that if the original plaintiffs in the case choose to pursue a lawsuit targeting a specific school district, it will be considered first by the Superior Court. Kendall said that would extend the time until Alaska families have a clear answer on the permissible uses of correspondence allotments, but that the courts would likely eventually decide on the question.

"I would be surprised if we don't have a definitive answer before this time next year," Kendall said.

In the meantime, school districts could continue approving correspondence allotment spending on private schools as they have done in the past.

Commercial troll season could last to the weekend

BY ANNA LAFFREY
Ketchikan Daily News

Commercial trollers started their summer season Monday, July 1, targeting a catch of approximately 66,700 chinook salmon in an opener that will be closed by emergency order when catch estimates approach that harvest target.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced last week that trollers are expected to hit the limit this weekend, after just six or seven days of fishing.

Last year, Southeast trollers brought in about 85,000 king salmon from July 1 to July 12, about 8,000 fish over the target for the first opener of the season.

The limit for trollers is based on the U.S.-Canada Pacific Salmon Treaty allocation for Southeast Alaska, which the Alaska Board of Fisheries distributes between gear groups by regulation.

This year's all-gear harvest target of 207,150 treaty chinook is allocated among commercial and sport fisheries according to management plans established by the board for the commercial purse seine (8,900 treaty chinook), drift gillnet (6,000), set gillnet (1,000) and troll fisheries (153,000), as well as the sport fishery (38,250).

Trollers already harvested a chunk of their treaty chinook allotment for the 2023-2024 accounting year. During the winter troll fishery, trollers caught 45,300 chinook, and during the spring troll fishery hooked 11,500 chinook, according to the state.

A total of 254 trollers in Southeast Alaska participated in the winter troll fishery that lasted from October to March. Fishermen received an average price of \$8.11 per pound for chinook.

A total of 204 trollers participated in spring troll openings that began on May 1 in some individually managed areas near salmon hatcheries and release sites in Southeast Alaska, as well as along migratory corridors for chum salmon. The spring fishery is managed to target Alaska hatchery-produced chinook and chum salmon, according to Fish and Game.

The department estimates that 92,400 treaty chinook salmon remain to be harvested by trollers during the summer fishery. Following the first summer chinook opener this week, trollers in August will be able to target the remainder of their allocation during a second summer opener sometime in August.

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Borough budget

Continued from page 1 that we have a well-funded, well-trained, well-equipped and, most importantly, well-staffed police department to ensure the continued safety of our citizens. Cutting police officer positions

will lead to extended shifts, increased overtime, faster burnout and major mental health strain. Downtime is absolutely crucial to survival in this field of work."

Because of the pending election for the police department to unionize, borough employees are limited in what they can say. "We can't say anything that might influence the vote," Borough Manager Mason Villarma said.

Villarma said in an interview June 26 that it's frustrating he can't share a plan for layoffs, because the plan would be negotiated if police department staff vote to join the union.

Frustrations shared by community members at the assembly meeting also included the lack of warning they received regarding the status of police department jobs.

Villarma explained the thought process behind the proposed budget. "For a long, long time, things weren't taken care of (in the municipality).

Capital projects weren't done in the past. Maintenance of facilities wasn't done in the past. Now we're at this critical point that we've inherited. ... We have the tough responsibility of using our scarce resources to basically address \$200 million in deferred maintenance on top of funding operating expenses."

He noted the aging underground infrastructure around town and the much needed road maintenance. "We have severe needs in the community to do critical services. And I'm talking about very basic needs: water, sewer, power."

The Wrangell Police Department is budgeted for seven certified law enforcement positions: The chief, a lieutenant, sergeant and four officers.

Villarma noted police force staff levels in surrounding communities of similar sizes. "Cordova has 2,545 people. They have one police chief, one sergeant, three officers, five total. Skagway has 1,191 people, but heavy tourism ... one police chief, one sergeant, three officers, five total. And Haines has 2,547 people (with) one police chief, one sergeant, three officers, five total."

The state's latest estimate for Wrangell's population, as of last summer, is 2,039 residents.

The assembly acknowledged that these are hard times financially for the borough and for taxpayers.

"We did not raise taxes to do

this budget, because we made a commitment to keep (property) tax mill rates the same, which is difficult. Now, there's always the opportunity to raise taxes, but nobody wants to do that. We're all fiscally conservative here. We want to protect the public dollars best we can," Villarma said.

In an effort to cut spending, this year's budget does not include contributions to KSTK, the senior center or the chamber of commerce. Rather, the three nonprofits will receive their utilities for free.

