



Photo by Peggy Fagerstrom

GOLDEN BEAUTIES— A burst of yellow arnica flowers grace the ocean side of the Nome-Council road by Bonanza bridge.

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AP Photo/Al Grillo

TOE KICK SPECIALIST — Marjorie Tahbone kicks a skin ball suspended 64 inches above the floor during the World Eskimo Indian Olympics in Anchorage on July 19. (See story page 6.)

Two construction workers die at Rock Creek mine

By Diana Haecker

Two iron workers died at the Rock Creek mine last week, when the manlift they were standing on toppled and sent the basket they were in crashing to the ground. The men were working on a steel building about 50 feet in the air.

Tyler Kahle, 19, of Tomahawk, Wisconsin and Craig Bagley, 27, of Anchorage worked for Alaska Mechanical Inc., the contractor building the Rock Creek mine and milling facilities operated by Alaska Gold Company, a NovaGold Resources, Inc. subsidiary. The fall took place on Thursday, July 19 around 6 p.m.

According to Alaska State trooper John Stroebele, the men survived

the initial fall.

They were transported to the Norton Sound Regional Hospital, where Kahle was pronounced dead at 7:49 p.m. and Bagley was pronounced dead at 9:09 p.m.

Troopers ruled out criminal involvement and said that it is unknown whether the incident occurred due to a mechanical reason or by operator error. Trooper Stroebele described the man-lift as a basket attached to a long arm that pivots, extends and retracts. The arm is attached to a base with four wheels. The controls for the man-lift are located inside the basket where the two men were working. A photo viewed by *The Nome Nugget*

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Council chews little fat Monday

By Sandra L. Medearis

Nome City Council shot through its agenda in a record 11 minutes Monday night, but did attempt to solve the taxi war between established taxi operators—Louis Green Jr. and Gary Hart—and Steve Longley.

Longley has been operating two vehicles under a bus license, but, Green and Hart complain, actually has been running a cab, taking calls on his mobile phone and going point to point without jumping through the licensing and insurance

hoops required of taxi companies. The Council went with a solution proposed by Hart, that he transfer two of his taxi licenses to Longley to bring him into the fold of legality. According to the City, Longley has been operating in defiance of a recently adopted ordinance delineating taxi operations from bus operations. The ordinance drew a line that pencilled Longley out of the taxi business, but did not include a penalty for violation.

At their last meeting, several

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Photo courtesy of Department of Labor, OSHA

ACCIDENT SITE— The photo taken by an OSHA inspector shows the toppled JLG manlift base. It is held in place by a loader. The extended arm of the lift leans over a smaller building. Not shown is the basket the men were in when the base became unstable and tipped over.

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of the accident site showed the wheeled base tipped over, the boom bent over a one-story tall building attached to the steel building Kahle and Bagley were working on. The photo showed a front-end loader holding up the base of the manlift. The boom hit the roof of the smaller building, whip-lashing the basket to the ground.

What caused the man lift to tip over? Was the four-wheeled base on unstable ground? Who controlled the basket? Those and more questions are currently addressed by three investigators sent to Nome by the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration, said MSHA spokeswoman Amy Louviere from her office in Washington, DC. Louviere told *The Nome Nugget* at press time on Monday that a preliminary report may be available on Tuesday.

At press time, it was not clear when the fall occurred.

Nome emergency personnel responded to a 911 call that came in at 6:39 p.m. at the Nome dispatch center located at the Nome Police Department. NPD said that AMI office worker Bethany Torres made the call from Satellite Field, reporting a man down, saying Code Red and requesting medical assistance to the mine.

A second call was made a few minutes later, at 6:41 p.m. and said

they were doing CPR and were requesting a medivac out of Nome.” At 7 p.m., a third call to the Nome Police Department dispatcher – the hub for all Nome emergency calls – requested a second ambulance. Since the mine site is located outside of the Nome City Limits and therefore outside of Nome police department territory, the dispatcher contacted the Alaska State Troopers office in Nome at 6:55 p.m.

