Douglas County wants input on spending choices

Douglas County residents may use an **online tool** to provide input to help the county manage its checkbook.

Access to this tool will be available through Dec. 21.

Money may be allocated toward the following categories, which are what the commissioners have deemed the most important in the Strategic Plan: safe community, economic vitality, financial stability, infrastructure, natural environment, cultural heritage and quality of life, and organizational sustainability.

The county and public will not be able to see the names of individual participants unless the participant chooses to display their name.

Tips for fire safety at home

The North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection Distict has the tips to offer whether in the kitchen, near the fireplace or stove:

· Have a qualified professional install stoves, chimney connectors, and chimneys.

· Stoves should have the label of an independent testing laboratory.

· In wood stoves, burn only dry, seasoned wood. In pellet stoves, burn only dry, seasoned wood pellets.

· Have your chimney and stove inspected and cleaned by a certified chimney sweep every year.

· Clean the inside of your stove periodically using a wire brush.

· Keep a close eye on children whenever a wood or pellet stove is being used. Remind them to stay at least three feet away from the stove.

· Stoves need space. Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from the stove.

· Install and maintain carbon monoxide alarms and smoke alarms outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. For the best protection, interconnect the alarms. When one sounds, they all sound.

· Allow ashes to completely cool before disposing them. Place ashes in a covered metal container. Keep the container at least 10 feet away from the home and other buildings.

No matter what type of device you use to heat your home, making sure that your heating devices and systems are in good working order is important. Many things can go wrong with heating equipment. Verify that everything you need to keep your home warm throughout the fall and winter months is in good working order.

– Tia Rancourt, North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District

Fish ingesting fibers from

people’s clothing

By Mary Catherine O’Connor, Outdoors

Humanity dumps 8 million tons of plastic into the oceans each year, according to a study published early this year in *Science*. That’s a mind-blowingly large figure, but it still doesn’t account for the untold billions of tiny plastic fibers from synthetic apparel that leave your washing machine and enter rivers, lakes, and oceans through wastewater treatment plants.

These fibers, as well as tiny bits of degraded trash and microbeads from personal care products, have generated a long list of questions and concerns among environmental scientists. In a new study in Nature, Chelsea Rochman, a marine ecotoxicologist from UC Davis, addressed one of the chief concerns: Are those fibers and other microplastics getting into our food system? The answer: Yes.

To reach this conclusion, Rochman and her colleagues purchased and dissected fish and bivalves from markets near Half Moon Bay and compared their contents to those of fish and bivalves purchased from a market in Makassar, Indonesia. In both locations, more than half of the species and roughly a third of the individual fish and shellfish contained foreign objects—most of which were microplastics—that the fish and shellfish filtered from the water or mistook for food.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Finding time to be thankful



Being thankful for my dog AJ and my friend Joy for trusting me to be AJ's second mom.

"We must find time to stop and thank the people who make a difference in our lives."

– John F. Kennedy

By Kathryn Reed

Thank you to every *Lake Tahoe News* writer and photographer, and contributor. Thank you to those who send news tips. Thank you to those who offer advice, counsel and support. Thank you to each reader, advertiser and paid subscriber.

More important, though, thank you to my family and friends – for everything, even when I don't want to hear it.

"Thank you" and "sorry" seem to be three of the most difficult words to say. And, yet, not a day goes by that we all could and probably should utter them.

Too often we wait too long and the opportunity is no longer there. Sometimes thanks comes at the end of life, when we know time is of the essence.

How hard would it be to slow down a little, to pause, to give thanks. Sure, it’s easy to do it today – on Thanksgiving. But what about tomorrow? And why didn’t you do so yesterday?

It’s easy to dwell on what doesn’t go right, the negatives of our lives.

I have friends dealing with serious health issues; a friend’s dad went on hospice this month; for some this is the first holiday since a significant loss; money is an issue for many; for others today is a reminder of their aloneness.

I know it can be hard at times to find something to be thankful for. There are days when the computer is so close to being thrown out the window and I pack up the Jeep with the dog and just start driving. But running away would only change the location where I would have to deal with my problems. And oddly, it just takes looking at AJ at times like this for my thanks to begin. Joy knew what she was doing when four years ago this fall she asked me to take AJ if she were to die.

AJ is proof that something wonderful can come from such incredible sadness. I will be forever thankful to Joy for bringing this dog into my life.

Look around – there must be something you are thankful for. Perhaps you would like to share it with everyone as a comment. And perhaps, just maybe, we can all keep finding thanks each and every day going forward.

Placer County uses K9 death

as learning tool

In the early morning hours of Thanksgiving 1998, the Placer County Sheriff’s Office lost its first and only dog in the line of duty.

As a way to remember Ranger and the sacrifice he made 17 years ago, the department is launching the first of what what it hopes is many **videos** on different topics meant to educate, inform and entertain.

Ranger, an Australian Shepherd, had been called to duty with his handler PCSO search and rescue volunteer Terry Butrym to assist Sacramento County in the search for a missing pheasant hunter. Ranger found the downed man near a phone utility box in the middle of a pitch-black field, where the current Sleep Train Arena stands today.

