

Opinion: Welcome to Joeville, California

By Joe Mathews

A startup founder asked me: What would you do if you were starting a California city?

My first answer: Get my head examined.



Joe Mathews

For 40 years, the state government and California voters have steadily reduced the revenues and limited the discretion of municipal governments. Our newest cities—like Menifee in Riverside County—have struggled to survive.

Then I reconsidered. No, I don't believe in the advanced digital cities that technologists at Google or Y Combinator want to conjure. But maybe you could form a successful California city—by exploiting California's present-day realities, rather than bowing to them.

I certainly know how I wouldn't start a new city: by electing a city government, making laws, or hiring the police and firefighters whose salaries and benefits swallow municipal budgets whole. And I wouldn't build housing to attract residents, at least not at first.

Instead, I'd start my California city—call it Joeville—by bringing on board the most important person in any California

city: the developer.

Spit out your coffee if you must, but cities thrive or wither by the quality of their developers. California laws on open meetings greatly restrict the power of public officials to talk freely and legally with each other. As a result, developers become vital communication hubs, the head coaches through which municipal players communicate and plan.

What would my developer develop first? If you want a great California city, you should start with a research university.

It's no accident that highly successful Irvine got a University of California campus in 1965, six years before the city incorporated in 1971. Universities transform smaller towns. La Jolla was a Navy retirement village before it got a UC campus and became an international center for technology.

Universities perform many roles: They are economic engines, provide a look for their cities, and address social challenges. If you doubt their impact, consider San Bernardino and Riverside, as James and Deborah Fallows do in their new book, "Our Towns: A 100,000-Mile Journey Into the Heart of America."

"Riverside and San Bernardino were similar-sized cities with similar economic prospects at the end of World War II," they write. "Their prospects began diverging in the 1960s—Riverside's up, San Bernardino's down—when Riverside was chosen as the site of a new University of California campus and San Bernardino was not."

I'd put Joeville's university in the city center, not on the outskirts as the UC did with its Merced campus. I'd have my university run the local school district—which would create an opportunity to start a teachers' college there.

With the schools in place, the developer could develop a tax base. Under California's misbegotten tax system, the best

cities are often those that can collect the most sales taxes. That's why retail-poor San Jose, for all its rich homeowners, has a poor city government, and the city of Cerritos, with its auto mall, is rich.

My city would be designed around the two highly attractive retailers that produce huge sales, and taxes: Costco and an Apple store. I'd try to attach the Apple store to a luxury hotel so that I could tax its rooms. too.

You probably think that, at this point, we'd establish a city government, to set up services. Think again. Local officials in California are so weak as to be useless. I'd rather have citizens take the lead.

California's preeminent expert on local participation, Pete Peterson, dean of Pepperdine University's School of Public Policy, offered a number of suggestions for Joeville. First, it should be a charter city with its own mission statement, drafted by citizens and recited annually. Peterson suggests residents should attend a multi-day "Citizens Academy" where they would learn the basics of municipal government, including budgeting, so they could run the place themselves.

Peterson says that Joeville could increase citizen engagement through its design. To encourage neighbors to get to know each other, city code might require porches to be built on the fronts of houses, with no attached garages.

Once Joeville's citizens are engaged, we'd be free to set up whatever municipal departments are required. Joeville wouldn't be afraid to contract out services, especially expensive police and fire, so as to have more money to spend on libraries, parks and recreation.

Now, you're probably thinking: Wouldn't Joeville be stopped in its tracks by California regulation and litigation? Yes, which is why we'd lobby state legislators to have the entire city declared a stadium—not for sports, but for civic

experimentation. The state, you see, routinely gives regulatory exemptions to stadiums.

Joeville still needs financing. In the meantime, California's nearly 500 cities, struggling under the state's fiscal and governing restrictions, might adopt Joeville's civic motto: "You'll Never Win If You Play By California's Rules."

Joe Mathews writes the Connecting California column for Zócalo Public Square.

CDC: Suicide rate on the incline in U.S.

By Melissa Healy, Los Angeles Times

More than a decade of steadily rising rates have made suicide the nation's 10th leading cause of death and one of only three causes of death – including Alzheimer's disease and drug overdoses – that are increasing in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In a report that examines trends in suicide at the state level from 1999 to 2016, the CDC reports that suicide rates have increased in nearly all states. In half of the states, the agency found the rate at which people took their own lives rose more than 30 percent.

In releasing the report, one day after fashion designer Kate Spade was found dead by suicide in New York, CDC officials underscored that more than half the people who died by suicide – 54 percent – did not have a known diagnosed mental health condition at the time of their death.

Read the whole story

Pot businesses are on a hiring spree

By David Goldstein and Anita Chabria, Sacramento Bee

Eight years ago, Samantha Miller was earning six figures a year as a product developer for a LED lighting company in Northern California when a high school friend called to ask a favor. Would Miller be able to help her friend's boss at a medical marijuana dispensary figure out how to use a new machine purchased to analyze the quality of pot?

