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Lisi Misa
being first duly sworn on oath deposes and says that she is a representative of the Anchorage Daily News, a daily newspaper. That said newspaper has been approved by the Third Judicial Court, Anchorage, Alaska, and it now and has been published in the English language continually as a daily newspaper in Anchorage, Alaska, and it is now and during all said time was printed in an office maintained at the aforesaid place of publication of said newspaper. That the annexed is a copy of an advertisement as it was published in regular issues (and not in supplemental form) of said newspaper on

August 17, 24, 31/2023

and that such newspaper was regularly distributed to its subscribers during all of said period. That the full amount of the fee charged for the foregoing publication is not in excess of the rate charged private individuals.

Signed Lisi Misa

Subscribed and sworn to before

me this 1st day of September

2023 Jada L. Nowling

Notary Public in and for
The State of Alaska.
Third Division
Anchorage, Alaska
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES
7/14/2024

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Anchorage Daily News - 08/17/2023

Biden's approval rating on the economy stagnates despite slowing inflation, new poll shows

Josh Boak and Emily Swanson
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden has devoted the past several weeks to promoting the positive impacts of his policies — but his efforts have yet to meaningfully register with the public.

Only 36% of U.S. adults approve of Biden's handling of the economy, slightly lower than the 42% who approve of his overall performance, according to the new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Both figures are close to where Biden's approval numbers have stood for about the past year and a half, including just two months ago. Signs of an improving economic outlook have done little to sway how people feel about the Democratic president as he gears up for a 2024 reelection campaign that could pit him against his predecessor and 2020 opponent, Republican Donald Trump.

Job growth has stayed solid with the unemployment rate at 3.5%, while the pace of inflation has slowed sharply over the past year to the annual rate of 3.2%.

Both Biden and Trump have weaknesses as older candidates seeking a rematch. Trump, 77, faces a series of criminal indictments that include his possession of classified material and allegations that he tried to overturn the 2020 election, which has rallied support among Republicans while leaving him with substantial vulnerabilities in a potential general election contest.

Biden, 80, has yet to fully bring Democrats to his side as the lingering aftershocks of inflation still weigh on people's minds. Along with members of his cabinet and Vice President Kamala Harris, Biden has been speaking about the $500 billion worth of new investments by private companies that he said came from incentives he signed into law.

Erica Basile, a teacher who describes herself as a "staunch Democrat," said she feels the economy is "mediocre, but improving."

"I do think in many ways they're working very hard at getting the economy back on track post-COVID," said Basile, who lives in Lynnwood, Washington.

Just 65% of Democrats approve of Biden's economic leadership, while 76% approve of how he's handling the job overall.

In follow-up interviews, some survey respondents felt torn between the desire to return to a sense of normalcy after Trump's presidency and the desire for even more sweeping policies to address climate change, health care costs and taxes.

"When Joe Biden was selected to be the nominee and eventually won, my feeling at the time was that he could be the most milquetoast and undramatic president to help the country cool down," said Steven Peters, 41, who works in information technology in White House, Tennessee. "Unfortunately, that's what he's been. I'm dissatisfied because I had hoped there would be more change."

Peters added, "He's really middle of the road when a lot of people would like to see more dramatic action."

For GOP supporters, such as Merritt Rahn, 74, Biden has gone too far. Rahn said he is retired but also works at Home Depot and sees higher gasoline and food costs as making it harder for families to get by financially. The Jensen Beach, Florida, resident said Biden will further hurt the U.S. by moving energy sources away from oil and gas.

"It's a death to our society and economy," said Rahn, who added that he believes Biden "has no clue what's going on."

The poll also found that 55% of Democrats say they don't think Biden should run again in 2024, though a large majority — 82% — say they would definitely or probably support him if he is the nominee. Overall, only 24% of Americans say they want Biden to run again.

Among Democrats who approve of how Biden is handling the economy, 58% would like him to seek another term. Just 20% of those who disapprove of his performance on the issue want the incumbent president to run again.

Biden continues to struggle to appeal to younger Democrats, especially on the economy. Only 52% of Democrats under age 45 say they approve of his handling of the economy, compared with 77% of those older.

The president has used the term "Bidenomics" to try to encompass his ideas to lower costs for people on Medicare, shift toward electric vehicles and renewable energy, and build factories for advanced computer chips and batteries. Yet some are still struggling to understand what the term means.

