



Most items in the electronics section of Svalbardbutikken will disappear by May 2, including appliances such as washing machines, computers, and digital music players such as iPods. Some merchandise such as video game consoles, DVD players, radios, coffee makers, vacuum cleaners and small accessories will continue to be sold.

## No more TVs and cameras

*Svalbardbutikken to stop selling most electronics, appliances; cites losses to internet buyers*

Svalbardbutikken is halting sales of computers, cameras, televisions, appliances and other electronics, with store management saying they are losing too many sales to internet shoppers.

Other factors such as high prices, the recession and moving the electronics section from a separate location at Lompensenteret into the main store in 2008 also hurt sales, according to shoppers and people familiar with the store's

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## Accidents, fires seen as major risks

*Tragedies likely to pose greater danger in Svalbard than on the mainland, governor reports*

Large-scale accidents, failure of major infrastructure, fires, landslides and telecommunications disruptions are Svalbard's largest security challenges, according to a first-ever comprehensive analysis by the governor's office.

The report issued this month examines peacetime risks, excluding incidents such as terrorism and sabotage. The goal is to use the findings as a foundation for emergency preparedness measures, Gov. Odd Olsen Ingero

wrote in an introductory statement.

"Because of our geographic location and the extreme climatic conditions that sometimes make themselves felt in Svalbard, the consequence of a failure of critical infrastructure or a personal miscalculation often are higher here than for similar events on the mainland," he wrote. "The archipelago's location in relation to mainland Norway means that we can not count and get assistance until after a certain time – at worst, it could take several days."

Svalbard is also seeing significant changes in settlement populations and from global

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Svalbard rescuers train for a large-scale accident in June of 2009. Photo by Per Andreassen.

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## Ad campaign offers chance to shine

*Company giving Wake-up Lights to Longyearbyen residents, hoping they'll blog*

Call it the bright side of advertising.

Longyearbyen residents are getting a chance to be on the lucrative end of a large-scale publicity campaign as Philips Electronics is offering free Wake-up Lights worth 1,041 kroner (yes, the actual price at many online merchants) for doing nothing more than sending an e-mail. The lights are scheduled to be handed out during a "mini-lightfest" hosted by the company this fall.

In return, the company is hoping some residents are willing to blog about their experiences with the light – good or bad – during the upcoming winter.

Alexandra Kedward, a Philips product publicity manager based in Amsterdam, said Longyearbyen was selected for the campaign because "it's one of the northernmost towns and it's kind of an interesting story."

"The objective is to put our light to the ultimate test," she said during a trip to Svalbard earlier this month to promote the effort and take photos of the area.

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## 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.

## The best medicine



Nurses lavish care on some computer-obsessed idiot newspaper editor who fell on the ice and got stranded at Longyearbyen Hospital as part of a revue spoofing the year's past events March 14 at Huset. The Western-themed musical was staged on the last day of Solfestuka, a week-long celebration of the sun's return to the town.

## Store will still sell some small electronics

### DOWNSIZE, from page 1

operations. Many said that while the decision will be an inconvenience, it won't be a significant problem buying the discontinued items online or at other stores in Longyearbyen.

"After moving from Lompensenteret I have only bought small equipment like photo paper and memory that I need fast at Svalbardbutikken," wrote Idar Je Nikolaisen, an electrician at Svea with a photography Web site, in an e-mail interview. "After (the move) the prices went up and the selection went dramatically down. Now I have moved my purchases to online stores, so it won't affect me much."

Much of the store's electronics inventory

has already been sold and isn't being restocked. Sales of discontinued items will officially end May 2, according to Morten Helliksen, the store's administrative director.

Discontinued items include large appliances such as refrigerators and washing machines, TVs, cameras, mobile phones, digital music players such as iPods, and computers and accessories such as printers and ink. The store will continue selling DVD and video game consoles, small kitchen appliances, vacuum cleaners, clocks, radios, picture frames and small accessories such as headphones.

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

## Briefly

### New robot technology livens up ocean research

New underwater robot technology has revealed "the Arctic Ocean is teeming with activity during the polar night," according to Norwegian and U.S. scientists conducting a 14-day study in Ny-Ålesund.

"This discovery will have major consequences for the future management policies in the High North," wrote Eva Jenssen, information advisor for The University Centre In Svalbard, in a press statement this week.

It has been long assumed Arctic Ocean life goes into winter "hibernation" because many biological mechanisms are dependent on light. Fixed sampling stations in Svalbard have refuted that theory in recent years, but were limited in the areas they could survey.

The new robots can take climate measurements, samples and record images along sever-

al hundred kilometers of ice-covered waters. The scientists deployed the robots in January for testing "under the harshest conditions imaginable" and will be deployed for longer projects in Svalbard as well as globally.

The full article and related research can be read at [www.unis.no](http://www.unis.no).

