

Man's plans for up to
230 farm animals
at home on hold
P. 2



What should be done
with Juneau's
City Hall?
P. 19



Crimson Bears to
open gridiron
season on road
P. 20



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August 16, 2026

Glacial flood of 2026 peaks at 14.7 ft., lowest in 4 years

Mendenhall River crests well below initial forecast; short-term preventative measures credited for lack of damage and injuries

By ELLIE RUEL, Reporter | JASZ GARRETT, Managing Editor | MARK SABBATINI, Editor

The lowest peak river level in four years from an August glacial lake outburst flood, plus minimal reported damage to homes, resulted in a collective sigh of relief among Juneau residents and officials on Thursday.

The Mendenhall River crested at about 2:15 p.m. Thursday at 14.7 feet, far below last year's record of 16.65 feet, according to National Weather Service Juneau. It was also well below initial forecasts of 16.1 to 16.6 feet after an outburst flood from Suicide Basin began Tuesday afternoon.

See Flood on Page 15



Pumps push water over HESCO barriers near River Road as the Mendenhall River reaches its crest of 14.7 feet at about 2:15 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 13, 2026. (Mark Sabbatini / Juneau Independent)

Bids start for long-term flood fix USACE says will be fast and cheap — but they don't know what it is

Companies will be asked to participate in a pitch process similar to reality TV show 'Shark Tank'; RFQ seeks to limit Suicide Basin's water height and rate of flow

By JASZ GARRETT, Managing Editor
MARK SABBATINI, Editor

Competitors are now being sought to design a long-term glacial flooding solution the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers says will be built faster and

cheaper than previous proposals — but they don't know what the project is.

The intent is to select a project and industry partner for it by the end of the year, said Army Corps Brig. Gen. Clete Goetz during a press briefing Friday. He said the process will involve "a series of what we call pitch briefings" that he compared to the reality TV

See USACE on Page 11

Assembly and school board candidates get first chance to distinguish themselves

Vacant storefronts, homelessness, working families, cruise passenger fees and future development among issues raised by Downtown Business Association

By MARK SABBATINI, Editor

People curious about differences between candidates in the Oct. 6 municipal election learned about many during the first public forum featuring 10 of the 11 contenders seeking Juneau Assembly and school board seats. *See Candidates on Page 7*

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Man seeking permit for up to 230 farm animals at home

'Whether it's a duck or a horse makes a difference,' chair says as vote postponed until Sept. 8; current request is for up to 200 chickens and 30 'other' animals

By MARK SABBATINI, Editor

A man applying to keep up to 200 chickens and 30 other farm animals on his Back Loop residential property is being asked by the Juneau Planning Commission to provide more specifics about what type of animals he wants and how many of them.

Shawn Kantola presented his case to the commission at its meeting Tuesday night, stating he plans to keep a much smaller number of animals for the use of his family of seven who will be living in a newly built house on the Silver Street property. Concern was expressed during the meeting by neighbors about noise, odors and other impacts of the animals, along with questions about why he was seeking such a high number of animals in the conditional use permit application.

The commission, after a couple of members suggested amending the application to allow for fewer animals, postponed consideration of the application until its Sept. 8 meeting, asking Kantola to provide specifics about the type and number of "other" animals he wants on his property.

"Whether it's a duck or a horse makes a difference," said Erik Pedersen, chair of the planning commission.

Only five of the nine commission members were present at the meeting, so all of them would have needed to agree on a vote to approve or disapprove the permit.

Kantola told the commission one reason for the number of animals in the permit application is when it comes to chickens

See Farm on Page 5

Dunleavy offers new gasline bill with limited S-corp tax

Governor proposes 'compromise' 2% tax rather than rate up to 9.4%; House and Senate leaders say bill doesn't have support to pass, and business groups express opposition

By MARK SABBATINI, Editor

Gov. Mike Dunleavy on Wednesday unveiled a gas pipeline bill that continues to seek large tax breaks for its developers, but with what he calls a "compromise" imposing a new tax on some corporations — albeit at a significantly lower rate than legislators have sought in previous bills.

The bill has been declared dead on arrival by legislative leaders in the House and Senate, who were being asked by Dunleavy to return to the Alaska State Capitol on Aug. 20 to consider it — giving them less than a week before the end of a third special session this summer to consider gasline legislation. A coalition of business groups also issued a statement opposing the bill.

"The Legislature's decision to not return to Juneau to take action on the proposed property tax change needed to advance the Alaska natural gas pipeline project is deeply disappointing and has consequences that extend well beyond this session," Dunleavy wrote in a message on his Facebook page Wednesday evening.

"We will continue to pursue all viable options to advance the Alaska natural gas pipeline project. Ensuring reliable and affordable energy for Alaskans is both an economic necessity and a responsibility to current and future generations. The challenge remains, and we will continue working to address it."

Dunleavy has for months been proposing a massive property tax cut for developers of the Alaska LNG Project, arguing it is a necessary incentive to make the project economically viable. Legislators resisting the

project say too many details lack specifics — including the project's likely costs and profits — and have backed an alternative bill with a so-called "S Corp" provision that makes privately owned oil and gas companies subject to the state's corporate income tax.

The tax is currently imposed on publicly traded companies (referred to as "C Corps") at a variable rate of up to 9.4%, depending on income. Dunleavy, in a press release, stated his bill proposed a flat 2% S Corp tax that would take effect in 2030, the latter provision being one year later a bill drafted earlier this summer by a joint House-Senate committee.

"This bill is a compromise that removes a significant barrier to moving the gas line forward," Dunleavy said in a prepared statement.

The governor, in a social media message earlier this week, asked legislators to reconvene on Aug. 20. The deadline for the current special session is Aug. 26.

However, majority caucus leaders in the House and Senate said there appears to be no viable way to pass the bill.

"Unfortunately, intractable differences have emerged on the Governor's bill relating to property tax relief for the gas line," a statement issued Wednesday by the House Majority Caucus declares. "The proposed HB 4001 does not appear to have the support needed to pass the Alaska House, with opposition being expressed by both Majority and Minority members."

"What we want to make clear to Alaskans, to the project developer Glenfarne, and to all those watching

from afar is that support for the AKLNG project as a whole is not in question," the statement adds. "The Legislature and the Governor have repeatedly expressed their strong support for the gas line, which has not wavered."

Senate President Gary Stevens, R-Kodiak, said during a press conference Monday he doesn't believe the Legislature will have enough time to consider the details of Dunleavy's bill. Stevens told the Anchorage Daily News on Wednesday he doesn't intend to reconvene the Senate to consider the legislation.

"A majority of those in the Senate believe that this is an issue that needs to be left to the next governor and the next Legislature, where they really have the time to delve into all the details," he told the newspaper.

A coalition of four business groups also issued a statement expressing opposition to Dunleavy's bill, based on the 2% S Corp tax going into effect "even if the Alaska LNG Project never delivers phase one volumes of gas or is ultimately abandoned."

"That raises a serious question about whether this tax is truly part of a gasline incentive package or instead represents a new, stand-alone tax on Alaska's oil and gas industry," added the statement by The Resource Development Council for Alaska, The Alaska Support Industry Alliance, Alaska Chamber of Commerce, and Alaska Oil and Gas Association.

"We appreciate the willingness to compromise, but a smaller targeted tax is still a targeted tax— and it should not become permanent regardless of whether the project it was intended to support ever moves forward."

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Launchpad, a private yacht owned by Meta chief Mark Zuckerberg, in San Diego on Oct. 24, 2024. (Photo by Ed Uthman published under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license.)

Spokesperson says Zuckerberg's yacht didn't ignore call for help

Ship belonging to Meta CEO was initially tuned to a different radio channel, according to statement; incident results in a flurry of international criticism

By MARK SABBATINI, Editor

A yacht owned by Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of Facebook parent Meta Platforms, did not hear an initial call for help from a vessel in Southeast Alaska a week ago because it was operating on a different radio channel, according to a company spokesperson.

The spokesperson also said Zuckerberg and his family were not aboard the vessel at the time.

The billionaire founder of CEO has been subjected to international criticism after the Alaska Beacon reported

Friday that a 21-foot skiff ran out of fuel between Petersburg and Juneau last Monday night. The UnCruise ship Wilderness Legacy made a detour to assist the skiff, but vessel tracking services show Zuckerberg's Launchpad, a \$300 million, 387-foot yacht, was closer.

That resulted in a flood of social media and other comments from people accusing the yacht's crew of violating international agreements requiring assistance to vehicles in distress. Michael Love, a passenger aboard the UnCruise cruise ship, stated on

Bluesky there was near-unanimous booing by people aboard when the captain announced Zuckerberg's yacht hadn't responded.

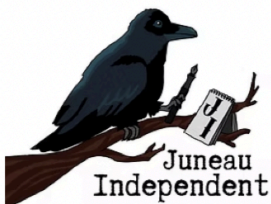
The Beacon reported the skiff sent a request for assistance, not a distress call, according to the U.S. Coast Guard. A statement provided to the Beacon and other media organizations by a Meta spokesperson during the weekend notes "Mark and his family were not on board at the time of the incident."

"As the Coast Guard noted, the boat was not in distress, and by the time the crew reviewed the Coast Guard contact on a different radio channel from the one they were operating on, the assist was already underway. We're grateful all parties are safe," the statement notes.

The Launchpad has been in Southeast Alaska much of the summer, including when family members lightered ashore from False Outer Point to cheer Zuckerberg's sister, Randi, as she finished second among women in the Juneau Marathon on July 25. While there were goodwill exchanges between the family and community members then, the rescue incident has resulted in harsher comments getting a high profile.

"I live in Juneau and I've been having to look at that excessive eyesore parked up in (Auke Bay) for too long now," the British newspaper The Guardian reported Sunday, citing a Reddit user's response to the rescue story. "(Expletive) Zuckerberg."

