

Town hall to address homeless problem

Tahoe Regional Young Professionals is hosting a town hall about homelessness.

It will be Aug. 30, 6-7:30pm at Tahoe Beach Retreat in South Lake Tahoe.

There will be a panel of experts addressing local homelessness issues, including the impact of services for the homeless like Lake Tahoe Warm Room, causes of homelessness including the housing crisis, and public safety concerns.

The public will be able to ask questions.

Sandoval works to get Obamacare throughout Nev.

By Ben Botkin, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY — Gov. Brian Sandoval said Tuesday that the state is “diligently working” to ensure that 14 rural Nevada counties will have health insurance coverage options through the state-based exchange in 2018.

In June, that state got word that no carriers will provide coverage to 14 Nevada counties through the Silver State Health Insurance Exchange, which provides health insurance through the federal Affordable Care Act.

Those carriers cited uncertainties in the market as reasons to

forgo the Nevada counties next year.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Ex-CAO keeps haunting EDC

By Larry Weitzman

Everyone knows that El Dorado County is short of money for road maintenance, funding employee pensions and dozens of other items that need attention. In fact, the county is so short of money there was an attempt to eliminate senior legal which costs the county about \$250,000 annually, a pittance when compared to the over quarter billion-dollar General Fund budget. So, you would think that if turning over a rock would benefit EDC by even \$100, they would do it. Maybe not. And because of that we need answers.



Larry Weitzman

It's time for EDC to not turn over a rock, but start rolling big boulders. On Nov. 4, 2014, a transition agreement and release of claims was executed by EDC and former CAO Terri Daly. It provided for the payment to Daly the sum of \$153,519.73 incumbent on her to keep certain promises which

were a substantial part of the consideration for this payment.

Daly agreed in paragraph 4 (a) of that agreement to assist the "county in regards to matters in which she was involved during her employment including but not limited to assistance in connection with any actual or threatened claims, complaints, litigation or lawsuits in which the county and/or Daly, in her official capacity, are named as subjects or defendants ..."

The same paragraph further states, "In consideration of the foregoing, county will pay Daly a total of nine (9) months base salary ... \$153,519." Seems pretty clear cut even to a non-legal lay mind.

In addition to this actual cash sum, Daly was paid other benefits, with the total amount perhaps approaching \$200,000. Almost enough to pay for senior legal which the Board of Supervisors were so willing to cut because the county is short of cash.

About 10 months after the execution of that contract and mutual promises which the county fulfilled by paying all sums and benefits due under the contract, two former BOS members, Norma Santiago and Ron Briggs file a lawsuit against the county for back pay of some \$200,000. Maybe they had spent the \$77,000 annual salary they each received for the prior eight or nine years and thereafter couldn't achieve gainful employment. Being a BOS member was maybe the highest paying "job" they ever had. In fact, Briggs has filed for another county job after filing and losing the race for county treasurer, a position for which he clearly wasn't qualified. Now he has filed for county clerk a job with a base pay of about \$120,000. Doesn't this guy have any marketable skills? I have the feeling Santiago will also seek public office again for the same reasons.

I digress. During the initial phase of that lawsuit which was decided in favor of the county solely on briefs and argument,

Terri Daly, the ex-CAO who promised to assist the county in any litigation (lawsuits), filed a voluntary declaration under penalty of perjury saying effectively that Briggs and Santiago were entitled to their claim. Would you call that "assisting the county in litigation as per paragraph 4.a.? In fact, it was the antithesis of her promises made for the payment of about \$200,000. Daly clearly breached her contract by taking a side that would be against the county. I and every other taxpayer should demand the county file an immediate lawsuit against Daly for breach of contract for her clear violation and seek the return of \$153,519.57 and all other payments and benefits paid to pursuant to the contract. She made promises she did not keep. She owes the county a lot of money.

The upshot of the Briggs/Santiago case was that they lost hands down because their claim violated the state Constitution. I wrote that would be the decision months before the actual decision and the judge in that case ruled correctly. It was very clear cut. There was obviously no appeal. And Briggs and Santiago have the audacity to run for another public office? That's a good definition of chutzpah.

I have discussed this matter with CAO Don Ashton as to if the county is so short of money as to even consider cutting senior legal, and you know Daly breached her transition agreement as I wrote about it nearly 18 months ago, why haven't we, the county, sued? He says he doesn't make that decision, but he could recommend it to the board. And the contract provides for reasonable attorney's fees to the prevailing party on top of the recovery of our money.

Why hasn't our county counsel recommended the recovery of this money; what it's small potatoes? So was senior legal which certain members of the board being so eager to cut. You can bet there are politics at play here, big time. If any incumbents are running for re-election and you can bet Mike Ranalli is, then he has to demand that we sue for recovery of the money. If they don't, they obviously do not care about the

taxpayers' money. Why should they, it's OPM to them. But it's not to me when I get charged sales tax or worse write that property tax checks twice a year.

This lawsuit against Daly stealing our money needs to be filed post haste as the statute of limitations will run on Nov. 3, 2018. The county is quick to raise taxes but not recover money from those that effectively steal from us. And if Mike Ciccozzi, county counsel, won't do it, why are we paying him over \$200,000 a year? The board should fire him. We need him as much as we need another do nothing bureaucrat. But with Ciccozzi we get bad advice and it costs the county twice or more.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.

Town of Vail wants to be sustainable tourism destination

By Jason Blevins, Denver Post

Born from an idea that corralled local businesses to embrace energy-saving strategies, the resort-anchored town of Vail trying to become the continent's first sustainable tourist destination certified through the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.

So, first, what is "sustainable tourism?"

"It's tourism that is compatible with the community," said Magdalena Muir, a Canadian professor of energy science and an auditor with Green Destinations. She spent a week measuring

Vail's progress toward involving uniting locals and guests in efforts to build a vibrant economy anchored in a healthy ecology.

Many communities have tourism imposed on them, especially in purpose-built resorts like many Colorado high-country destinations, and that can lead to an us-versus-them mentality pitting locals against visitors. Engaging the community in the mission of driving tourism can help reduce that friction, Muir said.

Sustainable is the hot new buzzword in tourism circles – especially as hosting visitors becomes a roaring economic engine of many rural and urban economies while locals desperately fight to protect the resources and appeal that draw the outsiders.

Read the whole story

Scientists fear Trump will dismiss blunt climate report

By Lisa Friedman, New York Times

The average temperature in the United States has risen rapidly and drastically since 1980, and recent decades have been the warmest of the past 1,500 years, according to a sweeping federal climate change report awaiting approval by the Trump administration.

The draft report by scientists from 13 federal agencies, which has not yet been made public, concludes that Americans are feeling the effects of climate change right now. It directly

contradicts claims by President Trump and members of his cabinet who say that the human contribution to climate change is uncertain, and that the ability to predict the effects is limited.

“Evidence for a changing climate abounds, from the top of the atmosphere to the depths of the oceans,” a draft of the report states. A copy of it was obtained by the *New York Times*.

Read the whole story

Bay Area money gobbling up Truckee properties

Publisher's note: *This is one in a series of stories about affordable housing in the Lake Tahoe-Truckee region. All articles may be accessed via the home page under Special Projects, 2017 Affordable Housing.*

By Linda Fine Conaboy

TRUCKEE – To live in Truckee and surrounding areas requires a great deal of money; money that seems to be in good supply especially if you've recently sold or are contemplating selling property in the Bay Area, where many of the buyers are cashing out and seeking more reasonable housing options in the Sierra.

Speakers representing various segments of Truckee's wild real estate market comprised the panel of presenters at the Aug. 8 Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce breakfast. They discussed the peculiarities their unique market presents including inventory, long- and short-term rentals, real estate trends

and their impacts on the local economy and the community.



“If you make less than \$100,000 a year, housing is an issue around Lake Tahoe and Truckee.” – Katie Rice, senior loan officer at Guild Mortgage

The cost of housing took up big slices of air time as well it should since the median price of a home in the area is now \$585,000, compared to \$549,000 in 2016.

Affordable housing issues are numerous, said Matt Hansen, owner/broker of Tahoe Truckee Homes and the panel’s moderator.

Sam Drury, president of the Tahoe Sierra Board of Realtors and broker/owner of Padden Properties, agreed and noted Truckee has more full-time residents now than Lake Tahoe, although this hasn’t always been the case. The way Drury sees it, Truckee has become a far more stable area, garnering the lion’s share of buyers who mostly hail from the Bay Area.

“If you’re a second-home buyer and flush with cash, you really don’t worry about price,” he said. “Tahoe is Fantasy Land for Californians. Fifty percent of my deals last year were cash. It’s a very different world up here.”

He added that as far as he can see, price is not an object to

these consumers. "People are flush. That's a really odd thing. They can spend, and want to spend [sometimes] more than \$3 million. These customers are the life blood of our community. It's the way it is, there's nothing else I can say."

But this scenario can leave the local who's looking for a reasonably priced family home out of the running.

A second-home owner purchasing a house priced at about \$527,000 can expect an average monthly payment of \$2,700, said Katie Rice, senior loan officer at Guild Mortgage. "Locals can't afford this, and with so much cash floating around, sellers usually will take the cash offer. It's a struggle, but cash offers are easier."



Houses are not affordable for the average worker in Truckee.
Photos/Linda Fine Conaboy

Starter homes in Truckee remain solidly within the \$400,000 to

\$500,000 range, causing some to look for housing in Reno and elsewhere. "But there's a big affordable housing problem in Reno too," Rice said.

Even if people can find an affordable home in Truckee, other expenses can ruin monthly budgets, especially when you consider that many pay up to \$1,000 in childcare costs, not to mention food, utilities and other monthly essentials.

And the picture becomes even more dismal as Rice paints a grim scenario describing costs that can be incurred on a \$407,000 "starter home," which includes a 20 percent down payment. She said the base monthly payment pencils at \$1,600, but with the addition of taxes, insurance and other fees the final monthly figure comes in at \$2,124.

"No one's doubting we have a problem here," declared Jim Winterberger, partner and president at Tahoe Getaways. "But business is good and housing prices are high here because this is a cool place to be."

Winterberger added that solutions to the dilemma need to include housing pockets such as Martis Camp, Shafer's Mill and Northstar.

"As the long-term rental pool shrinks, it's forcing people out of the market—this is affecting Truckee as a community." He added, "As an investor, you need to put at least 50 percent down and you need a long-term tenant. If not, it can be a challenge."

Chiming in, Drury alluded to the number of unknowns yet to be discovered. "The Bay Area is an economic engine running the problem and it's on full throttle now; but there it costs a ton to buy a house. The excess money might be being sucked up by the high cost of living. Californians need to be reminded about how wonderful we are," he laughed.

An audience member asked why there are so few multi-family

dwellings in the region. The answer from the panel: it's expensive and hard to get financing and insurance.

"We're all dealing with really tight margins," Rice said. "Even if investors have emotional ties to Truckee, they still have to make money."

In addition, Rice added, "We need to figure out how to keep our work force here. People in our community are not connecting the dots about housing. If someone has to commute from Grass Valley or even Fernley, you can reach a point of diminishing returns.

"I don't think there's one solution, it will take everyone working together to solve this. If you make less than \$100,000 a year, housing is an issue around Lake Tahoe and Truckee."

Ashley Cooper, Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation communications and grant manager was a visitor at this meeting instead of a presenter as she has been in the past. TTCF helped create the Mountain Housing Council.

"Everyone's talking together," Cooper said. "We're trying to build awareness [of this housing situation]. People care about other people."

She invited guests to participate and send her their thoughts and ideas. "We need you and your solutions," she said.

Spine specialist joining Barton Health

Spine specialist Zachary Child has returned to South Lake Tahoe as a physician at Tahoe Center for Orthopedics and Tahoe

Orthopedics and Sports Medicine.



Zachary Child

Child is a board certified orthopedic spine surgeon and musculoskeletal oncologist. He is skilled in addressing back pain and finding surgical and non-surgical options that help patients reach optimal spine health.

Child grew up in South Lake Tahoe. He attended medical school at UNR and did his residency at the University of New Mexico. For his postdoctoral training, Child completed fellowships in spine surgery at Harborview Medical Center (University of Washington) as well as orthopedic oncology at Massachusetts General Hospital (Harvard Medical School).

Most recently, Child has played an active role in the research concerning complex spine surgery and oncology. He taught courses in orthopedic surgery, spine surgery, and musculoskeletal oncology at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio and was on the adjunct faculty at the University of Washington in Seattle. His research and illustrations have been published on multiple occasions.

Letter: Tahoe Swim Club says thanks

To the community,

The Tahoe Swim Club would like to thank the following supporters of our annual Swimming at Altitude Swim Meet:

John D. Marchini and South Tahoe Refuse, Manuel and Claudia from Taqueria Jalisco, 7-Eleven for ice, Ed at Fast Print for printing the programs, Valerie and Jerry Rudd and the many officials from Northern California and Northern Nevada, the Tahoe parents and swimmers who volunteered countless hours, and Louise Marin for once again organizing all aspects of the meet!

Our annual meet brings in over 400 swimmers and their families to Tahoe for a weekend of competitive USA swimming. Without this meet, the Tahoe Swim Club, a small nonprofit, would not be able to provide the only competitive swimming opportunity here on the South Shore of Lake Tahoe. Thank you to all who support our swimmers and our swim club.

Kathy Haven, Tahoe Swim Club

Meeting to focus on Sierra Blvd. improvements

There will be a community information meeting Aug. 17 about the Sierra Boulevard complete streets project.

Preliminary plans call for a class 1 mixed use recreational trail, sidewalk, driveway connections, curbs, gutters,

drainage system, and storm water infiltration and treatment. Class 2 bike lanes are proposed for each side of the road. Lighting will be erected. On street parking will be available in some locations.

The meeting will begin at 5:30pm at Sierra Community Church on Sierra Boulevard.

This will be an opportunity for the public to voice ideas and concerns.

DCSO offering residents a law enforcement academy

The Douglas County Sheriff's Office's Senior Citizens' Law Enforcement Academy will be Sept. 11-15.

Registration is open for people interested in attending the academy and learning about law enforcement. Students must be at least 50 years of age and residents of Douglas County. Students attending the academy will learn about topics such as uniformed patrol procedures, jail and custody procedures, investigations, crime scene processing, along with gang and narcotics investigations. Information on volunteer opportunities and crime prevention methods, along with recent scam information will be a part of the curriculum.

The weeklong academy is from 1-5pm each day. The class is at the Minden Judicial Center.

The class size is limited to 30 students. The academy is offered free of charge. Applicants must be willing to submit to a background investigation, and may not have been convicted

of a felony.

Sign up by calling 775.782.9900.