

Disjointed efforts by Tahoe transit officials

By Kathryn Reed

The future of transportation is not going to be a smooth ride in Lake Tahoe.

While four speakers last week focused on technology and transportation, they all sounded like they are working in silos and not together.

What the public wanted based on questions was information about what is being done to lessen the tourist traffic, especially in residential areas on get-away day, and public transit in general.

None of the four speakers could deliver much in the way of satisfactory answers. They did acknowledge that without a functional transit system, people are going to stay in their individual vehicles. And without that local system, there is no reason to engage people in the Bay Area or Sacramento regions about taking some form of transit to get here or working on developing what the transit might be.

George Fink with Tahoe Transportation District, which runs the South Shore BlueGo bus system, admitted that Uber can do a better job than his agency. This is because BlueGo barely goes into residential areas.

As far as neighborhoods being overrun by tourists looking for a shortcut, the panel said that is a law enforcement issue and not something they will be dealing with. The only suggestion was to change the Caltrans owned reader boards.

Joe Marzocco with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency talked about all the data that is collected from people's cell

phones. A lot of this is done via Google maps and other apps people are using.

“A lot of third parties are collecting data, mostly from cell phones to track and forecast travel across the region,” Marzocco said.

TRPA will use the data as it updates its transportation plan.

Tahoe Transportation District collects data through an app called Swiftly. TTD collects data from riders who have the app – where they get on, off and how long the ride took.

TTD’s seven cameras on nearly every bus help collect data too. They aren’t just a safety tool. They register bumps and can tell when drivers take a corner too narrowly.

Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition’s technology is a bit more static. Through its website there is a bike map with different tools that allow users to find out where various types of trails are, if bike parking is available and other relevant information. Users may also add information.

Sherry Hao with the bike group said a new version of the map may come out this year.

Danielle Hughes, a land planning expert, spoke about the Connect Tahoe concept. It’s an idea she is trying to get people interested in that involves putting sensors in the ground and people then using an app to find open parking spaces. She talked about how much time is wasted finding a parking space and the emissions associated with that endeavor.

None of the four talked about the Living Lab at UNR that is being created in Reno, Sparks and Carson City. UNR researchers are using advanced-autonomous systems, computer sciences, synchronized mobility, robotics and civil engineering. Public transportation is the primary focus.

The initial research will explore how vehicles sense their

environment and communicate with other vehicles, infrastructure such as traffic signals and systems, and individual people through their mobile devices. Researchers are working toward safe, synchronized, zero-emission mobility systems.

The other technology that is new is being offered by Uber. The ride share company in mid-February plans to launch a website called Movement which will use Uber's data about routes and travel time from various cities.

Opinion: Civic duty involves clearing fire hydrants

By Bill Seline

Structure fires occur at the highest rates during the winter months. These house fires are usually caused by heating appliances like space heaters and woodstoves, according to the U.S. Fire Administration.

When the fire department responds to put out a house fire, the fire engine carries about 500 gallons of water, enough water to make an initial fire attack, but they quickly need a continuous water supply from a fire hydrant to extinguish the fire.



Bill Seline

Finding and connecting to a fire hydrant is one of the firefighters' first priorities. New mapping technology on fire engines has improved our ability to find hydrant locations more quickly, but getting to them when they are buried under heavy snow can be a challenge.

As you may have noticed, the recent storms have buried many of the over 4,000 fire hydrants in the Truckee Fire Protection District, as well as thousands of others in our sister districts across the Truckee-Tahoe region.

Fire crews have been working to clear snow from some of the priority hydrants on main roads, but it is impossible and not practical to clear snow from every hydrant after every storm.

In the event of a fire in your neighborhood, firefighters may spend valuable time searching for and digging out a hydrant when they could be doing other important tasks.

This is where you can help. Some citizens have informally "adopted a hydrant" in their neighborhood and take responsibility to clear snow three feet in all directions from the hydrant, as well as keeping it visible from the street. This is a great way to give back to your community and neighborhood.

I encourage you to find the fire hydrant near your house and clear the snow away after storms. This will improve the chances that the fire department can knock down a fire as quickly as possible.

Bill Seline is chief of the Truckee Fire Protection District.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Lake Tahoe Democrats are meeting Jan. 25, 6pm at Round Table Pizza at the Y in South Lake Tahoe. The agenda includes what other Democratic groups in the basin are doing, how to coordinate efforts, an update on the El Dorado County Central Committee, and goals for the future.
 - TOCCATA-Tahoe Symphony Orchestra is having two fundraisers – Feb. 11 at Genoa Golf Course and Feb 18 at a private home in Incline Village. For tickets and more information, go **online**.
 - Tahoe Regional Planning Agency is accepting nominations until March 31 for the Best in the Basin awards. The program annually recognizes and showcases projects that demonstrate exceptional planning, implementation, and compatibility with Lake Tahoe's environment and communities. More information and nomination forms are available **online**.
 - Zephyr Cove Library will be having a Broken Heart Hunt and Love Bug Craft event for children on Feb. 4 from 2-4pm. Children will craft little love bugs for Valentine's Day and will go on a hunt in the library for the other half of a broken heart.
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Liberty restores power in Truckee

Updated 10:35pm:

Power has been restored.

A good stretch of Northstar, Truckee and Glenshire are without power.

Liberty Utilities said these customer should expect rotating outages throughout the night and possibly into Wednesday morning due to a problem with NV Energy's North Truckee substation which feeds Liberty's distribution lines.

"We ask that North Lake Tahoe customers who do have service, or those that may have service restored intermittently, please conserve as any alternative temporary power source will not be able to support the full load," Liberty said in a statement.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Homewood man found deceased in snow

By Kathryn Reed

A Homewood man was found dead Tuesday morning, laying in the snow outside of his house.

Placer County sheriff's deputies found the body of Todd Michael Borchardt, 49, about 11am Jan. 24 covered in 5 to 6 inches of snow.

Deputies received a call from the PDQ Market in Tahoma saying a vehicle had been abandoned there. How many days isn't known. The vehicle was registered to Borchardt.

Looking at his residence the driveway, walkway and steps had not recently been shoveled. Lights were on and dogs were barking inside.

“We checked the house and found his cell phone and personal items. It didn’t look suspicious,” sheriff’s Sgt. Dave Hunt told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We don’t expect foul play.”

North Tahoe Fire was called to help look around the property. Using probes they were able to find the body.

An autopsy will be conducted.

Neither a shovel nor a snowblower was found in the vicinity of the body. Hunt also said it did not appear snow shedding from the roof was a factor.

Neighbors told detectives they had not seen Borchardt for a few days.

The market where the vehicle was located is walking distance to Borchardt’s residence on Emerald Circle. It is not known why he chose to leave the vehicle at the market.

Opinion: EDC supes OK questionable tax hike

By Larry Weitzman

Without one word of discussion, not one word, the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors voted in the morning session of their Jan. 24 meeting to send a letter of support to

substantially raise the taxes of every motorist of El Dorado County.



Larry Weitzman

Late Friday afternoon before the BOS meeting an addendum was placed on the consent calendar, item 38. The addendum said, "Chief Administrative Office recommending the board authorize the chair to sign the attached letters of support to Sen. Jim Beall and Assemblyman Jim Frazier, supporting SB1 and AB1 which would provide approximately \$10.1 million in additional funding for street and road maintenance to El Dorado County."

The use of the consent agenda is to quickly and summarily approve an agenda item without any discussion from BOS members or the public.

