WHS basketball team competes at state tourney

Whittell High School's boys basketball team was not able to put together consecutive state championships.

The Warriors, seeded second going into last weekend's championships in Las Vegas, lost to Spring Mountain 69-54 on Feb. 27. Spring Mountain went on to be crowned state champions.

WHS finished the regular season with a 15-1 record.

Whittell should be able to return a strong team next season with only four members graduating.

— Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

• Early-bird registration open for Race the Lake of the Sky standup paddleboard competition June 27-28 in South Lake Tahoe.

• Stress: The Effects on Body and Mind is a lecture that will be given April 2, 6-7pm by Sonia Rupp with Barton Psychiatry at Lake Tahoe Community College's board room. It will focus on how stress affects the body, how to recognize signs of long term stress and discuss strategies to decrease stress in your life

• North Tahoe Public Utility District’s Pancake Breakfast on March 7 is going to the dogs at the North Tahoe Event Center. Breakfast is from 8:30-10:30am during the Dressed Up Dogs parade before the Kings Beach SnowFest Parade. Proceeds go to the Tahoe Unleashed Dog Park being planned in the North Tahoe Regional Park.

• Scott Lukas, professor at Lake Tahoe Community College, created this video of first impressions at Lake Tahoe Hard Rock.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Mondavi

Mondavi arrived at our partner Umbrella of Hope with a badly broken rear leg, which ended up needing to be removed. He had a rough time during the operation, but has recovered extremely well. He has now arrived in Tahoe to find his new home.

He is very active and doesn’t seem to realize he’s missing a leg. Mondavi is a nice little boy with plenty of personality who will do well in just about any home.

Mondavi is neutered, microchipped, tested for heart worm, and vaccinated. He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

— Karen Kuentz

DCSD superintendent stepping down

By Kathryn Reed

After 32 years in public education, Lisa Noonan is ready for a change.

Now in her fifth year as superintendent of Douglas County School District, Noonan will not be at the helm next school year.

At least that is the plan. She has not given the board a hard retirement date, but instead is willing to work until a replacement if found. The board on March 3 is meeting to discuss how to go forward. Noonan said she hopes the board considers internal candidates.

"If Lisa wanted to stay longer, that would be wonderful," Ross

Chichester, president of the school board, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We will look for someone as powerful as she is. She is collaborative and innovative. She has really, really turned the Douglas County School District around from times when it was not a popular place to be a board member. She has done a wonderful job through hard years of budgets."

Lisa Noonan is retiring this summer as superintendent of Douglas County School District. Photo/Provided

Noonan, 55, is looking forward to spending more time with family. She and her husband have six grandchildren – which is two more than when she started the job – who are spread out all over the country.

"I've missed out on things while serving other people's children," Noonan told *Lake Tahoe News*.

In her job, taking substantive time off isn't always do-able. And a workweek, well, it's much more than 40 hours.

"There are always projects. If you ever wake up and you are finished, something is wrong," Noonan said.

She said it's time to change her priorities and put family before work.

"I think probably what I will carry with me the longest is my tenure took place during very difficult economic times for the state and our profession. I tried to be caring and compassionate as possible with the tough choices that had to be made," Noonan said. "Gently we got through those difficult times budget wise. There was no handbook on how to do that."

Bringing full-day kindergarten to all schools and increasing the rigor at the high schools are other accomplishments she is proud of.

She was 23 when she took her first full-time teaching job at an elementary school. She has a bachelor's from Humboldt State University, master's from San Diego State University and doctorate from UNR. She was working for Washoe County School District in administration before being hired by DCSD in 2010. Noonan plans to continue living in Nevada.

"Our kids are just awesome. Our future is bright for all of us. We have great kids. That is nice and reassuring," Noonan said.

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Notes:

• The special board meeting to discuss how to go forward with finding the next superintendent is March 3 at 4:30pm at the district office in Minden.

