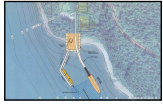


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Local craft stores look to patch hole left by Joann  
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JDHS returns to gridiron as the Crimson Bears  
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# Juneau Independent

The True Local Newspaper of Alaska's Capital City

August 8, 2025

## Storis arrives in Juneau

*U.S. Coast Guard ship slated to be homeported in Alaska's capital city scheduled to be commissioned Sunday*



LAURIE CRAIG / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

The U.S. Coast Guard's Storis icebreaker at the Auke Bay Ferry Terminal on Wednesday, Aug. 6, 2025.

By NATALIE BUTTNER  
Reporter

The U.S. Coast Guard's Storis has reached her future homeport city for the first time. The icebreaker docked at midday Wednesday at the Auke Bay Ferry Terminal, where public tours are scheduled Thursday and Friday, according to an official announcement.

The Storis is scheduled to depart the Auke Bay terminal at 9 a.m. Saturday for a five-hour voyage to downtown Juneau. The ship is scheduled to be commissioned Aug. 10, after which an initial deployment to the northern parts of the state is scheduled.

"I just want people to be able to see and experience the Coast Guard's newest icebreaker," said Cmdr. Curt Gookin, executive officer aboard the Storis.

Gookin said that the commissioning ceremony

See SHIP, page 12

## Skybikes, treehouses among features of Goldbelt's private dock

*Notice states project's intent is to "safely accommodate a class of increasingly larger cruise ships docking in Southeast Alaska"*

By MARK SABBATINI  
Editor

Goldbelt Inc. is aiming high with its proposed private cruise port on Douglas Island with facilities that include skybikes and treehouses, and docks capable of handling the increasingly large ships arriving in Juneau.

Those details and many more for the project — named Goldbelt Aani — are specified in an 82-page public notice of a permit application published July 28 by the U.S. Army Corps of

See DOCK, page 16

## Glory Hall halting meals, other day access to non-residents

*Change comes after Assembly rejects homeless safety zone for shelter*

By MARK SABBATINI  
Editor

The Glory Hall will halt meals and other daytime access to people who are not residents as of Aug. 26, following the Juneau Assembly's decision Monday not to establish a safety zone around the shelter that staff were seeking due to ongoing problems from homeless campers.

The restriction has been under consideration for some time to ensure the facility is safe for residents and staff, Kaia Quinto, executive director of the Juneau Housing First Collaborative, which operates the shelter and soup kitchen, said in an interview Thursday.

She said the board of directors authorized her to make the change before Monday's Assembly meeting and she implemented it after city leaders dead-



MARK SABBATINI / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

A row of tents used by people experiencing homelessness stands across the street from the Glory Hall shelter on Teal Street on July 17, 2025.

locked 4-4 on the vote to establish a safety zone banning nearby camping.

See SHELTER, page 10

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# Police blotter

*This report contains public information available from local emergency response and law enforcement organizations. This report includes arrest and citation information, not conviction information. Therefore, those listed in this report are presumed innocent. Information about these incidents can be reported anonymously at [juneaucrimeline.com](http://juneaucrimeline.com).*

### Saturday, Aug. 2

#### Driving While Intoxicated

At 11:16 p.m. on Saturday, Theodosia Deann James was arrested on Trout Street for driving under the influence, driving without a license, and three counts of violating her conditions of release. She was taken to Lemon Creek Correctional Center and her vehicle was impounded.

#### Fraud, Forgery, Counterfeit, Non-Sufficient Funds

At 2:23 p.m. on Saturday, a 49-year-old male reported fraud on Glacier Highway.

#### Motor Vehicle Collision Without Injury

At 3:23 p.m. on Saturday, a 45-year-old male reported a hit-and-run on Franklin Street.

### Sunday, Aug. 3

#### Disturbance

At 2:20 a.m. on Sunday, the Juneau Police Department responded to a report of an assault on Seward Street. One person was transported to Bartlett Regional Hospital.

#### Lost Property

At 11:31 a.m. on Sunday, JPD created a case documenting a lost phone on Franklin Street.

#### Out With Subject or Situation

At 4:27 p.m. on Sunday, Jesse Nolan Rodriguez, 46, was arrested on Otter Way on a \$250 JPD warrant and was taken to Lemon Creek Correctional Center.

#### Police Assist

At 9:25 a.m. on Sunday, a case was made for safekeeping on Hospital Drive.

#### Trespassing

At 8:02 a.m. on Sunday, Nicholas Steele Waterhouse was cited and released for criminal trespass on Vintage Boulevard.

#### Trespassing in Vehicle or Vehicle Rifling

At 6:50 p.m. on Sunday, a 55-year-old male reported a vehicle rifling on Fritz Cove Road.

### Monday, Aug. 4

#### Disturbance

At 2:07 a.m. on Monday, a 23-year-old female reported attempted damage to a local business on Front Street.

At 7:45 p.m. on Monday on Marine Way, James Carteeti, 45, was arrested for resisting and interfering. Vivian Wright, 32, was arrested for assault, resisting and interfering. Alcohol was involved.

#### Domestic Dispute

At 8:18 p.m. on Monday, Chelsea Browning, 24, was arrested for unlawful contact and violating the conditions of release. Domestic violence was involved.

#### Theft

At 2:31 p.m. on Monday on Yandukin Drive, a 58-year-old female reported her vehicle stolen. The vehicle was later recovered.

#### Traffic Stop

At 12:08 p.m. on Monday, Kyon Isiah Moore, 23, was cited and released for driving without a license on Jordan Avenue.

#### Trespassing

At 9:26 a.m. on Monday, Daniel Paul Dunham, 25, was arrested on Teal Street for criminal trespass and violating conditions of release. He was taken to Lemon Creek Correctional Center.

At 11:39 p.m. on Monday, Johnnie Johnson, 27, was arrested on Vintage Boulevard for trespass and lodged at LCCC.

### Tuesday, Aug. 5

#### Domestic Dispute

At 1:36 a.m. on Tuesday, Donavin Micheal Mc Curley was cited and released on Glacier Highway for reckless driving.

#### Trespassing

At 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Jeffrey Carpenter, 64, and Donald Allan, 65, were both cited and released for trespass on Willoughby Avenue.

At 11:12 p.m. on Tuesday, Johanna Copley, 39, was cited and released for trespass on Vintage Boulevard.

#### Traffic Stop

At 11:05 p.m. on Tuesday, Saul Gomez Guzman, 25, was arrested on Third Street for driving while intoxicated and driving without a license. He was taken to Lemon Creek Correctional Center.



# Tourist numbers high, business profits vary

*Elimination of top salary tier and job protections, less prep time cited as issues in contract talks*

By **NATALIE BUTTNER**  
Reporter

Cruise ships visiting Juneau this summer have met or exceeded capacity, ending early season worries about faltering numbers of international tourists and economic uncertainty. For some downtown businesses, spending is down. Staff shortages at the Mendenhall Glacier remain an unresolved challenge.

It's not difficult to find foreign tourists downtown near the cruise ship docks. George Fleming sat with his wife, Chris, at a picnic table facing the bustle of tour vendors and fellow passengers, his back to the water. He wore a cowboy hat with a Canadian flag patch, front and center.

He and his wife are from Edmonton, Alberta. From one capital city to another, they admitted they thought Juneau would be bigger.

"But I love this. I love a small town," George Fleming said.

A short distance down the pier, local residents Tom Paul and Jack Fontanella entertained arriving passengers by playing what they call "old-timey" music. Paul played the fiddle and Fontanella played banjo. Both men are retired and use busking as an excuse to play together, "as if we need one," Paul jokes. Their performances are weather-dependent.

"The beauty of playing only on sunny days is everybody's pretty upbeat," Fontanella said.

Paul said cruise lines probably don't advertise the crowded docks and jammed streets of downtown Juneau.

"A lot of times people seem really happy to meet locals and some of them seem kind of amazed at how many people are here at one time," Paul said.

## International Tourism

There was nationwide concern about the tourism industry at the beginning of this summer. The World Travel and Tourism Council predicted in May the national tourism industry stood to lose \$12.5 billion from a decline in international tourists.

However, City and Borough of Juneau Tourism Manager Alexandra Pierce notes that cruise ships arriving in Juneau in summer 2025 remain at full capacity. In June, capacity was at



NATALIE BUTTNER / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

Cruise ship passengers walk the Juneau Seawalk on July 28, 2025.

107% with 354,229 cruise ship passengers visiting Juneau, and 110% in July with 383,374 passengers visiting Juneau. Capacities higher than 100% are caused by two-person berths holding more than two people — for example, families with children.

Cruise ship travel may be insulated from immediate changes in the tourism industry, as many trips are booked in advance.

There has been a significant decrease in Canadian visitors to the U.S. nationally. Tariffs and Trump referring to Canada as the "51st" state caused some Canadians, including former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, to call for a boycott of U.S. tourism and products. There have also been instances of Canadian tourists being detained as they try to re-enter Canada from the U.S.

Though George Fleming said he had reservations about visiting the U.S. during the current administration, it was too late to change plans.

"We booked this before he (Trump) did everything," he said.

For the Flemings, a cruise in Southeast Alaska

seemed safer than a trip to the Lower 48.

"When we talked to our travel agent and everything else, she said, 'If you're going to do the states, Alaska and Hawaii are the two to do, because they're not the states. Alaska is on its own, Hawaii is on its own, and they've got their own' — actually, what did Tammy say?" Chris Fleming turned to her husband for confirmation, "'They've got their own brains.'"

George and Chris Fleming left from Vancouver, British Columbia, and will be returning to the same port, easing their immigration fears.

"Right now I don't think I would go across the border to the south at all. Because I probably wouldn't be able to get back to Canada," added George Fleming.

While they haven't met any other Canadians aboard, they have enjoyed a friendly atmosphere on the ship and in Juneau.

"The people here, it's like, we belong here, it's not like, 'oh, you're a tourist,'" Chris Fleming said.

See **TOURISM**, page 4



NATALIE BUTTNER / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

Tom Paul and John Fontanella, left, busk on the Juneau Seawalk on July 28, 2025. At right, a crossing guard ushers pedestrians across South Franklin Street.

## Spending by visitors running hot and cold this summer

### TOURISM, from page 3

#### City and Borough of Juneau programs

Connectivity is among the amenities available to tourists in downtown Juneau through Marine Passenger Fees. Anyone can connect to CBJ public Wi-Fi downtown. Pierce also notes that GCI and AT&T have increased their capacity in Juneau, improving communication downtown.

Traffic guards in bright yellow vests usher crowds from the docks to the stores and restaurants across Marine Way. Pierce said in the past, the crossing guard program had struggled with staffing retention. However, a new contractor took over the program in July, which has decreased turnover. The new contract requires an on-site supervisor who checks in with the crossing guards and monitors their breaks.

"It's still a challenge to make sure that all the crosswalks are staffed and to cover busy times, but because downtown Juneau is such a bottleneck, it's really important that we have those crossing guards," Pierce said.

Pierce said the concerns that the Tourism Best Management Practices Program has received from locals are similar to other years.

"We have our usual concerns about the persistent community issues like helicopter noise and whale watching," she said.

#### Business and spending

Pierce notes that while cruise ships remain at full capacity, she has heard there has been a slight decline in spending. She attributes this to recession concerns.

"When people already have a vacation booked, they probably are still going to go on that vacation, they just might not splurge in a way that they would typically," she said.

However, while she said this year may not be a record year for many stores, sales are fine.

"I was worried about the soft economy and all the tariffs and things, but so far, it's been holding up really well," said Kim White, owner of Alaska Shoppe in downtown Juneau.

Liz Perry, president and CEO of local tourism nonprofit Travel Juneau, also noticed less spending from travelers.

"They're a little more cautious with spending this year," she said. "So we're seeing some contraction of spending, and I think it just depends on the operator, and what that operator does, or what that retailer has to offer."

Some jewelers found this year to be especially difficult.

"I must say that when we started business in 2017 the first year should be the toughest year. But I must say, 2025 is the toughest year," said Neha Vaswani, owner of Venetian Jewelers.

Jewelry shop owners and employees in downtown Juneau had a variety of theories about why this summer is shining less brightly. Vaswani believed the dip was political.

"There are a lot of wars going on and it's a new president, changing policies," she said. "People are a little skeptical."

Norma Carandang owns the shop where Venetian Jewelers operates, as well as North Star Gifts, which sells higher-end souvenirs. Carandang estimated her sales are down by about 30% compared to previous years.

"There's a lot of people here all the time when there's cruise ships, but they decide that they treat our store like a park," Carandang said. "They're just wandering."

Araksi Ekmekjian is a longtime employee at Lambros Goldsmith, the 10th jewelry store from the tram. She blamed competitors for the slow year.

"We have a lot more jewelry stores," Ekmekjian said. "And what I'm noticing is, when people get off the cruise ship, there is like bouncers in front of the stores, harassing, kind of, customers. Sometimes by the time they get here, they don't

even want to talk to you."

Pierce agreed there has been a long-term trend of more jewelry stores in downtown Juneau. She said jewelry businesses and cruise ships have a symbiotic relationship.

"The joke that I've used is like, the cruise line is like the whale shark, they're like those little remora fish that follow the whale shark around," Pierce said.

At least one downtown business has had a record season. Glacier Scoops opened in May, and co-owner Corina Giamakidis said their first two months of business have exceeded expectations.

"We opened May 19, and so right in the middle of it, just full speed ahead," Giamakidis said. "We opened our doors and it was just a rush of people, which was awesome. We couldn't expect that."

Perry notes hotel occupancy is down, but anticipates data gathered in the upcoming month will determine if business has shifted to short-term rentals such as Airbnb.

#### Mendenhall Glacier staff still facing struggles

While business downtown may be stable, it has been a difficult season at the Mendenhall Glacier, a major Juneau attraction. The Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center operated with limited hours all summer due to staffing shortages caused by federal layoffs at the U.S. Forest Service.

"It's been a tough season, and just really, really impressed with everybody who's been able to kind of pull together and make it work, as well as have," Pierce said.

There are 12 weeks until the final cruise ship leaves Juneau on Oct. 14.

"We're really hopeful to have a good finish to the end of this season," Perry said.

• Contact Natalie Buttner at [natalieb@juneauindependent.com](mailto:natalieb@juneauindependent.com).



# Local ballot change in '26?

*Assembly effort to switch to ranked choice voting in local elections to continue w/ public hearing Aug. 18*

**By MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

Switching to ranked choice voting in Juneau's municipal elections is getting another hearing before the full Assembly on Aug. 18, after members on Monday night amended the proposal to exclude school board races that are already determined using a ranking methodology.

An ordinance implementing local ranked choice voting was introduced at a June 9 Assembly meeting and subsequently referred to a Committee of the Whole meeting on Monday night for further evaluation and possible modification. Juneau would be Alaska's first municipality to implement the methodology at the municipal level, although Assembly members aren't planning to vote on adopting the change until this year's local election is complete.

The proposal was initiated earlier this year by Assembly Member Ella Adkison, who said most Juneau voters have responded favorably to ranked choice voting since it was first used statewide in 2022.

"I think Juneau in general likes having lots of candidates in a race because it means that the person that they feel represents them the most is the person who actually gets onto the Assembly," she said. The current system "doesn't handle races with many candidates very well because you can have candidates with similar values taking votes from each other — and therefore pressure for candidates that might have similar values to drop out — so that you only have one person that kind of has those values...And I don't think that that incentive to having fewer candidates is good for Juneau."

Assembly members voted 5-3, with Mayor



MARK SABBATINI / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

Juneau Assembly Member Ella Adkison discusses implementing ranked choice voting in local elections during a Committee of the Whole meeting on Monday, Aug. 4, 2025.

Beth Weldon absent, to advance the ordinance to the Aug. 18 meeting for further consideration. A key issue for some Assembly members opposing the measure was implementing the change administratively rather than letting local voters decide the issue via a ballot measure, or at least weigh in with an advisory vote.

"I think the voters should have the opportunity to weigh on a very important issue affecting our elections," Assembly Member Maureen Hall said.

The issue came up at an Assembly meeting a week ago when two former Juneau municipal

clerks, Laurie Sica and Beth McEwen, submitted a joint letter about the proposal. Their letter did not examine the pros and cons of ranked choice voting, but instead asked that it be on a 2026 ballot.

Sica said for the past several years, she has assisted voters in the call center for the Juneau election. She said many voters do not understand or trust the by-mail voting process.

"This year, a large number of people submitted an unsuccessful petition to return to poll-based elections," Sica said. "Other unsuccessful elections

**See VOTING, page 6**

## DZ playground advances to Assembly

*The playground is a priority for the mental and physical health of students, educators say*

**By JASZ GARRETT**  
Managing Editor

A playground for the Dzantik'i Heeni campus is set to swing before the Juneau Assembly for a decision.

On Wednesday, the Assembly Finance Committee unanimously advanced an ordinance appropriating \$735,000 from general funds to the city manager for the project. The Assembly will consider the project at its meeting on Aug. 18. If

approved, the site prep for the foundation can begin.

The total project cost is estimated to be \$660,000, including the design and construction of a concrete path compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), new fencing, and safety surfacing for the pre-K and K-5 play equipment. Drainage is also needed for the field.

"I'm hopeful it will be done next year so that we can decorate it," Deedie Sorenson, president of the Juneau Board of Education, said.

If passed by the Assembly, the funds will still not cover the cost of playground equipment — JSD is expected to raise the funds. Estimates for the total cost of the project have varied based on its fea-

tures, such as whether a swingset desired by school board members is included.

"The district is still and the community is still going to be on the hook for the playground equipment, but we can't go there or even think about that until there was some level of confidence that there would be the site prep," Sorenson said.

The playground is a priority for the Juneau School District. There are 220 K-6 students at the Dzantik'i Heeni campus, according to Superintendent Frank Hauser. Students from Juneau Montessori School, Juneau Community Charter School and Yaakoosgé Daakahidi Alternative High School

**See PLAYGROUND, page 6**



# Ranked choice decision to come after election

## VOTING, from page 5

procedure petitions were filed in 2024 and 2023. A change to by-mail voting has taken considerable time and cost to implement and explain to the voters. Voter education is ongoing. Adding one more big change to already frustrated voters could create more problems than it is trying to solve."

Ranked choice voting asks voters to give a ranking to each candidate in a race, then goes to an "instant runoff" process if no candidate gets a majority of first-choice votes.

The process involves eliminating the candidate with the fewest first-choice votes and adding the second-choice votes to the remaining candidates,

then repeating the process until one candidate has a majority.

The process is straightforward for Assembly and mayoral races in Juneau since voters are selecting a single candidate per race, much like electing a president or member of Congress. However, concern was expressed by some local elected officials about how the process would affect Juneau Board of Education races. In those races there are a set number of seats open — typically three, as is the case this year — and the top finishers in the pool of candidates (four this year) get the open seats.

The Assembly on Monday by a 7-1 vote al-

tered the ordinance to limit ranked choice voting to races electing a single candidate.

Deputy Mayor Greg Smith proposed the Aug. 18 public hearing to allow testimony on the ordinance, but then postpone further consideration of the matter until the Assembly's Nov. 3 meeting — well after the Oct. 7 municipal election — so residents don't think the changes being discussed will have any effect on this year's races. That schedule was adopted 6-2.

• Contact Mark Sabbatini at [editor@juneauindependent.com](mailto:editor@juneauindependent.com) or (907) 957-2306. Juneau Independent Managing Editor Jasz Garrett contributed to this story.

# City leaders say school playground long overdue

## PLAYGROUND, from page 5

are based at the campus, following the district's consolidation plan that went into effect last school year.

All other elementary schools, preschool to sixth grade, have a playground. But at Dzantik'i Heeni, "they have a field that turns into mud and an ice rink so that they are playing on the gravel path in front of the building during winter," Sorenson said.

Hauser said there are no public parks in the Lemon Creek area either.

"It will not only be a playground for the over 200 and some students that are elementary students — there's about 300 students projected at the Dzantik'i Heeni campus, K-12," he said. "But that is a playground not only for those students there, but for the whole community."

The finance committee's concurrence with the district on an option comes almost a year after the project was first announced. The playground was initially expected to break ground this year.

At a Dec. 2, 2024, Public Works and Facilities Committee meeting, the total project cost estimate was \$1.8 million. At the same meeting, the committee instead recommended \$575,000 for the playground.

At a March meeting, staff presented options ranging from \$880,000 to \$1.5 million. The playground was part of a proposed bond measure for the Oct. 7 municipal election that provided more than \$10 million for JSD improvements, but the Assembly rejected the measure on July 28. At that meeting, Assembly Member Christine Woll directed the finance committee to consider providing \$735,000 from general funds for the playground.



JASZ GARRETT / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

Deedie Sorenson, president of the Juneau Board of Education, and Juneau School District Superintendent Frank Hauser testify to the Assembly Finance Committee on Wednesday, Aug. 7, 2025.

Deputy Mayor Greg Smith asked how to avoid raising expectations in the future.

"There are ways we can do better moving forward," he said.

City Manager Katie Koester recommended a decision be based on either a design concept or the funding available. She said the challenge with the

Dzantik'i Heeni playground project was that no budget was set because the Assembly was unaware of the schools' needs.

"This project needed a lot more expensive site prep than we were anticipating," Woll, chair of the finance committee, said.

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## CONSUMING JUNEAU



ELLIE RUEL / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

Shelves of colorful yarn at Changing Tides on Tuesday, July 29, 2025.

# Local stores fill niche left by Joann closure

*Craft sellers pick up slack, expand stock after craft giant shuts down*

By ELLIE RUEL  
Reporter

After Juneau's only chain craft supply retailer Joann closed permanently in May, local creatives felt like they were left in the lurch. No other retailer in town carries everything from cake decorating supplies and fabrics to clay and canvas alongside a veritable plethora of tools under the same roof.

Joann shut the doors of its "underperforming" stores including locations in Juneau and Anchorage after the chain filed for bankruptcy in the District of Delaware Bankruptcy Court. Since then, all store locations have shut down and the brand's intellectual property has been sold to Michael's.

While the central hub for art supplies no longer exists, local specialty stores are filling many of the voids. The consensus among art store owners is that the community still needs a similar one-stop craft shop. Right now, they're adapting to what their customer base wants. This means picking up extra stock for some, while others will continue selling as usual.

**Balloons by Night Moods - 9342 Glacier Hwy #74**

"If you don't adapt, it doesn't matter what kind

of business you have, if you don't adapt to your customers, and you only have a very focused view of, 'This is the only thing I'm going to do,' then you're going to die," said Kathy Buell, owner of Balloons by Night Moods, a party store that boasts the largest latex and foil balloon supply in the state.

She's no stranger to adaptability in Juneau's unique business environment. In her 30 years of owning the store, it's transitioned from lingerie to balloons to party supplies. Buell's original venture was Night Moods, a lingerie shop she closed due to medical reasons. When she reopened, the store was relocated to the former Airport Mall location of Good Humor Balloons. Since people kept asking for balloons and the old supplier was looking to get rid of her stock, Buell gradually transitioned to a party and balloons store.

Buell added a new cake decorating section to her store and expanded her ribbon offerings. An alcove at the back of the building now holds cake pans, sprinkles, edible glitter, boxes, boards, and more. It's a sizable expansion from the original catering section, and features an assortment of themed cake toppers.

"We've brought in cake boards, cake boxes," Buell said. "We've brought in the Wilton line of cake decorating supplies of frostings, gel colorants, sprinkles, edible glitter."

Spools of colorful silk and satin ribbons hang a

few shelves away. Balloons by Night Moods already had a wholesale account with their ribbon supply company to do party setups, so when Joann closed, Buell bought every kind and color of ribbon she could find.

"We're not turning into a craft store, but people use ribbons for all kinds of reasons, so that you know, whether it's a wedding and they're doing little favors, or it's graduation season and they're making fun leis, things like that," Buell said. "If I get three customers for different dates that want something, I'll bring it. If I can find it, I'll bring it in. So as long as it goes with the store."

**RainTree Quilting - 9105 Mendenhall Mall Rd Suite 350**

Jodie Buck, the owner of RainTree Quilting, said her name might indicate a singular focus on quilt supplies, but her supply inventory runs the gamut of fabric usage. Thread, sewing machines, embroidery machines, needles, notions, and batting line her walls, and cheery fabrics fill the shelves.

"Unfortunately, the name is a little bit limiting, but we have fabrics for quilting, which are your premium quilting cottons, but we also carry a selection of really nice garment knits and some flannels," she said.

Buck bought RainTree eight years ago after re-

**See CRAFTS, page 8**





ELLIE RUEL / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

The cake decorating and baking section at Balloons by Night Moods, left, now boast the Wilton line of products on Friday, July 25, 2025. At right, fabric and sewing supplies at RainTree Quilting.

# Options for people yarning to create crafts

## CRAFTS, from page 7

tiring from teaching home economics due to chronic migraines. She used her background in garment design to steer the store into a more wide-ranging market. Her staff has different specialty areas, and the store runs the only full-service sewing machine repair shop in Southeast Alaska with two technicians.

Since May, Buck has seen an influx of people she calls “misplaced Joann customers.” Some of them have inquired about general craft supplies, but she’s seen a trend of requests for hand sewing and clothing repair materials. In the coming months, RainTree plans to bring in more hand sewing supplies, embroidery floss, and licensed fleece patterns. Buck said she’ll be selective.

“Probably more ball teams like team sports,” she said. “Themes and maybe some kind of licensed fabrics like Harry Potter, for example, but we’re going to start by pulling our customers to see what they’re interested in.”

She said it’s important to have customer feedback since more supplies take up space and financial resources.

“If I can’t sell it, it’s not wise for me to bring it in, but I only want to bring in good quality, because poor quality fleece ends up in the dump really fast,” Buck said. “It just doesn’t hold up.”

### Changing Tides - 175 S Franklin St #203

Changing Tides also carries a variety of fabric patterns and some sewing supplies. A separate back section houses multicolored artisan yarns and some knitting needles and crochet hooks. In the heart of the tourism district, gift items like mugs are interspersed throughout the space and displays prominently feature “Alaskan” prints with salmon or bears. While they somewhat cater to tourists in the summer months, the store has seen an uptick in local traffic lately.

Owner Jan Nardone says that in the post-Joann era, Changing Tides plans to expand its yarn section to be more accessible to all levels of knitter

and crocheter, without sacrificing quality.

“We started out as just hand-dyed in Alaska yarn, so it’s expensive,” Nardone said. “And so we’ve kind of lowered it a little bit. We won’t go down to Joann’s and get acrylic or anything like that, but we will get something that everybody can use.”

### Crafty Girl Consignment - 1997 Dunn St Suite 3

Another local option for yarn is Crafty Girl Consignment in the Mendenhall Valley. Wendy Beebe opened her one-woman operation last year and accepts consignment craft supplies of all varieties. Most of her stock is still in its original packaging, and she carefully selects what goes on her shelves, rearranging the space based on what she’s carrying.

“With having so many craft supplies myself, they cost money,” Beebe said. “And when I wasn’t using them, I was trying to find an outlet to sell them, so I came up with a craft consignment store. I get a little bit of everything. So it’s nice.”

Aside from consignments, Beebe also brings in craft kits, home goods, watercolor books, and crochet hooks wholesale. Her crafting niche is paper and yarn, which she plans to bring in wholesale in the wake of Joann closing down permanently. She’s attempting to bring in acrylic paint, which isn’t readily available in town anymore.

“I mean yarn and paper crafting, that’s kind of my passion, but I am moving more towards yarn, and I think a lot of people are really getting into crochet and knitting and stuff like that,” she said. “It’s totally making a comeback, and so that’s really what people are after.”

The space is also an arts classroom. Beebe intends to host more artists, who are welcome to teach whatever skills they please. Unconventionally, she pays artists to teach in her space, rather than charging for the usage. She has a similar setup for her local artist consignments, which change month to month. Right now, the main artist display

features earrings made by a local middle schooler.

### Lupine Leather and Beads - 9105 Mendenhall Mall Rd Suite 330

Lupine Leather and Beads might have a different specialty from Beebe, but it employs a similar method of community engagement. The regalia and beading supply store has recently relocated to a larger space in the Mendenhall Mall, where tables and chairs are now set up for customers to work on their projects. A kitchenette is also on its way to completion, which will be crucial to the store’s Wednesday Soup Nights, where beaders can get together and chat while they work on their projects.

“It was pretty much her home dream is what she called it, and so she made her living room dream come to life,” said Izabella Retallick, whose aunt Frances Andrews founded the store, originally called Regalia Arts and Beads.

Michelle Clark, Andrew’s mother, now manages the store. Bright glass seed beads hang from wall hooks, and spools of colored felt sit in the back. The opposite wall holds a variety of pelts and furs, and the front of the store features her husband’s silverwork. She says that the shop has seen more traffic since Joann closed, and while they might plus up their jewelry-making supplies like wires, they won’t carry the same type of beads the craft giant did.

