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Juneau Independent

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Candidates make case at televised forum just before voting in local election starts

3 candidates for 2 school board seats discuss AI in classrooms and absenteeism; 8 Assembly hopefuls in 3 races discuss trust in city government, ICE agent deployments; ballots mailed Friday for Oct. 6 municipal election

By MARK SABBATINI, Editor

All 11 candidates in Juneau's Oct. 6 municipal election got a chance Wednesday evening to air their positions on key issues to residents during a televised forum two days before ballots are mailed and drop boxes open on Friday.

Eight candidates seeking three Juneau Assembly seats and three candidates seeking two Juneau Board of Education seats took part in the forum hosted by the League of Women Voters of Juneau and livestreamed by *See Forum on Page 11*



Eight candidates seeking three Juneau Assembly seats participate in a forum hosted by the League of Women Voters of Juneau at the KTOO Studios on Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2026. (Mark Sabbatini / Juneau Independent)

Juneau Suicide Prevention picnic sends waves of hope

'Let them know that they're not alone, and then let them know that them reaching out was a really brave thing for them to do'

By JASZ GARRETT, Managing Editor

About three years ago, Tim Eide Sr. attempted suicide. On Saturday, with the sun shining on his cedar hat, he looked across the Gastineau Channel toward the evergreen Mount Roberts.

"It just can't be an option anymore for me to even think suicide, because look *See Prevention on Page 6*



Tim Eide Sr. shows a suicide prevention ribbon pin on his vest, which he said is significant to him. "It means life," he said. "It means hope. It gives me hope. Help others and pray for everyone." He spoke during the Juneau Suicide Prevention picnic at Sandy Beach on Saturday, Sept. 12, 2026. (Jasz Garrett / Juneau Independent)

Tlingit and Haida's top VP challenging longtime president

First Vice President Ku.seen Jacqueline Pata is seeking to replace President Chalyee Eesh Richard Peterson, president since 2014 and the target of abuse accusations last year

By MARK SABBATINI, Editor

The top vice president is seeking to replace the longtime president of the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska during its tribal assembly next week, following both significant achievements and con-

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Assembly halts proposal requiring nonprofits to charge tax on purchases

Mayor cites confusion about changes in moving to table proposal after organization leaders express wide range of objections

By MARK SABBATINI, Editor

Requiring nonprofits to charge sales tax on purchases was tabled by the Juneau Assembly on Monday, after concerns about fairness, financial burdens and confusing aspects of the proposal were voiced by a range of local nonprofit leaders.

Assembly members spent months considering the proposal as part of a series of tax changes intended to boost revenues after voters passed two tax-cut measures in last year's municipal election. But Mayor Beth Weldon sought to effectively kill the proposal indefinitely after 17 nonprofit officials all testified against the proposal for a wide range of reasons.

"It's not the pleas that are getting me — you guys did a really good job, though," she told the audience. "It's the confusion this seems to be creating and that's what's troublesome to me because I don't like any legislation that's confusing in many different ways to interpret it."

Also, Weldon said, discussions with the city's finance manager suggest the change as being discussed likely won't raise close to the \$3 million a year originally projected.

The Assembly voted 6-2 to table the ordinance, with Nano Brooks and Neil Steininger casting the dissenting votes. Assembly Member Maureen Hall was absent from the meeting.

The tabled ordinance will lapse if not considered at the next Assembly meeting, meaning the process for a new proposal will have to begin anew, City Attorney Emily Wright said.

The change would have required nonprofits to charge local sales tax — currently 5% — for goods and services, with some

See Tax on Page 8

How Juneau pioneered cruise ship shore power 25 years ago

Success of Franklin Dock opened the way for more than 40 ports elsewhere to electrify at least some of their docks; but local proposal to add two electrified docks running into 'sticker shock'

By PAT FORGEY, Reporter

Juneau was a world pioneer in bringing shore power to cruise ships, making it possible for one of Juneau's top industries to run on clean and cheap renewable power while in port.

But while that groundbreaking effort started 25 years ago, Juneau still has only one electrified cruise ship dock.

That's even as concerns over man-made climate change have led to dozens of other ports to follow Juneau's lead.

Electrifying docks has helped Juneau — not by just by reducing pollution locally and working toward meeting its sustainability goals — but by helping the cruise ship industry reduce fuel costs, and meet its own goals of reducing emissions and achieving sustainability.

Juneau already uses the fact that the city is powered by renewable energy as one part of its marketing efforts, said Liz Perry, president and CEO of Travel Juneau.

"A good sector of the traveling public is interested in sustainability," she said.

Adding more hydroelectric power, especially to the ships themselves, can further that effort to attract visitors, Perry said.

"They want to go to places that are using renewable resources like Juneau is," she said. "And that makes Juneau that much more of a really high-quality destination for them."

But a single cruise ship can use as much power as a small city, and the

cost of new substations and related infrastructure to meet that demand can run into the tens of millions of dollars.

A cost of \$50 million has been used in informal discussions over the last few years, something that would likely take assembling multiple sources of money to accomplish.

A new shore power effort is now underway with design work already begun and nearing an important review stage, said Juneau Port Director Carl Uchytel. The city's Docks and Harbors Department operates the city's two publicly owned cruise ship docks.

Uchytel said he already knew it would cost more than \$50 million.

Still, Uchytel said he got "sticker shock" when he heard preliminary numbers from the design work that has already been done. That work is being done by electrical engineering firm H3 Solutions from Pasadena, California.

Uchytel said the city has a memorandum of agreement with Alaska Electric Light and Power to manage the design work.

"We pay AEL&P and they pay H3 Solutions," Uchytel said.

Early work should cost about \$2 million, he said.

Uchytel said that while he's been shown preliminary numbers, he wasn't willing to make them public yet.

"It's a lot of money, I'm just going to say that right now," he said.

Just design work on big construction projects can cost 5% to 10% of project costs, but Uchytel said design work is pausing at 35% complete, a typical place where major projects halt for



The Carnival Miracle at Juneau's lone cruise ship dock with shore power on Monday, Sept. 14, 2026. (Mark Sabbatini / Juneau Independent)

review before moving forward.

Juneau's single electrified dock, the privately owned Franklin Street Dock, is used by Princess Cruises. The current goal is to electrify the two publicly owned docks, Alaska Steamship Dock and Cruise Ship Terminal Dock, both north of the Franklin Dock.

The success of the Franklin Dock opened the way for 41 ports elsewhere to electrify at least some of their docks. When it first began in Juneau, Princess ships had to be retrofitted to use shore power. Now all cruise ships scheduled to be built during the next two years will be able to hook up to shore power, according to Cruise Lines International Association.

"What began as a groundbreaking initiative has since become a global best practice," said Princess Cruises in a press release highlighting the success of the Juneau project on its 25-year anniversary earlier this year.

Enabling diesel engines to be shut down in port has avoided more than 80,000 metric tons of emissions, the company said.

• *Pat Forgey is a longtime Alaska journalist who has written for the Juneau Empire and Anchorage Daily News. He can be contacted via editor@juneauindependent.com.*

Juneau's city manager gets raise to \$243,462.34, among the highest for municipal leaders in Alaska

Assembly OKs 3% pay increase and \$2,000 bonus for Katie Koester; City Attorney Emily Wright gets similar increase to \$214,925.57

By MARK SABBATINI, Editor

Juneau City Manager Katie Koester got a salary hike Monday to \$243,462.34, putting her near or at the top of pay for such positions in Alaska, with a 6-1 vote of approval by the Assembly.

Koester, hired as city manager in the summer of 2023 at a salary of \$210,000, most recently received a raise effective Sept. 8, 2025, to \$236,371.20. The raise approved Monday is retroactive to July 13, 2026.

The 3% raise and \$2,000 lump-sum payment are the same that city employees represented by Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association received in July, according to Assembly Member Christine Woll, who chairs the Assembly's Finance Committee.

"When we hired her we did a national wage analysis and a Juneau wage-analysis (including state positions etc), as well as an internal comp review and negotiated a starting salary accordingly," Woll wrote in a text message to the Juneau Independent on Tuesday. "Since then she has received increases at the same level as MEBA union employees have."

The Assembly also approved by a 6-1 vote a similar-size increase in the

salary of City Attorney Emily Wright to \$214,925.57, up from \$208,665.60. Assembly Member Nano Brooks cast the dissenting vote on both increases. Maureen Hall and Greg Smith were absent during the vote. The vote occurred after an executive session at the end of Monday's meeting lasting about 40 minutes, with the raises announced publicly afterward.

A report published in December by the Juneau Economic Development Council stated the average annual salary for workers in Juneau was \$68,352 in 2024 (up 4.2% from 2023).

Among other top-paying municipalities in Alaska, Ketchikan hired a new city manager in June at a salary of \$235,000 (with an advertised salary of up to \$245,000). Unalaska is seeking a city manager at an advertised annual salary of \$210,000 to \$230,000, and Sitka is seeking one for \$200,000. Anchorage's city manager received about \$160,000 in 2024. In Fairbanks, where the mayor serves as chief executive, the city council in January rejected increasing the current salary of \$88,000 by 55% to \$136,000.

Woll stated Anchorage and Fairbanks "are not good comparisons" due to their strong mayor form of municipal government where the mayor has much of the power of a city manager.

At the borough level in Alaska, the chief administrative officer for the North Slope Borough is set to make \$265,610 this fiscal year. Statewide,



City Manager Katie Koester discusses glacial flood mitigation funding at a Juneau Assembly Committee of the Whole meeting on Aug. 31, 2026. (Mark Sabbatini / Juneau Independent)

Gov. Mike Dunleavy's salary during the past year was \$176,000, but dozens of state officials earned more, topped by Alaska Gasline Development Corp. President Frank Richards at \$527,764 and Alaska Permanent Fund Corp. CEO Deven Mitchell at \$448,665.

Salaries for city managers outside Alaska vary considerably, with higher rates in states such as California. A government database in that state shows the city manager of Redding (population 94,294) topping the list at \$635,561 in total wages, while the city manager of Beverly Hills (similar in size to Juneau at 32,116 residents) makes \$503,443.

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Visits, sales at city museum down by half this summer due to budget cuts

Former director, now working as a temporary curator, says some activities such as accepting donations, processing collection items and tours have halted



The Juneau-Douglas City Museum is closed on Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2026. (Mark Sabbatini / Juneau Independent)

By MARK SABBATINI, Editor

Visitors and sales at the Juneau-Douglas City Museum have been about half of their usual levels since reducing its operations in July due to budget cuts, Juneau Assembly members were told at their meeting Monday night.

The museum has been open 22 hours a week — from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays — compared to daily operations totalling 56 hours a week before the cuts, said Mary Pat Wyatt, a former longtime director of the museum who is again working there temporarily as a part-time curator. About 4,700 people have visited during the past two months.

But some parts of the museum's operations have ceased entirely, she said during the public testimony portion of Monday's meeting.

"We've paused accepting donations,"

Wyatt said. "We have made no headway in the backlog of over 3,000 objects. We're not able to plan for next summer's exhibits because we don't know who's going to be there, if anybody. We canceled offering the summer walking tours."

Other impacts include the winter schedule of exhibits being cut to three instead of six, no First Friday evenings in September or October, no school tours or classroom visits, and not being able to help with research requests, according to a letter from Wyatt to city leaders dated Sept. 11.

The museum got about \$300,000 for the fiscal year that started July 1 in the budget approved by the Assembly in June, a cut of about \$261,000 from the amount requested to fully fund operations. The cuts eliminated two of the museum's full-time managerial-level

employees and the third employee departed to accept a job elsewhere, leaving one permanent part-time administrative employee on the payroll.

Reduced operations began July 10, although a \$45,000 donation from Norwegian Cruise Line allowed seasonal museum workers to be hired. Volunteers are also helping staff the museum.

The Assembly made the cuts to the museum's budget, while sparing some other recreational and cultural programs such as Juneau's two public pools, after a months-long process spurred by voters approving two tax-cut measures in last year's municipal election. An attempt to reverse some of the impacts of those measures is on this fall's ballot with a 1% seasonal sales tax intended to "help fund indoor and outdoor recreation," and another measure restoring the property tax cap to 12 mills instead of nine.

"I'm here tonight to urge the Assembly to direct a portion of any additional revenue that you realize after the upcoming election toward fully restoring funding to the Juneau-Douglas City Museum," said Jean McBrien, a museum volunteer and member of the support organization Friends Of The Juneau-Douglas City Museum, during Monday's meeting. In particular, she asked funding be restored for the full-time director and curator of public programs positions.

"When and if additional revenue becomes available, we have a clear opportunity to reinvest in civic spaces that serve everyone," she said. "The city museum generates real value. It enriches our local school curricula, attracts heritage tourism, and provides a welcoming space for residents to connect with our shared history."

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PREVENTION

Continued from page 1

what I'd miss," he said.

Eide Sr., 66, said he hopes sharing his story will help his nine grandchildren and others know there's another way. He said he served 13 years in the military. After his attempt years ago, he spent three months in Chris Kyle Patriots Hospital. Eide Sr. said 50 officers there were experiencing suicidal thoughts.

Eide Sr. said he attends veteran support groups and is in counseling. He said he is also a part of the Tlingit Haida Elders Dance Group.

"If you're having anxiety or stress, talk about it. Don't just bottle it up and hold it in. Give yourself a chance to heal, and we're all healing," he said. "We all need hope."

Cedar chips and remembrance rocks were provided so people could write a name or message to honor a loved one and put "good medicine" into the community. Forget-me-not seeds were also offered to plant in memory of people lost to suicide. Burning cedar chips is a traditional Tlingit grieving ceremony.

"If you've ever been to a koo.éex, they start off with a grieving ceremony to close out that losing somebody just in general — closing out that grief and moving into what they call fun times or they might refer to it as something else — happy times. And so that's kind of the idea that we hoped to bring," said NAMI Juneau Suicide Prevention Manager Margaret Katzeek.

NAMI is partnering with the Juneau School District to present "Signs of Suicide" for parents and caregivers on Thursday from 5 to 6:30 p.m. at Floyd Dryden. Charity Anderson, NAMI's youth suicide prevention program coordinator, said coaches and teachers are also welcome to attend. No registration is required. A similar presenta-



Michaela Demmert reads a speech at the Juneau Suicide Prevention picnic on Saturday, Sept. 12, 2026. (Jasz Garrett / Juneau Independent)

tion is being given in all schools, according to NAMI.

Anderson shared some signs of suicide to look out for in youth during an interview.

"Maybe they're isolating a lot. If somebody is typically an outgoing person and they just stop doing the things that they like to do. Maybe they're self-harming," she said. "Just like any major changes in behavior that we notice are a sign that something is going on. It might not mean that they're necessarily suicidal, but it's a sign that something is going on and we should get it figured out before it turns into something bigger."

Anderson said if someone notices a sign, they should take the youth's concerns seriously.

"Let them know that they're not alone, and then let them know that them reaching out was a really brave thing for them to do," she said.

Anderson said connecting youth with community mental health resources is a good next step. This week's presentation aims to equip trusted adults with the tools needed to handle these con-

versations with youth in grades six through 12.

She said suicide prevention also includes physical activities, getting outdoors, and eating well and sleeping enough. Anderson also recommended youth seeking connection visit the Zach Gordon Youth Center.

"I think the biggest thing with suicide prevention and mental illness is that it's still a thing that people don't want to talk about," Anderson said. "So us doing this and holding the space to just let people know that this is a safe place. This is something that's happening a lot in Southeast, whether you're affected by it directly or not. It's important just to hold space for these conversations."

She said youth need more mental health services in Southeast Alaska so they can stay close to their support system while going through a crisis instead of having to travel elsewhere. In the roughly two years she's been the program coordinator, she said she's noticed an increase in youth reaching out for help.

NAMI will also be scheduling a peer
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PREVENTION

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support associate class soon, with an interest list available on its website. The class is for people willing to use their lived experience in recovery from substance use or mental illness to help others. The week-long 40-hour class gives the recipient a state certificate at the end. NAMI has trained approximately 65 people so far. Aaron Surma, the nonprofit's executive director, teaches the class.

"For the person in recovery themselves, it's to not be ashamed of your past and think of it as a strength rather than a weakness. That was incredible for me," he said. "I think the person who is the peer support associate — that's the benefit."

He said the benefit for the person receiving support is having someone they can relate to. Surma said JAHMI has a peer support program, and attendees of Alcoholics Anonymous meetings have also participated in the class before.

Mental health presentations can also be requested by organizations or a group of friends. NAMI can be reached at 907-463-4251 or by emailing namijuneau@gmail.com.

Michaela Demmert is the community and cultural healer for Tlingit and Haida's Community and Behavioral Services. A support group was started last month in response to recent suicide losses in Southeast. The group meets on the first and third Thursday of each month and can be reached at 907-463-7305.

The tribe's Community and Behavioral Services offers individual counseling and same-day appointments with an on-call clinician for mental health emergencies. It also offers a range of other support groups.

On Wednesday, Tlingit and Haida



A group attending the Juneau Suicide Prevention picnic on Saturday, Sept. 12, 2026, paddles together in the One People Canoe Society's Eagle canoe near Douglas Harbor. (Jasz Garrett / Juneau Independent)

will host a free recovery resource fair at its Community Council at 3235 Hospital Drive from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. September is National Recovery Month, which aims to raise awareness of substance use and celebrate people in recovery.

Another upcoming event for National Suicide Prevention Month is Tlingit and Haida's ocean dip from 6 to 7 p.m. on Tuesday at the Auke Recreation Area's Raven Shelter. It was rescheduled from earlier this month due to weather.

"There are resources where people will listen," Demmert said. "People care and it's coming from a really genuine place."

While the theme is to honor suicide awareness, she said people can dip for whatever reason, adding that anyone is welcome.

"The idea is that you go out into the water and the water takes whatever you're carrying," she said. "A lot of our culture is around the water, right? It's our food, it's our highway system, it literally brings us life. And so the idea is that the ancestors will help

take some of that weight off of you."

The Juneau Suicide Prevention awareness picnic concluded with several people taking paddles to the water with that idea in mind. They climbed into the One People Canoe Society's Eagle canoe and rowed near Sandy Beach. A decade ago, the One People Canoe Society began partnering with the Juneau Suicide Prevention Coalition to support healing during the picnic.

On the canoe, paddlers shared they attended the event because they have lost loved ones to suicide or struggled with anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts themselves.

"If you ever have something that's really weighing heavily on you and really hard to think about, come out and offer that to the water because it's got a lot more capacity to hold something than you do," said skipper S'ákjayéi Yarrow Vaara.

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TAX

Continued from page 2

exemptions. Nonprofits would still have been exempt from paying sales tax on purchases.

The proposal was previously put on hold in July by the Assembly when concern was expressed by numerous nonprofit officials about anticipated administrative and financial difficulties if they were required to charge sales tax. Juneau Symphony Executive Director Charlotte Truitt told Assembly members at a July 27 meeting it would cost \$2,000 to modify their bookkeeping process and \$500 a month afterwards to charge customers the city's 5% sales tax.

The change contained an exemption for social services, which was altered at a Sept. 2 Finance Committee meeting to specify the exemption refers to "the provision of direct services to vulnerable, disadvantaged, or distressed individuals to meet basic life needs such as food assistance, housing assistance, disability support, day services, or senior and assisted living support."

Another exemption was adopted at that meeting for "intermittent fundraising events," defined as "any discrete campaign, gala, auction, bake sale, or temporary market drive conducted by a non-profit entity for the primary purpose of raising organizational funds, provided the physical selling window does not exceed 14

consecutive days and occurs no more than four times per calendar year."

But some organization leaders and Assembly members on Monday said the changes added additional uncertainties to an already questionable policy change.

Kevin Burns, the grants development specialist at Perseverance Theatre, told Assembly members that in addition to the extra accounting work the theater would have to do, it would suffer further financial harm if ticket prices aren't raised to factor in the 5% sales tax increase.

"Most of us will lower our prices to hold the (bottom) line for our constituents," he said.

The 14-day fundraising event limit means Perseverance will have to drastically shorten certain efforts such as raffle tickets, Burns said.

"That's a pretty sizable revenue line for us and we can raise anywhere from \$20,000 to \$60,000 a year," he said. "But it takes us months to do that. We can't do that in the 14-day window. And having again to pivot like this to reach an exemption causes undue burden on us."

Additional concern about fundraising event restrictions was expressed by Niamh Diardis, president of Juneau Skating Club, who noted that essential foods such as bread are exempt from sales tax due to a measure voters passed last year, but items sold at a nonprofit's bake sale could be



Juneau Assembly Member Neil Steininger, right, talks with local scouting leader Scott Ferguson while Mayor Beth Weldon talks with Emily Ferguson following the Assembly's vote to table a proposal requiring nonprofits to charge sales tax on purchases on Monday, Sept. 14, 2026. (Mark Sabbatini / Juneau Independent)

subject to the tax.

"These unanswered questions create stress, confusion, expense and the potential for costly mistakes," she said. "And please consider the unintended consequences. These costs land on families already struggling with rising prices. They land on volunteers already giving hundreds of hours, and they force many of us to raise our fees, reduce scholarships, cut programs, and ask even more of our volunteers."

After public testimony concluded, Assembly Member Paul Kelly proposed sending the proposal tax change back for further review by Assembly committees, but he withdrew the motion when Weldon and other members said they didn't see a way to craft a workable proposal that adequately addressed the concerns raised.

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TBMP

TLINGIT AND HAIDA

Continued from page 1

troversies involving tribal leadership since the last election two years ago.

First Vice President Ku.seen Jacqueline Pata, who's held that office since 2021, is seeking to replace Chalyee Éesh Richard Peterson, the tribe's president since 2014. Three other presidential candidates — Alicia "Lisa" Gassman, Tasha Hotch and Melissa M. Kookesh — are also listed on the ballot.

Peterson was unopposed in the 2024 election.

Pata, in an interview Friday, said comments she's heard from tribal citizens and the number of candidates running for president are indicative of "wanting to have some voice in the direction of their government."

"I'm concerned about long-term sustainability," she said. "I want to be able to make sure that we have financial accountability, we're transparent and accountable to our tribal citizens, but also accountable within the tribal council and that we're true to our values," she said.

Attempts to reach Peterson on Friday afternoon were unsuccessful. In a social media post on Friday, he said the tribe is facing challenges because "we are living through unprecedented political times."

"Federal administrative swings continue to challenge Tribal sovereignty and funding across Indian Country," he wrote. "Through these shifts, my focus has been keeping Tlingit & Haida steady, protected, and moving forward."

During the past two years the tribe has launched an education campus project, debuted a long-planned tribal casino, been prominently involved in glacial flood protection efforts and made other advances. But questions have been raised about some tribal



Ku.seen Jacqueline Pata, left, first vice president of the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, and longtime tribal President Chalyee Éesh Richard Peterson participate in a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Two Coppers Casino on July 1, 2026. (Mark Sabbatini / Juneau Independent)

business and leadership actions, such as a contract providing support services in Guantanamo Bay where the Trump administration has detained migrants.

Last summer tribal officials investigated abuse accusations by a former romantic partner against Peterson, with Pata announcing at a tribal council meeting a few weeks later the review had concluded with no finding of whether the accusations have merit.

Pata said she expects those accusations and other difficulties the tribe has faced to be part of the election debate when the three-day tribal assembly convenes Wednesday at Elizabeth Peratrovich Hall.

"I think all of those things create challenges, but they're realistic, it happens," she said. "We have challenges and we have to overcome. I think when you have those challenges, and you recognize where you need to strengthen your accountability, your responsibilities, it's a good time to evaluate those and to think about what we need to do to put better checks and balances in place, and that's definitely part of my campaign."

Pata also was the target of criticism

when she served as executive director of the National Congress of American Indians, stepping down from the position in 2019 after she was placed on administrative leave due to concerns about her handling of sexual and workplace harassment reports.

Peterson, in his message Friday, wrote, "I will always put our people first, regardless of the role. Right now, I believe my experience, relationships, and energy are best used serving as your President to protect what we've built and complete the work ahead."

A profile of Peterson at Tlingit and Haida's website states he is Tlingit from the Kaagwaantaan (Eagle/Wolf) clan and a lifelong resident of Southeast Alaska. Before becoming the tribe's president, he served as CEO of the Prince of Wales Tribal Enterprise Consortium, president of the Organized Village of Kasaan, mayor and a city council member for the City of Kasaan, and member of the Southeast Island School District Board of Education.

"Together we have launched major projects that reach far beyond what we initially imagined from expanding be-

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TLINGIT AND HAIDA

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havioral health care and broadband infrastructure to growing our economic sovereignty and laying the groundwork for Tribal Education Campuses," he wrote in his post Friday. "I feel a deep responsibility and duty to our Tribal citizens to ensure these initiatives are fully realized and successful."

Pata, according to the website, is a member of the Lukaax̂.ádi clan (Raven/Sockeye) in Haines. She has been the president and CEO of the Tlingit Haida Regional Housing Authority since 2019. Prior to that she was the executive director of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), and deputy assistant secretary for Native American Programs for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. She also currently chairs the tribal assembly's Governmental Affairs (State and Federal) Committee.

"I spent 20 years in Washington, D.C., and working with Congress and various presidents, and all the tribal governments in the country on issues like housing and economic development, education, healthcare — the list goes on," she said. "I sat at the UN negotiating for Indigenous rights and the right for the indigenous voice at UN forums, and I made a choice to

come home because I wanted to make a difference for my own people, and that's really why I'm running."

Among the other three candidates, Gassman served in top leadership positions for the Sheet'ká Kwáan Sitka Tribe of Alaska before stepping down as its CEO last December.

Kookesh is the permit facilitator for the Alaska Broadband Office, where she also served as tribal liaison for three years, and has worked as a legislative staff member as well as nearly a decade working in Tlingit and Haida's office of the president. Hotch, a longtime tribal health official, was the lone opponent against Peterson in the 2022 tribal assembly election.

All of the candidates except Peterson are also listed as vice presidential candidates on the ballot so, for instance, Pata could be elected to continue serving as first vice president if her presidential effort is unsuccessful.

Peterson is scheduled to give the annual State of the Tribe address at 11 a.m. Wednesday, with the declaration of nominees for council leadership positions and candidate speeches scheduled to start at 3 p.m. The elections are scheduled to begin at 1:05 p.m. Thursday, with winners taking their oaths of office at 4:30 p.m.

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

Get the most in-depth info on the Oct. 6 municipal election in the Juneau Independent's voter guide

• Profiles of Assembly and school board candidates

• Overviews of the three ballot measures

• Details of how/where to vote

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FORUM

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KTOO. Information about three tax-related ballot propositions and how to vote in the election was also presented during the 90-minute forum.

The school board candidates were featured during the first 20 minutes of the forum, answering questions on topics that included the district's budget-driven consolidation two years ago, policies for use of technology and AI in schools, mental health support for students, and high absenteeism rates.

The three contenders — first-term incumbents Britteny Cioni-Haywood and David Noon, and challenger Christine Johnson — are seeking two seats. They are listed as a single group on the ballot. Voters are allowed to select two and the two candidates with the most votes will win the seats.

Assembly members made their cases during the final hour of the forum with a different set of questions, including citizen trust in local government, addressing future housing and landfill needs, imposing limits on cruise tourism, and whether the city should be supportive if U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers are deployed locally.

Two of the three races are competitive: The Areawide seat is being sought by incumbent Paul Kelly, and challengers Brad Sapp and James McCants. The open District 2 seat is being sought by Karla Hart, Malachi Thorington, Joyce Niven and David Morris. Mila Cosgrove is unopposed for the District 1 seat. Karla Hart, Malachi Thorington, Joyce Niven and David Morris. Mila Cosgrove is unopposed for the District 1 seat.



Sabine Auger, a senior at Juneau-Douglas High School: Yadaa.at Kalé, asks Juneau Board of Education candidates about the role of technology and AI in classrooms during a forum hosted by the League of Women Voters of Juneau at the KTOO Studios on Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2026. (Mark Sabbatini / Juneau Independent)

School board candidates discuss effects of consolidation, AI's place in classrooms

All three school board candidates agreed the district is settling in after the consolidation of schools in 2024, but more work smoothing out rough edges remains.

"I think that the consolidation broke a lot of trust in the district," Johnson said. "I have heard that it happened really quick and that there didn't seem to be transparency around the plan, or that there was a really thought-out and solid plan."

She said if further problems involving consolidation arise while she's on the board "I'd want to be able to show the transparency of why the decisions were made and what has come from consolidation, including financial as well as student success."

Cioni-Haywood and Noon, who were serving their first year on the board at the time, were the dissenters when the board approved a consolidation plan by a 5-2 vote. Both said Wednesday night they have accepted that decision and are now working toward making the plan work.

"I know high school students like to have all their friends in one building,

so that's a positive," Cioni-Haywood. "I think there have been increased offerings as well. Is everything perfect? No, it's not. There's still more work to do."

Noon said priorities of the board as it deliberated consolidation were "class offerings, especially electives and exploratories at the high school and middle school, respectively," as well as preserving access to extracurricular activities

"So these were, as always, our highest priorities: student outcomes and student well-being, and despite the rough patches I think for the most part it's going OK," he said.

