

El Dorado County employees flush with cash

By Kathryn Reed

It pays to work for El Dorado County. In 2017, the salary and benefits for three employees topped \$300,000, while another 46 people surpassed \$200,000.

Six people's compensation package was more than the chief administrative officer's and he's the top official in the county.

"The list highlights some problems with the county's compensation policies. For instance, the cost of the undersheriff's total compensation is higher than that of his boss, the sheriff," Joe Harn, the county's auditor-controller, said in a statement. "The cost of each employee's CalPERS benefit is included on the list, but the reported retirement cost should be reviewed with some skepticism. CalPERS has intentionally understated the actual cost of its retirement programs statewide. Undoubtedly, higher costs for the county's retirement program and retirees' health stipend will need to be paid in the future."

Harn released the numbers last week. Here is that top 100 list.

"Posting the list to the county's website is part of the ongoing effort to increase transparency in our County government," Harn said. "The best government transparency involves placing all financial information online in a readily understandable manner. Government transparency allows taxpayers to see how our county is spending tax money, and gives El Dorado County citizens the ability to hold us accountable. The internet is a great place to enhance transparency."

On top of the list is the mental health director with a base pay of \$239,132, and a total package worth \$364,056.

Forty of the top 100 work in the sheriff's department. While most make more than \$100,000 a year, it's the overtime that adds up.

The lowest compensation package was \$180,663 for an attorney in child support services.

1 person dies in plane crash near Minden

A plane crashed Monday about one-half mile from the Minden airport, killing the pilot.

Douglas County sheriff's Capt. Dan Coverley said the twin engine Piper PA-34 Seneca took off from Bakersfield and was headed for Minden, where the pilot's son lives.

"We have two pretty good witnesses who say something happened in the air. They saw an explosion and then he crashed," Coverley told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The plane landed in a hayfield owned by the Washoe tribe, in the Hobo Hot Springs area.

The crash occurred about 11:30am Feb. 19.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

How 10 days in ICU changed Anderson

By Laura Ratliff, Today

Last week, Olympic snowboarder Jamie Anderson became the first female snowboarder to win not one, but two gold medals. The successful run came on a day with temperatures were in the single-digits and 30 mile-per-hour wind gusts challenged riders.

In an interview with “Today’s” Willie Geist, the Olympic champion says that her mindset was crucial to her success.

Getting that calm outlook, however, came after a harrowing injury that almost derailed her career.

Read the whole story

Icy roads a problem for drivers in Tahoe-Truckee

Law enforcement officials in and around the Lake Tahoe Basin have been working multiple car wrecks.

A collision Monday morning on Pioneer Trail and Glenwood Avenue in South Lake Tahoe resulted in one person being taken to the hospital. A fire hydrant was sheared off, which made the roads even more icy.

Truckee officers said on Sunday night they responded to numerous reports of vehicles that slid off roadways, with several overturned.

“This was due to unsafe speeds in snowy and icy conditions. Also many drivers failed to chain their vehicles and were unprepared for driving in severe winter weather,” officials said in a statement.

The overnight snow was good for the ski resorts. Powder days have been few and far between this season.

The National Weather Service in Reno says, “Very cold temperatures will take hold of the region for the next few days. Daytime high temperatures near will only reach near freezing and overnight lows will drop into the very low teens with some places dropping into the sub-zero range.”

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

EDC fundraiser raffles off AR-15 after Fla. shooting

By Ellen Garrison, Tony Bizjak And Molly Sullivan, Sacramento Bee

A raffle item at a Cameron Park Fire Department crab feed Saturday night made some attendees so uncomfortable that they left the event.

Firefighters were auctioning off an AR-15 rifle, the type of weapon allegedly used Wednesday by Nikolas Cruz in the school shooting in Parkland, Fla., that left 17 dead.

El Dorado Hills resident Allison Merrill and her friends left the crab feed after expressing their concerns about the gun raffle to the organizers, she said.

Read the whole story

Reno's Jitloff crashes in Olympic GS race

Giant slalom specialist Tim Jitloff of Reno was not able to complete his run at the Olympic Games.

Of the 100 men competing in South Korea, he was one of 21 to not finish. He crashed.

This was his lone event.

Four years ago Jitloff finished 15th in GS at the Sochi (Russia) Olympics.

"Here you are doing this really wonderful thing, traveling around the world. But you feel depressed because the pressure to perform beats you down, you feel relegated to a number or you are lonely," Jitloff told Reuters of the mental challenges that Olympic athletes face.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Milo

Milo is a handsome 11-month-old orange tiger short-hair kitten. He likes to play with dogs and has lived with children. Milo is friendly and loves to be petted.

Milo is neutered, microchipped for FIV, and vaccinated. He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with 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

SLT, city manager brouhaha continues

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe City Council members on Feb. 20 will again discuss the future of City Manager Nancy Kerry.

The closed session item is listed as: public employee discipline/dismissal/release. This was the same wording used for the **Feb. 12 special meeting**. At that time there was no reportable action.

Sources have told *Lake Tahoe News* the city and Kerry are working on a settlement. She is owed nine month's severance if she were to be let go without cause. As with all employees, she would also be entitled to compensation for unused sick and vacation time.

Still, though, no one has come forward to say what has led the city and Kerry to be on a path to part ways.

On Feb. 6 Kerry was mandated to turn in her work phone and key card for access to city offices, though she is still technically the city manager. She is receiving her regular paycheck, but is not doing any work. She is not taking sick or vacation pay, nor is she on administrative leave.

