

League to Save Lake Tahoe hosting open house

On June 19, the League to Save Lake Tahoe is hosting a summer kickoff party, featuring the reopening of the Fritz & David Huntington Environmental Education Center in South Lake Tahoe.

The center's overhaul is designed to provide better educate and engage the public about how to protect Lake Tahoe. New exhibits will include an audio station sharing the stories of how League staff and volunteers collect water quality samples during storm events as part of the Pipe Keepers program, as well as visual displays that portray the fragility of Tahoe's beauty.

As part of the kickoff festivities, the League will celebrate its volunteers, and its partner agencies and organizations.

The 5-8pm event is free. RSVP to events@keeptahoeblue.org or call at 530.541.5388.

Woman, dog die in Hwy. 50 car accident

A woman and her dog were killed in a car crash Wednesday morning near Glenbrook.

The single-car accident on Highway 50 was called in at 8:36am June 3.

The name of the deceased and details about the accident will not be released until Thursday at the earliest, according to

the Nevada Highway Patrol.

The driver was headed west. Traffic as of noon Wednesday was moving slow in both directions.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

EDC supes say yes to seniors, table raises

By Kathryn Reed

In the same week El Dorado County interim CAO Pamela Knorr wanted to cut senior programs she asked the Board of Supervisors to give key employees, including herself, a 15 percent raise.

The raise was tucked into the June 2 consent agenda. This is usually where items that don't need discussion from the electeds are placed. The item was to amend the salaries resolution to include longevity pay. None of the supporting documents mentioned that Knorr and County Counsel Robyn Drivon would be eligible for the spike in salary.

The proposal came from the Human Resources Department, of which Knorr is still head of. It was to change longevity to be based on total years in government service, not just at El Dorado County. Knorr, according to a February county press release, has more than 28 years of government service. She is 44 years old; making her 16 when she started her career.

The new rule would have only affected those employees not

covered by a union; so not the rank and file workers.

The issue was first broached in mid-May at which time the Auditor-Controllers Office found errors with the proposal and got the item delayed. More errors were found in the latest proposal.

The multi-page document was released to the supervisors after 5pm May 29.

On June 1 at 9pm, Auditor-Controller Joe Harn emailed the supervisors and Knorr asking for the item to be delayed at least two weeks. The letter in part says, "This draft resolution has not been reviewed and vetted in accordance with our normal process. ... I still note significant changes in the resolution that are not explained, noted, or disclosed in any way in HR's board letter. Most significantly, the resolution proposes to change Section 901 and grant longevity pay to department heads that have prior service at other cities and counties. This could mean a 15 percent raise for some department heads. This is a major change in the Salary and Benefits Resolution. This change should either be eliminated or clearly disclosed in the board letter and discussed and justified in public."

County Assessor Karl Weiland also sent an email to the board: "I support the auditor's request. Subsequent to the last continuance, I sent an email to the CAO and county counsel expressing my concerns regarding process. The reinstatement of the longevity for prior service clause into §901 (a) whether accidental or intentional, needs to be thoroughly vetted before adoption."

At this week's meeting the supervisors removed the item from the agenda.

As for the seniors, Knorr recommended the supervisors shut down the senior lunch programs in Diamond Springs, El Dorado Hills, Greenwood, Pioneer Park and Pollock Pines. She also

wanted the county's senior daycare program to be eliminated.

The board said no way to both proposals. A large contingent of seniors was in the audience at Monday's budget workshop meeting advocating for their programs.

Another matter on the June 2 agenda was discussion about hiring a permanent chief administrative officer. Knorr this spring told the board she would start the recruitment process. This is instead of relying on a consultant and subcommittee of the board, even though Knorr wants to have the job on a permanent basis. There was no reportable action taken.

Knorr was not available for comment.

Nev. runs out of license plate numbers

By Associated Press

The Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles is changing its license plate numbering scheme for the first time in more than three decades.

Division Administrator of Central Services Sean McDonald says the department simply ran out of the 12 million possibilities possible under the numbering system created in 1982.

Instead of starting with three numbers and ending with three letters, license plates will now carry two numbers, a letter, and three numbers.

This new system creates 34 million possible combinations that McDonald said should last a long time into the future.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- South Lake Tahoe Police Department will be hosting an open house at the police department (1352 Johnson Blvd.) on June 11 from 3-7pm in honor of the city's 50th anniversary.

