

Group launched to help Nevada thrive in development of autonomous cars



Nevada wants to be a leader
in driverless cars.
Photo/Steve Jurvetson

By Daniel Rothberg, Las Vegas Sun

An economic development organization Tuesday approved the formation of the Center for Advanced Mobility, part of a state initiative to place Nevada on the cutting edge of automobile technology at a time when the industry is quickly pushing to develop autonomous vehicles.

The center will fall under the Nevada Institute for Autonomous Systems, a nonprofit group that currently coordinates with the Governor's Office of Economic Development to oversee the state's designation as a federal drone test site and help develop the state's unmanned aerial industry.

Read the whole story

USFS to discuss off-highway vehicle grants

The Eldorado National Forest is developing preliminary applications to the Off Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division, which includes a strong emphasis on trail maintenance and repair, law enforcement across the four ranger districts, printing and distribution of the motor vehicle use maps, restoration of impacted areas, planning, and education.

The agency will be hosting an open house on Feb. 10 from 4-7pm to discuss the proposed preliminary grant applications. It will be at the Eldorado National Forest Supervisor's Office, 100 Forni Road, Placerville.

Previous grants have helped address trail repair and clearing of downed trees on more than 300 miles of OHV routes, law enforcement patrol on an additional 900 miles of native surface roads on the forest, provided for the printing of free maps, as well as other planning, development, and restoration activities.

Comments maybe emailed to Cindy Oswald at coswald@fs.fed.us.

Phone scammers able to manipulate caller ID

Washoe County Sheriff's Office has been receiving numerous reports about a phone scam in which people pose as sheriff's office personnel to fraudulently obtain money.

Scammers are using names of sheriff's office employees and

are able to manipulate the phone technology so the caller ID shows an actual sheriff's office phone number.

The scammer tells the person there is a warrant out for their arrest for a certain amount of fine. The potential victim is told to either surrender themselves to the sheriff's office for arrest, or that they may pay a reduced payment of the fine to adjudicate the warrant.

The scammer provides instruction on how the payment should be submitted, usually through an "eGift" cash card or similar payment to a specified account or name given by the caller.

Although the Washoe County Sheriff's Office will sometimes make calls to inform someone about a warrant, the office will not ask for payment over the phone or negotiate for payment in lieu of arrest.

Anyone who has suffered a loss as a result of this scam is encouraged to take down as much information as possible, such as a name and call back number, without giving any information away. Then contact the Washoe County Sheriff's Office at 775.328.3001, ext. 7.

2 suspects sought in S. Lake Tahoe homicide



Suspect No. 1:
Black, male, 6-
foot-3, 200 pounds,
late 20s-early 30s,
black hair in
braids or
dreadlocks



Suspect No. 2:
Black or mixed race
man with light
complexion, 5-
foot-8, 170 pounds,
late 20s-early 30s,
black hair with
tight curls.

South Lake Tahoe police are looking for two men who may be connected to the fatal shooting last weekend of an Amador County man.

Dennis Wright Jr., 40 was gunned down in the parking lot of the Beverly Lodge on Jan. 30 about 7:45pm. His friend Kendra Ghiorso told officers they were there to sell about 100 pounds of marijuana.

The suspects allegedly attempted to rob Wright and Ghiorso at gunpoint for the cash involved in the drug deals. Multiple shots were fired at Wright, who died that night at Barton Memorial Hospital.

The vehicle the men left in resembles a tan 2004 Chrysler Concorde or older sedan.

Anyone who may have information is asked to call 530.542.6100 or Secret Witness at 530.541.6800.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Prop bets add twist to Super Bowl

By Case Keefer, Las Vegas Sun

The thing that makes the Super Bowl so entertaining for sports bettors is also what makes it so profitable for sports books.

Gamblers love proposition wagers because they provide hundreds, if not thousands, of different ways to bet on the biggest game of the year. Bookmakers love proposition wagers because many of them have a high hold percentage to increase

the house's advantage.

That's not to say it's a hopeless endeavor to try to profit on the props. You just have to know where to look.

Read the whole story

Lake Valley seeks help to make hydrants accessible



Lake Valley needs help
clearing hydrants.
Photo/Provided

Lake Valley Fire Protection District is looking for people to adopt one of the more than 1,000 fire hydrants in the area.

Employees aren't able to shovel and maintain all of them in a timely manner even though state law says they must be free of obstructions and immediately identifiable.

The district said some hydrants remain buried all winter. That is why officials are asking community members to adopt the hydrant closest to their home or business, and keep it clear

of snow and debris.

When maintaining a hydrant, a 3-foot clear space should be maintained around it and to the road's edge.

For more info, call 530.577.3737.

Liberty has money for student scholarships

Liberty Utilities is offering academic scholarships to eligible high school and college students within its service territory.

The eight schools participating in the fourth annual scholarship program are South Tahoe High School, Loyalton High School, Douglas High School (students residing in Alpine County only), Coleville High School, North Tahoe High School, Truckee High School and Portola High School, as well as Lake Tahoe Community College.

The seven high school scholarships are \$500 each. High school seniors must have a minimum unweighted gpa of 2.5 and be accepted to an accredited four-year or two-year university or college or an accredited vocational school. They also must have some community service experience in the community which they reside.

The Lake Tahoe Community College scholarship is \$750. Those students are eligible for the scholarship if they have a current 2.5 gpa or higher, and have completed at least 18 quarter units at LTCC. They must be enrolled in LTCC's upcoming fall quarter, and have demonstrated leadership

through school and/or community service experiences within the community they reside.

Interested students should contact their school's financial aid office or counselor to find out more about the scholarship and to obtain an application. The individual schools have different deadlines, but all scholarships will be awarded starting mid-May through the end of June.

Task force: Docs should screen for depression

By Carina Storrs, CNN

Have you felt down a lot in the last couple of weeks? How often have you felt tired or felt as if you couldn't concentrate?

These are some of the questions your doctor might ask to determine if you are at risk of depression. And if new recommendations by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force are followed, primary care physicians will do this type of depression screening for all adult patients at least once.

The recommendations by the task force, an independent expert panel, update its 2009 advice in two important ways: First, everyone 18 and older should be screened, the panel said – and not just at clinics where systems are in place to connect at-risk individuals to mental health care. Second, primary care doctors should screen women who are pregnant or have recently given birth, two groups not included in earlier recommendations.

Future of South Lake Tahoe's roads, recreation facilities may end up in voters' hands

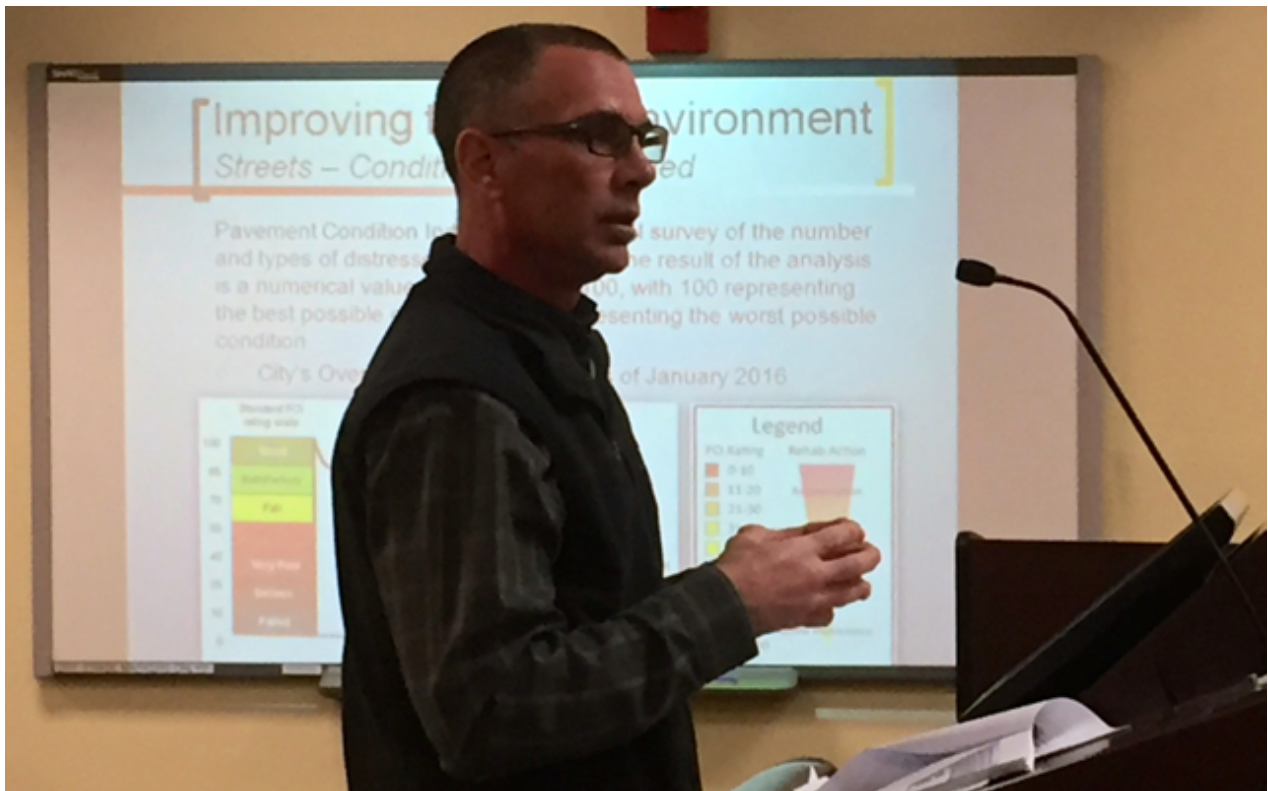
By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe voters will likely be asked in November to raise taxes in order to pay for a laundry list of needs and wants that was discussed by the City Council on Tuesday.

"We need ongoing funding for long-term capital needs," City Manager Nancy Kerry stressed.

As was pointed out in her presentation of the business plan, "Without a long-term funding strategy, the city will continue funding projects based on current needs and available resources."

While the city under Kerry's leadership has been able to balance the budget without dipping into reserves, the city hasn't been able to get ahead on major capital improvements. The deferred maintenance on roads, facilities and vehicles continues to mount.



Jim Marino, South Lake Tahoe assistant public works director, outlines what needs fixing in the city. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Financial options

Increasing the hotel tax by 2 percent, adding one-half cent to the sales tax and creating an amusement tax were all talked about at the Feb. 2 meeting.

Recreation and roads would probably be the two main beneficiaries of the influx of cash.

The finance subcommittee, which historically has been comprised of the mayor (Wendy David) and mayor pro tem (Austin Sass), is tasked with further investigating the options, reaching out to the potentially affected entities and bringing back a proposal to the entire council.

Jerry Bindel and Pat Ronan, both who work in the lodging industry and are on the South Lake Tahoe Lodging Association and Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority's boards, spoke in favor of the three taxes, saying they should all be on the same ballot.

They believe if a 2 percent increase in the transient occupancy tax were to be agreed to, that all of the money should be devoted to recreation. Specifying the recreation complex, 56-acre project and Regan Beach would satisfy needing to narrow the use for the money. Ballot language could also dedicate revenue for operation and maintenance of the facilities.

Bindel and Ronan are of the mindset that improved recreation facilities will lead to more tournaments in a variety of athletic disciplines coming to town, which in turn puts heads in beds. They admitted the initial tax spike might deter some people, but ultimately the improvements would bring even more guests.

Tournaments tend to attract people who stay longer and aren't just on the weekends, and can be in the shoulder seasons.

The current TOT is 10 percent throughout much of South Lake Tahoe, 12 percent in the redevelopment area. The former goes into the city's general fund, the latter mostly to pay off the bond debt. The Tourism Improvement District, which was formed in 2006, tacks on another \$3.50 or \$4 per night. TID uses that money for marketing.

