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Juneau Independent

The True Local Newspaper of Alaska's Capital City

July 27, 2025



ELLIE RUEL / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT



ELLIE RUEL / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT



MARK SABBATINI / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

Rescue officials, observers and volunteer "victims" perform their roles during an emergency exercise at Juneau International Airport on Saturday, July 26, 2025.

Emergency responders get crash course at mock disaster

Scripted plane crash with 100 aboard throws lots of twists at rescuers

By ELLIE RUEL
Reporter

Jackie Jackson eagerly embraced the news that both of her hands and arms were about to be broken in a plane crash.

Dye simulating blood and putty simulating exposed bones were applied to her hands and forearms before she and 63 other volunteers were bused out to the tarmac at Juneau International

See AIRPORT, page 11

Goldbelt dock sets sail

Two-berth private cruise ship port gets name — Goldbelt Aani — and starts local permitting process

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

A proposed private two-berth cruise ship dock in west Douglas now has a name — Goldbelt Aani — and a start to its permitting process including a preliminary meeting with the city this week, according to company and local planning officials.

A website for the project featuring a description of planned features, conceptual images and video, and an FAQ about operational and legal issues that have been raised has been published by Goldbelt Inc., the Juneau-based Alaska Native corporation that announced the proposed port last October.

The announcement prompted a multitude of questions from city officials caught by surprise since the project may significantly change the local

See DOCK, page 10

Humpback whale found dead in Gastineau Channel

Cause of death still unknown; male calf towed by Coast Guard to secure site to conduct a necropsy

By NATALIE BUTTNER
Reporter

A dead whale was observed drifting parallel to Sandy Beach Saturday morning. U.S. Coast Guard and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration officials coordinated in moving the whale to a secure location so scientists can perform a

necropsy to determine the cause of the whale's death. The necropsy is scheduled to begin on Sunday.

The whale was identified as a male calf, according to Jennifer Angelo, NOAA Fisheries Alaska Region communications lead.

Around 50 people were scattered on the beach near Bear Creek and the edge of First Street to watch as a Coast Guard boat towed the whale southeast down Gastineau Channel.

Some longtime Juneau residents said a dead

See WHALE, page 6



NATALIE BUTTNER / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

Officials with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Alaska and U.S. Coast Guard Station Juneau tow a whale carcass to a secure location on Saturday, July 26, 2025.

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Letters, columns, photos and other material are welcome. Submissions in electronic form (text, Word documents, JPEGs, etc.) are highly preferred, although typing and/or scanning of items will be considered on a per-case basis. We reserve the right to edit submissions for length, clarity, accuracy, libel and other reasons, but we will also make every reasonable effort to contact the author about any changes prior to publication.

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.

Wednesday, July 23

Conditions Violation

At 5:51 a.m. on Wednesday, 64-year-old Dean Henderson was arrested on Glacier Highway for criminal mischief, unlawful conduct related to domestic violence, violating a domestic violence order and violating conditions of release. Alcohol was a factor.

Domestic Dispute

At 9 p.m. on Wednesday, 33-year-old Thomas David Johnson was arrested on Foster Avenue for domestic violence fear assault and assault in front of a minor. He was taken to Lemon Creek Correctional Center.

Out With Subject or Situation

At 2:13 a.m. on Wednesday, 64-year-old Thomas Bell was arrested on Front Street on \$50 worth of warrants on original charges of violating conditions of release and trespassing. He was taken to LCCC.

Police Assist

At 4:47 p.m. on Wednesday, JPD retrieved firearms on Glacier Highway and placed them into safekeeping.

Sex Crime

At 7:27 a.m. on Wednesday, JPD began a confidential investigation into a possible sexual assault.

Traffic Stop

At 12:39 a.m. on Wednesday, 44-year-old Nicole Dunne was cited and released for driving while license revoked. The vehicle was impounded.

Trespassing

At 8:06 p.m. on Wednesday, 34-year-old Wesley Pearce was cited and released on Glacier Highway for criminal trespassing.

Thursday, July 24

Conditions Violation

At 8:49 p.m. on Thursday, the Juneau Police Department began an investigation into a reported violating conditions of release. Domestic violence was a factor.

Disabled Vehicle

At 11:31 p.m. on Thursday, a 1998 Ford Expedition was impounded.

Disturbance

At 2:46 p.m. on Thursday, the Juneau Police Department responded to an altercation between a 22-year-old male and a 21-year-old female on Main

Street.

Medical Response

At 11:24 a.m. on Thursday, Capital City Fire/Rescue reported a response to a cardiac arrest downtown. Staffed ambulances were on other calls, so off-duty personnel and people not assigned to ambulances responded in available apparatus. This resulted in "extra" apparatus at the scene to get enough medical personnel on site.

Out With Subject or Situation

At 1:03 p.m. on Thursday, 48-year-old Timothy Sheehan was arrested on Airport Boulevard for driving while license revoked and violating conditions of release. He was taken to Lemon Creek Correctional Center.

Police Assist

At 3:07 p.m. on Thursday, JPD assisted another agency with an investigation.

Trespassing

At 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, 33-year-old Kier Veraga was arrested on Glacier Highway for trespassing and violating conditions of release. He was taken to LCCC.

Friday, July 25

Burglary

At 12:26 p.m. on Friday, a 70-year-old female reported a burglary and a stolen vehicle on Glacier Highway. The stolen vehicle was later recovered.

Conditions Violation

At 8:50 a.m. on Friday, a 44-year-old male reported a 51-year-old female violated a domestic violence protective order.

Fight

At 1:04 a.m. on Friday, Israel Juarez was arrested on Front Street for disorderly conduct and criminal mischief. He was taken to Lemon Creek Correctional Center. Alcohol was involved.

Fraud Forgery Counterfeit NSF

At 5:48 p.m. on Friday, the Juneau Police Department investigated a report of fraudulent use of a bank account.

Out with Subject or Situation

At 8:32 p.m. on Friday, Damien Thorne was cited and released for trespass on Cinema Drive.

Theft

At 2:57 a.m. on Friday, Richard Carle was arrested for criminal trespass on Concrete Way. He was taken to LCCC. Alcohol was involved.

Trespassing

At 10:44 a.m. on Friday, Johana Violet Cropley was cited and released on Canyon Drive for trespass.

Monday is 'election day'

Filing deadline for candidates to be followed by Assembly acting on bond and tax measures, plus — and \$50K for election "advocacy"

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Some outcomes of Juneau's Oct. 7 municipal election will be known by Monday since that is the deadline for candidates to file for Assembly and school board seats. The Assembly is also scheduled to act on proposed ballot measures including two bonds and a seasonal sales tax, plus spending up to \$50,000 for "ballot initiative advocacy."

The filing deadline for three Assembly and three Juneau Board of Education seats is 4:30 p.m., and candidates must submit their applications in person at City Hall. All three incumbent Assembly members have filed for reelection, but two current school board members — President Deedie Sorensen and former Vice President Emil Mackey — say they are not running again.

As of Friday no challengers have filed for the Assembly races, according to the clerk's office. School board incumbent Steve Whitney, who was selected in May to fill out the remaining months of a member who resigned, has filed for reelection. The only other declared candidate is Melissa Culum, a freelance writer and homeschool parent who sought the open seat earlier this year.

The Assembly meeting that begins at 7 p.m. — at Centennial Hall, rather than City Hall, due to ongoing sound-quality problems — is scheduled to take public testimony on several election-related items before taking action that may include placing them on the ballot. The proposed ballot measures include: • Replacing Juneau's 5% sales tax with a seasonal sales tax of 7.5% between April 1 and Sept. 30, and 3.5% between Oct. 1 and March 31 — with food and utilities exempted from the new rates. The seasonal rates include a temporary tax of 1% voters have renewed for decades, while a permanent 1% sales tax and temporary 3% tax also renewed many times would be repealed.

• A \$10.735 million bond for school district projects including "reroofing projects at several schools, security and safety upgrades districtwide, boiler room renovation and upgrades at several schools, and playground site preparation at Dzan-tik'i Heeni school."

• An \$8 million bond for water and wastewater infrastructure improvements "including, but not limited to, work at the Mendenhall Wastewater Treatment Plant."

Controversy involving the measures — especially the seasonal sales tax — is likely since the Assembly increased property taxes for the current fiscal year and utility rates for each of the next five years when passing the current year's budget.



MARK SABBATINI / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

Juneau residents and city leaders gather at Centennial Hall for an Assembly meeting on Aug. 19, 2024. Assembly members earlier this month approved moving meetings to the convention center temporarily while sound quality issues at City Hall are addressed.

Assembly meeting moved to Centennial Hall

The Juneau Assembly is holding its regular Monday night meeting at Centennial Hall due to ongoing sound quality issues at City Hall, and plans to use the convention center or other alternative venues for future meetings while a resolu-

tion to the problem is sought.

City officials estimate it will cost about \$60,000 to replace the current audio system at City Hall — at a time when negotiations are ongoing to move to a different building altogether.

Those and other past actions are being cited by a citizens' group that has placed two measures on the ballot — one capping property taxes at nine mills rather than the current limit of 12 (excluding debt service), the other exempting utilities and essential food items from the city's sales tax.

Assembly and city administrative leaders say those measures could result in up to \$12 million in lost tax revenue annually. As a result, the city announced two weeks ago it is holding back 60% of its grant funding for organizations and individuals this year pending the outcome of the election.

Furthermore, city officials say the seasonal sales tax will result in more total revenue — primarily from summer tourists — which will cover the utility and food sales tax exemptions in the Assembly's proposal.

As a result, Monday's agenda includes a resolution to spend up to \$50,000 for "ballot advocacy" by the city manager's office.

"The Assembly has determined that due to the specialized nature of the CBJ budget and financial considerations, it will be important for the Assembly and City staff to robustly communicate with voters and provide up-to-date financial

projections," the resolution states.

The resolution declares state law allows "non-partisan information about a ballot proposition" to be provided by a municipality if funds are specifically approved for that purpose.

City leaders took similar action last year for the "Ship-Free Saturday" ballot proposition, including publishing a "neutral and factual" FAQ. About half of the three-page document emphasized efforts the city was making to limit cruise industry impacts, and the remainder addressed economic impacts of cruise tourism and potential legal issues if the measure passed.

Assembly members are also scheduled to consider an ordinance implementing ranked-choice voting — but starting in 2026 rather than during this year's election.

Alaska has used ranked choice voting, along with open-party primaries where the top four candidates advance to the general election, since 2024. Voters last year narrowly rejected a ballot measure to repeal ranked-choice voting and another repeal attempt is being made for the 2026 election..

• Contact Mark Sabbatini at editor@juneauindependent.com or (907) 957-2306.

District, teachers at impasse

Joint statement cites "uncertainty around education funding from the State" as obstacle in talks

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

At 9 a.m. Saturday morning only a single vehicle was pa

An impasse in six-month-old contract negotiations was declared Thursday by the Juneau School District and the Juneau Education Association, with both agreeing to proceed with mediation and blaming uncertainty about state funding as a key cause of the stalemate.

Negotiations began in February with the district offering an average 2.5% salary increase in the first year and a 1.5% salary increase in the second, plus step and lane salary movement for both years. It also flat-funded the district's contribution to employee health insurance.

JEA, which represents about 275 teachers and certified staff in the Juneau School District, asked

for a 10% raise each year and a greater district contribution to insurance. Educators also said during an emotional Juneau Board of Education meeting in May that the district's offers were getting worse rather than better as negotiations dragged on.

"On July 24, 2025, at 8:27 a.m. the Juneau School District (JSD) and the Juneau Education Association (JEA) reached an impasse in the collective bargaining process," a joint statement issued by district Superintendent Frank Hauser and JEA Past President Chris Heidemann notes. "Since February 2025, JSD and JEA have been meeting regularly to negotiate a successor agreement. One of the obstacles in the negotiations process has been the uncertainty around education funding from the State."

"As the next step in the process, the parties have agreed to move forward with mediation and continue to be committed to reaching a successor agreement."

The announcement comes three weeks before the first day of school and nine days before the Alaska Legislature is scheduled to begin a special

session that may include an attempt to override a veto of education funding by Gov. Mike Dunleavy. He vetoed \$200 of a \$700 increase in per-pupil funding the Legislature passed by a 46-14 vote — one more than the 45 votes necessary for a budget item override.

The governor has asked Republicans to stay away during the first five days of the session in order to reduce the chances there are enough votes to pass an override. But lawmakers hoping to restore the funds got a boost Tuesday when state Sen. Forrest Dunbar (D-Anchorage) announced he received a federal waiver from the National Guard for service scheduled during those opening days, so he will be able to participate in the session.

An impasse in Juneau School District negotiations was also declared in December of 2022, following the expiration of a contract in Juneau of that year. JEA members narrowly approved a new contract in May of 2023. It provided a 2% pay increase the first year, 2.5% the second and 3.25% the third.

• Contact Mark Sabbatini at editor@juneauindependent.com or (907) 957-2306.

Sitka display about missionaries destroying Native culture flagged by Trump's 'improper ideology' review

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

A display at a Sitka historical site referencing mistreatment of Alaska Natives by missionaries has been flagged as part of President Donald Trump's demand national park facilities remove "improper ideology," The Washington Post reported Friday.

An executive order by Trump in March demanded National Park Service employees review all materials and flag content that "inappropriately disparage Americans." The Department of the Interior subsequently expanded the scope of the review, including allowing the public to provide input.

The Post's story on Friday reports "National parks employees have raised the idea of removing books on slavery, Native Americans and George Washington from their gift shops as part of Trump officials' efforts to scrub these popular sites of 'corrosive ideology.'"

The newspaper reports staff at many locations were sparse or hesitant in their recommendations. But the story declares "others appeared to support change" and references the Sitka site.

"One staffer wrote 'replacement needed' for a sign at Russian Bishop's House at Sitka National Monument," the story notes. "The sign explains that missionaries worked to destroy indigenous cultures and languages across Alaska."

Staff at the Sitka National Monument said they were not authorized to speak about the matter and a



SITKA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Visitors examine an exhibit at the Russian Bishop's House at Sitka National Monument.

regional National Park Service spokesperson did not respond to inquiries Friday.

Trump's order would also apply to Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve. A person answering the phone at the park's listed number said Friday they could not discuss whether any material had been flagged and that a spokesperson for the park is not available until Monday.

The president's mandate to national parks is

part of a full-scale effort to eliminate materials and policies he finds objectionable. Locally that has resulted in the removal of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) content by the University of Alaska Southeast and the Juneau Arts and Humanities Council in response to threats to withhold funding (which has happened to some degree nonetheless).

• Contact Mark Sabbatini at editor@juneauindependent.com or (907) 957-2306.

Suicide Basin nears fill level

Valley flood victims fill sandbags in anticipation of glacier lake outburst flood during next few weeks

By LAURIE CRAIG
Special Correspondent

At 9 a.m. Saturday morning only a single vehicle was parked by the big sand pile near Dimond Park where residents would soon gather to fill sandbags to bolster their homes against potential flood water in Mendenhall River when Suicide Basin likely releases in the next few weeks. Shovels were poked into the sand ready to be used by more than the one man filling bags before the crowd arrived.

By 10 a.m. the scene had changed considerably.

Vehicles were lined up on the access road. City and Borough of Juneau Emergency Programs Manager Ryan O'Shaughnessy had quickly set up an impromptu registration table and laptop computer to log in participants who arrived to claim and fill 75 free white vinyl sandbags.

Two volunteers directed the drivers to a waiting area until the 12-15 sandbag loading spots encircling the sand pile had been vacated. The organized directions ensured orderly and safe access to the material.

The sandbagging was a do-it-yourself effort, but a few volunteers offered free labor to assist some of the older flood victims. A sense of camaraderie lifted voices along with the sound of shovels scraping in the sand. At four nearby softball diamonds occasional cheers erupted when a Rainball Tournament team scored a hit. The sunny morning held a feeling of small town cooperation and neighborliness.

Weston Holland, in the queue for bags was also a victim of the 2024 glacier lake outburst flood, or "jokulhlaup." He lives on hard-hit Emily Way. When asked if he thinks the new HESCO barriers lining the riverbank will prevent similar severe flood impacts this year, he said, "We'll see. Either it will or it won't. It's about 50-50."

Marie Ahrens, reentry case manager, arrived



LAURIE CRAIG / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

A crowd of do-it-yourself sandbaggers and volunteers fill white vinyl bags on Saturday, July 26, 2025, to protect their Mendenhall Valley homes from the pending Suicide Basin glacier outburst flood.

with five Gastineau Human Services volunteers who counted and sorted sandbags for speedy distribution, and helped fill bags. Ahrens parents' home was impacted by last year's flood, so she had a personal connection to Saturday's efforts.

"There's no way to do this yourself," she said of the sandbagging. "It takes a village." By 11 a.m., CBJ's O'Shaughnessy paused to explain his role. He joined the city staff in early February as the emergency programs manager after devoting 10 years to a local nonprofit.

"I was looking for new ways to contribute to the community," he said before waving another vehicle to a loading spot.

By noon, nearly 3,500 sandbags had been distributed to about 75 homeowners. The previous

week twice as many sandbags had been given and filled at a location closer to Thunder Mountain Middle School. Saturday's sandbag event was the fifth weekend scheduled to assist with self-serve flood bags as the volume of water accumulating in Suicide Basin continues to climb toward the level of release in previous floods.

The ice dam is currently expected to be full by mid-August, according to the most recent update at the National Weather Service's Suicide Basin website. The update published Monday, July 21, states the water height in the basin is 1,290 feet, compared to 1,334 feet on the same date one year ago and 1,370 two years ago.

• Contact Laurie Craig at lauriec@juneauindependent.com.



LAURIE CRAIG / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

Residents, volunteers and city officials fill white vinyl bags with sand on Saturday, July 26, 2025, in preparation for a possible glacier lake outburst flood.

Seven arrested in drug sting

Supplier in California provided methamphetamine distributed in Juneau, according to JPD

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Three Juneau residents were arrested this week in connection with an illegal drug distribution ring involving three other Juneau residents and a California resident suspected of being the supplier of the drugs, according to a Juneau Police Department release issued Thursday.

The case originated in October of last year and involves multiple law enforcement agencies in Alaska and California, as well as federal agencies, according to the release.

An initial investigation indicated Juneau residents Patrick Iler, 41, Erika Porter, 39, and Timo-

thy Miller were distributing methamphetamine locally, according to JPD. They were indicted this month on federal charges relating to drug conspiracy and possession with the intent to distribute methamphetamine. The three defendants were arrested on Wednesday and Thursday, and remanded at Lemon Creek Correctional Center.

Arrested in Highland, California, in May of 2025 as the source of the drugs was Kinarla Miles, 67. Three other alleged co-conspirators arrested in Juneau at about the same time were Jerome Larue, 51, Travis Lind, 38, and Edie Seslar, 60. All four were indicted in May on federal charges involving drug conspiracy, money laundering conspiracy, and possession with intent to distribute controlled substances.

The initial investigation into Iler, Porter and Miller resulted in the seizure of 1.32 kilograms of methamphetamine with a street value of about

\$130,000, according to JPD.

"The total amount of methamphetamine believed to be involved in this conspiracy was approximately 7 Kilograms of methamphetamine, with an approximate street value of \$700,000," the release states.

Court and police records show Iler has multiple previous drug-related arrests. He and another man were arrested in 2013 on suspicion of trafficking heroin and methamphetamine involving a package shipped from California. In 2020 he was arrested on multiple drug and weapons charges after an alleged shoplifting incident at a store revealed he was carrying a weapon — not stolen items — and a related warrant search of his vehicle two days later by police resulted in the discovery of a weapon, drugs and drug paraphernalia, according to JPD.

• Contact Mark Sabbatini at editor@juneauindependent.com or (907) 957-2306.

Cause of humpback whale's death unknown

WHALE, from page 1

whale in the channel is rare. Others recalled the death of Tango, a local humpback whale found dead on Hump Island as a result of a large vessel strike.

Barb Lake, a member of the NOAA Fisheries Marine Mammal Stranding Response Network, said she came out to support the team. The Stranding Response Network responds to endangered marine mammals and investigates their deaths. She spoke about the importance of investigating whale deaths.

"Whales are charismatic. They're part of a huge whale watching industry here in Juneau, and just tourism in general for the state," she said. "So we want to make sure that if we're seeing dead whales, that it's hopefully from natural causes and that there isn't something that we're doing to influence them, or that there isn't something wrong in the environment."

Lake said it is important not to jump to conclusions until more data is collected on the cause of the whale's death, which could take months.

"It just takes time sometimes," she said. "We have to take samples, send them to the lab. They have to get processed. And then we can determine what the cause of death is based on those. So it's not a quick process, and it involves many layers of different agencies and organizations to get those things."

Longtime Juneau residents Audrey Scott and Lynn Ridle came from their home in Mendenhall Valley to see the whale. Ridle said that in his 50 years in Juneau, this is the first dead whale he has seen. Like many of those on the beach, he was left with lingering curiosity.

"It'd be good to know what might have hap-



CARLEY LOWE / NOAA FISHERIES

Stranding network team members secure a stranded humpback to keep it in place until it can be relocated.

pened to cause that," he said, watching the whale be dragged behind the Coast Guard boat.

"I think that's everybody's big question right now," Scott added.

NOAA Fisheries Alaska Region communications lead Jennifer Angelo recommended that the public maintain distance from the whale to prevent

contracting disease and to give responders space to work. She also noted that the public can contact NOAA Fisheries Alaska Statewide 24-hour Stranding Hotline at (877) 925-7773 if they encounter an injured or stranded whale.

• Contact Natalie Buttner at natalieb@juneauindependent.com

Features

AI TRIES TO WRITE THE NEWS



AI-GENERATED PHOTO AND CAPTION

"A model representation highlighting the design of the new cruise ship port."

Goldbelt dock, flood readiness

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Editor's note: AI Tries To Write The News is a weekly feature where a commercial AI blog tool is asked to write news stories about notable local events of the past week, with excerpts of the results provided. The intent is to familiarize readers with what AI-generated news content looks like, and should not be considered factual or "reporting" in any sense other than as a basis of comparison to the human-written articles.

Example 1

Juneau Independent story from July 25, 2025: *Goldbelt unveils name, details of proposed private west Douglas cruise dock as permitting process begins*

A proposed private two-berth cruise ship dock

in west Douglas now has a name — Goldbelt Aani — and a start to its permitting process including a preliminary meeting with the city this week, according to company and local planning officials.

A website for the project featuring a description of planned features, conceptual images and video, and an FAQ about operational and legal issues that have been raised has been published by Goldbelt Inc., the Juneau-based Alaska Native corporation that announced the proposed port last October.

The announcement prompted a multitude of questions from city officials caught by surprise since the project could significantly change the local tourism landscape — literally — by directing a significant number of passengers away from the existing berths in downtown Juneau. That aspect of the project is one of the first things highlighted on the website's homepage...

AI-generated story: *Goldbelt Inc. Plans New Cruise Ship Port on Douglas Island for 2028 Tourist Season*

Goldbelt Inc, a well-known player in the hospitality and tourism sector, has made an exciting announcement. They are planning to build a new private cruise ship port named Goldbelt Aani on the west coast of Douglas Island in Juneau, Alaska. With its doors set to open for the 2028 tourist season, this new port aims to provide visitors a unique experience while honoring the area's vibrant Tlingit heritage.

The Goldbelt Aani will not just be a docking spot for ships; it promises to be a complete attraction that will transport guests to an authentic 1800s Tlingit Native Village. This project combines cultural education with fun activities, targeting tourists and locals alike.

See AI, page 8



AI-GENERATED PHOTO AND CAPTION

"HESCO barriers installation in Juneau for flood protection."

AI Tries To Write The News: Flood preparations

AI, from page 7

The Vision Behind Goldbelt Aaní

The idea for Goldbelt Aaní combines historical significance with modern amenities. Goldbelt Inc has understood the value of blending indigenous culture with tourism, creating a destination that showcases the Tlingit way of life.

This initiative comes at a time when cruise travelers increasingly seek deeper connections with the places they visit. For example, 63% of travelers in a recent survey expressed interest in learning more about local cultures during their trips. By recreating an 1800s Tlingit Native Village, Goldbelt Aaní will educate visitors on indigenous culture and provide them with an unforgettable experience.

Unique Features of Goldbelt Aaní

Goldbelt Aaní will boast a range of tourist facilities and activities designed to ensure a memorable experience. The port will feature structures that reflect traditional Tlingit architecture, enabling visitors to explore various elements of indigenous life...

Example 2

Juneau Independent story from July 26, 2025: Valley flood victims fill sandbags in anticipation of glacier lake outburst flood during next few weeks

Reminder: This is purely to illustrate what AI-generated text and photos look like. Nothing here is necessarily accurate or described in proper context.

At 9 a.m. Saturday morning only a single vehicle was parked by the big sand pile near Dimond Park where residents would soon gather to fill sandbags to bolster their homes against potential flood water in Mendenhall River when Suicide Basin likely releases in the next few weeks. Shovels were poked into the sand ready to be used by more than the one man filling bags before the crowd arrived.

By 10 a.m. the scene changed considerably. Vehicles were lined up on the access road. City and Borough of Juneau Emergency Programs Manager Ryan O'Shaughnessy had quickly set up an impromptu registration table and laptop computer to log in participants who arrived to claim and fill 75 free white vinyl sandbags...

AI-generated story: Juneau Prepares for Potential Glacier Lake Outburst Flood as Residents and Officials Take Action

Juneau, Alaska, is on high alert as residents and officials prepare for a possible glacier lake out-

burst flood from Suicide Basin. The Mendenhall River has seen severe flooding in the last couple of years, damaging over 300 homes and displacing numerous families. With climate change making such events more likely, the community is taking proactive steps to protect their homes and livelihoods. Efforts currently involve building levees with HESCO barriers and encouraging residents to adopt protective practices.