### Men fined, lose licenses for triggering avalanche

Two men in their 20s who triggered an avalanche while "highmarking" with snowmobiles March 13 at Hiorthfjell were fined 5,000 kroner and had their driver's licenses confiscated for three months, according to the Svalbard governor's office.

The men, whose actions violated traffic safety laws, also failed to report the accident and resulted in an unnecessary search by rescue officials.



Pim Vuik, a Philips Electronics photographer, takes landscape pictures outside Longyearbyen for an advertising campaign featuring lights the company is giving away to Longyearbyen residents this fall in the hope some will contribute to a blog about the product. Photo provided by Philips Electronics.

## Ad campaign seeking bloggers of bright

**LIGHTS, from page 1**

The lights – variations of which have been sold by different companies for many years – simulate a sunrise by gradually illuminating until a designated alarm time.

The Wake-up Light for the Longyearbyen project – introduced in 2008 – has 20 light intensity settings, and alarm sounds include an FM radio, iPod interface and "natural sounds" such as wind chimes and chirping birds. It has been cited by reviewers as pricier than some competitors' earlier models, but also without drawbacks such as noise generated by the bulb during the illumination process.

Philips has done a number of high-profile projects and promotional campaigns ranging from Big Ben to the New Year's ball in Times Square, but Kedward said this is the first such effort for the Wake-up Light.

Kedward said the company is hoping for a core group of 10 to 12 people who contribute to a heavily promoted blog, but "we want to hand out as many lights as possible" and will accept written entries from anyone interested. She said they're looking for diversity, such as moms needing to get up early and PhD students trying to improve their focus.

"If we can get a dog handler, obviously that would be great," she said.

Also being sought are people who know languages besides Norwegian including Dutch, French, German Russian and English. Kedward said people living in other Svalbard settlements will likely be considered for inclusion, even though the official campaign is designated for Longyearbyen.

The company isn't looking for people with sleep disorders because "we don't want this to be a medical experiment," Kedward said.

She said the goal is to collect submissions through the dark months, probably until the end of January.

What happens if bloggers don't like seeing the light?

"We don't want to edit that," Kedward said. "We want it to be real-life experiences."

Four company officials – one of whom had to leave early – spent several days this month taking photos, talking to media and delivering handouts promoting the giveaway. Kedward said events for the fall festival – which is when the lights will be handed out – are still being determined. But she said it may go beyond product promotion, including inviting foreign journalists to tour various research sites.

Those interested in obtaining a light or getting more information about the project can write [wakeuplongyearbyen@gmail.com](mailto:wakeuplongyearbyen@gmail.com).

## HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

### New alcohol policy allows all places to serve at 11 a.m.

Cafes and restaurants in Longyearbyen will be able to serve alcohol on equal terms starting at 11 a.m. beginning June 1 under a new policy approved by the municipal board. Current policy allows sales beginning at 5 p.m. weekdays and 1 p.m. on weekends, except for locations outside the town's center "ring" – Kroa and the Radisson Blu Polar Hotel – will can sell wine and beer at the soon-to-be-universal times of 11 a.m. and liquor at 1 p.m. "It's fantastic. It means a lot to us," said Patrik Jonsson, manager of Svalbar. "We send a lot of people away because they are not allowed to have a drink with their meal."

### Harsh winter puts severe limit on researchers' reindeer

Only 19 reindeer will be caught this year by the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research due to a harsh winter, 10 percent of the total they applied for. The Svalbard governor's office set the quota of six calves and 13 females due to poor conditions, but is still open to allowing labeling and treatment of additional animals once the condition of the first 19 are trapped. "If the animals appear to be in good shape it is important that we have a solution," said Audun Stien, an institute researcher. "It is expensive to let the scientists drive and move for several days."

### UNIS employees upset with new, pricier housing policy

A new housing policy charging different rents is resulting in complaints by employees at The University Centre In Svalbard. Current employees will continue paying 20 kroner per square meter, while employees hired in the future must pay 65 kroner, and doctoral and post-doctoral candidates must pay 150 kroner for family apartments. Monica Votvik, an employees' representative, said workers feel the decision was made without informing them. UNIS Director Gunnar Sand said employees have been informed about changes and the university must absorb a 12 million kroner budget cut, or about 10 percent.

## Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Cold and cloudy. Light winds. High -16C (-16C wind chill), low -19C (-19C wind chill).	Cloudy and cold. S winds at 4 km/h. High -17C (-18C wind chill), low -22C (-23C wind chill).	Cold with areas of sun. E winds at 8 km/h. High -18C (-20C wind chill), low -22C (-26C wind chill).	Cold and partly cloudy. ENE winds at 8 km/h. High -17C (-19C wind chill), low -21C (-27C wind chill).

**Extended forecast:** Sunday, mostly cloudy -18C (-21C), -23C (-28C); Monday, cold and partly cloudy, -18C (-23C), -16C (-17C); Tuesday, low clouds and a flurry -16C (-17C), -19C (-23C); Wednesday, cold with snow, -17C (-24C), -23C (-44C).

