



Photo by Tyler Rhodes

WIND IN HIS SAIL—Keith Andrews takes advantage of a breeze and newly exposed beach, letting his kite dance in the wind just west of Nome last Thursday.

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Photo by Tyler Rhodes

A DAY FOR REFLECTION—Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps cadets (l to r) CSM Gregory Saclamana, LTC Lucas Ritter and Capt. Sam Schmidt stand at attention during Nome's Memorial Day ceremony at the cemetery Monday. For more photos of Nome's tribute to fallen soldiers, see page 28.

Northern villagers test the waters for commercial fishery

Diomedes, Wales, Teller and Brevig eye opportunities in Bering Sea

By Laurie McNicholas

Teller fishermen discussed their potential for becoming Bering Sea commercial fishermen at a meeting with Joe Garnie, their representative on the Norton Sound Economic Development Corp. board of directors, and NSEDC staff May 19 in Teller.

NSEDC board members Mary Menadelook of Diomedes, Frank Oxereok of Wales and Reggie Barr of Brevig Mission attended the meeting because residents of their communities also are considering becoming Bering Sea commercial fishermen.

A few hours prior to the Teller meeting, NSEDC board and staff members covered the same topic with fishermen in Brevig Mission. Garnie launched the discussion during an NSEDC board meeting April 21 in Unalakleet by requesting a feasibility study to determine what is needed for residents of the four villages to become Bering Sea commercial fishermen.

"I would love to see our people become Bering Sea fishermen," Gar-

continued on page 6

Experts call for comprehensive state energy plan

By Diana Haecker

ANCHORAGE—A two-day conference on the business of clean energy in Alaska ended last week with an appeal by a panel of experts for a masterplan and roadmap to develop renewable energy projects in Alaska.

The Renewable Energy Alaska Project, a coalition of state, federal and municipal entities as well as utilities, business and Native organizations, had organized the first of its kind conference held at the Dena'ina Center in Anchorage on May 18-19.

Panelists agreed that besides a clearly formulated energy policy, business leaders need to step up and champion renewable energy by investing in the development of diverse clean energy sources. Roadblocks identified were the vastly different regions and needs in the state, the remoteness and lack of roads or rail infrastructure, the lack of a state masterplan and lack of public education, as well as mixed messages coming out of the governor's office.

Also, the reliance on oil, diesel or gas to generate heat and electricity that hold communities hostage to volatile

and unpredictable pricing needs to be replaced by systems of renewable energy generation to co-feed into the grid. Nome and the region know the feeling of being held hostage by so-called volatile fuel prices. The region bought the fuel for last year at the peak of record-high oil prices, leaving communities stuck with expensive oil even after the prices went down again. "No doubt we need to do something," said Nomeite Bob Hafner. "We took a big hit last year buying that real expensive fuel. We need to get away from high fuel prices, and we also have to fulfill our responsibility to the environment and reduce our carbon footprint."

Tapping the source

The dilemma is that Alaska has it all: wind, geothermal, solar, hydrokinetic and biomass to name just a few. However, the development of small-scale systems to tap these sources is not advanced enough to allow rural communities to buy a system off the rack. Even wind technology, the most advanced of all renewables, needs to be tweaked and conditioned to the local realities of a harsh climate.

Bob Hafner, a technician with Banner Wind LLC's wind farm, said that the 18 turbines installed on Banner Peak had "bumps and bruises and growing pains" to make it work. "It is

a rather large experiment," Hafner said. "Along the way, we had to make some adjustments to correct some issues to make them more dependable and condition them for arctic weather."

This, however, is an obstacle that could be turned into an advantage, said Charles Kubert, director for the Clean Energy States Alliance in Montpelier, Vt. He said Alaska is in the enviable position of having tremendous potential not only to develop its renewable resources, but also to export the gained knowledge. "The geographical limitations can actually be played into strengths as you make projects work, replicate them and your most valuable

business would be to distribute your renewables knowledge and develop and export the next generation of clean energy technology," Kubert said.

