

Ex-SLT redevelopment chief takes Central Valley job



Gene Palazzo

Gene Palazzo, former director for the South Lake Tahoe Redevelopment Agency, is now city manager of Galt.

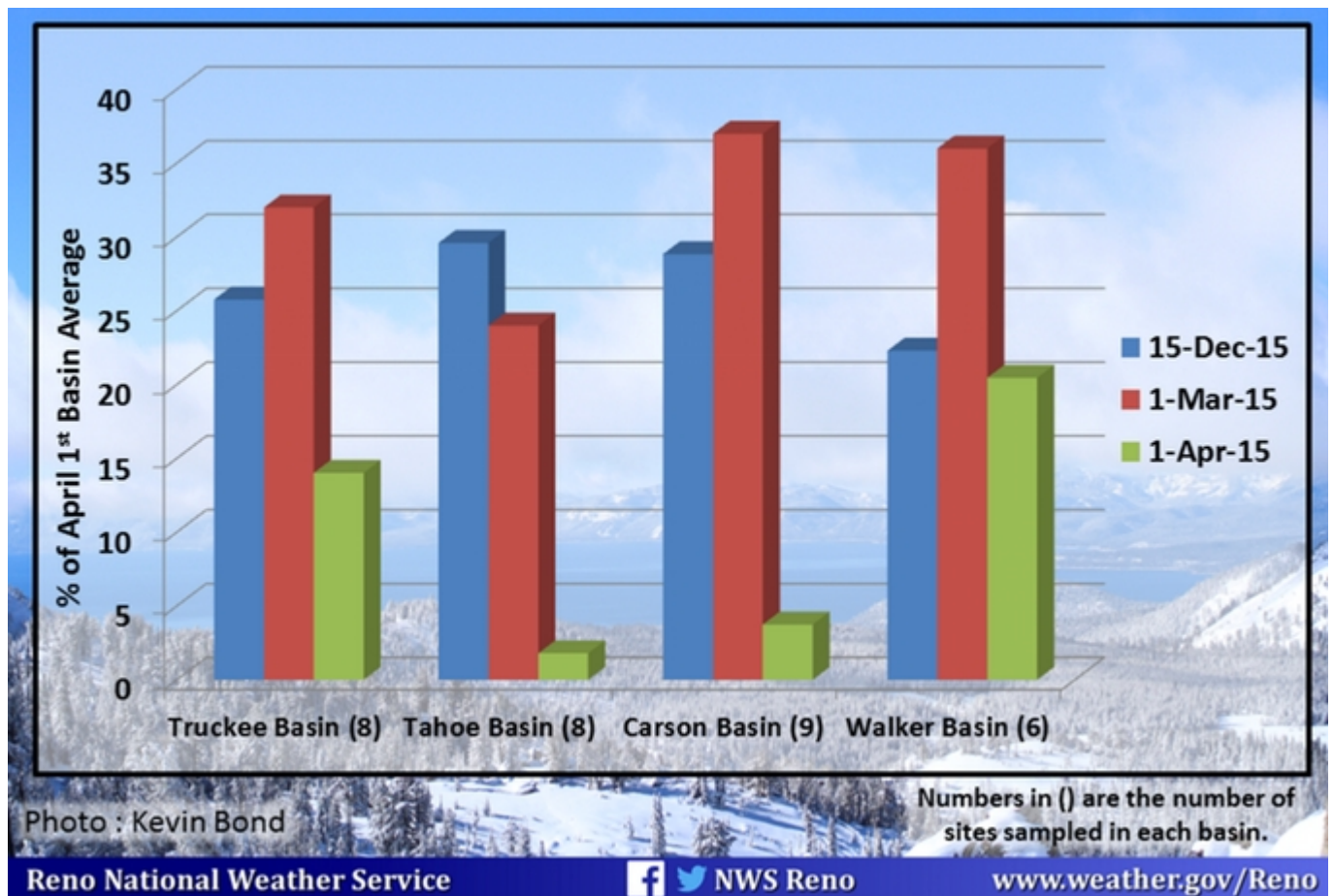
Most recently he was city manager of Crescent City on the North Coast. He took that job in 2011.

