

**VSC set new swim records
at Senior Champs**

see page 7

**Undefeated Vikings
best Haines at home**

see page 8

**Petersburg Live
talent show returns**

see page 8

petersburg
PETERSBURG, ALASKA



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12 Pages
\$2

Commission again sets Pacific halibut harvest at rock-bottom levels amid U.S.-Canada tensions

By **HAL BERNTON**
Northern Journal

The International Pacific Halibut Commission set the 2026 harvest at a historic low during an annual meeting that drew a Trump Administration political appointee to lead tense U.S. negotiations with Canada over shares of a shrunken fishery.

The four-day late-January gathering in Bellevue, Washington came during a time of tumultuous relations between the two nations.

President Donald Trump's

tariff policy and blustering talk of making Canada part of the United States have spurred widespread anger among Canadians. January has been particularly volatile, as Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, at an economic forum in Davos, Switzerland, attacked "coercion" by great powers, while Trump, in a subsequent speech, asserted that "Canada lives because of the United States."

At the Bellevue halibut meeting, Drew Lawler, a political appointee to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Ad-

ministration, served as the non-voting head of the U.S. delegation.

In private talks sandwiched between public parts of the meeting, the U.S. delegation threatened economic sanctions, and successfully pressured Canadians to trim the British Columbia share of the halibut harvest, according to sources with knowledge of these discussions.

The commission is charged by a more than century-old treaty with conserving Pacific halibut. There are three voting

Continued on page 12

Home Health finds new home on PMC campus

By **ORIN PIERSON**
Pilot writer

Petersburg Medical Center's Home Health department is settling into its new space in the former office of Public Health and is working to expand community awareness about the services available to local residents.

The move brings Home Health nursing staff into closer proximity with PMC's clinical departments, emergency room, and therapy services.

"It's so nice to be on campus and just be able to have conversations face to face," said Ruby Shumway, PMC's Home Health and Community Based Services Manager. "I can go up on the floor if my patients are in the ER, I can give report to the nurses taking care of them, or vice versa. If they have a patient that I'm going to be taking over, I can meet them. And so it's not like, 'Hi, I'm at your house and I'm a stranger.'"

Home Health provides skilled nursing care, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and certified nursing assistant services in patients' homes. The department currently serves 16 home health patients.

"Nursing wise, we can do medication management, we can do education on chronic or new illnesses. We can do wound care, caregiver education," Shumway said. "And we work very closely with the therapies department."

The department also operates a durable medical equipment lending closet, providing items like walkers, shower chairs, and even hospital beds to patients while they wait for their own durable medical equipment to arrive from suppliers in Anchorage.

Shumway transitioned from bedside nursing to Home Health one year ago, drawn initially by work-life balance considerations. She stepped into

Continued on page 3

Alaska's ferry system could run out of funding this summer due to 'federal chaos problem'

By **JAMES BROOKS**
Alaska Beacon

Alaska's state ferry system is at risk of a partial or total shutdown this summer due to the failure of the federal government to issue a key annual grant.

"Currently right now, we have a shortfall in our budget," said Dom Pannone, director of program administration and management for the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, to members of the Senate Finance Committee during a Monday morning hear-

ing.

Money from the Federal Transit Administration's rural ferry program pays for almost half of the Alaska Marine Highway System's operating expenses, but the administration failed to open its annual grant process in fiscal year 2025, which ended Sept. 30.

The ferry system's budget runs according to the calendar year. Last spring, the Alaska Legislature and Gov. Mike Dunleavy budgeted \$171 million for the 2026 ferry budget. Of that, almost \$78 million was supposed

to come from the rural ferry program.

Without that money, the system could be forced to tie up its ships in midsummer, at the peak of the state's annual tourist season.

"Right now, we have a federal chaos problem," said Sen. Jesse Kiehl, D-Juneau and a member of the Senate Finance Committee.

Ryan Anderson, commissioner of the state DOT, said his agency is "looking at several options" to prevent a shutdown of
Continued on page 5



Photo provided by Kreiss-Tomkins

Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins on Jan. 17, 2026, in Sitka, Alaska,

Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins enters the race to replace incumbent Governor Mike Dunleavy

By **JAMES BROOKS**
Alaska Beacon

Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins — former state legislator who represented Petersburg and much of Southeast for a decade — is running for governor, he said Tuesday.

Kreiss-Tomkins, frequently known as "JKT," served in the Alaska House of Representatives between 2013 and 2023. He becomes the 16th candidate and third Democrat to enter this year's gubernatorial election.

Incumbent Gov. Mike Dunleavy is term-limited and unable to run for a third term.

In Alaska, the top four vote-getters, regardless of political party, advance from the August primary to the November general election. In November, Alaskans use ranked-choice voting to name their preferences.

Kreiss-Tomkins said he's running because Alaska has big problems and he's interested in solving them.

"I really enjoy working with people from diverse backgrounds and different viewpoints and perspectives to try to forge compromise and get things done," he said.

While in the Legislature, Kreiss-Tomkins was a member of the bipartisan, bicameral fiscal working group that in 2021 drafted a plan intended to bring the state's finances in line over the long term.

Though that plan was never enacted, its components

Continued on page 3



Yesterday's News

News from 25-50-75-100 years ago

February 5, 1926 - The past few years has witnessed a struggle between theologians and the end is not yet. Whether the miracle of changing water to wine is questioned or not worries not the average layman. For the days of miracles are not past. Recently the United States Marshall's office of the third division seized considerable whiskey and rum for the pre-Volstead stock and for safe-keeping it was kept under lock and key and stored in the custody of the clerk of court. Recently Judge Richie appointed Frank H. Foster as District Attorney and he began distributing much needed whisky to various hospitals. Lo and behold! When the whiskey was opened it had turned to water. Ours not to question why. Yours not to reason why. It would appear that the modernists of that division had the best of the argument.

February 2, 1951 - Ed Hagerman and Carl Hatlen, owners of the Arctic Hotel, are hard at work on an extensive remodeling program. They are placing new bathroom facilities in seven rooms and remodeling those existing in seven other rooms. Old plumbing is being replaced with new copper pipe. Over at Hammer & Wikan "Things are going to be different around here" is the theme song these days. The stairway which formerly led up to the doctor's office has been torn out and the window is being extended across the front. The stairway is moved back halfway the length of the store and leads to additional storage space upstairs for the store. New shelves have been put up and a pleasant, painty aroma

pervades the atmosphere.

February 4, 1976 - Petersburg High School has adopted a wait-and-see attitude towards future student outings to Wrangell following assaults on three members of the basketball team following the game there Saturday night. Reportedly assaulted by older youths, no longer in school, were team stars Gene Diamond and Klas Stolpe, as well as team manager Bruce Marifern. Stolpe reportedly suffered a split lip when hit in the face while Marifern was kicked while on the ground. Diamond was also mildly injured in a separate assault. Other team members were reportedly chased by would-be attackers the same night. The hearing on assault charges against youths described as 19 to 20 or so in age, was scheduled for last Friday afternoon. "If the judge there doesn't come down hard," said PHS principal Carl Thynes, "then I think we'll just suspend our activities in Wrangell for a year." In such a case he said a waiver might be sought from the southern division of the state high school athletic association, so that the incomplete league

schedule of Petersburg would not hurt league standings. Ketchikan's team reportedly also received a rough reception in Wrangell, although there were no reported injuries. "This has nothing to do with the school there," said Thynes, "and that makes it hard to correct. They're all older kids from what I understand." Thynes expressed his confidence in the good will of Wrangell parents and students. "But the way I feel about it, you can't just send kids down there to get beat up or where they are scared."

