

# Astronomy talk at South Lake Tahoe Library

Dan Ruby, director of the Fleischmann Planetarium, will be in Tahoe on Saturday explaining the science behind SOFIA (Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy).

His PowerPoint presentation will focus on infrared astronomy with some safe sun viewing activities, and giveaways too. ☐

Ruby is active in ongoing planetary research involving extraterrestrial caves and trans-Neptunian objects. He is trained as a NASA ambassador in heliophysics and airborne infrared astronomy. He will be talking about tools scientists use to explore the vast universe beyond Earth's atmosphere, and what can be learned by looking outside visible light.

The free talk is June 3, 10am at the South Lake Tahoe Library on Rufus Allen Boulevard.

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## Trails day all about volunteers putting in work

National Trails Day, always on the first Saturday in June, allows organizations and agencies around the country to foster stewardship of trails and introduce people to volunteer trail work opportunities.

Tahoe Area Mountain Biking Association, Tahoe Rim Trail Association and Biggest Little Trail Stewardship are joining together to host a large volunteer trail day on the Thomas Creek Trail in the Galena area of Reno. The work is performed

in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service and Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space by volunteer crew leaders trained in trail maintenance techniques.

Volunteers will be performing tasks ranging from rerouting trail around damaged sections, maintaining trail drainage, and conducting annual maintenance on the bridges over Thomas Creek. Wear long-sleeves, long pants, and sturdy shoes and bring drinking water, work gloves, sunglasses and sunscreen. All tools are provided. Hard hats are provided, or a bike helmet may also be worn if preferred.

Preregistration is required to plan crew leaders, tools, food and drinks. Do so **online**.

The workday is June 3, 8:30am-12:30pm. Meet at the Thomas Creek trailhead located at the very end of Timberline Drive.

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## **Strong opposition to NDOT Hwy. 50 lane reduction**

**By Kathryn Reed**

ZEPHYR COVE – Safety, according to transportation officials, is the primary reason they are looking at reducing the number of lanes on Highway 50 between Stateline and the intersection at Highway 28.

For many of the nearly 250 who attended a meeting Wednesday night about the proposals, the idea of one lane in each direction seemed counterintuitive to increasing safety. Twenty-five people spoke at the May 31 meeting.



Bill Killebrew, center, on May 31 echoes the sentiment of most at the meeting – don't reduce the lanes on Highway 50. Photo/Kathryn Reed

#### **Comments included:**

- Needing a light at Warrior Way. (None of the diagrams showed this as a potential reality.)
- Wanting the data by NDOT to be more detailed; as in where did the accidents occur, what were the conditions and more.
- Work with the U.S. Forest Service to build bike trails out of the vehicle travel lane.
- Pilot options before they are permanent.
- Praise and criticism for roundabouts.
- Make the highway function like Skyland with turn lanes and frontage street.
- Being worried about future bottlenecks with projects like Edgewood Lodge, Zalanta, Tahoe Beach Club and Sierra Colina coming on board.
- Concern about emergency vehicles getting through on smaller roads and through roundabouts.

- Belief the crash numbers are low because many don't report accidents, especially solo spinouts.
- The need for chain enforcement.
- Remembering when the second tunnel at Cave Rock was built because there was a need for more roadway even in 1957.
- Believing a reduction in lanes will increase congestion.
- There are areas where the highway should be widened.
- Addressing parking in the beach areas will alleviate problems on the highway in summer.
- Left turn lanes are needed without sacrificing other lanes.
- Build a pedestrian overpass.
- This is a cycling destination, but the current highway is unfriendly to those on two wheels because of non-existent bike lanes and drains in area where cyclists ride, thus forcing them into the vehicle lane.
- Frustration with no options presented keeping the four lanes, and none without a bike lane component.
- Public transit is needed.
- Add concrete medians.

What wasn't brought up is the Stateline-to-Stateline bike trail that will go from the South Shore to Crystal Bay. Right now it ends at Round Hill Pines. It is and will continue to be a multi-use path set away from the road.

