

Opinion: ST Chamber defines goals for 2016

By Dave Jinkens

President Duane Wallace and the board of directors of the South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce held an all-day strategic and legislative planning session on Feb. 6 at the Best Western Station House Inn.

The board of directors held an extensive discussion of goals it wished to set for the organization and the legislative issues and concerns that need to be addressed by governmental bodies at all levels if we are to have a strong and viable economy that benefits all who live and work in our community. The South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce supports vigorous economic growth in the city limits and South Shore, new private-sector investment, and the retention and expansion of existing businesses in the community.



David Jinkens

We look forward to a good year in 2016. The board's legislative strategy will be a guide for chamber action in 2016 and the goals are clear and transparent. The board encourages positive and collaborative partnering opportunities with other community-minded organizations and community members. We want to build a strong local economy; foster the creation of good-paying jobs; respect the rights of the existing business owners and operators and residents (i.e.

homeowners and renters); foster and develop opportunities for community success; and help and support initiatives that create a bright future for all who live and work here. We want to grow the economy not the local tax burden. We want change that makes a positive difference for all those who live and work here, and we need the help and support of elected and appointed leaders and the community to do so.

The Legislative Strategy

- **Airport:** Support efforts that recognize the Lake Tahoe Airport as a vital regional and local transportation resource. It is a connector between the Tahoe basin and the U.S. Transportation System. It is an economic engine for the South Shore and non-aviation lands at the airport should be made available for economic growth opportunities to help our local economy, promote job growth and diversification and broaden the city's tax base.
- Recognize as well that the airport provides very high safety and emergency value to our community in a crisis situation.
- Support the idea of the return of commercial air service to South Lake Tahoe without burdening local taxpayers or businesses.
- **Arts Committee:** Form and organize an arts committee and develop an arts plan. Seek City Council support for plan implementation.
- **Building and Permitting:** Urge the adoption of regulations, policies, and fee structures that encourage and make it easier and less expensive for people to remodel and repair their homes and businesses. Streamline and expedite the processing of building permits and plan checks.
- **Business Friendly Rules:** Encourage and support timely city government initiatives and processes that update and

streamline city codes and policies to promote the success and expansion of existing businesses citywide and protect existing city businesses. Ask that city and county governments weigh new rules and regulations against their impact on the success of the existing business community.

- **Caltrans Road Repairs/Closures:** Encourage and support continued work by Caltrans to repair and improve highways serving the Lake Tahoe Basin and the South Shore. Ensure that any proposed highway closures needed provide adequate alternate routes to minimize negative impacts on the business community.

- **Campaign Contributions to City Elections/Full Disclosure:** Urge adoption by city government or by the public of full and complete campaign disclosure information and donation from all sources to candidates for City Council whether made by individuals, political action committees or businesses in state or out-of-state in order to create an open and transparent municipal election process.

- **Charitable Raffle:** Support changes in state law to allow a 50/50 formula for the operation of charitable raffles to encourage local charitable giving as was provided to professional sports teams in 2015 (i.e. by SB549).

- **Collaborate with Other Organizations:** Endeavor and work toward ways to support and cooperate with other business and charitable organizations that are working for the betterment of the entire community and in ways consistent with adopted South Tahoe Chamber goals and strategies.

- **Cross Lake Ferry:** Support in “concept” the Tahoe Transportation District to develop a cross-lake year-round ferry system between the North and South shores. The ferry would be an alternative to the vehicle to move people around the lake throughout the entire year. Examine the option of creating an auto-carrying ferry. Support funding from federal

and state sources for capital costs and operations with no burden to the local taxpayer.

- **Economic Development Corporation:** Evaluate the feasibility of forming a local economic development and/or community development corporation to assist local businesses and grow the local economy and promote the creation of quality and attractive workforce housing using state and federal grant seed money and private-sector donations.
- **Fees, Charges and Taxes:** Oppose increases in fees, charges, and taxes by any governmental agency during these times that are found to be detrimental to business owners and operators and the general public. Grow the tax base instead of the tax burden. Advocate for policymakers to have prepared an unbiased economic impact statement be made before new fees, taxes, and charges are proposed. Ensure that fees assessed by local governments do not exceed the cost to provide the service.
- **Housing:** Support initiatives to encourage the availability of safe, sanitary, and quality workforce housing in the City limits without burdening local taxpayers and identify federal and state resources to preserve and upgrade existing housing. Urge all permitting agencies to come together around the goal of significantly streamlining the process for affordable rental housing including finding ways to turn older motels into nice conversions of two-bedroom units.
- **Lighting:** Support in “concept” the installation of city street lighting in the Y area to promote the safe passage of pedestrians, encourage walking and biking, and promoting local businesses;
- **Loop Road:** Advocate for and insist on a complete and unbiased disclosure of all environmental, housing, resident and economic impacts of the proposed loop road project on the

city of South Lake Tahoe before decisions are made to give project approval. Determine if the proposed project is consistent with the city General Plan and adopted Housing Element. Provide specific and complete written answers to questions posed on behalf of the South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce and the community in regard to project impacts.

- **Meyers Area Plan:** Advocate for a complete, scientifically sound, transparent, and unbiased survey of all Meyers residents and parties before adoption of a Meyers Area Plan by local and regional governments.
- **South Y Community Plan:** Support efforts to identify reasonably and responsible and economically sound ways to implement improvements to the Y area in a business-friendly manner. Don't let the new Y plan sit on a shelf.

We look forward to working with all community-minded organizations to make South Lake Tahoe and the South Shore the best that it can be for all those who live and work here.

Dave Jinkens is the Government Affairs co-chair for the South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce.

Tahoe Queen faces fine for 2015 oil spill



Oil sheen on Lake Tahoe near the Tahoe Queen in March 2015.
Photo/Provided

By Lake Tahoe News

Aramark faces a nearly \$5,000 fine for having spilled hydraulic fluid from the Tahoe Queen into Lake Tahoe last year.

Aramark, the parent company of the paddle-wheeler based out of the Ski Run Marina in South Lake Tahoe, has until March 10 to respond. If the company disputes the fine, there will be a hearing in May.

Lahontan Regional Water Control Board could have fined the company \$10,000. Instead the penalty is \$4,983.

The spill occurred March 5, 2015. Four gallons reached the lake. Nine in total leaked from the vessel.

A resident who had taken her dog to the beach first notified officials of the problem. The animal came out of the water with an oily substance on its fur.

“When the complainant returned to the marina to identify a potential source of the oily substance, she observed an oily

and greasy-to-the-touch sheen on the water where the dog had been,” according to Lahontan documents.

According to information provided to the water board from Aramark, “Maintenance activities on the Tahoe Queen vessel’s paddlewheel had been occurring prior to the discharge event. A contractor for the discharger, Advanced Marine, was conducting the maintenance. The contractor disconnected the hydraulic lines, but the lines were not adequately capped per industry standard (i.e., steel caps). The contractor capped the lines using only plastic and duct tape to prevent dust and water from entering the lines. The contractor did not create a pressurized seal to prevent oil from spilling from the lines because the contractor believed the engine was static and would not be started.”

Will Burning Man’s extra \$3M go to the arts?

By Jenny Kane, Reno Gazette-Journal

Burning Man could pull in nearly \$3 million more in revenue this year, based on projected ticket sales.

And so far, the arts nonprofit is on track.

As controversial as Burning Man’s new \$1,200 da Vinci tickets were, they did not have a difficult time of selling during Wednesday’s sale.

The first 500 da Vinci tickets, a new tier of tickets that are three times the cost of the main tickets, were sold out as of Thursday morning, according to Burning Man spokeswoman Megan

Miller. An additional 4,900 \$990 pre-sale tickets, which were \$800 last year, also were sold out by Thursday morning.

Read the whole story

Chairlifts can be luxurious



The Orange Bubble Express at Park City in Utah was the first heated chairlift in the United States. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Megan Michelson, Outside

If you ski in Kitzbühel, Austria, this winter, you'll be treated to a chairlift ride like no other. The new Brunn eight-seat lift, which opened in December in the Pengelstein region, offers heated seats that are slip-proof and ergonomically designed with high-end leather upholstery. Each chair also comes with a clear plastic storm-proof shield and a locking safety bar.

Austrian lift manufacturer Leitner Ropeways built the chair over a ten-month period and brought in engineers from the automobile industry for their expertise in seat design. The seats' leather and foam also come from the automotive world.

"The goal was to combine high-quality materials, an ergonomic design, and cutting-edge technology," Leitner spokesperson Daniela Innerhofer told Outside. "The impetus was to offer even more comfortable chairs combined with premium design and, of course, to create something innovative."

Read the whole story

Record year for charitable giving in region

By Edward Ortiz, Sacramento Bee

Charitable giving scored a banner year in 2015 with the Sacramento Region Community Foundation, the largest area manager of charitable funds to nonprofits, posting a record year for new funds established.

The foundation operates like an investment house for charitable accounts opened by donors in Sacramento, Yolo, El Dorado and Placer counties. Foundation donors can direct grants to nonprofit groups of their choice as often as they like, or in perpetuity, in the case of endowed funds.

In 2014, the foundation saw the establishment of 44 new funds with \$5.8 million. In 2013, 33 new funds were established, and between 2008 and 2011, an average of 23 new funds were added

annually.

Read the whole story

Ex-Miss Nevada sentenced on drug charges

By Associated Press

A former Nevada beauty queen will not serve jail time for drug charges.

KVVU-TV in Las Vegas reports that Katherine Nicole Rees was sentenced to 12 to 32 months Friday, but the sentence was suspended.



Katherine Rees

Rees instead was put on probation not to exceed three years for four felony drug counts.

According to a criminal complaint, she is accused of selling methamphetamine in September 2014 and possessing more than 5 grams a month later.

The former Miss Nevada USA, who lost her title in 2006 after racy photos of her surfaced online, has faced several legal

troubles.

She and her boyfriend were arrested last September when officers found drugs and drug paraphernalia during a traffic stop.

She pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor drug charge in 2012.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Mewtoo

Mewtoo is a nice 1-year-old girl who has been at the shelter the longest of all cats, perhaps because she needs to be an only pet. She is affectionate and does like children.

Adoption fees for cats have been reduced to \$30 this month.

Mewtoo is spayed, microchipped, tested for FIV, and vaccinated. She is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go **online**.

– Karen Kuentz

EDC detectives revisiting decades-old murders

By Kathryn Reed

Carol Andersen lived in Stateline, went to Whittell High School and hung out at Regan Beach. She is buried at Happy Homestead Cemetery.

What makes her story different from other people at the South Lake Tahoe graveyard is that she was murdered and the person responsible has never been caught. Her body was found alongside a road in the South Shore on July 1, 1979.

Hers is one of more than 60 cold cases the El Dorado County District Attorney's Office is reexamining.

"We don't forget murder victims in this county. It doesn't matter if it happened last week or 30 years ago, we have an obligation to do what we can to solve those cases," District Attorney Vern Pierson told *Lake Tahoe News*.

El Dorado has a higher number of cold cases compared to most counties its size and even compared to larger areas.

Andersen's case has been made into a webisode that is posted

on the DA's Facebook page. About eight months ago the department started filming reenactments of cases in an attempt to remind people about the crime and try to trigger memories in order to garner new information.

The four-minute long films are paid for with Proposition 69 money that is collected from criminal penalties. A new one comes out each month.

Even though none of them has led to an arrest, leads are coming in on the various cases that have been profiled.

"Those are some of the toughest cases we have," Pierson said. "We've gotten good leads we are following up on. These cases take years. Tips are leading to a lot of other stuff. Every time we put one out we get a bunch of phone calls."

While DNA has been around for years, certain aspects of the technology have been refined which can provide new clues for investigators. Technology also is helpful with databases providing a wealth of information that is more immediate.

"Even back in 1991 when Jaycee Dugard was abducted some of those databases were not available back then," Pierson noted in reference to the youngster who was abducted from a bus stop in Meyers and was found alive in 2009.

All of this is an extension of the Cold Case Task Force that was formalized a few years ago with the DA's Office, South Lake Tahoe Police Department and El Dorado County Sheriff's Department. Investigators scour reams of paperwork and other evidence that has been collected.

Pierson credits their work with getting convictions in the **Richard Swanson** and **Joseph Michael Nissensohn** cases. Both were murder cases in South Lake Tahoe.

Opinion: Potty-mouths have long history in politics

By Forrest Whitman, High Country News

A pre-school teacher buddy of mine thinks Donald Trump ought to be scolded for being such a potty-mouth. She thinks no politician in history has uttered such deliberately shocking phrases. This was after Trump said that Hillary “is a loser and should be schlonged.”

She might be right about Trump, but politicians making shocking statements uttered are nothing new in the West. Some candidates have even been elected anyway – think Davis Waite, a member of the Populist Party who served as Colorado governor from 1893-95.

Waite was given to saying things like: “It is better, infinitely better, that blood should flow up to the horses’ bridles than that our national liberties should be destroyed.” That got attention 123 years ago. When candidates throw off outrageous statements like that, the press often goes “tut-tut,” but that never seems to stop the shock talk. The Denver press teased Waite unmercifully for his wild statements and he was inevitably nicknamed “old bloody bridles.” Yet he won the governorship, though he lost it badly just two years later.

Read the whole story

Lichen becomes California's latest symbol

By Emily Benson, San Jose Mercury News

California's newest state symbol adorns coastal oaks and conifers like a cloak. Birds pluck it from the branches to line their nests. Deer find it so delicious they've been known to fight over it. Scientists study it for clues about air pollution.

And now, California has turned it into the country's first official state lichen.

This year, lace lichen joined the ranks of the Golden State's 36 other official state symbols, which range from the California grizzly bear, the official state animal, to the saber-toothed cat – our official state fossil.

The California Lichen Society worked with Assemblyman Marc Levine, a Marin County Democrat, to sponsor the bill that gave lace lichen – a tangled, pale green organism named for the delicate nets growing from its tendrils' tips – its new title. Gov. Jerry Brown signed it into law last summer, and it went into effect Jan. 1.

Read the whole story