One of two questions from students was asked by Sabine Auger, a senior at Juneau-Douglas High School: Yadaa.at Kalé.

"How do you think the district should respond to rapidly changing technology like social media, smartphones and especially AI?" she said. "And what do you think this technology's place is in schools?"

The question came during a week when AI is making global headlines with experts worrying it might end humanity. Cioni-Haywood acknowledged "we are in an incredibly disrup-

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tive moment with technology."

"I think students are most adept at it and the rest of us are catching up," she said. "I do believe that there is a place for most of the technology in the school system, but we have to make sure that we have guardrails on that technology. There can most certainly be abuses of those systems and I'm not sure that we fully understand all of those quite yet."

Noon said he headed a committee that oversaw the development of a new cell phone policy during his first term that "we thought met the needs of the district at the various levels and created some flexibility."

"So those are the kinds of priorities that as a board right now we're discussing as we consider possibly developing a similar policy related to AI," he said. "It is in utero — it has not fully developed yet, but these are going to be the top priorities."

Johnson said "I think that we all have to acknowledge that technology and AI is here. Students are using it, whether or not they have access to it at school."

"I think that we need to teach students how to use it responsibly and how to use it in a way that is assisting them and not doing the work for them," she said.

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, which gained additional significance locally

this year when two teens were found dead alone in the woods near the Dzan-tik'i Heeni campus at the end of August. The school board candidates were asked Tuesday "what more can the school district do to support students struggling with mental health and to destigmatize seeking help?"

Noon said he and Cioni-Haywood were part of a committee "that was responsible for meeting with community members, meeting with staff, meeting with students and stakeholders around the district to help a plan that, again, prioritizes student well-being."

"That is the very first priority," he said. "One of the metrics that we are going to implement is to create an inventory of districtwide well-being practices — what are the various supports that are available at all the levels of the district and how as a board — with the always limited resources that we have — provide supports where they are needed and fill gaps where we identify that they exist."

Cioni-Haywood said she favors "providing as much counseling support as we can across the district."

"We know budgets are tight, but this is so vital," she said, adding the district also should be focusing on partnerships with nonprofit, tribal and other organizations that provide such assistance.

Johnson said she believes school staff are in a strong position to help "given the amount of time they spend with our students, to notice when a student might be entering crisis and be able

to start interventions early."

"We need to give teachers and administrators tools to be able to direct students to help using community resources," she said. "We have a lot of community partners that we could refer students to, and I think that the biggest thing to note is that teachers shouldn't be solely responsible for sharing this alone."

The second student question of the evening was asked by JDHS senior Kaycee Parady.

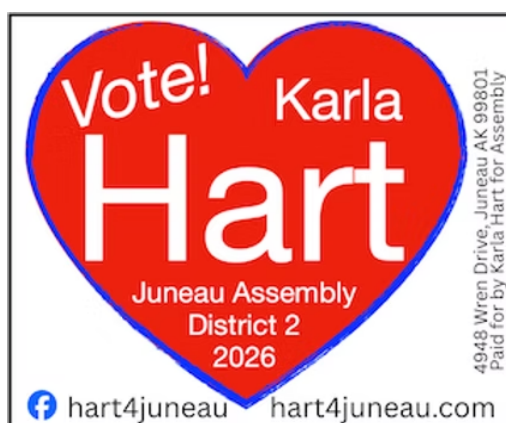
"Alaska school districts continue to face rising loss and uncertainty in state funding," she said. "How do you balance fiscal responsibility with the need to protect classroom instruction, and provide students with the programs and services they need?"

Johnson said that while examining data and determining needs for each of the district's programs is important, there are legal obligations officials have to meet for some of them.

"But I also think that we can look at how we can share resources so that all programs are receiving the support that they need," she said. "I think in order to make an educated decision and an impactful decision we need to evaluate how our decision is going to impact students — what changing programs or shifting funding for programs is going to do for student success."

Cioni-Haywood said the board has struggled with the question, especially during the first year when consolidation

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was occurring.

"We now have a system that is more incorporated for finance and accounting," she said. "We need to make sure that our resources are distributed equitably. I do think that we need to utilize our funding very wisely. We have different pots of money and so making sure that those funds are being utilized for that funding...I think looking at if there's ways that we can get reimbursed for other things, making sure we're maximizing that, and then also working with our partners and seeing if there are things that they can support as well outside of the general funds."

Noon noted "we have a \$94 million budget collectively in the Juneau School District, about \$80 million of which is under direct board control, but none of which we generate." He said that while that largely leaves the district at the mercy of the state — which he asserts has failed to provide adequate funds — "we do have opportunities to be creative."

Assembly candidates discuss cruise tourism, ICE agents

As with the school board, the Assembly candidates early in their discussion confronted the question of whether residents have lost trust due to decisions made in recent years.

"That is a huge problem with what we are currently seeing in Juneau today," Thorington said. "The Assembly and the Juneau government as a whole has largely lost the public's trust, and we've seen a lot of the funding cuts as demonstrated by that."

City leaders are taking steps to build some of that trust back, but better outreach program is needed "starting with a more understandable website, more available meetings, and accessibility to Assembly members as well as our city managers' offices and

representatives," he said.

Niven said an incident on Monday — when the Assembly tabled a long-discussed proposal requiring nonprofits to charge sales tax, largely because it was deemed confusing — shows city leaders need to improve how they proceed on such matters.

"I think we need to do our homework up front, get the ordinance in shape and ready to go, and so that it makes sense and it's understandable and explainable to the public," she said.

Affordability concerns are why many residents are unhappy with city leaders and "they're worried about their votes being ignored by the Assembly," Morris said.

"The people who voted down City Hall twice and now they're working on another one at \$18 million," he said. "I think they need to focus on the core issues, and let the private industry and the (nonprofits) take care of all the other things."

Cosgrove said "it's easy to get a little tunnel-visioned" as a city administrator of Assembly member.

"I think better work on informing and educating is important," she said. "But I also think active listening is really important, and looking for ways where we can better understand the people who maybe don't have the time or the privilege to come and sit in a meeting, or maybe the skill sets to come and send an email, or know that they can testify about an issue. And I know there's lots of communities that struggle with that."

Representative government means elected leaders "must listen to you and then do the will of the people," Sapp said.

"There have been many examples of the city not performing their duty in this regard," he said.

Kelly said he's tried to keep close touch with residents by holding regular office hours and sending monthly newsletters. He said he supports allowing public testimony at committee meet-

ings, since he hears from people who are frustrated about having to wait until Assembly meetings when a final decision may get made that seems to ignore comments made at that meeting.

McCants said he doesn't necessarily blame the Assembly if, for instance, 50 people in a community of more than 30,000 are voicing their opinions on a hot-button issue.

"At some point we have to take a little bit of accountability for ourselves and realize why we aren't showing up to voice our opinions to the government," he said. So it's not so much what they chose; it's what we did to make sure that they heard us."

Hart said she also supports allowing people to testify at committee meetings.

"The Assembly is locking themselves into decisions before they take it to the community for a chance to testify," she said. "We write letters, we write emails and we have zero way of knowing if they're ever read."

The candidates were also asked about the three ballot propositions that A) Extend a 3% temporary sales tax that votes have renewed every five years for decades, B) Raise the property tax cap to 12 mills, after voters lowered it to nine a year ago, and C) implement a seasonal 1% sales tax from April 1 to Sept. 30.

Hart, Niven, Thorington, Cosgrove and Kelly said they intend to vote yes on all three propositions. Morris and Sapp said they intend to vote for the 3% sales tax renewal and against the other two measures. McCants said he plans to vote no on all three, saying Juneau should sell its two cruise docks and "all the hundreds of millions of dollars worth of property in West Douglas" to fund its budget.

A question getting a wide range of responses was "Do you think the City and Borough of Juneau has a revenue problem or a spending problem, and

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what proposals do you advocate to address your point of view that balances core services such as police and fire; quality-of-life services such as grants, libraries, museums, and recreation; and emergency reserves for unforeseen emergencies like the glacial lake outburst flood?"

Kelly, answering first, said "I think it's primarily at this point a revenue problem, but I think also we can always look at more ways to be efficient."

"I think if we need to do cuts I support going back to the people again and kind of bringing forward again 'What are your priorities?'" he said. A previous community survey "indicated recreation was one of the top taxpayer-funded services to be cut, but I think especially after all the discussion we had last year people would think differently."

McCants, reiterating a stance from previous answers, said the local leaders should address "government-imposed scarcity" by selling off the city's cruise docks and public land.

"If I'm elected we will start necessary movement on disposal of those properties and this will not be a problem," he said.

The city has "made a couple of expensive glitzy errors with the Eaglecrest gondola and the Telephone Hill project, but in general I think it is a revenue problem," Hart said.

"We have 1.7 million cruise ship passengers coming to Juneau and yet



Judith Mitchell, right, and Patricia Turner Custard of the League of Women Voters of Juneau moderate candidate forum at the KTOO Studios on Sept. 17, 2026. (Mark Sabbatini / Juneau Independent)

we are not optimizing our revenue return from those 1.7 million people," she said. "We should be getting more."

Thorington said "rather than just a revenue or a spending problem, that CBJ has found themselves in a bit of a trust problem, which then has led to a revenue-cutting problem, which is looking like it's going to go on to another trust problem."

"It's a bit of a spiral that we need to figure out how to break because the consequences are pretty catastrophic at the rate we're going," he said.

Niven said the city had a spending problem and lost residents' trust, which resulted in tax-cut measures approved by voters last year that created a revenue problem.

"The first thing I think we need to do is focus on efficiencies," she said. "Look at all of our processes. It's not necessarily spending and/or revenue problems. It's 'let's look at efficiencies and find out ways where we could cut money, save money by doing things quicker.'"

Trust issues and the resulting tax-cut measures were also cited by Morris, who also stated the city has \$300 million in investments that it gets \$15 million in interest from.

