

Water for winemaking an issue during drought

By Mike Dunne, Sacramento Bee

If you have one of those “Save Water Drink Wine” bumper stickers on your car, you might want to rip it off.

And not only because the wit is so lame.

The advice is erroneous. In this time of drought, a bumper sticker urging fellow motorists to “Save Water Drink Water” makes more sense.

After all, 29 gallons of water were used to produce that glass of cabernet sauvignon you look forward to drinking with tonight’s dinner.

That, at least, is the calculation of the Water Footprint Network, a nonprofit foundation in the Netherlands that advocates for more sustainable, efficient and fair ways to use water.

Mesfin Mekonnen, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Twente in the Netherlands, and a Water Footprint associate involved in compiling data, said via email that the 29-gallon figure was based on such factors as rainfall, irrigation and water used in cellars during winemaking.

In California vineyards and cellars, is 29 gallons of water to produce a single glass of wine a realistic estimate?

Read the whole story

Letter: Measure F is LTCC's future

To the community,

Our journey toward Measure F began in May 2013, when Lake Tahoe Community College enacted "Investing In Our Future," a fiscal stability plan to ensure the sustainability of LTCC for the next 40 years. The first step in this plan was to build a shared vision of the future.

In September 2013, LTCC leaders brought community members, faculty, staff, students, K-12 educators, and elected officials together to develop that shared vision.

This fiscal stability plan was developed in response to an enrollment drop caused by new state regulations regarding repeatability of classes, years of state budget cuts, the loss of the good neighbor policy with Nevada, and other factors. The combination left LTCC at a pivotal crossroads.

The choice was to either downsize the college dramatically by reducing more programs, services, and employees, or to embark on a well thought-out strategic plan to build sustainable enrollments based on a shared vision, diversified revenue sources, our current program strengths, and better serving of our community's needs. LTCC's board of trustees and college leadership made a choice, and that choice was to move the college forward toward a realistic shared vision.

During the last 17 months the students, faculty, staff, board, and college leadership has done exactly what it promised the community: to become "California's Premier Destination Community College" and to ensure the college serves the South Lake Tahoe community for many years to come.

To that effort, LTCC has:

- Restored its full-time equivalent students from 1,464 FTES to 1,870 FTES in FY 2014-15.
- Launched a successful intercollegiate women's and men's soccer program.
- Grown our international student base from two to 33 students.
- Conducted a statistically valid survey to assess our community's support for a general obligation bond, and to understand the community's priorities. Those priorities include transfer to four-year schools; modernizing classrooms, labs, and technology; a University Center; and maintaining the current college campus.
- Provided more than \$2 million in federal financial aid and more than \$90,000 in scholarships to LTCC students.
- Developed and submitted over \$42 million in capital project proposals to the California Community Colleges Capital Outlay Program to fund facilities and technology upgrades and modernizations for LTCC. This includes an initial project proposal for a Public Safety Training Facility with two-thirds paid for with state funding, and one-third from local funding. In order to access this funding source, local matches are required. We can then leverage \$55 million into a \$100 million, 10-year building program.
- Diversified LTCC's revenues, with over \$2.6 million coming from outside our community to fund our local college. This was accomplished by leveraging our existing, outstanding Fire Science and Academy curriculum and program.
- Reduced budgets and benefits costs by \$2.5 million over the past three years.
- Built a strong relationship with the Lake Tahoe Unified School District to ensure the successful transition of its

students into LTCC, and to save money by sharing facilities.

- Completed a comprehensive facilities assessment.
- Incentivized and solicited private developers to build student residence halls on LTCC's beautiful 164-acre campus.

In response to our local community's priorities, LTCC continues to work on the following:

- Launching a new Environmental Technology and Sustainability certificate and associate of arts degree. This is in response to the plethora of environmental jobs in public, private, and nonprofit sectors here in South Lake Tahoe.
- Developing a proposal for a baccalaureate degree and soliciting colleges and universities to participate in a university center at LTCC.
- Developing an adult education program in partnership with LTUSD in hospitality.

The college's student body, board of trustees, faculty, staff, foundation Board, and leadership are committed to the long-term viability of our local community college, and to leading the way to a vibrant and sustainable South Lake Tahoe economy. We are doing what we said we'd do based on the community's priorities and input. We are asking our community to invest in our college by voting yes on Measure F this November. Please stand alongside over 400 community members in supporting Measure F for our FUTURE. Measure F is a strong investment for education and our local economy.

Sincerely,

Friends of LTCC – Yes on F 2014

South Lake looking for commission applicants

South Lake Tahoe is looking for applicants for the Airport Land Use Commission, Building/ADA Board of Appeals, Parks & Recreation Commission, and Planning Commission.

Appointments are for two years.

Applications may be obtained at the City Clerk's Office located at 1901 Airport Road, South Lake Tahoe between 8am-5pm, Monday through Friday. Applications can also be downloaded from the city's website.

Completed applications must be returned to the City Clerk's Office no later than 5pm Dec. 19.

For more info, call 530.542.6004.

