

2 businesses accused of underage alcohol sales

Employees at two South Lake Tahoe businesses are accused of selling alcohol to minors.

Miguel Mancillas working at Alpine Liquors and Daniel Marshall of Chevy's restaurant were cited Dec. 5 by South Lake Tahoe police officers. They face a minimum fine of \$250, and/or 24 to 32 hours of community service if convicted and this is their first violation.

In addition, ABC can take administrative action against the alcoholic beverage license of the business. That may include a fine, a suspension of the license, or the permanent revocation of the license.

Minors working under the supervision of officer attempted to purchase alcohol from 33 establishments in the city.

Officers said they are doing the compliance checks to reduce the availability of alcohol to minors because statistics show people under the age of 21 have a higher rate of drunken driving fatalities than the general adult population.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Truckee pilot among elite group

Truckee resident Tom Meadows has flown more than 1,000 Young Eagles, placing him in the top 1 percent of all Experimental

Aircraft Association pilots who have flown 100 or more kids.

Meadows, a semi-retired flight instructor, regularly has the kids sit in the left seat as pilot, while he explains what's happening as they actually fly the plane.

Not only has he flown local youths, but he and wife, Lynn, also a pilot, have flown their Cessna 172 to South Dakota, Iowa, Washington, Florida and Ohio to give kids free flights..

Experimental Aircraft Association's Young Eagles program started in 1993 to introduce youths 8-17 to aviation. Since then almost 2 million Young Eagles have enjoyed a free flight from EAA's network of more 46,000 volunteer pilots.

"One of the best parts of being an EAA member is introducing young people to aviation, and the best part of that is taking them flying. The younger kids are amazed that the cars look like toys, and the older ones are excited to see their house from the air." Meadows said in a press release.

Pilots are not compensated for their time or aircraft costs.

The local Truckee Chapter has flown over 3,000 Young Eagles in the past 21 years.

El Dorado supes restore pay perks for electeds

By Peter Hecht, Sacramento Bee

Thirteen months ago, El Dorado County supervisors voted to strip generous salary enhancements for seven elected officials amid cries that the county was vastly overpaying its public

servants.

On Tuesday, the board reversed itself and restored most of the pay cuts.

Major salary reductions were due to go into effect when officeholders were sworn in for new four-year terms in January. But the board voted to reinstate salary enhancements for professional certificates and years of service for seven elected officials.

Supervisors also voted to give additional pay perks to Sheriff John D'Agostini and Auditor-Controller Joe Harn, boosting their salaries with enhancements that are based on the earnings of their top assistants.

The vote was taken after board Chairwoman Norma Santiago argued that supervisors had to correct an unforeseen equity problem: Under the new pay formula, at least five of the elected officials would be earning less, in some cases significantly less, than top assistants.

Read the whole story

S. Lake Tahoe has free sand bags

South Lake Tahoe has sand bags available at no cost year-round at 1160 Rufus Allen Blvd., next to Campground by the Lake.

To pick up sand bags, proceed through the gate and drive to the back of the lot. At the back of the lot is a large sand

mound, shovels and bags. Residents fill their own bags, with a 10-bag limit per visit.

Access to sand bags is available Monday-Friday 7:30am-4pm.

Road beat: Power not a problem with Lexus hybrid



The Lexus GS 450h has power and great gas mileage.
Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

While the electrified Lexus GS450h hybrid has a bit of a disconnected feel, it doesn't lack for power. And we are

talking more than just horsepower.

As Lexus's refinement of all its hybrids continues, this new GS450h is the best example the Road Beat has tested.

While it's hard to believe Toyota's first U.S. marketed hybrid was introduced 15 years ago, the technology hit the Japanese market 17 years ago. My, how it has matured. Transitions have become literally imperceptible; braking action is smooth and the power is breathtaking, never mind the improved fuel economy.

Design of the new GS continues to evolve from the original 1993 Giugiaro penned shape. Most interesting and pronounced is the L'finnesse front end snout. Perhaps it is the most aggressive of all Lexi. Overall the design is smooth and attractive, with excellent proportions and nothing offensive or added on for the sake of complexity.



