Kodiak Still Hoping For UAF Research Ship

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Erik Wander/KMXT

Contrary to recent reports that a University of Alaska Fairbanks' School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences research vessel will be homeported in Seward, Kodiak Island Borough officials say the borough may still be in the running to attract the vessel to Kodiak.

Last week, it was reported that the new, 242-foot research vessel, to be funded by federal economic stimulus money, would be operated by the University out of Seward. However, borough assemblywoman Pat Branson said that after a bit of research on the part of Borough Manager Rick Gifford and Mayor Jerome Selby, hope remained for Kodiak to lure the vessel here.

-- (Branson 1 19 sec. "We were trying to read ... was not necessarily the case.")

Speaking at the assembly's work session Thursday, city harbormaster Marty Owen said that while he supports the concept of homeporting the vessel in Kodiak, the city simply does not have the facilities to make that happen.

-- (Owen 1 48 sec. "We could have it come on ... have to have her at the dock.")

Gifford said that he spoke with the dean of UAF's School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences and learned that the University had not yet made a commitment with Seward, although it has submitted a proposal. He said when UAF put their proposal together with the National Science Foundation for the vessel, it included three different locations as homeport options.

-- (Gifford 1 27 sec. "One was Seward, one was ... Railroad dock in Seward.")

Branson acknowledged Owen's concerns and said Selby sought alternatives the borough

could offer in a potential proposal to
the University, namely docking the vessel at the Lash dock on Women's Bay.

-- (Branson
2 34 sec. "Jerome really picked up the ... base, which is fisheries.")

Gifford said the
borough will contact the university and make its intentions to submit a
proposal known.

-- (Gifford
1 15 sec. "Mayor Selby, you know ... we'd like you to consider it.")

The next step in
that plan would be for the Lash Corporation, which owns and operates the dock,
to write a proposal with the borough's backing. Gifford said the City of Kodiak's involvement at this point would
simply be support. Branson said she believes there is understanding on the part
of the city of the need for bringing the vessel to Kodiak. She said that if
the city was not responsible for providing a facility for the vessel or building
a new dock, they would likely be supportive.

I'm
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