Data provided by [AccuWeather.com](http://AccuWeather.com)



Coal miners, such as those seen here at Svea, face risks from explosions, fires, atmosphere poisoning, floods, blockage of passageways, collisions with vehicles, falls and being crushed by equipment, according to an assessment by the Svalbard governor's office. Photo by Erik Nygaard.

## Study: One critical failure can cause more

### RISK, from page 1

warming, with the latter affecting research and commercial activity, Ingerø noted.

The report also assesses the risk from numerous other incidents such as floods, pollution and epidemics. But those of those highest concern are:

- Major mine, air and sea accidents: "Larger accidents will always emerge as the biggest challenge for the Svalbard community," the report states. "Large distances in the Arctic climate and limited resources will be critical constraints for rescue work in such situations." Several major accidents are cited as affecting the development of settlements during the past 50 years.

- Failure of critical infrastructure: "All Svalbard settlements are completely reliant on self-produced energy," according to the report. "Failure of the power supply can develop into a situation where the community's ability to function is crippled. Evacuation may be the ultimate consequence." Many infrastructure elements – such as power, heating and water – are interdependent, complicating the challenge.

- Fire in settlements: Most settlements are densely built wood housing which "combined with strong winds and limited resources to put out could develop into a raging fire with dramatic consequences for lives and health."

- Landslides: "Snow and slush avalanches represent a significant challenge," one that regularly results in loss of life, according to the report. Also, "other types of slides can be dangerous. Because of climate change, it seems that more often there will be periods of greater rainfall in a short time, which can increase the likelihood for landslides."

- Telecommunications and data failures: "A modern society is dependent on securing the supply of telecommunications services. For the health sector failure can quickly represent a danger to life and health. Rescue operations, for example, depend on working radio and/or cellular networks to operate effectively."

The Norwegian Ministry of Justice requested the assessment in March of 2009. Input was gathered from public agencies, private entities ranging from tourism to mining, and foreign

interests such as the Russia's Trust Arktikugol which oversees Barentsburg's operations. Events were ranked from "very likely" (more than once a year) to "very unlikely" (less than once every 50 years), as well as for severity of impact and cost/benefit of preventative action.

"Although our review with the project shows that there are many things that can be a readiness challenge on Svalbard, it is also important to emphasize it is safe to stay on the archipelago," the report states. "Health service works well, rescue service is good, and public and private enterprises are better equipped against fire and accidents than before."

"The expectations that it will be safe, however, have never been greater."

Accident risks from ranging from nuclear-powered icebreaker radiation leaks to toxic gasses in mines are assessed. A nuclear incident, locally or resulting from contamination elsewhere, is a category where probability is seen as low, but a series of recommendations are made due to the potentially "very serious" physical and psychological results.

Among the recommendations are adequate training in radiation protection for emergency officials, pre-storage of iodine tablets, ensuring settlements have adequate stores of water protected from contamination and equipping rescue helicopters with radiation protection equipment.

Fires are seen as a major risk not just because of the threat to life, but because they can destroy critical infrastructure and cause long-term economic disruptions. Recommendations for settlements include maintaining strong detection and response systems, and increasing focus on prevention when designing land-use plans.

The risk from ship fires, separately assessed, are largely dependent on the vessel's design and crew training, which varies by country. The nearest fire department with sea rescue capability is in Tromsø and "it will probably not be economically viable to build such a department on Svalbard."

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

## What's up

### March 23

7 p.m.: Evening Lent Mass. Svalbard Church.

### March 26

6 p.m.: Confirmation Liturgy. Svalbard Church.

### March 27 – April 4

Easter school holiday.

### March 28

11 p.m.: Confirmation Liturgy – Palm Sunday. Svalbard Church.

6 p.m.: Movie: "Tomme Tønner," Norwegian gangster comedy, ages 11 and up. Huset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "The Wolfman," U.S. horror/thriller, ages 15 and up.

### March 31

Deadline for nominations for youth cultural grants and Tyfus Statuette.

### April 1

7 p.m.: Maundy Thursday Liturgy. Svalbard Church.

### April 2

1 p.m.: Good Friday Liturgy. Vindodden.

### April 4

11 a.m.: Easter Liturgy. Svalbard Church.

### April 5

8 p.m.: Movie: "Percy Jackson And Lyntyven," U.S. family/fantasy, ages 11 and up. Huset.

### April 11

11 a.m.: Liturgy. Svalbard Church.

6 p.m.: Movie: "The Princess And The Frog," U.S. animated adventure, ages 7 and up. Huset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Velkommen," French drama, ages 11 and up. Huset.

### April 15

Deadline for 2010-11 kindergarten registration.

### April 17-18

Trappers' Trail dogsledding race.

## 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:

- *CO2 levels rising despite recession*
- *Global trade ban on polar bears rejected*
- *New light shines on North Pole ice trends*
- *'CSI: Svalbard' off to 'explosive' start*