Asked about the definition of Bidenomics, Cory O'Brien, 39, said: "You know what, dude, I have no idea. Biden is a free market capitalist like most moderate Democrats are."

The age gap extends to Biden's reelection campaign: Just 34% of Democrats under 45 want him to run again, compared with 54% of those older than that. Still, about three-quarters of younger Democrats say they'll most likely support him if he's the nominee, though only 28% say they definitely will.

O'Brien, who works in education and lives in Massachusetts, said he expects the 2024 election to be "miserable" for voters because of the likely Biden and Trump rematch.

"I think it's going to be a miserable election cycle," he said. "We're going to see a lot of the same stuff that we saw in 2020."

Biden also faces renewed pressure related to investigations over his son Hunter's business dealings. The poll finds that a majority of Americans — 58% — have hardly any confidence in Biden to reduce corruption in government, though that's unchanged since January. Another 30% have some confidence and 10% have hardly any.

The poll shows that 23% of Americans say they have a great deal of confidence in Biden's ability to effectively manage the White House, 31% have some confidence and 45% have hardly any. Despite the fact that Biden has achieved several of his major policy goals, just 16% say they have high confidence in his ability to do that, while 38% say they have some confidence and 44% hardly any.

Few Americans say they think the national economy is doing well: 34% describe it as very or somewhat good. No more than about a third of Americans have called the economy good since 2021.

BRIAN LAWLESS / PA via AP

People queue to enter a Bank of Ireland branch in Finglas village, Dublin, on Wednesday. Some Bank of Ireland customers were able to withdraw money they did not have Tuesday and early Wednesday, thanks to an hours-long technical glitch that also halted many of the bank's online services. The outage allowed some customers to transfer and withdraw funds "above their normal limits," the Bank of Ireland said.

Bank of Ireland glitch allowed customers to withdraw money they didn't have

Wyatte Grantham-Philips
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Some Bank of Ireland customers were able to withdraw money they did not have Tuesday and early Wednesday after an hours-long technical glitch that also halted many of the bank's online services.

The outage allowed some customers to transfer and withdraw funds "above their normal limits," the Bank of Ireland said. Customers could withdraw up to $546 with their Bank of Ireland card, the bank confirmed to The Associated Press Wednesday. They could also transfer funds from their Bank of Ireland account to a different account and withdraw up to $1,091, the bank said.

As word spread on social media, images and video footage appeared to show people lining up at ATMs in hopes of receiving the "free money." As more people appeared to arrive at ATMs in large numbers on Tuesday, images of police standing on guard close by began to appear on social media.

An Garda Síochána, Ireland's national police, said it was "aware of an unusual volume of activity at some ATMs across the country" — and that "local decisions were made depending on the public safety and public order presented to members of An Garda Síochána" on a case-by-case basis.

The Bank of Ireland, however, warns that all withdrawals will still appear as a debit on customer accounts.

"These transfers and withdrawals will be applied to customers' accounts today," the bank said in a Wednesday statement. "We urge any customer who may find themselves in financial difficulty due to overdrawing on their account to contact us."

Beyond the withdrawals, the technical issue also impacted many online and mobile app services. On social media, a number of frustrated customers reported not being able to access their accounts or see payments. Some stressed the difficulty of buying food and other essentials without being able to check their account balances — and others noted that this wasn't the first times a technical issue at the bank has impacted them, pointing to a June glitch that similarly cut off access to online services.

The Bank of Ireland said that its online services were working again Wednesday, but that the bank's app may be slow as the bank continues to catch up on processing payments. Overnight payments should appear throughout the day, the bank said.

"We sincerely apologise for the disruption this outage caused – we know we fell far below the standards our customers expect from us," the bank said.

Ireland's Minister for Finance Michael McGrath later announced he had asked the Central Bank of Ireland, which regulates the Bank of Ireland, "to establish a full account" of the outage and what can be done to avoid such issues in the future.

"Financial service providers have to do whatever is required to ensure continuity of service for their customers," McGrath said in a statement. "Disruption to banking services can have a significant effect on people's personal lives and on the running of businesses. Customers rightly have an expectation of a high quality of service and to be able to have uninterrupted access to services."

