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# 1Q loss: 183M

*Store Norske deficits continue at record rate despite layoffs due to low coal prices and production*

**By MARK SABBATINI**  
**Editor**

They expected bad news and there will be more of it before – and if – it gets better.

Store Norske, hovering on the edge of bankruptcy, is reporting a 183.3-million kroner loss before taxes during the first quarter of 2015 due primarily to low coal production and prices. The company suffered a 45.5-million-

**'Double moralists':** Parliament leaders say hypocrisy about nixing coal investments and supporting Store Norske bailout is proper

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kroner loss during the first quarter last year before the price crisis resulted in a record loss of 537 million kroner at the end of the year.

"The result is in accordance with the budget," Store Norske Administrative Director Wenche Ravlo stated in an e-mail interview. "We had budgeted for lower prices and lower production in relation to 2014, and that is reflected in the results as expected."

The first-quarter report states the mining company has an available liquidity 175 million

**See CRISIS, page 4**

The sun sets over the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in a scene from the documentary "Seeds of Time," which debuted in theaters earlier this month. The vault and the efforts by agriculturalist Cary Fowler to stock it with seed species from around the world are the focus of the movie, which is getting mixed reviews from media critics.



MARI TEFRE / HUNGRY INC.

# GROWING PAINS

*Svalbard seed vault's status as savior or saboteur gets new media scrutiny as movie debuts*

**By MARK SABBATINI**  
**Editor**

The good: A "daring rescue" of seeds in worn-torn Syria that may ensure the country's future food production. The bad: a rusted re-

frigerator part at the seeds' new home in Svalbard that "for a few horrible moments (suggested) the future of human civilization was in jeopardy." The mixed: the drama of our possible "mass extinction" of meals is getting big-screen exposure, but critics aren't finding it all that palatable.

Debate about the Svalbard Global Seed Vault's role as a savior or saboteur in preserving the world's food supply in the event of a

catastrophe has raged since before the facility opened seven years ago. But the war in Syria, which threatens to destroy that country's seed stores, plus a documentary that began screening in theaters last week are putting the vault in the spotlight again and exposing new angles of the controversy.

"Seeds of Time" by filmmaker Sandy McLeod focuses primarily on the vault, and the

**See SCRUTINY, page 3**

## Fear gays, not guns?



'Russia's tanks don't need visas'

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## Out of sight...



Send Syria's refugees to Svalbard?

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## Norovirus outbreak



Hospital treats nearly 20 after Syttende Mai

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## Our new overlord



Kjerstin Askholt to be governor of Svalbard  
**icepeople.net**

## Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

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## Copyright stuff

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## Corrections policy

When we screw up you'll know about it – on the front page. One of the big complaints about newspapers is they tend to bury corrections and clarifications deep inside where few people who read the original article see them. If we need to fix something, an alert box on the front page will state what story is in error and where the full correction is printed.

## Submitting material

Letters, columns, photos and other material are welcome, but we can't offer pay for published items since nobody here is getting paid at the moment. Submissions in electronic form (text, Word documents, JPEGs, etc.) are highly preferred, although typing and/or scanning of items will be considered on a per-case basis. We reserve the right to edit submissions for length, clarity, accuracy, libel and other reasons, but we will also make every reasonable effort to contact the author about any changes prior to publication.

## If it's a choice of these guys or the guys below...



PRIVATE

Ida Christine Aske Lima, an employee at Kroa, poses with Pete and Bret Leduc, both of Los Angeles, inside Fruene during a visit by the men to Longyearbyen this week. The men are wearing custom t-shirts they obtained in 2013 for their foreign travels. Pete's advice on ensuring a visitor lives up to the shirts' boast: "The stupid thing I find myself doing is complaining how expensive everything is." On the other hand, they actually ask where the bathroom is, unlike the parade of tourists doing the deed in questionable places outdoors that we exhibited in this space last week.

## Icesheet

### Random bits of the week's weirdness:

Russia's deputy internet troll is back and feeding orts and droppings to our superficial media souls by **declaring "Russia's tanks don't need visas" when visiting places like Svalbard.** Dmitry Rogozin, responding Saturday on Russian state TV to concerns about increasingly aggressive activity in the Arctic, basically told Norway to screw themselves as it plans to enact tougher entry restrictions to Svalbard after his unwanted visit here in April. "So what if they won't give us visas, put us on sanctions list," he said before tossing in the tank remark. He said the West "is afraid of the fact that we have started looking around, at our enormous territory." What we should fear, he added in one of infamous Twitter messages, is the West will "fall under the weight of Islamic State and gays." Because those two seem like such a natural alliance ... Much as we poke fun the revival of certain Soviet-era antics, there's nothing amusing when real repression occurs – and in this case it's happening on our side of the border as **Norwegian government officials are stripping the online newspaper BarentsObserver, which provides some of the best "outside" coverage of Svalbard, of its right to publish**



RIA NOVOSTI

**Gays are coming to destroy you!** Not that we care about the sexual habits of our conquerors, but we're wondering why Russia's deputy PM felt the need to share that particular detail.