After locating the hunter, Ranger ran back to his handler, as he was trained to do. Butrym followed Ranger to where the hunter’s body laid next to the phone box. Then, the only thing Terry saw was what he described as a “fireball” igniting the black night. Ranger had run up and touched the man, as he was trained, and the shock from the electrocuted man shot through Ranger’s body, killing him instantly.

The man was not only hunting for pheasant, but for copper wire that was in the phone box. The man couldn’t have known that the wires inside the box were live; a nearby tree had caused an overhead wire to break and fall onto the box, the wire’s end resting on top of the box.

Butrym said it could have been much worse, as Ranger gave his life so other searchers didn’t suffer the same fate.

Kings Beach man going to prison for crimes in Truckee

Frederick Santos-Coy, 24, of Kings Beach was sentenced to three years and eight months in prison for reckless discharge of a firearm and a special allegation of being a felon in possession of a firearm.

On Aug. 26 Truckee police officers found Santos-Coy carrying a gun in The Meadows area of Glenshire. The suspect started running, and at one point, fired gunshots into the air. At no point were the gunshots directed at police or witnesses in the area. During the arrest process, officers also discovered a small brush fire had started in the area.

On Nov. 17 Santos-Coy pleaded guilty to the charges.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Man accused in Tahoe crime pleads to charges in SF

By Vivian Ho, San Francisco Chronicle

A man accused of brazenly snatching a toddler from his mother on a San Francisco Muni bus was previously convicted on separate false-imprisonment charges, including one in which he was accused of attempting to kidnap a woman at knifepoint in South Lake Tahoe, authorities said Tuesday.

Sudesh Singh, 45, of Oakland pleaded not guilty in San Francisco Superior Court on Tuesday to felony kidnapping and child endangerment charges in connection with last week's abduction attempt.

Authorities revealed in court that prior to Singh's arrest, he had been detained by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for "acting suspiciously," apparently at the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services office on Sansome Street. It was not immediately clear why he was let go.

Read the whole story

Teen robbed on South Lake Tahoe bike trail



A South Lake Tahoe teenager was robbed Monday while walking on the path behind Motel 6 in South Lake Tahoe.

The 16-year-old told officers an adult male appeared from out of the bushes with his hand in a trench coat pocket, pointing it toward him like a gun. No weapon was actually seen or mentioned. The suspect demanded money from the victim, who promptly surrendered what he had. The suspect left the area on foot.

The victim was unharmed.

The suspect is described a white male, about 50 years old, 6 feet to 6-feet-3, stringy hair, and long bushy beard. He was wearing black sunglasses, black trench coat, grey undershirt, tattered blue jeans, and tattered white shoes.

Anyone with information is asked to contact SLTPD at 530.542.6100 or Lake Tahoe Secret Witness at 530.541.6800.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Tensions grow as Calif. groundwater law takes shape

By Ryan Sabalow, Sacramento Bee

HANFORD – Drive the farm roads of sparsely populated Kings County, and it's hard to miss them: clusters of pipes, cylinders and electrical boxes jutting from the soil every few hundred yards or so, in almost every direction. These are the groundwater pumps that ensure water soaks the vast fields of tomatoes, corn, alfalfa, cherries, almonds and walnuts even when the ditches run dry.

They've helped make agriculture the single largest industry in Kings County, where crop values actually have grown by $753 million during California's drought.

So maybe it shouldn't have surprised County Supervisor Doug Verboon, who owns a small walnut farm, that he got a hostile reception at a recent gathering after he suggested the county impose restrictions on drilling new wells and selling groundwater to other counties.

The tensions in Kings County offer just a taste of what's

expected in cities and towns throughout California's farm belt over the next few years as local officials work to enact the state's first-ever groundwater regulations. They are under orders to begin actively managing underground aquifers that for generations have been treated as a private resource, with property owners empowered to dig wells and extract as much water as they wanted without particular regard for their neighbors or government agencies.

This year alone, farmers across the state lost nearly 9 million acre-feet of surface water from the state and federal water delivery networks, nearly half their usual supply.

Read the whole story

Retailers losing the war on Thanksgiving

By Dave Jamieson, Huffington Post

In the run-up to Thanksgiving this year, TJX, the parent company to discount chains Marshalls and T.J. Maxx, has been airing an advertisement about its decision to keep its stores closed on the holiday. By bucking the national trend of starting sales on Thanksgiving Day, the spot suggests, TJX is taking a stand for family time over the holidays.

"Imagine a world where the holidays were about people again," a voice in the ad, titled "Bring Back the Holidays," intones. "Where doorbusters referred to loved ones pouring through the doors."

So is the backlash against stores opening on Thanksgiving

finally bearing fruit? Are retailers ready to give the holiday back to your drunk uncle and the NFL?

Not really. Many of the nation’s biggest retailers – Walmart, Target, Kmart and Best Buy, to name just a few – still want you to skip the apple pie Thursday evening to roam their stores forBlack Friday deals. But don’t be surprised if, in the coming years, retailers start reverting back to being closed on Thanksgiving Day and pushing their sales to Friday morning.

Read the whole story