



Photo by Nikolail Ivanoff

A CLEAN RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT— Pilgrim River is ice-free and peacefully runs towards Norton Sound. The snowcapped Kigluaik Mountains in the background.

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Photo by Diana Haecker

BRING IT ON! — Caroline Reader took up the challenge and armwrestled Louis Green Jr. for a can of grapefruit soda during last Saturday's spring cleanup finale at Anvil City Square. Reader won and Green got the soda as a consolation prize. (See story inside.)

Bethel considers cyanide ban

By Diana Haecker

With the prospect of an open pit hard rock gold mine at Donlin Creek in the near future and with it the use of sodium cyanide, Bethel's vice mayor introduced an ordinance to ban the toxic substance from entering the city limits.

The ordinance language reads

that "No person or entity may endanger the health and safety of the citizens of Bethel by engaging in any activity that directly or indirectly: (1) releases any toxic pollution into, or causes or contributes to any toxic pollution of, any surface or subsurface water, or tributary thereto that is utilized by humans

for drinking water or by salmon in the spawning, rearing, migration or propagation of the species, within the boundaries of the City of Bethel. (2) Transports, uses or generates within the City of Bethel or its watershed, quantities larger than 50 gallons per month of cyanide."

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NovaGold intervened in lawsuit; hearing scheduled against Corps

By Diana Haecker

The United States District Court for the District of Alaska will hear the case of the Bering Strait Citizens for Responsible Resource Development, Jana Varrati and Sue Steinacher against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers over the issuance of the 404 wetlands permit for the Rock Creek Mine operated by NovaGold.

The hearing in Judge Ralph Beistline's courtroom on Thursday, June 7 will deal with the merit of the lawsuit's request for a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction.

The hearing will determine if NovaGold is allowed to keep working at the wetlands at the mine site under construction while the judge decides whether or not the lawsuit

has merit. NovaGold intervened in the lawsuit.

The lawfirm Trustees for Alaska filed the lawsuit on behalf of the Nome group and the two Nome residents. The Trustees did not oppose NovaGold's intervention.

The lawyers for NovaGold suggested that the plaintiffs post a \$100,000 bond to protect their eco-

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NJUS to power Rock Creek

By Sandra L. Medearis

Nome Joint Utility System intends to expand its service area to include Rock Creek Mine. The local utility board has approved a contract with Nova Gold Resources subsidiary Alaska Gold Co. to have Nome Joint Utility System set power poles and string power transmission lines nine miles out to the Rock Creek Mine with the mining company picking up the tab 100 percent of the \$3 million for design and construction. Nome's city attorney gave the contract the go-ahead.

As soon as NG has put its ink on

the contract, line crews will begin work, John Handeland, utility manager, said Monday. NJUS will complement local labor with temporary help from IBEW NECA workers. He said 12 to 14 employees will be working at a time on the job.

Rock Creek Mine expects to power up into full production in August. The company will continue to use its own generators until line completion anticipated at the end of August. Alaska Gold estimates it will need 10 megawatts at

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Photo by Diana Haecker

PICKING UP TRASH— Aurora Bicknell, 10, and Annalise Contreras, 7, were busy picking up trash along Dry Creek during last Saturday's spring clean up. (See story inside.)



Photo by Diana Haecker

IMPROVEMENTS— Quality Asphalt begins work on road improvements, including paving, on East Front Street this week.

•NJUS

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full capacity around the clock every day for at least four years. In winter, without the addition of Alaska Gold as a customer, the community draws five megawatts, Handeland said. A megawatt equals 1,000 kilowatts

According to the construction contract, Alaska Gold will within 30 days have a separate power sales agreement ready for NJUS board consideration. At that time, Alaska Gold will become the utility system’s biggest customer.

So what’s in it for the NJUS ratepayer?

“If we are spreading the fixed costs of personnel and insurance and the like over five megawatts draw, that is one number. When we are spreading it over 15 megawatts, that is a substantially smaller number per kilowatt,” Handeland said. So, will bills go down? How the added mega-sales of power to Alaska Gold will show up on monthly bills depends on the outcome of negotiations on the power purchase contract with Alaska Gold over the next couple of weeks, he said.

This is the second time the City has powered the company’s mine.

NJUS sold power to Alaska Gold, under different ownership then, in the early 1990s after the company shut down its power house at the north end of Steadman Street on account of fuel issues and the age of generation equipment. The draw for Alaska Gold’s smaller operation was two megawatts to run Dredges 5 and 6, said Handeland, who worked for the old Alaska Gold back when.

The construction agreement as it stands is that NJUS will upgrade lines to larger capacity 25kV transmission lines from the power plant to the Nome-Teller Highway and then westward along the road to the Glacier Creek Road turnoff to the mine. From that intersection, NJUS will build a new 25 kV line north along Glacier Creek Road to the Rock Creek Mine substation and put in a new 25 kV transformer at the power plant to handle the larger load. Initially Alaska Gold told the utility it would need generation capability and supporting fuel storage upgraded to 5 kV, but now seeks a boost to 10 kV to match new, increased mine requirements and a more in-depth analysis.



Photo by Diana Haecker

FIRST BARGE IN— The first Northland barge arrived last Monday in Nome, after having to dodge ice pans southeast of St. Lawrence Island. The Coast Guard cutter *Healy* cruised by Nome also on Monday, slated to come back to Nome in August.

Council approves school money, hires new chief

by Sandra L. Medearis

The Nome Common Council voted May 30 to support the schools next year with almost \$1.7 million. The figure comprises in round numbers the state mandate of \$1.011 million plus an additional discretionary pot of \$670,000.

The fixed portion according to law equals what four mills’ property tax would be without senior exemptions and other exemptions allowed in the City’s tax structure. In October the state set Nome’s full value determination that meant a mill in property tax is worth \$252,725.

Council can adjust the discretionary amount sought. Councilman Jon Larson attempted to lower the discretionary contribution to around \$400,000 by cutting out school improvement projects he thought should be paid for through bonding, a route that could mean 60 percent reimbursement from the state. These projects included further work on stemming the presence of radon gas beneath the administration-NACTEC dorm-DOT area at Beltz complex (\$80,000), digital atmospheric controls at Nome Elementary (\$125,000) and replacement of the Nome Elementary gym floor (\$84,000-\$130,000), all estimates. With the cost of fuel consum-

ing the wallets and public treasuries, the city must make cuts and get help wherever, Larson said.

“I don’t know in days gone by how many people have come up to me and said how expensive it is to live in Nome these days,” Larson said.

The schools head, Stan Lujan said that refusing to fund the repairs could mean a delay of two to three years while bonding issues go to the state Department of Education for approval and through the process to sell improvement bonds to raise money. He added the fear that the state Dept. of Transportation might break their lease if the radon mitigation were not controlled fully beneath the part of the complex they rent. The DOT has recently renewed its lease with NPS since the radon issue became known.

Asked when the DOT lease was up, Lujan said he did not know.

Only Larson and Councilman Randy Pomeranz voted to approve the amendment reducing the discretionary contribution by a couple of hundred thousand dollars. The Council then voted unanimously to approve the City’s contribution to the school budget. City finances director Cussy Kauer told the Council the City will have to dip into its fund balance for at least \$1

million based on the current taxation at 11 mills. On June 6 the Council was to have a work session to consider its own budget and set the mill rate.

In other business at the special meeting, the Council approved a three-year contract with Nome’s newly hired police chief, Paul M. Burke with a beginning salary of \$90,000 effective June 15. His salary will increase by three percent annually with satisfactory evaluations by City Manager Randy Romenesko. Burke has 20 years’ experience in law enforcement with Alaska State Troopers including three years in Bethel and heading the coordination of AST statewide search and rescue. A committee comprising Nome citizens screened applicants and recommended Burke’s hire.

In other chit-chat in the work session, the Council seemed of a mind to continue funding the Nome Visitors and Convention bureau one more year, rather than turn the operation over to Nome Chamber of Commerce.

2007 Nome Adult Softball League Schedule

Thursday, June 7

7 p.m.
Bering Air vs Breakers (N)
Outsiders vs Polar (S)

8:30 p.m.
BOT vs AMI (N)
Polaris va Breakers (S)

Tuesday, June 12

7 p.m.
Polar vs Breakers (N)
Luck Shot Natives vs Outsiders (S)

8:30 p.m.
AMI vs Outsiders (N)
Breakers vs MC Hammers (S)

Wednesday, June 13

7 p.m.
Bering Air vs Subway (N)
Polar vs Polaris (S)
8:30 p.m.
Bering Air vs Subway (N)
Polaris vs AMI (S)



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