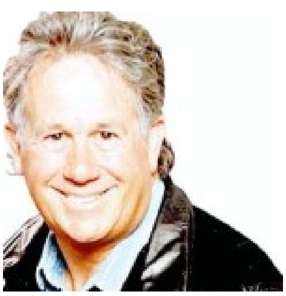
• Douglas County's front office in Minden has already seen changes in the last year. Rich Alexander and Lyn Gorrindo, both assistant superintendents, retired last summer. Teri White was hired as assistant superintendent, doing much of the human resources work.

Opinion: Daly’s bumbling may cost EDC millions

By Larry Weitzman

On Feb. 10, a rather innocuous item was on the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors consent calendar agenda. It was item No. 5 and its purpose was to receive and file a development impact mitigation fee report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2014, and authorize reimbursement to the El Dorado Hills County Water (Fire) District in the amount of $95,479.12. It doesn’t seem like a big deal, it wasn’t a general fund item, but it turns out it may be the biggest problem facing EDC in years and potentially costing tens of millions of dollars.

Sections 66000-66008 of the California Government Code are the enabling and governing provisions which allow local agencies like counties, cities, school districts or other types of political subdivisions to extract from home builders, individual or otherwise, fees to defray costs of public facilities related to their development project like schools, parks and other necessary public improvements as it relates to the development. TIM fees, school fees and fire fees are included here.


Larry Weitzman

This section of the law further requires that the local agency make certain findings on the reasonable relationship between the development and the fee's use and the need for the specific public facility created by the development. Also the cost of the public facility has to be reasonably related to the development as well. In collecting and depositing these fees, the law also provides that these funds be accounted for. So far, so good.

But the law also has specific requirements on the local agency to perform certain functions, findings and accountings with respect to these developer fees; otherwise they stand in violation of the very law under which they are extracting these fees from the home builder(s). There are two specific code sections which spell out these requirements, section 66001 (d) (1) (A-D) and section 66006 (b) (1) (A-H).

The former section (66001, et seq), says that every five years following the first deposit of a fee into a developer/home builder fund for public facilities, the local agency (in this case the county acting in place of the water-fire district) shall make certain findings which must do four things. First, is the identification of the purpose of the fee or fund money. Second, is that the county must demonstrate a relationship between the developer fee and the purpose for extracting it from the developer. Third, is that the county must identify all sources and amounts of funding anticipated to complete the financing of incomplete improvements and fourth is the designation by the county of the approximate dates the funding is expected to be deposited into the account. Doesn't seem too hard to do, right? That may be so, but not for this county and more specifically Terri Daly and her 18 newly hired analysts.

The county has collected tens of millions of dollars from developers/home builders and within that same government code at 66001 (d) (2) it says with respect to these five year reports that: "If the findings are not made as required by this subdivision, the County SHALL REFUND (emphasis added) the moneys in the account or fund…"

Section 66006 (b) (1) puts an annual requirement on the county with respect to each individual developer fund created by the fees extracted from the developer that says at the end of the year, the county will within 180 days make available to the public a report that contains certain information with respect to each fund that includes A) a description of the fund, B) the amount of the fee, C) the beginning and ending balance of the account or fund, D) the amount of fees collected plus interest, E) identifying each improvement on which fees were expended and the amount plus a percentage of the cost funded with the developers fees, F) the approximate date the public improvement will commence if the county has determined they have sufficient funding collected or complete financing on an incomplete improvement, and G) a description of interfund transfer or loan and in the case of a loan, when will it be repaid and the interest charged.

About 20 years ago the Board of Supervisors chose to make an ordinance that would also require the county administration to do the five-year study of Section 66001 (d) (1-2) every year as with the requirement 66006 (b) (1) above. It is EDC ordinance Sec. 13.20.020 which requires on an annual basis that the BOS shall review developer fee amounts are reasonably related to the impacts of development and whether the described public facilities are still needed.

The problem is the county hasn't done many of the developer fund studies as required by law since Feb. 3, 2009, the date of the last EDH Water (Fire) District study. EDC has collected tens of millions of dollars in TIM fees, schools fees, fire district fees, rec fees and more without following the law. The TIM fee study is two years delinquent and who knows about the annual reports and compliance with the county ordinance.