SB1 and AB1 will increase the gasoline tax by 12 cents a gallon (a 40 percent increase), diesel fuel by 20 cents and the vehicle registration fee by \$38 for conventional and hybrids cars and by \$100 for electric cars. Legislative analysts of the bill say it will raise \$7 billion and create a new bureaucracy. That new tax averages out to \$180 for every man, woman and child within the state. For El Dorado County that amounts to a cost of \$21 million or about double the amount of money the CAO says we will receive from this new tax.

If your family has two cars and you drive a total of 40,000 miles a year at 20 mpg the tax will cost that family \$240 extra is gas expense and a \$76 increase vehicle registration fees. Most drivers with pickups will fare worse.

Instead of cutting meaningful EDC spending, the BOS has decided to support a significant raise of your taxes that everyone will get to directly pay.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.

Explosive device kills ski patroller at Squaw

Updated 4:42pm:

A ski patroller at Squaw Valley died Tuesday morning during avalanche control activities.

Joe Zuiches, 42, of Truckee was killed Jan. 24 by an explosive device used for avalanche control.

“The cause is believed to be the detonation of an explosive charge, and does not appear to be avalanche related,” the resort said in a statement.

Placer County Sheriff’s Office and North Tahoe Fire Department are conducting the investigation.

The incident occurred at 8:35am during avalanche control activities at the top of Gold Coast Ridge.

Zuiches had worked at Squaw since 2012.

He is survived by his wife and infant son.

The Joe Zuiches Memorial Fund has been established through **Go Fund Me**.

The resort was closed for the day on Tuesday.

1 in 45 Calif. residents attended Women's March

By Phillip Reese, Sacramento Bee

The Women's March on Saturday drew historic participation across California, with 50 cities each drawing more than 100 protestors.

Crowd estimates put the cumulative turnout in California between 531,000 and 1.2 million, according to nationwide data compiled by Erica Chenoweth of the University of Denver and Jeremy Pressman of the University of Connecticut.

Read the whole story

EDC man going to prison for assault on ranger

An El Dorado County man was sentenced Jan. 24 to 27 months in prison for assaulting a federal park ranger.

Nicholas Martin Coberley, 45, of Pollock Pines, on June 20, 2016, attacked a Lassen Volcanic National Park ranger who had been called out to investigate reports of a man walking and yelling in the middle of the road at 9 that night.

According to court records, when the ranger approached, Coberley jumped into the back of the ranger's truck, grabbed a firefighting tool, and began hitting the truck's passenger compartment with the tool, causing more than \$2,000 in damage to the roof and windshield. Coberley then smashed out the rear window with an axe, climbed into the passenger compartment, and put the ranger in a chokehold.

Then Coberley swung an axe at the ranger's head from behind while the truck was in motion.

Once out of prison Coberley faces three years of supervised release.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Letter: Kiwanis take a turn at Bread & Broth

To the community,

It is always a treat when the Kiwanis Club of Tahoe Sierra hosts a Bread & Broth Adopt A Day of Nourishment. Not only has the Kiwanis Club sponsored an Adopt A Day every January since the program's inception in 2010, but they were the first organization to host an AAD dinner when the program was introduced.

Bread & Broth is so fortunate to have the on-going support of the dedicated Kiwanis Club of Tahoe Sierra.

On Jan. 9, Kelly Meyer joined her fellow Kiwanis Club and

seasoned AAD volunteer crew members Rich Dart, Pat Frega and Jan Lynds in providing help at the club's AAD dinner.

"This experience and opportunity to give back to the community I was born and raised in is incredible," Meyer said. "It's an eye opening experience and one I will be grateful for as it sticks with me – the dinner guest's strength, gratitude and tenacity. Sitting and talking with some of them was an honor and serving them was all my pleasure. I was blessed to be amongst my fellow Kiwanians."

Each Kiwanis Club is dedicated to improving the world one child, one person at a time. Bread & Broth would like to thank the Kiwanis Club of Tahoe Sierra for partnering with our program in our mutual goal of helping the neediest member of our community.

For more B&B program information, go **online**.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth