

Ganong 11th in Kitzbuehel super G

By USSA

KITZBUEHEL, Austria – Austria's Matthias Mayer kicked off ski racing's Super Bowl weekend and whipped the home-country crowd into a celebratory frenzy with a victory in Friday's Audi FIS Ski World Cup super G. Travis Ganong (Squaw Valley) paced three Americans into the top 20, finishing 11th.

Christof Innerhofer from Italy and Switzerland's Beat Fuez rounded out the podium in second and third respectively. Andrew Weibrecht (Lake Placid, N.Y.) was 18th; Steve Nyman (Sundance, Utah) was 19th. A trio of Americans just missed the top 30 including Tommy Biesemeyer (Keene, N.Y.) in 33rd, Jared Goldberg (Holladay, Utah) in 34th and Brennan Rubie (Salt Lake City) in 35th.

Friday's super G served not only as a World Cup race, but a chance for the American's to grab one more run to prep for Saturday's main event – the Hahnenkamm Downhill.

"After (Thursday) it was good to get a full run down the course and build a little confidence for (Saturday) and test out the body," said Ganong, who charged a bit too hard out of the gate in the final downhill training run.

"On a hill like this it's so hard mentally to be able to push and be confident," Ganong added. "After (Thursday's run) I kind of lost some confidence. Before the run (Thursday), I watched Stephan Eberharter's winning run from 2003 and he absolutely hammered. So I was inspired to try to push as hard as I've ever pushed before just to see what would happen and I got a little too excited – skied straight through the first gate. So I think it's just good to get that run done today and realize that I just need to relax and keep it simple, and not

push too hard and just find the flow and go.”

Nyman came out of the 51st start position to post his seventh career top-20 World Cup super G finish. He was was also the top finisher in Wednesday’s downhill training run.

“I haven’t had a great year in super G so far,” Nyman said. “Just messing with skis and stuff and I got back on this old ski and it felt really comfortable in training the other day to where it was OK today. Best result of the year in super G for me today and hopefully it qualifies me for World Champs.”

Austria’s Marcel Hirscher was 24th in Friday’s super G and increased his overall World Cup lead to 288 points over Norway’s Henrik Kristoffersen. Norway’s Kjetil Jansrud, winner of the last three three super G races, was ninth and maintained his overall World Cup super G lead with 329 points over Italy’s Dominik Paris (192 points).

Some Tahoe schools closed; snow keeps falling

It’s a snow day at Zephyr Cove and Whittell High schools, as well as for Truckee Tahoe Unified. Incline Village schools are on a two-hour delay.

This morning high winds and blowing snow are making the Sierra passes problematic for drivers. Expect white-out conditions at times. Click on the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News* for current road information.

A winter storm warning remains in effect until Monday at 4am for the Tahoe-Truckee area. Several feet of snow are expected

at the lake and even more at higher elevations. Winds will be strongest Saturday into Sunday, with ridge tops possibly hitting 140 mph. On Sunday waves on Lake Tahoe could be as high as 5 feet.

Weather will impact ski resorts. Be sure to check what is open before going out. The Sierra Avalanche Center says the danger level for Friday is considerable.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Letter: Build an appropriate music venue

To the community,

First off I want to thank Paul Reder for his investment in this community with The Loft and other ventures. Having been here 40 continuous years I know it's not easy in this town. I also want to say that I am all for events in the area. I was in the event industry for 15 years. Heads in beds is the game in this town.

I would also like to say “no” to more musical events at the play fields. The only reason SnowGlobe is there is because the college, Bijou Park and the middle school are shut down. If you hold events there at other times of the year, where is the staging and parking going to take place? How are musical events going to work around the other activities that happen within the Al Tahoe corridor? How are musical events going to affect the animals in the new wildlife center?

The community fields are being built and paid for by the

community for the community. The fields aren't being built for total domination by Reder events. Also, during the summer months I would bet that there will be an abundance of illegal camping because of the proximity to the meadows. Illegal camping most times equals illegal campfires and, well, you can see where this is going.

