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Another Vacant Building on Main Street?

The Alaska Side Gifts & More moves to new digs on Willard Street

By Roger Maynard

Today another building on Haines Main Street becomes vacant, as the Alaska Side Gifts & More moves a block south to Willard Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenue. Alaska Side owner Greg Podsiki said the old building at Second and Main is owned by Marilyn Josephson, and he's not sure what her plans are, or if she has a new tenant.

"The building owners here on Main Street," says Podsiki, "tend to assume that if you own a business you're making money. But that's not necessarily true. We weren't able to make ends meet. The rent at the new place is less than half of what we were paying here."

Podsiki is optimistic about the move, "The new place is going to be beautiful when it's done. The building has a modern interior, is well insulated, easy

(Continued on page 4)



Photo by Roger Maynard

The Alaska Side Gifts & More, owned by Greg & Terri Podsiki, is now located on Willard Street in the Folletti building.

Haines Resident Injured in Auto Accident

On Tuesday evening, April 26, at approximately 9:00 p.m. Haines resident, Katharine (Kate) Louise Hicks, age 29, was injured when the Toyota pickup she was driving left the driveway she was descending, traveled over a cliff, crossed the switchback lower driveway, and went over a second embankment, landing on its side near the Haines Highway at Nine Mile.

According to troopers, Hicks was medevaced to Bartlett Hospital in Juneau with possible rib and back injuries. Troopers were told by witnesses that the vehicle rolled four times.

Alcohol was not involved and the driver was not wearing a seatbelt.

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**Our Opinion:
 On Raising Taxes**

Rule-makers need to keep in mind unintended consequences of faulty tax policy

By Roger Maynard

The borough assembly is presently engaged in the yearly struggle with details of the borough budget. As can be expected, revenue does not allow the assembly to do everything it would like to do.

In his recent CVN editorial, Tom Morphet wrote, "If recent history is any indication, balancing the Haines Borough budget this year will involve some combination of spending reserves and increasing property taxes." Then he wrote, "Those aren't the only options," and proceeded to list some new ways to tax local residents – a local vehicle registration tax, reinstating the business property tax, a local alcohol tax, a tour tax and increasing fees and fines.

Unfortunately, he left out two excellent options that should be at the top of the list: cut spending and en-

courage private sector growth.

Cut spending

A number of borough residents have seen their property taxes increase substantially in the past few years, due to increased property appraisal values. When we see an assembly that gives away our tax money to every non-profit group that comes asking (as we've seen in recent years,) it's legitimate cause for alarm.

To the assembly's credit, they are considering setting up a community funding process whereby the assembly sets a cap on the funds that will be distributed to non-profits. Then, a small appointed committee decides how the money should be divided among various requests, making a recommendation to the assembly. The assembly makes the final funding decisions, keeping in mind the committee's recommendations.

For Haines, it sounds like a good step toward stopping the bleeding. According to Borough Manager Mark Earnest, this process is being used successfully in other communities.

Encourage Private Sector Growth

Rather than increasing the amount each resident pays, why not increase the num-

ber of taxpayers? Why not encourage business growth, rather than making every step difficult?

For example, borough officials need to recognize that an efficient and timely permit approval process is important to business owners who have money at risk. Making businesses, especially seasonal businesses, wait for permit approval until the season is already upon them is costly, frustrating, and makes pre-season advertising impossible.

And though we applaud the Downtown Revitalization Committee's (DRC) focus on improving the look and feel of our town, they need to be careful not to become the DRC police, trying to control business growth because the new businesses are not located on Main Street, or don't match their vision. The food stands that so offend the members of the DRC are beneficial to the economy, and to the borough government because they pay taxes on what they sell. Sometimes a champagne business needs to start out on a beer budget.

Finally, this means encouraging unique, world-class tourism opportunities such as cruise ship visitors and heli-skiers, responsible resource development, and so on. More taxpayers, both business and private, means more revenue for the borough without increasing the burden on the individual.