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Floatplane makes emergency landing in Mendenhall River



An Alaska Seaplanes floatplane is seen lodged downstream on a root ball floating in the flooded Mendenhall River on Thursday, Aug. 13, 2026. (Jasz Garrett / Juneau Independent)

By JASZ GARRETT, Managing Editor

An Alaska Seaplanes floatplane made an emergency landing at the mouth of the flooded Mendenhall River immediately after takeoff from Juneau International Airport on Thursday morning. The uninjured pilot was rescued after the river's force carried the aircraft into trees lodged downstream.

The incident occurred at about 11:17 a.m. when the de Havilland Beaver took off from the airport's floatplane pond. The pilot was the only person aboard, according to a statement issued by Alaska Seaplanes. The river was at or near the major flood stage of 14 feet at the time, according to National Weather Service Juneau.

"The aircraft landed safely but subsequently drifted into a root ball floating in the river," according to the Alaska Seaplanes statement.

Capital City Fire/Rescue retrieved the uninjured pilot using a rescue boat. Alaska Seaplanes stated he "is with

Alaska Seaplanes personnel now, who are actively working to recover the plane from Mendenhall River."

The plane was recovered later Thursday from Mendenhall River and taken back to the airport with assistance from Temsco Helicopters.

A maintenance crew from Alaska Seaplanes is examining and assessing damage to the aircraft, according to an updated social media post.

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

FARM

Continued from page 2

"I don't want to do 10 or 20 at a time. I would like to be able to do 100 at once" so his family has a supply for more than a short period. He said the request for the other animals is based on the practical realities of raising even a small number of them. "If as our kids grow up we have a pig and

we decide to have one litter of piglets, and it happens to have 14 pigs in that one litter we would be breaking the rules by having that many pigs on the farm, even if they're a foot in size," he said.

Among the residents living nearby expressing concerns was Christine Millay, who said the Kantolas are "very good family friends" and the concept is "a wonderful idea," but "I don't want that disrupting my dream home."

"I do not want to be smelling anything," she said. "We had 15 chickens and it stunk to high heaven, even on our best efforts to clean. I'm concerned about bear attractants. I'm concerned I had heard something about illuminating lights. But it's the roosters — I don't want to wake up at the crack of dawn. I would like to be able to sleep in."

Another neighbor, Chip McMillan, expressed similar concerns along with skepticism about a permit seeking to keep so many animals for one family's use. "It makes me wonder if this is not an entirely honest request," he said.

General support for the proposal was voiced by Aaron Morrison, another nearby resident.

"On a two-acre lot with the buffer around it I see this as not a problem in terms of the quantity and size of what he's asking for," Morrison said, adding he does have questions about whether Kantola's application would allow development on a vacant lot that's part of that buffer.

A report to the commission by Brandon Robinson, a city planner, recommends approval of the permit with several conditions that include noise limits, an electrified fence to protect against bears, water quality safeguards, odors not being detectable beyond the property for more than 48 hours, and keeping slaughtering of animals out of view of adjacent proper-

See Farm on Page 6

FARM

Continued from page 5

ties and public right-of-way areas.

Kantola, in an interview after the meeting, said he doesn't specifically know yet what types of animals and how many of each he might want to keep on the property. He said he believes the conditions recommended by the city planner's office should address the concerns expressed by neighbors, and questioned if the commission's request to provide specifics about types of animals is valid since "farm animals" are a single group in city ordinance.

"I need to talk to the city and find out what's actually allowed by code as far as that limitation goes — if they just have unlimited ability to pick and choose or how that works," he said.



Erik Pedersen, center, chair of the Juneau Planning Commission, questions Shawn Kantola about a permit application to keep up to 230 farm animals on his residential property during a hearing on Tuesday, Aug. 11, 2026, at City Hall. (Mark Sabbatini / Juneau Independent)

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

Salmon derby sees quiet ending to 80th run

Unofficial leaderboard remains unchanged since Friday

By ELLIE RUEL, Reporter

The final day of the 80th Golden North Salmon Derby drew to a somewhat quieter close on Sunday night, with no major upsets to the top three leaderboard fish.

Unofficial results online show a 26.2-pound king salmon caught by Patrick Dryer in first place, followed by his son Oliver's 19.5-pound king in second and Ivan Odenheimer's 18.4-pound king in third.

At the Douglas weigh station, dock chair Jonathon Gunstrom said this derby was one of their quietest years, filling two totes with salmon by Sunday night. Derby officials and representatives from KINY and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game had shifted to a meditative music session to entertain themselves.

"It's been pretty brutal," Gunstrom said. "No fish are biting, no one's catching anything. Even our regulars

that do well are struggling to catch anything."

He said many anglers had abandoned the fishing area to the south of Douglas and headed north towards Amalga instead.

Half an hour before the derby officially ended, the Auke Nu weigh station transitioned to a drive-through style of fish collection. Officials hauled boats alongside the dock and helped offload coolers of scholarship and derby salmon, and five totes were filled, totaling about 15 for the entire derby.

Hallie Mertle pulled in close to 6 p.m., with 24 scholarship fish and one derby fish in tow. She said she had been out at a cabin all weekend.

"The first day we got 10, yesterday, we got, like, five or six," she said. "At the end, we got, like, five, from the last 30 minutes, and then we made it here right on time."

The Amalga weigh station brought in 1.5 totes of fish on Sunday, the same amount as Saturday.

Rob Smith said he's been fishing the derby since he moved to Juneau in 1985, barring 2024.

"I live for this weekend," Smith said. "I don't own a slip, and I don't want to pull my boat every night, so I had to beg, borrow and plead to get a slip to tie my boat up for the derby."

He said his 14.1-pound coho made him optimistic about his odds.

"I feel pretty good, 'cause there's only an hour to go and it's the largest coho here," he said.

Smith noted the weather was a plus, since it didn't rain over the three-day derby.

"You could see it coming over, but we never got wet all three days out there," he said. "So that makes for a good journey."

The official awards ceremony is scheduled 6-7:30 p.m. Thursday at the Moose Lodge.

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CANDIDATES

Continued from page 1

People curious about differences between candidates in the Oct. 6 municipal election learned about many during the first public forum featuring 10 of the 11 contenders seeking Juneau Assembly and school board seats.

Big distinctions in answers and mannerisms were evident in responses to questions from the Downtown Business Association, which hosted the 85-minute event on Thursday. Some candidates spoke confidently to the audience of about 20 people gathering above the Sandpiper Cafe. Others tentatively read written responses to the association's questions provided in advance to participants.

True to the host organization's name, the topics focused on issues such as future downtown development, tourism management, homelessness and enticing working families. Not mentioned was glacial outburst flooding in the Mendenhall Valley, where a major annual release from Suicide Basin is expected during the coming week.

Other upcoming municipal election forums

Aug. 20: Juneau-Gastineau Rotary Club (TK McGuire's), 7 a.m.

Sept. 2: Rotary Club of Juneau-Glacier Valley (conference room at Juneau International Airport), noon.

Sept. 6: Douglas Island (Douglas Library), 2 p.m.

Sept. 10: Juneau Chamber of Commerce (Moose Lodge), noon

Sept. 16: League of Women Voters/KTOO, 7 p.m.

After opening statements by the 10 candidates, the three candidates seeking two Juneau Board of Education seats each answered the same questions from DBA President Cindee Brown-Mills,



Cindee Brown-Mills, left, president of the Downtown Business Association, moderates a forum of Juneau Assembly and school district candidates on Thursday, Aug. 6, 2026. (Mark Sabbatini / Juneau Independent)

the forum's emcee. That was followed by seven candidates in three Assembly races answering a series of questions that took up most of the final hour of the event.

One candidate seeking an Areawide Assembly seat, Brad Sapp, a Federal Aviation Administration Flight Standards manager, did not participate in the forum because he was on work-related travel to Anchorage.

A range of future blueprints among Juneau Assembly candidates

Among the eight people running for Assembly, three are competing for an Areawide seat, four for a District 2 seat representing the Mendenhall Valley and one is unopposed for a District 1 seat representing downtown.

The first question put to forum participants, with the moderator referring to downtown's empty storefronts during winter was "what role should the city play in encouraging new businesses and helping existing

businesses remain successful throughout the year?"

The unopposed candidate seeking to represent downtown, former City Manager Mila Cosgrove, said more housing is a key element, as are changes making year-round businesses more viable to operate downtown and the area itself more attractive for year-round residents.

"I think it's possible to look at removing roadblocks to business creation, maybe incentives," she said. "I'm not sure what that would look like, but I think it's worth exploring. I think it's really important that the city engage in building and maintaining attractive places for people to come to. So the Seawalk's lovely; people can walk around. It should feel like a place that you want to be. It should be clean. And I think partnering with the DBA and (the Juneau Economic Development Council) to talk about strategies where we can have that public-private partnership is really critical."

The most competitive race in District 2 had the widest range of answers. *See Candidates on Page 8*

CANDIDATES

Continued from page 7

swers. Incentives to businesses with downtown storefronts were suggested by Joyce Niven, a longtime financial and administrative manager for the Tlingit Haida Regional Housing Authority until she retired last year.

"The city has offered property tax incentives and they could consider incentives for being open for more than eight months a year, utility bonding and offering housing density bonuses," she said, adding streamlining the permitting process helps make businesses more affordable and more parking should be available.

Karla Hart, an activist who for decades has sought to limit large-scale cruise tourism, said "as somebody who doesn't live downtown or work downtown now it's very hard to get motivated to come downtown in the summer because I don't really have much reason to come."

"I think we need some balance in what's done in Juneau," she said, adding she also believes steps should be taken to reduce air pollution from cruise ships. She said she favors a housing solution that allows for some higher-density housing on Telephone Hill while preserving the liveable historical homes already there.

Cruise tourism impacts were also cited as a hindrance to locals coming downtown by Malachi Thorington, a

longtime resident who works as a journeyman electrician, commercial fisher and diver. He said it's difficult for city government to control what type of businesses operate downtown, but other steps can make the area more appealing for locals.

"Cleaning it up, I think — a lot of businesses working with DBA — facilitating cleaning up storefronts, cleaning up streets and in the winter-time being able to make sure that the roads are clear (and) parking is available," he said. "I've personally driven in circles to go downtown, only to go back home because I couldn't find a convenient place to get to where I wanted to go."

David Lee Morris, a longtime swim coach and former board president of the homeless assistance nonprofit Family Promise of Juneau, said city revenue from tourism should be used for safety, maintenance and infrastructure improvements downtown.

"Maintaining our historical and unique qualities downtown, I think, is very important because people enjoy seeing all the history that has been down there," he said.

The two Areawide candidates also differed in their answers. Paul Kelly, a first-term incumbent, said he saw incentives for businesses mentioned 22 times in a 20-year downtown blueprint plan the Assembly approved last year. But he questions if the city can afford them since there's already a budget shortfall in the wake of tax

cuts passed by voters a year ago.

"Those could be things that I could get behind supporting if the city were in a better financial position," he said. "So hopefully, we can, maybe with the election, make some changes with the upcoming vote in October."

There are two measures to increase taxes to help offset the losses from last year's cuts on this fall's ballot.

James McCants, a tour company owner who moved to Juneau in 2023, said the ambiance of downtown needs to be improved, citing problems with "riffraff." He suggested infrastructure upgrades such as covering the downtown boardwalk.

The second question to Assembly candidates asked, "How would you balance compassion for vulnerable residents with the need for safety and welcoming public areas?"

"We've got to look at costs and where we can make that happen, and we might have to be looking at outside and helping those folks in other places if we can," McCants said.

His opponent, Kelly, said while existing laws on illegal camping need to be enforced, "I believe that compassion means that we put more effort into sending professionals into the field who connect people with social services instead of arresting them, confronting them, and adding them to their record."

The District 2 candidates overlapped by stating a combination of actions

See Candidates on Page 9



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CANDIDATES

Continued from page 8

are needed to address the issue.

"I understand that much of the homeless problem is due to mental illnesses, and we need to meet the people where they're at and help them from that standpoint," Morris said. However, he said action also needs to be taken for people experiencing homelessness who refuse assistance and "we also need housing for people so they can step up."

Thorington said more space for Juneau's unhoused population is necessary "so that when an official asks somebody to move or sleep somewhere else they have a place that they can go in that moment, and not just go around the corner and get in somebody else's doorway."

Hart said she agrees a mix of approaches are needed for people seeking help and those who refuse it, acknowledging "I don't have all the answers on this one. I think if anybody did we wouldn't have the same issue" as a persisting one in the community.

A founder and board member of the Juneau Housing First Collaborative, Niven said, "The city has created many housing options to get people off the streets, and has more in progress."

She said her experience also means she won't have to "start from scratch" as an Assembly member considering the issue.

Cosgrove said while the city and assistance agencies are working well together, police should ensure a presence downtown also includes familiarity with de-escalation tactics. Also, she said, "I think housing and residents full-time just lifts everything up in the environment, and we should continue to focus on that as well."

The final two questions involved "bigger picture" views about the 20-year Blueprint Downtown passed by

the Assembly and Juneau's accreditation in the Main Street America program, the latter of which "is maintained through the DBA's efforts to maintain nationally recognized standards around economic vitality, infrastructure/design, collaborative relationships, and family-friendly activities designed to benefit residents and visitors alike in Alaska's beautiful Capital City."

There was considerable overlap among candidates about improving housing availability, parking, downtown public spaces such as the subport and tourism management. But there also were distinct ideas in many of the answers.

Hart, citing concerns about Goldbelt Inc.'s proposed private West Douglas cruise port, said she is calling for a "moratorium on new cruise ship docks until we actually understand and have the capacity to manage the cruise ship industry."

Morris said he's concerned about tracts being purchased by the Southeast Alaska Land Trust for conservation, "so the city's going to have to open up some land for local contractors to be able to build stuff."

Administrative measures for the blueprint were suggested by Cosgrove, who said a tracking process for its objectives still isn't activated, and Niven, who said "there needs to be a person appointed to manage the plan to make it be successful."

The Main Street program was generally endorsed by the candidates, although some said its provisions are vague.

Thorington said, "It seems to be the theme that everything that we want to see in our community is something that they put as a priority, be it livability, walkability, accessibility and character across the board."

McCants said it may help with some of the artistic character he wants to see furthered downtown. Kelly said it

can help build on some traditions that currently exist downtown such as First Fridays and other community activities.

Juneau Board of Education contenders confront a time of transition

Three contenders — 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.

Cioni-Haywood and Noon, both elected to their first terms in 2023, cited achievements during a turbulent three-year period that included a major financial crisis, consolidation of schools and prolonged contract negotiations with union employees that were resolved earlier this year.

"I do feel like we're at this kind of transition point," Cioni-Haywood told the forum audience, noting she hesitated before deciding to run again. "I have a lot of hope looking forward with some of the changes in administration, bringing on some really great new talent. It feels like a fresh start and I'd really like to be there to help kind of see that transition through."

Noon said he also struggled with the decision to run again, but believes the board needs members familiar with the problems the district has faced and is still facing.

"There are going to be more painful decisions potentially down the line if the (state's per-student funding) does not increase," he said. "The demographics of Juneau's population aging, our student population declining, means that we are probably going to have to have a conversation if things don't change in the next couple years,

See Candidates on Page 10

CANDIDATES

Continued from page 9

about possibly closing an elementary school, further consolidation may happen."

Johnson, who filed a complaint when her 4-year-old autistic son went missing from a playground last December, said the resulting faults found by the state in the district's special needs programs were a key motivator in her candidacy.

"I think ultimately trust is the overall most important thing," she said. "And I'm running as a parent who's celebrated incredible milestones and sat through really difficult meetings. I've asked hard questions, and worked alongside teachers, paraeducators and principals who care deeply about their students. And those experiences show me both what's working really great in our schools, as well as maybe areas that we can look to improve."

School board members in Juneau and elsewhere in Alaska frequently say more support — generally meaning money — is needed from the state to solve key problems. But at Thursday's forum, they were asked about seeking opportunities from sources closer to the community.

"How could the school district invite business owners into the classroom and create meaningful partnerships that better prepare students for the workforce?" Brown-Mills asked.

Cioni-Haywood said some courses already exist and more may be worth

adding, but noted "the board doesn't really get to set the curriculum decisions."

Noon noted an expansion of those programs has occurred recently with groups such as the Southeast Alaska Regional Career and Technical Education Consortium. Johnson also said she saw promise in such programs due to "a student I know (who) discovered an interest in mechanics through a shop class."

"She worked a summer job with a local tour company and expressed that interest," Johnson said. "And then she was brought on as an intern over the winter to learn about airplane engines. And now not only have we kept her skills in Juneau, but she's helping support the local economy and other businesses."

All three candidates noted such programs require additional teacher time and resources at a time when funding is an ongoing issue. The Juneau School District is facing hiring challenges ahead of this school year's start.

"We've had some very generous outside support from the mining industry, from these CTE programs," Noon said. "I think that in addition to that there's a lot of free resources that we can make available to teachers to promote personal finance instruction in the classroom."

The second question asked of the school board candidates: "What would you do to help create a school

system that families see as a compelling reason to move to and remain in Juneau?"

The three candidates suggested measures that, to varying extents, aren't directly under the board's control.

Cioni-Haywood said continuing to seek increases in per-student funding from state lawmakers is essential for a healthy school system. Noon said better teacher pay and benefits are key steps, and may be a difficult challenge without more state funding. Both sides in the contract standoff between the district's administrative leaders and union representatives cited a shortage of support from state lawmakers in funding and pension reform as a complicating factor.

Johnson said, "I've spoken with special education families who've left Juneau or homeschooled because they couldn't access the services their child needed."

School district leaders struggling with budget and personnel shortfalls in recent years have cited special needs programs among their areas of particular concern.

(Disclosure: Joyce Niven is the Juneau Independent's business manager. She is a part-time contractor responsible for accounting and other financial responsibilities, with no involvement in newsroom operations.)

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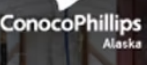


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Continued from page 1

show “Shark Tank.”

“We don’t have a price tag because we don’t know yet what it is that we’re building and how it will be built,” he said.

But U.S. Sen. Dan Sullivan, R-Alaska, participating in the press event remotely, declared, “We’ve got innovative, creative approaches to this that can make it much faster and much cheaper.”

Similar words were used by Goetz and other participants in the briefing that included Republican U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, and local municipal and tribal leaders — and by officials in two previous press events where specifics of the project were lacking.

A Request for Qualifications published Friday asks bidders to submit plans for a project that keeps Suicide Basin from rising above 1,100 feet and limits flood discharges to 1,000 cubic feet per second. The basin reached a height of about 1,345 feet this year before a release occurred and HESCO barriers along the river are designed to handle a release of 63,500 cubic feet per second.

Goetz, reiterating comments from previous press events, said the new process will invoke President Donald Trump’s “Building Infrastructure, Not Paperwork” initiative, the declared intentions of which are to shorten permitting timelines and cut administrative red tape for Army Corps projects. Critics have questioned if the intent is to bypass environmental review of Corps’ projects.

Army Corps and officials have previously stated the decade-long timeline for a long-term solution is due to Suicide Basin being on U.S. Forest Service Land, which has specific development criteria, as well as taking the time necessary to ensure whatever is done with the basin’s water doesn’t have unintended and destructive im-



Officials hold a press conference to explain a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plan to seek proposals for a long-term glacial flooding solution in Juneau on Friday, Aug. 14, 2026. (Mark Sabbatini / Juneau Independent)

pacts downstream.

Sullivan on Friday said the new approach is an “incredibly creative proposal that’s all about speed,” adding it’s “indicative of the leadership that’s happening from the top.” Goetz was asked Friday how officials can claim the project will be cheaper and faster without knowing its specifics, and why such an approach should be trusted as safe.

“We’re not taking shots in the dark and hoping that this will work,” Goetz said. “There will be a design here associated with this and we’ll do the appropriate analysis, and you know it will work because we’re going to address the conditions in Suicide Basin that lead to this.”

He noted that while the Army Corps has drafted a set of medium-term solutions that were being evaluated by local officials, including a steel wall that could cost up to \$1.5 billion, those have been shelved in favor of the new long-term plans.

Officials discussing plans for the RFQ in recent weeks have often mentioned local mining companies as a prospective partner, noting their expertise in drilling and tunneling mountains in the area. One mining of-

ficial has previously proposed a traditional drill-and-blast drainage tunnel for the basin that he claims will be quick and cost half as much as a “lake tap” solution the Army Corps at one point called its preferred solution.

The Army Corps also stated a lake tap could cost up to \$1 billion and take more than a decade to complete. Many residents in flood risk areas, as well as some public officials, have stated they consider that too costly and too long a wait given the problems posed by major floods that have occurred annually for the past years.

The RFQ published Friday is for an “Emergency Water Conveyance Prototype.” The project requirements in a 13-page program solicitation consist of one long paragraph that defines goals rather than how to fulfill them.

“Develop and demonstrate a proof of concept for, and design and construct, a new EWCP to protect the Mendenhall Valley, Juneau, Alaska associated with the severe and escalating flood hazard from GLOFs originating in Suicide Basin,” the requirements state. “The intent of this project is to prevent water levels in

See USACE on Page 12

USACE

Continued from page 11

Suicide Basin from reaching an elevation sufficient to produce enough hydraulic pressure against Mendenhall Glacier to initiate a GLOF event. The EWCP shall prevent water levels in the Suicide Basin GDL from rising above an elevation of 1,100 feet, NAVD88 while safely managing peak discharge rates of approximately 1,000 cubic feet per second (CFS) to protect downstream communities.”

An “industry day” to brief interested bidders is scheduled next Friday and the deadline to submit proposals is Sept. 4, Goetz said. Pitch presentations are tentatively scheduled Sept. 28-30, a preferred bidder selected Oct. 7 and an award agreement on a final project signed by Dec. 11.

“We’ll receive white papers from industry with their technical approach, and we’ll hold a series of what we call pitch briefings,” Goetz said. “If you’ve seen the show ‘Shark Tank,’ think that, where we’ll have those meetings with industry and from there we’ll select the best qualified to form an agreement with to design this.”

Lake tap not off the table, officials say

Murkowski saw the glacial outburst release from above on Wednesday afternoon.

That morning she sat down with the Army Corps team present in Juneau, as well as emergency management leaders from the City and Borough of Juneau and the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska’s public safety team.

During the flyover of the Mendenhall Glacier, she said she learned about the community adjusting to around five miles of HESCO barriers stretching along the Mendenhall River and an earthen berm constructed near Back Loop Road this year.

She said she also took in just how quickly the water released.

“We saw it in real time. You can see the hole in the ice at the base, the toe of the glacier, where it is flowing through,” Murkowski said. “And we saw it first on our way up the glacier, and you could see the current. But 25 minutes after our flight, going back over the same path, you could see how the volume of water had increased in just that time period.”

Murkowski said it’s important for Juneau residents to understand how impressed she is with the collaborative effort between the Corps and the city to keep properties as safe as possible in the short-term approach.

“But we’re also thinking about the longer term and what that is going to mean,” she said. “This is where I really appreciate the vision of the Corps in saying, ‘We’re not just going to

treat this as any Corps project that’s going to take a decade and millions and millions of dollars to advance.”

José Sánchez, director of engineering and business for the Corps’ Pacific Ocean Division, said the urgency of the situation requires out-of-the-box thinking.

He said this thought process applies not only to what kind of solution is sought, but also the ways it is acquired, which is why the Corps is inviting industries to submit concepts. He said the flyover provided scale for engineers to realize how difficult a long-term solution could be.

Sánchez said they aren’t pinpointing a lake tunnel solution at this time, but the approach will focus on maintaining a certain water level in the basin to avoid downstream flooding.

“That’s all we’re saying because we want all ideas to be brought on the table,” he said during a press briefing following the helicopter ride.

Murkowski said since her last visit to the capital city in June, she has seen the Corps do “a 180 in terms of its level of interest, its level of commitment, its level of engagement, and not just here within the Alaska division, but elevated all the way up to the top.”

She said she is advocating for the Corps to bore a tunnel through Bullard Mountain to drain Suicide Basin. Sánchez said while the “lake
See USACE on Page 13

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USACE

Continued from page 12

tap” isn’t being announced as the chosen long-term solution, the work the Corps has completed is still being taken into consideration. A lake tap solution was selected as a preferred long-term solution by the Forest Service, CBJ and Tlingit and Haida last December, with the Corps reaffirming it was the front-runner in March.

“We are going to be working on what we have already investigated and we have already learned from the efforts that started even before December of last year,” Sánchez said. “So all that engineering and all of that discussion we had at that time with the federal partners, with the city, with private entities as well — we even have private contractors involved in that — we’re going to use that information to progress us in a faster manner.”

The senator and Sánchez said the 35 Army Corps personnel on the ground during this year’s flood — as well as the federal agency’s largest concentration of pumps being set up in Juneau to mitigate seepage by HESCO barriers — proves the project is being treated with importance.

“Our plan is to move ahead with all the authorities that we have in place, and also plan on future authorities that we may have on this project,” Sánchez said. “We’re not slowing down.”

Murkowski said the path of soliciting industry proposals under emergency authorities is an aggressive approach for expediting a long-term fix and the Water Resources Development Act is another avenue. The bill aims to fast-track a permanent engineering solution by speeding up Army Corps paperwork. It has yet to pass the U.S.

Senate and House. Congress must also appropriate funding.

“It is hard on the people in this community. It’s hard for those that are waiting,” Murkowski said.

She also visited the unprotected neighborhood of View Drive during her visit Wednesday. Following the 14.7-foot river crest Thursday afternoon, resident Emily Rosenfeld wondered if the unannounced solution would apply to her street.

“The intent of us is to be able to manage the water out of the Suicide Basin in a way that it will not impact the residents downstream,” Sánchez said at the Wednesday press briefing. “So that includes everybody downstream.”

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Manslaughter, homicide added to charges against pair accused of attacking Alfred Willis Torres Sr.

Niece and nephew of victim scheduled to be arraigned next week on nine charges each related to alleged assault earlier this year in downtown parking garage

By MARK SABBATINI, Editor

Several additional charges, including manslaughter and criminally negligent homicide, have been added to cases against the niece and nephew of a man who died after being assaulted in a downtown parking garage in April.

Devon Rivera, 29, and Chelsea Willis, 37, are accused of attacking Alfred Willis Torres Sr., 53, who was found semiconscious in the Marine Parking Garage shortly after 11 p.m. April 6 by emergency officials who responded to a caller reporting the incident. He died about four weeks later

in a Seattle hospital.

Rivera was originally charged with three felony assault charges, and Willis with felony tampering with evidence and misdemeanor assault. But on Thursday both were charged with nine counts, including multiple additional felony assault charges in addition to the death-related charges, according to the Alaska Court System’s online database.

Juneau District Attorney Whitney Bostic has previously stated prosecutors needed to look at an autopsy report of Torres and other information before deciding if additional charges were warranted against Rivera and Willis. Attempts by the Juneau Independent to reach Bostic after normal business hours on Friday evening were unsuccessful.

Willis’ attorney, Anna Maria McDonald Ambrose, declined to comment Friday night. Attempts to reach Rivera’s attorney, Emma Johnson, were unsuccessful.

Rivera is scheduled to be arraigned on the new charges Monday and Willis on Tuesday at Juneau’s Dimond Courthouse.

According to a court charging document, Rivera told police he was at the parking garage building with Willis when she departed on a walk and returned with Torres, who didn’t know Rivera was there.

“Willis alleged they were acting in self-defense in relation to an alleged incident that occurred years prior,” according to the charging document. “Rivera learned about this allegation and that’s why he attacked Alfred.”

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CCFR completes response to wildfire near Eagle Beach

No injuries reported; public advised to use caution as dry, sunny weather expected to continue

By JASZ GARRETT, Managing Editor

The U.S. Forest Service requested Capital City Fire/Rescue assistance with a wildland fire north of Juneau that was threatening cabins on Thursday afternoon. The fire was successfully put out late Friday afternoon, according to the fire department.

The initial request for assistance from the Forest Service came in at approximately 3 p.m. Thursday. CCFR had crews on scene near the Eagle Beach Picnic Area at about 5:30 p.m. The fire took place in steep terrain off the roadway.

The Eagle River United Methodist Camp was near the fire, but sustained no damage and did not need to be evacuated, according to CCFR.

"Crews worked until approximately 9 p.m. last night, successfully holding the fire in check," Fire Chief Tom Hatley wrote in an email Friday.

Forest Service resources included an engine, personnel on the ground and a helicopter conducting water drops. CCFR responded with a water tender and six personnel to assist with firefighting operations Thursday.

An Astar helicopter fills a bucket from Eagle River and carries it to dump on a wildfire on the other side of the highway past Eagle Beach through heavy smoke on Thursday, Aug. 13, 2026.

Crews returned to the active fire Fri-



The fire department responds to a wildfire near the Eagle Beach Picnic Area on Thursday, Aug. 13, 2026. (Photo courtesy of Capital City Fire/Rescue)

day morning to continue firefighting and mop-up operations. The fire's "footprint" was contained and is still estimated to be more than one acre, Hatley said in a phone interview at approximately 5 p.m.

"It stayed in check along the cliff, so they got a good stop on it," Hatley said. He said there were no injuries reported and no structures were damaged. The public is not restricted from the area, but he asked that people be aware of emergency responders' vehicles parked alongside the road.

"The Forest Service has got a crew still on it, just finishing up mop-up," he said. "Today we just sent up our water

tender with two people to assist them with mop-up."

The cause of the fire is still undetermined, with an investigation expected to be complete by the end of Friday.

Juneau is under a heat advisory and broke a daily temperature record Thursday. Hatley said the overall fire danger remains "low" but encouraged the community to be mindful.

