

## Unknown

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**From:** Bailey, Frank T (GOV) [frank.bailey@alaska.gov]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 09, 2007 11:09 AM  
**To:** Yocom, Lauren J (GOV)  
**Cc:** fek9wnr@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** RE: Add to Clips  
Thanks so much Lauren.

F

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**From:** Yocom, Lauren J (GOV)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 09, 2007 11:08 AM  
**To:** Bailey, Frank T (GOV)  
**Subject:** RE: Add to Clips

I've added him, please let me know if he doesn't receive them tomorrow.  
Ly

Lauren Yocom  
Communications Assistant  
Office of Governor Sarah Palin  
Alaska State Capitol

907.465.4031  
907.465.3533  
907.321.5571

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**From:** Bailey, Frank T (GOV)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 09, 2007 10:58 AM  
**To:** Yocom, Lauren J (GOV)  
**Subject:** RE: Add to Clips

Hiya Lauren,

Could you please add Todd Palin to the news clips list? His email is [fek9wnr@yahoo.com](mailto:fek9wnr@yahoo.com).

Thanks for all your "scouring" on this stuff every morning. Definitely helpful to get the lay of the land.

Thanks much!

Frank

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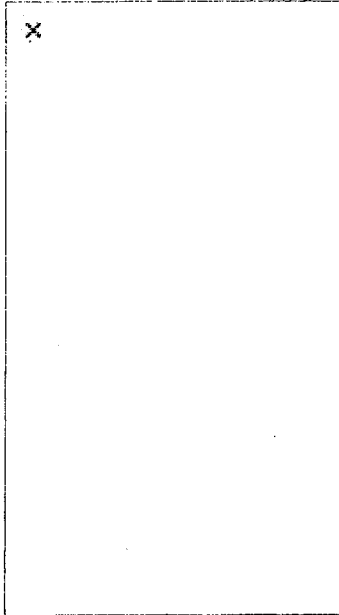
**From:** Yocom, Lauren J (GOV) [mailto:lauren.yocom@alaska.gov]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 09, 2007 7:58 AM  
**To:** Yocom, Lauren J (GOV)  
**Subject:** News Clips 10.9.07

## News Clips October 9, 2007

10/14/2009

ROSTON 00975

## Alaska's Oil Price



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# Anchorage Daily News

## Anderson admits he broke law, violated trust

**COURT MEMO: Ex-lawmaker facing 6 years for corruption concedes role, seeks leniency.**

By LISA DEMER  
ldemer@adn.com

(Published: October 9, 2007)

Three months after a federal jury convicted him of seven felonies including bribery, former state Rep. Tom Anderson acknowledges that he broke the law, violated the public trust and must be punished.

Anderson didn't testify during the 10-day trial this summer. But he fought the charges, and until now maintained publicly that he was innocent.

His sentencing hearing is set for Oct. 15 before U.S. District Judge John Sedwick. A pre-sentence investigation report recommends he serve five to six years.

In a memo filed with the court on Monday, Anderson's lawyer says he is seeking "leniency, compassion and mercy." Except for the circumstances in the corruption case, Anderson has been a "tireless and selfless representative and advocate for the people of the State of Alaska," wrote defense lawyer Paul Stockler.

Anderson, a Republican who represented East Anchorage for two terms, shouldn't be sentenced to any more than two years and nine months, his lawyer argues.

"I accept full responsibility for the choices I've made and the damage I've done and the damage

**ROSTON 00976**

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here transcends the personal loss and pain that has been suffered by my wife and family," Anderson says in the sentencing memorandum. His wife is state Sen. Lesil McGuire, and his father is former director of Alaska State Troopers.

Anderson was convicted of participating in a scheme in 2004 and 2005 with former Cornell Cos. lobbyist Bill Bobrick and consultant Frank Prewitt in which payments were funneled to him in exchange for his pushing the company's interests. Prewitt was working undercover for the FBI, and Cornell was unaware of the scheme, the U.S. Justice Department has said.

"Mr. Anderson believed at the time, that his actions were not in any way unlawful," Stockler says in the 47-page sentencing memorandum.

"Rather, he erroneously and indeed naively thought that he could properly serve two masters: the people of the State of Alaska, and a private consulting client seeking to capitalize on access to a legislator."

Anderson now realizes no one could do that, his lawyer says.

By the time the conspiracy began, Anderson was friends with Bobrick. Their families socialized often, from "informal game nights" to outings at the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts. "Over time, Mr. Anderson permitted that personal relationship to cloud his moral and ethical judgment," Stockler wrote.

Anderson has no prior criminal convictions, his lawyer wrote.

Prosecutors have not yet filed their sentencing memorandum but will be seeking somewhere in the range of five years and three months to six years and six months, as recommended by the probation office in its report, Assistant U.S. Attorney Joe Bottini said Monday.

It's a little late for Anderson to acknowledge what he did wrong, Bottini said. He could have pleaded guilty.

"He put us through a trial," the prosecutor said. "In our view he is not entitled to any consideration for acceptance of responsibility."

Efforts to reach Anderson and Stockler were unsuccessful Monday.

But in the new court filing, Stockler wrote that there is no need to hand Anderson a long sentence to deter others. The story already is known to politicians, lobbyists and public officials.

"Moreover, they are aware that, as a result of his misdeeds, Tom Anderson was publicly disgraced, is now deeply in debt, and has lost his professional reputation, job, financial security, Alaska Permanent Fund dividend and right to vote."

The document also quotes letters of support from Anderson's friends, family and colleagues. One is from House Speaker John Harris, R-Valdez.

"Tom was a good legislator. In my opinion, he had the best interest of Alaskans on his moral and ethical compass," Harris is quoted as saying. Anderson got himself into a fix, Harris says, because he was "too naive or ill-prepared to recognize that politics and business are often comparable to a jungle."

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## **Board preserves Nelchina subsistence caribou hunt**

**CARIBOU: Fish and game board denies Mat-Su residents' proposal to get rid of Tier II permits and expand the harvest.**

By JAMES HALPIN

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(Published: October 9, 2007)

A proposal that had many rural Alaskans outraged at a perceived attack on their hunting rights failed to pass muster at a state board meeting Monday.

The Alaska Joint Board of Fisheries and Game decided by a thin margin to kill a proposal to open a swath of land south of the Alaska Range, where the Nelchina caribou herd roams, to more hunters. By killing the proposal, the board kept one of only a few road-accessible caribou herds in the state off-limits to those ineligible for so-called Tier II subsistence permits.

"I see people concerned because they feel like their birthright is being ripped out from underneath them," said Game Board Chairman Cliff Judkins, who supported the proposal.

The proposal came from Mat-Su residents who advise the boards. They pitched the idea as a fix for the legally troubled system for dividing the popular caribou harvest.

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The years-old debate focuses on whether some hunters are being treated fairly because they don't qualify for the same hunts as other Alaskans.

All Alaskans are considered subsistence hunters under state law. When demand for a resource is particularly high, the state can limit access to Tier II hunters, who are chosen under point systems that consider such factors as place of residence, cost of living and alternative resources.

The Nelchina caribou fall under a Tier II hunt.

Thousands of the Nelchina caribou are killed each year in the area covered by the proposal, though only about 13 percent of successful hunters live in the Copper River basin, on the eastern side of the hunt area, according to Department of Fish and Game numbers presented at the meeting.

"Why is it likely to benefit current nonsubsistence users and hurt subsistence users?" asked Game Board member Ben Grussendorf, who opposed the proposal. "That should get one to start thinking pretty seriously about what our duty is by law."

The state's permit system has been the subject of controversy for years.

To assuage the complaints in 2005, the board considered a similar proposal that would have opened the easy-access hunt for everyone, though with a few catches.

People who signed up for the hunt wouldn't be allowed hunt or trap anywhere else in Alaska. They would have had to salvage every scrap of meat, and couldn't use certain motorized vehicles -- including airplanes, RVs and some ATVs -- during their hunts.

That proposal failed, and today applicants receive points based on their responses to questions including how much food and gas cost in their towns, how many days they fished or hunted during the previous year and the number of years they have hunted the animal.

Last year, the state added income level to the requirements for drawing a permit to hunt in the Copper River area, though that condition is being challenged in court.

The land in question is located between the Parks, Glenn and Richardson highways. That its borders are roadways where people live was also of concern to opponents.

"It's just too extreme to advance," Grussendorf said.

The process of changing the regulations has already dragged on for years, Grussendorf said, "and all we've done is make people more and more upset with us."

Much of the Copper River basin traditionally belonged to the Ahtna Athabascans, though only about 25 percent of the residents there were Natives in 2000, according to Department of Fish and Game statistics that were presented.

"There will always be a certain number of residents in these communities that are going to be completely dependent on subsistence hunting," said board member Paul Johnson.

Last year, 3,740 people stalked the Nelchina herd, with 277 of them from the Copper River basin.

In previous years, as many as 13,000 have hunted the herd, and the number of basin residents involved has always been a fraction of the total.

Ending the Tier II hunting simply won't solve the problem, Johnson said, because subsistence lifestyles are the norm in rural Alaska, even if the residents live on the road system.

The basin had a population of about 3,362 in 2006, and many of those people rely on a mixed subsistence-cash economy, according to the report. Year-round employment is the exception.

"It's a dire need for us," said Wilbur Joe, who attended the meeting to represent his village of Kluti-kaah. "We were all holding our breaths. It's a serious matter for us; our subsistence is our lifestyle."

In 1999, 52 percent of adults in the basin were not working, and 16 percent were unemployed, according to the report. More than a third of the households made less than \$25,000 a year.

And surveys conducted during the past 20 years have shown more than 90 percent of basin households harvest and use wildlife for personal use, the report said.

"I don't think another year is going to produce some new information that's going to change anything," said member Vince Webster.

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## **Assemblyman seeks approval for New Year's Eve fireworks**

**HAZARD? Officials say risk of injury, not fire, justifies keeping the ban in place.**

By KYLE HOPKINS

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**ROSTON 00978**

10/14/2009

(Published: October 9, 2007)

For five hours every New Year's Eve, Assemblyman Dick Traini wants to legalize fireworks in Anchorage.

The current ban doesn't stop the bottle rockets and sparklers anyway, he said Monday. "I'm sure some of my children have been out playing with fireworks on New Year's Eve. So let's just end the charade."

Tonight, Traini plans to introduce an ordinance that would let people light fireworks from 11:30 p.m. on Dec. 31, until 4:30 the next morning each year.

Traini said he hadn't talked to the Fire Department about changing the rules yet. "I'm sure they'll have some reason why we can't," he said.

He's right, and that reason is: Somebody could lose an eye.

Or worse.

"It's not so much the fire danger of fireworks," said Fire Department spokesman Tom Kempton.

"It's the injuries that they cause every year."

Quoting federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention statistics, Kempton said four people died and 10,800 people nationwide were treated for fireworks-related injuries in emergency rooms in 2005.

City manager Denis LeBlanc oversees the Fire Department. He doesn't like Traini's idea either.

"Once you open the door, you can't regulate the type of fireworks. And bottle rockets are horrendously dangerous from both a personal and building-safety standpoint," he said.

Traini said he didn't suggest lifting the fireworks ban on the Fourth of July because of the seasonal fire danger. That, and you can't actually see fireworks in the summer.

As written, selling and buying fireworks in Anchorage would remain illegal under his proposal: You'd still have to drive to Houston to purchase Roman candles and sparklers.

It also would be illegal to light fireworks in many parts of the city, such as from cars, in parks, or next to schools and churches, among other places.

Traini said he wrote the ordinance with people's backyards in mind.

Asked if any fireworks merchants asked him to propose the change, he said no.

"It's just on my list of things to accomplish before I die," he said. "I promised the kids last year that I would try and get this done."

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Find Kyle Hopkins' political blog online at [adn.com/alaskapolitics](http://adn.com/alaskapolitics) or call him at 257-4334.

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#### **By the numbers**

**5** Hours that Assemblyman Dick Traini wants the city to lift fireworks ban (11:30 p.m., Dec. 31 to 4:30 a.m., Jan. 1)

**4** Fireworks-related deaths nationwide in 2005, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**10,800** Fireworks-related injuries treated in emergency rooms nationwide in 2005

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#### **Briefings set on Palin's oil tax plan**

Anchorage Daily News

(Published: October 9, 2007)

Gov. Sarah Palin's oil and gas tax team is hosting a series of public briefings on the proposed rewrite of a key state oil tax starting Friday.

Palin has called a special legislative session starting Oct. 18 to take up a new tax she calls Alaska's Clear and Equitable Share plan. The move comes amid a political corruption scandal in which two executives of Anchorage oil-service firm Veco Corp. pleaded guilty to bribing some state legislators last year to vote for a tax rate favored by the state's biggest oil companies. A jury found former House Speaker Pete Kott, R-Eagle River, guilty last month, and two more trials are scheduled in the ongoing investigation.

Palin's ACES plan would raise oil taxes above the level the Legislature set last year.

For more information about ACES go to [www.alaska.gov](http://www.alaska.gov) and look for the ACES Link.

The hearing schedule:

- Friday in Fairbanks -- 5:30 p.m. in the Carlson Center, 2010 Second Ave.

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- Saturday in Wasilla -- 10:30 a.m. in the Central Mat-Su Public Safety Building, Station 61, 101 W. Swanson Ave.
- Sunday in Anchorage -- 2 p.m. in the Z.J. Loussac Public Library, Wilda Marston Theater, 3600 Denali St.
- Monday in Kenai -- 6 p.m. in the Challenger Learning Center, 9711 Kenai Spur Highway.
- Oct. 18 in Sitka -- 3 p.m. in Harrigan Centennial Hall, 330 Harbor Drive.

## **Vandals target family fish pond**

**Water poisoned by fertilizer, vehicle window smashed early Sunday**

By JULIA O'MALLEY

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(Published: October 9, 2007)

Karol Kvale found the bodies Sunday: Blackie, Sparky, Sam and Speckly, goldfish inhabitants of her Zen-themed garden pond, floating dead, poisoned by a vandal. She suspects it's the same person who smashed in her father's Subaru window sometime early Sunday morning.

"It was clearly malicious," she said. "It was clearly planned."

Kvale and her mother, Janice, built the garden together in the yard of a little '40s-era house downtown. Janice passed away last winter, but Kvale kept up the garden as a tribute. Last week it was featured on the front page of the Daily News. Kvale's sure the extra publicity brought the vandals, she said.

"Even if they didn't like the article or don't like me, why take it out on fish?" she said. "That's like so cowardly."

Kvale's kept fish in her little pond, under the artfully pruned maple and the bamboo fountain, for five or six years running, with few problems save the occasional predatory magpie. It's a favorite for neighborhood kids, she said. The fish are tough little creatures. They can live in the pond even when the temperatures drop.

