

Confusing Camp Rich light here to stay

Caltrans has received several complaints about the pedestrian hybrid beacon installed at Camp Richardson on Highway 89. The perception has been that the beacon is causing major weekend backups.

The beacon will remain active this weekend and until further notice.

Caltrans conducted a two-day study on July 21-22 and determined the beacon isn't a major contributing factor to the weekend traffic backups. The state agency said once the limited beach parking fills up motorists are driving at slow speeds looking for shoulder parking along the highway, impeding the free flow of traffic.

But this isn't anything new during the summer. Locals would say it takes more than a two-day study. Traffic since the light went in has been worse, and the color scheme and blinking don't make sense.

Caltrans said it realizes motorists may be confused when experiencing the beacon for the first time. This is a relatively new pedestrian safety feature on California highways and the first of its kind installed in Lake Tahoe.

The beacon head consists of two red lenses above a single yellow lens. The beacon head is "dark" until a pedestrian desires to cross the street. There is no green light which people are used to.

A group of local agencies is working on short- and long-term remedies to speed the flow of traffic. In the mean time, people are stuck with the confusing beacon.

EDC DA to talk about sanctuary city bill

El Dorado County District Attorney Vern Pierson will discuss his position on Sanctuary Jurisdiction for Cities, aka Senate Bill 54, on Sept. 11 at 6:30pm.

He will be the guest speaker at the El Dorado County Republican Central Committee meeting. It begins at 6:30pm at Park Community Church, 3901 Wild Chaparral Drive in Shingle Springs.

Pierson, who opposes SB54 presented, has presented his case before the California Assembly Judicial Committee.

The RCC wants the Board of Supervisors to adopt a resolution declaring that El Dorado County will comply with federal immigration law.

Other issues to be discussed, include propositions 47 and 66.

Letter: Liberty takes turn at Bread & Broth

To the community,

“Here at Liberty, one of our core values is community. We are

all part of this community and enjoy participating by giving back whenever we can.” This was the collaborative comment given by the sponsor crew members from the Adopt A Day of Nourishment host Liberty Utilities at the sponsorship dinner on Aug. 21.

Representing Liberty Utilities were team members Theresa Faegre, James Martin and Kelsey Zieba who had a fun time serving the solar eclipse themed dinner proved by Bread & Broth’s creative and talented cooks.

Taking advantage of the excitement of the Monday solar event, the B&B Monday Meal menu featured eclipse chicken, half moon salad, cosmic fruit salad, lunar luscious zucchini, galaxy garlic bread and out of this world desserts. In addition to staffing the serving line, the Liberty crew helped with bagging fruits, vegetables, dairy products, canned goods and bread and pastries for the food giveaway bags and ending their evening with the meal’s cleanup.

It is always a treat to have a sponsor crew that is excited and happy about donating their time and effort to help their neighbors who struggle with hunger. Through Liberty Utilities’ donation of \$250 to help cover the costs of their sponsorship dinner, B&B was able to welcome and feed over 100 community members full-course and nutritious meal. Kudos to Liberty Utilities and their incredible volunteer crew for their commitment to their community.

To partner with B&B as a donor or sponsor, contact me at 530.542.2876 or carolsgerard@aol.com.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Radio trouble keeps Calstar from flying in Tahoe



Airbus is working to solve the radio problem with Calstar in Tahoe. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

By Kathryn Reed

Calstar's helicopter at Lake Tahoe Airport has been grounded for more than two weeks and there is no date on the horizon when it will be flying again.

"We are unable to efficiently and effectively communicate in that region because of the radios. We won't fly without good communications," Anna Blair, vice president of business strategy for Calstar, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "It is very specific to the radio frequency that is utilized in your community."

No other base is affected by this radio issue.

Air Medical Group, which is now the parent company of Calstar, has 240 air ambulance in 32 states. Calstar has bases in Auburn, Ukiah, Gilroy, Concord, Salinas and Santa Maria. It has been in South Lake Tahoe since October 2001.

Since the merger last year Calstar now uses an Airbus H135/P3. Airbus is working on a solution to the radio problem.

"They are literally working every single day until we are back in service. Typically, they are a very responsive vendor," Blair said.

It was not an immediate issue, but something that developed over time.

In the interim Care Flight has been picking up the slack. It operates out of the Truckee and Minden airports and is based in Reno.

"It's not uncommon to rely on each other for service when things are busy. We haven't experienced anything where we've left the region uncovered," J.W. Hodge, COO for Care Flight, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

His people and Calstar are in regular communication. Care Flight has not needed to adjust its staffing or move resources to accommodate the increase in calls with Calstar's absence.

The air ambulances cover for each other during routine maintenance of the aircraft and when one is on a call. So in many ways this is no different for the crews.

Plus, the number of calls tends to decrease when school is back in session and even more so after Labor Day weekend.

Not being able to fly hasn't meant the local Calstar employees are out of work.

“For the staff, there is still a lot of items to do – training, collateral duties. We do have other Calstar bases and they do move around,” Blair said.

For South Lake Tahoe Fire Department, Calstar’s situation has not caused any problems to date.

“Generally we give the helicopter a heads up before we think we need them. When we’ve needed the helicopter the other company has been here,” Fire Chief Jeff Meston told *Lake Tahoe News*.

One thing to note is that when Calstar was bought last year the reciprocal membership agreement with Care Flight went away. This means it’s a good idea to have both memberships because one never knows which helicopter will arrive on scene. The membership is like an additional insurance policy.

Opinion: Explaining electric rates

By Paulette Sproul

Liberty Utilities wants to help customers understand the often complex and confusing world of electric rates and billing statements, and have developed several documents to do just that.

Customers continually tell us that they don’t fully understand how electric rates are determined and specifically how they can read their bills. We want to explain this as fully and transparently as possible to our customers, so we developed several tools to help with this.

Electric rates explained: This four-page document answers basic questions like: How are rates determined? What is my rate class? How do I know what rate class I'm in? How am I charged? How is my bill calculated? The information is presented in a color-coded format, and includes a breakdown of the specific charges for the four major customer classes.

Sample bills with glossary of terms: Liberty Utilities has also prepared a sample bill for residential, budget payment, small commercial, medium commercial and large commercial customers with an associated glossary of terms. Customers can reference the numbered item on the sample bill to the corresponding definition in the glossary of terms.

All documents are available **online**. Simply click on the "my account" link at the top and scroll down to the "understanding my bill" section. Customers can download and print at home or visit any local Liberty Utilities office for a printed copy. Customers are also encouraged to call the local customer care number, 800-782-2506, with any questions about their bills.

While we hope these documents will help customers understand their bills better, we hope they will call our local customer care representative if they ever have any questions.

Also, beginning Sept. 5, the South Lake Tahoe and Tahoe Vista Liberty offices will open one hour earlier; regular office hours will be 8am-5pm Monday through Friday.

Paulette Sproul is Liberty Utilities' director of customer care.

Air quality warning for Placer County

The Placer County Public Health Officer and Placer County Air Pollution Control Officer are issuing a joint air quality advisory to notify the public of the potential of poor air quality conditions due to multiple fires occurring throughout the state, as well as the continued excessive heat. This advisory will be active Sept. 1-4.

Smoke may affect portions of Placer County from the Sacramento Valley up into the Lake Tahoe area, dependent upon wind direction, until the fires are extinguished. In the evenings, smoke tends to move downhill becoming more concentrated in lower elevation areas including western Placer County, the foothills and the valley regions of Lake Tahoe.

In the afternoon and early evening hours, conditions may improve as smoke rises.

Smoke contains very tiny particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs. While all people may experience varying degrees of symptoms, the more sensitive individuals, such as young, aged and those with respiratory conditions, are of greatest risk of experiencing more aggravated symptoms. Symptoms may include, but are not limited to, coughing, watery and itchy eyes, scratchy throat and difficulty in breathing.

If you can see or smell smoke, avoid all unnecessary outdoor activities, especially if you are in an area where visibility is greatly reduced.

Calif. offering free fishing day on Saturday

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is waiving fishing fees on Sept. 2.

People may fish Saturday without having to buy a sport-fishing license. This is an opportunity for licensed anglers to introduce non-angling friends and children to fishing and the outdoors.

All fishing regulations, such as bag and size limits, gear restrictions, report card requirements and fishing hours and stream closures, remain in effect. Every angler must have an appropriate report card if they are fishing for steelhead, sturgeon, spiny lobster or abalone anywhere in the state, or for salmon on the Smith River.

CDFW reminds anglers that recreational salmon fishing in the Klamath-Trinity river system remains closed this season due to very low predicted adult returns.

Rash of car burglaries in Stateline

Since Aug. 24 there have been 13 attempted burglaries in the Stateline area.

The Lower Kingsbury area is being hit hardest; mostly unlocked vehicles.

The suspects work after dark targeting vehicles parked in

driveways and on the street. All the vehicles that were involved were left unlocked. The losses include cash, wallets, an iPad and checkbook.

One witness reported seeing on a surveillance recording a white male 5-feet-10, wearing shorts, a T-shirt, and a baseball cap, carrying a backpack who was trying to open a car door.

People are asked to call 775.782.5126 or 911 if they see someone suspicious.

Locking doors is the best deterrent.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

\$4B water, parks bond may be before Calif. voters

By Angela Hart, Sacramento Bee

As torrential rains and dangerous flood waters pummel large swaths of Texas and parts of Louisiana, California lawmakers are eying legislation to prevent similar damage from from the state's own disasters.

Senate Bill 5 from state Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de León would ask voters this upcoming June to approve a \$4 billion bond to fund water, flood and parks projects across California.

To make it to the governor's desk, it would need to clear the Assembly, where another water and open space bond from from Assemblyman Eduardo Garcia, D-Coachella, is under debate.

Read the whole story

Pot in the workplace subject of workshop

Recent changes to state laws in California and Nevada legalizing the recreational use of cannabis have led to confusion among employers. One key question is whether employers are required to accommodate an employee's use or possession of cannabis at the workplace.

What should an employer do, for instance, if a new employee tests positive for cannabis? These issues and more will be addressed at a Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce workshop on Sept. 20, noon-1:30pm at the Stateline office.

This workshop is designed to enable employers to properly handle recreational cannabis in the workplace. MOBO Law will facilitate this workshop.

Be sure you bring your own "brown-bag" lunch.

Cost is \$10 for members, \$20 for others.