

FAIRBANKS

Daily News-Miner

THE VOICE OF INTERIOR ALASKA SINCE 1903

Inside Today

Alaska Republican Party endorses Parnell for re-election, citing his record in office. » A4

GOOD MORNING



The weather.

Today will be partly cloudy with temps hovering around zero. High today 4 Low tonight -1

WEATHER » A7

Aurora forecast.

Auroral activity will be quiet. Weather permitting, quiet displays will be visible overhead from Barrow to Fort Yukon.

This information is provided by aurora forecasters at the Geophysical Institute at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. For more information about the aurora, visit http://www.gi.alaska.edu/AuroraForecast



WHO'S THERE?

Birders ready for Fairbanks' 53rd annual Christmas Bird Count.

OUTDOORS Page B1



IT MUST BE ST. NICK

Get out your best holiday gear. Santacon takes place this weekend.

LATITUDE 65

SHORT TRIP

Ice Dogs player commits to UAA.

SPORTS Page D1

SOURDOUGH JACK: "I'm always asked to dress up as Santa for Christmas. It's pretty easy. I already have the beard and the bowl full of jelly."



Man gets 10 years for beating

Fairbanks resident fatally beat Circle elder last winter

By Sam Friedman SFRIEDMAN@NEWSMINER.COM

A Fairbanks man who fatally beat a Circle elder was sentenced to a 10-year prison term Thursday afternoon.

Alfred Harold Woods, 49, did most of the talking at his sentencing Thursday afternoon at the Rabinowitz courthouse, stopping to cry occasionally as he read an apology to the family of 68-year-old victim John Alexander and the Circle community as a whole. "Words seem hollow, but God knows what's in my heart," Woods said. He said he's read the Bible since going to jail, poured his heart out to fellow clients at treatment and sworn off alcohol. Wood previously pleaded guilty to

manslaughter. The 10-year prison term was decided as part of a plea agreement. Court documents don't explain Woods' motivation for harming Alexander, who died in an Anchorage hospital about a month after he was found badly beaten in the Steese Highway community. Neither did any of the parties at Thursday's hearing elaborate on Woods' reason for beating Alexander, though everyone mentioned alcohol as a contributing factor.

Woods had a history of violence associated with alcohol, including a 2007 felony assault conviction. The original criminal complaint Alaska State Troopers wrote about the January assault stated that witnesses in Circle reported Woods was trying to break into several homes and start fights the night Alexander was beaten. A grand jury failed to indict Woods on a charge of burglary.

BEATING » A8

CHRISTMAS IN ICE



Sculptor Qi Feng An, of China, brushes snow off his multi-block carving, titled "Winter Hike," as colored lights illuminate the entries at the competitive ice sculpture exhibits at Christmas In Ice. ERIC ENGMAN/NEWS-MINER



Above: Visitors are silhouetted Thursday by an illuminated ice sculpture during the annual Christmas In Ice celebration in the 7-acre park next to the Santa Claus House in North Pole. Left: Carl Eady's multi-block entry "Santa Is Real!" is seen Thursday. Lasting through Jan. 7, the park opens at 11 a.m. daily and at noon on Christmas Day. ERIC ENGMAN/NEWS-MINER

For more on the park and other North Pole holiday events and attractions, see Latitude 65.

DOT plans to re-route portion of Dalton

By Jeff Richardson JRICHARDSON@NEWSMINER.COM

With traffic growing on the Dalton Highway, the Alaska Department of Transportation is planning to overhaul a treacherous nine-mile stretch that introduces travelers to the haul road. DOT's plan includes a proposal to reroute a 7 1/2-mile portion of the state's northernmost highway, which connects the Elliott Highway to Prudhoe Bay on the North Slope. That area is the most hazardous part of the 414-mile Dalton Highway, Engineering Manager Sarah Schacher said, thanks to the mountainous area that the road traverses. The proposal would move the intersection of the Dalton and Elliott highways about a mile closer to the south, then build a new road that pass-

es through a nearby valley instead. Schacher said it's the best way to bypass the switchbacks and 12 percent grades that make the stretch perilous. "You can't literally move a mountain," she said. Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. originally built the road to provide access to Prudhoe and the trans-Alaska oil pipeline. The Livengood-to-Yukon River portion of the Dalton was built in 1971, Schacher said, but wasn't meant to be much more than a supply road. The road is primarily used by long-haul trucks carrying supplies to Prudhoe — more than 60 percent of Dalton traffic is by truck — but growing numbers of tourists are also using the road. That presents problems for both professionals and inexperienced drivers on the stretch, and a significant number of

accidents have been reported there. "The Dalton Highway was never intended to be open," Schacher said. "It was built with what they had for what they could afford." Construction costs from \$35 million to \$45 million are estimated for the two-year project, which would be paid for with federal highway funds. If the permitting process progresses as hoped, construction would begin in 2017. Schacher said the proposed reroute travels through state land, so it won't present as many challenges as a road through private or federal lands. It will still be subject to a series of environmental reviews, however, including the impact on about 41 acres of wetlands surrounding the planned roadway.

DALTON » A8

Galena gifted moose meat

Donations sent to replace food lost in flood

By Tim Mowry TMOWRY@NEWSMINER.COM

When floodwaters ravaged the Yukon River village of Galena in May, homes, vehicles, snowmachines, fuel tanks and personal belongings weren't the only thing residents lost. Thousands of pounds of moose, fish, berries and other traditional foods that residents had stored in freezers and caches also were ruined as a result of the electricity being knocked out for several days. And many residents were too busy rebuilding their homes this summer and fall to have time to replenish their freezers. They didn't have time to go salmon fishing or moose hunting, and even if they did have time to fish, the king salmon run was so poor and there were so many restrictions in place that they hardly caught any fish. Enter the Alaska Moose Federation.

MOOSE » A8

Settlement reached after plane parts taken from crash site

Staff Report NEWSROOM@NEWSMINER.COM

A Georgia-based aircraft restoration company has agreed to pay the federal government \$55,000 for removing parts without permission from a historic F-82 Twin Mustang that crashed on federal land outside Fairbanks in 1950. According to a press release from the U.S. Attorney Karen Loeffler, commercial aircraft restoration group B-25 Group, LLC, agreed to the settlement to conclude a five-year-long investigation that stemmed from the unauthorized removal of the parts from the crash site in July 2008.

SETTLEMENT » A8

