

TRPA seeks input on bike-pedestrian network

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, in its capacity as the Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization, is asking people to take an online survey to provide public input needed to create a connected, accessible, and safe bicycle and pedestrian network at Lake Tahoe.

It takes about 15 minutes and will be available through June 30.

The survey seeks to identify parts of the bicycle and pedestrian network that are working well, areas that are in need of improvement, and the types of infrastructure people want to see built in the Lake Tahoe region. Full-time residents, seasonal residents, commuters, and visitors are all encouraged to participate.

Survey data will help with the creation of Linking Tahoe: Active Transportation Plan – Bicycles, Pedestrians & Safe Routes to Schools.

Community meetings also are being organized to gather public input for the Active Transportation Plan. A meeting at the South Lake Tahoe Public Library is scheduled for April 14 from 5:30 to 7:30pm. A North Shore meeting at Kings Beach Elementary is scheduled for April 16 from 5:30 to 7:30p.

Health benefits boost board compensation

By Brad Branan, Sacramento Bee

Most people elected to special district boards receive no compensation to oversee the agencies that provide services such as water or local park maintenance.

But some district directors receive annual salaries approaching \$20,000 and health benefits for a position that has few requirements besides preparing for and attending meetings.

Of the nearly 1,000 special district board members in the capital region, about 70 percent received no compensation, the *Sacramento Bee* found in an analysis of 2013 salary data recently released by the California State Controller's Office.

The other 30 percent, however, received an average of \$4,300 in total compensation. All of the two dozen directors who received the most compensation – \$15,000 or more – served districts in the Sierra foothills or around Lake Tahoe, in particular water districts with a long history of providing health coverage to board members and their immediate family members.

The South Tahoe Public Utility District had four of the five highest-paid board members in the region in 2013. They each received \$4,800 in wages, but the biggest expense came from health care costs, an average of \$21,585 each.

Read the whole story

Amodei wants cooperation in sage grouse preservation

By Associated Press

CARSON CITY — Rep. Mark Amodei says Nevada lawmakers have nothing to fear from working with the federal government on sage grouse preservation efforts.

Amodei assured a joint session of the Nevada Legislature on Monday evening that federal authorities were dedicated to helping preserve endangered sage grouse environments throughout the state.

The Republican congressman said the state had come a long way in dealing with the possible listing of the sage grouse as an endangered species, which would limit land use throughout the state. Amodei said Nevada and the federal government needed to work together and were “brother and sister.”

Amodei was first elected to Northern Nevada’s 2nd Congressional District in 2011 and spent 11 years in the state Senate. Democratic Rep. Dina Titus is scheduled to address the Legislature on Wednesday.

Northern Nevada’s construction comeback

By Jason Hildago, Reno Gazette-Journal

Tracy Holland of Sparks built a career that was hewn in steel.

For the last 28 years, the 52-year-old iron worker counted on construction as his signature trade, helping create the bones of projects such as Aces Ballpark and the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center at the University of Nevada, Reno.

Holland counts himself as a Northern Nevada resident for an even longer time.

“My family moved here in 1971 when I was 10 years old,” Holland said. “I don’t want to leave; I mean, why would I?”

Yet leave is exactly what Holland did for three years. From 2010 to 2012, Holland worked at four different projects in the Bay Area to support his family, who remained in Nevada. The driving force behind the decision? A real estate collapse that was quickly followed by a severe recession – the worst in the state’s history.

At the close of 2006, the greater Reno-Sparks area boasted 25,900 construction workers, according to the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation. By the end of 2010, that number fell all the way down to 7,300, a drop of nearly 72 percent.

“We had a lot of members who left when the recession hit,” said Holland, who serves as an officer with the Iron Workers Local 118 union. “We also had members who left the construction industry and took other jobs.”

In 2013, however, Holland finally returned to his roots and reunited with his family for good.

After four years of decline during the recession, Reno-Sparks saw gains in construction employment in three of the last four years. Driving the momentum is an increase in building activity that included high profile projects such as the Apple data center at Reno Technology Park and the biggest construction prize of them all, Tesla Motors’ gigafactory at Tahoe-Reno Industrial Center.

