



Daily News-Miner

THE VOICE OF INTERIOR ALASKA SINCE 1903

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High school hoops: Who scored big and who bombed on the court. » B1

GOOD MORNING



The weather.

Some sun and clouds will dominate today with highs barely reaching into double digits.
High today 12
Low tonight 2

WEATHER » A9

Aurora forecast.

Auroral activity will be low. Weather permitting, 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.gialaska.edu/AuroraForecast>

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CURE FOR CANCER

Vice President Biden says politics is standing in the way

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Mammoth remains indicate man lived in Arctic much earlier than thought

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SOURDOUGH JACK:

"The only high-speed chase you'll see me in is when I'm fetching another piece of pie."



Hospital foundation eyes new partner

By Weston Morrow
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Agreement sought with Providence Health

The Fairbanks Hospital Foundation will pursue a lease agreement with Western HealthConnect, a subsidiary of Providence Health and Services, for operation of the hospital and other foundation facilities, the foundation announced Friday.

The move comes less than one month after the foundation announced it would part ways

with Phoenix-based Banner Health. The foundation had partnered with Banner Health since 2000, when Banner purchased the foundation's former partner, LHHS.

"Basically, in the last couple years, Banner has been more focused on system than on community, so we did a lot of soul searching," said Jeff Cook,

the foundation board's president.

The foundation owns Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, Denali Center and Tanana Valley Clinic. The lease agreement will cover operations at those facilities.

The hospital foundation signed a letter of intent to sign a lease agreement with WesternHealth Connect, which means the foundation will begin negotiating

exclusively with the organization, Cook said.

WesternHealth Connect is one of several secular organizations created by Catholic organization Providence.

"What we were looking for was a hospital system that sort of knew our area geographically, that had sort of more community focus than system focus," Cook said.

HOSPITAL » A5

THE KUSKOKWIM 300



Kaitlyn Wade, 6, looks at some of Paul Gebhardt's dogs before the start of the Kuskokwim 300 on the Kuskokwim River off Front Street on Friday in Bethel. Kaitlyn's father, Doug Wade, helps Gebhardt before the race every year. The Kuskokwim 300 is a 300-mile dog sled race from Bethel to Aniak and back to Bethel. For more on the race, see Sports, page B4. ERIN CORNELIUSSEN/NEWS-MINER

Yukon chum shutdown rejected

Fisheries Board looking at ways to limit bycatch from lower Yukon

By Sam Friedman
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The most aggressive approach to cutting king salmon bycatch on the lower Yukon River went nowhere Friday evening, but a number of more subtle approaches remain on the table.

By a unanimous vote, the Alaska Board of Fisheries quickly rejected a proposal Friday night that would have shut down the chum salmon commercial fishery at the mouth of the Yukon River. Before the vote, council members described the law as "draconian" and as more of a generalized expression of frustration than a serious proposal.

When the fish board continues its meeting this morning at the conference room at Fairbanks' Finish Line Restaurant, it will

consider other proposals to limit bycatch from lower Yukon River commercial fishermen. The board also will vote on a few proposals that would take things in the opposite direction by expanding the commercial fishery.

After rejecting the proposal to eliminate the commercial fishery, the board passed one such measure favored by downriver fishermen, a proposal written by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to decrease the minimum size of a chum salmon run necessary to begin allowing fishing.

Upriver complaints

Upriver advocates called for tougher rules on commercial chum salmon fishing this year in order to protect the more valuable king salmon runs. In

the last two years, the state has ordered unprecedented king salmon fishing restrictions, including for subsistence fishermen.

Unlike kings, Yukon River chum runs are healthy. But because of the king salmon crisis, fishermen along the upper Yukon River asked Alaska's Board of Fisheries to crack down on types of summer chum fishing this year that could accidentally catch and hurt king salmon, preventing the fish from reaching their spawning grounds.

The proposal to eliminate commercial fishing came from Tanana/Rampart/Manley Fish and Game Advisory Committee, which represents the area to the west of Fairbanks.

FISHERIES » A5

Man in high-speed chase gets 1 month jail in plea deal

By Dorothy Chomicz
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A 23-year-old Fairbanks man who led Alaska State Troopers on a high speed chase that ended in a standoff that closed the Richardson Highway for 90 minutes last August was sentenced Friday to one month in jail after accepting a plea deal with the state.

Jonathan Allan Pitts pleaded guilty to one count of felony failure to stop at the direction of a peace officer. A second charge of misdemeanor reckless driving was dismissed, as were six minor offenses related to the incident — passing in a no passing zone, failure to drive on the right side of the road, improper lane change, failure to stop at a stop sign, speeding 20 mph or more over the speed limit and failure to register vehicle.

Pitts must successfully complete a thinking errors course and will be on probation for two years after his release.

CHASE » A5

Constitutional change proposed to limit session length

By Becky Bohrer
ASSOCIATED PRESS

JUNEAU — A Democratic state representative has proposed a constitutional amendment to limit regular legislative sessions to 90 days.

The proposal, from Anchorage Rep. Matt Claman, was released Friday in the last batch of bills filed before the start of the upcoming session on Tuesday.

Currently, the constitution allows for the Legislature to meet for up to 121 days, with an option to extend for up to 10 days.

But state law limits regular sessions to 90 days — the product of a voter initiative.

Claman's proposal, which includes a 10-day option to extend, would have to be approved by two-thirds of each the House and Senate to go

before voters.

Legislators in recent years have tried to honor the 90-day limit but in some cases have blown past it to finish their work or been called into special sessions. A bill has been introduced for this session by another Democrat, Rep. Sam Kito III, to abolish the 90-day limit.

Claman noted that 2016 will mark 10 years since the voter initiative passed. "My thought is if

the voters really want a 90-day session, we need to amend the constitution. So let's let the voters tell us what they want," he said.

Other bills released Friday include:

- A proposal from Rep. Bob Lynn, R-Anchorage, related to Alaska Permanent Fund dividends for those with overturned convictions.

BILLS » A5