Remember who ran the county since about 2010 when the next annual reports would be due, that's right Terri Daly. In fact during her tenure as CAO, not one special district annual report or five-year report was done and there was little, if any, compliance with county ordinance 13.20.020.

But it gets worse. Guess which CAO analyst was charged with doing this job for the fire and rec districts? You guessed it, the sniveling and political campaigning Mike Applegarth as he was assigned to the job of special district liaison. Maybe he was too busy participating in the recent political campaigns to complete the vital task that are mostly done by the districts themselves. What are the consequences of this malfeasance? An examination of the law says specifically that the county has to pay the fees back to the developer/home builder. One hopes the county still has the money in the various accounts as the law requires. But it gets worse, much worse. On the morning of March 12, 2013, Joe Harn, the county auditor, wrote a memo to Daly and others members on the county staff that EDC has violated state and county law with respect to the administration of developers' fees that are collected by the county for the county's special districts and that as auditor, he cannot release any of these funds until the county is in compliance.

Two and a half hours later Daly replied saying, "Perhaps we could write a memo explaining what the problems are with the Nexus studies (the code section reporting requirements above) then put it on the board agenda for direction. I think we might already have such a memo already."

Harn, the auditor responded, "The law requires that the BOS review the CIP's once a year. Further, the law requires that a report of the financial transactions related to these fees be reviewed by the BOS once a year. If the nexus studies are inadequate, we need to quit collecting the fees."

This was one of several communications from the auditor regarding this problem.

And now you know why the now ex-CAO dislikes the auditor and is still trying to ruin him. It appears Daly was incompetent, especially considering these reports as required by law were actually easy to do. But neither Daly nor her minions could accomplish these perfunctory tasks, even after hiring 18 new staff employees in her office at almost $2 million a year. And what did the BOS do, give her $150,000 on her termination, while this failure on her part could leave EDC liable for tens of millions of dollars.

What brought these fees to the surface again was a request from the El Dorado Hills Fire District for $95,479.12 of these fees. It was placed on the consent (sneak it through) calendar on Feb. 10, but the day before the hearing, Harn sent emails requesting this matter be continued for obvious reasons; that there hasn’t been a study done as required by law since Feb. 3, 2009. Harn said he would not pay this request even if ordered by the BOS as it would be illegal. The matter trailed until the end of the day at which time it was continued to Feb. 24.

It has already been continued again as the law requires 15 days notice be given for such a public hearing. But there is still the underlying problem of the failure of EDC to follow the law by failing to file reports and the nexus studies since 2010. Since that time the county has collected $3,984,000 in developer/home builders’ fees for El Dorado Hills fire district alone. Without the reports, the county may not be entitled to keep the fees. And there are more than a dozen other special fee districts. How many others are out of compliance? And you thought Daly, who left Amador County holding the bag on a $20 million lease, or the Climate of Fear study was a big deal.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.

Jitloff 10th in GS in Germany

By USSA

GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN, Germany – Austria's Marcel Hirscher took revenge for his World Championship loss, posting a 1.99 second first run before charging to a 3.28 second win in an Audi FIS Ski World Cup giant slalom in Garmisch-Partenkirchen. Ted Ligety (Park City) was fourth.

Ligety was eighth after first run, on a run he descibed as like "skiing on one of those kiddy ball rooms where you jump in the pit." The course was tough in the morning, with guys struggling to find speed out of the snow. But Hirscher was able to figure it out, and the normally competitive Ligety did nothing but praise Hirscher's skiing.

"That was impressive," he said. "He was able to put on a massive margin on us and that second run he skied awesome. Impressive piece of skiing, that's for sure."

Ligety's second run moved him to first place for a good number of racers, and he sat in third until Hirscher bumped him off the podium. Hometown boy Felix Neureuther was second and Benni Raich of Austria was third, in his first World Cup podium in a year.

Although sick, Tim Jitloff (Reno) pulled out the second fastest GS run second run to move into 10. Tommy Ford (Bend, Ore.) had a phenomenal first run – finishing in 13 – and was still in the points after a small bobble second run put him in 23rd.