Nine poster boards scattered about the multipurpose room at Zephyr Cove Elementary School showed different stretches of this roadway and what they could look like in the future. All



received more no votes, but, still, plenty of people supported the concepts.

NDOT's ideas range from a roundabout at highways 50 and 28, and one at Zephyr Cove Resort; to one lane through the tunnel that would include a bike lane; to revamping access at Cave Rock.



Possible lane reconfiguration on the highway at Warrior Way. Photo/LTN

Plans call for acceleration and deceleration lanes to get motorists onto and off of the highway in a safer manner, especially for residents with streets and driveways along the highway. Designated parking would be constructed. Left turn lanes would be added. Right hand storage lanes are proposed; this would allow traffic to flow around the bottlenecks, which are primarily at beaches.

NDOT doesn't have one plan. It's possible components of the

various proposals will be used, along with the public's ideas.

According to Nevada Department of Transportation officials, on this section of Highway 50 in the last seven years there have been:

- 682 crashes
- 404 involved property damage
- 382 involved injuries
- 12 were fatalities.

"This is why we are here tonight – the crash data," Kent Steele, senior designer with NDOT, told the packed room. "If we implement some of the components, we can potentially decrease crashes by 40 percent in some areas."



Traffic on Highway 50 on May 30 in mid-afternoon.  
Photo/Kathryn Reed

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### Notes:

- Send comments before June 16 to [ksteele@dot.nv.gov](mailto:ksteele@dot.nv.gov).
- This scoping period could last nine months.
- NDOT will have another public meeting, probably in the first quarter of 2018, to share ideas based on public feedback.

- The design phase will take one to three years, with construction another one to three years.
  - Repaving of Highway 50 will occur in the next three to five years, and NDOT wants some of the news ideas implemented at the same time.
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## **Opinion: Seniors get shaft in EDC budget**

**Updated 9:12am:**

**By Larry Weitzman**

A day or two before the official release of the El Dorado County budget, informed sources have told this columnist that among the budget cuts will be the elimination of EDC's senior legal program, a program that is funded about 65 percent by the county, and by about 35 percent private donations and a small federal government grant.

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. According to my sources. the entire senior legal staff will be cut.



Larry Weitzman

While there are rumored to be other large cuts in the EDC budget such as to the Community Development Agency, there are no positions cuts to the county administration. The county recently spent more than the entire senior legal staff budget in the hiring of a new county public information officer and filling the position of the assistant director of administration and finance for Health and Human Services.

The former mayor of Placerville and now the chair of Friends of Seniors, Kathi Lishman, said the following when learning of the elimination of senior legal: "I am shocked to hear about senior legal, as it seems to have come out of nowhere, and is quite alarming. The services they provide to EDC seniors are extremely important. Senior legal has received about \$95,000 in donations from the community in the past 12 months, and meets with about 2,000 clients a year. Some of the elderly are home bound or institutionalized.

"They also provide legal resources for adult protective services. 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.

"The Board of Supervisors cannot make these cuts in a vacuum."

In a phone call with Board of Supervisors Chair Shiva Frentzen, she was also alarmed by the proposed complete cut of county support for senior legal. Frentzen says she does not want that to happen and it needs be examined further.

Former El Dorado County Community Services-Human Services director for 25 years (1982-2007), John Litwinovich, had the following to say of the proposed cuts: "At this point, I think adding administrative positions is a mistake. The costly creation of agency level administrative positions is the principal reason senior services are in jeopardy. Now is not the time to be dismantling the needed senior continuum of care prior boards developed over decades. Rather, it's time to reconsider administrative layers and positions that have been added in recent years, positions that have drawn resources away from service.

"Priority should be given to those county employees who directly serve the public, be they sheriff's deputies, road maintenance workers, front desk clerks, kitchen staff who prepare meals for home bound seniors, or senior legal attorneys, on whom so many vulnerable elders depend. These and other direct service positions, rather than an ample administrative structure, constitute county government's *raison d'être*."

*Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.*

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## **Nev. lawmakers vote to create Tahoe sewer authority**

A bill that would create the Douglas County Lake Tahoe Sewer Authority is awaiting Gov. Brian Sandoval's signature.

The Legislature has voted to abolish the 64-year-old Douglas County Sewer District No. 1 in favor of the new agency that would have more restrictive powers.



The original entity was formed by the state to ensure the Stateline casinos had a way of getting rid of their sewage.

The district in 2016 was accused by the Douglas County district attorney of violating open meeting and election laws.

The new agency would be governed by a member of each of the three districts it serves as well as two members appointed by Douglas County.

The sewer district had been governed by three board members; two casino executives and a rep from Edgewood Companies.

In addition to the casinos and Edgewood properties, the sewer district has more than 5,000 residential connections on the South Shore.

*– Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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## **Teen dies after falling while hiking at Emerald Bay**

A 14-year-old girl died Wednesday after falling about 50 feet near Emerald Bay.

An off-duty police officer started CPR before she was transported to Barton Memorial Hospital in South Lake Tahoe. The teenager, though, had sustained fatal injuries.

The incident occurred just after noon on May 31.

El Dorado County sheriff's deputies said she was hiking near the Vikingsholm trail.

What authorities aren't releasing:

- Victim's hometown.
- If she was someplace she shouldn't have been since the Vikingsholm trail is paved.
- If she was really at Eagle Falls, which are raging and the rocks are slippery there.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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## Chamber group focusing on local retail

The Retail Industry Group of the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce is looking for budding or established retailers to join its monthly strategy sessions.

The mission of this group is to encourage growth in the retail industry by promoting buying locally and by providing resources for marketing, education, and support throughout the retail community.

June's Retail Industry Group meeting will host city of South Lake Tahoe experts to discuss sign ordinances requirements.

The meeting is June 1 at 8am at Tahoe Mountain Lab. Those interested in attending should email [emily@tahoechamber.org](mailto:emily@tahoechamber.org).

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# Why some slot machine themes just don't work

By Thomas Moore, Las Vegas Sun

You would think it would be a sure-fire hit in Nevada; a slot machine with a Frank Sinatra theme.

It was unveiled in 2001 when then-Las Vegas Mayor Oscar Goodman, along with Sinatra's daughter, Tina, made Dec. 12 Frank Sinatra Day.

But sometimes, what seems like a great slot theme just doesn't pan out, industry experts say.

Olaf Vancura, vice president of game development for slot maker Mikohn Gaming (which eventually became part of IGT) and other gaming companies, said gameplay is paramount. To be successful, a slot machine must offer players entertainment and escape, Vancura said. If it doesn't, no theme will save it, he added.

**[Read the whole story](#)**

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## Driver leaves scene after hitting bear in Incline

A bear had to be euthanized Wednesday after it was hit by a vehicle on Highway 28.

Washoe County sheriff's deputies responded to a report of an injured bear lying in the roadway south of Incline Village at



approximately 12:40am May 31. The 3-year-old female bear was in the Memorial Point area south of Sand Harbor.

The bear was breathing but unable to move. Deputies consulted with a Nevada Department of Wildlife biologist by phone as he responded to the location and they determined that the most humane course of action would be to dispatch the bear in order to stop it from suffering.

Anyone who may have information about this incident is asked to contact the sheriff's department at 775.328.3350 or Secret Witness at 775.322.4900.

*– Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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## **Tahoe casino win on the rise in April**

Casinos at both ends of the lake had a better April compared to the state.

Stateline casinos saw their revenues increase 4.55 percent from 2016, while North Shore was up 10.97 percent.

Nevada's gaming revenue of \$886,528,810 in April was 1.19 percent higher than a year ago.

*– Lake Tahoe News staff report*