If the city wants to have music events, then the city should build an event center for such events. Maybe the city could focus on an event center that creates revenue instead of constantly bringing up building a city hall. Or maybe Mr. Reder could build a proper event center for his events and possibly others.

Again I will say that I am all for events in the area. They just need to have a proper venue.

John Spinola, South Lake Tahoe

Lack of affordable housing nothing new in Tahoe

Publisher's note: *This is one in a series of stories looking at the affordable housing issue in the Tahoe-Truckee area.*

"For any community, the quality of life experienced by its residents depends, to a great extent,

on the quantity and quality of available housing."

– 20-20 Committee

report to the South Lake Tahoe City Council, Jan. 2, 1979

By Joann Eisenbrandt

The lack of affordable housing for many of South Lake Tahoe's permanent residents, for homebuyers and renters, has been a clearly recognized but largely unsolved problem for decades. Recently, El Dorado County District Five Supervisor Sue Novasel put together a Housing Task Force to revisit the issue and hopefully identify some realistic solutions.

South Lake Tahoe was incorporated on Nov. 30, 1965. Laurel Ames, an active participant in that incorporation process, spoke about the new city's high hopes in a **March 2015 article for *Lake Tahoe News*** celebrating the city's 50th anniversary. She explained the city hired a land use planner and began a yearlong effort called 14,000 Planners. It was called 14,000 Planners because that was the city's population at the time. The idea was that everyone had a role to play and a voice in the process. South Lake Tahoe, as Ames put it, "could have any kind of community it wanted, provided they could articulate and agree on a picture of what that vision was."

In the decades since, a number of exterior forces and geographic constraints have influenced the city's ability to create such a cohesive vision. This is especially true when it comes to the development of affordable housing.

A statewide issue

Affordable housing is not just a Tahoe basin or El Dorado County issue. Providing affordable housing is a statewide requirement and a statewide problem. Each governing body in California is required to adopt a general plan outlining the long-range physical development of their jurisdiction. The Housing Element is a mandated part of that plan. It must show

how local governments plan to meet the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of their population.

At the local level



For some time, the city's affordable housing issue centered on those who work in the service industry sector. This is what many call "workforce housing." More recently, however, the affordability question has moved up the income scale to include established middle-income professionals and college-educated millennials.

At the Oct. 25, Board of Supervisors meeting, Novasel requested \$15,000 in El Dorado County transient occupancy tax) funds to contract with consultant Michael Ward of High Bar Global Consulting. The plan is to create the framework for a group of stakeholders to meet and develop strategies to address what Novasel terms South Lake Tahoe's "affordable housing crisis."

She told the supervisors that at the lake the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency had created commodities/development rights to control growth. These, she said, had the effect of driving up construction and rehabilitation costs and creating a barrier to redevelopment of the city's aging infrastructure. There are a limited number of tourist accommodation units available for new construction. TAUs have value and can unrealistically escalate the purchase price for motels or the transfer of those units. Vacant or deteriorating properties still dot the

landscape, too expensive to rehabilitate or rebuild as affordable housing. Like all construction, affordable housing must pencil out economically or it will not get built.

“Our housing is in a critical mass right now,” Novasel insisted.

TRPA is taking a hard look at many of its regulations and standards for the first time, commodities among them. It is anticipated this process will take several years. Novasel doesn’t want to wait. Her goal is to have her newly-formed group composed of representatives of the California and Nevada jurisdictions at the lake, “sit down and start a real direct discussion to see what we can do.” The first six organizational meetings will involve mainly public agencies with additional groups such as nonprofits, real estate agents, employers, social service agencies and local residents brought into the process after that.

Participants share their views

TRPA is represented on the task force by Executive Director Joanne Marchetta and COO John Hester. The bi-state agency’s public information officer Tom Lotshaw told *Lake Tahoe News* that TRPA supports Novasel’s effort.

“We wouldn’t want Sue (Novasel) to wait for our (Development Rights) Strategic Initiative to be completed. The commodity system is creating some friction for the affordable housing process. The Strategic Initiative is a major undertaking and it won’t change things overnight,” Lotshaw said.