February 8, 2001 - The Petersburg City Council is looking for ways to stop people from dumping appliances, bedsprings and other garbage along area roadways. City Councilor Barry Bracken asked Monday for a public awareness campaign to promote "reasonable" rates at the landfill as well as a public safety campaign on the illegality of dumping items anywhere but the landfill. "Somehow or other, we're just going to have to get a handle on this or it's going to get worse," Bracken said, noting

he's seen water tanks, expansion tanks and bed springs dumped along the roads. He said he took a large appliance to the landfill and was surprised at how cheap the disposal cost was. Mayor Ted Smith said the problem has gotten bad enough that there are appliances dumped in the Wrangell Narrows almost all the way to Papke's Landing. The city is trying to get junked vehicles up to the landfill this winter, so there is no fee for disposal of vehicles brought to the landfill until February 16. "We've got a problem that's only going to get worse," said Councilman Dave Carlson. "This problem is just going to grow and grow and grow." The city council

plans to hold a work session with the Utility Board to discuss solutions to the dumping problem.

Northern Nights Theater

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www.petersburghumane.org
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PETRO MARINE

PETERSBURG HAPPENINGS

Brought to you by:  

THURSDAY, February 5

Tai Chi for Arthritis & Fall Prevention: 10:00am, Mitkof Dance Studio
SHARE Coalition Meeting: 12:00pm, Wave Offices
Free Dinner Get Together: 5:30pm, Lutheran Church Holy Cross House
PHS Basketball vs. Lumen Christi: 5:15pm, Highschool Gym

FRIDAY, February 6

Al-Anon Support Group: 12:00pm, Episcopal Church
KFSK Wearable Arts Show: 5:30pm, Sons of Norway Hall
AA Candlelight Meeting: 7:00pm, Episcopal Church
PHS Basketball vs. Lumen Christi: 5:30pm, Highschool Gym

SATURDAY, February 7

Seahawks Fan Group Photo: 12:00pm, Crane Dock
KFSK Wearable Arts Show: 5:30pm, Sons of Norway Hall
American Legion's Mardi Gras Masquerade: 7:30pm, PSG Moose Lodge

SUNDAY, February 8

Knitting Group - All Welcome: 2:00pm, Mt. View Manor Social Hall

MONDAY, February 9

Tai Chi: 7:00am, Mountain View Manor Social Hall
Burger Night: 5:30pm, Moose Lodge
Petersburg, LIVE, Talent Show: 6:30pm, Wright Auditorium
AA Women's Meeting: 7:00 pm, Presbyterian Church
Volleyball: 7:30pm, Parks and Rec Gym

TUESDAY, February 10

Tai Chi for Arthritis & Fall Prevention: 10:00am, Mitkof Dance Studio
Planning Commission Meeting: 12:00pm, Assembly Chambers
PIA Community Meal: 5:00pm, John Hanson Sr Hall
Taco Tuesday: 5:30pm, Moose Lodge
AA 12x12 Meeting: 7:00pm, Holy Cross Classroom

WEDNESDAY, February 11

Tai Chi: 7:00am, Mountain View Manor Social Hall
Wiggle & Giggie: Stories and Playtime: 11:00am, Public Library
Rotary Meeting: 12:00pm, Salvation Army Hall
Nurturing Parenting Class: 5:00pm, WAVE, Under Courthouse
Free Dinner For All: 6:00pm, First Baptist Church

W

EATHER

	High	Low	Precip	Snow
1/28	50	42	1.05	0.0
1/29	45	0	0.00	0.0
1/30	43	0	0.00	0.0
1/31	45	0	0.31	0.0
2/01	45	0	0.13	0.0
2/02	49	0	0.00	0.0
2/03	50	45	0.73	0.0

This Week's Precipitation: 2.22"
 This Week's Snow: 0.0"
 This weather service is provided by the FAA weather observation station at the James A. Johnson Airport.

DAYLIGHT HOURS

Date	Sunrise	Sunset	Daylight
Feb 5	7:44a	4:28p	8:44hrs
Feb 6	7:42a	4:31p	8:48hrs
Feb 7	7:40a	4:33p	8:52hrs
Feb 8	7:38a	4:35p	8:57hrs
Feb 9	7:36a	4:37p	9:01hrs
Feb 10	7:34a	4:40p	9:06hrs
Feb 11	7:31a	4:42p	9:10hrs

FERRY SCHEDULE

Terminal Office • 772-3855 or call 800-642-0066

NORTHBOUND DEPARTURES				SOUTHBOUND DEPARTURES			
SUN 2/8	KENNICOTT	08:15	P.M.	WED 2/11	KENNICOTT	02:45	A.M.
MON 2/16	KENNICOTT	12:00	A.M.	WED 2/18	KENNICOTT	03:00	A.M.
SUN 2/22	KENNICOTT	07:15	P.M.	WED 2/25	KENNICOTT	01:45	A.M.
MON 3/2	KENNICOTT	01:00	A.M.	MON 3/2	HUBBARD	12:15	P.M.
TUE 3/3	HUBBARD	10:30	A.M.	WED 3/4	KENNICOTT	02:45	A.M.

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PETERSBURG

TIDE TABLE

FEBRUARY 2026

	HIGH TIDES				LOW TIDES			
	A.M.		P.M.		A.M.		P.M.	
	Time	Ft.	Time	Ft.	Time	Ft.	Time	Ft.
5 Thu	3:15	17.3	3:31	16.2	9:24	1.0	9:36	-0.2
6 Fri	3:48	16.8	4:01	14.6	10:05	1.5	10:08	1.4
7 Sat	4:20	16.1	4:44	13.0	10:48	2.2	10:42	3.1
8 Sun	4:55	15.2	5:35	11.5	11:38	3.0	11:19	4.7
9 Mon	5:35	14.3	6:46	10.3	12:41	3.7
10 Tue	6:30	13.5	8:31	9.9	0:09	6.1	2:04	4.0
11 Wed	7:45	13.1	10:08	10.5	1:28	7.1	3:31	3.5

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 Facebook: @PistonRudderServiceInc

To add an event to the Happenings calendar call us at 772-9393 or email pilotpub@gmail.com

Home Health

Continued from page 1

the management role within three to four months.

She maintains a patient caseload alongside her management duties, working as one of two full-time Home Health nurses.

"Providing patient care is very important to me, and I do not want to be in the office all day," Shumway said.

There has been some turnover in staff in the home health department in recent years, but for Shumway her new role leading the department is good fit. "I feel grounded ... I feel like I'm doing what I should be doing in this community."

She sees home health becoming increasingly important in Petersburg.

"Home based care is going to be the future, there are just so many people aging, and it's only going to grow," Shumway said.

A recent focus for Shumway has been educating the commu-

nity about how different insurance plans affect access to home health services.

She participated in the Project Connect event last week to spread awareness about these options.

While Medicare requires patients to be homebound to receive services, Medicaid and VA benefits do not have that restriction.

"With the Medicaid or VA, you do not have to be homebound to get home health services," Shumway said. "I think it's that way to decrease the number of ER visits and the number of rehospitalizations, that if you provide good preventative care in the home, even if you're not homebound, it can help prevent ER visits."

"If you are at the clinic and you get a new diagnosis, or you're on new medications and you're nervous about that, there's people in the community that



Photo courtesy of Logan Stolpe / PMC

Cedar Social Club participants in January playing bingo in one of the rooms used by the club at the Elizabeth-Peratrovich building.

would love to come and help you and educate you on that and give you support," she said. "And you know, it doesn't have to be a long term ... It can be a few weeks to go in there make you more comfortable with what your diagnosis is, so that you're not feeling alone and that you're well educated about what you're going through."

PMC's Patient Navigator Brandy Boggs is a valuable support for patients who might need these services.