"It's really hard when you're considering things like layoffs and critical needs, and allocating taxpayer dollars to more voluntary type causes, or charitable causes, which are huge and a big piece of bedrock for our community," Villarma said. "But I think that taxpayers themselves should voluntarily contribute to those things."

The borough contribution to the senior center last year was \$13,000; funding for the chamber has been around \$20,000 to \$25,000 a year; and KSTK requested \$12,500 in the new budget.

The approved budget also included cuts to the Parks and Recreation Department funding. The contribution will drop from \$640,000 last year to \$554,000. Borough funds cover more than 70% of the budget for the department's programs and maintenance, including the community center and swimming pool.

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Police report

Monday, June 24
Agency assist: Ambulance.

Tuesday, June 25
Welfare check.

Wednesday, June 26
Citizen assist: Vehicle inspection.
Fireworks complaint.
Domestic disturbance.

Thursday, June 27
Assist: Wrangell IGA.
Found property.
Agency assist: Alaska Department of Transportation.
Driving complaint.
Inmate booking.
Reckless driving.
Traffic stop: Verbal warning for driving habits and faulty equipment.
Suspicious circumstance.

Friday, June 28
Animal complaint.
Violation of protective order:
Unfounded.
Traffic stop.
Citizen assist.

Saturday, June 29
Agency assist: Search and Rescue.
Agency assist: Sexual assault.
Stolen property.

Sunday, June 30
Domestic disturbance:
Drugs.
Dead deer.
Found property.
Motor vehicle accident.
During this reporting period there were five agency assists for the Hoonah Police Department and six bar checks.

Permanent Fund could run short of cash if investment year is bad

By SEAN MAGUIRE
Anchorage Daily News

The Alaska Permanent Fund started the fiscal year on July 1 facing a possible \$600 million shortfall.

Legislators have earmarked \$3.8 billion from the fund for next year's budget, which includes the Permanent Fund dividend. An additional \$1 billion has been set aside for inflation proofing. Both draws would exceed currently available revenue in the fund's spendable account.

"That's the first time that we've been in this scenario," Deven Mitchell, CEO of the Alaska Permanent Fund Corp., told a joint legislative committee on June 24.

Investment earnings over the next year should bridge that fiscal gap. But a "doomsday scenario" of poor investment returns could leave fund managers unable to meet the 5% annual draw required by state statute for state services and the dividend, Mitchell said.

"We don't want to be alarmist," he said, adding, "there's a lot of opportunity to make adjustments to eliminate this perceived cliff."

The \$80 billion Permanent Fund is split between two accounts. Just under \$70 billion is in the constitutionally protected principal, which is unspendable without a constitutional amendment. About \$10 billion is in the earnings reserve account — a fund that can be spent by a simple majority vote of the Legislature. But most of that revenue has already been allocated.

The annual 5% draw of the fund's total value was established by the Legislature in 2018. Permanent Fund earnings have been the state's primary source of revenue in all but one year since then.

The fund's managers have warned that the state's nest egg has a small but growing risk of financial crisis. In February, advisers to the board of trustees said there was a 5% chance the earnings reserve could be exhausted within three years.

"If I drove to work every day and every 20th time I was going to have an accident, I would modify my behavior," Mitchell said to lawmakers June 24.

Extend the horizon out to 10 years and the risk of draining the spendable account at least once in the next decade grows to 20%, a recent report shows.

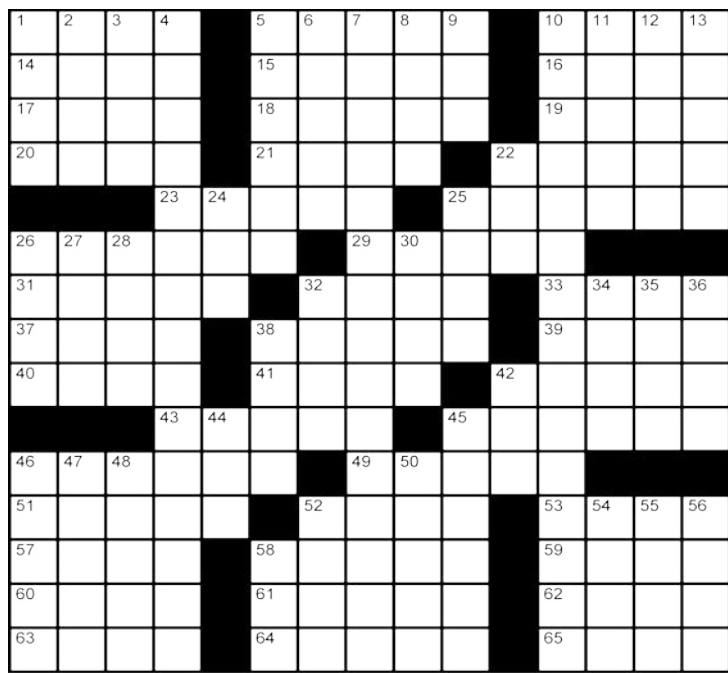
The Permanent's Fund's board of trustees in February issued their 10th analysis paper of the fund's future. For more than 20 years, the trustees have recommended a constitutional change to create a single-fund structure with a hard cap on draws from the fund — no more fluctuating earnings reserve.