He added, “We are there to help ... to come up with a menu of potentially viable solutions to take back to each jurisdiction around the lake and apply them situationally. We are excited and optimistic to see what’s happening.” Novasel is a member of the TRPA Governing Board.



“What we have is a lack of adequate housing at all economic levels.”

– Wendy David, South Lake Tahoe mayor pro tem

What city leaders say

South Lake Tahoe Mayor Austin Sass attended the first meeting of Novasel’s group in November. He told *Lake Tahoe News*, “I don’t know how much blame you can put on TRPA. This is a very desirable tourist destination. In comparison to Aspen and Vail it is affordable, so people from the Bay Area have bought second homes here. These people may not be willing to rent out these homes at affordable housing rates.”

Sass, who is also a member of the TRPA Governing Board, said the city has 350 rent-controlled or affordable housing units that were built before redevelopment money was taken away by the dissolution of redevelopment agencies by Gov. Jerry Brown in 2012. “These types of projects don’t pencil out now for any city. El Dorado County has zero affordable housing units in the unincorporated area of the Tahoe basin.”

“I’m a pragmatic guy,” Sass explained. “I want to know how we are going to get it done and where we are going to get the money from. The purpose of this group is to put our heads together to find out if there is money in places we don’t know about.”

South Lake Tahoe Mayor Pro Tem Wendy David also attended the task force’s initial meeting. She told *Lake Tahoe News*, “We have a gorgeous lake that must take priority in protecting, but along with that has come very strict building restrictions and availability. It’s a very delicate balance that we’ve

tried to maintain.”

David is encouraged that TRPA is now “sitting at the table with us. It is important to work together with the regulatory agencies to see how to address the housing issue. That is a very positive thing that is happening.”

David noted that city housing prices have surpassed their highest peak in 2006. She sees vacation rental properties as a contributing factor.

“We are seeing an increase in the percentage of single-family homes that are being sold and then used primarily as vacation rentals. How people are vacationing has changed and that has led to a lot of commercial activity in residential areas,” David said.

She noted that the City Council just recently revised the city’s Vacation Rental Ordinance to ban future vacation rentals in multi-unit complexes, one of the main sources of affordable housing for low- and moderate-income residents.

According to David, “workforce housing” is not the full extent of the problem. “What we have,” she insists, “is a lack of adequate housing at all economic levels. If professionals take jobs here and then find they cannot find a home in their price range, they will eventually leave. At the other end are young professionals just starting out as well as the lower-income residents who just want to live the dream of Tahoe and are willing to be a bartender or a dishwasher.”

David is hopeful the involvement of basinwide elected decision-makers will lead to agreement among agencies and jurisdictions on what needs to be done and what the first steps should be.

Affordable housing and economic development

Novasel believes it’s appropriate that TOT money is being used

to help finance her efforts. TOT is charged to those renting lodging in the county or the city for less than 30 days. Renters pay it to property owners as a percentage of the rent charged. Property owners then pay that money to the local jurisdiction.

The county's 2004 General Plan loosely defines how TOT money can be spent. "The majority of transient occupancy tax generated revenue shall be directed toward the promotion of tourism, entertainment, business, and leisure travel in El Dorado County."

Novasel said, "This is economic development. We want millennials. We want our workforce to find homes to live in. If employees can't find housing, then businesses can't have employees."



Housing stock varies throughout South Lake Tahoe.
Photos/LTN

The 20-20 viewpoint

14,000 Planners was South Lake Tahoe's first attempt at strategic planning, but it was certainly not the last. In 1976, 11 years after the city's birth, the 20-20 Committee was formed. It was called the 20-20 Committee because each of the five city councilmembers chose four community members to help identify significant issues and provide 20-year-long solutions. There were a number of public meetings to encourage community input. In December 1979, the group presented its final report to the City Council.

Barriers and solutions

Among the group's objectives was to, "Improve the quality of residential life by ensuring that adequate housing is available to all residents."

A number of barriers were going to make this difficult. "Due to the lower salaries and seasonal nature of employment in the region," the report concluded, "the available housing is beyond financial reach of the majority of residents."

