



# Daily News-Miner

THE VOICE OF INTERIOR ALASKA

Inside Today Counting on Electoral College voters to block Trump from presidency? Don't. » C6

## Walker's budget cuts spare university

By Matt Buxton  
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Gov. Bill Walker's proposed budget for the next fiscal year contains cuts for just about every part of state government — including his own salary — but the University of Alaska budget is among those he spared.

At a proposed \$325 million of state general funding, the proposal would keep funding for the University of Alaska level from the current year. The budget will go to the Legis-

lature for potential changes before returning to Walker.



The Walker only other budgets that were not cut are K-12 education, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the Legislature.

State Budget Director Pat Pitney said in an interview that maintaining funding for the university and K-12 are strategic investments aimed at long-term growth for

the economy. She noted that the university budget had been cut 12 percent since Walker took office.

"The university is changing to fit that reduction going forward and we're going to rely on the university for economic diversification," she said.

The UA Board of Regents submitted a request for \$341 million in state funding, aimed at giving the university system some breathing room as it works through a massive, multi-year overhaul

of its programs and administration.

UA Regent John Davies from Fairbanks said the university had been bracing for yet another cut in the governor's budget, so seeing none was a relief, but said the university will continue to fight for more funding.

"The original guideline was we were supposed to be preparing for a 5 percent cut or something like that, this is better than that of course," he said.

UNIVERSITY » A5

## Governor's plan proposes job losses, using oil wealth

By Becky Bohrer  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

JUNEAU — Gov. Bill Walker has proposed cutting hundreds more state jobs as part of a budget plan that includes the use of earnings from Alaska's oil-wealth nest egg and ultimately tripling state motor fuels taxes.

Walker's budget office said the governor's overall budget plan, if imple-

mented, still would leave a budget deficit of about \$900 million that would need to be closed.

In a statement Thursday, Walker said the state has slashed its budget and will look for more ways to reduce costs. But he said Alaska can't cut its way to prosperity and a discussion is needed on raising new revenue.

GOVERNOR » A5

**GOOD MORNING**

**The weather.**  
Today: Mostly cloudy. A slight chance of snow in the morning. Highs in the mid- to upper-teens. Tonight: Mostly cloudy. Lows 5 to 15 above.  
High today ..... 5  
Low tonight ..... 2

**WEATHER » A5**

**Aurora forecast.**  
Auroral activity will be low. Weather permitting, low-level displays will be visible overhead from Utqiagvik to Fairbanks and visible low on the northern horizon from as far south as Anchorage and Juneau.

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>

## ACCIDENT AT JOHANSEN EXPRESSWAY



Firefighters assess the scene of a vehicle accident Thursday afternoon at the intersection of the Johansen Expressway and Aurora Drive that left one vehicle inoperable and another flipped on its side in the ditch. Neither driver was seriously injured in the crash. ERIC ENGMAN/NEWS-MINER

## \$92K grant to fund Housing position

By Kevin Baird  
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Thanks to a \$92,300 grant from a state corporation, Fairbanks Mayor Jim Matherly and his chief of staff, Mike Meeks, hope to hire a Housing and Homeless Services coordinator by mid-February.



Matherly

On Monday, the Fairbanks City Council unanimously approved a resolution to accept a \$92,300 grant from the Alaska Mental Health Trust — which administers services for people with mental disorders, Alzheimer's disease, dementia, brain injuries and substance-abuse problems — to fund the position.

The city will accept \$92,300 from the trust, with \$86,300 going toward the coordinator's salary, \$1,000 for training and another \$5,000 for data collection. Fairbanks will match the grant by providing office space and supplies for the coordinator.

"This is where local government can make an immediate change overnight to the citizens that live here," Matherly said after the council's vote. "It's a very heartening and very serious matter."

Meeks said he will finalize the contract details of the position and work on measurable goals for the coordinator to accomplish during the first year. Meeks said these will be written into a Memorandum of Understanding, which the City Council will vote on in its meeting Jan. 9. Meeks said he hopes to send the job offer out to the public Jan. 10, and a panel will be created to help with interviewing and hiring.

HOUSING » A3

## White House: Putin hacked election

By Bradley Klapper and Josh Lederman  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration suggested Thursday that Russian President Vladimir Putin personally authorized the hacking of Democratic officials' email accounts in the run-up to the presidential election and said it was "fact" that such actions helped Donald Trump's campaign. The White House also assailed Trump himself, saying he must have known of Russia's interference.

No proof was offered for any of the accusations, the latest to unsettle America's uneasy transition from eight years under Democratic President Barack Obama to a new Republican administration led by Trump. The claims of Russian meddling in the election also have heightened already debilitating tensions between Washington and Moscow over Syria, Ukraine and a host of other disagreements.

