

Workshop to address individual storm runoff issues

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, in partnership with GreenACTnv, will offer a free presentation on how to prepare landscapes to reduce erosion hazards and increase the potential for storm runoff to soak into soils.

The workshop is 6pm, June 14 at the Douglas County Cooperative Extension office, 1325 Waterloo Lane in Gardnerville. Presenters include water resource specialist John Cobourn, geologist Matt McMackin and retired U.S. Forest Service hydrologist Larry Schmidt.

In addition to runoff from the rooftop and pavement, water can sometimes flow onto property from uphill adjacent properties. Such problems can be severe during occasional flash floods from thundershowers. McMackin and Schmidt will suggest ways that neighbors can work together to reduce impacts to their homes and neighborhoods.

Participants are invited to email photos (lewiss@unce.unr.edu) of erosion or drainage problems on their properties, along with a simple site plan to show where the problem areas are located. This way the instructors can address specific problems being encountered in the area.

Brown joins other governors backing Paris accord

By Kathleen Ronayne, AP

Three Democratic governors said Thursday they won't let the U.S. back away from a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, despite President Trump decision to withdraw from an international pact.

"This is an insane move by this president," Gov. Jerry Brown said, blasting the decision as "deviant behavior from the highest office in the land."

Brown joined Gov. Jay Inslee of Washington state and Gov. Andrew Cuomo of New York to form the U.S. Climate Alliance to uphold the Paris climate agreement, a pact involving nearly 200 nations aimed at slowing the warming of the planet.

[Read the whole story](#)

Olson appeals bankruptcy court's decision



Patty Olson

The legal battle involving the parcel in South Lake Tahoe that houses the medical marijuana collective has reached another stage.

On May 31, attorneys for Patty Olson filed paperwork with the U.S. Bankruptcy Appellate Panel of the Ninth Circuit.

A **bankruptcy judge in Reno** dismissed the case because of the medicinal pot shop being a tenant. This is because federal law deems this type of business as being illegal. Olson, who owns the property, is challenging that decision.

While the issue is tied up in court, Olson remains owner of the parcel in the Bijou Center and the foreclosure proceedings are stalled.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Douglas County workers to receive raises

Douglas County commissioners this week approved contracts with the labor unions. Commissioner Dave Nelson was the lone vote against the raises.

The 140-member strong Douglas County Employees Association agreed to a seven-year contract. It reduces the annual merit raise from 0-6 percent to 0-3 percent, and provides a cost of living adjustment based on the CPI; the latter being tied to county revenues.

A five-year deal was reached with the Douglas County Sheriff's Protective Association as well as the Douglas County Sheriff's Protective Association Sergeants' Bargaining Unit. They have

the same raises s DCEA. There are 85 and 14 members, respectively.

The contracts guarantee a 2 percent raise in even years, and a maximum of 2 percent in odd years.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Opinion: We can make a difference post-Paris accord

By Nick Exline

On June 1, as I watched President Trump announce that his administration would be pulling the United States out of the Paris Climate Accord, I couldn't help but reflect on President Ronald Reagan's farewell address to the nation in which he imparted, for the final time as president, his vision that the United States is the world's shining "light on a hill."



Nick Exline

These words rang in my mind because with this withdrawal the United States now joins Syria and Nicaragua as the only three nations on earth not to sign onto the accord. Nicaragua didn't sign because they believed the accord did not go far enough. Abandoning the Paris Climate Accord is counter to the

collective voices of 194 nations on earth, all recognized scientific institutions, our universities, our religious leaders, our military, our businesses large and small, and our citizenry who overwhelmingly supported staying in the Paris Climate Accord. From a purely economic growth stand point it is difficult to ascertain why the United States would turn its back on a \$6 trillion renewable energy growth industry whose job forecasts exceed all other sectors. Why would we cede these jobs of the future to our competitors?

It was difficult for me to see how this withdrawal could co-exist with Reagan's vision of the United States as the world's indispensable nation, the world's "light on a hill." It suddenly occurred to me that when Reagan referred to the United States as the "light on the hill" he was not stating that he the president, the actions of our government or our military were the light, but rather that as a result of the tireless efforts of the American people to stand up for what's right and just, that we the American people, are the light.

In that vein I am more optimistic than ever that we will meet and exceed what is required to address the defining issue of our time, climate change. We must divorce ourselves of the notion that a politician or technological innovation is going to come and save us in the nick of time. We must all grab the wheel of history and become the leaders necessary to create a world of which we can all be proud to leave to our children.

Working to have the city of South Lake Tahoe commit to 100 percent renewable electricity was not an effort of us vs. them, but an effort of we. We as a community came together to demand that our homes and businesses be lighted by renewable electricity. We came together to say that not only is renewable electricity the economically wise decision, but we understand that climate change is diminishing our snow pack and impacting the clarity of our lake and we will take a stand.

My optimism is rooted in the understanding that together we can accomplish anything. In the coming months we will work with many partners to push this 100 percent renewable commitment to more cities and counties beyond South Lake Tahoe's borders and we will need your help.

In the end I am optimistic because I understand as we grab the wheel of history, and tirelessly work toward bringing about positive change, that we are in fact the "light on the hill" and our brightest hour is on the horizon.

I look forward to working with each and everyone one of you during these exciting times and please contact me if you would like to get involved in this positive change because we are all in this together.

Nick Exline is chair of the South Lake Tahoe 100% Renewable Committee.

4-wheel drive group looking for members

Lake Tahoe Hi-Lo's 4WD Club is having a meet and greet membership drive June 3 from 9am-2pm in the TJ Maxx parking lot in South Lake Tahoe.

The nonprofit promotes family recreation, social activities, enjoyment and protection of natural resources. The group meets the fourth Tuesday of each month at Round Table Pizza at the Y in South Lake Tahoe from 6-8pm. Non-members are welcome.

The meeting is always open to the public as are all of their club outings. Families coming to the Tahoe basin to enjoy

“wheeling” in a safe and supportive manner are welcome to participate.

Search warrant issued in Humane Society case

The investigation into the alleged embezzlement at Lake Tahoe Humane Society escalated this week with officers confiscating potential evidence from the former director’s residence.

Niki Congero has been accused by the nonprofit’s board of taking **more than \$100,000**. She has not worked at the Humane Society since being fired March 31.

South Lake Tahoe police detectives on June 1 took a couch and financial documents as evidence. Furniture is an item that showed up on the nonprofit’s credit card bill. Congero had access to the card at that time.

Congero has been posting garage sale dates on the Facebook page South Lake Tahoe & Around the Lake Garage Sale.

Congero remains free while the investigation is ongoing. She has not been charged with any crime.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Coasties hope to avoid deadly Tahoe boating season



Safety is a concern for motorized and non-motorized boat users at Lake Tahoe. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Terra Breeden

Summer weather has finally arrived in Lake Tahoe and with it, recreational users are heading to the lake, rivers and beaches to enjoy the water. But this past winter, with its record-breaking snow accumulation, has caused extremely low water temperatures, high water levels and hazards where previously there was none. Users of motorized and non-motorized vessels should be extra cautious this season.

“Lake conditions change quickly and that’s something to understand. Water temperatures are rather bracing and altitude also plays a part in how people feel in the water,” Carol Chaplin, president-CEO of Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

It is important to exercise caution on the water whether

conditions are different or not. But this summer, cold water temperatures may last longer due to the vast amount of snow lingering in the upper elevations.

“Recreational users such as boaters, rafters and beach-users should remember that snow melt water is very cold and hypothermia can develop quickly if exposed to it for even short periods of time,” Lisa Herron, with the USFS Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, said.

According to the U.S. Coast Guard, the water temperature in Lake Tahoe will remain frigid until late July, making it dangerous for recreationalists. Last year, there were nine boating fatalities on Lake Tahoe. Seven of those victims were on kayaks or paddleboards.

