



# Daily News-Miner

THE VOICE OF INTERIOR ALASKA SINCE 1903

## Inside Today

Ice Dogs win Game 5 over Wilderness, head to Robertson Cup semi-finals. » B1

## GOOD MORNING



### The weather.

Mostly cloudy with isolated rain showers after noon and highs in the upper 50s.  
High today ..... 61  
Low tonight ..... 41

Sunrise: 4:46 a.m.  
Sunset: 10:50 p.m.

WEATHER » A9

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## LOST RACCOON

The search is on for a missing world-traveling toy.

KRIS CAPPS  
Page A3

...

## SPOTLIGHT

Chamber of Commerce Artist of the Year Hannah Foss enjoys trying different mediums.

INTERIOR  
Page A4

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## COLORING THERAPY

Adults find solace in coloring books during personal struggles.

HEALTH  
Page B4

...

SOURDOUGH JACK:  
"Congrats from this ol' sourdough to all the new grads!"



# Class of 2016



Charles Sean Topkok does a dance after receiving his Ph.D. in Indigenous Studies during the University of Alaska Fairbanks commencement at the Carlson Center on Sunday.  
ERIN CORNELIUSSEN/NEWS-MINER PHOTOS

## UAF salutes more than 1,300 graduates

By Amanda Bohman  
ABOHMAN@NEWSMINER.COM

The granddaddy of them all, the University of Alaska Fairbanks graduation, kicked off graduation season Sunday, featuring Alaska Native dance, an 1,100-strong balloon drop and a keynote speech from a top corporate executive who grew up in Tok.

Alaska's flagship university conferred about 1,460 degrees, mostly bachelor degrees, to the class of 2016, including 820 women and 547 men. The youngest of the class is 17. The oldest is 77.

Keynote speaker Aaron Schutt, a Koyukon Athabascan and head of Doyon, Limited, offered some advice to the graduates, 232 who are Alaska Native or Native American.

Coming from a small community in the most sparsely-populated state, Schutt said he felt like people didn't expect much from him as an engi-



Elizabeth Kavruk Nictune Fleagle smiles as she receives an Honorary Doctorate of Education during commencement.

neering student at Washington State University.  
"I didn't take it the wrong way," he said. "I always took it as a challenge to succeed and

push myself."  
He later earned a law degree from Stanford University.

GRADUATION » A3

# Budget cuts take bite out of food safety division

By Rashah McChesney  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

JUNEAU — The latest round of budget cuts in Alaska could leave residents vulnerable to dirty restaurant kitchens, foodborne illnesses and scummy pools.

As lawmakers grapple with an estimated \$4 billion budget deficit, the state agency tasked with ensuring the safety of Alaskans' food supply says a proposed \$268,000 cut could lead to fewer inspections, less oversight and the elimination of some programs.

Fewer inspections would increase the possibility of an outbreak of foodborne illness.

"We're not going to be out in forces like we had been with restaurant inspections," said Jason Wiard, an environmental health officer who oversees southeast Alaska.

Last year, the Department of Environmental Conservation's food safety and sanitation program received a \$624,000 funding cut.

The division lost eight positions — including four inspectors — increasing the workload on the 13 remaining inspectors. As of January, two inspectors are each responsible for nearly 550 facilities in Anchorage per year. Fairbanks isn't far behind, with 500 facilities for each for its three inspectors, according to food safety and sanitation data. One inspector in Juneau handles 600 facilities.

The remaining inspectors visit facilities and businesses needing oversight, such as convenience stores, restaurants, seafood markets and processors, pools and spas and tattoo parlors.

Inspectors have shifted their focus to high-risk businesses and everything else could see delays, Wiard said. It could take longer for new businesses to get plans reviewed and permitted by the state, he said.

Several functions have already fallen by the wayside. State inspectors have stopped reviewing building plans and responding to complaints about barbers and beauty shops. Anchorage, Alaska's largest city, has its own inspection program and performs those services. But shops opening outside its city limits fall into a regulatory limbo.

"Right now, we can't enforce DEC regulations and the work around is basically that a shop owner reads and verifies on their application that they have read DEC's requirements and agree to comply," said Janey Hovenden, director of the state's Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing.

Outside of Anchorage, other businesses like hotels and motels, laundromats and public showers lack oversight, said Kimberly Stryker, Food Safety and Sanitation director.

BUDGET » A3

# Looming marijuana ruling could limit federal prosecutions

By Sudhin Thanawala  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN FRANCISCO — Rolland Gregg and his family have fought federal marijuana charges for more than three years, arguing that the roughly 70 marijuana plants investigators found on their Washington property were for their own medicinal use and fully complied with state law.

A federal jury last year convicted Gregg, his mother and his then-wife of growing 50 to 100 marijuana plants — amounts their attorney said are in compliance with state medical marijuana law. With prison sentences looming, they have now turned to a recent act of Congress that they say should have stopped

**A federal appeals court is expected to issue a ruling soon on the scope of the law that could pave the way to end or overturn at least six federal marijuana criminal prosecutions and convictions in California and Washington ... and limit future prosecutions of medical marijuana users and dispensaries in eight Western states that allow them.**

the U.S. Department of Justice from prosecuting them because they were doing what their state allowed. Marijuana is illegal under federal law, and the DOJ disagrees with Gregg's understanding of the new law.

"It's been the hardest thing I've ever had to deal with in my life when you see the government coming down on you for simply trying to be healthy," Gregg said.

A federal appeals court is expected to issue a ruling soon on the scope of the law that could pave the way to end or overturn at least six federal marijuana criminal prosecutions and convictions in California and Washington, including Gregg's, and limit future prosecutions of medical marijuana users and dispensaries in eight Western states that allow them.

"The 9th Circuit is the biggest circuit, one that contains lots of marijuana states. If they were to say, 'The federal government is prohibited from enforcing medical marijuana law,' that would be huge," said Sam Kamin, a professor at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law who studies marijuana regulation.

RULING » A8

