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Page B1

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Daily News-Miner

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Friday, May 28, 2010

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Tanacross secure as fire continues

By MARY BETH SMETZER
msmetzer@newsminer.com

The village of Tanacross is secure from the still raging Eagle Trail Fire, estimated at 4,000 acres, and fire crews are dozing containment lines west of the nearby Eagle Subdivision on the Eagle Trail.

Both Tanacross and the Eagle subdivision, located about a dozen miles west of Tok off the Alaska Highway, are threatened by a lightning-caused wildfire discovered late Wednesday afternoon, which quickly mushroomed from 5 acres to

2,000 acres within a few hours. The Alaska Highway has been reopened and pilot cars are being used to lead traffic between Moon Lake at Mile 1331 to Mile 1321 on an intermittent basis. Motorists can expect delays of 20 to 30 minutes.

Fire officials laud experienced Tanacross and Tok fire crews for saving the village and previous work done by villagers clearing fuels around the perimeter of the community.

"A lot of the firefighters are locals who went above and beyond to save and secure that line around Tan-

across," said Sarah Saarloos, a fire information officer in Tok.

"With the high temperatures and low relative humidity in the single digits, that's extreme fire activity,"

Pete Buiet, a fire information officer, also praised the experienced fire crew members response.

"Anytime you have fire moving into a specific area, if you have people who know what to look for, they can make all the difference in the world. Tanacross is full of good firefighters."

Please see FIRE, Page A5

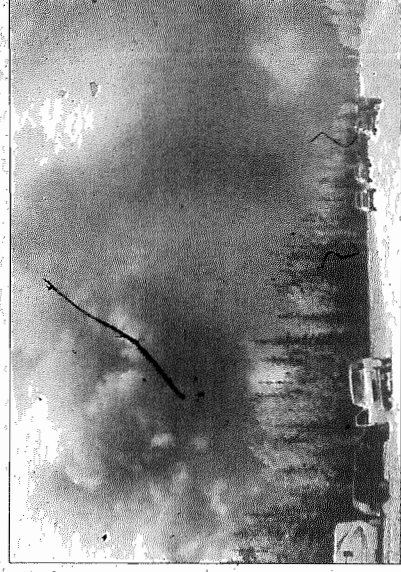


Photo courtesy Alaska Fire Service
Lightning triggered the Eagle Trail Fire, which is estimated at 4,000 acres.

Parnell signs Goldstream public-use area bill

By TIM MOWRY
tmowry@newsminer.com

It was Sen. Joe Thomas who sponsored the bill Gov. Sean Parnell signed Thursday in Fairbanks that

SURPRISE VISITOR

Drilling delay gets mixed response

By DAN JOLING
Associated Press Writer

FAIRBANKS
Daily News - Miner

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Publisher Emeritus

MARILYN ROMANO
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DERMOT COLE
Columnist

ROD BOYCE
Managing Editor

SAM BISHOP
Assistant Managing Editor

Hot spot

Extreme fire danger requires extra caution this weekend

Wildland firefighters across Interior Alaska have been busy enough this week. They don't need more work.

With many people headed outdoors, whether to camp or just clean up the yard during the coming Memorial Day weekend, extra caution is necessary because of the high fire danger.

The state Division of Forestry on Thursday asked residents to be extremely careful this weekend with anything that can create a flame. Remarkably, they've already responded to several unattended campfires that escaped this week.

Other common ignition sources include fireworks, off-road vehicles, burning brush piles and target shooting.

"Hot and dry conditions have created the potential for large-scale, long-term fires," the division said in a public service announcement.

It appears state firefighters and the federal Bureau of Land Management already have several fires that fit that description.

Those fires aren't of too much concern when they're burning thousands of acres of remote black spruce forest. Such fires can threaten some scattered cabins. But those cabins often are near rivers or lakes — water sources for portable, high-output, gasoline-fired pumps that can soak an area thoroughly in short order. It's an effective, usually successful strategy.

However, when fires occur close to larger communities built away from ready water sources, the fires become much more worrisome. It's hard to protect all the structures in a neighborhood, village or town when a wall of fire comes at it and the water must be hauled in trucks or dropped from aircraft from remote sources.

And sometimes the fires are just too hot for any amount of water to stop. That's what happens during the kind of weather we're seeing this week.

Lightning strikes are providing plenty of excitement without any assistance from humans. Alaskans should do everything they can to avoid creating more infernos this weekend and in the weeks ahead.

PRESIDENT OBAMA IS SET TO TAKE A MORE HANDS-ON APPROACH



Spill doesn't make Obama

Energy bill won't end oil addiction

Rich Lowry



President Barack Obama said at his BP press conference that when he was shaving the other day, his daughter Malia asked him, "Did you plug the hole yet, Daddy?"

If Obama wanted to give her a quick lesson in how the world works, he might have said, "No, dear, that's beyond my capacity. I can't stop oil from gushing from a well 5,000 feet beneath the ocean's surface. Now, did you do your homework?"

Malia can be forgiven for not understanding the limits on her daddy's power. She's 11 years old. What's everyone else's excuse? If the presidency of the United States is the most powerful and majestic office on Earth, it does not confer omnipotence on the mere mortal who happens to occupy it.

Perhaps Obama himself needs to be reminded. A White House aide told a reporter that the president, in a fit of frustration, barked to his aides during one meeting, "Plug the damn hole." That's a meaningless order with the world's best engineers already desperately trying to solve a hellish technical problem.

BP's engineers had initial success in executing a "top kill," a procedure involving pumping mud into the well. If it works, it will be the deep-sea equivalent of the operation to save Apollo 13. One analyst told *The Washington Post* "it's like doing

brain surgery using robots under a mile of water with equipment that's got 30,000 horsepower of energy inside it."

If the top kill doesn't work, BP will have to drill relief wells, which will take months. When he's irked about that, presumably Obama's advice will be "to drill faster." Of course, BP already has all the incentive it needs to staunch the flow. It's liable for the cleanup costs and has already lost about 30 percent of its market capitalization.

Since the spill is undeniably a crisis and the Obama administration's ethic is never to let one go to waste, Obama says the BP disaster means Congress should pass his energy bill and "answer this challenge, once and for all." As with much of Obama's agenda, this is a convenient non sequitur posing as an urgent response.

A cap-and-trade bill could have passed years ago and we'd still be drilling offshore. The outer continental shelf had 4,000 oil and gas facilities as of 2002. Obama proposed even more offshore drilling just a few weeks before the BP spill, an acknowledgment that drilling will be necessary even if he gets his way on an energy bill.

Opinion

Send your letters: letters@newsminer.com

Friday, May 28, 2010

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Energy bill won't end oil addiction

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Cap-and-trade will increase the cost of petroleum, but not enough to end its usefulness. As Jerry Taylor of the Cato Institute points out, we use 70 percent of our petroleum for transportation, simply because nothing else is as efficient in powering our cars and trucks. In Europe, gas costs \$7 per gallon, people still put it in their cars.

At his presser, Obama sought to appear in charge, knowing that anything short of that is politically deadly for a president. But he muddled his message. At times, he acknowledged BP is taking the lead in the response. And he admitted he didn't know whether the head of the Minerals Management Service — the agency at the center of the controversy about whether BP was properly regulated — resigned or was fired.

Obama can sound analytic to the point of detachment, establishing a crucial distance between himself and his own team. Sometimes he referred to his own administration as "they" and "the current administration." As if his role is only to grade the blue books and offer constructive criticism.

In the light of his BP experience, one hopes Obama regrets his slam of President Bush for his "unconscionable ineptitude" in responding to Hurricane Katrina, a larger and more rapid-moving, underpriced crisis. If nothing else, it'd be karmic payback if critics began accusing Obama of failing to stop the spill because he hates brown politicians.

"Daddy, why haven't you saved the birds yet?"

Rich Lowry is editor of *National Review* magazine. E-mail him at comments.lowry@nationalreview.com.

LETTERS TO THE Editor

Fire caution

May 24, 2010

To the editor:
I just wanted to call attention to something I noticed this weekend while floating a short section of the upper Chena River.

On three separate instances, my party and I came across unattended bonfires. These weren't just smoking remains of a bonfire, these were actively burning fires with sparks, embers — the whole nine

At the current mill rate, it will cost a family living in the borough close to \$6 per day and a city resident close to \$8.75 per day to live in a borough-assessed home of \$185,000, this is every day of the year.

With a 5 percent sales tax, a borough resident would have to spend \$120 every day, a city resident \$185 on non-exempt items to equal your everyday property tax bill. This is after you have paid all of your taxable bills, even

the ballot box.
Think about all of the above, in the privacy of your home, discuss it with your neighbors.

Continued next month.
Nelson B. Miles
Fairbanks

Basic biology

May 24, 2010

To the editor:
It seems logical to me that we should all be interested in establishing the truth. *The May 14 Daily*

baby as a human being, you need to take a basic biology course.
Virgil D. Severns
Fairbanks

Candidate Bartos

May 25, 2010

To the editor:
Once again, Hank Bartos is running for office, now for a board seat representing North Pole with Golden Valley Electric Association.
Rather than give a lengthy dialog of why you

loading my groceries into my car. I drove home and didn't notice my handbag was missing until I went to put my car keys into it. I was sure I had lost my cell phone, credit cards, debit card, keys to the house, my epi-phen (I am allergic to bee stings) and everything I need from day to day.

I called Fred Meyer and was told my handbag had been turned in to the service desk. I drove there and, to my total amazement, found

create toxins, allergies, nutritional problems and new diseases that might be difficult to identify. Although they urged their superiors to require long-term tests on each GM variety before approval, the political appointees at the agency, including a former attorney for Monsanto, ignored the scientists.

Official policy claims the foods are no different and do not require safety testing. A manufacturer can introduce

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Fairbanks has back-to-back 80-degree days, sets record

By **TIM MOWRY**
tmowry@newsminer.com

Fairbanks had its first 80-degree day of the summer Wednesday and its second Thursday, along with a new record.

The high temperature at Fairbanks International Airport hit 82 degrees late Thursday afternoon, breaking the old record of 80 degrees set in 1990.

It was the second straight 80-degree day in Alaska's second-largest city. The temperature hit 80 degrees on Wednesday, tying the record set in 2002.

Chances are good the area will rack up a few more 80-degree days before the weekend is over. High temperatures in the low 80s are forecast for today and through the weekend, said meteorologist Matthew Kidwell at the National Weather Service in Fairbanks.

It's doubtful any new records will be set during the weekend, Kidwell said. The record high for today is 90 degrees, set in 1947, and the records for Saturday and

Sunday are 86 and 84, respectively.

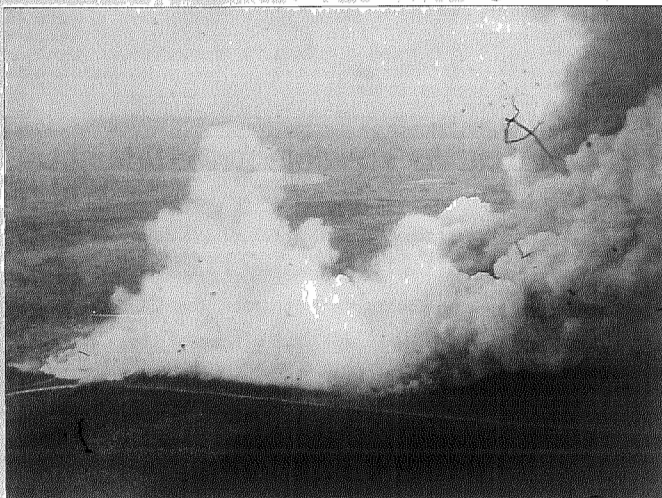
The hot temperatures are the result of "a high pressure ridge that's firmly in place" over the Interior. It will remain in place through the weekend before breaking up early next week. Temperatures are expected to fall into the 60s on Tuesday, according to Thursday's forecast.

The hot weather is about two weeks ahead of schedule. On average, the first 80-degree day does not occur until June 12 in Fairbanks, and the temperature only reaches 80 during May about once every four years, according to weather service records.

There are typically 11 days each summer with a high temperature of 80 degrees or higher at the airport. Last year, which featured the second-warmest July on record, there were 19 days when the temperature hit 80 or higher, including the first 90-degree day in 15 years.

That contrasts with summer 2006, when the temperature hit 80 degrees twice.

Contact staff writer Tim Mowry at 459-7587.



The 60-acre Gilles Creek Fire near the Pogo Mine was started by a lightning strike. Photo courtesy of Alaska

Hot, dry conditions spark host of wildfires throughout Interior

By **MARY BETH SMETZER**
msmetzer@newsminer.com

Wildfires across the state are increasing because of high temperatures, low humidity, and lightning strikes, escalating fire danger throughout the Interior.

Fairbanks hit a new record high at the airport Thursday — 82 degrees. Forecast is for the same kind of temperatures through Sunday.

Fire officials are reporting 53 active fires around the state with 10 staffed by fire personnel.

The Eagle Trail Fire near Tanacross, which threatened the village and a nearby subdivision off the Alaska Highway, continues to have significant growth and is manned with smoke jumpers, firefighters, air and support personnel of approximately 165 people, with more resources on the way.

The Applegate Fire, 21 miles north and east of Man-

Another lightning-caused blaze, the East Minto Lake fire, started Wednesday and was contained by smoke jumpers by 4 p.m. Thursday and will be demobilized today.

The Sucker River Fire, which encompasses about 400 acres, six miles southeast of Fort Yukon, was 50 percent contained Wednesday. By Thursday morning 67 personnel at the site, reported smoldering with no apparent growth, and crews were mopping up.

The Toklat Fire, which was reported to be approximately 50,000 acres in size Thursday, continued to advance southwest toward Mucha Lake and west towards East Twin Lake.

Fire officials report that the fire, which is exhibiting running, flanking and short range spotting along the southeast perimeter, also is smoldering and creeping

Hot Shot Crew, Minto No. 2 Crew and North Star Crew Type 2.

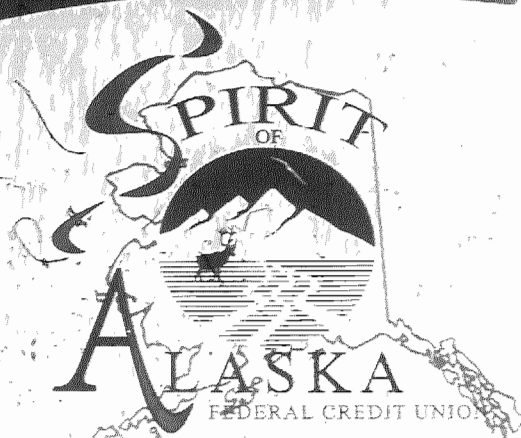
Structure protection is being carried out in the Mucha Lake area and along the Kantishna River. Retardant is being dropped at the south end of the fire to limit the fire's spread to the southeast.

Crews are mopping up the Broken Tree Fire, located about eight miles northeast of the Toklat Fire, which was about 80 percent contained Thursday night, and some crew members from the Tiikaan Fire Crew were shuttled to the Montane Fire, 28 miles north and east of the Broken Tree Fire.

The Montane Fire, 2.5 acres in size, is on a monitor status.

