

Placer County providing new resource for homeless

Placer County residents who are experiencing homelessness now have a new, centralized gateway to housing resource.

People who are homeless may call 833.375.2237 to determine their eligibility for various housing programs. Their needs will be shared with participating homeless service providers offering emergency, rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing in Placer County.

This telephone hotline is operated by the Homeless Resource Council of the Sierra, a collaborative group of agencies and nonprofit organizations from Placer and Nevada counties. That group leads the Continuum of Care, coordinating housing and services funding for homeless families and individuals.

This streamlined service will help various agencies throughout Placer County better coordinate services and prioritize needs. Homeless individuals will have their needs assessed in a consistent manner, and their data will be placed into the Continuum of Care's Homeless Management Information System.

The helpline is also available in Spanish. Walk-in services will still be available at local emergency shelters for those who do not have a phone.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

• Truckee Fire is encouraging residents to adopt a hydrant, which means clearing it of snow. For more info, email

prevention@truckee-fire.org.

- South Lake Tahoe Fire Rescue's annual awards will be Jan. 29, 5pm in council chambers at Lake Tahoe Airport.
 - Here are the El Dorado-Tahoe and Sierra roadwork schedules for the week from Caltrans.
 - Human resources expert Laura Moriarty will be conducting a workshop Feb. 21 about the steps people can take to prevent sexual harassment, retaliation, and bullying in the workplace. It will be from noon-1pm at the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce office in Stateline. Cost is \$10 for members, \$20 for others. For more info, go **online**.
 - Carson Valley Middle School eighth-grader Jacob Piphon, from Carson City, placed first in the National Radon Poster Contest, after taking home first place in the Nevada Radon Poster Contest. He competed against student winners from several other states and will receive \$1,000 for his poster "The Element of Surprise."
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Affordable housing – lots of talk, little action

By Kathryn Reed

An annual salary of \$80,000 is what is required to rent a two-bedroom apartment in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Kings Beach and South Lake Tahoe were called the two poverty pockets in the basin.

These dire circumstances were illustrated by Heidi Hill Drum of the Tahoe Prosperity Center.

“At least 30 percent of the community is living at 150 percent of the federal poverty line. That is \$36,000 a year for a family of four,” Drum said at this week’s TRPA meeting.

She gave a presentation Jan. 23 to the South Lake Tahoe City Council and then on Jan. 24 to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board. Joining her in Kings Beach at the TRPA meeting were representatives of the Mountain Housing Council based on the North Shore.

“We don’t want people living in motels or in trailers held together with duct tape,” Drum told the TRPA.

The nonprofit she heads up plans to create a demonstration affordable housing project. But like so much in the basin, the wheels of progress move slowly. While the plan is to turn a South Lake Tahoe hotel into affordable housing, no hotel has been selected, no developer is on board, no money has been secured to pay for it, there is no plan to decide who would get to live there, let alone there being an opening day.

“We’re just starting, so all these questions are to be answered during the first year of the process. We want it to be a very high-profile, public process,” Drum told *Lake Tahoe News*.

While there have been endless studies, a litany of meetings and multiple task forces put together, little has been done to solve the issue. (***Lake Tahoe News*** ran an entire series on the topic in 2017.)

The lack of affordable housing is not an issue that is unique to the Lake Tahoe Basin, but there are constraints here other locales don’t have.

Tahoe has limited land to build on. It also has some of the most restrictive development requirements in the country, along with high permit fees. This in part is where TRPA might play a role in affordable housing. It could be through

development rights or bonus units.

"We need to look at our own policy and development rights to make sure we are not a hindrance or at least we're not the reason projects are not going forward," TRPA board Chairman Jim Lawrence said.

California voters will be presented with an affordable housing bond in November. Thirteen counties will also have housing bonds on the ballot.

The day before the TRPA meeting the Nevada Legislature's interim affordable housing committee met for the first time this year.

The *Las Vegas Review-Journal* reported, "U.S. Census Bureau data from 2016 shows nearly half of all renters in Nevada are cost burdened, meaning they spend more than 30 percent of their income on utilities and rent or mortgage. And recent reform of the federal tax code has devalued tax credits that incentivize private investors to help build apartments for low-income families."

Austin Sass, who is South Lake Tahoe's rep on the TRPA board, said, "We literally need close to 1,000 units to satisfy the hourly workers in this community. That sounds like projects or a big apartment. Given the density requirements, I'm not sure where we go. At the end of the day it doesn't seem like there is a solution to put a dent in the housing problem."

Affordable housing advocates have an eye toward Colorado, which is considered a leader in this arena. Ski resorts there have started to put tiny houses on campgrounds for employees.

Of the four members of the public who spoke to this issue at Wednesday's TRPA meeting, one from Tahoe City said affordable housing has been a problem since the 1970s. He added that he's trying to put a project together, but the "process is cumbersome." Someone else said it's time the ski resorts are

held more accountable.

With the Lake Tahoe-Truckee area being a tourist destination, the problem is exacerbated with people wanting a second home here that stays vacant much of the year or is rented out to tourists – not locals.

In the Truckee-North Shore area, it was stated that 50 percent of the single family residents sit vacant 68 percent of time.

But this isn't new. Twenty years ago it was reported that 70 percent of the homes in South Lake Tahoe were not occupied by full-time residents.

Never part of the affordable housing discussion is wages or whether employees should expect to live and work in the same town.

Opinion: Public discussions on sexual harassment changing

By Juliet Williams

Twenty years ago, major news outlets reported allegations that then-President Bill Clinton had a sexual relationship with a 22-year-old White House intern.

Looking back, the Clinton-Lewinsky affair heralded a sea change in political discourse by normalizing public discussion of sex acts. Today, it is hard to believe that esteemed presidents, from Thomas Jefferson to John F. Kennedy, were sheltered from public judgment by a code of decorum that conveniently regarded the subject of sex as beneath the dignity of political discussion. That all changed in the

Clinton days when terms like “oral sex” and “semen stain” were catapulted from the domain of hushed whispers to front-page news.

Fast forward to today, and once again the man sitting in the oval office is dogged by allegations of sexual misconduct. As a scholar who has examined public reaction to political sex scandals since the Clinton days, this is hardly where I expected we’d find ourselves in 2018. Twenty years ago, it seemed plausible that difficult conversations spurred by revelation of the Clinton-Lewinsky affair – about issues ranging from sexual harassment to the nature of sexual consent – would lead to lasting changes in the way women and men conducted themselves in the workplace, and well beyond.

But how far have we really come?

Sexual harassment remains prevalent

The election to the presidency of a man who boasts of “pussy-grabbing” is an indication that we still have a long way to go.

Today, sexual harassment remains commonplace, despite legal protections and the introduction of anti-harassment training in many workplaces. Surveys report that between 25 percent to 85 percent of women say they have been sexually harassed at work. Even the most conservative of these findings indicate a widespread problem. For women in certain employment sectors – including male-dominated industries like construction or service jobs where workers rely on tips to earn a living wage – rates of sexual harassment and sexual assault are likely to be far higher.

The persistence of workplace sexual harassment is a powerful reminder that gender-based subordination pervades modern life. But that doesn’t mean nothing has changed since the Clinton era. Looking back, three differences between now and then deserve our attention.

Signs of progress

First, no longer are the only men held to public account for sexual misconduct those who represent us in the most literal sense – elected officials. Today, prominent figures in entertainment, corporate America, sports and academia are facing public scrutiny for their actions. Already this has led to serious professional consequences for some and may even result in criminal prosecution for others.

Stars wore black at the 75th annual Golden Globe Awards in solidarity. Photo by Jordan Strauss/Invision/AP

There is, however, a risk that the scope of the problem will be minimized by the media's focus on high-profile perpetrators and the mostly privileged, mostly white women who have drawn attention as victims. The notion that men made powerful by fame or wealth can abuse their power is easy to understand. But a person doesn't have to be rich or famous to have power over another. The fact is that anywhere there are gender relations, there are power relations.