**without censorship. That has prompted the publishing of our first-ever editorial** ([tinyurl.com/nadaxoe](http://tinyurl.com/nadaxoe)) as we and pretty much every other journalism entity in Norway are denouncing the decision. *BarentsObserver* is essentially owned by Norway's three northernmost county governments, but that's no excuse when objective coverage of what's happening between Norway and Russia is more important than ever.

## Be part of Longyearbyen's growing future!

Polar Permaculture has a vision to develop a resilient and healthy community while reducing our impact on the environment. Our team of experts are creating solutions for organic food growing, transformation of waste streams and engaging our community. Work is commencing on our greenhouse project now. Could you be part of the solution? We would love to hear from you.



Polar Permaculture

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MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Cary Fowler, an agriculturalist who is the focal point of the documentary "Seeds of Time," shows seed samples from Syria to a visitor during a 2013 tour inside the Svalbard Global Seed Vault.

## Vault debate keeps growing

**SCRUTINY, from page 1**

efforts of agriculturalist Cary Fowler to preserve seed species by working with organizations and governments worldwide. Numerous news, magazine and other media are offering an in-depth focus on the vault as a result, including a lengthy profile published May 20 in *The Guardian* that opens with a harrowing antidote about how a simple malfunction threatened the seeds in what's supposed to be a "disaster-proof backup" for other gene banks.

Robert Bjerke, a Statbygg employee monitoring the vault's systems on a computer Dec. 16, 2014, noted the storage room temperature was -16C rather than the optimal -18C, according to the article. He discovered the entire cooling system had shut down due to a rusting

electrical connection and by the time a technician arrived from Tromsø the next day the temperature was -14.5C.

Worse, the technician told Bjerke the part was made in Italy and would not be obtainable after Christmas. But "the same technician also serviced the local supermarket in Longyearbyen and knew its freezer had a similar component" that was borrowed as a temporary fix.

"What if there was a bigger glitch – one that could not be fixed by borrowing a part from the local shop?" *The Guardian* asked. "There is now a growing body of opinion that the world's faith, in Svalbard and the Crop Trust's broader mission to create seed banks, is misplaced."

**There's more! Visit [www.icepeople.net](http://www.icepeople.net) for the complete story.**

## Send Syria's refugees to Svalbard?

*Proposal by Progress Party leader denounced by locals as heartless and impractical*

**By MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

Svalbard is already a haven for Syria's crops that are under threat in the war-torn country. Now it's being suggested thousands of refugees fleeing the country be sent to the archipelago as well.

Norway will accept 10,000 refugees from Syria during the next two years under a plan supported by a majority of Parliament. Christian Eikeland, group leader for the Progress Party in Vest-Agder, is suggesting they be sent to a camp in Svalbard because mainland cities lack the capacity for them. But local officials and residents say Svalbard lacks the legal, medical and other facilities the refugees need – and the plan is about the party's opposition to them.

**There's more! Visit [www.icepeople.net](http://www.icepeople.net) for the complete story.**

### HEADLINES STOLEN FROM **SVALBARDPOSTEN** VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

#### Norovirus infects about 20 after holiday; cause unknown

About 20 people were treated for norovirus infections during the days immediately after this year's Syttende Mai celebration, according to Longyearbyen health officials who said the origin of the outbreak is unknown. Guests with two separate groups at an eatery in Longyearbyen sought treatment May 18 and 19 after suffering symptoms including vomiting and diarrhea, said John Shaft Bilicz, head of the medical department at Longyearbyen Hospital. Although initial speculation was the patients were infected at the eatery, Bilicz said that does not appear to be the case and determining the origin of the virus will likely not be possible.

#### Part of Vei 222 blocked due to collapse caused by leak

A leak in the city's hot-water pipe heating system caused a section of Vei 222 to collapse this week, forcing officials to block the section while the extent of the damage is assessed. The pipe runs along the middle of a street between seven rows of apartment complexes and the leakage resulted in a long crack, but no buildings were damaged and the leak itself has been stopped. "We discovered it during the winter and when the snow melted we saw that it was much larger," said Kjersti Holte, the city's technical director

#### Imtech gets 5K for being first eco-certified local builder

Imtech got a surprise gift of 5,000 kroner from the Longyearbyen Community Council for becoming the first local construction company to be Eco-Lighthouse certified. The certification, Norway's most widely used for recognizing environmental and social responsibility efforts, was approved earlier this month. "This is important for us," said Ryno Hansen, the company's general manager. "We can now document that we are focusing on the external environment and the working environment." The money from the council is for being one of the first ten local entities to achieve certification. Basecamp Spitsbergen, The Governor of Svalbard and Svalbard Husky have also been certified.

## Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Mostly clear. NW winds to 22 km/h. High 0C (-6C wind chill), low 1C (-3C wind chill).	Cloudy. W winds to 32 km/h. High 1C (-4C wind chill), low -1C (-6C wind chill).	Cloudy. SW winds to 32 km/h. High 3C (-2C wind chill), low 1C (-4C wind chill).	Cloudy. W winds to 29 km/h. High 3C (-1C wind chill), low 0C (-5C wind chill).
24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight

**Extended forecast:** Sunday, cloudy, 3C (0C), 1C (-3C), light 24:00h; Monday, p. cloudy, 3C (-1C), 2C (-1C), light 24:00h; Tuesday, p. cloudy, 3C (0C), 2C (-1C), light 24:00h; Wednesday, rain, 2C (-1C), 2C (-3C), light 24:00h

Data provided by storm.no



INGE BAKKELAND / STORE NORSKE

Store Norske miners work on a processing machine in a company photo explaining its health and safety procedures. Accidents were a trouble spot for the company during the first quarter of 2015 as the injury rate was four times higher than projected. The calculation is based on the number of work hours lost due to three incidents resulting in injuries during the quarter. Store Norske's "H-value" was 20, compared to its goal of five and the average of 8.3 for Norway's mining industry.

## Store Norske's fate a year away

### CRISIS, from page 1

kroner, compared to 269 million a year ago.

Store Norske is expected to receive a 500-million-kroner bailout package from the government to ensure operations can continue through 2016. But the company's first-quarter report also repeats dire warnings from government and other analysts that its future beyond that is in peril if prices don't rebound.

The company has laid off about 100 of its 340 employees this year and ceased operations at its Lunckefjell mine, which was envisioned as the primary production site during the next few years when it opened last year.

The mine is still seen as a potential savior because it contains industry-quality coal that sells for higher prices than energy-quality coal. But Store Norske's report states a decision about resuming production – and therefore staying in business – needs to be made by the

spring of 2016.

"After this it will require such a large inflow of additional liquidity that it will be difficult to implement, and coal activity will therefore cease during 2016," the company's report states.

Production is continuing at Svea, with 152,000 tons of coal produced during the first quarter compared to 285,000 tons last year, but deposits there are expected to be quickly depleted. Furthermore, prices for the coal there are about \$60 a ton, but \$15 a ton below what the company needs to break even.

One good bit of news in the report is production at Mine 7 increased about by 1,000 tons, or eight percent, compared to a year ago, although that represents only a small percentage of the company's overall production.

**There's more! Visit [www.icepeople.net](http://www.icepeople.net) for the complete story.**

### SHORTLISTED FOR THE BAILEYS WOMEN'S PRIZE FOR FICTION

'AMBITIOUS,  
PROPULSIVE,  
ADDICTIVE,  
ASTONISHING'  
*New York Times*



'CHANGES THE  
WAY WE SEE  
OUR WORLD'  
*Sunday Times*



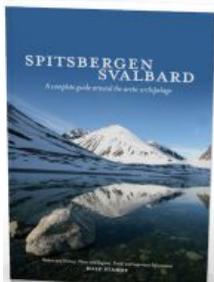
"This book does not only cover **comprehensive** information concerning all fields of possible interest, but is at the same time a photo book containing many color images to illustrate many wildlife and flower species and to document landscapes and places from all over the archipelago."

- Reader review

## THE complete guidebook by the complete guide



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## What's up

### May 26

7 p.m.: Evening Mass and fireplace social. Svalbard Church.

### May 27

6 p.m.: Movie: "Mad Max: Fury Road," U.S. action/adventure, ages 15 and up Kulturhuset.

### May 28

6 p.m.: Public tour of Kunsthall Svalbard featuring "Glacier" exhibit by Joan Jonas. Svalbard Museum.

### May 30

Noon-4 p.m.: Open day at KSAT, including children's activities. Free shuttle bus from Svalbardbutikk.

6 p.m.: Cultural exchange show featuring performers from Barentsburg. Kulturhuset.

### May 31

5 p.m.: Movie: "SPY," U.S. comedy, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

7 p.m.: Movie: "San Andreas," U.S. action, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

### June 1

8 p.m.: Trivia quiz. Barentz Pub.

### June 2

7 p.m.: Longyearbyen Community Council meeting.

### June 3

6 p.m.: Movie: "SPY," U.S. comedy, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

### June 4

6 p.m.: Public tour of Kunsthall Svalbard featuring "Glacier" exhibit by Joan Jonas. Svalbard Museum.

### June 7

5 p.m.: Movie: "Pitch Perfect 2," U.S. comedy/musical, all ages. Kulturhuset.

7:30 p.m.: Movie: "Disney Tomorrowland – A World Beyond," U.S. adventure/fantasy, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

### June 10

8 a.m.-8 p.m.: Longyeardagen

## What's online

Icepeople.net provides daily updates of news about Svalbard and the world's polar regions, plus extras for articles from the print edition. Among the latest news:

- Tromsø ending traditional seal hunt
- U.S. Arctic drilling auditor picked by Shell
- Russian bombers buzz Sweden's border
- Greenland OKs same-sex marriage