"Brandy helps with people getting on Medicaid, Medicare, filling out all the paperwork for it, seeing 'are there different needs that they have that they don't even realize that they have?'" Shumway said. For example, "providing respite care for people, for caregivers that are with their loved one, 24/7, to be able to say, 'Hey, how

about for four hours a day, you take your loved one to the Cedar Social Club, and then you can have four hours by yourself."

The Cedar Social Club, a day program for elderly residents operated through Home Health,

continues to operate out of two rooms at the Petersburg Indian Association building, and offers activities, meals, and socialization for participants while providing respite for caregivers.

Sip & Paint

Hosted by the *Muskeg* Maleriers

Saturday
Valentine's Day
Feb. 14th, 1-3pm

\$40

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25 max students, Adults 21+ Payment will hold place in class

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**Petersburg
MEDICAL CENTER**

Kreiss-Tomkins

Continued from page 1

resemble the fiscal plan introduced this year by Gov. Mike Dunleavy.

"We're in a perpetual budget uncertainty," Kreiss-Tomkins said, identifying the state's fiscal situation as his No. 1 issue.

Since oil prices plunged in 2015, legislators and governors have struggled to balance Alaska's budget on an annual basis, occasionally bringing the state to the brink of a government shutdown.

"We're living and dying by the price of oil, and we have a structural budget deficit, so the state's finances are not especially in order, and that is, I think, probably the highest-order problem," Kreiss-Tomkins said.

He said Dunleavy hasn't been able to work across party lines and hasn't been successful with the Legislature. Kreiss-Tomkins contrasted that with his own experience as a member of a Democratic-independent-Republican coalition majority in the state House.

"I feel like we need that same spirit in the executive branch, and if we could have a governor and an executive with that approach and mindset ... there's a tremendous amount of good that we can get done for Alaska," he said.

Kreiss-Tomkins said the campaign season will show how he differs from the other two Democrats in the race: former state Sen. Tom Begich, and current state Sen. Matt Claman.

When it comes to the number of other candidates in the race, Kreiss-Tomkins said it's not a bad thing for Alaskans to have so many choices.

"Seeing so many people willing to run sort of reflects the importance of the election and the gravity of the problems facing Alaska," he said, adding that he expects "some winnowing of the field as time goes on."

Candidates for Governor

Former state Sen. Tom Begich (Democrat)

Former state Sen. Click Bishop (Republican)

Former Anchorage Mayor Dave Bronson (Republican) and Lt. Gov. candidate Josh Church (Republican)

Former state revenue commissioner Adam Crum (Republican)

Current state Sen. Matt Claman (Democrat)

Lt. Gov. Nancy Dahlstrom (Republican)

Matanuska-Susitna Borough Mayor Edna DeVries (Republican)

Kasilof resident Jessica Faircloth

Anchorage podiatrist and state medical board member Matt Heilala

Former state Sen. Shelley Hughes (Republican)

Former state Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins (Democrat)

Author Hank Kroll (Registered Republican) with Lt. Gov. candidate Tommy Nicholson (Undeclared)

Angoon resident and former teacher James William Parkin IV (Republican)

Former Attorney General Treg Taylor (Republican)

Palmer resident Bruce Walden (Republican)

Businesswoman Bernadette Wilson (Republican) with Lt. Gov. candidate Mike Shower (Republican)

The AlaskaBeacon.com is a donor-funded independent news organization in Alaska.

Skoggies cleaning up the streets



The Litter Getter crew from Kinder Skog, a Petersburg Medical Center Youth Program, filled several garbage bags with litter they cleaned up from around town this week.



Photo courtesy of Katie Holmlund

TO THE EDITOR

To the Petersburg Community

To the Editor:
 Thank you, thank you, thank you for providing us with the most rewarding memories of the past 25 years! From opening your arms to us in 2000, when Kathy was hired as Petersburg's City Clerk, to supporting our family operation of Northern Lights restaurant from 2003 to 2010 and Larry's commercial carpet cleaning business for many years. But most of all, we thank you for working with us since 2014 to develop the youth shotgun marksmanship program, Devil's Thumb Shooters.
 Since 2014, DTS has expanded from just a few

members to over 20 members annually making it the largest team in the Alaska U.S. Youth Education in Shooting Sports program – not a small feat when considering the many larger communities within our great state. It is our hope and wish that the program stays strong into the future. That will require not only the community's continued monetary support for the program but the community's help in the club's functions. We hope that some of you say yes when a DTS Board member asks for your help in serving as a volunteer coach and/or board member.
 We will always remember the great years here in Petersburg. Keep carrying on in your welcoming, caring small community ways. We'll see you in the future when we return for summertime visits with family

and friends.
**Best Wishes,
 Larry and Kathy O'Rear**

Proud of our students of the month

To the Editor:
 Stedman Elementary is proud to announce our Students of the Month! These outstanding students have demonstrated respect, responsibility, leadership, and a love of learning. Each will be recognized with a school announcement, a Viking Bus Noise Parade, a yard sign, a certificate, and recognition in our community.
 January Students of the Month Evelyn is being recognized as Student of the Month for her

incredible resilience, kindness, and impressive growth in both reading and math, all while showing a positive and open-minded approach to learning.
 Tomi is being recognized as Student of the Month for her quiet determination, kindness, and "try my best" attitude that inspires others and reflects the strong character values of Stedman Elementary.
 Helmi is being recognized as Student of the Month for her kindness, responsibility, and positive attitude, consistently showing respect and care for others throughout the school day.
 Aiyana is being recognized as Student of the Month for her

leadership, empathy, and strong commitment to learning, making a positive impact on her classmates and school community every day.
 We are so proud of these amazing students and the example they set for their peers. They embody what it means to be a Stedman Eagle, and we are excited to celebrate their accomplishments with our school and community. On Wednesday, Feb. 4 we celebrated them with a small noise parade downtown and up Dolphin Street.
**With pride and admiration,
 Heather Conn
 Principal, Stedman
 Elementary School**

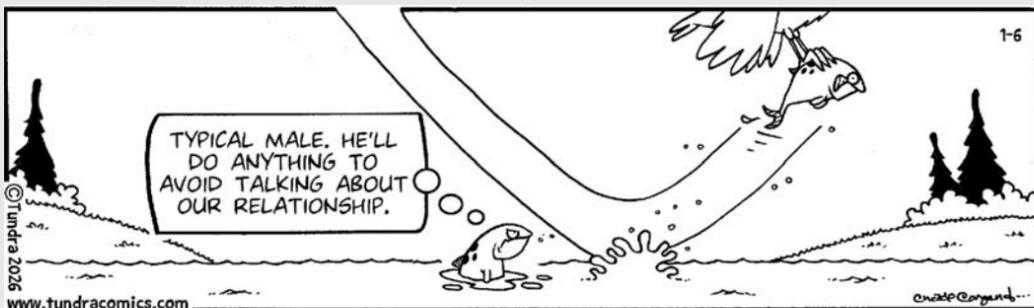
Ritter's River

by Marc Lutz



Tundra

by Chad Carpenter



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MADE IN ALASKA

Ferry funding crisis

Continued from page 1

the ferry system.

If a federal grant isn't delivered, DOT would make significant changes to the summer ferry schedule, which is slated to begin in May.

Anderson said the state could "dispose of the Matanuska," the state's oldest active ferry, which has been tied up dockside as a "hotel ship" because of maintenance costs.

The ferry Kennicott, coming out of drydock, or the Columbia, another old mainline ferry, could be tied up as a hotel ship instead of the Matanuska, he said.

On Monday, neither DOT officials nor state legislators could say why the Federal Transit Administration has failed to make grants available.