It found the community had a high transiency rate and those service-industry employees who did live in town, "appear to accept a 'natural' lowered standard of living by virtue of living in such a unique area." This, the report noted, can lead to intense negative reactions to tourists generated by, "a feeling of being a 'second-class' citizen."

The lack of affordability of housing led to overcrowding in rental units, many of which were substandard or dilapidated. The group believed the city needed to update its Housing Element to encourage more affordable housing and create a housing advisory committee to administer solutions. A public/private partnership was essential, as was the need for Nevada's large employers to produce "adequate and available housing for their employees."

The 20-20 Committee felt, as 14,000 Planners had, that South Lake Tahoe first needed to decide what type of town it wanted to be. It recognized the need to preserve the basin's beauty given tourism as the prime industry.

"At the same time," they insisted, "the needs of residents must be met to assure a cohesive, happy community, and enhance the quality of the visitor experience."

"Affordable, desirable and appropriately configured housing for all residents is central to a community's social and economic vitality."

-- Renaissance 90|

The labor pains continue

In the late 1980s, Renaissance 90 hoped to accomplish what 14,000 Planners and the 20-20 Committee had not. Of these earlier efforts, Renaissance 90's Strategic Plan noted, "Inexperience with strategic planning and the timing of both efforts have resulted in some unmet expectations."

The group's effort to achieve a "Tahoe rebirth" was spearheaded by then City Manager Kerry Miller. It was divided into six committees—among them Economic Development and Land Use, Well-Being and Housing. It was a mix of public officials, community leaders and ordinary citizens, including this reporter who served on the Housing Committee. The final report was presented to city leaders in June 1989.

The Housing Committee found that affordable housing remained a pressing issue. It thought prior efforts had focused too much on planning and not enough on action. However, it agreed with them that there needed to be "significant citizen involvement in planning for the city's future." Before such planning could take shape, city leaders needed to ask, "Where does the city want to go?" Renaissance 90 hoped its Strategic Plan would

“establish a sense of direction for the community as a whole.”

Need for meaningful planning

Apart from the new redevelopment area, the group noted that the city had no economic development program or meaningful land use planning. The city’s population had a high per capita education level and there was a high quality of life to attract workers and businesses, but there was also a transient local population and a high percentage of small business failures.

The committees suggested “champions” to implement the strategies they proposed. The Housing Committee identified the city and an as-yet-to-be-formed nonprofit housing group as “champions” for the development of more low-income housing.

The committee carried out a detailed analysis of the city’s housing inventory, condition and availability through street-level physical surveys and interviews. It concluded that a “substantial number” of residents were low income, given the preponderance of low-wage jobs at the casinos, resorts and ski areas. These residents had to spend a “disproportionate amount” of their income for housing or choose to live in overcrowded multi-family units that were in “poor to substandard condition.”

The lake’s complex regulatory environment took some of the blame. “The area’s history of stringent building constraints and complex inter-agency oversight functions, combined with economic infeasibility, has led to delays in both new construction and rehabilitation or reconfiguration of existing residential units, especially in the median to lower income ranges.”

The final report pointed to past failures to, “include the psychological needs of residents in the planning process.”

It recommended an ongoing forum be created to evaluate

progress and provide opportunities for citizen input, finding that, "Affordable, desirable and appropriately configured housing for all residents is central to a community's social and economic vitality."

Chamber takes on the issue

As the affordable housing shortage began to affect local businesses more substantially, they also became involved in trying to solve the problem. In March 2001, the South Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce had an Affordable Housing/Work Force Housing forum at Harveys. An employee/labor pool survey had been distributed in the weeks prior to the meeting asking chamber members for employee statistics and issues related to affordable housing.

Questions the survey asked included: "Do you feel that your employees are able to live in our region comfortably with the wage/salaries that you pay?" and "Do any of your employees have housing problems?" One hundred-twenty businesses responded to the survey.

Attorney Lew Feldman, who led the discussion for the chamber, said, "The quality of the resort is the quality of the people who live and work in the resort." Steve Teshara from the Gaming Alliance told the group that lower-end casino employees could not live on their wages unless they were a two-person household. The casinos were going out further and further into other communities to recruit—often as far as Europe and Mexico. Andrew Strain of Heavenly said that housing supply and demand was "out of balance." He referenced people living behind the loop road in the woods underneath the Heavenly gondola. He said affordable housing must make "bottom line sense" to happen, pointing to the negative impact of the "local and regional regulatory maze."

