



Daily News-Miner

THE VOICE OF INTERIOR ALASKA SINCE 1903

Inside Today

Hutchison's Payge Scanlon-Boswood inks deal to play college softball. » B1

GOOD MORNING



The weather.

Expect clouds and sun off and on today, with a small chance of snow this afternoon.

High today 9
Low tonight 4

WEATHER » A9

Aurora forecast.

Auroral activity will be active. Weather permitting, displays will be visible overhead from Barrow to Juneau.

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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TRUMP VS. CRUZ

All eyes are on the two contenders at tonight's GOP debate
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BOWE BERGDAHL

Captured soldier, now in U.S. custody, faces desertion charge
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TRUTH IS OUT THERE

Meet Washington's lone UFO lobbyist
SCI/TECH
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SOURDOUGH JACK: "Think they'll let me take that tanker for a spin up on the Dalton?"



Making a budget wish list

Interior legislators, municipal officials meet to talk about state funding for projects

By Matt Buxton
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Just because the state's finances fell apart when oil prices collapsed does not mean local needs will stop piling up.

That's what Fairbanks and North Pole leaders said when they

met with locally elected state officials on Monday to share a plethora of legislative requests and projects that they say are critical to the area.

The meeting is somewhat of an annual tradition before the Interior Delegation departs for Juneau for the legislative session, which

is set to begin on Jan. 19. It has become increasingly dismal in recent years as the state's finances have turned south, and this year legislators will be considering a massive overhaul of how the state government is funded, including a change to the Permanent Fund Dividend and income taxes.

Mayors from the three local governments — the Fairbanks North Star Borough and the cities of North Pole and Fairbanks — attended the meeting as well as city council members and assembly members.

BUDGET » A9



A specially designed trailer to transport supercooled liquefied natural gas is seen on display in front of the Fairbanks Pipeline Training Center. The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority and Fairbanks Natural Gas are evaluating the new trailer.

ERIC ENGMAN/NEWS-MINER

New natural gas tanker under evaluation

By Matt Buxton
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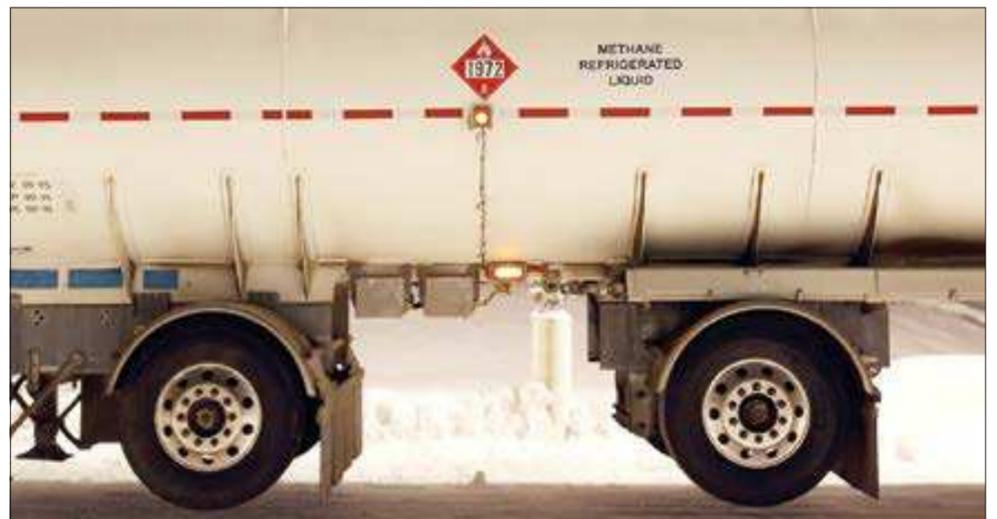
During the years the state has worked on bringing natural gas to Fairbanks, it's refined and lowered prices of just about every part of the project except for trucking.

That could change with a new liquefied natural gas trailer specially designed for Alaska that hit the roads for the first time this weekend.

The 75-foot, five-axle, 13,000-gallon capacity liquefied natural gas trailer was on display at the Pipeline Training Center on Monday night as it begins a months-long trial in the Fairbanks Natural Gas utility's fleet of trucks.

The trailer, for now, is a one-of-a-kind creation between Tennessee-based Heil Trailer International and South Africa-based GasCon coordinated by Western Cascade Trucking Equipment. It combines a larger-than-average cryogenic storage container made by GasCon with a special five-axle trailer made by Heil.

"It's a proven platform," said



The additional axles on a specially designed trailer to transport supercooled liquefied natural gas on display in front of the Fairbanks Pipeline Training Center. ERIC ENGMAN/NEWS-MINER

Nathan Langford, a Heil engineer who worked on the trailer. "The axle layout and everything is proven. The new technology here is tailoring it just for the Alaskan market."

The trailer pushes right up to the

Alaska law in terms of capacity for the roads, which Heil said are higher than most Lower 48 states where most LNG trailers are designed to operate.

He said the trailer's higher capac-

ity will lower the overall cost to deliver gas to Fairbanks and should result in a lower cost that ratepayers will see.

TANKER » A10

Air quality bounces up and down as North Pole sees fifth burn ban

By Amanda Bohman
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The local air quality outlook this week is grim with a short atmospheric reprieve expected later today before the air is anticipated to go stagnant again.

Meanwhile, air quality was bad enough Monday to trigger North Pole's fifth burn ban of the winter.

National Weather Service meteorologist Scott Berg said a weak weather front is expected to move through the Tanana Valley mixing up the air, but it will be short lived.

"We'll see the inversions develop back over the area," he said. "That could impact air quality. The rest of the week, it could be poor."

Inversions are when a layer of warmer air traps pollutants below in a layer of colder air. It's

a routine weather occurrence in the Tanana Valley, causing episodic air pollution problems in the winter.

That's what happened on Monday when the air quality deteriorated, and the Fairbanks North Star Borough called a Stage 3 air alert in North Pole. That prohibits residents of North Pole's urban area, known as the air quality control zone, from burning wood, coal and pellets.

Conditions in North Pole were declared unhealthy due to high levels of PM2.5, an invisible toxin caused by smoke emissions.

PM2.5 levels were better in Fairbanks, where a Stage 2 alert was declared. Only residents with stoves certified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are allowed to burn under a Stage 2 alert.

AIR » A10

Labor dispute sees little resolution as city hashes out funding options

By Robin Wood
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Monday's Fairbanks City Council meeting had a warm start as fifth-grade students from Denali Elementary School read aloud the Bill of Rights. Testy discussion soon followed, however, as the council took up contract disputes and budgets.

The council voted 5-1 not to amend Fairbanks' 2015 operating budget to fund the first year of a disputed contract. Councilwoman Joy Huntington voted in favor of funding the contract.

As of press time, the council was still discussing 2016's operating budget.

A vote whether or not to appeal the disputed contract to Alaska Superior Court was expected in the evening.

During a three-month window in 2014, the council approved, voted to reconsider

and then unanimously rejected a three-year contract with the Public Safety Employees Association. Councilman Jim Matherly requested the reconsideration but didn't file paperwork in time, so the council voted to suspend their own rules for reconsideration, which required a five-vote majority.

The PSEA, which represents 68 personnel from police and dispatch, filed a claim of unfair labor practices with the Alaska Labor Relations Agency. On Nov. 24, the agency ruled in favor of the union, and ordered the city of Fairbanks to implement the contract in full. The disputed contract would provide a 10 percent pay increase while reducing working hours from 40 to 36, and provide a \$1,750 per person retroactive payment.

COUNCIL » A10