Specifications

Price \$60,510 to about \$71,000

Engine

3.5L DOHC 24 valve V-6 286
hp @ 6,000 rpm
254 lb.-ft. @ 4,600 rpm

Electric Drive

Motor Max output 200 hp
Battery Type Sealed Nickel
Metal Hydride

System voltage 650V
Max output 41 hp
Combined Max power output
327 hp

Transmission

CVT
Configuration
Front engine/rear wheel
drive

Dimensions

Wheelbase 112.2 inches
Length 190.7 inches
Width 72.4 inches
Height 57.3 inches
Track (f/r) 62.0/62.6 inches
Ground clearance 5.5 inches
Trunk capacity 13.0 cubic
feet
Fuel Capacity 17.4 gallons
Weight 4,112 pounds
GVWR 5,125 pounds
Weight distribution (f/r)
51/49 percent
Steering lock to lock 2.8
turns
Turning circle 34.8 feet
Wheels 18X8 inch alloys
Tires 235/45RX18
Coefficient of drag 0.27

Performance

0-60 mph 5.31 seconds
50-70 mph 2.96
50-70 mph uphill 3.62
seconds
Top speed Governed at 131
mph
Fuel economy EPA rated

29/34/31 mpg
city/highway/combined Expect
31 mpg overall in mixed
driving. At 70 mph on cruise
control two way run 39 mpg
on longer level highway
trips at legal speeds expect
37 mpg.

Wheelbase is midsize at 112 inches, length is 191 inches and width is a svelte 72 inches. What's nice is that outside dimensions don't belie the rather large rear seat comfort and legroom remarked on when carrying two rear seat adults to lunch one afternoon. However, the hybrid's trunk is reduced by more than a cubic foot by the hybrid's battery. Notwithstanding, it is still very usable because of its shape.

Powering the GS450h is the same V-6 as found in the conventional GS350 except for some minor modifications to improve efficiency like making it into an ultra high compression (13:1) Atkinson cycle engine. Consequently power drops from 306 hp at 6,400 rpm to 286 hp at 6,000 rpm. Peak torque also falls by 23 pounds to 254 pounds of twist at 4,600 rpm. However, the GS450h makes up for that with an electric motor kicker with a battery output of an extra 41 hp (327 hp combined). While that may not sound like much, it is. This GS450h flat out flies.

It will do the benchmark 0-60 mph run in 5.31 seconds. That is world-class performance. Passing times are also world class with 50-70 mph runs on level ground and up a 6 percent grade averaged 2.96 and 3.62 seconds, respectively. That is getting it done. And throttle response is near perfect and linear. It is impossible to tell this vehicle is a hybrid except for when the green EV light lets you know the engine has quit running. Then you can notice the deafening silence.

OK, hybrids are supposed to be fuel efficient and this one

certainly is. The GS350 is rated by the EPA at 19/29/23 mpg city/highway/combined. It is also not as quick as the hybrid, close, but no cigar. The hybrid GS450h however is rated at 29/34/31 mpg. But here is the even better news. On the highway at 70 mph on cruise control the GS450h averaged 39 mpg on a two-way run. Amazing. Overall with little time spent on the freeway it averaged 31.1 mpg. However, in a two-way run from Placerville to South Lake Tahoe and back, the 450h averaged 34 mpg. Speeds were kept at 60 mph and under. The 450h is not only a bit quicker than its conventional sibling; it's about 8 mpg more economical.

What is even more amazing is the fact that the GS450h weighs 4,112 pounds or nearly 400 pounds more than its sibling GS350.

Now this is where it gets interesting. The GS450h can flat out corner. Its suspenders are state-of-the-art double wishbones up front with a multilink independent system bringing up the rear. Coils and gas filled shocks are in each corner with stabilizer bars at both ends. A vehicle speed sensing electric rack guides the car and it is integrated with the Vehicle Dynamics Integrated Management system. It's also quick at 2.8 turns lock to lock. Standard rubber is 235/45×18 inch tires mount to wide 18×8 inch alloys. As to the 450h's cornering power, it is huge. During hard corners at speed vehicle attitude also remains firm and flat so it has the ingredients of a genuine sporting sedan, but it misses one thing, good feel and feedback from the steering. The GS could be hustled through corners that would have lesser cars crying "uncle," but it takes driver concentration, input and guidance, more so than say Miata or a new Ford Mustang GT. Turning circle is a tight 34.8 feet.

Understanding that, the GS has a marvelous ride quality. It absorbs road punishment perfectly, no harshness or jarring yet the ride is solid and firm with absolutely no float. It's about as good as I have ever encountered. And it is quiet, even outside the car it is hard to hear the engine at idle and

it is absolutely dead silent in all driving regimes except full throttle when you can hear a bit of V-6 engine bark. By the way, this is one of the first V-6s that almost has the sound of a V-8 under full throttle acceleration.

During normal driving it is so quiet you cannot tell if the gas engine is running or it is on pure electric power, which the GS450h can do up to about 42 mph under very light throttle pressure. There is no tach so the only indication is the green EV light is on. The GS450h can travel about a mile or so under continuous pure electric drive.



The Lexus is full of luxury.

Strides have also been made with smooth braking. There is no pulsing during stopping. It is next to impossible to sense any powertrain transitions, especially with the super smooth CVT transmission. Panic stops from 40 mph take 43 feet under absolutely perfect control. Of course every safety acronym known to mankind is present in this vehicle.