She'd been working in her garden late Saturday night and it was getting pretty chilly, she said. The thought crossed her mind to take the fish in for the winter, but she didn't. She regrets that now. Sunday morning, after discovering the vandalized car, she noticed the fish pond was full of foam. Little crystals of poisonous fertilizer were sprinkled around the edge. She doesn't use fertilizer. The fish had been poisoned.

Kvale put out the word among her neighbors, but no one saw anything. The police took a report, but she's not sure what will come of it.

All the fish are dead except one, Orangey, the oldest and largest in the pond. He's inside in a tank for observation and, she hopes, de-tox. Kvale's feelings about the whole thing aren't exactly Zen.

"I totally believe in karma," she said, standing by her pond Monday morning, where the fish still floated in the icy water, under the Asian lantern and red maple leaves.

"Whoever did this will totally get bit in the you-know-what."

Find Julia O'Malley online at [adn.com/contact/jomalley](http://adn.com/contact/jomalley) or call 257-4591.

## **Linehan jury sees victim's letter anticipating his own murder**

**PROPHETIC: Victim wrote his parents to "take Mechele down" if he was killed.**

By MEGAN HOLLAND

mholand@adn.com

(Published: October 9, 2007)

Did Kent Leppink know he was going to be murdered? If so, why didn't he run away from those he thought were going to kill him? Defense attorneys asked this Monday in the murder trial of Leppink's former fiance, Mechele Linehan.

In a bizarre letter written two days before his body, shot three times, was found near Hope in May 1996, Leppink told his parents that if he turned up dead, to blame Linehan or two prominent men in her life, John Carlin or Scott Hilke.

"It was my time, and there's nothing that can change that," he writes in the letter. "There are a few things I'd like you to do for me, though. I hate to be vindictive in my death, but paybacks are hell." He then goes on to list how he can get his revenge.

Portions of the letter were shown to jurors Monday. The letter was key to the state's investigation

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into who killed Leppink and it is a critical piece of evidence against Linehan. But if the letter is to be believed and if Leppink really thought he was in danger, defense attorneys asked, why did he continue to spend time and sleep in the same house as those he feared might kill him?

Betsy Leppink, the victim's mother, took the witness stand Monday morning and told the jurors the day before she heard her son had been killed, she and her husband received the package in the mail that her son called his "insurance policy." It contained a cover letter and a sealed envelope. In the cover letter, he told his parents, "If I didn't think that things could get a little 'rough' up here, I wouldn't have sent you this."

"It's not funny to talk about getting killed, but in today's world you have to expect anything."

In the sealed envelope, which his parents opened after they found out he was dead, Kent Leppink writes to his parents not to dwell on his death. He tells them his affairs to clean up, and tells them to "take Mechele DOWN. Make sure she is prosecuted."

Leppink tells his parents to give or sell his boat to a friend, to take some of his \$1 million life insurance money to pay off his debts, and to use some for a nice beach vacation. In portions of the letter not shown to the jury, he also gives them detailed information about Linehan, who then went by her maiden name, Hughes. He accuses her of using Carlin's medical insurance as her own, and not reporting her exotic dancing income to the Internal Revenue Service. He gives them contact information for insurance companies, Linehan's mother's address, and Linehan's Social Security number.

On the day he sent the package, Kent Leppink lived at Carlin's South Anchorage home, where Linehan also resided. The next day, he spent the evening at the house watching television and drinking beer, Carlin's son, John Carlin IV, testified at his father's March trial.

Linehan's defense attorney, Wayne Fricke, asked Betsy Leppink if her son ever expressed any fear of Linehan. She said no.

"He didn't seek to move out of that house, correct?" he asked.

"I don't have a clue," she answered.

Kent Leppink's brothers have also taken the witness stand in the last two days of trial. They testified that the \$1 million life insurance payout, which Kent Leppink changed the beneficiary on days before he died, went to two of his three brothers and his nieces and nephews. His parents and a third brother would not accept any of the money.

The family members also testified that several years before Leppink died there was a deep rift in the family. Leppink had embezzled as much as \$100,000 from the family's Michigan grocery business. When the family found out, they kicked him out of the company. He left Michigan and eventually ended up in Alaska.

Prosecutors say Linehan conspired with Carlin to kill Leppink for a \$1 million life insurance payout she erroneously thought was to go to her. A jury convicted Carlin in April of first-degree murder.

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## **State wants more prison space**

### **2,000-BED INCREASE: Expansion is planned in five communities**

The Associated Press

(Published: October 9, 2007)

FAIRBANKS -- State officials are visiting several communities that could have their local correctional facilities expanded under the state's new prison plan.

State correctional officials want to add 2,000 prison beds by expanding correctional facilities in four cities and by building a new prison.

The Alaska Department of Corrections hopes to have construction completed within five years, easing a housing crunch caused by overall population increases, drug and gang activity, new laws and increased minimum sentences.

The state routinely has to fly prisoners to other states, with 800 now confined in Arizona, said Corrections Commissioner Joe Schmidt.

The state's plan to address this includes a new 1,260-bed prison in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, and expanded jails in Bethel, Fairbanks, Anchorage and Seward.

The original 2,250-bed Mat-Su facility, approved under the administration of former Gov. Frank Murkowski, was projected to cost \$330 million. But last spring, the size of the projected prison was

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scaled back to cut costs.

The \$220 million facility is now scheduled for occupancy in 2012 at Point MacKenzie. Preliminary work has started.

Schmidt was to meet with Fairbanks officials this week to discuss expansion of the Fairbanks Correctional Center, and the state's proposal of using city-issued revenue bonds to pay for the expansion.

Officials say plans for the Fairbanks work already are partially drafted, and construction could start in 2010.

In 2004, the Alaska Legislature authorized a bill paving the way for deals in which cities or boroughs would issue revenue bonds for construction and the state would guarantee reimbursement.

It wasn't used until the state made a decision about the new Mat-Su prison, which was finalized in May.

Other meetings already have been held in the other communities, and follow-up conferences are expected.

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## **Verdict mixed in Ellsworth-CIRI lawsuit; both sides see victory**

**JURY: He must pay CIRI and Nabors for fraud, but they owe him for losses**

By ELIZABETH BLUEMINK

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(Published: October 9, 2007)

A jury verdict finalized Monday found Anchorage businessman John Ellsworth defrauded his former business partners and penalized him \$7.8 million. But the jury also decided Ellsworth's accusers owe him \$12 million for his lost business.

Both sides claim victory, but the fight is not over. Future court rulings could significantly boost the amount of money at stake and who has to pay it.

The case pitted one of Alaska's most profitable Native corporations and one of the world's largest oil-service companies against the man who built up one of Alaska's largest construction companies. Cook Inlet Region Inc. of Anchorage and Nabors Industries of Houston sued Ellsworth two years ago for \$40 million. They alleged fraud and other misconduct while Ellsworth ran Alaska Interstate Construction from 1998 to 2005. His actions cost them money, they said.

For example, Ellsworth billed AIC for personal vacations for his friends and family, overcharged for aircraft he privately leased to AIC, wrongly abandoned a lucrative oil contract in Russia and covered up the evidence in a last-minute shredding of almost three tons of documents, according to CIRI and Nabors.

The two companies and Ellsworth co-owned AIC.

Ellsworth countersued for \$12 million, saying the companies fired him and took his interest in AIC without paying him.

"We got 100 percent of what we asked for," said Ellsworth's attorney Paul Stockler on Monday.

The trial was "just a vendetta" against him, intended to keep him from competing in the future against AIC, Ellsworth said.

The jurors found that Ellsworth engaged in a lot of wrongful behavior but they couldn't attach a penalty to some of his acts because of state law and instructions from the court, said jury foreman Brian Lewis on Monday afternoon.

When the jurors learned after delivering their verdict that Ellsworth might have to pay three times the amount they awarded for fraud, they "felt a little better," said Lewis, a civil designer with a local architectural engineering firm.

The jurors didn't know during deliberations that Ellsworth might actually be liable for treble damages, he said.

The \$7.8 million verdict against Ellsworth included \$7.3 million for fraud. Treble damages -- which could increase the fraud award to \$22 million -- are in play because the verdict found Ellsworth violated the state's Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Act, said CIRI general counsel Ethan Schutt.

That law mandates tripling the damages, he said.

Aside from fraud, the jury verdict requires Ellsworth to pay smaller damages, such as \$350,000 for credit-card expenses unrelated to AIC business and \$85,000 for selling AIC assets for less than

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market value after he was notified of his termination.

#### A LOT TO ARGUE ABOUT

Ellsworth will fight the plaintiffs' request for treble damages, and both sides plan to ask a judge to require the other side to pay all attorneys' fees, attorneys said.

Anchorage Superior Court Judge Sen Tan -- who was out of town Monday but is back at work today -- will take up the lawyers' motions.

The trial started in late July and lasted more than two months. The jury deliberated for two weeks until Friday.

"The attorneys (still) have a lot to argue about," Stockler said.

#### COMPETITION LOOMS

Ellsworth said his new firm, Alaska Frontier Constructors, will compete with AIC for North Slope contracts this fall for the upcoming construction season.

Until he was fired in 2005, Ellsworth owned 20 percent of AIC -- a major Alaska construction firm -- and CIRI and Nabors each owned 40 percent. CIRI and Nabors now own AIC 50-50.

Until Ellsworth was fired, AIC was the only company that built ice roads and gravel islands on the North Slope.

CIRI expects Ellsworth to compete, but he might be hampered by a court verdict finding him guilty of fraud, Schutt said.

#### CIRI REACTION

CIRI isn't surprised that the jury whittled down its request for \$40 million, Schutt said.

"It's not a trivial amount of fraud," Schutt said, referring to the \$7.3 million award on that claim, solely for improper aircraft charges.

"(Fraud) is a difficult thing to prove," he said.

The jury also rejected CIRI's and Nabor's claim that Ellsworth owed them millions for abandoning a Sakhalin Island oil construction project. CIRI knew it would be a tough claim to prove in court, Schutt said.

One of Ellsworth's main defenders was Carl Marrs, an ex-CIRI chief executive who testified during the trial that he authorized Ellsworth to run the company as he saw fit.

Lewis said the jurors were surprised that Marrs wasn't targeted by the lawsuit.

CIRI spokesman Jim Jager responded Monday that suing Marrs could have been counterproductive -- it would have made a complex case even more complicated, he said.

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## **Plan to increase state workforce due**

**HIRING: Some job requirements may be eliminated.**

The Associated Press

(Published: October 9, 2007)

JUNEAU -- State administrators are studying what can be done to build and sustain a workforce that is due to shrink with pending retirements.

And more money isn't necessarily the answer, said Annette Kreitzer, commissioner for the state's Department of Administration.

"It's a balancing act, trying to figure out what we can afford," she said.

Record-high oil prices have boosted the state's coffers in recent years, but the long-term revenue forecasts call for production declines.

In August, Gov. Sarah Palin established an executive branch working group to address the state's growing recruitment and retention problems.

This comes at a time when more than a quarter of the state's executive branch employees will be eligible to retire in five years, as will more than one-third of its professional staff.

The group is expected to report its recommended strategies to the governor by Nov. 1.

Among the solutions they're looking at, Kreitzer said, is doing away with unnecessary job requirements that make recruiting difficult.

A computer technician job might call for a bachelor's degree and certification from Microsoft or Cisco. While the degree may be appealing to an employer, it may be the certification is not necessary, Kreitzer said.

If a particular requirement is removed, the state may get a broader yet still qualified pool of

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applicants.

If those entrusted with hiring had to choose between two equally qualified people, they'd have the option of giving extra weight to the additional certification.

The governor's office reports that nearly 40 percent of the state job openings did not have enough qualified candidates applying. For each of these jobs, they had fewer than five qualified and eligible applicants.

Recruitment and retention issues are hitting various departments.

For example, the Department of Revenue has been unable to hire qualified tax auditors to enforce oil tax rules.

That particular problem, however, is being addressed in the governor's tax bill being reviewed by lawmakers in the special session, which starts Oct. 18.

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## **Leppink letter raises new questions**

**Victim stayed in house with those he feared after writing to his parents that he might be killed**

By MEGAN HOLLAND

mhholland@adn.com

(Published: October 8, 2007)

Did Kent Leppink know he was going to be murdered? If so, why didn't he run away from those he thought were going to kill him? Defense attorneys asked this today in the murder trial of Leppink's former fiancé, Mechele Linehan.

In a bizarre letter written two days before his body, shot three times, was found near Hope in May 1996, Leppink told his parents that if he turned up dead, to blame Linehan or two prominent men in her life, John Carlin or Scott Hilke.

"It was my time and there's nothing that can change that," he writes in the letter. "There are a few things I'd like you to do for me, though. I hate to be vindictive in my death, but paybacks are hell." Portions of the letter were entered into evidence Monday. Prosecutors say Linehan conspired with Carlin to kill Leppink for a \$1 million life insurance payout she erroneously thought was to go to her.

Betsy Leppink, the victim's mother, took the witness stand in the morning. She testified that the day before she heard her son had been killed she and her husband received the package in the mail that her son called his "insurance policy." It contained a cover letter and a sealed envelope. In the cover letter, he told his parents, "If I didn't think that things could get a little 'rough' up here, I wouldn't have sent you this."

"It's not funny to talk about getting killed, but in today's world you have to expect anything."

In the sealed envelope, which his parents opened after they found out he was dead, Kent Leppink writes to his parents not to dwell on his death. He asks them to tidy up his personal business, and he tells them to "take Mechele DOWN. Make sure she is prosecuted."

In portions of the letter not shown to the jury, Leppink tells his parents to give or sell his boat to a friend, to take his \$1-million life insurance money to pay off his debts, and to take some of his life insurance money to go on a nice beach vacation. He also gives them detailed information about Linehan, who then went by her maiden name, Hughes. He accuses her of using Carlin's medical insurance as her own, and not reporting her exotic dancing income to the Internal Revenue Service. He gives them contact information for insurance companies, Linehan's mother's address, and Linehan's Social Security number.

On the day he sent the package, Kent Leppink lived at Carlin's South Anchorage home, where Linehan also resided. The next day, he spent the evening at the house watching television and drinking beer. Carlin's son, John Carlin IV, testified at his father's March trial.

Linehan's defense attorney, Wayne Fricke, asked Betsy Leppink if her son ever expressed any fear of Linehan. She said no.

"He didn't seek to move out of that house, correct?" he asked.

"I don't have a clue," she answered.

Kent Leppink's brothers have also taken the witness stand in the last two days of trial. They testified that the \$1-million life insurance payout, which Kent Leppink changed the beneficiary on days before he died, went to two of his three brothers and his nieces and nephews. His parents and

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a third brother would not accept any of the money.

The family also testified that several years before Leppink died there was a deep rift in the family. Leppink had embezzled as much as \$100,000 from the family's Michigan grocery business. When the family found out, they kicked him out of the company. He left Michigan and eventually ended up in Alaska.

