

BlueGo fleet to be exclusively diesel powered

By Kathryn Reed

Soon Tahoe Transportation District's fleet of BlueGo buses on the South Shore will all be diesel.

This is because the board this month voted to get rid of the compressed natural gas buses and the fueling station it operates at Lake Tahoe Airport.

"CNG has not been that great of a performer in mountain environments like ours, especially when you have hills to climb. When you combine that with where diesel technology has come, it is very clean and definitely more affordable and provides the power we need," TTD Executive Director Carl Hasty told *Lake Tahoe News*.

It costs TTD about \$72,000 to operate the station. They are responsible for nearly 98 percent of the usage. Other users have been notified it will be closing this summer.

TTD will also save money by not needing staff to maintain the facility or have parts for that fleet.

Placer County's TART bus service uses CNG. Four of TTD's CNG-fueled buses will go there.

"The TTD fleet includes 15 CNG powered buses. Buses 3281 and 3282 are currently not in service and were scheduled for disposal this year and buses 3283 and 3284 have exceeded their federal useful life and have CNG storage tanks that will expire in the next two years," the staff report says. "The cost to replace CNG storage tanks is typically around \$20,000 per bus. Another five CNG vehicles have exceeded their federal useful life and are also eligible for disposal. Of the

remaining six CNG vehicles, buses 3274 and 3275 are specialized CNG-powered trolleys that will be retained for use on the West Shore. These buses will fuel at Placer County's Cabin Creek CNG station. Placer County is interested in acquiring the other four CNG buses. These four buses have remaining federal interest and must be transferred to another grantee to avoid repaying FTA a prorated share of the federal interest."

TTD added five buses to its fleet in May and will add another four in September.

The now defunct South Tahoe Area Transit Authority, which used to run BlueGo, began acquiring CNG buses about 13 years ago at a time when it was deemed this would be the more environmentally friendly route. That is not the case now. Hasty said TTD will keep looking at alternatives, but added electric vehicles won't be purchased in the near future.

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Note:

- TTD staff will be giving a presentation to the South Lake Tahoe City Council on July 21 at 9am at Lake Tahoe Airport.

6 members of 14-15 EDC Grand Jury to serve again

The 2015-16 El Dorado County Grand Jury began work this month on a yearlong process to investigate various issues in the county.

The jury is tasked with investigating civil matters in the county. However, it has no real authority other than to write a report each other – good or bad – about the people or entities involved. The subjects of the reports then write back saying what they might do to correct the allegations.

Six members of the 2015-16 El Dorado County Grand Jury served on last year's panel. They are Richard Coffin, James Kern, Peter Marty, Jeanne Ott, Thomas Simpson and Colleen Young.

The other members include: Kenneth Cater, Hal Erpenbeck, Dan Kelly, Thomas Orth, Roger Pickler, Rodney Pimental, Debbie Rice, Julie Ryan, Jan Sawyer, George Turnboo, Richard White, Gatha Willyard, and Laura Anne Winston. Cater is the foreman.

Superior Court Judge Dylan Sullivan will be overseeing this jury, her first year to do so.

Planned controversy Placerville

Parenthood reaches

By Sammy Caiola, Sacramento Bee

StemExpress, a Placerville biotech firm specializing in stem cell procurement for scientific research, is under fire after being mentioned in a viral YouTube video created by abortion opponents.

The video, posted Tuesday, shows footage of Dr. Deborah Nucatola, senior director of medical services at the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, discussing over lunch the

harvesting of fetal organs for research. She's talking with two actors from the anti-abortion group Center for Medical Progress, who were posing as representatives from a biotech firm.

The eight-minute undercover clip, which has garnered over 1 million views and inspired the popular anti-abortion Twitter hashtag "#PPSellsBabyParts," is edited in a way to suggest Planned Parenthood and its affiliates profit from fetal tissue and organs procured during abortions, which is against federal law.

Read the whole story

LTCC art instructor taking students to Italy

Lake Tahoe Community College art instructor Phyllis Shafer is leading a trip to Florence in October 2016, where students can appreciate some of the most famous artworks ever created, with expertise and insight provided by one of the best-known Western artists working today.

The public is invited to a trip kickoff meeting and slideshow hosted by Shafer on July 23 at 6pm in LTCC's board room to learn more about the experience.

"The Art of Florence" class trip is scheduled for Oct. 10-18, 2016. Students who register for this trip by Aug. 1 will save \$200, bringing the cost to \$4,385.

For more information about the trip, go online, scroll to "Find Your Trip," and enter Group Leader ID "234147" and Group

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• El Dorado County Board of Supervisors will be having the annual Tahoe meeting on Aug. 31 starting at 9am at Lake Tahoe Airport. The Meyers Area Plan is anticipated to be one of the topics.

• Due to scheduling conflicts, Vacation Bible School at St. Theresa Church in South Lake Tahoe is now the week of Aug. 10. For more information and registration contact Danette Winslow at 530.544.4788 or sttheresare@gmail.com.

• Tahoe Paradise Resort Improvement District is having a special meeting July 17 at 9:30am at the park. Here is the agenda.

• Matthew Schlanger was sworn in July 13 at Douglas County's newest sheriff's deputy.

Feds urge bus safety rules similar to planes

By Fenit Nirappil, AP

SACRAMENTO – Federal safety officials on Tuesday urged

commercial buses to have more clearly labeled emergency exits and safety briefings similar to those on planes after their investigation of a deadly collision in California in which a tractor-trailer slammed into a bus full of students.

Dozens of students struggled to escape the burning, smoke-filled bus after the FedEx truck veered across an interstate median about 100 miles north of Sacramento and struck it head-on April 10, 2014. Both drivers, five students and their three adult chaperones died.

National Transportation Safety Board investigators determined the truck driver, 32-year-old Timothy Evans, losing control was the probable cause of the crash, but they couldn't conclude why. The agency said the driver's actions weren't consistent with him falling asleep, but may suggest he had a seizure or fainted.

The federal investigation also found that students struggled to escape from the bus because of poorly labeled exits and no safety instructions as required by the bus company's policy.

The four-member NTSB at its meeting in Washington, D.C., voted to urge regulators to improve emergency exits and add fire-resistant materials to buses so it is easier for passengers to survive crashes.

NTSB Chairman Christopher Hart said the case exposed "double standards in regulations protecting motor coach passengers."

"When plane crashes are survivable, many more people survive," said Hart.

Board officials said buses should have the path to emergency exits light up after crashes and a black box-style data recorder, while drivers should offer safety instructions as flight attendants do.

The bus driver on the first leg of the California trip told

investigators he did not show a six-minute safety video at the start of the trip, according to NTSB records.

More than half of the 29 students interviewed did not know which windows were designated as emergency exits, and some shattered other panels to escape. Those who climbed out had to drop 7 feet.

The NTSB is urging new buses to have second doors that double as easier escape options, as is standard in Europe.

The bus was equipped with seat belts ahead of a federal mandate taking effect next year, but not all students were wearing them.

The investigation also raised questions about fire safety.

The bus exploded into flames after the crash, and at least two passengers died of asphyxiation. Board officials said decades-old standards for vehicle materials withstanding fires should be updated because they treat a four-passenger sedan the same as a double-decker bus and don't take into account fires ignited by crashes.

Victor Parra, president and CEO of the United Motorcoach Association, said some of the NTSB's safety recommendations may make sense, but should be backed up by science showing they'll make a difference.

"Buses are the safest way to travel on the nation's highways, bar none," said Parra. "We have plenty of exits now; it's a matter of making passengers aware of what they are and how they use them."

The NTSB can recommend safety rules, but it's up to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to enact them. NTSB officials have criticized agencies for ignoring its calls, some decadeslong, to shore up bus safety.

The bus in California's crash was carrying 44 students from Southern California for a free tour of Humboldt State University. Many were hoping to be the first in their families to attend college.

FedEx and the bus company, Silverado Stages Inc., are facing lawsuits from survivors of the crash and families of the victims.

FedEx did not comment on the NTSB's findings, and Silverado Stages CEO John Busskohl did not immediately respond to an email and calls.

Celebs practice before teeing off in ACC



Mark Mulder watches son Dax, as his other children Xander, 7, and Tatym, 5, look on. Photo/Carolyn E. Wright/Copyright

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – The next generation of celebrity golfers was on the links at Edgewood Tahoe on Wednesday.

Mark Mulder – a two-time All Star pitcher with the Oakland A's and current ESPN analyst, made July 15's practice round a family event. After the adults took their turn on the 17th hole it was time for 7-year-old Xander to tee off. Following him was little brother Dax. The 3-year-old took two tries with his pint-sized club before he whacked it straight down the fairway.



Former Kansas City Chief's head coach Herm Edwards, left, gets advice from Edgewood Tahoe pro Ron Blum. Photo/Carolyn E. Wright/Copyright

The annual American Century Championship is a mix of frivolity and serious golf. Some of the 92 celebrities are there to have fun, while others are competing for a chunk of the \$600,000 purse. The three-day tournament starts Friday.

Musician and sometimes actor Justin Timberlake, who is playing in the event for the first time, drew a sizeable crowd Wednesday that was several people deep. At the driving range he was getting advice from Jack Wagoner.



Tennis player James Blake is back playing the

sport that made him famous, at least in exhibition matches. Photo/Carolyn E. Wright/Copyright

Wagoner, a two-winner of this event, was looking sharp.

The sports book at Harrah's-Harveys has four-time champion Billy Joe Tolliver at 7:2 odds to beat defending champ Mark Rypien. Rypien is at 5:1 to win it, Timerlake is 40:1. In the cellar is Charles Barkley with 5,000:1 odds to win the 26th annual tournament. Barkley is a crowd favorite. He likes this event so much he postponed hip surgery so he could play here.



Ex-49er QB Steve Young signs autographs; including the jersey of Mason Saso, right. Photo/Carolyn E. Wright/Copyright

The fans, well, they appreciate the antics – especially on hole 17 – as well as the competition. Mostly they come to see Hollywood stars and athletes in person, with many seeking

autographs and photos.

Twelve-year-old Mason Saso of Colusa was wearing a Steve Young jersey that looked more like a night shirt. And while he is clearly too young to have seen the former 49er quarterback in action, most of his family are fans of the team so that's how he got hooked.



Justin Timberlake is destined to be this year's gallery favorite. Photo/Carolyn E. Wright/Copyright

"He's a great football player," the youth said of Young. "He played for my favorite team." That alone was reason enough for him get the QB to sign the back of his jersey with big No. 8

on it.

This is the third year Sharon Cornelius of South Carolina has headed west for the tournament.

“I just love the camaraderie. Everyone is so nice,” she said as she waited for players to come by.

Cornelius is on a quest over the next few days to get several photos of her with the celebrities. She won’t be alone.

Opinion: Most U.S. immigrants from China

By Erika Lee

Once singled out for exclusion by law from the United States, Chinese immigrants now make up the largest single group of arrivals a year into this country. The Census Bureau says China replaced Mexico as the top country of origin for immigrants to the U.S. in 2013.

Given the history, this growth – and the fact that Chinese immigrants are considered part of the Asian American “model minority” – seems improbable. But the story of Chinese immigration, past and present reminds how fickle our attitudes about immigrants can prove.

Although many of today’s Chinese immigrants are students and investors, earlier Chinese immigrants were considered the lowest of the low skilled. Chinese sailors were among the crew on a ship that arrived in Baltimore in 1784. Chinese immigrants were living in New York City in the 1830s. And Chinese were among the thousands of gold seekers who rushed

into California during the Gold Rush in the mid-19th century. By 1870, there were 64,000 Chinese in the United States, most of them in California, and almost all of them from the Pearl River Delta outside Guangzhou in southern China.

These Chinese immigrants faced a tremendous hostility, despite amounting to only a small fraction of the total foreign-born population in the United States in the late 19th century. They were charged with taking away jobs, corrupting white women, and threatening American civilization. In 1882, the U.S. passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which barred Chinese laborers, prohibited all Chinese immigrants from becoming naturalized citizens, and allowed only select classes of Chinese to apply for admission.

While the act was in effect – from 1882 to 1943 – Chinese immigrants became America's first "illegal" immigrants. Chinese immigration drastically dropped, though it never totally stopped. Many of those who came resorted to false papers (like my grandfather). Those who arrived in San Francisco faced harsh interrogations, humiliating medical examinations, and long detentions in the unsanitary barracks on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay.

In the past 50 years, Chinese immigration has undergone a dramatic transformation. The 1965 Immigration Act ended national origins quotas favoring immigration from Europe over other parts of the world; it also established preferences for professional and skilled workers. At the same time, China's subsequent economic modernization and global outlook revived and diversified the flow of immigration from China.

In 1960, there were just less than 100,000 Chinese-born immigrants in the United States. In 2010, the Census reported over 3.3 million adult Chinese-Americans. As of that year, Chinese Americans had higher median annual personal earnings than the general U.S. population.

While Chinese immigrants may not be scrutinized in the same way that undocumented low-skilled Mexican immigrants are, it would be wrong to assume that America has fully embraced Chinese and other Asian immigrants. Some Americans resent having to go to a doctor who has a foreign accent, for example, or having their kids compete with talented foreign-born (and second generation Asian-American) students for college admissions or jobs.

There could be even more resentment if China's national wealth and strength becomes more pronounced, and more explicitly opposed to American interests. This country has often treated immigrants unfairly based on the actions of their countries of origin. In 1999, Chinese-American scientist Wen Ho Lee was unfairly accused of spying for the People's Republic of China. Could there be more episodes like this in the near future?

As Chinese immigrants have gone from being the most excluded immigrants to the most numerous, we should recognize what has changed and what has not. Chinese immigrants and Chinese-Americans are growing in number. They are often held up as America's "good" immigrants. But they and other Asian Americans remain vulnerable to anxieties, economic shifts and political struggles. How far have Chinese Americans really risen? And during a time of increasing xenophobia and concern about a newly powerful China worldwide, how easily might they fall?

Erika Lee is a historian and writer and director of the Immigration History Research Center at the University of Minnesota. Her most recent book, "The Making of Asian America: A History" will be published in September. She wrote this for What It Means to Be American a national conversation hosted by the Smithsonian and Zocalo Public Square.

State still collecting evidence in dead bear case

By Kathryn Reed

The investigation involving the killing of a bear by a South Shore resident should be wrapped up by the end of the month. Ultimately it will be up to the El Dorado County District Attorney's Office if charges are filed.

A necropsy – aka animal autopsy – was done on the 2½-year-old bear that was shot July 9. The cause of death was presumably because it was shot in the backside with buckshot from a shotgun, according to Patrick Foy, captain with the California Department of Fish & Wildlife.



A bear was shot to death last week on the outskirts of South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Toogee Sielsch

The bear was found the next day sprawled on its back at the base of a tree off Pioneer Trail near Minniconjou Drive.

A game warden with the state did not see any blood, but instead used other tracking techniques that led him to a house in the area. Foy told *Lake Tahoe News* a man in his 70s admitted to shooting the bear and told authorities he did so in self-defense.

It is legal to discharge a firearm in the basin and shoot an animal if one believes his or her life is in jeopardy or property needs protecting.

Foy said the shooter, whose name has not been released, had inquired about a bear depredation permit earlier this year, but chose not to get one.

This bear was not tagged – meaning it had not been captured before as a nuisance bear.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- South Lake Tahoe will be hosting a public meeting for the community to review three initial design concepts for future improvements to the Regan Beach. The meeting is July 28 from 5:30-7:30pm at the recreation complex at 1180 Rufus Allen Blvd.
- Tahoe Area Regional Transit's Highway 267 summer service has been expanded to include two buses running hourly from Crystal Bay to downtown Truckee from 7am to 6pm daily. It will continue through Sept. 7.
- Lake Tahoe Golf Course is hosting a pop up dinner Sept. 4 at 6pm with chefs Josh and Whitney Deri of Blend Catering. For more information or to reserve a seat, go

online.

- Coffee with a Cop is Thursday mornings from 8-10 at the Starbucks at the Raley's at Stateline this summer. It's an opportunity for residents and visitors to meet with South Lake Tahoe officers.
- Emerald Bay Dentistry recently merged with Lake Tahoe Dental.