In a Wednesday statement, the Central Bank confirmed it was monitoring the situation and had begun the process of establishing a full account of this week's incident with the Bank of Ireland.

"Where issues occur which impact on customers we expect banks to rectify the issues urgently," the regulator said. "We require banks to put things right where they have made errors or cause customer harm."

Target Q2 sales fall on muted spending, Pride month backlash, and it cuts profit outlook for 2023

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Target reported its first quarterly sales drop in six years, dragged down by shoppers' inflation worries and a negative reaction by some customers, widely publicized on social media, to its Pride merchandise.

The Minneapolis retailer expects high interest rates, which makes credit cards more expensive to use, and higher prices on food to continue to put a strain on customers and on Wednesday, the chain cut its profit outlook for the year. It also expects sales will decline for the remainder of the year. In lowering its forecast, Target also cited the end of the student loan moratorium, which had provided one-time college students a little more financial breathing room.

Profit for the fiscal second quarter came in above expectations, however, as Target brought inventories closer in line with cautionary spending on discretionary items by customers.

Shares rose 3% Wednesday despite trimming profit expectations for the year.

Target is among the first major U.S. retailers to report quarterly financial results and the impact of rising prices and elevated interest on its customers will get a lot of attention ahead of a raft of quarterly reports from companies like Walmart other retailers.

CEO Brian Cornell said higher high prices for food and household essentials are taking a bigger chunk out of the paychecks of customers, who have also pulled back on buying some goods in favor of travel or spending time out of the house in other ways.

"Guests are out at concerts," Cornell told reporters on a media call Tuesday. "They're going to movies. They've seen 'Barbie.' They're enjoying those experiential moments, and they're shopping very carefully for discretionary goods."

Other retailers are seeing the same thing.

Home Depot, the nation's largest home improvement retailer, said Tuesday that sales continued to decline after surging in recent years. Sales of big-ticket items, those that may require financing, were particularly hard hit.

Industry analysts will be eager to see if the same forces are impacting other retailers reporting earnings this week, including Walmart, the nation's largest, on Thursday. Macy's, Kohl's and Nordstrom post quarterly results later this month.

This week, the U.S. reported that Americans increased their spending last month, but higher interest rates are weighing on economic activities that are highly dependent on credit, like sales of homes, vehicles, furniture and electronics.

Target is more vulnerable than other big box discounters like Walmart. More than 50% of Target's annual sales come from discretionary items like toys, fashion and electronic gadgets, according to the company's latest annual financial report.

Target also faced a unique problem during the most recent quarter, becoming one of the companies that was targeted for its LGBTQ+ support, in particular, its displays of Pride Month merchandise. It pulled some items in particular regions and made other changes after encountering hostility from some customers who confronted workers and tipped over displays. Company executives said this week that it couldn't tease out how much the negative reaction had on its business, but once it made the changes, those incidents subsided. Overall sales improved in July from June.

Cornell said the company has learned from the backlash and that it will be more thoughtful in merchandise offerings for its heritage months, which celebrate various ethnic and marginalized groups. Target said it will have a slightly more focused assortment and will reconsider the mix of its own and national brands with its external partners.

"We'll continue to celebrate Pride and other heritage moments, which are just one part of our commitment to support a diverse teams and guests, " Cornell told reporters. "However, as we navigate an ever changing operating and social environment, we're applying what we've learned to ensure we're staying close to our guests and their expectations of Target."

Target earned $835 million, or $1.80 per share, in the quarter that ended July 29. That compares with $183 million, or 39 cent per share, in the year-ago period.

Sales fell nearly 5% to $24.77 billion as shoppers focused more on groceries than discretionary items.

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CONTROLLING INTEREST TRANSFER APPLICATION

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FROM PAGE A1

MAUI

burned. He later picked his way through the flames, smoke and rubble to pull survivors to safety.

But dozens of others found themselves caught in a hellscape, their cars jammed together on a narrow road, surrounded by flames on three sides and the rocky ocean waves on the fourth. Some died in their cars, while others tried to run for safety.

"I could see from the bypass that people were stuck on the balconies, so I went down and checked it out," said Kekoa Lansford, who made several trips into town to look for survivors. What he found was horrible, Lansford said, with dead bodies and flames like a hellish movie scene. "And I could see that people were on fire, that the fire was just being stoked by the wind, and being pushed toward the homes."

