Covid testing
Amid accuracy concerns, Alaska providers use Abbott COVID-19 testing machines.

Struck down
A COVID-19 story from a rugged Alaskan.

Fish Factor
Fishermen give guidance on virus relief funds.

Details emerge in Kotzebue’s first positive COVID case
Local officials still worry about testing protocols
SHADY GROVE OLIVER
The Arctic Sounder
The Northwest Arctic Borough saw its first positive COVID-19 test on May 19. A traveler coming into the hub community on an Alaska Airlines flight voluntarily accepted a test from Maniilaq public health upon arrival, which then came back positive.
Since then, community members and local officials have questioned whether more can be done to prevent similar cases in the future.
At first, Maniilaq provided very few public details about the case or the person’s potential interactions in town, which left people wondering if he had any contact with community members.
In his first recorded message to the public in recent weeks, Maniilaq President and CEO Tim Gilbert outlined how Maniilaq has been responding.
“Since mid-March of this year, Maniilaq...

Maniilaq performs nearly 300 COVID tests in village

Tests were offered after second positive case
SHADY GROVE OLIVER
The Arctic Sounder
The Northwest Arctic region received its second test-positive case of COVID-19 last week. The first Northwest Arctic case was a person who had traveled into Kotzebue and has since been quarantined in the local hotel. The second was a resident of an outlying village who had traveled to the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) in Anchorage for a medical appointment.

Graduate offers perspective on tribal education opportunities
Darian Danner is first to earn a bachelor’s degree from Ilisaġvik College
SHADY GROVE OLIVER
The Arctic Sounder
This month, Darian Danner, 28, became the first student to earn a bachelor’s degree from Ilisaġvik College. She graduated with a degree in business, after having previously earned another bachelor's degree from the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA).
As the first to finish Ilisaġvik’s pilot program, Danner has a unique perspective on the potential for tribal colleges to transform the higher education landscape of the state. The Sounder spoke with Danner about her

Fishermen give guidance on virus relief funds.
Pauline Harvey named new NSBSD superintendent

She begins her term immediately

SHADY GROVE OLIVER
The Arctic Sounder

After an extensive candidate search, the North Slope Borough School District has named its new superintendent. Following an email to all employees in their last meeting, they voted in open session to appoint Pauline Harvey to the position. She will begin with a starting salary of $160,000 and a two-year contract, the board noted in a written statement.

A second Norton Sound Health Corp. employee in Nome has tested positive for COVID-19, the health corporation said, though it’s not known how the disease may be spreading there. It’s still unclear how that GCI employee got sick, Steckman said.

Norton Sound Health Corp. has closed its Nome facilities for cleaning Friday after the first employee case was confirmed. The cleaning will take four days, but the emergency room and Nome clinic to arrange for testing.

The new cases announced upon arrival to Nome. Steckman said, but people in the Nome census area have been lifted, including communities in the Nome region can contact their local clinic to arrange for testing.

Theodore Nayukok Leavitt, 29, of Utqiagvik, pleaded guilty to the class A misdemeanor charge of driving under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance and reached a plea agreement.

Theodore Nayukok Leavitt, 29, of Utqiagvik, pleaded guilty to the class A misdemeanor charge of driving under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance and reached a plea agreement. He has been ordered to contact North Slope Borough Behavioral Health and complete a screening, evaluation and treatment program, and submit proof of completion with the court within 11 months of judgment. His driver’s license has been revoked for 90 days.

He has been placed on probation for one year, during which time he may not possess, consume or buy alcohol, by order of Magistrate Judge David Roghair, effective March 28.

Bad Kanayuk, 27, of Atqapuk, pleaded guilty to the class B misdemeanor charge of indecent exposure in the second degree with a victim age 16 years or older and reached a plea agreement, through which a second identical charge was dropped.

He has been sentenced to 10 days in jail with all 10 days suspended. He may have no contact, either directly or indirectly, with the victim named in the case or with the victim’s place of residence during the period of time that has already been served in this case.

He must pay a police training surcharge and an initial jail surcharge. He may not have any contact, either directly or indirectly, with the victim named in the case or with the victim’s place of residence during the period of time that has already been served in this case.

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Ilisagvik celebrates the class of 2020

SHADY GROVE OLIVER
The Arctic Sounder

This month, students across the North Slope earned their high school and college degrees. Ilisagvik College celebrated its graduates, who have spent countless hours working toward their higher education.

The 2020 graduates of Ilisagvik College include Elizabeth Avisnak, Taylor Bowen, Benjamin Hanby Steward, Keliela Talaasia, Jacynthia Sarah Oprenov, Lyndsey Lafeti Blanco, Inga Marcella Weddle, Darian Danner, Dolly Frankeon Hank, Rosalie Misimua Tialala, Haley Marie Fischer, Jacob D. Harris, Juliana Osgood, Rachel Schierholt, Wilma Ulusok and Haavale Tualala.

The college’s board of trustees conferred upon local resident Ida Olemaun the Honorary Associate of Arts Degree “in recognition for her tireless work advocating for education across the North Slope,” the college wrote in a statement.

Professor Denise Ment was also chosen as the American Indian College Fund’s Faculty of the Year. Dr. Jaime Davis, the owner of the business department, was named adjunct faculty of the year.