"What is going on in Washington, D.C.? That's always a tough thing to work with," Anderson said.

U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, secured almost \$1 billion in the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act bill for the rural ferry program, which was written in a way to steer much of the money to Alaska.

By text after Monday's hearing, Murkowski spokesman Joe Plesha said the Federal Transit Administration told her office it will release the FY26 ferry grants this spring, but did not give a timeline. "We are directly engaged with the FTA and working to advance the release of this grant funding as soon as possible," Plesha said.

When Murkowski got the ferry language signed into law, it was the first time the federal government had significantly funded operational expenses for Alaska's ferry system. "In this particular case, it can actually pay for the operations of those (ferry) vessels," Anderson said, noting that includes operating costs like crew and fuel. That billion dollars was to be spread across five years, and the program disbursed more than \$252 million nationwide in FY22, \$170 million in FY23 and \$194 million in FY24.

Alaska received more than five-sixths of the total distribution in that time, something that allowed Gov. Mike Dunleavy to divert state dollars to other parts of Alaska's annual budget.

Alaska DOT estimates that about \$410 million remains available for the federal government to disburse.

In each of the three prior grant years, it took between 152 and 199 days from the time the grant application period opened to the time the grant was awarded.

That timeline means that even if federal transit officials were to open the grant process tomorrow, a decision might not be made before the start of the summer ferry schedule in May.

Dunleavy and the Legislature could extend the timeline by changing the ferry system's budget calendar so that it starts July 1 along with all other state agencies, but if there's still no federal money, that would just extend operations until January 2027, and then the system would face a \$150 million cliff instead of a \$78 million one.

Sen. Bert Stedman, R-Sitka, said that finding "backfill" money will be difficult in either case.

"Our budgets are getting tighter and taking away the flexibility the (finance) committee has to backfill some of these holes, and this particular hole could be significant, pushing \$80 million," he said.

The ferry funding issue could persist even if the federal transit authority resumes paying grants, because its ferry operations program is set to expire this year.

"What happens when that grant money is gone?" asked Sen. Mike Cronk, R-Tok.

"This year, the surface transportation reauthorization is up for renewal," Anderson said. "This, we understand, is part of that discussion: Will the rural ferry program continue over the next subsequent four years?"

Anderson said that even if Congress renews the program, the current Alaska-favorable rules might be rewritten.

"Other states are very interested in this program as well because they have a lot of similar challenges," he said. "Nationwide, there's support for a program such as this. The questions that are out: How will the rules be rewritten, and how competitive will the program be? That will be the challenge."

The AlaskaBeacon.com is a donor-funded independent news organization in Alaska.

Police report

January 28 - An officer provided a courtesy transport. There was a report of suspicious behavior on Chief John Lott Street.

An officer assisted EMS on N 12th St. A driver on Mill Road was issued a citation for an expired registration.

The officer responding to a report of a disabled vehicle blocking the intersection of Dolphin Street and Nordic Drive found the vehicle gone.

A driver on Nordic Drive was issued a warning for speed. A driver on Mitkof Highway was issued a warning for failure to stop at a stop sign.

An officer assisted a parent and child on S 2nd St. A driver on Skylark Way was issued a warning for headlight requirements.

Jasmin Ohmer was charged with reckless endangerment and failure to stop for a school bus on North Nordic at South Harbor. There was a report of alleged harassment on S 3rd St.

There was a report of suspicious behavior on Lumber St. A driver on 8th St was issued a warning for tail light requirements.

January 29 - An officer assisted Emergency Medical Services (EMS) on N 12th St. Papers were served.

Officers responded to a report of a dangerous dog on 3rd St. A found phone was turned in to the Police Department (PD). An officer conducted extra patrols.

An officer provided a courtesy transport. A citizen warmed up in the PD lobby. A driver stopped at Libby Strait said they were having a hard time seeing the road.

January 30 - A disturbance was reported on Birch St. There was a report of suspicious behavior on S Nordic Dr. An officer assisted a citizen with a civil matter on S Nordic Dr. An officer conducted a welfare check.

Papers were served. **January 31** - Found keys were turned in to the PD. A report of suspicious behavior on Skylark Way was unfounded.

PD conducted a civil standby on Birch Street. There was a report of theft on S 2nd St.

There was a report of suspicious activity on S 3rd St. A Kindle reported as missing was found.

February 1 - An officer conducted extra patrols. A disturbance was reported on Chief John Lott St. An officer assisted EMS.

February 2 - A noise complaint on Gjoa St was unfounded. Suspicious activity reported on N Nordic Dr was unfounded.

A driver on S 2nd St was issued a warning for headlight requirements. A vehicle abandoned on Excel St was impounded.

A driver on S 4th St was issued a warning for headlight requirements. A driver at Hammer & Wikan grocery was issued a warning for headlight requirements.

A driver on Wellness Dr was issued a warning for failure to stop at a stop sign. A report of suspicious behavior on Howkan St was unfounded.

February 3 - A driver on N 1st St was issued a warning for failure to stop at a stop sign.

A sex offender updated their registration. There was a report of suspicious behavior on S 2nd St.

An officer assisted the Volunteer Fire Department (PVFD) on S Nordic Dr. A found wallet was turned in to the PD.

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Wrangell Borough putting together pieces of major economic development plan

By **LARRY PERSILY**
Wrangell Sentinel

WRANGELL — With just four weeks left before the deadline, Wrangell borough is pressing ahead to complete its application for a \$50 million federal grant to help pay for several projects to boost the town's economic future.

"We all know we've been economically depressed" since the timber industry collapsed more than a generation ago, Kate Thomas, the borough's economic development director, told the assembly at a work session on Jan. 27.

The federal grant, through the Economic Development Administration, would help pay for redevelopment of borough-owned at the former 6-Mile Mill site, additional fill to expand the Marine Service Center and create an access point for a new dock for smaller cruise ships, an extension of the City Dock, and a new flume to direct water into Wrangell's reservoirs.

Though the 6-Mile and downtown waterfront development

plans have drawn most of the attention as borough officials have discussed the grant application at public meetings, officials said the flume replacement project is essential to meeting the community's future water needs.

Wrangell loses an estimated 15% of the water that flows through the old, broken-up and leaking flume, Borough Manager Mason Villarma told the assembly. The 250-foot-long open-culvert flume — put together in the 1960s, he said — directs runoff into the reservoirs.

"This is an easy one," he said of the need to replace the flume to ensure the town has sufficient water during the seafood processing season and to accommodate more demand if the borough is successful in attracting new industries, commercial and residential customers.

Borough staff plan to present preliminary engineering reports and costs of the flume, 6-Mile and downtown waterfront proposals at an assembly workshop at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10, at City Hall.



Photo illustration from the City and Borough of Wrangell

The borough's waterfront development plan includes adding a 150-foot-long floating extension to the City Dock.

The public will have its chance the next week to get more information and ask questions at a town hall meeting scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 19, at the Nolan Center.

The town hall is planned "to gather community input and better understand public perspectives, questions and priori-

ties related to the projects," according to the notice on the borough website.

Corvus Design, which has won awards for its design work at the Anan Wildlife Observatory and Wrangell Mariners' Memorial, will moderate the town hall.

Wrangell is eligible for the federal disaster rebuilding grant because of the deadly November 2023 landslide at 11.2-Mile Zimovia Highway which killed six people. The federal program is intended to help communities rebuild their economies after a disaster.

The grant program requires a public-private coalition, Villarma said, to show that the federal aid would be leveraged to attract private dollars, creating jobs and boosting the town's economy.

The Economic Development Administration will look at how much private investment is included in the overall plan as it decides whether it will approve a grant, Thomas said. The application deadline is March 3.

