

Wildfires stressed Wine Country's healthcare system

By Soumya Karlamangla, Los Angeles Times

Dr. Scott Witt kept close behind the ambulance carrying the newborns. On his motorcycle, he drove over and ducked under downed power lines. He swerved around embers blowing onto the highway.

Sutter Santa Rosa Regional Hospital, where Witt oversees the neonatal intensive care unit, was being evacuated Oct. 9 because of wildfires that would become the deadliest in California history.

But Witt couldn't call the doctors who would be caring for the babies because there was no power. The physicians at the other hospital also had no way of accessing Witt's medical records online to know what treatment was needed.

The Northern California wildfires created what some described as an unprecedented healthcare crisis that has served as a wake-up call in the region. Not only were two major hospitals evacuated hours into the disaster, but the chaos continued for days after.

[Read the whole story](#)

Nev. utility regulators

investigating ballot measure

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY — State utility regulators are investigating “issues of public importance” regarding the pending Energy Choice Initiative that will be on the November 2018 ballot.

If approved by voters, Nevada’s energy industry will be restructured to allow consumers to pick their electricity supplier.

The investigation by the Public Utilities Commission was initiated following a request by the Governor’s Committee on Energy Choice, which is also reviewing the potential effects of Question 3, should it win approval. The amendment to the state constitution passed in 2016 with strong support.

Read the whole story

Snow may impact travel in Tahoe basin

The National Weather Service has issued a winter weather advisory from Thursday night through noon Oct. 20 for the higher elevations of the Sierra mountains.

Snow accumulations may occur on Interstate 80 over Donner Pass and on Highway 50 over Echo Summit, with chain controls possible after midnight Thursday. Gusty winds may also reduce visibility.

Caltrans is reminding motorists that wet and slippery roadways

reduce tire traction, especially at high vehicle speeds. Hydroplaning can result in loss of driver control.

Barton's management team grows



Preston Becker

Barton Health has added a chief operating officer to its management team, a first for the South Lake Tahoe-based health care organization.

"We have added the position of COO to our executive team in order to ensure that the operations across all the clinical departments are consistent. As Barton continues to expand access to additional services and our operations become more complex, our new COO will enable us to ensure consistently exceptional care to our patients," CEO Clint Purvance told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Preston Becker, who most recently was CEO of Carson Valley Medical Center in Gardnerville, has been hired as the COO.

While Barton would not release what Becker's salary is, it is assuredly well into the six figures. IRS documents for Barton from 2015, the most recent available, show the CEO making

\$672,044 a year and the CFO salary being \$340,070. Their benefits packages are each worth in excess of \$30,000.

Asked who was essentially doing the job before Becker came on board, Elizabeth Stork, director of Human Resources, said, "This is a new position that aligns patient care, services, and office operations. Some duties and responsibilities now within the C00 position were previously shared between the executive team and managers."

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Locals power LTCC soccer teams to national rankings

By Jim Krajewski, Reno Gazette-Journal

Lake Tahoe Community College has become a soccer powerhouse, thanks to several former local high school standouts.

After 14 years without sports, Lake Tahoe CC brought athletics back in 2014 and is having one of its best seasons in memory, for both the men's and women's soccer teams.

Coach Jeremy Evans has helped the Lake Tahoe CC women's soccer team to a No. 11 national ranking in the NSCAA poll and first place in the Golden Valley Conference. And Lake Tahoe CC men's coach Nick Arbelaez also has his team in the national rankings, at No. 12, and also in first place in the Golden Valley Conference.

Read the whole story

Leads sought in EDC logger's 2015 disappearance

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

Charles Thompson, a long-time El Dorado County resident and logger, left his family home with an unidentified woman on Oct. 2, 2015, and his family has not heard from him since.

The El Dorado County District Attorney's Office this week issued a news release and video seeking the public's help in developing new leads in the cold case.

Thompson lived more than 40 years in the Fair Play area, where his family owned a large ranch. He attended local schools and worked for many years as a logger, according to the news release.

Read the whole story

Pumpkin race to benefit Tahoe Expedition Academy

Tahoe Expedition Academy's inaugural Great Truckee Pumpkin Race is Oct. 27 from 4-5:30pm in downtown Truckee at the junction of High and Jibboom streets.

This outdoor event involves competing pumpkin race "cars." This is a child, teen, parent, and grandparent event where you

build a pumpkin car (according to the rules), decorate it, and let it go down an inclined race course.

There will be cheater pumpkins. They will be smashed by the referee's giant mallet.

Winners of each heat advance to the quarterfinals and championship. A grand prize of \$500 will be awarded to the winning pumpkin along with trophies for the top three races, the most outrageous pumpkin and the pumpkin with the best costume. A corporate division will also be available for local businesses to compete against each other.

Race entry will cost \$15 in advance and \$20 that day. Register **online**.

Magical night to raise funds for TY&FS

Tahoe Youth & Family Services' 2nd annual Night of Magic at The Loft in Heavenly Village will be Nov. 8 at 7pm.

Tickets are \$55. Text 'MAGIC2017' to 91-999, go **online** or stop by the agency's South Lake Tahoe office at 1021 Fremont Ave. A limited number of tickets are available.

Tahoe Youth & Family Services has expanded to serve Alpine and Douglas counties. The nonprofit's mission is: "To promote the healthy development of children, families, and individuals through counseling, mentoring, and support programs."

Road Beat: Bludgeoning of your right to choose

By Larry Weitzman

One aspect of being an American is the right to choose and that right is in serious jeopardy. In other parts of the world, there is no protection from government intervention in your life as provided by the United States Constitution which limits and delineates the power of government. No other country in the world has these protections as evidenced by recent edicts, mandates and fiats issued by the governments of China, Norway, Netherlands, France, Britain and soon by Germany. Within the next eight-23 years, it is those governments' intention to ban the sale of cars with internal combustion engines, which has been the motive force of over 99 percent of all automobiles since about 1910.



Larry Weitzman

But you had to know some knucklehead, pandering and controlling legislator would soon follow suit in California. And it is in the form of a left wing assemblyman named Phil Ting, from of all places, San Francisco. It is the same guy who tried to subsidize Tesla in his recent Assembly Bill 1184, which we can thank the heavens for its demise in the California Senate. It was essentially a \$3 billion giveaway to

rich people that would pay to each buyer of a Tesla about \$25,000-\$30,000 in the form of a rebate, no matter their income. Great, the average annual income of Tesla buyer is \$320K. A \$3 billion wealth transfer from the poor and middle class to the rich (former President Barack Obama said anyone making more than \$250K annually is rich).

Democrat Ting said on Sep. 29 that he vowed to introduce legislation that would ban the sales of new cars with internal combustion engines by 2040, saying, "California is used to being first, but we are trying to catch up to this." This is like being first to jump off a high cliff. Sometimes it is better to be last or in this case maybe never or at least not until a safe way down is developed. When government gets involved in dictating to the private sector of what to manufacture, it by classic definition called fascism. Look it up, instead, I'll save you the trouble: Fascism /'fæʃɪzəm/ is a form of radical authoritarian nationalism, characterized by dictatorial power, forcible suppression of opposition, and control of industry and commerce, that came to prominence in early 20th-century Europe. Does this definition make Ting a fascist?

If EVs were so great and demanded by the public, there would be plenty of different models from many different manufacturers for sale. That is how the free market works. But there aren't. What EVs that are for sale are because of government edicts and regulations. They simply don't sell. Even Tesla, who brought to market the Model 3, is having claimed problems in production, building only 260 cars between July and September when it said it would build more than 1,500 cars for the same period and be producing 5,000 cars a week by the end of this year. Model 3 is a losing proposition. You can't lose money on every car you sell and make it up in volume. The Model S is proof of that as they are losing about \$15,000 on every Model S they sell. Just look at their financial statements. Teslas total loses even with government

subsidies for the last five years now total \$2.4 Billion through the second quarter of 2017. Third quarter losses have been projected to grow by about another \$330 million.

Perhaps the intended purpose of Ting is to take away the public's freedom of personal transportation and the freedom of travel. EVs have limited ranges and their refueling time is long and arduous. So even if their range is 200 miles, your radius of operation is about 100 miles. Yes, there are such things as superchargers which can give you an alleged 80 percent in half an hour, but battery life becomes questionable and who wants to stop two times for half an hour or more when going from Placerville to Los Angeles. I have made that trip several times in a conventional car and it is nonstop with absolutely no range anxiety. And refueling takes just three minutes or less. EVs will severely limit our mobility.

Second is the cost of EVs. Sure, Chevy sells a \$36,000 Bolt, but it costs them a reported \$52,000 a copy to manufacture. A base Tesla Model 3 will cost about the same to manufacture. The real sales price of a car costing \$50,000 to build should be at least \$75,000 to make any profit considering general and administrative expenses. In fact, the usual rule of thumb is to double the manufacturing costs. How many people can afford even a \$50,000 car? The average compact car sells for about \$20,000 and returns 35-40 mpg. Compact CUVs sell for about the same transaction price up to about \$25,000. And manufacturers still make a small profit, while making huge profits on \$40,000 to \$50,000 trucks as they don't cost that much more to build.