"It's hot and dry and people need to make sure they're being responsible with campfires and so forth and make sure things are out before they leave," he said.

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FLOOD

Continued from page 1

A year ago residents on Meander Way were paddling boats to get to homes that have sustained significant flood damage the past three years. This year a cul-de-sac at one end of the winding street was mostly dry, with Kevin Tillotson moving a few items in his puddled backyard.

"I wouldn't call this flooding," he said. "It's not going into my crawl space. It's just in my yard."

Previous floods have resulted in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers deploying walls of HESCO barriers, about 40 industrial pumps and other protective measures in neighborhoods.

"We have actually been very pleased with the way the city has worked with us," said Amanda Ryder, who at about 3 p.m. was sitting on her back porch overlooking the HESCO barriers between her home on Killewich Drive and the Mendenhall River. "I feel like the contractors as well as the city employees have been very sensitive to our input and what we want, and they've done their best to accommodate people."

No reports of injuries or serious damage

A preliminary assessment of 133 at-risk properties Thursday shows 12 sustained minor levels of water intrusion, with about 220 more properties set to be evaluated Friday, according to Ryan O'Shaughnessy, Juneau emergency program manager.

"There were no serious injuries, emergency evacuations of homes, or really any other critical emergency situations," he said during a press conference held Thursday evening by local, state and federal flood response officials.

O'Shaughnessy said a self-reporting tool is available on CBJ's website, where residents can upload photos and



Amanda Ryder watches the Mendenhall River pass by her backyard on Killewich Drive at about 3 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 13, 2026. (Mark Sabbatini / Juneau Independent)

records of flood-related damage.

About 1,900 homes were in evacuation zones, twice as many as last year, due to damage in hundreds of residences cumulatively during the past three years. More than three dozen homes were damaged or destroyed when a 2023 flood cresting at 14.97 feet caused severe riverbank erosion. Nearly 300 homes were damaged during the 2024 flood that peaked at 15.99 feet, prompting an initial wall of HESCO barriers that resulted in about 50 homes sustaining damage when the 2025 flood crested at 16.65 feet.

The HESCO barriers — reinforced and heightened this year to withstand an 18-foot flood — sustained two tree strikes and one instance of barrier lean, all a short distance south of the Brotherhood Bridge, said Denise Koch, the city's public works director. She said drones provided by state transportation officials played a crucial role in monitoring conditions along the river.

"It is a huge, huge advantage to be able to get that level of coverage," she said. "Anytime we would receive a comment or a question from the pub-

lic, where there was a concern about a particular area, we could quickly direct the drone to go to that area and we could review and monitor the drones in a way that's much, much faster than we ever would have been able to do on foot."

This year's flood was expected to be higher and peak earlier — with a forecast Tuesday night calling for a crest up to 16.6 feet at roughly 7 a.m. Thursday. But the forecast height diminished and the predicted time got later through early Thursday afternoon.

The reasons for the lower crest are still being determined, but a lower rate of water release from the basin and the river being at a lower level at the start of the flood compared to last year appear to be factors, said Aaron Jacobs, the senior service hydrologist at the National Weather Service Juneau, in an interview about an hour before the river crested.

"The mass that we saw this year per-hour change was 2,000 cubic feet per second," he said. "In comparison, last year we saw about 3,200 to 3,300 cfs increase per hour for multiple hours."

See Flood on Page 16

FLOOD

Continued from page 15

The Mendenhall River was at about four feet when this year's glacial lake outburst flood began Tuesday afternoon, compared to more than nine feet last year, when an atmospheric river occurred shortly beforehand.

Officials at Thursday night's press briefing emphasized there is more work to do evaluating this year's flood, including damage to HESCO barriers that need repairs and how protective measures can be improved looking ahead to next year's flood. "We will start that work tomorrow," said Koch.

Even without HESCO barriers, the neighborhood of View Drive was mostly dry this year, thanks to their own efforts and the lower crest, according to residents who stayed and those returning Thursday. During last year's flood, several homes on the street suffered major flood damage.

Randy Hurtte was waiting for the floodwater to recede enough on Thursday afternoon following the 2:15 p.m. crest so he could drive back to check on his house. Hurtte, his wife and his dog evacuated to a friend's house Wednesday night.

Last year, the entire first floor of their house was flooded, leaving only an upstairs bedroom untouched. On

Thursday, Hurtte said there was no water inside the house or garage. He said he still had to check inside his crawl space.

Hurtte said it was a close call, though, guessing that if the flood had crested six or 12 inches higher, it would have been a different story.

"Can go fishing now instead of working on the house," he said.

His neighbor Emily Rosenfeld felt similarly and had plans out on the water this weekend instead of cleanup.

"I think that often the worst part for us is just kind of the anticipation of the event every year," she said.

Her property, which has two separate buildings, was first impacted in 2023 with about six inches of water inside.

"One is our main house, which has thankfully never been touched with the flooding, but our second structure is a two-story garage, and the first story of the garage has flooded every year since 2023," Rosenfeld said. "It didn't for the first time this year, actually. So it's significant. It didn't even get to the level of our garage at all this year. So we didn't need to use the sump pumps this year."

She said she was hopeful for a lower crest due to the dry weather and now she's hoping to continue celebrating

the sun with the start of the king crab season on Friday.

Neighbors Doug Smith and Malachi Thorington said neither of their homes were flooded, and measurements showed the water was about three feet lower than last year on their properties near the Mendenhall River. Smith added his garage was inundated with about a foot of water.

"At least this year for once, they overestimated, and we're all super happy," Thorington said. "I was braced for another foot higher this year. I think everybody stayed dry and we got the whole week back."

At the beginning of View Drive closest to the Back Loop Bridge, which reopened Thursday evening, Mike Babcock said his berm held and no water inundated his home. Babcock's house hasn't flooded in the past.

He said with the amount of money he invested and prep work that went into preparing for a higher crest this year, he almost felt disappointed. Babcock said he was prepared with a trash pump he ended up not needing since the berm held.

"Just thankful," Babcock added with a laugh. "I thought it was going to be more exciting, but that's okay. I'm just really glad for all the people that didn't get water in their house."

He expressed hope that downstream residents fared the same.

Relief after riding out the crest

As floodwaters began to recede, residents on Meander Way were pulling in flood mitigation measures and returning to their homes.

Sitting in a sunny spot in front of his garage, Daniel Michrowski waited out the crest.

"We're really thankful that things lined up pretty perfectly this year as opposed to last year," Michrowski said. "The fact that the river was so low, it was so dry, the river and the

See Flood on Page 17



Elliot Welch rafts on the Mendenhall River near Back Loop Bridge at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2026. (Ellie Ruel / Juneau Independent)

FLOOD

Continued from page 16

lake were low, and we're just fortunate that it's not testing the system as much."

In 2024, Michrowski's crawl space and laundry room flooded, and last year water came up his driveway. His wife and dog evacuated before Thursday's crest.

"I stayed, and so that was part of our plan," he said. "Just in case there was seepage or leakage, I could pump it back over."

A wall of plywood covered in plastic sheeting and secured with sandbags surrounded him and his house.

"We're cautiously optimistic that we've survived another year," Michrowski said.

Jeff Rud was about to start stripping the plastic and sandbags from his garage door. He stayed through the flood.

"It never came up as high," he said. "Didn't even touch the barriers."

Despite having a riverfront house, Rud has never been flooded before, but has had water creep up his driveway. He said neighbors around him saw some ponding and seepage from the barriers.

Down the street, Melissa Browne said she also rode out the crest. While some water pooled in her backyard, Browne said this year was the driest her property has been during the flood.

"This is actually the first year that we stayed," Browne said. "With it happening later on in the day, and the time frame kept getting pushed back, we decided that we would stay the night last night, and then kind of see how things rolled today. We had go bags ready, just in case, to leave, but we never felt the need to."

Browne said a neighbor's camera situated on the river side of the barriers allowed her to watch the water rise, reaching only two feet up the first barrier. Last year, they were stacked two



Emily Rosenfeld and her dog Ajax walk through the flooded street of View Drive on Thursday, Aug. 13, 2026. After the crest, the water quickly receded. (Jasz Garrett / Juneau Independent)

high, and nearly overtopped.

"I think there was just so much adrenaline going that you're just wanting to know what's happening and just watching that water rise," she said. "And then it's just immediate relief."

Unlike previous years, Browne said she only saw about six inches of water in her backyard approaching her porch.

"As soon as the water came in, we called the flood hotline, CBJ's crews were here quickly to get the pumps running, and they've been running the whole time," she said.

Last year, the Brownes' garage and crawl space flooded, and three feet of water pooled in their garage in 2024.

"This is the first year that we're dry, other than a little bit of water in the backyard," Browne said. "We're feeling good."

Among the residents who did heed the city's evacuation advisory was Victoria Porter, a resident of a condominium on Glacier Highway near the river. Porter was among 15 residents who spent Wednesday night at the shelter on the Floyd Dryden campus. She also brought her two dogs, Elvis and Gracie, who stayed in an adjacent

space for pets.

"I didn't want to worry. I just wanted to rest," she said, adding she hoped to return home by tonight.

A total of 15 people, two dogs and a cat stayed at the shelter overnight, said Britta Tonnessen, the community disaster program manager for the American Red Cross in Southeast Alaska. Seven people stayed at the shelter last year the night before the flood crested.

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Mike Babcock sits on his berm watching the Mendenhall River recede near Back Loop Bridge after the crest of 14.7 feet on Thursday, Aug. 13, 2026. (Jasz Garrett / Juneau Independent)

Voices

Sullivan should have led the opposition to Todd Blanche's nomination

By RICH MONIAK

Sen. Dan Sullivan isn't a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee. But if he were a true leader in combating sexual assault and abuse, he would have immediately expressed his objections to Todd Blanche's nomination for attorney general. Other Republican senators would have joined him. And the judiciary committee would not have advanced the nomination for a vote by the full Senate.