Understanding the Threat of Glacier Lake Outburst Floods

Glacier lake outburst floods (GLOFs) happen when a dam holding back glacial meltwater suddenly fails. Suicide Basin poses a significant threat in Juneau, as it has the potential to create massive floods that can devastate areas downstream. These floods often occur without warning and can have dire consequences for infrastructure and safety.

In Juneau's history, occurrences of GLOFs have heightened awareness among officials and residents. For example, in 2011, a flood from Suicide Basin inundated parts of the community and resulted in significant destruction, painting a vivid picture of what can happen when one of these floods occurs. As glaciers melt faster due to climate change, the risk increases, making it essential for everyone to understand the potential dangers...

• Contact Mark Sabbatini at editor@juneauindependent.com or (907) 957-2306.

Voices

Assembly's scorched-earth approach to Telephone Hill difficult to understand

By **JOE KARSON**

What makes a great city great? Seattle's Space Needle, the New York skyline, San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge instantly come to mind. But when I think about my visits to these cities it's the neighborhoods that I mostly remember: The exotic sights and smells of a Chinatown or outdoor market, stately rows of immaculately preserved Victorian homes, sidewalk cafes, colorful street vendors and performers, lively little parks where young couples push strollers past their retired neighbors kibitzing over dominoes or chess. Great neighborhoods make great cities. Alaska's capital city is no exception.

There is lots for tourists to do in Juneau, but after sing-alongs at the Red Dog, a tram ride and a crab leg, many visitors are ready for a peaceful stroll through a pleasant neighborhood. Fortunately, there is just such a place close at hand. Like Central Park in New York, Juneau's Telephone Hill neighborhood remains an inviting green space right in the heart of the city's bustling downtown.

The name comes from the first telephone service in Juneau, set up by Edward Webster in 1893 at the house he built on the Hill the previous year. That house is still there — along with other of the oldest continuously occupied homes in the state. Strolling through the neighborhood with its historic homes, its century-old gardens and arbors, has long been an important part of Juneau's tourist experience. On summer evenings, visitors often stop to chat with residents, who are happy to discuss the Hill's rich history. There is no admission fee. The only souvenirs available are the memories of a visit to the living history of Alaska. Sadly, these memorable experiences, so vital to making Juneau the worldwide destination it has become, may be facing an end.

A former Juneau city manager, an early advocate of demolishing Telephone Hill, described the situation there as "a classic good of the many versus good of the few issue." Is history just for the few? Has the maintaining of the homes and gardens on the Hill by its residents, for over a century, been

just for the few? And is one leafy sanctuary from the relentless commerce of a tourist town too many?

Change, of course, is inevitable, but I find the Assembly's scorched-earth approach to the redevelopment of Telephone Hill difficult to understand. I have seen what the destruction of neighborhoods has done to other cities I've known. I have seen buildings in Boston dating back to the Revolution bulldozed to make way for an IHOP or McDonald's. In San Francisco, small businesses run by the same family for generations have been replaced with million-dollar condominiums. Tour buses now cruise through these iconic neighborhoods with the driver pointing out landmarks that "used to be there." Is this to be the fate of Telephone Hill? Will the oldest homes in Juneau be replaced by high-rise, concrete and glass boxes with photos in the lobbies of what "used to be there?" The Hill deserves better than that. Juneau deserves better than that.

• *Joe Karson is a Juneau resident.*

Governor isn't even trying anymore to get along

By **LARRY PERSILY**

It's about getting along with his colleagues when he was a state senator. Nothing wrong with being an obstinate contrarian, unless you would rather learn, build consensus, truly govern and get something done.

But that's not his style. And considering that Dunleavy won election as governor in 2018 and reelection in 2022, I suppose he figures he knows what he's doing and his critics are wrong.

It works for him, even if not for Alaska.

Just looking at this year, he issued an unconscionable veto of public school funding because he was miffed that a majority of legislators didn't embrace his pro-charter school, pro-private school, anti-public school teacher attitudes.

Next up on the menu, the governor cooked up in his political kitchen the contrived maneuver of calling legislators back to work in a special session, forcing them to consider overriding his education funding veto. But he added a new ingredient: He asked Republican House members to stay away from the Capitol in an attempt to throw the vote in the governor's favor.

Dunleavy favored predatory lenders over cash-strapped Alaskans when he vetoed a bill that

would have capped interest on payday loans at an annual rate of 36%.

And with that handy veto pen, he deleted from the state budget additional funding for child care services and early intervention services for children with disabilities or developmental delays. He blamed his decision on oil prices, despite continuing to spend millions of state dollars on countless, unproductive resource projects and dreams, and political publicity for his administration.

Whereas Alaskans have long known that oil prices — and state revenues — fluctuate as regularly as the tides, Dunleavy has turned the oil price excuse into the new ketchup: He puts it on everything.

In the latest example of his desire to pick a fight where there was no fight to pick, the governor named an attorney to a seat on the Alaska Judicial Council designated in the state constitution for a non-attorney. The sketchy fact that the appointee — a political supporter of the governor — is a retired attorney, not a practicing-before-the-court working attorney, doesn't matter. He's still an attorney sitting in a seat designated for non-attorneys to help select new judges.

Not only is John W. Wood an attorney by education, training and practice, he is a state contractor, earning so far this year more than \$132,000 to run hearings and mediations. Sounds like an attorney in paycheck if not in actual name on the door.

The state constitution prohibits members of the Alaska Judicial Council from holding a "position of profit" with the state government. Maybe the governor and his staff missed that provision, though more likely they simply chose to ignore it.

It all adds up to a governor rewarding a friend and supporter, who in this case worked as a staffer for Dunleavy when the future governor was a state senator. It looks like loyalty matters more to Dunleavy than following the law.

I was recently walking to the store when a young man pulled into the crosswalk, blocking my path. He stuck his head out the car window, smiled and said in an apologetic tone: "Sorry, I'd back up, but I have no reverse." Sounds a lot like Dunleavy. No backing up, just pushing ahead and getting in the way.

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

Goldbelt floats new dock details

DOCK, from page 1

tourism landscape — literally — by directing a significant number of passengers away from the existing berths in downtown Juneau. That aspect of the project is one of the first things highlighted on the website's homepage.

"Goldbelt Aani is not a gangway to souvenir-shop lined streets," the website states. "It is a gateway to Alaska's indigenous past. It will sit on pristine shores along Juneau's world-famous humpback whale watching grounds framed on the horizon by the rugged snowcapped Chilkat Mountain Range."

The website also promotes the port — whose Lingít name translates simply to "Goldbelt Land" — as "a first of its kind cultural destination for Juneau."

"The port is designed to replicate an 1800s Tlingit Native Village where visitors will interact with Southeast Alaska Native culture, art, foods, and be invited to explore the history of Goldbelt's ancestral people," the site notes.

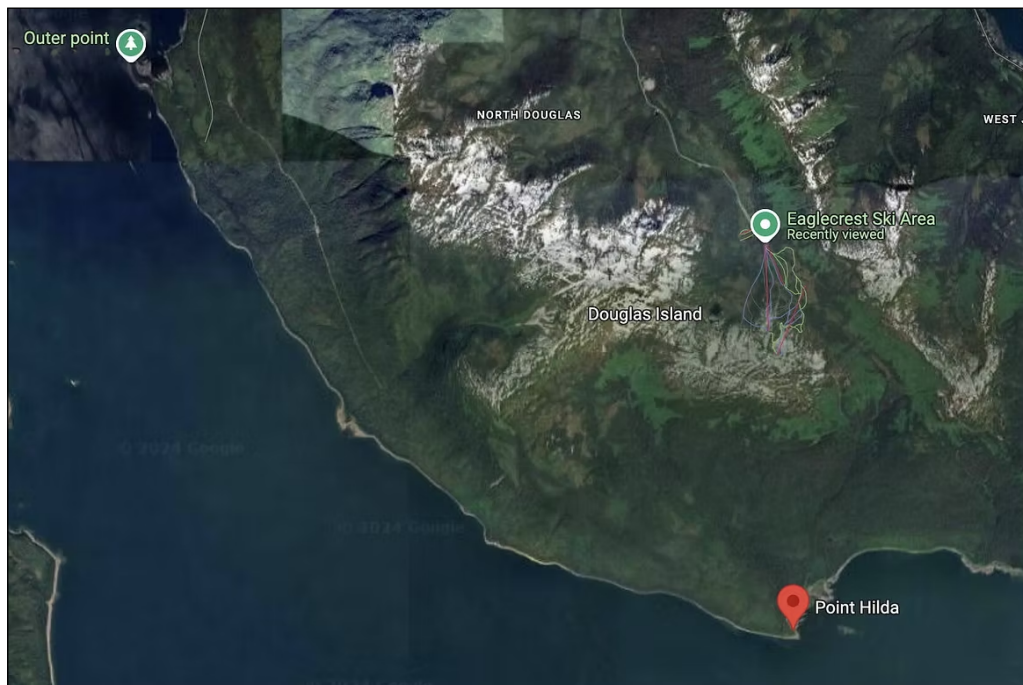
The site states the port is scheduled to be ready for the 2028 cruise ship season, a year later than the original projection last October. However, Goldbelt President and CEO McHugh Pierre said at the time that opening in 2027 would occur "if everything worked, I mean, absolutely perfectly" in the development process.

A key question is how the private port will affect the five-ship-a-day and daily passenger caps specified in voluntary agreements between the city and cruise operators. If the agreement applies then downtown businesses could see a huge dropoff in visitor activity. If it doesn't then Juneau could potentially see hundreds of thousands more visitors than the roughly 1.6 million that arrived each of the past two years and are expected again this year.

The port will be on 251 acres of Goldbelt-owned land on the west side of Douglas Island, roughly 15 miles from downtown Juneau. The nearest visitor options will be floatplane tours offered from the dock, shore facilities and trails, and Eastcrest Ski Area where Goldbelt hopes to be operating a gondola by the time the cruise port opens in 2028.

Royal Caribbean Group was announced as a co-partner at that time. But the project's website makes scant mention of the cruise line except for a response in the FAQ to "Does Goldbelt have any cruise customers for this new port development?"

"Royal Caribbean Group has expressed its strong interest in being the port's primary user once construction is completed," the FAQ states. "Additional potential customers may be announced closer



MARK SABBATINI / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

Alaska Electric Light and Power lowers the Harnessing of the Atom totem pole to stands outside the Juneau-Douglas City Museum on July 23, 2025.

to the port opening."

Officials at Goldbelt and Royal Caribbean did not respond to inquiries Friday about the status of their previously announced agreement.

Local residents as well as city officials have raised questions about the project, with photos of areas cleared of trees and other signs of development posted on social media sites. Jill Lawhorne, director of the city's community development department, said in an interview Friday a pre-application conference between city planning staff and Goldbelt occurred Wednesday.

"Basically that is just the opportunity for an applicant to present their concepts or plans to community development, which means planning, building, and also the fire marshal and general engineering," she said. "Basically our permitting divisions or departments within CBJ attend those and they just discuss and ask any questions. So that's really the first step, usually, in most permit processes and so that's where they're at right now."

The next step for Goldbelt will be applying for the necessary permits, Lawhorne said.

Goldbelt, at its website, offered a history of the site suggesting the preliminary work now occurring is part of a much longer public process.

"In 1995, Goldbelt and the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) worked on a master plan to jointly

develop sites where Goldbelt and CBJ holdings adjoin," the website notes. "According to municipal records, Goldbelt and CBJ signed an MOA that included a series of agreements that had been updated between the parties over the preceding decades. In 1999, this partnership culminated in the municipality appropriating \$600,000, hiring an engineering firm to develop a master plan. Today, that original vision is taking root as Goldbelt Aani (Land) Cruise Port."

The FAQ also contains the question "How is development on Goldbelt's ANCSA land different from other commercial developments in Juneau?" The response notes Goldbelt received more than 32,000 acres of land in Southeast Alaska under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) which now belongs to the company's 4,300 Alaska Native shareholders.

"Alaska Native Corporations are bound by legal and cultural responsibilities to benefit their owners — all of whom are tribal citizens, many still residing in Juneau for Goldbelt," the FAQ states. "ANCSA land is not developed to enrich an individual or a singular business interest, but rather to advance the long-term well-being of its Alaska Native shareholders."

• Contact Mark Sabbatini at editor@juneauindependent.com or (907) 957-2306.

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Crash ‘victims’ embrace roles



ELLIE RUEL/ JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

A rescue worker helps “victims” of a simulated plane crash on the tarmac at Juneau International Airport during an emergency rescue exercise on Saturday, July 26, 2025.

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Airport to play plane crash victims during an emergency rescue exercise Saturday.

They uttered agonized screams, wandered off irrationally and otherwise acted unpredictably (in ways their printed instructions told them to) as a couple dozen police, fire, airport, hospital and other officials tried to respond as they would in a real-life emergency.

“I wanted to get something exciting, and hopefully a good opportunity for the EMTs and other agencies to be able to work on me and learn a lot,” Jackson said while makeup was being applied to her about 90 minutes before the mid-morning “crash.”

The rescue officials acted out their own as-

signed roles, adding more chaos to an already volatile situation. Erratic moments such as firefighters passing out from heatstroke and offering conflicting patient counts played out according to a closely guarded script known to only three people.

One was Andres Delgado, the airport’s maintenance and operations superintendent, who wrote the scenario and then supervised the multiagency response. The airport conducts full-scale live training exercises every three years and “desktop” preparedness exercises annually.

Delgado said this year’s script included rescue situations local officials are likely to face, plus a series of planned mishaps and some unexpected incidents added while the exercise was in progress.

“Obviously we had a lot more ‘reds’ than I had

promised,” he told rescue officials in a debriefing afterward, referring to seriously injured victims. “That’s because a lot of times it’s worse than you expect.”

The simulation was a hydraulic failure on a 737-800 jet carrying 100 people that kept the flaps from deploying, causing the plane to land hard, veer off the runway and catch fire as it broke apart. Numerous fatalities resulted — represented by inflatable dummies and plush toys in the fire area — while a short distance away the volunteers were strewn about on the pavement with various levels of injury ranging from minor to fatal.

Emergency officials weren’t told what the scenario was during a pre-exercise briefing, which focused instead on guidelines (i.e. “real-life emergency” as the code phrase if a response was needed to an actual local incident) and objectives.

“This is a drill of the system, not of your individual performance,” Sam Russell, assistant chief of administration for Capital City Fire/Rescue, told his responders. “So do the best you can do at the things you know how to do, but don’t worry about how things turn out, OK?....We’re going to get the fire put out, and we’re going to move our victims as best we can, and we’re going to do it without hurting anybody today — either us or the victims — and that’s the goal.”

Some aspects of the simulation didn’t fully conform to a real emergency. The airport remained in operation — so floatplane and sightseeing helicopters were taking off and landing nearby throughout — whereas in a real disaster airspace would be shut down. Also, if there were dozens of severely injured people needing immediate care — well beyond the hospital’s capacity — other medical local providers as well as extensive airlifting to facilities outside Juneau would be involved.

The “victims” were also spared from having IVs injected, clothing cut off and some other actions typical of major injury incidents. But each received a sheet of paper detailing their vital signs,

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ELLIE RUEL/ JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

Rescue officials, observers and volunteer “victims” perform their roles during an emergency exercise at Juneau International Airport on Saturday, July 26, 2025.



ELLIE RUEL/ JUNEAU INDEPENDENT



MARK SABBATINI/ JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

A "victim" gets a touch-up with fake blood, left, before an emergency exercise at Juneau International Airport on Saturday, July 26, 2025. At right, the "script" for the simulated crash is carried out by Andres Delgado, the airport's maintenance and operations superintendent, as Interim Airport Manager Dave Palmer observes.

Scripted plane crash features plenty of plot twists

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injuries and behaviors they were supposed to exhibit.

On the way to the crash site, the "victims" excitedly fixed their prosthetics and blood bags. A few did last-minute medical research to properly display their symptoms. One said she needed to figure out how to properly represent the respiratory rate listed, which was meant to mimic a traumatic brain injury.

Stebi Sanchez, who played a moderately injured but very disoriented victim, already had some experience with what symptoms to display.

"This is not my first rodeo doing an exercise like this, coming from the military, I have unfortunately seen things like this before," Sanchez said. "With the understanding that this was a timing exercise, not a medical exercise, I think they did a really good job. We're back here in an hour and a half."

Sanchez was also happy with his acting skills, saying he had some of the paramedics convinced he was actually injured.

"I put in the effort and people noticed, so I was really happy about that," he said.

The exercise, which began shortly before 10 a.m. with an emergency alert about an inbound jet in distress, was scheduled to last until about 1 p.m. But Delgado called an official "end of exercise" at 11:24 a.m. as the firefighting portion was less intense than scripted — one of several "audibles" that occurred — and all of the victims needing hospitalization were transported by that time.

All of the volunteers exhibited "Oscar-worthy performances," as Delgado called it. Wails and fake screams of pain filled the tarmac as actors

called out for family members or yelled that they "weren't dead yet."

Some of the simulated "victims" even created complex backstories to sell their plight. Leila Rocereta and her friend Kennedy Savage decided to adopt the aliases of Jessica Williams and Elizabeth Jackman, respectively. The two crafted an elaborate narrative of flying back from a bachelorette party, adding some soap-opera-esque dramatic flair.