Kathy Southern, president of the Board of Realtors, noted a decline in the low-income housing pool and the subsequent rise

in rental prices. Investors found developing moderate income properties in Tahoe “stifling.” She said that 10 percent of the market pool of housing was “lost to second homes and vacation rentals.” She pointed to the conversion of older motels into employee housing as one possible solution.

Hal Cole, South Lake Tahoe mayor, said, “We’re becoming a more elitist community like Aspen. Workers are bused in and Tahoe is only enjoyed by the rich.”

The survey showed that 82 of the responding businesses had from one to 20 positions unfilled; 52 of them believed that the lack of affordable housing affected their ability to hire and retain employees. The majority of employees had salaries in the \$6-\$10/hour range. Fifty-five business owners said their employees were not able to live in the region comfortably with the wages they paid, and 61 respondents said their employees were experiencing housing problems.

Looking toward tomorrow

In 2002, Tahoe Tomorrow, a volunteer group of local businesspeople and community leaders addressed the same issues the chamber had identified the year before. They sought to help create “a better tomorrow for everyone.” Their board of directors included familiar faces like Feldman, Jeff Tillman of South Tahoe Refuse, chamber Executive Director Duane Wallace, Lakeside Inn owner Mike Bradford, former South Lake Tahoe City Attorney Dennis Crabb and marketing consultant Carl Ribaud. They created task forces to identify community issues. Action teams would then implement solutions.

The Building a Stronger Community Task Force focused on affordable housing. Their data showed that 56 percent of South Lake Tahoe households qualified as low-income or lower and that 25 percent of the housing stock was owner-occupied with 75 percent being rentals or second homes. They found the “significant shortage of affordable housing, decent rentals,

and starter homes—with ever-escalating costs of real estate,” came to a large degree from “a lack of shared vision and proactive multi-jurisdictional leadership.”

Tahoe Tomorrow only lasted a few years. “It was a volunteer group,” Ribaud told *Lake Tahoe News*. “It fell apart because of lack of funding.”



“We can’t solve all the housing problems.
We can solve specific issues within the
housing problem.”

— Sue Novasel, *El Dorado County supervisor*

Study and more study

Over the years, a number of housing condition studies were conducted and reports prepared by the city to determine the extent of the affordable housing need and the best way to spend the required 20 percent tax increment funding in the redevelopment area as well as how to allocate Community Development Block Grant money and funding from other sources such as the state Rental Rehabilitation Program.

The city’s Housing Authority had a housing priority workshop in July 1996. At its next meeting that August, city Housing Coordinator Patrick Conway noted that, “Approximately 40 percent of the housing stock in the city is considered substandard.” His report focused on the question of what was South Lake Tahoe’s “fair share” responsibility to provide housing when a significant portion of the city’s housing stock is used to support those who work in Douglas County. He

referenced the Douglas County Population and Housing Element which showed that the city provided housing for 4,667 workers from Douglas County, but only 640 Douglas County residents worked in South Lake Tahoe.

In February 2003, the Parsons division of P&D Consulting prepared a report for the city entitled, Housing Issues and Challenges. It found, "Local workers, both service sector employees and professionals such as teachers, government employees, and social service agency staff, can no longer afford housing in South Lake Tahoe."

Rental prices were lower than in urban areas, but when these rates were compared to incomes, rental rates in the city were "high." Additionally, the least expensive housing stock is, "old, not well-maintained, substandard, and owned by absentee landlords who are not responsive to tenants' complaints."

In 2016, the city hired the consulting firm of Michael Baker International to conduct a vacation home rental economic impact study. The proliferation of vacation rentals in the city has been frequently mentioned as a contributing factor to the affordable housing shortage. An online survey is available on the city's website. The first public meeting was Nov. 16, 2016, with the second one scheduled for Jan. 25. According to the city's website, the goal is, "to find out how (vacation rentals) affect you and your neighborhood."