The road closures — some because of the fire, some because of downed power lines — contributed to making historic Lahaina the site of the deadliest U.S. wildfire in more than a century. But there were many problems that day, and in some ways the disaster began long before the fires started.

A flash drought in the region provided plenty of kindling, and Hurricane Dora brought strong winds to Maui as it passed roughly 500 miles south of the Hawaii island chain. Those winds downed at least 30 power poles in West Maui, and Hawaiian Electric had no procedure in place for turning off the grid — a common practice in other fire-prone states. Video shot by a Lahaina resident shows a downed powerline setting dry grasses alight, possibly revealing the start of the larger fire.

And later, as the fire began to swallow homes in its ravenous path, Maui County emergency officials declined to use an extensive network of emergency sirens to alert Lahaina's residents to flee.

During a news conference Tuesday, Maui Police Chief John Pelletier said police officers drove up and down streets, knocking on doors and using loudspeakers to tell people to leave, but he didn't say exactly where and what time those efforts occurred. The Associated Press has filed public records requests for location reports and other documentation including video and internal communications to clarify the details of the police and fire response, but Maui County has not yet released that information.

A team of Associated Press journalists documented the first hours of the deadly wildfire by interviewing dozens of survivors and public officials, examining public documents and analyzing citizen videos, satellite images and publicly available data. The timeline reveals the chaos that overtook the town.

Timeline

Shane Treu wakes early on Aug. 8 and is in his backyard when he hears a utility pole snap next to Lahainaluna Road. He sees the downed powerline ignite the grass and calls 911 at 6:37 a.m. to report the fire.

Small brush fires aren't unusual for Lahaina, and the fire department declares this one 100% contained by 9:55 a.m. The assurance puts many residents at ease; the high winds have prompted the closure of some public schools for the day, and others have not yet started. That means many of Lahaina's 3,000 public school students are home alone while their parents work.

Contained is not controlled, however, and the town is being battered by high winds. While many of Maui County's fire crews work to extinguish the Upcountry fire on the eastern half of the island, the wind is toppling power poles and scattering embers like seeds in Lahaina.

Treu's neighbor Robert Arconado said the fire reignites around 2 p.m. He records video of it spreading at 3:06 p.m., as large plumes of smoke rise near Lahainaluna Road and are carried downtown by the wind.

Around 3:20 p.m., Lahaina resident Kevin Eliason is watching the black smoke from a vantage point closer to downtown when passersby tell him a power pole has been knocked onto the tar roof of a gas station two blocks away, creating fireballs that are being blown in the wind, he said.

Eliason said the fire knocked the power out in the area soon after.

Ten minutes later, Hawaiian Electric sends a news release asking Maui residents to prepare for extended outages. The utility says more than 30 power poles are down in West Maui, including along the Honoapiilani Highway at the south end of Lahaina. The fire department closes the Lahaina Bypass road because of the fire.

The closures block the only route out of Lahaina to the south.

Mike Cicchino decides to flee with his wife and several dogs from their neighborhood near Lahainaluna Road.

They head toward the ocean, but when they reach the intersection with the highway, Cicchino sees a traffic jam ahead on Front Street. He sees more traffic backed up on the highway to his right, where he knows the fire is rapidly approaching.

To his left, he sees two police cars blocking the road, one across the lane of traffic and another one just starting to pull away. Cicchino ignores the roadblock, driving around the police cars to head south.

About a mile later, he runs into a line of cones blocking the highway.

"I remember thinking, shoot, maybe there is something dangerous ahead," Cicchino says. "And then we see all the other cars driving onto Front Street, so we go that way too."

He cuts through parking lots and side streets, and ends up on Front Street near the ocean.

"So the police were blocking roads, the exit, some of the exit roads out," he says. "And I'm assuming it's because there's been some downed power lines or some downed trees."

Maui Police Chief John Pelletier confirmed that at a news conference two weeks later.

"We did not close or forbid people from getting out of Lahaina," Pelletier said. "If there was a downed power line that was live, we wanted to make sure that you didn't go over a downed live power line."

The first sign of trouble for Nate Baird and Courtney Stapleton comes at 3:40 p.m., when their 9- and 10-year-old sons say they can smell s'mores.

By the time the family piles into the car with their dog and Baird's mother and joins a caravan of evacuating residents, parts of the subdivision are beginning to burn. A telephone pole falls behind their car, causing an accident and blocking a side street.

Meanwhile, police officers knock down a fence to help others escape, the police chief says later. Firefighters in the area nearly become trapped themselves, losing a truck to the flames, Pelletier says.

When Baird and his family turn south to drive out of town, the way is blocked by cones and a crew working on downed electric poles. The workers were motioning for everyone to turn back toward Lahaina.

Shayna Decker, a spokesperson for Hawaiian Electric in Maui, did not immediately respond to a request for comment by The Associated Press.

They decide they don't care what the crew wants, swerving around the cones and heading south. They make it to a neighboring town by 4:18 p.m. and begin texting people to see who else has made it out.

"Nobody realized how little time we really had," Baird said. "Like even us being from the heart of the fire, we did not comprehend. Like we literally had minutes and one wrong turn. We would all be dead right now."

Jonelle Santos said her daughter, Ronelle Santos-Adrian, managed to escape her Lahaina affordable housing apartment with her 3-year-old daughter and partner by turning their four-wheel-drive vehicle away from the standstill traffic and onto a dirt road, eventually finding their way to a friend's house in Napili. Some of the other people who lived in the apartment complex didn't have cars, Santos said, and her daughter thinks some of them didn't make it out.

Kim Cuevas-Reyes narrowly escapes with her 12- and 15-year-old by ignoring instructions to turn right on Front Street toward Lahaina's Civic Center, which earlier in the day had been turned into a shelter for refugees. Instead, she takes a left, driving in the wrong lane to pass a stack of cars heading in the other direction.

"The gridlock would have left us there when the firestorm came," said Cuevas-Reyes, 38. "I would have had to tell my children to jump into the ocean as well and be boiled alive by the flames or we would have just died from smoke inhalation and roasted in the car."

At 5:20 p.m., Maui County shares another update on Facebook. The road leading south out of Lahaina has been cleared and is open for traffic, the county says.

But by then, some on Front Street have already died, according to survivor accounts. Others, including Cicchino, have jumped over the seawall and are treading water, dodging flaming debris and breathing overheated black smoke.

At some point, police begin directing people away from Front Street, Pelletier says, "because it had already gotten too late." He does not say exactly when that point is reached.

A private ambulance company calls the U.S. Coast Guard at about 5:45 p.m., asking for help transporting 10 injured people from Lahaina to Maalaea because a fire is blocking road access to Lahaina. It is the Coast Guard's first notification of the fire.

People in the water and on boat moorings use flashlights and phones to guide the boats through the thick smoke. The Coast Guard rescues nearly 40 people from the shore and pulls 17 people from the water while civilians help pull more from the ocean. The rescue efforts stretch into the early morning hours.

Kekoa Lansford is among the rescuers. Earlier, he had climbed a hill behind the town and watched as the city burned, trying to gauge when it would be safe to return. Lansford said he knew people would need help "because the roads are small, and it's pretty tight down there."

Over the next several hours, Lansford makes repeated trips into the still-burning downtown, often using back roads to travel safely. "I seen one girl and her legs was all burned up, and then I helped her," Lansford said. "And then something just clicked in my head, like, everybody's going to be burned up. So I just kept going back down."

Lansford focuses his effort on Front Street, getting as many people as he can out of the fire.

"Pulling them off behind the seawall, you know, and walking them back to my truck," he said.

He takes each person to a place that seems safe from fire where they can be picked up by others. And then he goes back to find more.

"Just getting them out of the fire, make sure they don't die of smoke inhalation. Some of them will die after anyway," he recounted.

The houses and buildings are too hot to enter, he said, and a popular spot for watching the sunset has become a death zone.

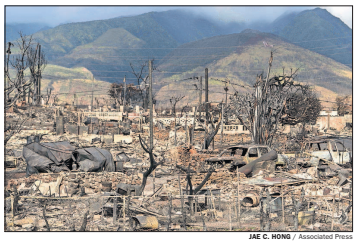
When the sun rises on Wednesday, the town that was once home to about 13,000 people has become an ashen wasteland frozen in its final moments of panic.

