

FAIRBANKS

Daily News-Miner

THE VOICE OF INTERIOR ALASKA SINCE 1903

Inside Today

Fairbanks City Council passes a resolution for labeling foods containing GMOs. » A2

GOOD MORNING



The weather.

It's freezing — at least, the high today will be. High today32 Low tonight 16 WEATHER » A11

Aurora forecast.

Auroral activity will be low. Weather permitting, low displays will be visible overhead from Barrow to Fairbanks.

This information is provided by aurora forecasters at the Geophysical Institute at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. For more information about the aurora, visit http://www.gi.alaska.edu/AuroraForecast

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GHOULISH GOODIES

Tasty ideas for your Halloween bash

FOOD Page B6

...



WHEN WILL THE SNOW GET HERE?

Will the ground stay uncovered on Halloween?

INTERIOR Page A5

...

SOURDOUGH JACK:

"Not sure what I'm gonna do without my snow-pumpkins this year. Might have to go buy me a real one to carve."



Health exchange problems continue

Company that helps Alaskans navigate federal marketplace reports low enrollment

By Matt Buxton MBUXTON@NEWSMINER.COM

A company trying to sign up Alaskans in the new federal health insurance marketplace told state legislators Tuesday that it had signed up just three people since Oct. 1.

"We have worked across the entire state of Alaska and all the communities in outreach education and enrollment. ... Unfortunately, the marketplace is not functioning," said Tyann Boling, the chief operating officer of Enroll Alaska, a company that helps people navigate the Healthcare.gov website and in return receives commissions from insurance companies.

"We've only had the ability to enroll three individuals in the marketplace. We expected at this point to have enrolled close to 2,000."

The numbers reported by Enroll Alaska and other groups don't include sign-ups who successfully navigated the website on their own.

Boling spoke to the House Finance Committee panel reviewing the Department of Health and Social Services budget. The committee, which was in Fairbanks on Tuesday, has been holding meetings throughout the state to get a better understanding of the state's most expensive department.

The state of Alaska, along with a majority of other states, opted to reject federal funding to set up its own individualized marketplaces. Gov.

Sean Parnell also has rejected hundreds of millions of federal dollars for an expansion of Medicaid covered by the federal health care law.

Some other states that opted to set up their own marketplaces have reported tens of thousands of people successfully signing up for insurance.

Many Republican representatives on the subcommittee agreed with Parnell's decision to keep the state out of it but quizzed state officials on what they're doing to help people.

"Because the state has strung us

HEALTH » A10

A CALL TO ACTION

During conference, youth urges climate change work

By Weston Morrow WMORROW@NEWSMINER.COM

Nelson Kanuk, the name behind a high-profile climate change lawsuit in Alaska, delivered the youth keynote address Tuesday for the annual Elders and Youth Conference in Fairbanks.

Unsurprisingly, the issue of climate change pervaded Kanuk's heart-felt speech, which also focused on Alaska Native peoples' strong ties to the environment.

Kanuk, a Yupik Eskimo from the village of Kip-nuk in the Kuskokwim River delta, and five other youths are suing the state of Alaska, with backing from activist groups. They want to force the state to regulate carbon dioxide as part of its public trust responsibility.

A state Superior Court judge rejected the suit last year, but Kanuk appealed to the Alaska Supreme Court. Earlier this month, the justices heard oral arguments for the case in Barrow. They have not yet issued a decision.

Kanuk is studying criminal justice as a freshman at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. He told the several hundred audience members in the Carlson Center, both young and old, that the time to act is now.

Traditional Alaska Native values were a common thread in Kanuk's speech. He used those values as a call to action for his elders and peers to fight against climate change. In particular, he called on advice he said he learned from his own elders.

"We don't own the land. ... The land owns us," Kanuk said. "We can work together to adapt to the changes so that we can keep moving forward."

Kanuk's own village has experienced problems from erosion from melting permafrost and the thinning of the ice sheet in recent years as the climate changes throughout Alaska, he said. Even traditional hunting techniques used to catch walrus and other marine animals are becoming harder, Kanuk said.

See video from the Elders and Youth Conference online. » www.newsminer.com

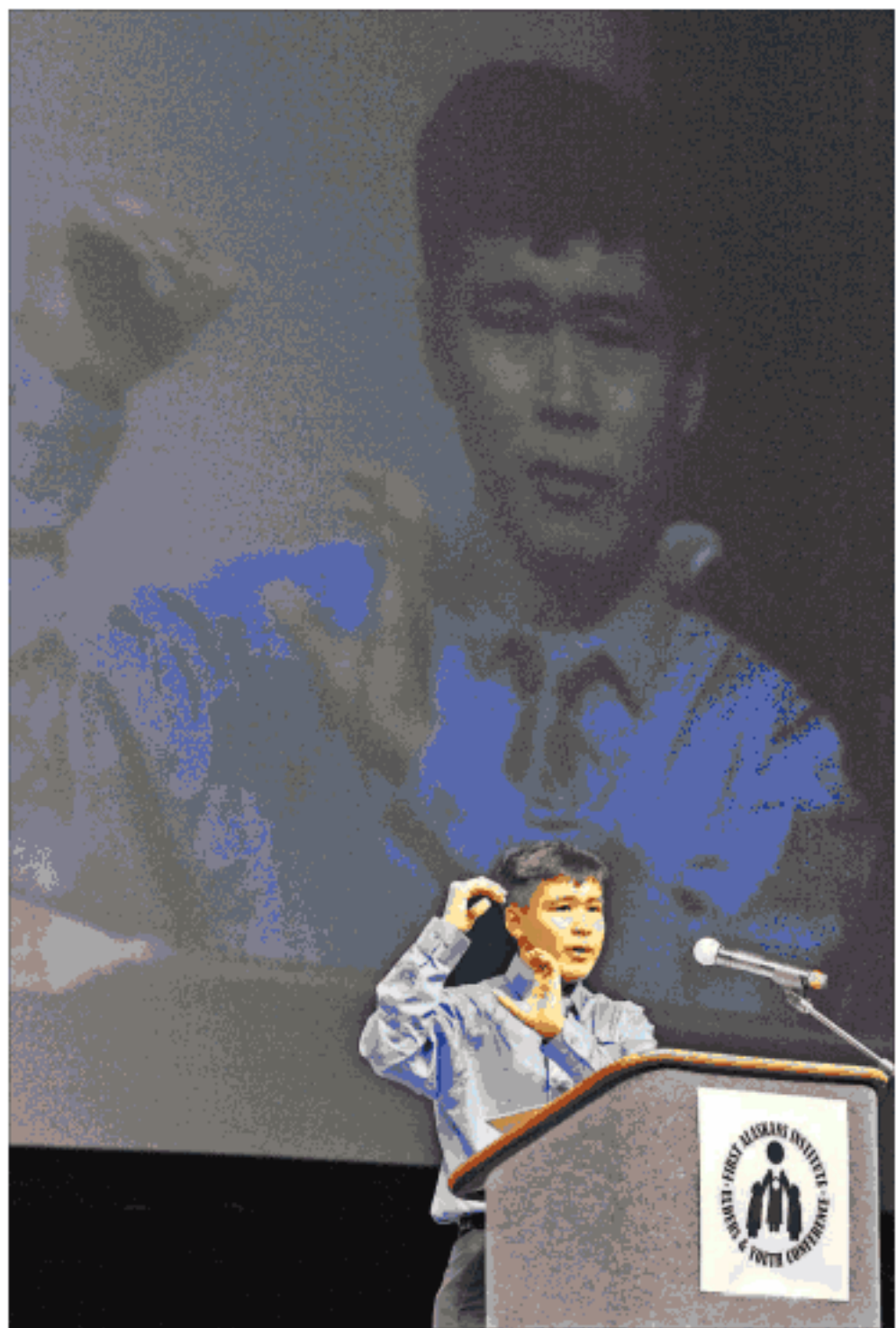
CONFERENCE » A10

AFN COVERAGE:

Regular updates from the Alaska Federation of Natives Convention will be available via Twitter using the hashtag #AFN2013.



