

Whittell High trying to figure out its future



Brian Rippet talks Oct. 7 while task force member Stacy Noyes takes notes and facilitator Nancy McMillan listens. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

ZEPHYR COVE – While a group of concerned individuals is tasked with answering three questions regarding the future of Whittell High School, the chore is turning out to be anything but simple and straightforward.

The committee – made up of parents, teachers, and a community representative – came about after last spring's uprising regarding staffing and course offering issues at the Zephyr Cove 7-12 school. Staff, administrators and board members are often on hand to help or to answer questions.

Last week was the second time they met to discuss:

- What should/could the format and course offerings look like if Whittell stays approximately the same size?
- What should/could the format and course offerings look like if Whittell grows in enrollment?
- What should/could the lake schools' format and course offerings look like if Whittell/Zephyr Cove Elementary decline in enrollment?

Member Brian Rippet on Oct. 7 pointed out how prior to 2010 there was an opportunity for students in California (that goes beyond the Alpine County agreement) to attend Whittell. He said the board took that opportunity away unbeknownst to staff and parents. This has led to trust issues.

It was also pointed out that when programs start and stop it does not build confidence in parents to enroll their students.

(No board members attended last week's meeting, nor did the superintendent.)

Member Stacy Noyes has been talking to Lake Tahoe Unified School District Superintendent Jim Tarwater and Lake Tahoe Community College President Kindred Murillo about Douglas County students taking classes across the state line. The biggest roadblock was put up by Nevada when it eliminated the good neighbor policy a handful of years ago.

Only six credits from outside Nevada can be applied toward high school graduation. However, unlimited community college credits from a Silver State institution would be allowed. The problem, though, is that LTCC is closer for Whittell students than Western Nevada College.

Noyes said there is work being done at higher levels to rectify the California-Nevada enrollment issue so perhaps the local group should focus on other things.

Parent Carol Chaplin pointed out how her sons were promised

the opportunity to be able to take WNC classes, but that was short-lived. In fall 2008, Whittell had an agreement with WNC. Whittell teachers taught WNC classes in addition to their regular five periods. One was a section of composition and one of trig/pre-calculus.

She pleaded with the panel to find things in the short-term that would benefit her son who is still at Whittell, since one son has already graduated.

One of the more immediate measures that could be done, though it doesn't affect current students, is to look at a program that welcomes potential new students as a way to grow enrollment. There was talk of how people have called the school and been turned off before even scheduling a visit. A member of the parents club said she would look into whether that group would take on a more formal orientation program.

Task force members don't want money to be a reason not to consider an idea. They want to explore the idea for merit first.

Reaching out to area preschools was also broached because they are the feeder programs for the school district.

Also to be explored is why people who live in Douglas County are opting not to go Zephyr Cove Elementary or Whittell High schools, as well as finding out why new enrollees picked DCSD.

The next meeting is Oct. 21 at 4:30pm at Whittell High School.

Letter: Students deserve a

vibrant LTCC

To the community,

Wait, what? Safer? Yes! As a 20-plus-year South Lake Tahoe resident and a recently retired FBI agent, I have experienced Lake Tahoe Community College as a student, a guest speaker, and as an occasional criminal justice instructor.

Over the years, these connections have proven to me just how essential LTCC is in giving our local youth a pathway toward a productive future. Whether students come to the college interested in criminal justice, the Lake Tahoe Basin Fire Academy, early childhood education, wilderness leadership and education, medical and dental office work, or any of the many programs offered at the college, LTCC is our town's ticket to a good job.

Even better, many of these jobs directly contribute to a safer, healthier community for all of us. When our local youth has the opportunity to learn in a world-class, cutting-edge setting, they're on the path toward a great job and a satisfying career for life. And that's something we can all benefit from.

Please vote yes on Measure F this November to help LTCC keep our kids going in the right direction.

Chris Campion, South Lake Tahoe

Military prepares to respond

to climate change

By W.J. Hennigan, Washington Post

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel addressed the Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas on Monday, unveiling a comprehensive plan for how the U.S. military will address the effects of climate change.

Rising global temperatures, increasing sea levels and intensifying weather events will challenge global stability, he said, and could lead to food and water shortages, pandemic disease and disputes over refugees and resources.

The Pentagon's "2014 Climate Change Adaptation Roadmap" describes how global warming will bring new demands on the military.

Among the report's conclusions: Coastal military installations that are vulnerable to flooding will need to be altered; humanitarian assistance missions will be more frequent in the face of more intense natural disasters; weapons and other critical military equipment will need to work under more severe weather conditions.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- Douglas County Library now let's people borrow free digital video, music and audiobooks with a library card. For more information, go online.

- Here is the roadwork schedule for the Sierra from Caltrans.
 - Cork & More in South Lake Tahoe is hosting a wine tasting Oct. 16 from 7-9pm as a benefit for Tahoe Arts Project. Cost is \$15.
 - Oct. 14 is the last day for Nevadans to register to vote for the Nov. 4 election; Oct. 20 is the deadline for Californians.
 - Tahoe Cross Country and Alpenglow Sports are putting on the Fall into Winter Trail Runs on Oct. 25 starting at 9am. There are four distances. For more info, go online.
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Phone scammers successful in S. Tahoe

The South Lake Tahoe Police Department and El Dorado County Sheriff's Department received several phone calls last weekend from residents someone called saying they were identifying a specific individual from one of the agencies.

Residents were told that they had warrants out for their arrest for failing to respond to a jury summons. The callers were then told they could avoid arrest if they purchased "Green Dot" prepaid money cards and provided the code numbers

to the caller. The callers used the names of local judges, court clerks and officers.