More than 100 deaths have been confirmed, and roughly 1,000 people remain unaccounted for.

Many of the survivors are angry, and haunted by the thought that a just few minutes of notice could have saved many lives.

Baird's neighborhood near Lahainaluna Road was filled with kids who were home alone when the flames hit, he said.

"We needed like 10 more minutes, and we could have saved a lot of kids," he said, choking back tears. "If we'd just had like a 10- or 15-minute warning."



JAE C. HONG / Associated Press

The aftermath of the deadliest U.S. wildfire in more than a century is seen in Lahaina, Hawaii, on Monday.

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POLITICS

EPA head says he's proud of decision to block Pebble mine

Mark Thiessen
Associated Press

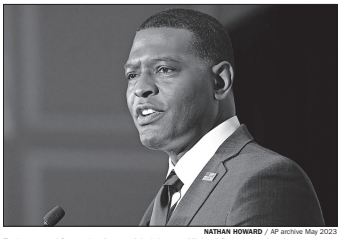
The nation's top environmental official said he fully supports his agency's decision to block a proposed gold and copper mine in Alaska's salmon-rich Bristol Bay, even as the state of Alaska has asked the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn that action.

"Let me be clear, we are very proud of our decision to really evaluate the Pebble mine project and do what is necessary to protect Bristol Bay," Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael Regan said in a telephone interview with The Associated Press on Tuesday as he began a four-day tour of Alaska, starting in a Bristol Bay village.

The EPA in January vetoed the proposed Pebble mine, citing concerns with possible impacts on the aquatic ecosystem in southwest Alaska that supports the world's largest sockeye salmon fishery. The region also has significant mineral resources.

Last month, the state of Alaska asked the nation's high court to intervene.

"The EPA's order strikes at the heart of Alaska's sovereignty, depriving the State of its power to regulate its lands and waters," according to the court filing.



NATHAN HOWARD / AP archive May 2023

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael Regan speaks about new proposed limits on greenhouse gas emissions from coal- and gas-fired power plants during an event at the University of Maryland on May 11 in College Park, Md.

The EPA and the Department of Justice are reviewing the complaint and have until late next month to file an optional response, Regan said.

Regan's first stop will be in the Bristol Bay village of Igiugig, located about 250 miles southwest of Anchorage, where Lake Iliamna feeds the Kvichak River. The village's 68 residents, comprised mostly of Indigenous people, lead a subsistence lifestyle, relying mostly on salmon.

Regan planned to talk to tribal leaders about solid waste management issues and energy generation, but also "to highlight the significance of our decision around Pebble mine, to protect the bay for environmental and cultural, spiritual and sustenance reasoning."

When asked if there are other actions EPA could or should take to block the mine if the state were to prevail, he said their process is to follow the science and law on a project-by-project basis, the way the agency evaluated the Pebble proposal.

"I feel really good about the decision we made," he said.

Canada-based Northern Dynasty Minerals Ltd. owns the Pebble Limited Partnership, which has pursued the mine. As proposed, the project called for a mining rate of up to 73 million tons a year.

Regan planned to discuss environmental justice concerns, climate change, subsistence food security, water infrastructure and pollution from contaminated lands conveyed through the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act during his first visit to the nation's largest state.

Discussions will also include how the EPA might help support community projects with money provided with the so-called Inflation Reduction Act, or the climate and health care bill passed last year.

Other stops will be in Utqiagvik, Fairbanks, Anchorage and the Native Village of Eklutna, on the northern edge of the Anchorage municipality.

Alaska became the fourth stop on what is billed as Regan's "Journey to Justice" tour to learn how pollution has affected people. Previously, visits were made to Puerto Rico; McDowell County, West Virginia; and one that included stops in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas.

Regan is not the only Biden administration official set to visit. U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Marcia Fudge will address housing needs in Alaska later this week.

Other administration officials who have visited this summer include U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland and U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg.

MARC LESTER / ADN

An entrance to Bettye Davis East Anchorage High School, seen Wednesday.

EDUCATION

Student brought handgun to high school in East Anchorage, police say

Anchorage Daily News

A student brought a handgun to Bettye Davis East Anchorage High School on Tuesday but didn't threaten anyone with the weapon, authorities say.

