

Tahoe making case for federal transit dollars

By Kathryn Reed

Tahoe Transportation District officials are in Washington, D.C., this week on a mission to convince lawmakers to pass the federal transportation bill that would bring money to the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The Trans-Sierra Transportation Plan and Coalition is a loose coalition of six California jurisdictions and five from Nevada that have an economic interest in a functioning regional transit system.

“We will have more of a benefit working together instead of competing against each other,” Carl Hasty, executive director of TTD, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

With state and federal highways surrounding the basin and being the conduits to enter and exit the basin, local officials want a bigger piece of the financial pie.

But the region has long been shortchanged on its share of funding because it is considered a rural area. And while the permanent population fits the rural description, what isn't part of the equation is the tourist population. With those added vehicles on the roads, it puts a strain on infrastructure that was not designed to sustain them. The local dollars plus what comes from the two states and feds are not enough to maintain the roads or create a transit system that functions for everyone.

The TTD board on Feb. 13 heard a presentation about the Trans-Sierra plan as well as an update on Lake Tahoe's Highway Corridors and Inter-Regional Long-Range Transit Plan.

The staff report said, "Given the physical and environmental constraints of Lake Tahoe and the region, increased investments in transit will be key for getting a growing number of visitors and workers to and from their destinations with less congestion and fewer environmental impacts. Improved bus service, light rail transit, bus rapid transit, water taxis and ferries, and services for our senior and disabled friends and neighbors are all part of the Trans-Sierra Transportation Plan."

It would take \$35 billion to do all of the projects the jurisdictions have on the books. Hasty said \$19 billion is realistic number for what could be funded. Included in that is the loop road on the South Shore and Fanny Bridge replacement in Tahoe City.

That sort of investment would increase the odds the region would be able to attract large events like the X Games or the Olympics. A coalition is still working on bringing the Winter Games to the area in 2026.

Information from staff said, "The wide open spaces and attractions of the Trans-Sierra Region straddle what has been dubbed the Northern California megapolitan, the fast growing urban area stretching from San Francisco, through Sacramento, to Reno. The Northern California megapolitan is home to some 15 million people today, and this number is expected to increase by an estimated 25-30 percent by the year 2035."

Hasty and Alfred Knotts, TTD planner, will be talking with folks in the administration as well as congressional staff about Lake Tahoe's needs.

"There is all kinds of talk going on in D.C. What there isn't talk about is any growth in the program," Hasty said.

The corridor concept is a layered approach to planning where transit, bike-pedestrian issues and roadways are all considered. It considers recreation, commuter, tourist and

public transportation. And in doing so it means engaging a slew of stakeholders to make it all work.

Highway 28 in Incline Village is the corridor that received the most attention and work to date. Each corridor is different and will need different things.

All of this will be incorporated into the update of the Regional Transportation Plan that is due in 2016. It must be updated every four years. But instead of TTD or the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency doing so in a silo, components of the plan that are already being worked on by other entities will be compiled into the document so it is a collaborative, comprehensive document without redundancy.

Editorial: State parks in trouble

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Feb. 15, 2015, San Diego Union Tribune.*

The California parks system is a network of incredible wonderlands spread among 280 parks covering 1.6 million acres from the deserts to the mountains to the sea. But for years, the system has been plagued by bureaucratic mismanagement, badly deteriorating conditions in the parks, a \$1 billion backlog in maintenance, and expenses that far surpassed revenues every year.

New leadership in Sacramento, pushed by an independent commission co-chaired by former Sen. Christine Kehoe of San Diego, seems to have a better grip on the problems and what needs to be done. But the task is monumental.

Start with the money, and with some of the state parks in our own backyard.

Read the whole story

When grief won't relent

By Jane E. Brody, New York Times

Bereavement – how one responds and adjusts to the death of a loved one – is a very individual matter. It is natural to experience a host of negative reactions in the weeks and months following the loss of a loved one: among them, sadness, difficulty sleeping, painful reminders of the person, difficulty enjoying activities once shared, even anger.

Grief is a normal human reaction, not a disease, and there is no one right way to get through it. Most often, within six months of a death, survivors adjust and are more or less able to resume usual activities, experience joy, and remember their loved ones without intense pain.

But sometimes, even when the loss is neither sudden nor unexpected, as is true in the majority of deaths in the United States, survivors close to the deceased can experience extremely disruptive grief reactions that persist far longer.

In a report last month in The New England Journal of Medicine, Dr. M. Katherine Shear presents a composite portrait of what is known as complicated grief, an extreme, unrelenting reaction to loss that persists for more than six months and can result in a serious risk to health.

Read the whole story

FAA releases proposed rules on commercial drones

By Joan Lowy, AP

WASHINGTON – Drone on, the government says.

Just not through the night sky. Or close to an airport. Or out of the operator's sight. And probably not winging its way with a pizza or package, any time soon.

Long-anticipated rules proposed Sunday will open an era in which small (under 55 pounds) commercial unmanned aircraft perform routine tasks – crop monitoring, aerial photography, inspections of bridges and cell towers, and much more. But not right away. Final rules are probably two to three years away.