Miller passed on the job, but offered some free advice. With her background in machinery design and lab supervision, she told the dispensary folks: "You need (to hire) a scientist because you are going to ruin that piece of equipment if you don't know how to run it."

The dispensary owner ignored her warning and sure enough, Miller soon received a call that the machine had gone kaput. Fed up, the owner offered to give the high-tech device to Miller if she could repair it – and would be willing to test the dispensary's marijuana for free.

Read the whole story

South Shore fundraiser for metastatic breast cancer

If you know someone who has died from breast cancer, they died from metastatic breast cancer.

“Metastatic” means the cancer has escaped the breast and traveled to distant sites, like bones, lungs, liver, or brain. Cancer that stays in the breast does not kill.

Approximately 6 percent of initial breast cancer diagnosis are metastatic, and approximately 28 percent of women and men with early stage breast cancer will become metastatic; the median life expectancy after a diagnosis of metastatic breast cancer is 36 months, and in 2018 more than 41,000 Americans will die due to metastatic breast cancer.

Despite this reality, the large breast cancer fundraisers only give a small percentage of their research funds to studying ways to help the already metastasized patient. Many experts believe we are on the cusp of making metastatic breast cancer a chronic disease, if only there were more money to do the research needed to develop effective treatments.

METAvivor, a nonprofit organization with a volunteer board (the majority of whom have metastatic breast cancer themselves), directs 100 percent of donations to such metastatic research, through a vigorous scientific peer-review process.

There will be a fundraising concert at Kahle Community Park in Stateline on June 25 from 6-9pm. Ike and Martin will provide the music. There will be food available. Bring your own beverage that is not in a glass container. No dogs allowed.

Minimum donation is \$20.

Damage being mitigated; work continues at Emerald Bay

By Kathryn Reed

The contractor doing work for Caltrans near Emerald Bay has been allowed to continue the project after regulators found employees potentially violating the permit by degrading the natural environment.

“A TRPA inspector visited the site (Friday) afternoon and found that adequate protection measures have been put in place as requested, and the project can proceed,” Tom Lotshaw with TRPA told *Lake Tahoe News*. “TRPA will continue to work with Caltrans and California State Parks to assess the disturbance and agree on a cleanup and restoration plan, and TRPA is continuing to pursue its investigation to determine if any civil penalties for code or permit violations will be pursued.”

If the bi-state regulatory agency decides to assess fines, it can be up to \$5,000 per infraton, per day – which means the damages could be substantial.

Stewart Engineering out of Redding is the firm that is being accused of not having its erosion control measures in place. Workers were caught **on video** laughing as a boulder took out a tree.

“The day we were informed about this incident taking place, our resident engineer on the project called the project

manager for Stewart Engineering to discuss what happened and find out what he knew about the incident. No one from Caltrans staff was on scene during the filming of the boulder going over the hill,” Steve Nelson with Caltrans told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We immediately contacted a local arborist to visit the jobsite with us and inspect all the damage to trees below the wall that could have occurred due to this project. The arborist has put together a report for us, detailing the damage and severity of the injuries to several trees below the wall due to any rocks rolling down the slope, along with a plan to mitigate that damage. The arborist will be employed to carry out that plan as soon as the work on the wall is complete.”

The goal is to have the project completed on or about June 20.

Nelson said Caltrans has an approved plan to stabilize the slope below the wall, and to plant a number of sapling sugar pines below the wall. TRPA is reviewing those plans.

Upstart candidates hope to send political shockwaves in Nev.

By Ramona Giwargis, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Going against the “political establishment” is a risky move in Nevada, a purple state where every hard-fought election could shift control of the Statehouse and on Capitol Hill.

Yet some Nevada candidates are running grass-roots campaigns against opponents with much deeper pockets.

State Sen. Patricia “Pat” Spearman is one of five Democratic candidates in the 4th Congressional District, where former Rep. Steven Horsford has plenty of campaign cash and the backing of Nevada’s largest union.

Read the whole story

Verizon looking to improve coverage in SLT

The South Lake Tahoe Planning Commission on June 21 will consider five special use permits for Verizon Wireless.

The company wants to install small scale antennas to existing power poles and supporting equipment in the city’s right-of-way.

The locations are: 1983 H St., 1027 Herbert St., 3086 Oakland Ave., 780 Merced Ave., and 969 Bigler Ave.

The meeting will begin at 3pm at Lake Tahoe Airport.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Cat adoption fees in El Dorado County lowered

For a limited time, El Dorado County Animal Services has lowered its adoption fee for adult cats at its shelters in

Diamond Springs and South Lake Tahoe. Adult cats over the age of 1 year can be adopted at either shelter for \$20 through the end of July.

All adoptable cats at the shelters are spayed or neutered, microchipped, vaccinated, tested for leukemia and given a health exam.