“The foot traffic here is great and so I have been seeing an uptake in people that would go to Joanne’s first coming here now, and we don’t carry inexpensive or cheap things, so it’s a little different for folks if they’re not gonna order online, and lot of people like to see, touch, feel,” Clark said. “We’re not gonna carry cheaper quality beads and stuff.”

Clark noted that she sources beads from the Czech Republic and Japan because of their uniformity, which is better suited for traditional beadwork. They’ve seen a 4-5% increase in price from





ELLIE RUEL / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

Hand dyed yarns hang at Changing Tides downtown on Tuesday, July 29, 2025.

# Stores look to make marks with crafters

## CRAFTS, from page 8

their suppliers due to tariffs and higher shipping costs, which they've had to work into their pricing structure.

"You have to be creative in it, make sure you order what you need and find the best way to ship things," Clark said.

### Alaska Robotics - 134 N. Franklin St

Another notable gap left by Joann is sketchbooks, pencils, markers, and pens. While on first glance, Alaska Robotics may seem like an odd place to find art supplies, the gallery features a nook on the left wall that holds a wealth of drawing supplies.

Ineri Kylanen, who's worked there for 12 years, said that the store's focus is portable supplies, especially given their downtown location.

According to Kylanen, the gallery tries to specialize in quality materials with a comfortable price point, so people can buy "something that will last you and will serve you well, but it's not the exact, the best, like sort of the highest priced professional."

"A lot of our customers are tourists, but we do also serve locals. So it's something like, we don't really have huge items just because we don't have space for it, but we try to have things that are for multiple ways of doing art that serve you well."



ELLIE RUEL / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

Sketchbooks, pencil cases, and other portable art items at Alaska Robotics on Tuesday, July 29, 2025.

Kylanen said.

The gallery may not be a full-service craft store, but Kylanen said they're willing to help local artists source and order whatever supplies they might need.

"So if you do something specific, like say you do your printmaking thing, and there aren't that many printmakers in town, so we probably don't carry that regularly, but you would like to have that item, you can order it through us," Kylanen said.

### Ben Franklin - 233 Front St

For more general supplies, Ben Franklin's back section covers a lot of the bases. They have a general craft section with the basics like markers and pens, as well as some fabrics, yarn, and sewing supplies. Seasonal decorations like fake fall leaves and tinsel garlands are available on their back wall. They don't plan to expand, since they don't have the space.

### Imagination Station - 174 S. Franklin St.

With back-to-school coming up, families are looking for entry-level art supplies for kids. Those supplies may be readily available at stores like Fred Meyer and Office Max, but local toy store Imagination Station also carries the full Crayola line as well as kids' art kits and a few STEM kits. They're also expecting a shipment of Faber-Castell supplies shortly, and carry nicer pens and adult coloring books.

"I did keep in mind that there was going to be less available in town when I bought for the fall, so we will have a slightly broader craft section this year and just put a little more effort into it," said Alicia Smith, who owns Imagination Station. "We'll be concentrating more on art items and craft kits."

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# Shelter limits daytime services

## SHELTER, from page 1

Efforts to establish a meal program at an alternative location are underway, but it is not known yet where or when it will be operating, Quinto said.

A written notice sent by the Glory Hall to patrons states "we must change how we operate to make sure that our staff, patrons, volunteers, visitors, neighbors, and partners who live and work in and around our facility are safe."

"We also must concentrate on providing quality service to people in need to meet our mission to end homelessness and achieve equity, health, and dignity through housing, connection to services, and community," the notice adds. "We cannot accomplish these goals without changes to our operations."

The building will be secured and a visitor policy enacted as of Aug. 26 that will allow people access to some services during office hours, according to the notice. That includes navigation services from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays, and case management and clinical services "available on a basis consistent with the visitor policy."

PATH Program Services will be mostly off-site, but available Mondays through Thursdays from 9-11 a.m. and 1-3 p.m. Also, the Stabilization Program is ending in September due to a separate action by the Alaska Housing Finance Corp. more than a year ago.

Camping by people experiencing homelessness has been a significant problem for the city during the past couple of years, beginning with a large increase in reports of illegal activity at the city-sanctioned Mill Campground near the Goldbelt Tram two summers ago. The Assembly as a result approved a dispersed camping policy with no designated site, leaving people on their own to find sleeping spots.

That has resulted in a barrage of complaints throughout town from residents and businesses due to nearby campers, as well as the campers themselves. The vicinity of the Glory Hall has been one of the most heavily populated camping area due to the shelter and other nearby social service agencies being located there.

The Assembly's Committee of the Whole on Monday, at the request of agency officials, considered a proposed ordinance establishing a safety zone in the Teal Street area, similar to one established in Bellingham, Washington, a year ago. Anchorage also has a similar restriction, but it is facing a legal challenge from the American Civil Liberties Union.

City Attorney Emily Wright told Assembly members one of the legal issues of the safety zone is opponents can argue it discriminates by targeting a specific group of people rather than the general population.

"We are very specifically talking about homeless people," she said. "And if I were to go to court — if we were to be sued by the ACLU — they



MARK SABBATINI / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

Juneau Assembly Member Wade Bryson, right, argues in favor of establishing a safety zone around the Glory Hall shelter during a Committee of the Whole meeting on Monday, Aug. 4, 2025.

would have the meeting notes, they would have the organization notes, they would know what we're talking about. So every time we talk about these things we need to look at the broad perspective, bigger picture for our city. What are the behaviors that we don't like in our city? What are the behaviors that we need to stop or encourage so that our service providers can provide services?"

Assembly members favoring the proposal cited the need to protect vulnerable people staying and working at the shelter. Assembly Member Wade Bryson said that protection should be provided and the issue of trying to reduce homelessness treated as a separate issue.

Deputy Mayor Greg Smith said while the policy isn't perfect and there are pending legal questions, approving to proceed with the ordinance would simply bring it before the full Assembly where it could go through further review and public comment before a vote to adopt it is considered.

Among those voting against the ordinance was Assembly Member Ella Adkison, who said "I really think that I'd rather focus on other areas where we aren't getting ourselves into legal hot water." Assembly Member Maureen Hall, who also voted in opposition, said while she supports the idea of security for facilities such as the Glory Hall, she doesn't favor banning people from camping nearby if they need meals and other services provided by the shelter.

Bryson, noting a trespass order could be issued against somebody camping on private property, asked why a similar policy can't be used for the Teal Street locations where campers frequent.

Deputy City Manager Robert Barr said the city currently has a policy where homeless encampments on public land can be dismantled if their presence becomes too disruptive to an area. Such removals have occurred multiple times this year — including to groups of tents along Teal Street — but people can move back three days later.

"If the Assembly wishes to give us a different

direction about when we should take enforcement action we will certainly hear that and act accordingly," Barr said.

A more practical than legal concern was raised by Assembly Member Neil Steininger, who asked Barr where homeless residents will go if a safety zone is established.

"Do you kind of have any instinct from working in this area where these individuals might end up actually going in town?" Steininger said. "Where is this impact going to shift to from the Teal Street area should we make that an area with a complete, stricter, no-camping ban? Will they end up in Mr. Bryson's neighborhood, as he used in his example?"

Barr said the likelihood is "we would see increased camping on the border of whatever we define a shelter safety zone to be geographically," as well as "along easily accessible greenbelt-type areas."

"So think along the undeveloped side of the Mendenhall River, back behind Fred Meyer, various sorts of park and greenbelt areas in the Lemon Creek area, and the like," he said.

Steininger, in response, observed "most of those areas described are much closer to existing residential neighborhoods" than the Teal Street facilities.

Bryson said he believes discussions about where camp sites should be allowed are misguided because it suggests officials are OK with the concept of ongoing camping by people without other shelter.

"If we are trying to make camping easier it means we've given up on trying to end homelessness by trying to make it OK for people to not have a home and provide a camping area for them," he said. "It means we've stopped trying to provide a home for them."

A cold-weather emergency shelter south of downtown Juneau is scheduled to be open for a third season between Oct. 15 and April 15, Barr said. However, he said St. Vincent de Paul Juneau, which operates the shelter under a contract with the city, does not have the staffing to open the shelter earlier or keep it open year-round.

Assembly members, after rejecting the safety zone, asked city officials to examine other possible options such as additional security for areas such as Teal Street or a year-round shelter. Barr said officials are considering options for a low-barrier shelter during warmer months and there are preliminary indicators a property in the Teal Street area may be for sale, which he didn't specifically name since its status is not certain.

"So one of the options that I would anticipate bringing back to you in the future is a potential land purchase and renovation — or land purchase, and demolish, and build shelter option," he said.

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JASZ GARRETT/ JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

Gov. Mike Dunleavy speaks during a press conference at the Alaska State Capitol on Aug. 3, 2025.

# Dunleavy seeks state 'DOGE'

*Governor issues orders seeking funding cuts, automatic approval of stalled development permits*

**By MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

A "government efficiency" mandate that starts by targeting grants and "accounts payable," plus automatic approval of natural resource permit applications if the state misses a deadline are contained in two administrative orders issued by Gov. Mike Dunleavy on Monday.

Both orders were issued two days after Dunleavy suffered a series of political defeats during the opening day of a special legislative session he called, including lawmakers overturning his veto of an education funding increase and spurning his executive order forming a state Department of Agriculture.

The orders also largely mirror the governing-by-decree tactics of President Donald Trump, who Dunleavy strongly supports, now being replicated by Republican governors in many states. Unlike executive orders, the Alaska Legislature cannot overturn administrative orders.

Dunleavy, in a press release Monday, offered the following summaries of the two administrative orders:

- Administrative Order No. 359: "Establishes a Government Efficiency Review, requiring the Office of Management and Budget to lead an annual review of all executive branch agencies. The review will identify cost savings, streamline operations, modernize processes, and ensure every public dollar is spent wisely. Initial areas of focus will include grants to non-state entities and accounts payable. Agencies will also be required to use technology and artificial intelligence to improve transparency and accountability in how public money is spent."