The 60-acre Gilles Creek Fire near the Pogo Mine was started by a lightning strike, 18 miles up Pogo Road, and is being monitored by fire personnel until more help

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BEER-A-FRIEND

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The Applegate Fire, 21 miles north and east of Manley Hot Springs and about 20 miles west of Minto, is estimated at approximately 100 acres. On Thursday morning, six smoke jumpers were deployed to the area for structure and point protection.

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The Toklat Fire, which was reported to be approximately 50,000 acres in size Thursday, continued to advance southwest toward Mucha Lake and west towards East Twin Lake.

Fire officials report that the fire, which is exhibiting running, flanking and short range spotting along the southeast perimeter, also is smoldering and creeping along other perimeters.

Located about 30 miles southwest of Nenana, fire personnel include four smoke jumpers, five helicopter crew members, the Gannett Glacier Crew, Kaltag No. 1 Crew, Midnight Sun

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Contact staff writer Mary Beth Smetzer at 459-7546.

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FIRE: Fuel removal grant 'saved the day'

Continued from Page A1

Although the majority of the 200 villagers were evacuated to an emergency shelter at Tok School, those who stayed on "saved the day," Buist said.

A federal grant the village received in 2005 to remove hazardous fuels spurred the clearing of a large area around the village and thus changed the nature of the current fire, Buist said.

"When it got to the fuel break, it switched from being a crown (tree top) fire to a ground fire.

"(Fuel removal) was very scientifically done. It saved the day in conjunction with the people who stayed to protect the village," Buist said.

Tanacross is Tanana Chiefs Conference President Jerry Isaac's home village, and he is traveling between Tok and Tanacross, checking on family members, lending moral support to village leaders and elders, and keeping a cautious eye on the fire.

Isaac worked as a firefighter and trapper until he became involved in tribal leadership, and he is acutely aware of the volatility and unpredictability of wildfires.

"Fires can change in size, shape, and volume at a moment's notice," he said.

Isaac, too, is grateful village crews thinned out and removed all the combustible fuels around the village which slowed down and redirected the fire.

Crews removed tall timber,

white spruce, black spruce, a mix of hardwoods, cottonwoods, birch and brush.

"I would strongly recommend other (Interior) communities to do projects like that," Isaac said.

Fire officials are expecting more resources from the Lower 48 to battle the blaze, including type 1 hot-shot crews.

"We're getting a lot of help from Canada with air support," Saarloos said. "They have been great neighbors. They loaned us Ducks which are (fixed-wing Canadair CL-215) water scoopers."

Questions about the Eagle Trail Fire can be sent to eagletrailfire@gmail.com. For updated information on Alaska fires, visit www.incweb.org.



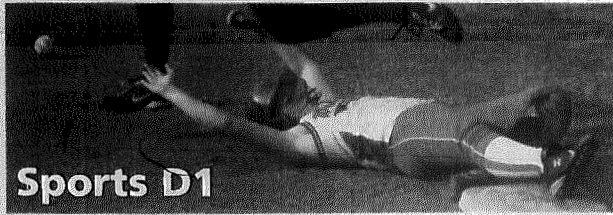
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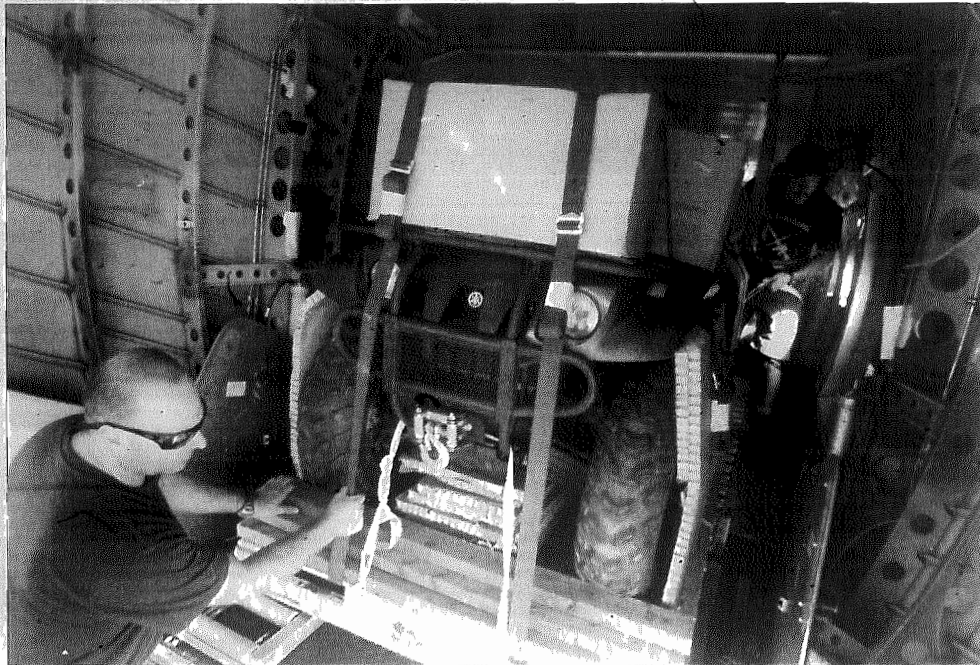
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BP's plug plan might work
Page A6

Wildfires Rage On

- Crews break out heavy equipment to battle blazes
- Weekend fire precautions ■ List of Interior fires



Sam Harrell/Daily News-Miner

Para-cargo specialist Bob Schober, left, steadies a four wheeler as Porter McQueary, another para-cargo specialist, straps it into an airplane Friday at the Bureau of Land Management Alaska Fire Service air base on Fort Wainwright. The ATV, strapped to a pallet with other supplies, was being prepared to be dropped to crews fighting the Fryingpan Creek Fire off the Steese Highway.

By MARY BETH SMETZER
msmetzer@newsminer.com

Fire crews and support personnel are jumping from fire to fire as record-setting warm temperatures, lightning strikes and no precipitation ratchet up extreme wildfire behavior throughout the Interior.

On Friday, fires in several nearby highway communities sparked fire officials into action.

The closest blaze to Fairbanks was a one-acre fire located between the Salcha River and Harding Lake near 322 Mile Richardson Highway.

Within a few hours, an initial fire crew, engine and helicopters had the blaze contained, said Paul Stenkamp, fire information officer for the Fairbanks area. Later, it was demobilized and put on monitor status.

"It's been a busy afternoon," Stenkamp said. "The crews are very challenged, but are doing an outstanding job."

Fire crews also responded Friday to a fire near Julius Creek, about six miles east of Clear on the east

Please see FIRE, Page A7

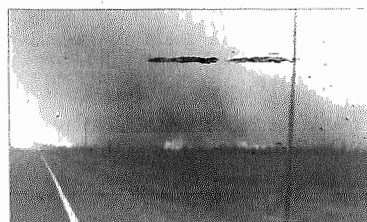


Photo courtesy Sharon Roersch

The Eagle Trail Fire moved west and northwest on Friday toward the Little Tanana River.

Weekend fire caution urged

By MARY BETH SMETZER
msmetzer@newsminer.com

Warm temperatures and lack of precipitation have increased fire danger warnings across the Interior and left fire officials stretched thin as they respond to fast-rising numbers of wildfires.

With many people taking to the outdoors this

Illegal caribou hunters sentenced

By TIM MOWRY
tmowry@newsminer.com

Three Delta Junction men who illegally killed 10 caribou off the Denali Highway in December have been fined a total of more than \$12,000, ordered to forfeit their snowmachines and rifles to the state, and had their hunting privileges revoked for three to five years.

Vladimir Doroshuk, 31; Grigoriy Rybak, 43; and Andrey Medyanikov, 29, pleaded guilty in a Glennallen court May 4 for killing Nelchina caribou outside the federal subsistence area for which they had permits. The Alaska Department of Public Safety announced the results Friday.

Doroshuk, 31, received the stiffest sentence of the three men for shooting and burying a cow caribou in the snow. Doroshuk was sentenced to seven days in jail and fined \$5,500, in addition to giving up the rifle and snowmachine he used in the hunt to the state. Doroshuk's hunting privileges were revoked for five years; he was placed on probation for five years and he also was ordered to pay \$850 in restitution for the wasted cow caribou.

Please see CARIBOU, Page A6

Alyeska restarts pipeline

By BECKY BOHRER
bbohrer@newsminer.com

JUNEAU — The operator of the trans-Alaska pipeline system restarted the 800-mile line late Friday after it lay idled because of a spill.

The pipeline was shut down for 79 hours and 40 minutes, Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. spokeswoman Michelle Egan said in a statement. That is the longest shutdown since August 1977, surpassing the more



James Schuyler, P.O. Sakher Barnier Village fire crews arrive back at their Fort Yukon camp Friday via helicopter from fighting the Sucker River Fire.

Para-cargo specialist Bob Schober, left, steadies a four wheeler as Porter McQueary, another para-cargo specialist, straps it into an airplane Friday at the Bureau of Land Management Alaska Fire Service air base on Fort Wainwright. The ATV, strapped to a pallet with other supplies, was being prepared to be dropped to crews fighting the Fryingpan Creek Fire off the Steese Highway.

By MARY BETH SMETZER
msmetzer@newsminer.com

Fire crews and support personnel are jumping from fire to fire as record-setting warm temperatures, lightning strikes and no precipitation ratchet up extreme wildfire behavior throughout the Interior.

On Friday, fires in several nearby highway communities sparked fire officials into action.

The closest blaze to Fairbanks was a one-acre fire located between the Salcha River and Harding Lake near 322 Mile Richardson Highway.

Within a few hours, an initial fire crew, engine and helicopters had the blaze contained, said Paul Stenkamp, fire information officer for the Fairbanks area. Later, it was demobilized and put on monitor status.

"It's been a busy afternoon," Stenkamp said. "The crews are very challenged, but are doing an outstanding job."

Fire crews also responded Friday to a fire near Julius Creek, about six miles east of Clear on the east

Please see FIRE, Page A7



Photo courtesy Sharon Roesch

The Eagle Trail Fire moved west, and northwest on Friday toward the Little Tanana River.

Weekend fire caution urged

By MARY BETH SMETZER
msmetzer@newsminer.com

Warm temperatures and lack of precipitation have increased fire danger warnings across the Interior and left fire officials stretched thin as they respond to fast-rising numbers of wildfires.

With many people taking to the outdoors this Memorial Day weekend, fire and health officials are urging everyone to take precautionary measures

Please see CAUTION, Page A7

Jamies Schwarber,
PIO Sucker River Fire

Village fire crews arrive back at their Fort Yukon camp Friday via helicopter from fighting the Sucker River Fire.



Sourdough Jack sez:



"With all these wildfires going on, I've been extra careful. The only thing I've

Classified C5
Comics C3
Dear Abby C2

Inside

The Associated Press

ANCHORAGE — The Alaska Legislature's special ethics committee says

Ethics panel OKs campaigning

lash over Gov. Frank Murkowski's use of a state jet for campaigning.

State Rep. Jay Ramras of Fairbanks asked for a second opinion which

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car
ity

FIRE: Hot, dry weather worsens situation

Continued from Page A1

of the Parks Highway, and are monitoring a 320-acre fire called the Popavich Fire that sprang up Wednesday six miles northeast of Healy.

A fire near the Granite Tors Trail has caused the popular hiking route to temporarily close to the public. The lightning strike fire in the area is unmanned but is being monitored.

The light winter snowpack and warm, dry conditions are reawakening some 2009 fires. In Denali Park, the Foraker River Fire was reported smoldering in black spruce and tundra 100 miles west of park headquarters and 39 miles west-northwest of Kantishna. The tenth of an acre fire is being monitored for the time being.

The Gilles Creek Fire that started near Mile 18 on the 50-mile road to the Pogo Gold Mine has picked up speed, and fire personnel are responding with an influx of ground and air personnel.

Power was shut off Wednesday to the mine in anticipation of the fire threat. The mine is operating on generator support and continues to receive supplies, said Todd Roth, general manager.

"The fire people are doing their best to put the fire out," he said.

The Sucker River Fire, a 400-acre, lightning strike blaze about five miles southeast of Fort Yukon, started more than a week ago and is finally being put to rest.

"It's a good news story," said Jim Schwarber, fire information officer in Fort Yukon.

"The fire was caught on the first day, within an hour after it was reported. And with a lot of coordinated efforts and working together, we completed the lines around the fire. The fire crews all did great work," he said.

The fire area is extremely dry, Schwarber said, and crews literally had to beat flames in grassy areas to put out the fire.

The Eagle Trail Fire near Tanacross continues to advance to the west and northwest, but fire crews continue working on fire breaks and burnouts to further ensure the protection of Tanacross and nearby Eagle Subdivision.

Residents of the village, population 200, and the subdivision were evacuated to the Tok School emergency center on Thursday and

NOTABLE ACTIVE INTERIOR FIRES

• The **Applegate Fire** is located east of the Eureka Mining District on Applegate Creek north of the Elliott Highway. More than 4,000 acres are burning less than a half mile from the Elliott Highway and two miles from the closest structure. Fire officials are concerned for structures in the Eureka area and Kentucky Creek Subdivision south of Eureka, between Eureka and Manley Hot Springs. On Friday, there were 27 firefighters and engines on the scene doing assessment and structure prep. More help is on the way.

• The **Eagle Trail Fire** advanced to the west and northwest on Friday toward the Little Tanana River. Firefighters are securing firelines on the west side of the Tanacross Road and around Tanacross village, which was evacuated Thursday. Work is being done to secure a fireline south of the Alaska Highway and firefighters are constructing a dozer line up to the high country. Structure protection continues at Crystal Springs and in the Mansfield Lake area to the north.

• The **Fryingpan Creek Fire** west of Eagle Summit is estimated at 100 acres and 70 percent active. The lightning strike blaze is unmanned.

• The **Gilles Creek Fire**, located near Mile 18 on the 50-mile long road to the Pogo Gold Mine near Delta, has increased significantly in acreage and fire officials have moved a number of resources and people (60) to Delta to take action after fire retardant failed to hinder the fire's growth. Power to the gold mine was turned off Wednesday because transmission lines are threatened by the fire.

• The **Granite Tors Fire**, a lightning strike fire, is unmanned and is being monitored. The Granite Tors Trail is closed for public safety.

• The **Julius Creek Fire**, six miles east of Clear on the opposite side of the Parks Highway, was started by a lightning strike Friday. By midday, 40 acres were involved and fire crews were cautiously optimistic about keeping it from getting larger. Three fire crews, air tankers and helicopters were involved in targeting the blaze.

• The **Mississippi Site Fire** is located within a military training area west of the Delta River. Wind in the area upped the acreage involved from 125 to 150 on Thursday. The fire is unmanned, and will only be managed by air since there is unexploded ordnance in the area.

• The **Popavich Fire** started Wednesday about six miles northeast of Healy and is unmanned. About 320 acres are involved and no structures are threatened.

• The **Sucker River Fire**, a 397-acre fire located 4 to 5 miles southeast of Fort Yukon, is 100 percent contained and firefighters are reporting no new hot spots. Two No. 2 fire crews, Arctic Village and Venetie, are still on the scene mopping up.

• The **Toldat Fire**, located about 30 miles southeast of Nenana, has consumed more than 50,000 acres and continues to gain acreage to the south. Fire crews have moved west to East Twin Lake and are doing burnouts around cabins to the east side. Cabins on the east and west sides of Mucha Lake are being secured. Structures and Native allotments around West Twin Lake are being assessed as well and undergoing prep work to protect specific points. Similar work is being done near where the Bear Paw River runs into the Kantishna River, and homesteads in the area are being protected.