Supporters say that would avoid the need for annual inflation proofing and that a single fund would better allow corporation staff to invest for the long term.

"You eliminate the concern about one generation of Alaskans taking more than their quote, unquote, 'fair share,'" Mitchell said.

Crossword

Answers on page 12



CLUES ACROSS

- 1 Depositors' protective grp.
- 5 Fruitcake
- 10 Jane Austen matchmaker
- 14 Bind
- 15 Uma Thurman's ex --- Hawke
- 16 Give temporarily
- 17 Arabian chieftain
- 18 Lightweight cord
- 19 Breathtaking organ
- 20 Against
- 21 Large bundle
- 22 Lamp scamp?
- 23 Bit of broken pottery
- 25 To do with mail
- 26 Strainer
- 29 Whisky distiller --- Walker
- 31 Appears ominously
- 32 --- Chanel
- 33 Actor and rapper Mike ---
- 37 Wheat flour in India
- 38 For example, brogues
- 39 Harvest
- 40 Hits lightly
- 41 High-efficiency lights, briefly
- 42 Enigmatic quotemaker Yogi ---
- 43 Corpse
- 45 Luxury accommodations
- 46 Dozing
- 49 Wet season
- 51 Place
- 52 Work the land
- 53 Records
- 57 Cookware
- 58 Military blockade
- 59 "... sting like ---" (Ali)
- 60 Therefore
- 61 Kofi ---
- 62 Brief message
- 63 Red light gas
- 64 Office in training
- 65 Writing table

CLUES DOWN

- 1 Type of market
- 2 What Rhett didn't give
- 3 Brenda Lee's "--- True?"
- 4 Yuletide
- 5 Home beverage center
- 6 Fighting an enemy
- 7 Old acquaintance
- 8 His last word was "Rosebud"
- 9 Unity
- 10 Large landmass north of the Canadian mainland
- 11 Launch
- 12 Passion
- 13 Theatrical backer
- 22 Smallest Indian state
- 24 "--- So Fine" (old Chiffons number)
- 25 Advantages
- 26 Fuss
- 27 Scintilla
- 28 Former Mississippi senator
- Trent ---
- 30 Summer refreshments
- 32 Top cook
- 34 Cheeky
- 35 Shave
- 36 Health farms
- 38 Thin potter's clay
- 42 Top and bottom of a hamburger
- 44 Senator --- Cruz
- 45 Noiseless
- 46 Colorado resort
- 47 Stockpile
- 48 Dismiss
- 50 Pond problem
- 52 S N L comic --- Fey
- 54 Double-reed woodwind instrument
- 55 Obtains
- 56 Search
- 58 Cold War U S A F arm