The order itself states "Initial areas of focus of the Government Efficiency Review will include: 1) Grants to non-State of Alaska entities (and) 2) Accounts Payable."

- Administrative Order No. 360: "Launches a comprehensive Regulatory Reform Initiative, replacing previous regulatory directives with a new framework to reduce unnecessary burdens on Alaskans and businesses. The order requires state agencies to review and streamline existing regulations, guidance documents, and materials incorporated by reference. Agencies must reduce regulatory requirements by 15% by the end of 2026 and 25% by the end of 2027."

A governor's administrative orders cannot change state law, which the order affecting ap-

proval of permits and projects appears to do, said state Sen. Jesse Kiehl, D-Juneau, in an interview Tuesday.

"I don't know that the governor has that power," he said. "We set standards in the law and departments have regulations setting up the way to meet those standards, and we absolutely owe private businesses a speedy turnaround, but a time clock doesn't have anything to do with whether a project meets the standards or not."

The governor's order for projects and permits mandates reducing and simplifying the steps in the approval process, plus "clear timelines and deadlines...including provisions for automatic approval if deadlines are not met." That means oil and other development projects would get approval with full environmental review if agencies — whether willfully or inadvertently — fail to meet the deadlines.

Kiehl said such a provision isn't legal or logical.

"We need to make the agencies as efficient as possible," he said. "But if a bridge proposal or a mine proposal or clear-cut proposal is going to kill a bunch of salmon fry in the stream, it doesn't meet the standards. I don't care how long it takes."

A Dunleavy spokesperson, in response to questions from the Independent about the legality of the

**See ORDERS, page 12**



# Legality of Dunleavy order questioned

## ORDERS, from page 11

administrative order, defended it as proper.

"While regulations cannot alter statute, (the order) will ensure that state agencies are effectively serving Alaskans, not creating regulatory roadblocks," Deputy Press Secretary Grant Robinson wrote. "(The) Department of Law and the Governor's office will be providing implementation guidance to agencies on how to reduce discretionary requirements soon."

AO 359 is similar to "Department of Government Efficiency" (DOGE) mandates issued in at least 26 states including Florida, Iowa, Louisiana and Oklahoma. But while many of those governors say their efforts are inspired by the Trump administration's DOGE cuts, there are key differences in implementation.

"The state initiatives have a markedly different character than Trump's slash-and-burn approach, symbolized by Musk's chainsaw-brandishing appearance at a Conservative Political Action Committee appearance in February," the Associated Press reported in a story published July 12. "Governors are tending to entrust their DOGE bureaus to loyalists, rather than independent auditors, and are often employing what could be yearslong processes

to consolidate procurement, modernize information technology systems, introduce AI tools, repeal regulations or reduce car fleets, office leases or worker headcounts through attrition."

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis in July announced audits of Broward County and the city of Gainesville as part of a series of local government probes. The Center Square reported July 22. The news site states examples of spending targeted by DeSantis "are an \$800,000 Broward County float in this year's Parade of Roses in Pasadena, Calif., and 'Green New Deal' projects in both areas."

Robinson, responding to a question about what specific grants and "accounts payable" the governor has in mind by targeting them initially in his administrative order, stated as of now the scrutiny is for spending by state agencies.

"In some areas of the budget, this may result in eliminating grants to non-State of Alaska entities," Robinson wrote. "In other areas, it may result in contracting with a specialist who can provide a service at a superior value. The ultimate goal is to ensure that tax dollars are spent in the most responsible manner."

Kiehl said such efforts are already core duties of the state Office of Management and Budget, and

"I have been working with state agencies to find efficiencies every year that I've been in the Legislature."

Rescinding of federal grant funds previously approved has been achieved by the Trump administration through executive orders and pressuring Congress, including clawing back \$9 billion recently for foreign aid and public broadcasting. Kiehl said the Alaska Supreme Court has ruled that while governors have line-item veto authority, that doesn't extend to rescissions such as those occurring at the federal level (some of which are being challenged in court).

Contracting out state services to private entities has been successful in some instances, especially for specialized purposes such as naval architects for the Alaska Marine Highway System since the state has struggled to hire certain personnel, Kiehl said.

"On the other hand, if it means taking eligibility workers for public assistance and trying to cover seven years of failure by sending it to a call center in India with untrained workers for less than the American minimum wage, that's a terrible idea and would be a disaster," he said.

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# Storis still needs several years of upgrades

## SHIP, from page 1

highlights the work of the crew, members of the community in Juneau and Alaskan representatives who have helped the Coast Guard acquire and ready the vessel. U.S. Sen. Dan Sullivan, an advocate for the acquisition of the Storis, will be attending the commissioning ceremony.

"It's a neat opportunity because it's the official entry of the vessel in the Coast Guard service," Gookin said.

Also scheduled during the weekend is a free screening of the documentary film "STORIS: The Galloping Ghost of the Alaskan Coast" by filmmaker Damon Stuebner is scheduled at 1 p.m. Saturday at the Alaska State Library, Archives, and Museum.

The Storis, originally built in 2012 as a privately operated ship known as the Aiviq, was purchased by the Coast Guard last year from an Edison Chouest Offshore subsidiary. The ship is undergoing extensive modifications to make it ready for full mission deployment.

According to Gookin, the ship left Seattle on July 24 and stopped to do exercises outside of Ketchikan, Wrangell, Petersburg and Sitka.

"It's got a very different engine configuration than any of our other vessels, so we have more maneuverability than any other vessel in the Coast Guard fleet, and it's an exciting chance to learn to drive a different ship," Gookin said.



LAURIE CRAIG / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

The LeConte state ferry and U.S. Coast Guard icebreaker Storis dock at the Auke Bay Ferry Terminal on Wednesday, Aug. 6, 2025.

Coast Guard officials have said it will be several years before the ship is fully ready to be homeported in Juneau with an estimated full crew of 190.

Gookin said there are currently 64 crew aboard, a mix of Coast Guard personnel and Edison

Chouest Offshore contractors. Coast Guard Lt. D.J. Corbett drove the ship into Juneau.

"The contractors, they're here because they operated this ship before. They're here to teach us all of their tips and tricks and how the ship runs and operates," Corbett said.

According to Corbett, the Coast Guard contract with Edison Chouest Offshore contractors goes until November and the Storis should be operating with a complete Coast Guard crew by next summer.

The Storis is scheduled to serve limited seasonal patrols in Alaska and undergo further service work in the Lower 48 until homeporting in Juneau is feasible.

"They're still building out the infrastructure for Juneau. Right now, we're temporarily home ported in Seattle, and we're hoping to move up here in the next couple years," Corbett said.

Corbett said that the types of missions the Storis will undertake will remain unknown until the Coast Guard can better assess the capabilities of the ship. One possibility may be regulating fishing in the Arctic and North Pacific. However, significant training and modification are required in the immediate future.

"Our primary focus is just learning and training on a new ship," Corbett said.

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ELLIE RUEL / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

People line up for tours of the U.S. Coast Guard's Storis icebreaker at the Auke Bay Ferry Terminal on Thursday, Aug. 7, 2025.

# Locals get first icebreaker tour

*Assembly effort to switch to ranked choice voting in local elections to continue w/ public hearing Aug. 18*

**By ELLIE RUEL**  
**Reporter**

Hundreds of Juneauites lined up around the perimeter of the Auke Bay Ferry Terminal parking lot Thursday afternoon to catch a glimpse of the U.S. Coast Guard's newest icebreaker. Crew members stationed aboard the Storis led tour groups of eight around the ship. One tour was led by Matthew Kersey, assistant engineer officer for the icebreaker.

"I'm responsible for basically anything that makes the ship go anywhere, produce electricity, produce water, keep people alive," Kersey explained.

The first stop after boarding was Storis's winch room. He said before the Coast Guard acquired the vessel, formerly known as the Aiviq and owned by an Edison-Chouest Offshore subsidiary, it was used for oil exploration in the Arctic. According to Kersey, the ship has one of the best marine towing systems in the world, but the Coast Guard isn't sure how they'll make use of that yet.



ELLIE RUEL/ JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

U.S. Coast Guard Assistant Engineer Officer Matthew Kersey shows the icebreaker Storis' flight deck to a tour group on Thursday, Aug. 7, 2025

"We're still trying to figure out what we want to do with this," Kersey said. "The Coast Guard purchased this vessel for the front end to break ice."

The next stop was the flight deck, which is unconventionally positioned at the bow rather than the stern. The deck can support 420 tons, more than

**See TOUR, page 14**



# A first look at the Storis icebreaker

## TOUR, from page 13

enough for any of the helicopters in the Coast Guard fleet. After a question from an attendee about who could use the helicopter pad, Kersey noted that they're in slightly unfamiliar territory with this vessel.

"It's forcing us to expand how we do things, other than just building a ship exactly to how we're used to it. So I would say it's probably pushing the Coast Guard outside of the comfort zone a little bit," he said.

Along with the 46 Coast Guard personnel stationed on the Storis, 22 civilian mariners familiar with the ship are helping ease the transition of operations.

"We have a chief engineer who's been on the Storis for, like, over 10 years, so he's an excellent guy to learn from," Kersey said.

Multiple people were curious about the icebreaking capabilities. Kersey explained that the Storis can employ both continuous icebreaking and ramming techniques, and claimed that the vessel could break six feet of ice at some speeds. A ProPublica report published earlier this year raises some questions about its history and design failures.

Other notable features included the on-deck crane, which was actively being used to load supplies for the next leg of the journey, and the bridge, which showcased a variety of machinery and steering equipment.

After the tour, one of the families aboard said they were excited about being able to see the inner workings of the ship. Their kids said the bridge, or "captain's land," and the helicopter pad were favorites.

