Rail jam competition returns to Sushi Pier

The fifth annual Shred for Sushi Rail Jam is Dec. 15.

This free event hosted by OnCourse Events in the Sushi Pier parking lot (177 Lake Tahoe Blvd., Stateline) will feature a rail jam competition, disc jockeys, food and drink specials, photobooth, and other booths.

The rail jam competition is open to skiers and riders of all ages with a $20 competitor fee.
Registration begins at 5:30pm with a 50-competitor cap. Competition starts at 7pm.

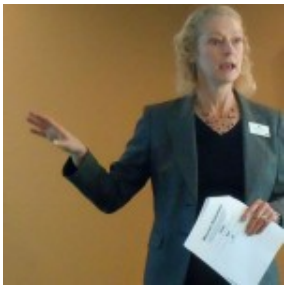
Proceeds from the rail jam, raffle, and venue proceeds will benefit the Boys and Girls Club of
Lake Tahoe.

Gorman leaving Nevada-based chamber

By Kathryn Reed

After more than nine years as CEO-president of the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce, B Gorman is being asked to move on.

She is leaving in May when her contract is up. The board chose not to renew it.



B Gorman

“Her tenure as CEO was an exceptionally long one for someone in her position. It was definitely time for her to go,” one board member told *Lake Tahoe News*. However, it was not a unanimous vote.

Chamber CEO tenure is usually about five years.

Gorman has been the only leader of this chamber. She started Oct. 2, 2006, taking control of what was the merged Tahoe Douglas and South Lake Tahoe chambers of commerce.

It didn’t take long for disgruntled members of the South Lake Tahoe chamber to form a chamber that today some call the little chamber or California chamber. It’s been an issue Gorman has had to contend with this whole time.

She plans to stay in South Lake Tahoe and start a consulting firm helping businesses. Gorman did not want to talk to *Lake Tahoe News* now about her departure and future plans.

Prior to moving to Lake Tahoe in 2006 for the chamber job, Gorman had been a regional director for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. She has been a ski instructor at Heavenly Mountain Resort and has a law degree from the University of Connecticut School of Law.

The chamber has formed a committee to search for the next CEO.

SLTFD not giving up ambulance duties

By Kathryn Reed

The South Lake Tahoe City Council on Monday took steps to reduce overtime in the fire department and ensure ambulances are staffed with appropriate medical personnel.

In July the council voted to turn over the ambulance service to Lake Valley Fire Protection District. South Lake Tahoe and Lake Valley fire departments make up what is called the Cal-Tahoe Joint Powers Authority. That entity operates the ambulance contract on the East Slope for El Dorado County

One reason South Lake Tahoe wanted out of the ambulance business is because of the interagency transfers. This takes employees out-of-pocket at times for an entire shift as they transport people to medical facilities outside the Tahoe basin. With a firefighter in that ambulance, it meant fewer people on duty to do that job. Plus, firefighters tend to make more money than an EMT. Lake Valley believed the compensation to make those runs was a profitable endeavor.

Lake Valley, based in Meyers, has dragged its feet to take on the responsibilities like it said it wanted to do and would do. This in turn has cost the city money to continue to staff the ambulances.

SLTFD Fire Chief Jeff Meston said he is still willing to negotiate a deal with Lake Valley, but for now he has to take care of his people, the city and be cognizant of his budget.

While Lake Valley Fire Chief Gareth Harris, board President Dave Huber and JPA Executive Director Ryan Wagoner all asked the council to delay the vote, they didn’t explain why things were taking so long.

Huber wants the Lake Valley board and City Council to have a joint meeting. He did not say what might be accomplished if this were to happen. The council expressed zero interest in such a gathering.

Earlier this year Lake Valley firefighters had a vote of no confidence in their chief. However, the board continues to keep him on.

The City Council voted 4-0-1 on Dec. 7 to change the contract with the firefighters' association, which will then modify the staffing. Councilwoman Joann Conner abstained. At one time she was on the Cal-Tahoe JPA. She resigned from that post earlier this year.

With South Lake Tahoe removing firefighters from ambulances, it will save the city money and could mean less support for Lake Valley because no one in the ambulance can fight a fire.

Lake Valley Fire Protection District runs about five firefighters per shift, in large part relying on the free assistance of South Lake Tahoe, CalFire and the U.S. Forest Service. Those agencies all help each other out.

Seventy percent of the calls SLTFD goes on are medical emergencies. Firefighters respond to 30 to 40 calls a year. Most days there are 16 people on duty.

Going forward SLTFD ambulances will be staffed with paramedics and emergency medical technicians. Six EMTs will be starting Dec. 14.

The other change is three battalion chief positions are being resurrected after being eliminated in 2011. Testing for those jobs is being done now.

