



# '13 budget: North lucky

*15 percent increase for region reflects its 'top strategic priority' status as warming takes effect*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

Here's a rebuttal to those alarmed the Arctic may have passed the climate change "tipping

point" this year that's factually unassailable: Lots of cold, hard cash.

While cutbacks and even bankruptcies are continuing their years-long trend among governments worldwide, Norway plans to boost its spending in the High North by 15 percent in 2013 as the region has emerged as the country's top strategic priority. The proposed budget contains numerous prominent items for Svalbard, in-

cluding another large payment for Longyearbyen's new power plant, two large helicopters for the governor's office, and 45.6 million for an Earth observatory in Ny-Ålesund.

"The North remains the government's main strategic priority and this budget proposal helps implement key objectives of the High North policy," said Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide in a

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## Bidding for big benefits

*Auction highlights month of fundraising events in effort to fight human rights violations*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

Here's a chance to throw a whale of a slumber party for you and 13 friends. Or get three intimate ones to heat things up in your own inflatable spa. Or round up 34 for a tour using the governor's boat, nine for a private catered evening at the Svalbard Museum or four for an expert-guided ice cave expedition.

And not to spoil the mood, but taking a moment to think about victims of human rights

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MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Runners take off from the starting line of the inaugural relay race to raise funds as part of the annual NRK telethon. Fifteen teams participated in the five-stage event, with the Longyearbyen Fire Department prevailing despite their somewhat heavy "racing" outfits.

### Inside

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## Is our 'mayor' moving up?

*First woman to lead municipal council gets push as head of regional party – Parliament next?*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

A year ago Christin Kristoffersen surprised nobody by becoming the first woman to head Longyearbyen's municipal council. This year she may surprise almost everybody by winning an election that could put her in Parliament next year.

What looked like a two-man battle for the top  
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MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Christin Kristoffersen, right, accepts the keys to the leader's office of Longyearbyen's municipal council from departing leader Kjell Mork as she presides over her first meeting last October.

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

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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.

## These are the Northern Lights. Seriously...



BBC

Dag Lorentzen, left, a professor at the University Centre in Svalbard, uses a drawing in the snow to explain to BBC Science Editor David Shukman how solar storms affect the Earth's magnetic field to create the aurora borealis. Solar storms observed this week are being studied by scientists in Svalbard to see why they disrupt satellite navigation systems. The flare-ups can distort signals from global positioning satellites, affecting measurements by tens of meters. Video of the demonstration and other coverage is at [www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-19898445](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-19898445).

## Icesheet

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

Most restaurants inevitably hit a few bumps in the road when getting started, but we don't see many wanting to highlight them as part of their long-term business plan. But **the folks starting Arctic Tapas, who were tight-lipped when initially revealing plans to open the new eatery, turn out to have no fixed location in mind at all. Instead, the restaurant will consist of two buses, a decorated passenger bus serving the food during tours and another housing a commercial kitchen, according to The Local Paper of Sustenance.** "The concept is to serve small Arctic delicacies to complement a magnificent guided bus tour between Svalbard's points of interest," the backers wrote in a license application to the Longyearbyen Community Council. The eatery received a 275,000-kroner award this summer from Innovation Norway, which praised the concept as "so special that it would enhance diversity and not steal from the companies that are already in Longyearbyen." The municipal council, however, isn't quite ready to endorse the project, wanting to see if it passes things like labor and alcohol licensing requirements, and explains how aspects such as where buses will be parked when idle, what utility hookups they will seek and how goods are stored ... The most-excellent rewards of global warming just keeps coming in waves. Besides the huge increase for our area in next year's national budget, there's **this primer on Surfology® 101 published by *Surflife* magazine, which declares the "death spiral for summertime Arctic ice" before the year 2050 to be righteous.** "Surfing a newly opened Arctic will be about much more than the surf itself," the article notes. "Arctic surf will offer the extraordinary experience of riding waves at spots that



CATERS NEWS AGENCY

**Killer vacation, dude:** This Lofoton Islands surfer may be bringing his board north for even more bodacious breakers in Svalbard if experts in "surfology" prove right about the impacts of climate change on the waves.

have never been ridden before, in an ocean that's mainly been locked under ice for at least the last few millennia. So if you have an appetite for adventure and want a chance to see climatological change in action, then head north to the Arctic! It's the end of the world!" ... Captivating as that writing is, we're guessing it won't be the winner of another opportunity to head north in a *National Geographic Traveler* essay contest. Aspiring **authors are asked to submit a 300-word essay about "their most inspirational travel experience for the chance to win an unforgettable writing commission to Spitsbergen**, courtesy of Quark Expeditions worth £10,000! The piece doesn't have to be based on somewhere exotic; it just needs to be a fresh and informative perspective of a destination, whether it be glamping in Cornwall or an intrepid rainforest trip in Colombia." OK, the value is a bit diminished if you already live here, but taking a boat trip around the island and getting your experience published is still sweet. The deadline is Jan. 18.