The positive trend is backed by the latest jobs numbers, which saw construction employment in Reno-Sparks grow to 10,300 by the end of last year. Unions, meanwhile, are getting increased interest even from out-of-state members eager to land a spot at projects such as the gigafactory or the recently announced Switch supernap and Ghost Systems projects.

Read the whole story

Soroptimist honor those making a difference

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – *“This is the time to uphold women’s achievements, recognize challenges, and focus greater attention on women’s rights and gender equality to mobilize all people to do their part.”*

These are the words of Pat Papp, a district director for Soroptimist and member of Soroptimist International Tahoe Sierra.

While March 8 was International Women’s Day, on March 5 the two Soroptimist clubs on the South Shore came together to recognize women and high school students who are making a difference in the community.

“International Women’s Day is a time to reflect on progress made, to call for change and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their countries and communities,” Papp said.

The Live Your Dream award is about recognizing women who have overcome obstacles, but are still pursuing their education to make life better for themselves and their families. The two honorees, who both work for Barton Health, were given \$2,000 to further their education.

Since the award was first given in 1972, nearly \$30 million has been bestowed upon recipients worldwide.

Kathleen Dewing of Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe presented this year's South Shore honorees. She said the people chosen this year are women who will set an example for their children, who will give back to their communities and who have already overcome so much.

Many who receive this award have endured some form of abuse, been challenged in ways that go beyond what would be considered normal and still find the good in what lies ahead.

Latosha Sanchez and Keyla Trejo were honored last week. Both are working toward their nursing degree. Sanchez has kids who are 6, 2 and 11 months. She a full-time mom and a full-time student.

"I had a troubled childhood. My mom had many men in and out of our lives," Sanchez said. "I was the shoulder for her to cry on." Sanchez's husband is a rock for her to rely on – something she wasn't used to.

For Trejo, she is a single mom with a 6- and 8-year-old.

"My parents never had the opportunity to pursue their goals career-wise," Trejo said. "The biggest hardship after becoming a single mom was deciding what to do with my life and for my kids."

The Ruby award recognizes women who are helping to improve the lives of other women and children. Janey Roeser and Tere Tibbets are this year's honorees.

Roeser is the club advisor for the S Club at South Tahoe High School. She's paid to teach English at the school. She is described as having the spirit of volunteerism and the soul of someone who wants to make a difference.

"Selfishly, it has enriched my life," Roeser said, "I don't know if they know how much they've given to me."

Tibbetts immigrated from Cuba with her family when she was 13. With her parents being educated, it helped the family survive. This helped Tibbetts learn early on that education makes a difference.

"The more educated your are, the freer you are," Tibbetts said.

She worked for Lake Tahoe Unified School District for 20 years and then went to Lake Tahoe Community College as a counselor.

Today, her big emphasis is on her book club that she created for women whose first language is Spanish. It's getting them to read, to meet others and become educated.

Honored with the Violet Richardson award were five South Tahoe High students and one Whittell High student. The award is in honor of the first president of the first Soroptimist award.

Each of the young women received \$100. The involvement in school ranges from having grade point averages higher than a 4.0, to sports to extensive volunteer work to being involved in and starting clubs at their respective schools. And all are planning to go to college to enable them to pursue careers of their choice.

This year's winners are Haley Chamarro, Kylee Lyons, Emma Sower, Sarah Novak and Joemae Santos from STHS and Kate Krolicki from WHS.

Opinion: Be wary of the travel industry

By Christopher Elliott, Washington Post

It's for your own good.

Travelers are hearing these words more often than ever, and they are being applied to increasingly unwelcome scenarios. The latest example: being unable to access WiFi in your hotel without incurring an added charge. In August, the American Hotel & Lodging Association and Marriott filed a petition with the Federal Communications Commission asking the government for permission to block wireless devices in hotels.

Marriott, you might recall, last year paid a \$600,000 fine for allegedly interfering with its guests' personal wireless hotspots at one of its large convention properties. The hotel chain argued that its having the authority to disrupt these connections would make customers less vulnerable to hackers and "unauthorized network access."

In other words, the chain wants to jam your cellular hotspot for your own good.

The hotels fail to mention, of course, that they'd also earn a bundle by charging guests for access when they can't use their own wireless devices to connect to the Internet.

Airlines, car rental companies and cruise lines are using similar rhetoric to push their own agendas. Customers have come to expect such obfuscation that some travel companies have built their business on opting for straight talk. But with a little digging, you can always unearth the truth and

maybe keep your vacation budget in check.

Read the whole story

Some ex-Caesars workers lose retirement in bankruptcy

By Howard Stutz, Las Vegas Review-Journal

An undisclosed number of former Caesars Entertainment Corp. employees have lost their retirement income because of the casino company's bankruptcy restructuring of its largest operating division.

The retired employees were notified by the company through a form letter/memorandum that was sent Jan. 15, the same day Caesars Entertainment Operating Co. filed a pre-packaged Chapter 11 bankruptcy plan in Chicago that is expected to eliminate \$10 billion of debt.

The employees were told the company would no longer make payments under a Supplemental Employee Retirement Plan (SERP).

Caesars is the parent company of Harrah's Lake Tahoe and Harveys.

"Instead of receiving notification of my direct deposit, I received this letter," said Betty Wilson, a retired certified public accountant who worked for Caesars World. Caesars World is one of the former entities acquired by then-Harrah's Entertainment in the company's 2005 buyout of Caesars Entertainment for \$9 billion.

A Caesars official familiar with the matter but not authorized

to speak on behalf of the company said there are several similar retirement plans offered by other companies that were subsequently acquired by Harrah's/Caesars.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Filipino community cooks at B&B

To the community,

The Filipino community is a very vibrant part of the St. Theresa Church parish and on March 2, in keeping with their involvement in the community, they were the Adopt A Day sponsor for the evening meal served by Bread & Broth. Using their excellent cooking skills, they prepared a tasty and filling Filipino cuisine dinner of pork and chicken adobo, chicken apritada, chicken chow mein, rice and steamed vegetables.

Helping to put on the great evening for the dinner guests were Cecilia DeLeon, Julie, Fajayon, Mila Seal, Ador Manalin, Nora Cabauero, Donna Rojas, Sally Dasalla, Beverly Delos Reyes and Myra Fajilan.

Speaking for her fellow crew members, Seal said, "It is a wonderful feeling for each and every one of us, members of the Filipino community, to be given this opportunity to serve and share our blessings and personal time with our less fortunate members of the South Lake Tahoe community. I would like to express our sincerest appreciation to the Bread & Broth program for allowing us to be a part of this community service. This is such an amazing and a very fulfilling

experience.”

Bread & Broth would like to thank the Filipino community members for their AAD sponsorship and for the enthusiasm and joy they brought to the dinner event. Their smiles and warmth were an added treat to the unique meal and the help they lent to the B&B volunteers to provide another meal to those struggling with hunger.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Tahoe City man killed in suspected DUI crash

A 24-year-old Tahoe City man was killed Saturday after he was ejected from the vehicle he was riding in.

Daniel Koenig was pronounced dead at the scene.

Kelley Smith, 23, of Tahoe City was arrested March 7 at 2:20am on driving under the influence charges and booked into the jail in Auburn. He sustained cuts and scratches.

Another passenger, Tony Thompson, 25, of Tahoe City was not injured.

According to the California Highway Patrol, Smith was driving west on Highway 28 between Cedar Flats and Carnelian Bay at a high rate of speed when he lost control, went into the eastbound lane, and then clipped small trees before striking a power pole on the south side of the highway.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Sports betting turns a corner

By J.D. Morris, Las Vegas Sun

Sports betting is having a big moment in the United States.

Prominent voices from professional sports and politics have indicated they're willing to discuss expanding sports gambling, which is legal only in a handful of states. Meanwhile, Nevada has broadened the types of wagers it offers, and people appear to be betting on sports more than ever before.

The Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act, passed by Congress in 1992, made sports betting illegal in almost every state. Nevada, Oregon, Montana and Delaware are exempt from the law, but beyond Nevada, wagering is allowed only on a limited basis.

So for now, Nevada is the only state with full-fledged legal sports betting, but that could change in the not-too-distant future.

Adam Silver, commissioner of the NBA, has said he supports legal sports betting. He told ESPN he spoke with commissioners of other sports leagues, and "all of them are interested in having a better understanding of the issue."

Read the whole story