Alaskan energy expert Gwen Holdman, director of the Alaska Center for Energy and Power out of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, agrees. "Alaska has an opportunity to play a role and become a global energy giant," Holdman said. Opportunities open up with new shipping routes, and with that in mind, she hypothetically asked whether Alaskans should focus on building pipelines and exporting resources, as Gov. Sarah Palin suggests. "Or should

continued on page 5

Spring breakup occupies Rock Creek Mine

Despite injection wells working, water building behind dam

By Tyler Rhodes

As the heavy snows from this winter continue to begrudgingly melt, the operator of the idled Rock Creek Mine reports it has put a water treatment plant in operation to deal with water that has collected behind the dam in its tailings storage facility.

Rock Creek Production Manager Dave Jarvis told Nome's Local Emergency Planning Committee May 21 that the plant is now operational and that the treated water is being injected into the ground through wells.

The dam at the mine just northwest of Nome was not designed to hold back primarily water. Rock Creek operator NovaGold Resources has been working with state regulators for months to formulate and activate a plan to treat and remove the water. Jarvis said the treatment plant was treating 260 to 330 gallons per minute. A month ago, NovaGold President and Chief Executive Officer Rick Van Nieuwenhuysse said the facility contained approximately 55 million gallons of water. Van Nieuwenhuysse said water injection was started

after NovaGold received the go-ahead from the state May 15. The plant, he said, was started Feb. 15.

Jarvis also gave an update on the chemical content of the water. He said the water behind the dam contained cyanide at a level of 11 parts per billion (ppb), which fell to undetectable amounts after treatment. He noted that the drinking water standard for cyanide is 20 ppb. The aquatic life standard is 5.2 ppb.

Jarvis said tests showed arsenic in the tailings facility at 40.3 milligrams per liter, which fell to 0 mg/L after treatment. The drinking water standard is 10 mg/L. Antimony registered at 13.9 mg/L before treatment and 5.23 mg/L prior to injection. The drinking water standard for antimony is 6 mg/L.

continued on page 4

THE MELTOFF—A stream cuts a channel through the drifts lining the Rock Creek Mine site last Thursday before flowing into a culvert under the Glacier Creek Road.



Photo by Tyler Rhodes

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• Energy

continued from page 1

we look at refining our resources in state and use them in Alaska? What are our goals?" Holdman asked.

"We are not as self-sufficient as we pride ourselves in as Alaskans," Holdman said. "We need to formulate a common goal."

Take Iceland as an example. After World War II the coal-dependent island in the North Atlantic struggled to get coal and it took the crisis to concentrate on developing the geothermal and hydrokinetic power sources. Now the island is up to 95 percent heated by its own free geothermal energy, and Reykjavik went from being a smog-polluted city to the cleanest capital in Europe.

"I hope its not going to take a crisis to make strides in going towards renewable [energy]," Holdman said.

Ocean power

According to the Alaska Renewable Energy Atlas, western Alaska is fueled by diesel and some wind energy. Unalakleet's Paul Ivanoff III was at the conference along with Norton Sound Economic Development Corp. employees Aggie Blandford and Tiffany Martinson to delve into a world of renewables knowledge.

Ivanoff said that Unalakleet is in the process to erect six 100-kilowatt wind turbines. Nome already has its windfarm. Gambell may see a few turbines going up soon, too.

In addition, Nome has a potential geothermal source in Pilgrim Hot Springs. But new to Nomeites and regional attendees of the conference was information about marine hydrokinetic projects. Dr. Robert Paasch, director of the Northwest National Marine Renewable Energy Center in Corvallis, Ore., established in September 2008 by the U.S. Department of Energy, said his lab is focused on marine hydropower from three power sources: ocean currents, waves and tidal currents. Paasch said that the hydrokinetic energy technology to harness the oceans' energy is at the very beginning. "We are where wind energy technology was 30 years ago," Paasch said.

Marine hydrokinetic energy has been looked at, but, as of now, there are only a few systems installed world wide, netting 2 megawatts of energy production.

"We see hydrokinetic energy as a complimentary source," Paasch said, but added that it has advantages over wind because smaller turbines can be devised, and the ocean has a higher availability and a higher predictability, he said. This piqued the interest of Hafner and Ivanoff alike. "That was very interesting," Hafner said. "As an ocean dredger, I know that we have some nice currents that run in the 4 mph range out there, and the density of water is good to transmit to energy. But again it's finding the right operation that would be unaffected by

freezing and thawing."