The Animal Services shelter in Diamond Springs is located at 6435 Capitol Ave. and is open Monday through Saturday from 9:30am-4:30pm. The shelter in South Lake Tahoe is located at 1120 Shakori Drive and is open Monday through Saturday from 9:30am to noon and 1-4:30pm.

Animal Services has additional information, including pictures of adoptable animals, on its **website**.

Homebrew competition to benefit homeless

Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless will be hosting the Tahoe Beach Bash, featuring the fourth annual Homebrew for the Homeless.

This family-friendly event at Tahoe Beach Retreat in South Lake Tahoe will feature live music, homebrew beer competition, lakeside barbecue, bounce house, local vendors, child-friendly obstacle course, and other entertaining activities for people of all ages.

It will be July 28 from noon-4pm.

All proceeds from the event will be used to support Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless. TCH opened the South Lake Tahoe

warm room, the first temporary emergency winter shelter in the area, for the third winter on Dec. 24, 2017. Since inception it has served 298 individuals and provided more than 7,300 shelter bed nights. In 2017, 26 percent of guests were employed and 87 percent of guests were living in the South Lake Tahoe area when they became homeless.

Early ticket pricing is available. General entry tickets are \$20 per person, which includes all activities and live music, as well as food and non-alcoholic beverages. Tickets for children under 12 are \$10, with children 5 and under free. Tickets for the poker run which includes homebrew tasting (open to those 21 and over) are \$40, including general entry.

For more information, to purchase tickets, or to enter the homebrew competition, go **online**.

Docs worry about ability to deal with mass casualty

By Kathryn Reed

If a mass casualty incident occurs on the South Shore, it is going to require the resources of neighboring medical facilities to treat the injured.

“In the event of a mass casualty incident, the main effort would be to ensure rapid transportation to the appropriate care centers,” Selwyn Lee, chief medical officer at Barton Health, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “This would involve field triage by emergency services as well as county assistance to bring in as much help as possible to our hospital. While we do have an outstanding trauma program in place, there are still

limitations and the health system could be overwhelmed quickly if the acuity of care is high.”

An advantage this area has over others is CalStar being based at Lake Tahoe Airport. CareFlight would also be called in during a tragedy. It is already backup to the primary helicopter ambulance. Plus, there would be ground transport.

Getting patients to another health care facility could be challenging or not even possible depending on the incident and the weather.

Barton has memoranda of understandings with UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento, Marshal Hospital in Placerville, Renown Medical Center in Reno and Carson Valley Medical Center.

Barton Memorial Hospital could treat about 20 people; though how busy the emergency room is at the time of the tragedy would be a factor.

Jenna Palacio with Barton said, “In any given large-scale emergency, incident command would dictate the action plan to prioritize, triage and neutralize the situation. Mass casualty incidents can overload even the most advanced medical centers. The key to providing the highest level of care to every patient in need is to utilize any and all available resources within the established trauma system.”

A poll done this spring by the American College of Emergency Physicians found that nine out of 10 emergency room doctors don’t believe their facilities are completely ready for major disasters.

Stats from the survey of 1,328 doctors include:

- 93 said their emergency room could not handle a surge in patients from a disaster;
- 49 percent labeled their hospital somewhat prepared;

- 90 percent said they would not have enough medication.

Barton has been a level III trauma center for three years. A team of doctors and staff is available around the clock to react to an event. One of the reasons this designation was sought is because of the remoteness of South Lake Tahoe.

“Trauma III designation recognizes Barton Hospital as a critical access point for patients seeking trauma care. Unlike other hospital facilities, trauma centers guarantee the resources for in-depth emergency care and the immediate availability of emergency medicine physicians, surgeons, nurses, lab and X-ray technicians, and life support equipment 24-hours a day,” surgeon Kim Evans told *LTN* in 2015.

Renown is a level two facility, while UC Davis Medical Center is a level one. These levels are usually found in urban centers.

Barton said advantages to the community with it being a trauma center include expanded blood bank capabilities, expedited patient evaluation, priority access to diagnostic technology, increased staff aptitude for traumatic injuries, training standards for care and response timing ensuring patients would be treated within a specific time frame.

Tourniquet training and education in the event of a mass shooting or other traumatic incident is provided by Barton to first responders through a program called Stop the Bleed.

“Uncontrolled bleeding is the No. 1 cause of preventable death from trauma. The greater the number of people who know how to control bleeding with an injured patient, the greater the chances of surviving that injury,” Palacio told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) is lobbying Congress to pass the Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation Act of 2018, with the

goal of the federal government taking a more active role in medical preparedness. It was introduced last month by Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C.

“Hospitals and emergency medical services continue to suffer significant gaps in disaster preparedness, as well as national drug shortages for essential emergency medications,” ACEP President Paul Kivela said in a press release. “These shortages can last for months, or longer, and constitute a significant risk to patients.”