"Only Russia's senior-most officials could have authorized these activities," White House spokesman Josh Earnest said, repeating the words from an October U.S. intelli-



President Barack Obama meets with President-elect Donald Trump on Nov. 10 in the Oval Office of the White House. Obama spokesman Josh Earnest said Thursday it was "obvious" Trump knew what Russia was doing during the campaign, pointing out that Trump had encouraged Moscow during a news conference to find Clinton's missing emails. Trump has said he was joking. AP FILE PHOTO/PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVAIS

gence assessment. Obama's deputy national security adviser, Ben Rhodes, connected the dots further, saying it was Putin who was responsible for the Russian government's actions.

"I don't think things happen in the Russian government of this consequence without Vladimir Putin knowing about it," Rhodes said on MSNBC.

The explosive accusation paints Putin, the leader of perhaps the nation's greatest geo-

political foe, as having directly undermined U.S. democracy. U.S. officials have not contended, however, that Trump would have been defeated by Hillary Clinton on Nov. 8 if not for Russia's assistance. Nor has there been any indication of tampering with the vote-counting.

The Kremlin flatly rejected the claim of Putin's involvement, with Putin spokesman Dmitry Peskov dismissing Thursday as "laughable nonsense."

The dispute over Russia's role is fueling an increasingly public spat between Obama's White House and Trump's team that is threatening to spoil the delicate truce that Obama and Trump have forged since Election Day.

Although the president and president-elect have avoided criticizing each other publicly since Trump's win, their aides have been more openly antagonistic.

HACKING » A5

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**PREP HOOPS**  
West Valley beats Thunder Mountain in season opener.

**SPORTS**  
Page D1

...

SOURDOUGH JACK:  
"It is good to see Fairbanksans taking care of one another."





INTERIOR

HACKING

Continued from A1

Kellyanne Conway, Trump's senior transition adviser, said it was "breathtaking" and irresponsible that the White House had suggested Trump knew Russia was interfering to help his campaign.

That led Obama spokesman Josh Earnest on Thursday to unload, arguing that Trump, who has dismissed the CIA's assessment of Russian interference, should spend less time attacking the intelligence community and more time supporting the investigation that Obama has ordered.

Earnest said it was "obvious" Trump knew what Russia was doing during the campaign, pointing out that Trump had encouraged Moscow during a news conference to find Clinton's missing emails. Trump has said he was joking.

"I don't think anybody at the White House thinks it's funny that an adversary of the United States engaged in malicious cyber activity to destabilize our democracy," Earnest said. "That's not a joke."

U.S. intelligence officials have linked the hacking to Russia's intelligence agency and its military intelligence division. Moscow has denied all accusations that it orchestrated the hacking of email accounts of Democratic Party offi-

cialists and Clinton's campaign chief, John Podesta, and then leaked them to the anti-secrecy website WikiLeaks.

Obama said Thursday that anytime a foreign government tries to interfere in U.S. elections, the nation must take action — "and we will."

"Some of it may be explicit and publicized, some of it may not be," Obama told NPR News. "But Mr. Putin is well aware of my feelings about this, because I spoke to him directly about it."

Trump and his supporters insist the Democrats' outrage about Russia is really an attempt to undermine the validity of his election victory. Rep. Peter King, a Trump ally and New York Republican, called it "disgraceful" as he spoke to reporters amassed in Trump Tower after meeting with the president-elect.

"Right now, certain elements of the media, certain elements of the intelligence community and certain politicians are really doing the work of the Russians," King said.

Still, Democrats pounced on the latest suggestions of Putin being connected to the daily drip of emails during the presidential race from some of Clinton's closest advisers.

Putin was "clearly involved," said outgoing Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid.

"Having been the former head of the KGB,

does that surprise you?" Reid said. "And does it surprise anybody today when he denied it?"

Reid's comments echoed those of Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, the top Democrat on the Senate intelligence committee, who said Wednesday it's hard to think that Putin didn't know about the operation. She called suggestions that he was aware of the hacking "very credible."

There has been no specific, persuasive evidence shared publicly about the extent of Putin's role or knowledge of the hackings. That lack of proof undercuts Democrats' strategy to portray Putin's involvement as irrefutable evidence of a directed Russian government plot to undermine America's democratic system.

Secretary of State John Kerry defended Obama's handling of the issue during the heat of the presidential campaign — a stance now criticized by some Democrats as too weak — but said he wouldn't comment on whether Putin was involved.

"People need to remember that the president issued a warning," Kerry said. "But he had to be obviously sensitive to not being viewed as interfering on behalf of a candidate or against a candidate or in a way that promoted unrealistic assessments about what was happening."