And when they are in place, they may include a separate category with fewer restrictions for very small drones, likely to be defined as less than 4.4 pounds.

The Federal Aviation Administration released a variety of proposed requirements for commercial operators to meet, such as passing a knowledge test administered by the agency as well as a federal security check. The small drones could travel as fast as 100 mph, at altitudes of 500 feet or lower. Flights over people except those involved in the drone's operation would be prohibited.

"We have tried to be flexible in writing these rules," said FAA Administrator Michael Huerta. "We want to maintain today's outstanding level of aviation safety without placing an undue regulatory burden on an emerging industry."

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The agency is researching technology that he hopes will eventually enable small drones to fly safely beyond the sight of operators, Huerta said. He emphasized that introduction of commercial drones into the national airspace will be a staged process. The government is also looking ahead to how larger drones might be allowed to fly in airspace shared by manned aircraft, for example, he said.

One of the key safety concerns is that without a human on board the ability to "see and avoid" other aircraft is limited. Another concern is that the link between the operator and a remote control aircraft can be broken, causing the drone to fly away until it loses power or collides with something.

Cases of flyaway drones getting stuck in trees or hitting buildings are rampant. Last month, a drone that its operator lost control of flew over the White House fence and crashed on the lawn before Secret Service agents could block it.

Even with the proposed safety restrictions, drones can transform urban infrastructure management, farming, public safety, coastal security, military training, search and rescue, disaster response and more, the White House said in a presidential memorandum on privacy released in conjunction with the rules.

The memorandum lays out measures federal agencies must follow to guard against abuse of data collected in their drone flights. Among other steps, the order requires agencies to review privacy and civil rights protections before deploying drone technology and to adhere to a range of controls. Personally identifiable information collected in drone flights is to be kept no longer than 180 days, although there are exceptions.

It's questionable whether such steps will satisfy civil liberties advocates, who've objected strongly to the government's vigorous use of digital surveillance in the name

of national security. But drone advocates were generally happy with the proposal, although they disagreed with some of the details.

“I am very pleased to see a much more reasonable approach to future regulation than many feared,” said Brendan Schulman, a New York attorney who unsuccessfully challenged FAA’s restrictions on drone flights.

The agency currently bans commercial drone flights except for a few dozen companies that have been granted waivers. That ban will stay in place until regulations become final, but FAA officials plan to continue granting waivers case by case. About 300 waiver requests are pending and new requests are being filed almost daily.

The proposed rules are “a good first step” bringing the U.S. closer to realizing the benefits of drone technology, said Brian Wynne, president and CEO of the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International, a trade group.

An FAA analysis points to an estimate by the trade association that drones will create 70,000 jobs with an economic impact of more than \$13.6 billion in the first three years after their integration into U.S. skies.

In a big concession to industry, the FAA said it won’t require an “airworthiness certificate” for small drones. The design and manufacture of each model of manned airplanes and helicopters go through a rigorous approval process by the FAA before they are granted airworthiness certificates. That can take years.

The FAA decided that drone technology was changing so rapidly that by the time a model received an airworthiness certificate the remote-controlled aircraft might already be out of date, Huerta said.

Calif. population expected to outstrip water conservation

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

California water agencies are on track to satisfy a state mandate to reduce water consumption 20 percent by 2020. But according to their own projections, that savings won't be enough to keep up with population growth just a decade later.

A 2009 state law requires urban water agencies to reduce per-capita water consumption 20 percent by 2020, compared with use at the start of the century. Most agencies are on track to reach that goal, and have made even more progress thanks to emergency cuts over the past year triggered by the ongoing drought.

However, by 2030, the data show, these savings will be more than erased by anticipated population growth. According to projections by the water agencies themselves, their total water deliveries will increase 16 percent by 2030 compared to their estimates for 2015.

California's population, already larger than all other Western states combined, is expected to grow 14 percent during that same period, reaching an estimated 44 million people by 2030, according to the state Department of Finance.

Read the whole story

K's Kitchen: Going nuts for lasagna

By Kathryn Reed

When it comes to making lasagna, it's easy for me to get in a rut. It's because there is one recipe I like so much.

Now I have another recipe to add to the repertoire.

It was such a treat to not only have a delicious meal with friends, but to leave with the recipe.

I used a jar of spaghetti sauce that was only 3 cups. That's not enough for this recipe. Another half cup if not a full cup would have made my version much better. Extra marinara sauce served on the side is how Denise and Steve served it – and now I know why based on my pan being a little dry.

I also used pecans instead of walnuts. The latter is what the original recipe calls for. I have a freezer full of pecans from another friend, so that is why I chose that nut.

As Denise told me, a variety of ingredients could be used in this recipe. She equated it to being similar to building a quiche.



Nutty Zucchini Lasagna

3 medium zucchini, thinly sliced

1 large carrot, thinly sliced or grated

3½ C marinara sauce

1/8 tsp pepper

1½ C shredded mozzarella

1 C Parmesan cheese, grated and halved

Small container ricotta cheese

1 egg

No boil lasagna noodles

1 C walnuts or pecans

Slice zucchini thin and cross ways.