Flume replacement

The flume that diverts flow from the watershed above the reservoirs was built atop wooden cribbing, Thomas explained, adding that a lot of the wood blocks have fallen away and the metal culvert has become disjointed.

The preliminary plan — which could change as engineers work on design and cost estimates — is to replace the entire structure with a concrete flume, 250 feet long, about 3 feet wide and 2.5 feet high, said Amber Al-Haddad, capital projects director.

A concrete waterway will last two to three times longer than building a new wood structure, said Tom Wetor, public works director.

The rough "pioneer road" up past the upper reservoir would need to be improved in order for workers to remove and replace the flume, Al-Haddad said.

City Dock extension

Preliminary plan calls for adding a 150-foot-long, 50-foot-wide floating extension to the north end of the City Dock, with fenders on both sides so that boats can tie up on the outside and inside faces, Al-Haddad said.

The mooring dolphin at the

north end of the existing 405-foot-long dock would be removed to make room for the extension, with a new dolphin installed farther out.

The floating extension would allow cruise ships to dock at all tides, rather than anchoring offshore and ferrying their passengers to town by small boats.

"A lot of ships can tie up at the City Dock, but it's not comfortable," Villarma explained of several cruise ships that match up better for passengers to disembark with a floating dock than across a steep ramp at high or low tides.

Water and electrical service would be extended to the floating dock, Al-Haddad said.

The borough collects higher port fees from ships that tie up than it does when they anchor and ferry passengers to shore, Thomas said.

Marine Service Center and downtown fill expansion

If the funding comes through, the work could include adding about 1 to 1.5 acres of fill to expand the Marine Service Center, Al-Haddad said.

The fill would be added on the City Hall side of the marine center. Water service and storm drainage would be part of the design.

The intent, Villarma said, is to add fill to the waterfront from the existing barge ramp to the Marine Service Center, "all the way across."

The borough closed down the barge ramp almost a year ago over safety and structural concerns with the half-century-old steel structure. Officials are working with Alaska Marine Lines to relocate the barge landing and freight yard to the 6-Mile property, which would open up the downtown waterfront land for other uses.

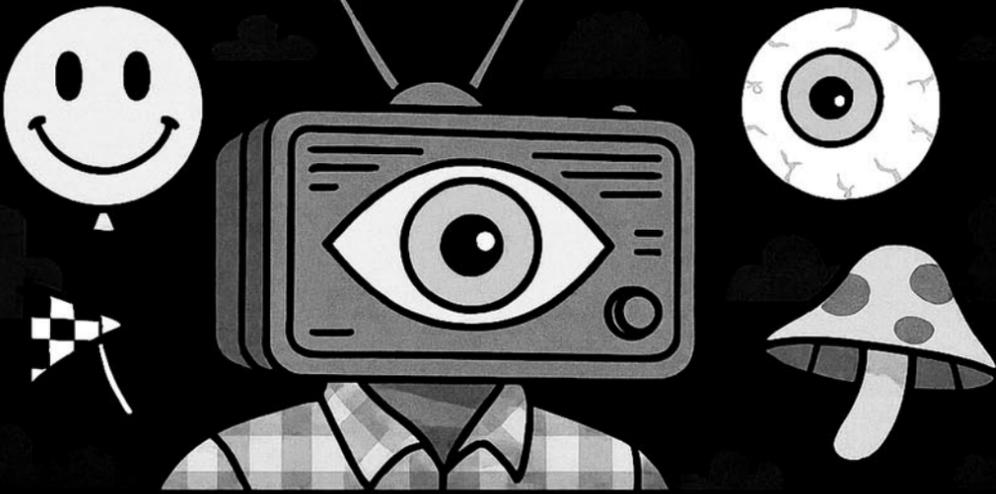
The borough is still working on a mock-up, Thomas said, but if the freight yard moves out and the additional fill is built up, the area could be developed for retail use, green space and a waterfront walk corridor.

"There are definitely layers and phases to this," she said, adding that it would not all happen at once.

The borough already has signed a tidelands lease with American Cruise Lines to allow the company to install a 300-

Continued on page 7

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Viking Swim Club chases records at 2026 Senior Championships

By AIDEN LUHR
Pilot writer

Recently, four Viking Swim Club swimmers got the opportunity to compete in the 2026 Alaska Swimming Senior Championships. The four swimmers representing VSC were Tori Miller, Kendyl Lachapelle, Hakon Eddy and Cyrus Hulebak.

"They all did very well. They stepped up against the older kids and it was cool to see how they competed against them," head coach Derek Gibb said.

During this competition, ages ranged from 11-year-olds, all the way to 18-year-olds.

Like he's done throughout this season, Hulebak set new records during the competition. Hulebak surpassed his previous PR with a new time of 28.86 in the 50 yard breaststroke. In the 100 backstroke, Hulebak finished fourth, with a time of 56.23, breaking coach Gibb's record of 56.70.

"I knew I was going to get it - but that's not what I was really focused on. I was just trying to swim as fast as I can," Hulebak said.

"[Hulebak] has been wanting that record for a little while now and I was very happy to see him get it," Gibb added.

Despite the success, Hulebak is always searching for more improvement.

"On my last 75, I was getting really gassed because I had



Photo courtesy of Klas Stolpe / Juneau Independent

Viking Swim Club's Tori Miller swims the women's 50 yard butterfly during the 2026 Alaska Swimming Senior Championships at Juneau's Dimond Park Aquatic Center.

already sprinted a 50, so I can do a few more dolphin kicks," Hulebak said.

Miller feels like she's slowly getting back to the level she was at during the end of last season.

"In the beginning of the season it was kind of off and on PR's but overall I think as we're getting more into the season, I'm getting back to where I was last year," Miller said.

In her 100 IM, Miller finished

12th, with a time of 1:05.50.

"I haven't swam [the 100 IM] for like a year and now that I'm in the 13-14 [age group], we can do the 50's and the 100's [IM]," Miller said.

VSC also competed in the mixed 200 freestyle relay, where they finished fifth, with a time of 1:41.39. The team consisted of Hulebak, Miller, Eddy and Lachapelle.

"I feel like I did pretty solid. I think I [swam] a [high] 23,

which is a new PR for me, so I was really excited," Eddy said regarding his leg of the relay.

Moving forward, Eddy's main goal is to potentially break a few more records.

"To get that 200 [butterfly] record and to 57 [seconds] in my 100 butterfly," Eddy said.

The time in the mixed 200 freestyle relay set a new state record in part. VSC wasn't sure if they were going to be able to compete in that event because Lachapelle got sick in the middle of the meet but she was able to bounce back and help her team set a new state record.

In some of her events, Lachapelle finished 24th in the 100 butterfly, with a time of 1:09.94 and 21st in the 50 breaststroke, with a time of 37.50.

"[Coach Gibb] pushed us really hard in practices and I've definitely improved my strokes and beaten my times by a lot this year," Lachapelle said.

Lachapelle dropped 3.9 seconds in her 100 butterfly and in her 100 breaststroke, she dropped about two seconds (1:19.47).

Lachapelle's main goal for the rest of the season is to qualify for a Hawaii meet.

"In my 50 freestyle, I'm one second away [from qualifying]. Eat a bit healthier, push harder in swim [and] make sure I stretch before everything so I don't pull a muscle," Lachapelle said regarding the

keys to achieve her goal.

The team also competed in the mixed 200 medley relay finishing fifth, with a time of 1:52.59.

Up next for VSC is a time trial and then the Alaska Age Group Championships, from Feb. 13-15th, in Kodiak.

"I'm hoping to get a lot more PR's in the events I haven't been swimming like the 200 IM, free [and] maybe, the fly," said Miller.

