



Daily News-Miner

THE VOICE OF INTERIOR ALASKA SINCE 1903

Inside Today

New regulations allow Alaska tribes to apply for federal trust status for lands. » A3

GOOD MORNING



The weather.

Partly cloudy skies expected. More of the same, slightly chillier.
High today 7
Low tonight -12

WEATHER » A9

Aurora forecast.

Auroral activity will be moderate. Weather permitting, displays will be visible overhead from Barrow to Talkeetna.

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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TWO WINS

Nanooks men's and women's basketball teams pull out victories.

**SPORTS
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IN COURT

Man sentenced to jail and probation after burglarizing house while the owner watched on security camera.

**INTERIOR
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HOOPS LOSS

West Valley boys' basketball team defeated by South Anchorage in OT.

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...

SOURDOUGH JACK:
"How 'bout a little good news? It's almost Christmas!"



Chena River 'ice bridge' claims dog, 2 vehicles



A Test The Waters dive crew including owner Mitch Osborne, left, and diver Nicole Farnham, right, and Ben's Auto and Truck Repair recover a vehicle from the icy water near the Pike's Landing Chena River Ice Bridge entrance Friday. The driver, a passenger and two dogs were in the Toyota RAV4 when it attempted to drive onto the river Tuesday night and broke through the ice. Both people and one dog managed to escape. The other dog was trapped and died. ERIC ENGMAN/NEWS-MINER

Restaurant owner says he tries to discourage drivers on the river

By Sam Friedman
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The Chena River already has claimed at least two vehicles this year on a section long used as an ice-covered shortcut between Airport Way and Chena Small Tracts Road.

First, on Monday, an out-of-state driver in a rented Jeep Grand Cherokee sunk into the river after making a left turn onto the river from Pike's Waterfront Lodge, according to Bob Weaver, the owner of Ron's Towing, which pulled the vehicle out. No one was hurt in this incident.

A camera crew that's following the towing business filmed the recovery, but the accident was not staged for the cameras, he said.

On Tuesday evening, Alaska State Troopers helped rescue the driver of a RAV4 stuck in the river, according to Sgt. Brian Wassmann. Two troopers found a 20-year-old woman standing on the roof of her vehicle and were able to help her to shore, he said. A black Labrador was trapped



Test The Waters owner Mitch Osborne communicates with the tow truck operator as Osborne's dive crew and Ben's Auto and Truck Repair recover a vehicle from the icy water.

ERIC ENGMAN/NEWS-MINER

in the vehicle and did not survive. The vehicle remained submerged until Friday when the vehicle and the body of the dog were pulled out of the river.

Mitch Osborne, an ice diver and co-owner of diving business Test the Waters helped recover the RAV4 on Friday.

He said it sounded like the vehicle sunk especially quickly,

giving the occupants little time to escape.

"A lot of people don't realize that even though the Chena River isn't moving that fast, that water can pin you and push you. It feels so numbing and you have no energy, once it numbs you, to get out."

RIVER ICE » A5

Vehicle gas leak caused fire at auto shop

By Dorothy Chomicz
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A gasoline leak from a vehicle under repair caused the fire that destroyed an auto and glass shop and attached home Thursday, according to a Fairbanks fire official.

"When you're working on a vehicle, it's still energized, so there's the potential for a spark or ignition to cause the fuel to catch fire," said Assistant Chief Ernie Misewicz, of the Fairbanks Fire Department.

The fire at Jim's Auto and Glass was reported at 4:10 p.m. and spread quickly throughout the building, Misewicz said.

"This was a labor-intensive fire due to the size of the building," he said. "Dense smoke limited visibility in and around the building."

More than 40 firefighters worked on the



The burned out remains of Jim's Auto Parts & Glass seen on Friday. A gasoline leak from a vehicle under repair caused the fire that destroyed the auto and glass shop and attached home Thursday, according to a Fairbanks fire official. ERIN CORNELIUSSEN/NEWS-MINER

blaze, with units from the University, Fort Wainwright, North Star Volunteer, Steese, Chena-Goldstream and Ester fire departments assisting, according to Misewicz.

The owners of the

shop apparently lived in the attached home, Misewicz said.

The Red Cross provided them with a hotel room Thursday night, but it is not clear if they have a permanent place to stay.

Fairbanks North Star Borough property tax records list the owners of the property as Lois Leeds and Thomas L. Roberts.

Contact Dorothy Chomicz at 459-7582. Follow her on Twitter: @FDNMerime.

Man charged in death of ADA

By Rachel D'Oro
ASSOCIATED PRESS

ANCHORAGE — A man accused of shooting a Barrow prosecutor in a jealous rage over a woman was indicted on murder charges by a grand jury.

Ronald Fischer, 47, was charged Thursday with first- and second-degree murder in the Dec. 8 shotgun death of Brian Sullivan, an assistant district attorney in Barrow.

Fischer initially was charged with first-degree murder after surrendering several hours following the shooting. The indictment supersedes that charge.

Authorities say Sullivan, 48, was shot twice in the home of a woman who had children in a previous relationship with Fischer. The indictment also charges Fischer with assault by placing the woman in fear with a shotgun.

The indictment was handed up in Nome because Sullivan had been presenting cases to a grand jury in Barrow. Fischer is expected to be arraigned on Monday.

He is represented by public defender Mark Billingsley, who did not immediately respond to a request for comment Friday.

Earlier cases involving misdemeanor charges against Fischer were being joined to the homicide case.

CHARGES » A5

Polar bears are feeling the heat of Arctic warming

By Darryl Fears
THE WASHINGTON POST

Air temperatures at the top of the world continue to rise twice as fast as temperatures in lower latitudes, causing significant ice melt on land and sea, and affecting populations of polar bear and migrations of fish, a federal report released Wednesday said.

As a result of the Arctic temperature rise, an effect of global warming, Alaska recorded temperatures nearly 20 degrees higher than the January average as warm air flowed north, according to an Arctic Report Card issued by the National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration.

In April, the amount of snow in Eurasia — the land mass that comprises Asia and Europe — hit its lowest level since satellite observations began in 1979, and the June snow in North America was the third lowest on record, said Jacqueline A. Richter-Menge, a senior research engineer for NOAA's Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory.

"Snow disappeared three to four weeks earlier than normal in western Russia, Scandinavia, the Canadian sub-Arctic and western Alaska because of below average accumulation in

ARCTIC » A3