On the student front, Taylor Bowen became the second student to graduate with both a high school diploma and associate’s degree through the college’s technical diploma program. Finally, Ilisagvik gave its first bachelor’s degree to student Darian Danner, who studied business administration.

Congratulations to the Ilisagvik Class of 2020!

Alabama LNG project receives federal certification

The next step is to find investors

ALEX DEMARAN
Anchorage Daily News

A federal agency on Thursday certified the Alabama LNG project for construction and operation, a vital achievement for an industry that has been in the works for years.

Other state and federal permits would be needed before construction could begin, and officials said they would need to find new investors or buyers for a project estimated at $4.3 billion.

“Today’s federal authorization is a key step in determining Alabama’s gas industry and economically beneficial for Alaska,” Gov. Mike Dunleavy said in a prepared statement from the Alaska Gasline Development Corp.

“The ongoing project economic review and discussions with potential partners will determine the next steps for this project,” Dunleavy said.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission issued the certificate of public convenience and necessity six years after public input, studies and fieldwork, AGDC said.

The state submitted more than 150,000 pages of environmental, engineering and cultural data needed for the certificate.

The project calls for construction of an 800-mile pipeline to deliver natural gas from the Crescent Point in Nikiski in Southcentral Alaska, where the fuel would be superchilled in a liquid for overseas shipment in tankers.

The project dates back to 2014 under Gov. Sean Parnell, in a partnership involving the state, Exxon Mobil, ConocoPhillips, BP and pipeline owner TransCanada.

The state in 2016 took over the project, under Gov. Bill Walker, after the companies bailed out as investors. The state said it secured funding and a new multiyear federal review over the past year reported cumulative project expenses of $5.48 billion.

Achieving federal approval is considered a prerequisite for a possible sale of the project, in hopes that a buyer or investors will help complete the project to ensure Alaska’s gas fields.

Alabama’s congressional delegation commended the FERC approval in a prepared statement.

“This is a capstone moment for Alaska LNG at the federal level, and it is the result of a robust and comprehensive review process,” said Sen. Lisa Murkowski.

Frank Richards, president of the state gas line agency, said the project is important to the state.

“The Alabama LNG project presents an opportunity to unlock significant benefits from Alabama’s stranded North Slope natural gas, including a new reliable and affordable clean energy source, the creation of a substantial number of high-paying construction and operations jobs for Alaskans, and long-term U.S. energy security,” Richards said.

While the state of Alaska’s public health labs are working to double-check results from rapid COVID-19 testing machines as concerns about their accuracy continue to swirl nationally.

There are 113 Abbott machines in Alaska, according to the state’s health department.

Several Abbott ID NOW testing machines were distributed statewide to remote communities that needed faster test results. Previously, it took days or weeks to get results in some places, as samples needed to be flown to other labs.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced last week that early data suggested the machines could produce potentially inaccurate results.

A false negative — a test that says someone doesn’t have COVID-19 when they actually do — is the main concern. The FDA said it is still investigating some of the potential issues.

The state’s public health lab director, Dr. Bernd Jilly, said he has known about the false negative issues since the testing machines were first deployed. For that reason, they’re still asking that Abbott machine test results get sent to the state labs for follow-up testing.

Through Friday afternoon, out of 360 Abbott test results that the state’s public health lab has double-checked, one negative test ended up coming back positive during confirmatory testing, Jilly said.

They had a very low viral load so it was right at the limit of detection of the Abbott machine,” Jilly said. “So it wasn’t surprising that it came up negative.

Through Saturday, 43,507 tests overall had been conducted in Alaska, according to the state health department.

We do get standard errors that come up in testing, and since the amount of virus in the test sample was so low, the instance didn’t concern him.

A recent pre-print of a study from New York University, which has yet to go through the traditional peer-review process for scientific research, showed high false negative rates in the Abbott machines when testing people in New York.

But in Alaska, where cases are low, "one would expect a negative result just based on the clinical picture of life here,” Jilly said.

In places where the disease is more prevalent, a lot of negatives would be more of a red flag.

Having to send test results to the state labs for confirmation doesn’t defeat the purpose of a rapid test, Jilly said, because if there is a positive result, it can be trusted as a positive result away.

Then, public health officials can work to trace close contacts of the person with COVID-19.

"North Slope has stepped up its ability to do swift contact tracing and isolate people who have COVID-19,” Jilly said.

If a negative result turns up for someone who seems like they may have COVID-19 symptoms, traveled recently or has been in contact with a positive case, Alexander said they’ll send the test to a state or commercial lab for confirmation.

If someone is at a high risk for complications from the disease or is potentially interacting with a lot of people in the community, they’d also send in the samples to get reconfirmed, she said.

They might also repeat the test again next week, and results could vary depending on how much virus someone has in their system, she said.

Some communities, like Tok and Galena, deploy their own Abbott machines, Alexander said. Other communities don’t have machines, so people are swabbed by a health aide in a clinic instead. Some villages don’t have health aides, so TCC
There’s a lot of talk right now about how tough the pandemic and subsequent shutdown has been on Alaska’s economy. In Alaska's biggest city, economic experts are fearful of an “eviction tsunami” by the end of the year for Anchorage residents who have been jobless since March.