UNIVERSITY

Continued from A1

"We still intend to talk to the governor and legislators about the plan that we have. It's a 10-year plan and we think there's a good argument for funding us at the higher level so we can save money in the long run."

Davies said the systemwide reorganization, called Strategic Pathways, needs time to be done right. Deeper cuts, he said, will force decisions that ultimately could hurt the university's future.

Rep. Adam Wool, D-Fairbanks, shared those concerns. He said he thinks \$325 million doesn't meet the needs of the university, adding that the Legislature had

approved \$335 million last year before Walker vetoed it down to \$325 million.

"I don't want to see programs cut, jobs lost and see people leaving because they feel the university is losing its stature," he said.

Wool said, though, that he's not prepared to support a blank check for the university, particularly after the Regents' decision to put the administration of a single, systemwide School of Education at the University of Alaska Southeast over an initial recommendation for it to be based at UAF.

"I'm not thrilled with that number (for funding); on the other hand, I'm not thrilled that they moved the center of the Education Department to Juneau and after UA

President Jim Johnsen said UAF is the place to be," he said.

Johnsen initially proposed UAF as the home of a consolidated School of Education, citing the campus' strength in research and rural connections, but reversed his recommendation this week.

Wool said the years of cuts have affected UAF more than other campuses and said he didn't want to see it lose more.

"I'm really concerned about UAF, and I don't want it to erode and see stuff keep moving south," he said. "UAF has taken a bunch of hits, we lost 400 jobs. I want to start putting that back in some way."

Contact staff writer Matt Buxton at 459-7544. Follow him on Twitter: @FDNMpolitics.

GOVERNOR

Continued from A1

Alaska, which has long heavily relied on oil revenues to help pay for state government, is grappling with a multibillion-dollar budget deficit amid chronically low oil prices.

Revenue Commissioner Randall Hoffbeck said issues that need to be dealt with include a broad-based tax and further changes to Alaska's oil and gas tax credit system. But rather than release a suite of proposals — as Walker previously had done, with little success — Hoffbeck said the governor wants to work with legislators to devise a package "that everybody can agree to move."

"It didn't work the other way, so we're hoping it's going to work this way," Hoffbeck said by phone Thursday.

Heading into this year's regular session, Walker proposed various industry tax increases, oil and gas tax credit changes and use of Alaska Permanent Fund earnings to help pay for state government. Lawmakers, whose work extended into two special sessions, agreed to credit changes focused largely on Cook

Inlet, but other major pieces pushed by Walker faltered.

On Thursday, Walker proposed permanent fund legislation similar to what passed the Senate earlier this year but died in the House. It calls for draws from fund earnings based on a percentage of the fund's value to help pay for state government. It also would change how annual dividends to residents are calculated. Dividends would be \$1,000 for each of the next two years.

Under Walker's fuel tax proposal, motor fuel taxes would double starting July 1, and increase again, to triple the current rates, on July 1, 2018. The funds could be used for highway maintenance, harbor infrastructure and other transportation needs, according to the Department of Revenue.

Rates for highway fuel, for example, would go from the current 8 cents per gallon to 24 cents per gallon by 2018, which Walker said is in line with the national average.

Walker's budget for the spending year starting July 1 would cut 795 positions. As part of the cuts, the state expects to have 400 fewer employees by this time next year, said Pat Pitney, Walker's bud-

get director.

The budget office said already there are 2,500 fewer state employees than two years ago. As of October, there were 24,300 state employees, she said.

Reaction to Walker's plan was muted.

Sen. Anna MacKinnon, R-Eagle River, and co-chair of the Senate Finance Committee, expressed disappointment with the level of proposed cuts. But she pledged her committee would find places to make government "run more efficiently and effectively."

Minority Senate Democrats, meanwhile, wanted to see legislation dealing with credits.

Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux, R-Anchorage, said that though Walker has gotten things started, the House and Senate need to work on responsible ways to fill the deficit. In a news release, LeDoux, one of three Republicans who joined with Democrats to form a new House majority for the coming Legislature, said she hopes fixing the state's "flawed system of subsidizing the oil and gas industry with large tax credits will be part of the fiscal solution."

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WEATHER AND FORECASTS

FAIRBANKS 5-DAY FORECAST

Table with 5 columns: FRIDAY, SATURDAY, SUNDAY, MONDAY, TUESDAY. Includes weather icons and descriptions: Partly cloudy, Cloudy, Partly cloudy, Cloudy, Mostly cloudy, slight chance of snow.

▲ 5° ▼ 2° ▲ 9° ▼ 2° ▲ 18° ▼ 5° ▲ 11° ▼ -1° ▲ 7° ▼ -4°

ALMANAC

Statistics for Fairbanks through 5 p.m. yest.