Inside is a luxurious interior with extremely comfortable front chairs that are infinity adjustable. There is no tach, but most other gauges are present, but the Lexus Mark Levinson sound system while sounding superb is difficult to control with a flighty mouse used for everything but volume. It is a sore spot that hampers an otherwise outstanding automobile. Trick technology for its own sake doesn't always work. It also causes too much driver inattention. It sets the car back 50 years as in older airplanes when a radioman was required just

to work communications.

Rear seat room is astounding.

Pricing starts at \$59,600 but options like the Luxury Package (\$5,255), the HDD navigation (\$1,735) and the Mark Levinson Sound System (\$1,380), plus some other items brought the total price including \$910 for the boat from Japan to \$70,649. That is substantial money to show off your environmental sensitivity.

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.

Movement under way for free transit in Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Free transit. Regional transit. Transit that goes where people want to go.

These are concepts that many tourist destinations have embraced for years. Lake Tahoe, not so much.

But that could change. Tahoe Transportation District in 2015 plans to make a concerted effort to take the necessary steps to bring free regional transit to the Lake Tahoe Basin.

“If each community in the region is interested in being a competitive resort community, we have to go there (with free transit),” Carl Hasty, executive director of Tahoe

Transportation District, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Hasty was at the Dec. 9 South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting giving the electeds an update on transit issues, including the loop road near the state line.

He started out by saying there is a strong correlation between a strong economy and modern infrastructure. Tahoe is lacking that infrastructure and the economy proves his point.

In looking at places like Vail, Whistler and Park City that offer free transit, the funding comes from federal, state and local government entities.

"We need to create funding sources that don't currently exist," Hasty told the council.

Hasty did not have a dollar figure for what free transit would cost or what the city's share would be. But he is simultaneously working with the North Shore to try to tie the bus services together.

"On free transportation, I'd like a comprehensive network," Councilman Austin Sass said. He wants it to include biking and hiking trailheads. "I would like it to go from Spooner Summit to Echo Summit."

Sass also wants to make sure officials from El Dorado and Douglas counties are part of the dialog.

Hasty said a free, expanded bus service would benefit locals and tourists. For tourists, he told *LTN*, it provides a fluid experience, where they don't have to worry about how to get from point A to point B.

Plus, he added, when a bus service is safe and convenient, it adds to the overall experience.

When TTD has offered free service on BlueGo on the South Shore the ridership tends to double – with more locals and visitors

on board. But those opportunities are infrequent and are based on the ability to get outside funding to cover the costs.

Vail Resorts pays TTD to provide free bus service to Heavenly Mountain Resort on certain routes – mainly the ones servicing lodging properties.

Hasty said in 2015 TTD will be actively seeking community input about what it wants in public transit throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Editorial: CIA betrayed American values

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Dec. 9, 2014, San Jose Mercury News.*

The CIA betrayed American values in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. It knew torture was immoral, illegal and nearly always counterproductive as an interrogation tool. Yet acting upon the direction of then President Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney – and at times breaking even their trust – the CIA violated the Geneva Conventions dramatically lowered America's standing as a nation of principle.

The Senate Intelligence Committee report released Tuesday describes outrages that confirm what most Americans already believed. At least the U.S. Senate had the courage to expose the crimes that were committed in this nation's panicked attempt to win the war on terrorism. We can only hope this exposure helps return us to the moral high ground.

This is the blackest mark on the United States' moral standing

since it interned Japanese-Americans during World War II.

Read the whole story

Mason says goodbye to LTCC board



After 40 years, Roberta Mason is leaving the Lake Tahoe Community College board. Photo/Kathryn Reed

“Better things are coming. That is the exciting thing. I almost don’t want to leave.”

Those are the words of Roberta Mason, who on Dec. 9 attended her last Lake Tahoe Community College meeting as a board member.

Mason was the driving force to get the South Lake Tahoe college started and has been on the board since its inception 40 years ago.

During a ceremony to say goodbye to her as well as to Molly Blann (neither ran for re-election in November) Mason was

called the mother and guardian of the college.

Mason has had high praise for Jim Duke, Guy Lease and Kindred Murillo, the first, second and current college presidents, respectively.

“Every time I try to say something I start crying,” Murillo said. “I hope I’m like her when I’m her age.”

Mason then gave a special shout out to her best friend – Del Laine – who was always her campaign manager, and who was at her first board meeting and her last one.

Later Tuesday night at the Lake Tahoe Unified School District meeting Mason was honored with a proclamation. She served on that board from 1969-73.

Larry Green, who is on the LTUSD board and an instructor at LTCC, said, “She is my hero.” And he credited Mason for being instrumental in getting him to run for the board.