Find Megan Holland online at [adn.com/contact/mholland](http://adn.com/contact/mholland) or call 257-4343.

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## **Arctic waters are changing for oil drillers**

**UNPREDICTABLE: Spill cleanup will be harder as pack ice destabilizes.**

The Associated Press

(Published: October 9, 2007)

OTTAWA — Climate change may make Arctic energy resources easier to reach but it could also make them harder to exploit because of changes to sea ice, a U.S. scientist said ahead of an international oil and ice conference in Alaska.

Hajo Eicken, a University of Alaska scientist, is one of the presenters from at least five countries scheduled to speak about oil spills in ice-choked waters at a conference that starts Wednesday in Anchorage.

Eicken said Sunday that climate change is rewriting the rules for Arctic sea ice and becoming a crucial consideration in any offshore drilling. He says drillers will have to be aware that the old certainties of shore-bound ice — where much of the current exploration will take place — have changed.

"Conditions are more variable, less predictable. Even in winter, when normally you would expect to see the landfast ice to be stable and locked in place, we're starting to see ... larger tracts of landfast ice detach from shore and drift out to sea," Eicken said.

The conference is organized by Ottawa-based SL Ross Environmental Research Ltd.

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## **Assemblyman seeks approval for New Year's Eve fireworks**

**HAZARD? Officials say risk of injury, not fire, justifies keeping the ban in place.**

By KYLE HOPKINS

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(Published: October 9, 2007)

For five hours every New Year's Eve, Assemblyman Dick Traini wants to legalize fireworks in Anchorage.

The current ban doesn't stop the bottle rockets and sparklers anyway, he said Monday. "I'm sure some of my children have been out playing with fireworks on New Year's Eve. So let's just end the charade."

Tonight, Traini plans to introduce an ordinance that would let people light fireworks from 11:30 p.m. on Dec. 31, until 4:30 the next morning each year.

Traini said he hadn't talked to the Fire Department about changing the rules yet. "I'm sure they'll have some reason why we can't," he said.

He's right, and that reason is: Somebody could lose an eye.

Or worse.

"It's not so much the fire danger of fireworks," said Fire Department spokesman Tom Kempton.

"It's the injuries that they cause every year."

Quoting federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention statistics, Kempton said four people died and 10,800 people nationwide were treated for fireworks-related injuries in emergency rooms in 2005.

City manager Denis LeBlanc oversees the Fire Department. He doesn't like Traini's idea either.

"Once you open the door, you can't regulate the type of fireworks. And bottle rockets are horrendously dangerous from both a personal and building-safety standpoint," he said.

Traini said he didn't suggest lifting the fireworks ban on the Fourth of July because of the seasonal fire danger. That, and you can't actually see fireworks in the summer.

As written, selling and buying fireworks in Anchorage would remain illegal under his proposal: You'd still have to drive to Houston to purchase Roman candles and sparklers.

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It also would be illegal to light fireworks in many parts of the city, such as from cars, in parks, or next to schools and churches, among other places.

Traini said he wrote the ordinance with people's backyards in mind.

Asked if any fireworks merchants asked him to propose the change, he said no.

"It's just on my list of things to accomplish before I die," he said. "I promised the kids last year that I would try and get this done."

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Find Kyle Hopkins' political blog online at [adn.com/alaskapolitics](http://adn.com/alaskapolitics) or call him at 257-4334.

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#### **By the numbers**

**5** Hours that Assemblyman Dick Traini wants the city to lift fireworks ban (11:30 p.m., Dec. 31 to 4:30 a.m., Jan. 1)

**4** Fireworks-related deaths nationwide in 2005, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**10,800** Fireworks-related injuries treated in emergency rooms nationwide in 2005

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### **Board preserves Nelchina subsistence caribou hunt**

**CARIBOU: Fish and game board denies Mat-Su residents' proposal to get rid of Tier II permits and expand the harvest.**

By JAMES HALPIN

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*(Published: October 9, 2007)*

A proposal that had many rural Alaskans outraged at a perceived attack on their hunting rights failed to pass muster at a state board meeting Monday.

The Alaska Joint Board of Fisheries and Game decided by a thin margin to kill a proposal to open a swath of land south of the Alaska Range, where the Nelchina caribou herd roams, to more hunters. By killing the proposal, the board kept one of only a few road-accessible caribou herds in the state off-limits to those ineligible for so-called Tier II subsistence permits.

"I see people concerned because they feel like their birthright is being ripped out from underneath them," said Game Board Chairman Cliff Judkins, who supported the proposal.

The proposal came from Mat-Su residents who advise the boards. They pitched the idea as a fix for the legally troubled system for dividing the popular caribou harvest.

The years-old debate focuses on whether some hunters are being treated fairly because they don't qualify for the same hunts as other Alaskans.

All Alaskans are considered subsistence hunters under state law. When demand for a resource is particularly high, the state can limit access to Tier II hunters, who are chosen under point systems that consider such factors as place of residence, cost of living and alternative resources.

The Nelchina caribou fall under a Tier II hunt.

Thousands of the Nelchina caribou are killed each year in the area covered by the proposal, though only about 13 percent of successful hunters live in the Copper River basin, on the eastern side of the hunt area, according to Department of Fish and Game numbers presented at the meeting.

"Why is it likely to benefit current nonsubsistence users and hurt subsistence users?" asked Game Board member Ben Grussendorf, who opposed the proposal. "That should get one to start thinking pretty seriously about what our duty is by law."

The state's permit system has been the subject of controversy for years.

To assuage the complaints in 2005, the board considered a similar proposal that would have opened the easy-access hunt for everyone, though with a few catches.

People who signed up for the hunt wouldn't be allowed hunt or trap anywhere else in Alaska. They would have had to salvage every scrap of meat, and couldn't use certain motorized vehicles -- including airplanes, RVs and some ATVs -- during their hunts.

That proposal failed, and today applicants receive points based on their responses to questions including how much food and gas cost in their towns, how many days they fished or hunted during the previous year and the number of years they have hunted the animal.

Last year, the state added income level to the requirements for drawing a permit to hunt in the Copper River area, though that condition is being challenged in court.

The land in question is located between the Parks, Glenn and Richardson highways. That its

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borders are roadways where people live was also of concern to opponents.

"It's just too extreme to advance," Grussendorf said.

The process of changing the regulations has already dragged on for years, Grussendorf said, "and all we've done is make people more and more upset with us."

Much of the Copper River basin traditionally belonged to the Ahtna Athabascans, though only about 25 percent of the residents there were Natives in 2000, according to Department of Fish and Game statistics that were presented.

"There will always be a certain number of residents in these communities that are going to be completely dependent on subsistence hunting," said board member Paul Johnson.

Last year, 3,740 people stalked the Nelchina herd, with 277 of them from the Copper River basin. In previous years, as many as 13,000 have hunted the herd, and the number of basin residents involved has always been a fraction of the total.

Ending the Tier II hunting simply won't solve the problem, Johnson said, because subsistence lifestyles are the norm in rural Alaska, even if the residents live on the road system.

The basin had a population of about 3,362 in 2006, and many of those people rely on a mixed subsistence-cash economy, according to the report. Year-round employment is the exception.

"It's a dire need for us," said Wilbur Joe, who attended the meeting to represent his village of Kluti-kaah. "We were all holding our breaths. It's a serious matter for us; our subsistence is our lifestyle."

In 1999, 52 percent of adults in the basin were not working, and 16 percent were unemployed, according to the report. More than a third of the households made less than \$25,000 a year. And surveys conducted during the past 20 years have shown more than 90 percent of basin households harvest and use wildlife for personal use, the report said.

"I don't think another year is going to produce some new information that's going to change anything," said member Vince Webster.

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## **Crabbing may be in for change**

**RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: Federal panel votes to review crab rationalization policy.**

By WESLEY LOY  
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*(Published: October 9, 2007)*

Alaska's multimillion-dollar Bering Sea commercial crab fisheries, which saw a revolutionary management overhaul in 2005, might be headed for more big changes in how they're run.

Over the weekend a federal panel that helps regulate the fisheries voted to review key elements of the management regime known as crab rationalization.

Gov. Sarah Palin's lead representative on the multistate North Pacific Fishery Management Council said rationalization might not be working as intended.

"This program deserves a re-evaluation," he said.

The council, meeting in Anchorage through the weekend, voted 7-3 in favor of Lloyd's motion for a staff analysis of rationalization, with the report due next October.

Under rationalization, once open king and Tanner crab fisheries were divided into individual, tradeable catch allowances for fishermen. A big reason for the overhaul was to encourage consolidation of a roughly 300-boat fleet that was too large for depressed crab stocks.

Beyond the individual fishing quotas for boats, rationalization also awarded unprecedented buying rights to established seafood processing companies. These companies hold exclusive buying rights to 90 percent of the crab catch, with fishermen free to shop the remaining 10 percent to any buyer they choose.

Lloyd said this 10 percent slice might not be large enough to encourage competition in terms of crab prices and the number of processors operating in the industry.

The study the council approved will analyze a range of different splits, such as processor rights to 70 percent of the catch, or 50 percent, or even none. The study also will look at rationalization's arbitration feature, which helps crabbers and processors work out price disagreements. Some industry players criticize it as complicated and costly.

Processors insist they need exclusive rights to buy most of the crab catch -- to counterbalance the

advantage the fishermen gained with their exclusive catch rights.

The whole shift to individual fishing quotas has taken much of the frantic race out of Bering Sea crab fishing. The North Pacific Council was trying to solve the crab industry's economic and safety woes when it unanimously voted for crab rationalization in 2002. Congress subsequently made the change official.

But the new twist added to the crab fishery -- giving processors buying rights -- enraged many fishermen, who branded the move anticompetitive. Critics such as Ralph Nader, Arizona Republican Sen. John McCain, the Wall Street Journal and other voices joined in.

On Sunday, three council members from Washington state, where most of the Bering Sea crab boats and processors are based, voted against Lloyd's motion, saying crab rationalization hasn't yet had time to settle in and evidence is lacking that the program isn't working well.

"There's just not justification to date to do what this motion does, which is clearly to begin the dismantling of the program," said veteran council member John Bundy of Seattle.

Lloyd, however, said dismantlement is not his goal.

The Bering Sea crab fisheries rank with pollock, salmon and halibut as the state's most valuable commercial seafood harvests.

The king and Tanner crab seasons open Monday, and catch limits are substantially higher this season. The fleet will go after 63 million pounds of opilio Tanner (snow) crab, 20.4 million pounds of Bristol Bay red king crab and 5.6 million pounds of bairdi Tanner crab.

The most valuable Alaska crab fishery, red king crab, was worth at least \$53 million at the docks last season.

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Find Wesley Loy's commercial fishing blog online at [adn.com/highliner](http://adn.com/highliner) or call 257-4590.

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## **Get aggressive with climate change**

### **COMPASS: Points of view from the community**

By RICK STEINER

*(Published: October 9, 2007)*

The final public hearing for the Alaska's climate change commission is Wednesday, and it may well be the last best chance in a long while for Alaskans to tell government their concerns and propose solutions to this threat.

Nowhere in the world is climate change more devastating than here in Alaska. Yet so far, the Palin administration's response to the issue -- creating a "sub-cabinet" and agreeing to "observe" an interstate task force on climate change -- has been tepid at best. Worse, such bureaucratic diversions actually distract from substantive action, much like the Bush administration's recent pretenses on climate.

To understand government priorities, just follow the money. To date, neither the Palin administration nor the Legislature has directed any significant funding to the issue of climate change. One can only conclude that they are either getting disastrously bad advice, or that they simply don't care. And if Alaska government doesn't care, how can we expect the federal government or others to help us out? As state government has a constitutional and ethical obligation to mitigate the effects of climate change in Alaska, we deserve a much more serious and urgent response.

- First, state government must be responsive to this threat. Simply giving agency heads another job title, as a "climate sub-cabinet," does little. The state should establish an Alaska Office on Climate Change (or a joint federal/state office) whose staff will work this issue full time. This office would develop and advance Alaska's climate change policy and adaptation/mitigation efforts, and assert state climate policy interests nationally and internationally.
- The state's climate change program will need money, lots of it. To fund the effort, the state should establish an Alaska Climate Response Fund from a 10-cents-a-barrel tax on all oil produced in the state (similar to the state's oil spill fund), with a commensurate tax on coal and gas production. This would raise \$30 million to \$40 million a year for the state's climate response effort, particularly revenue-sharing for community adaptation needs.
- Gov. Palin should direct the attorney general to assess potential legal remedies, such as joining the lawsuit filed by several other states in 2004 seeking to limit carbon emissions by power

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companies that cause global warming.

- Although Alaska is a small contributor to global CO2 emissions, we need to show the world we are willing to do our part in reducing our carbon footprint. The state should make it a goal to double the energy efficiency of our economy by 2020, using tax and subsidy instruments.
- Alaska should explore opportunities to capture and sequester carbon, in particular with the North Slope and Cook Inlet producers. We should evaluate the establishment of a Strategic Hydrocarbon Reserve, where coal and some oil reserves are left in the ground. Credits from such sequestration efforts should be marketable in the future.
- For immediate response and adaptation, the Legislature should appropriate funds this session for a statewide engineering assessment of immediate needs for erosion and flood control, and fund a salmon/climate change adaptive management initiative to develop strategies to mitigate climate change effects on salmon productivity.
- Finally, it is in Alaska's self-interest to reduce global carbon emissions to stabilize world climate. State policy should aggressively advocate and support national and international policies that will reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent by 2050.

Climate change is the most significant problem Alaska has ever faced. As history demonstrates, we can be a society that either chooses to succeed or chooses to fail.

Alaskans can help make the right choice by testifying at Wednesday's hearing at the Anchorage Legislative Information Office or by teleconference from your local LIO, from 3:30-5 p.m.

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Rick Steiner is a professor and conservation specialist at the University of Alaska Anchorage. The Anchorage Legislative Information Office is at 716 West Fourth Ave. Those outside Anchorage can call in, 888-295-4546.

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## **From berms to bad drivers, Anchorage is a tough walk**

*(Published: October 9, 2007)*

Editor's note: We asked Daily News online and regular readers to give their views on walking in Anchorage in advance of the Anchorage Assembly's vote expected at tonight's meeting on a first-ever walking plan. Here are excerpts from what readers have to say.

The first messages came from [adn.com](http://adn.com), including one from the Inside Opinion blog, and do not have names attached. Then come a number of notes from people who did include their names.

### **Take a lesson**

In Amsterdam, they have about 6 feet dedicated to cyclists separated from the main streets by a small median. In the winter, both pedestrians and cyclists could use this, and it would be easier to plow than a sidewalk. ... It would be MUCH safer and would encourage people to bike instead of drive, which today, many people are scared to do.

### **City View blues**

Having lived in City View for over 20 years, (one of the few subdivisions with sidewalks) let me connect the dots for you.