The men now get ready for Kvitfjell, Norway for a downhill and super G. Two more World Cup giant slaloms remain, in Kranjska Gora, Slovenia, before the men head to the World Cup Finals in Meribel, France.

LTN subscriber wins series of Borg books

Ellie Waller is about to own the first eight books published by Lake Tahoe author Todd Borg.

This is all because she won the latest *Lake Tahoe News* subscriber contest. Subscribers wrote in why they should be the recipient of the books. The responses were read to an *LTN* reporter who chose the winner without knowing who wrote what.

This is what Waller said: *"I love the Owen McKenna series and all its characters: Spot, Street, Mallory, Ellie, etc.! I look forward to August releases every year and the new plots and adventures Todd crafts to keep his readers loyal. I especially love that I can identify with many of the locations and feel like I could be a silent observer hiding behind the scenes. Supporting a local is the BEST!"*

To become a *Lake Tahoe News* subscriber, fill out this paid subscriber form. Subscribers are eligible for contests like this, plus they help to ensure Lake Tahoe's only daily news source keeps the "ink" flowing.

Cracks appearing in public pensions' armor

By Mary Williams Walsh, New York Times

First in Detroit, then in Stockton, and now in New Jersey, judges and other top officials are challenging the widespread belief that public pensions are untouchable.

Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey delivered the latest blow on Tuesday, when he proposed to freeze that state's public pension plans and move workers into new ones intended not to overwhelm future budgets or impose open-ended demands on taxpayers.

The first crack came in Detroit, where a judge ruled that public pensions could, in fact, be reduced, at least in bankruptcy. Then, just a few weeks ago, an opinion by the bankruptcy judge for Stockton, which emerged from Chapter 9 on Wednesday, called California's mighty public pension system, CalPERS, a bully for insisting in court that pension cuts were wholly out of the question.

Such dogma "encourages dysfunctional strategies," wrote the judge, Christopher Klein, chief judge of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of California. He said CalPERS's legal arguments were invalid, and he concluded that it lacked standing to dominate the courtroom discussion the way it had. Stockton did not even seek permission to freeze its pension plans, but the judge nevertheless wrote that it was entitled to do so and went on to cite steps that struggling cities in general should take to trim their pension costs legally.

Read the whole story

I-Did-A-Run tests dogs' speed, strength

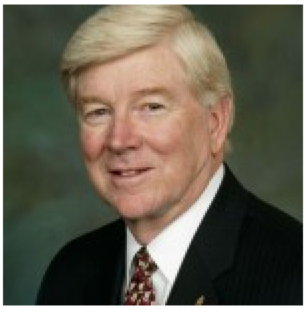
As part of North Lake Tahoe's SnowFest, the 11th annual I-Did-A-Run returns to Tahoe Donner on March 8 at the Tahoe Donner Downhill Ski Area no matter the weather.

Dogs of all shapes and sizes will compete in this timed dog pull race. The event pits dog against dog in a race against the clock, pulling sleds over a snow-covered course. Prizes are awarded to the speediest finishers among four weight divisions.

Registration takes place at noon the same day and the race starts promptly at 1pm. Entry per dog is $20 and includes a goody bag.

For complete event details, including dog weight divisions and all available prizes, go online .

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Guy Lease, former Lake Tahoe Community College president, has been selected to be the special trustee of City College of San Francisco. In this role he makes all the decisions until July when the governing power is returned to the elected board of trustees.

• The Community Athletic Coordinating Council, an organization consisting of representatives of all youth and adult sports organizations in South Lake Tahoe, will meet March 11 at 5:15pm at the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board room.

• Here are the Caltrans roadwork schedules for Lake Tahoe-El Dorado and Sierra for this week.

• Dutch Bros. of Carson City customers collected 774 pounds of food for Food for Thought.

• South Lake Tahoe needs two members who are physically handicapped for the Building/ADA Board of Appeals. Applications may be obtained at the City Clerk’s Office, 1901 Airport Road, South Lake Tahoe or download one.