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BREAKING NEWS AT ADN.COM

Alaska's Newspaper

BP chokes off leak after 85 days

WATCH BEGINS: Engineers will monitor pressure, watch for leaks.

By COLLEEN LONG and HARRY R. WEBER
The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — BP finally choked off the flow of oil into the Gulf of Mexico on Thursday — 85 days and as much as 184 million gallons after the crisis began — then began a tense 48 hours of watching to see whether the capped-off well will hold or blow a new leak.

To the relief of millions of people along the Gulf Coast, the big, billowing brown cloud of crude at the bottom of the sea disappeared from the underwater video feed for the first time since the disaster began in April, as BP

INSIDE

SWAP: BP admits it pressured Britain to release Lockerbie bomber.

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closed the last of three openings in the 75-ton cap lowered onto the well earlier this week.

“Finally!” said Renee Brown, a school guidance counselor visiting Pensacola Beach, Fla., from London, Ky. “Honestly, I’m surprised that they haven’t been able to do something sooner, though.”

But the company stopped far short of declaring victory over the biggest offshore oil spill in U.S. history and one of the nation’s worst en-

vironmental disasters, a catastrophe that has killed wildlife and threatened the livelihoods of fishermen, restaurateurs and oil industry workers from Texas to Florida.

Now begins a waiting period during which engineers will monitor pressure gauges and watch for signs of leaks elsewhere in the well. The biggest risk: Pressure from the oil trapped under the cap could fracture the well and make the leak even worse, causing oil to spill from other spots on the sea floor.

TWO-DAY TEST

If engineers see any sign of a new leak erupting, the cap will be reopened, allowing oil to spill into the sea again.

Even if the well holds out for the whole two

days, the vents will be opened again and oil released while engineers conduct a seismic survey of the ocean floor to make sure oil and gas aren’t breaking out of the well into the bedrock, said retired Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen, the Obama administration’s point man on the disaster.

“For the people living on the Gulf, I’m certainly not going to guess their emotions,” BP vice president Kent Wells said. “I hope they’re encouraged there’s no oil going into the Gulf of Mexico. But we have to be careful. Depending on what the test shows us, we may need to open this well back up.”

The news elicited joy mixed with skepticism

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‘AMERICA HAS LOST A REAL HERO’



ERIK HILL / Anchorage Daily News

AMT1 Troy Brevick presents Tiffany Banks with the flag that draped her late husband’s casket during a funeral service for Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Brett Banks on Thursday at Fort Richardson National Cemetery. Flanking Banks are her mother, Colleen Quiner, left; her brother Ken Quiner with her son Shane, 5; and Brett’s father, Ivan Banks, holding her other son Austin, 2. A daughter is due in a couple months. Banks was killed July 7 when an Air Station Sitka MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter went down in waters off La Push, Wash. “America has lost a real hero,” said Rear Admiral Christopher Colvin, commander of the 17th Coast Guard District in Juneau. “Guardians like Brett come to the rescue in the nick of time. His loss tears at the heart of America.” For a gallery of pictures from the service, visit adn.com/photos.

Murkowski has big edge in fundraising

GOP PRIMARY: Miller lags behind despite Tea Party Express help.

By SEAN COCKERHAM
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Sen. Lisa Murkowski has more than 20 times as much campaign cash as Republican primary challenger Joe Miller, an advantage that even the promised big spending on his behalf by the national Tea Party Express group isn’t going to close.

Murkowski on Thursday was reporting to the Federal Election Commission that she had nearly \$2.4 million in her campaign bank account as of the start of this month. Miller campaign spokesman Randy DeSoto said the challenger recently had about \$100,000 left in his account, and bought some ads since.

The Tea Party Express group is promising to narrow the money gap before the Aug. 24 Republican primary election, saying it plans to spend “a sizable amount that could approach \$1 million” to support Miller. The group began this week with what it said was a \$100,000 radio ad campaign for Miller.

Alaska Rep. Don Young also holds a sizable money advantage over Republican primary challenger Sheldon Fisher, although Young’s \$221,077 is just a fraction of the million-dollar-plus war chests he used to bring into campaigns.

Fisher has put \$100,000 of his own money into the race and reports \$36,000 in his campaign account.

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Court grants temporary halt to homeless camp raids

PROBLEMS: Property rights are being violated, the ACLU says.

By MARY PEMBERTON
The Associated Press

A court on Thursday granted a request from the American Civil Liberties Union of Alaska to stop raids on homeless camps in Anchorage — for a while, anyway.

The ACLU requested a temporary restraining order because it maintains that the raids

violate constitutional property rights of the homeless. The Superior Court granted the request and issued an order to remain effective for at least 10 days. A hearing on the matter will be held Monday.

Jeffrey Mittman, executive director of ACLU in Alaska, said there are numerous problems with the municipal ordinance passed in June, including the immediate destruction of property seized in raids.

“The way the ordinance is written now, everything is thrown out,” Mittman said Thurs-

day. But even the homeless have property rights, he said: “Every Alaskan has property rights.”

The temporary restraining order stems from two recent instances in which people were informed they were illegally camped, Mittman said. Four individuals went before a municipal hearing officer to contest their removal. At last week’s hearing, a police officer told them they were actually camped on federal land but the municipality wanted them removed anyway, Mittman said. The hearing of-

ficer agreed. Mittman said they told the city at that time they would seek to have the raids halted.

The municipality last summer codified its longtime practice of clearing out the numerous homeless camps set up mostly in heavily wooded areas around the city. Several camps have been removed this summer and more notifications were recently posted, said municipal lawyer Dennis Wheeler.

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Top Nation & World News

Vatican issues new norms for dealing with pedophilia

The Vatican’s latest attempt to address its burgeoning sexual abuse problem makes it easier to discipline guilty priests. But it also caused confusion by equating the ordination of women as priests as a sin comparable to pedophilia.
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FDA panel says obesity drug is too dangerous to market

In a surprise decision, a panel of federal health experts on Thursday refused to endorse a new anti-obesity pill from Vivus Inc., saying the drug had too many potentially serious adverse side effects.
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Wall Street crackdown gets the OK from Congress

Lending practices to be restricted; consumers have safeguards

By JIM KUHNHENN
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Congress on Thursday passed the stiffest restrictions on banks and Wall Street since the Great Depression, clamping down on lending practices and expanding consumer protections to prevent a repeat of the 2008 meltdown that knocked the economy to its knees.

A year in the making and 22 months after the collapse of Lehman Brothers triggered a worldwide panic in credit and other markets, the bill cleared its final hurdle with a 60-39 Senate vote. Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski, a Republican, voted against it; her Democratic counterpart Mark Begich voted in favor. It now goes to the White House for President Barack Obama’s signature, expected as early as Wednesday.



ALEX BRANDON / The Associated Press

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., signs the financial reform legislation bill.

The law will give the government new powers to break up companies that threaten the economy, create a new agency to guard consumers in their financial transactions and shine a light into shadow financial markets that

escaped the oversight of regulators. The vote came on the same day that Goldman Sachs & Co. agreed to pay a record \$550 million to settle charges that it misled buyers of mortgage-related investments.

ALL PLAYERS AFFECTED

From storefront payday lenders to the biggest banking and investment houses on Wall Street, few players in the financial world are immune to the bill’s effects. Consumer and investor transactions, whether simple debit card swipes or the most complex securities trades, face new safeguards or restrictions.

A powerful council of regulators would be on the lookout for risks across the finance system.

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WEATHER & INDEX

Anchorage	Wasilla	Kenai
Afternoon sun High 64; low 51	Mostly sunny High 66; low 50	Mostly sunny High 65; low 49



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