1. Within 24 hours of big snow, I bust my butt to clean sidewalk, being careful not to put snow in the street (against the law).
2. 24 hours later or so, city plow covers same walk with snow from street which is now like concrete and by law I must remove same snow being careful not to put snow in street. (Again, against the law).
3. After several heavy snows, where to put snow becomes a big problem as I no longer have the strength to throw snow over the 5-foot berm on my lawn.

### **Splash that walker**

After a doctor's appointment and long waits for People Movers a few winters ago, I got off bus after dusk in South Anchorage. Walking on side of West Dimond to get home, speeding cars splashed icy waters on me, and passengers yelled at me to get off road. ...

The lack of snow removal on sidewalks is one reason why I hate to visit Los Anchorage, the most visitor-unfriendly town in the USA! You city folks need to start acting like a real city instead of a giant Californicated suburb if you want visitors to return. The lack of public transportation and the lack of sidewalks drive your customers away!

### **About time**

It's about time this muni gets on with improving roads and sidewalk issues for pedestrians and

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cyclists alike. The winter makes it hard for pedestrians and cyclists who are sometimes forced to share maybe a foot or so of sidewalk.

#### **Walking plan**

But don't you see? Only five people commented. But you can bet you will hear the howls about how much money it costs -- AFTER THE FACT. Never mind people in wheelchairs, people who must walk on dark streets, especially kids. Never mind snow plows. Thank goodness this will pass. Good job, Assembly!

#### **Snow berms treacherous**

I'm physically disabled and have limited mobility. I get around fairly well during the summer and fall months, but during the winter there are lots of places it is impossible for me to get to (I depend on the People Mover).

Even along the People Mover routes, sidewalks are not cleared, and there are snow berms at most corners blocking crosswalks, if there are crosswalks.

---- Bob Northcott

#### **Fireweed sidewalks scary**

I have lived near Fireweed and Spenard since 1984. When my oldest child began school at North Star Elementary, we walked to school almost every day, and that involved walking on Fireweed Lane from near the corner of Arctic until the first school driveway. Talk about scary! Fireweed's sidewalks are almost one continuous driveway, sloping so steeply into the traffic lane that it is almost impossible not to slide into the street after snow falls.

This is an eight-minute walk, and you can see the school along most of the route. But it is so dangerous that the School District provides "hazardous transportation" for what should be a walkable route

---- Harriet Drummond

#### **Who is liable?**

Will this proposal include medical benefits, and can we now move the snow from MOA walks into MOA streets to be removed?

Do property owners get a liability release from the MOA? How about the property owners' liability? More research needed.

---- James Marris

#### **A hardened jaywalker**

I am a daily downtown pedestrian. I walk to work, and I walk my grandson to school. This town was not made for walking.

Between where I live, near R Street, and Denali School, where we walk to, there are four traffic arteries that do not have crosswalks at every corner. In fact, A, C, I and L streets do not have crosswalks at all for at least five blocks.

The street that does have signals at every block is 9th, but it is very unpleasant to walk on. The sidewalk is narrow, bordered by a big hedge, and the traffic is very fast and very close. Not somewhere you want to walk a child, much less yourself. We jaywalk every day.

Walking in this town is dangerous and unpleasant, but it need not be.

---- Allison Mendel

#### **Nothing had changed**

I lived in Anchorage for 35 years, then moved to Arizona 13 years ago. I spent four months this summer walking about three miles every day in the downtown area in Anchorage. Nothing has changed for pedestrians. We have to dodge cars in the intersections, and worse, bicycles on the sidewalks. ... Bicycles don't belong on sidewalks, and should not be allowed.

---- Deborah Berry

#### **School routes blocked**

A number of years past sidewalks were installed along Waldron Drive from Lake Otis to the path to Tudor Elementary School.

The neighborhood was assured that because this was a school route, the sidewalk would always be cleared immediately after a snow storm. However days pass with no clearing, and after enough time the children trample down a reasonable path.

This same problem happens on the walkways along Lake Otis. Pedestrians are certainly second-hand citizens -- getting services long after automobiles are accommodated. Discouraging!

---- Jacquelyn Sparrow



## Letters to the editor

(Published: October 9, 2007)

### **Sept. 20 moose hunting closure in 14A ruins another season**

I recently got back from a short moose hunting trip in Unit 14A where the Board of Game reduced the season from ending on Sept. 30 to Sept. 20 this year.

My brothers and I have been scouting and traditional bow-hunting a particular area for a couple of years without a successful harvest; however, last year during the tail end of the season ending Sept. 30, we saw moose every day. We were very keen on harvesting one this season, but the Game Board did not allow us to hunt the rut. As most hunters will attest in Southcentral Alaska, hunting prior to Sept. 20 can be like hunting in the summer.

We experienced absolutely no moose vocalizing and predominantly green vegetation and summer-like conditions. This exasperates a difficult method and means such as bow hunting (in our case with handmade arrows and recurve bows) due to the fact one must get in close range. Without the rut and vocalization, our chances were greatly diminished to the point of not seeing any moose. We decided that the board must want more moose casualties on our highways and railways, and so it shortened our long-awaited hunt.

It was a very disappointing season for us. I think I voice my opinion with possibly a lot of similarly resentful hunters in the Valley, if not statewide.

---- Frank Wesser

Anchorage

### **Responsible gun ownership needed to help protect right to bear arms**

I would like to comment on all the bullet holes in street signs that I have been seeing around Anchorage. Living in the United States of America, we have been blessed with the constitutional right to own arms. Over our course of recent history that right has been limited and restricted. In 2008 we stand poised to see Hillary Clinton and Rudy Giuliani facing off to be our next president. They're two of the biggest names in anti-gun politics.

The only way we will be able to continue having our current firearms rights is through the influence of popular public opinion. As gun owners we need to encourage positive public outlook on gun ownership by the way we conduct ourselves with our guns. Shooting holes in signs creates a very negative opinion. It shows a total disregard for public property and a complete disrespect of others' safety. Lots of things can go wrong when shooting a sign, and not knowing where the bullet will go afterward is one of them (think "brush deflection"). It will take only one injured or killed individual from a stray bullet to turn a negative tide of public opinion.

---- Brazil Conroy

Anchorage

### **Department of Peace would pay for itself in reducing violence**

I was very encouraged when I read of Sen. Lisa Murkowski's recent actions in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee ("Murkowski wants broad Iraq effort," Sept. 21). I applaud her efforts to create a civilian surge in Iraq to help bring peace to the region, and also for working toward it with a bipartisan amendment to the defense bill.

A bill that has been introduced into the House of Representatives calling for the creation of a U.S. Department of Peace and Nonviolence would provide ready resources for this very type of effort. Some people think the Department of Peace would duplicate the U.S. Department of State's efforts, but the State Department only deals with other states or recognized governmental entities, which is not what we are dealing with in Iraq. The Department of Peace would address violence at its root causes, domestically and internationally, augmenting the work of the State Department and the Department of Defense as well as implementing proven programs to address gang violence, domestic violence, bullying and other forms of violence.

If you think the cost of a Department of Peace is too high, consider the cost of war and violence in our world today. Visit [www.thepeacealliance.org](http://www.thepeacealliance.org) to learn more about this important legislation.

---- Lori Draper

Seward

*EDITOR'S NOTE: The writer is statewide coordinator for the campaign to establish a U.S. Department of Peace and Nonviolence.*

### **No Child Left Behind needs to be discarded for sake of education**

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It is important for any viable culture to have an education system. It ensures its place in the flow of history. Through it, new leadership emerges, innovation is supported, identity is passed on and creativity is allowed to flourish. Generations are prepared to take their place in society. That said, it is time to allow No Child Left Behind to die.

Education is a local issue, at most a state issue, not federal. One of the problems with NCLB, indeed, any federal program, is state governments then rush to out regulate the federal regulations to show how much they are in support of said program. Control of education is and should be in the hands of parents and local school boards with assistance available at the state level. Federal regulation is the proverbial camel's nose in the tent. It never goes away and it only grows, becoming evermore burdensome, smothering those things we wish to accomplish with education. Federal regulation becomes the tail that wags the dog, where form is more important than content. Where achieving checkmarks and reports is the end, and education no longer the goal.

---- Joseph E. Kerley, III

Anchorage

#### **Jewel Lake shooting was justified**

Regarding the Anchorage Police Department shooting in the Jewel Lake area ("Passenger says police killed man needlessly," Sept. 26): When a vehicle is turned into a deadly weapon, deadly force is justified.

---- Warren Schimmeyer

Anchorage

#### **Our politicians could learn something from Carl the cat**

Where does one begin? A ridiculous, frivolous court battle over a cat, politicians and so-called "business professionals" being found guilty of conspiracy, bribery and extortion, and we are supposed to trust these people! Apparently, it is true that greed knows no bounds.

What's sad is that this completely moral fiasco with the legislators will affect many, all because a group of men who already made a very nice living greedily wanted more.

As for Carl the cat, I dare say it doesn't care who it lives with; it's satisfied with the simple things in life like love, food and warmth. Maybe there's a distinct message there.

---- Michael J. Donnelly

Anchorage

#### **Police crackdown on jaywalking is welcome and long overdue**

You have got to be kidding me ("Anchorage police cite then forgive jaywalkers," Sept. 28). The very definition of "sting" (noun) as found in Webster's dictionary is "an elaborate confidence game; specifically: such as a game worked by undercover police in order to trap criminals." Why in the world would anyone expect notification of a sting?

I am one of the lucky commuters who has the privilege to drive Tudor Road during rush hour. The area between Lake Otis and Piper is simply treacherous with jaywalkers. I am a hyper-vigilant driver, but I am scared to death, twice a day, Monday through Friday, that I am going to hit someone who darts into traffic. Of course, winter adds a different dimension of terror since the icy roads make it more difficult to react in a timely manner.

I applaud the police for trying to crackdown on this problem. Sure, there are other issues in our community that are perhaps deemed more worthy of our attention, but if this issue isn't addressed, then it will only get worse. Hey, you break the law, any law, you face the consequences. It's a pretty simple concept.

---- Betsy Shilling

Anchorage

#### **No excuses for Sen. Stevens; he should have known better**

I'm sorry that Lowell Thomas feels that Sen. Ted Stevens is not being shown any respect and appreciation ("Give Sen. Stevens a little respect," Sept. 28). The remodeling of Stevens' Girdwood home with Veco's help is not just about "friends and neighbors helping to put up a barn, or roofing a house," as he states. It's about a U.S. senator who shows no regard for his constituents when he compromised himself in doing business with the Veco boys, whose guilty pleas included bribery.

As a former lieutenant governor for Alaska, Thomas' comment, "I'd have offered (to help remodel) too," is very troubling to me but it explains why Alaska's politics are where they are today with the corruption investigation. He hit it on the nose when he referenced that Stevens is "our senior senator." A senior senator would know what is improper or unethical and would not have

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constituents questioning if they have been misrepresented over the years. The bottom line is that Stevens should have known better. It's not enough to just bring the bacon. What might have been done to get it is also important. If Thomas and those who agree with him would stop focusing on what Sen. Ted Stevens has brought into Alaska, you'd all understand.

---- Deborah D. Williams

Anchorage

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## Juneau Empire

### Northwest Digest

#### **Conference looks at oil spills in Arctic**

OTTAWA - Climate change may make Arctic energy resources easier to reach but it could also make them harder to exploit because of changes to sea ice, a U.S. scientist said ahead of an international oil and ice conference in Alaska.

Hajo Eicken, a University of Alaska scientist, is one of the presenters from at least five countries scheduled to speak about oil spills in ice-choked waters at a conference in Anchorage that starts Wednesday.

Eicken said Sunday that climate change is rewriting the rules for Arctic sea ice and becoming a crucial consideration in any offshore drilling.

He says drillers will have to be aware that the old certainties of shore-bound ice - where much of the current exploration will take place - have changed.

"Conditions are more variable, less predictable. Even in winter, when normally you would expect to see the landfast ice to be stable and locked in place, we're starting to see ... larger tracts of landfast ice detach from shore and drift out to sea," Eicken said.

The conference is organized by Ottawa-based SL Ross Environmental Research Ltd.

#### **Oregon teacher wants to take gun to school**

MEDFORD, Ore. - High school English teacher Shirley Katz insists she needs to take her pistol with her to work because she fears her ex-husband could show up and try to harm her. She's also worried about a Columbine-style attack.

But Katz's district has barred teachers from bringing guns to school, so she is challenging the ban as unlawful, since Oregon is among states that allow people with a permit to carry concealed weapons into public buildings.

"This is primarily about my Second Amendment right and Oregon law and the simple fact that I know it is my right to carry that gun," said Katz, 44, sitting at the kitchen table of her home outside this city of 74,000.

"I have that (concealed weapons) permit. I refuse to let my ex-husband bully me. And I am not going to let the school board bully me, either."

In Oregon, a sheriff can grant a concealed-weapons permit to anyone whose criminal record is clean and who completes a gun-safety course.

Thirty-eight states, along with the District of Columbia, prohibit people from taking guns to school, according to the National Council of State Legislatures. But it's unclear how many offer an exemption for people holding concealed-weapons permits, since the council does not track such exceptions.

Superintendent Phil Long insists employees and students are safer without guns on campus at South Medford High School, where Katz teaches. The district plans to make that argument when the case comes before a judge on Thursday.

#### **Pollution found in remote areas of park**

WEST GLACIER, Mont. - Pollution has tainted even the most remote areas of Glacier National Park, and some fish in backcountry waters are so contaminated they could endanger the wildlife eating them, a federal scientist has found.

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Dixon Landers of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency led a three-year study examining pollution that travels in the air.

Landers first hiked into Glacier in 2003. Later he and his team used more than a dozen mules to transport some 2,000 pounds of scientific gear to places such as Snyder Lake, high above the park's McDonald Valley. The researchers took samples that included water, lake sediment, vegetation and fish. Water tests revealed contamination such as a pesticide that is not used widely in the United States but is applied in Canada, and pesticides that are banned in North America but still are used in some other parts of the world.

Other scientists who have studied water and snow chemistry in Glacier have looked mostly for the "dirty dozen," consisting of pesticides known collectively as persistent organic pollutants, or POPs. Landers' work searched for more than 100 semi-volatile organic compounds, or SOCs.

Both POPs and SOCs have relatively low molecular weights and volatilize easily in the atmosphere when put under heat. They move around the globe, scrubbing out of the air in rain or snow and then vaporizing back into the sky during warmth. Glacier is the kind of cold spot in which they can become trapped.

#### **Effort to halt climate change blocked in Wyo.**

WASHINGTON - As one of the largest energy producers in the nation, Wyoming is no stranger to the debate over global warming.

With a Democratic governor who embraces energy development even as he advocates for emerging clean-coal technologies, the state has tried to address climate change head-on - without swerving from its energy-dependent economy.

Yet those efforts, including a \$3 billion clean-coal project, have been sidelined at the federal level and left the state's leaders frustrated. With no clear indication of the federal government's direction on climate change, Wyoming is finding it difficult to strike out on its own.

A federal energy bill approved in 2005 appeared to launch a close energy alliance between Wyoming and the federal government. The bill included a congressional commitment to an advanced coal-fired power plant near Rock Springs with the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions without cutting into Wyoming's production of 430 million tons of coal annually.

But Congress has failed to follow through on promised subsidies for the plant. And last month came indications that Wyoming's struggles to land funding could get even tougher, when Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid announced his opposition to three coal-fueled power plants proposed in his home state of Nevada.

Reid's spokesman Jon Summers said the senator has no intention of getting involved in similar proposals in other states. But Summers added that Reid's antipathy toward coal extends beyond Nevada - and is not limited to conventional plants.

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## **Torrent of Discovery**

### **Divers chart oldest American shipwreck ever found in state**

ANCHORAGE - A private dive team exploring the waters of Southcentral Alaska has discovered the oldest American shipwreck ever found in the state, officials said Monday.

The Torrent sank 139 years ago in Cook Inlet after tidal currents, among the world's most powerful, rammed it into a reef south of the Kenai Peninsula. Documents from the period show that all 155 people on board survived.

The United States had purchased Alaska from Russia for \$7.2 million in 1867, less than a year earlier, and about 130 Army soldiers had come north on the Torrent to build the first U.S. military fort in Southcentral Alaska, now the state's most populous region.

"It's a very significant find because it's right after the purchase, during the transition from Russian to American authority," said Judy Bittner, a state historic preservation officer. "It's the very beginning of federal presence in Alaska and the establishment of order."

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About 20 sailors and 15 of the soldiers wives and children were also on board.

A four-man dive team led by Steve Lloyd, owner of Anchorage's largest independent book store, found remnants of the wreckage in July. Until last week, they kept the discovery secret at the request of state officials, who wanted more time to document the site before any looters arrived.

"The actual depth of wreck site is still classified by state authorities," Lloyd said. "We have by no means found everything."

An array of objects, from guns, cannons, shoes and plates, are hidden beneath the broad leaves of giant kelp beds or concealed in caverns and crevices among massive boulders, Lloyd said.

"It's like walking through a field of tall grass and undergrowth looking for a baseball that you've lost," Lloyd said.

Big finds include two anchors, sections of the hull and heavy bronze rudder hinges weighing about 100 pounds. The objects lie scattered across an area nearly 300 yards from the main wreck site. The team managed to map a section measuring 200 by 150 feet.

The search cost about \$2,000, Lloyd said.

About 2,500 ships have wrecked off the Alaska coast since Russian explorers first arrived in 1741, according to Mike Burwell, a cultural anthropologist for the federal Minerals Management Service. A partial database on the service's Web site lists Japanese submarines and fishing trawlers, Liberian freighters and New England whaling ships, among others.

The oldest-known American shipwreck in Alaska is the Eclipse, a Yankee fur trading vessel. It sank in the Shumagin Islands on Aug. 11, 1807, south of the Alaska Peninsula, and has never been found, Burwell said.

The Torrent is now being considered for listing in the National Registry of Historic Places. Bittner said state or federal archaeologists may study the wreck if they can secure enough funding.

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## Anchorage has new tool to catch child predators

ANCHORAGE - Cases of child pornography are on the rise in Alaska, and police say they are falling behind in their efforts to catch child predators who are using the Internet to target victims.

But the Anchorage Police Department now has a new tool to help stem the tide, a \$300,000 federal grant for training and new computer equipment.

More than 60 online crimes against children were investigated last year, but Detective Sgt. Ron Tidler said the frequency and severity of the crimes is increasing. Also on the rise is the technological know-how of the perpetrators.

"The problem with this type of crime is the technology continues to change, so we need to keep up with it," Tidler said. "This type of investigation is kind of a money pig, because the computers go obsolete so fast."

Tidler is in charge of the department's police cyber crimes unit, which investigates Internet crimes against children in Alaska.

The money from the grant will help to pay for training and computer equipment for other agencies so they work together, Tidler said.

It also will be the foundation for an Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force in Alaska, he said. The federally funded Internet Crimes program trains law-enforcement personnel nationwide how to fight online sex predators. Previously overseen by the Seattle police, the program now will have a regional hub in Anchorage, Tidler said.

Investigators conduct work on two fronts: forensic computer examinations (recovering evidence from hard drives) and online investigations (concentrating on chat rooms and file-sharing sites).

Anchorage Police Detective Mark Thomas, an online investigator, said his team is routinely swamped, but training other agencies will help everyone work together more efficiently.

"Computers give people the perception of anonymity, but there isn't any," Thomas said. "Someone's

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always watching."

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## State workers lose millions to bond fund

### Officials consider suit against company that managed retirement investment

After a supposedly low-risk bond fund in which 1,100 state employees invested their retirement money plunged in value in August, state officials are considering pursuing legal action against one of the nation's top mutual fund companies.

The Alaska Retirement Management Board in August held an emergency meeting and voted to remove State Street Corp.'s Daily Government/Corporate Bond Fund from a list of investment options for state employees after a disastrous August.

"There was a fairly substantial loss in value," said Jerry Burnett, the Department of Revenue's legislative liaison.

The State Street fund held \$36 million in state employee money as of June 30, state records show. By the time the ARM Board held an emergency meeting on Aug. 24, it had fallen to \$30 million.

"Since this was intended to be one of the least risky investment options, that was not good," Burnett said.

Alaska is not the only State Street client with concerns.

Prudential Financial Inc. last week sued State Street over losses in 165 retirement funds it manages, and the state of Idaho is considering legal action as well, according to the Wall Street Journal.

Alaska retirement officials say the fund was supposed to track a well-known Lehman Bros. bond index, but instead plunged dramatically lower than the index.

While the index rose 3 percent so far this year, the Daily Corporate/Government Bond Fund fell 18 percent, Burnett said.

If State Street's managers were investing in something other than what the fund was expected to invest in, that might be the basis of a legal claim, Burnett said.

Department of Law attorney Mike Barnhill said it was too soon to tell whether it might be possible for the state to recoup from State Street money lost by its employees.

"We are now trying to figure out what is up and what is down," he said.

The money that had been in the State Street fund has since been transferred to a new fund, the Barclays Lehman Bros. Government/Credit Bond Index Fund.

While all investments have risk, the State Street fund was not expected to do what it did. A Department of Revenue portfolio manager noticed when the fund began to deviate from the index it should have been tracking, and the deviation was brought to the board's attention, Burnett said.

Representatives of State Street, based in Boston, did not return messages left Monday at the end of the East Coast business day.

The Daily Government/Corporate Bond Fund was one of 14 options available in the SBS Supplemental Annuity Plan and one of 10 investment options in the new Public Employees' Retirement System and Teachers' Retirement System defined contribution plans.

The fund should have been among the least risky investment options available and is typically used by those nearing retirement and wanting to take less risk with their retirement nest egg.

Burnett told the Journal the losses might force some workers to delay retirements.

State Street is one of the nation's largest financial firms, holding assets worth \$13 trillion and actively managing assets worth nearly \$2 trillion. In addition to the bond fund, State Street continues to manage hundreds of millions of dollars of other types of investments for the Retirement Management Board.

State Street manages some stock investments for the Alaska Permanent Fund Corp., but none like the retirement fund, said Laura Achee, fund spokesperson.

"State Street is not one of our bond managers," she said.

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## State announces plans to add 2,000 prison beds

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## Alaska Department of Corrections officials hope to have construction completed within five years

FAIRBANKS - State officials are visiting several communities that could have their local correctional facilities expanded under the state's new prison plan.

State correctional officials want to add 2,000 prison beds in the state by expanding correctional facilities in four cities and by building a new prison.

The Alaska Department of Corrections hopes to have construction completed within five years, easing a housing crunch caused by overall population increases, drug and gang activity, new laws and increased minimum sentences.

The state routinely has to fly prisoners to be housed in other states, with 800 now confined in Arizona, said Corrections Commissioner Joe Schmidt.

The state's plan to address this includes a new, 1,260-bed prison in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, and expanded jails in Bethel, Fairbanks, Anchorage and Seward.

The original 2,250-bed Mat-Su facility, approved under the administration of former Gov. Frank Murkowski, was projected to cost \$330 million. But last spring, the size of the projected prison scaled back to cut costs.

The \$220 million facility is now slated for occupancy in 2012 at Point MacKenzie. Preliminary work has started there.

Schmidt was to meet with Fairbanks officials this week to discuss expansion of the Fairbanks Correctional Center and the state's proposal of using city-issued revenue bonds to pay for the expansion. Officials say plans for the Fairbanks' work already are partially drafted, and construction could start in 2010.

In 2004, the Alaska Legislature authorized a bill paving the way for deals in which cities or boroughs would issue revenue bonds for construction and the state would guarantee reimbursement.

It wasn't used until the state made a decision about the new Mat-Su prison, which was finalized in May. Other meetings already have been held in the other communities, and follow-up conferences are expected.

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## Seward woman named Teacher of the Year

SEWARD - Eighth-grade teacher Laura Beck demands excellence from her pupils and usually receives it, but she's not one to hold a grudge if a kid has a bad day.

"Academics are important, but the whole child is more important," she said. "They might have blown it 20 minutes ago, but who they are right now is not who they're going to be."

This is what she tells her students. No matter how badly they may screw up, she gives them second, third, even fourth chances to make things right. Beck is her students' cheerleaders, she said. It's her job to point them in the right direction by giving them an encouraging word or a little push.

After teaching elementary school in Alaska since 1982, Beck was content to teach first grade forever, but when the principal at Seward Middle School approached her with the vacant U.S. history position 11 years ago she tentatively stuck her foot in it.

"I was scared to death of seventh- and eighth-graders," she said. "And I've never regretted a moment since. They fit in with my sense of humor and my patience level."

From then on Beck's been a familiar sight in the halls and on the volleyball court, where she coaches middle and high school students.

As the person responsible for raising the money for the school's library, she's often there as late as the principal himself. It's this commitment to her school and to Seward that earned her this year's Wal-Mart-Sam's Club Alaska Teacher of the Year award, an award that includes a \$10,000 grant for Seward Middle School.

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"She is certainly a mentor and a leader amongst the teaching staff in this building," said Trevan Walker, Seward Middle School's new principal. "Her hours in this building actually rival mine as the administrator."

Walker said students and parents recognized Beck's work not only on the volleyball court, but also those to keep the school library running. When the school moved out of the high school and into its own building, they had a library but no librarian and no money for books.

"If you're a voracious reader, you go to the public library," Beck said. "What I decided to do was build a reading library."

With the help of parents and a quilt donated by Christine Olsen, owner of Sew'n Bee Cozy, \$8,000 went toward new books for the library. Beck became a certified librarian and spends her weekends cataloguing and stocking books. She's also shown her fellow teachers how to check books out.

"Teachers have free reign to bring students into the library at anytime, and we are all trained to check out books, which is pretty handy," Walker said. "None of this would have been possible had Laura not set the library up."

Beck said several of her students and their parents entered her in the regional teacher of the year contest, which she won in May. But winning the state teacher of the year award Oct. 1 came as a complete surprise.

"I told the student body that we really needed to acknowledge our soccer seasons and cross country seasons," Walker said, adding that they had acknowledged the athlete's accomplishments at the beginning of the year and the students weren't sure why they were doing it again.

Walker quickly brushed the students off when they wanted to get involved and began making arrangements for the ceremony from Soldotna so no one in Seward would get wind of what was going on. He was even able to keep Beck's husband John in the loop so he could allow her family to be there when she received the award.

"The neat thing is nobody knew this was happening," Walker said.

John Taylor, co-manager for the South Anchorage Wal-Mart, said out of 50 entries from all over the state, Beck was chosen as the regional winner because of the number of hours she coaches volleyball and works in the library. The regional award included a \$1,000 grant for the school.

"Seward is a very small community. They struggle to even get (teachers) down there," he said. "(Beck) wears many hats at that school."

As if winning the award wasn't enough, Seward Mayor Vanta Shafer further honored her by proclaiming Oct. 1 as Laura Beck Day.

"It's just a ceremonial thing," Shafer said. "Our schools face a lot of struggle financially and sometimes you just don't feel like there's any good news coming out, and this is good news. This is terrific news."

## Planners to review Office Depot permit

### Study shows store will not have a significant effect on traffic in Lemon Creek

A land-use permit for an Office Depot planned in Lemon Creek is back for review before the Juneau Planning Commission tonight, after a study showed the store will not increase traffic significantly in the area.

Also on the agenda are a permit for Schuck's Auto Supply, a parts supply chain, and an update on the downtown parking garage.

The Planning Commission had requested a more detailed traffic study from Office Depot while reviewing the store's permit at its August meeting.

The study found that nearby Costco and Home Depot have not generated as much additional traffic as originally expected. Another 561 vehicles were expected to go through the intersection of Anka Street and Glacier Highway at peak times, but a traffic study this September found an increase of only 17 vehicles.

As a condition of its permit, Home Depot widened the intersection to accommodate higher car numbers.

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The new study found that the intersection can accommodate the additional traffic expected for Office Depot and Schuck's, according to Greg Chaney, a planner with the Community Development Department.

"There was a phenomenal difference between the forecast and the actual in terms of increase in vehicle trips," Chaney said, adding that the original traffic study was based on national models that predict traffic from other areas, something that just doesn't happen in Juneau.

"There's not a magnet for the outlying areas like there would be if you built a Home Depot in Seattle," Chaney said.

People also may be combining trips to the multiple stores in the Lemon Creek commercial area, he said. It's not clear when Office Depot might open if it gets the necessary approvals. Architect Wayne Jensen, with architectural firm Jensen Yorba Lott, said they "haven't gotten to that point yet."

The store still needs to go through the building permit process if it receives approval from the Planning Commission.

The store would be at the end of Commercial Boulevard, on the right hand side.

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## Coho catch disappoints fishermen

Chum harvest well below average, but 2007 a good year for reds, pinks and kings

This fall's commercial coho salmon season came in close to historical averages, but it still left disappointment in the hearts and bank accounts of most fishermen, as it fell short of the stellar catches of the last couple of years.

Southeast Alaska fleets have hauled in about 2 million coho this year, compared to 3 million a few years ago, according to Scott Kelley, the regional supervisor for commercial fisheries for Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The long-term average from 1960 to 2005 for coho is 2 million. One of the highest years for coho was 1994, when 5.7 million were caught.

"It's average, but unfortunately a fisherman doesn't look at it that like that. We compare it to last year and how much money is in our pockets," said Kathy Hansen, head of the Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance.

Sport fishermen aren't seeing a great coho season this year either.

"This might have been the fourth lowest year that we've observed," said Brian Glynn, a sport fisheries biologist at Fish and Game.

