



Photo by Nils Hahn

EAST BEACH WORKOUT—Nicole Mertz, second to right, with the NSHC CAMP department took her Mad Muscles fitness class to East beach on Monday, July 17 for a workout.

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Department of Defense awards Graphite One \$37.5 million

By Megan Gannon
Graphite One is getting a big injection of taxpayer dollars to support its mine development. The U.S. Department of Defense announced on Monday that it will award Graphite One \$37.5 million to help fund the company's feasibility study.

The grant uses funds from last year's Inflation Reduction Act and is made possible under the Korean War-era Defense Production Act, or DPA.

Last year, the Biden administra-

tion invoked the DPA to list several minerals, including graphite, as "essential to national defense." Under Title III of the DPA, more federal funds are now available for private ventures that seek to extract and produce those minerals domestically.

According to the announcement from the Department of Defense, this new grant "will allow Graphite One to fast-track their feasibility study by a full year, informing and expediting decisions to move the project further through their plans for a complete

U.S.-based graphite anode supply chain."

Mike Schaffner, Graphite One's senior vice president in charge of mining operations, said the company still aims to have its feasibility study finished by December 2024 as previously discussed in the last community meeting held in Nome, on April 20.

"We assumed having adequate funding in the community presentation," Schaffner told the Nugget in an email. "Had we not received the

grant or been able to raise the funding, it would have delayed the project."

Schaffner said Graphite One applied for this funding, adding that the company will have to provide matching funds for the grant, which means Graphite One will spend \$75 million and then be reimbursed for half. The company has 18 months to complete this work for the feasibility study.

The Department of Defense was not able to respond before press time

with more information about its agreement with Graphite One.

In that feasibility study, Graphite One will further outline its plans for an open-pit mine in the Graphite Creek deposit on the northern slopes of the Kigluaik Mountains. The company's crew has been busy this summer drilling cores to better define the resource. Under the company's latest plan outlined in its pre-feasibility study, Graphite One

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Photo by Logan Hebel

BROTHERLY LOVE—Owen and Paris Hebel compete in the car pull at last week's WEIO event in Fairbanks. Paris won third place in the event. See more photos on page 8.

Nome works through a month of internet disruption

By Anna Lionas

Since the June 11 failure of the Quintillion fiber optic cable, Nome's residents, businesses and government have been trying to find solutions to retain some sort of internet connectivity to keep commerce and everyday business flowing at reduced speeds. Following the outage, Fastwyre and GCI have worked to improve their cellular and internet services.

"Part of GCI's philosophy is to always have a backup," said Chief Communications Officer at GCI Heather Handyside. Once the Quintillion fiber broke it took around eight hours to transfer traffic from the fiber optic network to GCI's TERRA network. This restored a baselevel of network service, but the TERRA network is very close to being at capacity. "It's just a highway that is full of cars," said Handyside. "The more people on the network, the slower the traffic."

GCI is working to reroute the internet traffic by upgrading current equipment to improve users' experiences until the Quintillion line is restored. Handyside also said technicians at GCI's central management center are monitoring the digital traffic and rerouting it during the busiest times of day. All private consumer services are treated the same, said Handyside, but there are businesses that pay for backup services in case of an outage. "In those cases when we've committed to a certain level of service, we provide it," said Handyside.

Following the outage, the City of Nome's and NJUS' internet were down for 10 days. Mayor John Handeland began working with Fastwyre because it's the city's internet provider. Fastwyre has organized six satellite receiver dishes that are

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Nome's cruise season kicks off with arrival of MS Roald Amundsen

By Megan Gannon

On Tuesday, Nome saw its first cruise ship visit of the year. Hurtigruten Expeditions' MS Roald Amundsen docked in port for a changeover day for two groups of luxury cruise ship passengers—one group of nearly 400 people was leav-

ing, another group about the same size was just boarding.

"Everybody seems really happy today—everything's on schedule," said Robin Johnson of Nome Discovery Tours, which coordinated the visit. She was standing in front of a pair of school buses outside of Old St. Joe's and directed passengers to get on the bus that would take them to the airport.

The Mini Convention Center was open as a hospitality center. Nearby, the tourists could meet the sled dog team of the Arctic Sky Kennel.

On the East side of town, Bill Potter offered a gold panning demonstration.

Passengers were also free to visit the Carrie M. McLain Memorial Museum and the National Park Service office or go shopping at Maruskiya's and Naataq Gear.

A lunch was catered by Bering Tea at Old St. Joe's, and their tomato

bisque has been a hit among guests.

"We have people that come back two years later on another cruise and ask if we still have the soup," Johnson said.

The Roald Amundsen's visit marked the first of 12 more scheduled cruise ship visits for this year.

"About five years ago, we had three or four in the summer, so the numbers are definitely growing," Johnson said. "We had 12 last summer, too. There were seven more scheduled for this summer, but because they were going into Russian waters, they were canceled."

Nome might have seen an additional visit this summer if the sea ice broke apart sooner. A late May visit from the Scenic Eclipse had to be cancelled due to ice conditions in the region, said Harbormaster Lucas

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Photo by Megan Gannon

DISCOVERY TOURS — Robin Johnson and Diana Adams help cruise ship passengers navigate Nome.

On the Web:

www.nomenugget.net

E-mail:

Diana@nomenugget.com