Councilmembers Sass and David formed South Lake Tahoe's subcommittee that studied vacation rentals for the last year and a half. Sass called it a "socio-economic study looking at how vacation home rentals are affecting our town." He believes the study will give the city needed information to come up with a long-range solution. He told *Lake Tahoe News* the finished report should be ready in April or early May.

Hard to kill

Despite the fact that it has been studied to death by a

plethora of public and private agencies, the affordable housing problem in South Lake Tahoe lives on. In her **October 2016 monthly column**, "Working Together on Lake Tahoe's Housing Problems," TRPA's Marchetta acknowledged that median home prices of nearly \$400,000 on South Shore are, "simply too high for our region's low wages, putting the cost of home ownership and even rent out of reach for many working people."

She referenced a study on affordable housing by the Tahoe Prosperity Center. Heidi Hill Drum, executive director of the Tahoe Prosperity Center, is a participant in Supervisor Novasel's affordable housing task force. In the October 2015 Measuring for Prosperity report, the Prosperity Center agreed that "second home ownership rates are increasing in the region and there is little market momentum currently for additional workforce housing. However, even in 2010, TRPA reported that housing affordability in the Tahoe basin was more challenged than in the San Francisco Bay Area, primarily due to lower wages in relation to housing prices. The more recent trends have widened the affordability gap."

They reported that Tahoe has lost close to 7,000 jobs since 2008, has an unemployment rate higher than the state average, has seen declining school enrollment and a drop in prime working-age adults between 25 to 44 years as a proportion of the total population. Drum told *Lake Tahoe News* she agrees with the emphasis Novasel's task force is putting on regional solutions.

Novasel wants to see her group, "go beyond our specific little silos and collaborate because that's how we are going to see real progress." She acknowledges the long history and complexity of the affordable housing issue. "We can't solve all the housing problems," she emphasized. "We can solve specific issues within the housing problem. It's like saying you are going to solve poverty. It's too big of a moving target. If we can wrap ourselves around an issue or two, we can get that done now."

The group's next meeting is expected to take place in early February.

Opinion: Good things happening in Tahoe

By Jim Lawrence

Twenty-five years ago, I finished my graduate work in Oregon and moved to Northern Nevada for a planning position at the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. Having spent a large part of my youth hiking and camping at Tahoe and in the Sierra, the move felt like coming home.

Today, I am still in awe by Lake Tahoe's beauty, and along the way I have become even more inspired by the many voices that all share a passion for protecting and enhancing the Jewel of the Sierra. Working collaboratively and from a place of mutual respect, we have and can continue to make positive changes for Tahoe's environment, economy, and communities.



Jim Lawrence

Last year the Tahoe region achieved many milestones. Having just accepted the position as chair of TRPA's Governing Board, in my view, the challenge for 2017 is to keep building on that

momentum with critically important initiatives to conserve and restore Lake Tahoe's environment while also revitalizing our communities.

Heavy snow is falling this January, signaling some relief for Lake Tahoe's forests after five years of drought. But this summer will also mark the 10th anniversary of the Angora wildfire. The fire was started by an illegal campfire and quickly burned 3,000 acres and more than 250 homes. We must not lose sight of wildfire risk and continue to work together to reduce hazardous fuels in our forests and create defensible space and fire-adapted communities. This is not just a critically important public safety issue, but is essential for the health of our forests. A healthy forest means ecologically functional watersheds, better wildlife habitat, and improved streams and fisheries.

Fire districts and land management agencies have made significant progress working together as the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team, prioritizing and coordinating fuel reduction projects to reduce wildfire risk in the most dangerous areas where forests and communities meet. More than 65,000 acres of wildland urban interface have been treated over the last two decades, and the rest is on track to be treated over the next 10 years. Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team partners last year secured more than \$25 million in federal funding for continued fuels reduction work in the wildland urban interface. We need to keep that work going and extend it out into the general forest landscape.

In December, Congress passed the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act after nearly a decade of work on the legislation. It authorizes up to \$415 million in future federal funding for projects that will help restore Lake Tahoe's famous water clarity, remove hazardous fuels from forests, and combat aquatic invasive species. Much work remains to secure that funding, but this legislation is critically important for continued progress on these major focus areas of the Lake

Tahoe environmental improvement program.