Commercial sockeye, pink and king catches were all above average, but chum came in well below the 10-year average of 12.4 million, at 9.2 million. The chum fishery has grown during the past decade because of an increase in hatcheries. The 45-year average is 4.6 million.

"As far as disappointments go, chum was probably the most disappointing of the lot," Kelley said.

Hansen agreed, saying good predictions had led to high hopes.

"People had become excited about the projections, but the runs came in half of what was predicted. They had geared up and prepared for really good runs," Hansen said.

"Overall, people feel a little disappointed in the season. On the other hand, they say, well, overall, I really didn't do that bad," Hansen said.

Prices are rising for all salmon species, and king salmon fetched record-high prices, between \$8.50 and \$9 per pound, especially for winter-caught fish, according to the Department of Fish and Game. Pink salmon also have tripled in price, from 5 to 7 cents a pound to 20 to 25 cents a pound.

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## My Turn: Clean elections will keep us on course

Alaska is an amazing place for grassroots democratic action. Perhaps it is because Alaska's rich history is younger than most other states that the vibrant nature of politics shines so brightly. Ever since I started working at the Alaska Public Interest Research Group seven years ago, Alaska politics has been an amazing and exciting process, both to watch and engage in.

I reached a new level of awe while attending a briefing on our Clean Elections Initiative at the Division

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of Elections. The woman in charge of initiatives for the state was citing the statutes and regulations that govern initiatives. She backed up for a moment to cite the state constitution and how initiatives were placed in the constitution itself.

I couldn't help but look to my right, two seats away, where Alaska constitutional delegate Vic Fischer was sitting. As one of the sponsors of the Clean Elections initiative, he was at the meeting to learn the mechanics of gathering signatures for the process that he and the other constitutional delegates had enshrined more than 50 years ago. Fischer also served in the territorial House of Representatives and the state Senate in addition to a long career with the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the Institute of Social and Economic Research, including 10 years as its director.

It made me think about the founding of our country. Surely our country's founders must have gone to committee meetings, organizational meetings, government training sessions and university positions after they made history by establishing the United States of America. History increases their stature but 10, 20 and 30 years after our country was founded, many were still likely engaged in civic life, going to meetings or maybe pushing initiatives.

Soon after the meeting at the Division of Elections, Fischer stopped by my office after meeting with former Gov. Wally Hickel. While not a delegate to the constitutional convention, Hickel has had a deep and pronounced effect on Alaska. He also has signed the Clean Elections Initiative and offered his help in the effort to reform Alaska politics by removing special interest money from political campaigns.

It is heartening that these two former politicians now turned citizen activists are still so engaged in Alaska's civic life. It is a great example of leadership and participation for all of us. In contrast with the ethical scandals and corruption that continue to deflate Alaskans' trust in their political system, these two, and many others, provide a model for how citizens across the political spectrum can conduct themselves in a democracy.

It also is significant that both of them are in favor of clean elections. Clean elections represent yet another example of Alaskans of different parties coming together to work for what's best for Alaska. Clean elections will level the playing field for political candidates - incumbents and challengers alike. It will inspire more and different people to run for office.

Most importantly, with clean elections, corporations and special interests can't buy their way into the halls of government. Special interest money is simply taken out of the equation. This puts people back in charge of the electoral process and their democracy. That's exactly what Alaska needs right now. Candidates will no longer be beholden to a small number or large donors, but are free to serve the actual voters that elected them. The VECO Corp. bribery scandal and the campaign contributions VECO gave over the years should serve as a stern warning about the dangerous influence money can have on politics.

The Clean Elections Initiative is a positive step toward political reform in Alaska. It will allow Alaskans of all political stripes to run for office and put out their ideas as to what is best for Alaska. The founders of this country and this state certainly didn't want special interests dominating political life. Clean elections are a way to get our system back.

• Steve Cleary is the executive director of the Alaska Public Interest Research Group in Anchorage.

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## Theater still important part of community

I've been reading with great interest the letters about Perseverance Theatre and the changes to come. After the Empire Editorial on Sunday, I was moved to write something in response. I work at Perseverance Theatre, but this is not an official response. No one on the staff knows I'm writing this. It comes from the heart, as a member of the community.

I started working with Perseverance Theatre in 2001, as a confused 19-year-old who didn't know what he wanted to do. I only knew that I loved my hometown and wanted to stay. After being cast in "Moby Dick," things really took off. Eventually, I was hired onto the staff, and have contributed many things to the theater throughout the years.

During the past four years, PJ Paparelli taught me much about hard work, hard decisions and compassion. Many people believe he only cared to work with "outside talent". I'm here to tell you that

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this local talent's working life has skyrocketed during his time working with Paparelli.

As a Native artist, let me tell you that it's rare to find someone in a position of power who has so much respect, understanding and appreciation for culture and individual artistry. Last year, we completed two large projects in which we brought Native performers from around the state to share Raven stories, and to perform in the endangered Tlingit language. I don't know if that could have happened without Paparelli, and though the credit gets shared with so many collaborators, his example set the tone.

During his time at the theater, the Second Stage was brought back after a long hiatus; more University of Alaska Southeast students became a part of the theater community; and those "outside" actors and designers returned for many shows, becoming a part of our community. A new wave of local actors has grown under Paparelli's watch, developed through UAS and Second Stage.

People are complicated. All of our artistic directors at Perseverance Theatre have had their share of problems while in the hot seat, and so did Paparelli. However, please take a broad look at the record during the past four years. You might find something positive.

**Ishmael C. Hope**

**Juneau**

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## **Fluoride vote a disappointment**

The Oct. 2 election was a lost opportunity for the people of Juneau. The gap between the haves and the have-nots in this country is getting larger all the time. The rich are becoming richer and the poor are struggling and becoming more numerous. The underprivileged people of Juneau would have definitely benefited by having fluoride in the water because they have limited access to dental care, and fluoride may have made their teeth more resistant to cavities. The election has now effectively added the burden of bad teeth to the burden of poverty.

Was there some risk to fluoride? Sure. There is a downside to every medicine or chemical. Don't forget that chlorine also can be used as a poison gas, yet we never question it being added to our water supply (and we shouldn't). But who ever decided at what level that is totally safe? Next time you see a young child with rotten teeth, just think how much harder it will be for him or her to be successful in society because of the poor first impression that smile will make. My hope is that at least the controversy will motivate the community to make fluoride treatments and supplements available to those who cannot afford regular dental care.

**Kim C. Smith, MD**

**Juneau**

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## **AK Women in Timber to hold reunion**

For some 20 years, Alaska Women in Timber was a strong advocate for the folks who lived in the woods and made their living from the timber industry. When the mills closed, camps closed, jobs were lost and the remaining AWIT members had to give up on their organization.

The Alaska Forest Association is celebrating its 50th anniversary convention in Ketchikan on Oct. 17-19. AWIT will host an open house from 9 a.m. to noon Oct. 18 for friends and past members at the Ted Ferry Convention Center. We hope any former AWIT members who are in the neighborhood will come and join in "catching up" session. Bring your pictures. We look forward to seeing you.

**Helen Finney**

**Ward Cove**

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## **Don't be shocked when state has no workers**

As an 18-year employee of the state of Alaska, I read the Empire's Oct. 5 article, "State steps up efforts to keep, find workers," with great interest. I was eager to find out what rhetoric the state would use to sidestep the real issues of dealing with lousy pay and its pathetic Tier IV retirement system.

Fortunately, I didn't have to read too far into the article to find out the state of Alaska's visionary approach to dealing with the problem. They are going to (drum roll please) lower their standards. Boy, that should instill confidence that our state government is going after the best and the brightest to serve the people of Alaska. Annette Kreitzer, the commissioner of the Department of Administration, in a

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recent press release said "We value state employees and want the state to be an employer of choice." And yet, in regard to recruiting and retaining state employees, she comes right out in the Oct. 5 article and says, "The first obvious answer - more money - probably isn't going to be possible." Let me translate this double speak for you - the state isn't interested in dealing with the real problem, but they are interested in pursuing Band-Aid approaches that don't cost anything while simultaneously making it look like they are doing something.

That fact that they won't really solve the problem is irrelevant. After all, what really matters is if they are making a concerted effort to deal with the problem, perhaps the citizens of Alaska will give the state a pass when it comes time to explain why the services they get from the state are in a shambles.

Meanwhile, state employees will continue to leave their jobs in droves. In the state employee contract negotiations three years ago, the state said it couldn't pay state employees more money because oil prices were down. Now that prices are booming, they say they can't pay state employees more because oil prices are projected to go down in the future.

Let's face it, there's always going to be some excuse. If they can't afford to raise state employees' wages now, then there never will be a good time to do it. Don't worry, we're getting the message from the state loud and clear - they just don't care about us. In a few years, the full impact of the state's short sightedness will be evident, the state will still be hemorrhaging employees and will probably have to resort to begging employees to stay. However, the state shouldn't be surprised if the response they get from employees is, "The first obvious answer - me staying - probably isn't going to be possible."

**John Carlile**

**Juneau**

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## Fairbanks Daily News-Miner

### ***GVEA requesting increase in rates***

By Eric Lidji

elidji@newsminer.com

Published October 9, 2007

Golden Valley Electric Association is asking state regulators to approve a 3.12 percent rate increase for all customers.

The increase would impact the energy charge on all bills and the demand charge added to the bills of larger businesses and industrial customers. For a residential customer using 780 kilowatt hours of electricity a month, the hike would increase monthly bills by \$2.63.

The board of directors of the electric cooperative approved the request at its September meeting. The increase would bring in an additional \$3.6 million in revenue to help offset increased operating costs.

The cooperative has asked for the increase to go into effect at the start of 2008.

The request is the fourth GVEA has made since March 2004 and the second this year, following a 4.13 percent increase regulators approved this summer. Typically, utilities must wait much longer between rate cases, but regulators allow electric cooperatives to file more often through a procedure called *Simplified Rate Filing*.

Simplified Rate Filing allows electric cooperatives, and only electric cooperatives, to adjust rates several times a year without the time and expense of the extensive financial analysis required for a full rate case.

Under Simplified Rate Filing, an electric cooperative cannot increase rates more than 8 percent over 12 months or 20 percent over three years. The current GVEA request, if approved, would represent a 7.25 percent increase over the past year and

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15.25 percent increase over the past three years.

The increases are typically based on maintaining a specific financial ratio used to calculate whether a company's earnings are sufficient for covering interest payments on its debt.

The Legislature created the Simplified Rate Filing process in 1985 with the idea that electric cooperatives, being run by a member-elected board of directors, were different than other utilities.

"Thus," state regulators wrote at the time, "these regulations are based on the premise that the board of directors of each cooperative is in close contact with its constituency and that the burden of determining what rate adjustments (increases or decreases) should be implemented should rest primarily with that board."

Matanuska Electric Association started using Simplified Rate Filing a few years later, and in the 20 years since has filed dozens of rate increases and decreases through the process. Chugach Electric Association also uses the process, as does the Homer Electric Association.

State regulators began allowing GVEA to use the Simplified Rate Filing in 2004. The year before, expenses rose faster than revenues and the company's margins, the term for profits in the cooperative world, dropped 39 percent.

In hearings at the time, GVEA Chief Financial Officer John Grubich told the Regulatory Commission of Alaska that with operational costs on the rise and a series of capital improvement projects on the horizon, the utility needed to be able to generate revenue quickly and cheaply.

A full-blown rate case typically lasts between one and two years and can cost more than \$500,000. Grubich has said several of those rate cases would have been required over the past few years without Simplified Rate Filing, or SRF.

"Part of the reason that we went to the SRF," Grubich told the News-Miner in April, "was because looking forward, when you see the capital improvement program that we had, you realize that we didn't have enough money to cover all that on an interim basis, and so the SRF allowed us to maintain some financial stability."

A utility can only pass on the cost of a new project once its customers are seeing the benefit of it, and so as various projects like the Northern Intertie, Battery Energy Storage System, a transmission line between North Pole and Salcha, the North Pole Substation and the new North Pole Expansion Plant came online, they became part of subsequent Simplified Rate Filings.

The Simplified Rate Filing trades precision for speed, though.

Regardless of whether the cooperative builds new plants to serve thousands of new residential customers or several gigantic new industrial projects, the Simplified Rate Filing process requires a cooperative to change rates evenly for all rate classes.

GVEA plans to file a full rate case next June to measure, among other things, which customer classes get the most benefit from various improvement projects and charge each customer class accordingly.

Contact staff writer Eric Lidji at 459-7504.

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## ***Delta Junction Elementary wins national award***

By Robinson Duffy

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Published October 9, 2007

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The elementary school in Delta Junction has been honored as a Blue Ribbon School by the federal government. The designation, an award given to only 287 schools across the nation this year, honors the top schools in America as far as student test scores are concerned or those whose students — especially those classified as “disadvantaged” — made leaps in performance on standardized tests.

“I didn’t really understand what a big deal it was until I started working with (the application) and then I was thinking, ‘Wow, our little school is amazing,’” principal Michelle Beito said. “It’s ranking us as one of the top schools in the nation. If you’re looking at the community and you see that the elementary school is a Blue Ribbon School, that’s pretty impressive.”

Delta Junction Elementary School has about 400 students in grades kindergarten through fifth. Half of those students are eligible for free or reduced school lunches and nearly 30 percent speak limited English, with many coming from Slavic families.

Because of the school’s size and limited resources, it only has a part-time English language learner teacher to work with struggling students. But despite that handicap, Beito said, other staff members have stepped up and instituted unique initiatives to help the students achieve.

“There’s really a team approach in this building,” Beito said. “We truly believe that every child in our school is everyone’s responsibility. We all take responsibility for every child in the building. It’s very impressive. They are an exceptional staff.”

The teachers and staff have put together an intervention program in the past few years to target those students falling behind in reading or math and getting them additional help. Additionally, the school has a “leveled” approach to reading instruction whereby students — especially those who don’t speak English well — are grouped together not by grade but by reading level.

“They might be a third-grader but reading at a second-grade level so we group kids by their ability and that allows them to grow much faster rather than having the lessons be over their heads and so they’re struggling all the time,” Beito said.

The efforts are paying off if the test scores are an indication. In the 2004-2005 school year, 62 percent of the elementary school’s third-graders struggling with English were deemed proficient or advanced in math. The next year, 86 percent of the third-graders in that particular subgroup tested proficient or advanced. The students with limited English proficiency (or LEP) at the fourth and fifth grade level — the other two grades at the school that take standardized state tests each year — also showed double-digit increases in math and reading scores.

In the upper grades, more students at the school who don’t speak English well were able to improve from proficient to advanced. In 2005, none of the school’s LEP fifth-graders were advanced in reading while 11 percent were advanced in 2006. Similarly, in 2005 only 13 percent of the LEP fifth-graders were advanced compared to 37 percent in 2006.