Lukins' wells contaminated, using STPUD water

By Kathryn Reed

Most of the water Lukins Brothers Water Company customers are using is coming from South Tahoe Public Utility District.

This is because two of the three active wells the South Lake Tahoe private water company operates are contaminated with

Tetrachloroethylene, also known as PCE. The wells show 16 parts per billion and 43 parts per billion. The maximum contaminant level is 5 parts per billion.

The state Division of Drinking Water mandates regular testing of water for a variety of potential contaminants. The day it came back high the state was notified, the wells were shut down and the intertie with STPUD was opened. This was July 11. However, it was not until Sept. 30 that the state told Lukins to let its customers know what is going on. Legally, the water company could not disclose the information until being told to do so by the state.

Jen Lukins, who runs the water company, said there was no threat to customers because three months ago when the water came back with a high PCE reading the company took steps to ensure other water was coming out of taps.

"Everyone is receiving safe, potable drinking water that meets all drinking water standards," Lukins told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Those wells will be shut down until a treatment is found or Lukins drills a new well. An engineering firm is trying to determine what the best solution is for Lukins. Then we'll work with the state to get the funding."

Two private wells near the Y off Highway 89 are also contaminated with PCE.

"One challenge is we don't have some obvious source," Lauri Kemper with Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Cleanup cannot take place until the location is identified. Once that is done the property owners will be tasked with cleaning it up.

Lahontan applied for a \$69,000 grant from the state's cleanup and abatement account. Sometime this fall a series of hydropunches will be performed to determine the location of

the contaminant. The drilling equipment punches holes in the soil, takes samples and tries to pinpoint where the PCE is originating.

Then the groundwater, soil or both will be treated.

Kemper said most likely this PCE outbreak is not from the Laundromat at the Y. There is still an open case involving that facility from when it had a self-serve dry cleaning machine that leaked in the 1970s. A similar machine was at the site of what is about to be BevMo, but that case was closed.

Kemper said the drought could be contributing to why PCE is making itself known because of how wells draw water.

“We hope we find the source of the contaminant fast before more of the aquifer becomes contaminated,” Lukins said.

In other water contamination news:

- Lahontan officials continue to monitor what Tahoe Tom’s gas station is doing regarding cleaning up MTBE leaking from its site into the ground water and contaminating the water at Mark Twain Hotel. The station is supposed to be paying for the bottled water being used by the South Lake Tahoe hotel, but it isn’t. Kemper said the station is racking up penalties. The water board will be meeting with station owners at the end of the month.

Hard Rock applies for gaming license at Stateline

By J.D. Morris, Las Vegas Sun

The company that operates Las Vegas' Hard Rock Hotel & Casino this week earned initial approval from state gaming regulators to reopen a shuttered Lake Tahoe casino under the same brand.

Warner Gaming is transforming the former Horizon casino, which closed earlier this year, into a new Hard Rock property in Stateline. The state Gaming Control Board recommended Warner for approval to run the casino, a decision that will now head to the Gaming Commission for final consideration.

William Warner, the company's chief executive, told the gaming board at its meeting in Carson City that the \$60 million renovation should be completed in January.

Read the whole story

The business of same-sex marriage in Nevada

By Conor Shine, Las Vegas Sun

Same-sex marriage is on its way to Nevada and with it could come millions of dollars in new spending for the state's economy.

Weddings are already a \$2.3 billion industry in Las Vegas, according to the Wedding Report. That number stands to grow even larger with thousands of in-state same-sex couples ready to marry and even more looking to travel to the "Marriage Capital of the World" to tie the knot.

A June report from the Williams Institute at UC Los Angeles laid out the potential economic impact from legalizing same-sex marriage in Nevada.

Read the whole story

Lake Valley makes pitch to hike fire tax



Lack of property tax revenue from the Angora burn area is impacting Lake Valley Fire.
Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – Lake Valley Fire Protection District does not have enough money to do all of the things it wants to do. That is why a parcel tax is on the Nov. 4 ballot.

Members of the district, which for the most part includes the incorporated area of El Dorado County in the basin, have been paying \$20 a year since 1986. The problem is Measure M never increased based on inflation. It brings in \$150,000 a year.

Measure H, which will be before voters, would replace Measure M with a \$120 fee that would be tied to the consumer price index. This means it could go up each year, though not by more than 3 percent any given year. It is projected to bring in \$1 million.

"Things will change," Fire Chief Gareth Harris told *Lake Tahoe News* when asked what happens if the measure fails. "We'd have to eliminate the fuels program."

About 25 people turned out for a meeting Oct. 8 regarding the measure, though most were firefighters or on Lake Valley's board.

Firefighter Martin Goldberg went over where the money would go. He explained how state and federal funds have dried up so another resource needs to be found. Measure H is the district's answer.



Firefighter Martin Goldberg, left, with some of the members of the Angora Peak Fire Crew.

The money would not go to raises, even though firefighters have not received a raise in eight years. The salaries it would fund are those of the members of the Angora Peak Fire Crew. Many of them just spent two weeks on the King Fire. They were paraded before the audience and introduced.

This group is responsible for the free chipping service the district provides, thinning on district parcels and pile burning.