Most Americans, say reports, are struggling to stay on top of an ever-mounting debt load. In Alaska, where so many of our seasonal jobs depend on tourism, at least 100% of Anchorage residents have been jobless since March.

Third-party and open letters will not be published. Letters that high-dollar item and use that money to work on projects and efforts that can be done in ways that support the local economy. Maybe you were looking at buying a new car, but could invest a few hundred dollars (at a local garage) and wait a few months to make the big leap.

The point is, right now, Alaskans need Alaskans. It’s very unlikely we are going to be rescued on a financial front by state or federal funding. If we are going to rise up out of this economic crisis, we need to help each other in every way we can and that includes with our pocket books. If we all switched our spending habits as much as possible, and shopped at Alaska-owned businesses, we could make a tremendous difference to the economy of the state during this critical time.

I n an acceleration of his administration’s plan to reopen Alaska’s economy, Gov. Mike Dunleavy announced Tuesday that most business restrictions related to COVID-19 health mandates would be lifted in just three days.

With few exceptions, Alaska businesses can now be open at 100% of their legal capacity. Masking and distancing requirements for businesses, once required, have been left to business owners’ discretion. Although municipalities can choose to maintain more restrictive policies, Anchorage Mayor Ethan Berkowitz indicated it that Alaska’s largest city will follow the state’s lead, with some modifications, within days. The same is likely to be the situation in other cities where COVID-19 has been most prevalent.

What happens next, both in terms of public health and Alaska’s economy, remains to be seen.

More than any other U.S. state, Alaska is in a unique position with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic. Through a confluence of good fortune, early action by municipal and state leaders, and solid adherence by Alaskans to distancing and hygiene mandates, we have spared the exponential growth in cases and deaths seen across the Lower 48. That, in turn, has made the reopening of Alaska’s economy and the easing of restrictions on public life a far less risky proposition.

To be sure, Alaska still has ground to cover with respect to abundant, rapid-turnaround testing that could provide more certainty with regard to the number of infected Alaskans, as well as quicker signals if cases begin to spike. And Alaska, like the rest of the world, is still waiting on quick, cheap and accurate antibody tests that will give us a far better picture of COVID-19’s spread, who has some measure of immunity and who is still at risk. But given Alaska’s small number of active cases, the decision to move forward with economic re-opening is more calculated than many other states, and based on what we know today, it’s the right path.

Mostly, however, what will determine whether Alaska keeps its crown as the safest state during the COVID-19 pandemic is what Alaskans do now. Although new cases are few, with an average of about three cases per day statewide, that can change in a hurry if the virus is given an opportunity to spread more widely. Larger social gatherings, for instance, should be planned with an eye toward public safety and include the social distancing and hygiene standards we’ve all become so familiar with. Common sense, based on what we know about this virus, must be the rule of the day.

And now it’s up to each of us individually to assess our own levels of risk and take responsibility to decide for ourselves what activities and venues we will patronize.

So far, Alaskans, businesses and organizations have been responsible for how they reopen and requirements for customers, such as one-way store aisles and required face coverings. All we can do is hope that the virus, by chance to spread, while patronizing Alaska businesses, it’s the best of both worlds; giving our economy a fighting chance without taking undue health risks. We might as well get used to this new normal, because it will likely be here for a while. Gov. Dunleavy, in announcing the lifting of restrictions on business activity Wednesday, said the goal was for the economy to be open “just like it was before the virus.” But he was careful to note that recommendations for distancing, face coverings and hygiene remain in place.

During the days and weeks to come, Alaska will lead the way in online presence since achieving a delicate balance — nursing our businesses back to health, getting Alaskans back to work and keeping us all safe. It’s a tall order, but it will be a matter of individual and collective responsibility, avoiding complacency and keeping up the same behaviors that have served us well thus far. Let’s do our state proud.

OPINIONS & IDEAS

Want to help Alaska’s economy? Shop locally.

Carey Restino
It is our responsibility to end domestic violence

BY KEVIN CLARKSON
For the Arctic Sounder

For most of us, the COVID-19 emergency “hunker down” has been a test of ingenuity, patience and endurance. Ingenuity has been needed to find new ways to occupy ourselves, exercise, get a haircut and handle important life and family events with loved ones. Patience and endurance have been needed as well as a commitment to life for normalcy. But sadly, for some, that has not been the case.

Domestic violence does not go away, and in some ways it exacerbates during times like these. But, throughout the COVID-19 emergency shutdowns and still now, help for domestic violence victims is but a phone call or a text away. In emergencies, the police are available by dialing 911; assistance and referrals are available by dialing 211; Alaska’s Careline is available at 877-266-4357; the National Domestic Violence Hotline is available at 800-799-7233 or 900-787-3224; and the National Sexual Assault Hotline is available at 800-656-4673; and Report Abuse Alaska is available at 907-478-4444 or online at reportchildabuse@alaskagov.

For anyone who might be at risk of domestic violence, make that phone call for help, ADT Home Security has developed a mobile safety app for smartphones called SecureOne that is available during the COVID emergency. This app allows a victim to silently SMS chat with ADT’s 24/7 professional monitors, discreetly trigger an emergency alert that permits ADT to pinpoint the user’s GPS coordinates, designates emergency contacts, or gives an alarm signal to friends to receive alerts when the alarm is triggered, and to preset a time period after which emergency contacts will be notified.