Results:

Boys:

Cyrus Hulebak
5th in 100 IM (56.78)
4th in 50 Backstroke (25.93)
4th in 100 Backstroke (56.23)
5th in 50 Breaststroke (28.86)
15th in 100 Freestyle (51.55)
3rd in 100 Breaststroke (1:02.97)

Hakon Eddy:
14th in 100 Butterfly (59.72)
2nd in 200 Butterfly (2:14.07)

Girls:

Tori Miller:
12th in 100 IM (1:05.50)
13th in 50 Backstroke (30.31)
11th in 100 Butterfly (1:03.04)
12th in 100 Backstroke (1:05.77)
6th in 50 Butterfly (28.09)

Kendyl Lachapelle:
24th in 100 Butterfly (1:09.94)
21st in 50 Breaststroke (37.50)
19th in 100 Breaststroke (1:19.47)
29th in 50 Butterfly (31.61)
52nd in 100 Freestyle (1:02.65)

Wrangell

Waterfront development

Continued from page 6

foot-long floating dock along the new fill to accommodate its ships, which berth overnight. The company hopes to have the facility ready for the 2027 summer tourism season.

While the borough will pay for the fill, the cruise line will pay for the dock facility.

Borough officials at the Jan. 27 work session said the exact layout of the new dock has not yet been decided, but it will be positioned so that it does not interfere with operations at the City Dock or impede access to the Marine Service Center.

6-Mile deepwater port

The biggest piece of the grant package is turning the former mill property, which the borough purchased in 2022 for \$2.5 million, into a deepwater port for industrial and commercial activities.

If the federal grant comes through, the money would go toward extending water and sewer lines and constructing roads on the property, Thomas said.

A new entrance and exit road from the industrial subdivision to Zimovia Highway would be constructed, Al-Haddad said, and the project would include removing the deteriorated bulkhead along the waterfront and replacing it with armor rock to protect the shoreline.

Tideline Construction is the first occupant of the area, running its scrap metal recycling operation and moving its construction business to Wrangell from Juneau last year. The borough sold several acres at the southern end of the property to Tideline last year.

Next up could be JAG Marine Group, which is looking at building a shipyard and marine repair business at the property; a new barge landing and freight yard project led by Alaska

Marine Lines; and a small-scale data center at the back of the property, close to the highway, proposed by a California-company Greensparc which installed a similar, but smaller, data center in Cordova last year.

The 42-acre parcel would be shared, Villarma said, with 10 acres for Tideline, 22 acres for JAG, 4 acres for the freight yard, about 1.5 acres for Greensparc and about 1.5 acres for the borough, which would like to install a small generator station at the site to provide backup for the industrial subdivision and residential users out the road.

That preliminary layout would leave a few acres available at the south end of the property.

The assembly at its Jan. 27 regular meeting, after the work session, unanimously approved spending \$550,000 as the borough's 50-50 share with JAG of a million-dollar preliminary engineering, design and feasibility study of the shipyard project.

The money would come from the borough's Mill Property Development Fund, which had a balance of almost \$1.3 million.

Assembly Member Dan Powers asked Villarma about the risk of paying half the cost of the work if the federal grant does not come through or JAG decides not to proceed with the shipyard project.

The borough would be out the money if the development plan fails to gain federal or JAG investment, Villarma said, though he added all indications are that the plan will succeed.

The manager said he has been talking with JAG "every day and weekend for the past eight weeks."

He also noted that if the entire 6-Mile development goes ahead, JAG would see increased efficiency in its shipyard operations by having the barge landing next door for steel, materials and equipment deliveries.

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Vikings sweep home series against Haines Glacier Bears, remain undefeated in conference

By **AIDEN LUHR**
Pilot writer

Two undefeated teams in conference clashed when the Haines Glacier Bears (6-0 in conference) and the Petersburg Vikings (8-0 in conference) faced off against each other this past weekend in Petersburg.

The Glacier Bears came out and seized control early on by taking a 17-15 lead after the first and then a 28-23 lead at halftime.

"The [Glacier Bears] were getting easy looks at the basket. I felt like we were having a hard time scoring," head coach Rick Brock said. "We had to get back to what we [did] well in the second half."

Defense in the second half was the turning point for the Vikings, as the team only allowed three points in the third quarter. In the third, the Vikings went on a 17-3 run to take a 40-31 lead after three.

"That's how we're built. Our defense helps our offense and in the first half it wasn't that way. In the second half we did a much better job of making them take tough twos," Brock said.

In the second half, the Vikings outscored the Glacier Bears 34-10, to win 57-38. This was Camden Johnson's first game back from injury and he poured in 10 points off the bench.

"He can get to the basket. He can make jump shots, so I think that opens up things for others. It was nice having him back in the mix," Brock said.

The Vikings had six different players score five or more points during the game, a continued balanced scoring attack.

In game two, the Vikings got out to a 17-11 lead early in the second and a 31-21 halftime lead. The main issue was several

starters for the Vikings were in foul trouble. Due to foul trouble, the Glacier Bears went on a 16-9 run in the third.

With experienced players on the bench, the Vikings needed to find a source of stabilization. That source was senior forward Logan Tow. Tow scored double digits in both nights but it was his ability to do the "dirty work," that helped spark the team.

"We had some starters in foul trouble. Not being in foul trouble and being on the floor as one of the leaders, was really important," Tow said.

In the first game, Tow scored 10 points and was 2/2 from the free throw line. In game two, he scored 12 points, adding in a three point make this time around.

"Really taking advantage of using screens from my teammates and trying to get good looks inside," Tow said.

The bench in the game for the Vikings combined for 19 points.

The Vikings won 59-46, sweeping the two game home series against the Glacier Bears. The Vikings were stingy defensively both nights, led by junior guard Ben Kandoll, who had the assignment of guarding the Glacier Bears best player, Colton Combs.

"All the guys that were defending him [Combs] this weekend had the physical skills. We really had to be locked in on the mental [aspects] to guard him, his habits and what we were supposed to do to counter him," Kandoll said.

Kandoll said he takes pride in knowing he has the opportunity to guard the opposing team's best player.

"I definitely do. Defense is half the game and I feel like



AIDEN LUHR / Petersburg Pilot

Petersburg junior guard Ben Kandoll locks in on Haines Glacier Bears best player, Colton Combs on Friday, Jan. 30, 2026, in Petersburg. While playing stingy defense, Kandoll also provided scoring off the bench with three and four points scored respectively between the two games.

that's the half that I can have the most impact on," Kandoll said.

Kandoll also provided points off the bench, scoring three in game one and four in game two.

The Vikings improved to 10-2

and 10-0 in conference.

The Vikings will be host to the Lumen Christi Archangels on Feb. 5 and 6th.

"It gives us a little window into how we might stack up

with teams around the state. If you're going to be good, you have to be able to play anybody, anywhere, at any time. It's another opportunity for us to do that," said Brock.

Petersburg Live Talent Show returns Monday to support student travels

By **ORIN PIERSON**
Pilot writer

Young performers and seasoned community talent will share the stage in Wright Auditorium on Monday night when Petersburg Live returns as a fundraiser to support high school art students traveling to Haines this spring for Art Fest and drama students heading to Scotland this summer for Fringe Fest.

The two-hour variety show opens its doors at 6 p.m., with performances running from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Admission is \$10 at the door, with a bake sale offering homemade treats throughout the evening.

"There will be a wide range of performance, through video recording, live performances. There'll be music, there'll be dance, there'll be art films and slideshows, time lapse videos with art students creating work. There'll be skits, a lot of talent," said Ashley Lohr, Petersburg High School art teacher and event organizer.