Nationwide from 2015 to 2016, deaths increased 12 percent from 626 to 701, injuries increased 11.1 percent from 2,613 to 2,903, and the total number of accidents increased 7.3 percent from 4,158 to 4,463, according to the Coast Guard.

“The No. 1 cause of fatality was water-shock and hypothermia,” Luke Berghuis, petty officer first class of the Tahoe City Coast Guard, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Most of the fatalities last year were in less than 10 feet of water, and the water temperature is going to remain colder this year due to snow melt. It’s going to take a long time for this snow to melt off.”

According to Berghuis, paddleboarders are a main concern of the Coast Guard because often they don’t wear life jackets or leashes.

“Paddleboarders are our highest fatality rate on the lake,” Berghuis said.



Safety and advice

Beach users

- Plan ahead – Check out beaches ahead of time so you know what to expect and whether or not your favorite area is open. If you can't get to your favorite place, think of it as an opportunity to explore new areas.
- Arrive early – In order to secure a spot for your outing, you may want to arrive early, particularly on busy weekends. Have a backup location in mind in case some areas are too crowded.
- Check out – California State Parks and Lake Tahoe Nevada State Parks for advice about what to

expect when visiting their locations.

Boaters

- If you are on a kayak or paddleboard, always wear a lifejacket.
- Have a float plan.
- Know where you are going and where you are on the lake. If you need to be rescued, it is important to know where you are and have familiarization with the area.
- Make sure your radio or cellphone is charged. For cellphones, put in a dry bag to keep it operable in case you do fall in or capsize.

High wind and choppy waves can knock a person off of a paddleboard and make it nearly impossible to get out of the freezing water. Lake Tahoe is well-known for its windy afternoons, and when the wind picks up, the Coast Guard receives a high volume of emergency calls, usually between 4 and 6pm.

According to Berghuis, watercraft-borne authorities such as the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department will be issuing tickets to paddleboarders and kayakers who don't have a life vest. The fine can be up to \$350. They don't have to be wearing it, but it needs to be close at hand, easy to reach.

"The sheriff's office will be pushing that this year because of the high number of paddleboard fatalities last year," Berghuis said.

Another danger boaters should be aware of are obscured boulders in the water. The water level of the lake is currently at 6,228 feet, that's 5 feet above the natural rim. While high water levels are great for a lake recovering from a

four-year drought, huge boulders which were once exposed in places like Sand Harbor and Logan Shoals are now completely under water, some just inches below the surface. Boaters can easily run into rocks in many areas and should scan the water carefully when boating near the shoreline.

The rising water has also diminished Tahoe's beaches, eating up the shoreline and everything on it. Logs that were previously on the shore are now bobbing in the water, creating more hazards for boaters to be wary of.

"All of the dead trees that used to be on the beach are now floating, so there's a lot of debris in the water," Berghuis said.

But there is some good news for Lake Tahoe boaters: every one of the launches and marinas on the lake will be open this summer. Last year, only three launches were fully operating.

However, the Coast Guard anticipates that there will be less boating activity on the lake than in previous years.

Lake Tahoe isn't the only lake in California with high water levels, all of the lakes and reservoirs are overflowing with water, and brimming lakes such as Folsom Lake are expected to draw visitors away from Lake Tahoe.

"Because all of the lakes are full, people will stay down in the valleys and recreate in reservoirs. We hope that will cut down on Lake Tahoe visitors this year," Berghuis said.

Whitewater is a danger for river rafters and hikers exploring the backcountry. This year, Lake Tahoe's rivers and streams are swollen and flooded with high water moving at breakneck speed. Recreationalists should exercise care when rafting or crossing the rivers.

"Avoid areas that are flooded, especially if the water is flowing fast, and try not to cross swift-moving rivers and

streams. Water levels can fluctuate rapidly, so a stream crossed earlier in the day may not be able to be crossed later in the afternoon as the temperature rises,” Herron said. “In the backcountry, hikers may encounter snow bridges across rivers. Be sure to test them thoroughly before crossing as they might collapse under you weight.”

But for adventure-seekers, the rushing water in Lake Tahoe’s rivers and streams adds fun and spectacle to their experience.

“On a positive note, waterfalls are impressive right now and the rafting season may be extended longer than in previous years,” Herron said.

Letter: Ex-director defends EDC senior services

Publisher’s note: The following email was sent to the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors on May 18 from John Litwinovich, El Dorado County Community Services-Human Services Department director from 1982-2007.

Dear members of the board,

Three years ago I sent your board a message regarding our county’s senior services. In light of current fiscal challenges, I am resending it. The background information on Community Services is important for budget discussions, as is the fact that you do have options for reducing costs and strengthening services.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions. Thank you.

John Litwinovich

December 12, 2014

Members of the board,

During challenging budgetary times, talk of austerity measures and cuts in services are the norm. As you are a board in transition facing such challenges, the following is a brief history and some thoughts on Community Services, your vitally important safety net for seniors.

Our county's senior programs, among the best in California, were developed over four decades. Prior board members, including Dub Walker, Bob Dorr, Pat Lowe, John Upton, Jack Sweeney ... indeed all of your predecessors to varying degrees ... worked before you to build the compassionate, efficient countywide service delivery system that you now support. Millions of senior nutrition meals have been served, thousands of at risk elders have been protected through senior legal services, tens of thousands have been assisted by housing programs, utility bill support, home weatherization, senior day care and a host of other services that help seniors remain healthy, independent and in their own homes.

Few things the county does touch as many lives in such meaningful ways on an ongoing basis. And at the heart of every effort have been the staff and volunteers of Community Services, some of your most dedicated, knowledgeable and hard working employees and community members.

Thirty-five years ago, the Board of Supervisors took steps to ensure resources went directly into services. Instead of accepting a future under the Sacramento Regional Area Agency on Aging, and instead of contracting out with other entities, the board fought for autonomy and local control, reducing three potential administrative layers to one, and created our own direct service Area Agency on Aging.

In 1982, again placing seniors first, the board reaffirmed its commitment to having services provided by county employees. Two decades later, El Dorado County was at the forefront in the writing and passage of state legislation to ensure local control throughout California for federal energy assistance and other resources so vital to elders.

Over time, board members, staff and volunteers worked not only to expand service sites, but to build community facilities to better serve our residents.

That's four decades of building something very special, placing our elders first, in a caring, compassionate and cost-effective manner.

Times change. While the inspiration of wonderful advocates from the past like Moni Gilmore and Genevieve Stirnman lives on, new, well-intentioned folks are arriving with their own ideas. For your sake, and theirs, the following are suggestions regarding senior services, both missteps to avoid and good measures to embrace.

Do not fall for the argument that someone else can or will provide these services better, more efficiently, or even less expensively. Audits and studies have shown our programs are run very efficiently with excellent quality services. Perhaps alternative providers may be found who might, in the short run, do something remotely comparable on the cheap. Hopefully, no one will propose replacing our excellent senior services delivery system with something less.

Do not fall for the misguided argument that senior programs place the county at risk, and thus should be contracted out to reduce that risk. Obviously, the county already accepts much higher risks in providing other services. However, more importantly, each year there are thousands of elders in our county who are at risk of abuse, exploitation, hunger, isolation and a host of other challenges addressed by senior

legal, nutrition and other programs. Does county government exist to serve and protect its citizens, or simply to serve and diminish risks to itself? Beware of anyone who advocates for the latter.

Do not fall for the argument that the only way to meet budget goals is to cut or contract out vital services. This is not so, as explained below.

If you have not done so already, go and visit Community Services. Meet the front line senior nutrition staff, volunteers and, most importantly, the elders being served. Tag along with a volunteer on their home delivered meal route and see who's being helped. Talk with the senior legal staff and learn about the wide range of cases and the tremendous impact this service has for at risk elders. Visit senior day care and meet the participants. Every place you go, talk with the staff, the volunteers and the service recipients. Become an advocate in continuing to strengthen the service system.

