



# Daily News-Miner

THE VOICE OF INTERIOR ALASKA SINCE 1903

**Inside Today**

State on the hunt for gas after North Slope plant bows out of project. » INTERIOR, A4

**GOOD MORNING**



**The weather.**

Cloudy with snow likely.  
High today ..... 11  
Low tonight ..... 7

**WEATHER » A9**

**Aurora forecast.**

Auroral activity will be quiet. Weather permitting, quiet displays will be visible overhead from Barrow to Fort Yukon.

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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**MAKER SPACE**

Lathrop High School boasts high-tech equipment.

**SCIENCE & TECH**  
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**REAL LIFE SCI-FI**

Mysterious rocket lands downtown as part of performance.

**KRIS CAPPS**  
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**NANOOK HONORED**

Benissa Bulaya named GNAC Co-Player of the Week.

**SPORTS**  
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...

**SOURDOUGH JACK: "I gotta make a solo winter ascent to the roof to take down the Christmas decorations."**



## Whole lot of shaking going on

Sensors picked up more quakes than ever in 2014

**SEISMIC ACTIVITY:**

Alaska saw more earthquakes in 2014 than in any other year on record.  
**2014: 40,686**  
2003: 31,799  
2002: 31,295  
2010: 30,857  
2008: 28,240

By Casey Grove  
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**ANCHORAGE** — Alaska shook, rattled and rocked more in 2014 than any year on record.

The Alaska Earthquake Information Center's network of seismometers picked up 40,686 quakes last year in the state and bordering parts of Canada. That is significantly more than the previous high of

nearly 32,000 in 2003. In 2013, there were only about 28,000 such events, the center reported.

"We've blown away those benchmarks," said state seismologist Michael West, reached by phone. "There's never been a year where we identified 40,000 earthquakes in a year."

While the processes that cause earthquakes are the stuff of intense research, West said there are three

obvious reasons the network of more than 400 stations across Alaska detected more in 2014 than ever before.

First, West said, the "health" of the seismic network is better than ever. The seismometers themselves are greater in number, and the center has been able to maintain them well, even at remote sites off the road system, West said. The part of the network on the road system can detect earth-

quakes as weak as magnitude 1, whereas the quakes in outlying areas, such as the Aleutian Islands, have to be magnitude 2 or 3 to register, he said.

Second, there are technological advances in the instruments and the software that feeds data to researchers and the public, West said. So the center's ability to detect earthquakes has improved, it has had enough staff to monitor all of

the equipment and the computers are more efficient, he said.

**QUAKES » A9**

## MOORE WINS SIXTH COPPER BASIN 300



Copper Basin 300 winner Allen Moore poses at the finish line with the trophy and leaders Kodiak and Quito. This is Moore's third Copper Basin win in a row and his sixth win overall. PHOTO COURTESY BIRCH LEAF PHOTOGRAPHY

**MORE MUSHING:** HOW THE REST OF THE COPPER BASIN FIELD FINISHED. » SPORTS, B1

## Man won't face charges in accidental shooting

By Dorothy Chomicz  
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A Fairbanks corrections officer who accidentally shot himself and his daughter while they were at a physical therapy session last week will not be charged with reckless endangerment, according to District Attorney Mike Gray.

"There was not enough evidence to indicate recklessness. I don't know whether the gun malfunctioned or why it discharged. Negligent, perhaps, but not reckless by Alaska standards of recklessness, so the case was declined," Gray said in a voice mail message to the News-Miner.

The man and his 12-year-old daughter were both patients at Adient Physical Therapy Monday in the Medical Dental Arts building when the incident occurred, according to Fairbanks police. The man was transferring his gun out of his holster to his jacket in preparation for his appointment when the gun discharged, according to police.

The bullet entered and exited the man's forearm, grazed the girl's right thigh and entered her left thigh, according to police. Both were taken to Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, where the man was treated and released.

The girl underwent surgery and was released the next morning, according to her mother.

Fairbanks police investigated the shooting and referred it to the prosecutor's office for one count of reckless endangerment. It is unclear whether a lesser charge will be forwarded.

**SHOOTING » A9**

## Climber makes solo winter Denali ascent

Staff Report  
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A Minnesota man achieved the first solo winter ascent of North America's tallest peak Sunday afternoon.

Lonnie Dupre used his SPOT GPS device to send a message back to his expedition manager at 2:08 p.m. Sunday, according to the climber's website.

"All OK, Doing Well," he said in the message from the 20,237-foot summit of Mount McKinley.

The ascent follows three unsuccessful winter attempts for the climber, who spent more than 60 days on the mountain during the past years.

During the summer climbing season, Denali attracts an average of 1,200 climbers, half of

whom reach the summit. Winter attempts are rare. Nine expeditions, 16 people, have reached the summit during the winter, according to Dupre's website. None climbed the mountain by themselves.

Dupre, who is from Grand Marais, Minnesota, is an arctic adventurer whose previous expeditions include a circumnavigation of Greenland and two trips to the North Pole. He attempted January Denali ascents in 2011, 2012 and 2013, achieving an elevation of 17,200 before turning back.

Dupre spent just less than a month on the mountain this year. He flew to Denali base camp from Talkeetna on Dec. 18 and began ascending the West Buttress route used by most Denali climbers.

Along the way, he battled 60 mph winds and temperatures colder than 60 below. He carried a 5-foot sled with 165 pounds of supplies before switching to a backpack for the higher sections, according to his website.

He sent periodic updates on his acclimatization, gear hauling efforts and hard-earned macaroni and cheese dinners. The messages were transmitted to his expedition manager by satellite phone and posted online.

Before his Sunday summit post, Dupre's previous log was Saturday, when he checked in from an elevation of 17,200.

As of Monday evening, Dupre has descended to an elevation of 11,200, well on his way to his 7,200-foot base camp.

Contact the newsroom at 459-7572.

## Senate moves ahead on Keystone despite veto threat

By David Espo and Dina Cappiello  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**WASHINGTON** — Senate Republicans steered legislation to approve the Keystone XL oil pipeline toward an initial test vote on Monday, intent on forcing a quick veto showdown with President Barack Obama over the long-stalled project.

The measure has sparked intense debate over the Canada-to-Texas pipeline's potential impact on

employment and the environment, yet there was little or no doubt that it would overcome Monday's hurdle. Republicans said they hoped it could win final approval and be sent to the White House by the end of next week.

"President Obama has every reason to sign the jobs and infrastructure bill that we will pass," said Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky. He noted that the Nebraska Supreme Court had recently rejected a legal challenge

brought by opponents, an obstacle the White House had cited.

Sen. Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii, made the case for the opposition. He said that if constructed, the pipeline would carry "some of the dirtiest, most dangerous and most polluting oil in the world." He called the project "anti-clear water, anti-clear air, anti-public health."

The proposed 1,179-mile pipeline would begin in Canada, enter the United States at Morgan, Montana, cut across South Dakota

and connect with an existing pipeline in Steele City, Nebraska, that in turn reaches refineries along the Texas Gulf Coast. It would carry an estimated 800,000 barrels of crude oil per day.

The White House has repeatedly threatened a veto, and if Obama follows through, it will become the first of what are expected to be numerous clashes with the Republican majorities now in control of both houses of Congress.

The House passed pipeline legislation last week,

as it often has in recent years. This time, for the first time since the project was proposed six years ago, the Senate is in Republican hands and the legislation commands enough bipartisan support to assure its approval — if not enough to override a veto.

By bringing the legislation to a vote one week after taking over the Senate majority, Republicans hope to achieve two goals at once.

**KEYSTONE » A9**

