

BLM wants \$1 mil. Burning Man VIP compound

By Jenny Kane, Reno Gazette-Journal

U.S. Bureau of Land Management officials are asking Burning Man organizers to provide “excessive” comforts such as flushing toilets, washers and dryers, and vanity mirrors in a compound for high-level government officials staying in Black Rock City.

A Burning Man spokesman estimated the compound would cost the event more than \$1 million, bringing its 2015 permit fees to about \$5 million. The renderings of the compound obtained by the RGJ also show various accommodations set aside for VIP visitors but don’t indicate who the visiting dignitaries will be.

The request, unprecedented in Burning Man’s history, has turned into a point of contention as organizers negotiate with the agency for their annual permit to stage the event in the Black Rock Desert. No permit has been issued for this year’s event, which runs Aug. 30 to Sept. 7. Typically permits are issued in early August.

Burning Man has refused to comply with the BLM’s request, which the federal agency submitted on June 1, according to Burning Man spokesman Jim Graham.

Read the whole story

NTPUD may change election format

North Tahoe Public Utility District board of directors may change the election format to an election at-large model like what South Tahoe Public Utility District just did.

An online survey is asking district customers what they think. It will be available until Sept. 15.

The board will vote Oct. 13.

Since formation in 1948, the NTPUD has elected its five-member directors by specific “seat numbers” serving staggered four year terms.

Letter: Successful chamber mixer

To the community,

Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce thanks Basecamp Hotel for hosting the Business After Hours Mixer (BAHM!) on June 25 at Basecamp’s new bar and beer garden. It was a wonderful night that included live music, corn hole and tours through the new property, which include rooftop patios and an Airstream trailer.

The bar and beer garden are officially open to the public so make it a priority to visit this summer.

The next chamber BAHM! is scheduled for September.

Shannon Earley, LTSSCC

Drought causes spike in insurance rates



The Truckee River near Tahoe City should have enough water for rafts to be floating on it.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Michael Bott and Thom Jensen, KXTV

Curb appeal, crime rate and a quality education. Those are the factors most people weigh when buying a home. But, a new investigation found that equation was now influenced by the drought and longer, more intense fire seasons.

Homeowners insurance, once a budget afterthought, was now top of mind for some people.

Residents in a small Placer County community said their premiums are “burning out of control,” and insurance companies are canceling other policies altogether. They lived on the outskirts of Colfax in a heavily wooded subdivision named Alpine Meadows.

Read the whole story

Gerry Wright – 1928-2015



Gerry Wright

Longtime South Lake Tahoe resident Gerry Wright died June 3, 2015. He was 87.

Gerry was born in Lloydminster, Saskatchewan, in 1928.

He worked in the accounting field for 67 years, beginning with Husky Oil, originally out of Lloydminster. He was transferred to Calgary, Alberta; Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan; and then in 1962 to Cody, Wyo.

Gerry loved people, his family and music. He was a member of the Canadian Reserve Army Band in Moose Jaw and directed the Cody Elks Club Band.

After moving to Los Angeles in the mid-1960s, he worked with the younger kids of the Reseda Youth Band. In the 1970s, he played with the Ambassadors 18 piece dance band. A family trip to the Sierra brought a desire to move and in 1979, Gerry and Jeanette moved to Tahoe. Gerry opened an accounting business in the early 1980s.

He joined the Kiwanis Club, served as treasurer for many years and also was a regular at the Thursday men's bridge club at the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center.

Gerry loved Jesus and with a grateful heart for the showers of blessings from God, he and Jeanette joined Tahoe Community Church in 1984. He taught Sunday school and became the first elder in 1990. He fought the good fight, he finished the race, and he kept the faith. (2Timothy 4:7 ESV)

He is survived by his wife, Jeanette, of 66 years; son, Doug; daughter-in-law, Karen; son, Colin; daughters, Jacki and Paula; son-in-law, Bob; six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

A celebration of life service will be July 11 at 11am at Tahoe Community Church at 145 Daggett Way off Kingsbury Grade.

West Nile virus found in El Dorado County bird

A bird found in the El Dorado Hills area tested positive for West Nile virus, the first for 2015.

The bird, a Western Scrub Jay, was found June 16.

So far this year, West Nile virus activity has been reported

in 26 California counties, including Sacramento and Placer counties. No human cases of the virus have been reported in California this year.

According to Fred Sanford, supervising environmental health specialist with the El Dorado County Environmental Management Division, it is unusual to see a West Nile positive bird this early in the season.

“We don’t typically get our first report of a West Nile positive bird in El Dorado County until later in the summer,” Sanford said in a press release. “Confirmation of our first West Nile virus positive bird means the virus is circulating between birds and mosquitoes and there is heightened risk of infection in humans. It’s important to take precautions.”

Last year, seven West Nile virus positive birds were identified in El Dorado County. No human cases were reported.

West Nile virus can be transmitted to people through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes get the virus when they feed on infected birds. The illness is not spread from person-to-person. While most people infected with the virus show no symptoms, some may have high fever, severe headache, tiredness and/or a stiff neck that can last several days to several weeks.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• A construction kickoff meeting to discuss South Lake Tahoe's Sierra Tract Erosion Control Project, Phases 3 and 4 is set for June 30 at 6pm at the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center, 1180 Rufus Allen Blvd.

• Jack Connell is now executive chef at PlumpJack Cafe & Bar located at PlumpJack Squaw Valley Inn.

• Construction of Bijou Bike Park in South Lake Tahoe will start in July.

• The 4th annual Kirkwood Mountain Classic Cross Country race is July 12. Online registration closes July 9.

• Photographer Dirk Yuricich's exhibition Textures of Water will be at his studio-gallery June 27-July 16 from 1-6pm and by appointment. The studio is closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays. The opening reception is June 27-28 from 1-6pm, 171 Shady Lane, Stateline.

TPRID on path to continue major changes

By Jessie Marchesseau

MEYERS – With a new fiscal year just around the corner, the Tahoe Paradise Resort Improvement District board of directors is gearing up for a year full of change.

Former park manager, Steve Dunn, is out of the picture and moved out of the house in which he had been residing on the property. Now the board must decide what to do about

maintenance, management and event planning, not to mention what to do with the house. The 50th anniversary celebration is coming up, bears are in the trash almost daily, new fiscal year financials need to be discussed and to top it off, it's an election year with four of the five board seats up for grabs.

Applications have already been accepted for the events coordinator and park caretaker positions. The directors will be sorting through those and doing interviews in the coming weeks. A third position is also being discussed for seasonal park maintenance. All three positions will be part time, replacing Dunn's solitary full-time one.

Whether or not living in the on-site house will be offered as partial compensation to any of the new employees is still undecided. For now, the board has opted to list the house's estimated rental market value, \$1,100 per month, as part of the annual revenue in the 2015-16 budget. The house is not ready to be rented right now, as Dunn did not meet his deadline to be fully moved out by May 16 and still has some personal property on the premises. The board was considering a dumpster to dispose of the remaining items, but since Dunn has made an effort to clean things up in recent weeks, they decided to wait a little longer and then reassess.

Also listed on next year's budget is revenue from site rentals, mainly weddings. However, this number is significantly smaller than it has been in the past, as it only includes rentals already confirmed for this season. The board plans to discuss at a later date whether or not to continue hosting weddings in the park as well as the possibility of raising prices to be more in line with other local venues.

After reviewing the rest of the proposed 2015-16 budget prepared by Peter Nelligan, board treasurer, it was unanimously approved June 25 with a balanced operating budget of \$72,900.

Nelligan has also been in charge of trash at the park in the absence of a caretaker. He said bears are constantly getting into the trash and bear cans are a must, sooner rather than later.

"We're creating bad behavior in bears by allowing them to feed in the park, and it's also a mess to pick up," he said.

He estimates the park needs five boxes. Price quotes are being gathered, and the issue will be revisited at the next meeting with the goal of getting them installed as soon as possible. Board Chairwoman Sue Novasel said they would likely be able to appropriate funds from elsewhere since it was not included on the approved budget.

Jan Roman Gonzales reported that the planning of the 50th anniversary celebration on July 11 is moving along. Bands, vendors and sponsors are lined up, flyers are ready to be distributed, and signs and banners will be arriving any day.

The RID recently received notice from El Dorado County that 2015 is an election year for the board. Since two of the seats were appointed midway through their terms and two are expiring, all four will be up for election this year. The two expiring seats will be four-year terms, and the other two will be for two years. If no more than four people apply, those applicants will simply be appointed to the seats and no election will be conducted. Any resident registered to vote within the TPRID may put their name in for the election by contacting Kim Smith with El Dorado County at 530.621.7490 between July 13 and Aug. 7.

The next meeting will be July 9.

Opinion: Be smart with campfires

By Olivia Rahman

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and other fire protection agencies need your help this wildfire season to protect our communities and the pristine beauty of Lake Tahoe from wildfire.

Illegal or unattended campfires in the basin cause over 90 percent of the wildfires here. Protecting lives, property, and our natural resources is something all citizens can help accomplish by learning about campfire regulations and restrictions before lighting a campfire.

Whether cooking, warming up, or just sitting and enjoying the crackle and glow of a campfire, safety is essential. In the greater Lake Tahoe area, campfires and charcoal barbecues are not allowed on beaches or in the forest outside of developed campsites and campfires are never allowed in the Desolation Wilderness. A valid campfire permit is required to have a campfire or propane/gas stove on any public land.

Before you light a campfire fire, here are a few things to consider:

Questions to ask before having a fire:

- Are there fire restrictions in effect?
- Is it too windy with red flag warning conditions?
- Is this an approved location for campfires?
- Is a propane/gas stove a possible campfire alternative?

- Is there enough water to put out the campfire?
- Is the area clear of flammable materials? (tents, overhanging branches, dry grass/leaves)
- Will there be a responsible adult awake and attending the fire at all times?

Putting out a campfire:

- Putting a campfire out takes a lot of water and stirring.
- Soak the fire with water making sure all embers, coals, and sticks are wet.
- Use a shovel, stir water and dirt into your campfire to make sure everything is wet.
- Feel for heat with the back of your hand near the surface; make sure everything is cold to the touch.
- If it is too hot to touch, then it is too hot to leave. Repeat steps 1, 2 and 3.

Be alert for careless activity that could cause a wildfire and report any suspicious activity to local officials. Create defensible space around your property and think before starting any activity that creates heat or can cause a spark. Finally, make sure your campfire is dead out. We can all make a difference in reducing human-caused fires during this season.

For more information about fire restrictions and how to obtain a campfire permit, call the Forest Supervisor's office in South Lake Tahoe at 530.543.2694, Monday through Friday from 8am-4:30pm.

Olivia Rahman works for the U.S. Forest Service.

Website tracks hidden resort fees

By Josh Noel, Los Angeles Times

More hotels are tacking on often-hidden 'resort fees' to their bills. Here's how to spot them

If the hotel bill includes fees for services you didn't use or weren't available, make your case at front desk

I recently received a nasty little surprise on my bill when checking out of a Memphis, Tenn., hotel.

Tucked in with the room charge and the various taxes were a \$20 "resort fee" and a \$20 a night charge for "valet service." Never mind that I hadn't used the valet. Or that when I checked in, the front desk clerk didn't happen to mention I was being charged for the service.

Resort fees are nothing new – and there's a new website called

ResortFeeChecker.com to help you find out how much you'll be charged – but they are increasingly common and, arguably, cagier, with surcharges such as an automatic charge for valet service, regardless of whether a guest uses it.

Read the whole story