He starts his job in the Central Valley on March 1 with a salary of \$156,750. He's in line for a 3 percent raise starting July 1.

The move will put Palazzo closer to his wife, Ellen, who is remains assistant city clerk in South Lake Tahoe.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Sierra snowpack trumping last winter



By National Weather Service

After four dry winters, the mountain snowpack is off to a great start in the Eastern Sierra and Western Nevada.

The peak of the snowpack is typically near April 1, and this is the date used to compare overall winter snowpack numbers.

The winter of 2014-15 brought an abysmal snowpack to the region, with most basins only reporting 2 to 20 percent of average as of April 1, 2015. However, last year's peak was also earlier in the winter, closer to March 1, and would be slightly higher than current conditions, as can be seen in the chart above.

So far, the winter of 2015-16 is already nearing the overall snowpack percentages of last winter.

Keep in mind, we are comparing the current snowpack to the April 1 averages, so the data set is not complete for this

season. We are just trying to show that we are off to a great start this winter and the snow water equivalent numbers in the Truckee, Tahoe, Carson, and Walker River basins are slightly above average for this time of the year.

As a side note, snow water equivalent is the amount of liquid that would be produced if all the snow were melted instantaneously. The graphs in the first image are showing the same four river basins and comparing the percentage of average in the snowpack today based on March 1 and April 1 averages and what the percentage of average on April 1 of 2015 was. The number of sites sampled in each basin are in parenthesis, all data courtesy of NRCS.

Marijuana expert to give talk on North Shore

Kayvan Khalatbari will lead an expert panel in a discussion on the science and medical benefits of cannabis on Jan. 29 as part of the Squaw Valley Institute's lecture series.

He's an innovative entrepreneur and volunteer in several political and nonprofit ventures that focus on the ethical framework of the cannabis business. Khalatbari co-founded Denver Relief, a medical and adult-use cannabis dispensary, the second oldest and the longest continuously operating cannabis business in the city, serving several thousand regular patients and customers in Denver.

He has been an active participant at Sensible Colorado, volunteering for patients' rights and proactive regulation over cannabis.

For more info, go **online**.

Adelson son-in-law orchestrated purchase of LV paper

By James DeHaven, Howard Stutz and Jennifer Robison, Las Vegas Review-Journal

The son-in-law of billionaire casino owner Sheldon Adelson arranged the \$140 million purchase of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* on Adelson's behalf, sources confirmed Wednesday.

Patrick Dumont, who is listed on the website of Las Vegas Sands Corp. as the company's senior vice president of finance and strategy, put together the deal at the behest of his father-in-law, the chairman and CEO of the casino operator.

Dumont, a 41-year-old attorney from New York, in 2009 married Sivan Ochshorn, a daughter of Adelson's wife, Dr. Miriam Adelson, from a prior marriage. Sivan Ochshorn Dumont is listed as owner/agent of Israel Hayom, which is owned by the casino mogul.

Read the whole story

Property values climb in region, Calif.

By Mark Glover, Sacramento Bee

Assessed property values in the seven-county Sacramento region rose nearly 6 percent in the past year, according to statistics released this week by the California Board of Equalization.

BOE said values in Sacramento, Placer, El Dorado, Yolo, Amador, Sutter and Yuba counties totaled a combined \$272.8 billion for 2015-16, compared with \$257.7 billion in 2014-15.

[Read the whole story](#)

Tahoe firm making gear for women who shred

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

TAHOE CITY – To people who dedicate their lives to mountains and snow the statement from Jen Gurecki might have sounded blasphemous.

“I’m at a point in my life where I’ve had so many powder days I can’t even keep track of them,” Gurecki said before getting to the really shocking stuff. “There are bigger things to do in life than powder days.”