The show will benefit 11 students planning to attend art fest in Haines this April, as well as the high school drama group continuing

their multi-year fundraising effort for this summer's trip to perform Dracula at the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh Scotland.

Performers on Monday night range from 10-year-olds to talented adults in the community, though most of the performers will be high school students. Acts include piano performances, original poetry, dance numbers, art process videos and skits. PHS Drama teacher Elsa Wintersteen will be serving as emcee.

In a nod to the youngest audience members, organizers will include a special interactive number inviting children 8 and under to take the stage to join an impromptu dance number.

"I came up with that idea because I had my own kids in the crowd and kind of too young to have an organized act for performance," Lohr said. "So I kind of added that one in there."

Petersburg Live follows in the tradition of the Petersburg talent shows previously organized by the Petersburg Arts Council. Lohr has helped coordinate the event for roughly 15 years in various capacities, with the high school taking the lead for the past four to five years.

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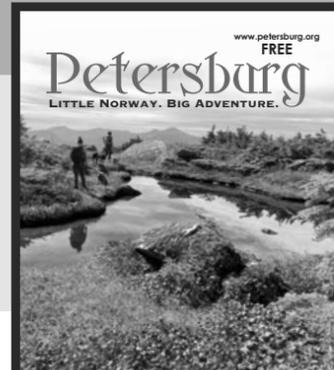
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Lady Vikings makes the most of home court advantage, goes 3-1 against conference opponents

By AIDEN LUHR
Pilot writer

The Petersburg Lady Vikings looked to claim their first victory of the season when the Haines Glacier Lady Bears came to town this past weekend.

The Lady Vikings left no

doubt in game one as they took a 27-7 halftime lead. After the Glacier Lady Bears scored their seventh point with 5:16 left in the second quarter, they didn't score again until the 2:16 mark in the fourth quarter.

"Any time you hold a high school team to that few points, you have to be happy with the

defensive effort," head coach Matt Pawuk said.

The Lady Vikings won game one 44-12 to get their first victory of the season. The Lady Vikings were led by sophomore forward Lexie Tow, who had 16 points and senior post and guard Natalee Bertagnoli, who had 10 points.

In game two, the Lady Vikings got off to a slower start offensively, leading 6-0 heading into the second. Then, in the second quarter, the Lady Vikings scored 16 points to take a 22-0 halftime lead.

"I feel like sometimes we always start out a little timid but then we find our flow. Just figuring out the defense and what they like to do," Bertagnoli said.

In the second half, the Glacier Lady Bears only scored five points while the Lady Vikings added 16 more, to win the game wire to wire 38-3, claiming their first series sweep of the season.

"I was really happy to get our first wins of the season. I had the opportunity to get some of my younger kids on the floor quite a bit," Pawuk said.

The Lady Vikings were led by Bertagnoli, who had 10 points.

The Lady Vikings next pair of games was a rematch against the Craig Lady Panthers.

The Lady Vikings faced a nine point deficit at halftime, trailing 22-13.

"[Coach Pawuk] knew we could go up against [the Lady Panthers]. He knew we had the ability to beat them. We kind of told ourselves we can go up against this team and I feel like that helped us do our best," Tow said.

In the third quarter, the Vikings scored 20 points to take a 33-32 lead heading into the fourth.

"When teams put a ton of pressure on you defensively, the only way to work around that is to go at their pressure. You can't back down from it. The flow on the offensive end was the best I've seen," Pawuk said.

In the entire second half, the Lady Panthers face guarded Tow - meaning the defender has her back to the ball. The Lady Panthers sent on one person at her, trying to deny her the ball, limit her space and disrupt her rhythm. It didn't work as she was the leading scorer with 19 points, including 7/9 from the free throw line.

"I just started going around and stuff and doing whatever to get open; that also made the defense tired," Tow said. "I just used a lot of random techniques to get open."

With 6.1 seconds left the Lady Vikings held a 41-40 lead. With senior Rikka Miller at the free throw line, she sank both to give her team a 43-40 lead.

The Lady Vikings were able to hang on and win 43-40.

"Just believing in our teammates, believing in Rikka to make her free throws," Bertagnoli said. [Even though] there were turnovers, we played how we needed to and it worked out."

The Lady Vikings weren't able to complete the home sweep of the Lady Panthers, as they were defeated 34-15 the following day.

The Lady Vikings won three out of four on this homestand to improve to 3-7 overall (3-7 in conference) and will now turn their attention to more home games against the Lumen Christi Archangels on Feb. 5 and 6th.

"[The Archangels] well coached. I'm excited. They're another 2A school and we'll get to see how we match up against them," said Pawuk.



Photo courtesy of Katie Holmlund

Petersburg senior center and guard Natalee Bertagnoli drives baseline against a Lady Panthers defender on Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026, in Petersburg. The Lady Vikings defeated the Lady Panthers 43-40.

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**PUBLIC NOTICE
PETERSBURG BOROUGH
ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE #2026-01**

Ordinance # 2026-01:

An Ordinance of the Petersburg Borough Adjusting the FY 2026 Budget for Known Changes

Copies of this ordinance are posted at the municipal offices at 12 S. Nordic Drive, the US Post Office, the City of Kupreanof, the Library, and the Municipal Harbor office for review during normal office hours.

Published: February 5, 2026



PUBLIC NOTICE

The Southeast Alaska Power Agency (SEAPA) is seeking proposals from qualified firms to clear, trim, and cut 70.92 acres of trees and brush on SEAPA's transmission line right-of-way located on the Cleveland Peninsula in Bradfield Canal, near the community of Wrangell in Southeast Alaska. Bids are due March 5, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. AKST. For a complete set of the bid documents with additional details, please navigate to:

<https://www.seapahydro.org/opportunities/bids-projects> or interested respondents may call the SEAPA office at (907) 228-2281 for a copy.

Published: February 5, 2026



**Property Tax Exemption
Notice**

The deadline for all Property Tax Exemption Applications for 2026 is February 17th.

Any qualifying party that has not already applied or any party that was asked to provide proof of eligibility needs to have all the information to the Finance office by February 17th at 4:30 p.m.

Please remember that it is the responsibility of the property owner to update our office of changes in ownership, mailing address, exemption eligibility, and any other changes to the property.

The Senior Citizen Property Tax Exemption Application is a one time application.

Published: January 22 & February 5, 2025



**PETERSBURG BOROUGH
PLANNING COMMISSION
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

Notice is hereby given that the Planning Commission, on **Tuesday, February 10 th, 2026, at 12:00 pm** will be holding a meeting and conducting a public hearing in the Assembly Chambers located at 12 South Nordic Drive. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive public comment on the following:

- A.** Consideration of a recommendation to the Borough Assembly to amend Title 19, Zoning to address Wireless Communication Facilities.
- B.** Initiation of an amendment to Title 19, Zoning to reduce the off-street parking requirement for residential dwellings from two spaces per unit to one space per unit.

Published: January 29 and February 5, 2026



Artifact Archive



This large brass nut was donated to the Clausen Museum collection in 1967 by Bill Johnson. It was recovered from the steamship *Mariposa*. While the specific purpose of this nut is unknown, its 13 1/2 inch diameter suggests it was designed to withstand immense force while providing a secure, durable fastening in a harsh marine environment. Brass resists seawater corrosion, making it ideal for marine applications.

The *SS Mariposa* was an iron ship built in 1883 in Philadelphia by the William Cramp & Sons Shipbuilding Company. The ship was sold in 1912 to the Alaska Steamship Company, but not renamed. Much faster than previous crafts, the *SS Mariposa* cut the transit time between Seattle and Ketchikan from 52 hours to 41 hours.