"Victims of human trafficking and sexual abuse of minors — whether in Alaska or nationwide — need to know that their government is working for them, not against them," Sullivan's press secretary wrote in the Juneau Empire 10 years ago. "And perpetrators need to know that we won't rest until they are brought to justice."

The law eventually caught up to Ghislaine Maxwell. She was a close friend Jeffrey Epstein, the disgraced financier who pled guilty to soliciting prostitution from a minor in 2008 and committed suicide in 2019 after being indicted for sex trafficking of minors. In 2021, Maxwell was sentenced to 20 years in prison for conspiring with Epstein to transport minors with intent to engage in criminal sexual activity, and one count of sex trafficking of a minor.

However, conspiracy theories persisted about Epstein's death and a coverup to protect prominent public figures. President Donald Trump, FBI Director Kash Patel, and others helped keep them alive.

On at least two occasions while campaigning for president in 2024, Trump

hedged on releasing the so-called Epstein files but indicated he was inclined to do so. In Feb. 2025, his Department of Justice "declassified and publicly released" the first phase of the files. But most of the documents had been previously made public.

According to a report by the Wall Street Journal, in May 2025 Blanche and Attorney General Pam Bondi informed Trump he was named in the files multiple times. That shouldn't have surprised anybody. Epstein and Trump had been close friends for years.

In July, Bondi issued a memo stating "no further disclosure" of the files "would be appropriate or warranted." Trump took to calling the files another hoax created by Democrats.

Before the month ended, Blanche spent two days interviewing Maxwell as if she was a credible witness who would never seek anything in return. She told him she never witnessed Trump acting "inappropriate with anybody." Blanche then ignored Bureau of Prison policy by transferring her from a low-security prison to a minimum security prison camp.

But it wasn't until last month that Blanche finally took an hour of his time to meet with Epstein's victims. And he only did that to satisfy the concern of a Republican senator on the Judiciary Committee.

Meanwhile, in response to a lawsuit filed by an independent journalist alleging DOJ has failed to comply with the Epstein Files Transparency Act, a federal judge determined "Blanche has conceded that he is in violation of the Act."

Quite clearly, Blanche is working against the victims of sexual trafficking and abuse, not for them. To be

more exact, he's working for Trump, who said last November "we have nothing to hide" by releasing the files. But that was months after he failed to prevent likely passage of the act by demanding House Republicans drop the issue.

What's also clear is Trump and Blanche are working for fake victims. Trump pardoned everyone convicted of violently attacking the Capitol and police officers during the Jan. 6 insurrection.

And in an attempt to reward them, they created an Anti-Weaponization Fund which a federal judge described as an "attempt to use the Court to provide some legitimacy to an agreement to confer immunity to people and entities affiliated with the President and to earmark billions of dollars from American taxpayers to redress grievances not defined in the law."

While it's true that Blanche formally rescinded the fund, Trump said he would still like to see the criminals he pardoned "compensated for the pain" of being justly convicted in a court of law.

It's corrupt thinking like that which makes it conceivable that Trump will eventually pardon Maxwell. With Blanche as his attorney general, it's likely DOJ won't pursue the other perpetrators who colluded with Epstein.

And if Sullivan votes to confirm Blanche, he'll prove he no longer cares about victims of sexual trafficking or any woman sexually assaulted or abused by men in power.

• *Rich Moniak is a Juneau resident and retired civil engineer with more than 25 years of experience working in the public sector.*

What are taxpayers actually getting?

By ANGELA RODELL

Last week, I emailed the Assembly a straightforward question: if the city sells City Hall to Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI) at a discount, how much future tax revenue will taxpayers forgo, and what will they get in return? No Assembly member answered.

That may seem minor, but it reflects a larger problem. The public is repeatedly asked to weigh in on major decisions before receiving the information needed to evaluate them, then expected to trust a process where basic questions about costs and consequences go unanswered.

The question isn't controversial. It should have been among the first the Assembly considered before voting to dispose of a publicly owned asset. Instead, taxpayers are being handed conceptual benefits, architectural renderings and an Aug. 17 deadline, while the financial questions remain open.

The issue isn't whether SHI is a valuable institution. It is. The issue is whether the Assembly is applying the same diligence to this sale that it would apply to any disposal of public property.

SHI has proposed a three-story, 30,000-square-foot cultural center with a glass-blowing studio, retail gallery, cultural programming, and possibly space for the Juneau-Douglas City Museum, estimated at \$40 million. Yet SHI has acknowledged it doesn't have funding to build it and may not for years. It is nonetheless asking the city to sell the property for \$1.5 million — \$1 million below the \$2.5 million minimum originally proposed for an open auction.

The financial implications go beyond the purchase price. As a non-

profit, SHI would likely generate little or no property tax under a tax-exempt community-use arrangement, and commercial activity there would generate less sales tax than a comparable private development on the same parcel. That's not a criticism of SHI, it's simply the fiscal reality of transferring public property to a tax-exempt entity.

At the city's current mill rate of 9.92, a comparable taxable facility on the site could generate roughly \$400,000 a year in property taxes, nearly \$8 million over 20 years, and close to \$20 million over 50. Whether those estimates run high or low, they matter far more than the negotiated purchase price and should be central to the Assembly's analysis.

These are my estimates, not official city figures, and that's the problem. The city has professional assessors and finance staff, yet taxpayers are left estimating the value of a public asset from their kitchen tables while officials prepare to vote on its sale. Staff should evaluate the fiscal impact and present findings publicly before any decision.

Worth noting is Huna Totem Corporation's Áak'w Landing, an Alaska Native-led project with real cultural and economic benefits, is a for-profit undertaking that will pay property and sales tax as required, a direct fiscal contribution alongside its broader community value. Last month, that project was sent back for additional review after design changes were proposed. Whatever one thinks of that call, the message was clear, more information was needed first.

When some projects face repeated scrutiny while others advance with unanswered financial questions, residents naturally wonder whether decisions are driven by objective standards or preferred outcomes. That uncertainty erodes public trust.

Supporters of the sale point to relocating the Juneau-Douglas City Mu-

seum into the new facility. But City Manager Katie Koester noted in a May memo that ticket revenue likely wouldn't cover the city's lease and personnel costs at market rates and could add as much as \$250,000 a year to the museum's budget. This is notable given that the Assembly just cut museum staffing and hours in this year's budget. A city struggling to fund existing services should be cautious about selling public assets below market value.

To be fair, SHI raises legitimate points. City Hall isn't turnkey; no appraisal has established what a building burdened by asbestos, lead paint, and deferred maintenance would bring on the open market. An auction could yield less than the city hopes. But uncertainty is an argument for better analysis, not less.

SHI's contributions to Juneau are real. The organization reports generating more than \$30 million annually in economic activity, supporting over 100 local jobs, and providing more than \$13 million in direct gifts to the Juneau School District and UAS since 2015. Those contributions deserve recognition. They do not, however, answer the question before the Assembly.

Before Aug. 17, taxpayers deserve a transparent public record showing what's being given up, what's being gained, and how those conclusions were reached. Trust isn't created by asking residents to accept conclusions. It's created by showing the work. The public deserves the numbers and the analysis, not just the renderings.

• *Angela Rodell is a former CEO of the Alaska Permanent Fund Corp. and commissioner of the Alaska Department of Revenue who is currently a business consultant and member of Juneau International Airport's board of directors. Her column appears the second Tuesday of every month.*

Sports

Crimson Bears to open gridiron season on the road

Scrimmage shows the power JDHS brings this year as they prepare to play defending state champ South

By KLAS STOLPE, Sports Editor

Thunder Mountain Middle School's Falcons Field was covered in black, red and white on Monday night as the Juneau-Douglas High School: Yadaa. at Kalé Crimson Bears showcased their football team in a scrimmage, highlighting a roster that will compete in the Cook Inlet Conference.

"We are still a ways from playing our best football, but that is pretty normal this time of year," JDHS head coach Rich Sjoroos said. "We have a whole new offensive starting line. All five guys are new and I think it is the first time we have had that since probably 2019...Definitely some work to do there as far as the chemistry piece because a lot of times people get kind of enamored with big throws and big runs and big tackles and stuff. But it's really the line, starting at the high school level and beyond that really can dictate a lot of these games."

New to the starting offensive line — but with four years in the program and time on line last season — is JDHS senior Isaiah Galletes-Fale.

"With our small number of athletes each year, it shows how committed and motivated the people who show up every day to practice are," Galletes-Fale said. "And not only that, but we have implemented smaller guys in a typical larger man position at the offensive and defensive line. All power to them and we thank them constantly for giving up the glory of being in a skilled player position."

When Galletes-Fale dons the JDHS jersey, he knows a season is built on the backs of prior years.



Juneau-Douglas High School: Yadaa. at Kalé during the Crimson Bears scrimmage at Thunder Mountain Middle School's Falcons' Field on Monday, Aug. 10, 2026. (Klas Stolpe / Juneau Independent)

"What it means to me is a legacy to those who have come before," Galletes-Fale said. "As I have had many older adults talk to me about their glory days on the team, including my own brothers, cousins and many of their friends. Whether it was last year, the year before or when the football program first started, I want to let them know that we will continue carrying the Juneau football into incoming generations."

Sjoroos said senior Jake Chambers has transitioned from tight end to line.

"He put in a lot of work in the weight room, and we kind of approached him on the idea and he wants to have a great senior year," Sjoroos said. "And I said, 'Well, it's one way to start it is to be a starter on the offensive line for us.' So he's embracing that role and doing a great job with that."

Senior tight end Tyler Oudekerk (6'0", 170 pounds) also had a strong weight training off season and will work the O-line, as will junior center Sean Fairchild (5'11", 230) and classmate Leonidas Taualo-Tasi (5'10", 215). Ju-

niors Logan Womack (5'9", 165) and Malik Shepperd (5'10", 210) will also be among the front seven.

"I feel like our team chemistry is really high this year," Chambers said. "This is the first year in high school that I feel we have had players going out of their way to organize film studies, walkthroughs and all sorts of stuff to prepare for the upcoming games, which I think gives the team an edge when it comes to building skills and getting better together...Wearing the jersey means a ton to me. These are all guys that I have grown up with and played alongside since we were little kids. And just to be out there after all the work we have put in offseason, it makes me real proud to be out there alongside my brothers representing Juneau together."