"So I think they're having a spending problem and not allocating the resources they have responsibly," he said. "They can open up a lot of land and get more money, but they're sitting

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Here's how to vote in Juneau's municipal election

By JASZ GARRETT, Managing Editor

Registered voters can cast their ballot by mail or at a vote center until Juneau's municipal election ends at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 6.

Eight candidates are seeking three Juneau Assembly seats and three candidates are seeking two Juneau Board of Education seats in this fall's local election. There are also three tax-related ballot propositions on the ballot. More information can be found [here](#).

All 11 candidates in the election got a chance Wednesday evening to air their positions on key issues to residents during a televised forum two days before ballots were mailed and drop boxes opened on Friday.

Vote by mail beginning Friday

Registered voters can expect to see a ballot in their mailbox soon, according to a City and Borough of Juneau press release. After receiving it, they can return their completed ballot at a secure drop box available 24/7 in the following locations:

Auke Bay: Statter Harbor Boat



Launch Parking (11801 Glacier Highway, not the Harbor Office parking lot).

Downtown: City Hall (155 Heritage Way, corner of Marine Way and Shattuck Way)

Douglas: Douglas Public Library (1016 3rd Street)

Lemon Creek: Alaska Electric Light and Power Company (5601 Tonsgard Court)

Valley: Mendenhall Valley Public Library (3025 Dimond Park Loop)

Voters can also return their ballot through the U.S. Postal Service using first-class postage. Voters are encouraged to take their ballot to a USPS counter and request a hand postmark. Ballots returned via USPS must be postmarked on or before Oct. 6.

Vote centers open Monday

Vote centers will be open to people who need assistance voting, require an Americans with Disabilities Act accessible ballot, did not receive a ballot in the mail, or prefer to vote in person.

Registered voters can vote in person at the following vote centers:

City Hall Assembly Chambers: From Sept. 21 to Oct. 5, open Mondays through Fridays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Mendenhall Valley Public Library: From Sept. 21 to Oct. 5, open Mondays through Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Fridays through Saturdays from 12 to 5 p.m.

On Election Day, these vote centers will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Final results will be certified on Oct. 20.

The last day to file as a "write-in" candidate is Sept. 29. This is also the last day to apply for a ballot to be sent to a different address.

• *Contact Jasz Garrett at jasz@juneauindependent.com or (907) 723-9356.*

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on a lot of money that they don't tell anybody about and that's not good for the people. They don't need any more resources. They need to learn how to stay in their lane and spend their money properly."

Cosgrove said the issue is "a little bit of revenue and spending, but I also think budgeting."

"I think the city could do a better job of honing in what the budget currently looks like and make sure that we're reflecting projections based on accurate trends and making sure we have that budget number honed in," she said.

Sapp said "we had a spending problem that resulted in a revenue

problem."

"Money lost on the gondola, money lost on Telephone Hill, money lost on the giveaway of the city building, money lost on Peterson Hill," he said. "You go on and on and on. It's money lost, money lost, money lost. It's mismanagement of the people's money. We need to properly budget. We need to project very accurately, and we need to spend. Wisely, open up land, allow private development and it'll solve a lot of these issues."

A question near the end of the forum that stirred some reaction from the audience was "What are your thoughts about ICE agents operating in Juneau? Would you consider restrictions on how JPD and other city services interact with federal agents?"

Hart, Thornington, Niven and Cosgrove said they don't see cause for Juneau officials to cooperate if ICE officers were deployed locally. Morris said he agrees there are no known gang or similar activities from refugees in Juneau, but if ICE agents are sent to Juneau "our law enforcement people should support them." Sapp, similarly, said "if they come here it's going to be for a reason." Kelly said policies for potential situations should be established. McCants said he did not vote for Donald Trump in the 2024 presidential election, and expressed support for "a core immigrant community that's really near and dear to my heart."

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

First of two new ARFF trucks at airport fire station gets pushy welcome from local officials

By MARK SABBATINI, Editor

A new specialized fire truck that will help ensure Juneau International Airport doesn't face the shutdown scare that briefly arose during the past winter was officially put into service on Friday.

The Rosenbauer 4x4 aircraft rescue and firefighting vehicle (ARFF) got a midday ceremonial "push-in" to its bay by about a dozen local officials at the Glacier Fire Station next to the airport. The ceremony is a tradition for new vehicles dating back to horse-drawn fire engines of the 1800s that had to be pushed in by people when returning from an incident — although the 57,000-pound Rosenbauer had a driver at the wheel to "assist" the officials pushing the front of the truck.

Yet another new ARFF truck, an Oshkosh Striker 6x6, is scheduled to arrive within weeks, which means the station will once again have three such vehicles of its own after a lengthy effort to replace older trucks, said Capital City Fire/Rescue Chief Tom Hatley.

"Our fleet will be complete and it'll be good enough that I don't have to worry about it during my tenure or anybody else's tenure here," Hatley

said during brief remarks to the attendees. "These are 20-year apparatus."

Having three ARFF trucks matters because with fewer trucks the airport can only accommodate smaller jets — and can't be open at all if no ARFF trucks are available, under Federal Aviation Administration regulations.

ARFF trucks feature large-capacity water storage and chemical extinguishers for plane fires, and have all-terrain capabilities so they can access unpaved areas near runways. At the beginning of this year Juneau's airport had three such trucks with model years of 2016, 2003 and 1992, but the older two weren't functional and thus were borrowing two trucks from elsewhere.

In February the airport went through a two-week period when the station's 2016 truck and one of the borrowed trucks were out of service, Airport Manager Andres Delgado told Assembly members during a Feb. 25 Finance Committee meeting. He said that meant the smaller jet restriction was in effect — with a maximum length of 125 allowed instead of 158 feet — and the airport would have had to close temporarily if the third truck got a flat tire or had some other malfunction.

The ARFF truck put into service Friday had already been ordered at that time, but Delgado also said options were being explored for the quick purchase of another new truck to bring the fleet back to full strength. The station recently has been using ARFF trucks borrowed from Palmer and Texas to ensure three working vehicles are at the station.

Hatley, in an interview after the push-in ceremony, said the Palmer truck is being returned with the deployment of the station's new truck and the Texas truck will be returned when the second new vehicle is ready for service. He said the Rosenbauer 4x4 arrived about a month ago, but it needed to be equipped and staff training before it was put into service.

That truck has a 1,500-gallon liquid tank, while the soon-to-arrive Oshkosh Striker has a 3,000-gallon tank, Hatley said.

An open house at the fire station is planned Oct. 10, when both new trucks are expected to be ready, Hatley said.

Delgado on Friday said the airport fire station averages two or three incidents a month that require an ARFF truck deployment.

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Voices

Why I'm voting yes on Props A, B, C

By SHANNON MASON

I grew up in Juneau. I learned to ski at Eaglecrest, swim at Augustus Brown, skate at Treadwell Arena, and our Southeast Alaska ecosystems by walking our trails. These are the public spaces that make this community feel like home.

As an adult, I've chosen to build my life here, too. I went to college in New York City and, after watching my college friends stay in New York or head to San Francisco or Chicago or even Seattle, decided to return after graduation — because for me, home is someplace truly remarkable.

That is why I'm voting yes on Propositions A, B and C this October.

I know asking people to vote for taxes isn't the easiest message. Nobody gets excited about paying more. But we also have to be honest about the other side of that equation: the community we want — the special place we choose to live—costs money to maintain, and choosing not to invest has consequences, too.

For me, these three propositions are ultimately about what kind of Juneau we want to call home in five, 10 and 20 years.

Proposition A is about maintaining the basics.

Prop A extends Juneau's existing temporary 3% sales tax for another five years. This is not a new tax. It's an extension of a revenue source our community already relies on to fund police, fire, and ambulance services; snow removal; roads and drainage; parks and libraries; infrastructure; capital projects; and other essential services.

Those aren't luxuries. They're the basic functions we expect from the community we live in.

If we allow that revenue to disappear, our need for firefighters doesn't disappear with it. Snow still has to be plowed. Roads still need to be maintained. Emergencies still happen.

Proposition B is about giving Juneau flexibility.

I think this proposition may also be the easiest to misunderstand.

Prop B restores the municipal property-tax mill-rate cap from nine mills to 12 mills. Voting yes does not automatically increase the property-tax rate to 12 mills. Instead, it gives current and future Assemblies more flexibility to respond to financial challenges, emergencies, or budget shortfalls rather than being locked under the existing nine-mill cap.

That distinction matters. We've already seen how quickly circumstances can change in our community. I would rather give locally elected leaders the tools to respond to those challenges while continuing to hold them accountable for their decisions than artificially limit the options available to them.

And Proposition C is the one that hits closest to home for me.

Prop C creates a permanent 1% seasonal sales tax, collected from April through September, dedicated specifically to indoor and outdoor recreation. Because it is collected during our busiest visitor season, tourism spending will help support the recreational facilities and opportunities that residents enjoy year-round.

I strongly believe recreation is not an "extra" in Juneau. It's our trails. It's our pools, parks and fields. It's where kids grow up, where families spend time together, and where many of us

build the friendships and experiences that make Juneau feel like home.

Our community talks constantly about how difficult it is to attract and retain workers, keep young people in Juneau, and encourage families to put down roots here. Housing and the cost of living are obviously pieces of that puzzle, but so is quality of life.

My generation has benefited from Juneau residents who invested in this community before I was old enough to vote. These voters built and maintained places that became part of my childhood without knowing who I would be or whether I would stay here. Now it's my turn to make that choice for those who come after me.

I want Juneau to be safe. I want reliable emergency services and maintained infrastructure. I want us to respond when our community faces emergencies or difficult financial circumstances. And I want the next generation of Juneau kids to grow up with the same incredible access to recreation that helped make me love this place.

