

THE VOICE OF INTERIOR ALASKA

Inside Today

Fairbanks man sentenced to prison for serial burglaries committed in 2017. » A3

South Davis Park water contaminated

By Sam Friedman

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The South Davis Park groundwater is contaminated with perfluorinated compounds from the nearby fire training center, the Fairbanks city and borough governments announced in a joint news release Thursday.

Groundwater contamination from old firefighting foam has previously been known to affect a few dozen of private wells in the area. The family of contaminant chemicals, often referred to as PFCs, also have polluted water wells around Eielson Air Force Base and Fairbanks International Airport, also because of firefighting foams used at those locations.

At the South Davis Park, the contaminated water wells are used only for irrigation, not for drinking. The South Davis Park is a large complex of woods and facilities that includes soccer fields, softball fields, a playground and a dog park.

The contaminated water around the Fairbanks Regional Fire Training Center on 30th Avenue was first announced in February 2016. The South Davis Park is directly across the Mitchell Expressway from the fire training center.

Two irrigation wells at the park were tested for PFCs back in July 2016. They were found to have concentrations or the perflorinated compound PFOS (perfluorooctane sulfonic acid) at concentrations of 740 and 770 parts per trillion, well above the state standard of 400 parts per trillion, according to a letter the state Department of **Environmental Conservation** sent to the borough on May 7.

The letter tells the borough the two wells cannot be used for irrigation until the water meets clean water standards. It wasn't immediately clear Thursday why the Department of Environmental Conservation didn't contact the borough about the contaminated wells in 2016.

Thursday's news release states that the city government will be providing clean water to irrigate the turf fields "in the short term."

The projected cost to the city of irrigating the sports fields

with clean water wasn't immediately known because the city hasn't yet decided how to supply the fields with clean water, said city spokeswoman Teal

Options for getting clean water to PFC contaminated areas discussed elsewhere in the borough have included trucking in clean water, connecting areas to city water service and providing carbon filters.

 $Contact\ Outdoors\ Editor\ Sam$ Friedman at 459-7545. Follow him on Twitter: @FDNMoutdoors

Borough

asks for

Kassel trying to

By Amanda Bohman

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tary confirmed Thursday.

ment-backed housing.

The U.S. Air Force has no inten-

tion of adding to housing at Eielson

Air Force Base, the Air Force secre-

The Fairbanks North Star Borough

Mayor and the head of the Fairbanks

Economic Development Corp. said

more assurances are needed to attract

large-scale housing investors worried

about being undercut by govern-

About 900 new housing units are

needed by 2020 to accommodate a

buildup at Eielson Air Force Base,

said Jim Dodson, CEO of the Fairbanks Economic Development Corp.

No large-scale house building is currently happening in the borough, said Dodson, Borough Mayor

Karl Kassel and Aaron Welterlen, a

member of the board of directors of the Interior Alaska Building Associ-

Dodson and Kassel flew to Wash-

ington, D.C., a few weeks ago and

asked for a commitment in writing

from the Air Force that it would

conduct a housing assessment and

get an agreement from the Borough

Assembly before approving new

AIR FORCE » A5

ation and past president.

Air Force

guarantee

secure homebuilders

for influx at Eielson

8 teams, 10 Native languages, four days

UAF hosting conference to address linguistic emergency

By Erin Granger

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Alaska lawmakers last month passed a resolution declaring a "linguistic emergency" regarding Alaska Native language loss. Now the University of Alaska is joining the fight to restore these languages by hosting a four-day conference to bring awareness to the issue and to help educate speakers of all levels.

The Alaska Native Language Revitalization Institute, to be held on the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus, will host 140

GOODMORNING

Partly sunny and nice! Overcast late in

Monroe Catholic and Hutchison

boys baseball split doubleheader.

SPORTS

Page B1

The weather.

High today......63

Low tonight47

BATTER UP

the day.

LANGUAGE » A5

Sunrise:

4:17 a.m.

Sunset:

11:18 p.m.

WEATHER

» A9

SOURDOUGH

'Teachers

remove your

The bright kids

sunglasses.

are gone for

the summer."

JACK:

HAVE A GREAT SUMMER





Faculty and staff at **Hunter Elementary** School wave goodbye to the school buses as they pull out on the last day of school Thursday afternoon. ERIC ENGMAN/ NEWS-MINER

For coverage of the **IDEA and West** Valley High School graduations, see page

Mueller probe enters 2nd year; where is it headed?

By Eric Tucker ASSOCIATED PRESS

washington — It was one year ago Thursday when Robert Mueller, the former FBI director, was appointed as special counsel to take over the Justice Department's investigation into possible coordination between Russia and Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign.

The 12 months since have yielded a flurry of criminal indictments and guilty pleas, tense court appearances, angry tweets from the president and speculation over what the ever-taciturn Mueller already knows and what he'll investigate next.

Trump noted the anniversary with an early morning tweet making clear his frustration.

'Congratulations America, we are now into the second year of the greatest Witch Hunt in American History...and there is still No Collusion and







Trump

CHARGED BY MUELLER IN RUSSIA PROBE





Papadopoulos





Manafort

No Obstruction. The only Collusion was that done by Democrats who were unable to win an Election despite the spending of far more money!' Hundreds of pages of

court filings, and public **MUELLER** » A7 Cohen



РНОТО

OTHER KEY PLAYERS

The cockpit of the F-35A was on display during the F-35A Lightning II Media Day event Oct. 17 in the Eielson Air Force Base Thunderdome. About 900 new housing units will be needed by 2020 for the influx of 3,500 personnel and their families who will accompany the fighter jets. ERIC ENGMAN/NEWS-MINER FILE

INSIDE

Classified » B7 Comics » B5 | Dear Abby » B6 | Markets » A9 | Obituaries » A3 |



KNOWLEDGEABLE FRIENDLY STAFF TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS MUST BE 21+ TO ENTER WITH VALID ID

Marijuana has intoxicating effects and may be habit forming and addictive. Marijuana impairs concentration, coordination, and judgment. Do not operate a vehicle or machinery under its influence There are health risks associated with consumption of marijuana For use only by adults twenty-one and older. Keep out of the reach of children <mark>Marijuana</mark> should not be used by women who are pregnant or breastfeeding

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INTERIOR/ALASKA |

ON THE STREET

'What was your first job right out of high school?'

Compiled by Erin Grange



"It was a summer job before I went to college in the fall. I think I worked at the local Kmart in Edwardsville, Pennsylvania."

Kerry Walsh



"I worked for the city of North Pole as a public summer hire doing any of the public works projects like the signs near the roundabout."

Nicolas Proulx



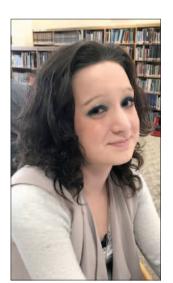
"I worked as a firefighter here in town at North Star Volunteer Fire Department."

Zachary Edsell



"I guess my first job was working as a glazer, cutting glass for windows in North Dakota."

Paul Hedtke



"I worked at Denny's here in Fairbanks after high school."

Carlie Christianson

Alaska fishermen say otters eating profits

By Dan Joling
ASSOCIATED PRESS

ANCHORAGE — Northern sea otters, once hunted to the brink of extinction along Alaska's Panhandle, have made a spectacular comeback by gobbling some of the state's finest seafood — and fishermen are not happy about the competition.

Sea otters dive for red sea urchins, geoduck clams, sea cucumbers - delicacies in Asia markets — plus prized Dungeness crab. They then carry their meals to the surface and float on their backs as they eat, sometimes using rocks to crack open clams and crab. The furry marine mammals, which grow as large as 100 pounds, eat the equivalent of a quarter of their weight

each day.
Phil Doherty, head of the Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association, is working to save the livelihood of 200 southeast Alaska fishermen and a \$10 million industry but faces an uphill struggle against an opponent that looks like a cuddly plush toy.

Fishermen have watched their harvest shrink as sea otters spread and colonize, Doherty said. Divers once annually harvested 6 million pounds of red sea urchins. The recent quota has been less than 1 million pounds.