Attendees listen intently as Nelson Kanuk gives his keynote address during the First Alaskans Institute Elders and Youth Conference on Tuesday at the Carlson Center. ERIC ENGMAN/NEWS-MINER



Nelson Kanuk gives his keynote address during the First Alaskans Institute Elders and Youth Conference. The theme of this year's conference, which goes through today, is "We Are Our Ancestors." ERIC ENGMAN/NEWS-MINER

Coalition plans concert to 'rock the Native vote'

By Weston Morrow WMORROW@NEWSMINER.COM

Voter turnout in Fairbanks plummeted to the lowest point in a decade this fall.

In other areas of the state, the outlook was just as bleak, but a coalition of several Alaska Native groups is working to reverse that trend. They plan to bring out the vote through

music. Musicians will take to the stage today in Fairbanks for the Hunt-Fish-Share Rock the Native Vote Concert. The concert, which will take place

beginning at 8 p.m. in Lathrop High School's Hering Auditorium, was organized to coincide with the Alaska Federation of Natives Convention, being held in Fairbanks.

"I think using the international language of music and film to share positive messages of hope and inspiration does

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NOTICE TO REAL PROPERTY TAXPAYERS. Second-half 2013 Real Property Taxes are due Thursday, November 1, 2013. Includes a 'TAX BILL' graphic with 'DUE 11/01/13'.

NEWS

Atla pushes for mushing programs in Alaska schools

By Sam Friedman
SFRIEDMAN@NEWSMINER.COM

Champion sprint musher George Atla once had someone offer him \$5,000 for one of his dogs. Atla said he was confused why someone would want to buy only one dog when you need 14 for a team, but the man explained.

The man told Atla he wanted to be associated with the winning dog team. He said "when you go by, I want to be able to say 'You see my dog running in that team,'" Atla told an audience Tuesday afternoon at the First Alaskans Institute Elders and Youth Conference.

Atla spoke of a time when small villages put together dog teams to compete in major races, such as the Open North American Championship in Fairbanks, sometimes with each dog contributed by a different person. There were more opportunities for someone to make it as a professional musher, as Atla did, he said. Atla is one of the winning mushers in state history with eight Anchorage Fur Rendezvous World Championship titles and 10 Open North American victories.

These days, Atla teaches students in the Interior village of Huslia at the Frank Atla Youth and Sled Dog Care Mushing Program, which is named after his son. He shared the stage on the floor of the Carlson Center with his granddaughter, Courtney Agnes, 14, during the First Alaskans Institute Elders and Youth Conference on Tuesday at the Carlson Center. ERIC ENGMAN/NEWS-MINER

"Years ago, there was a lot of pride in our dog mushing," Atla said. "We're hoping to bring some of that back to the state of Alaska."

The program started last year and teaches 32 students. It brought students to the Junior North American Championship last year. In March, a Huslia musher will compete in the Arctic Winter Games in Fairbanks.

Atla told the audience he's hoping competitive youth dog mushing programs take off around the state. Another goal is to persuade the state of Alaska to add the program to the school curriculum in Huslia, he said.



Legendary dog musher George Atla, of Huslia, speaks about his youth dog mushing program while sitting with granddaughter Courtney Agnes, 14, during the First Alaskans Institute Elders and Youth Conference on Tuesday at the Carlson Center. ERIC ENGMAN/NEWS-MINER

It's now run entirely with volunteers and with dog food donated by a manufacturer.

"I talked to the governor about it, and he was all for it. But he didn't say anything about financing as usual," Atla said. "We're hoping that our school district next year will adopt this program."

