4 chaplains join DCSO’s ranks

The Douglas County Sheriff’s Office recently acquired four new law enforcement chaplains.

The chaplains are civilian volunteers; faith based religious leaders in the community. The chaplains completed 60 hours of training in protocols and procedures in chaplaincy, along with DCSO procedures. The chaplains increased the group size from two to six. They are Bill Henderson, Eddy Sims, Frank Russell and Luke Wartgow.

Each law enforcement agency utilizes chaplains differently. In Douglas County they assist deputies with tasks such as death notifications, and emotional support for those affected by crime and tragedy. They serve without religious affiliation, provide encouragement and resources.

Delayed start to rafting on Truckee River

By Paul Nelson, KTVN-TV

Truckee River Rafting tries to open for the summer months on Memorial Day, but it had to wait a few extra weeks this year. River flows have to be at least 200 cubic feet per second for the company to open and that did not happen until last Thursday, after the federal water master increased water releases at the Tahoe City Dam to 220 cfs.

“The runoff has slowed down, so they’re going to need to release water from Lake Tahoe to supply places like Reno and the surrounding area," Parker Bell, manager of Truckee River Rafting, said.

The melting snow kept the Truckee River above the legal minimum flows downstream.

Read the whole story

Surf Air in Truckee faces lawsuit, tax liens

By Hugo Martin, Los Angeles Times

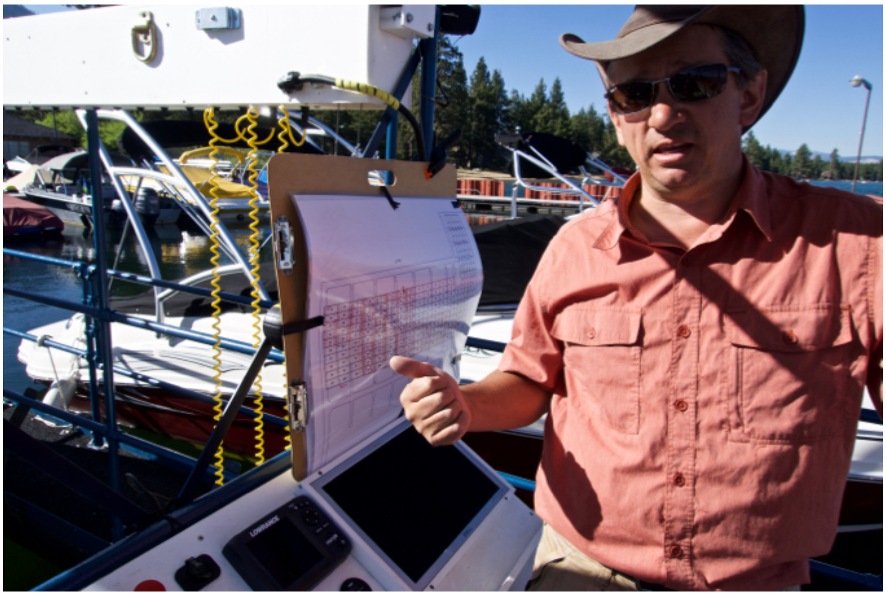
To hear Sudhin Shahani explain the latest turbulence at Surf Air, you would get the impression that all is well with the all-you-can-fly membership airline.

But the chairman and chief executive of Santa Monica-based Surf Air, which operates in Truckee, can't completely dismiss the sense that something is amiss at the 5-year-old carrier.

The trouble came to a head last week, when Encompass Aviation, which has operated Surf Air's planes in California since 2017, filed a lawsuit claiming that Surf Air is financially distressed and owes Encompass $3.1 million for its services.

Read the whole story

TRPA, boat builders collaborate on designs for AIS



John Paoluccio is confident in his creation to rid invasive plants with UVC light. Photo/LTN file

By Dennis Zabaglo

Ten years ago, when a new threat to Lake Tahoe from invasive species emerged, TRPA stepped up to tackle the challenge.

That challenge, now known throughout the West, was to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species, especially quagga mussels. TRPA took the initiative to lead the collaborative partnership to fight invasive species, which is now a national model of success.

Beyond local partnerships, TRPA has expanded relationships at the national level, seeking new methods to prevent a quagga mussel introduction and to prevent and control other species.