TRPA continues to make headway on its top initiatives. The agency is working with local governments and other partners on a “welcome mat” initiative to coordinate and streamline permitting processes. It is also working on an initiative to improve Lake Tahoe’s unique development rights system. The goal is to help people invest in projects that benefit our environment and the health of our communities and economy.

With the four-year 2017 Regional Transportation Plan scheduled to be released soon, one of our largest goals for the coming year is addressing Lake Tahoe’s significant transportation challenges, and finding ways to implement needed infrastructure and transit improvements.

With 150 miles of bike and pedestrian routes built over the last 20 years, and major projects like the Fanny Bridge project in Tahoe City on track to start construction soon, our region can make significant headway on transportation issues. Construction also started on the Incline Village to Sand Harbor State Park bike path last summer. The project is building a showcase bike path to one of the lake’s busiest summer recreation areas. But it will also feature new off-highway parking areas, enhanced transit services in the state Route 28 corridor, and water quality improvements to help protect the lake’s water clarity. This shows how we can bundle projects to reduce traffic and parking congestion, provide new recreation amenities, enhance bicyclist and pedestrian mobility and safety, and improve our environment.

We must continue to connect and improve routes for bicyclists and pedestrians and improve our electric-vehicle charging infrastructure so people can more easily drive zero-emission vehicles to and from Lake Tahoe. We must also strengthen our transit services so people can travel around the Tahoe basin and to popular recreation sites without having to drive at all.

We face many challenges in the years to come. Fortunately, the spirit of partnership and collaboration is alive and well at Tahoe. And with that spirit of partnership continuing, there is no doubt we can all work together to see even greater achievements that are yet to come.

Jim Lawrence, deputy director of the Nevada Department of Conservation and Resources, is chair of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- The Community Action Council of El Dorado County is seeking an individual or agency to represent the interests and concerns of low-income people living in El Dorado County, with special attention on housing, nutrition and low-income program needs. The deadline to submit an application is Feb. 17. Contact Star Walker at 530.621.6255 or 7star.walker@edcgov.us.
- Placer County Air Pollution Control District is seeking grant applications for the annual clean air grant program. More information is **online**.
- Smart & Final and the Smart & Final Charitable Foundation made a \$2,500 donation to Tahoe Youth & Family Services and Lake Tahoe Unified School District.
- Truckee Town Manager Tony Lashbrook is retiring effective July 15.
- Reno was the second windiest city in the U.S. in 2016, behind Nashville, according to CoreLogic.

LTCC theater program being restructured

Lake Tahoe Community College's theater department will exist for another academic year, but not without substantive changes.

The board of trustees this week decided to pursue a public-private model for operating the actual theater. The college in 2017-18 will put on one production, which will be in the spring. The rest of the time scheduling for the theater will be handled by the vice president of Academic Affairs.

Earlier this school year there was a recommendation to disband the department because it was no longer a viable academic entity. Shortly after that news became public the **community told the board** and staff that the college theater program is important.

From that meeting several people came forward wanting to be on a task force to help determine the future of theater at LTCC and to look at making it more of a community theater, along with opening the facility for other uses. Those participants are still being assembled, with the first meeting of the task force set for February. A facilitator has yet to be named/hired to oversee this process.

Susan Boulanger, who runs the theater department, will have a job through next school year. In January 2018 the board will assess where things are at that time and is expected to make a long-term decision.

Boulanger will be teaching more online classes and her workload will be renegotiated since the number of productions

has been reduced by two-thirds.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Tahoe bracing for another round of storms



South Lake Tahoe residents on Jan. 19 deal with more snow and narrow roads. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Lake Tahoe News

Thursday's weather was nothing compared to what is expected to come. Remember last week? Part II is about to hit.

