Festival centers on all things fish

The Fall Fish Festival is Oct. 3-4 at the Taylor Creek Visitor Center on the South Shore.

Hosted by the U.S. Forest Service and the Tahoe Heritage Foundation, the festival is an opportunity to learn about the variety of fish species that live in Lake Tahoe and its streams including the federally threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout.

Festival events feature children's activities, food vendors and event T-shirt sales, educational booths, streamside information and Kokanee Trail Runs on Sunday sponsored by the Tahoe Mountain Milers. For information on the trail runs, go **online**.

The festival is from 10am-4pm each day. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's giant inflatable fish will serve as the gateway to fun activity stations for kids and festival mascots, Lulu the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout and Sandy and Rocky Salmon will make appearances. There will also be a special appearance by Smokey Bear.

The Fall Fish Festival and Oktoberfest at Historic Camp Richardson Resort occur the same weekend, so the parking lot at the visitor center fills quickly. The Forest Service encourages attendees to bike, walk or take public transportation to the event.

SLT neighborhood to be evacuated during test

South Lake Tahoe and allied law enforcement agencies will be hosting a neighborhood evacuation drill Oct. 1 from 10am-noon.

The neighborhood will receive a reverse 911 call to test the system.

Evacuation maps for the entire city can be found **online**.

The Highlands Evacuation Drill will affect approximately 160 homes and 270 residents. Residents who wish to participate in the evacuation drill are encouraged to do so by “evacuating” to the snow dump area at the end of Sierra Boulevard. A public information officer will be at the site as well as Red Cross serving snacks.

Hard Rock gearing up for Halloween

Lake Tahoe Hard Rock’s inaugural Halloween bash starts at 10pm Oct. 31 at Vinyl.

The Rocking Dead Halloween Bash & Costume Contest will include party band Cover Me Badd.

The best costume will win $250, $100 in free slot play for second place and $50 in free slot play for third place.

Entry into Vinyl is free for partygoers in costume and $10 for those who are not. Costumes may not include masks, real or

fake weapons or makeup that makes a person unidentifiable. Attendees must be 21 years of age or older.

Coming soon to casinos: Betting on yourself

By J.D. Morris, Las Vegas Sun

Coming soon to Nevada casinos: slot machines that feel a lot like arcade or video games. The Nevada Gaming Commission recently approved regulations for skill-based slot machines in an effort to help the casino industry appeal to younger, more technologically savvy customers.

The regulations create three categories: traditional chance games, skill games in which a player's ability determines the outcome, and hybrid games in which a combination of chance and skill affect the result.

The skill-based rules have been in the works for months, after the state Legislature approved a bill directing regulators to encourage "innovative, alternative and advanced technology" in casino games. The measure was pushed for by the Association of Gaming Equipment Manufacturers, which represents slot machine companies.

Read the whole story

Truckee about to add 2 electric charging outlets

The Truckee Donner PUD is going to install two public access charging stations in Truckee.

One station will be located at the Truckee Train Depot and there will be a second station at the Pioneer Commerce Center located just north of Interstate 80. Each of the two locations will have two, Level 2 charging stations.

The greater Truckee area has seen a dramatic increase in plug-in electric vehicles in the last few years. In addition, the California Energy Commission has recently made a significant investment in the region with a $200,000 grant to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency to produce a Tahoe-Truckee PEV Readiness Plan.

The Level 2 charging stations are being provided by Greenlots using CMI/EVSE charging equipment. The charging stations will require payment using either credit card or a charging app on a smartphone.

TDPUD will be offering free charging for the first month of operation. They should open in November.

Golf tourney to aid fallen

firefighter’s family

The Wildland Firefighter Foundation golf tournament on Oct. 3 will be a fundraiser for fallen U.S. Forest Service firefighter Michael Hallenbeck’s family as well as the foundation.

Hallenbeck, 21, of Shingle Springs died Aug. 8 after a tree fell on him while fighting a wildfire near Sierra-at-Tahoe.

Registration at Tahoe Paradise Golf Course starts at 9:30am. Cost is $52, which includes lunch and a cart.

For more info and to sign up, call 530.680.3117 or email atchoffman19@yahoo.com.

Snowsports jump on .ski domain for websites

By Jason Blevins, Denver Post

The .ski domain launched onto the Web earlier this month, creating the Internet’s first domain space for snowsports.

The new top-level domain is a fresh start for athletes, ski makers, ski resorts and other snowsports companies seeking to carve their own corner of cyberspace.

