

More Nev. kids have health insurance, but state 9th worst

By Jessie Bekker, Las Vegas Review-Journal

The number of children in Nevada without health insurance was cut by more than half between 2011 and 2016, but the state's rate of uninsured kids remains the ninth-highest in the U.S., according to a report.

The gains in insurance coverage occurred after passage of the Affordable Care Act in 2010 and Nevada's subsequent expansion of the federal Medicaid program, said Elizabeth Lukanen, deputy director of the State Health Access Data Assistance Center. The policy research center based at the University of Minnesota released the report Friday.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Alessi's resignation a welcome surprise

By Kathryn Reed

Quitting won't get Suzie Alessi what she wants.

What South Lake Tahoe's city clerk wants is for potentially damaging or embarrassing texts and emails about her and written by her to not see the light of day. The multiple entities that have sought the documents, including *Lake Tahoe*

News, will continue to pursue the records whether she is in office or not.



Suzie Alessi

Alessi on June 19 announced at the City Council meeting she would be resigning in July. She did not give an exact date.

The City Council was shocked, according to Mayor Wendy David. "We had no idea," she told *Lake Tahoe News*. They knew she did not intend to seek re-election in November.

Alessi has come under fire of late because she doesn't do her job. She has it cushy because as an elected official she is only held accountable to the public – not the City Council, not the city manager, not the city attorney. She can work when she wants, take off whenever she wants.

Her latest shenanigans regarding the delay of public records is to threaten to sue to stop them from being made public. A lawsuit may delay things, but it won't change the law. It is what it is.

There are very few instances where public records cannot be released. State law dictates what can be redacted. If she thinks the information won't be relevant after the taxpayers are no longer paying her to barely work, she is sorely mistaken. After all, we'll be the ones footing her six-figure retirement. After 32 years on the public dole she will continue to be on it. She will collect about 90 percent of her salary and that goes up about 2 percent a year. Her current salary is more than \$100,000.

It is only the city attorney and an elected city clerk who may redact anything from a public record. Most cities don't have elected clerks, and therefore it would only be legal counsel with the big black marker.

On June 1, Alessi emailed *LTN* saying, "Retrieval of the voluminous records subject to your public records request is nearly completed. If not all records are retrieved/received by early next week, the city will provide the records it has in its possession and the remainder will be provided to you as soon as received."

No records have been provided. None. Zero. Zip.

They have all been retrieved, so to speak, according to multiple sources at the city.

It is the city clerk, though, whose job it is to be in charge of Public Records Act requests – even when she is the subject of the request.

State law requires the city have a clerk, though it does not have to be elected. About 100 of the 478 incorporated cities in California have elected clerks.

There is nothing in the city's code that dictates how to replace a city clerk who does not fulfill her term.

Clearly, the system is flawed.

Alessi can't leave soon enough. She has brought such disgrace to the office.

She couldn't get along with the deputy clerk and ran her off earlier this spring. Speculation is Ellen Palazzo will run for the position in November. The filing period opens July 16.

There is an assistant clerk, Sue Blankenship, who would be left with the immediate duties.

Alessi told *LTN*, “It’s time – a changing of the guard.”

That’s an understatement.

Interim City Attorney Nira Doherty told *LTN* she expects to make a recommendation this week to interim City Manager Dirk Brazil about how to proceed.

Brazil told *LTN* he is leaning toward filling the post from July to November with a retired city clerk. “I don’t see this position being 40 hours,” Brazil said.

Still, it is up to the City Council to decide what to do. And those five would be the ones to make an appointment.

SLTPD searching for vehicle, suspect



A vehicle that looks like this is being sought by SLTPD.

The South Lake Tahoe Police Department still has not located

the person believed to be responsible for the **shooting death** of a local man on June 11.

Police are looking for a a light colored Pontiac Aztec that the suspect is believed to have fled in.

Gregory Mitchoff, 62, died from multiple gunshot wounds. He was found in the 3600 block of Spruce Ave.

Anyone with information is asked to call SLTPD at 530.542.6110.

South Lake Tahoe Secret Witness is offering a \$2,500 reward for anyone who provides information leading to the conviction of the perpetrators of this crime. Secret Witness can be reached at 530.541.6800.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Letter: EDC auditor candidate concedes

To the community,

As candidate for El Dorado County Auditor-Controller, I conceded the race to incumbent Joe Harn as the latest vote counts were released as of June 15.

I have to admit I am kind of surprised by the results. I had a great deal of community, grass-roots support and enthusiasm from both volunteers and donors along with some great endorsements.

The most recent results are reported as total votes 48,970,

Joe Harn 25,454 51.98 percent, Mike Owen 23,415 47.81 percent. Harn, who has held the post for 24 years, held an advantage of about 2,000 votes of the nearly 50,000 votes cast. I estimate that there a few ballots left to be counted, but the remaining votes are unlikely to change the overall result.

With just a few ballots left to count it appears that if 1,000 votes for Harn had gone to Owen, EDC would have a new auditor/controller.

It's an unfortunate fact that political incumbents are re-elected about 92 percent of the time. -In my case, my opponent's reelection campaigns have been financed by out-of-the-area donors. That appears to explain finance disclosures showing Harn spending almost \$90,000 just before voting started according to Harn's latest campaign disclosure statement.

I will support the voter's decision and respect the election results.

My 2018 campaign earned the endorsements of many including El Dorado County Sheriff John D'Agositini and Placerville Mayor Wendy Thomas as well many winery owners and the El Dorado County Association of Realtors.

Mike Owen, auditor candidate

Rock slide on Echo Summit causes delays



A deliberate rock slide on Highway 50 near Meyers on June 19. Photo/LTN

Updated: 5:01pm:

Expect delays on Echo Summit for much of the week as Caltrans works to stabilize the hillside.

“We have a rock-scaling operation to knock down loose material, today through Thursday. They’re working 12-hour shifts with one-way traffic control, 6am to 6pm,” Steve Nelson with Caltrans told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Traffic is delayed at least 15 minutes.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Open Nev. seats play role in control of U.S. House

By Ramona Giwargis, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Two Nevada congressional seats are in play this November, setting up a showdown between national Democrats vying to win a House majority and Republicans determined to expand control of the chamber.

The pair of open seats are up for grabs because Democrats are vacating them. Rep. Jacky Rosen is leaving the 3rd Congressional District seat to run for the U.S. Senate. Rep. Ruben Kihuen is not seeking re-election in the 4th Congressional District amid accusations of sexual misconduct.

And while political analysts say the seats lean Democrat, national Republicans are coming after them. Both districts are top targets for the National Republican Congressional Committee – especially the 3rd Congressional District, which President Donald Trump won in 2016 by 1 percentage point.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- El Dorado County Board of Supervisors on June 18 unanimously approved a \$605 million budget for 2018-19; \$290 million of that is the General Fund.
- Clinton Culp is Lake Tahoe Community College's first full-time faculty member in Wilderness Education and Outdoor Leadership. He starts July 1. He comes from Montana State University-Billings where he is assistant professor of Outdoor Adventure Leadership.
- South Lake Tahoe Fire Rescue is partnering with Lake Tahoe Humane Society in the management of the Disaster Animal Response Team program.
- Here is the **El Dorado-Tahoe** roadwork schedule from Caltrans for this week.
- Anyone wanting to know about capital improvement projects in Douglas County may go **online** to get information.

Road maintenance and ownership data is also provided there.

Sail boats compete in annual race on Tahoe



The boats start to race June 16 near the Tahoe Keys.
Photo/Laura Rasmussen

Lake Tahoe Windjammers Yacht Club had its Southern Crossing race June 16.

This race featured a southwest wind that built to 20 mph, with gusts to 30.

It started just off Tahoe Keys, went to Cave Rock with an increasing breeze, across to Rubicon, a white sail reach to Edgewood, then a beat home to Tahoe Keys in gusts of 30 mph.

The winner was Richard Ferris, captain of August Ice, with a time of 4:57:40.5.

Eight boats started the race, with seven finishing.

LTCC creating new gathering spot on campus



Workers on June 18 place pavers at Coyote Legacy Plaza. Photo/Kathryn Reed

With a special tool and eye toward precision, workers on June 18 were carefully placing the pavers for Coyote Legacy Plaza.

This circular area between the physical education building and the soccer field at Lake Tahoe Community College will be finished by the time graduation takes place June 29.

The idea was launched a year ago with the goal of people donating money for an engraved paver. The money raised paid for a bronze coyote – the school mascot – to be commissioned. It will be about $1\frac{1}{2}$ times the size of a real coyote.

It will go in the center of a stone/rock area people can sit on, with the pavers circling the statue area. The artwork will be illuminated at night.

As more people buy pavers, that money will be put toward student scholarships and staff grants. They range from \$250 to \$2,500 depending on size.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Douglas County strengthening VHR regulations

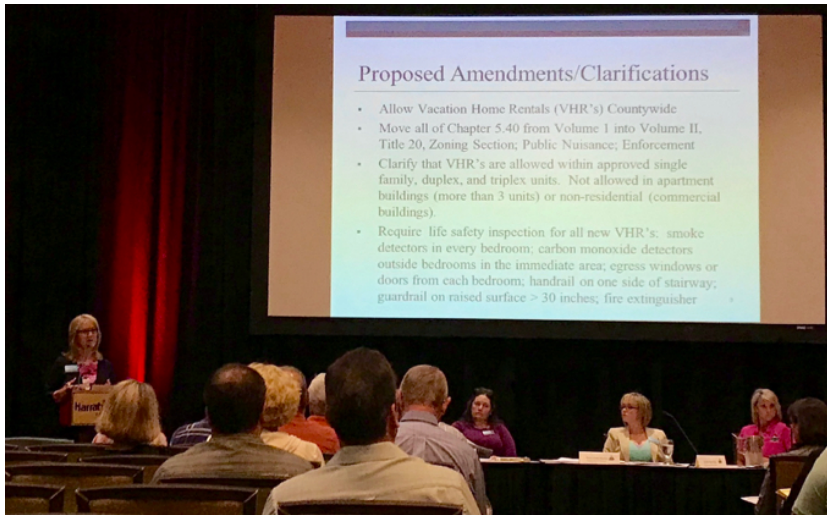
By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Douglas County is putting some teeth into its short-term rental ordinance in an effort to curtail problems and bring more oversight to the issue.

County officials came up with the ordinance and are just now engaging the public. The plan is for the ordinance to go for a vote by the Board of Commissioners in August.

June 18 was the first opportunity for residents and others to ask county staff questions, offer suggestions and give advice on the draft ordinance. Twenty people spoke during the three-hour meeting at Harrah's Lake Tahoe. Staff said adjustments will be made based on public feedback.

A few issues are still being worked out, which is where public testimony is critical. One item that was brought up Monday was whether bear boxes will be mandated in the Carson Valley. The county hasn't decided.



Mimi Moss, left, explains Douglas County's draft VHR ordinance. Photo/LTN

Many comments centered on whether homeowners' associations because the county's rules will in some ways supersede the HOA rules. Mary Anne Martin, deputy district attorney, said the county will consider what the HOA wants, but the county will make its decision based on its rules. Owners will then have to contend with the HOA separately.

Still, it was a much quieter, more respectful gathering on June 18 compared to meetings in South Lake Tahoe and El Dorado County. It helped that there was not a time limit for people to talk so people had the opportunity to say everything they wanted. Plus, not a single elected official was at the front table. It was reps from planning, code enforcement and the District Attorney's Office who led the meeting, with Host Compliance also there. Also allowed was some dialogue with audience members after the formal comment period ended in order to get questions fully answered, and new comments to be voiced.

While a few regulations will be similar to what South Lake Tahoe has adopted, Douglas County officials more than once said they don't want to be unfriendly like its neighbor to the west. Some of those who spoke also belittled what the city has done, including limiting the number of VHRs that are allowed.

The county in its paperwork made a point of saying what the ordinance won't do. It won't limit the number of VHRs, it won't mirror South Lake Tahoe's regulations and it won't allow grandfathering of a VHR.

Part of the code change takes the VHR ordinance out of Business and Revenue and puts it into Zoning/Planning. This allows penalties and fines to be issued.

The number of fines and revocations to date has been low because there has been little recourse based on how things are currently written. Going forward it's likely the fine will be \$250/day if the owner is out of compliance, with a maximum of \$10,000. Unpermitted vacation home rentals would face a \$500 fine per day.

Parking will be restricted to on-site for overnight. The county will not be enforcing daytime parking. Ninety-eight percent of complaints are parking, according to the county.

Occupancy will be changed from two per bedroom plus four to two per bedroom plus two. This was a bone of contention for many in attendance because people believe their house can accommodate more than the proposed rule without it being an issue.

"We believe if we curtail that number, it takes care of some of the problem of overcrowding in the residence," Mimi Moss with the county said. Building code already has two per bedroom.

Josh Priou with Lake Tahoe Accommodations said the occupancy change would affect 30 percent of their rentals, which could equate to a decrease of \$135,000 in transient occupancy tax for the county on an annual basis because of the need to lower the nightly rental fee.

All new permits and renewals will require a life safety inspection, which has been going on for the last 2½ months.

The VHR permit fee will go from \$100 to \$250, with renewals increasing \$125 to \$200.

Hot tub use won't be allowed between 10pm and 8am.

One way the county will be able to enforce the rules is by hiring Host Compliance, a Bay Area firm that since 2010 has been helping jurisdictions find rentals – permitted and not, offer a complaint hot line and provide data. This is the same company South Lake Tahoe and Truckee use.

Ulrik Binzer with Host Compliance said the short-term rental market has grown 800 percent since 2011. When his company started there were 16 websites that were regularly patrolled. Now there are 50, with those targeting 90 percent of the portals where people list their homes.

His stats show there are 1,272 unique rental units in Douglas County, with 90 percent in the Tahoe area. The median nightly rate is \$295. Ninety percent are entire house rentals.

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Notes:

- Future meetings:

July 10, 9am – Douglas County Planning Commission, CVIC Hall, Minden

Aug. 2, 10am – Board of Commissioners, CVIC Hall, Minden

Aug. 16, 1:30pm – Board of Commissioners, Harrah's Lake Tahoe

Sept. 6, 10am – Board of Commissioners, Minden (optional meeting if first and second readings are not taken care of in August)

- Draft ordinance is **online**.