

EDC voters still waiting to get mail ballots

By Brad Branan, Sacramento Bee

Some El Dorado County voters have inundated their elections office with calls after not receiving mail ballots for the Nov. 8 election.

Registrar of Voters Bill Schultz said the problem lies with the U.S. Postal Service, since his office mailed the ballots Oct. 11-14. That means USPS has failed to deliver some of them within 10 days.

Schultz said he thinks the delays are due to the volume of mail – his office sent about 70,000 ballots – and because of the way the Postal Service distributes mail. USPS hauls the ballots down Highway 50 to West Sacramento for sorting before delivering them back up in El Dorado County.

Read the whole story

Letter: Collin is already a proven leader

To the community,

On Nov. 8, I hope you will vote Jason Collin for City Council.

Jason Collin is an easy pick. He stands out in our community as a proven leader, as a trustworthy and dedicated community member, as a family man, and as a great collaborator and

communicator. I have known Jason for over eight years now, and in all my experiences at schools, in Rotary, at community events and at recreation activities with Jason, I have noted that his strengths lie in his ability to relate to people. He finds common ground with everyone, he listens attentively to all parties involved, and he collaborates to find effective solutions. He holds strong convictions that make him a stronger leader. He is honest, trustworthy and dedicated to improving our community.

Jason stands for making our community a better place for each of us by finding affordable housing solutions, through recreation improvements, with transportation solutions and road repair, through environmentally conscious decisions, and with community minded choices.

Jason understands that we live, work and play in the most beautiful place on earth and his goal is to make our hopes and aspirations for our community come true. Jason Collin is committed to making our city and our environment a better place for all of us through his collaboration with the citizens, the city employees and his peers on the council if we elect him. I solidly endorse and support Jason Collin for City Council.

Kathy Haven, South Lake Tahoe

El Dorado County selling defaulted properties

Defaulted properties in El Dorado County will be auctioned Nov. 4 by the tax collector.

Properties for sale includes approximately 45 in El Dorado County and 280 timeshare intervals in the Lake Tahoe Basin. A complete list of parcels can be viewed **online**.

The auction will be at Planning Commission Hearing Room, 2850 Fair Lane Court (Building C) in Placerville at 1:30pm.

Potential buyers may complete the bidder registration form online in advance. Some parcels may have bond obligations associated with them, or they could have limited rights.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Tahoe Paradise Resort Improvement District's board on Oct. 27 will discuss consolidating elections. The meeting starts at 6pm at the park's main office. The vote would be in November or December.

- Harveys will host World Series of Poker events Oct. 27-Nov. 7. For more info, call 775.586.4949.

- The regional mass notification system called Placer-Alert will be tested Oct. 26 in targeted areas between 8:30-10am. To register, go **online**.

- Lift tickets on Nov. 10, opening day at Mammoth Mountain, will be \$50. Tickets other days in November are \$89 online.

- Check this video out of early season shredding in Tahoe:

CalSTAR, ski workers prep for winter transports



CalSTAR on Oct. 21 explains to Heavenly employees how to work around a helicopter. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

A helicopter ride isn't anyone's idea of a good way to end the ski day. But when minutes matter an air ambulance can be the difference between life and death.

It's a group effort to ensure injured skiers and riders get to a hospital as quickly as possible.

"Our goal is skids down to skids up of 10 minutes or less," CalSTAR flight nurse Beth Frisby said.

Kip McCarthy, Kirkwood Mountain Resort's health and safety manager, told *Lake Tahoe News* an air ambulance is an integral part for that resort as well at Heavenly Mountain Resort.

“What would have been over an hour is now 20 minutes,” McCarthy said of driving vs. air time to get a patient to a hospital.

Every year CalSTAR trains with employees of the local mountains so they are ready when the helicopter arrives. On Friday it was a group from Heavenly learning about the loading procedures and the necessary respect to have for the H235, P3 Airbus.

“We need to get this right 100 percent of the time,” flight nurse Ted Langevin told the group huddled around the landing zone at the California Lodge parking lot. “If you are not sure what to do, stop.”

Because accidents happen at all times of the day, even to workers, it’s not just the patrollers who train with CalSTAR.



Sky Meadows is the busiest on-mountain landing zone for

CalSTAR at Heavenly. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The blades on the helicopter are not visible at night and the back of the bird is a dangerous place to be. Ironically, though, the back is where patients are loaded.

With this being the first year for the new helicopter, it will mean some training for the CalSTAR crew, too. The back end is lower to ground, which will make a difference in snowy conditions.

Bear paws are put on the skids in the winter for traction in the snow.

In a mock situation, with blades not rotating and no snow on the ground, the Heavenly gang got to see what it would be like to carry a backboard (sans patient) to the rear of the helicopter and then lift the patient in.

Those on the ground are responsible for telling the flight crew – which consists of a pilot and two nurses – the wind and landing conditions. If they don't know the direction of the wind, saying they are facing a certain way and then if the wind is to their front or back, or if it's swirling will help the pilot.

Dusty snow on the ground will kick up and blind the pilot. Stomping the snow to make it more solid might be needed. Putting a sack with chains in it (so it doesn't blow away) can be a good marker for where the nose of the helicopter should be.

Don't be afraid to call for helicopter was repeated multiple times on Oct. 21.

"If you are thinking about it more than one time, call the helicopter," Frisby told the workers. "We'd rather be called and there's no patient than to be called too late."

It doesn't cost anyone anything if it turns out the person should be transported via regular ambulance.

Langevin added, "Weather will always be an issue, but don't let that be a determining factor for you."



Patients are loaded from the back into the CalSTAR helicopter. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Wind can be an issue, not so much for the helicopter, but for the people inside of it. Sudden gusts are the worst for the nurses.

"We can fly in a lot of wind. But if we can't help the patient, it does us no good," pilot Mark Davis told *Lake Tahoe News*.

It's the CalSTAR team that decides where the patient will go

and the type of care needed. Most ski patrollers have an extremely limited medical background.

Trauma and stroke patients go to Renown Medical Center in Reno, burn patients to UC Davis in Sacramento, cardiac cases to Carson-Tahoe in Carson City and fractures to Barton Memorial Hospital in South Lake.

CalSTAR, which has eight nurses, four pilots and a base mechanic, is like a flying hospital.

It's not just injured skiers CalSTAR is lifting from area resorts. Babies have been delivered and sometimes the person has already died.

Of the 72 ski resort calls CalSTAR received in 2015-16, 35 percent were from Heavenly. Crews also went to Kirkwood, Sierra, Squaw Valley and Bear Valley. The No. 1 reason is for falls – which includes terrain park injuries, then hitting a fixed object like a tree, third is skier vs. rider (or some combination), and fourth is cardiac.

Hard conditions and busy times, like holidays, are when the call volume goes up.

Most resorts have designated landing zones for CalSTAR, though it is possible to land at other locations. Besides the Cal Lodge at Heavenly, Sky Meadows is the next busiest landing location. The Galaxy location near East Peak, Stagecoach and Boulder lodges are also landing sites.

Letter: Placer County supes

out of control

To the community,

We all know by now that the Placer County Board of Supervisors voted to tentatively approve the Martis Valley West project, which will bring many years of construction, massive ridgeline sprawl, and further urbanization to the Lake Tahoe area.

Rather than taking a thoughtful and measured approach to evaluating the merits or lack thereof of the project, the supervisors, led by Kirk Uhler, who clearly has never met a project he didn't like or an environmentalist he did, voted 4-1 in favor.

In doing so, they brushed aside hundreds of objections from the public and first responders like the California Highway Patrol and the North Tahoe Fire Protection District and, incredibly, their own Planning Commission, who voted to deny. This is an egregious example of putting greed over public safety.

Placer County stands to make millions from this project alone, not to mention the many others in the pipeline. One thing Uhler mentioned during his comments was "per door" traffic mitigation fees, which are collected from new development to help build infrastructure needed as population increases.

That made me curious, and I looked up the fees for Lake Tahoe, which are \$4,846 for each new dwelling. These fees alone will net Placer more than \$3 million, and they are but one portion of the haul Placer stands to take from this project.

It's easy to see why the supervisors, none of whom live in this area – save the lone dissenting vote, Jennifer Montgomery – thought "Hey, why not?" With thousands of potential units to be developed in and around the Basin, Placer stands to make many millions of dollars for many years to come.

