

FAIRBANKS

Daily News-Miner

THE VOICE OF INTERIOR ALASKA SINCE 1903

Inside Today Monroe Catholic multi-sport standout signs junior college baseball letter of intent. » B1

Official: 50-70 teachers likely will lose jobs

Announcement comes as district works on proposed 2014-15 operating budget

By **Weston Morrow**
WMORROW@NEWSMINER.COM

Between 50 and 70 teachers in Fairbanks North Star Borough schools likely will lose their jobs at the end of the school year, according to school district superintendent

Pete Lewis.

Lewis made the announcement as the district works to complete its proposed operating budget for the 2014-15 school year. The budget proposal is not finished and the district does not plan to release it until Feb. 1, Lewis said, but the cuts are not

likely to be reduced in the remaining time frame unless funding from the state or borough increases significantly.

Throughout the past several years, the district's costs have grown while its funding sources have not. Enrollment in the district also has been declining in recent years.

The state, which funds the majority of the district's budget, has not raised its main funding formula in four years, and the governor's bud-

get proposal recommends the trend continue for a fifth year.

"Costs continue to rise," Lewis said. "We have inflation factors. Things don't get cheaper from year to year."

Teacher layoffs usually cause increased class sizes, which the school board has sought to avoid as one of its top priorities. Last year, the district had to lay off several teachers for the first time in years.

After last school year, the district

sent letters of doubtful employment status to 80 teachers and ended up laying off 16 but was able to hire about half of them back in some capacity by the start of the 2013-14 school year.

"This year, it will affect classrooms in a much more significant way," Lewis said.

Most of the cuts last year took place at the secondary level.

TEACHERS » A12

Tristan Glowa, a West Valley High School senior and member of the school's environmental club testifies during the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation air quality public comment meeting Tuesday afternoon at Patrick B. Cole City Hall. ERIC ENGMAN/NEWS-MINER



Making their voices heard

West Valley trio testifies in support of clean air regulations at DEC hearing

By **Weston Morrow**
WMORROW@NEWSMINER.COM

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation held its final public hearing on proposed new air quality regulations in the Fairbanks area Tuesday.

The proposed regulations would implement an emission limit of 2.5 grams per hour for wood stoves,

pellet stoves and outdoor hydronic heaters in much of the Fairbanks area and would disallow the use of such heaters when airborne particulate matter passes a certain concentration.

About 50 people filled the City Council chambers at the Patrick B. Cole City Hall building in downtown Fairbanks at the meeting's start and continued to filter in

throughout the 2.5 hour hearing, which started at 11:30 and continued until 2 p.m. Midway through the meeting, the presider paused to say the room had passed its capacity and asked those who had spoken to consider stepping out.

Unlike the first public hearing the evening of Jan. 7, which was marked by hecklers and tension, the hearing Tuesday proceeded with relatively little name calling or personal attacks. Also unlike the first hearing, in which more opponents of the regulations spoke than proponents, the majority of public comments

during the second hearing urged the passing of the standards or called for even stricter regulations.

About 40 people spoke during the comment period. Three high school students from West Valley High School's environmental club — representing themselves and the club's several dozen other student members — testified in favor of the regulations.

Tristan Glowa, a senior at West Valley, said the students aimed to represent the voice of youths as a whole.

AIR » A12

LEGISLATURE 2014

Kerttula resigns for Stanford fellowship

By **Becky Bohrer**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

JUNEAU — Rep. Beth Kerttula announced Tuesday that she is resigning from the Alaska Legislature for a fellowship with her alma mater, Stanford University.

Her resignation will take effect Friday. She stepped down as minority leader Tuesday, which was also the opening day of the new legislative session.

The Juneau Democrat has served in the House since 1999 and as minority leader since 2007. She hadn't drawn a general election opponent since 2004 and would have been up for re-election again this year.