PER ANDREASSEN / SYSSSELMANNEN

Rescuers with the Svalbard governor's office prepare to airlift two men back to Longyearbyen after their expedition was thwarted by storms during the winter of 2011. Two new helicopters are part of a proposed 15 percent increase in funding for the High North in Norway's 2013 budget.

## Big budget hike for Svalbard in 2013

### SPENDING, from page 1

prepared statement. "Norway will play a leading role in the development of the North and the Arctic with our neighbors, allies and partners, said the Foreign Minister.

The proposed budget for the High North is nearly two billion kroner, an increase of about 290 million kroner for 2012. Norway is projecting a budget surplus of about 250 billion kroner, a sharp contrast to the financial turmoil being experienced by many European Union countries.

"Despite a difficult global economic environment, the Norwegian economy continues to do well," said Finance Minister Sigbjørn Johnsen in a prepared statement.

The budget includes 15.4 million kroner for a new coal power plant in Longyearbyen that's necessary to meet treatment requirements of the Climate and Pollution Agency. The plant, which received 14.6 million kroner in 2012, is scheduled for completion in 2014.

Providing the governor's office with two large helicopters to improve response times and crew safety during rescue and other related operations is also proposed. At present the office has one large and one medium-size helicopter. A new helicopter hanger costing 14 millioner kroner is also part of the proposed upgrade.

The proposed budget does reject some items sought by local officials, such as 200,000 kroner to purchase housing for Svalbard Muse-

um employees. "To get qualified personnel, we need to provide housing at an affordable price," Museum Director Tora Hultgreen told *Svalbardposten*.

Also included in the proposed budget is:

- An initial allocation of 75 million kroner for a new ice-class research vessel that will be home-ported in Tromsø. The total cost of the vessel is 1.4 billion kroner.

"The aim is for Norway to be a leader in the field of knowledge on the High North," Eide said. "The new research vessel will be important for environmental and polar research and for the mapping of natural resources. Increased activity in the region as a result of the retreating ice in our marine and coastal areas makes this investment particularly relevant."

- An allocation of 3.4 million kroner to allow 20 more students at The University Centre in Svalbard. The total proposed amount for UNIS is 112.2 million kroner to UNIS.

- A total of 40 million kroner for the Research Council of Norway's Polar Research program, 90 million kroner to support the MARE-ANO program for mapping the seabed in Norwegian waters, 25 million kroner to follow up on the national strategy for marine bioprospecting, and 40 million kroner for the continued mapping of mineral resources in northern Norway.

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

## HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

### Lompensenteret for sale after 10M kroner of improvements

The owners of Lompensenteret are putting the shopping center at the center of Longyearbyen on the market after making about 10 million kroner of improvements since they purchased it in 2004. "There remains, however, in the coming years, improvements that may contribute to a further increase of the number of tenants, revenue and earnings," wrote Store Norske and Eiendomsinvestor, co-owners of the building, in a statement released Monday. "(We) are seeking to prioritize investment in other primary sectors." A sale is dependent on a good price and "if the process does not achieve that result (we) will continue our ownership and develop Lompensenteret in collaboration with current and future tenants."

### Oktoberfest an absolute buzz thanks to more than suds

With fiery leather pants, cheeky cleavage – and, of course, lots of suds – this year's Oktoberfest in Longyearbyen was the most popular since its inception in 2009. The final day "was even so full that we had to shut the tent for new guests," said Stein-Ove Johannessen, overseers of the three-day event in a tent at the Radisson Blu Polar Hotel. "The tent can accommodate 250 people and it's the first time it has happened." It's the first year the festival has made a profit and Johannessen said complaints during the inaugural year made it clear a greater focus on music and food, instead of beer, was essential to the event's survival.

### Book documents a century of women making Arctic history

"Polar Heroines," a new book in Norwegian by Sigri Sandberg Meløy, is attempting to bring a fairer historical accounting of the fairer sex. "I've been a bit ambivalent about polar literature and experiencing it as a little one sided," she said. "Tired, frozen men who strive forward." Her book focuses on seven women who have characterized polar history in various ways during the past 100 years. "In their notes are feelings, nature descriptions and even poetry," she said. "They are not as concerned with building themselves up as heroes."

## Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Cloudy. SE winds to 29 km/h. High 4C (0C wind chill), low 0C (-4C wind chill).	Rain/snow. Variable winds to 29 km/h. High 1C (-3C wind chill), low -5C (-10C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. Variable winds to 22 km/h. High -4C (-9C wind chill), low -8C (-13C wind chill).	Snow. S winds to 22 km/h. High -1C (-4C wind chill), low -4C (-8C wind chill).
Sunrise 8:45a; sunset 4:41p	Sunrise 8:53a; sunset 4:32p	Sunrise 9:01a; sunset 4:23p	Sunrise 9:10a; sunset 4:14p
<b>Extended forecast:</b> Sunday, cloudy, 2C (-4C), -1C (-6C), light 6:46h; Monday, rain/snow, 1C (-4C), -1C (-6C), light 6:27h; Tuesday, p. cloudy, -1C (-5C), -5C (-10C), light 6:07h; Wednesday, cloudy, 1C (-4C), -1C (-6C), light 5:46h			

Data provided by storm.no



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Tone Lise Slejanse, visiting from Brønnøysund, looks at used clothes for sale during the annual flea market Saturday at The University Center in Svalbard, one of a month-long series of events to raise funds for Amnesty International's efforts to fight human rights violations abroad.