"We've seen a multimillion-dollar fishery in sea urchins pretty much go away," he said.

Jeremy Leighton of Ketchikan dives for sea urchins from his boat. He looks for plump specimens 3.5 to 4.5 inches in diameter, making sure they're not too big.

"If it's like a cow tongue, it just doesn't fit on a sushi roll," Leighton said. In a bed holding 50,000 pounds of the spiny shellfish, he might harvest 10 percent.

Sea otters are not as discriminating. If sea otters have discovered the bed, Leighton finds broken shells on the ocean floor and a handful of sea urchins hidden in rock crannies.

"That's when you know you're in trouble," he said.

Patrick Lemons, Alaska chief of marine mammals management for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, said the federal Marine Mammal Protection Act limits the agency's response. Sea otters in southeast Alaska are not listed as threatened or endangered, but the agency cannot intervene to protect commercial fisheries until a species is at optimum sustainable population."

"Sea otters are still colonizing southeast (Alaska) and are significantly below 'carrying capacity' down there," Lemons said. Carrying capacity is the number of animals a region can support without environmental degradation.

The agency could develop local man-

agement plans within the region with Alaska Natives to protect the catch of subsistence shellfish, which traditionally has included crab, clams, abalone and other species.

A5

Sea otters are the largest members of the weasel family. To stay warm, they rely on the densest fur on the planet.

Their luxurious pelts made them a target for hunters, starting with Vitus Bering as he explored the North Pacific in the 1700s. Russian and U.S. hunters over 150 years virtually wiped out sea otters until the signing of an international treaty to protect northern fur seals and sea otters in 1911.

In the 1960s, Alaska's wildlife agency moved more than 400 sea otters from the Aleutian Islands to southeast Alaska to reintroduce them to their historic range. A count in 2000 estimated 12,000 animals. The last count in 2012 estimated 27,500 animals, a growth rate of 12 to 14 percent annually. Fishermen fear the population will double again in six years.

Hunting is one of the only checks on sea otters, but under federal law, only coastal Alaska Natives can kill them. There's no season or bag limit, but federal rules severely restrict how pelts may be used.

Sea otter hunters can sell whole pelts only to other Alaska Natives.

AIR FORCE

Continued from A1

housing projects for Eielson Air Force Base.

"What we are trying to do is to get the Air Force to give us a little bit more consideration than just a statement," Dodson said. "We have reached out to national builders that go around and build houses. Without an exception, every time I ask, 'Would you consider (a project in Fairbanks)'? The answer I have gotten is, 'Building speculative military housing is not a good investment'"

Kassel said housing activity in the borough has picked up in anticipation of new F-35 squadrons to be stationed on Eielson Air Force Base, but more investment is needed.

"As strong a statement as possible" from the Air Force would help, he said.

"(Investors) want to have a high degree of confidence before they pull their wallet out," the mayor said. "If you ask a banker, or a general contractor, it's sometimes difficult to rely on what their (the Air Force's) current intention is. You would prefer to have something in writing that reflects more long-term guarantees."

The comments by Heather Wilson, secretary of the Air Force, came during a Defense Appropriations Subcommittee hearing on the Air Force budget, said a spokeswoman for U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska.

A transcript shows that Murkowski raised the topic, saying there is concern that the Air Force might ask an on-base, privatized housing partner to build additional units that would compete with private housing.

The Air Force secretary replied: "Senator, we have no plan for doing privatized housing at Eielson other than what's already there."

Welterlen said builders are nervous about investing in new housing. The number of new housing units needed has varied, going as high as 1,500 and 2,000, he said.

"None of us knows what the

true housing need will be until the demand comes," he said.

He agreed that more assurances from the Air Force could spur investment.

"Just them saying it, that's great.

"But how about a guarantee?" Welterlen said.

Contact staff writer Amanda Bohman at 459-7587. Follow her on Twitter: @FDNMborough.

LANGUAGE

Continued from A1

Native language instructors, first-language speakers and language learners May 21-24. The conference was organized by the University of Alaska Fairbanks College of Rural and Community Development.