"I would encourage residents and visitors to do their grocery and supply shopping on Friday and Saturday and to stay off the

roadways on Sunday and Monday. Thankfully, it looks like we'll get a break starting on Tuesday," Tracy Franklin, spokeswoman for South Lake Tahoe, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Officials in the Tahoe-Truckee region are bracing for another deluge. A winter storm warning is in effect through 4am Monday. Between now and then there could be 2 to 4 more feet of snow at lake level and 3-6 feet above 7,000 feet.

Forecasters with the National Weather Service in Reno expect a break Saturday afternoon before the white stuff starts up again.

The National Weather Service warns roofs and carports could collapse because of snow weight and depth.

Truckee is asking residents to adopt a fire hydrant. This would mean keeping it clear of snow. A minimum 3-foot clearance around the hydrant makes for easier access.

Power outages should be expected and roads dangerous, especially as the snow keeps piling up.

Parts of the West Shore and Truckee just barely had power restored.

"We had people without power for many days with the last storms and we want to ensure if something similar happens, that we can direct them to the appropriate places to get warm and get information," Placer County Supervisor Jennifer Montgomery said in a statement.

Should power be knocked out again for an extended period, North Shore residents can find warming centers open during the day at:

- Tahoe City Public Utility District, 221 Fairway Drive in Tahoe City
- North Tahoe Public Utility District, 875 National Ave.

in Tahoe Vista

These centers will offer people a place to stay warm, charge communications devices and get the latest information on changing weather conditions and storm related news or advisories.

Snow removal crews throughout the basin are trying to widen streets as fast as possible. Along many side streets the road is only wide enough for one vehicle at a time.

South Lake Tahoe snow removal crews will resume clearing snow from the primary arterial and collector roadways such as Pioneer Trail, Al Tahoe Boulevard, Tahoe Keys Boulevard, Venice Drive, Sierra Boulevard and Ski Run Boulevard

Once these roadways are cleared, city snow removal crews will return to removing snow from the center lane roadways in neighborhoods.

Snowplows have the right of way. Vehicles left unattended in the streets are subject to citation and/or tow. The best policy is to keep vehicles parked off the streets at all times.

The following are suggestions from South Lake Tahoe:

- If you don't have to go out, don't. Even if you can drive well in the snow, not everyone else can.
- Get sand bags. They are available at the city yard at 1160 Rufus Allen Blvd. and fire Station No. 3 at 2101 Lake Tahoe Blvd.
- Clear storm drains.
- Prepare for utility outage. Gather flashlights and replace batteries. During the storm, Liberty Utilities crews will work 24/7 to restore power where needed. To report a power outage, call 844.245.6868.

- Keep roofs cleared. Snow with high water content is heavy. When it's followed up by torrential rain, existing snow on your roof will become heavier.
 - Expect berms.
 - Stock up on supplies.
 - Don't drive through water.
-

Letter: Liberty was super accommodating

To the community,

My two contacts with Liberty Utilities were via the phone number published by local media for "electric outage reports". Each call was answered quickly by a friendly and efficient live person. In addition, I received a follow up welfare call from what I think was a field technician within one hour of area "brownout" restoration.

My battery powered scanner was on overload with emergency communications between responding agencies. Listening almost an entire day, I heard positive, "out loud" team thinking to solve difficult, unanticipated issues.

No complaints here if my taxes fund such real time, real life cooperation. Job well done.

A note to planners: I have "plain old telephone" (POTS) service for just these kinds of emergencies. With no electricity, one has no Internet access for utility information sites or social media and probably no telephone.

Please keep it simple going forward.

Thank you again responders.

Dawn Armstrong, South Lake Tahoe

How ski retailers have evolved in the digital age

By Devon O'Neil, Powder

Ever since the traditional ski-shop business model—buy a lot of product and hope to sell it for twice as much—ran into the e-commerce meat grinder a decade ago, it has only gotten tougher for shops to exist, never mind thrive.

According to SnowSports Industries America, consumers bought nearly \$1 billion worth of snow sports equipment online last winter, up more than 20 percent from four years ago. It is probably not a coincidence that more than 1,300 snow sports retailers—or about 20 percent of the total—have closed in the past six years.

In addition, direct-to-consumer sales have become more widespread by manufacturers, many of which have opened their own retail stores in ski towns.

[Read the whole story](#)