— Alaska fire services

For updates on Alaska wildfires, visit www.inciweb.org or <http://fire.ak.blm.gov>

ditions posted for today forecast afternoon thunderstorms which can cause gusty and erratic wind conditions.

Continued hot and dry weather is predicted through Monday.

Fire crews are working on structure protection at nearby Crystal Springs and in the Mansfield Lake area to the north.

Tanana Chiefs Conference President Jerry Isaac said Tanacross residents are concerned about the safety of the old Mansfield Village, about 7 miles north of Tanacross.

Intermittent traffic delays between Alaska Highway near the Tanacross Airport Road and milepost 1330, near Moon Lake, continue because of poor visibility from smoke and emergency equipment on the highway. Pilot cars will lead traffic through the fire area.

Drivers are urged to exercise caution and drive slowly near all wildfires with headlights on. Do not stop in areas where the fire is approaching the road. According to the Alaska Interagency Coordination Center, 220 wildfires have burned 74,244 acres statewide so far this year. There are 68 fires active

A designated driver could be a LOCAL HERO this holiday season. If you choose to drink, please don't drink and drive.

A public safety reminder from the Alaska State Troop

FAIRBANKS
Daily News - Miner
The voice of Interior Alaska since 1903

WEATHER AND FORECASTS

FAIRBANKS 5-DAY FORECAST

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
An afternoon and evening t-storm in spots	A thunderstorm in spots in the afternoon	Sunny to partly cloudy	Intervals of clouds and sunshine
▲ 80° ▼ 52°	▲ 78° ▼ 52°	▲ 75° ▼ 52°	▲ 72° ▼ 44°

ALMANAC

Statistics for Fairbanks through 6 p.m. yesterday.

Precipitation:
24 hours ending 5 p.m. trace
Month to date 0.24"
Normal month to date 0.51"
Year to date 0.80"
Normal year to date 1.92"

Temperatures:
Record High 90° in 1947
Record Low 30° in 1934
Normal High 66°
Normal Low 42°

ALASKA SUMMARY

The interior will have very warm weather again today with high temperatures near 80 degrees. Clouds will build, leading to spotty afternoon thunderstorms from the Alaska Range to the Brooks Range. It will be quiet across the rest of the state. There will be a passing shower or two across Kodiak Islands and the Aleutians. The weather pattern will change little through the holiday weekend. Temperatures will remain warm across the interior through Monday.

STATE AND REGIONAL FORECAST

ARCTIC SLOPE
Partly sunny today with a passing shower, mostly cloudy in the north. High 33 to 45. Mostly cloudy tonight. Low 22 to 33. A passing shower tomorrow, but dry in the north.

TANANA VALLEY
A thunderstorm in spots this afternoon; warm. Times of clouds and sun; sunnier in northwestern parts. High 74 to 80. A shower or thunderstorm in spots tonight. Low 46 to 53.

ANCHORAGE EXTREMES YESTERDAY
High 83° at Eagle
Low 26° at Shishmaref

ANCHORAGE
Partly sunny today. High 70. Partly cloudy tonight. Low 52. Partly sunny tomorrow. High 68. Monday: mostly sunny with a shower possible. High 67. Tuesday: cloudy and sun. High 65.

City	Fri. Hi/Lo	Today Hi/Lo	Sun. Hi/Lo	City	Fri. Hi/Lo	Today Hi/Lo	Sun. Hi/Lo
Arctic Village	73/47	66/44s	66/44pc	Glennallen	78/42	73/42pc	72/41pc
Cordova	76/44	63/44c	62/44pc	Kena	70/45	60/42pc	65/42s
Dillingham	61/44	61/42c	59/43c	King Salmon	67/41	61/39c	63/41pc
Eagle	83/42	80/45s	80/43s	McGrath	76/49	77/50c	75/50s
Barrow	34/22-			Prudhoe Bay	35/25		
Kotzebue	49/37			Bettles	78/50		
Nome	56/36			Fort Yukon	77/51		
Bethel	67/46			Tanana	80/46		
				Fairbanks	80/52		
				Healy	74/47		
				Tok	77/50		
				Anchorage	70/52		
				Homer	56/44		
				Valdez	62/46		
				Kodiak	50/43		
				Cold Bay	48/40		

he said.

The fire area is extremely dry, Schwarber said, and crews literally had to beat flames in grassy areas to put out the fire.

The Eagle Trail Fire near Tanacross continues to advance to the west and northwest, but fire crews continue working on fire breaks and burnouts to further ensure the protection of Tanacross and nearby Eagle Subdivision.

Residents of the village, population 200, and the subdivision were evacuated to the Tok School emergency center on Thursday and will remain there until it is deemed safe to return.

Fire officials are being cautious since weather con-

ditions. Continued hot and dry weather is predicted through Monday.

Fire crews are working on structure protection at nearby Crystal Springs and in the Mansfield Lake area to the north.

Tanana Chiefs Conference President Jerry Isaac said Tanacross residents are concerned about the safety of the old Mansfield Village, about 7 miles north of Tanacross.

"It's a historical village. That's where the present day Tanacross people came from," Isaac said. "It is used in the winter and summer for trapping, fishing or hunting."

at Airport Road and milepost 1330, near Moon Lake, continue because of poor visibility from smoke and emergency equipment on the highway. Pilot cars will lead traffic through the fire area.

Drivers are urged to exercise caution and drive slowly near all wildfires with headlights on. Do not stop in areas where the fire is approaching the road.

According to the Alaska Interagency Coordination Center, 220 wildfires have burned 74,244 acres statewide so far this year.

There are 68 fires actively burning. For particulars, visit <http://fire.ak.blm.gov>.

Contact staff writer Mary Beth Smetzer at 459-7546.

ALASKA EXTREMES YESTERDAY

High 83° at Eagle
Low 28° at Shishmaref

MORE ALASKA CITIES

City	Fri Hi/Lo	Today Hi/Lo/W	Sun Hi/Lo
Arctic Village	73/47	66/44/s	66/44
Cordova	76/44	63/44/c	62/44
Dillingham	61/44	61/42/c	59/43
Eagle	83/42	80/45/s	80/43
Fairbanks	78/52	80/52/pc	78/52
Galena	77/51	81/52/s	82/49

NATIONAL TEMPERATURES

City	Fri Hi/Lo	Today Hi/Lo/W	Sun Hi/Lo
Albany	78/59	76/58/pc	85/68
Albuquerque	88/61	89/58/s	88/58
Amarillo	86/63	90/62/s	85/6
Aspen	79/40	68/29/pc	67/3
Atlanta	90/68	84/66/t	82/6
Atlantic City	73/60	73/63/pc	87/6
Austin	96/67	94/67/s	94/6
Baltimore	75/62	80/64/pc	90/6
Baton Rouge	93/70	90/69/t	90/7
Birmingham	91/69	89/67/t	84/6
Bismarck	90/68	70/43/t	83/4
Boise	63/41	65/42/c	73/5
Boston	69/54	74/59/pc	85/6
Buffalo	80/59	80/58/s	84/6
Burlington VT	78/54	78/56/pc	80/5
Casper	88/44	66/34/t	67/3
Charleston SC	90/67	89/67/t	87/6
Charleston WV	88/63	86/63/pc	88/6
Charlotte	89/65	85/63/t	90/6
Cheyenne	85/52	74/40/t	68/4

CAUTION: Advise against any outside fire

Continued from Page A1

whether they are on the road, boating, camping or staying at home.

Permitted burning has been suspended for days, said Robert Schmoll, a fire manager officer for Fairbanks Area Forestry, but the state has not restricted campfires to date.

Schmoll advises against building a fire of any kind unless it is absolutely necessary and keeping it small.

"It is extremely dry, so make sure you have a good mineral break, using non-burnable materials such as sand or gravel. Make sure you put the fire out all the way and cold trail it, which means putting your fingers carefully through the ashes, making

sure there are no hot coals."

Schmoll also advises against using chain saws or recreational vehicles that heat up and can spark a fire when dry vegetation comes in contact with exhaust pipes or hot metal.

If working outdoors with hot machinery or equipment, Schmoll recommends being careful and taking a fire extinguisher and/or a large jug of water along for safety.

If smoke from forest fires begins drifting into wherever you live, work or play, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation advises anyone with respiratory illness or heart disease, the elderly and children to avoid exposure. All others are cautioned to avoid outdoor physical exertion when condi-

tions reach unhealthy levels.

When air quality data is unavailable, the following air quality smoke reference guide can be used to estimate air quality levels and their potential health impacts.

When visibility is 10-plus miles, air quality is good.

As visibility lessens then air quality does likewise: 6-9 miles = moderate; 3-5 miles = unhealthy for sensitive groups; 1.5-2.5 miles = unhealthy; 0.9-1.4 miles = very unhealthy; and 0.8 miles or less, hazardous.

Air quality indexes on wildfire smoke can be obtained at www.epi.alaska.gov/eh/wildfire/default.htm or www.dec.state.ak.us/air/smoke-main.htm.

Contact staff writer Mary Beth Smetzer at 459-7546.

TRIPS: For re-election or to a higher office

Continued from Page A1

"This gives such an advantage to the incumbent when it is an election season, when you can go ahead and fly for a legislative purpose and combine that with fundraising or with campaigning. The challenger would have to pay for

their challengers can campaign.

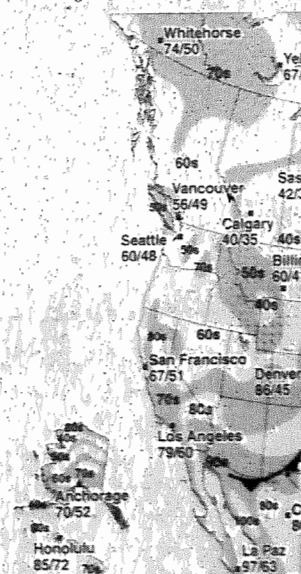
The travel policy applies to legislators running for re-election, as well as those running for higher office. Ramras, a Republican, is running for lieutenant governor. Sen. Hollis French, D-Anchor-

can, said he traveled to constituents in Homer to explain what happened in the legislative session.

"And of course everyone knows I'm running for office in Homer. It wasn't a campaign trip. I wasn't campaigning. But frankly, the difference between campaign

NATIONAL WEATHER

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and high for the day. Forecast high



NATIONAL EXTREMES

High: 101° at Tucson, Ariz

Legend: Showers Rain T-storms Snow Flurries

A Fairbanks man has received an 18-month suspended prison sentence for growing 101 marijuana plants.

Sampson Roberts, 28, pleaded guilty Friday to three counts of fourth-degree drugs misconduct, a felony. Roberts, under the terms of a plea agreement, will not serve any jail time if he successfully completes the next 18 months on

"I messed up, and I messed up bad," Roberts told Superior Court Judge Paul Lyle. "I'm 28 years old, and it's time I grew up and changed some things."

Responding to a tip, Alaska State Troopers raided Roberts' Vasi Way trailer in July and uncovered three rooms full of marijuana plants. They also found drug paraphernalia such as bong and pipes in the living room and kitchen.

according to court records. Stems, small leaves and seeds were collected throughout the home, amassing 162 ounces.

Roberts previously was convicted of misdemeanor marijuana possession, but that conviction was removed from his record after he successfully completed probation last year, a few weeks before troopers raided his trailer.

Contact staff writer Chris Freilberg at 459-7545.

It's dry, dry, dry

Little precipitation means low water in Interior's rivers



Sam Harro/News-Miner

Access to the Chena River at Peger Road on Friday is a bit challenging with low river levels. This is the third-driest start to a year in Fairbanks, according to National Weather Service records dating back to 1904.

By **TIM MOWRY**
tmowry@newsminer.com

An early and dramatic start to the wildfire season isn't the only byproduct of some of the driest conditions Fairbanksans have ever seen in May.

The water in most local rivers is as low as a lot of local boaters can remember it heading into the Memorial Day weekend.

It hasn't reached the point where rivers are too low to run boats, but it's getting close, said Vernon Hines, who owns a cabin on the Salcha River southeast of Fairbanks.

"The way things usually go is we have breakup, the river comes up and then it cleans up but we still have snow in the hills. And then that melts, and by Memorial Day, it comes back up again," said Hines, who was on the river last weekend. "I don't think it's going to come back up this year."

"The way things are going, if we don't get any rain, it will probably get really low," he said.

After one of the driest winters on record — the winter snowfall of 24.8 inches was the third-lowest in more than 100 years in Fairbanks — this spring hasn't done much to replenish the aquifer.

This is the third-driest start to a year in Fairbanks, according to National Weather Service records dating back to 1904.

With only 0.80 inches of precipitation since Jan. 1, Fairbanks is 1.09 inches below normal for precipitation for the year.

That might not sound like much. But when you consider that Fairbanks has received only 6.83 inches of precipitation in the past year and the average is 10.33 inches, that translates to 65 percent of the normal amount.

"That's significant," said weather service meteorologist Matthew Kidwell.

The Salcha River was running at 6.85 feet Friday. When it gets below 6 feet, it makes getting a boat up and down the river interesting, Hines said.

The flow in the Salcha was less than half of what it normally is for this time of year, according to Larry Rundquist at the Alaska-Pacific River Forecast Center in Anchorage.

The Chena River is running about 2 feet below normal.

The low water in the Chena hasn't posed too much of a problem for the Riverboat Discovery, the giant sternwheeler that hauls tourists up and down the lower Chena River, but that's only because the glacial-fed Tanana River rose in the past week because of the hot weather and backed up water into the Chena, company president Ryan Binkley said.

Please see DRY, Page B2

Museum Day celebration honors Randy Acord, Corky C

Fairbanks police received a report Thursday morning that he appeared intoxicated and was attempting to drive from Wal-Mart. A chemical test found his breath-alcohol content to be 0.113.

Swords was convicted of drunken driving in July 2001 and August 2002, according to court records.

• Daniel Wayne Wiesnete, 50, address unknown, was charged with driving under the influence after he nearly hit a trooper car head on Thursday morning on the Old Steese Highway near the Howling Dog Saloon. A chemical test found his breath-alcohol content to be 0.210.

Wiesnete also was charged with misdemeanor or drugs misconduct after troopers reportedly found a marijuana pipe in his vehicle.

Multiple charges

A Fairbanks man was charged with fourth-degree assault and driving under

the influence after he allegedly pushed his roommate then drove intoxicated about 100 feet down a trail off his driveway.

Larry Kirk Ivey, 49, was arrested Wednesday at his home near 329 Mile Parks Highway.

Ivey's roommate told troopers he was afraid because Ivey had been drinking and owns firearms.

A chemical test found Ivey's breath-alcohol content to be 0.155.

Theft

• Fairbanks police received a report Thursday that someone broke into a car parked on Hilton Avenue and scattered the owner's belongings, including credit cards, around a driveway.

• Someone broke into a vehicle on Crosson Avenue overnight Wednesday and stole an 8GB iPod as well as a digital Olympus camera.

Vandalism

Fairbanks police received a report Thursday that someone broke into a vehicle parked on E Street. Nothing was stolen, but the vehicle sustained "extensive damage," and the vandal let the air out of the vehicle's tires.