If you hear that the programs are too expensive to operate, begin (and end) by asking how much is being spent on administrative overhead. The programs themselves are primarily federally and state funded, substantially supplemented by donations, fees and county support. Direct service staff are paid modestly and minor adjustments in service levels have always been made in response to board priorities and fluctuations in funding.

Unfortunately, in recent years, especially with the development of a super agency structure, administrative overhead has gone through the roof. Historically, Community Services functioned best with a small team of involved administrators who knew the programs, the staff, the volunteers and the service recipients. There were few layers of bureaucracy and little duplication of effort. Services were driven by senior needs rather than institutional needs. Current fiscal challenges are due not to direct service staff,

who remain as capable and dedicated as ever, but to a top heavy and costly administrative structure. Again, it comes down to weighing the needs of citizens versus the perceived needs of a very substantial county and agency administrative structure. You do have a choice.

Begin with the premise that continuing to strengthen senior services, rather than beginning to dismantle them, is an administrative rather than a personnel challenge. In Community Services, you have fine employees from the lowest paid staff to the agency director. Perhaps there are untried ways of substantially reducing overhead in the current organizational structure. If not, Community Services needs to be allowed to again thrive on its own as a separate, thrifty department. In either case, our county's seniors need your continued support and commitment to maintaining services.

In Community Services you have been entrusted with something special, a true gem among the many fine departments of county government. Please oversee it carefully, as our seniors are depending on you.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

**John Litwinovich, Community Services-Human Services Department
director 1982-2007**

Letter: EDC takes issue with column

To the community,

Re: Seniors get shaft in EDC budget (Opinion, June 1, 2017),

the following misleading information presented as fact must be put right.

Paragraph 1: “....a program that is funded about 65 percent by the county, and by about 35 percent private donations and a small federal government grant.”

Clarification: Senior Legal receives approximately \$80,000 in donations each year and approximately \$250,000 in general fund money.

Paragraph 2: “This program provides direct legal services to seniors in landlord/tenant issues/estate questions/elder abuse/long-term care planning and protecting seniors from being taken advantage of. The service is now offered without charge.”

Clarification: Information that is relevant but not included is that these services are provided without any verification of the individual’s ability to pay for the services. Data relative to the income of senior legal clients has been requested, but not provided, and due to attorney client privilege, even if this information is available, county administration is unable to access the information directly. Taxpayer money may well be going to fund free legal services to wealthy seniors who are able to pay.

Paragraph 3: “....there are no position cuts to county administration.”

Correction: The recommended budget includes a net county cost reduction of approximately 8.2 percent within the general government functional group, which is primarily county administration. In addition, many high level administrative positions in the Community Development Agency, including the CDA director, assistant director of finance and administration, administrative secretary, administrative services officer and senior department analyst, have been cut from the budget, with all of the work being absorbed by other staff. The Chief Administrative Office is absorbing most of this work without any increases to net county cost.

Paragraph 5: "The programs that provide direct service to clients are the first ones to have their budgets reduced or cut, while overhead costs to these programs continually go up, often due to increased administrative costs."

Clarification: In FY 2014-15, shortly after the creation of the Health and Human Services Agency, the administrative overhead rate was 36 percent. This rate has declined the last several years and in the fiscal year 2017-18 recommended budget it is 27 percent, a 9 percent decrease.

Paragraph 8: "At this point, adding administrative positions is a mistake. The costly creation of agency level administrative positions is a principal reason senior services are in jeopardy."

Clarification: The Health and Human Services Agency is adding an assistant director of administration and finance position, but deleting a chief assistant director position. The salaries of each position are identical so there is no increase to the budget. Instead it is simply replacing one executive level administrative position that had a clinical focus, with an executive level finance position due to the complexity of the funding streams in HHSA and to better compliment (sic) the skill set of the director.

Carla Hass, El Dorado County public information officer