



# Daily News-Miner

THE VOICE OF INTERIOR ALASKA

**Inside Today** Terrel Johnson named Gatorade Alaska Boys Track and Field Athlete of the Year. » B1

## House, Senate rejects Wasilla session

By Erin McGroarty  
EMCGROARTY  
@NEWSMINER.COM

In a bold rejection of Gov. Mike Dunleavy's call for a special session in Wasilla, legislative leaders announced Monday they plan to hold the second special session back in Juneau with some committee meetings held at the Anchorage Legislative Information Office.

House Speaker Bryce Edgmon, I-Dillingham, and Senate President Cathy Giessel,

R-Anchorage, released a joint statement Monday announcing their most recent flex in a tug of war between state lawmakers and the governor.

While the news release notes that the Legislature doesn't quite have the 40 votes needed to call itself into a special session, legislators still feel they are within their right to decide where session should



Dunleavy

be held.

"Although we are one vote short of the 40-vote threshold to call ourselves into our own special session agenda, the majority of legislators in both bodies considers it our right to determine the location and venue best equipped to conduct business on the governor's special session call, while providing the most access to as many Alaskans possible," the joint statement reads.

The two legislative leaders also pushed Dunleavy to include the state's capital bud-

get and an extended discussion of future dividend-related issues on the special session agenda. According to state law, whoever calls the session is able to dictate the topics to be discussed. Dunleavy called the session earlier this month and stated that the amount of the dividend is the only topic to be considered.

"The Governor's proclamation also fails to include the Fiscal Year 2020 capital budget. If the capital budget is not finalized in July, Alaska's private sector industries could be

devastated by forfeiting nearly \$1 billion in federal highway and aviation projects because required state matching dollars were not provided," the statement from Edgmon and Giessel reads.

The legality of the leaders' decision to return to Juneau remains in question.

Austin Baird, spokesman for Edgmon, explained in an email to reporters Monday evening that the situation is unprecedented.

SESSION » A3

## SHOVEL CREEK FIRE



"Shovel Creek Fire from Murphy Dome Road on Friday." Thanks to Bill Witte, of Fairbanks, for sending along this shot. Residents near the Shovel Creek Fire are asked to prepare for a possible evacuation. Read more on Page A3.

## Felony charges in two incidents at Creamer's Field

By Dorothy Chomicz  
DCHOMICZ  
@NEWSMINER.COM

A popular College Road waterfowl refuge and nature area has been the scene of two violent incidents in the last week, according to Fairbanks police.

Fairbanks police, Alaska State Troopers, emergency medical crews and University of Alaska police responded to Creamer's Field at 5:15 p.m. Thursday after they received a report of a stabbing near the barn, Fairbanks Detective Andrew Adams said in an interview.

Witnesses at the scene reported the assailant, later identified as Aiden Wayne Musser, 18, threw a fillet knife at his friend during an argument, then headed north into a field. Musser was found sitting in the field a short time later.

The 6- to 8-inch blade entered the back of the victim's right arm through his triceps and penetrated through his biceps. Witnesses at the scene removed the knife from his arm before responders arrived on scene, Adams said.

The victim had suffered "significant bleeding," Adams said, but the injuries were non-life-threatening. Police and medical crews aided the victim, who was then transported to Fairbanks Memorial Hospital for treatment.

Investigation revealed Musser and the victim had been arguing and the victim decided to leave and walk home. Musser became angry and threw the knife at him before fleeing the scene.

Musser was charged with felony first-degree assault and jailed at Fairbanks Correctional Center. He was arraigned in Fairbanks District Court on Friday afternoon and his bail was set at \$2,500, unsecured, meaning he does not have to pay unless he fails to show up for his court dates. Musser was released to Pretrial Services at 11:15 p.m. Saturday and fitted with an electronic monitoring ankle bracelet, according to the Department of Corrections.

FELONY » A6

## GOOD MORNING



### The weather.

Today will be mostly cloudy.

High today ..... 74  
Low tonight ..... 53

Sunrise: 2:59 a.m.  
Sunset: 12:46 a.m.

WEATHER » A5

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SOURDOUGH JACK:

"I know I shouldn't be surprised about fires in the summer, but it always gets me on edge when it gets close to people."



## City Council advances mill rate amendment

By Cheryl Upshaw  
CUPSHAW@NEWSMINER.COM

Fairbanks City Council continued discussions on amending the mill rate cap in the City Charter on Monday night, voting to advance discussions to their next meeting. Should the ordinance to remove the city's "cap-within-a-cap" pass, it will go before voters in October's general election.

The mill rate levy cap is one of two tax caps outlined in the Fairbanks City Charter. The mill rate cap "limits the amount of property taxes the city can collect each year as dictated by the charter rate of 4.9 mills, which is \$490 per \$100,000 in assessed value." Removing the cap could result in a small increase in property taxes.

Councilmember Jerry Cleworth clarified that though it

was possible that removing the cap would raise the mill rate, it was also possible for it to go down. Allowing the city to adjust the mill rate would make it easier for the city to respond to changes in inflation and the Consumer Price Index. Further, Cleworth said, removing the mill rate cap would put the city more in line with the system used by the borough.

Several members of the council suggested wording changes to the ordinance as it was presented last night. They said they felt the amendment was unclear in some places and in others could be considered misleading. For example, Councilmember Shoshana Kun said she felt it was important to clarify that should the amendment pass, taxes levied by the city could fluctuate and would not necessarily go up

every year.

"Make it clear that it can drop," Councilmember Kathryn Ottersten agreed. "It could roam a little bit — make that really clear."

Because the mill rate is fixed at 4.9, Cleworth said, in years when inflation goes up, and small adjustments to the mill rate cannot be made, a gap in needed funding occurs. In previous years, the city instituted a business license fee to cover the gap, but with increased inflation, those fees were no longer sufficient to cover the gap left by lost funding from the declining Consumer Price Index and higher inflation. The council could institute a sales tax, but has not done so.

The city "left money on the table" by not creating a sales tax, Cleworth said.

RATE » A5

## State DEC to host public air quality hearings

By Erin McGroarty  
EMCGROARTY  
@NEWSMINER.COM

The state Department of Environmental Conservation, working in partnership with the Fairbanks North Star Borough, will be providing information for and hearing testimony from the Fairbanks community Tuesday and Wednesday regarding issues on Fairbanks area air quality and

a draft of the Serious State Implementation Plan for the borough fine particulate matter nonattainment area.

DEC Commissioner Jason Brune expressed his desire to hear from the community in a statement in late April.

"Local solutions are critical to improving air quality and we look forward to engaging with the community on the draft plan and associated regulations in the coming months,"

Brune said then. "It is our goal to address this public health concern and meet the federal Clean Air Act requirements while developing a final plan that can best address the local air pollution problem."

The federal Environmental Protection Agency requires the plan in order to bring the borough's level of fine particulate matter — or PM 2.5 — into compliance with the federal Clean Air Act.

Areas of Fairbanks and North Pole are required to reduce pollution levels by more than half or the borough faces sanctions, including reduced federal highway aid, under the Clean Air Act.

A majority of the air quality issues in the Fairbanks area are due to wood smoke from home heating in the winter in combination with low temperatures.

AIR » A3