Uhler's district is Granite Bay, where residents have tried to recall him in the past due to concerns over massive development. His and the other supervisors' reckless disregard for public safety, the environment and residents' wishes make it time to call a halt to an out-of-control Board of Supervisors who see Tahoe as nothing more than a cash cow.

Are out-of-the-area officials like Uhler really the ones we want to have in charge of development where we live? Do we want them making the decisions as to how much traffic can be added to our choked roads, and how many more people can be stuffed into Martis Valley and Olympic Valley?

Tahoe is already over capacity, the roads are at gridlock, and things only stand to get worse under Placer County's unlimited development stance. Maybe it's time to start pushing for a different way of doing things or at least different people to do them.

And maybe it's time to bring up the "M" word once again: moratorium.

Coral Amende, Incline Village

Internet the salvation for small bookstores

By Amy Haimerl, New York Times

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. — When Peter Makin opened Brilliant Books five years ago, he quickly realized his business wouldn't survive in this remote locale if his only customers were local buyers.

In the summer, this small town five hours north of Detroit is a haven for tourists and summer residents who are drawn to the state's wine country. But after the fall colors fade and the sapphire waters of Lake Michigan chill, the region's population slumps by as much as 40 percent for much of the other nine months of the year.

But even as the summer visitors disappear, Brilliant Books is still thriving as a result of robust online sales.

A decade ago, independent bookstores were viewed as an industry on the decline. Crushed on price by Amazon and by the wide selection of national retailers like Barnes & Noble, thousands of mom-and-pop outlets had closed up shop.

But after years of losses, they are emerging from the decimation, with the number of independent bookstores rising 21 percent from 2010 to 2015.

Read the whole story

Watchdog raises concern over Caesars creditor deal

By Tracy Rucinski, Reuters

A lawyer for the U.S. government's bankruptcy watchdog raised concerns in court on Wednesday over Caesars Entertainment Corp's \$5 billion creditor deal to push its main unit out of Chapter 11, even as hold-out creditors appeared closer to backing the agreement.

Caesars Entertainment Operating Co Inc. (CEOC) filed for bankruptcy in January 2015 amid allegations by creditors that its parent had looted the unit of its best assets, leaving it with \$18 billion of debt.

Las Vegas-based Caesars reached an agreement with creditors last month that includes a \$5 billion contribution to CEOC's reorganization plan in exchange for releases from billions of dollars in legal claims.

Caesars is the parent company of Harrah's Lake Tahoe and Harveys.

Read the whole story

NV Energy proposes Jan. 1 reduction for N. Nev.

By Reno Gazette-Journal

NV Energy has reached a settlement agreement with the Regulatory Operations Staff of the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada, Bureau of Consumer Protection, and a number of other entities to lower prices for customers in Northern Nevada starting Jan. 1, 2017.

The agreement follows the June 2016 filing of NV Energy's required triennial general rate case and is subject to Public Utilities Commission of Nevada (PUCN) approval.

Read the whole story

Second home owners offer first-hand advice

By Marni Jameson, Orland Sentinel

Is owning a second home all it's cracked up to be? That's the question I cast to my experience-wizened readers. And their resounding answer? A definitive sometimes.

I am giving the reins over to my readers, who have shared their first-hand knowledge of second-home ownership. Here are their lessons from the trenches, beaches, mountains and golf communities:

"Just think!"

"There we were, stretched out on the beach – in January!" begins Bonnie Wilkes, explaining how she and her husband, then Chicago residents, came to own a second home in Sarasota, Fla. "The temperature was in the mid-80s. Wow! We thought – just think if we could have this all the time! We should buy a second home here."

And they did. That was 34 years ago. "Never again did we feel that same level of relaxation while on vacation at that same beach," she continued. "Some days we didn't even make it to the beach because we were waiting for the refrigerator repair guy. Instead of strolling the gift shops in the village, we were at a big box store looking for a TV for the guest room."

Waiting until the kids were grown made a second-home investment pay off for Jane Gold, of Saratoga. After their three children were out of the house, she and her husband bought a second home in Lake Tahoe.

“Our family always vacationed there, and we have fond memories of those times.” Five years ago, they bought a house close to the lake and just a four-and-a-half-hour by car from their main home, so they can take their dogs. “We don’t regret buying one bit.”

Read the whole story