Raising taxes for a specified use would require a two-thirds approval. Bindel and Ronan believe that's possible to achieve and pledged the lodging association's backing. This came after City Councilman Tom Davis was adamant the only thing increased taxes should go toward is roads. Davis is on the lodging board representing his company, not the city. When it comes to a vote of the council regarding the TOT Davis will not be able to participate because he could benefit from it.

It's also possible to ask voters to raise the TOT and not have the dollars earmarked for anything in particular. A second question could ask what they want the money to go to – recreation? roads? something else? That would be an advisory

vote and not something any council would have to honor. However, City Manager Kerry pointed out not following the voters' desires could derail their political careers.

One reason to not specify where the dollars would go is that this would only require a 50 percent plus one vote, which would be easier to accomplish than 66 percent. Also, more than one priority could be funded.

Another advantage to this scenario is that if the money initially went toward recreation, the presumed added revenue from those facilities could then go toward roads and/or some other project.

The gamble is if voters don't set recreation as a priority for the TOT dollars.

The city briefly raised the hotel tax via Measure Z in November 2002. This added \$1 to every hotel room. It was in place from Feb. 1, 2004, to Oct. 31, 2006. It brought in about \$1.1 million a year.

Raising the sales tax was already done once. It went from 7.25 percent to 7.75 percent after voters gave the go-ahead in November 2004. All of this "extra" revenue goes right to South Lake Tahoe, whereas the bulk goes to the state.

An amusement tax could be assessed to ski and bike rental, scenic rides on Heavenly's gondola and other items.



Dodging pot holes in South Lake Tahoe is getting more difficult.

What needs fixing

Jim Marino, assistant public works director, spoke about the \$35 million need in the next five years for capital replacement, the \$50 million five-year community investment and the \$24 million five-year environmental improvement list.

It's estimated the rec center needs \$13 million. It hasn't been decided if it will be refurbished, overhauled or demolished and rebuilt.

Regan Beach improvements are expected to cost \$9 million.

Nothing will happen to the 56-acre area until the city and county resolve ownership-lease issues there. The city is reluctant to invest sizably in a parcel it doesn't own. If another lease is pursued, Kerry said she would like it to be for 99 years.

The campground that sits on those 56 acres is in need of some basic, albeit pricy, renovations like bathrooms.

Marino would like a minimum investment of \$3 million a year for roads. In a 20-year span this would bring them to a level that he said would no longer be embarrassing.

He also stressed the importance of maintaining the roads that have been overhauled so they don't get into such a state of disrepair that they cost the city more money in the long run.

Letter: Kirkwood gives back at Bread & Broth

To the community,

For over 26 years, Bread & Broth has been serving the community by providing free meals to those who struggle to put food on their tables and provide just the basic needs for daily living. As a nonprofit that is staffed by an all-volunteer crew, B&B relies on our very generous community donors to provide the funds needed to cover the costs associated with providing the dinners.

On Jan. 25, Kirkwood Mountain Resort was the Adopt-A-Day sponsor, which donated \$250 for the meal's costs and provided a group of sponsor volunteers that wanted to help their fellow

community members in need.

Arriving at 3pm and ready to help were members of Kirkwood's hospitality team Robert Shaffer, entry houseman; Ben Hutchinson, front office manager; Sam Rudman, front desk supervisor; Julia White, front desk agent; and Frank Dixon, financial analyst.

After an hour helping with the dinner's setup and packing the giveaway bags, the sponsor crew served first and second servings of chicken, potatoes and salad to the dinner guests, packaged to go containers and finished up their volunteer evening helping with the cleanup.

"I enjoyed serving food to people in my community," wrote Rudman of her time at B&B's dinner. "It is so great to give something back."

There is really something very satisfying in participating in a B&B meal and seeing the impact a nutritious, full course meal has on the diners. Bread & Broth would like to salute Kirkwood Mountain Resort and their sponsor crew for making a difference in the lives of others.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth