

South Shore casinos haul in the cash

Stateline casinos in May saw their revenues surge by 30 percent compared to 2016, with the win being more than \$17.8 million.

Statewide the numbers were also positive. The Gaming Control Board on June 29 said the overall win was up 3.5 percent to \$991.6 million compared to May 2016.

Of the 19 markets that are tracked, 12 showed year-over-year gains.

This is the third straight month the state has shown improvement.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Money Matters: Don't go broke on vacation

By Nic Abelow

Everyone needs a vacation periodically. Breaking the routine of the workaday world is not only refreshing, but studies show it is good for you and your ability to do a better job. Reducing job stress can lead to more productivity.



Nic Abelow

It's easy to spend a lot of money on a vacation, but that guarantees neither a good time nor vacation value. With a little planning, you can have a great time and still avoid breaking your budget.

Vacation value

Whether you find a vacation value or just a vacation depends, of course, on whether you find the kinds of places, activities, and people that meet your needs. For instance, a wonderful buy at Disneyland is little value to a couple who prefers to spend a week on the ski slopes.

Here are some tips to trim costs and get more value for your vacation dollar:

Plan ahead. You may get the kind of vacation you want at the time and place you want if you book your transportation and accommodations in advance. You'll also have time to put aside money to pay for the trip without using high-interest credit cards at the last minute.

Budget for your vacation spending. Figure out how much your vacation will cost, add in the fun extras, and then start saving so you don't run up a credit card bill. If you don't have ready cash, but you simply must get away to keep your sanity, check out getting a bank installment loan rather than using plastic. Interest charges will be lower, and the debt will be paid back in a set period of time rather than revolving on your credit card bill.

Book your flight in advance. The difference in airfare alone

can amount to hundreds of dollars, especially when you purchase tickets 14 days in advance and you travel Tuesday through Thursday. Flight bargains like these are offered for limited time periods and tend to sell out early. You have to check with the airlines often or have a travel agent who watches out for you.

Buy your vacation cruise well in advance. Cruise-line owners want to make sure their ships are booked. The difference in price can be substantial between a purchase made in November versus one made in January.

Selected Travel Resources

Trip booking. Look for “deals” and “discounts” pages on Hotwire, Travelocity, Kayak, Priceline

Short-term apartment and home rentals may offer better values than hotel rooms: HomeAway, AlluraDirect.

A good guide can help point you toward the best values: Lonely Planet, Rick Steves, Frommer's.

Travel packages. Some people want to wander on their own and are willing to pay for it. But a vacation package that includes airfare, hotel, and admissions to local attractions can be very attractive.

With hotel accommodations and vacation packages, you can often save with last-minute flexibility as there are frequently great vacation values available on short notice. You may be able to get last-minute specials – unsold seats on flights or accommodations at holiday resorts – for a discount.

Off-season, off-peak, and midweek values. Golfers can rent luxury suites in resorts such as Palm Springs, Scottsdale, and South Florida in the summer for a fraction of their winter prices. The first two weeks in December may also offer prices that are almost as good. Packed during ski season, resorts such as Aspen, Vail, and others offer lower-priced summer

packages with activities ranging from whitewater rafting to bike and Jeep tours, horseback riding, and balloon rides. Contact the resort directly and make these reservations early because good deals go fast.

And think midweek and off-peak. You'll avoid crowds and save up to 50 percent. The Caribbean islands are beautiful year-round, but a week's stay on St. Thomas in November or June costs considerably less than a week in February. In addition to the money saved off-season, there are fewer tourists in town, leaving more room in the duty-free shops and on the beaches. Dates for the high season vary by location, so check with your travel agent or resort website.

Take advantage of discounts. If you're a member of a fraternal or special-interest group, you can often save 10 percent or more on the cost of expenses such as car rentals and hotel accommodations.

Cash in on the competition among airlines by watching out for airline advertisements urging you to take advantage of drastically reduced promotional fares. These offers may require advance purchase, allowing you time to plan a vacation around the best value offered. Also be sure to check major airline websites, which often offer additional discounts on advertised discount fares and have web-only specials.

Be aware that you can be charged more if the airline fare goes up after you make your reservation. Therefore, it's advisable that you pay for the tickets as soon as possible to lock in the fare.

By the way, airlines don't have to give you a refund if the fare drops after you've bought tickets, although some will do so. Keep on the lookout for lowered fares, and request a refund or credit voucher if your fare drops.

Distance can save you money. You don't have to be right near an attraction to enjoy it.

Skiers can save substantially on lodging by staying farther away from a mountain resort rather than within walking distance of the lifts. If you must stay on the mountain, know that midweek rates are generally lower than weekend rates. The same is true for popular vacation attractions like Disneyland: lodging outside rather than inside the park can result in savings.

Sometimes the lower-cost approach, however, may not give you the most value. Renting a condo at a ski resort may be more expensive than staying in an off-attraction hotel, but when you balance the price against the costs of a rental car, the time spent driving, and the inconvenience – especially if you're traveling with children – it may be a better choice. The bottom line is that a little advance planning can go a long way in making your vacation a fun-filled – and affordable – experience.

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Alert Placer deputy saves 6 Tahoe ducklings



Six Tahoe ducklings have a
new lease on life.
Photo/PCSO

Six ducklings tried to run from the law, but officers were able to apprehend them in Tahoe City.

A Placer County sheriff's deputy saw the group of orphaned ducklings crossing North Lake Boulevard. She used her patrol vehicle to block traffic, allowing them to safely cross.

The ducklings huddled up under a vehicle on the side of the highway. The deputy stood guard to make sure they didn't go anywhere until animal services arrived.

But animal services came unprepared. The ducklings were able to avoid their large net. But what they didn't know is they were waddling right into a sewer drain.

This time animal control got it right. The drain cover was removed and with a smaller net the animals were plucked from this very unnatural environment.

The six ducklings were to be taken to a wildlife rescue, with the hopes they learn to survive without their mom.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

4 wheels exchanged for 2 in bike challenge

Thousands of miles were logged in this year's Tahoe Bike Challenge. Each year, for the first two weeks of June, hundreds of Tahoe residents and visitors participate in the Tahoe Bike Challenge in teams or as individuals to see who can replace the most car trips with trips by bicycle.

Staff with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the League to Save Lake Tahoe took the top prizes in the event.

Students from North Tahoe School in Tahoe City and South Tahoe's Bijou Community School, Lake Tahoe Environmental Science Magnet School, Sierra House Elementary, Tahoe Valley Elementary School, and South Tahoe Middle School participated. More than 430 students rode their bikes, completing 837 bicycle trips. Bijou Community School took the lead with the most trips.

Here are the school rankings:

- Bijou Community School: 326 trips
- South Tahoe Middle School: 189 trips
- Magnet School: 180 trips
- Sierra House Elementary: 87 trips
- North Tahoe School: 58 trips.

For the team prizes, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency dominated the long game to handily win the 2017 prize for most total trips, with 545 bicycle trips and a 1,476 collective miles, while staff from the League to Save Lake Tahoe edged out a tight competition for the prize for most trips per employee, at 13.7 trips per staff member.

Top five teams for each category:

Most total trips:

- Tahoe Regional Planning Agency – 545 trips
- League to Save Lake Tahoe – 233 trips
- South Tahoe Refuse – 182 trips.

Most trips per employee:

- League to Save Lake Tahoe – 13.7 trips per employee
- Tieslau Civil Engineering – 13.5 trips per employee
- Environmental Incentives – 9.3 trips per employee.

Winners for individual categories:

Most total trips:

- Amy Fish: 54 trips
- Larry Green: 50 trips
- Scott Cecchi: 44 trips
- Jason Briedis: 42 trips
- Steve Froyum: 40 trips.