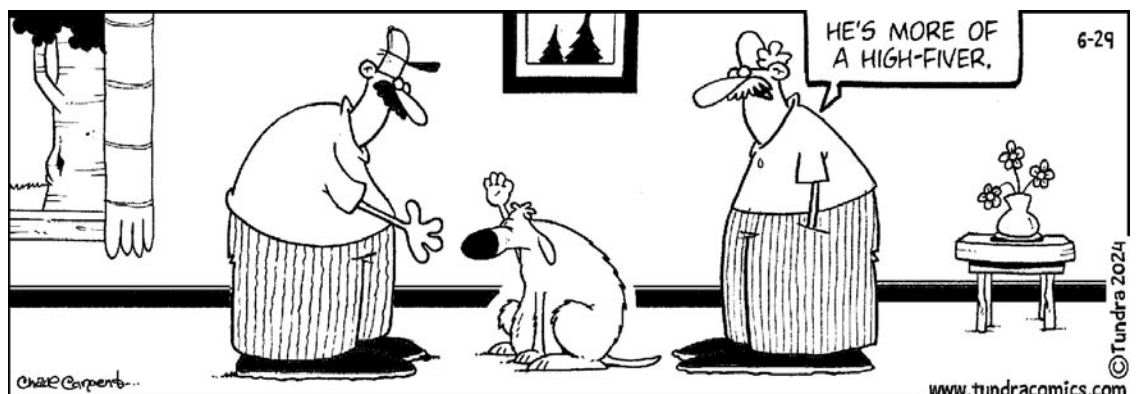
Ritter's River

by Marc Lutz



Tundra

by Chad Carpenter



OBITUARIES

Former resident Lyle Bennett dies at 76



Lyle Bennett

Lyle F. Bennett lost his battle with lung disease on June 19, 2024.

He was born April 3, 1948, to Farrell and Alda Bennett. Though he was born in Vancouver, Washington, "he was a lifelong Alaskan."

Lyle enjoyed many ventures during his lifetime, including drilling rock on Three Lakes Loop Road south of Petersburg, as owner/operator of Petersburg Art Gallery, as well as 30-plus years of owning and operating vending machines. He lived in Wrangell for a few years, about 35 years ago, working at the power plant

and painting with other artists in town.

His main joys in life were family and friends. Lyle met Carol Mathews at Brownwood, Texas, while deployed with the U.S. Army. They were married on May 29, 1970, "and were married for more than 54 wonderful years."

He is survived by his wife Carol Bennett; sons Devren (Everette) and Trent (Vanessa); grandchildren Daten, Abi, Carmen, Mathew and Diesel; sister Lanore Rodenberg; and many nieces and nephews.

A celebration of life was held June 28 in Petersburg.

**CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL
PUBLIC NOTICE**

Pursuant to the City and Borough of Wrangell Code, Sec. 3.04.080, notice is hereby given that the regular assembly meetings of the assembly shall be held on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month and shall begin at 6 p.m.

If any such Tuesday shall fall on a legal holiday as defined by the laws of the State of Alaska, the meetings scheduled for that day shall be held at the same hour on the next succeeding day which is not a holiday. Separate notice for the regular assembly meetings shall not be required. There will be no regular meetings the second Tuesday in July and August and fourth Tuesday in December.

If a work session is scheduled preceding the regular assembly meeting, publication shall be made on the website and posted at City Hall and the post office that the regular assembly meeting shall begin at 7 p.m.

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

Publish July 3, 2024

**CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL
NOTICE INVITING BIDS
MEYERS CHUCK HARBOR REPLACEMENT
FLOAT PROCUREMENT**

Notice is hereby given that the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, will receive sealed bids for the construction of the Meyers Chuck Harbor Replacement – Float Procurement project. Base Bid Work consists of all activities necessary to design moorage floats and supply all fabricated moorage float materials and hardware and delivering those materials to the Marine Services Center storage area in Wrangell, Alaska, in accordance with the Contract Documents. Additive Alternate work consists of designing additional moorage floats and supplying those materials and hardware and Contractor assembly of the moorage float materials and hardware into complete float modules prior to shipping. The engineers estimate for the Base Bid work is approximately \$600,000 and for the combination of Additive Alternates is approximately \$345,000.

Sealed bids will be received by the City and Borough of Wrangell, Post Office Box 531, Wrangell, Alaska 99929, located at the Borough Clerk's Office, 205 Brueger Street, Wrangell, Alaska 99929 until 2 p.m. prevailing time on July 17, 2024, and publicly opened and read at that time.

The Contract Documents should be downloaded from the City and Borough of Wrangell website (www.wrangell.com) under the Bids and RFPs section.

The owner reserves the right to reject any or all Bids, to waive any informality in a Bid, or to make an award as it best serves the interests of the owner.

Mason Villarma, Borough Manager
City and Borough of Wrangell

Publish June 26, July 3 and 10, 2024

CLASSIFIED

HELP WANTED

Wrangell Cooperative Association Transportation (WCAT) is seeking two road/trail maintenance laborers. Complete job descriptions and applications are available outside the Wrangell Cooperative Association office at 1002 Zimovia Highway. Positions are open until filled. Contact Lizzy Romane at 907-874-3077 with any questions.

HELP WANTED

Johnson's Building Supply is accepting applications for the following position: Customer Service: Duties include counter sales, freight handling, customer deliveries, stocking and inventory. Full-time position; will require working Saturdays. Valid Alaska driver's license, must be able to lift 50 lbs., forklift experience a plus, starting pay is DOE. Stop by Johnson's for an application.