The state was able to nominate three schools for the federal recognition, which was instituted as part of No Child Left Behind. Each nominated school then had to fill out an application laying out how the school had helped students — especially those from poorer families or those struggling with English — improve test scores. The school must also show that the students’ improvements were due in part to the teachers and staff, according to Erik McCormick, who helps oversee the Blue Ribbon program in Alaska.

“It’s a pretty extensive application,” he said. “(The Alaska Department of Education) nominating them does not mean they automatically get it.”

Across the nation, 453 schools were nominated, but only 287 received the recognition from the federal government. In Alaska, only one other school, Richard Johnson Elementary School in Metlakatla, received the award.

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At a ceremony Monday in Delta Junction, the school was presented with a blue ribbon by a representative from the U.S. Department of Education. Beito will be traveling to Washington, D.C., in November for a formal award ceremony.

"When I get back from Washington, D.C., we're going to have a community reception to honor the kids," Beito said. "After all, they're the ones who did all the work."

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## **Hotel tax proposal draws little talk at city meeting**

By Chris Eshleman

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Published October 9, 2007

A plan to raise taxes on hotel and bed-and-breakfast stays drew only limited comments from the visitor industry Monday.

The city of Fairbanks hopes the hike in "bed taxes" would help cover a \$1 million budget shortfall and fund road work, fire protection and other basic services.

City officials created the tax three decades ago to support the tourism industry and develop the economy. Mary Richards, who owns All Seasons Bed and Breakfast Inn, told the Fairbanks City Council a tax increase would hand hotels and bed and breakfasts outside the city limits, which would not be hit with the extra tax, a competitive advantage.

"An increase in the bed tax would be an unfair, targeted tax specifically and only to the lodging industry," she said. "I see it as a hindrance to my ability to increase my rates in order to cover costs such as fuel oil, insurance and maintenance."

The plan would help offset voters' decision last week to lower property tax rates inside the city. The bed tax would increase from 8 percent to 10 percent in the city, and the estimated \$600,000 in extra revenue would funnel into the city's coffers.

Nonprofits including the Fairbanks Convention and Visitors Bureau, Fairbanks Economic Development Corp. and arts-focused organizations would continue to get bed tax revenue under the plan, which is scheduled for a Nov. 19 public hearing.

Visitor bureau president Deb Hickok said the nonprofit's directors are taking steps to see whether Fairbanks could support performing arts and convention centers — projects included in the popular Vision Fairbanks downtown revitalization plan. She suggested Monday that the city should reserve the option of higher bed taxes in case they're needed to support those projects.

"Once something like this is on the books, it's really hard to get it off the books or change it," she said.

Council members indicated the plan, along with a proposal to raise fees for city-issued business licenses, could draw concern from residents as the city inks next year's budget — a budget the plan would help fund.

"There's going to be a lot of work ahead of us in the next year," Councilman Chad Roberts said.

**COUNCIL SPLITS ON UNION CONTRACTS:** In other business, the council approved what could be a lame-duck contract for firefighters but dumped a proposed contract extension for equipment operators, engineers, laborers and other employees covered under the joint crafts union.

The fire union's president has declined to carry the contract to members for consideration. The council's Monday vote comes during a stalemate in contract negotiations between the city and union, and firefighters, lacking an up-to-date contract, are

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working under terms of an expired contract.

The decision to drop the proposed contract for the joint crafts union leaves the union with one year left on its current contract.

Contact staff writer Chris Eshleman at 459-7582.

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## ***Support tepid for prison plan***

By Chris Eshleman

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Published October 9, 2007

Fairbanks policy makers offered only lukewarm support Monday for the state's plan to expand prison space using community-issued bonds.

The project would add an 80-bed wing to the overcrowded, state-owned Fairbanks Correctional Center — built to house 200 inmates but now regularly holding 300 — and add prison space elsewhere, including a new jail in the Matanuska Valley, through the use of local bonds.

A handful of Fairbanks City Council members, interviewed following a work session Monday, worried about overcrowding but questioned the state's plan to use city bonds for a state project. The plan was included in a bill approved by the Alaska Legislature in 2004.

"I don't know if (this) is the tool that gets us there," Councilman Chad Roberts said.

State Sen. Gary Wilken, R-Fairbanks, attended the meeting and, speaking afterward, labeled the 2004 bill "unusual" legislation driven largely to build the Matanuska Valley prison.

State corrections officials at the meeting acknowledged the financing plan is a "less than optimal" option for a Fairbanks prison expansion, although they also noted their plan would reduce or eliminate the need to fly hundreds of inmates each year to a prison in Arizona, where they said 858 Alaska prisoners live.

Council members Lloyd Hilling and Vivian Stiver said they want to hear more about the financing proposal before they offer firm opinions.

Hilling suggested he might support it, noting the same process helped build prison space in other parts of the state.

"I lean toward sympathy for it because it means having this local facility and not shipping people all over the place," Hilling said.

Construction on the project, if approved, could start as early as 2010 and cost an estimated \$13 million.

While the city would assume bonding debt for the project, the state would guarantee repayment and sign an operating agreement, said state corrections officials, who indicated the City Council has the option of passing a resolution supporting the plan.

Daniel Colang, president of the Alaska Correctional Officers Association, also questioned the financing plan even as he offered a litany of reasons to upgrade the 40-year-old Fairbanks prison.

"I have a problem with the state coming to cash-strapped communities asking them to (help) with a project like that," Colang

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told the council after the work session.

Contact staff writer Chris Eshleman at 459-7582.

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## **Medical examiner: hypothermia did not cause death in manslaughter case**

By Chris Freiberg

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Published October 9, 2007

The high-profile manslaughter case of Kevin Garner is expected to go to the jury sometime today.

Garner, 26, of North Pole, is on trial for manslaughter for his role in the death of Catherine Ahsoak, 53. Authorities say an intoxicated Garner ran over Ahsoak, who was lying in the middle of the road, and dragged her several blocks to her death on the way to a friend's house in the early morning hours of Feb. 4. The deaf woman's frozen body was discovered under his Honda Civic by a neighbor later that morning.

Defense attorneys have said though Garner was intoxicated at the time of the accident, he cannot be guilty of manslaughter or failure to render aid because Ahsoak was dead or dying of hypothermia at the time he hit her.

An autopsy found Ahsoak's blood-alcohol content to be nearly three times the legal limit of 0.08 to operate a motor vehicle. In addition, nearly three times the recommended dose of the antihistamine Benadryl was found in her system.

During rebuttal testimony Monday, however, the chief medical examiner for the state of Alaska said hypothermia was unlikely, given the evidence.

"She died from something other than hypothermia," Dr. Franc Fallico testified.

He said that at the time she received the injuries from the car accident "she had to be alive or with blood pressure."

Defense attorneys offered no cross-examination of Dr. Fallico.

On Friday, they called another pathologist who testified that Ahsoak was likely dead at the time of the incident and a pharmacist who spoke about the effects of the alcohol and Benadryl in her system.

Closing arguments are expected to begin this morning at 9 a.m.

If convicted of all charges, Garner could face more than three decades in jail.

Contact staff writer Chris Freiberg at 459-7545.

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## **Palin appoints 3 from borough**

Staff Report

Published October 9, 2007

Gov. Sarah Palin recently appointed Travis Noah of Fairbanks and Debbie Kitelinger of North Pole to her Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education.

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Palin also appointed Bernard Gatewood of Fairbanks to a seat on the Governor's Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse.

Noah graduated from North Pole High School in 2001 and works as a sales representative for the Fort Wainwright Post Exchange, according to a news release from the governor's office. He has led seminars for local schools and groups on dealing with people with disabilities, and has lobbied through the Key Campaign.

Noah was appointed to a seat representing users of disability or special education services.

Kitelinger was reappointed to a seat on the Council representing secondary consumers of services.

She is a homemaker who has trained parents for the Alaska Transition Training Initiative. She and her husband have eight children, including a son with cerebral palsy.

The Council is an interdepartmental planning agency that coordinates services or special education to disabled Alaskans.

Gatewood was appointed to a public seat on an advisory board on alcoholism, which advises the governor, the Legislature and state agencies on substance-abuse issues, treatment and prevention efforts.

Gatewood is superintendent of the Fairbanks Youth Correctional Facility, according to a news release.

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## ***Winter roads: Weekend accidents are a reminder to dust off old skills***

Published October 9, 2007

Two tragedies this weekend serve as strong reminders of the perils of snow and ice on the roadways at this time of year.

Slick roads were a factor in the deaths of two people, one in a Saturday evening accident in the Goldstream Valley and another down the Richardson Highway at Summit Lake. In each instance, according to authorities, the vehicle slid into a body of water.

Every year at this time, when the first snows come, drivers get a sharp reminder that they need to bring out their winter driving skills.

We need to slow down.

We need to make sure our vehicles have tires suitable for winter driving.

We need to pay attention to the road, maybe even leaving the cell phones alone.

We need to keep a good distance behind the vehicle ahead.

We need to allow extra time to get to where we are going.

We need to be patient.

The roadways will be slick many times throughout the coming winter; that's a given.

We need to be aware of that fact now.

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## ***Letters to the Editor***

Published October 9, 2007

### **Practice fire escape**

Oct. 4, 2007

To the editor:

It's time for Fire Prevention Week, and on Oct. 7-13 the Ester Volunteer Fire Department is reminding local residents to "Practice Your Escape Plan."

During this year's fire safety campaign, firefighters will be spreading the word about the dangers of home fires and teaching local residents how to plan and practice escaping from a home in case a fire occurs.

According to the latest research, 3,030 people died in home fires in 2005 — that's roughly eight people every day.

Many times when we speak to residents who have experienced a fire in their home, they recall becoming confused and disoriented by the conditions and severity of the situation — but they realized they needed to get out fast.

Sometimes there are only seconds to escape, but there's no question that having a plan in place that has been practiced saves precious time and makes survival more likely. We hope that Fire Prevention Week will prompt folks in our community to plan and practice their escape.

Although it's difficult to prepare for the unexpected, reviewing the information below and taking action based on it to plan for a fire is strongly recommended:

- Install working smoke alarms on every level; and inside and outside of each sleeping area.
- Develop a fire escape plan that identifies two ways out of each room and a family meeting place outside.
- Make sure your plan allows for any specific needs in your household. If everyone knows what to do, everyone can get out quickly.
- Practice using the plan, at least twice a year.

Some studies have shown that some children and adults may not awaken to the sound of a smoke alarm; they may need help waking up.

If the smoke alarm sounds, go to your closest exit, and if you run into smoke, turn and use another way out. If you must exit through smoke, get low and go under the smoke to your exit.

Don't take time to pick up belongings; just get out and help others get out. Move fast but stay calm.

For more information, go to [www.esterfire.org](http://www.esterfire.org) or contact your local fire department.

Chief Cameron Wohlford

Ester Volunteer Fire Department

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# KTUU

## Now This is Woman's Work

There are more female governors in office than ever before, and they are making their mark with a pragmatic, postpartisan approach to solving state problems.

by Karen Breslau, Newsweek

Oct. 15, 2007 issue In 1998, voters in a focus group were asked to close their eyes and imagine what a governor should look like. "They automatically pictured a man," says Barbara Lee, whose foundation promoting women's political advancement sponsored the survey. "The kind you see in those portraits hanging in statehouse hallways."

They most certainly didn't visualize Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, a former beauty-pageant winner, avid hunter, snowmobiler and mother of four who was elected to her state's highest office last November. Or Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano, a badge-wielding former federal prosecutor and onetime attorney for Anita Hill who has redefined the debate over illegal immigration in her state.

While this year's political buzz has been about Hillary Clinton's run for the White House and Nancy Pelosi's ascension to Speaker of the House, women leaders like Palin, a Republican, and Napolitano, a Democrat, have gained significant power in the lives of millions of Americans at the state level.

In addition to Alaska and Arizona, Michigan, Kansas, Washington, Hawaii, Connecticut, Louisiana and Delaware elected or re-elected women governors in the last year. That's a total of nine, the highest number to serve simultaneously. And next year women candidates will run for the statehouse in North Carolina and Indiana.

A decade ago only 16 women in U.S. history had served as governor (four of them were appointed to replace their dead husbands or other ill-fated male predecessors). Today that number stands at 29.

"The best way for people to believe in women as competent executives is by actually watching them govern," says Lee. "They find them likable, strong and effective."

New research shows that voters give female governors significantly higher marks than their male counterparts on such qualities as honesty, cooperation and caring—as well as toughness. And at a time when the national debate has become poisonously partisan, governors like Napolitano, 49, and Palin, 43, are making their mark with a pragmatic, post-partisan approach to solving problems, a style that works especially well with the large numbers of independent voters in their respective states.

Napolitano vetoed 127 bills proposed by Republican lawmakers during her first term. But she also went on to approve tax cuts opposed by some of her fellow Democrats while winning Republican support for her pet project, funding all-day kindergarten. She was the first governor of either party to demand that the federal government live up to its constitutional responsibility to secure her state's border with Mexico while at the same time fending off conservatives' efforts to deny social services to illegal immigrants.

In 2006, President George W. Bush traveled to the Arizona border, where he publicly praised Napolitano's policies. She won re-election in a landslide, and in a state where Republicans still hold the majority.

"Arizonans don't wake up saying, 'I'm a blue person' or 'I'm a red person'," Napolitano tells

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NEWSWEEK. "They wake up saying, 'How is the governor dealing with my freeway problem, my school problem, my whatever issue it is of the day?' "

In Alaska, Palin is challenging the dominant, sometimes corrupting, role of oil companies in the state's political culture. "The public has put a lot of faith in us," says Palin during a meeting with lawmakers in her downtown Anchorage office, where-as if to drive the point home-the giant letters on the side of the ConocoPhillips skyscraper fill an entire wall of windows. "They're saying, 'Here's your shot, clean it up'."

For Palin, that has meant tackling the cozy relationship between the state's political elite and the energy industry that provides 85 percent of Alaska's tax revenues-and distancing herself from fellow Republicans, including the state's senior U.S. senator, Ted Stevens, whose home was recently searched by FBI agents looking for evidence in an ongoing corruption investigation. (Stevens has denied any wrongdoing.) But even as she tackles Big Oil's power, Palin has transformed her own family's connections to the industry into a political advantage. Her husband, Todd, is a longtime employee of BP, but, as Palin points out, the "First Dude" is a blue-collar "Sloper," a fieldworker on the North Slope, a cherished occupation in the state. "He's not in London making the decisions whether to build a gas line."

In an interview with NEWSWEEK, Palin said it's time for Alaska to "grow up" and end its reliance on pork-barrel spending. Shortly after taking office, Palin canceled funding for the "Bridge to Nowhere," a \$330 million project that Stevens helped champion in Congress. The bridge, which would have linked the town of Ketchikan to an island airport, had come to symbolize Alaska's dependence on federal handouts.