Hafner added that harnessing wave or tidal power wouldn't fit for Nome, but ocean currents may have potential to co-power Nome.

Ivanoff said that hydrokinetics also triggered his interest to learn more. "My question was if such a system would work in smaller communities," Ivanoff said, but also cautioned that he would definitely not be interested in any project involving dams. "I'm not interested in dams being built in our region. That could jeopardize our salmon, and salmon is our livelihood. I would never ever touch the run of the salmon, but the tidal and current hydrokinetic concept is kind of interesting."

Wanted: A roadmap

"It really is necessary to make a plan as soon as possible, create a policy as soon as possible and then start implementing the objectives that are part of that policy," said conference organizer Chris Rose.

While the state last year has revived the dormant Alaska Energy Authority, which is in the process of creating an inventory of Alaska's resources by region, a comprehensive state energy policy is missing. Bill Popp, an Anchorage businessman, said, "We need an overarching state policy that would require all state divisions to work on a common goal." He stated that different state divisions are at odds with each other and there is no firm policy to regulate state policies in regards to energy.

Gov. Palin had stated that she wants Alaska to derive 50 percent of its energy from renewables by 2025, but she didn't provide a plan or roadmap how to get there. Instead, the conference was overshadowed by the news that Palin refused to accept the \$28.6 million in federal stimulus funds, arguing that it should be left up to local governments to impose energy building codes rather than having the feds dictate energy standards.

Joe Balash, Palin's energy advisor, said that becoming a world leader is a pretty huge step. "We need to take care of Alaska at this point," Balash told *The Nome Nugget*. He pointed to the Alaska Energy Authority that he said had existed more or less on paper for 15 years. "Since Steve Haagenson's appointment last year, he has been taking very methodical and thoughtful steps in rejuvenating the agency, realigning its mission and purpose with meeting the energy needs of Alaskans and not just being a conduit for shuffling funds," Balash said.

Balash said that what is needed are solutions and choices to be made at the local level. "We don't think making those decisions in Anchorage or Juneau is the right thing to do. We see our job as making sure the local entities have the information about what's available locally and identifying means

to moving those projects forward, what kind of technology, where to find it and how to finance those projects."

Green business

Paul Sheldon with Natural Capitalism Solutions said that it is a national challenge to commercialize renewable energy systems because policies are not in place to push the invention or businesses are not willing to take the risk. "We lose new technologies because we can't find financing for it," Sheldon said.

The look at Alaska's economy reveals that mining, timber and military spending drove the fledgling Alaska economy at the time of statehood. In these past 50 years, some things have changed, some haven't. What has changed is that mining and timber are not the driver of the Alaskan economy anymore. The economy consists of one-third oil and gas development, one-third of federal government spending (through the military) and one-third is the export of seafood.

What hasn't changed is Alaska's small population size and the huge distances to markets, which are the main constraints to develop the economy. Throw in the word of the day, green jobs, and Alaska's future may hold the global export of technology, knowledge and small-scale renewable systems expertise, the experts said.

Greg Wortham, mayor of the small town of Sweetwater, Texas, said that he asked what his constituents wanted and then delivered. As a result, there is a thousand-fold more wind power in his county, Nolan County, with 3,000 megawatts of installed wind turbines. That's more than in the whole windy state of Alaska, which currently has a combined wind power of a whopping 3 megawatts installed.

In the global perspective, the United States produces 28,000 megawatts of wind power, compared to a small country like Germany, producing 23,900 megawatts of wind-generated electricity. "Texas is not a green state by declaration," Wortham said. "But it's greener than any self-proclaimed green state."

He went on to say that there were 1,330 wind-related jobs and landowners receiving royalties to the tune of \$15 million annually. He also noted that the wind project in his county created an industry of wind farm construction, operation and maintenance jobs, and ancillary businesses, as well as the phenomena of wind tourism of visitors from all across the nation to get a peek at what makes Nolan county's wind energy spin. The wind project has even sparked festivities such as the Wind Harvest festival in the fall, a Ride the Wind bike race and higher education degrees at the Texas State Technical College to train a skilled wind energy work force.

