



# Daily News-Miner

THE VOICE OF INTERIOR ALASKA

## Inside Today

New public bus route to start running Tuesday from Pleasant Valley. » INTERIOR, A4

## GOOD MORNING



### The weather.

Mostly clear with patchy freezing fog in the morning and highs in the upper teens to lower 20s.

High today ..... 18  
Low tonight ..... 0

### WEATHER » A9

### Aurora forecast.

Auroral activity will be high. Weather permitting, highly active displays will be visible overhead from Barrow to Fairbanks.

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>

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## SPOTLIGHT

Author Daryl Farmer finds freedom and inspiration in Alaska.

INTERIOR  
Page A4

...



## SUPPORT DUCK

Indian Runner duck flies with owner as an emotional support animal.

HEALTH  
Page B4

...

### SOURDOUGH JACK:

"I'm no duck, but some insist I'm a quack anyway."



# Early voting opens today

Staff report  
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With 15 days until the Nov. 8 election, early voting opened today at regional election offices throughout the state.

Registered voters can cast

absentee ballots at regional election offices in Fairbanks, Anchorage, Juneau, Nome and Wasilla.

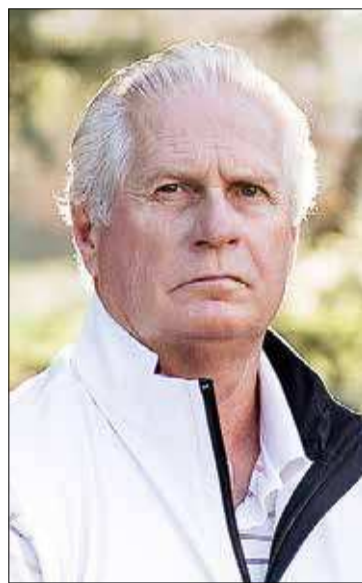
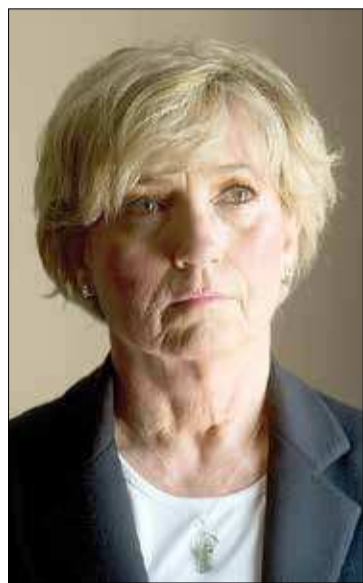
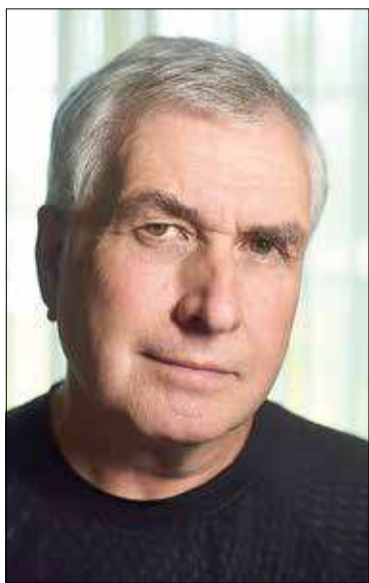
The offices are open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday through election day. Offices will also be open the weekend

before the election day 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Nov. 5 and noon to 4 p.m. Nov. 6.

The Fairbanks regional elections office is located in the state office building at 675 Seventh Ave.

Contact the newsroom at 459-7572

# DEA retreats in its war on opioids



Left: Retired Drug Enforcement Administration supervisor Frank Younker, left, Kathy Chaney, who was the DEA's group supervisor in Columbus, Ohio, center, and Jim Geldhof, right, voiced frustration over the roadblocks they faced in opioid cases. WASHINGTON POST PHOTOS BY MATT MCCLAIN (LEFT), ANDREW SPEAR (CENTER), NICK HAGEN (RIGHT)

## Agents voice frustration over roadblocks to prosecution

By Lenny Bernstein and Scott Higham  
THE WASHINGTON POST

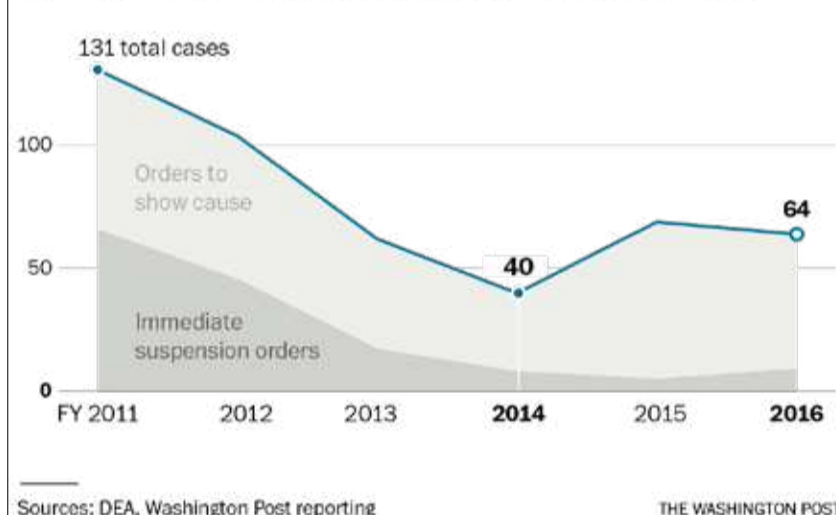
A decade ago, the Drug Enforcement Administration launched an aggressive campaign to curb a rising opioid epidemic that was claiming thousands of American lives each year. The DEA began to target wholesale companies that distributed hundreds of millions of highly addictive pills to the corrupt pharmacies and pill mills that illegally sold the drugs for street use.

Leading the campaign was the agency's Office of Diversion Control, whose investigators around the country began filing civil cases against the distributors, issuing orders to immediately suspend the flow of drugs and generating large fines.

But the industry fought back. Former DEA and Justice Department officials hired by drug companies began pressing

### Cases against prescription drug distributors drop

Since 2011, the Drug Enforcement Administration has pursued fewer cases against distributors, manufacturers, pharmacies and doctors.



for a softer approach. In early 2012, the deputy attorney general summoned the DEA's diversion chief to an unusual meeting about a case against two major drug companies. "That meeting was to chastise me for going after industry, and that's all that meeting was about," recalled Joseph Rannazzisi, who ran the diversion office for a decade before he was removed

from his position and retired in 2015. Rannazzisi vowed after that meeting to continue the campaign. But soon officials at DEA headquarters began delaying and blocking enforcement actions, and the number of cases plummeted, according to on-the-record interviews with five former agency supervisors and internal records obtained by

The Washington Post. The judge who reviews the DEA diversion office's civil case-load noted the plunge. "There can be little doubt that the level of administrative Diversion enforcement remains stunningly low for a national program," Chief Administrative Law Judge John J. Mulrooney II wrote in a June 2014

OPIOIDS » A5

# District 3 candidate sees running as her civic duty

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Daily News-Miner's coverage of Interior Alaska legislative races continues today. The News-Miner's election information guide, including Q&As with candidates on the issues, publishes Oct. 30. Complete campaign coverage is online at [www.newsminer.com/news/politics](http://www.newsminer.com/news/politics).

By Matt Buxton  
MBUXTON@NEWSMINER.COM

Instead of campaigning on Saturday, candidate Jeanne Olson was busy at an spay and neuter clinic at the Tanana Valley Fairgrounds.



With a sedated Australian shepherd splayed out in front of her, the veterinarian explained why after nearly 30 years of caring for animals she decided to enter politics.

"It's my civic obligation. There's jury duty and voting as things you should do as a citizen, but every once in a while if you can do something more, you should," she said. "And I know I can, that's why I decided to do it."

Olson is the independent candidate running for House District 3. The seat is held by Rep. Tammie Wilson, a Republican. Also in the race is Democrat Christina Sinclair.

Olson, 61, said friends encouraged her to run, feeling her blend of popularity and experience, which also includes a career in the Air Force, made her an ideal candidate in the Republican district.

She said at first she was reluctant to enter the race. She was frustrated by the Legislature's failure to address the state budget crisis in any material way and often was frustrated by Wilson's voting record, particularly when it comes to cuts to education and university, but ultimately she filed because she felt no one else could win in North Pole.

OLSON » A7

# Nenana teacher named finalist for Alaska Teach of the Year award

**NENANA** — A high school teacher at Nenana City Public School is one of three finalists for the 2017 Alaska Teacher of the Year. Eric Filardi, 32, has been teaching for 11 years. This fall, he began his third year teaching high school English and engineering in Nenana. He also manages a counseling grant that focuses on trauma, resiliency and adverse childhood experiences. He spearheads a monthly student coffeehouse, open to the community, and is a member of a community

committee to facilitate youth wellness. He calls it his dream job.



Filardi

Being named a finalist for the honor of Teacher of the Year is "absolutely incredible," he said. "It's because I have an amazing administration at Nenana. It's all because of Superintendent Eric Gebhart and Principal Sherri Carattini." The other finalists are Stephanie Cronin, of Seward, and James

Harris, of Soldotna. The final three were selected by a team of educators from the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. Twelve teachers were nominated. The winner will be announced Nov. 13 after interviews by Amy Jo Meiners, 2016 Alaska Teacher of the Year; Tim Parker, NEA Alaska president; and John Kito, of Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals. That panel will recommend a Teacher of the Year and an alternate to Education Commissioner

Michael Johnson. "What really makes me excited is the fact that it brings a lot of attention to our schools that are on the rural road system and the non-road system in Alaska," Filardi said. "I know our students especially will benefit a great deal from this attention." Students who attend school in Nenana include teens from throughout villages in Alaska. Those students live in the Nenana Student Learning Center. Filardi and his fiancée (now his wife, Hannah Barkey Filardi),

came to Nenana after teaching in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates. That is where they met. They were both teachers and yoga instructors. Before that, Filardi taught for four years in New York. He so loved the cultural and family aspect of education there that he searched for something similar when he returned to the U.S. He found what he was looking for in Nenana. His wife also works in Nenana at the Student Learning Center.

TEACHER » A3

