

Reward offered in church vandalism cases

The FBI is offering a \$5,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and prosecution of those involved in a series of vandalism cases at Incline Village churches dating back to Easter.

Investigators are interested in tips from citizens who have witnessed or seen graffiti or writings from anti-Christianity websites and/or satanic worship graffiti.

Citizens with information regarding the vandalisms are asked to call 800-225.5324. In addition to the FBI, Secret Witness announced an increase in the reward it is ,offering to \$1000 for the arrest and prosecution of those involved.

Since April, the Washoe County Sheriff's Office in conjunction with the FBI have investigated four incidents involving churches in Incline Village. Most recently, between Aug. 29 and Aug. 30 a subject broke multiple windows and attempted to cut down a wooden cross at two Incline Village churches and again on Tuesday night or Wednesday morning.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

USFS thinning forest on South Shore

Thinning of trees for fuels reduction and forest health is under way on approximately 50 acres of National Forest System lands adjacent to Gardner Street near Panther and Tata lanes

in South Lake Tahoe, and on approximately 30 acres on the southwest end of the Spring Creek Tract off Highway 89.

The Forest Service has closed these areas from 7am-6pm daily for public safety due to heavy equipment and falling trees. Units 17 and 155 near Gardner Street are closed through Oct. 14 and unit 1141 southwest of the Spring Creek Tract is closed through Nov. 14.

The closure notices and maps are posted in the project areas along with signs to indicate the location of thinning operations. Hazards may be present even when operations have ended for the day and the closure is not in effect. Individuals disregarding the closure order may be cited, with subsequent fines and jail time.

The forest thinning is part of the South Shore Fuels Reduction and Healthy Forest Restoration Project, which will treat approximately 10,000 acres to reduce the risk of severe wildfire, improve forest health, and provide defensible space to neighboring communities.

Grant means big changes in Nev. children's mental health services

By Jackie Valley, Las Vegas Sun

A nearly \$11 million federal grant will transform how Nevada cares for children with mental health issues, according to state officials who cheered the award.

On Tuesday, the administration of Gov. Brian Sandoval

announced that the Nevada Division of Child and Family Services will receive a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, a federal agency. The grant will support the development of comprehensive mental health services and wraparound support for children with serious emotional disturbances and their families.

Activities associated with the grant will last for four years, with the state receiving about \$2.7 million per year.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Real New Year starts in September

By Andrés Martínez

Have you made your New Year's resolutions?

No? What are you waiting for? Labor Day is upon us.

September sneaks up on us every year to interrupt the languid days of summer, like a bell being rung to signal the end of recess, a return to work and to seriousness. 'Tis the season to be purposeful.

The day after Labor Day should be proclaimed our real New Year's Day. So what are you going to do with the rest of your life? Or with the coming year? At least go buy yourself one of the many calendars that starts with the fall – believe me, it isn't just students purchasing them.

We talk about the “school year” starting now, but I am not sure why the qualifier, why the undue deference to January.

Nothing ever really starts in January, a dreary post-holiday hangover of a month. It's no wonder that month's resolutions usually fail to gain traction.

I was reminded of how hardwired we all are to think in terms of academic years while enviously watching my fifth-grader unpack his new supplies the other day at his school's open house. All those new pencils and pristine binders ready to entertain new scribbles and doodles. I'll never forget that excitement of getting new notebooks each fall, writing my name on them, and struggling to keep the starched paper from sticking together initially.

In college, I used to love picking up the books for each course (well, except for having to pay for them) and I'd make the most of our initial "shopping period," when you could wander in and out of any class, as if sampling a grand buffet, before finalizing your semester schedule. The possibilities were endless.

But fall isn't only about going back to school. Every workplace I have ever worked at has treated the fall as the true beginning of the year, when new projects are launched. Fall marks the start of a new football season (both of the American and English varieties), a new TV season, and a new budgetary year for the federal government. It marks the arrival of new fashions (check out how fat those magazines are!), new car models, and of more purposeful movies and weather. In certain latitudes, the fall brings a crisp air that chides you into reaching out for your long-neglected sweater or jacket – but without the malevolence of winter.

In September, I still believe, every year, that my Steelers and Gunners will go all the way in their respective leagues. Even Cleveland Browns and Tottenham Hotspurs fans can be hopeful in September. Heck, even those teams' players can be hopeful this time of year, at least for a few weeks.

This New Year I am also excited to check out Stephen Colbert's debut playing himself on late-night network TV, and the return of the Muppets to primetime. Don't bother asking me what's new, what I am excited about, come January. I couldn't tell you.

Could the NFL, Hollywood, Uncle Sam, and Judaism all be wrong about the true beginning of the year? I don't think so.

Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year ("head of the year"), commemorates God's annual renewal of the world; this year it starts at sundown on Sept. 13. Most Christian denominations used to set the beginning of their liturgical year in September as well; the Eastern Orthodox still do. Back in their heyday, the Phoenicians and Persians were also civilized enough to realize New Year should be celebrated in the fall.

The theme of renewal is why it's important to celebrate the arrival of a new year on a personal level, by taking stock, and by setting new goals and resolutions. I can't guarantee you will succeed in shedding all those pounds, learning Arabic, and becoming your community's leading volunteer – all the while increasing your productivity at work.

The important thing is to try, whatever your resolution may be. Then try again.

And to start your trying now, not in January.

Andrés Martinez writes the Trade Winds column for Zócalo Public Square, where he is editorial director. He is also professor at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism at Arizona State University.

U.S. transportation officials embracing more than cars

By Josh Cohen, Next City

Local bike and pedestrian planners have long had a complicated relationship with the federal Department of Transportation. It is often incredibly difficult to pay for ambitious infrastructure projects without the U.S. Department of Transportation's help, but because the feds haven't yet codified much of those ambitious, next-generation street designs, ambitious municipal projects are ineligible for funding.

At least that's the story risk-averse engineers like to tell advocates and their bolder colleagues. But in a recent attempt to change attitudes, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) published a laundry list of common funding and design misconceptions aimed at local and regional planners.

The report highlights five major funding misconceptions. The FHWA points out that federal funds can, in fact, be used for protected bike lanes, road diets and local road networks. Cities and states can also draw from far more funding sources for biking and walking projects than just the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). The DOT also provides walking and biking funding via channels such as the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program, the National Highway Performance Program and more.

Read the whole story

Radon poster contest open to Nev. youth

Nevada students are invited to showcase their artistic talents and promote radon awareness by entering the Nevada Radon Poster Contest.

The contest is open children ages 9 to 14 who are enrolled in public, private, territorial, tribal, Department of Defense and home schools. Children can also enter through a sponsoring group, such as art, computer, library, reading, science, scouting, youth or 4-H clubs.

Posters should convey one of these messages: 1) What is radon? 2) Where does radon come from? 3) How does radon get into our homes? 4) Radon can cause lung cancer, or 5) Test your home for radon.

Posters will be judged on content accuracy, visual communication of the topic, reproducibility and originality. They can be created with crayons, markers, paint, collage, pencils, photographs or computer graphics. There is no fee to enter, but each child is limited to one entry. Entries must be received at 4955 Energy Way in Reno by Oct. 31.

Cash prizes are \$75 for first place, \$60 for second and \$45 for third. The top three entries are also awarded cash prizes for their teachers or sponsoring organization's representative.

For more info, call 775.336.0252.

SLT honors man for saving woman's life



Jacob Callanan

Jacob Callanan was recognized at the Sept. 1 South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting for his actions in assisting a person who nearly drowned.

On July 25, Callanan was working at Ski Run Boat Company when he heard the sounds of a woman in distress in the water in Lake Tahoe. He swam to the person and brought her to shore. He started first aid measures before paramedics arrived.

"His quick actions definitely saved this person's life," Al Martinez, South Lake Tahoe Fire Department firefighter-paramedic, said.

SLT, STPUD at odds over franchise agreement



South Tahoe PUD does not pay a fee to have its water and sewer lines on South Lake Tahoe property. Photo/LTN file

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe since earlier this summer has been paying South Tahoe Public Utility District for water and sewer just like any other customer. South Tahoe PUD, though, is not paying the city a franchise agreement like all the other water companies in town.

If the city has its way, there will be franchise deal in place – and soon. South Lake Tahoe officials want to correct what they see as a 50-year-old problem.

“It’s a standard practice that utilities pay for the right to use a city’s property,” City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Tahoe Keys, Lukins and Lakeside water districts all pay 2 percent of their gross revenues to the city per their franchise agreements. South Tahoe PUD never has. When STPUD acquired smaller water districts that were paying the fee, the practice stopped. The city never pursued its right to those dollars.

The city in 1966 – just after becoming incorporated – entered

into 50-year franchise agreements with the various water districts. Those all expire at the end of this year.

City Attorney Tom Watson told *Lake Tahoe News* that state law allows cities to create an ordinance – like South Lake Tahoe has – to impose the franchise fee.

The city has been talking with the four water districts about 10-year franchise agreements, with the goal of treating them all the same. The council will likely discuss the issue Oct. 20.

South Tahoe PUD has the topic on Thursday's agenda. The Sept. 3 item is to discuss the proposed franchise agreement and direct staff.

"Since we have not seen anything at all at this point, I would rather not speculate on possibilities. We have chosen not to begin any research or analysis until we actually see what is proposed," STPUD General Manager Richard Solbrig told *Lake Tahoe News*.

However, according to city officials the two entities have been discussing the issue for several months. The last meeting was Monday, though an agreement was not reached.

The contract the two had expired at the end of July. Former City Manager Dave Jinkens negotiated it at a time when the district was doing a lot of work in the redevelopment area near Stateline. It included free water and sewer for the city, while the district paid nothing.

Kerry said not paying a water-sewer bill saved the city about \$100,000 a year. She added that STPUD is saving about \$500,000 a year by not having a franchise agreement.

Franchise agreements between municipalities and utility companies are fairly routine. The whole point is that the utilities are essentially renting space owned by the city –

albeit underground in this case – in order to operate their business.

Kerry said the proposal that will be before the council this fall is to have the STPUD franchise fee be dedicated to the replacement of roads. Money from the other water districts goes toward the broader public works budget.

STPUD does not have a franchise agreement with El Dorado County. *Lake Tahoe News* on Aug. 28 asked El Dorado County Counsel Robyn Drivon about any agreements with West Slope water providers. She said she would look into it, but has not responded.

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Notes:

- The STPUD board meeting is Sept. 3 at 2pm, 1275 Meadow Crest Drive, South Lake Tahoe.
- Also on the agenda are formal mutual aid agreements with Tahoe Keys and Lukins. “The agreement will provide the backup reliability sought by the state inspector. The agreements should be virtually identical, except for any differences in the physical connections,” Solbrig said.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

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- Tahoe Regional Young Professionals is having a mixer Sept. 9 from 6-9pm at Blue Dog Pizza at the corner of Sierra Boulevard and Highway 50 in South Lake Tahoe. It is free for members, \$10 for others.

- The South Lake Tahoe Fire Department will be hosting a blood drive Sept. 10 from 9am-1pm at Fire Station No. 3, 2101 Lake Tahoe Blvd. To schedule an appointment, contact Kim George at 530.307.9596.

- Paul Marlowe is retiring this month from Barton Urgent Care at Stateline Medical Center. Marlowe has practiced medicine in Stateline for 32 years.

- Worldwide Photo Walk is Oct. 3. **Click here** to find a walk near you.

- El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce is celebrating 100 years.

Sept. 11 ceremony set for S. Lake Tahoe

The American Legion Post 795 of South Lake Tahoe is hosting a ceremony to honor the victims and first responders of Sept. 11, 2001.

The ceremony will be at 11am Sept. 11 at the American Legion Hall, 2748 Lake Tahoe Blvd.

The commemorative ceremony honors the victims of the attacks on the World Trade Center, Pentagon, airline flight takeovers and the American military service personnel who have died in the war against terrorism and other service members who continue the fight.

The ceremony will also recognize emergency service personnel, including firefighters and law enforcement.