The Storis will be open for more tours on Friday morning from 8-10 a.m., and its commissioning ceremony is scheduled Sunday.

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ELLIE RUEL / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

Winches aboard the U.S. Coast Guard's Storis icebreaker on Thursday, Aug. 7, 2025.



ELLIE RUEL / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

Visitors tour the bridge of the U.S. Coast Guard's Storis icebreaker on Thursday, Aug. 7, 2025.

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OFFICE OF U.S. SEN. DAN SULLIVAN

U.S. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., center, meets with U.S. Sen. Dan Sullivan, R-Alaska, on Dec. 18, 2024.

# Looking at what ill Alaska

*Kennedy defends vaccine fund cuts, calls processed foods part of genocide against Natives during visit*

**By MARK SABBATINI**  
**Editor**

Hours after cutting \$500 million for vaccine research, U.S. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. defended his controversial health care agenda at a press conference Tuesday with Alaska's two U.S. senators during the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium in Anchorage.

During his appearance with U.S. Sens. Dan Sullivan and Lisa Murkowski, both Republicans who voted to confirm him as health secretary, Kennedy called processed foods part of a genocide against Alaska Native people.

"All the tribes, the processed foods are literally killing them, part of a genocide that is centuries old," he said. "It may be one of the worst parts of that genocide in terms of the impact of processed foods on Native health."

As a result, he said "we want to work with the tribes. We want to be recognize and support their

sovereignty. And we want to move the impediments to food sovereignty, to subsistence of traditional foods we wanted."

Earlier during the day Kennedy earned global headlines by announcing the cancellation of \$500 million for 22 vaccine development projects using mRNA technology. Health experts say the technology is safe and its development was crucial in slowing the spread of COVID-19 at the onset of the pandemic.

"I don't think I've seen a more dangerous decision in public health in my 50 years in the business," Mike Osterholm, a University of Minnesota expert on infectious diseases and pandemic preparations, told the Associated Press. He also told the news agency the technology allows rapid vaccine production, which would be crucial if a new pandemic occurs.

Kennedy, who has made numerous false and misleading statements about vaccines, stated with-

out providing scientific evidence that the funding is being cancelled because the mRNA vaccines "fail to protect effectively against upper respiratory infections like COVID and flu."

Sullivan did not address Kennedy's vaccine policies at the event. Murkowski — notorious as being one of the few Republicans in Congress who has criticized the Trump administration on some issues — said she disagreed with some of his actions, such as replacing all of the members of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.

"I have been one who has been perhaps more critical of some of the processes, but I don't fault the secretary for wanting to ensure that there is a more rigorous testing process for our vaccines," she said. "Although I do believe that we have many vaccines that have been in place for years, if not decades, that have clearly demonstrated that efficacy over a period."

**See HEALTH, page 16**

# Alaska's senators back Kennedy

## HEALTH, from page 15

The health secretary, during his Anchorage appearance, also defended cuts to Medicaid contained in a budget bill signed by Trump last month that cuts \$1 trillion in federal health care spending, which state officials say could affect coverage for more than 100,000 Alaskans. The bill also adds \$3.4 trillion to the national deficit during the next decade by including \$4.5 trillion in tax cuts that fiscal analysts say primarily benefit the wealthy.

"We're using AI and we're using innovation to identify waste, fraud and abuse, and eliminate it, and that's the only cuts that we're going to see," Kennedy said.

Alaska's congressional delegation has noted some Alaska-specific exemptions to the Medicaid cuts are in the federal spending bill. Those include

exempting Alaska Natives and certain seasonal workers such as fishers from work requirements for able-bodied people to be eligible for Medicaid.

Murkowski and Sullivan, during the press conference, both praised Kennedy for his commitment to Alaska Native health care in particular.

"It's an honor to be able to welcome him back to Alaska," Murkowski said, "It is yet another trip in his repertoire of many, many visits to the state of Alaska. He's familiar with many of our issues, but most notably as they relate to Alaska Native peoples. So to have him here in his capacity as the Secretary of Health and Human Services with the oversight of (Indian Health Service) is significant. And it's important he's heard today much about what he already knows with regards to self determination, self governance, some of the issues that impact our

tribal health organizations."

Sullivan said he asks all of Trump's Cabinet nominees and other top officials if they have been to Alaska, and Kennedy's response was particularly impressive.

"Before I could even, like, ask the question Secretary Kennedy spent 25 minutes telling me of all the places he's been to in Alaska, how many times he's been up here, how he cares about these issues, how he's been working on for decades — especially Alaska Native health issues — where I would say he's not just passionate, but brings a level of expertise and commitment," he said. "So in our first meeting I was blown away by his commitment to Alaska."

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# Goldbelt has high hopes for cruise dock

## DOCK, from page 1

Engineers. The notice seeking comment is effective until Aug. 28 and states a public hearing can be requested by interested parties.

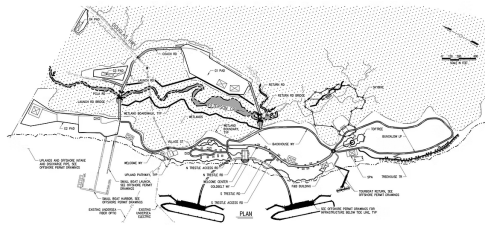
Goldbelt announced its proposed two-berth dock on property it owns along the northwest coast of Douglas Island last October, to the surprise of city officials who said they were unaware of the plans beforehand. Officials also said the company provided few details during subsequent months, although preliminary permit discussions with Juneau's Community Development Department occurred July 23.

The USACE notice focuses largely on Goldbelt Aani's specific facilities and infrastructure, plus environmental and other impacts that will need to be weighed in considering the application.

"The applicant's stated purpose is to construct two cruise ship berths on Douglas Island that can safely accommodate a class of increasingly larger cruise ships docking in Southeast Alaska," the notice states. "The proposed development also includes the onshore visitor attraction development and associated infrastructure necessary to support the cruise ship operations."

Goldbelt Aani is scheduled to be built in phases, with offshore development expected to take up to two years and onshore development up to five years, according to the notice. Goldbelt states its goal is to open the port for the 2028 cruise ship season.

Two floating cruise ship docks 500 feet long, with mooring dolphins extending out about 315 feet more from each end of both docks, are specified in the blueprints. The distance of roughly 1,130 feet between the mooring dolphins would be able to accommodate the largest ships currently visiting Juneau such as the 1,138-foot-long *Ovation of the Seas*.



TURNAGAIN MARINE CONSTRUCTION

An illustration of Goldbelt Inc.'s proposed two-berth private cruise port, as detailed in a permit application submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The water depth of the two docks at low tide also appears to exceed the 30-foot draft needed for Royal Caribbean's 1,196-foot-long *Icon of the Seas* — currently the largest ship in the world, along with a sister vessel owned by the company — but the ability of such a ship to dock elsewhere in Alaska would be limited.

Goldbelt is proposing a multi-use harbor that, in addition to the two cruise ship piers, features interconnected floats for a small boat harbor, seaplane base, and a fuel dock for vessels and planes.

Shore facilities listed in blueprints include a kayak center, theater, restaurant, shops, stalls, spa, treehouses and bungalows. A network of roads, trails and elevated boardwalks is planned to connect facilities.

Explained in greater detail — due to the infrastructure required — is a skybike facility consisting "of a 2,300-foot-long cable loop suspended 30 to 50 feet above ground level between structural towers."

Among the specifications for the skybikes — which essentially involve pedaling a well-secured bike along a chairlift-like installation — are "tower heights ranging from 20 to 80 feet depending on site topography," and "Elevated viewing platforms would be installed along the ride."

Installation of infrastructure ranging from steel pilings for the docks to a wastewater treatment facility are specified in the plan, along with some details of how Goldbelt plans to address or mitigate impacts to the environment or cultural heritage sites.

For instance, "to compensate for impacts to 7.25 acres of wetlands and marine waters impacts (5.58 acres of palustrine, 0.12 acres of riverine, and 1.55 acres of estuarine impacts), Turnagain Marine Construction proposes to purchase credits from a wetland mitigation bank or in-lieu fee program," the USACE notice states.

Among the questions raised by city officials, residents and other interested parties is whether the two ships docking at Goldbelt Aani will be counted as part of Juneau's voluntary five-ship-a-day agreement with the cruise industry. A similar voluntary limit on the daily number of passengers is set to take effect next year.

Goldbelt did not immediately respond to questions from the Independent seeking further details about the project as specified in the USACE notice.

Numerous permit applications to various city, state and federal agencies have not yet been submitted, according to the notice. The notice also states USACE "is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity."

"Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application," the notice states. "Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, reasons for holding a public hearing."

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## Voices

# Juneau needs new ferry terminal like it needs a hole in a boat

By **LARRY PERSILY**

The state is taking money that was appropriated for one bad idea almost a generation ago and spending it on an equally wasteful idea.