"I was supposed to be getting married, but all my teeth fell out and I have a laceration on my face. And my wedding's in two weeks, and I look like this. What am I supposed to do?" Rocereta explained. "The wedding's got to be postponed, and I spent so much money, and we just found out I'm pregnant."

Aylin Wolter, 15, played the part of a very hysterical crash victim. Wolter was screaming for the entire 90-minute exercise and went through one and a half bottles of water in the process to prevent herself from going hoarse.

"I've never been a part of something like this before, but I thought it was really interesting how it worked," she said. "I really like acting."

"The makeup is fantastic," added Madison Gambala, who had been outfitted with prosthetic face burns and pretended to be unable to follow first responders' instructions.

Other chaos was caused by some of the officials — although not necessarily while acting in official roles. One officer, for instance, climbed into a fire department SUV being used by Mark Fuette, a CCFR EMT, and drove off unnoticed until Fuette radioed Delgado seven minutes later.

"Apparently there was an intruder here who took off with my vehicle," Fuette reported.

Delgado, well aware of the theft he'd scripted, paused a beat before replying.

"Roger. Did scene security handle the situation?" he asked.

"I have no idea," Fuette responded.

Another pause.

"Roger. Do you have eyes on your vehicle?" Delgado asked.

"Yes, I can see it all the way across the tarmac by Echo One," Fuette said, referring to a gate at the opposite end of the airfield.

Delgado kept Fuette waiting for another beat.

"Roger...we may want to get JPD on it," Delgado said.

At that point a third voice cut in: "I've got an ambulance and a fire truck here, and we were able to stop him and I've got airport police on the way."

"Excellent. Thank you," Delgado said, wrapping up that particular "audible."

Delgado, at the start of the exercise, said he was performing double duty as the airport superintendent in the response scenario as well as observing the performance of other officials. Others also were playing dual roles due to a key problem — an ongoing staffing shortage at agencies citywide — that was highlighted during the debriefing.

"We don't have enough bodies, we don't have enough resources, we don't have enough trucks," Bagwell said. "And that is something that we need to have a long conversation about how we want to proceed in the future."

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Sports

Aylward is Juneau Marathon men's champ, Gress takes women's title

McManus repeats for men's title in half marathon, Hinderberger does the same for women's division

By KLAS STOLPE
Sports Editor

Juneau's William Aylward, 25, and Shannon Gress, 40, were crowned champions Saturday, winning the men's and women's titles in the Juneau Marathon. Jack McManus, 20, of McCall, Idaho, and Juneau's Joanna Hinderberger, 34, won the Juneau Half Marathon titles — with both repeating their winning efforts from last year.

"It has been a lifelong goal to run a marathon," Aylward said. "I grew up just north of Boston and I really wanted to qualify for the Boston Marathon, and now I have. I couldn't really be any more ecstatic. After how my legs feel, I'm not so sure I want to do it." Aylward crossed the finish line in the 26.2-mile race in two hours 37 minutes and 20 seconds. The physical therapist with the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium moved to Juneau two months ago.

"This is my first marathon," he said. "I ran in high school (Peabody, Massachusetts) and all through college (Franklin Pierce University), and I kind of just went off a random training block I made up, 12-ish weeks long, progressively longer runs, and here we are."

Aylward said the first 19 miles were great, "The last seven my quads just shut down and I just did not feel good at all. I'll tell you what, in the last two miles there were some barely up hills and those things killed me." Aylward next will run for team Slo Mo's in the Klondike Road Relay, of which he vows, "I don't think I will run super fast, more like just trying to finish, but I think it will be a good experience."

Gress, who set the women's open record of 2:51:33 in 2014 at age 29, this year was chasing the masters' mark of 3:35:04 set by Mary Hanna, 48. And she shattered it.

"I just turned 40, so I was hoping to break the masters' record if I could," Gress said. She hit the new mark of 3:03:35 to win the crown and place second overall among men and women. "So I feel really good about that. That was a big goal and just to see what I could get done out there. Oh my gosh, the last six miles, for whatever reason, I don't know if it was the wind or what, but definitely I hit those six miles and it got very challenging, and it



William Aylward, 25, of Juneau, above, reaches the halfway point of the Juneau Marathon enroute to his state championship win on Saturday, July 26, 2025, in a time of 2:37:20. At right, Juneau's Shannon Gress, 40, is encouraged by family members as she sprints to the finish of the Juneau Marathon in a new women's master's record time of 3:03:35.

KLAS STOLPE / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT



became a mental race for sure."

When asked how this compared to her previous wins, she said: "It's funny because it wasn't as fast of a time, but I'm incredibly proud of finishing this one because it was definitely one of the biggest mental races I've had."

McManus won the men's half marathon in 1:13:57 and Hinderberger the women's in 1:26:29.

She was sixth overall among the combined genders.

"Why not do it?" McManus laughed when asked about running the event. "I just I love running, I love racing and I really love the 10K in track, and so this is just kind of two of those and such a beautiful setting. So yeah, it's awesome to be able to, like, have this race atmosphere before like

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KLAS STOLPE / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

Juneau Half Marathon winner Joanna Hinderberger, front in picture at left, is congratulated by Juneau Marathon winner Shannon Gress, back, at the finish line Saturday, July 26, 2025. At right, Idaho's Jack McManus, 20, sprints alone at the front of the Juneau Half Marathon during his repeat win in a time of 1:13:57.

Full- and half-marathon racers meet goals in many ways

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the cross-country season starts."

McManus runs track (10K and 5K) and cross-country (8K) for Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington. His girlfriend is 2022 JDHS graduate Annika Schwartz, who also runs for Whitman.

His advice to young runners is, "Just stay excited, don't worry about miles or times or anything, just run and enjoy the running of the running. It's not about the stats or anything. It's about just being there. Those things can come later if you want, but you've got to start."

McManus will be looking to earn cross-country nationals in the fall and qualify for track nationals as well.

Hinderberger said she has always liked the Juneau Marathon.

"I've done the marathon before I did the half last year," she said. "And I had my two friends (Shannon Gress and Hillary Young) that were also running today and it seemed like a beautiful day to run a half."

"I think just trying to have a good time," she said. "You know, the last two years I've tried to chase down Mary Ellefson's record. Last year I came like 30 seconds short. This year I came a minute short. But I figured it never hurts to try. So I'm trying to do her overall record. Hilary's trying to get the masters' record."

Hinderberger's advice to new runners is, "I think just try. That's kind of my motto in life, just try, don't be afraid to come up short and just try be-

cause you're never going to regret trying. I had been training for a full and just broke three hours for the full for the first time in my life, like five weeks ago. I did 2:58:00. And so I hadn't really trained for this half, but I thought, you know, just go out there."

Hinderberger hopes to do the Boston Marathon with her father, Chip Lindy. They both will be doing a marathon in a month for his qualifying time.

Aylward, Gress, McManus and Hinderberger each received a trophy from the Juneau Trail and Road Runners for their overall top finishes. The Road Runners Club of America also gave a state championship medal to the four and to each age group winner as both events were certified a state championship this year. The JTRR also gave medals to the top three finishers in each age group for point scoring in the NAO Cup. Participants all received finisher medals.

It was also a day for more than medals and trophies as roughly 250 competitors started the annual races at Savikko Park in Douglas and chased their dreams out onto North Douglas Highway and back to the finish.

Juneau's Oilvia Glasscock, 33, and partner Paul Strickler, 31, began training in February.

"I've been meaning to do a marathon for a while and never felt I was ready to commit all the time to training," Glasscock said. She was the second female finisher and ninth overall with a time of 3:29:32. "This year it felt like I was going to have a good window for it this summer. We've had a lot

of fun. I enjoyed the training a lot more than I thought I would. Putting in all the miles with my partner has been fun, doing those 20-mile runs has been fantastic... We did a couple runs on the course and on the way back seeing the glacier is a good propeller to the end."

Patty Stockell, 63, from Clearwater, Florida, and Sivabalan Pandian, 66, of Mumbai, India, opted for the 6 a.m. early starts in the half and full, respectively.

"I am doing one in every state and this is Alaska and number 14 for me," she said. She walked a 3:23:21. "I'm not a marathoner, but this keeps me healthy. Also, my husband (Chip) is in a wheelchair with MS and he can't do things like this, so it inspires me to get out and be more active."

Pandian is also trying to complete races in all 50 states, but in the marathon distance, and finished in 6:55:14.

"This is 44," he said. "I have now 940 marathons, but I am a walker, not a runner... These have been a transformation in my life. I started my first at the age of 54, so I have got a lot of changes in my body. So I am feeling very comfortable, good and healthy, too... You must do it if you want to keep away from doctors and in good health, you must do it." Juneau's Katelyn Schultz, 25, turns 26 in early August.