Most total miles biked:

- Gianna Leavers: 311 miles
- Jennifer Capistran: 214 miles
- Patrick Johnson: 187 miles
- Sally Loomis: 180 miles
- Mike Niccoli: 160 miles

Most elevation gain:

- James Kayser: 23,820 feet
 - Gianna Leavers: 20,201 feet
 - Jim Marino: 19,064 feet
 - Mark Frisina: 18,690 feet
 - Bob Albrecht: 15,004 feet.
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Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- New this year is evening on the lawn at Valhalla. The first one is July 5, 5:30-7:30pm. Bob Woods' Swampbilly is the artist. There is a suggested donation of \$10-\$20. Bring lawn chairs and a picnic; a bar will be set up.
 - Joey Logano presented the High Fives Foundation with a check for \$5,000, bringing the Joey Logano Foundation's total to \$53,000 in three years. The Joey Logano Foundation inspires and assembles the NASCAR community to assist children and young adults in need during times of crisis.
 - South Lake Tahoe Library will host Puppet Art Theater Co. on June 30. The free outdoor show starts at 2pm at 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd. in South Lake Tahoe. Puppet Art Theater Co. will be performing "Tale of the Dragon's Tail!" which tells the story of Princess Penny and a dragon in her kingdom.
 - **Creating Equilibrium**, a first-of-its-kind event focused on generating innovations that impact the environment, will be Aug. 25-27 at Squaw Valley.
 - Washoe County Sheriff's Office Citizen Corps is offering a free emergency preparedness and response training academy beginning July 13. For more info, go **online**.
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Rural Nev. to lose all Obamacare plans next year

By Anjeanette Damon, Reno Gazette-Journal

Blaming the uncertainty over health care reform in the U.S.

Senate, insurance carriers will stop offering plans under the Affordable Care Act in nearly all of Nevada's rural counties, including Carson City and Douglas County.

In total, about 8,000 Nevadans will lose their insurance, with no options to buy a different subsidized plan on the federal health exchange. More than 5,000 of the people affected live in Carson City, Douglas, Storey and Lyon counties.

"My administration is working diligently to identify solutions to ensure there is, at the very least, a safety net available to rural Nevada residents who will be left without any options for coverage in the wake of these devastating and unfortunate decisions," Gov. Brian Sandoval said in a written statement. "The reduced footprint of carriers on the exchange will leave more than 8,000 Nevadans with no coverage, and that is unacceptable."

Read the whole story

DCSO taking its message to the airwaves

Douglas County Sheriff's Office will be partnering with radio personality Jon Sanchez of KOH-780AM for a series of radio events to be broadcast for the community.

The public is invited to join in by calling 775.852.8255. People may attend the first event (July 7) in person at Sanchez Ranch Meat Co. in Minden to ask questions of Sheriff Ron Pierini.

The undersheriff and the four captains will be guests on the

radio show through October to discuss their areas of responsibilities and duties.

Sanchez will end the season with a live remote at the DCSO K-9 Fundraiser on Oct. 6 at Sanchez Ranch Meat Co. from 4-6pm.

The schedule is as follows:

- July 7, 5-6pm: Douglas County Town Hall Meeting hosted by KOH-780 AM Jon Sanchez with DCSO Sheriff Ron Pierini. The public is invited to attend the live event at Sanchez Ranch Meat Co. located at 1734 Highway 395, Unit B, Minden.
 - July 20, 5:15-6pm: KOH-780 AM Sanchez with guest Sgt. Bernadette Smith.
 - Aug. 4, 5:15-6pm: Guest Undersheriff Paul Howell.
 - Aug. 18, 5:15-6pm: Guest Capt. Dan Coverley.
 - Sept. 1, 5:15-6pm: Guest Capt. Dan Britton.
 - Sept. 15, 5:15-6pm: Guest Capt. Jim Halsey.
 - Sept. 29, 5:15-6pm: Guest Capt. Joe Duffy.
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ZCTC doubles event celebrates Wimbledon

On the weekend of the Wimbledon Championships in England, the courts of Zephyr Cove will be going all white.

The annual Breakfast at Wimbledon at Zephyr Cove Tennis Club is July 15. Breakfast starts at 9am, with play at 10am. Participants will be paired with a partner in the doubles event. Wear white – just as the pros do at Wimbledon.