The other change for SLTFD is engines will now be staffed with three firefighters.

With an ambulance and an engine responding to most events, it

means five people instead of the current four will arrive.

The change in staffing in many ways is not new. It’s what the city had in 2001 when the JPA agreement started, Meston said.

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In other action:

· On a 3-2 vote the council repealed the plastic bag ban affecting everyone but grocery stores. Councilmembers Hal Cole, whose idea it was revisit the issue, along with Tom Davis and Joann Conner voted in favor of the change.

· The council heard an update on the loop road from Tahoe Transportation District Executive Carl Hasty, with the same info that was available at **last week’s open house**. There will be a public workshop in early 2016 where the public can ask questions and get answers.

Opinion: Federal highway bill good for Tahoe

By Carl Hasty

The five-year, $305 billion federal transportation bill passed by Congress and signed into law Dec. 4 by President Obama includes a provision that will steer additional money to Lake Tahoe communities for roadway improvements and enhanced public transit service.

The Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act is the first long-term federal transportation bill in nearly a decade. The bill will provide greater certainty and stability

for state and local governments working to improve their transportation networks.



Carl Hasty

Unlike other designated metropolitan planning areas, Lake Tahoe's rural classification left it at a disadvantage for federal support due to a technical flaw in the rules. The new legislation amends current law and will steer formula based federal funding to Lake Tahoe for road improvements and transit service. This key measure will allow the Tahoe Transportation District and Tahoe communities to upgrade transportation infrastructure to improve the environment, enhance public recreation, and revitalize communities.

This changes the metrics for us. The heavy urban use of the basin did not align with limited transportation funding so critical to the protection and vitality of Lake Tahoe.

The diligent effort of the TTD to modify the status was supported by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and transportation partners as well as delegations from California and Nevada.

This bill will help to create an inter-regional transit system in the next five years as well as corridor improvements related to safety, environment, economy, and quality of life.

Research has proven Tahoe is one of the most heavily visited national forest areas. Previous studies also indicate that over 70 percent of the particulates impacting lake clarity originate from the transportation system and built

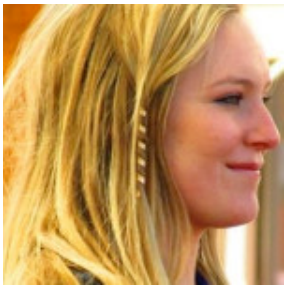
environment. Fine sediment pollution from roads and developed areas is the leading cause of declines in Lake Tahoe's famed water clarity. Vehicles are also a major source of emissions that pollute the air and fuel algae growth once in the Lake.

"For years, federal regulations have put Tahoe at a disadvantage because of our small, year-round population. This bill changes important formulas to take into account the millions of people who visit Tahoe's extensive public lands," said Joanne Marchetta, executive director of TRPA. "TRPA and our transportation district partners have been working together with our congressional delegation for years on this critical fix in order to upgrade our transportation infrastructure and transit services."

"Tahoe Transportation District's leadership has redefined the approach and execution of projects in a timely manner," said Carlos Monje Jr., assistant secretary for transportation policy at U.S. Department of Transportation. "We are looking forward to growing our partnerships with the Basin, and to additional projects in Nevada and California."

Carl Hasty is executive director of the Tahoe Transportation District.

Anderson injured; won't be at Dew Tour



Jamie Anderson

Jamie Anderson won't be defending her Dew Tour slopestyle title this week in Breckenridge, Colo. Instead, the Meyers resident will be recovering from surgery.

In a training run the snowboarder fell and broke her clavicle. She had surgery at Vail Valley Medical Center.

Anderson had won the event the last three years.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

CTC, State Parks land swap to be discussed

California Tahoe Conservancy and California State Parks are planning to transfer nine parcels in the vicinity of Washoe Meadows State Park and Lake Valley State Recreation Area.

There will be an open house about the proposal on Dec. 15 from 5:30-7:30pm at the California Conservation Corps offices in Meyers.

This is designed as an informational session for people to learn more about the transfer.

The official land transfer will occur upon final recording of

the property documents, which is anticipated to happen by fall 2016. These land transfers were authorized in the 2012-13 state budget.

To view maps of the parcels included in the land transfer, go **online**.

Home invasion on West Slope involves cash, pot

The latest El Dorado County home invasion involving pot occurred Dec. 4.

According to the victims, they were asleep when someone kicked-open the door to the backyard at about 7am. At least two people, one armed with a shotgun, entered the house in Rescue, according to sheriff' deputies. They searched the house, demanding the male resident tell them where the money was.

One male resident received several cuts, including some that required stitches. He was later treated at the hospital and released.

The suspects tied all three victims and left taking money and marijuana. By the time the sheriff's office was called, the suspects had been gone for some time.

Deputies said the house appeared to have been ransacked. In addition, marijuana was seen in almost every room. It looked like the residence and property was being used as a commercial marijuana facility to include growing, drying, processing, and packaging.

The suspects were described as possibly Hispanic, in their late 20s to mid-30s. One suspect was described as wearing a hoodie and some sort of mask. They were heard talking to each other in English and Spanish.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Supreme Court lets local ban on assault weapons stand

By David G. Savage, Los Angeles Times

In a victory for gun-control advocates, the Supreme Court on Monday rejected a Second Amendment challenge to laws that forbid the sale or possession of semiautomatic weapons that carry more than 10 rounds of ammunition.

The justices by a 7-2 vote refused to review rulings by judges in Chicago who upheld a ban on assault weapons in the city of Highland Park as a reasonable gun-control regulation.

Justices Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia dissented.

Read the whole story

David mayor of SLT; council

marginalizes Conner



Austin Sass and Wendy David are now mayor pro tem and mayor, respectively, of South Lake Tahoe. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

Without unanimous support of their colleagues, Wendy David is now mayor of South Lake Tahoe and Austin Sass is mayor pro tem.

Councilwoman JoAnn Conner abstained from both votes this morning without saying why.

As is customary with the December council meeting, the electeds voted among themselves as to who will be the two leaders for the next year as well as which council member will represent the city on a variety of boards.

No one besides David expressed an interest in being mayor.

Councilman Tom Davis was the first to throw his hat into the ring for mayor pro tem.

Conner said it was important for the mayor and mayor pro tem to attend ceremonial functions. She listed a few where that did not happen, to which then Mayor Hal Cole had to correct her to say he attended things she wasn't aware of.

During Sass' proclamation as to why he should be mayor pro tem he stated how the position is so much more than attending functions, and that it is more about leadership.

David agreed. "Leadership does equal making decisions," she said.

She threw her support behind Sass, saying the two had worked well together on committees in the past year.

Cole, hearing what David had to say about Sass, sided with her.

The votes for mayor and mayor pro tem were 4-0-1.

This was the same vote for the commissions, with Conner abstaining.

The council changed how it voted on entities beyond the council by having members weigh in on their desired position before the Dec. 7 meeting. At the meeting each council member voted on a preprinted ballot for whom they wanted for each position.

Conner was essentially removed from all of her duties except for one that has her working with people outside of Lake Tahoe. She remains the representative to the League of California Cities.

This comes on the heels of Conner having been **censured** by the council earlier this fall and being **banned from talking to staff**. Those actions were the result of her bullying nature

that has resulted in city employees filing complaints against her and other leaders in the community like El Dorado County Supervisor Sue Novasel and Lake Tahoe Community College President Kindred Murillo voicing their inability to work with Conner.

The committee-board reps are:

· California Tahoe Conservancy – Davis

· El Dorado County LAFCO – Sass

· Tahoe Regional Planning Agency – Cole, Sass as alternate

· Tahoe Transportation District – Sass, Davis as alternate

· Abandoned Vehicle Abatement – Cole

· Cal-Tahoe JPA – David and Davis

· Clean Tahoe – David

· Tahoe Prosperity Center – David

· Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority – Davis

· Recreation JPA – Sass

· Waste Management Authority JPA – David, Davis as alternate

· Redevelopment Successor Agency – Cole, Davis as alternate

· Community Play Consortium – David.

The ballot came with some standing committees being eliminated or representation to the committee being eliminated. Because this is a policy decision that had not been put on the agenda it will come back for a future vote.

The proposal is to not send a council member to the following entities' board meetings:

· Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce

· South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce

· South Lake Tahoe Lodging Association

· South Tahoe Public Utility District.

It is proposed to eliminate the following city committees or subcommittees because they are considered completed:

· Airport Master Plan

· Parks and Recreation Master Plan

· LTUSD, LTCC MOU

· Single Room Occupancy

· Policy for Giving to Nonprofits

· Warm Room Project

· Senior Citizens Center.

Wet storm expected to blow into Tahoe basin

A wet storm is headed for Lake Tahoe this week.

OpenSnow is saying it may be the biggest storm since March

2012.

The National Weather Service in Reno is forecasting the winds to arrive Wednesday – 40-65 mph, while ridgetops could see 100 mph gusts.

“Heavy, wet Sierra cement is likely, with 1 to 3 feet of snow possible above 7,000 feet and 5 to 10 inches down to Lake Tahoe level,” NWS said in describing Thursday’s forecast.

The wet windy weather is expected to stay around through the weekend.

Highs will be in the high 30s and low 40s.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report