Contact staff writer Sam Friedman at 459-7545. Follow him on Twitter: @FDNMerime.

CONFERENCE

Continued from A1

"That's getting dangerous now because the ice is getting thinner, the temperatures are getting warmer," he said. "With one thing that is threatened, there are many more smaller things that are threatened right underneath that."

Kanuk drew on the program theme, "we are our ancestors," to urge his peers to utilize the

lessons of their elders — the younger generation's link to the past.

"With elders, that's what they're here for — to teach us. We need all that knowledge," Kanuk said. "I challenge you all youth within these next couple days to gather all the information and the knowledge you can get and bring it home, show it, teach it to all the youth in your village."

Contact staff writer Weston Morrow at 459-7520. Follow him on Twitter: @FDNMSchools.

VOTE

Continued from A1

in fact motivate and inspire people to positive action," said Robby Romero, the headliner and one of several artists who will perform.

Romero formerly signed with the major recording label Island Records but left to become an independent artist when the label merged with Polygram Records in 1989. When the labels merged, Romero said, he had the choice to stay the course toward pop stardom or leave to continue pursuing his love of Native music. He left the label and has spent the past two decades creating music and videos that celebrate Native culture, a passion that qualifies him substantially to inspire the power of voting in Native youths.

"I stand in solidarity with my Native brothers and sisters," Romero said.

One of those sisters is Princess Lucaj, the executive director of the Gwich'in Steering Committee. The steering committee has had a vital role in organizing the concert and providing volunteer support.

Lucaj said she was discouraged by voter turnout across Alaska this fall but hopeful that young adults can help raise the numbers next year.

"You have to use your voice," Lucaj said. "If you don't use your voice, you jeopardize what you have."



Musicians will take to the stage today in Fairbanks for the Hunt-Fish-Share Rock the Native Vote Concert. The concert, which will take place in Lathrop High School's Hering Auditorium, beginning at 8 p.m., was organized to coincide with the Alaska Federation of Natives Conference taking place in Fairbanks this week. Robby Romero is the headliner and one of several artists who will perform at the event. COURTESY OF ROBBY ROMERO

While the concert's main purpose is to encourage voter turnout among Native youths, the first part of its name conveys a secondary mission: Hunt-Fish-Share seeks to bring out more voters who understand the needs of Native subsistence hunters throughout Alaska. Alaska Natives have split frequently with the state and federal government on Native subsistence rights and enforcement.

"We are asking for the right as sovereign entities ... to manage the resources outside our front doorstep," said Jessica Black, one of the event's organizers.

Lucaj said the issue extends beyond the issue of subsistence to one of basic rights.

"Right now, unfortunately, I

can't say that there is mutual respect — some pockets of respect — but overall equal rights in this state for Alaska Native people, I don't think we're there yet," Lucaj said. "But we can get there. I'm optimistic that we can get there."

Event organizers, volunteers and musical artists involved in the concert agreed, though, that increasing Native voter turnout is necessary to addressing the concerns of the Native community.

"You look at the history of voting," Lucaj said. "These are rights that people fought very hard for. Kind of in paying respect to that, it's disrespectful not to vote, I think."

Contact staff writer Weston Morrow at 459-7520. Follow him on Twitter: @FDNMSchools.

HEALTH

Continued from A1

to the federal government — which I'm fine with — we don't have any idea of how many people who have inquired on this website and decided it's too costly," said Rep. Tammie Wilson, R-North Pole. "As far as the state goes, we're just kind of throwing our people out there and letting them navigate, if they can't navigate that's too bad, if they get fined that's too bad, that's our stance?"

Bret Kolb, the director of the Alaska Division of Insurance, said the state's only option is to direct people to the federal sign-up site.

"What we're trying to do

is help people get to those touch points, whether it's to the federal government, to the 800 numbers, to the navigators that are available to help them get through the process," he said. "The Division of Insurance is trying to assist people and answer the questions as best we can, given the information and resources we've been given."

Wilson was unsatisfied, asking whether the state would seek more serious action against the federal government.

"If we're sending people back to the website that they're frustrated at, that's not really helping," she said. "I'm not saying it's your fault, but that's the pretty much the stance of the state. Instead of

pushing back on the government and taking care of our own."

When later asked if the state could set up its own marketplace as an alternative, Kolb said it was unlikely. The state would have to spend money to build and maintain a marketplace for a relatively small number of people, he said.

"We're trying to figure out what our motivation would be," he said.

However, Enroll Alaska's Boling said that once the federal government gets the website into a working condition, she believes her company "will be very successful" in getting people insured.

Contact staff writer Matt Huston at 459-7544 and follow him on Twitter: @FDNMPolitics.

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City Council supports labeling foods for GMOs

By Sam Friedman
SFRIEDMAN@NEWSMINER.COM

Mandatory labeling of genetically modified foods has the support of both local governments.

By a 5-1 vote Monday night, the Fairbanks City Council passed a resolution in support of labeling requirements for food containing GMOs, organisms that have been genetically engineered for characteristics such as faster growth or pest resistance. Critics of GMOs, such as the Alaska group GMO Free

Alaska, have expressed concerns that GMOs could be unhealthy or could limit biodiversity.

Like a similar resolution passed last summer by the Fairbanks North Star Borough, the city resolution does not force food manufacturers to put labels on foods with GMO ingredients. Instead, it encourages the state and national governments to require labels on GMO foods, including the many processed foods that use genetically modified corn or soybeans.

At Monday's city council meet-

ing, a GMO resolution sponsored by Bernard Gatewood had the support of everyone except Councilman Lloyd Hilling.

Hilling asked several audience members who came to testify in support of the resolution what scientific studies their opposition to GMOs was based on. When it came to vote, he said they hadn't provided enough evidence that GMOs were harmful.

"Is there a danger in GMO? I've inquired, I've asked the several people who gave testimony here to night

for sources or merely the names of the studies that were done," Hilling said. "Everybody said it's been proven, but I haven't yet gotten a source except 'the rats that are dying in France.' To me, it's very important to behave in a scientific manner when we're going to have the government do things."

Stacy Pearson, a Fairbanks resident and member of GMO Free Alaska, said Tuesday that the most compelling evidence is a growth in food allergies she's noticed as GMO foods have become more prevalent.

"I remember when I was in school, you would know the occasional kid who was allergic to peanuts, and that was about it," she said. "Now there are kids that are allergic to lettuce and things like that. They certainly seem to be linked."

The next step for GMO Alaska is to advocate for GMO labeling at the state level, she said. Rep. Scott Kawasaki, D-Fairbanks, has agreed to sponsor a bill, she said.

Contact staff writer Sam Friedman at 459-7545. Follow him on Twitter: @FDNMerime.

IN BRIEF

State honors three Fairbanks schools

Three schools in the Fairbanks North Star Borough received special honors from the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development Tuesday.

The state named 31 schools as "highest-performing" and 37 schools as "high progress," making a total of 49 specially recognized schools.

Anderson and Crawford Elementary Schools in the Fairbanks district were both honored as high performing, while Crawford and Chinook Charter School were honored as high progress.

Crawford was one of only 19 schools in the state to be honored in both categories.

To qualify for the honors schools must, among other things, be in the top 10 percent of schools for performance (to qualify for the highest performing award) or growth (to qualify for the high progress award).

Rules for massage, detective businesses

By unanimous votes, the Fairbanks City Council revised licensing requirements for massage and private detective businesses Monday night.

The amended rules were designed to streamline the application process to reflect the fact that criminal background checks are now faster and easier to get. Applicants no longer have to submit copies of their criminal history.

Under the new rules, applicants for either type of business license must not have any recent convictions for prostitution offenses, sex offenses or drug offenses or for burglary, larceny, fraud or embezzlement.