- The League to Save Lake Tahoe is looking for volunteers to help clean up Tahoe beaches on July 5 from 9am-noon. To RSVP or ask questions, email events@keeptahoeblue.org.

- TRYP will host its next South Shore Networking Mixer on June 10 from 6-9pm at 968 Park Hotel in South Lake Tahoe. It is free for members and \$10 for non-members.

- On the first Friday of each month, starting June 5, FNCTN will bring in regional disc jockey's spinning fresh beats at Xhale Lounge in Stateline. Admission is \$10, with doors opening at 8:30pm.

- Unmask is the theme of the 2015 Teen Summer Reading Program at the Douglas County Public Library. The library's Teen Advisory Board movie night on June 13 at 5:30pm is "The Dark Knight Rises" in the Minden Library meeting room. Pizza, popcorn, and soda will be served. This free event is open to all teens.

Road beat: IS 350 – best Lexus model



Lexus IS 350 continues to impress. Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

It's been five long years since I last tested the Lexus IS 350 and not much has changed my opinion that this IS is dollar for dollar the best ride in the Lexus line up and perhaps the best Lexus model, although I haven't tested the new RC coupe yet. As far as Lexus sedans go, it is the highest performing, best handling, best looking of the brand while being the smallest and yet extremely comfortable.

Since its introduction as a 2006 model there have been a few changes. Wheelbase has grown by about 3 inches to 110 inches and length is up by a corresponding amount to 184 inches, but

height and width remain at 56 and 71 inches, respectively, as well as the very aggressive and pleasing design. Lexus has refreshed the front end to conform with its L'finnesse design theme while also sharpening the edgy theme that was already present in areas like the lower rocker panels. It is still the best looking Lexus sedan. But there are more improvements elsewhere.



Specifications

Price \$40,990 to about \$49,000

Engines

3.5L, 24 valve, DOHC V-6 306 hp @ 6,400 rpm

277 lbs.-ft. of torque @ 4,800 rpm

Redline 6,600 rpm

Transmission

Eight speed automatic with paddle shifters

Configuration

Longitudinal front engine/rear wheel drive/all wheel drive (IS250 AWD)

Dimensions

Wheelbase 110.2 inches

Length 183.7 inches

Width 70.9 inches

Height 56.3 inches
Track (f/r) 60.4/60.6 inches
Weight 3,593 pounds ((IS350)
Weight distribution 54/46
percent
Trunk capacity 13.8 cubic
feet
Fuel capacity 17.4 gallons
Steering lock to lock
2.58-3.493 turns
Turning circle 34.2 feet
Wheels (opt) 18X8/18X8.5
inch alloys
Tires (f/r opt)
225/40X18/255/35X18
Brake diameter (f/r)
13.15/12.2 inches
Coefficient of drag 0.28

Performance

0-60 mph 5.05 seconds
50-70 mph 2.51 seconds
50-70 uphill 3.18 seconds
Top speed Artificially
limited at 143 mph and I
believe them.
Fuel economy EPA rated
19/28/22 mpg
city/highway/combined
(IS350). Expect 20-21 mpg in
rural country driving and 28
mpg on the highway in the
IS350.

While this particular F-Sport optioned IS 350 gets significant handling upgrades, the powertrain is almost identical to the original 2006 model. It still sports the Lexus 306 hp (at 6,400 rpm) 3.5L V-6 which also knocks down 277 pounds of twist

at 4,800 rpm (at 4,800 rpm the engine is making 253 hp). In the process, the IS 350 pick up a couple of speeds as it now sports an eight speed automatic instead of the six-speeder that drives the rear wheels. But if you opt for the AWD version, the tranny reverts to the prior six speed auto, not very significant as you will read.

Performance of the IS 350 is spectacular, but slightly off the prior IS 350 F-Sport test. Zero-60 mph required 5.05 seconds, which is world class. Passing performance is also extremely quick with a 50-70 mph run taking 2.51 seconds and the same run up a 6 percent grade slows that time to 3.18 seconds. On their face these are some of the quickest performance times ever recorded by the Road Beat, but are still slower than two other IS 350 tests (one of those tests also being an F-Sport model) which had average times of 4.55, 2.20 and 2.92 seconds respectively. And those prior tests had six speed trannies. Testing was also performed in the same place so I have no explanation.

Numbers were also down for fuel economy and what makes this so interesting is that window sticker numbers for this 2015 model are up from previous window sticker numbers. This new model was EPA rated 19/28/22 mpg city/highway/combined. My prior 2009 model was rated at 18/25 city/highway. The 2009 model returned in actual testing at 70 mph 31.9 mpg. This new 2015 model "only" averaged 28.0 mpg. Overall fuel economy was 20.0 mpg for the test while the 2009 model averaged 23.5 mpg. I don't have an answer as both cars weighed about 3,600 pounds.

F-Sport adds several important features to the IS 350 including Adaptive Variable Suspension, Variable Gear Ratio Steering, F Sport tuned suspension, twin projector LED headlights, 18 inch staggered wheels and 225/40 and 255/35 performance tires front and rear, heated and ventilated seats, high friction brake pads and more. The IS 350 was already the best handling Lexus, it's a true BMW fighter, but with this additional F-Sport package, not only does it improve handling

and cornering power, it rides beautifully. Handling is superb, great steering, super quick turn-in, great balance, body roll control, rotation and more. BMWs beware, big time.

Its ride quality as mentioned above is about the best the Road Beat has ever experienced. It is extremely supple, quiet and solid, like a bank vault. On the highway it is whisper quiet and very buttoned down. Not many cars surpass the IS 350 experience. The engine spins 2,050 rpm at 70 mph and is inaudible unless you ask for some power and then it speaks with an authoritative bark.

Braking with the upgraded four wheel discs are better than benchmark, stopping the IS 350 in 38 feet from 40 mph. Pedal and feel are outstanding. Of course the IS has about every safety acronym in the book. LED headlights with the F-Sport package are, outstanding, but standard with the IS 350 are also dazzling HID headlights.



Some of the controls are cumbersome.

Now to perhaps the best part, the cockpit. While it may be a bit difficult for an old guy like me to get in and out, once ensconced you will be rewarded with some of the best seats in an automobile. Padding is perfect, the shape is totally supportive and the comfort is extremely long distance. And on top of all that they are great to look at with their sporty

design and soft leather.

Instrumentation is supposedly taken from the Lexus supercar, the 553 hp, \$400K Lexus LFA. It is a TFT screen and the instrumentation is complete with more emphasis on the analog tach than digital speedo. It works, but I prefer traditional analog gauges for everything. The fit and finish of the rest of the interior is outstanding with soft touch and leather covering most surfaces. While rear seating is adequate for two, I certainly wouldn't want to be the middle guy.

But all is not perfect. The radio control system which is controlled by a "mouse" as is the rest of the center stack, is difficult to operate. What happened to two round knobs and a few well identified push buttons. Why do manufacturers have to "fix" what isn't broken? The system is terribly distracting to operate as well. It should be a rule that all mice belong in a trap.

The trunk is large at nearly 14 cubic feet.

Pricing starts for the IS 350 at \$40,065 plus \$925 from the boat from Japan. Funny how that works out to \$40,990. The F Sport package lists for \$3,740 and if it were my purchase that would be part of it as would the \$400 Variable Gear Ratio power steering rack. However, I am not sure I would opt for the \$2,995 Nav system and upgraded radio. The standard sound system which includes XM works for me. But my tester listed for \$48,725 all in which also included the \$600 blind spot monitor and cross traffic alert. The power moonroof is also standard. This is an extremely well equipped standard ride and compared to other vehicles in its class, it might be the bargain. If you are thinking BMW or alike, you need to drive this Lexus. AWD is also an option.

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on

racetracks all over the Western United States.

SLT council passes plan for Y, residential hotels



A greenbelt is planned for the Y as part of the Tahoe Valley Area Plan. Rendering/Design Workshop

By Kathryn Reed

With the approval of two items Tuesday, the South Lake Tahoe City Council took significant steps to mapping out the city's future.

One issue was the Tahoe Valley Area Plan and the other was single room occupancy hotels. The council members individually said how important these two votes were on June 2.

It has taken more than 20 years for the city to approve a development plan for the Y. A previous city manager hijacked one plan that had been created by a citizens' committee. Then the powers that be decided to wait for the TRPA to finish its Regional Plan update.

Steve Leman, who was on the committee years ago, had high praise for this iteration of the plan, calling it balanced, creative, comprehensive and professional. He also alluded to wanting to possibly go forward with a small project in the area on the land he owns on Emerald Bay Road.

But Leman also wondered if the city missed its golden opportunity to renovate this area now that the state has done away with redevelopment.

John Hitchcock, planner for the city, highlighted some of the changes that evolved through public meetings that started 16 months ago as well as staff input from the last time the city went through the process. They include creating a greenbelt. How to go forward with this proposal will be on the council's next agenda.

"The storm water facility becomes multi-use space instead of single," Hitchcock explained. It will also have scenic, recreation and open space components.

Another change is updating the stream environmental zone map through the use of consultants, which included digging in the dirt to determine if the area originally mapped was SEZ. Hitchcock said planning for a 20-year, one-hour storm is sufficient, and that it is most important to capture the first flush of a storm when it comes to dirty water reaching the lake.

But Laurel Ames questioned why the city was reducing the stream environmental zone area from what has been on the books for decades and wondered why the flood plain was not greater. She pointed out how many people in Texas weren't in a flood plain either, but still were flooded.

Ames wanted to show the council and audience a map of what the zoning changes looked like but the city would not accommodate her by loading her thumb drive. (She was allowed to do so at the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency meeting last week.)

Shannon Eckmeyer, representing the League to Save Lake Tahoe, had high praise for the plan. She is also on the city's Planning Commission, which approved the plan at its last meeting.

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board is expected to vote July 22 on the Tahoe Valley Area Plan.

As for the hotel issue, health and safety are the driving forces to mandate property owners upgrade their establishments. Single room occupancy (SRO) hotels are essentially long-term housing in a hotel room with a hot plate or microwave and a fridge. Owners are able to retain the hotel designation and therefore the tourist accommodation units. These TAUs then add value to the structure with this unique commodity attached to it.

Tuesday was the first reading of the ordinance, with the second set for June 16. The ordinance would become effective 30 days later. Property owners will have one year to meet the rules. Having enough electrical power is a main worry because it could lead to a fire. (Fire Chief Jeff Meston said recent hotel fires were not an electrical issue.)

An on-site laundry facility is no longer required.

For places that might install a communal kitchen, it will be up to the owners to set the rules. Some people want to install a tiny sink, but that would trigger a hook up fee for each sink. South Tahoe Public Utility District counts kitchens as a sewer unit. Hook up fees are \$3,600.

The city is working with STPUD to get that lowered for the low-income housing.

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In other action:

- The council approved the Chateau project's acquisition

of 6,307 square feet of commercial floor area for the next phase, which is slated to break ground in August and take 18 months to complete. It includes a condo-retail mix, with the condos potentially used as tourist rentals.

- The vacation home rental ordinance will be on the June 16 agenda.

- There may be fewer bear boxes at Connolly Beach. Info about the beach's history will be on a future sign. Councilman Tom Davis brought up needing to provide access to public restrooms.

Letter: Chamber mixer a success

To the community,

Summer officially begins later this month, but it certainly felt like summer was in full force at the Round Hill Round Up Business After Hours Mixer (BAHM) on May 28 at Round Hills Pines Beach Resort.

Over 70 people experienced the resort's new tiki bar and their new signature drink, the Painkiller, while enjoying the beautiful weather on the beach.

Thank you to Round Hill Pines Beach Resort for hosting and providing a wonderful night of networking.

Shannon Earley, Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce

Bear League accused of cyber-stalking

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

A legal battle between bear advocates and a Lake Tahoe couple who says they were threatened and intimidated after reporting a problem bear to authorities will continue after a judge said evidence suggests “cyber-stalking” occurred.

Richard and Adrienne Evans failed to prove the Bear League intentionally interfered with the relationship between Adrienne and her professional mountain bike racing sponsors and that claim in the couple’s lawsuit is dismissed, Washoe District Judge Lidia Stiglich ruled May 27.

But the judge declined to dismiss two other claims in the Evans’ complaint as requested by the Bear League, including that the nonprofit organization engaged in civil conspiracy and attempted to defame the couple in an impassioned dispute over Nevada’s bear management practices.

Katherine Parks, attorney for the Bear League and its founder and executive director Ann Bryant, declined to comment Tuesday.

Read the whole story[B](#)

SLT Yacht Club looking for members

The South Lake Tahoe Yacht Club is hosting its annual membership drive by inviting the community to be lunch guests June 6 at the Cantina in South Lake Tahoe.

The club's motto is "let's have fun". The gathering is an opportunity to meet members and learn about the club and its various activities. Boat ownership is not a requirement for membership.

Lunch is from noon-3pm.

For more info, go online southlaketahoeyachtclub.com or contact Carol Gerard at 530.542.2876 for more information.