An Anchorage Police Department school resource officer was told by a high school staffer that several students reported seeing the student with a gun just after 2:20 p.m. inside the building, police said Wednesday. The school day ends at East at 2 p.m.

The officer contacted both the student and a parent off school grounds, police said. Criminal charges have been forwarded to the state Division of Juvenile Justice for review.

Authorities do not believe the student made any threats with the gun, according to a message sent to families by Principal Ron Brown.

A student told school administrators at the end of the day that they believed they saw a student with a handgun in the building, Brown told families. School officials notified the police department.

An Anchorage School District spokesman referred questions to the police department. A police spokeswoman said Wednesday that she could not answer questions about the incident, including whether the gun was loaded, due to the ongoing investigation and the involvement of a minor.

There was no interruption to classes because the report was made at the end of the day, Brown told families.

CRIMES & COURTS

Washington state man sentenced to 2 years for selling fake Alaska Native artwork

Riley Rogerson
Anchorage Daily News

A man from Washington state was sentenced this week to spend two years in federal prison for selling fake Alaska Native artwork in Ketchikan.

Cristobal "Cris" Magno Rodrigo, 59, pleaded guilty in April to one federal count of conspiracy and another count of misrepresentation of Indian-produced goods and products.

Judge Timothy Burgess sentenced Rodrigo on Monday to serve two years in federal prison, the longest a defendant has received for any Indian Arts and Crafts Act violation in the U.S., according to the Indian Arts and Crafts Board. Rodrigo is also ordered to pay nearly $54,204.81 in restitution, make a $60,000 donation to the Tlingit and Haida Central Council Vocational Program, write an apology to run in the Ketchikan Daily News, and serve three years of supervised release.

Between April 2016 and December 2021, Rodrigo and his family sold stone carvings and totem poles that were produced in the Philippines as authentic Alaska Native art at businesses in Ketchikan, according to a federal plea agreement. Through the course of the scheme, Rodrigo's businesses, Alaska Stone Arts LLC and Rail Creek LLC, sold thousands of counterfeit carvings.

In 2019 and part of 2021, the companies sold more than $1 million of artwork produced in the Philippines and passed off as Alaska Native, according to a sentencing memorandum filed by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jack Schmidt.

While Rodrigo lived in Washington state, he and his family owned and operated the Ketchikan businesses. Rodrigo Creative Crafts — a company in the Philippines owned by Rodrigo's wife — contracted Filipino wood carvers to produce the carvings and totem poles that were shipped to the U.S. Rodrigo had more than 20 years of experience working at Alaska stores producing stone carvings and directed the workers on how to produce the art, the sentencing memo said.

The business also falsely represented employees as being part of an Alaska Native family business that used locally sourced materials, the sentencing memo said.

Rodrigo's wife, Glenda Tiglao Rodrigo, 46, and son Christian Ryan Tiglao Rodrigo, 24, have also entered plea agreements. Their cases are ongoing.

CRIME & COURTS

Troopers: Pedestrian killed by hit-and-run driver on Alaska Highway

Tess Williams
Anchorage Daily News

A Delta Junction man died Tuesday when he was hit while walking along the Alaska Highway by a vehicle that left the scene before authorities arrived, Alaska State Troopers said.

John Emerick, 47, was walking southbound on the paved shoulder of the highway near Delta Junction when he was struck, according to troopers spokesman Tim DeSpain. Troopers, responding to a report of a body in the road just before 10:20 p.m., arrived to find the driver who struck Emerick had fled, they said.

Evidence from the scene led investigators to believe that the suspect's vehicle is dark gray or blue, and that it drove toward Tok after hitting the man, troopers said Wednesday. An investigation continues.

Troopers urged anyone who may have witnessed the collision or have information about it to call 907-451-5100 or submit tips anonymously through the AKTips smartphone app or online. That includes anyone with dashboard camera footage between 9:30 p.m. and Wednesday morning from the Alaska Highway east of Delta Junction, troopers said.

MILITARY

Army charges military doctor in sprawling sexual abuse case

Dan Lamothe
The Washington Post

Army officials said Wednesday that the service has brought sexual assault charges against a military doctor in what people familiar with the matter describe as a sprawling case involving at least 23 alleged victims.