But at the end of the day, this election asks us to choose the kind of community we want to live in. I choose a Juneau that invests in itself. I choose a Juneau where families want to stay, workers want to build careers, and businesses want to grow.

Juneau is worth investing in. That's why I'm voting yes this October: yes on A, yes on B, and yes on C.

• Shannon Mason is the campaign manager for Juneau Yes, an advocacy group favoring all three ballot measures in Juneau's Oct. 6 municipal election. She is also the political director for Democratic gubernatorial candidate Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins. This column reflects her views and not those of Kreiss-Tomkins.

Vote no on Propositions B and C

By JOE GELDHOF, FRANK BERGSTORM and ANGELA RODELL

In 2025, the three of us worked with citizens across our community to begin making Juneau more affordable. Together we got the ball rolling.

Juneau voters adopted two sensible measures. One eliminated the local sales tax on groceries and residential utilities. The other capped the operating portion of the property tax mill rate at nine mills, down from 12. Now the Assembly cannot quietly increase property taxes without asking voters first.

The 5% tax on groceries and utility bills disappeared, putting real money back in Juneau households' pockets every month.

Instead of looking for structural ways to make Juneau more affordable, and more aggressively promoting projects to grow the economy, most CBJ Assembly members responded by wailing about lost revenue and creating a climate of fear.

Real economizing never happened. Prior to last October's vote, the CBJ appropriated \$5.5 million for Telephone Hill site prep — money still not needed since the project is on hold. We spent \$18 million on new City Hall quarters that voters twice rejected, and repaid Goldbelt roughly \$9.4 million in principal and interest — more than the \$7.2 million drawn down — to unwind its \$10 million loan for the Eaglecrest gondola.

Millions more went out the door in grants. Still, the CBJ sits on roughly \$300 million in investments that throw off about \$15 million a year in interest. Does that suggest our government has

run out of money or just refused to set priorities?

Rather than set spending priorities, the Assembly put out a familiar list of horrors — warnings of closed pools, a darkened ice rink and widespread cuts to services. Juneau residents packed Assembly chambers pleading for their pool, rink, and trails.

None of those cuts happened. The CBJ found the money to keep recreational facilities open, for now.

The revenue collapse that the fear campaign predicted never happened. CBJ had projected losing \$10 million to \$12 million a year from the grocery and utility exemptions alone. Yet, the city's finance director told the Assembly that sales tax collections came in about \$6 million better than that. Some of that was rising fuel prices tied to the Iran war, but Juneau's economy was also genuinely growing. Private-sector employment hit records, and tourism, mining and healthcare jobs were all up.

The CBJ's budget already built in an assumption for inflation on the expense side, and the Assembly still found room to approve new labor contracts. If CBJ can absorb rising costs and hand out raises while its own revenue projections were still millions too pessimistic, it can absorb voter-approved tax cuts without reaching for new taxes.

It takes time to right-size government, and the last thing this community should be doing now is raising taxes. But that is exactly what will happen if voters approve Propositions B and C this October.

Proposition C adds a new 1% sales tax from April through September. It is a different design than the seasonal sales tax Juneau voters rejected by nearly 1,500 votes last October, but it rests on a similar idea: that taxing this community more for part of the year is necessary.

Proposition B would blow up the operating mill rate cap voters just ap-

proved, raising it from nine mills to 12 — a 33% increase — and opening the door to higher property tax bills for every homeowner in Juneau, with renters impacted too.

The CBJ has repeatedly overestimated expenses and underestimated revenues. Year after year, the result is millions in carry-forward cash. While there are accounting reasons for this — the underlying reality is CBJ collects more tax revenue than it spends.

Juneau voters already answered this question last October. They chose no tax on groceries and utilities, capped the mill rate, and held the line on new taxes. Propositions B and C ask us to reverse course just one year later, before the Assembly has shown it can live within a budget Juneau residents can afford.

Our community cannot tax its way into affordability. A seasonal sales tax will make gas, home repairs and everyday purchases more expensive. A higher mill rate cap opens the door to higher property taxes and higher housing costs.

The CBJ has the resources to keep our recreational facilities maintained without reaching back into your pocket. What is missing is the discipline voters asked for last October.

To keep the affordability ball rolling, vote no on Propositions B and C.

• Joe Geldhof has been paying Juneau taxes since 1979. Frank Bergstrom is a retired miner with experience in project development, operations, and closure, plus consulting, and contracting. Angela Rodell is the former CEO of the Alaska Permanent Fund Corporation and a former Alaska Commissioner of Revenue. Frank, Angela and Joe worked with dozens of Juneau citizens to draft and pass the 2025 initiatives that eliminated the CBJ sales tax on groceries and utilities and capped the mill rate at 9.

Sports

JDHS XC boys win at Ketchikan, girls second *Crimson Bears harriers run like rabbits around Ward Lake trail course*



Runners from schools across Southeast Alaska begin the Kayhi Invitational Cross Country men's 5,000 meters race at Ward Lake on Saturday, Sept. 12, 2026. (Christopher Mullen / Ketchikan Daily News)

By KLAS STOLPE, Sports Editor

The Juneau-Douglas High School: Yadaa.at Kalé Crimson Bears cross-country running team continues to be a force in the Region V Southeast Conference as the boys won the overall team results and the girls placed second Saturday in Ketchikan.

“In Ketchikan, for both the girls’ and boys’ races we previewed the race course and pointed out tough sections and tight quarters,” JDHS co-head coach Abby Jahn said. “The Ketchikan course is narrow on the backside of the lake and can be difficult to pass. We encouraged athletes to use visual cues to stay engaged in the race and identified sections where they can easily pass other competitors. There were some breakthrough days for many of the Juneau athletes.”

JDHS senior Erik Thompson won the boys’ race in 16 minutes 19.10 seconds, edging Region V Division III

Craig senior Aulis Nelson, who placed second in 16:23.52. JDHS senior Logan Fellman ran third in 17:07.55, classmate Zach Bos fourth in 17:11.06 and DII Sitka senior Derek Wilson fifth in 17:35.15.

“For the boys, Erik Thompson and Logan Fellman are really good at getting out at the front of the pack and racing hard from the beginning,” Jahn said. “Their confidence and experience with racing is really leading their team to step up. Zac Bos and Austin Huang continue to make progress and close the distance on Erik and Logan. Max Webster, Anderson Murray and others stepped up this week as leaders on the course, too. Oscar Lamb made a big leap this week. We saw him have a breakthrough in the workout earlier in the week, then at the race. He PR’d by over two minutes.”

JDHS junior Sigrid Eller topped the DI runners and placed third overall in 20:56.58. DIII Wrangell sophomore

Jenna Meissner won the girls’ race in 20:41.61 with DII Sitka sophomore Novah Schmidt second in 20:42.22. Sitka sophomore Lola Hitchcock placed fourth in 21:12.85 and JDHS junior Nevah Lupro fifth in 21:23.30.

“For the girls, there is incredible depth on the team,” Jahn said. “Any of our top 14 runners could be on the varsity squad for regions and state. There is a consistent crew including Sigrid Eller, Nevah Lupro, Sunna Schane, Grace Rumsey and Maya Mothershead that are leading their team in races and improving their performances and confidence each race. Of note, Kaycee Parady is making leaps and bounds this season. She PR’d by three and a half minutes since last year and is unstoppable. Emmalynn LaPlante is also seeing big improvements and gaining confidence as a competitor. She is motivated and determined to contribute to her team and make improvements as a runner. It is really fun to watch her progress.”

JDHS took 28 athletes to Ketchikan, while the remainder of the team raced a team time trial on Pioneer Road. JDHS travels to the Petersburg Invitational XC meet on Saturday. The girls’ race is at 10 a.m. and the boys at 10:45 a.m. The JDHS team members not traveling will compete in a race at 10:30 a.m. Saturday at Eagle Beach.

“All athletes are doing a great job gaining experience as athletes and learning how to prepare for, race and recover from a 5K,” Jahn said. “There were so many highlights from a coaching perspective, but most importantly we have a large group of committed athletes who are chipping away at rac-

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RACE

Cotinued from page 19

ing and learning along the way. They are mentoring our freshman and helping them navigate competition. It is wonderful to see, and I am looking forward to more progress this coming weekend in Petersburg and at home at Eagle Beach."

Following are the Ketchikan Invitational boys' and girls' team placings and individual results.

BOYS TEAM SCORES

1. JDHS 36; 2. Ketchikan 57; 3. Sitka 65; 4. Skagway 105; 5. Wrangell 125; 6. Craig 154; 7. Mt. Edgecumbe 180.

GIRLS TEAM SCORES

1. Sitka 33; 2. JDHS 34; 3. Petersburg 76; 4. Ketchikan 105; 5. Craig 118; 6. Mt. Edgecumbe 165.

BOYS RACE

1. JDHS sr Thompson 16:19; 2. CRG sr Nelson 16:23; 3. JD sr Fellman 17:07; 4. JDHS sr Bos 17:11; 5. SIT sr Wilson 17:35; 6. KTN fr Ben Thompson 17:43; 7. JDHS sr Austin Huang 18:03; 8. KTN sr Henry Vail 18:11; 9. SIT so Owen Mork 18:12; 10. WRG sr Jackson Carney 18:13; 11. SKG jr Logan Rupprecht 18:13; 12. SIT so Silas Marley 18:22; 13. PSG so Andi Mihai 18:24; 14. KTN jr Isaac Evison 18:25; 15. KTN jr Maxton Glover 18:31; 16. SKG jr Zane Coughran 18:33; 17. KTN fr Paul King 18:46; 18. WRG so Ryder Ritchie 18:47; 19. KTN sr Blaine Garlick 18:51; 20. SIT jr Andrew Mullin 18:53; 21. SIT jr Silas Todd 18:53; 22. JDHS sr Max Webster 18:54; 23. KTN jr Ezra Roskam 19:00; 24. SIT so Cedar Starbuck 19:01; 25. WRG jr Lucas Stearns 19:08; 26. SKG jr Julius Thole 19:11; 27. SKG sr Luca Tronrud 19:18; 28. JDHS jr Anderson Murray 19:19; 29. SKG jr Dane Ames