"We've known for a long time that our Alaska Native languages are in a state of decline," said Sandy Kowalski, the college's director of indigenous programs. "There's a strong interest here at the university to support indigenous languages and support the revitalization of the languages."

UAF's Alaska Native Language Center and Alaska Native Language Program will be contributing to the institute, but Kowalski said this is much more than a university event.

"We've identified eight teams this year to work on 10 languages," Kowalski said.

Alaska has at least 20 distinct Native languages, and that presents significant challenges, she said.

"Many of the other revitalization efforts are dealing with a single language. But if we're going to support this as a state, we've got several languages to support," Kowalski said. "We wish we could do all 20, but we just didn't have the capacity this first time

around."
The Alaska Native Language Preservation Advisory Council's biennial report predicted that most of the state's indigenous languages may be dormant or extinct by the end of the 21st century, making the issue a statewide concern that gained the attention of the Legislature and Gov.

Bill Walker.

The Legislature approved House Concurrent Resolution 19, originally introduced April 28 by Rep. Dan Ortiz, I-Ketchikan. The resolution has been passed to Walker for signing.

"That happened while we were getting ready for the institute. So there was some really good timing as far as intense interest across the state for an opportunity like this; the legislative action has been another piece that has helped us move forward," Kowalski said.

For Kowalski, the need to revitalize Native languages in Alaska is personal.

"I moved to Buckland to live with my grandparents when I was 4, and my grandparents spoke Inupiaq around me," she said. "I heard it and I guess that developed a strong framework in my mind around the language."

Kowalski didn't grow up speaking the language but chose to study it in college.

college.

"When I graduated from high school, I chose UAF because they had the Iñupiaq program," she said. "I studied it here and have since then felt like it's important to provide opportunities and support for other language learners."

Kowalski said the statewide effort comprises individuals doing the

hard work.

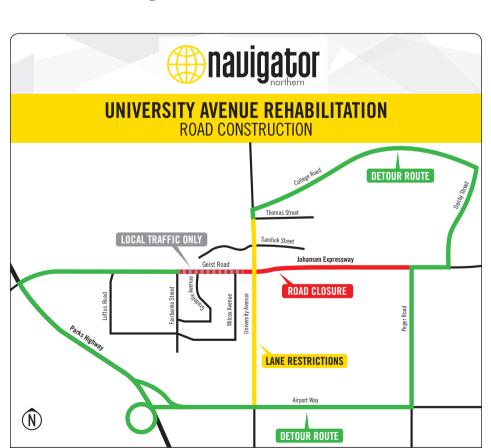
"There's all these big gears that are moving here. But, really, the work comes down to the individuals that are doing it within their communities and the personal commitment that they demonstrate," Kowalski said.

This is the first year the university is holding the institute, and Kowalski said whether it will become an annual event is unclear.

Registration for the institute is full, but plenary sessions will be recorded and posted, and breakout sessions will be live-streamed.

More information on the institute's schedule can be found at http:// uaf.edu/rural/anlri.

Contact staff writer Erin Granger at 459-7544. Follow her on Twitter: @FDNMPolitics.



The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, in partnership with Great Northwest, Inc., is working to widen and reconstruct the intersection of University Avenue and Geist Road/Johansen Expressway. Work is expected to begin on May 19 and be completed by October 2018.

University Avenue Updates:

- Beginning May 19, east and westbound traffic at the intersection of University Avenue, Geist Road, and the Johansen Expressway will be CLOSED to through traffic between Fairbanks Street and Peger Road. This ROAD CLOSURE is expected to last until mid-August.
- SINGLE-LANE TRAFFIC will be maintained for north and southbound traffic on University Avenue. Turns will not be permitted at the Geist Road/Johansen Expressway intersection.
- Business, bike and pedestrian access will be maintained through the construction zone.
- Please allow for additional travel time and plan to follow all construction signs for DETOUR routes. Peger Road will have an additional RIGHT-TURN LANE to accommodate increased traffic turning onto Airport Way.
- To receive email updates about this and other Fairbanks/North Pole projects, please email FairbanksConstruction@alaskanavigator.org.



For more information, call DOT&PF at 907-451-2652 or visit AlaskaNavigator.org.

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