



Mat-Su Valley Frontiersman

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2009 | YOUR HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER SINCE 1947

VOLUME 62, NUMBER 25

50 CENTS

Published for the
Mat-Su Valley
and Kay Anderson
of Wasilla.

Inside



Afternoon dual

Rivals hit the mat in front of Colony student body.

SPORTS, B1



Something special

Community comes together to help at holiday time.

VALLEY LIFE, A11

Water works

Seminar touts benefits of individual water power plants.

VALLEY LIFE, A11

Weather

HIGH: 6
LOW: 0

Increasing clouds and very cold.

Full forecast, PAGE A2

Index

A section

- Pet tails..... A2
- Worlds of Wonder... A4
- Opinion..... A6
- Schools..... A9
- Faith..... A10
- Valley Life..... A11
- Obituaries..... A12
- Police Beat..... A13

B section

- Sports..... B1
- TV Listings..... B5
- Comics..... B8
- Classifieds..... B9

Country Cuts
Thanksgiving Celebration
Fireworks
November 28
7:19 p.m.
Dedicated to Valley Churches
Santa will visit
3 pm - 6 pm
423 S. Alaska St. Palmer
745-7809

THE GIVING SEASON



ROBERT DeBERRY/Frontiersman

Blood Bank of Alaska phlebotomist Stephanie Christenson prepares to draw blood from Valley resident Robert Bates Thursday afternoon in Wasilla. Due to a decrease in demand, the Blood Bank of Alaska's Wasilla and Soldotna locations will be closing.

GOING DRY

Valley blood banks set for closure

BY TODD L. DISHER
Frontiersman

WASILLA — Citing decreased demand due to the down economy, the Blood Bank of Alaska is closing its donation centers in Wasilla and Soldotna.

Alaska is following a national trend, spokesman David Large said. In the last five months, statewide demand has dropped by 10 percent.

"With the increase in people losing their jobs, and with it their insurance, people are doing less elective surgeries," Large said.

The leases are up at the end of the year for both the Wasilla branch, which contributes 7 percent of the state's donations, and the Soldotna branch, accounting for another 5 percent. Looking forward, it made sense to not renew, Large said.

"There is just so much uncertainty. We are trying to provide a service here, and we don't want to jeopardize the organization financially," Large said.

Blood Bank of Alaska services 25 health care facilities around the state. It has three other fixed dona-



Blood Bank of Alaska Phlebotomist Stephanie Christenson prepares a bag of blood at the blood banks Wasilla location Thursday afternoon.

ROBERT DeBERRY/
Frontiersman

tion centers — two in Anchorage and one in Fairbanks. The group also uses mobile clinics to get donations from schools, businesses or areas not near a fixed center.

With the closures, the supply to hospitals will not be affected, Large said, as the supply chain does not necessarily depend on these two donation centers.

All donated blood is routed through one of two processing facilities — one in Fairbanks and one in Anchorage. Additionally, Large said the group will step up its mobile donation clinics in both the

Valley and the Peninsula.

A call to Mat-Su Regional Medical Center confirmed this. Linda Olson, the head of Infusion Services, said all the blood Mat-Su Regional gets comes from the processing facility in Anchorage.

"It shouldn't affect us," Olson said. "It would only make a difference if the supply of blood drastically decreased in the state."

Olson said maybe it wouldn't be as convenient for some people to donate if the centers close, but she

See BLOOD, Page A3

Charter school gets OK

Birchtree will follow Waldorf charter model

BY ANDREW WELLNER
Frontiersman

PALMER — One more name can now be added to the list of charter schools in the Valley — Birchtree Charter School.

In a 5-1 vote Wednesday, the school board decided to approve Birchtree's application to become a charter school. The school is tentatively set to open next school year.

The school district's website lists four other charter schools in the Valley — Academy Charter School, Fronteras Spanish Immersion Charter School, Midnight Sun Family Learning Center and Twindly Bridge Charter School.

Generally, charter schools offer a type of education that differs from the education offered in the district's traditional public schools. Birchtree will as well.

Lori Berrigan, president of Birchtree's board, said the type of education the school will offer is simply not available in the Valley. The school's webpage describes it as a "Waldorf-inspired program." Berrigan and at least a half-dozen other parents hoping to enroll their children in Birchtree testified at Wednesday's meeting, urging the school board to approve Birchtree's application.

The website of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America paints a picture of a school in which science, math and reading play an equal role in the curriculum with art and handicrafts. Notable differences from traditional education include teachers that stay with their classes through multiple years and student-created workbooks in place of traditional textbooks.

But the discussion at Wednesday's meeting focused less on the curricu-

See CHARTER, Page A3

Wasilla to buy mall for future library

Decision comes as surprise for steering committee, Friends of Wasilla Library

BY TODD L. DISHER
Frontiersman

WASILLA — The city is planning to buy the Meta Rose Square as the future home for the Wasilla Public Library, a move that has shocked the library steering committee and the shopping center's tenants.

Wasilla has signed a purchase agreement to pay \$1.5 million for the indoor shopping center in the heart of downtown, Public Works

Director Archie Giddings said. The city will convert the building from its current retail configuration into a library 2.5 times larger than the current building.

The money for the project will come entirely from the city's coffers, but Giddings said it was determined the city could pay for the building without drawing its reserve fund below the amount legally required.

See LIBRARY, Page A8



ROBERT DeBERRY/Frontiersman

The city of Wasilla is planning to buy the Meta Rose Square shopping center as the future home for the Wasilla Public Library. Wasilla has signed a purchase agreement to pay \$1.5 million for the indoor mall in the heart of downtown.

Troopers involved in fatal shooting identified

BY ANDREW WELLNER
Frontiersman

WASILLA — Alaska State Troopers have released the names of five of their own who shot and killed a woman in Wasilla over the weekend.

The troopers who fired on Nora J. York, 58, are:

- Trooper Daron Cooper
- Trooper Timothy Cronin

- Trooper Ronald Hayes
- Trooper recruit Lance Jamison-Ewers,
- Trooper Joshua Varys

Troopers say the other officers on scene that day either did not use deadly force or used only tasers, which they said in a previous press statement were unsuccessfully deployed three times on York.

York was pronounced dead on scene having received multiple

gunshot wounds. One trooper was injured in the incident with what appeared to be a gunshot wound, but was treated and released the same day.

The incident happened in the wee hours of Saturday morning when troopers were called to what they were told was possibly a suicide attempt just off of Wasilla-Fishhook Road on Atka Drive. Seven troopers responded because the

incident happened to take place at shift change.

Troopers say the whole thing began when a man in a wheelchair called 911 to say York had pointed a shotgun at him and threatened to shoot him. York was heard in the background of the call and may have used the phrase "suicide by cop."

See TROOPERS, Page A3