Two minutes after Nome Volunteer Ambulance Department volunteers were toned out, the first ambulance rolled out of the garage and was on its way to Rock Creek. According to Ambulance Chief Charlie Lean, the ambulance took 12 minutes – driving in the legal speed limit – to get to Rock Creek, where construction workers directed the five volunteers to the site of the fall.

From what first responders gathered, the workers were legally secured within the basket and seemed to have hit the ground standing. One worker was catapulted out of the basket and the other one was still in the basket, entangled with the railing. As the ambulance arrived, both men were lying on the ground. Construction personnel were doing CPR on Craig Bagley. As Nome emergency personnel were toned out, Nome Volunteer Fire Department Chief

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Council members proposed a solution that got cab owners’ attention, that Council stiffen the requirements for taxi operation and open the licenses to anyone who could measure up. Currently, Hart and Green own all the taxi licenses in Nome. This idea raised the specter of out of town competition. Green drew a parallel at an earlier Council meeting with happenings in Bethel, where there are almost 100 taxi drivers. Hence, Hart’s offer to transfer two of his permits to Longley, lest the Council open the ride market to “Outside” competition, Hart said.

Just a minute, Councilman Jon Larson wanted to know—what happens to Longley’s bus permit that the Council has held in question? The Council approved the transfer of the licenses to Longley with the condition that Longley surrender his bus license.

In other action, the Council:

- Approved hiring the City’s current state legislative lobbyists, Joe L. Hayes and Wendy Chamberlain to represent the City, the schools and Nome Joint Utility System in Juneau through the next budget year. The City will pay their company. Legislative Consultants, \$75,000 plus expenses, the same as last year’s contract. NJUS has budgeted and will pick up a third of the cost.

- Approved a risk management plan to ensure a safe, cost effective environment for employees, citizens and tourists—and to save more money on insurance under the Alaska Municipal League’s loss control incentive program that fosters safety in the workplace. City of Nome is insured under the League’s joint insurance program. Last year 26 municipalities saved a combined \$143,000, from which Nome received a discount of \$12,335 against future insurance costs.

- Gave the state Dept. of Transportation an easement of City property to upgrade a storm drain by the Visitor’s Center. In return, the AkDOT will have the City \$17,163. City Manager Randy Romanesko disclosed to the Council that, thinking an easement already existed on the books, he and Mayor Denise Michels had already signed the agreement on the easement. The Council rubber-stamped the action. The City will keep the right of public access to the park and shoreline of Norton Sound.

- Received gratitude from NovaGold executives who came to thank the City for the Nome Volunteer Ambulance responders who helped during an industrial accident at the mine that took two lives Thursday evening. NovaGold also acknowledged service from Norton Sound Health Corp. emergency staff.

BLM transfers land to BSNC

By Nancy McGuire
TAKING POSSESSION— The Bureau of Land Management transferred title of land to the Bering Straits Native Corporation at a July 18 meeting at Old St. Joseph Hall. Front row: Tim Towerak, president and CEO of Bering Straits Native Corporation; Tom Lonnie, director of the Bureau of Land Management in Alaska. Back row: Ramona Chinn, deputy director of Alaska BLM Lands, and Roy Ashenfelter, Kawerak Land Management Services Program Director, who received Native allotments on behalf of Alaska Native Vietnam veterans.



The Bureau of Land Management handed over title to over 30,000 acres of land on the Seward Peninsula at the BLM Resource Advisory Council meeting July 18. The BLM transferred 30,081 acres of patented land to the

Bering Straits Native Corporation. They also did an interim conveyance of approximately 3,661 acres. Four Native veterans gained title to their Native Allotments. Richard Miller was awarded 80 acres, Richard Atuk 159.99 acres,

Russell Tocktoo 79.98 acres and Neal Richard Foster 79.99 acres.

The BLM traveled with members of Bering Strait Native Corporation to Glacial Lake and to Salmon Lake.

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