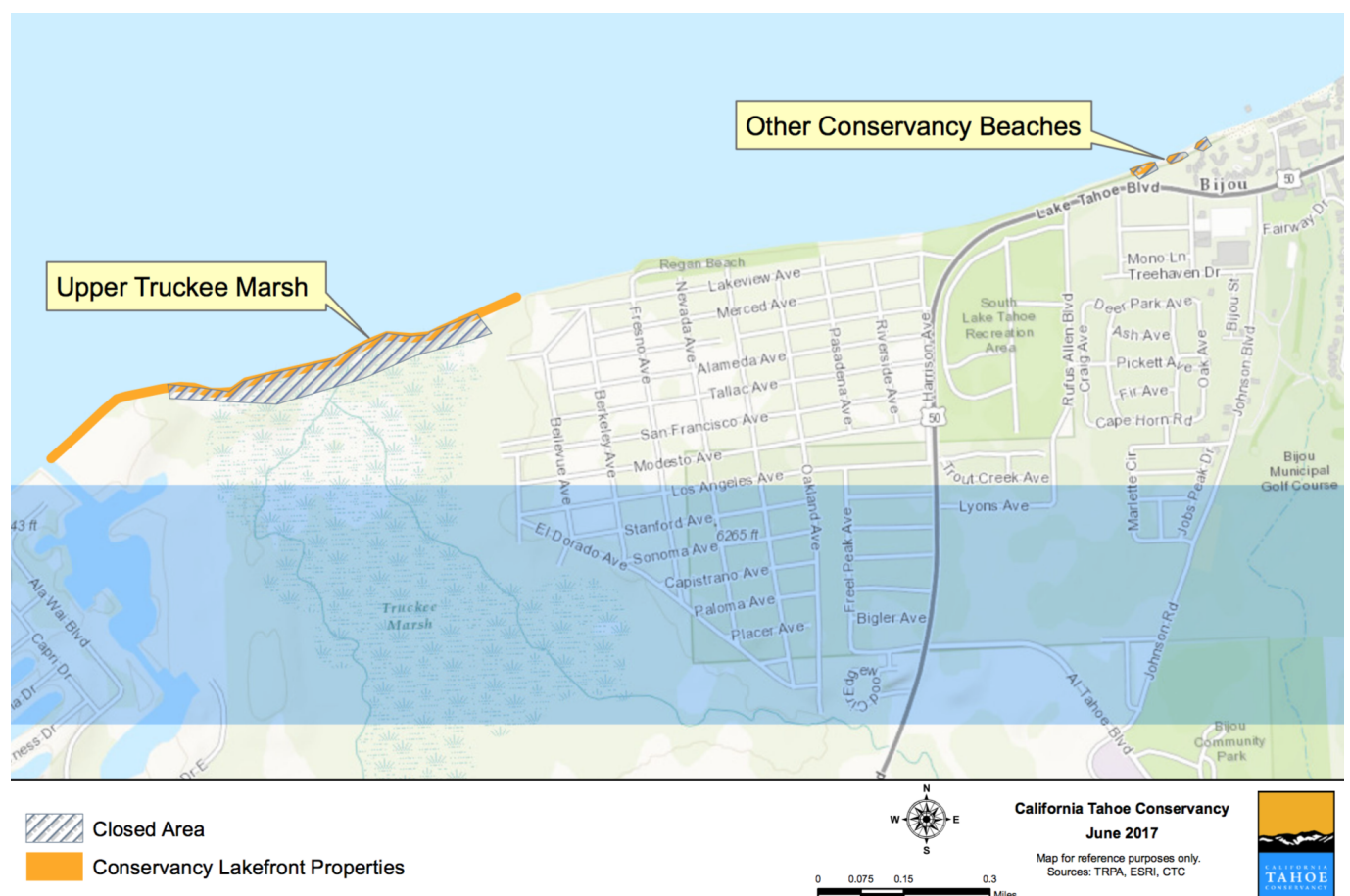
Cost is \$15 for ZCTC members, \$20 for non-members, and \$5 for spectators who want to eat. The first 32 paid entrants are

guaranteed a spot. The deadline to sign up is July 10 at noon. To do so, go to the pro shop at the courts.

