

Lawmaker pushes for all-gender restrooms

By Melody Gutierrez, San Francisco Chronicle

SACRAMENTO – Transgender people may find a bit of relief in a bill being proposed by a California lawmaker Friday that would make all public single-stall restrooms gender neutral.

Assemblyman Phil Ting, D-San Francisco, said AB1732 would require all single-occupancy restrooms in private businesses and government buildings to be “all-gender,” instead of one restroom for men and another for women. Supporters of the bill say it would allow transgender and gender nonconforming people to pee in peace, without verbal or physical threats when they are seen entering a restroom for the gender they identify with.

The bill builds on a restroom access bill signed into law in 2013 that allows transgender K-12 students to use the school restroom corresponding with the gender they identify with.

Read the whole story

Loop road may cost STPUD customers \$10 mil.



Shannon Cotulla, STPUD assistant general manager, talks about water-sewer lines in the loop road area.
Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

Ten million dollars. That's what it could cost to move South Tahoe Public Utility District's water and sewer lines if the loop road goes through.

"It could have devastating impacts for our utility," Shannon Cotulla, STPUD assistant general manager, said of the relocations process.

Cotulla and General Manager Richard Solbrig explained at the Feb. 1 South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce meeting at the Cantina restaurant that while many questions remain to be answered, the easements are what are most important.

"If they give us the easements for the facilities, then it would be up to the developer to come up with the cost to relocate the lines," Cotulla said.

The district has encroachment permits, but not the easements.

Solbrig put a preliminary estimated price tag of between \$5 million and \$10 million to move the water and sewer lines. Part has to do with whether the road would be lowered to mitigate noise issues. Digging down, like what the **Nevada**

Department of Transportation is doing in Carson City, is a normal engineering tactic.

With STPUD having gravity lines in this area bordering Nevada, it would become more costly to have to put lines deeper than if they operated in a different manner.

Last week South Tahoe PUD finished mapping its assets in the proposed project area. An exact dollar figure is hard to pinpoint because it's not known how far the lines would have to move. Just to plan such an endeavor costs about \$300 per foot.

The district officials said a 30-year loan would likely be needed to foot the bill. This in turn would equate to about a 10 percent rate hike. Solbrig envisions that cost being spread out among all customers in the district.

It's not just the water-sewer lines that would need to be relocated if Highway 50 were routed behind Harrah's Lake Tahoe and MontBleu and the current highway becomes a city-county street through the Stateline casino corridor. Cable television, gas, electric and phone infrastructure would also need to be moved. And those rates would then likely spike.

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Notes:

- There will be a meeting about the loop road on Feb. 10 from 4:30-7pm inside South Tahoe Middle School's multipurpose room.

Opinion: El Dorado County on a path of success

By Sue Novasel

El Dorado County and its Board of Supervisors have been in full stride throughout the last year solving critical issues, making important changes to protect tax dollars and providing expanded services to the public.

I am proud that in my first year in office on the Board of Supervisors we have become a well-working board, formulating a new strategic plan for our communities based on public input. My four colleagues and I represent more than 180,000 residents and oversee a budget of over \$500 million. El Dorado County District V reaches from the shores of the South Shore, past Emerald Bay to Tahoma and down to Pollock Pines.



Sue Novasel

El Dorado County employs over 1,800 employees, working in more than 100 divisions from animal services, child protection and probation to the department of transportation. We operate public services such as snow removal, elections, land use planning, and libraries while taking care of our most vulnerable populations and ensuring proper child and health care. One of our most important services is public safety. Our sheriff's office works mostly behind the scenes to create a safe environment, which provides peace in our neighborhoods by protecting the lives of our citizens.

On the day I took office in January 2015, our county faced a \$19 million budget deficit. A delicate balance between maintaining critical services and balancing the budget was a top priority for our board. I am happy to report that the county diligently delivered a balanced budget by June, allowing for improved reserves while adding oversight on expenditures. And 2016 looks to be another year of improving revenues and services to our county residents.

As your District V supervisor, I am appointed to critical local boards such as the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, California Tahoe Conservancy, Tahoe Transportation District, county Mental Health Commission, First 5 El Dorado, South Lake Tahoe Recreation Facilities Joint Powers Authority, South Lake Tahoe Solid Waste Management Authority, South Lake Tahoe Redevelopment Oversight and the Tahoe Paradise Resort Improvement District. With these additional job assignments, come many local projects and goals.