— Chris Freiberg

WRENCH

Continued from Page B1

Troopers noted that the woman had red marks on her neck and that the wrench was near a couch in the home, according to the complaint.

McGrath previously was convicted of domestic violence.

Contact the newsroom at 459-7572.

DRY

Continued from Page B1

"Until last week, it was touch and go for a while," he said. "It's been an issue, but we've been able to keep going."

Normally, the Tanana River doesn't start backing into the Chena River until June or July, Binkley said.

"It's like the whole summer has shifted forward a month this year," he said.

Most of the boaters coming through the Boat Shop in Fairbanks have commented about the low water service manager Johnny Boyer said.

"People are saying it's low, but people are getting to where they need to go," he said. "Nobody that I've talked to has been stopped because of low water."

Contact staff writer Tim Mowry at 459-7587.



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Sunday, May 30, 2010

Alaska wildfires grow

By AMANDA BOHMAN
abohman@newsminer.com

Winds on Saturday, carried smoke into Fairbanks from a wildfire near Nenana, while another wildfire claimed a lodge along the Iditarod Sled Dog Race trail southwest of Fairbanks. The Farewell Lake Lodge and an unknown number of outbuild-

ings burned late Friday, fire information officer Pete Buist said. "They were able to extract the people before the fire took the place over," he said.

The lodge, near McGrath, is located on the Iditarod Trail on the leg from Rohn to Nikolai, although it is not an official stop-over for mushers, according to the Iditarod website.

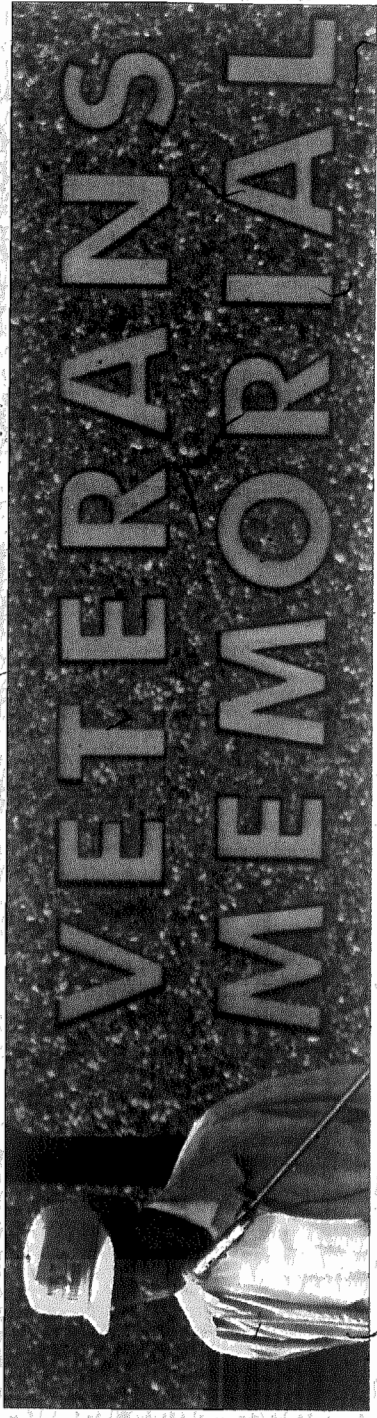
An unknown number of people evacuated the place after the Turquoise Lake Fire moved two and a quarter miles in 20 minutes.

"That is extremely fast," Buist said. "There was more fire than what we had resources to deal with."

Please see FIRES, Page A6



Photo courtesy Eagle Trail Fire crews/Delta Junction personnel
A firefighter works Friday to contain the Eagle Trail Fire burning near the village of Tanacross.



Top kill effort fails to fix leak

By BEN NUCKOLS
Associated Press Writer

ROBERT, La. — The most ambitious bid yet to stop the worst oil spill in U.S. history ended in failure Saturday after BP was

VETERANS MEMORIAL

TO THOSE WHO SERVED

Draiser Garage
 Eight Dog
 will benefit its
 tal elementary
 as are marked
 able offer."
 ls, 310 Birch Hill
 on: 347-2860.
 Fairbanks Run
 UAF West Ridge

Road. Information: 474-8080.
 7-8 p.m.—**Narcotics Anonymous**
meeting. St. Nicholas Church,
 707 Frontage Road, North Pole.
 Information: 452-7372.

MONDAY

9 a.m.-4 p.m.—**Films.** "40 Below in Fairbanks" at 9 a.m.; "The Aurora Explained" at 10 a.m.; "Deadliest Catch: Dead of Winter" at noon; "Alaska: Big America" at 2 p.m.; "Light of the North" at 4 p.m. Free. Morris Thompson Cultural & Visitors Center, 101 Dunkel St. Information: 459-3730.
 9 a.m.-5 p.m.—**Fundraiser Garage Sale.** Interior Freight Dog Association's sale will benefit its donations to local elementary schools. All items are marked "make a reasonable offer." Cold Spot Rentals, 310 Birch Hill Road. Information: 347-2860.
 11 a.m.—**Memorial Day Services to Honor Veterans.** Begins at 11 a.m., at Veterans Memorial Park, Eighth Avenue and Cushman

St.; at 11:30, it proceeds to Clay Street Cemetery; 12:30 p.m. at Birch Hill Cemetery with flyover from Eielson Air Force Base; at 1:30 p.m., at Northern Lights Memorial Park, 2318 Yankovich Road; and then at 2:30 p.m., Golden Heart Plaza. At each location there will be posting of colors, speeches, placing of wreaths, 21-gun salute, taps and the colors retired. An open house will follow at each VFW Post.

11 a.m.—**Memorial Day Celebration.** Fun family activities, entertainment and Memorial Day ceremony at 1 p.m. in the gazebo. Pioneer Park.
 5 p.m.—**Memorial Day Gathering** to honor all veterans. Sponsored by Soaring Eagle Drum. Potluck will be held, bring a dish to share. Open to the public. Pioneer Park.
 6 p.m.—**Cycling.** Dirt Divas. Goldstream Sports.
 8-9:30 p.m.—**AA & Al-Anon Family Group "Two-fers."** Christ Lutheran Church, Farmers Loop

459-7532.

and Iniakuk Avenue. Information: 456-6458 or www.al-anon.ak.org.

TUESDAY

9 a.m.-5 p.m.—**Legal Learning Lab.** Free access to find online local resources, legal information and general court information. Internet access and printer use are free. Alaska Legal Services, 1648 Cushman St., Suite 300. Information: 452-5181.
 9 a.m.-4 p.m.—**Films.** "40 Below in Fairbanks" at 9 a.m.; "The Aurora Explained" at 10 a.m.; "Deadliest Catch: Dead of Winter" at noon; "Alaska: Big America" at 2 p.m.; "Light of the North" at 4 p.m. Free. Morris Thompson Cultural & Visitors Center, 101 Dunkel St. Information: 459-3730.
 9:15-10:15 a.m.—**Seniors Walking Club.** Big Dipper.
 10 a.m.—**Summer Nature Walks.** Free. A one- to two-hour guided

11:15 a.m.—**North Star Senior Center**
 11:30 a.m.—**Caregiver University**
 Noon—**Great of Commerce**
 meeting. V
 5-6:30 p.m.—**Pounds Se**
 banks Luth
 Cowles St
 451-6381 o
 5:30-6:30 p.m.—**Alaska Toa**
 201, O'Nei
 tion: 474-6
 6 p.m.—**Orie**
 tive adopt
 Alaska Cér
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 6-9 p.m.—**Go**
Club Awar
 Night. Brin
 Kunkle Co
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 451-8750.
 To submit a
 e-mail calenda

COMING BACK

in Fairbanks
GO
 — St. Paul's Church in Eagle opening after being closed for se of fire damage. al Society & Museums, with nity members and nine Eagle ol students, recently finished up of the church and its sur-and storage unit. The church, ll requires renovations to the undation. "We had to get it er to anything else with it," ciety President Elva Scott.

GO
 5 — A Barrow whaling cap-subsistence quotas could jeop-hts to hunt bowhead whales, the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Wednesday. on fined Percy Nusunginya for making an unauthorized t Nusunginya took his crew killed a whale Tuesday, said dent Lennie Lane Jr. of Point

GO
 D — Ray Kasola was king of ers today. at title with the two crewmen pring his boat from Circle City a distance of 800 miles — in minutes and 55 seconds. ne crewmen — Don McVeigh — flashed up the Chena River, ides and to the finish line.

LOCAL ALMANAC

Today's weather

Another day in paradise ... as long as you don't mind too much smoke.

High: 80
Low: 54
Precipitation: 24 hours ending 5 p.m. trace
 Sunrise 3:38 a.m.
 Sunset 11:59 p.m.
 Length of day 20 hrs, 21 min, 6 sec
 Daylight gained 6 min, 25 sec

For the complete weather forecast, see Page A7.

TODAY IN HISTORY

The Associated Press

Today is Sunday, May 30, the 150th day of 2010. There are 215 days left in the year.
Highlight in History:
 On May 30, 1922, the Lincoln Memorial was dedicated in Washington in a ceremony attended by President Warren G. Harding, Chief Justice William Howard Taft and Robert Todd Lincoln.
On this date:
 In 1431, Joan of Arc, condemned as a heretic, was burned at the stake in Rouen, France.
 In 1854, the territories of

race; Ray Harroun was the winner.
 In 1937, ten people were killed when police fired on steelworkers demonstrating near the Republic Steel plant in South Chicago.
 In 1943, American forces secured the Aleutian island of Attu from the Japanese during World War II.
 In 1958, unidentified American service members killed in World War II and the Korean War were interred in the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery.
 In 1960, Soviet author and

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FIRES: About 20 new wildfires are being reported per day; 80 are active across state

Continued from Page A1

The blaze is the second-largest wildfire in the state at 22,780 acres. It was caused by human behavior almost two weeks ago.

The largest wildfire so far in Alaska, the Toklat Fire at 55,000 acres, is burning about 30 miles southeast of Nenana. The lightning-caused blaze is to blame for the smoky air, according to a meteorologist intern at the National Weather Service.

"It looks like the low to mid-level winds are pushing the smoke from that direction," meteorologist intern Stephen Kearney said.

The state and the Fairbanks North Star Borough issued air quality advisories on Saturday.

Measurements in Fairbanks showed levels of particulate matter reached a stage known as "unhealthy for sensitive groups." People with heart and lung illnesses, the elderly and children should limit exercise, the borough air alert stated.

The state issued a broad advisory for the central

Wildland fire forces closure of Elliott Highway

Staff Report
newsroom@newsminer.com

FAIRBANKS — The rapidly growing Cascaden Ridge Fire, about 10-15 miles west of Livengood, has closed the Elliott Highway to all traffic.

The fire, which was started by lightning about 3/4 miles north of the highway, has burned steadily southward throughout the day. On Friday night, it was estimated at about 1,000 acres. According to a release late Saturday from fire officials, it was up to 6,000 acres.

Interior, including McGrath, Nenana, Livengood, Manley Hot Springs and Delta Junction. The advisory suggested people with heart and lung disease avoid smoke exposure.

"Generally, worse conditions occur overnight and during the early morning hours, as the atmosphere cools and brings smoke to the surface," the state advisory said. "During the day, surface heating

"It does not affect the Haul Road, but it would affect someone trying to go to Minto, Eureka or Manley," fire information officer Pete Buist said.

Firefighters are assessing threatened structures in the Cascaden subdivision east of the fire, he said. The Midnight Sun hotshots were reported to be mobilizing to the fire, but Buist said all firefighters have been pulled off the fire to ensure no one is in its path. "When there's a fire like this, there's nothing guys with shovels can do. The important thing is to not get in front of it."

Firefighters are going from home to home in the area, and drivers on the Dalton Highway and the portion of the Elliott Highway south of the Dalton junction are advised to be alert for smoke and emergency vehicles. Further west near the Elliott Highway, the Applegate Fire measured at 6,500 acres Friday. It was burning about 1.4 miles from the highway and 1 mile from the nearest structure, in Eureka, about 20 miles from Manley Hot Springs. Firefighters from the Allakaket No. 2 team are protecting structures near the fire.

ing resources was the 5,000-acre Eagle Trail Fire burning near the village of Tanacross. "Things are in better shape than they have been," Buist said more resources were put toward the Toklat Fire on Saturday and firefighters saved an unknown number of structures along Mucha Lake.

"We did not lose any of them," the fire information officer said. Another fire with increasing resources was the 5,000-acre Eagle Trail Fire burning near the village of Tanacross. "Things are in better shape than they have been," Buist said more resources were put toward the Toklat Fire on Saturday and firefighters saved an unknown number of structures along Mucha Lake.

Lightning set that fire on Wednesday. As of 8 p.m. Saturday, evacuations were called off and Tanacross and Eagle Subdivision residents were

allowed to return to their homes, a fire official said.

A fourth wildfire burning near the Pogo Gold Mine outside of Delta Junction also saw more resources Saturday.

"The primary objective is to protect the power source for the mine," Buist said.

Lightning-set that 5,000-acre blaze on Wednesday.

A fire near Eureka continues to grow, and Buist said 28 firefighters are focused on structure and roadway protection.

A fire near the Granite Trail continues to burn, and the trail remains closed. The fire is on moment status, which means no one is fighting it. The blaze put up a plume of smoke on Saturday that could be clearly seen from Chena Hot Springs Road.

Buist said about 20 new fires per day are being reported.

Eighty wildfires are active across Alaska, burning about 115,000 acres so far, according to a fire situation report.

Contact staff writer Amanda Bohman at 459-7544.

CLIMBER: So far this year, 68 climbers have reached the summit of Mount McKinley

Continued from Page A1

Unable to find a suitable landing zone, Hermansky performed what is known as a "toe-in" landing maneuver, hovering with only the tips of his skids touching the snow, while Chenoweth helped the climber aboard.

"It was a little bit out of the ordinary, but the pilots are trained for toe-in technique," Wright said. "They do

well within our abilities."

Only about 5 percent of the more than 1,000 climbers attempting McKinley each year ascend the West Rib, which Denali National Park spokeswoman Maureen McLaughlin described as more dangerous than the popular West Buttress route.

"We don't see many solo climbers on that route," Wright said. "In 2008, 42 of the 1,272

camp at 7,200 feet where the

was examined by a volunteer physician before being flown to Talkeetna in a plane and released.

This was Benoit's third time on McKinley. He previously submitted via the West Buttress route. As the McKinley climbing season nears its apex, with more than 400 climbers on North America's tallest mountain, three other

toms eased once he reached Talkeetna.

A climber suffering severe pain due to a kidney stone was evacuated from the 7,800-foot camp on the West Buttress Wednesday. The park helicopter flew him to Talkeetna, where an ambulance brought him to Mat-Su Regional Medical Center.

So far this season, 68 climbers have reached the

F

Opinion

Nancy Kuhn
Questions for
Golden Valley
F3



Send your letters: letters@newsminer.com

Sunday, May 30, 2010

FAIRBANKS
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Playing with fire

Congress should pass senator's disapproval resolution for EPA

Fairbanks residents have a history of dealing with air quality issues and the regulatory approach used by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to address them. So we should understand easily why that approach is the wrong one to address the latest pollutant that plagues us — carbon dioxide.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski and 41 other senators also understand this, which is why they have pushed a resolution to bar the EPA from using the regulatory structure developed under the Clean Air Act to limit carbon dioxide as a way to combat global warming. That "resolution of disapproval" should come before the U.S. Senate for a vote next week. It deserves passage.