EVs face several problems before public acceptance and with all the hype about EVs, the public isn't buying them as they are less than one percent of the total market even with huge subsidies and sales are not increasing. If there were no government subsidies, as in Hong Kong, where subsidies were slashed to zero recently, sales followed suit. EVs are at least double the cost of conventional cars, if not more.

Secondly batteries have limited range and huge refueling issues. Gasoline has about 100 times the energy density of batteries and an amazingly simple refueling process. But because of engine efficiency differences, the I/C energy advantage is about 25 to 0ne. The energy cost per mile for EVs is about the same for a conventional compact car. No benefit for EVs there, as well.

And while “they” claim there is progress being made in EV technology, there has been little progress with battery chemistry, not progressing at all over the last decade. However, technology progress with conventional cars has been amazing with huge improvements in both performance and fuel economy. Interesting of how reality works. And I/C technology is still improving with the recent accomplishment of the compression ignition gasoline engine by Mazda which is slated for production next year (2019) with claimed fuel economy improvements of 20-30 percent. Nissan is about to produce the first variable compression engine with similar claims. Yet battery technology remains the same and electric motors haven’t changed significantly in 100 years. Yet we are going to ban the progress of I/C technology to become Luddites of the early 20th century, when EVs ruled personal transportation. Brilliant.

The reasoning for Luddites like Phil Ting is to save us from nonexistent or insignificant global warming. That’s why environmentalists resemble watermelons as they are green on the outside and red on the inside. The whole environmental movement is nothing more than a socialist movement as the solutions are bigger government, more laws and regulations, more taxes, less choice and freedom. I wrote 20 years ago with respect to the original Kyoto Accords environmental agreement that it had nothing to do with the environment and everything to do with politics, namely socialism. EVs are only the first salvo of your limitation of rights and freedoms, next will be the size and/or location of your home, the food you eat and/or

the clothes you wear. It's coming.

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.

Residents unload VHR frustrations on EDC supes

By Susan Wood

It was like a back-to-the-future flashback on vacation home rentals at Lake Tahoe. Only this time, it was El Dorado County fielding the brunt of fiery opinions – not the city.

On the same day South Lake Tahoe officials hashed out rules on vacation home rentals within their boundaries, El Dorado County supervisors met Tuesday on city turf to open the door to dialogue on the nagging issue. The topic brought out about 30 people for the supervisors' annual gathering at the lake.

Speaker after speaker on Oct. 17 lined up to express their opinions. Most were disgruntled residents. Others were property managers defending the practice that has turned into an economic gain for homeowners and the jurisdiction.



El Dorado County Board of Supervisors on Oct. 17 get an earful about vacation rentals. Photo/Susan Wood

Suggestions differed. But many agreed the process needs expanded law enforcement and to be taken out of the county tax collector's office. Department head C.L. Raffety gave an informational presentation at the urging of Tahoe Supervisor Sue Novasel.

When all was said and done, the county committee of Novasel and Supervisor Michael Ranalli that was formed Sept. 12 agreed to host community meetings in the next few weeks. Novasel wants to bring stakeholders together in the same room in order to revisit the existing ordinance.

"We need better enforcement," said Novasel.

Within the county jurisdiction of the Lake Tahoe Basin, the tax collector's office reported 575 vacation home rentals in 2015. It has grown to 876 in a few years. Those are just the ones the county knows about. It monitors 15 VHR websites to check for homes listed without a permit. The process takes precious man hours – more than what Raffety's staff can handle.

"We are moving into a shared community. It's an ongoing problem everywhere," Novasel said.

With the growth of the shared-home industry comes investigations of wrongdoing spun out of complaints that

involve an overburdened county sheriff's department. The county has opened 128 investigations this year. Violations numbered 129 in 2015 and 59 a year ago as the permitting process was being addressed.

"It's been incredibly difficult to watch the (city's) process knowing the tsunami is coming our way," Novasel said, adding "an overhaul" of the county's rules is necessary.

El Dorado County's current ordinance mandates two people per bedroom plus four additional visitors per residence; prohibits spa use between 10pm and 8am; dictates when trash can be taken to the curb; regulates the posting of the permit; demands a local contact person within a one-hour's drive from the rental; restricts parking to only the driveway; and requires noise kept to a level not deemed "excessive."

Violators may get a warning on a first offense, but will be fined \$250 on the second. The third complaint may lead to a \$1,000 fine and finally a fourth could result in the permit being revoked.

A citizen's group called the Peaceful Tahoe Coalition formed because neighbors of the vacation home rentals got fed up by outrageous behavior by some visitors.

Among the demands, John Adamski outlined a few suggestions including a cap on the number of units, tighter restrictions and more "teeth" in enforcing the law.

Adamski shared a concern observing the city still doesn't have a final ordinance.

"I don't want to see that happen with the county," he said.

Time is of the essence for some residents.



County residents tell elected officials what they think of VHRs. Photo/Susan Wood

“We’re being terrorized in our neighborhoods,” Carrie Williams told the board. She described a disruptive street in which she lives where one neighbor’s dog was killed “on leash” by a vehicle racing down the road.

In another instance, gun shots were fired into the night.

And yet another, 30 visitors showed up to rent a two-bedroom home.

“This has gotten out of control,” Williams said.

Ed Miller of the Meeks Bay Fire Protection District said he wants more order.

“It’s a quality of life issue,” he said.

Miller shared a story of disrespect when renters on his street blocked plows, prompting the driver to return to no avail

because vehicles were still blocking the road.

"The entire neighborhood didn't get plowed," he said.

Miller would like to see the "Good Neighbor" brochure the county uses to say more than South Lake Tahoe. The county seems to have ignored its reach goes to the West Shore.

A 55-year resident on the South Shore, Janet McDougall told the board it should take the ordinance out of the tax collector's office because it's a zoning issue.

"This is a serious problem," the former South Lake Tahoe legal analyst said. "This is completely inappropriate from a land-use perspective."

She also lamented over the practice pitting residents against visitors.

Leona Allen added to the list of unlawful observations. These incidents range from strewn trash to strippers showing up to perform lewd acts to urinating in public to cigarettes tossed off decks. Extinguishing the latter is critical to Allen considering her involvement with the Lake Valley Fire Protection District.

"Vacation home rentals aren't going anywhere. I get that. But neither are we," she said.

Allen insisted the county set up a community service division within the sheriff's department to enforce the new rules.

"Something's gotta change," Rick Mapes said with a sigh.

Mapes runs a snow removal company and must get up at 4am to conduct his business – a difficult task when neighbors are partying and creating a ruckus into the night.

His wife, Jamie Mapes, attended several community meetings over a decade ago when the city was undergoing the formation

of its ordinance.

Still, property managers got up to voice their support of the industry, careful not to condone the types of behavior mentioned. Those who spoke appeared to genuinely care about being a part of the solution.

Kathy Jo Liebhardt not only runs Tahoe Destinations, she owns a vacation home and is “saddened to hear” the stories.

She cautioned the county on placing a limit on the number of them.

“Capping is not going to do anything,” she said.

In the meantime, her rules are strict and non-negotiable.

“I have no problem fining and evicting,” Liebhardt said, adding she is “not going to put up with that crap.”

Another property manager, Josh Priou admitted to feeling sheepish about even stepping up to the podium.

“I feel like crap after hearing everybody’s horror stories,” he said.

Nonetheless, he reminded the crowd renting homes is still considered residential use, not commercial.

The tourism industry drives Lake Tahoe.

“Lake Tahoe is a huge vacation rental destination,” he said.

Priou has been involved in the tourism industry for 24 years – half of that time renting homes in the marketplace. He likes “to provide an experience to the visitor.”

Shaken by the homeowners’ stories of unruly vacation home renters, Ranalli turned to county Counsel Michael Ciccozzi asking if the board may place a moratorium on permitting new rentals until the county figures out its changes to the

ordinance.

"I'm bothered," Ranalli said.

Ultimately, the board shied away from the suggestion but agreed to move on the matter sooner rather than later.

With that, Raffety will host a public meeting Nov. 1 at 2pm in the South Lake Tahoe Library at 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd. to review the vacation home rental policy.

In other action, the Board of Supervisors:

- Heard an economic report on the impact of e-commerce on brick and mortar retail space and how it relates to land-use planning. Chief Administrative Officer Don Ashton requested two outside economic advisors provide the study that highlighted the need for the county to accommodate such a shift.

- Watched a presentation from a land-use planning team providing a glimpse into the county's Economic Development plan with a new website campaign coined "Elevate to El Dorado, a great place to live, work and play." The \$14,000 campaign is intended to coincide with the county's strategic plan.

- Observed a silent protest from the El Dorado County Public Employees union as almost a dozen members sitting a short time in the audience came with signs reading "Fair Contract Now" and "Negotiate."