Two dollars

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Inside Today Small earthquakes recorded before Iliamna landslide. **A6**

Prax re-elected; Cottle wins District 34

By Jack Barnwell

The Alaska Division of Elections wrapped up its unofficial results on Wednesday night as it tabulated the remaining state House and congressional races that did not hit over the 50% mark.

Most of the seven Interior Alaska state house races achieved a 50% margin on or just after Election Night. However, two could not be called on Election Night and remained close or required ranked-choice voting.

'Not a lot of fun:' Prax re-elected

Republican incumbent Rep. Mike Prax in House District 33 had remained above 40% since the Nov. 3 results, followed by independent Pepper McFarland and Republican Barbara Haney. It's the first time Prax has faced challengers. Appointed in 2020 to replace Tammie Wilson in the House, Prax ran unopposed in the 2022 and 2024 elections.

During Wednesday's ranked choice voting tabulation, Prax ultimately ended with 64.3% of the vote. Haney was eliminated in the first round. About 1,168 of Haney's votes went to Prax as voters' second choice, while 93 went to McFarland.

Prax said the race "was not a lot of fun, but we got through it.

"I've been telling people I had to clean my desk (in Juneau), but not clean it out," Prax said. "I'm feeling pretty good about the results."

Prax said he intends to continue focusing on professional licensure updates that have proven to be a barrier for people moving to Alaska, including nurses.

"Removing as many barriers to entry to get people up here to work in the medical field is an important step in the right direction," Prax said. He added that pushing the Alaska LNG project into development "should be priority one for everyone."

McFarland acknowledged last week that it's not probable she could

ELECTION » A5

UAF drone program testing ways to deliver medical supplies

Goal is to let people get their healthcare where they live



PIETR BUTTELMANN/SYSMEX

ACUASI's Windracers ULTRA drone carrying chilled human blood samples takes off from Nenana Municipal Airport on Aug. 19, 2026.

By Jack Barnwell

For years, the Alaska Center for UAS Integration, or ACUASI, at the University of Alaska Fairbanks has pioneered efforts to integrate drone technology into commercial airspace, either through its own research or through partnerships.

In the last few years, it's reached new heights, according to ACUASI Director Cathy Cahill. Cahill provided an update to the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce on Tuesday.

ACUASI has partnered with the Tanana Chiefs Conference and Ryan Air to develop or test operations to deliver medical supplies by drone. TCC and Ryan Air both received grants from the first round of the five-year, $1.3 billion Rural Health Transformation Program funding that Alaska received.

TCC hopes to develop the concept so it can deliver medical supplies to rural villages in the tribal consortium's area. Ryan Air wants to do the same for communities in its service area in partnership with Yukon-Kuskokwim communities and the Southcentral Foundation.



JACK BARNWELL

Cathy Cahill, director for the Alaska Center for UAS Integration UAF, provides an update on the drone program on Tuesday.

"If you happen to be in a rural community here, often you don't get your medicine in a timely manner," Cahill said. "We want to make it easier to deliver healthcare."

Cahill noted that Dr. Anne Zink, Alaska's former chief medical officer, once remarked that it was more expensive to transport people to a medical facility than to deliver medical services to rural Alaskans.

If a public health nurse was based in a remote village for a week, it would be much easier for a drone to deliver test samples to Fairbanks or Anchorage and have a clinic or hospital send medication back as needed.

"It would save people a tremendous amount of cost and effort going back and forth from communities; lets people get their healthcare where they live," Cahill said.

ACUASI conducted a similar process from its Nenana Municipal Airport hangar in August when it did a test flight carrying human blood samples using a Windracers ULTRA drone.

Staff from the Interior Region EMS Council collected samples from volunteers. Each volunteer provided two samples for comparison of conditions before and after transport.

Cahill said the nearly nine-hour flight demonstrated that blood samples could be delivered effectively.

"What this proves is that the blood could survive a long-distance flight at elevation and not get degraded," she said.

ACUASI plans to equip its two Windracer drones with a Detect

ACUASI » A5

Begich re-elected to U.S. House after ranked-choice tabulation

By James Brooks
ALASKA BEACON

Alaska has re-elected Republican U.S. Rep. Nick Begich III.

Following a ranked choice tabulation Wednesday by the Alaska Division of Elections, Begich received 51.4% of the vote in the 2026 general election, ahead of independent challenger Bill Hill, who received 48.6%.

Begich, first elected in 2022, became the most successful freshman lawmaker in the history of the U.S. House of Representatives, sponsoring seven bills and three repeal resolutions that passed a Republican-controlled Congress and the desk of President Donald Trump.



LOREN HOLMES/ALASKA BEACON

Rep. Nick Begich, R-Alaska, addresses supporters on election night, Nov. 3, at the Hotel Captain Cook in downtown Anchorage.

"To the hundreds of thousands of Alaskans

U.S. HOUSE » A5

Lathrop, North Pole hockey teams remain suspended as investigation continues

By Ariana Crockett O'Harra

The Fairbanks North Star Borough School District provided an updated statement on the suspension of the Lathrop High School and North Pole High School hockey teams, saying they are continuing to investigate the incident. The Wasilla Police Department is also investigating allegations of kidnapping and sexual assault involving both teams.

Joshua DuVall, director of communications for the school district, said it is continuing to work through its investigative process, including determining disciplinary consequences.

"We recognize there has been significant community interest in this

HOCKEY » A3

Blasting activity at gold mine near Fox rattles Goldstream Valley residents

By Jack Barnwell

Renewed blasting in a placer mine five miles southwest of Fox has rattled the nerves — and patience — of nearby residents in the Goldstream Valley.

Now the mine's owner, Georgia resident Cary Williams, seeks to renew his U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit for the next several years. Williams operates both the Goldstream mine and the Little Eldorado Placer Mine north of Fox through his company Big Sky Exploration.

Goldstream residents took to social media to air their grievances as mining persisted for the first few weeks of November.

"They are causing a lot of problems in the community," Goldstream resident Ned Gaines told the News-Miner. "It makes my windows shake and I have cracks in my walls that might be caused by it."

Gaines, who has consulted with oil and mining operations in the past, said he's heard similar anecdotal concerns from other Goldstream residents. He added that one of the more frustrating parts was the lack of outreach.

"We have no info on when the blasting happens, what kind of explosive, how it's being stored, no schedule," Gaines said. "This mine is impacting the community and causing distress to the residents."

The community endured a similar situation in 2024, Gaines said, prompting several complaints to be filed.

The original USACE permit for the Goldstream mine proposed "overburden soils and material in order to recover gold and washed gravels." This requires discharging 20 acres of fill material per year.

The application notice mentions the use of dozers within the mine area, but no blasting.

Gaines said the likely explanation for so much blasting is to clear away permafrost to get access to the gravel and gold deposits.

The Goldstream mine

MINE » A3

GOOD MORNING

The weather.

Times of sun and clouds.

High today 29
Low tonight 17
Sunrise: 9:39 a.m.
Sunset: 3:31 p.m.

WEATHER » A3

Aurora forecast.

Auroral activity will be moderate. If skies are clear, moderate displays may be visible overhead from locations such as Utqiagvik to as far south as Talkeetna, and may be visible low on the horizon as far south as Bethel, Soldotna and Southeast Alaska.



SOURDOUGH JACK:

"I'm tempted to say it's nice that this election is over, except I have a feeling there's more to come."

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