It was especially surprising coming from Gurecki, 39, who

moved from Arizona to Lake Tahoe 15 years ago to spend more time on the snow. And last year she and Danielle Rees, 38, co-founded Coalition Snow, a startup that makes skis and snowboards.

But slowly, as Gurecki explained the idea behind Coalition, it became clear how her drive to build company could surpass even her passion for powder.

That's because the mission behind Coalition – described as the only ski and snowboard maker founded by women and dedicated to having women design products for advanced female skiers and riders – is to do more than sell equipment to surging numbers of millennial-age female skiers and riders. It seeks to open doors for those same women in the male dominated snow sports industry, on the slopes and in the boardrooms.

Read the whole story

21 eateries signed up for Tahoe restaurant event

Gourmet burgers, handmade pastas, steaks, fresh seafood, small plates, and desserts are on the menu for the Jan. 8-15 at Tahoe South Restaurant Week.

Participating restaurants to-date include: Artemis Lakefront Café, Beacon Bar & Grill, Bear Moon Bar & Grill, Blue Angel Café, Casey's, Chart House, Ciera Steak + Chophouse, Echo Restaurant, Edgewood Tahoe, Fire +Ice, Friday's Station, Getaway Café, Jimmy's at The Landing, Kalani's, MacDuff's Pub, Passaretti's Restaurant, Primo's Italian Bistro, Riva Grill, Naked Fish, Toast Tahoe, and Zephyr Cove Restaurant.

Participating restaurants will feature specially-priced and prix fixe menus highlighting the theme “Made with Altitude.” There are no passes, tickets or coupons. Instead, diners simply visit their favorite participating restaurants throughout the week to enjoy the special menus.

Tahoe South Restaurant Week is part of California Restaurant Month.

For more info, go **online**.

LTCC Nordic trails open

The Nordic Ski Center at Lake Tahoe Community College is open.

Passes (day and season) and lessons (cross country and skate) are available through the college’s Connect Community Education program.

The center offers 5 to 7 kilometers of diverse trails that are maintained and groomed two to three times per week by volunteers. The trails wind all around LTCC’s 164-acre campus, offering views of Freel Peak, Trout Creek, and the forest surrounding the college.

The grooming schedule is **online**.

Local businesses may get two transferrable full-season business passes for up to 10 employees for \$100. The couples season pass is \$39, while an individual season pass is \$29. The family season pass is \$49 for an individual family with up to six members. Currently enrolled LTCC and LTUSD students may get a student season pass for \$10 with a valid school ID. A

single day use pass is \$5.

Season pass revenues help to support the continuation and growth of the Nordic Ski Center at LTCC, making it possible for the Center to continue operation in the years to come.

Purchasing a season pass offers skiers dawn-to-dusk access to the groomed trail system seven days a week, until the snow is gone. To purchase a season or day pass **online**.

Study: Risky to mix cold/flu medications

By Claudia Buck, Sacramento Bee

Got a cold and a headache? If you're treating them by popping pain killers and downing cough/cold medicines, be careful.

With the cold and flu season under way, too many Americans may be unwittingly overdosing on over-the-counter medications, according to consumer research conducted recently by a team of CSU and UC professors. In five surveys of more than 600 adults, the study found that most were unaware that taking two or more off-the-shelf pain relievers and cold medicines was risky, potentially leading to severe liver disease and other health risks.

The culprit is the "active ingredient" contained in many pain/fever relievers, such as acetaminophen in Tylenol, ibuprofen in Motrin or Advil and naproxen in Aleve.

Read the whole story

Massive undertaking to deliver holiday mail



Letters and packages from Lake Tahoe all go through Reno. Photo/Linda Fine Conaboy

By Linda Fine Conaboy

RENO – It's the busiest mailing day of the year and surprisingly this humming and thrumming place was occupied by seemingly happy people, masters of their powerful conveyors, sorters, forklifts, trucks, and bins and bins of mail, all awaiting their attention.