Chambers and Taualo-Tasi will also work the defensive line, which will feature the return of junior Liam Fenu-miai (5'10", 320), who suffered a cardiac event at the end of last season.

"He got medically cleared after that-
See Football on Page 21

FOOTBALL

Continued from page 20

unfortunate incident,” Sjoroos said. “He is doing great and is in some of the best shape I have ever seen him in. But we are just going to have him play one side of the ball and defense is definitely something he has passion for. So we are going to put him on that defense side and turn him loose. Pretty much every other lineman you don’t have the ability to be on both sides of the ball.”

Behind the lines, however, stands one of the state’s best running backs and defensive backs in 5’8”, 165-pound senior Ethan Van Kirk.

“What has impressed me most about our team during the preseason is how much we have come together,” Van Kirk said. “A lot of the kids I am playing with today are teammates that I have been playing with ever since JYFL. It is hard to believe that we could get much closer, but this preseason we definitely have...I am feeling good about this season. As a team we have a great chemistry in the backfield, which I am sure will take us far throughout this season. On top of this, all offseason we have been really working to keep ourselves in good running condition, considering we do not have as many players as some of these Anchorage teams...Putting on the jersey and stepping onto the field for the first game is always an exhilarating feeling, and playing the defending state champion only furthers this feeling. I think that I can speak for all

of my teammates when I say we are ready to take on whoever stands in front of us, state champions or not.”

Senior quarterback and DB Krew Ridle (5’8”, 145), senior safety, wide receiver and DB Avei Tuvaifale (5’9”, 175), senior RB/DB and kicker Sonny Mazon (5’5”, 130), junior WR/DB Andrew Sanders (6’0”, 155), junior RB/LB Caleb Aube (5’6”, 150) and junior RB/LB Sylvan Washington (5’8”, 190) were among those noted by Sjoroos, along with senior RB/LB Jaxin Jim (5’10”, 180), Jim, while not the biggest, is one of the Crimson Bears’ strongest players and packs a punch on both sides of the ball.

“What really impressed me about this team is the dedication,” Jim said. “It has impressed me that a lot of guys are as dedicated as me, if not more...I feel great, and I am excited and eager to play as it is my senior year. My dedication has grown a lot. I have not missed one offseason workout during the winter and put up some big numbers, and during the offseason I have put my focus into film and understand the game at a higher level.”

Wearing the Crimson Bears jersey means a lot to Jim, as does the jersey number he will wear in honor of childhood friend Paul Lingley IV, 17, who died July 14, following a dirt bike accident with close friend Greyer Schwegel, 18. Lingley was about to start his senior year at Klawock High School where he ran cross-country, starred for the basketball team and helped raise his siblings in a single-father home.

“I play for the Juneau-Douglas Crimson Bears and I am proud to wear that jersey,” Jim said. “Makes me want to put Juneau football on the map...I will be changing my number this year to 20 and I am excited to wear that number, it means a lot to me. My childhood friend Paul Lingley wore that number for Klawock basketball...He was a really good friend when he lived in Juneau, before he moved to Klawock.” The JDHS drive to the Alaska Schools Activities Association First National Bowl Football State Championship begins with a road trip to defending state champion South Anchorage on Saturday. The Wolverines ended the Crimson Bears’ season 38-17 in the first round of last year’s playoffs and went on to win the title, defeating West Anchorage 24-10 in the semifinals and tromping Bartlett 37-3 for the championship.

“I have been really impressed with the way that players are filling in spots and putting in work to get better at new positions after our seniors graduated last year,” Krew Ridle said. “It means a lot to me to put on a Crimson Bears jersey because I am representing my town and those who represented it before me.”

JDHS graduated nine seniors from last year’s 3-6 team that played within a second-half victory every weekend before finishing fifth in the CIC. The power of last season showed as the top five teams were within one or two games of having the best seeding heading into the state tournament.

See Football on Page 22

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WEEKLY CIVICS TRIVIA

Who appoints the Juneau city manager?

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This week's Voting Tips

- ✓ Primary early voting begins August 3.
- ✓ See elections.alaska.gov for more information.

AUGUST 18, 2026
PRIMARY ELECTION

LWV
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The Juneau-Douglas High School: Yadaa.at Kalé Crimson Bears football team scrimmage at Thunder Mountain Middle School's Falcons' Field on Monday, Aug. 10, 2026. (Klas Stolpe / Juneau Independent)

FOOTBALL

Continued from page 21

"I just think there's a grit to these kids in Juneau," Sjoroos said. "They have got a tough schedule ahead of them though, going to South week one and they are the defending state champs and it is a tough environment and all that kind of stuff. Definitely out of the gates, taking on the best and it will be a good measuring stick, see what we got to work on and go from there. But I do like this group. I think they have the ability to tackle well. And I saw that at camp this summer. And anytime if you can play good defense and put in some good special teams, and not turn the ball over, well, those are the three things I look at, especially early in the year. You are going to put yourself in a pretty good spot in every game to at least be super competitive and see how it shakes out at the end."

JDHS travels to play CIC South Anchorage at 2 p.m. Saturday (JV 11 a.m.).

The Wolverines graduated 21 players, but should refill that with at least 25 juniors from last season.

"Well, I told our guys to eat as much as you can," Sjoroos said with a laugh.

"I try not to make the mountain too big. Let's just be real. South is a very good football team. They went on an incredible run at the end of the year. We played them well last year, especially at home, we lost by one point. And even on the playoff game on the road, the score was 21-17 midway through the third quarter. So we were right there. We just had a couple turnovers and those kinds of things in a playoff game can really flip the momentum and it did."

"I think my biggest thing is preaching to them about ball security. I really believe you have got to be the one to hand the ball to the referee every play, and then just tackle well. I think those two things are going to be what we are really preaching. And just try not to do more than what your responsibilities are. I think we have a pretty good defensive group, they are good tacklers, but I also think they are good communicators. So as long as they do that on Saturday, I think that will give us a good start."

"South didn't win state with just their seniors; they have a good group so there are challenges ahead of us, first time traveling as a group, getting settled, quick turnaround, stay hydrated and prepped on the field, remember

our responsibilities...South knows they are at the top and will come in with a lot of confidence, especially when we have 20 kids on the sideline and they have 50. They are going to feel pretty good about their depth and their numbers...but our kids don't ever seem to back down from a challenge."

South Anchorage head coach John Lewis said the Wolverines run a Fly Sweep offense, using speed to create the power game and the passing game. Among their returners are Offensive Player of the Year, senior Ethan Yarrington (#5, LB/RB), and All-State first team selection, senior Bryson Jackson (#8, WR).

"We pride ourselves for our aggressive defense and special teams," Lewis said. "We are the smallest team in size, but toughness and fearless attitude make up our DNA...Juneau plays tough football like we do, but the amount of commitment that each kid must do just to play, they always have my respect. Great coaches coach what they have, and that staff does that job better than anyone, and we know this first game will be one of the toughest this season."

South Anchorage's scores last year began with a season-opening 13-8 loss to West Anchorage. The Wolverines then went on a seven-game win streak: Bartlett 14-7 (OT), Lathrop 31-7, East 33-7, JDHS 29-28, Colony 48-29 and Dimond 37-6. South lost their final regular-season game to Service 24-19 before sweeping their playoff run and state title. This season is another test for South.

"I have had some practice at this," South coach Lewis said. "And truth is the 2025 team won, 2026 has different strengths and weaknesses to overcome, but the most important thing to stress is this: the trophy sits on a shelf, you are here to win state for 2026, repeat talks gets you in the wrong mind space. We are hunted every year,

See Football on Page 22

FOOTBALL

Continued from page 22

everyone wants to beat us, so it's another season to finish the ride to the end of October."

Lewis said he has been surprised this preseason by "the number of kids coming out, from other sports, to capture the fun and experience football brings to the table. There is no other sport that challenges you to be competent, fearless, and tough then football. We have been gathering the best and toughest athletes our school has, they want to be coached, and they understand hard work."

JDHS will travel to CIC Bettye Davis East Anchorage on Aug. 22 to face the Thunderbirds (varsity 2 p.m., JV 11 a.m.).

"Pretty thin playbook to start the year," Sjoroos said. "You are trying to figure out where all the pieces fit because we are not the only team that has players coming back from vacations or different obligations and are trying to get back in the mix. It takes a little bit of time to get all the pieces put together. I think it is just get yourself started in the right direction and find yourself moving upward by the middle of the year and then just playing your best football at the end of the season. That is really the goal that we put in front of us."

The Crimson Bears' first home game is at 7 p.m. Aug. 29 (JV 4 p.m.) against the D2 Railbelt Conference's North Pole Patriots.

JDHS will host the CIC Service Cougars on Sept. 5 (V 7 p.m.); travel to the CIC Colony Knights on Sept. 11 (V 7 p.m. JV 4 p.m.); host the CIC West Anchorage Eagles on Sept. 18 (V 4 p.m.); host the non-conference Sitka

Wolves JV Sept. 19 (JV 7 p.m.); travel to the CIC Dimond Lynx on Sept. 26 (V 2 p.m. JV 11 a.m.); and host the CIC Bartlett Golden Bears on Oct. 3 (V 3 p.m.).

The first round of the playoffs is scheduled for Oct 10-11 and semifinals Oct. 17-18, both rounds at the higher seed. The state championship is scheduled for Oct. 23 at Colony High School (7 p.m.).

Last season JDHS lost to Service 19-12, defeated East 41-22, lost to Palmer 41-20, lost to Bartlett 27-0, lost to South 29-28, defeated Dimond 15-14, defeated Colony 34-20, and lost to West 44-8 and to South 38-17.

For Sjoroos, the challenges of a season also involve the junior varsity, which he believes is one of the best the Crimson Bears have had.