Rep. Chris Tuck of Anchorage, who had served as minority whip, succeeds Kerttula as leader. Rep. Scott Kawasaki of Fairbanks will replace Tuck on the House Resources Committee, given Tuck's new role.

The resignation will leave the caucus with just nine members in the 40-member House until a new member is appointed. Ten is the minimum number of members required for a formal minority for purposes of committee assignments. House Speaker Mike Chenault, R-Nikiski, said he planned no changes in the number of minority members on committees, saying a change in committee makeup, pending appointment of a replacement, would just cause disruption.

KERTTULA » A12

GOOD MORNING



The weather.

Today will be partly cloudy.

High today20

Low tonight7

WEATHER » A11

Aurora forecast.

Auroral activity will be moderate. This information is provided by aurora forecasters at the Geophysical Institute at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

...

SOURDOUGH JACK:

"Looks like the East Coast took our weather again. They can keep it."



City Council makes MLK Day a 'day of service' after lengthy testimony

Mayor explains why he couldn't make it a holiday for workers

By **Sam Friedman**
SFRIEDMAN@NEWSMINER.COM

Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday will be observed by the Fairbanks city government next year, though it won't be a holiday.

The Fairbanks City Council unanimously passed a resolution late Monday night marking the civil rights leader's future birthdays as a day of service for city workers.

On the third Monday of January, the measure authorizes the mayor to let city workers use part of their on-duty time for "in-service training on diversity or cultural awareness and/or ... approved volunteer activities to help those in need."

About two dozen people testified in support of commemorating King. Most praised the "day of service" model, though a few said a city holiday would be better.

Mayor John Eberhart, who intro-

duced the resolution, said he would have preferred to make King's birthday a holiday for the city's workforce. It's already a holiday for employees of all 50 states, the Fairbanks North Star Borough, Anchorage and Juneau.

However, Eberhart said he proposed the day of service idea because he is not authorized to offer an additional holiday, and because city labor unions were unwilling to give up another holiday in exchange for Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The city finance department calculated that it would cost taxpayers \$83,000 in overtime and other expenses to grant an additional holiday.

Earlier in the meeting, Tyrone Burkhead, who described himself as a 50-year resident of Fairbanks, asked the council why the city couldn't honor King the way state and other local governments do.

"What is wrong with us acknowledging that we are the Golden Heart City and that we are willing to recognize Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday as a true holiday?" he asked. "Maybe you could go to some of the other agencies that have made the decision that they are willing to make Dr. King's holiday a true holi-

day and see what they did."

Much of the testimony came from members of pre-civil rights generations. They described living with racially segregated water fountains, memories of King's "I Have a Dream Speech" and how they felt when they heard of his assassination.

Not everyone had personal memories from King's lifetime. Thomas Lee Jr., a Fort Wainwright soldier who was stationed here earlier this year said he came to the city council meeting because he was influenced by community events honoring King growing up in Salisbury, N.C. He said he wanted to speak to the council when he heard Fairbanks didn't have a Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday.

"It (MLK Day events) taught me a lot as a young man. It taught me how I can do things in my community to make it better," he said. "When you have these observances for people that tried to do the right thing ... that means so much. It might not reach all the kids but if it reaches one or two kids, those kids are going to knock down doors."

Contact staff writer Sam Friedman at 459-7545. Follow him on Twitter: @FDNMerime.

Legislative reshuffle bodes well for Fairbanks Rep. Kawasaki

By **Matt Buxton**
MBUXTON@NEWSMINER.COM

The departure of Minority Leader Rep. Beth Kerttula from the Alaska House will mean new direction for the small group of Democrats, but maybe none more so than Interior Rep. Scott Kawasaki.

In her departing floor speech, Kerttula said Kawasaki, who joined the Legislature in 2007, will be put forward as the new minority floor leader and get a seat on the House Resources Committee.

"We'd like to have Rep. Kawasaki go back on Resources," she said.

KAWASAKI » A12