No more taxes

Let's Keep Bears Out of Town

Last Fall, the Haines Borough Assembly passed ordinance 8.20, titled Bear Attraction Nuisance. With Spring arriving, I would like to remind the townsite residents that all organic waste material must be kept in a completely enclosed structure or container, except on the morning of garbage pickup, when the material can be placed outside in a garbage can with a tight fitting cover. Each person who owns and/or is in control of property that creates, maintains, or permits a bear attraction nuisance on the property shall be charged with an infraction and subject to a fine of up to \$300.

I think it is very important that we begin the year by properly storing our garbage, so we do not create an atmosphere that attracts bears to the townsite area. If you see a bear within the townsite, please notify the Haines Borough Police Department, and we will take action to dissuade the bear from remaining within town. Once a bear gets used to finding garbage at a certain location, he is much more likely to return there and it is much more difficult for the police to convince the bear to permanently leave the area.

Let's start the year off right! If you have any questions about this ordinance, please feel free to contact the Haines Borough Police Department at 766-2121

Gary A. Lowe
Chief of Police
Haines PD

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ALASKA SIDE GIFTS & MORE MOVES

(Continued from page 1)

to heat and has good lighting. When people come in the front door they'll see our FTD Florist shop. We have a whole room for Hallmark cards and products, and another whole room for toys and gifts."

"In the old place, our florist shop was at the back counter," says Podsiki, "In the new place, folks will see the flowers when they come in the front door."

At the time of this writing, the new store is still being set up. The main counter is just inside the door, with

adjoining rooms. To the right is a room filled with Hallmark cards and products. Farther back is another room with children's toys and garments, and to the left is a whole room with the high-end consignment artwork from Sue Folletti's store.

Rumors of the closing of yet another Haines business had some residents worried, but The Alaska Side will still be around. They're making some adjustments to improve their business – and it looks like they're here to stay.

ON RAISING TAXES

(Continued from page 2)

To increase the tax burden on individuals is a sure way to slow an already faltering economy and help some folks decide to go elsewhere. Whether we increase dockage fees (an indirect tax,) allow fuel taxes to balloon with the price of gas, raise

property assessments, or dream up new tax schemes, taking money out of our pockets has an overall dampening effect on the local economy. We need to pay enough taxes to support necessary government, but no more. We cannot tax ourselves into prosperity.

Community Pride Week

Community Pride Week in Haines has kicked off with several individuals and a few groups already picking up bags at Haines Sanitation to fill with trash or recyclables. The community clean up begins April 29 and runs through May 9.

New for 2011 is a blue recyclables-only bag for plastics and aluminum cans. The traditional yellow bags are for non-recyclable trash. Trash must be collected from community areas such as roadsides, ditches, fields, vacant lots, public parks, etc.

Non-profits earn \$3/bag and individuals can credit their bags to a non-profit or use them to earn one of twenty dump passes that will be given by Haines Sanitation. The 2011 king and queen will also awarded a dump pass and a \$25 gift certificate to the restaurant of their choice.

Filled bags can be dropped off at the Haines Sanitation office Monday - Friday 8 a.m.— 5 p.m. or taken to the landfill Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday 8 a.m.—2 p.m. Participants in the program are asked to not leave filled trash bags on the side of the road or around stop signs.

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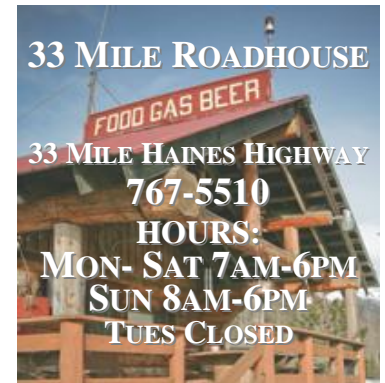
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Haines Borough, Haines, Alaska

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For more information please contact
Steve Ritzinger
Planning & Zoning Technician
766-2231 ext. 23
sritzinger@haines.ak.us

Posted 4/27/11

Julie Cozzi, Borough Clerk