"I think it's important to keep those guys together," he said. "Building them the kind of year that I think they can have, which will obviously pay dividends for the varsity in the future. It is tempting to pull some of those guys up, put them at the varsity level at a younger age, but I don't think this year that's the direction that I wanna go... Obviously, we have a lot of challenges with depth. Our numbers are the lowest since 2019. We have a pretty small senior class and a smaller freshman class, and a pretty good-sized junior and sophomore class. But any time you have two classes that are on the smaller side, that leads to lower numbers and most years, we'll have just one. But this year we have two groups that don't have a lot of numbers and so it puts us in a tougher spot for practices and things like that."

What they lack for in numbers, the Crimson Bears make up for as a team. "We find a way to come together as a

group and have each other's backs," Sjoroos said. "Week one nobody wins a state championship, week two nobody wins it. It is all about getting better so that you can try and make that run at the end of the year. And I feel like we've played some good playoff games the last few years. We haven't necessarily had the end result we were looking for, but I feel we have put ourselves in a good spot to win a couple of those. Hopefully this year will be the same, that we can just continue to progress. As coaches we try to support each other and be organized and have a good plan in place for the kids to be successful. I told the kids, 'My goal is just try and put you guys in spots to be successful and represent our community well.' And I think the kids do a good job of embracing that."

The Crimson Bears coaching staff are Sjoroos (HC), Jeff Hedges (OL/DL), Brandon Ridle (defensive coordinator), Silver Maake (assistant DC), Danny Isaak (WR), Mike Behrends (RB), Chris Connally (QB), Naash Richey (head JV), Zach Starboard (JV DC), Jaysen Katasse (JV assistant) and Brandon Duran (JV OL/DL). Manager is Jaasyah Crowley.

PLAYERS

(preseason position, height, weight)

Seniors: #2 Sonny Mazon (RB/DB, 5'5, 130); #3 Ethan Van Kirk (RB/DB, 5'8, 165); #8 Avei Tuvaifale (WR/DB, 5'9, 175); #14 Krew Ridle (QB/DB, 5'8, 145); #20 Jaxin Jim (RB/LB, 5'10, 180); #55 Tyler Oudekerk (TE/DL, 6'0, 170); #56 Jake Chambers (TE/LB, 6'0, 185); #75 Isaiah Galletes-Fale (OL/DL, 6'5, 330).

Juniors: #5 Sylvan Washington (RB/LB, 5'8, 190); #12 Dylan Miller (WR/DB, 5'11, 160); #13 Cohen

See **Football** on Page 24

"WHEN IT COMES TO MEANINGFUL MENTAL HEALTH CARE, MEETING VIRTUALLY IN SOMEONE'S HOME CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE."

Dr. Koko Bravo, Psychiatrist

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FOOTBALL

Continued from page 23

Odenheimer (OL/DL, 5'6, 170); #15 Beckham Kasler (WR/DB, 5'6, 140); #21 Andrew Sanders (WR/DB, 6'0, 155); #22 Jarry Maghinay (RB/LB, 5'6, 180); #23 Caleb Aube (RB/LB, 5'6, 150); #49 Helaman Aitaoto-Tele'a (TE/DL, 6'2, 240); #54 Logan Womack (OL/DL, 5'9, 165); #65 Sean Fairchild (OL/DL, 5'11, 230); #74 Liam Fenumiai (OL/DL, 5'10, 320); #78 Malik Sheppard (OL/DL, 5'10,

210); Leonidas Taualo-Tasi (OL/DL, 5'10, 215).

Sophomores: #1 Carter Day (QB/LB, 5'10, 165); #4 Jude Rushton (WR/DB, 5'7, 130); #6 Hendrik Van Kirk (RB/DB, 5'7, 140); #7 Parker Katasse (QB/DB, 5'5, 130); #9 Hania Richey (WR/DB, 5'9, 140); #10 Danny Duran (RB/DL, 5'8, 170); #16 Tayt Whiteley (TE/DL, 5'11, 205); #17 Caleb Demmert (WR/DB, 5'7, 125); #19 Jose Carranza (WR/DB, 5'8, 140); #52 Byron Jack III (RB/DL, 5'7, 140); #53 Soren Young (RB/LB, 5'7, 150).

Freshmen: #24 Liam Bigelow (WR/DB, 5'8, 140); #27 Kolten Krueger (RB/LB, 5'8, 160); #47 Oto Kivalu (RB/LB, 5'7, 175); #58 Channer Maki (OL/DL, 6'3, 250); #68 Drake Paul (OL/DL, 5'7, 210); #69 Cole Whiting (OL/DL, 5'7, 175); #70 Tierney Bible (OL/DL, 5'8, 215); #72 Kolten Hay (OL/DL, 5'7, 220); Vance Tupou (OL/DL, 5'8, 180).

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

Midsummer Night Run reveals a Golden Age of athletes



Racers leave the starting line at False Outer Point on North Douglas Highway during the Midsummer Night Run, Tuesday, August 11, 2026. (Klas Stolpe / Juneau Independent)

Wright smites the field, all of whom battle to their finish

By KLAS STOLPE, Sports Editor

Juneau's John Wright, 39, put his best "Elizabethan" feet forward to entertain the cheering masses as he led a "Golden Age" of athletes across the finish of the Midsummer Night Run on Tuesday evening at False Outer Point, winning the 10-kilometer race in 35 minutes and 46 seconds.

"I wanted to see where I was in a buildup to a marathon in Octo-

ber," Wright said, catching his breath at the finish line aid station. "It was kind of a fitness test."

Wright will be running the Portland Marathon on October 4. He wants to average less than 6:30 per mile in his marathon. He averaged 5:39 on Tuesday evening from the False Outer Point parking lot starting line to the Fish Creek Bridge and back.

"I was not quite as ready as I was hoping I would be," he said. "There were too many miles stuck in my legs for this one, so no PR today."

Juneau's Olivia Glasscock, 34, was the

first 1K female, and sixth overall, finishing in 43:51.

"I was just trying to finish," Glasscock said. "I was under the impression that it was a 5k until about an hour before. The whole second half I was kind of regretting my pace in the first half and just holding on... Kind of just coming back from being off of running for a little while this year, and trying to take it nice and safe. I hope to get some sort of PR later in the year but I haven't decided what."

Finn Taintor, age 9, the only under-19

See **Night Run** on Page 25



Juneau's John Wright, 39, sprints along North Douglas Highway towards False Outer Point during his 10-kilometer win in the Midsummer Night Run on Tuesday, Aug. 11, 2026. Wright finished in 35 minutes and 46 seconds. (Klas Stolpe / Juneau Independent)

NIGHT RUN

Continued from page 24

racer in the 10K, placed 13th overall in 48:58 and hit his race goal.

"I wanted to get sub-50," Taintor said. "I got 48! I haven't actually done a 10k before. I think key was just to keep kicking down, like, maybe every half a mile speed up. I started off at maybe a little slower than a 5k pace, and I had a lot left. I don't know what is next, maybe the cancer run on Saturday if I am able too."

Taintor has another goal for the future. "I want to get a four-minute mile," he said. "When he (John Wright) and I passed each other I just started kicking down because I knew the turn-around point was soon."

One-mile racer Addi Johnson, 8, enjoyed the outing and watching the runners.

"I really like running," Johnson said. "And I am trying to get points for the Nugget (Nugget Alaska Outfitters cup standings). I think I did pretty good. This was my second fastest mile. I think I might do the cancer run this weekend."

Johnson was asked if she wanted to run as fast as Wright.

"Someday, maybe," she said. "It takes a lot of practice probably."

Wright (fastest in the 19-and-over category) was followed by Abe Kanter, 32, in 35:46; Tim Mikulski, 27, in 40:35; Darin Tingey, 21, in 41:14; William Merritt, 23, in 43:48; Glasscock, 43:51; Hiram Henry, 51, 43:57; Peter Flynn, 43, 44:21; McKenna Uhing, 25, 44:32; Paul Strickler, 32, 46:39; Therese Pokorney, 27, 47:28; Quinn Tracy, 46, 48:17; Finn Taintor, 9, 48:58; Keith Levy, 69, 49:24; Abe Levy, 39, 50:03; Elijah Levy, 19, 50:38; Hannah Bailey, 30, 57:00; Heather Parker, 40, 52:18; Kristen Strom, 29, 56:49; Dominic Johnson,

36, 58:30; Melissa Anderson, 50, 50:38; Carolyn Bergstrom, 56, 58:54; Nora Harper, 28, 1:00:17; Mitchell Sporing, 25, 1:00:58; Keegan Jackson, 43, 1:05:10; Katy Ritter, 47, 1:06:42; Odine Wiltuschnig, 19, 1:11:29; and Guy Crockroft, 66, and Eric Antrim, 53, in 1:13:39.

Christine Woll, 41, topped the one-mile field in 8:33 and was the fastest in the 19-and-older category. Following were Isla Taintor, age 8, in 8:44 (the fastest in the 18-and-under field); Dylan Hoke, 7, in 8:58; Melody Millard, 64, in 8:59; Johnson 9:33; Maddie Sullivan, 9, in 11:44; James Sullivan, 7, 12:29; Isabelle Sullivan, 11, in 13:02; Abby Sullivan, 5, in 14:56; and Jessica Sullivan, 42, in 14:56.

Next in line for the Nugget Alaska Outfitters Cup point scoring is Saturday's Beat The Odds 2-mile walk or 5k run (NAOC race) at the University of Alaska Southeast, with a 9 a.m. start after opening ceremonies. Online registration only.

Also notable is the Saturday, August 22, Goldbelt Tram-Mount Roberts Run (JTRR/NAOC), set for Saturday, August 22. According to race directors, the race will be running even if the Goldbelt Tram is not.

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



Juneau's Olivia Glasscock, 34, and Hiram Henry, 51, sprint along North Douglas Highway toward False Outer Point during the 10-kilometer race in the Midsummer Night Run on Tuesday, Aug. 11, 2026. Glasscock finished in 43:51 and Henry in 43:57. (Klas Stolpe / Juneau Independent)