



Daily News-Miner

THE VOICE OF INTERIOR ALASKA SINCE 1903

Inside Today

Healy man drives more than 1 million miles for the love of bowling. » KRIS CAPPS, A3

GOOD MORNING



The weather.

A little brisk today. Mostly cloudy and breezy with highs in the 40.

High today43

Low tonight26

WEATHER » A9

Aurora forecast.

Auroral activity will be high. Weather permitting, highly active auroral displays will be visible overhead from Barrow to Bethel, Dillingham and Ketchikan.

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.gialaska.edu/AuroraForecast>

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SHOW-STOPPERS

Theatre UAF, Fairbanks Light Opera Theatre both hit the stage with new productions.

LATITUDE 65

...

LOOKING UP

Switch in position boosts Ice Dogs' Todd Burgess.

SPORTS
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SLIPPERY OCTOPUS

Inky slips through a gap in its tank at a New Zealand aquarium, shimmies down a drain to reach the ocean.

WORLD
Page A10

...

SOURDOUGH JACK: "Bearanoia is as seasonal as allergies in Alaska."



House, Senate panels split on F-35 funds

By Sam Friedman
SFRIEDMAN@NEWSMINER.COM

A U.S. Senate subcommittee approved \$295 million in Alaska F-35-related construction funding Wednesday, while a House of Representatives committee voted to trim the funding by \$82.3 million.

At issue are seven Eielson Air Force Base construction projects the Pentagon asked Congress to fund for the 2017 fiscal year. A House funding bill included funding for an aircraft weather shelter

for one squadron of F-35s, but no funding for a second weather shelter.

The Air Force is planning so much construction at Eielson, because last week the service announced it has decided to station two squadrons of F-35 fighter planes at Eielson starting in 2020.

The House committee cut the funding for the second shelter because so many military construction projects are planned in Alaska next year, said Matt

Shuckerow, a spokesman for Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska).

"Congressman Young raised his concerns directly to the House Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rodgers (R-Kentucky) and requested that all seven Eielson-based (military construction) projects be funded, however the committee expressed concern over the sheer volume of projects in Alaska during (the 2017 fiscal year)," Shuckerow said by email.

The Senate version of the bill included a total of \$561 million in

military construction projects in Alaska, more than any other state.

In the Senate, Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) is a member of the subcommittee that handles military construction funding. She praised the subcommittee's actions in a news release Wednesday.

"While Alaska is set to receive a larger share of the 2017 military construction budget than any other state, these investments are incredibly important for the secu-

F-35 » A3

A WALK IN THE SUN



Mary Anne Laroe Cricket down Glacier Avenue on Wednesday. Laroe takes Cricket, who belongs to neighbor Rita Roselli, for a walk a few days a week. ERIN CORNELIUSSEN/NEWS-MINER

Bears are on the move

Residents asked to report sightings to Fish and Game

By Sam Friedman
SFRIEDMAN@NEWSMINER.COM

The Fairbanks office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game received its second bear sighting of the season on Monday, this one on the west side of town.

Wildlife Biologist Dick Shideler said a Goldstream Valley resident reported seeing a single brown bear Monday morning on Willow Run, a small street off of Goldstream Road. Fish and Game staff didn't see any sign of the bear when they went to Willow Run, but Shideler believes the report is credible because he knows the resident who reported seeing the bear. Also, the ground was still hard early Monday morning, so it's possible the bear walked through the area without leaving tracks, he said.

On the east side of Fairbanks, a resident reported seeing a brown bear March 29 off of Nordale Road, Shideler said.

Bears have been coming out of dens early this spring throughout Alaska. Brown bears have been reported already this year in Kodiak, and black bears in the Anchorage area have also been seen. Fish and Game has been asking people statewide to be bear aware this month and avoid feeding bears by securing garbage, barbecues, bird feed and pet feed.

Shideler said it will help Fairbanks wildlife biologists if people report bear sightings to the Department of Fish and game at 459-7206.

"We'd really like to get

BEARS » A3

Makeup of state ABC board delays passage of updated alcohol bill

By Matt Buxton
MBUXTON@NEWSMINER.COM

JUNEAU, ALASKA — A bill updating the state's alcohol laws has a path to the House floor, but there's disappointment about a provision that specifically bars active health industry members from serving on the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board.

Senate Bill 165 is a pared back version of a years-in-the-making overhaul of the state's alcohol laws that proposes to soften the state's penalties for underage drinking and rework the ABC board's membership requirements.

Originally the bill by Sen. Peter



Micciche, R-Soldotna, proposed to add a public safety member, a rural member and a public health member to the board in addition to the two alcohol industry representatives.

Due to opposition from the alcohol industry's interest group, the Alaska Cabaret, Hotel, Restaurant and Retailers Association, the public health member was removed on the Senate floor. CHARR members called public health members "anti-alcohol" and feared they'd lose control of the board. The position was replaced by a general member of

the public with a specific prohibition against them being actively engaged in the public health sector.

It was a change that Rep. Shelley Hughes, R-Palmer, found disappointing when the bill was presented in the House Labor and Commerce Committee on Wednesday.

"I believe that is important insight to have on the board considering some of the severe problems we have in the state," she said. "And I'm surprised to see the prohibition."

Micciche, who got involved with the bill specifically for the

ALCOHOL » A3

Scaled-back oil tax credit bill finds little support in House

By Matt Buxton
MBUXTON@NEWSMINER.COM

JUNEAU, ALASKA — The House worked until nearly 2 a.m. Wednesday morning on a bill to reform the state's oil tax credits but couldn't muster enough votes to pass the bill 17 hours later.

About a half an hour into a 7 p.m. floor session to debate and vote on House Bill 247, Speaker Mike Chenault, R-Nikiski, announced Gov. Bill Walker's bill was headed back to the Rules Committee.

After the floor session broke, Rules Committee Chair Rep. Craig Johnson, R-Anchorage, said there simply weren't enough votes to pass the bill.

"There were not enough votes to pass it," he said. "But it's still in play."

Johnson said it'll ultimately be up to Walker to wrangle the votes to pass the legislation even though House Republicans dramatically scaled back the bill from what Walker originally proposed, reducing the savings from hundreds of millions of dollars to just tens of millions of dollars.

Walker has said the oil tax credit reform bill is one of his must-haves along with a change in the Permanent Fund and a broad-based tax to address the state's \$4.1 billion budget gap.

Johnson said he believed it's important to address oil tax credits, but said he would have voted against House Bill 247 given the chance because of changes made the night before.

The Republican-led House

TAX CREDITS » A3



Alaska state Rep. Scott Kawasaki, center, speaks during a House minority news conference on Wednesday in Juneau. Also shown, from left, are Reps. Geran Tarr and Chris Tuck. Tuck is the minority leader. (AP PHOTO/BECKY BOHRER)