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the Sentinel. Contact Amber at 907-874-2301 or email wrgsent@gmail.com.

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Wrangell Heritage House Development, LLC

June 28, 2024

To: Leadership of the City and Borough of Wrangell Alaska; and An Open Letter to the Citizens of Wrangell.

From: Wrangell Heritage House Development, LLC and its President Wayne Johnson.

The purpose of this letter is to withdraw our proposal to acquire the "Old Hospital Property" and six adjacent lots for the purpose of building condo units, covered garages, and on-site resident boat storage. We have made this decision to eliminate any doubts or concerns that we, as developers, are seeking any City owned property "for free", as erroneously and egregiously stated in the headline of a front-page article in the Wrangell Sentinel newspaper on Wednesday June 26th, 2024.

As Wrangell City leadership and Wrangell Development leadership is aware, the proposed deal called for Wrangell Heritage House Development, LLC to 1) Acquire the plot of land where the Old Hospital is located for \$200 thousand; and then, 2) Once the Old Hospital Building was demolished and debris removed and hazard waste was abated and removed from the island, then and only then, 3) the adjacent six lots would be conveyed as consideration for the demolition and also as an economic incentive for the future development.

The deal clearly spelled out that conveyance of the six adjacent lots was fully conditioned on satisfactory removal of the Old Hospital Building, and that doing so would provide substantial value to Wrangell far more than the value of the lots themselves.

So that people are aware, it will cost well over a million dollars for a private owner to acquire, demolish and remove the debris and hazardous material. As a government entity, it is expected that the cost will be much higher.

For me and my development company, life is just too short, and my personal and professional reputation is too important, to be subjected to any criticism of "Developer Now Wants Borough Lots For Free", which is what the headline read. Since this article, with this headline, appeared I have now had several people ask me about it, and express concerns about our intentions. In light of our sole intention of undertaking this initiative to do something positive for Wrangell, I am beyond disappointed as to how the project is now being characterized and discussed, therefore the reason for our withdrawal.

It is my recommendation that the City of Wrangell itself undertake to demolish the Old Hospital Building, abate and remove the hazardous waste, remove and dispose of all debris, and prepare the site for sale and future development. Multi-story, multi-family housing is the highest and best use for this property. Proper development of this site for this purpose will cost between \$12 and \$15 million.

I do wish to make it crystal clear that based upon the unfounded characterization as reported by the newspaper article, and associated discussions that it has fostered, that neither I nor my development company, nor any party to which I am associated with has any interest at all in re-engaging regarding this property.

I very much wish the City of Wrangell well with its future use of this property.

Sincerely,

**Wayne Johnson
President and Manager
Wrangell Heritage House Development, LLC.**

Annette Island Packing plant reopens after 5-year closure

By ANNA LAFFREY
Ketchikan Daily News

The Metlakatla Indian Community's Annette Island Packing Co. has reopened after a five-year closure.

About 100 people gathered on June 14 to start the summer fishing season with a blessing of the fleet and to celebrate the return to work of the seafood processor which has operated in the community for more than 100 years.

AIP was founded as a cannery in the late 1800s and operated year-round until 2019, when the plant reduced its operations due to rising costs and other liabilities, according to a report from the Metlakatla Indian Community.

Mayor Albert Smith said the "fish processing side" of AIP has been shuttered since 2019,

but the facility has been operating as an ice house. For the past five years, Metlakatla fishermen had to sell their catches to tenders on the fishing grounds or run to processing plants in neighboring communities such as Ketchikan.

This year, fish processing is back underway at AIP. The plant began buying troll-caught king salmon and halibut from local fishermen in April, which Smith said was part of "a soft opening."

"With the king salmon and halibut, they're just sent out fresh," Smith said. "No freezing from the Annette Island Packing side. They come from the fishing vessels already dressed, so we just got to box them and ship them."

"We're starting off small-

scale, and we're working our way back into the swing of things," the mayor said.

Circle Seafoods, a Washington-based seafood company, this year is leasing part of the AIP facility and will be buying fish from gillnet and seine fishermen at the Annette Island plant, the mayor explained.

"Circle Seafoods is leasing a small portion of the cold storage site, and they're going to run their operations out of there this summer," Smith said. "I'd say Circle Seafoods is leasing a quarter of it, and then three-quarters of it is still Annette Island Packing."

Circle Seafoods co-founder Charlie Campbell said during a June 21 phone call with the Ketchikan Daily News that, this summer, Circle Seafoods

plans to purchase all species of salmon from gillnet and seine boats that tie up to sell at the AIP plant.