Mix ricotta, mozzarella and ½ cup Parmesan, pepper, nuts and egg. Set aside.

In 9 x 13 pan cover bottom of thin layer of sauce. Cover with noodles, but don't overlap.

Spread ¼ of the sauce, then 1/3 of cheese, then ½ carrots, top with ½ zucchini.

Repeat layers ending with cheese and remaining sauce.

Bake covered in 375-degree oven for 40 to 50 minutes. It should be bubbly in the center. Uncover and sprinkle on remaining cheese. Bake uncovered for about 20 minutes, until heated through. Let stand for 15 minutes before serving.

Letter: Weidinger PR takes a turn at B&B

To the community,

As each guest entered the serving line at Bread & Broth's dinner on Feb. 9, they were warmly greeted with big smiles from the sponsor crew members of Weidinger Public Relations and B&B volunteers. Their warm greeting was just the beginning of a pleasant evening filled with a hearty serving of chili dogs and baked beans, bags of food to take home and visiting with friends and acquaintances.

As the Adopt A Day sponsor for the evening, Phil Weidinger and his associates Jenn Boyd and Erin Leigh Frederick showed up at 3pm to begin bagging the give away bags, then served firsts, seconds and to goes, and wrapped up the evening cleaning and stacking tables and chairs. They were a happy and very helpful sponsor crew.

"We're happy to be able to give back to our community. Every little bit helps. And a simple smile can go a long way," said Jenn Boyd.

Weidinger Public Relations is an awarding winning public relations firm "promoting the serious business of fun" for many businesses and organizations in the Lake Tahoe area. It was obvious throughout the evening that they were very serious about making the dinner a positive experience for those attending.

Kudos to Weidinger PR for hosting a B&B dinner and for the smiles they brought to the faces of our guests.

To help B&B as a donor or sponsor, contact me at 530.542.2876 or carolsgerard@aol.com.

Working remotely requires trust on both ends

By Ed Koch, Las Vegas Sun

In Las Vegas and across the country, many self-starting employees have shed the shackles of on-site, whip-cracking bosses to enjoy the freedom offered by virtual or remote offices. Working from home a few – or maybe a few thousand – miles away from bosses is becoming increasingly popular. It's a setup both remote bosses and their workers enjoy.

"It's part of the cyber world we now live in," said longtime Los Angeles Times reporter John Glionna, who covers the Southwestern United States from his home in Henderson and reports to editors in Los Angeles.

Rick Kwiatkowski, vice president of Phoenix-based Inland Hobbs Material Handling, which rents and sells forklifts and other heavy equipment, said if a company expects to expand and be successful in today's high-tech world, satellite offices are becoming a necessity.

"If you are the kind of business owner who has to have his hands on every phase of operation, then your company will have great difficulties growing, because you've become the bottleneck," said Kwiatkowski, who oversees offices in Arizona, California, northern Mexico and Las Vegas. "You have to trust the people you have hired to do their jobs."

Calif. going after sugary drinks – again

By Lydia O'Connor, Huffington Post

If the soft drink industry thought its fight with health reformers ended in the San Francisco Bay Area last election season, a new bill in the California legislature may be a rude awakening, reviving the movement to cut the state's sugary beverage consumption.

"I don't think this issue is going to go away – not given the increasing concern with obesity, especially childhood obesity," Larry Gerston, a political analyst and San Jose State University professor, told The Huffington Post.

Last fall's soda battles focused on taxing the sweet drinks. The new challenge is warning labels. California Senate Majority Leader Bill Monning, D-Carmel, introduced a proposal Wednesday to put warnings on beverages containing added sweeteners with at least 75 calories per 12 ounces. The labels would read: "STATE OF CALIFORNIA SAFETY WARNING: Drinking beverages with added sugar(s) contributes to obesity, diabetes, and tooth decay."

"Given the rock solid scientific evidence showing the dangers of sugary beverages, the State of California has a responsibility to inform consumers about products proven to be harmful to the public's health," Monning said in a press release. "This bill will give Californians the at-a-glance information they need to make more healthful choices every

day.”

Read the whole story

Workout junkies flock to CrossFit, shun fitness centers

By Allison Prang, Bloomberg

Elizabeth Johnson is giving the fitness-center industry cause for concern.

The 24-year-old reporter in Sarasota, Fla., ditched her membership at the local Youfit health club and in May joined the Seaward CrossFit studio. Since signing up at the club, which she says has about 40 members and runs classes of 10 or fewer people performing exercises in unison, she’s lost 40 pounds and gained the support of a crowd of like-minded fitness fanatics.

“I felt like they wanted me to be there,” Johnson said in a phone interview. “I like the small, community feel.”

CrossFit, SoulCycle and other programs luring consumers like Johnson are hurting fitness-center operators such as Town Sports International Holdings Inc., which has posted losses and falling sales recently. While the large companies use warehouses of gleaming exercise equipment to draw members, the upstarts are creating tribal followings in small spaces at fractions of the cost. That’s prompted the big operators to fight back by cutting prices or starting their own studio-like concepts.

Read the whole story