TRPA works with the boat industry to develop new components and encourage new thinking when it comes to designing and building boats. For instance, Wake Worx LLC of Florida has developed a filter in collaboration with TRPA, UNR and others. The filter is designed to prevent quagga mussel juveniles and other species from entering ballast tanks on wakeboard boats. Due to the large amount of water that these tanks can hold, invasives could easily be transported to another water body. This innovative filter significantly reduces the risk of transport.

Also helping to prevent the spread is Volvo Penta, which manufacturers boat engines. Starting with model year 2017, stern-drive engines come outfitted with a hose quick-connect designed to simplify and increase effectiveness of hot water decontaminations. The boat industry is embracing work to combat invasives and is committed to partnering with TRPA and others to find new solutions.

To help control invasive species already in the lake, a new technique is in the testing phase. Inventive Resources, Inc. from the Central Valley of California, has invented a method using ultraviolet light to help control aquatic invasive plants. “When I hear ‘it will never work,’ it kicks me into high gear, and makes me even more passionate about using innovation to solve problems. Everything can be improved upon,” said John Paoluccio, owner of Inventive Resources Inc. The project, overseen by the Tahoe Resource Conservation District, is showing promising initial results, and the partnership is eager to continue the pilot project with post-monitoring in 2018.

Another new method, called laminar flow aeration, will be tested at two locations with the most dense and complicated aquatic invasive plant infestations at the lake—Ski Run Marina and the Tahoe Keys. Laminar flow aeration injects millions of tiny air bubbles from the bottom to the lake surface, producing constant, parallel layers of flow, with no cloudiness between the layers. The resulting oxygen-rich environment enhances the consumption of the organic layer at the bottom, which plants use for food. If there is less food, then it becomes less likely the plants will survive.

Plants are not the only invasives needing to be controlled. The invasive Asian clam is also a problem at Lake Tahoe. Rubber barriers can kill these unwanted creatures, but the process leaves behind dead shells that are a nuisance. The decomposing shells are visually unappealing and may also add concentrated levels of calcium that make areas of the lake more suitable for other potential invaders like quagga mussels. Here too the private sector is seeking solutions. Aqua Treasures, LLC of Canada has developed equipment that will harvest the clams from the lake bed. Additional development on this invention is still needed, but plans are in the works to test the equipment this fall at Lake Tahoe.

As the adage goes, "you can't build a house with a hammer alone," but with continued investment in innovation, the Lake Tahoe Aquatic Invasive Species Program will have the tools to continue the success of the past 10 years.

*Dennis Zabaglo is Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's aquatic resources program manager. This article is republished from the **summer 2018 Tahoe In Depth**.*

Opinion: Calif. can't sidestep federal tax impact

By Dan Walters, CALmatters

When President Trump signed an overhaul of the federal tax system six months ago, there was much complaining from politicians in California, New York and other high-taxing – and politically blue – states.

They particularly disliked a new $10,000 limit on deductability of state and local taxes because it would make their taxpayers, particularly the most affluent, feel the full financial effects of high state taxes.


Dan Walters

We’re back to where we started when the federal tax law was changed, with upper-middle class and high-income Californians, those paying more than $10,000 in previously deductible state income and local property taxes, facing higher federal tax bills.

They feared that those highly impacted taxpayers would find ways to reduce or eliminate their state tax liabilities since they could no longer write them off on federal tax returns, and that would cut into state revenue streams.

The potential impact would be especially heavy in California because of the state’s lopsided dependence on its highest-income residents. The top 1 percent of California taxpayers account for nearly half of the state’s income tax revenues and therefore about a third of its general fund budget.

Gov. Jerry Brown even worried aloud that faced with much-higher tax burdens, the state’s wealthy would be tempted to move their official residences to low- or no-tax states such as neighboring Nevada.

California politicians saw it as a sneak attack by Republicans on blue states and vowed to counter it with some clever bookkeeping.

While deductibility of state and local taxes was being severely curtailed, they said, the tax overhaul left charitable contributions untouched so they could give taxpayers an option of making tax-deductible donations to the state in lieu of taxes.

We haven't heard much about that scheme of late, for good reason. Last month, the Internal Revenue Service issued a warning that "federal law controls the characterization of the payments for federal income tax purposes regardless of the characterization of the payments under state law."

Implicitly, in other words, were California or any other state to attempt the charitable contribution ploy, taxpayers who used it would be in danger not only of having their deductions denied, but of being slapped with penalties for trying it.

Call it a political checkmate.

So we're back to where we started when the federal tax law was changed, with upper-middle class and high-income Californians, those paying more than $10,000 in previously deductible state income and local property taxes, facing higher federal tax bills.

And that means we're back to wondering whether a significant number of affluent Californians will feel moved to move.

Earlier this month, the Wall Street Journal reported that real estate professionals are seeing an uptick in inquiries from high-income clients about moving from high-tax states such as California and New York to those with low- or no income taxes, such as Florida and Nevada.

David Hutchinson, who developed the Clear Greek golf community on the Nevada side of Lake Tahoe, told the Journal, “Most of our lot sales are to buyers from California, the vast majority of whom intend to make them a permanent residence.”

Someone earning $3 million a year could move his or her personal domicile from San Francisco to Tahoe, Hutchinson said, and save $399,000 a year in taxes, adding, “That’s a lot of money to spend on real estate.”

Anecdotal stories about tax refugees abound, and in fact, I could cite several well-to-do retirees among my circle of acquaintances who’ve relocated from Sacramento to the Reno area for tax reasons.

So it’s happening, but whether the tax relocations remain just anecdotes or develop into a green wave won’t be known until after those higher taxes come due next year.

Dan Walters is a columnist at CALmatters.

Feds: Americans conserving water like never before

By Christopher Ingraham, Washington Post

Americans are conserving water in their homes like never before, according to a U.S. Geological Survey report released this month.

In per capita terms, domestic water use has plummeted from 112 gallons per day in 1980 to just 82 gallons in 2015, a 27 percent decrease. Take 30 gallon-sized milk jugs, fill them up with water and set them aside — that’s how much water you’re saving, every day, relative to the average American in 1980.

For a typical family of four that means about a half-ton of water saved, or eight cubic feet, every single day relative to 1980.

For the purposes of the USGS data, domestic water use encompasses everything we do with water at home.

Read the whole story

Union fees struck down, delivering blow to Calif. labor

By Adam Ashton and Emily Cadei, Sacramento Bee

California’s pubic employee unions were handed a serious blow in a Supreme Court ruling Wednesday that forbids them from collecting fees from workers who benefit from their representation but do not want to join them.

In a 5 to 4 ruling, the court determined that public sector unions’ so-called “fair share” fees violate “the free speech rights of nonmembers by compelling them to subsidize private speech on matters of substantial public concern.”

The decision in Janus vs. AFSCME effectively makes California a “right to work” state, ending a 41-year precedent that allowed public sector unions to levy so-called fair share fees on workers who don’t belong to labor organizations.

Read the whole story

N.Y. expected to overtake Nev. as top U.S. sports betting market

By Mick Akers, Las Vegas Sun

The Supreme Court's recent overturning of a federal ban on sports betting could clear the path for New York to become the largest U.S. sports wagering market.

By 2023, New York is projected to rake in $700 million annually from sports bets, according to projections by GamblingCompliance, an independent service that monitors gambling legislation.

2023 annual revenues in New Jersey and Pennsylvania are also projected to surpass those of Nevada, estimated at about $300 million. In 2017, Nevada notched a record $248 million in sports wagers.

Read the whole story

Man who impersonated police at Tahoe sentenced

By Associated Press

A man who authorities say claimed to be a police officer and pointed a gun during a road rage encounter near Lake Tahoe has been sentenced to up to four years in prison.

Jared Kaiser, 33, was sentenced Monday after pleading guilty in April to assault with a deadly weapon.

Read the whole story

Cyclist killed in SLT by hit-and-run driver

A 33-year-old South Lake Tahoe bicyclist was killed early Wednesday morning by a hit-and-run driver.

The man, whose name has not been released, was found by construction workers in the early morning of June 27 when they arrived to work. He was already deceased.

This was on Highway 50 eastbound, west of the Upper Truckee River.

According to the California Highway Patrol, it appears the cyclist was going south across the eastbound lanes when he was struck by the frontend of an unknown vehicle.

Anyone with information is asked to the CHP at 530.577.1001.

— Lake Tahoe News staff report