The Reno Main Post Office on Vassar Street is the U.S. Postal Service's regional hub, where each and every letter, magazine and parcel from as far away as the Oregon border, Northern California, Winnemucca, Carson City, the entire Lake Tahoe

region as well as Reno and Sparks is processed.

Overseeing this organized chaos is Michael Sralik II, plant manager, and Karen Little, post office supervisor. Sralik, most recently from Arizona, has been here about a year, while Little, who's from Colorado, has been on the job two years—both started their careers as letter carriers.

Sralik, who knows each and every facet and cranny of the place, will work practically around the clock during the busy season, with breaks when he dashes home for a quick four-hour nap and returns.



Karen Little, Reno post office supervisor, checks the mail. Photo/Linda Fine Conaboy

He said he's hardly ever in his fairly plush and spacious office. He prefers being on the floor where the action is. The action on Monday night included the processing of a record

420,000 letters and 100,000 packages; nationally, the post office anticipates 612 million packages will fly out the doors of a huge network of postal offices in December.

However, Sralik added, if you think Dec. 14 is busy, wait for Dec. 21, when the anticipated peak delivery crunch will occur. Nationally, the figure this year will soar to 30 million pieces on a single day.

He attributes this phenomenon partly to online services.

"More than 7 million people are expected to use USPS.com," he told *Lake Tahoe News*, adding that events such as Cyber Monday can be extremely beneficial to the post office.

The other employees in Reno work various shifts to keep the 250,000 square foot plant running on a round-the-clock schedule, every day of the year.

To get the job done, across the nation, about 30,000 seasonal workers are hired, while at the Reno facility, 40 people were added to the staff.

At the rear of the facility lies the loading docks where huge 18-wheelers are serviced as well as smaller neighborhood delivery vehicles, all being loaded and unloaded.

In this area too, are numerous plus-sized bins of packages and letters ready to head out of town.

"We fly about 80 percent of our volume by commercial airline," Little said. "We buy tickets for our mail, which is why we ask all of those questions about content when a customer drops off a package."

Because most of the post offices around the lake are smaller and can't accommodate big trucks at their docks multiple trips are made each day.

"For the last three Sundays, we've been transporting there

early in the day. South Lake Tahoe got two trucks in two days," he said.

All of this increased activity bodes well for the Postal Service, Little said. "We've seen a 20 to 30 percent increase in package delivery over last year. Maybe it's the better economy. But we've done a good job, so people are coming back to us."



Routing mail to the appropriate address is an intricate process.
Photo/Linda Fine Conaboy

In addition, Little said the "If it fits, it ships," slogan advertising flat rate mail has been exceedingly helpful. "It's a convenience to customers. The carrier gets a notification, knocks on the door or picks up the package off the porch. How much more convenient can that be?" she asked.

Not only does computer automation help the home customer or business, but it's been a boon to the post office too. Unless

they're oversized and culled from the herd, letters and even parcels are all loaded on conveyor belts, sorted, bar coded and distributed to carriers, all in the blink of a computer's eye. This process happens for incoming and outgoing mail and happens to each piece.

Still, there is a downside to post office operations. Enter David Rupert, a corporate communications specialist based in Denver. "We've been self-sufficient since 1972," Rupert said. "Before that we were taxpayer-supported. Over time, we've been required by law to break even and we have, but the last few years, we've struggled.

"We're still losing lots of money because first class mail is down 30 percent over the last six years. Parcels are on the increase, but not making up the difference yet. We welcome this, but we still struggle over decreasing volume. In part, it could be that many people are now paying their bills online," he told *Lake Tahoe News*.

But even the battle to overcome a difficult past record can't dampen the spirits of the crew at Vassar Street. Heck, you'd think that any minute Santa was going to pull up to the loading dock. This is one happy crew, eager to deliver good tidings.

"This is a very choreographed, organized process, believe it or not," Stralik laughed.

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Notes:

Important mailing dates are fast approaching. For a stress-free season remember to mail first class letters by Dec. 19; priority parcels by Dec. 21; and express mail by Dec. 23.