Applicants must not be addicted to drugs and must be "of good moral character and repute."

Kodiak takes part in tsunami exercise

KODIAK — Emergency management personnel in Kodiak took part in a drill this week to test their tsunami readiness.

The Kodiak Daily Mirror reported Monday's tabletop exercise involved the city and borough incident management team. It dealt with a threat after a simulated magnitude 9.0 earthquake struck 150 miles southwest of Portland, Ore.

The drill tested the team's ability to monitor a mock tsunami that headed toward British Columbia and the Alaska coast. It also involved

TODAY'S BEST BETS



NEWS-MINER FILE PHOTO

6 p.m.-1 a.m.—Gwich'in Old-Time Athabaskan Fiddling Dance Fundraiser; \$10; fry bread, crafts and great music. Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center.

7-9 p.m.—An Evening of Big Band Jazz. UAF jazz bands and the Fairbanks Community Jazz Band join in a free concert featuring standards from Rosemary Clooney, Glenn Miller, Count Basie, Natalie Cole and more. Free; UAF Davis Concert Hall.

8 p.m.—Hunt, Fish, Share: Rock the Native Vote Concert. Free admission; Hering Auditorium, 901 Airport Way.

Calendar in print: A5

Calendar online: To read a full listing of community calendar items and to add your own event, please go to newsminer.com.

confirming information, measuring wave heights and calculating when waves would hit Kodiak Island.

Team members also had to decide

when to alert the public and the media and to make preparations for special groups, like those living in nursing homes.

The exercise was required preparation for the statewide Alaska Shield 2014 exercise on March 28.

Troopers ID body found by hunter

ANCHORAGE — Alaska State Troopers have identified the man whose body was found by a squirrel hunter near a Wasilla ATV trail.

KTUU reported the body has been identified by fingerprints as Jeffery A. Davis.

Troopers said Davis was on conditions for release, which included a third party custodian. Troopers say Davis walked away from the home where his custodian lived on Oct. 1.

That home was located about a quarter of a mile from where his body was found Sunday.

The cause of death has not yet been determined, but troopers don't suspect foul play.

Night exercise moved to Anchorage

ANCHORAGE — Delta Junction residents will be able to sleep easy, but it might be a little noisy at night in East Anchorage.

U.S. Army officials say a live-fire training exercise planned for the Donnelly Training Area near Fort Greely has been moved to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. Officials say furloughs during the government shutdown, along with federal budget cuts, or sequestration, have prompted the move.

That change of location means the training will be conducted up to midnight this week along Bulldog Trail, which is adjacent to the Muldoon neighborhood in the state's largest city.

Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry Regiment will fire weapons, ranging in size from 5.56 mm to .50-caliber, with training scheduled to end Friday.

Troopers say body found was suicide

ANCHORAGE — Alaska State Troopers say a man whose body was found near Palmer earlier this month killed himself.

Troopers spokeswoman Megan Peters identified the man as 24-year-old Brendon Twitchell. The state medical examiner confirmed the manner of death as suicide.

A person walking a dog near Moose Creek outside Palmer found the body Oct. 11. Troopers believed it was Twitchell, who was wanted on a warrant charging him with felony child pornography possession and distribution.

His car was found at Moose Creek.

From staff and wire reports

CORRECTIONS

A photo caption with the article "Eberhart sworn in as mayor, Anderson returns to council" incorrectly identifies the woman giving the oath of office to Fairbanks City Mayor John Eberhart. It was City Clerk Janey Hovenden.

In a story Tuesday about Alaska Native youth financially planning for college, the program of the two main speakers was misnamed. Olga Skinner and Colleen Angalak work for Rural Student Services at University of Alaska Fairbanks, not the Rural Education program. *The News-Miner strives to correct inaccuracies in a timely manner. To report an error in the newspaper, call the newsroom at 459-7572, fax 452-7917 or email corrections@newsminer.com.*

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