"It was kind of a funny reason to run," Schultz said. "It was convenient, 26 (miles) for 26 (years), but I would have run it anyway. A marathon is al-

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Full- and half-marathon racers meet goals in many ways

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ways something that has been on my bucket list. Part of it is that and part of it is I just wanted something to challenge me in a different way. I'm used to doing fast races, so it has been kind of cool getting myself outside my comfort zone and doing something I have never done before. Just testing my limits... my goal was just to finish."

Schultz wanted to see how close she could get to the Boston Marathon-qualifying time of 3:25:00. She was the fourth female finisher and 18th overall in 3:43:14.

"The main goal is just to have fun and to finish," she said.

Juneau was the 47th state in which Robert Babcock, 61, of Tulsa, Oklahoma, crossed the finish line. He ran a 5:43:27 marathon.

"It is a great way to see the country," he said. "The running community is solid. It is so diverse and yet there is a lot of community in the running world. It is really the only sport that I know of where amateurs and professionals start at the same time and run the same course, so everybody's equal."

In September he will run in Jackson, Wyoming, then the Cape Cod Marathon (Massachusetts) in October and the Marshall University Marathon (West Virginia) in November.

"My goal is always to finish with no injuries," he said. "And I do like a good medal...Tulsa is a large, tight-knit running and cycling community. I started with 5Ks and then a half and my running leader said if I could do that then I could do a full and asked me to join him in an out of Oklahoma marathon. So I joined the 50 States Marathon Club and here I am. It's been a journey...I stick to a training plan, I listen to my body, I stretch, I hydrate...I would like to do each of the major U.S. marathons and then one on each continent."

Juneau's Justin Scussel, 19, was running the marathon because Alaska Shirt Company co-worker Kenneth Miner was.

"I am just showing up here to run and have a good day and have some fun," Scussel said before



Online
100-photo gallery
of race photos at
the Independent's
website.

the race. "I've got a couple little runs in, but nothing crazy...I'm just shooting for a finish. We have a goal in mind, a 4:30:00 would be great. Anything faster and we're happy."

Miner said he was running "for the love of the game...I hope I beat Justin." Scussel ran 4:09:25, Miner ran 3:51:22.

Juneau's David Fure, 30, had never done a marathon. He hit 4:25:22.

"I always wanted to do it," he said. "I knew some friends doing the half and thought, 'Hey, I've been running a lot, why not? I'll try it.' Years ago I tried to run 20 miles kind of out of the blue, I'd only run 15 before that, and got injured in like mile 18. I couldn't run for a few months so I've just never even touched 20 or above since then — until this year. And so it just felt good to sort of be able to do something I'd wanted to do for a long time." His advice for first timers is "run slow."

Juneau's Candice Delmar, 24, has a treadmill at work, which helped relax one of the youngest IBM mainframe programmers in the United States to hit 4:40:21 in her first marathon.

"Honestly, because I fall asleep sitting at a desk, but the treadmill helps to get my steps in for the day," she said. "I was going to do the half and then two weeks ago I decided I wanted a bigger challenge so it was a very last-minute decision... Running is relaxing...I could barely run two miles about a year ago, so anybody can do it. You just have to work hard."

Juneau's Novalee Campos, 23, ran to the half finish line carrying her daughter, as husband William Torgerson cheered them along. Campos ran a 2:48:06.

"I needed a fitness goal after having a kiddo," Campos said. "I was a bodybuilder before that and I just wasn't feeling the same passion for bodybuilding, and my friend was like, 'Hey, let's do a half-marathon' and I was like, 'Yeah let's do it.' So here we are."

Campos' friend Kili Dickinson, 23, ran a 2:48:29.

Liz Ryan, 40, of Pawcatuck, Connecticut, ran a 4:22:18 and was joined at the finish by son Maverick.

"This was my first marathon," she said. "My son is three-and-a-half, and it meant the world to me to have him here at the finish line. It was amazing. I'm trying to set a good example for him and having him here means a lot. My first marathon and we'll see how I feel tomorrow. I turned 40 last week and felt like that was a good time to start. I've done a couple half marathons, but felt like this was something to check off the list."

Juneau's Paige Eddy, 29, was running her second marathon and shared why.

"I had two miscarriages this year so I was doing it for that," she said. "My advice for people struggling is to just keep pushing forward. Lean on your community and the people around you that care about you. Find something to do and find meaning in it, in the struggle."

Eddy's first marathon was three years ago, after son Ocean was born. He and sister Luna, 6, and Eddy's husband, Tell Spragg, 32, cheered her to her finish in 4:46:18.

With the day's heat rising, Makaylee Moore from Apple Valley, California, continued to battle through the last mile of the marathon. She was one of the final runners.

"It's been on my bucket list," Moore said as she jogged and walked the final paces. "And I want to cross that line. I'm not a runner. I hate running. I have never run over six miles before this. This is so awesome."

• **Contact Klas Stolpe at kstolpe@juneauindependent.com**

Following are the JTRR top three age group finishers. For complete results go to <https://sportstats.one/event/juneau-marathon-and-half-marathon> or <https://jtrr.org/event/2025/race/810/ap>

MARATHON

Men Overall Finish: 1. William Aylward, 25, Juneau, AK 2:37:20; 2. John Wright, 38, Juneau, AK 3:03:56; 3. Tyler Woodard, 40, Carrollton, GA 3:04:09.

Women Overall Finish: 1. Shannon Gress, 40, Juneau, AK 3:03:35; 2. Olivia Glasscock, 33, Juneau, AK 3:29:32; 3. Bobbi Baur, 55, Chicago, IL 3:35:54.

Men 39 & Under:

1. William Aylward, 25, Juneau, AK 2:37:20; 2. John Wright, 38, Juneau, AK 3:03:56; 3. Jason Norat, 29, Juneau, AK 3:08:17.

Women 39 & Under:

1. Olivia Glasscock, 33, Juneau, AK 3:29:32; 2. Katelyn Schultz, 25, Douglas, AK 3:43:14; 3. Cassandra Howard, 24, Valdez, AK 4:02:53.

Men 40-49:

1. Tyler Woodard, 40, Carrollton, GA 3:04:09; 2. Daniel Goethel, 41, Juneau, AK 3:39:22; 3. Eric Pascual, 48, Tell City, IN 3:43:13.

Women 40-49:

1. Shannon Gress, 40, Juneau, AK 3:03:35; 2. Liz Ryan, 40, Pawcatuck, CT 4:22:18; 3. Alice Nunes, 43, Sitka, AK 4:38:37.

Men 50-59:

1. Ramesh Rajagopalan, 59, Katy, TX 3:40:22; 2. Erik Terrel, 57,

Kelso, WA 4:17:30; 3. Juan Shepperd, 58, Austin, TX 5:18:54.

Women 50-59:

1. Bobbi Baur, 55, Chicago, IL 3:35:54; 2. Kara Hourdas, 51, Lexington, KY 4:45:24; 3. Connie Miranda, 56, Baldwinville, NY 4:56:32.

Men 60-69:

1. Gerry Andersen, 64, Lancaster, CA 3:37:05; 2. Carlos Sanchez, 66, Round Rock, TX 3:50:19; 3. Richard Marquez, 64, Mountain View, CA 3:59:05.

Women 60-69:

1. Lisa Carlucci, 65, Victorville, CA 4:18:53; 2. Karen Derrick, 64, Columbia, MO 6:03:25.

Men 70+:

1. John Eldridge, 74, Juneau, AK 5:41:11.

HALF MARATHON

Men Overall Finish: 1. Jack McManus, 20, McCall, ID 1:13:57; 2. Chase Hall, 30, Oswego, IL 1:17:41; 3. Nick Iverson, 18, Juneau, AK 1:20:56.

Women Overall Finish: 1. Joanna Hinderberger, 34, Juneau, AK 1:26:29; 2. Hilary Young, 41, Juneau, AK 1:28:36; 3. Shelby Balding, 21, Centennial, CO 1:31:23.

Men 39 & Under:

1. Jack McManus, 20, McCall, ID 1:13:57; 2. Chase Hall, 30, Oswego, IL 1:17:41; 3. Nick Iverson, 18, Juneau, AK 1:20:56.

Women 39 & Under: 1. Joanna Hinderberger, 34, Juneau, AK

1:26:29; 2. Shelby Balding, 21, Centennial, CO 1:31:23; 3. Christin Woodaard, 38, Carrollton, GA 1:32:04.

Men 40-49:

1. Matthew Herman, 40, Fort Thomas, KY 1:40:56; 2. Quinn Tracey, 45, Juneau, AK 1:47:54; 3. Gregory Brown, 42, Juneau, AK 1:48:05.

Women 40-49:

1. Hilary Young, 41, Juneau, AK 1:28:36; 2. Juli Adelman, 45, Portland, OR 1:34:45; 3. Caitlin Stern, 40, Juneau, AK 1:40:22.