Second, as more accusations come to light, we are witnessing a shift in the terms of sexual discourse. In the past, the media has fallen into a Victorian-era vernacular when reporting on sexual allegations involving prominent men. Think about it: When is the last time you heard a modern-day journalist use a term like "adultery" or "chambermaid" outside of covering a sex scandal?

Now, the media faces sharp criticism for using the noncommittal term "sexual misconduct" when discussing legally actionable crimes, including rape. The shift to more explicit language is important because it helps counter the idea that there is something inherently shameful about naming sexual abuse for what it is.

Finally, sex today is being discussed in terms that are not

just personal, but political. In the Clinton era, women like Gennifer Flowers, Juanita Broaddrick, Kathleen Willey, Paula Jones and Monica Lewinsky paid a steep price in terms of their own privacy when allegations of presidential sexual misconduct arose. At the time, it often seemed as if these women were the main story.

In contrast, today's scandalous revelations are quickly leading to conversations about questions of gender equality that implicate all of us. Meanwhile, social media campaigns like #MeToo are drawing attention to the failure of the traditional media to make space for victims to speak in their own voices and on their own terms.

Twenty years ago, millions around the world learned of a sexual affair between a president and a young intern. Two decades and countless sex scandals later, stories of sex and power are still roiling the public. This time, however, they are also galvanizing a broad-based movement with concrete demands for change. It's been a long time coming, and I hope there is no turning back.

Juliet Williams is a professor of gender studies at UCLA.

Mammoth introduces monthly membership ski pass

By Jack Foersterling, Powder

In today's day and age, nearly our entire lives are based on monthly subscriptions and memberships. From streaming music and movies on Spotify and Netflix to your gym membership or unlimited data plan you just got for your phone, everything is

based on the pay-per-month model. Now, Mammoth Mountain is looking to offer the same for skiers.

This year, Mammoth introduced their “Work + Play Membership” for \$99 a month. With their membership, members receive a 2017-18 Cali4nia Season Pass (which includes lift access to Mammoth, June Mountain, Big Bear, and Snow Summit), additional lift access at Mammoth and June Mountain through January 2019, a Mammoth Bike Park Pass for summer 2018, and unlimited access to the Fort, Mammoth’s new coworking spaces that debuted this season.

Read the whole story

Major crime-genre book event coming to region

One of the largest book-related gatherings in the country, Left Coast Crime, is coming to Reno in two months.

South Lake Tahoe author Todd Borg will be the toastmaster for this event.

“This is an event that I can personally certify as a big deal,” Borg told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Having attended in the past, I can attest to how interesting, informative, and fun these LCC gigs are. There will be dozens of panels on every subject involving crime fiction. There are talks, and interviews, and a banquet dinner, and a performance by the ghost of Mark Twain, who, as many locals know, is channeled by famous local Twain impressionist McAvoy Layne.”

Anyone who is interested in books and writing is invited and

welcome to attend the March 22-25 event.

More than 500 mystery fans, both readers and authors, have already registered to attend. Attendees come from all over the country, and some from outside the country. This convention at the Nugget Hotel in Sparks will be one of the biggest literary events ever to come to the Tahoe-Reno area.

The guests of honor include authors Naomi Hirahara and William Kent Krueger. They will be talking and participating in panels.

Readers will have a chance to meet and talk with authors. And for authors, this is a chance to meet readers and colleagues.

"If you are an aspiring writer, this is an experience that is beyond valuable. You will come away with career-shaping information just by listening to the panels and hearing what 200 authors have learned about the world of writing," Borg said.

Cost is \$220 for all four days. For more info, go **online**.

Calif. putting Sierra Nevada trees to work

By Julie Cart, CalMatters

This is going to be a big year for one of the state's smallest agencies.

As California redoubles its efforts to reduce greenhouse gases, officials are rooting around for new ways to meet the state's goals. Included in their plan: recruiting billions of

redwood, oak and pine trees to help diminish planet-warming gases by pulling carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

It's a major pivot, from regulating harmful emissions solely from factories and cars to calling on nature to pitch in. Officials say 2018 is the moment for the state to harness, and fully measure, the role forests can play in addressing the pressing problems of wildfires and the dangerous releases of carbon that occur when millions of forested acres burn. Both issues are accelerating in alarming, parallel lines.

A good bit of the work will fall to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, one of 10 conservancies within the state's Natural Resources Agency.

The group—two dozen multitasking scientists, biologists and planners in a nondescript office park in Auburn, an old gold-rush town in the Sierra foothills—was born in 2004 with a mandate nearly as vast as the region. Like the state's iconic coastline, the Sierra Nevada mountains are a defining feature of California, rising sharply to dizzying elevations, topping out at Mount Whitney's 14,500 feet, the highest peak in the lower 48 states.

The range, tracing the spine of the state across 22 counties from the Oregon border to deep inside the Mojave Desert south of Bakersfield, holds most of California's forested land and is the source of 60 percent of the state's drinking water.

The conservancy is charged with restoring the Sierra's environmental and economic health, on a modest \$4.5 million annual operating budget derived entirely from the environmental license-plate fund. The bulk of its work, such as facilitating research and making grants for forest and watershed restoration projects, is paid for with state bond money.

The group has no bulldozers or chain saws; it's largely a clearinghouse and planning entity. But its casual work space

lacks the stuffiness of Capitol offices: jeans and hiking boots substitute for Sacramento's skinny suits and wing-tip shoes. Even with an already full to-do list, executive director Jim Branham says, the organization is ready to take on an expanded role policing carbon in the region's forests.

"There is a sense of urgency," Branham said.

The Sierra forests are overgrown and susceptible to both fire and pests, Branham noted. Last year was the most destructive fire year on record, and the state and national forests within California's boundaries are strewn with 129 million dead trees, felled by flames, disease and insects. Years of drought, disease and dead wood fed the infernos. The extent of forest loss could not have been foreseen, Branham said.

"Some of the best scientists in the world have looked at this and didn't come close to predicting what happened," he said. "Our worst fears were nowhere near what actually happened. It's been far worse."

It's the conservancy's unique job to fashion a response appealing to a mosaic of land owners—including the federal government, whose land is included in the conservancy's brief. The federal component alone is a contentious issue for some of the three-quarter-million Sierra residents.

The sprawling Sierra, its deep forests studded with icy blue lakes, is not just a geological divide but also a political one. Towns tucked into these foothills and mountains are often deeply conservative and proudly self-sufficient.

Some residents are of the opinion that government—Sacramento and Washington alike—is already too present in their lives and businesses. The California Farm Bureau was on record opposing the establishment of the conservancy. When the Legislature created it, some locals looked askance at what they anticipated would be yet another bureaucratic agency bossing them around.

Doug Teeter was among those residents. Teeter, who is on the Butte County Board of Supervisors, said increasing limits on the use of off-road vehicles and other recreation on federal lands had caused him to harbor anti-government views. When it became his turn to sit on the conservancy's 16-member board, he was skeptical.

"I was hesitant," he said, fearing the influence of outside environmentalists would impose their will on the region.

But while the agency often conceives of and oversees projects, it does not have the staff to undertake them, instead funding local, state or federal agencies and groups. When it became clear that the conservancy's focus was clearing out forests and shoring up watersheds, Teeter was won over. The agency has doled out \$60 million in grants since its inception, rather than hand down edicts, and that has gone a long way to win over locals, he said.

"My community has been a big recipient of SNC grants," Teeter said. Grants to Butte County have gone to restoration of natural streams, the thinning of forests for fire safety and a wastewater project in the town of Paradise, near Chico. "I see the on-the-ground effort that the conservancy has made in our community. Money talks, and people listen when they want that money."