Now back to Alaska. Pat Galvin, the commissioner of the Alaska Depart-

ment of Revenue was at hand to answer the pressing question whether the Palin administration is willing to utilize the Permanent Fund for renewables.

Galvin said that the fund is in good shape, but that those questions are too early to ask. "It is premature to think of a source of funding for renewables when there is no plan in place or direction," Galvin said. Thinking along the line what would generate the most bang for the buck, he said that economies of scale projects such as the proposed megaprojects of damming the Susitna River or the gas bulletline would provide opportunity for financeable renewables. "But it is difficult in rural areas where it is not realistic to do without fossil fuel energy within the next few decades," Galvin said.

If that is the vision, then business will continue as usual. Chris Rose, executive director of REAP, called upon something that is not quantifiable: vision and passion.

Brainstorming for solutions

In the end, the take-home messages were to diversify power sources, to find politicians and business leaders who become champions of the idea to make renewable resources a reality and to formulate a statewide energy plan.

Noel Perry, founder of an avant-garde think tank called Next 10 from California, suggested that an Alaska Energy Commission bring energy experts together to give local solutions and to push the concept of conserving energy. He said that strong political signals could indeed make a change. "Policy can drive invention," he said, alluding to the day's news that President Barack Obama had committed car companies to strive for a new 35 miles per gallon standard. "That means we

have to import millions of barrels less oil, lessening our foreign oil dependence by conserving," he said, pointing out that part of the discussion should be to look at ways to conserve and use less than produce energy from renewables without changing a wasteful lifestyle.

Rachel Shimshak, director of the renewable Northwest Project in Portland, Ore., gave advice that worked for her multi-state wind projects: leadership from elected officials "that get it" as well as from utilities and stakeholders and consumers. "Then, you got to have people who go out there and take a risk," she said of businesses that need to take the leap of faith and invest in renewables.

A major roadblock to the development of renewable energy was the governor's rejection of the energy stimulus money and to have an energy standard in effect. Alaska is not alone when it comes to government officials adhering to the status quo energywise. Polls conducted in Nebraska about what the people wanted in terms of power, resulted in a push for wind. "These polls were utilized to convince the higher-ups in utilities and politicians to move toward renewables," Shimshak said.

When asked what is needed to set Alaska on track for a renewable energy future, the conference organizer Rose told the *Nugget*, "It takes leadership and political will. The governor, elected officials in the Legislature, congressmen, those are the people we elect and we need to tell them 'do this for us.' It takes passion and political will. We have everything else. We have resources the rest of the country would love to have. And we got money that the rest of the country would love to have. So let's put the two together with passion and leadership and we'll get there."



Get it in the bin!

Spring is here Nomeites so REMEMBER the Nome Recycle Center is open year around for your aluminum, white paper and newspaper. Please place items inside of the open drop off container located directly across from CarQuest (please no plastics, glass or cardboard).

We also recycle used car, truck and heavy equipment batteries (lead/acid only - no computer or household batteries). Please place on pallets outside container.

Help us keep Nome beautiful! Remember to recycle! For questions, call 443-6619.

A clean Nome is like a clean home, enjoyable!



City of Nome

Spring Clean-up is through May 31.

Raffle Day: Saturday, May 30

Free hot dogs and pop in the Lions Club Bus at Anvil City Square from noon to 5 p.m. for all trash collectors! Prizes for all trash collectors and a **prize drawing will be held at 5:15 p.m. at Anvil City Square!**

Trash Collection Sites

May 30 - 31 dump trucks will be located at: • Icy View Fire Hall • East End Park • Elementary School Parking Lot • Recycling Center • Belmont Point Collect 15 or more bags for a chance to win a bicycle! **Prize tickets exchanged for yellow bags on Saturday, May 30 only!**

U-Call-We-Haul: May 26 - 29

You must call 443-NOME to arrange for pickup **BEFORE 1 p.m. on Friday, May 29.** Service is for residents only—no rental properties or remodel jobs.

Free Dump Days

On **Saturdays** from **June 6 - October 3** from **11 a.m. to 7 p.m.** Service for residents only.



A chance to win a bike!