Fairbanks first tried to solve its carbon monoxide — not dioxide — problem with mandatory inspection and maintenance of vehicles in the borough. Now we're trying to reduce particulates in our air. Setting aside lingering skepticism about whether these pollutants are really so bad that they need expensive interventions, most people can recognize that the regulatory system used to combat them is rational and targets the specific pollution problem.

Both local efforts arose because Fairbanks violated the EPA's National Ambient Air Quality Standards for these pollutants. Those are the standards that the EPA sets for pollutants that "endanger" public health, as it has concluded carbon dioxide does.

So the EPA expects to set a standard for carbon dioxide. It will be something lower than current carbon dioxide levels, which are approaching 390 parts per million in the air and are steadily rising. Alaska's Department of Environmental Conservation will get to work meeting the new standard by limiting emission sources. It will give the Fairbanks North Star Borough first crack at the problem, as it did with carbon monoxide and particulates. Every state across the nation will do the same.

As part of the effort, the EPA also will require operating permits for emission sources that exceed 100 tons of carbon dioxide per year and new construction permits for plants that create 250 tons per year, because that's what the Clean Air Act says it must do. That sounds like a lot of carbon dioxide, but many buildings and even small manufacturers produce that much. A single pickup truck driving 10,000 miles per year at 20 mpg produces 5 tons of carbon dioxide.

The EPA and states have issued about 15,000 operating and construction permits combined across the nation in recent years. But, because so many enterprises — public and private — produce so much carbon dioxide, the EPA will need to review millions of operating applications and thousands of construction applications if carbon emissions come under its purview. Recognizing the absurdity of this, the agency

Obama takes responsibility, and the risk that comes with it

By BEN FELLER
Associated Press Writer

It was always his mess to clean up. That's what Americans expect from their presidents.

And so as the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico became the worst in U.S. history, President Barack Obama took responsibility in the only obvious way left. Unequivocally.

"In case you were wondering who's responsible, I take responsibility," Obama said at a Thursday news conference arranged to make that very point. "It is my job to make sure that everything is done to shut this down."

No more White House parsing about how BP is legally responsible for plugging the leak and paying the cost, even though that remains accurate. Obama knew that his own accountability was needed for the angry Gulf Coast communities, for an administration struggling to nail its message, for himself.

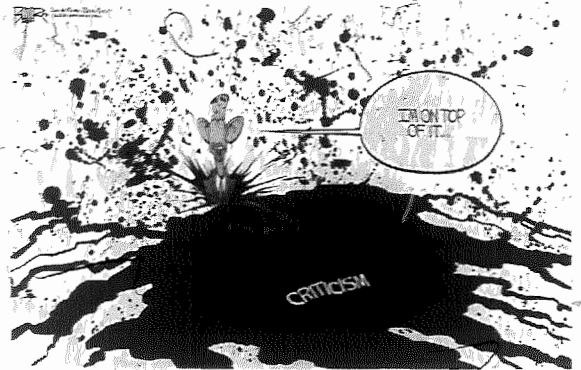
And once you're in, no point being subtle.

In language presidents normally reserve for the burden of sending troops to war, Obama said of the oil spill: "This is what I wake up in the morning and this is what I go to bed at night thinking about." At a time when Obama is juggling a host of nettlesome problems — the war, the economy, Mideast peace — he pushed them all behind this one, saying his government has been "singularly focused" on fixing the spill.

This is what comes with the job, and the sympathy of voters is not everlasting. Presidents get hired to fix problems they have never even contemplated.

When a government loses its credibility with the people, the blow can be devastating. And although bigger issues than politics are in play — mainly, the enormous destruction to the waters and wildlife — this was clearly a consequential moment for Obama.

A new Gallup poll finds that more



than half those surveyed thought Obama was handling the crisis response poorly. That is despite all the crews and aid and equipment Obama's team had dispatched, all the times his incident commander and his interior secretary and his West Wing advisers made the case to the media.

And so Obama stepped in. He resurrected a buck-stops-were theme he has used before, most notably after a would-be airliner bomber exposed security lapses on Christmas Day. Obama could not seem to claim ownership enough, declaring on Thursday: "My job is to get this fixed."

The reassurance, as needed as it may have been, does not change two underlying realities.

The first is that no amount of words will replace what people want: results. And that is a much more far-reaching challenge of plugging the leak, cleaning up the oil, holding a big oil company responsible and preventing deep water rigs from sinking in disaster.

A hands-on presidential visit has its limits, too, although Obama knowing being at the scene has an important, symbolic upside. He was back in coastal Louisiana on Friday, not just for another government briefing but a look at the tar balls rolling up to the water's edge of Fourchon Beach.

The other reality he faces is that the government, in fact, is not in charge of the incident the way people want.

It cannot push BP out of the way

and take over the operation of fixing a busted, gushing well a mile below the sea's surface. The most powerful government in the world is simply not equipped to do that.

One of the more revealing, if overlooked, moments at Thursday's news conference came when Obama recalled a discussion in the Situation Room. He asked Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Adm. Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, whether the military had any assets that the oil companies lacked to deal with the crisis.

There were none. "We do not have superior technology when it comes to dealing with this particular crisis," Obama said. Understandably, he suggested that the federal government should start examining whether it should develop some.

To connect in real terms, he even pulled in a story of his 11-year-old daughter.

"When I woke this morning and I'm shaving and Malia knocks on my bathroom door and she peeks in her hood and she says, 'Did you plug the hole yet, Daddy?'" Obama said.

That was Obama's most effective moment, said Kevin Sullivan, the former communications director for President George W. Bush. "It did make it personal," Sullivan said. "In addition to conveying that 'We're in the case,' the White House wanted to convey that it cares about the people involved."

Ben Feller covers the White House for The Associated Press.

Deepwater illustrates risky business

In the weeks since the Deepwater Horizon explosion, the political debate has fallen into predictably partisan and often puerile categories. Conservatives say this is Barack Obama's Katrina. Liberals say the spill is proof the government should have more control over industry.

But the real issue has to do with risk assessment. It has to do with the



David Brooks

risks that swept out of a drill off the Gulf of Mexico in California. A culture of silence settled upon all concerned, from front-line workers who didn't want to lose their jobs to executives who didn't want to hurt profits.

Finally, people in the same field began to think alike, whether they are in oversight roles or not. The all-encompassing capture of the Minerals Management Service is actually

Playing with fire

Congress should pass senator's disapproval resolution for EPA

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Sen. Lisa Murkowski and 41 other senators also understand this, which is why they have pushed a resolution to bar the EPA from using the regulatory structure developed under the Clean Air Act to limit carbon dioxide as a way to combat global warming. That "resolution of disapproval" should come before the U.S. Senate for a vote next week. It deserves passage.

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So the EPA expects to set a standard for carbon dioxide. It will be something lower than current carbon dioxide levels, which are approaching 390 parts per million in the air and are steadily rising. Alaska's Department of Environmental Conservation will get to work meeting the new standard by limiting emission sources. It will give the Fairbanks North Star Borough first crack at the problem, as it did with carbon monoxide and particulates. Every state across the nation will do the same.

Ow

Obama takes responsibility and the risk comes with it

By BEN FE
Associated Press

It was always his responsibility. That's what American presidents do. Their presidents.

And so as the oil spill of Mexico became the history, President Barack Obama took responsibility in the end. He left. Unequivocally.

"In case you were worried I was responsible, I take responsibility," Obama said at a Thursday press conference arranged to mark the anniversary. "It is my job to make sure everything is done to solve the problem."

No more White House spin. About how BP is legally responsible for plugging the leak and paying the cost, even though the cost is not accurate. Obama knew that accountability was needed. He was angry. Gulf Coast communities were struggling. He sent a message, for himself.

And once you're in, it's not subtle.

In language reserved for the burdened and the bereaved, Obama said: "This is what I want to do in the morning and this is what I want to do at night thinking about the time when Obama is just dealing with the nettlesome problems — the economy, Mideast peace, and so on. All behind this or that. The government has been so focused on fixing the problem."

This is what comes with the job, and the sympathy of voters is not an everlasting. Presidents deal with the problems they have never dreamed of.

When a government takes responsibility with the people, it can be devastating. And always more issues than politics.



Jeff Benowitz

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sion sources. It will give the Fairbanks North Star Borough first crack at the problem, as it did with carbon monoxide and particulates. Every state across the nation will do the same.

As part of the effort, the EPA also will require operating permits for emission sources that exceed 100 tons of carbon dioxide per year and new construction permits for plants that create 250 tons per year, because that's what the Clean Air Act says it must do. That sounds like a lot of carbon dioxide, but many buildings and even small manufacturers produce that much. A single pickup truck driving 10,000 miles per year at 20 mpg produces 5 tons of carbon dioxide.

The EPA and states have issued about 15,000 operating and construction permits combined across the nation in recent years. But, because so many enterprises — public and private — produce so much carbon dioxide, the EPA will need to review millions of operating applications and thousands of construction applications if carbon emissions come under its purview. Recognizing the absurdity of this, the agency has proposed a way to ignore the smaller sources, but the proposal appears to contradict the Clean Air Act and would be vulnerable to lawsuits — either from environmental groups who want stricter rules or from industry groups looking for any way to topple the program.

All these limits and costly regulations might be worthwhile if, as with carbon monoxide and particulates, the result would be substantially less carbon dioxide in the air — the kind of reduction that climate models indicate is necessary to limit warming. Unfortunately, that result isn't anticipated.

All the rules and regulations will put only a small dent in global carbon dioxide levels, if any. That's because of two factors. First, carbon dioxide is a rapidly dispersed component of our air and it spreads globally. Second, the heavily populated, developing parts of our globe are not interested in limiting their carbon dioxide emissions.

Advocates of limiting our own emissions say that other nations will follow if we lead. That may be so, but then let's lead in a rational fashion. If the United States is to limit carbon emissions, it must do so with a system that either taxes carbon or sets a total cap on emissions that creates a market in which the worst pollution is traded away first. Those ideas are fraught with problems and uncertainties as well, but they are far preferable to an old-fashioned, bureaucratic permit system.

We're playing with fire here; we don't want to get burned. Murkowski's resolution is an apt extinguisher.

templated.

When a government loses its credibility with the people, the blow can be devastating. And although bigger issues than politics are in play — mainly, the enormous destruction to the waters and wildlife — this was clearly a consequential moment for Obama.

A new Gallup poll finds that more

Deepwater illus

In the weeks since the Deepwater Horizon explosion, the political debate has fallen into predictably partisan and often puerile categories. Conservatives say this is Barack Obama's Katrina. Liberals say the spill is proof the government should have more control over industry.

But the real issue has to do with risk assessment. It has to do with the bloody crossroads where complex technical systems meet human psychology.

Over the past decades, we've come to depend on an ever-expanding array of intricate high-tech systems. These hardware and software systems are the guts of financial markets, energy exploration, space exploration, air travel, defense programs and modern production plants.

These systems, which allow us to live as well as we do, are too complex for any single person to understand. Yet every day, individuals are asked to monitor the health of these networks, weigh the risks of a system failure and take appropriate measures to reduce those risks.

If there is one thing we've learned, it is that humans are not great at measuring and responding to risk when placed in situations too complicated to understand.

In the first place, people have trouble imagining how small failings can combine to lead to catastrophic disasters. At the Three Mile Island nuclear facility, a series of small systems happened to fail at the same time. It was the interplay between these seemingly minor events that led to an unanticipated systemic crash.

Second, people have a tendency to get acclimated to risk. As the physicist Richard Feynman wrote in a report on the Challenger disaster, as years went by, NASA officials got used to living with small failures. If faulty O rings didn't produce a catastrophe last time, they probably won't this time, they figured.

Feynman compared this to play-

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Tuesday, June 1, 2010

Hiker slays Denali bear

By CHRISTOPHER ESHLEMAN

ceshleman@newsminer.com

A backpacker shot and killed a grizzly bear Friday night in Denali National Park and Preserve, the first such incident within the park's original borders in decades and also the first since a February change in federal laws allowed licensed visitors to carry loaded guns in national parks, a parks spokeswoman said Sunday afternoon.

Parks Service biologists and rangers are investigating the case, trying to determine whether the backpacker had justification for shooting the bear, said Kris Fister, a park spokeswoman. The parks service was withholding the hiker's name as of Sunday.

Please see BEAR, Page A7

Predator plan draws federal flak

By MARY PEMBERTON
Associated Press Writer

ANCHORAGE — Different mandates about how Alaska wildlife should be managed and a plan to kill wolves inside a national refuge is causing a rift between state and federal managers.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service says if the Alaska Department of Fish and Game goes ahead with its plan to conduct aerial predator control inside the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, it will consider those state employees trespassers

Please see PLAN, Page A7



U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Alton Huckaby plays Taps during Memorial Day observances at Veterans Memorial Park.

Fairbanks turns out to honor veterans

By AMANDA BOHMAN
Fairbanks Staff Writer

Event organizers had a lot of work to do. They had to make sure that the observance was held in a safe and secure location, and that the weather was just what the doctor ordered.

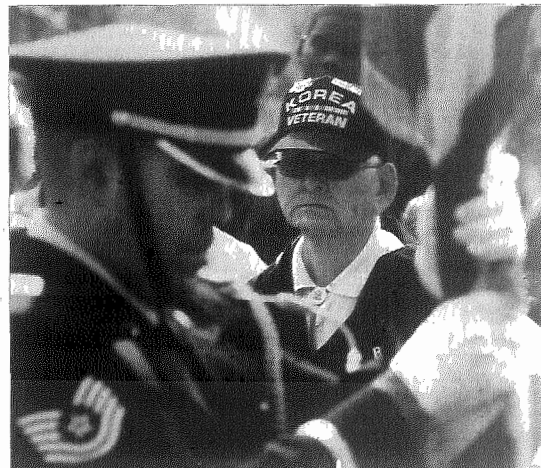
The observance was held at Veterans Memorial Park, and the weather was just what the doctor ordered. The event was a success, and the community came out in force to honor the veterans.

About 150 people attended the observance, and the community came out in force to honor the veterans. The event was a success, and the community came out in force to honor the veterans.

Rep. Thomas W. Alford, Alaska's only Republican congressman, was also in attendance. He was joined by other community leaders and veterans.

Gov. Sean Parnell, Alaska's governor, was also in attendance. He was joined by other community leaders and veterans. The event was a success, and the community came out in force to honor the veterans.

Please see VETERANS, Page 3T



Korean War veteran Morgan Solomon watches as U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Rafael Gonzalez retrieves the colors to end the Memorial Day observances in Veterans Memorial Park.



Commander Robert Boies of the Disabled American Veterans Fairbanks Chapter 2 bows his head and holds his hat and hand over his heart during Memorial Day observances.

Firefighters mobilize more resources to combat blazes

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Service says if the Alaska Department of Fish and Game goes ahead with its plan to conduct aerial predator control inside the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, it will consider those state employees trespassers

Please see **PLAN**, Page A7



Sam Harris/News-Miner

Korean War veteran Morgan Solomon watches as U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Rafael Gonzalez retrieves the colors to end the Memorial Day observances in Veterans Memorial Park.

Please see **VETERANS**, Page A7

Pole, and former Fairbanks, Sen. Glenn Hackney were among the crowd.

Col. Edward Daly, deputy commander for U.S. Army Alaska, gave the keynote speech, while aides to the Alaska congressional delegation read remarks from their bosses

Firefighters mobilize more resources to combat blazes

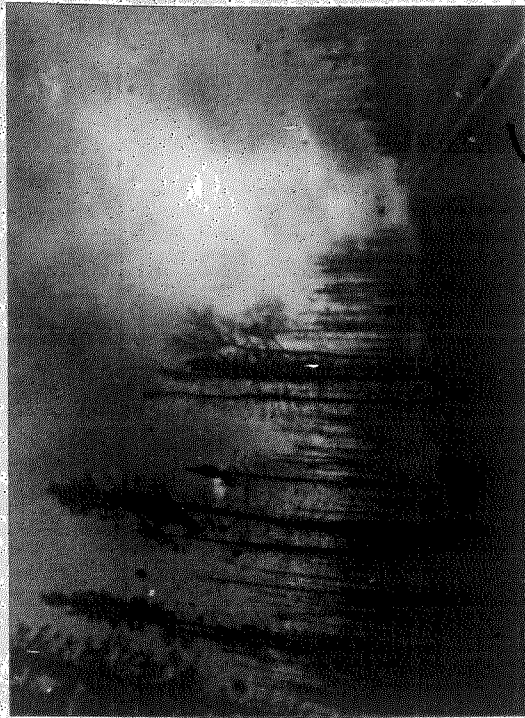
***By AMANDA BOHMAN**
abohman@newsminer.com

The number of acres burned in Alaska more than doubled during the weekend, and fire officials raised their preparation level to Level 4.

Level 5, which is critical, is the highest on the scale, fire information officer Bob Summerfield said.

The number of acres burned so far in the state jumped from 115,000 acres on Saturday to 260,000 acres by Monday morning, according to situation reports.

Please see **FIRES**, Page A8



Mark McCreedy/AP&I

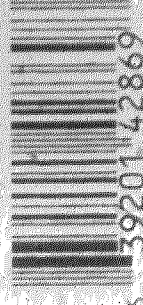
The effects of the Eagle Trail Fire are seen near the Alaska Highway, as scorched trees mark where the wildfire has been while streams of smoke darken the sky.

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Weather	A
World	B

Vol. CVI, No. 150

24 pages



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Caregiver Support Group, 565 University Ave., Suite 2. Information: 452-2277.
Noon—**Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce**. Special board meeting. Westmark Hotel.
5-6:30 p.m.—**TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly)** meets at Fairbanks Lutheran Church, 1012 Cowles St. Information: 451-6381 or 457-1900.
5:30-6:30 p.m.—**UAF Toast of Alaska Toastmasters Club**. Room 201, O'Neil Building. Information: 474-6311.
6 p.m.—**Orientation** for prospective adoptive and foster parents. Alaska Center for Resource Families, 815 Second Ave., Suite 101. Information: 479-7307.
6-9 p.m.—**Goldstream Valley Lions Club Awards and Family Potluck Night**. Bring a dish to share. Ken Kunkle Community Center, 2591 Goldstream Road. Information: 451-8750.
6:15 p.m.—**TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly)**. Ben Franklin craft room, North Pole Mall. Information: 488-2198.

6:30 p.m.—**Fairbanks Weight Loss Surgery Support Group** meeting. Mobile 1, 903 Old Steese Highway. Information: 488-7975.
6:30-9 p.m.—**Pioneer Park Pickers Jam Session**, led by Jim Rasmussen. Pioneer Park Museum. Information: wovensage@yahoo.
6:45 p.m.-9:15 p.m.—**Fairbanks Great Land Sounds** men's chorus meets at Northern Lights Church of Christ, 645 11th Ave. Open to men who like to sing. Information: 451-0204.
7 p.m.—**Compassionate Friends, Fairbanks Chapter**, monthly meeting for family members who have experienced the death of a child. Hospice of the Tanana Valley, 2001 Gillam Way. Information: 479-0707.
7 p.m.—**Science Books Discussion Group**. Best American Science and Nature Writing 2008 (second half). Noel Wien Library. Information: 459-1063 or golson@fnsblibrary.us.
7 p.m.—**Reel History: Documenting Alaska** film series. "Paddle to Seattle: Journey Through the

Inside Passage. Presented by Summer Sessions and Lifelong Learning. Free. Schaible Auditorium, UAF campus. Information: 474-7021.
7 p.m.—**Duplicate Bridge**. Sponsored by Farthest North Bridge Club. Senior Center, 1424 Moore St. Information: 456-6932.
7 p.m.—**Narcotics Anonymous** meeting. St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Second Avenue entrance. Information: 452-7372.
7-8:30 p.m.—**Co-Dependents Anonymous** meets at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, 1030 Second Ave. Information: 458-0466.
8 p.m.—**Jasper Quartet Recital**. Sponsored by Summer Sessions and Lifelong Learning. Advance tickets \$12 adult, \$6 senior, military and students; \$15 at the door. Davis Concert Hall, UAF campus. Information: 474-7021.

WEDNESDAY

7 a.m.—**Chena Kiwanis Club break-**

To submit
e-mail calend

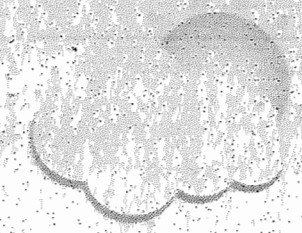
LOCAL ALMANAC

Today's weather

Where the smoke is not, there will be clouds. But at least we can cough in warmth.

High: 73
Low: 50
Precipitation:
24 hours ending 5 p.m. none

Sunrise 3:32 a.m.
Sunset 12:06 p.m.
Length of day 20 hrs, 33 min, 39 sec
Daylight gained 6 min, 13 sec



For the complete weather forecast, see Page A7.

TODAY IN HISTORY

The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, June 1, the 152nd day of 2010. There are 213 days left in the year.

Highlight in History:

On June 1, 1813, the mortally wounded commander of the U.S. frigate Chesapeake,

Seattle. (The fair closed in October the same year.)

In 1943, a civilian flight from Portugal to England was shot down by the Germans during World War II, killing all 17 people aboard, including actor Leslie Howard.

In 1958, Charles de Gaulle

FAIRBANKS Daily News - Miner

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52 weeks \$188

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Opinion

Send your letters: letters@newsminer.com

Tuesday, June 1, 2010

FAIRBANKS Daily News - Miner

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Clearing the air

Fairbanks can't avoid mandated cleanup measures

The debate about measures to improve the air quality in Fairbanks resumes Thursday when the Borough Assembly considers a revised cleanup plan put forward by Mayor Luke Hopkins.

Public testimony and a possible vote aren't scheduled until the following week, but residents can be sure the coming days will be filled with points and counterpoints, finger pointing and name-calling.

What borough residents need to remember, however, is the bottom line: The federal government is requiring that something be done about the poor air quality in a large portion of the Fairbanks North Star Borough.

Oh, sure, local leaders in Fairbanks could ignore the federal mandate. But there's not one speck of a chance that the state government is going to ignore inaction by this community. That's because the state government will suffer the consequences if Fairbanks doesn't comply. Millions of federal dollars would become unavailable to the state.

Money talks, as they say.

The state is quite content to let Fairbanks come up with its own solution, provided the solution is satisfactory to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. And that's just what Fairbanks voters said they wanted anyway when they approved an advisory ballot measure late last year saying they favored having an air quality plan put together locally.

Borough Assembly members and Fairbanks residents need to remember that when they are listening to what is likely to be a heavy amount of emotional anti-government testimony. What Fairbanks cannot afford is to have leaders who don't have the backbone to be frank about the reality that the state will move to clean up Fairbanks' air if Fairbanks doesn't do it itself.

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Community perspective

Send Community Perspective submissions by mail (PO Box 70710, Fairbanks, AK 99707), by fax (452-7977) or by e-mail (letters@newsminer.com). Submissions must be 500 to 750 words. Columns are welcome on a wide range of issues and should be well-written and well-researched with attribution of sources. Include a full name, address, daytime telephone and headshot photograph suitable for publication (e-mail jpeg or tiff files at 350 dpi). Photos may also be scheduled to be taken at the newspaper office. The News-Miner reserves the right to edit submissions or to reject those of poor quality or taste without consulting the writer.

TICK
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ADAM AGGS
CARTOONIST

GOP must plug deficit hole

Legacy of overspending becomes target

Kathleen Parker



On domestic issues, House Minority Leader John Boehner is unequivocal in his support for three items: Quench, Dawn and OxiClean.

Quench refers to the body lotion, Dawn the dishwashing liquid, and OxiClean the laundry stain remover — the first two are products of Procter & Gamble, one of the largest employers in Boehner's Ohio.

These state secrets surfaced when I asked the perpetually tan Boehner, who insists he was "born tan," how to treat my sunburn. Firing up a Camel Light, his first of three during our 40-minute interview in his Capitol office, he said, "Ah, I'm a Quench believer."

Before we moved on to more pressing concerns, Boehner riffed on other favorite products. Dawn works not only on dishes, but on oil-slicked birds, as the manufacturer's website boasts. As for OxiClean, look no further than Boehner's dazzling white shirt.

You have to admire a man who can juggle both Heloise and Nancy Pelosi in the same paragraph. You also can't help noticing that Boehner is at once commanding and preternaturally laid back. What he doesn't show (but oth-

we're winning two-to-one with independents today.

For Boehner, being called the "Party of No" isn't a regrettable invective. It is a strategy aimed at highlighting the contrast between those running things and those who want to run things. That deafening silence you hear from Republicans about the Gulf oil spill? All the better for Americans to hear the glubglubglub of Democrats and the administration going down the drain.

Boehner & Co. are busy, meanwhile, conducting a massive digital listening tour via the GOP's new "America Speaking Out" website, where voters can submit and vote on ideas. It's user-friendly to a fault, with undertones of "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood," such that Dick, Jane and even Spot can play.

Then again, Republicans finally have figured out the miracle of social media and are using it to engage voters angry that Washington seems to neither listen nor care what they think. Companion to the "speaking out" site is YouCut, unveiled by Rep. Eric Cantor earlier this month, where Americans can vote on spending cuts. In one video, Rep. Michele

the GOP's agenda. Democrats have cleared that public funding is being used for political purposes. Of course, Democrats did the same thing with their "Six for '08" effort. What is in the public interest and what may also prove politically advantageous is a blurred mirror. Both parties have walked Boehner's office says no campaign funds have been used, nor is there a campaign component to the website.

Boehner is reluctant to speculate about November when his seats will be in play. If things should bump on election night — and should Boehner replace Pelosi as speaker — expect to see lots of bills on the floor. First to get the hatchet would be health care reform, which Republicans would seek to replace with "common sense" measures to reduce insurance costs and to increase other priorities would include higher knowledge tests, entitlement reform, and restoration of the integrity of the House, which Boehner says has been defamed by previous speakers' emphasis on partisan games.

"That's why the Congress of the United States is broken and I am to fix it."

That's a multi-trillion-dollar question given the partisan "Four Issues" between the parties, as Boehner puts it. But when 40 cents of every dollar spent has to be borrowed, some debt, as President Obama described the current crisis, has to "plug the damn hole."

Whether Republicans have the

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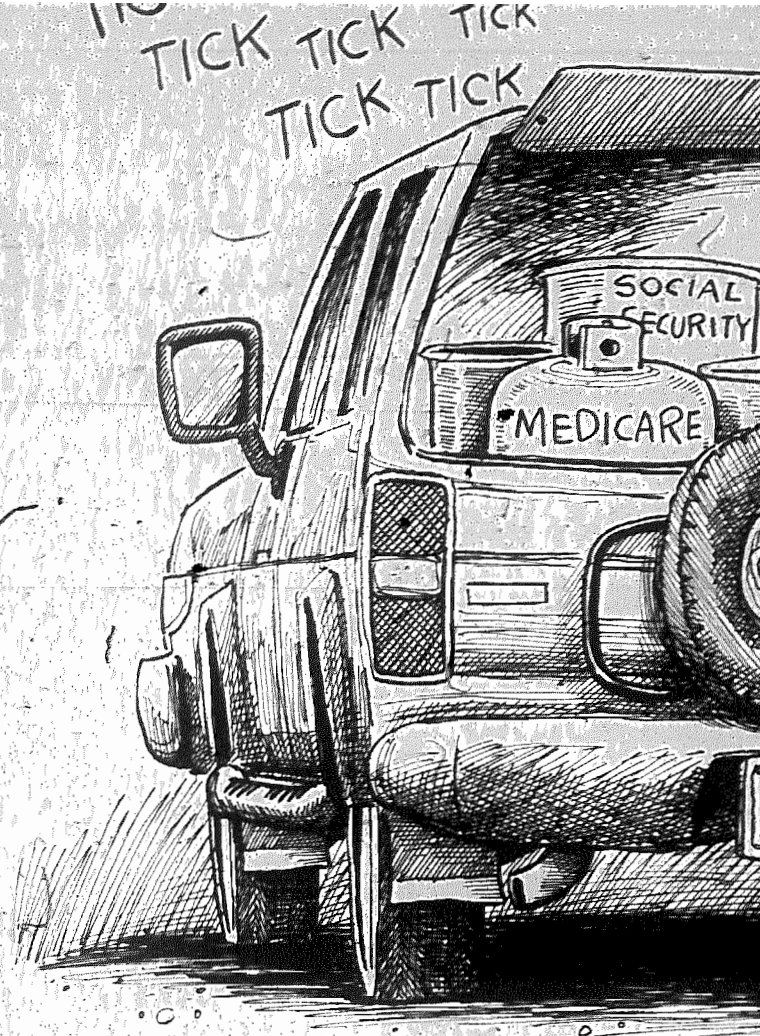
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GOP must plug

Legacy of overspending becomes target

Kathleen
Parker

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FIRES: Continue to spawn and spread in the Interior's hot, dry and windy conditions

Continued from Page A1

"We're doing everything we possibly can with these fires but it's probably not going to be over anytime soon," Summerfield said. "We are just getting into what would be the start of the normal fire season. Folks need to be prepared for the long haul."

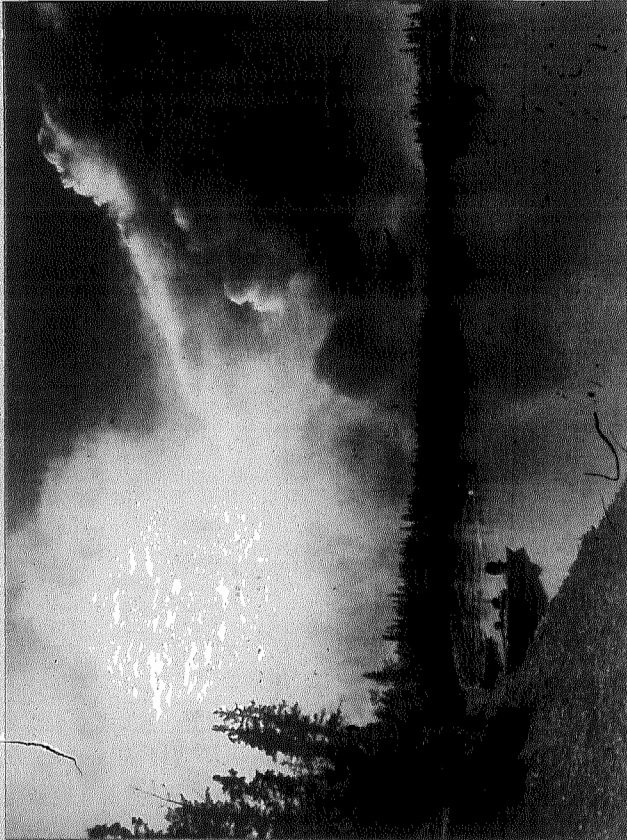
According to the Alaska Emergency Coordination Center's guidelines, Level 4 preparation means more than 50 percent of "non-tactical resources" are committed and more than 75 percent of "tactical resources" are committed to new fires. Tactical resources include smokejumpers and air tankers. Non-tactical resources include helicopters, fire engines and fire crews.

Level 5 preparation means more than 75 percent of both kinds of resources have been deployed to fight wildfires.

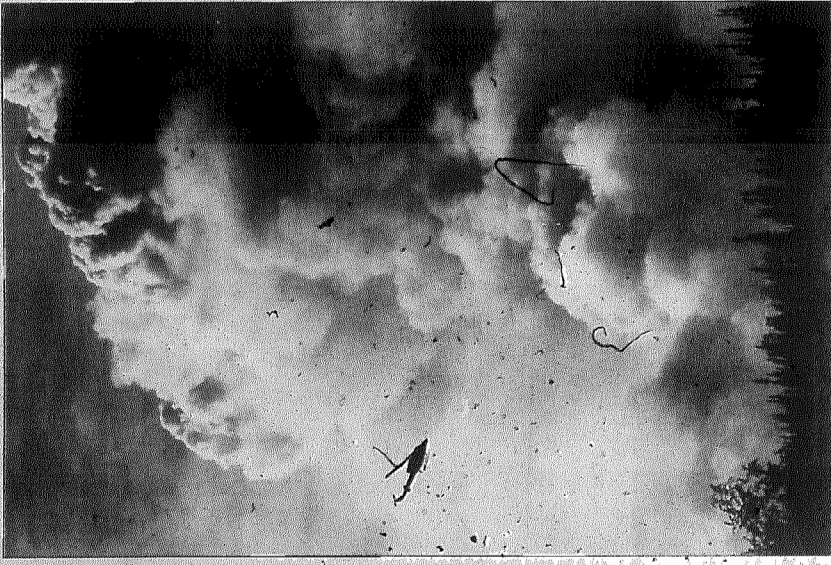
More than 1,000 people are assigned to fight the various wildfires or support the firefighters. Most of the workers, about 530, are assigned to the Eagle Trail fire near Tok.

"When we get to PL (preparation level) 4 or PL 5, we have folks from all over the Lower 48 and — as of now — a lot of resources from Canada," said fire information officer Pete Buist.

Moving to PL 4 can be a major milestone, depending on the summer. "It's not that unusual, but there are summers where we never reach PL 4," Buist said.



Mark Picose/Getty AP/PT
Above and at right, smoke billows from the Eagle Trail fire near Tanacross. At right, a helicopter prepares to dump a load on the flames to slow their spread.



Lightning ignited a new level would drop off. That's the blaze on Sunday near Healy not to say it wouldn't go back up, but it'll depend on the east of Delta Junction. The a number of things: complexity of the incidents, the number of new fires, the ground and the air, a. Buist said. "We don't get to worked up about predicting what's going to happen. It's just about dealing with it as it happens."

The National Weather Service is calling for continued highs in the 70s with scattered thunderstorms in the coming days.

"Whether a thunderstorm will actually hit Fairbanks is for sensitive groups," meaning people prone to heart and lung illnesses, the very young and the very old are urged to avoid prolonged exertion.

"All it would take is rain for 2-3 days, and (the danger)

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152-1407

Texas textbooks are unlikely to spread

Name: Amanda
valedictorian
Age: 17
College: Fairbanks State University

Contact staff writer Amanda Bolman at 459-7544.

FIRES: Continue to spawn and spread in the Interior's

Continued from Page A1

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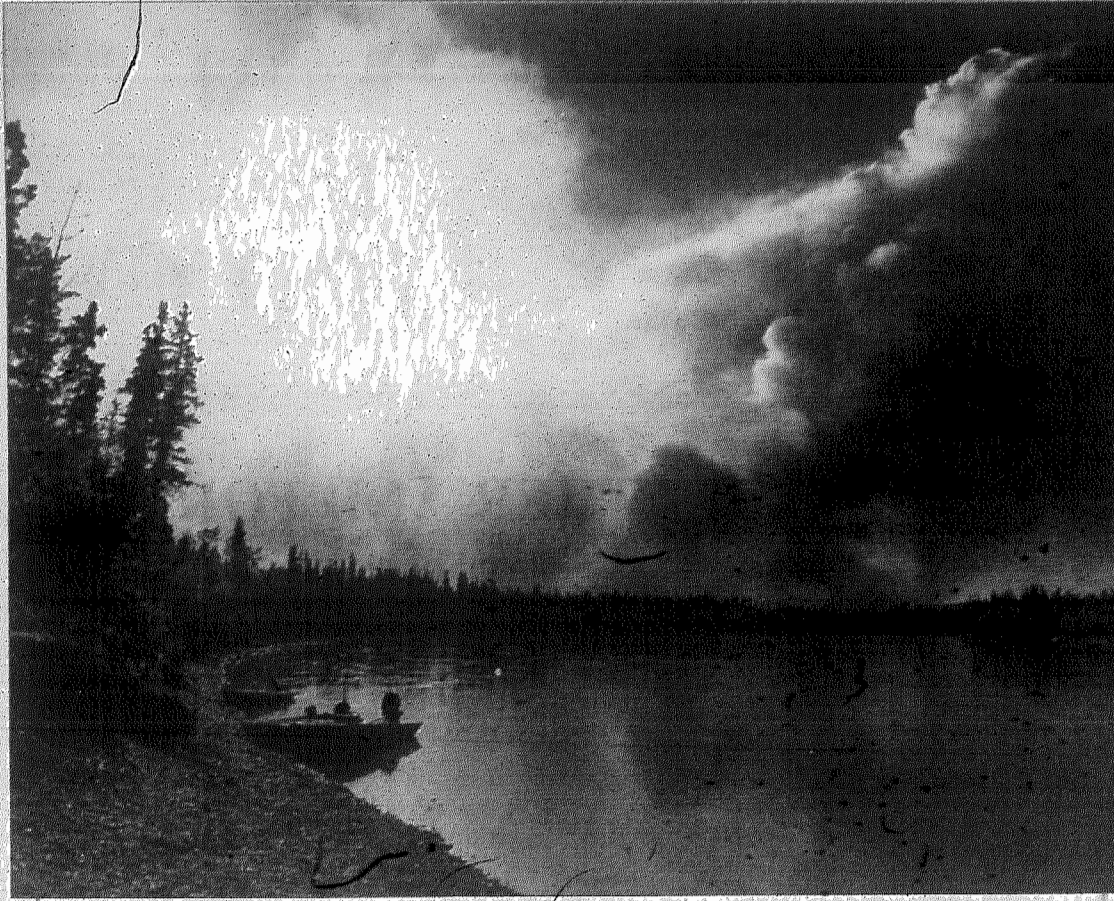
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Above and at right, smoke billows from the Eagle Trail Fire near Tanacross. At a helicopter prepares to dump a load on the flames to slow their spread.

Reaching PL 5 takes a combination of active fire weather, multiple large fires and many new fires. Buist said the last time Alaska reached that stage was August 6-7 last year, when 80 fires were burning across the state, including the Hardluck Creek Fire, which briefly threatened homes near Murphy Dome. There were 87 active fires as of Monday morning.

According to a report, the Eagle Trail was about 15 percent contained Monday as firefighters continue to focus on structure protec-

tion.

The Toklat Fire and the Gilles Creek Fire also continue to be high priorities, Summerfield said.

The Toklat Fire, burning near Nenana, is running through black spruce with flame lengths at 75 feet, a situation report stated. Rapid growth is taking place on the southwestern end of the blaze.

At more than 100,000 acres, the Toklat Fire is the largest in the state.

A more sophisticated management team took over the Gilles Creek Fire, which

is burning along the road near the Pogo Gold Mine on Delta Junction, according to a situation report. Dozers and other equipment worked to reestablish tainment lines.

North of Fairbank Cascaden Ridge and gate fires have kept Elliott Highway closed to traffic. "The Elliott's breached so many times it might as well be closed now," Buist said.

Twenty-three helicopter crews either have deployed or are being deployed to the Lower 48 to fight fires, according to crew situation reports, but Buist said that isn't unusual. "It depends on what we're doing at any particular point in time. It may just be a

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Mark McCready, AP&T

The Eagle Trail Fire near Tanacross. At right, the flames to slow their spread.

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Twenty-three hotshot crews either have deployed or are being deployed from the Lower 48 to Alaska, according to crew service reports, but Buist said that isn't unusual. "It just depends on what we're short of at any particular point in time. It may just be that we have plenty of one type of resource and not of another," he said.



Lightning ignited a new blaze on Sunday near Healy Lake, which is about 30 miles east of Delta Junction. The estimated 100-acre Healy River Fire was hit hard from the ground and the air, a situation report stated.

The National Weather Service is calling for continued highs in the 70s with scattered thunderstorms in the coming days.

"Whether a thunderstorm will actually hit Fairbanks is hard to say," meteorologist Matthew Kidwell said.

The chance for rain is better toward the end of the week, he said.

"All it would take is rain for 2-3 days, and (the danger

level would) drop off. That's not to say it wouldn't go back up, but it'll depend on a number of things: complexity of the incidents, the number of new (fires)," Buist said. "We don't get to worked up about predicting what's going to happen. It's just about dealing with it as it happens."

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Contact staff writer Amanda Bohman at 459-7544.

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A Great Place to Live!

Texas textbooks are unlikely to spread

By PAUL J. WEBER
Associated Press Writer

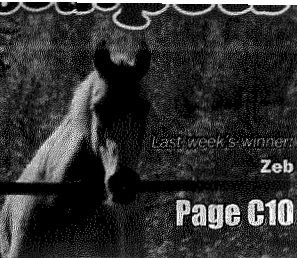
SAN ANTONIO — Pop quiz: Does the school curriculum adopted in Texas really

what material appears in classrooms across the country. That's why the state school board's recent decision to adopt new social studies standards was closely watched

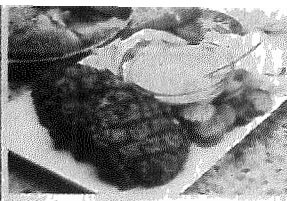
tion for another situation," said Bob Resnick, founder of Education Market Research, based in New York.

After months of discussion, the Texas Board of Educa-

An advertising feature full of information about pet products, services and a photo gallery of our town's cutest pets.



Last week's winner: Zeb
Page C10



Burger love
Food C1



Gores call it quits • A5

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Wednesday, June 2, 2010

Fire Dangers

Haze from wildfires hangs over Fairbanks; temperature expected to climb in Interior

By TIM MOWRY
tmowry@newsminer.com

Cooler, wetter weather across the Interior on Monday night and Tuesday provided what weather and fire officials described as a "short-term reprieve" for firefighters battling more than a dozen wildfires in the Interior, but it won't last long with warmer, drier temperatures on the way and no significant rainfall in sight.

"We're in a phase where we're waiting to see what the weather does," Mark Morrow, a fire information officer with the Alaska Fire Service, said Tuesday morning.

Scattered showers fell across portions of Alaska overnight Monday, including some areas where fires were burning. The little rain that did fall "was pretty localized" and won't have much effect, fire information officer Pete Buist said.

Please see CONDITIONS, Page A6

More crews headed to Alaska as fires grow

By MARY BETH SMETZER
msmetzer@newsminer.com

Two of the 99 wildfires burning around the state — the Eagle Trail Fire near Tanacross and the Gilles Creek Fire near Pogo Gold Mine north of Delta — are ranked No. 1 and No. 2 on the nation's wildfire priority list.

But being at the top has both negative and positive aspects.

The bad news is the fires are aggressive and not contained. But the good news is the priority rankings mean fire managers are first in line for securing resources to fight the blazes.

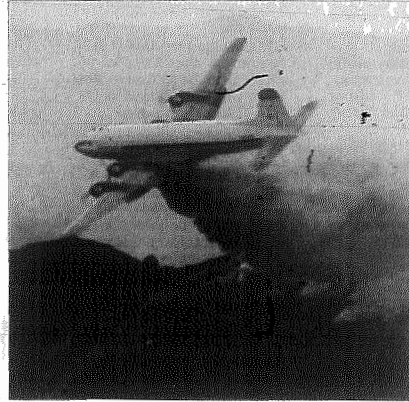


Photo courtesy Alaska Division of Forestry
A retardant tanker drops its load on the Gilles Creek Fire on Tuesday near the Pogo Mine. The Gilles Creek Fire has burned more than 17,000 acres.

Man gets 33 years for role in robberies

By CHRIS FREIBERG
cfreiberg@newsminer.com

A Fairbanks man who a prosecutor described as "a cancer to this community" received a 33-year sentence Tuesday for his role in two robberies last summer.

Justin Thomerson, 31, pleaded guilty to kidnapping and received a 15-year sentence for robbing a Fairbanks man at knifepoint last June. In exchange for the plea, prosecutors dismissed charges of robbery, murder, assault and theft.

Thomerson received an additional sentence of 15 years to serve and 15 years suspended, with one consecutive year to serve for setting up a fake drug deal last June in Anderson Apartments and robbing two men at gunpoint. Thomerson was sentenced in that case following a week-long jury trial last December.

Superior Court Judge Paul Kelly, who approved the plea agreement, revoked two years and four months of suspended time in connection with two other past robbery cases that had previously been pleaded to.

Please see SENTENCE, Page A7

Election time draws slate of candidates

By CHRISTOPHER ESHLEMAN
ceshleman@newsminer.com

The statewide filing deadline drew moderate action in election offices Tuesday, the last day for candidates in Alaska to formally file. The result: August primaries will include only a handful of contested races. Scores in many districts will be November's general election as the one to watch.

Voters will see three contested August primaries — which feature Republicans — in East Fairbanks, Delta Junction-Village and in the sprawling House District 9, which includes Fairbanks and Chitina.

In all 14 Republican and state Democrats appeared at the several contests and two Senate seats in play between Delta Fairbanks North Star, Delta Junction and Village, were up for information passed early Tuesday evening by state election officials.

Two primaries will feature candidates steeped in political experience: Vivian Stone, an incumbent Fairbanks



Traffic moves through a haze of smoke along Chena Pump Road as seen from the upper campus of the University of Alaska Fairbanks on Tuesday afternoon.

Please see CREWS, Page A6

Please see ELECTION, Page A7

Seventy-five cents

Fire Dangers

Haze from wildfires hangs over Fairbanks; temperature expected to climb in Interior

By **TIM MOWRY**

tmowry@newsminer.com

Cooler, wetter weather across the Interior on Monday night and Tuesday provided what weather and fire officials described as a "short-term reprieve" for firefighters battling more than a dozen wildfires in the Interior, but it won't last long with warmer, drier temperatures on the way and no significant rainfall in sight.