The Sierra had a once-booming economy as the center of the gold rush and timber cutting, but those industries are in the rearview mirror. Today, people are hurting. Branham, who has been running the conservancy since its inception and is sensitive to local sentiment, found a way to marry the needs of the forest to the economy. He made a strategic decision to achieve results by bringing together groups historically indisposed to sitting at the same table: county officials, timber companies, environmental groups and federal land managers.

Lacking the regulatory teeth to force landowners or counties to act, the conservancy took a soft-power approach, acting as a broker to champion projects that either employed local businesses or boosted the region's economy through forest clearing or watershed projects.

Restoring forests is "a tremendous economic driver" Branham said. "That's the other part of our mission. It puts people to work and produces material from, the forest. It was a pretty nice fit to say this ecological restoration initiative across the region serves to make the environment healthier, but it can also serve to make the economy work better."

The scope of the conservancy's mission narrowed after the devastating 2013 Rim Fire, which raged for more than a year, burning a quarter-million acres of forest in the central Sierra. That fire made it clear the conservancy could not mend every broken place in its portfolio.

Since then, Branham said, the agency's work has focused more on forest thinning to minimize fire threats and sustain healthier trees, which stabilize slopes that store valuable water underground. That work clearly dovetails with the state's interest in using forests to capture carbon emissions and finding ways to reduce the significant carbon release that accompanies massive wildfires.

The conservancy has recently partnered with CalFire, the state firefighting agency, which is turning over \$5 million in proceeds from the state's cap-and-trade system for reducing harmful emissions. The money will pay for forest and watershed restoration around Lake Tahoe that is expected to create multiple benefits: Clearing crowded forests allows more healthy trees to grow, take in and store carbon in the ground and stabilize soils that hold water.

"I applaud the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's work to increase the amount of carbon captured by our forests," said state Sen.

Bob Wieckowski, a Democrat from Fremont who chairs the Senate Environmental Quality Committee. “The more we can rely on our green infrastructure and let nature help us to mitigate climate change..., the better off we will be.”

But even the most generous of grants, welcome as they are, don’t go a long way across a vast landscape. A \$25 million grant from a state water bond was greeted with excitement but tempered by the enormity of the Sierra itself.

“We thought, ‘Awesome, that’s, uh, ... one ... dollar ... per... acre,’” said Brittany Covich, the agency’s outreach manager.

More money and political will may be available this year, from more cap-and-trade revenue and funding directed by the state Air Resources Board to manage greenhouse gases. Projects those funds could pay for are in the planning stages.

Branham has been around long enough to know that the political spotlight seldom lingers, and the important thing is to act quickly.

“My experience with these issues is sometimes those opportunities close quicker than you would expect,” he said. “It’s a matter of how much can we do.”

Community Hub to open at SLT Library

The South Lake Tahoe Community Hub officially opens Feb. 1 at the local library.

Community Hubs are teams of parenting, literacy and health specialists located throughout El Dorado County who assist

families with the everyday challenges of raising children and connect them to community resources. Hubs offer groups, activities, and programs for families with children up to age 18, focused on building resiliency through collaborative, community-based prevention and early intervention services.

The Hub will host a brief ceremony including a proclamation by El Dorado County Supervisor Sue Novasel, introduction to the Community Hub team members followed by a story time.

This free event is at 10:30am and open to all. The library is at 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Lake Tahoe Unified School District is warning people that an individual or company is making phone calls and going to homes in the area offering tutoring services. They are telling people that their child's school sent them and they are asking for credit card numbers or cash. These services are not sanctioned or sponsored by LTUSD or any of the district's schools. The district does not share any student information with third parties unless required by law.

- People who speak Spanish or Tagalog in addition to English are needed as poll workers for El Dorado County. For more info, call 530.621.7471.

- Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce's annual Business Expo is March 30, 4:30-8:30pm at Harveys in Stateline. Cost is \$10 for members and \$15 for others in advance; \$20 at the door.

· Ed Zschau, a former congressman and Silicon Valley CEO, will discuss why the Northern Nevada area is poised to become the most vibrant high-tech enterprise center in the United States, and how education, entrepreneurship, and economic development initiatives are making that vision possible. The free event is Feb. 21 from 11:45am-12:45pm at the Tahoe Center for Environmental Science in Incline Village.

· Ismeal Resendiz-Moreno, 44, of Incline Village, has been booked on a charge of murder as part of the ongoing investigation of a homicide that occurred Tuesday morning inside a residence in Incline Village. The victim's name still has not been released.

Study: Humidity contributes to snowpack's loss

By Mike Wolterbeek

The future of snowpack and water resources in the American West now has another variable in the equation for water managers – humidity, which can actually increase snowmelt even on a cloudy day.

In a study published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, UNR Assistant Professor Adrian Harpold and his colleague University of Utah Professor Paul Brooks show that changes in humidity may determine how the contribution of snowpack to streams, lakes and groundwater changes as the climate warms.

Surprisingly, cloudy, gray and humid winter days actually causes the snowpack to warm, increasing the likelihood of melt

during winter months when the snowpack should be growing, according to the study. In contrast, under clear skies and low humidity the snow can become colder than the air, preserving the snowpack until spring.

Harpold, an ecohydrologist, and Brooks, a hydrologist and biogeochemist, looked at snowpack data from more than 400 locations around the West, from the humid Pacific Northwest to the arid desert southwest. Across that range of environments, they found dry and humid environments responded to climate warming with episodes of snowpack loss during the winter. In humid areas, though, the episodes were primarily winter snowmelt, while in dry areas the episodes were dominated by winter sublimation – direct loss of snow to the atmosphere.

“And these effects are likely to become more intense with more warming,” Harpold said. “We found that relative humidity generally has been both increasing in the Pacific Northwest and decreasing in the desert southwest over the last 30 years, reinforcing the patterns of winter melt in the Pacific Northwest and sublimation in the southwest.”

Researchers have evaluated different mechanisms that could account for declining snowpack in a warming world: earlier onset of snowmelt, a change in melt rates and shifts from snow to rain under certain conditions. Climate change may also tweak winter humidity up in some regions and down in others. Brooks said that researchers have known that a changing climate could have major impacts on snowmelt-derived water resources.

“But it has been unclear up to this point,” Brooks said, “why some areas seem to be much more sensitive to change while other locations seem resilient.”

Cloudy, humid days reverse the cooling from both radiation and sublimation – cloud cover prevents snow from emitting energy, and condensation of water vapor on the snow releases latent

heat, warming the snow. That is why a couple of humid days with temperatures right around freezing result in large melt events and even minor flooding. An extreme case of this can come on foggy days, Brooks said. Snow on dry days can “sublimate,” or change directly from a solid to vapor. This process, just like evaporation, absorbs heat and further cools the snow, slowing snowmelt.

“Up to now, future trends in winter humidity have not been a focus of prediction,” Harpold said. “Our work shows this will be a key variable that we will have to predict under climate change.”

If humidity increases, water managers may be faced with the challenge of storing water for longer periods while mitigating mid-winter flooding. In contrast, a decrease in humidity will further stress already limited water supplies.

“Long-term planning for reservoirs, water storage and water supply systems is also key for water managers,” Harpold, whose Nevada Mountain Ecohydrology Lab is based in the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources, said. “For example, in the Sierra and Lake Tahoe you may see a yearly pattern of humid air masses moving over the region, so plans should be made with these regional patterns in mind.

“As we reach a tipping point and see our customary water storage system, the snowpack, melting more and earlier in the winter, systems that rely on snowmelt will need to be reevaluated and modified. It means that trends and patterns in humidity will be very important to the future of snowpack,” Harpold said.

Mike Wolterbeek works for UNR.