As some of the nation’s most vulnerable youth that have already experienced abuse and neglect are working to keep youth safe and to protect our most vulnerable. Be aware of signs of abuse around you on your family members and friends. Black eyes, busted lips, red or purple marks on the neck, strained wrists and bruises on the arms are things to notice and take seriously. If you see these on friends or family, ask questions. Each of these can happen innocently. But each is also a possible sign of domestic violence.

In difficult times, foster parenting becomes more important than ever, it is critical to shine a light on the plight of foster youth that have already experienced a disproportionate amount of isolation imposed by pandemic. Several of the support networks have already stepped up in a major way to keep youth safe and to shelter-at-home.

The month of May is National Foster Care Month and it is an opportunity to bring attention to the importance of foster parenting. Now perhaps more than ever, it is critical to shine a light on what is needed by children and the foster community. In this age of social distancing, foster care workers – like so many others are getting creative and utilizing technology to spread awareness, reach out to make connections, find new foster homes and train them. Placement agencies and currently licensed foster parents have stepped up in a major way to keep youth safe and help them thrive despite the new challenges presented by COVID-19.

As the pandemic has forced so many things to be put on hold, the need for quality foster families remains and efforts to recruit them must continue. Organizations continue to actively look for good people to open their hearts and homes to youth from their community. If you are considering becoming a foster parent during this time, please keep thinking about whether it is right for you. Now may be a good time to gather information and learn more about how to start the process.

No youth should face the COVID-19 crisis without the love and support of a family. This is particularly true for foster youth that have already endured abuse or neglect. The idea was, if North Slope gas could afford to pay the price needed to build and operate it could go it alone to build a smaller one. We snookered ourselves.

As the pandemic has forced so many things to be put on hold, the need for quality foster families remains and efforts to recruit them must continue. Organizations continue to actively look for good people to open their hearts and homes to youth from their community. If you are considering becoming a foster parent during this time, please keep thinking about whether it is right for you. Now may be a good time to gather information and learn more about how to start the process.

No youth should face the COVID-19 crisis without the love and support of a family. This is particularly true for foster youth that have already endured abuse or neglect.

We are living through some difficult and scary times. I hope you, your family, friends and colleagues are healthy and you are able to follow the safety guidelines that have been established by health authorities.

Most of us have been staying home to assist in “flattening the curve.” The impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak are being felt across the world. With the chaos created by the pandemic, it is easy for vulnerable populations to fall into the cracks. As some of the nation’s most vulnerable youth, it is important the plight of foster youth is not forgotten. The crisis has the potential to have some very negative ramifications and devastating outcomes for the foster care community.

Although everyone is coping with a loss of socialization and a sense of uncertainty, it can be especially troublesome for foster youth that have aged out of the system. Transitioning to adulthood is not easy under the best of circumstances and even harder for young people in tough places without family support or any type of safety net or support system to speak of. How can you stay home when you do not have a home to go to? Many who have exited foster care lack a stable family to rely on for advice, emergency housing, meals or financial aid. This crisis puts some in danger of homelessness, food insecurity and mental health deterioration.

Fortunately, child protective systems are working to temporarily extend the age limit of foster care so foster homes can assist by providing some additional protection for this group of individuals.

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After spending almost five hundred thousand dollars in state money, Alaska holds permits, rights of way and engineering plans for two unaffordable, uneconomic, unfeasible and engineering plans for two unaffordable, uneconomic, unfeasible pipeline routes across North Slope natural gas to buyers. But there are no buyers. There were never any buyers that could afford to pay the price needed to build and operate either project. It was all in our heads or, more accurately, in the heads of those we sold ourselves.

A decade ago, panicked over fears that Southcentral residents would run out of Cook Inlet gas, legislators put a heat on year-round, legislators started putting money into a pipeline project to move North Slope gas to the Matanuska Valley, Anchorage and the Kenai Peninsula. And Fairbanks newspapers were in singing “Don’t Stop Believing” Civic-minded boosters, economic development supporters and other local groups that much of the public were all pushing hard for the pipeline. The idea was, if North Slope gas and oil producers weren’t interested in building the pipeline, we should build a smaller one ourselves and control our own destiny.

Though it went by several names — Bullet Line, In-State Line, Backline, Alaska Stand-Alone Pipeline (ASAP) cost half a billion dollars. When the economics changed: They were busy on the first day. There’s no way a small market of several hundred thousand people could absorb this gas at the prevailing costs and gas on a $10 billion project.

While the state was imagining it could go it alone to develop North Slope gas, isn’t economic to develop.
After reaching peak fitness, Finstad found himself floored by virus

BY NED ROZELL
University of Alaska

After the final steps of a long run in early March, Greg Finstad took his pulse rate. His heart was at 38 beats per minute. Perfect. The reindeer biologist and marathon runner was in top shape to run this year’s Boston Marathon.

From there, things did not follow the plan for Finstad, head of the Reindeer Research Program at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. After reaching his peak of fitness, not long after he was alone in his bedroom, he was gasping for what he thought might be his last breath.

Finstad was infected with the COVID-19 virus. It knocked him down and took him out.

Finstad is not a typical 65-year-old. The studious researcher has wrestled reindeer with his right hand for decades. He is the Seward Peninsula and St. Lawrence Island’s expert on the little critters that have been a family tradition.

Finstad, who is now home in Fairbanks recovering with aching joints but the ability to ride his bike with his grandchildren, was one of the first confirmed cases of the disease in Fairbanks.

His story of the damage wrought by a particle 1,000th of a millimeter across is one of which he hardly remembers.

In late February 2020, Finstad caught a flight to Seattle, on a Sunday. His plans were to attend his dad’s memorial service. To reach Seattle, he flew into Portland, Oregon, and drove to Nome, then flew to Seattle, on a Monday. He was in the passenger cabin in Vancouver, Washington, had a text from his wife, Bev, that she was feeling fatigued.

“I considered myself a tough guy—I can tough it out; that virus isn’t tougher than me,” he said recently in a phone interview. “Well, it is tougher than me.”

In Fairbanks, doctors dressed in protective gear met him at Tanana Valley Clinic. He took his temperature and found he had a fever. He tried to stay as far away from his family as he could. They decided he needed to return home.

Finstad is not a typical 65-year-old. The studious researcher has wrestled reindeer with his right hand for decades. He is the Seward Peninsula and St. Lawrence Island’s expert on the little critters that have been a family tradition.

For 18 miles one day, Finstad then flew to Buffalo, New York, via Seattle and Chicago, Illinois. He is on the board of directors for the Reindeer Owners and Breeders Association, and spoke at the organization’s annual meeting there.

From Buffalo, he traveled back to Alaska on March 8, 2020. He remembers extreme congestion within the corridors of Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.

“It was spring break when I was coming back” he said. At Sea-Tac, “there were rivers of people in every terminal. Even if anyone sneezed, that virus could have infected a dozen people.”

Back in Alaska, Finstad briefly visited his office in a building that was almost empty during spring break. He felt fine, but his visit soon after led to that building being one of the first structures on campus closed to visitors.

Home from his journey to bury his father, move his mother to an unfamiliar place and give the keynote speech at a conference, Finstad and his family drove down to their cabin in the Alaska Range. His three grandchildren were off from school for their own spring break. Time at the cabin with them is a family tradition. There in the one-room structure, Finstad began to feel fatigued.

“I got aches all over, and then my senses of taste and smell disappeared,” he said. “This was not like the flu. My body’s response to this was very different.”

By chance, he had a medical thermometer at the cabin. He took his temperature and found he had a fever. He tried to stay as far away from his family as he could. They decided he needed to return home.

In Fairbanks, doctors dressed in protective gear met him at Tanana Valley Clinic. He took his temperature and found he had a fever. He tried to stay as far away from his family as he could. They decided he needed to return home.

“Having recovered from this, there’s a certain amount of immunity,” he said of himself. “I still wear a mask and my hands are raw (from washing them).”

“I want to tell people who take their mask off (in tight spaces): You know, I’ll bet I was tougher than you, and it just about killed me.”

Since the late 1970s, the University of Alaska Fairbanks’ Geophysical Institute has provided this column free in cooperation with the UAF research community. Ned Rozell is a science writer for the Geophysical Institute.
...when we participate in the 2020 Census. The census is our voice to show others how our communities have grown and what we need. When we participate, the census provides us information that we use for programs and grants to help shape the future for generations to come.

To learn more go to 2020CENSUS.GOV

Shape our future START HERE
Alaska fishermen give guidance on virus relief funds

Affected fishermen say direct payments from relief funds are much-needed help

A rapid response by nearly 800 Alaska fishermen will provide a guideline for giving them a hand up as the coronavirus swamps their operations.

An online survey from April 14-May 3 by Juneau-based nonprofit SalmonState asked fishermen about the COVID-19 outbreak and in the midst of the pandemic in April. It also asked what elected officials at local, state and federal levels can do to help them directly.

Over half of the 817 responses came in over four days, said Tyson Fick, Salmon-State communications adviser.

“Clearly, people were interested. We were aware of what people had heard and to weigh in. In several ways we feel like we had a very broad swath of regions and gender types and fishermen,” he said.

A total of 779 responses (95%) were accepted, of which 50% were Alaska residents, 28% were from the Lower 48, and 22% did not provide resident information.

Nearly 95% said they participated in a salmon fishery, with the majority fishing for both salmon and a mix of nearly all other species commercially found in Alaska. Some takeaways:

Prior to COVID-19, the top three concerns among fishermen were fish prices (65%), the Pebble Mine (60%), and climate change (53%).

After COVID-19 hit, concerns shifted to loss of income (75%), preventing the spread in coastal communities (69%), and bad policy decisions being made while fishermen are distracted (58%).

When the producers pulled out in 2016 because of a dim economic outlook for rushing ahead with the LNG project, the state took over, hired a half-million-dollar-a-year salesman from Texas to lead the effort and stepped deep into the quicksand of believing that no bank will underwrite.

That’s the realistic response: Stop spending money. Larry Persily is a longtime Alaska journalist, with breaks for federal, state and municipal service in oil and gas. He spent too long, too, failing the economics test.
Classifieds & Legals

State of Alaska releases business guidance or recent lifting of COVID-19 restrictions

Many safety policies should be kept in place, guidelines recommend

AUBREY WEBER
Anchorage Daily News

In advance of this week’s move to Phases 3 and 4 of Gov. Mike Dunleavy’s reopening plan, the state released a new set of guidelines for how businesses should operate once nearly all of the COVID-19-related restrictions are lifted.

The guidelines say businesses should keep in tact many of the policies required under Dunleavy’s mandates, such as wearing face coverings, having hand sanitizer or hand-washing stations available to customers, implementing social distancing practices and increased disinfecting of surfaces.

The state is providing the guidelines to advise businesses, but they are not mandatory.

“This next phase is about personal responsibility and businesses can adapt their own rules,” Alaska Department of Health and Social Services spokesman Clinton Bennett said in an email.

[Read the full text of the state of Alaska’s guidance for phases 3 and 4 of reopening]

The changes taking effect Friday morning lift nearly all of the coronavirus health mandates, but individual city and borough governments may keep stricter policies in place. Anchorage Mayor Ethan Berkowitz said he will announce his plan Friday at noon.

Additionally, the 14-day quarantine for travelers coming to Alaska from out of state remains in place, as does a restriction on travel to Alaska villages off the road system and a mandate addressing nonurgent medical and dental procedures.

In general, the state’s guidelines advise Alaskans to wash their hands often and for 20 seconds. They also say to avoid coming within 6 feet of people you don’t live with, and to wear a cloth face covering when in public.

The state’s guidance says you should disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home daily, cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze and stay home if you’re feeling ill.

For businesses, the state guidelines recommend cleaning procedures and public health policies stricter than what was in place prior to the pandemic.

All businesses are advised to disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least daily, and implement a pre-work screening policy for employees. Businesses should encourage employees who are feeling ill to stay home.

Bars and restaurants are advised to provide guides, such as tape on the floor, to keep people 6 feet apart, and to install physical barriers such as Plexiglas shields on places like host stations.

They are also advised to replace buzzers alerting diners that their table is ready with text notifications, and laminated menus in digital or disposable ones.

Large condiment bottles should be replaced with single-use servings, and bars and restaurants are also advised to avoid self-serve food and drink stations.

Restaurants are still encouraged to promote drive-thru and takeout options rather than dine-in service.

As more people return to the workplace, child care facilities are expected to be busy.

The state suggests child care facilities teach staff and children to wash their hands, and have employees wear face coverings.

Child care facilities should also limit mixing groups of children, and limit children from sharing things like meals and art supplies. The facilities should also consider staggered meal times to limit how many people congregate.

Child care facilities should also have a plan to test children and, if advised, are to notify all children to play with soft toys, like stuffed animals, which are difficult to sanitize.

The same policies suggested for child care extend to day camps. Additionally, sleeping locations should be spaced 6 feet apart.

For mass transit, the state suggests floor markings or physical barriers to keep people 6 feet apart. Operators should implement stricter cleaning policies, provide soap or hand sanitizer for passengers and encourage face coverings for employees and passengers.

Long-term living facilities, such as retirement homes, jails and prisons, present a greater challenge surrounding mandates and recommendations for mass gatherings for the COVID-19 pandemic, Hertel said.

“Communal dining should be canceled at those facilities, as well as nearly all other aspects. Every facility should have a plan to test all residents and staff.”

The state’s Health Management and Regulations Division, which regulates commercial fishing operations, remains in effect and has far more stringent requirements than what’s asked of other businesses. The state added that “every effort should be made” to test fishermen before they board fishing vessels. A mandate that applies to seafood processing workers also remains in place.

The 2020 Alaska State Fair in Palmer has been canceled, organizers said in a statement. The State Alaska Fair Board of Directors and CEO Jerome Hertel made the decision based on the continued uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, Hertel said in the statement.

“We need to make decisions now based on what we know today, not how we hope things will be in August,” Hertel said.

The fair was originally scheduled to take place from Aug. 22 through Sept. 2 at the state fairgrounds in Palmer. Organizers hope to hold the fair in 2021, according to Hertel. This year’s cancellation is the first since 1942, during World War II, Hertel said.

“We have reached the point that with all the precautions surrounding mass gathering events for mass gatherings of this scale, it just will not be possible to deliver the same experience fairgoers have come to expect from the state’s largest celebration,” Hertel said of the decision to cancel this year’s event.

People who have already purchased fair tickets using credit cards will automatically be refunded, according to Hertel.

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**ACROSS**

1. Requests  
5. Pub dispenser  
8. Feline sound  
11. HGTV’s “____ or Flop”  
12. Ferdinand, e.g.  
13. Like a ghost  
14. *Pro ____,” or in proportion  
15. Miscellany  
16. *Elsewhere  
17. *Response to #51 Across?  
19. Cher has one  
20. Marine enchantress  
21. Not tac nor toe  
22. *Not underwear!  
25. *Battery’s companion  
29. Literary “even”  
30. “____ it ____,” or go full force  
33. Quartet minus one  
34. Greyish brown  
36. Common conjunction  
37. Ban from school, e.g.  
38. Homesteader’s measurement  
39. Complete failure  
41. “Stand and Deliver” singer  
42. Relating to breastbone  
44. Spectacle venues  
46. Marcia’s jealous sister  
47. *Courtroom protest  
48. *To lure into a compromising act  
49. Old Russian autocrat  
50. Anis-flavored aperitif  
51. Newspaper piece  
52. Atom that lost an electron, pl.  
53. Words from Wordsworth, pl.  
54. Type of salamander  
55. European peak  

**DOWN**

1. Big do  
2. Eastern European  
3. Toy with a tail  
4. Thinly spread  
5. Tutu fabric  
6. Mork from Ork  
7. Walk, as through mud  
8. Cripple  
9. Major European river  
10. Ancient Chinese dynasty  
12. Stock exchange, in Paris  
13. Mollify  
14. Anisette, for short  
16. Greek Bs  
17. *Response to #51 Across?  
18. Often precedes through, to search  
22. Twin  
23. Not just stand there!  
24. Habituate  
25. Gives a hand  
26. Of a city  
27. Tarzan’s swing rope  
28. *Reasons to sue  
31. Peacock’s pride  
32. Genetic initials  
35. *Lie made under oath  
37. Pre-Ionic  
39. Belle or Parrot-head, e.g.  
40. Usually not allowed in court  
43. Back of the neck  
45. *To lure into a compromising act  
46. *To annul or suspend  
47. Jinn or genie  
49. Old Russian autocrat  
51. Newspaper piece  
52. Atom that lost an electron, pl.  
53. Words from Wordsworth, pl.  
54. Type of salamander  
55. European peak  

**SUDOKU**

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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.
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**Tundra**

By Chad Carpenter

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**For solutions to the Crossword and Sudoku puzzles, see page 6.**
CASE FROM PAGE 1

Association has been working on our COVID response," he said. "We've been preparing for the virus under three different scenarios. The first is to prevent the virus from getting to our region, the second is to be prepared when the virus reaches our region, and the third one, most recently, is to restore services that were shut down as a result of COVID-19 periods." As the Sounder previously reported, Maniilaq’s public health department has been conducting the voluntary tests in Kotzebue to conduct precautionary measures. The person is from. How many in the village who be quarantined there, too.

"For our patient who tested positive, we know for a fact that he or she did not leave the area. He stayed in the area where the test is taken, which is the FBX building. He didn’t take a cab into town, he didn’t go shopping. He stayed in the area," said Gilbert. "We sent a driver with the appropriate PPE (personal protective equipment) to fetch him up." From there, the patient was transported to Maniilaq Health Center’s respiratory room, which is a special room in the hospital that’s designed specifically to work with COVID patients, that’s easily cleaned once that patient has left.

"There was a medical provider who assessed his symptoms and took his vitals. Once they were finished at the clinic, he was taken to Nulagelik Hotel. The hotel has been kind enough to designate two floors of their hotel as what they’re calling COVID floors," Gilbert explained. "They’re used for people who need to be quarantined. He’s provided food. They’re comfortable. His room is for his privacy. He is still in isolation at the hotel, as of this week. Any other potential patients will likely be quarantined there, too.

"I guess what we’re trying to say is we’re feeling very confident that this person had minimal interaction in the community, going from airport to testing site, to the hospital, to the quarantine site," Gilbert said. "So, we just want to reassure people that his interaction in the community was very, very minimal."

Gilbert and Maniilaq Vice President of Health Services Sharon Kurz also presented to the Kotzebue City Council. Kurz said the other type is the rapid test which results are returned to Maniilaq in about 48 hours, she said. The other type is the rapid test public health nurses are doing at the airport.

Maniilaq can perform between 5,000 and 10,000 of the ANMC-type tests, but only about 100 rapid tests at a time, she explained.

"That’s why we would want to use those on the people who have to move that day from an Alaska Airlines flight to go to our village," she said.

During the meeting and at other meetings — like one that happened the day of the other positive test — local officials expressed concern about how the testing is happening.

The individual is remaining quarantined in Anchorage.

Maniilaq has not publicly released the name of the village person is from. However, they noted a written statement that they sent nine Maniilaq staff members to the village to conduct precautionary COVID-19 tests on May 22 and 23.

"The individual’s family were asked to come to the clinic and volunteer for a test," they wrote. "Also included was anyone in the village who believed they may have been in contact with the individual and anyone else in the village could receive a COVID-19 test after the first two groups."

Maniilaq performed nearly 300 total tests in the village. On May 22, Kivalina residents posted on social media about a specific type of testing personnel in their village. Maniilaq has not confirmed the individual who tested positive was from Kivalina.

While the health team was in town, the local health aide assisted Maniilaq in collecting pretesting questionnaires. A local search and rescue volunteer offered to bring people to and from the testing site, if they weren’t able to make it easily on their own. Many locals volunteered for tests, including local children.

"I believe in being safe than sorry," she said. "I want to know the if and the have nots. If there is someone we have to take care of, I want to be able to know ahead of time so we can prepare, me included."

She said the health workers first took down her information. Then, they sat her in a chair and had her tilt her head back. "We were told they would get samples from both noses," she said. "But 10 seconds each," she explained. "Where they placed the Q-tip, it felt almost like a slight burning sensation for a brief moment. And then it was over. There was no after effects though, but it did tickle when being extracted so I started sneezing. (It) made my eyes water but that new sensation was different."

She said she was uncomfortable to get the test, but it was bearable. She shared her experience for anyone who might be afraid of getting tested, so they’d know what to expect.

Health workers had to leave the village the same day, she said, but their flight back to Kotzebue was cancelled because of weather, so they stayed.

Despite the rain and weather conditions, people volunteered to come and get tested all evening.

"They were still busy, but they are shutting down at 9 p.m.," Mitchell said that day. "They took the appointment by families. The whole family went for a test for those that wanted it. I went with my daughter since I'm the only one in my house, although my name was listed."

She said it was important to her to find out and make sure her family was safe and healthy.

"Yes, I am glad (they offered testing)," she said. "I need confirmation that we are clear. I don’t want to live in wonder and worry for two weeks. I do not want to be in a situation where I tested positive at, I care to know that me and my family are clear."

In its May 25 written statement, Maniilaq said the individual who tested positive at ANMC was tested a second time on May 23.

"The results of the second test were negative," they wrote. "According to the ANMC Laboratory medical director and the Centers for Disease Control, the first (positive) test is the most accurate indicator of an individual’s COVID-19 status. This means ANMC and Maniilaq are still regarding the individual as positive for COVID-19 for the sake of safety and the prevention of spread of the virus."

The individual is remaining in quarantine in Anchorage and is being closely monitored by ANMC medical staff.

"Maniilaq is grateful for the participation of the village residents who testing took place and for the staff that went to carry out the testing," Maniilaq wrote.
Q: What degree were you pursuing at Ilisagvik?
A: “I actually have a bachelor’s of business administration and economics from UAA. I got that in 2016. I started at Ilisagvik in 2018 and it’s their first bachelor’s degree in business”

Q: How did you find out about this opportunity and why did you decide to pursue their first bachelor’s degree program?
A: “There was a lot of media coverage on Ilisagvik rolling out their tuition waivers and I think I came across it either on Facebook or the Arctic Sounder. It was posted everywhere. I decided to apply. Originally, I was thinking about doing the bachelor’s; I was going for just a certificate. I might as well go for the bachelor’s. I was going for just some professional certificates. It was posted everywhere. It was everywhere. I think that’s important for Inupiaq, as much as it is Hawaiian. I think that’s important for Inupiaq, as much as it is Hawaiian students.”

Q: What are your thoughts of getting more Native people involved in business? What kind of power does that bring?
A: “I think it’s vitally important for us as Native people to have a stake in our own livelihoods and that’s anywhere from just managing our basic infrastructure to owning our own Native small businesses. I think this is the first time in the context of us and our communities, is very important. I think Ilisagvik is promoting this through the education they’re providing. They have the CDL programs and those vocational programs, but I feel like the Native people tend to be underrepresented in business. Having these opportunities for business education that Ilisagvik is presenting is definitely a step in the right direction for us.”

Q: What was your experience of working with Ilisagvik?
A: “There was a lot of media coverage on Ilisagvik rolling out their tuition waivers and I think I came across it either on Facebook or the Arctic Sounder. It was posted everywhere. I decided to apply. Originally, I was thinking about doing the bachelor’s; I was going for just a certificate. I might as well go for the bachelor’s. I was going for just some professional certificates. It was posted everywhere. It was everywhere. I think that’s important for Inupiaq, as much as it is Hawaiian. I think that’s important for Inupiaq, as much as it is Hawaiian students.”

Q: Can you tell me a little about what it was like to be the test student for this program? What was your experience of working with Ilisagvik to get to this point?
A: “I honestly was under the impression that there were several of us that were kind of on track to do this. I wasn’t kind of surprised to find out I was the first. But it’s definitely an honor and a privilege to set that groundwork and that milestone for students.”

I can attest to, specifically, having a tribal college education, especially coming from a traditional non-traditional college like UAA. I think there is such a valuable education that Ilisagvik can provide to Native students and underrepresented students alike. I can attest to the value tribal colleges and universities bring to us indigenous students. It seems like they’ve so greatly and artistically integrated the Inupiaq culture and values into their curriculum. I was really astonished at how they could do that. They really do that very well.

I know that Ilisagvik has a reputation for being a vocational school, in the past, but I’m very proud that they’re going more toward the academic side and having this bachelor’s degree in business is taking them in a direction I appreciate.”

Q: From your perspective, why is tribal education a good thing for students to have access to?
A: “My father is Hawaiian and my mother is Inupiaq and I graduated from a Hawaiian high school. My parents thought it was very important that we both go to college. I think that’s important for Inupiaq, as much as it is Hawaiian students.”

Q: What was it like for you to go to college in a place that you have such strong ties?
A: “I actually live in Anchorage, so I did all of my coursework online, but it was really satisfying having classes and call-ins and discussions with community members and people that I knew. They were small and intimate classroom settings, unlike at UAA (where) there are hundreds of students and you don’t even necessarily need to know their names and you probably won’t know a lot of them. You really get to build meaningful relationships with people in your community that you’ll actually get to work with and hopefully make changes with and grow and you’re a part of the community.”

Q: What is your experience of working with Ilisagvik?
A: “I would say if any of my fellow Alaska Natives are on the edge about whether or not they should attend Ilisagvik College, I’m telling you now this is the sign you’ve been waiting for. There will be little to lose and so much to gain from participating in this wonderful program. Challenges like this don’t come very often to have a nearly free education and a quality education at that”