Tom Kelly, vice president of communications for the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association, said .ski soon will become “an essential part of a skier’s digital tool kit.”

Read the whole story

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Skipper upon arrival.



Skipper all cleaned up.

Skipper is a really nice tiny Poodle-Havanese mix. He’s 4 years old and seems to get along with everyone.

When he arrived at the shelter he was severely matted. Some people prefer non-shedding breeds, but they don’t realize

that, since they don’t shed, they must be groomed every six weeks. He was lucky enough to be groomed by one of the shelter’s wonderful volunteers.

Skipper is neutered, microchipped, heartworm negative, and vaccinated. He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter’s Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go **online**.

– Karen Kuentz

UNR lab plotting regional seismic faults

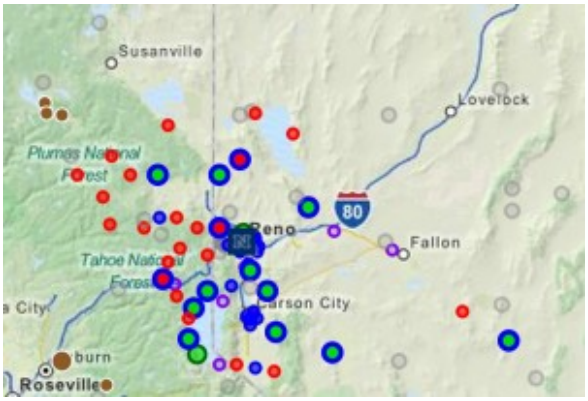
By Kathryn Reed

INCLINE VILLAGE – Technology is continuing to bring clarity to the seismic world, though not yet to the extent where temblors can be predicted.

LiDAR provides images and data that otherwise could not be ascertained or would take an exhorbitant amount of time to collect.

“It has immediate scientific value for tectonic analysis and mapping,” Courtney Brailo explained at a talk earlier this

month at the Tahoe Environmental Research Center in Incline Village. “We can measure change as it happens.”



Seismic activity is normal throughout the Sierra. Map/UNR Seismology Lab

Brailo is a UNR graduate student working at the Nevada Seismological Lab.

By using LiDAR the lab has been able to document known faults and has discovered ones in the region that were previously unknown.

LiDAR uses lasers and GPS. It can be used on land or underwater. There is satellite, aerial, terrestrial and mobile scanning LiDAR.

Brailo explained how filters could get rid of vegetation on the ground, allowing scientists to get a better view of the terrain via the LiDAR method. This can provide better information at times than being in the field, especially because it is accurate up to centimeters.

“We are seeing things we’ve never seen before. We can see bare earth in Alpine terrain,” she said.

Brailo added, “We can scan 1,000 kilometers a day. It’s quick compared to other standards.”

The UNR lab has been using LiDAR since 2005. In 2010, it was

used to map the entire Lake Tahoe Basin – including the faults on the South Shore as well as at Mount Rose. Today, Brailo is focusing more on the greater Reno area. Through her work corrections have been made to previously documented faults and she has documented a new one.

Having baseline data helps scientists measure change going forward. This includes movement in the faults, measuring offset drainage and what the plates look like.

LiDAR can also be used to help engineers and government entities know where it might be more or less dangerous to build based on potential seismic activity. Digital elevation models can be created. Fire crews have used LiDAR to map tree density. It can be used on buildings. It's the technology that was tapped a few years ago to make sure the space shuttle could be trucked through the streets of Southern California.

Opinion: Extortion under the color of law

By Larry Weitzman

In February, I wrote a column where I explained the failure of the county to follow the Mitigation Fee Act that was codified in the California Government Code as sections 66000-66008. It had two purposes, one of which was to restrain local agencies from imposing development fees that were unrelated to a development project and a second purpose was to give government a way around Proposition 13.

The act allows agencies to attach a fee to each parcel developed that could be used for public needs of the new

development like fire stations, parks and other infrastructure necessary to the new development.



Larry Weitzman

“For all unexpended development fees, the agency must make findings every fifth year that identify how the fee will be used, demonstrate a reasonable relationship between the fee and the purpose for which it is charged, identify all sources and amounts of funding anticipated to complete financing for incomplete improvements that were identified when the fee was established, and designate the approximate dates for that funding to be deposited into a dedicated account. (§ 66001, subd. (d)(1). The public agency must make these findings ‘in connection with’ the annual report the act requires the agency to provide. (§ 66001, subd. (d)(2). If these findings are not made, ‘the local agency shall refund the moneys in the account or fund’ to the then current owners of the affected properties on a prorated basis plus accrued interest. (§ 66001, subds. (d)(2) & (e); see Home Builders, supra, 185 Cal.App.4th at pp. 565-566.).” That language isn’t mine; it was copied from an opinion of the California Fourth District Court of Appeals in the case of Walker vs. the city of San Clemente filed on Aug. 28, 2015.

It is a case directly about the Mitigation Fee Act where San Clemente collected about $10 million for additional beach parking from developers. The need for parking didn’t materialize. But the city kept the money instead of refunding it and was sued. The court found that that the city didn’t file a sufficient five-year Nexus study as the city failed to

make all the required findings and had other defects. The court went on to say that according to the language of Section 66001(d)(2) such a refund is required as the statute says, “If the findings are not made as required by this subdivision, the local agency shall refund the moneys in the account or fund. The court continued, “A statute’s clear and unambiguous language controls, and therefore we need not resort to extrinsic sources or rule of statutory interpretation.”

The court decision also bars the continuation of any noncompliant district to collect fees into the future. This decision creates serious problems for our county.

El Dorado County collects money for about a dozen districts from developers, homebuilders and families under the Mitigation Fee Act and most are out of compliance in not filing the necessary paperwork (a Nexus study) every five years with the Board of Supervisors. About 20 years ago the Board of Supervisors also adopted an annual Nexus study ordinance (13.020.20) modeled after the aforementioned state statute, but it doesn’t say that if there is a failure to comply, the unexpended fund balance must be returned and these balances are in the millions of dollars. If EDC is required to refund that money, it goes to the current homeowner of record.

It was about 2½ years ago when the county auditor notified the then CAO that EDC was out of compliance with County Ordinance 13.020.20 and Mitigation Fee Act (Government Code Section 66000-66008) districts that collect money and the collection of those developers’ fees needs to stop. Every supervisor, including Norma Santiago, county counsel and even Mike Applegarth was put on notice directly by email. Why Applegarth? It was his job to gather and review the required Nexus studies in the CAO’s office. He didn’t. I guess he was too busy complaining to the BOS that the auditor was a bully.

The issue finally rose up earlier this year about the time I wrote a column in March about county mischief. There was an

issue with the El Dorado Water (Fire) District that wanted to be paid about $95,000 from the fees collected. Until they filed the proper paperwork pursuant to Section 66001(d)(2), they didn't get the money.

Bigger problems face the county now. EDC has collected $330,000 in developers' fees for the El Dorado Hills Public Safety Facility. Money has been collected for more than eight years; no Nexus studies have been filed. With this new Walker vs. San Clemente decision, if a homeowner files for a refund of the developers' fees, the county will have to return the entire fund balance to the respective homeowners of record. Even worse EDC has no plans to build this facility.

But that is small potatoes. The El Dorado Hills CSD Rec Fee has a cash balance of $4.9 million. According to my research, there has been no compliance with the Mitigation Fee Act five-year Nexus study since 2007 that has been filed with the BOS. If they are still collecting fees, that would also be a violation of the law. That could amount to several thousand dollars per homeowner.

Cameron Park CSD Fire fee has a cash balance of $1.2 million, and according to records no Mitigation Fee Act Nexus study has been filed since 2005. If refunds by homeowners of record within that district file for a refund, it's another million plus dollars the county will have to refund. This same problem could cause the Lake Valley Fire Protection District to refund about $81,000.

Other districts appear to be out of compliance all subject to refunds. Minutes of the BOS and former Supervisor Norma Santiago appear to have determined that the Nexus study for half a dozen Fire Protection Districts Capital Improvement Plans were out of compliance in 2011. The minutes from Aug. 11, 2011, reflected the following language: "1) Deny the adoption of the resolution and maintain the fees at the current rates as previously approved by the board."

In addition the minutes stated “direct staff to return in approximately 90 days with recommendations for changes in current policies and ordinances to incorporate consistent methodology among all districts.” Then CAO Terri Daly ignored the direction of the BOS. Perhaps a firing or two might have been a good object lesson at this point. Or perhaps Norma Santiago let the CAO slide because maybe Daly promised to find Santiago a job.

But the BOS even today shows a pattern of feckless behavior that could cost the taxpayers of this county. In early June, the CAO, BOS and Supervisor Sue Novasel received an email pointing out these clear violations of the Mitigation Fee Act. They have been well aware of this problem since then. By now they must have permanent body indentions from sitting on their hands.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.