Mason is a constant presence at nearly every college event. That likely isn’t going to change. She wants to remain involved; hoping to be on the bond oversight committee.

– Kathryn Reed

Girl Scouts to sell cookies online

By Leanne Italie, AP

NEW YORK – Watch out world, the Girl Scouts are going digital

to sell you cookies. For the first time in nearly 100 years, Girl Scouts of the USA will allow its young go-getters to push their wares using a mobile app or personalized websites. But only if their scout councils and guardians say OK.

“Girls have been telling us that they want to go into this space,” said Sarah Angel-Johnson, chief digital cookie executive for the organization covering about 2 million girls. “Online is where entrepreneurship is going.”

And the best news for these digital natives: They can have cookies shipped directly to your doorstep.

More than 1 million scouts, from kindergarten-age Daisies to teens, were expected to opt in as cookie-selling season cranks up this month and the scouting organization gets digital sales under way. But digital sales are intended to enhance, not replace, the paper spreadsheets used to generate an estimated \$800 million in cookie sales a year – at anywhere from \$3.50 to \$5 a box, depending on scout council.

There are important e-lessons here, scout officials said, such as better articulating and tracking goals, learning to handle customers and money in a new way, and more efficiently processing credit card information.

“A lot of people have asked, ‘What took you so long to get online?’ We spend a lot of time thinking how do we make this safe, scalable and smart,” Kelly M. Parisi, chief communications executive for Girl Scouts of the USA, said at a recent demonstration for select media.

Councils were offered one of the two platforms but not both. For web-based sales, scouts customize their pages, using their first names only, and email prospective customers with links to click on for orders. They can also put up videos explaining who they are and what they plan to do with their proceeds. The mobile platform offers tabs for tracking sales and allows for the sale of bundles of different kinds of cookies. It can be

used on a phone or tablet.

"They can get them quicker than waiting for me to deliver them because sometimes it takes me a long time to deliver," offered 11-year-old Priscilla at the preview. The adults at the event asked that only first names of scouts be used.

Added 7-year-old Anna: "My favorite part is that now I can sell more Girl Scout cookies." She pulled down about 200 boxes last year and has upped her goal to 600.

Girl Scouts use their cookie money to pay for community service work or troop activities such as camping and other trips.

The websites will not be accessible without an email invitation, requiring the girls to build client lists. And personal information is as protected as any digits out there, for both the scouts and customers, using encryption in some cases. Much of the responsibility to limit identifying details about scouts online falls on parents.

Troop Leader Karen Porcher of the Bronx has an 11-year-old scout and is particularly psyched about the digital options. They live in a house rather than an apartment, and she and her husband work at home, eliminating at-office cookie and neighborly building sales.

"During cookie season my daughter is wearing her (scout) vest on the subway and people are so excited to see a Girl Scout," Porcher explained. "Strangers actually will buy a case of cookies and wait for her to call. This is going to be amazing because now she can just say 'Give me your business card,' or 'I'll take your email address,' send the email and they can be delivered. This is gonna be sweet."

Porcher also sees word-of-mouth value in getting cookies delivered quickly.

“People are going to be walking around with cookies and others are going to say, ‘Whoa, how did you get those already?’”

Zack Bennett of Manhattan has a 9-year-old scout who sold more than 1,000 boxes last year. She hopes to increase her goal to 1,500 this season and went through training to learn how to set up her new cookie website. But dad won’t be letting her loose alone.

“I’ll be sitting in the backseat to help her, certainly when it comes to credit cards, things of that sort,” he said. “But it makes perfect sense to have it be on the computer. It’s definitely time the Girl Scouts came into the 21st century.”

Sand Harbor offering weekend of winter events

Sand Harbor is offering a slew of holiday activities and special events Dec. 13-14.

The park restaurant will be open weekends for holiday drinks and snacks, with meal and sleigh-ride packages available.

Holiday ornament crafting is Dec. 13 from noon-3pm at the visitor center at Sand Harbor. All ages are welcome, children must be accompanied by an adult. The park will supply materials and work with children to help them create handmade ornaments. A \$5 donation is suggested to help cover costs.

Holiday Heritage talk is both days from 10-11am. Park staff will give a presentation on the history and customs of this holiday season. All ages are welcome, children must be accompanied by an adult.

The Sand Point hike is Dec. 14 from 1-2:30pm. Meet at the visitor center. This is an easy three-quarter-mile hike around the Sand Park Boardwalk. Along the way, park rangers will point out facts about plants and animals in the area. All ages are welcome, children must be accompanied by an adult.

Entry to Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park Sand Harbor is \$7 per vehicle with a \$2 discount for Nevada residents.