

Food, toy collections on South Shore

Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority and South Tahoe Refuse & Recycling Services are partnering to make giving to Christmas Cheer easier than ever.

The LTVA's Drive and Drop for Christmas Cheer takes place Dec. 5-10 from 9am-5pm. Drive through the visitor center parking lot at 3066 Highway 50, South Lake Tahoe to drop donations of food or toys into the bins provided by South Tahoe Refuse. Cash donations should be brought inside the visitor center.

South Tahoe Refuse is also having its annual Community Holiday Food & Toy Drive Dec. 5-9. Leave canned/package food or toys curbside on your regular collection day, or drop off at South Tahoe Refuse, 2140 Ruth Ave., during business hours.

Christmas Cheer feeds more than 1,000 people each month, year-round, and the need for wholesome meals is even more important to families with children who are out of school at the holidays.

For more information about donating, call 530.541.5255.

Illicit marijuana grows decimate western wildlife



Illegal marijuana grows in the Sierra Nevada are hurting wildlife.
Photo/Integral Ecology Research Center

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

Tony Magarrell isn't very relaxed for someone who just spent a week in the lush backcountry canyons of Lassen National Forest, 165 miles northwest of Reno.

Magarrell, a special agent for the U.S. Forest Service, wasn't there to enjoy roaring waterfalls or abundant wildlife. He was cleaning up yet another illicit marijuana operation, a job that gives him a front-row seat to environmental wreckage most people will never see.

The bags of trash hauled out by helicopter provided evidence of the damage illicit grows can do to the environment. But the damage goes far beyond the trash left behind.

Both California and Nevada voters have recently approved ballot measures to decriminalize marijuana possession and issue licenses for marijuana businesses. But it's too soon to tell if that will affect illicit grows in the Sierra Nevada and elsewhere. That's because the vast majority of what's grown illicitly is sold through black market channels, which

still exist because most states and the federal government still consider marijuana to be illegal.

Read the whole story

Free pet adoptions at EDC shelters

A Placerville company is giving future pet owners a gift this month – free animal adoptions.

Travelite RV Rentals is paying for all December pet adoptions from the El Dorado County animal shelters in Meyers and Diamond Springs.

The savings can be significant. Normally fees are \$120 for dogs, \$42 for cats, \$40 for small livestock and \$15 for other smaller animals.

Licensing fees, which range from \$23 to \$34.50, are still up to the person adopting the pet.

For more information, call the shelters: Meyers, 530.573.7925 and Diamond Springs, 530.621.5795.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- South Lake Tahoe is having a meeting Dec. 14 from 5:30-7:30pm at the council chambers about the design for the Tahoe Valley greenbelt.
 - Tahoe Donner Cross Country Ski Area is open.
 - The annual tree lighting at the North Tahoe Events Center in Kings Beach is Dec. 2 from 5-7pm. Take photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus, live holiday music performances by the Boys & Girls Club of North Lake Tahoe, free holiday crafts, free soup, hot cocoa and more.
 - Tahoe National Forest sold-out of its 400 Christmas tree permits in four days.
 - The University of California Cooperative is putting on classes to train people to be master food preserver volunteers. The program overview meeting is Jan. 5 in Placerville. Applications are due Jan. 8. More info is **online**.
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Calif. eyes stricter water conservation rules

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

As the drought enters its fifth year, California is considering tightening its urban water conservation standards.

In a series of proposals released Wednesday, state officials said they might require urban water districts seeking to avoid

state conservation mandates to prove they have a five-year water supply on hand.

Under rules that went into effect earlier this year, urban districts have to show only a three-year supply to get out from under the state's previous mandates, which required savings of 25 percent. With the more relaxed standards now in effect in most of the state, Californians haven't been conserving as much as they did last year. Officials with the State Water Resources Control Board have raised the idea of imposing a tougher mechanism for reducing consumption.

Read the whole story

NHP looking for van that hit pedestrian in Stateline

Nevada Highway Patrol troopers are looking for the driver of a minivan that hit a pedestrian in the Stateline casino corridor.

The incident occurred Nov. 13 at about 4am in front of Harvey's.

Troopers said there was a verbal altercation between the driver of a white Ford minivan and a pedestrian that included objects being thrown at the pedestrian. The pedestrian began to run after the white minivan on Highway 50. Then the pedestrian was struck by the left side of the van.

The victim was transported to Barton Memorial Hospital with non-life threatening injuries.

The driver of the minivan is described as a Middle Eastern

adult male, possibly in his mid- to late 20s, with short black hair. The passenger in the van is described a white adult female in her early 20s with long blonde hair.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Trooper Sal Navarro at 775.684.4469 or snavarro@dps.state.nv.us.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Task force begins overhaul of Nev.'s juvi system

By Sandra Chereb, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – A task force of judges, prosecutors, legislators, youth advocates and juvenile probation officials on Tuesday began considering options to improve Nevada's juvenile justice system and break a cycle of recidivism.