Precipitation:

24 hours ending 5 p.m. ... Trace
Month to date ... 0.41"
Normal month to date ... 0.29"
Year to date ... 14.51"
Normal year to date ... 10.46"

Snowfall:

24 hours ending 5 p.m. ... Trace
Month to date ... 6.8"
Normal month to date ... 5.7"
Season to date ... 12.0"
Normal season to date ... 31.5"

Temperatures:

Record High ... 33° in 1986
Record Low ... -55° in 1946
Normal High/Low ... 5°/-11°

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise ... 10:54 AM
Sunset ... 2:39 PM
Length of Day ... 3 hours, 46 min., 26 sec.
Daylight lost ... 1 min., 40 sec.
Civil twilight begins ... 9:29 AM
Civil twilight ends ... 4:05 PM
Moonrise ... 7:20 PM
Moonset ... 12:07 PM



ALASKA SUMMARY

Low pressure will produce a chance of snow showers over western and southern Alaska, with rain possible near the southern coast. A few snow showers will be possible in far northern Alaska.

STATE AND REGIONAL FORECAST

ARCTIC SLOPE

Today: Mostly cloudy. Patchy freezing fog. Highs in the teens. Tonight: Patchy freezing fog in the evening. Partly cloudy in the evening. Lows 6 to 12 above.

TANANA VALLEY

Today: Mostly cloudy. A slight chance of snow in the morning. Highs in the teens. Tonight: Cloudy. Lows around 7 above.

ALASKA EXTREMES YESTERDAY

High ... 46° at Adak
Low ... -41° at Tok

MORE ALASKA CITIES

Table with columns: City, Thu. Hi/Lo/W, Today Hi/Lo/W, City, Thu. Hi/Lo/W, Today Hi/Lo/W, City, Thu. Hi/Lo/W, Today Hi/Lo/W. Lists cities like Arctic Village, Cordova, Dillingham, Eagle, Fairbanks, Galena, Kotzebue, Nome, Tanana, Bethel, Homer, Kodiak, Anchorage, Prudhoe Bay, Bettles, Fort Yukon, Fairbanks, Healy, Tok, Valdez, Juneau, Ketchikan.

NATIONAL TEMPERATURES

Table with columns: City, Thu. Hi/Lo/W, Today Hi/Lo/W, City, Thu. Hi/Lo/W, Today Hi/Lo/W, City, Thu. Hi/Lo/W, Today Hi/Lo/W. Lists cities like Albany, Albuquerque, Aspen, Atlanta, Atlantic City, Austin, Baltimore, Baton Rouge, Birmingham, Bismarck, Boise, Boston, Buffalo, Burlington, VT, Casper, Charleston, SC, Charleston, WV, Charlotte, Cheyenne, Chicago, Cleveland, Columbia, SC, Dallas, Denver, Des Moines, Detroit, Dover, Duluth, El Paso, Fargo, Flagstaff, Hartford, Helena, Honolulu, Houston, Indianapolis, Jacksonville, Kansas City, Knoxville, Las Vegas, Little Rock, Los Angeles, Louisville, Memphis, Miami, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Mobile, Nashville, New Orleans, New York City, Norfolk, Oklahoma City, Omaha, Palm Springs, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, Portland, OR, Providence, Provo, Rapid City, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, Santa Fe, Seattle, Sioux Falls, Spokane, St. Louis, Tampa, Topeka, Washington, DC, Yakima.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY

Today's noon positions of weather systems. Today's highs and tonight's lows. Temperature bands are highs for the day.



NATIONAL EXTREMES

High: 84° at Tucson, AZ
Low: -26° at Mt. Washington, NH

A strong winter storm will bring significant snow to most of the Upper Midwest with cold temperatures. Freezing rain and rain will be expected just to the south, with some thunderstorms over the lower Mississippi Valley.

WORLD TEMPERATURES

Table with columns: City, Thu. Hi/Lo/W, Today Hi/Lo/W. Lists cities like Athens, Baghdad, Beijing, Berlin, Buenos Aires, Cairo, Calgary, Dublin, Edmonton, AB, Hong Kong, Jerusalem, Johannesburg, Kabul, London, Madrid, Mexico City, Moscow, New Delhi, Oslo, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, Rome, Stockholm, Sydney, Tokyo, Toronto, Vancouver, Whitehorse, Yakutsk, Yellowknife.

Key: W=weather; s=sunny; f=fog; pc=partly cloudy; c=cloudy; hz=haze; fg=fog; sh=showers; r=rain; dr=drizzle; t=thunderstorms; sn=snow; sf=sleet; m=ice(sleet or freezing rain); wi=windy; mx=wintry mix (rain and snow)