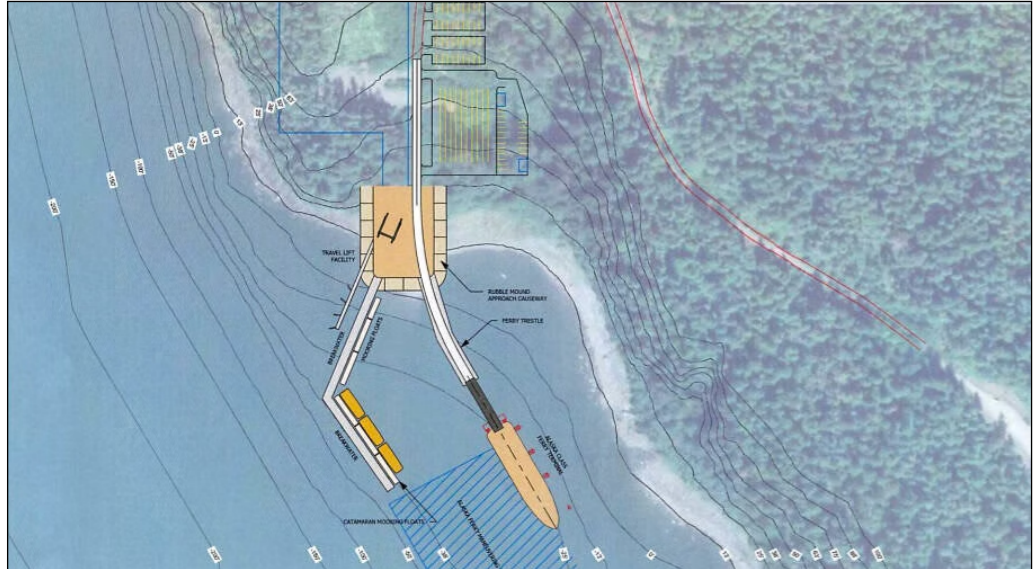
Gov. Mike Dunleavy's Department of Transportation, which manages the Alaska Marine Highway System, has signed a \$28.5 million contract to start work toward a new ferry terminal at Cascade Point, 40 long road miles north of downtown Juneau.

The money is coming from a kitty left over from a long-ago appropriation to build a longer road between Juneau and Haines or Skagway. The billion-dollar road was never built, though millions of dollars was foolishly spent on planning.

The governor has shifted the leftover planning money to a shorter road as a better idea than a longer road, as if that makes it a good road.

Mind you, the \$28.5 million doesn't get you a usable ferry dock, or any sort of dock. It will pay for permitting work, engineering, a bridge over a creek, a retaining wall and site prep.

The dock, berthing moorings, shore-based facilities, electrical power, water and sewer and everything else needed for a functional ferry terminal will cost tens of millions of dollars — money the state does not have in hand but figures it will get from the federal government.



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

An illustration shows the proposed Cascade Point ferry terminal.

Setting aside the reality that federal money these days is about as certain as a sunny summer day in Southeast Alaska, what's the rush to spend money designing a project that may never get built — that shouldn't get built.

It appears that the governor, whose term ends in 16 months and who has long advocated for the out-of-sight, out-of-mind remote ferry terminal, wants to push ahead while he still is in office and

**See CASCADE, page 18**

## Hoping the music of Telephone Hill can carry on

By **MARK WHITMAN**

The memories and ghosts that inhabit Telephone Hill are hard to hear above the noise and clamor of cruise ships and tour buses, but on an early morning, in the shade of trees and homes that still stand, you might still hear them.

The sound of Joe Twan's peg leg, pounding out time on the floorboards of the first courthouse built on the hill; calling out the moves for the dancers...as he and Dick Willoughby played twin fiddles through the night. Laughter and music to push back the long, dark curtains of winter darkness.

The shuffle of cards and laughter as the old timers of Cassiar played cards in China Joe's log cabin with Juneau's first brick-oven bakery built right into the home...coffee and cards and fresh ginger cake!

Today, in the state museum you can still see

Joe's bamboo, erhu fiddle. Dick Willoughby's homemade banjo is still in the museum somewhere; instruments of music, locked away in glass cases.

We forget, before the internet, before YouTube and Spotify, long before AI, there was a time when music came from parlors and homes of people. At the turn of the century, families would gather around a piano and a family member skilled at reading sheet music, or playing songs from memory, would gather the family to sing. Music and songs were a shared thing.

In our time, Telephone Hill was the focal point of the last singers and players of Folk Festival's final night, making music till dawn, when celebrants would leave Jeff Brown's "Institute of White Noise"...his magical, musical home on the Hill.

Or you might still hear John Ingall's in his garage workshop working away on a new flute design. Most folks don't know John has flutes that sit

in the Smithsonian Institute, and recently he was granted a patent for a new flute that is a wonder to hold and play. Again...musical magic on the Hill.

Visitors often ask, where is the best food in Juneau, the best music?

We who live here know the truth, the best food and music is in the homes of its people, and you are more than fortunate if you are invited to share in that.

So the members of our city Assembly, who are poised to bulldoze the homes and green heart of our city, they need to sit on a bench on Telephone Hill and listen long and hard, for they have forgotten the words and the melody of the song we call "community." They have forgotten the song and treasure we share in our homes is more valuable than gold. There is still a ghost of a chance they might sit up and listen, and let the Hill be.

• *Mark Whitman is a Douglas resident.*

## COOKING FOR PLEASURE

# Peach ice cream vs peach gelato

By **PATTY SCHIED**

What could be better this time of year than eating homemade fresh peach ice cream or gelato? I have wondered for a while which one is better, so I decided to make both and have a taste test.

For these recipes you need an ice cream maker, alas, without one you won't be able to make them. Fortunately, there are many ice cream makers for sale, some very deluxe and others inexpensive but still easy to use. If you like ice cream, they are a great investment because the homemade variety not only tastes better, it is also cheaper.

The hardest part of making these ice desserts was finding good peaches. I visited every store in town sniffing peaches to find the best ones. Because I needed so many, I purchased yellow, white, and also nectarines. Even so, I had to toss a few fruits because some were too green and I was too impatient to let them ripen in a bowl.

Each recipe required two cups of chopped peaches or about 3 or 4 whole peaches, peeled and cut up. It is easy to peel peaches. Bring a pan of water to a boil, drop in a peach and let it cook for about a minute, remove into a bowl of ice water and let it sit for another minute. The peel should slip right off.

Each recipe makes about a quart and a half of frozen dessert. The mixtures should be made a day ahead and stored overnight in the refrigerator so that they are thoroughly chilled.

## For the Gelato:

- 2 cups finely chopped fresh peaches mixed with ¼ cup sugar and set aside.
- 1 pint of half and half.
- ½ cup sugar.
- 1 pinch of salt.
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch.



PEACH DESSERTS BY PATTY SCHIED

Place sugar, salt, and cornstarch into a heavy-bottom medium saucepan. Turn heat to medium and gradually whisk in half and half. Bring mixture to a boil, stirring constantly until thickened. Remove from heat. Stir in peaches. Taste for sugar. Pour into bowl.

Cover mixture with plastic wrap and cool in the refrigerator overnight.

## For the Peach Ice Cream:

- 2 cups of finely chopped fresh peaches mixed with ½ cup of sugar and set aside.
- 2 cups heavy cream.
- 1 cup half & half.
- ½ cup sugar.
- ¼ tsp salt.
- 4 egg yolks.
- 1 tsp of vanilla.

Beat egg yolks until light in color. Heat cream, half and half, sugar and salt in a heavy-duty pan at medium heat until sugar is dissolved.

Very slowly pour ½ cup of the hot cream mixture into the egg yolks, whisking constantly. This 'tempers' the egg yolks. It is important that this process is done carefully, or the yolks will curdle and you will have to do this step all over again.

Pour the egg/cream mixture into the pan and heat slowly, stirring constantly until the mixture coats the back of a spoon. **DO NOT BOIL.**

Strain milk egg mixture into a large bowl. Add peaches and vanilla extract. Stir and cover with plastic wrap and store in the refrigerator overnight.

The next day, pour mixture into ice cream maker following machine directions. (Some machines can make both the same day. If you are using the Ninja ice cream maker, the ice cream and gelato mixtures must be frozen overnight in the designated containers.)

Each recipe makes about a quart and a half of gelato/ice cream. If you are used to purchasing grocery store ice cream, you will notice that this recipe makes a much denser frozen dessert.

## THE TASTE TEST

I invited several friends to come and taste the desserts, interested in learning what they preferred. They liked both equally, saying that the ice cream was lush and decadent with its creamy richness and that the gelato was lighter with a more intense peach flavor. It surprised me one small scoop of each was all my guests wanted due to the dense richness of each. Even though six guests were encouraged to eat more, I ended up with a lot left.

The conclusion, if there is one, is that either dessert is great. If you want one with less sugar and fat, the gelato is the best choice. If you want the rich creaminess of homemade ice cream, select that one. Either one is much cheaper than any store-bought variety.

• *Patty Schied is a longtime Juneau resident who studied at the Cordon Bleu in London and has written a cookbook. Cooking For Pleasure appears every other week. She welcomes questions about her column at patschied@yahoo.com.*

# New ferry terminal is far from feasible

## CASCADE, from page 17

can direct spending, no matter how wasteful.

The Department of Transportation has not even completed an economic feasibility study of the project.

The borough assemblies for the two Lynn Canal communities the new terminal supposedly would benefit — Haines and Skagway — think it's a bad idea and would do little to improve ferry service in Lynn Canal.

The state's argument is that by directing people to a new ferry terminal far north of the current Juneau terminal at Auke Bay, the ships could reduce their running time up Lynn Canal, saving fuel and maybe squeezing in more trips.

Yet that ignores the fact that the shrunken ferry

schedule is due to lack of crew and aging vessels being held out of service. It's as if the Dunleavy administration is skipping over the two big problems to propose a solution that isn't even on the nautical chart.

The Cascade Point "solution" is so far off the chart that a taxi or ride service from the terminal to the airport, medical offices or downtown would cost travelers more than the ferry ticket between Haines or Skagway and Juneau.

But don't take Haines or Skagway's word for it, much of the Alaska Marine Highway Operations Board, which Dunleavy appointed, thinks the \$28.5 million is a seasick idea.

"The Alaska Marine Highway System has been plagued for 50 years with one-off projects that get

foisted upon it ... that then the system and the users have to deal with," Wanetta Ayers, chair of the operations board, said at a meeting last month. "This is another one of those situations where it's going to get foisted upon the system and we're going to have to cope with it for 20 or 30 years until somebody admits it's not going to work."

Board member Bob Horchover was emphatic: "Without even a reason for doing it is, to me, a boondoggle."

The Cascade Point terminal needs to sink before it swims in state dollars.

