

SALMON CATCH

Demand soars, profits flatline BUSINESS D1

Ice Dogs advance in playoffs

SPORTS C1

MAJOR WIN

UP IN THE AIR



Snowboarders compete in North Face Masters race

SUNDAYS. E1

Spending plans pass despite concerns over amount

By STEFAN MILKOWSKI smilkowski@newsminer.com

JUNEAU — State lawmakers approved a spending plan for operating expenses Saturday that majority and minority members alike described as simply unsustainable.

“Some of the things we’re promising, we’re going to have to take away,” Rep. Mike Kelly, R-Fairbanks, said during a floor debate on the bill.

The House also approved a budget for capital projects totaling \$2.7 billion despite concerns from some members that the cash influx would overheat the state’s economy. That bill still needs formal approval in the Senate.

A third spending bill authorizing the state to issue \$315 million in bonds for transportation

projects passed the Senate but still needs approval in the House.

The three bills were the last major items still in play in the legislative session, which ends tonight.

Unsustainable growth

The operating budget approved Saturday appropriates a total of \$11.2 billion, including more than \$5 billion in state general funds.

It increases agency spending by less than 4 percent over last year but boosts overall spending of state funds by more than 23 percent, according to a legislative analysis.

Please see SPENDING, Page A6

Lawmakers finally pass identity theft bill

By STEFAN MILKOWSKI smilkowski@newsminer.com

JUNEAU — The Alaska Legislature on Saturday gave final approval to a comprehensive bill aimed at protecting residents from identity theft.

The bill, which came to 30 pages, was held over Friday night in the Senate after Sen. Gene Therriault, R-North

Pole, succeeded in amending it to require companies to notify the state’s attorney general of any security breaches.

The Senate approved the bill 20-0 on Saturday, and the House voted to agree with Senate changes to it.

“We have been trying for more than three years now to find that balance of protection from identity theft while

still allowing commerce and transactions to continue, and this bill meets that need,” said one of the bill’s sponsors, Rep. John Coghill, R-North Pole, in a written statement.

Therriault, who sponsored a companion version of the bill, said the bill would give individuals more control over

Please see BILLS, Page A6

Bike-building brigade

Enthusiasts share their passion for pedaling with a larger goal in mind

By CHRISTOPHER ESHLEMAN ceshleman@newsminer.com

Nick Toye flipped through five brand new bike tires he had salvaged a day prior from a garbage transfer site.

A student at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Toye was taking a break from tinkering with the stripped-down bicycle behind him. As part of a club that meets weekly to fix up rescued bikes, he has access to rows of used frames the group has collected — about 80 during the past year and a half — in hopes of prepping them for the road.

There were brands recognizable and obscure: a slim Fuji roadster, a Specialized Street Stomper. On a given work day, club members might clean and grease chains or change brake lines — the work is dictated largely by the available parts and supplies.

Toye and another club organizer, Eli Sonafrank, said it’s a good use of old bikes and parts that would have otherwise gone to the landfill. And if it gives them a chance to show other students a few of the tricks of bike maintenance, all the better.

If they’re really lucky, they said, the work could someday lead to an on-campus bicycle-sharing program, although maybe not until after they graduate.

Toye said when he lived off Sheep Creek Road last year, it

Please see BIKING, Page A8



John Wagner photos/News-Miner

Eli Sonafrank, left, and Nick Toye, student members of the University of Alaska Fairbanks Sustainable Campus Task Force, look over the club’s stockpile of donated bicycles Saturday. Members meet a few times a month to repair and build working bicycles from various parts of otherwise nonworking bicycles.



Eli Sonafrank consults a bicycle repair manual about a troublesome bottom bracket on a donated bicycle.

ONLINE

Visit www.newsminer.com for an audio slideshow of Eli Sonafrank and Nick Toye and their bike-building endeavors.

Legislature OKs slate of crime bills

By STEVE QUINN Associated Press Writer

JUNEAU — State lawmakers targeted bootleggers, sex offenders and child pornographers with stiffer penalties in a pair of sweeping crime bills.

With the legislative session down to its final hours, lawmakers temporarily shelved budget debates and passed new crime laws late Friday and early Saturday.

A Senate bill and a House bill generated a flurry of activity and produced compromises during an 18-hour span.

A bill by Sen. Lesil McGuire, R-Anchorage, started out as a sex offender bill and became an omnibus measure that includes offerings from several lawmakers,

plus Gov. Sarah Palin.

With so much attention focused on arguments between lawmakers and Palin over how much money to spend and how much to save, the bills quietly meshed into one document Wednesday.

“It’s a more efficient way of moving policy through,” McGuire said. “The public has seen a lot of discussion about places where the legislature and the governor disagree.

“Pulling together sections of the governor’s crime package, the House bills and the Senate bills was symbolic of the kinds of things we can do.”

The 21-page document produced changes that include:

Please see CRIME, Page A7

State money may be thrown into Pebble Mine dispute

The Associated Press

ANCHORAGE — The Alaska Legislature may enter the fractious debate over the Pebble Mine.

The capital budget includes \$25,000 for the governor’s office to educate the public on Alaska mining and regulation.

Until Saturday, the budget item said the money was “to influence the outcome of an election on initiatives affecting those mining activities.”

On Saturday, however, the House amended the measure to say it “may” influence the election.

The measure highlighted the thorny question of whether legislators should be appropriat-

ing money to influence citizen initiatives.

Alaska voters in November may be asked to vote on clean water initiatives that could affect the proposed Pebble copper and gold mine in southwest Alaska.

In a statement Saturday, Gov. Sarah Palin said the budget item did not originate from her office and that it would not be her intention to influence a ballot initiative.

“If lawmakers decide to allocate public money for this, we will ensure the Department of Natural Resources provides objective, factual information about the impacts of mining-

Please see MINE, Page A7

Inside

Who’s who

Fairbanksan Twila Schuster featured on cover of Parade magazine Page B1



Sourdough Jack sez:

“Hmm, and all this time I thought Alaskans were for smaller government. Well, who knew?”

Strains of Iraq war taking toll on Army’s soldiers, equipment

The Associated Press

INSIDE

WASHINGTON — U.S. soldiers are committing suicide at record levels, young officers are abandoning their military careers and the heavy use of forces in Iraq has made it harder for the military to fight conflicts that could arise elsewhere.

Unprecedented strains on the nation’s all-volunteer military are threatening the health and readiness of the troops.

While the spotlight last week was on congressional hearings with the U.S. ambassador and commanding general for Iraq, Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Richard Cody was in another hearing room explaining how

U.S. troops see bloody week in Baghdad. Page B8.

troops and their families are being taxed by long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the prospect of future years of conflict in the global war on terror.

“That marathon has become an enduring relay and our soldiers continue to run — and at the double time,” Cody said. “Does this exhaust the body and mind of those in the race, and those who are ever present on the sidelines, cheering their every step? Yes. Has it broken the will

Please see STRAIN, Page A7



The Associated Press Members of the 304th Civil Affairs Brigade fold a giant American flag at their headquarters in Philadelphia. The 304th Civil Affairs Brigade will be deployed to Iraq following training at Fort Dix, N.J.

Pike's Landing Riverfront Dining & Sports Lounge

Come See What You're Missing! Each week CHEF JEFFREY L. offers some of the best dinner specials in town! Stop in and see what he's cooking up this week!

FAMILY FOR GRADUATION OR VISITORS THIS SUMMER? Reserve early for the best rooms rates in town! (907) 456-4500 • 1-877-774-2400 • WWW.PIKESLODGE.COM