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ALASKA, SEE B-1



Anchorage Daily News

75 cents

THURSDAY, MAY 29, 2014

BREAKING NEWS AT ADN.COM

ALASKA'S NEWSPAPER

Final Edition

Pilot dies in helicopter crash

Bystander suffers serious burns while attempting rescue at Birchwood Airport.

By **SUZANNA CALDWELL AND JERZY SHEDLOCK**
Alaska Dispatch

A helicopter pilot died in a crash at Birchwood Airport on Wednesday afternoon, authorities said.

The crash was first reported at 2:30 p.m., according to

Clifton Dalton, assistant chief at Chugiak Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company. He said crews responded in minutes to find the helicopter engulfed in flames.

Rescuers said the pilot, who had not been identified, was killed. Dalton did not know who the helicopter belonged to nor whether it had been landing or taking off.

According to Federal Aviation Administration spokesman Allen Kenitzer, the helicopter was a Robinson R44.

He said the cause of the crash remained unknown.

Anchorage police spokeswoman Jennifer Castro said police were still working to notify next of kin Wednesday.

Dalton said a bystander who saw the crash suffered serious burns while attempting to rescue the pilot and was transported to Providence Alaska Medical Center for treatment.

The wreckage of the helicopter sat charred at the south end of the runway Wednesday

evening. Only its yellow tail remained intact.

Witnesses said they saw the helicopter carrying a load that appeared to be a 55-gallon drum. John Markis, who had been leaving Birchwood Airport, saw the helicopter just before the crash. He said it had dropped its load, but it was unclear if that had been planned.

Israel Payton said he was working at nearby Airframes Alaska when he heard a loud bang. He said noise at the air-

port isn't unusual. There's a shooting range nearby, and helicopter pilots often practice there. But this bang was unusually loud.

When he looked out, he saw the helicopter on the ground in flames. Payton said he recognized the helicopter as one that usually stays parked at the airport, but he did not know who owned it. He told his colleagues to call 911 and ran outside with a fire extin-

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NATIVE COALITION TO OPPOSE OIL TAX MEASURE

Group of 6 regional corporations begins campaign to fight return to ACES.

By **RICHARD MAUER**
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Six regional Native corporations, some with substantial oil-field business, announced Wednesday they have formed a coalition to oppose the oil-tax cut referendum in August with at least \$500,000 in campaign spending.

The new group, "No One on One," joins two other business-backed organizations in opposing the referendum, including one in which Alaska's three big oil producers have already provided millions of dollars.

Supporters of the referendum say they expect to be outspent many times over but believe voters will still vote to repeal Senate Bill 21, passed by the Legislature in 2013.

The Native corporation coalition announcement was staged in the cavernous South Anchorage fabrication shop owned by a subsidiary of Arctic Slope Regional Corp., one of the coalition members. Workers in white hard hats stood as a backdrop to the podium, and dozens more supporters, including House Speaker Mike Chenault, were in the audience.

Welders, lathe operators and other craftsmen at the shop build metal parts and equipment for the North Slope.

"It's safe to say that we're going to be doing healthy media buys," said Tara Sweeney, senior vice president of Barrow-based Arctic Slope Regional Corp.

The coalition's official spokesman will be Jason Moore, communications director for Anchorage-based Cook Inlet Region Inc. The other regional corporations in the group are Doyon Ltd., in Interior Alaska; NANA Regional Corp. from Kotzebue; Bristol Bay Native Corp.; and Nome-centered Bering Straits Native Corp.

Representatives of all six said they believed the tax cut is promoting job growth and spending by oil producers, and that their shareholders are benefiting.

See Page A-6, COALITION

AIRWAVES ARE BATTLEGROUND FOR THESE BROADCASTERS



Bernadette Wilson and Ethan Berkowitz spar discussing politics on their weekday talk show on KFQD.

Photos by **LOREN HOLMES** / Alaska Dispatch

Talk radio takes commitment

Most hosts need second job to pay bills

By **NATHANIEL HERZ**
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For the nation's top hosts, talk radio is a lucrative job. Conservative Rush Limbaugh makes an estimated \$66 million annually, according to Forbes' latest estimates, while Howard Stern rakes in \$95 million.

In Anchorage? Part-time hosts in the nation's 170th largest market can earn as little as \$1,200 a month.

"It's why I'm rooting for an increase in the minimum wage," said Ethan Berkowitz, a Democrat who co-hosts a morning talk show on AM radio sta-

tion KFQD.

But Berkowitz doesn't rely solely on his radio income to pay the bills. He's also senior vice president at the local office of a consulting firm, Strategies 360, that has worked on the marijuana legalization initiative and an Anchorage Assembly campaign.

Berkowitz's on-air partner and foil, Republican Bernadette Wilson, works for the group on the opposite side of the marijuana initiative.

Berkowitz and Wilson are just two

See Page A-7, RADIO



Talk show host Dave Stieren opines on air for KFQD.

NATION & WORLD NEWS

Obama sets foreign policy path for cadets

President Barack Obama tried to regain his statesman's mantle, telling graduating Army cadets that the nation they were being commissioned to serve would still lead the world. **Page A-3**

US investors see a bright future in Iran

For the first time in decades, entrepreneurs from the United States are visiting Iran, exploring the possibility of future partnerships. **Page A-5**

Federal judge finds ConocoPhillips permit given in error

By **YERETH ROSEN**
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A hotly contested permit allowing ConocoPhillips to build a road and bridge to a new oil field is now in doubt after a federal judge ruled that regulators approved it without fully considering environmental impacts.

U.S. District Court Judge Sharon Gleason, in a ruling issued Tuesday, said the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers erred in the way it issued a wetlands-fill permit that ConocoPhillips

needed to build a gravel road and a road-and-bridge link for its CD-5 oil field on the western North Slope.

Construction is already partly done, with the 6-mile access road and pad installed and some bridge work finished over the winter, ConocoPhillips spokeswoman Natalie Lowman said.

However, the permit allowing that work is flawed, Gleason found, because the Corps — which approved the permit in 2011 after previously re-

jecting ConocoPhillips' permit application — failed to justify its decision to skip a supplemental environmental impact statement. The Corps should have considered further study to weigh modifications to ConocoPhillips' plan and potential impacts to a North Slope environment already being altered by climate change, Gleason said in her ruling.

The Corps offered "only minimal explanation" for its decision that there was no need for a supplemental study

to add to a 2004 environmental analysis, Gleason said in her ruling.

The Corps "failed to articulate a satisfactory explanation ... for its decision to forgo preparation of an SEIS to address changes to the CD-5 project," she said. "The court concludes, therefore, that the Corps' decision was arbitrary."

A lawsuit challenging the permit was filed last year by seven residents of Nuiqsut, the Inupiat village closest to

the development.

To ConocoPhillips, the road and bridge are essential links needed to make practical any development in the National Petroleum Reserve Alaska, the 23 million-acre unit of federal land that lies west of the North Slope's other developed oil fields. ConocoPhillips has other oil field projects deeper in the reserve that the company expects to develop as long as there is a surface

See Page A-7, NPRA

ANCHORAGE

Rain expected
High 58; low 47

WASILLA

Rainy
High 57; low 47

KENAI

Rainy
High 58; low 46



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