Parcel tax money would also go toward aging facilities and equipment.

It would go on indefinitely. Goldberg said if other funding sources come forward, then property owners would be given a reprieve with Measure H. Possible sources are if Lake Tahoe Restoration Act is reauthorized and if State Responsibility

Area funds are released.

“I feel like we are asking what we need to maintain the program,” Goldberg told the group.

Lake Valley is not receiving any of the \$152.33 the state is collecting from residents for being in a State Responsibility Area. It does, however, intend to apply for a chunk of the \$10 million that will soon be made available statewide.

Another hit to Lake Valley’s income is the diminished property tax collected from the Angora burn area. This is because about 100 of the 254 houses that were reduced to ash in June 2007 have never been rebuilt.

“They are off the tax roll except for the land value,” Harris said. “That is a significant issue.”

To pass, Measure H requires two-thirds of the voters on Nov. 4 to approve it.

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Notes:

- More info is available online.

Missing Douglas County teen found safe



Mia Swenson

Updated Oct. 10 11:145am:

Douglas County sheriff's deputies have found a Gardnerville teen who went missing Oct. 3.

Mia Swenson, 16, is safe and has been reunited with her family.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Colorado resort sues over Salt Lake ski marketing

By Lindsay Whitehurst, AP

SALT LAKE CITY – A Colorado ski resort says Salt Lake City can't market itself as Ski City USA because the winter sports slogan is too similar to their decades-old nickname for Steamboat Springs.

Steamboat Ski Resort is suing Utah tourism officials, claiming a \$1.8 million campaign designed to lure tourists from Colorado violates their Ski Town, U.S.A. trademark.

“They’re trying to leverage the value we worked hard to create for their own commercial benefit,” resort spokesman Rob Perlman said.

Visit Salt Lake, the tourism-promotion group that created the campaign, declined to comment on the suit Wednesday, communications director Shawn Stinson said.

The package of online and print ads emblazoned with the new Ski City logo was announced last month in a press conference that drew local elected officials as well as tourism authorities and ski resort executives.

The name is designed to tout the Salt Lake area’s restaurants, bars and night life a short drive from four resorts: Alta Ski Area, Brighton Resort, Snowbird Ski Resort and Solitude Mountain Resort.

The trademark infringement suit filed in Denver by the Steamboat Ski Resort and Steamboat Springs Winter Sports Club names those four Utah resorts and Visit Salt Lake.

The lawsuit asks a federal judge to stop Salt Lake from using the Ski City brand and seeks unspecified damages and any profits they make from the name.

No hearings have been scheduled in the case.

In September, Visit Salt Lake President Scott Beck said the new campaign is absolutely aimed at luring skiers away from Colorado, which annually registers about three times more skier visits than Utah, according to figures from the National Ski Area Association. Last season, Utah had 4.1 million day visits from skiers and snowboarders – compared to 12.6 million in Colorado.

Vicki Varela, managing director of the Utah Office of Tourism, said her office’s research has shown that more than half of people who are shown a picture of Salt Lake City’s skyline

with the mountains behind it think it is Denver.

The campaign “gives us the story that we deserve to have on the national stage,” Varela said last month.

The Ski City marketing is paid for by the private nonprofit Visit Salt Lake, which gets its revenue from a tax visitors pay when they stay at hotels. It isn’t meant to replace the long-running statewide slogan, “The Greatest Snow on Earth,” which is on Utah license plates and used throughout promotional materials.

The ads don’t include three resorts near Park City, Utah, which are also a short drive from Salt Lake City. Colorado-based ski industry titan Vail Resorts Inc. last month purchased Park City Mountain Resort in a move that put an end to a legal battle between the two companies. It also paved the way for the creation of what could be the country’s largest resort because Vail also operates the adjacent Canyons ski area.

Beck said the campaign wasn’t a response to Vail’s expansion in the market or an attempt to draw skiers from other Utah resorts.

South Shore chamber offering business workshops

Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce in partnership with South Lake Tahoe is putting on two workshops this month.

Leadership and People Management is a workshop for business owners on Oct. 22 from 1-5pm.

Participants will be taught why leadership skills are critical to a business in today's economy and how to avoid the biggest mistakes that kill morale, motivation, productivity and profits. Participants will also be taught how to manage challenging employees more effectively, manage feelings, create a positive work environment for all, and respond positively to and treat all employees fairly. Topics include the high cost of poor leadership, creating a positive culture, dealing with difficult employees, the art of giving feedback and overcoming your own reactive tendencies. This interactive workshop is ideal for managers and business owners who want to improve their leadership skills, retain good employees and/or motivate their staff.

On Oct. 29 from 1-5pm will be a Time Management workshop for business owners.

Workshop participants will identify the barriers that keep them from managing their time more effectively. Topics include taming the calendar beast, focusing on what matters, tips for staying on track and meeting deadlines and the art of energy management. This interactive workshop is ideal for anyone whose inbox is full, has missed an appointment, hasn't gotten eight hours of sleep since the '90s or could just use one more hour in the day.

The workshops will be the chamber office, 169 Highway 50, Stateline.

For more detailed information or to register for the workshops, go online.