"We're in a phase where we're waiting to see what the weather does," Mark Morrow, a fire information officer with the Alaska Fire Service, said Tuesday morning.

Scattered showers fell across portions of Alaska overnight Monday, including some areas where fires were burning. The little rain that did fall "was pretty localized" and won't have much effect, fire information officer Pete Buist said.

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More crews headed to



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Please see **CONDITIONS**, Page A6

More crews headed to Alaska as fires grow

By **MARY BETH SMETZER**
msmetzer@newsminer.com

Two of the 99 wildfires burning around the state — the Eagle Trail Fire near Tanacross and the Gilles Creek Fire near Pogo Gold Mine north of Delta — are ranked No. 1 and No. 2 on the nation's wildfire priority list.

But being at the top has both negative and positive aspects.

The bad news is the fires are aggressive and not contained. But the good news is the priority rankings mean fire managers are first in line for securing resources to fight the blazes.



Traffic moves through a haze of smoke along Chena Pump Road as seen from the University of Alaska Fairbanks on Tuesday afternoon.

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Inside

- Classified C4
- Comics C3
- Dear Abby A6
- Food C1
- Interior/Alaska B1

Chaos in Gaza



1 dead, 4 hurt when p

By **RACHEL D'ORO**
Associated Press Writer

ANCHORAGE — A small airplane crashed in a busy business district near



CREWS: Drivers urged to be patient and expect delays if driving in rural Alaska

Continued from Page A1

Eagle Trail Fire crews expect to increase their current firefighting staff of 535 by another 100 people in the next few days, said Celeste Prescott, fire information officer for the type 2 team Incident Management Team.

"Five more crews are on order," she said. Currently, the fire is 15 percent contained and is moving north and west between Mansfield Trail and Glamam Lake.

Last week, the residents of Tanacross (population 200) and the nearby Eagle Subdivision on the Alaska Highway who were evacuated to emergency shelter at Tok School on Thursday were allowed to return home Saturday night.

Fire officials report that

good progress has been made on containment lines north of Delta Junction off Pogo Mine Road, continues to mop up status. However, there is still the potential for traffic delays on the Alaska Highway.

Currently, the focus is on catching the blaze before it reaches old Mansfield Village to the north, which has historical and spiritual significance to Tanacross residents.

"There are eight smoke jumpers and 10 crew members who are doing structure and gravesite protection," Prescott said. "They have laid hoses around every gravesite and every house."

Numerous other structures in the area and nearby Crystal Springs have been saved by fire crews as well.

The Gilles Creek Fire, cleared of fuels. The mine

has just down for maintenance and is using generators to power essentials.

"The folks at the mine are extremely helpful," Lavagnino said. "They support our efforts and are strong partners."

The popular Granite Tors Trail has not been re-opened for public safety concerns because of a wildfire in the area.

Applegate and Cascade are burning several miles apart near the Elliott Highway.

As of Tuesday morning each fire had claimed more than 14,000 acres of black spruce mixed with hardwoods.

The Applegate Fire, located between Manley Hot Springs and Eureka, had 114 people staffing the blaze and 39 people were manning the

127,000 acres and has 200 fire personnel on the scene. Focus is on protecting structures near the Bear Paw, Kantishia and Toklat rivers as well as East Twin and West Twin lakes.

According to Bob Sumner, a fire information officer, the scattering of rain around the Interior Monday night, might give people the false impression that the area wildfires and smoky skies are going to be short-lived.

"People need to be prepared to know that this may be going on for some time," he said.

Contact staff writer Mary Beth Smetzer at 459-7546.

CONDITIONS: As week goes on, expect it to heat up

Continued from Page A1

"It doesn't take long for it to dry out," he said. Rainfall ranged from a trace to 1 inch in some areas but it produced only a "temporary benefit" and was accompanied by more than 2,000 lightning strikes, which ignited seven new fires.

"I haven't heard of any difference making precipitation at any of these places," Morrow said.

Meteorologist Ted Fathauer at the National Weather Service in Fairbanks said that will likely be the case for the rest of the week. "We had some rain but it just wasn't anywhere near enough," Fathauer said. "We

need a half-inch or an inch of rainfall to knock this stuff down for good. There's no real hope for widespread rain at least for the next couple of days."

The forecast is for temperatures in the low 70s through the rest of this week with the possibility of warmer temperatures early next week, Fathauer said.

Still, the relative humidity of 30 to 40 percent on Monday was welcome relief from the 10 to 15 percent a few days earlier and fires were "laying down" as a result, Morrow said.

"We don't have any news right now of things flaring up," he said. "We're continuing to make progress today in several locations. The weather-

out any new fires that start while trying to sleep those that are burning away from cabins and Native allotments.

"We've got plenty of big fires already," Buist said. "If we can make these little fires stay little that makes our lives easier and keeps expenses down."

The Elliott Highway between the Dalton Highway and Manley is open but Buist described it as "an iffy deal" because both the Cascade Ridge Fire between mileposts 124 and 125 and the Applegate Fire between Miles 80 and 85 have both crossed the highway and are still burning.

Contact staff writer Jim Mowry at 459-7587.

CRASH: Cause unknown

Continued from Page A1

The identities and hometowns of those onboard were not yet known, said Jennifer Rodi, a National Transportation Safety Board investigator.

The single-engine plane was registered to Cagner and Julian Inc., a guide and outfitting business based in Port Alsworth. No one with the business could be reached for comment Tuesday night.

Rodi said it was too early to say what caused the crash.

The aircraft went down after departing Merrill Field about a mile away. Rodi said it was unknown who was flying the plane or if a flight plan had been filed.

She said the four survivors were critically injured. However, Brosh said the girl onboard was able to unbuckle herself before she was hit by the wreckage. Other witnesses Aden Her-

the crash site. A small, cone-shaped piece of the aircraft landed in the motel's parking lot.

Brosh was driving to a guitar lesson and had stopped at a nearby intersection when he heard a loud noise behind him. He swung his head back as the plane slammed into the ground.

People started to pour out of their cars and run to the aircraft.

Brosh said the plane burst into flames while those on board were still being extricated.

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CREWS: Drivers urged to be patient and expect delays if driving in rural Alaska

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good progress has been made on containment lines and parts of the fire are on mop up status. However, there is still the potential for traffic delays on the Alaska Highway. Currently, the focus is on catching the blaze before it reaches old Mansfield Village to the north, which has historical and spiritual significance to Tanacross residents.

"There are eight smoke jumpers and 10 crew members who are doing structure and gravesite protection," Prescott said. "They have laid hoses around every gravesite and every house. Numerous other structures in the area and nearby Crystal Springs have been saved by fire crews as well. The Gilles Creek Fire, cleared of fuels. The mine

Power to the Pogo Gold Mine was shut off a week ago, and power poles in the fire's vicinity have been cleared of fuels. The mine

has just down for maintenance and is using generators to power essentials. "The folks at the mine are extremely helpful," Lavagnino said. "They support our efforts and are strong partners."

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Cascaden Fire, located along the Elliott Highway between Lavengood and the Minto turnoff. Anyone driving on the Elliott Highway is urged to use caution because of heavy smoke, fire equipment traffic and firefighters working adjacent to the road. Another rapidly expanding blaze is the Turquoise Lake Fire, which by Tuesday had grown to more than 57,000 acres near the north fork of the Kuskokwim River. Over the weekend it burned the Farewell Lake Lodge. The Toklat Fire, 25 miles southwest of Nenana, encompasses more than

127,000 acres and has 200 fire personnel on the scene. Focus is on protecting structures near the Bear Paw, Kantisha and Toklat rivers as well as East Twin and West Twin lakes. According to Bob Summerfield, a fire information officer, the scattering of rain around the Interior Monday night, might give people the false impression that the area wildfires and smoky skies are going to be short-lived.

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"We had some rain but it just wasn't anywhere near enough," Fathauer said. "We

need a half inch or an inch of rainfall to knock this stuff down for good. There's no real hope for widespread rain and air quality was rated at least for the next couple of days." The forecast is for temperatures in the low 70s with the possibility of warmer temperatures early next week. Fathauer said. Still, the relative humidity of 30 to 40 percent on Monday was welcome relief from the 10- to 15 percent a few days earlier and fires were "laying down" as a result, Morrow said.

"We don't have any news, right now of things flaring up," he said. "We're continuing to make progress today in several locations. The weather point, Buist said, is putting

er has helped somewhat." Smoky conditions persisted in Fairbanks on Tuesday and quality was rated as unhealthy for sensitive groups; though it had improved slightly compared to Monday. With Fairbanks essentially surrounded by wildfires in all four directions, the smoke won't be going anywhere anytime soon. Fathauer said. Fathauer described the smoke situation in the Interior "like milk in a plate."

"Smoke is everywhere," he said. More than 1,000 firefighters are battling a total of 13 fires, most of which are burning in the Interior. The top priority at this point, Buist said, is putting

out any new fires that start while trying to steer those that are burning away from cabins and Native allotments. "We've got plenty of big fires already," Buist said. "If we can make these little fires stay little that makes our lives easier and keeps expenses down."

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FAIRBANKS 2014
Arctic Winter Games
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UAF athletic woes hit UAF athletics

Department slashes contracts to balance budget

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athletics department will work with the shortened contracts, which will in part allow the department to shave about \$400,000 off its expenses. The cuts are needed to offset rising fixed costs within the roughly \$7 million budget.

"The question is what are you

going to give up? Probably the only area you can make up a lot is in labor," Karr said.

Karr said the "big three" expenses at the athletics department make up most of its budget — student-athlete scholarships, labor and travel. Those items are

anticipated to rise by about 4 percent next year, but revenues aren't projected to keep pace.

"They're the cost of doing business, and they're hard things to adjust," Karr said.

Karr said the UAF athletics department actually had a small

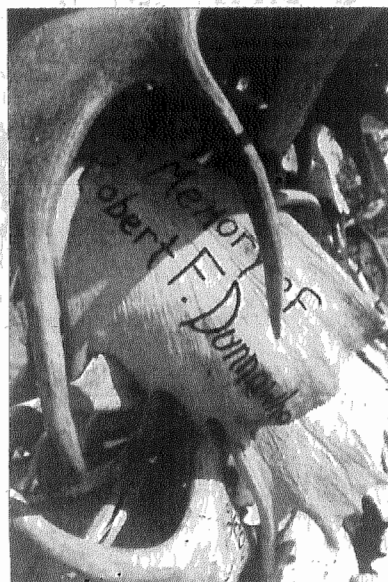
surplus this year, but it was because of some factors that can't be relied upon again. Deferred payments from previous years and a strong season by the hockey team helped boost revenues, among other factors.

Other budget-cutting steps are being taken, including reductions

Please see **BUDGET**, Page A6



Jason Faris, left, and artist Sandy Jamieson, right, clamp down a cedar log to match the curve of the steel as work continues on the antler arch outside the Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center on Wednesday.



Donated sets of antlers are carved with donors names for the antler arch outside the Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center.

GATEWAY TO THE INTERIOR



New fire warnings in effect

By MARY BETH SMETZER
msmetzer@newsminer.com

Dry weather mixed with lightning storms continue to challenge firefighting crews staffing a dozen of 81 active fires reported burning around the state Wednesday.

Between 1,500 and 1,600 fire personnel are battling the blazes. More than half are Alaska fire crews and support staff, and the rest are imported from the Lower 48 and Canada, said Pete Buist, fire information officer.

A pre-evacuation (stage one) warning was issued to residents and owners of cabins along the shores of Quartz Lake on Wednesday morning because of potential fire danger from the Gilles

Please see **FIRES**, Page A6

Parnell

coach Dallas Ferguson has a five-year contract, and Karr said administrators were uncomfortable changing the details of his long-term deal. As a result of those shortened contracts, the athletic department will close from

There was no immediate word from the Murkowski campaign Wednesday if the donation would be returned. Palin trounced Murkowski's father, incumbent Gov. Frank Murkowski, in the 2006 GOP primary race.

"Quite honestly, I'm so offended at that terminology because it absolutely isn't in the bill." There is no reason to gin up fear in the American public by saying things that are not included in the bill," she added.

Miller said he was thrilled to get the endorsement. "We share the belief that our nation is at a critical juncture," he said in a statement.

judge, unsuccessfully ran for a state House seat in 2004. Miller said he was thrilled to get the endorsement. "We share the belief that our nation is at a critical juncture," he said in a statement.

FIRES: Homeowners on Quartz Lake are notified of potential evacuations as fire nears

Continued from Page A1

Creek Fire, 27 miles northeast of Delta Junction near the Pogo Gold Mine. The early warning allows people with special needs or pets and livestock to make plans for an orderly exit if necessary. "We don't want people to think the north shore of Quartz Lake is going to burn," Buist said. The fire has the potential to go there, depending on the wind, and the fact that there is a solid fuel bed of black spruce located from the Pogo Road, south to Quartz Lake, Buist said. "If the fire starts making an advance, we might ask people to leave."

Buist said structures along the lake's edge are pretty easy to defend if owners take fire prevention measures such as clearing fuel around their cabins, cleaning gutters, etc.

The 18,100 acre, lightning-caused fire is staffed with 390 fire personnel and 35 Toklat Fire is still the biggest acreage fire in the state, claiming 131,000 acres to date, burning into

for the last 18 days of the month. The high temperature of the month was 82 degrees on May 27, which broke the previous record of 80 degrees set in 1990. The temperature of 80 degrees on May 26 tied the record.

The average high temperature in May was 67 degrees at Fairbanks International Airport and the average low was 41 degrees. It was also much drier than normal in May though nowhere close to a record. A total of 0.24 inches of precipitation was measured at the airport during the month, which was a little more than one-third of the normal 0.60 inches of precipitation for the month. The driest May on record was last year with 0.05 inches of precipitation.

The low temperature for the month was 29 degrees on May 6 and there were a total of five nights when the temperature fell to or below the freezing mark. The last freezing temperature of the season — so far — was on May 14, which is close to the average date for the last freeze at the airport.

Despite ranking as the third-warmest May on record, the month also went down as one of the rare Mays in which measurable snow fell at the airport. One-tenth of an inch of snow fell on May 6. It was the first measurable snow in May since 2002.

The May snowfall nudged the season total to 24.9 inches, the third-lowest on record in Fairbanks. Contact the newsroom at 459-7572.

Month of May was third-warmest on record

Staff Report
newsroom@newsminer.com

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Since going smokefree we've seen

VETO: Using Facebook as a public forum

Continued from Page A1

The operating budget, which provides for the day-to-day workings of state government, is about \$8.4 billion. But it is the \$3.1 billion public works budget, review so we can spend less,

islanders through a few have met with me in pairs from their adjacent house districts. Been helpful to hear about their more localized priorities.

The capital budget package is better described as

Parnell wrote on May 21, again on his Facebook page, that he was meeting with individual lawmakers as part of his budget review to hear about local projects.

"Continuing our budget review so we can spend less,

Buist said, "Our gut-reaction is we'll most likely pick up more lightning starts."

With fire danger so high, Buist urges extra caution for any outdoor human activity. "This is a bad time to do any burning, even a campfire can be the source of what can turn into a tragedy," he said.

Contact staff writer Mary Beth Smetzer at 459-7546.