Men 50-59:

1. Will Hicks, 56, Juneau, AK 1:46:16; 2. Marcel Blythe, 56, Wesley Chapel, FL 2:04:06; 3. Brice Mast, 52, Anchorage, AK 2:10:25.

Women 50-59:

1. Michele Shirakura, 59, Juneau, AK 1:54:36; 2. Liana Gulzow, 52, Camas, WA 2:05:28; 3. Kasia Konieczny, 52, Ruston, WA 2:11:10.

Men 60-69:

1. John Bursell, 61, Juneau, AK 1:29:01; 2. Kenneth Platt, 63, Juneau, AK 1:59:13; 3. Steven Schmitz, 64, Juneau, AK 2:04:21.

Women 60-69:

1. Jan Caulfield, 68, Juneau, AK 2:14:52; 2. Jana Kozlova, 66, Radonice 2:15:34; 3. Nancy McCrary, 64, Grayson, GA 2:23:49.

Men 70+:

1. Mitch Rymanowski, 70, Odessa, FL 3:09:55.

Women 70+:

1. Debra Roth, 70, Eugene, OR 2:09:54.



The Gastineau Channel Little League Juneau Baseball All-Stars are currently playing in the Little League Juniors West Region Tournament at Bend, Oregon.

PHOTO COURTESY OF GCLL

GCLL starts regions with win

By **KLAS STOLPE**
Sports Editor

Juneau's Gastineau Channel Little League Junior Baseball All-Stars opened the Juneau League West Region Tournament at Bend, Oregon, on Thursday with a 3-2 win over Arizona's Sunny Side All-Stars.

"It was a great team effort," Juneau co-coach Jason Hart said. "All 12 players contributed to the team win." Added manager Jaysen Katasse, "The boys were able to battle a tough Arizona team in the first bracket game and prevail in extra innings."

Juneau's Issac Kirsch and Darwin Decena combined on the mound for the win. Kirsch started and went five innings, allowed two hits and two runs, walked one batter, and struck out four. Decena relieved for three innings, allowed three hits and one walk, and struck out two. Kirsch threw 82 pitches, 49 for strikes, and faced 21 batters.

"Never underestimate a team based on where they come from," Kirsch said. "They might just surprise you. In baseball, anything can happen." Decena threw 39 pitches, 23 for strikes, and faced 11.

"It was the best feeling of my life," Decena said.

Arizona scored the first run of the game in the top of the fourth inning as Jacob Galvez was hit by a pitch with one out and stole second base. Ozzie Guadarrama hit a two-out ground ball and reached on a fielding error that scored Galvez for a 1-0 lead.

Juneau got that run back and more in the bottom half of the fourth inning, as Elias Lockhart earned a two-out walk, Vinny Nizich singled to left field — sending Lockhart to third — and Nizich

then reached second. Parker Katasse singled to center field, scoring Lockhart and Nizich for a 2-1 lead.

Arizona tied the game in the top of the fifth inning as David Blasi hit a one-out single to left field, advanced to second on a balk, and advanced to third on a ground ball out by Jaden Flores, who hit to Juneau pitcher Kirsch. Blasi would score on a pick-off error to tie the game 2-2.

Juneau's Bode Winkelman led off the bottom of the fifth inning with a double, but was stranded on base. Bridger Lockhart led off the bottom of the sixth inning with a single, but was stranded on base, and Mason Catrett led off the bottom of the seventh inning with a single, but was stranded on base.

In the top of the eighth, the game went to international tiebreaker rules. Teams would start their at-bat with a runner on second base.

Arizona placed Andres Valenzuela on second to start the eighth inning. Guadarrama then placed a bunt down, but Juneau catcher Winkelman fielded the ball for the out and Valenzuela advanced to third. Arizona's Marcial Lara then grounded into a fielder's choice to Juneau third baseman Myles Pasion, who dove for the hard hit ball and threw out Valenzuela at home plate catcher Winkelman for two outs.

Arizona's Emilio Medina hit a single to center field and moved Lara to second base. Arizona's David Blasi then blasted a hard shot to left field that was handled on a bounce by Juneau's Levine, who threw home to Winkelman. Winkelman cut down Arizona's Lara trying to reach third base to end their at-bat.

In the bottom of the eighth inning, Juneau

placed speedster Nizich on second base to start their at-bat. Nizich drew numerous pick-off attempts, disrupting Arizona pitcher Hector Degollado. With one out, Juneau's Kirsch hit a hard ball to Arizona's shortstop, who mishandled the fielding play and threw the ball into the dugout, allowing Nizich to score and end the game 3-2.

Parker Katasse led Juneau with two RBI.

"Throughout the whole game I kept telling everyone we have to go all out, every play," Katasse said. "It was such a close game, so that extra effort would decide it."

Nizich, Katasse, Kirsch, Winkelman, B. Lockhart, Catrett, and Gavin Kohan had one hit each. Nizich scored two runs and E. Lockhart one. Katasse and E. Lockhart earned one walk apiece.

"I came into it knowing it was gonna be a close game, but I didn't know it would be that close." Juneau's Henry Maier said.

In other opening action, Arizona defeated Oregon 6-3 on Wednesday and Hawaii defeated Colorado 20-0.

On Thursday, Southern California defeated Nevada 12-2, Northern California defeated Montana 14-2, and Utah defeated Oregon's host team 17-2.

Juneau on Sunday plays the winner of Friday's game between Idaho and Hawaii (Friday game scores were not available). Other Friday games included S. California vs. N. California, Utah vs. Washington, Nevada vs. Montana.

The tournament is double-elimination and runs through Thursday. The winner advances to the World Series in Taylor, Michigan, August 3-10.

• Contact Klas Stolpe at ksolpe@juneauindependent.com.

Auke Bay Post 25 opens state with loss as several players fall ill

By **KLAS STOLPE**
Sports Editor

Juneau's Auke Bay Post 25 American Legion team faced their biggest challenge of the season as they opened pool play on Friday in the 73rd Alaska Legion Baseball State Tournament with numerous players falling ill and unable to play.

"We had four guys go to the ER and had to change to a whole new game plan," Juneau head coach Joe Tompkins said. "They caught a virus and the fifth one got sick in the third inning."

Juneau would fall 11-1 to Chugiak Post 33.

"I am so proud of our team," Tompkins said. "They were very scrappy. They fought hard."

Playing in the Denali Pool, the fifth-seeded Juneau boys struck first against fourth-seeded Chugiak, scoring their single run in the top of the third inning.

Brenner Harralston was hit by a pitch, Christian Brown earned a walk and Kasen Ludeman hit a sacrifice fly ball to right field that scored Harralston for a 1-0 lead.

Chugiak would score two runs in the bottom of the third and fourth innings, six runs in the fifth inning and a single run in the sixth inning.

Ludeman led Juneau with one RBI. Jacob Katasse led with one hit, and Harralston with one run scored. Ludeman, Landon Simonson, Micah Nelson and Brown earned one walk each.

Cayman Huff started on the mound and went three innings, allowed four hits and four runs - four earned runs - and walked two batters.

Simonson relieved (1.1 IP, 3 R, 3 ER, 3 BB, 2 SO) and Brown closed (1 IP, 2 H, 4 R, 4 ER, 6 BB).

Juneau used their pitching staff sparingly as they have two pool play games remaining and the possibility of more illness. The five ill players are doing better and isolated from the team.

In other opening action, the three seed, Wasilla



KLAS STOLPE / JUNEAU INDEPENDENT

In this photo Juneau's Auke Bay Post 25 American Legion baseball team celebrates a win against Dimond Post 21 at Adair-Kennedy Memorial Park recently. Juneau is currently in Alaska Legion State Tournament play at Anchorage's Mulcahy Stadium.

Post 35, defeated sixth seed West Post 1 in the Alyeska Pool, 11-10. Top seed Service Post 28 topped eighth seed Eagle River in the Denali Pool; and second seed Kenai Post 20 defeated seventh seed Ketchikan Post 3 in the Alyeska Pool 11-10 in eight innings.

The state tournament runs through Wednesday.

Friday games: Chugiak 11, Juneau 1; Wasilla 11, West 10; Kenai 11, Ketchikan 10 (8Innings); Service defeated Eagle River.

Saturday: Ketchikan vs. Wasilla, Eagle River vs. Juneau, Chugiak vs. Service.

Sunday: Ketchikan vs. West, Wasilla vs. Kenai.

Monday: Eagle River vs. Chugiak, West vs. Kenai, Juneau vs. Service.

Tuesday semifinals: Denali 2nd vs. Alyeska 1st, Alyeska 2nd vs. Denali 1st.

Wednesday championship game: Winners of semifinals. The state champion advances to the Northwest Regionals in Billings, Montana, Aug. 6-11.

• Contact Klas Stolpe at kstolpe@juneauindependent.com.

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