The mayor estimated that about 30 to 40 gillnetters and 12 to 17 seiners are gearing up to go fishing out of Metlakatla.

Petersburg asks voters to raise cap on sales tax

By PETERSBURG PILOT

A ballot proposition on October's Petersburg election ballot will ask residents whether they want to increase the amount of a purchase that is subject to sales tax.

Currently, Petersburg collects its 6% tax on sales of goods and services up to the first \$1,200 on the invoice. Above that amount is free from the tax.

The proposed municipal code amendment, approved for the ballot in a unanimous vote by the borough assembly on June 17, would raise the taxable sales limit to \$5,000.

If approved by voters, the maximum sales tax on a purchase would increase from \$72 to \$300.

The sales tax cap was established in 1959 and has been increased just one time in those 65 years, going from \$1,000 to \$1,200 in 2002.

Had it kept pace with inflation, it would be closer to \$10,500, according to backup material prepared by Petersburg borough officials for the ordinance.

If approved by voters, the change would take effect Jan. 1, 2025.

Wrangell borough officials are studying a similar change in the law. Though they have briefed the assembly on the issue, they have not presented anything to the assembly for action.

Sales tax in Wrangell stops at \$3,000. The borough estimates that the tax cap costs the municipal treasury about \$900,000 a year in reduced tax revenue from larger purchases of goods and services that exceed the \$3,000 taxable limit.

Ben Mallott named president of Alaska Federation of Natives

By MARK SABBATINI
Juneau Empire

Ben Mallott, the son of former Alaska Lt. Gov. Byron Mallott, will become the new president of the Alaska Federation of Natives on Oct. 1, the organization announced June 28.

The younger Mallott, who is stepping into a role his late father previously served at AFN, will succeed Julie Kitka who is stepping down after 34 years as president.

Mallott, 40, has served 11 years as an officer with the largest statewide Native organization. AFN represents about 140,000 Alaskans and more than 300 Native corporations and federally recognized tribes. He is currently AFN's vice president of external affairs.

AFN is immersed in a multitude of issues at the tribal, state and federal levels — some involving longstanding issues such as subsistence, others involving new matters such as sovereignty rights arising in lawsuits and litigation.

The organization is also contending with the departure of some Alaska Native entities as members in recent years including the Central

Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, which departed last year along with the Tanana Chiefs Conference.

Richard Chalyee Éesh Peterson, president of Tlingit and Haida, said last year AFN played a critical role for the tribe during the 1980s through the early 2000s, but in recent years Tlingit and Haida has expanded to the point the tribe can adequately advocate for itself by itself.

The first issue Mallott has named as a priority is subsistence. The Tanana Chiefs Conference cited a lack of action on subsistence as a key reason for its departure from AFN. Communities relying on subsistence are facing critical shortages of some species such as salmon, along with ongoing battles about legal rights and preferential access to those resources.

Mallott, a graduate of Juneau-Douglas High School: Yadaa.at Kalé who now lives in Anchorage, has significant family roots in the state's political and business world. In addition to his father's decades as a tribal, political and business leader, his brother Anthony Mallott was president of Sealaska Corp. until he stepped down in January.

CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL NOTICE INVITING BIDS TRANSFORMERS PROCUREMENT

Notice is hereby given that the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, will receive sealed bids for the Transformers Procurement project.

Sealed bids will be received by the City and Borough of Wrangell, Post Office Box 531, Wrangell, Alaska 99929, located at the Borough Clerk's Office, 205 Brueger Street, Wrangell, Alaska 99929 until 2 p.m. prevailing time on July 16, 2024, and publicly opened and read at that time.

The Contract Documents should be downloaded from the City and Borough of Wrangell website (www.wrangell.com) under the Bids and RFPs section.

The owner reserves the right to reject any or all Bids, to waive any informality in a Bid, or to make an award as it best serves the interests of the owner.

Mason Villarma, Borough Manager
City and Borough of Wrangell

Publish June 26, July 3 and 10, 2024

K	S	E	D	T	E	D	A	C	N	O	N
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S	N	I	N	A	R	A	P	E	L	E	A
S	E	T	E	S	U	I	S	F	I	F	T
A	R	R	E	B	S	D	E	L	S	A	T
P	A	P	E	R	S	E	O	H	S	A	T
S	P	P	E	C	O	C	O	C	S	M	O
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Happy 4th of July

Wishing everyone a safe and sane holiday weekend!

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