Membership is \$85 for the season.

While breakfast is included in the price, participants are asked to bring a dish to share and drink of choice.

CTC banning public from select SLT beaches



By Kathryn Reed

As if Mother Nature hadn't taken away most of the sand in Tahoe via a full lake, now the state of California is cutting

off what little access remains in parts of the South Shore.

The Upper Truckee Marsh and the beach below where the Alta Mira building used to be adjacent to Lakeview Commons became off-limits effective June 28. When that policy might be lifted is anyone's guess.

It's all about protecting sensitive habitat and erosion concerns.

The new rules are happening days before the basin's busiest week of the year. The California Tahoe Conservancy, which owns the land, is laying down these rules – not the city of South of Lake Tahoe.

"Generally, people will need to get wet to access the closed areas and they are not the most desirable beach locations," Nick Meyer with the California Tahoe Conservancy told *Lake Tahoe News*. "There isn't really much beach to access, especially near the Alta Mira site. The stretches where the beaches are largest will still be open to access."

The Upper Truckee Marsh area is not entirely cordoned off, but a large swath is no longer open to the public.

"The Upper Truckee Marsh is the largest remaining wetland in Lake Tahoe. It hosts several special status bird species and the largest remaining population of Tahoe yellow cress in the world. The habitat for this endemic plant has become very limited as a result of the high lake level," Meyer said.

If people don't comply, consequences will be handled on a case-by-case basis. The CTC board at its meeting earlier this month entered into an agreement for the California Highway Patrol to work its properties.

"We will use temporary fencing, signage, staff patrols, education, and law enforcement patrols," Meyer said of how the agency plans to enforce this new edict.

According to Meyer, the following are potential laws people would violate if they disregard the signs:

- California Penal Code involving damaging plants on state property;
- South Lake Tahoe code dealing with closed park areas;
- City code involving tampering with signs and landscaping;
- City code banning removal of natural resources;
- City code about injury to or removal of plants.

However, according to city officials, the city ordinances are not applicable on state property.

Second act for LTCC theater up to board

By Kathryn Reed

The drama surrounding the future of Lake Tahoe Community College's theater department is like an improv production where the ending is anyone's guess.

Another scene was staged with week at the board meeting with the task force presenting its recommendations. However, two-fifths of the board was gone – members Kerry David and Jeff Cowen were absent.

Ultimately, it will be up to the five electeds to write the final act.

In October, it came to light that the administration was going down the road of eliminating the department because of lack of enrollment and finances. **A month later** the public came out to say not so fast and expressed how important the theater is to the community.

From there a community task force was formed with two goals – delve into the for-credit program and look into how best to serve the community outside the college.

On June 27, Michael Ward, who facilitated the six two-hour meetings of the task force, along with members of the committee talked about their recommendations. It was a rather full house for an LTCC board meeting, mostly with theater supporters filling the seats.

In the wake of this turmoil the nonprofit Tahoe Arts Alliance has formed. It could be a production partner with the college.

For credit suggestions:

- Retain the program for two years to work on increasing enrollment.
- Merge theater with speech-communications.
- Develop dual enrollment program with South Tahoe High School.
- Create a summer theater program like the Spanish ISSI.
- Diversify offerings.
- Increase marketing.

Community partnership ideas:

- A four-partnership approach with separate entities for production, promotion, LTCC as facilities manager, and a future resident company.

- Establish a production calendar so other entities are using the theater.
- Work with South Lake Tahoe and El Dorado County for marketing and financial support.
- Evolve into a repertory or conservatory model.

After the presentation, college President Jeff DeFranco told *Lake Tahoe News*, “For now we are narrowing the offerings and they will culminate with a spring production.”

Talks are under way with Valhalla for that arts organization to put on a play at LTCC in the fall. There is also a TedX event planned for September.

“We need to make sure the theater doesn’t sit empty for 11 months. We need to make this great asset available to the community,” DeFranco said.