• *Larry Persily is the publisher of the Wrangell Sentinel, which first published this column.*



# Sports

## Crimson Bears back on gridiron

*Juneau-Douglas High School: Yadaa.at Kalé's football team returns to black and red*

**By KLAS STOLPE**  
**Sports Editor**

The 2025-26 Alaska high school football season has begun and the Juneau-Douglas High School: Yadaa.at Kalé Crimson Bears have returned as the namesake of the capital city's gridiron team.

"We're back to being the Bears," JDHS head coach Rich Sjoroos said. "A few of the kids are still feeling it out. We're starting to say Bears on the breaks and chants and things. They've been saying Huskies since they were freshmen or whatever. But I think each day that goes by, everybody's really embracing it more and more. And that's their school now. So I think everybody's behind that."

JDHS had become the Juneau Huskies when Thunder Mountain High School and the then JDHS team could not field large enough programs. The two schools combined their programs in a similar way the wrestling programs had when numbers dwindled. The Juneau School District waited one year for the name change, allowing the community time to adjust to last year's consolidation between now-defunct Thunder Mountain High School and JDHS.

The Crimson Bears will showcase this year's talent at the White/Silver Scrimmage on Aug. 11 (6 p.m.) at Thunder Mountain Middle School and unveil their new uniforms at Player Intro Night on Aug. 14 (8-9 p.m.) at Adair-Kennedy Memorial Field.

"We were 3-6 last year," Sjoroos said. "We were 3-5 in the regular season and then lost to West in that playoff game in the last minute. That was a tough one. The kids played just phenomenal all night, defensively especially. And West just got us in that last minute on that fourth-down play. And then they ended up making it all the way to the finals. I just think that's how close that conference was last year. And I feel it's going to be every bit as competitive again this year."

With the graduation of Hayden Aube, Jayden Johnson, Sage Schultz, Caleb Ziegenfuss, Johnathyn Kestel, Merrick Hartman, Benny Zukas, Gunnar Tarver and Stefano Rivera the Crimson Bears may seem to be on a rebuilding year. But the team has a solid foundation that hit the weight room just weeks after last season and continued through the summer with up to 30 players attending camps at Pacific Lutheran University and Linfield



KLAS STOLPE / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

The Juneau-Douglas High School: Yadaa.at Kalé Crimson Bears football team practice Tuesday at the Thunder Mountain Middle School field. The Crimson Bears open their season Aug. 15 in Anchorage against the Service Cougars.

University.

"The kids did lots of off-season training," Sjoroos said. "And then most of them were able to attend a couple of camps in the summer, and that sure goes a long way towards getting reps and practicing against different levels of competition from different states and different coaches, too. Sometimes it's nice to hear a different voice than the same one you hear all the time. There was like 20 different high schools there, and so lots of different competitions, and scrimmages and individual skill sessions, and things like that. Really good camps."

Key to the JDHS squad will once again rest on their offensive and defensive front lines as they battle through the Division I Cook Inlet Conference schedule for placing in the state championships.

Seniors Jonah Mahle, Kyle Carter, Hyrum Fish and Ricky Tupou are four key returning two-way linemen.

"We've got what I feel is one of the best offensive lines in the entire state," Sjoroos said. "The fact is they've been together since their sophomore year, mostly at the varsity level, and they kind of took their lumps as sophomores, hung in there a lot of games last year, and then now it's kind of their turn this year. They've been putting a lot of time and work in. They have that chemistry so we are much further along in the first week of practice. And

hopefully we can kind of control the lines and dictate the tempos of the games that we play. And that's really going to be something that we kind of hang our hat on this year."

Sjoroos also noted talent coming from senior running back/linebackers Gunnar Niere and Mati Iona, senior lineman Alex Marx-Beierly, and senior wide receiver/defensive backs Noah Ault and Daniel Campbell as key for success on the field.

"Aside from our line, Ethan Van Kirk is going to be the dynamite running back for us," he said. "We did lose Sam Sarof, he would have been a senior running back, but he moved up to Anchorage, unfortunate for us, but I'm sure whatever school he ends up at is going to be happy to see him walk in the door. But Ethan Van Kirk is just a dynamite running back. He actually got an award at the Linfield camp as one of the top running backs at that camp, so that was pretty neat to see, and then he'll be a safety force as well. And Noah Ault is back, and he spent a lot of time at quarterback and some different things, but he's going to be a receiver this year and a starting safety or DB in the secondary. He's going to be our over-the-top threat, probably the fastest kid on the team, and probably one of the faster kids in our conference. We got a couple different kids vying for that quarterback spot. We got

**See KICKOFF page 20**



KLAS STOLPE / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

At left, Juneau-Douglas High School: Yadaa.at Kalé senior football players Ricky Tupou, Gunnar Niere, Mati Iona, Kyle Carter, Noah Ault, Jonah Mahle, Hyrum Fish, Alex Marx-Beierly and Daniel Campbell pose for a photo at the Crimson Bears practice Tuesday. At right, coach Rich Sjoroos observers players at practice.

# New sleuth of Bears prepare for season

## KICKOFF, from page 19

Daniel Campbell, who led the conference in interceptions as a DB last year, who's been really putting a lot of work in. And he's going to be in the running along with junior Krew Ridle who was the JV quarterback last year. So those two guys have been really going back and forth, and I kind of change my mind from day to day as to who I think has the lead in that scenario. I think there's going to be ample opportunities for both of them to get game action this year and show what they can do."

Sjoroos said the camp settings also allowed the players to bond outside of the field.

"There's no scoreboards so everybody can kind of exhale a little bit, let their guard down and get to know each other and just kind of have a little of a lighter approach to some of the stuff," he said. "Football season gets to be a grind when they're practicing in the rain and everything's so tense because we're getting ready to play East or West or Bartlett, and they are big conference games. So once in a while it is nice to have other things filtered in, whether it be a team camp down south or like last week we went out the road and spent 24 hours at the Methodist camp doing some fun events, just kind of getting to know each other better. Same with the coaches, too, right? You coach a lot better if you know the person that you're working with next to you, so. It's all good stuff."

At last week's Unity Camp retreat, Sjoroos selected the team's first captain.

"I asked the group, 'If you had a captain on this team, what were some attributes and qualities you'd be looking for?' And everybody had some great answers for that, you know, as far as being a leader, having commitment and dedication, all the things you look for in captain. And I said, 'Well, I think we'd all agree we have one player here for sure, maybe some more, but definitely one right now that checks all those boxes.' And when I said Ethan Van Kirk there was a big round of applause, they all knew. He's a great kid. He's only gonna be a junior, so we're gonna have him for a couple of years."

Sjoroos has his entire coaching staff returning,

including line coach and main assistant Jeff Hedges, and co-defensive coordinators Brandon Ridle and Todd Hanson.

"I felt like last year at the end of the year, our defense was playing at a really high level," Sjoroos said. "And it was because those two guys had really got their system figured out and were getting the most out of the kids. So I'm excited that they're both coming back."

Chris Connally works with the receivers and quarterbacks, Mike Behrends works with the running backs, and Zach Starboard is an assistant varsity coach.

New to the coaching staff is Naash Ritchie. His father, Riley Ritchie, started Sjoroos on his coaching journey when Naash played as a junior and senior. N. Ritchie will be the junior varsity head coach and also has a freshman son playing this season. Silver Maake is JV defensive coordinator and Kirby Carter is a JV assistant coach.

"I think our JV team is going to be really good," Sjoroos said. "There's some really good players coming up this year in good numbers. I mean lots of freshmen and sophomores, and the future definitely looks bright."

Team managers are Zoe Mahle, Aria Maake and Josiah Crowley.

Sjoroos relishes what he learns each season about his teams.

"I think last year I learned that there's just a toughness in these kids," he said. "We're so undersized with the growth of the Polynesian teams up in Anchorage. It used to be just a couple teams had a lot of bigger Polynesian kids or bigger kids in general, but now it seems like everybody up there has just got a lot of big, strong kids. So I feel like we have a toughness and there's just no limit to what these kids can do as far as taking on some of these bigger schools."

"They played so hard last year against West and Bartlett and East and came out short in some of those games, but seeing a bunch of those kids coming back this year, I feel our run game is going to be really good and our run defense is going to be really great. I think in the state of Alaska, if you do

those two things well and play good special teams, you're going to be competitive in every single game you play no matter the size of the team."

"I just like this group. It was interesting. I was watching them after we lost to West in the playoffs. We stayed the night up there and before the game we were all business, right? But after the game they wanted to just play a little game of pickup basketball at the school we were staying. So I'm just watching them and just watching the fun they were having, but then also noticing we had some good athletes, some promising talent, coming back the following year. And it just gets your juices flowing."

"I like that this year when we went to camp we kind of went down there with a plan of 'this person would be good in this role and this person good in this role,' and we were able to see that through and it was very successful. I feel like we came out of camp with a pretty good plan that we're able to stick to and not have to go back to the drawing board. Sometimes you're going down there kind of trying to figure it out while you're there. And this time we had a great turn out during the spring and so we were able to kind of put the pieces in place a little bit earlier and stick with that. It's definitely getting us a head start on the season."

"We could use a few more guys. Especially with the older kids, we could use three or four more kids up at the varsity level just to give us some more depth and things like that. But we'll work with what we got."

JDHS opens the season at Service on Aug. 15; hosts East Anchorage on Aug. 23; travels to Palmer on Aug. 30 and Bartlett on Sept. 6; hosts South Anchorage on Sept. 12, Dimond on Sept. 20 and Colony on Sept. 27; and finishes the regular season at West Anchorage on Oct. 4.

The four conference quarterfinal playoff games begin at each home field of the higher seed Oct. 10-11. The two semi-finals are at the higher seed's home field on Oct. 17-18. The state championship game is Oct. 24 at Colony High School.

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