19:20; 30. SIT jr Calvin Strong 19:28; 31. JDHS Niklas Uschmann 19:34; 32. KTN so James Armstrong 19:38; 33. JDHS jr Lucas Nelson-Vallejo 19:42; 34. WRG jr Carter Howell 19:46; 35. MEHS fr Duke Walcott 19:48; 36. SKG jr Arthur Aribam 19:58; 37. MEHS jr Arthur Barr 20:06; 38. KTN fr David Berntson 20:08; 39. CRG so Jack Conatser 20:11; 40. MEHS sr Benjamin Balluta 20:32; 41. MEHS jr Connor Hamilton 20:40; 42. JDHS sr Sam Buttner 20:45; 43. CRG so Allen Trimmer 20:50; 44. KTN so Copeland Westergard 20:53; 45. CRG so Alex Trimmer 20:56; 46. JDHS so Oscar Lamb 21:09; 47. KTN sr Gavin Alderson-Bell 21:12; 48. HNH sr Lawrence Howland 21:18; 49. CRG jr Roanin Durgan 21:24; 50. MEHS jr Theodore Westlake 21:26; 51. PSG sr Waylon Jones 21:37; 52. JDHS jr Finnan Kelly 21:40; 53. SKG jr Maddox Tracy 21:40; 54. WRG fr Quinton Davies 21:45; 55. JDHS jr Porter Goudie 21:49; 56. CRG so Matthew Gardner 21:55; 57. PSG fr Declan Olsen 22:01; 58. WRG sr Aadyn Gillen 22:19; 59. JDHS fr Soren Richards 22:38; 60. CRG so Jaxon Deniger 23:10; 61. HNH jr James Erickson 23:25; 62. HNH jr Riley Neal 23:29; 63. JDHS fr Wesley Swanson 24:31; 64. JDHS fr Fisher Goetz 24:45; 65. KTW sr Raymond Fairbanks 25:23; 66. KTW jr Emmitt Aboudara 26:05; 67. MET fr Josh Williams 26:26; 68. PSG so William Desposato 26:27; 69. MET sr Xavier Olsen 26:30; 70. KTW so Russell Peele 27:17; 71. SKG so Jaden Young 27:33; 72. HNS fr Edgar Nash 37:07; 73. Craig fr Chance Hansen 39:18

GIRLS RACE

1. WRG so Jenna Meissner 20:41; 2. SIT so Novah Schmidt 20:42; 3. JDHS jr Sigrid Eller 20:56; 4. SIT so Lola Hitchcock 21:12; 5. JDHS jr Nevah Lupro 21:23; 6. PSG jr Arielle Tucker 21:38; 7. WRG sr Alana Harrison

21:48; 8. SIT so Mari Fujioka 22:00; 9. JDHS fr Grace Rumsey 22:05; 10. SIT so Grace Hall 22:09; 11. JDHS jr Sunna Schane 22:17; 12. KTN sr Ryan Elerding 22:17; 13. PSG jr Cadence Flint 22:18; 14. JDHS so Emmalynn LaPlante 22:27; 15. CRG so Jayla Edenshaw 22:40; 16. KTN sr Sarah Kleeman 22:42; 17. SIT fr Ruby Richter 22:43; 18. JDHS fr Coralynn Nelson 22:46; 19. HNS so Sophia Hedden 22:49; 20. PSG fr Arya Holmgren 22:51; 21. CRG sr Rayne Fraley 22:51; 22. SIT fr Elizabeth Crosias 22:55; 23. JDHS so Maya Mothershead 22:58; 24. JDHS sr Kaycee Parady 22:58; 25. PSG jr Zia Hulebak 23:26; 26. JDHS sr Sabine Auger 23:44; 27. JDHS jr Larkyn Woltring 23:49; 28. JDHS sr Ellie Jo Wall 23:53; 29. PSG sr Maria Toth 24:09; 30. PSG fr Devyn Flint 24:19; 31. CRG so Saranne Stonecipher 24:36; 32. HNS fr Violet Crowe 24:44; 33. SIT so Cedar Bethune 24:54; 34. KTN sr Maddy Gass 24:58; 35. KTN so Chloe Beach 25:23; 36. SKG jr Mackenzie Mixon 25:26; 37. HNS jr Anna Bell 26:11; 38. KTN so Becky Fields; 39. MEHS so Audrina Dull 26:24; 40. WRG fr Natalie McGee 26:28; 41. MEHS jr MaryKay Evon 26:33; 42. CRG sr Madison Conatser 26:39; 43. CRG so Alli Demmert 27:03; 44. HNS so Makayla Henry 27:05; 45. MEHS jr Macey Langlie 27:49; 46. JDHS sr Jillian Levy 27:52; 47. KTN sr Piper Caskey 28:56; 48. SKG so Ella Rauscher 28:57; 49. KTN jr Amelia Westergard 29:02; 50. KTN fr Vada Headley 29:37; 51. MET so Elizabeth Olsen 29:42; 52. MET sr Mackenzie Williams 29:59; 53. KTN jr Khloe Nordlund 30:55; 54. MEHS jr Anya Tinker 30:55; 55. MEHS Ursula Mangrobang 30:58; 56. KTW fr Jacqueline Fairbanks 31:06; 57. JDHS sr Raegan Adams 33:48; 58. KTW jr Alyssa Jeffrey 36:29; 59. KTN jr McKinley Scott 39:55

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Friday gridiron clash a classic West, JDHS rivalry

No quarter given or taken in possible title preview as Eagles prevail 21-9 over Crimson Bears

By KLAS STOLPE, Sports Editor

In the trenches, through the inclement weather, two teams soldiered on through the late afternoon into early dusk with no quarter given or taken until the final whistle blew and only the players remained under stadium lights — touching fists, hugging worn bodies.

The Juneau-Douglas High School: Yadaa.at Kalé Crimson Bears and West Anchorage Eagles had just added another classic contest to their 20-plus year rivalry, with JDHS losing at home, 21-9.

“Just proud of our guys, a really gritty, tough group that takes on all challengers,” JDHS head football coach Rich Sjoroos said. “And West is obviously a really good football team.”

“It was a tough game and it went down to the wire,” West head coach Brown Faaaliga said. “Obviously, we got some things going offensively, defensively as well. But like I said, man, we expected a tough game.”

Faaaliga paused and pointed to the JDHS team in huddle, noting the home coaching staff and reciting numbers, among them 20 and 14, and an assortment of the Crimson Bears’ front line players.

“Those guys right there, that is a great team right there,” he said. “And they are going to be playing pretty deep in the season. And you know, we



Juneau-Douglas High School: Yadaa.at Kalé senior Krew Ridle (14) finds a hole created by blocks from senior Ethan Van Kirk (3) on West Anchorage junior Ben Solomona (31) and JDHS sophomore Hendrik Van Kirk (6) on West senior JJ Chanhtaseng (2) during the Crimson Bears 21-9 home loss to the Eagles at Adair-Kennedy Memorial Park on Friday, Sept. 18, 2026. (Klas Stolpe / Juneau Independent)

are just happy that our guys got it done on our side, too.”

Sjoroos said, “I think our guys are taking the loss hard, which is tough to see, but also you take pride in the fact that they care that much and are really motivated this season. They have a desire and hunger to do well.”

The first strategic move for JDHS was pinning West back on their own 20 with senior Sonny Mazon’s opening kickoff. The first play from scrimmage was a one-yard loss as Crimson Bears senior Jaxin Jim and Ethan Van Kirk, juniors Caleb Aube and Jarry

Maghinay and sophomores Tayt Whiteley and Carter Day got hands on West senior wide receiver Truss Irwin, who had been forced to change direction by JDHS’ defensive line.

That line forced an incomplete pass next and an offensive penalty and the visiting Eagles were looking at a third-and-16.

The challengers responded with senior quarterback Parker Grimm connecting with Irwin for a 76-yard catch and run touchdown and a 6-0 lead. West senior Elias Sandberg kicked the

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WEEKLY CIVICS TRIVIA

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- ✓ Juneau's Municipal election: ballots mailed Sept 18; in person/early voting starts Sept 21
- ✓ Registration closes for the November General Election on October 4

NOV 3, 2026
GENERAL ELECTION

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF JUNEAU

WEST

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extra point for 7-0.

JDHS started their first drive from their 35-yard line, and seniors Krew Ridle and Van Kirk were trying to find holes the Crimson Bears' offensive line worked to open. They were met with solid tackles by West senior defensive tackle Elikena Ponitini, senior linebackers Halaiea MacCandless and Jezekaiah Tufue and junior lineman Aizehn Lauano, and would be forced to punt.

The action would rarely leave a stretch of field between both teams' 30-yard lines.

"I learned tonight that we like to fight until the very end," JDHS' Ridle said after the game. "I would say the entire team really had hard the entire game, just wanting to fight. There were a couple of plays, small mistakes that kind of set us back, but we will be back."

West would be met by the JDHS defensive line and tackles by Ridle, Aube, senior Jake Chambers, junior Helaman Aitaoto-Tele'a and senior Avei Tuvaifale and be stopped on fourth-and-three at the JDHS 43-yard line.

JDHS would be met by the West defensive line and crushing tackles by Ponitini. The Crimson Bears faced a fourth-and-three and tricked their way to a first down at West's 36-yard line but a fumble on the next play was recovered by the Eagles. West would go nowhere however as JDHS' Ridle made an opening drive tackle and the Crimson Bears line forced a fumble — recovered by West — and an incomplete pass and the Eagles had to punt.

JDHS faced their largest field deficit from their own 8-yard line and worked out to their 39-yard line before West's Ponitini had two tackles and senior defensive back JJ Chanhtseng another and the Crimson Bears had to punt. The high kick in the rain was fumbled by West and recovered by



Juneau-Douglas High School: Yadaa.at Kalé senior defensive back Ethan Van Kirk (3) jars the ball away from West Anchorage senior wide receiver Jayciano Cabelas (18) as JDHS sophomore linebacker Carter Day (1) moves into the play during the Crimson Bears 21-9 home loss to the Eagles at Adair-Kennedy Memorial Park on Friday, Sept. 18, 2026. (Klas Stolpe / Juneau Independent)

JDHS junior Beckham Kasler at the Eagles 25-yard line. Three straight plays by the Crimson Bears were thwarted by the Eagles and ran into the second quarter. JDHS relied on Mazon to split the uprights with a 23-yard field goal to close the score to 7-3 with 11 minutes remaining in the first half.

West ran seven plays but had to punt from their own 32-yard line and JDHS started a crunching drive from their own 30-yard line as Van Kirk and Ridle carried the ball seven straight times, inching to the Eagles' side of the field before an incomplete pass and a fumble — recovered by West's Chanhtseng — ended possession.

West went three-and-out thanks to a huge tackle for a loss by JDHS' Jim and an incomplete pass, facing fourth-and-15 at their own 48-yard line. JDHS ran twice and were stopped with no gain by West senior Eli Rucksdashel twice with help from Lauano. The Crimson Bears' Mazon put a punt out of bounds at West's own 4-yard line with 1:31 left in the half and the Eagles managed only 14 yards before the half ended.

"You need to play a pretty flawless

game to beat West and that is tough," Sjoroos said after the game. "We had stretches there, we were playing pretty darn good. We got a couple of take-aways and got them off the field a few times and did get a little momentum offensively but just not enough to sustain that for 70 to 80 yards against a defense like that. They are hard to love the ball on, hard to score on. We dug deep into my playlist, everything I could, I guess I need a longer one."

JDHS received the second-half opening kick and Van Kirk and Ridle would follow their line, with one pass to Kasler included, across the 50 to the Eagles' 48 before being stopped on fourth-and-short for a three yard loss.

West capitalized on the momentum change and Pogtis threw a first-down completion to sophomore wide receiver JP Chanhtaseng for a first down at the Crimson Bears 20-yard line. JDHS' Jim, Tuvaifale and Chambers tackled West senior Manny Maga for a two-yard loss, but on the next play Pogtis connected on a catch-and-run to Chanhtaseng for a touchdown with 5:40 remaining in the third quarter and

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JUMP

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Sandberg hit his second extra point of the game for a 14-3 Eagles' lead.

JDHS was stopped on their next possession and West theirs. The third quarter would end with both sides working the middle of the field. JDHS tacklers included Day, Van Kirk, Jim and the entire defensive line. West tacklers included Tufue, Pontini, junior linebacker Kaio Thompson and the Eagles' defensive line.

JDHS took their next possession into the fourth quarter but were stopped on pass pressure facing fourth-and-11 at the Eagle's 30-yard-line. West worked out to the 50-yard line before an interception by Maghinay gave JDHS the ball at the Eagle's 46-yard line.

The Crimson Bears drove behind a nine-yard carry by Van Kirk, a 15-yard defensive penalty, a first-down pass from Ridle to Kasler for 18 yards to the 10-yard line, a six-yard run from Van Kirk to the four-yard line and three tough pounding plays that led to a fourth-and-goal two-yard run by Ridle to close to 14-9 with 6:22 remaining in the game.

Said Sjoroos, "Once you get outside of the 30, you are like, 'All right, it's time to dig in now.' And that is when they get even tougher. We got down there and everybody started celebrating when we caught that pass to the 10. And I was like, 'that's great, but we got to finish this drive.' And that was tough to do. Those last 10 yards, they are tough. And it took all four downs and some creativity to get it in there on fourth down, and we did."

A two-point conversion run was tackled short by a swarm of West line-



West sophomore wide receiver JP Chanhtaseng (13) tries to avoid a tackle by JDHS senior defensive back Avei Tuvaifale (8) during the Eagles 21-9 win over the Crimson Bears at Adair-Kennedy Memorial Park on Friday, Sept. 18, 2026. Chanhtaseng scored on the play. (Klas Stolpe / Juneau Independent)

men including Ponitini, who received the Eagles' "Kings Belt" award following the game.

"As an offensive or defensive lineman you are a king," West coach Faaaliga said. "So our lineman of the game gets this belt and it is pretty awesome and he was our lineman of the game."

Ponitini commented after the game, "Playing on the line is setting the tone everywhere we go and then making sure our brotherhood stays strong, even though we are on the way to success. It was hard to play here. Tough team with tough players, tough weather, but I was here with my brothers. I know they were fighting with me so I was fighting for them. Just as Juneau's linemen do."

JDHS' Mazon pinned West on their

own 20-yard line with a kick through the end zone, giving the Crimson Bears a solid chance to win the game.

West's first play featured JDHS' Jim in their backfield tackling Pogtis for a loss and tackling junior Blessing Faaea after a short gain.

Runs by West's Faaea and Pogtis were stopped by tackles from JDHS' Tuvaifale, Ridle, senior Isaiah Galletes-Fale and Maghinay, but the Eagles were accumulating enough yards to reach the Crimson Bears' 41-yard line.

West's Pogtis ran 15 yards to the 26-yard line and on the next play West's Maga pounded through tacklers for a 26-yard rushing score and an Eagles' 20-9 lead with 2:17 left in the

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IF YOU DON'T HAVE HEART,
YOU'RE IN THE WRONG BUSINESS.

WEST

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game. West's Sandberg hit his third extra point of the game for a 21-9 lead.

"I think if you look at what we were able to do offensively, even defensively, against Juneau is special," West coach Faaaliga said. "I think coming down here in a tough environment is hard. We had to get up at five a.m. to catch a flight, and then play a four p.m. game. I think our guys are resilient, and I think they get the job done week in and week out, and all the props go to them."

JDHS stayed locked in. With time and score against them the night's battle was part of a larger war. Every play to the finish was knowledge being consumed.

The Crimson Bears moved from their own 14-yard line out to their 41 as time forced a truce to be called and handshakes symbolized the reconciliation that both sides had added another historical game to their rivalry.

"Well, it was a tough game," JDHS' Jim said. "But our best offense and defense will come together in the playoffs. This is a tough loss. But I am using this as fuel for our next two games to just become the best we can be. It is pretty cool getting praising from West, they have really good athletes and players on their sideline. But for now I will get back into what I always do and watch film study for Dimond, draw up the plays and get ready for Dimond... And this number 20, it means a lot to me. And I am kind of just proud to wear it every game. I wear it with pride and represent Juneau."

Ridle was asked how it felt having opposing coaches and players recognize his and his team's play.

"It means a lot knowing that I am a player like that," Ridle said. "Because we always have players that we are calling out, saying we have got to watch them, and it feels great to be one of those guys that people have to

watch out for."

JDHS, now 3-2 in the Cook Inlet Conference (4-2 overall) will next prepare to travel to Anchorage's Dimond High School (0-4 CIC, 1-4 OA).

West, undefeated against Alaskan opponents (5-0 CIC, 5-1 overall), prepares to host crosstown rival Bettye Davis East Anchorage (1-3 CIC, 1-4 OA). East hosted Dimond Saturday, that score was not final as of this writing.

"We will get back to work Monday and focus our efforts on Dimond," Sjoroos said. "And a lot of things still in front of us. If we can get another win, we get a home playoff game. So obviously that is a big goal of this program, something you want to do each year. So we will focus on Dimond, just put all our efforts into them and start studying them. I have no doubt these guys will bounce back and be ready to go. I just liked our effort, liked our energy. West was just a little bit tougher team and they made a few more plays than we did and got a couple of stops that were big for them. The thing is, is when you look at the eye test, I mean, geez, I don't know if they live off fertilizer, you know, but, they are just very strong. Obviously they got a good workout program and some good genetics and are just well coached. A well run program. They have a system. It is all that. You have to give them credit, right?"

Ridle rushed 26 times for 78 yards and one touchdown, E. Van Kirk 19 times for 78 yards, Day once for 16 yards, C. Aube twice and Hendrik Van Kirk once. Ridle completed four of 11 passes for 46 yards. Kasler caught one pass for 27 yards, E. Van Kirk two for 18 yards and Whiteley caught one pass for one yard.

"A one-score game in the fourth quarter is what you are kind of looking for," Sjoroos said. "And we had a couple of chances with the ball bouncing on the ground that we just weren't able to get, and they were able to run the

clock out. I am just proud of the kids. I shook every coach's hand after the game. I thought they prepared hard, did everything they could and I thought the kids did everything they could. We just kind of ran out of steam there at the end. It was a great test. At some point you play teams again, you don't know for sure who it will be or when but I bought it will be early in the playoffs. It would be something if we got to a later on type thing, but I got a lot of stuff to do ahead of that. I am glad we came out of that healthy. There was a lot of big hits and some guys got slammed around so to come out of there with everybody looking like they are going be able to go, and getting a couple guys back for next week, will give us a little more depth to regroup and go up north. We have been playing pretty good on the road and we have got to do it again next week and then go from there."

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

SCORE BY QUARTER

Juneau	0 - 3 - 0 - 6 = 9
West	7 - 0 - 7 - 7 = 21

HOW THEY SCORED

1ST QTR

11:02 - Eagles - Grimm 76-yard pass to Irwin. Sandberg PAT 7-0

2ND QTR

11:10 - Crimson Bears - Mazon 23-yard field goal. 3-7

3RD QTR

5:40 - Eagles - Pogtis 22-yard pass to Chanhtaseng. Sandberg PAT 14-3

4TH QTR

6:22 - Crimson Bears - Ridle 2-yard run. 2-point conversion run fails. 9-14.
2:17 - Eagles - Manga 26-yard run. Sandberg PAT 21-9.