Rather than relying on such largesse, says Palin, she wants to prove Alaska can pay its own way, developing its huge energy wealth in ways that are "politically and environmentally clean."

It's no coincidence that two of the nation's most popular women governors come from frontier states (Arizona and Alaska were the 48th and 49th, respectively, to join the Union) without established social orders that tend to block women from power. In Washington (the 42nd state), Gov. Christine Gregoire and both U.S. senators are women, a trifecta yet to be achieved by any other state. As women reach these top jobs, even more women enter the political pipeline.

"When voters perceive things are bad, they expect a woman candidate to come in and create change," says Debbie Walsh of the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University. "Voters give them license not to fit the mold."

They also are willing to embrace women in nontraditional roles as protectors or enforcers of the public interest. Napolitano, like Gregoire and Gov. Jennifer Granholm of Michigan, served as her state's attorney general. Granholm and Gregoire made national reputations helping the states win a record \$200 billion settlement against the tobacco industry in the 1990s.

Napolitano prosecuted human-smuggling rings as a U.S. attorney in the Clinton administration, and as state attorney general sued long-distance provider Qwest for consumer fraud. "It's a very authentic role for women to do that kind of caretaking and say, 'I am going to look after your interests'," says Walsh. "What makes them formidable as candidates is experience as the chief law-enforcement officer for their state, a role that exudes strength. Which is always the question asked about a woman. 'Is she strong enough? Is she tough enough?' "

It's a question Napolitano doesn't bother with much anymore. Sitting in her Phoenix statehouse office, decorated with sports memorabilia, law-enforcement badges and the flags of Arizona National Guard units serving in Iraq, Napolitano is surrounded by a cluster of public-safety experts, reviewing preparations for next winter's Super Bowl, which will be played near Phoenix.

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"Who's in charge?" she demands, jabbing at an-impossibly complex organizational chart listing dozens of law-enforcement agencies. "Who do I call if something goes wrong?" That practical approach has impressed lawmakers, even if they don't agree with her on the issues. "Her door is always open," says State Sen. Tom O'Halleran, a Republican, who has clashed with Napolitano over legislation but is also impressed by her negotiating skills. "She's not stuck to an ideology."

Although she has been in office less than a year, Palin, too, earns high marks from lawmakers on the other side of the aisle. During a debate earlier this year over a natural-gas bill, State Senate Minority Leader Beth Kerttula was astounded when she and another Democrat went to see the new governor to lay out their objections. "Not only did we get right in to see her," says Kerttula, "but she asked us back twice-we saw her three times in 10 hours, until we came up with a solution."

Next week in Juneau, Alaska lawmakers will meet to overhaul the state's system for taxing oil companies-a task Palin says was tainted last year by an oil-industry lobbyist who pleaded guilty to bribing lawmakers. Kerttula doesn't expect to agree with the freshman governor on every step of the complex undertaking. But the minority leader looks forward to exploiting one backroom advantage she's long waited for. "I finally get to go to the restroom and talk business with the governor," she says. "The guys have been doing this for centuries."

And who says that's not progress?

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Voice of the Times

L. Williams 10/09/07

Don't spend Gravina money yet

By LEW M. WILLIAMS JR.

Before Ketchikan residents and their representatives get too strident criticizing Gov. Sarah Palin over canceling the Gravina bridge project, we should remember she agreed with Ketchikan's Sen. Bert Stedman and Rep. Kyle Johansen to put \$46 million in the state budget to complete the Swan Lake-Tyee Lake Intertie.

And if it goes like most projects, it probably will require a few more millions for completion. That is an important project, a first step for a Southeast Alaska power grid. It could lead to selling excess power to British Columbia, further boosting Southeast's economy.

That does not mean giving up on better access to Gravina. And the governor says she and her commissioner of Transportation will be looking at more economic access, hinting strongly at improved ferry service. That really is no answer, not when it costs \$20 for a ride to the airport and inhibits Gravina development.

Before settling on ferry service the governor and her DOT should go back to October 2000 when the department issued a tabloid newspaper outlining 19 alternatives for Gravina access. Some were cheaper and so was the preferred alternative when first selected. It is the revisions since that drove the price higher.

Gov. Frank Murkowski saw this in his first year in office. He asked prominent Alaska engineer Dennis Nottingham of PND, a firm with extensive Alaska experience, , , ,

(cont'd from front page) to draw up an alternative. He did. It was a tube from Peninsula Point to Gravina. It cost less than the preferred alternative.

The governor liked the idea but he didn't like starting over with the Federal Highway Administration. It would take four years to get the new route approved by FHA. So Murkowski stuck with the preferred alternative.

He understood what Palin and others with an eye on Gravina Island money apparently don't

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understand. Sen. Ted Stevens recently warned them of it. When the money in the federal highway trust fund is divided among the states every five years, the states have to submit a five-year plan of highway projects and FHA has to approve the plan and the projects. The state can't just take the money and do as it wishes, or the federal government can take the money back. Stevens warned that the unused Gravina money could be recalled until the FHA approves a revised state highway plan. So don't spend it yet, friends.

Re-examining the Nottingham recommendation is a good idea, along with re-examining the other 19 alternatives advanced in 2000. In the meantime, northern Alaska critics of spending money on the Gravina crossing are exhibiting their ignorance and enjoying stomping on what they perceive as Ketchikan's grave. One junior journalist says everything should be stopped on Gravina, including the tunnel at the end of the airport.

The tunnel was never part of the Gravina crossing project. There is, and has been, a road around the south end of the airport, serving parts of Gravina aside from the airport.

After a jetliner ran off the runway at Chicago a few years ago and landed on a freeway with fatal results, the FAA decided that it needed to lengthen runways at many major airports around the country, including Ketchikan. The only feasible way to lengthen the Ketchikan runway was south over the area where the road around the airport runs, the only feasible road route. To lengthen the runway, the FAA had to destroy the road, not practical, or bridge it. FAA settled on a tunnel for the road under the extended runway.

To have a junior journalist, one who doesn't check his facts, create animosity between sections of the state is unfortunate, especially in a state that can ill-afford to be less than united against Lower 48 criticism.

There is enough animosity over what Juneau residents call capital creep, government offices moving to Southcentral Alaska. In Anchorage, there is criticism of the University of Alaska administration in Fairbanks limiting academic offerings at UA Anchorage. And Anchorage, with failing fish plants, dairies and other businesses costing the state dollars, isn't immune to criticism.

We asked our contemporaries in journalism and politics, do we want a knock down, drag out, section against section battle, great for headlines and newspaper sales, or do we want to solve all of the states problems and move ahead united?

In case our friends aren't frozen into a trash-Ketchikan mindset, we point out that the road from the airport to the site of the proposed Gravina crossing has a value on its own, even without a bridge. Extending the road another 3 miles to the end of Gravina Island reaches Black Sand Beach State Park. Putting a landing there for the Metlakatla ferry Lituya, provides faster and cheaper access to the airport for the people of Metlakatla and maybe even some along South Tongass.

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Special session 10/08/07

Much ado,  
or little to do?

THE SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE session that begins in Juneau on Oct. 18 is to be a one-topic affair — to address Gov. Sarah Palin's proposed upward revision of the Petroleum Profits Tax enacted just a year ago. The goal is to get more money from the state's major oil producers.

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The session, lawmakers say, is scheduled to run for 30 days.

It probably should not take that long for the members of the House and the Senate to decide one way or another. However, given the penchant for some legislators to try to stay in session for as long as possible, it very likely will last the full month.

It would not run the maximum time, we feel confident in suggesting, were the special session being held in Anchorage.

More and more, it becomes obvious that the state's lawmaking business should be conducted in the population center of the state — where the process is much more . . .

(cont'd from front page) available to the general public.

Leave the capital in Juneau. Let it retain the title, for whatever it's worth to the city fathers.

THE TRUTH IS that the core of state government already has moved to Anchorage. There are more state employees here than there are in Juneau. Most state agencies do most of their business out of Anchorage.

The governor and the lieutenant governor and the attorney general have offices here. Most of the legislators have offices (and free downtown parking spaces) here.

Were this special session to be held here, as a one-day special session was on June 26, business would be attended to more expeditiously. The public would be looking in and watching closely.

Granted, this special session coincides with ongoing corruption trials in federal court — and deals with accusations that the PPT law enacted last year was tainted by charges that a few legislators sold their votes. And there is a concern by some that it is best to remove the review of the PPT as far as possible from the courtroom action.

On the other hand, Democratic and Republican legislators alike say the final vote on the PPT was not the result of tainted votes — that the measure would have passed regardless.

Because of that, a number of legislative leaders say they feel the PPT has not been in place long enough to require modification. Some have even suggested that the special session convene and then quickly adjourn, without any action taken.

The probably won't happen.

But the session also might turn out to be much ado about very little — but still take 30 days to run its course.

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## **Kodiak Daily Mirror**

### **Kodiak Lions Club purchases \$12,000 cameras for infant, child vision care**

*Article published on Monday, October 8th, 2007*

By DEANNA COOPER

Local optometric physician and longtime Lions Club member Jerimiah Myers met with Gov. Sarah Palin, Lt. Gov. Sean Parnell and the head of staff of Providence Children's Hospital in Anchorage, Dr. Robert Arnold, in late August to discuss the Alaska Blind Child Discovery (ABCD) program.

The project identifies visual problems with yearly screening for children from infants to grade school.

**ROSTON 01014**

10/14/2009



The Lions Club, the State of Alaska and Providence Hospital Pediatrics sponsor the project.

The project first used Polaroid cameras. For about 10 years, the Lions Club set up visual screening during the holidays, such as when children gathered to sit on Santa's lap. The camera was able to detect a red eye reflex that can be diagnostic for an existing problem.

Through the Lions Club, Myers bought a dozen new vision-screening cameras from Germany. They cost \$12,000 each and are able to diagnose on a broader level by identifying and measuring refractive error.

"They are kind of like auto refractors they use in the military, but (they) look more like a timing light," Myers said.

The camera makes noises to attract an infant's attention and then measures the shape of the eye.

"For infants up to pre-school is what we're shooting the program toward," Myers said. "Neurologically, if you miss that child in the first three years, there's really no hope of them ever having full neuro. We might be able to pull the cataracts out and they can see to get around, but you need that information of reflex and neuro-response to grow right.

"For the last eight years, everytime there is Santa Claus at the gymnasium or gatherings we have done at Safeway, we shoot every child at various events with our old Polaroid camera."

The Lions Club motto is "Let no child go unaided" from Helen Keller's speech to the blind in 1925 at the United Nations.

"The Lions took in this project as knights of the blind," Myers said. "We're working with preventable blindness around the world, but we've never been able to address the children."

Myers has a young patient he is currently seeing whose problem was discovered by one of these cameras.

"This is so definitive. It's going to make such a difference," he said. "We are the volunteers and the state is going to market us just like they do with 'Click it or ticket.' The governor is going to make a promotion series of videos and Providence Hospital will create and manage a database."

The Lions Club collects used eyeglasses year round. They can be dropped off at either optometrist in town and on the Coast Guard Base. Any Lions Club member can accept used glasses.

The majority of eyeglasses collected in Kodiak are cleaned, categorized and sent to South America. They are distributed by Lions Clubs members with the help of eye doctors who are doing their internship.

Myers said he knows of a situation in Paraguay where a whole family shares one pair of eyeglasses.

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## Frontiersman

State wants road fixed, reopened

By Greg Johnson

Frontiersman

Published on Tuesday, October 09, 2007

WASILLA — The state may have the last word about a controversial road swap proposed by the city.

**ROSTON 01015**

10/14/2009

The city's plan to trade land for a portion of East Sun Mountain Avenue to provide access to a new large retail development along the Parks Highway frontage road is a no-go, with the state Department of Transportation and Public Facilities ordering the city to repair and reopen the road by Monday.

The section of East Sun Mountain Avenue between the Windbreak Café and the new Sportsman's Warehouse has been torn up for months while Meritage Development installed utilities to its planned Creekside Town Square complex.

The city had requested extending its timetable to repair the road by a year, but instead is granted enough time to fix it and open it to traffic again, says Kenneth M. Morton, utility section chief for the state DOT in a Sept. 25 letter.

In addition to concerns over disrupted drainage and the erosion created by it, Morton says the city needs to make sure the road and rock-lined ditch be "restored and maintained to its pre-construction condition." The road runs along the north side of the Parks Highway and provides access to the Windbreak Café, Six Robblees and other businesses.

Wasilla Public Works Director Archie Giddings said that's exactly what's happening now. Meritage pulled up the portion of road on a city permit to run utilities to the Creekside development and is responsible for fixing the damage.

A telephone message left at Meritage Development for comment was not returned by press time.

Because East Sun Mountain Avenue was built by the state DOT using Federal Highway Administration funds, the state and city are limited in what can be done with the road, said Dianne Woodruff, a newly elected Wasilla City Council representative and member of the Mat-Su Borough Planning Commission.

"I'm betting that the frontage road [swap] is pretty dead," she said. "I don't think it's going to fly."

The road will eventually be transferred to the city with maintenance responsibilities, but with conditions that it maintains its original purpose for its life, or about 20 years, Woodruff said.

"You can still work out some kind of arrangement to access, but that needs to remain a workable [road]," she said, adding had strong public opinion not been voiced, the city could still be planning to locate access through local business properties.

Bob and Annette Andres, owners of the Windbreak, have protested the proposed road swap and appealed to the state Attorney General's Office to intercede in what they view as a deliberate attempt by city staff to harm their business in favor of a future development.

Giddings said the city wanted to trade the portion of road that runs in front of the future Creekside complex to alleviate traffic issues, not disrupt anyone's business.

"We were just going to explore traffic options," he said. "That whole block is going to stay the same. It's going to open up soon for the winter."

Woodruff said the city's intentions were quite clear in the paperwork filed.

"They have shown all along in the plotting file [the alternatives], one of which included all the properties they wanted to go through," Woodruff said. Without the public outcry, "I think the city would have continued to push ... the road through those properties."

That it appears the Windbreak and its neighbors may enjoy business as usual is good news to loyal customers.

**ROSTON 01016**

10/14/2009

Frank Hardy has eaten two to three times a week at the Windbreak for about three years.

"I really don't want to see anything happen to this place," he said, adding he comes back because "the steaks are killer."

Sheri Ray has been a server at the café for three years and likes serving local people home cooking. She has been nervous reading there was potential for the eatery to be affected by the land-use decisions.

"I like it here," she said. "It's like family here. It feels down-home and the food's good, too."

As for Giddings, he said the city would continue to look for ways to make growth and development a win-win situation for all involved and affected by it. With the public whirlwind of support for the Windbreak, Six Robblees and the other businesses along East Sun Mountain Avenue, Giddings said city staff has listened.

"Any time you deal with someone's land it's emotional — and it's important," he said. "We've got the message from the public and we'll just move forward."

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**ROSTON 01017**

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