"Nancy is currently on regular paid status," Debbie McIntyre, director of finance, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "The Finance Department has received no direction from City Council regarding Nancy's pay status, and as such she will remain on paid status until direction is given. An exempt employee receives full pay whether or not they work full hours, and their pay doesn't change if they work more than full hours, just the nature of the exempt status employee."

Councilman Austin Sass has said people have complained about Kerry, but to what extent is not known. People complain about bosses and colleagues all the time. Councilman Tom Davis said no official complaints have been filed.

Lake Tahoe News on Feb. 8 asked the city: "How many complaints have been filed against each of the last three city managers? How many employee lawsuits have been filed against Kerry, O'Rourke and Jinkens? What was the outcome of them?" The city has not provided the answers.

Lake Tahoe News knows of **one former employee who filed a lawsuit** during Kerry's tenure, which was settled. There are no other known complaints. This speaks to why Kerry in her five-plus years as city manager had only received glowing reviews, including as recently as June 2017 when she was given a 5 percent raise.

Kerry's fall from grace comes with more questions than answers.

The relationship became strained once interim City Attorney Nira Doherty came on board.

The only thing known for sure is that **Mary Egan of Municipal Resource Group** came in last October to assess the culture of the city at the request of Sass, who was mayor at the time. Egan never provided the city with a written report. She talked about her findings in closed session Jan. 23.

Lake Tahoe News requested all correspondence with MRG prior to the contract signing as that would be public record. Suzie Alessi, the city clerk, handles all Public Records Act requests. Again, no response.

Alessi was resent a different PRA on Sunday, with acting City Manager Jeff Meston, Mayor Wendy David and Doherty copied on the email.

Alessi's response to everyone about this reporter was, "I am really tired of feeling harassed and bullied by her."

Again, Alessi is failing to do her job. As an elected official her boss is the people, no one at the city.

Opinion: Blame New York City for Trump

By Mitchell L. Moss

Only one person born and raised in New York City resident has been elected president of the United States during the past 100 years: Donald J. Trump.

Most successful politicians from New York City – Al Smith, Tom Dewey, Nelson Rockefeller, Rudy Giuliani – failed when they ran for president.

By contrast, Trump never made it in New York City's business, cultural or civic world.

That's why he won.

From the moment of his birth in Queens, Trump was an outsider, the son of an outer borough real estate developer. Trump was not even elite in Queens. He went to the undistinguished Kew-Forest School and then attended the New York Military Academy, rather than the nationally ranked Jamaica High School near his home.

Trump's father, Fred Trump, a real estate developer, lived in what was designed to be a gated, very white, insular enclave: Jamaica Estates, Queens. The Trumps didn't live in either of

the two higher-status neighborhoods of Queens: Forest Hills Gardens or Douglaston.

Trump had a bigger handicap in his father's German heritage. Fred Trump, who built middle-income housing in Brooklyn and Queens, had been arrested in 1927 at a KKK protest rally in Queens, according to the *New York Times*. Since World War II, a German heritage has been a liability for prospective politicians in New York. In fact, the current mayor of New York City, Bill de Blasio, was born Warren Wilhelm, Jr., and was called Bill Wilhelm before he legally changed his name to Bill de Blasio, adopting his mother's maiden name as his own just in time to run for city council.

Trump then missed out on opportunities to expand his exposure to other cultural groups. Although of age for military service during the Vietnam War, he successfully avoided the draft with four deferments—and one medical deferment after colle

As an ambitious young man, Trump made the leap into Manhattan by using his father's political connections and his own negotiating skills to get control of the aging Commodore Hotel next to Grand Central Terminal. With financing from the Hyatt Corporation, and a generous tax abatement from the city and state, Trump Tower was built in the 1980s, at 56th Street and Fifth Avenue, a prime Manhattan location.

But these real estate successes were not followed by integration into the city. He wasn't rich enough to compete with billionaires like Michael Bloomberg, or generous enough to qualify for the boards of cultural institutions like the Metropolitan Museum of Art or the city's leading medical centers. Trump never actually owned many properties—he was focused far more on licensing his name, and attaching them to buildings, like a barbarian marking what he had seized.

Trump never became a member of the Real Estate Board of New York, the leading organization of property owners in New York

City. And the city's major law firms and real estate consulting firms were reluctant to work for Trump, since he is known for not paying his bills. Most major commercial banks in New York refused to finance his real estate projects, especially once they became aware of his use of bankruptcy laws to protect whatever money he had earned from projects, while hurting investors.

In New York City, Trump, like any interloper, took advantage of the tools available to him. Specifically, he manipulated the Manhattan-based mass media to create a national identity as a celebrity. But he

never absorbed the values of New Yorkers and the importance of immigration, global trade, higher education and the free press. Trump's presidency is actually based on a rejection of "New York values."

But his career assaulting the political and cultural elites of New York taught him one lesson: Even a bad bully can have a fan club.

News reports now have him marveling that New Yorkers who once wouldn't give him the time of day—like the former Goldman Sachs chieftain Gary Cohn—now work for him.

In light of his history, the Trump campaign promise to "take back America" was more than an empty slogan. It's a genuine reflection of his inability to fit into the cultural and economic arena of New York City where he was never recognized as a person of consequence.

Mitchell L. Moss is Henry Hart Rice professor of urban policy and planning at New York University.

Flu vaccine 25% effective against worst strain

By Associated Press

The flu vaccine is doing a poor job protecting older Americans and others against the bug that's causing most illnesses.

Preliminary figures released Thursday by the CDC suggest the vaccine is 36 percent effective overall in preventing flu illness severe enough to send a patient to the doctor's office.

There's only been one other time in the last decade when the flu vaccine did a worse job.

[Read the whole story](#)