The waters of the Inside Passage were quite treacherous in this era, with many unmapped underwater reefs and seamounts in otherwise deep waters. Many ships wound up having remarkably short lifespans running those routes, and shipwrecks were common. However, the route saved hundreds of miles and protected vessels from the hazards of the open ocean, so most traffic to southeast Alaska took advantage of it.

During a voyage from Seattle, north to Cordova, where 1200 tons of Kennecott copper ore was to be loaded into the hold for the return trip to Tacoma, the *SS Mariposa* met her end. Just off Point Baker at 5:30 a.m. on November 18, 1917, the ship struck an unmarked reef – now appropriately named *Mariposa Reef* – tearing a large hole in the forward hull. All 265 passengers and crew were rescued.

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

The Pilot extends its best wishes to the persons listed on the Community Calendar.

Those celebrating birthdays this week are: **February 6:** Audrey Burrell, Lars Christensen. **February 7:** Adele See, Thomas Schwartz, Tiffany Morehouse, Troy Anderson. **February 8:** Barbara Derrough, Joan McCollum, Troy Thomassen. **February 9:** Steve Scherrer. **February 10:** Caleb Lutomski, Chris Buschmann. **February 11:** Ann Aliberti, Ashley Kawashima, Orin Pierson, Richard Burrell, Rick Fish. **February 12:** Brenton Coon, Yvonne Bergsted.

Those celebrating anniversaries this week are: **February 9:** Kurt and Sharon Kivisto. **February 11:** Jeremy and Marissa Collison. If you'd like to be included on our list, please call 907-772-9393.



at Petersburg School District

BREAKFAST IS AVAILABLE
K-5 AT 7:45AM / 6-12 AT 8:50AM

Monday, Feb 9

Breakfast

WG Banana Bread

Lunch

WG Grilled Cheese and Tomato Soup

Tuesday, Feb 10

Breakfast

WG Low Sugar Cereal

Lunch

Alaskan Salmon Brown Rice

Wednesday, Feb 11

Breakfast

WG Muffin

Lunch

WG Beef Spaghetti with WG Breadstick

Thursday, Feb 12

Breakfast

Yogurt and WG Granola

Lunch

Steve's Lava Chicken WG Roll

Friday, Feb 13

Breakfast

WG Breakfast Pizza

Lunch

Broccoli Beef Brown Rice

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Applications will be accepted at the front desk of the Borough office,
 12 S. Nordic Street; or via email at tiffany.glass@petersburgak.gov
 Call Tiffany at 907-772-5404 for more information.



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 information!

Halibut harvest set

Continued from page 1

representatives from the United States, and three from Canada.

The halibut fishery has been in a deep prolonged downturn that has buffeted sport, commercial and subsistence fishers in Alaska, British Columbia, Oregon, Washington and Northern California. Since the early 2000s, both the average size and overall population of halibut have fallen precipitously, according to scientists.

The annual meeting drew dozens of people, including commercial fishermen, charter boat skippers, seafood processing company officials and tribal representatives.

On the meeting's final day, the commissioners set an overall take limit of 29.3 million pounds of halibut for U.S. and Canadian commercial, recreational and subsistence fishers.

The 19.3 million-pound commercial harvest will be the lowest in more than 100 years, down slightly from last year's already rock-bottom level due to the small cut to the Canadian allocation. The overall commercial catch is more than 70% below the levels of the early 2000s, and is likely to keep prices high for the fishing fleets — and also for consumers, who this past year often found halibut sold for more than \$25 a pound at seafood counters.

'Livelihoods were threatened'

The scarcity of halibut has stoked longstanding disagreements between the U.S. and Canada over how to divvy up the harvest.

U.S. participants at the annual meeting argued that Canada has consistently received significantly more fish than is justified by annual surveys of the halibut populations in the waters off British Columbia. These surveys have found up to 13% of the fish dwell in that area, while the Canadians generally have received some 18% of the coast-wide quota.

For years, Canadians have successfully argued at annual meetings that the division of

the harvest should not be dictated by such surveys, in part due to concerns about their accuracy. They have called for conservation cuts to be shared by both nations.

This year, the Canadians retreated from their long-held position.

During the private meetings with the U.S. delegation led by Lawler, they agreed to trim their nation's 2026 take of Pacific halibut by 7.2% — even though the U.S. quota stayed at last year's level.

"After some challenging discussions where livelihoods were threatened, I did what I felt was best for the Canadian stakeholders and the halibut resource," Canadian commissioner Peter DeGreef, a commercial fisherman, said during the public portion of the meeting. "Now we're taking the cut in Canada knowing that the halibut stock in Canada will ultimately reap the benefits and the rewards. I wish that other areas would have done the same."

Reached later by phone, DeGreef declined to comment on statements made by the U.S. delegation in the private negotiations.

According to sources, Lawler threatened that the U.S. could invoke tariffs or use a provision of a federal conservation law to restrict British Columbia halibut exports to American markets.

Lawler, who serves as principal deputy assistant secretary for international fisheries at NOAA, also noted that the Trump administration has withdrawn from numerous international agreements, the sources said.

In an interview before the closed-door meetings, Lawler maintained that he's supportive of the treaty that established the halibut commission.

After the negotiations, he declined an interview request.

"Each of us got a little something, which is generally how fishing negotiations go," Lawler said in a statement.

Lawler's leadership in the negotiations earned praise from U.S. fishers who have

long pushed for reductions in the Canadian share of the halibut.

"It was a huge benefit to have him here," said Buck Laukitis, a veteran halibut fisherman from Homer, Alaska.

An uncertain path to recovery

The harvest limits are intended to keep fishing pressures below a level that would slow the the recovery of the halibut stocks, and they cover a range of fishing operation

The recreational allocations this year tally 3.38 million pounds. They are vital to charter boats, including more than 450 in Alaska that reported taking paying locals and tourists on halibut trips in 2024.

Most of the halibut, though, are caught in commercial harvests by fishing crews that set longlines of baited hooks along the ocean floor. More than 1,000 commercial vessels made deliveries to processing plants in the United States and Canada in 2024.

Other commercial fleets also may bring up halibut while targeting other species, and must then throw them back. Bottom trawl vessels working off Alaska net most of this bycatch, typically small, young halibut. Some — but far from all — survive their trip to the surface. Bering Sea trawlers killed some 3.28 million pounds of halibut last year, according to federal reports that track the discards.

Halibut can live for decades. They can grow to weights of several hundred pounds or more, though most of those caught weigh in the tens of pounds.. A mature female may release from 500,000 to more than 5 million eggs in the deep ocean.

Every so often, for reasons researchers don't fully understand, environmental conditions favor the survival of a particular year's hatch.

In the late 20th century, some of these year classes were large enough to boost halibut populations to record levels.

But over the past 20 years, survival rates of young halibut

have largely been poor. There also has been a dramatic reduction in the average weight of each mature female halibut — a downsizing that some researchers say has been exacerbated by fishing pressures, while others largely blame it on poor environmental conditions for growth.

The estimated collective tonnage of spawning females is a key indicator of stock health. The 2024 estimates were down nearly 80% from the late 1990s, and increased slightly last year.

The commission has charged its staff scientists with determining a "depleted" point, at which the halibut might not recover. Initial modeling found that to be significantly below current levels.

"We can't put our finger on why these things are currently low," said Ian Stewart, a commission scientist, during a presentation at last week's meeting. "It could well be that we are just in a state of low productivity moving forward, and it's unknown at what point we may, or may not, move out of that."

In partnership with the Anchorage Daily News and The Seattle Times, Northern Journal has chronicled the long, steep decline in Pacific halibut. Reporter Hal Bernton filed this dispatch.

This article was originally published in Northern Journal, a newsletter from Herz. Subscribe at this link.

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