Many community members were scammed out of thousands of dollars.

This is one of many hoaxes involving law enforcement. Law enforcement agencies do not call people and force them to pay money to avoid arrest, nor do they demand payment to keep people out of jail or to free them from jail.

King Fire terrain susceptible to more devastation

By Hudson Sangree, Sacramento Bee

Rugged and isolated, the Rubicon River Valley on the border of El Dorado and Placer counties was for many years an idyll of old-growth trees and icy swimming holes. Then the King Fire roared through last month, turning a 20-mile stretch of the canyon into a vast dead zone of ashen earth and smoldering stumps.

Experts now worry that the devastation and the extreme temperatures of the fire, which scorched much of the soil and reduced its ability to hold together and absorb runoff, could lead to floods and mudslides when winter storms arrive. The same conditions affect parts of the south fork of the American River near Pollock Pines, where an arsonist allegedly started the 98,000-acre King Fire on Sept. 13.

Members of the U.S. Forest Service's Burned Area Emergency Response team, or BAER, swooped in last week, as the fire was

finally contained, to assess the immediate dangers remaining in its aftermath. Members include botanists, hydrologists and geologists. Their job is to deal with such immediate threats as falling trees and crumbling roads.

BAER coordinator Eric Nicita said possible mudslides are a major concern, because when the top layer of soil cooks, it looses the fungi, bacteria and other organic material that hold it together and allow it to absorb water. In these conditions, rain runs through soil and tears it down instead of percolating into the earth.

“The only thing the water can do is roll downslope,” said Nicita, a soil scientist with the Forest Service. “All of a sudden, your flow is increasing incredibly.”

One of the most vulnerable danger zones from the King fire is the White Meadows Road area above the south fork of the American River, along Highway 50 near Fresh Pond. That’s where a dozen homes burned and where residents are already busy clearing dead trees and starting to rebuild.

Read the whole story

Carbon monoxide scare on Kingsbury Grade

Three rooms at the Lodge at Kingsbury Crossing in Stateline had to be evacuated today because of carbon monoxide.

An alarm went off in one room just before 10am Oct. 14. The odorless gas then spread to two other rooms.

“It was coming from the vent, but we’re not sure if it was

drawing from somewhere else,” Tahoe Douglas Fire Marshal Eric Guevin told *Lake Tahoe News*.

It’s possible the heater could be the source, or it could have been from the exhaust of a vehicle that was left running near the air intake.

The county building department and utility company also responded to the Lower Kingsbury Grade resort.

No one was hurt or became ill.

The heat was shut off and the rooms cleared of the potentially deadly gas.

All tourist accommodation units are supposed to have carbon monoxide detectors in each room per Nevada law. The same goes for California. In Douglas County, these get inspected each year by the fire department.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Douglas County to open community-senior center

The Douglas County community and senior center in the valley will open more than five months ahead of schedule and more than \$10,000 under budget. Contractors expect to be done Dec. 6.

Core Construction was credited for its help in keeping the project below the \$16.9 million budget as well as for finishing well before the original opening goal of April 2015.

The grand opening will showcase the building's 83,000-square-foot housing a full-size double gymnasium, jogging track, fitness facility, two racket ball courts, seven activity rooms, a preschool room, community health nurse facility, senior and adult daycare, grand senior dining room, lounge, gift shop and administrative offices.

Frontier Communications is donating free Wi-Fi to the center for the next five years.

The Douglas County Community Services Foundation is still collecting funds to help furnish and purchase equipment.

Project uses Tahoe weather data to create sound

By Davis Enterprise

The Lake Tahoe Sonification Project is a sound installation which represents multiple aspects of Lake Tahoe's environment, both above and within the lake.

Weather data from the lake is crafted into sound, creating a continuous aural experience that is artistic in design, and intelligible to a listener. This sound installation will create an absorbing experience for all who wish to listen.

The Lake Tahoe Sonification Project is on display at the Nelson Gallery on the UC Davis campus through Nov. 2.

The Lake Tahoe Sonification Project is possible due to the work of the water scientists of the Tahoe Environmental Research Center. Precise measurements of the internal waves

that constantly move through the lake are regularly collected by TERC.

Professor Geoff Schladow, the director of the center, has worked closely with several UC Davis composers to explain the data and the behavior of Lake Tahoe. Also involved was Professor Naomi Saito of the Department of Mathematics, who has worked closely with the data from the lake.

Read the whole story

Letter: Time for locals to support LTCC

To the community,

Measure F on the ballot this November is just as critical to the future of Lake Tahoe Community College as it is to the strength of the entire South Shore community. Imagine our community without a decent and competitive academic center like the college.



Jeff Cowen

From grandpas to graduates, the college intersects the lives of nearly everyone. And while many voters remember the new campus being unveiled as if it □happened yesterday, the main

college buildings are a quarter of a century old. As the college has aged, learning technology, student demands and the need to diversify offerings have leapt ahead.

The kind of investments needed at LTCC will cost money and much of it must be raised locally. The evolution of tax policy in California and across the nation means that if we want a good college in our midst, we have to be the ones to step up and share the cost.

As a business owner, I recognize the need to cut from large state programs and expensive bureaucracies, but that does not mean that local needs simply disappear. Although there are matching dollars available from the state, Measure F is the way to unlock them and provide for our own future. The bond measure requires a local body to manage the money.

Can we afford Measure F? The measure would increase property tax for the average property owner less than \$100 per year. That's about the going subscription rate for cloud-based storage or a few magazines. The college is ailing and at a crossroads. Vote yes on Measure F for a more secure, locally-funded future for one of our community's most critical assets.

Jeff Cowen, business owner and candidate for LTCC Trustee Area