Gov. Brian Sandoval established the task force in July to thoroughly review Nevada's juvenile system and propose changes. Sandoval has indicated that overhauling the state's approach to criminal justice for youths and adults will be on his agenda for the upcoming legislative session.

Nevada was chosen from among 18 states to receive a federal grant for the juvenile justice effort, which came in the form of technical assistance from the Council of State Governments Justice Center. The center evaluated Nevada's juvenile system and outlined suggestions for improvements.

[Read the whole story](#)

Artists sought to create streetlight banners

North Tahoe Business Association is looking for artist to create streetlight banner art to be displayed along main street Kings Beach.

The selection committee is looking for artwork that is colorful, meaningful and enhances Kings Beach main street.

Banner size is 18 inches wide by 36 inches high. Proposals should include a preliminary color rendition and brief narrative description of the artwork.

Proposals are due Feb. 24 and should be emailed as PDF files to info@NorthTahoeBusiness.org.

An \$80 honorarium will be awarded for each selected banner.

NTBA will have selected artwork professionally printed onto poly canvas and plans to install banners by summer 2017.

Nevada gets \$2M federal grant to promote food safety

By Associated Press

The Nevada Agriculture Department has been awarded a federal grant worth nearly \$2 million to help promote food safety on

farms and ranches throughout the state.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration and Health Human Services is making the money available over five years to help farmers comply with produce safety guidelines.

Federal law requires all operations that grow produce commonly consumed raw to implement and monitor a food safety control plan.

State program manager Ashley Jeppson said Tuesday they will use the funds to offer training, workshops and technical assistance to aid farmers in preventing outbreaks of food-related illnesses.

Attic volunteers to be replaced with paid staff

By Kathryn Reed

Devastated. That is how some volunteers with Barton Auxiliary feel after being told they can no longer donate their time at the Attic Thrift Shop or Barton Memorial Hospital's gift shop.

The new rule takes effect Jan. 1.

Auxiliary members learned at their Nov. 21 meeting that paid staff would be taking over their volunteer positions at the thrift and gift stores. They can apply for those jobs. But these people weren't looking for a paid job and the constraints that come with it. They want to give back to the community. Many are older, retirees.

Barton Health CEO Clint Purvance delivered the news in person.

According to the synopsis in the group's monthly newsletter that came out this week, the reason for the change is "due to state and federal laws that prohibit volunteers from working in a commercial retail environment."

During the 10-months the health conglomerate was without a human resources director consultants were brought in to look at various aspects of the organization.

"It was discovered we may be viewed as not in compliance," Purvance told *Lake Tahoe News*. This is in regards to the use of volunteers.



For the first time since the Attic opened in 1961, paid employees will operate it starting in 2017. Photo/LTN

Sandy Killian, Barton auxiliary president, initially deferred comment to Barton's human resources director. Then Barton PR sent out a statement in her name that said, "Yes, we are a bit sad, but are committed to making a positive impact on Barton's patients, families, and visitors."

However, with other auxiliary members she is not being as conciliatory.

One member told *Lake Tahoe News*, "It's sad that this has happened. Volunteers have been and still are the heart of Barton."

The auxiliary primarily makes its money through the thrift shop. The group also has an annual holiday fair each November, operates the hospital gift shop and sells the popular seasonal cheeseballs.

Most of the money is earmarked for a special project at the hospital that the group agrees to. The auxiliary has given more than \$6 million to the hospital.

Each year scholarships are also doled out. This year \$19,500 went to 14 students in the Lake Tahoe and Carson Valley areas.

The South Lake Tahoe thrift store opened in 1961. Through the years it has raised millions of dollars. In the early days the auxiliary was responsible for paying the doctors at Barton Memorial Hospital.

In 2010, the auxiliary turned 50. There were 89 volunteers that year who "gave" 29,393 hours to the hospital. This saved the health care system \$600,000.

"The net revenue generated from both locations will continue to fund the auxiliary's student scholarships and an annual project, such as acquiring a 3-D Breast Tomosynthesis mammography machine, to benefit the health and wellbeing of our community," Mindi Befu, spokeswoman for Barton Health, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The auxiliary members will be absorbed into other volunteer jobs if they so desire.

Other jobs involving auxiliary members include: 14 members work at the hospital's front desk and guide patients and their families throughout the hospital; approximately 10 volunteer at the Skilled Nursing Facility as field trip and activity

assistants; on-going programs include blood drives, wellness lab draws, the comfort cart, and liaisons for physician offices; special events include the Festival of Trees & Lights, Holiday Faire, Cocktails for a Cause, Mom's Morning Out, Tiki Golf Tournament, and sports physicals at the high schools.

"We truly consider each member important and will continue to find new and exciting ways they can be more involved in improving the health and wellbeing of our community," Befu said. "In no way is this a reflection on the efforts of the volunteers as they have done an outstanding job."

One way the public may benefit from the change is that it is well known volunteers take first crack at all donations, so there might be better items on the Attic's floor to buy now that auxiliary members won't have first dibs.