Maj. Michael Stockin, 37, is charged in what could be one of the military's largest sexual abuse cases in years, service officials said. An Army spokeswoman, Cynthia Smith, said in a statement that the "general nature of the charges include abusive sexual contact and indecent viewing," both in violation of military law. She declined to provide additional specifics, saying that doing so at this time would be "inappropriate."

The charges were brought following an Army investigation, first reported by The Washington Post last week, that spanned more than a year. Stockin, an anesthesiologist working at a pain clinic at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington state, was removed from seeing patients in February 2022, Army officials have said.

The case comes after years of Defense Department struggles to protect personnel from alleged sexual predators. A Pentagon report released in April said the military recorded 8,942 reports of sexual assault in the previous year, despite recent policy changes intended to address the issue.

Stockin's lawyer, Robert Capovilla, said in a statement that the charges were brought Tuesday and that the defense "has been given very little opportunity" to review the Army's investigation.

"We look forward to being given full access to the evidence and we hope to conduct our own thorough investigation into these allegations free from unlawful command influence," Capovilla said, referring to the practice in which a commander seeks to sway the potential actions or outcomes in a case.

One soldier who has accused Stockin of assault told The Post in an interview last week that he reported the doctor to authorities after first encountering him at Lewis-McChord's Madigan Army Medical Center in January 2022 during a visit to the facility's pain management clinic. The soldier said he was seeking treatment for a chronic back injury, and Stockin asked him to drop his pants, touching the soldier's ankles and legs. Stockin, the soldier alleged, then held his genitals.

A charge sheet obtained by The Post on Wednesday shows that Stockin is now charged in that case with one count of sexual assault. It is not clear whether other charges are pending. The Post generally does not identify the victims of sexual assault.

Ryan Guilds, a lawyer representing multiple people who allege abuse by Stockin, said in a statement Wednesday that he is "deeply concerned" with a lack of communication from the Army "and what appear to be significant failures by hospital leadership to prevent these alleged assaults from taking place."

Guilds added that he has been asking for regular updates in the case for months but had heard "virtually nothing, despite asking."

"At this point, we have no idea how deep the alleged abuse goes," Guilds said, calling the charges filed against Stockin "an important first step."

The Army, asked about Guilds's remarks, did not immediately respond.

Stockin has been assigned to Lewis-McChord, about 40 miles south of Seattle, since July 2019, though it is unclear how many of the alleged assaults might have occurred there. Official personnel records provided by the Army show that since joining the service in 2013, he has served in Iraq, at Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawaii and at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center outside of Washington, D.C.

CONTROLLING INTEREST TRANSFER APPLICATION

Bistro IT, LLC, 1020 W. 12th Avenue, Anchorage Alaska 99501, is applying for a transfer of a Beverage Dispensary-Tourism License #4283. The change in ownership involves the ownership interest transfer from BISTRO IT, LLC to BELUGA POINT INVESTMENTS IT LL, LLC. Interested persons should submit written comment to their local governing body, the applicant, and to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board at 550 West 7th Ave. Suite 1600 Anchorage AK 99501 or alcohol.licensing@alaska.gov.

DGF Enterprises, Inc. doing business as Dream Green Farms, located at 2939 Porcupine Dr., Suite A, Anchorage, Alaska 99501 is applying under 3 AAC 306.045 for transfer of controlling interest in a Standard Marijuana Cultivation Facility (3 AAC 306. 400(a)(1)), license #10080. The transfer involves a change in ownership percentage from Justin Roland 44%, Kenneth Knight 42%, Mark Habermann 0% and Sandra Habermann 14% to Kenneth Knight 50%, Sandra Habermann 50% and Mark Habermann 0%.

Interested persons may object to the application by submitting a written statement of reasons for the objection to their local government, the applicant, and the Alcohol & Marijuana Control Office (AMCO) not later than 30 days after the director has determined the application to be complete and has given written notice to the local government. Once an application is determined to be complete, the objection deadline and a copy of the application will be posted on AMCO's website at https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/amco. Objections should be sent to AMCO at marijuana.licensing@alaska.gov or to 550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1600, Anchorage, AK 99501 and Attorney Jana Weltzin, Esq at jana@jdwcounsel.com or 901 Photo Avenue, Second Floor, Anchorage, AK 99503.

AMCO Received 2.27.24