## Auction highlight of fundraisers

### TELETHON, from page 1

violations abroad during the merriment is a decent idea. They might not be part of the indulgence, but they'll be benefiting from it.

The novelty offerings are among more than 80 items for bid during the annual auction Sunday at the Radisson Blu Polar Hotel. The event is typically the most popular local event during a month of fundraisers intended to supplement an annual telethon hosted by NRK, with this year's proceeds going to Amnesty International.

Longyearbyen typically raises by far the most per-resident among towns in Norway hosting events before the telethon, scheduled this year on Oct 21. Lene Villumsen, presiding over this year's events for the first time, said that trend appears on track to continue.

"We have raised nearly 200,000 kroner – and that is fantastic," she wrote in an e-mail interview. "Compared to previous years...well, if I compare activity with activity there is a tendency of less money, but then we have new ac-

tivities such as the relay race that have brought in a lot of money that we haven't had earlier."

The race last Saturday in the center of town featured 15 teams, many wearing "running" outfits matching their professions, raised 28,000 kroner, Villumsen wrote. Organizers are already planning to repeat the event next year.

Sunday's auction features large and small items donated by numerous entities, including local notables providing private meals, concerts and massages. There's also material items ranging from ski boots to a polar bear skin. Art projects, including three photo items by Ung Foto, are typically among the most popular.

Tours are also plentiful, from the large-group bashes to a five-day dogsledding trip to Newtontoppen for one person.

The most notable large tour is an overnight visit to Ny-Ålesund for 14 people, which includes a presentation about the research station.

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

## Kristoffersen gets push toward Parliament

### LEADER, from page 1

spot for the Labour Party's Troms district is getting a late push to elect Kristoffersen instead, according to *Nordlys*. Kari Schröder Hansen, chair of the Svalbard Labour Party, said she believes such support exists beyond Longyearbyen.

"That we would really like to happen," Hansen said. "It would simply be amazing. Christin is a great candidate and a real advocate for the North. She has the ability and capacity to look beyond just Svalbard in perspective."

"We also hear from other local groups in Troms that Christin is high on their lists, so she has very good support in other places too."

A win would make her the first Svalbard resident to lead both bodies, and regional party officials say they expect the top two candidates to advance to Parliament in next year's election.

The probability of Kristoffersen prevailing in the Troms vote is debatable. She was listed 10th out of 12 candidates when party's nominating committee made its recommendations last

month. Final recommendations will be made Nov. 1, with the party's nomination meeting scheduled Nov. 16.

But controversy arose when the nominating committee recommended Martin Henriksen for the leader's spot despite Roger Ingebrigtsen getting more votes. Candidates Bjørn Inge Mo and Tove Karoline Knutsen also got more votes than Henriksen. Dissenters claimed the move is part of an unofficial campaign to prevent Ingebrigtsen from getting a safe seat in Parliament.

Kristoffersen even gets really happy when she hears about the praise from selection committee chairman.

"I have an absolutely wonderful job where I am, but if my party...would want me to be there, I will of course," she told *Nordlys*. "I would like the opportunity to promote the North, and it is well soon time that someone comes from Svalbard."

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

## What's up

### Oct. 10

6 p.m.: Movie: "Taken 2," French action/crime dubbed in English, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Oct. 11

2 p.m.: Board of Culture and Leisure Authority meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

### Oct. 12

9 a.m.: Board of Youth Activities meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

### Oct. 13

7:30: Harvest festival, feast and concert. Huset.

### Oct. 14

11 a.m.- 3 p.m.: Open invite to new climbing tower at Kullungen kindergarten. Pancakes and drinks will also be sold. Benefit for annual NRK telethon.

6 p.m.: Auction to support annual NRK telethon. Radisson Blu Polar Hotel.

6 p.m.: Movie: "Elena," Russian drama, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

7 p.m.: Free Flow Film Tour, featuring winter sports movies. Kroa.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Flukt," Norwegian action, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Oct. 15

8 p.m.: Trivia quiz. Kulturhuset cafe.

### Oct. 16

1 p.m.: Administration Committee meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

### Oct. 17

Open day at Longyearbyen School with sales of student-made food and crafts. Benefit for annual NRK telethon. Time to be announced.

6 p.m.: Movie: "Bachelorette," U.S. comedy, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Oct. 19-21

Fifth anniversary celebration with special food and concerts. Svalbar.

## 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:

- *How many polar bears live in the Arctic?*
- *Warming means more Antarctic ice*
- *Finland may phase out coal use*
- *Diabetic, impotent polar bears dis soda*