My focus in representing you has been and will continue to be facilitating projects that benefit the lake, the county and our communities, such as:

- Planning and completing projects that improve our communities and provide better recreation. Biking and hiking promotes clean air and good health. Community connectivity is vital to our communities as well as stimulating economic vitality. In 2015, our county completed the Sawmill Bike Path, connecting Meyers to South Lake Tahoe.
- Improving the permit process by working with local agencies and listening to consumers to better streamline administration to create greater efficiencies.
- Supporting boat inspections to prevent invasive species. Boat inspections needs to continue as we strive to keep Lake Tahoe clear of invasive species that could devastate ecosystems.

- Assuring that the Meyers community planning process is in good hands by attending community meetings, speaking with the business owners and residents to hear their concerns, and encouraging community advisory groups formed by locals who are concerned about how their community works and grows together.

- Clearing the way for improvement projects that are ready to launch as funding becomes available, such as recreation and road improvements, erosion control projects, library hubs and small business expansion.

Another important priority to me is bridging communications between the West Slope and Lake Tahoe. Collaboration between agencies such as the city of South Lake Tahoe, Caltrans, USFS, and TRPA are not only important – they are vital to coordinating environmental and community projects. Agencies that work together accomplish more. I look forward to great things happening by increased collaboration on future projects.

As the Mental Health Commission representative, I am pleased to report that a hard working team of staff and volunteers has secured transitional housing for our mental health clients, expanded therapies and services, and improved communications and coordination with Barton Hospital and law enforcement. How to care for our homeless and our residents with mental health challenges will always be difficult but progress is being made by a collaboration of public and private citizens clearing the way for this vulnerable population to be better housed, fed and understood.

My pride and joy project has been the Tahoe Paradise Resort Improvement District, also known as Tahoe Paradise Park. I took the reins as president of the board of directors this year and thanks to the work of our board and many hard working volunteers of the Meyers community, we have:

- cleaned up the park

- brought in new events, concerts and activities
- coordinated a community election for the first time in over 10 years
- aligned the budget with new priorities, which has set an exciting course to revitalize our local community park.

Tahoe Paradise Park has been a special place for my family and me, and it's inspiring to see the young families coming back to enjoy it as we always have.

South Lake Tahoe seniors are among the hardest working volunteers, contributors, networkers and solution-oriented community groups. When they speak, I listen. And they gave me an ear full this year that made sense. I am taking steps to deliver the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center to the city of South Lake Tahoe and get it into the hands of the correct operators – the seniors and the city. While communications toward solutions can sometimes be a bumpy road, I will never take my eye off the goal and we are now within reach of creating a new road for a more vibrant senior facility.

Finally, I am very proud of our residents of my district, our employees, our businesses, and the people and places we share with our visitors. This last year has been a year of hard work and I'm looking forward to working with you in 2016 to bring about even greater solutions to create the legacy our community deserves. Thank you for allowing me to serve you as your local representative. Please call my Tahoe office if you ever have any concerns or questions at 530.573,7918.

Sue Novasel is the District 5 rep on the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors.

Bettors crazy about Carolina Panthers

By Matt Youmans, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Politicians frequently inspire intense feelings of love and hate from the American public, and sometimes NFL quarterbacks do, too. Opinions are divided on Cam Newton. Some despise his dancing and showboating. Others respect his immense talent.

Five months ago, few people were thinking about him at all. And, certainly, no one truly thought he would be a superstar headed for the Super Bowl so soon.

On Aug. 31, with the season about to kick off, the Westgate Las Vegas futures board showed the Carolina Panthers at 60-1 odds to win the championship. Bettors were not exactly lining up to get a piece of the action.

Read the whole story

Nev.'s net metering rules may alter energy strategy

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – Nevada government and business leaders may have to shift at least part of their established economic development focus from renewable energy to other opportunities if new net metering rules drive the rooftop-solar business out of Nevada as predicted by industry officials.

Rooftop solar was only very recently identified as a priority for Gov. Brian Sandoval's Office of Energy. A rooftop-solar initiative implemented in 2012 had a goal of getting 5 percent of all single family homes and businesses in Nevada to use rooftop-solar systems. The office also had a goal of seeking to make solar electricity cost-competitive with other forms of energy.

The office received a \$765,000 grant in 2011 for its Nevada Rooftop Solar Initiative from the U.S. Department of Energy.

Read the whole story

Evolution of mining in Nevada

By Las Vegas Sun

Modern-day mining in Nevada is a high-tech business, not a get-rich-quick dream.

Operators use drones to survey, monstrous trucks to haul and T-Rex-sized power shovels to chomp into the ground. Permits and environmental applications take years to approve.

Technology has transformed the business. But the first step remains the same: Stake a claim.

Read the whole story

Special bus service available for seniors

After nearly a year of discussions, the Tahoe Transportation District is implementing a **pilot program** to provide interregional and out of area transportation for adults 60 years of age and older and individuals with disabilities.

There will be monthly trips to Sacramento, Placerville-western El Dorado County, North Lake Tahoe-Truckee, and Reno-Carson City.

The goal is to bring those living in outlying neighborhoods to programs and services in the community, as well as provide transportation to regional programs and services they are unable to access without assistance. Trips will be scheduled every Tuesday between 11am and 3pm. The regional trips will be scheduled based on number of passengers, destination, and appointment times. If severe weather is forecasted, the trip may be canceled.

To schedule a ride, call 530.541.7149, ext. 3.

Money available for South Shore nonprofits

The Tahoe Women's Community Fund has \$22,000 to give to area nonprofits or public schools.

Grant categories include children, poverty and housing, education and literacy, and mental health and wellness.

The application deadline Feb. 29 at 5pm. Recipients will be announced April 1.

For more info, go **online**.

Things to know before buying a winter vacation home

By Daniel Goldstein, MarketWatch

If homeownership is the first cornerstone of the American Dream, then a quiet cabin by the lake (if not a beach house with a view of a breathtaking sunset) in the mountains as far away from a Wi-Fi hot spot as possible probably runs a close second.

Indeed, overly-wired and Internet-saturated Americans are looking to the peace and quiet of a cabin again. Zach Klein, the co-founder of Vimeo and the current chief executive at DIY.org, an online school for kids, recently wrote a best-selling book on the thousands of Americans who have gone to the backwoods to build their own.

Of course, you don't have to saw your own logs to get the log-cabin effect. Heather Barbosa, a 44-year-old architectural project manager in Fullerton bought a two-bedroom cabin in Big Bear near the popular ski resort in 2003 with some money her grandmother left her.

She uses it four times a year, but rents it out for eight to 10 weekends a year as well. "It's really a staple of our family now and a cheap vacation for us, " she said. "Now that

we've paid it off it becomes positive cash flow for us too."

Read the whole story

Tahoe Vista time-share project still alive



Spindleshanks comes down on Oct. 7, 2015. Photo/Ellie Waller

By Kathryn Reed

The much-maligned property in Tahoe Vista where Spindleshanks used to be might still be turned into 39 time-share units.

Tim Wilkens, who owns the 6-acre parcel, has been given an extension by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency until May 1 to start the construction process.

"The determination was based on information that the permittee was unable to follow the approved construction schedule due to

a requirement by Placer County in mid-2014 that the project be held until appropriate measures could be implemented to mitigate the presence of a protected bat species at the site," Tom Lotshaw, spokesman for TRPA, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

If Wilkens does not get an approved updated construction schedule before May 1, the permit will expire.

The project was first proposed in 2006. Wilkens at that time with Joe Lanza and Rafe Miller had formed Lake Tahoe Partners. The plan was to develop 49 timeshares, with Wyndham to manage it. Wyndham is no longer involved, nor are Lanza and Miller.

A lawsuit was filed in 2008 by Friends of Tahoe Vista and the League to Save Lake Tahoe against Placer County and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. The plaintiffs' contention was this was way too much density for the site.

The 2010 settlement called for reducing the plan to 39 units and having 50,000 square feet less coverage.

The land is practically in the middle of Tahoe Vista on the mountain said of this North Shore community.

The Spindleshanks building had to come down last fall because it could not be brought up to code. It was originally constructed in 1927 for what was known as the Sandy Beach Resort and campground. Its last incarnation was the Spindleshanks restaurant. The restaurant has since moved to the Brockway Golf Course.