

Vail's CEO distributes \$2M to charities

Sizable donations from the chief executive officer of Vail Resorts will benefit children on the South and North Shores of Lake Tahoe.



Rob Katz

CEO Rob Katz and his wife, Elana Amsterdam, founder of Elana's Pantry, made personal contributions totaling \$2 million to 12 nonprofit organizations in the communities where the company operates. Each of the contributions will be directed toward programs that support the welfare and education of children in these local communities.

"The success of our local communities brings a number of unique challenges that require our focus and attention – none more important than helping kids and families who are most vulnerable. Elana and I feel fortunate to be able to provide this support to these outstanding non-profits to allow them to continue their great work," Katz said in a statement.

The Boys & Girls Club in South Lake Tahoe will receive \$125,000. The money will cover the full cost of 50 children attending the club for an entire year, and provides the organization with \$50,000 in seed funding to launch a campaign for a new home.

The Boys & Girls Club in North Lake Tahoe also will receive

\$125,000. This donation will support the expansion of the organization's program in Truckee to address youth and academic achievement, as well as to provide a safe place for teens to go. The program currently serves 320 kids per day at Kings Beach and 105 kids each day at Truckee. With this gift, 75 more children will be able to have access to the program for three years.

EDC's CalPERS obligation tops \$280M

By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County's unfunded obligation to CalPERS now exceeds \$280 million.

Auditor-Controller Joe Harn this week let the Board of Supervisors know the debt grew by \$51 million in one year.

"The most recent report of our financial position with CalPERS is as of June 30, 2015. Since CalPERS investment earnings for the year ended June 30, 2016, were dramatically less than estimated, our unfunded obligation will exceed \$300 million in our next CalPERS actuarial report," Harn told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Further, CalPERS has informed the county that six years from now the required annual payments to CalPERS will be \$13 million per year higher than they are now. Balancing the county's budget and providing critical public safety and road maintenance services will become much tougher in the future because of our unfunded obligation to CalPERS."

While *Lake Tahoe News* reached out to CAO Don Ashton and Supervisor Sue Novasel, it was spokesman Creighton Avila who

responded by saying, "While El Dorado County has been proactive in reducing retiree health costs by removing this benefit for all new employees resulting in a capped retiree health unfunded obligation, the unfunded CalPERS liabilities continue to be a concern for the county and many jurisdictions across the state." (Retiree health benefits have nothing to do with CalPERS.)

The county has no plans for how to deal with the growing problem of funding a defined benefit for employees.

However, it would be more expensive for the county to withdraw from CalPERS.

Part of the escalating debt is the result of CalPERS giving all member agencies low cost estimates in the 1990s. Against the advice of Harn, supervisors in 1999 and 2000 accepted CalPERS' numbers and offered county employees dramatically enhanced retirement benefits.

"It should be noted that South Lake Tahoe and South Tahoe Public Utility District and just about all of our surrounding counties have more lucrative and expensive retirement plans than El Dorado County does," Harn said.

60 kids needed for 'Rumpelstiltskin' performance

Missoula Children's Theater will be back to Tahoe the week of Oct. 17.

Auditions for "Rumpelstiltskin" are Monday at Tahoe Valley Elementary School's multipurpose room from 4-6pm. Plan to stay

for the full two hours. Some of the cast members will be asked to stay for a rehearsal immediately following the audition.

There are roles for up to 60 children. Assistant directors will also be cast to aid in rehearsals throughout the week, and to take on backstage responsibilities. Students in kindergarten (must be 5) through 12th grade may audition. No advance preparation is necessary.

Rehearsals will take place all week from 4-8:30pm depending on the role. All children who are cast must be able to attend all rehearsals for their role.

“Rumpelstiltskin” will be presented Oct. 22 at Tahoe Valley Elementary School at 3pm and 5:30pm. Admission is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children and seniors.

Auditions are free. If cast, there will be a fee of \$50 per child to participate. A limited number of scholarships are available; call Tahoe Arts Project leader Peggy Blowney at 530.542.3632.

80% containment in fire near Cascade Lake



The Emerald Fire burns on Cascade Ridge Friday morning just before daybreak. Photo/Taylor Flynn/Tahoe Mountain News

Updated 7:10pm:

By Susan Wood

CAMP RICHARDSON – The Emerald Fire burning near Cascade Lake is 80 percent contained. It has burned more than 200 acres.

According to Kit Bailey, U.S. Forest Service local fire chief, “We have stopped the forward progress.”

The fire, though, is unpredictable. At one point the flames were going toward Lake Tahoe even though the wind was pushing it in the other direction, Bailey told *Lake Tahoe News*.

It started near Highway 89 at Spring Creek tract about 1:30am Oct. 14 and ran hard toward Lake Tahoe. Flames reached Lake Tahoe on a beach north of Camp Richardson, according to

CalFire. However, the fire as of 10:20am was only burning on the mountain side.



A firefighter keeps a watchful eye on the blaze along a fire line near Highway 89 north of Spring Creek tract on Oct. 14. Photo/Taylor Flynn/Tahoe Mountain News

It is burning west of Spring Creek near Cathedral Road. Evacuations have been ordered for Spring Creek, Cathedral, Fallen Leaf Lake's west shore, Cascade Properties and Cascade Lake. Five hundred people are on mandatory evacuation orders, while another 500 have voluntary orders. While an evacuation center has been set up at the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center, people are being told to drive north on Highway 89 toward Tahoe City. Rideout Community Center located at 740 Timberland Lane in Tahoe City has been opened for evacuees.

Highway 89 is closed from Fallen Leaf Road to Bayview Campground, and the evacuation area north of Bayview has been

released. The highway will remain closed until hazardous trees can be cleared, this could be a day or two.



From the vantage point of Baldwin Beach, hot spots continued on the western and eastern sides of Cascade Ridge, though large flare ups appeared to be diminishing as rainfall continued about 7:30am. Photo/Taylor Flynn/Tahoe Mountain News

One of the big issues with suppression is that no aircraft can fly because of the strong winds. Visibility is also a concern because the rain, smoke and low clouds are a problem.

Fire officials have been hoping the rain will give them the relief they need to help put this out. Right now they are building a line around the fire.

“The rain has been extremely helpful and has stopped it significantly,” South Lake Tahoe Fire Chief Jeff Meston told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Fire trucks are parked at the residences of Cascade Lake. No houses have been threatened.

“There was a lot of big firefighting going on last night,” Lake Valley Fire Chief Tim Alameda told *Lake Tahoe News*. However, he added, what isn’t helping is “there is no shortage of dead trees.” Ironically, that is what the Lake Valley board discussed at its meeting Thursday night.

Lee Webber of Antioch, who was celebrating his birthday by camping at Camp Rich with his family, was on standby to decide whether they would evacuate. “Last night the wind was rough,” he told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

While this fire was going, South Lake crews got called at about 3:30am Oct. 14 to a brush fire Meeks Lumber. It is another one of the “suspicious” fires that has been confounding firefighters.

– *Kathryn Reed contributed to this story.*

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



A pedestrian light is being installed at Camp Richardson. Photo/Bill Kingman

- It's about to be a little safer to cross Highway 89 in Camp Richardson. A light is being installed near the ice cream parlor that is expected to be operating next week.
- El Dorado County is hosting a workshop Oct. 25 at 6pm to discuss the county's Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan. The meeting will be in the Planning Commission Hearing Room, in Building C, at 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville. For more info, go **online**.
- Ed Z'Berg Sugar Pine Point State Park is looking for volunteers to prepare the park for winter by raking the lawn, weeding the native plant gardens, and laying new grass seed on Oct. 26 from noon-3pm. Go **online** to sign up.
- At last weekend's Keep Sierra Clean Day 430 people collected 1,100 pounds of trash from the slopes.
- Because of the storm the Meyers Outdoor Gear Swap has been moved to Oct. 23.

KMS sale in jeopardy; county-TRPA involved

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – The conversion of Kingsbury Middle School into affordable housing is in jeopardy because the county has not completed the area plan that encompasses the site and the allowable number of vehicle miles has been drastically reduced per Tahoe Regional Planning Agency rules.

Patrick Taylor in July entered into an agreement with Douglas County School District to purchase the 22-plus acre site with 36,000-square-feet of space for \$3.25 million, which included paying half the utilities – \$25,000 – for a year.

At this week's board meeting the four who attended (Ross Chichester, Neal Freitas and Cindy Trigg were absent) deliberated for some time about what to do with the due diligence period ending the following day, Oct. 12. All four had to agree for any motion to pass. Ultimately they agreed to extend the period one month to Nov. 16, one day after their next meeting.

But based on how slow government works in the basin, there is no way all of the issues will be resolved in that time period.

"For the Kingsbury Middle School site, TRPA previously determined that the vehicle miles traveled was limited to 286. This is based on TRPA code provisions that deal with previous uses. Since the school had been closed for over 60 months, the higher vehicle trips originally associated with the school use was no longer recognized by TRPA," Mimi Moss, director of Douglas County Community Development, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

“Any increase in the VMT will now require a change to the area plan, including additional environmental study and traffic analysis.”



The halls of Kingsbury Middle School have been vacant for eight years. Photo/LTN

At the school meeting Oct. 11, Superintendent Teri White said the allowable VMT was 1,500 when KMS was open. The school site has been sitting empty since students left at the end of the 2007-08 school year.

Because there was a 1½ year delay by the county in submitting the area plan to TRPA some of the technical data needs updating. The Tahoe Douglas Area Plan was most recently sent to TRPA on Aug. 24, with TRPA sending it back to the county with comments on Sept. 23. The county is working to address the bi-state regulatory agency's concerns.

Ascent Environmental is the consultant helping the county with the planning document.

A sticking point between the county, school district and KMS buyer is who will pay for all the necessary studies to move the project forward.

“The county is in discussions with our environmental consultant regarding additional timelines, costs, and area plan changes based on our recent discussions with the school district. Ultimately, the new buyer would be responsible for the cost,” Moss said.

Traditionally the county would pay for the environmental review of the area plan as a whole and the developer would pay for the analysis of impacts associated with his project. The traffic analysis is also necessary because the property use is changing from a school to housing.

Taylor told the DCSD board he isn't going to put another penny into the project (he put up a \$15,000 deposit) until the VMT issue is resolved.

Board member Teri Jamin, who was once the head planner for the city of South Lake Tahoe, advocated for extending the due diligence period two months if a non-refundable deposit could be secured from Taylor so he would have some skin in the game.

Board member Robbe Lehmann said, “If they want to buy it, it should be as is.”

Board member Tom Moore said, “We are gambling to a certain extent because we don't know how it would change in value based on the perception of zoning.”

The district is paying about \$5,000 a month for the upkeep of the site, which includes utilities.

Taylor is the first person to come forward with an offer on the site. That is what has some board members nervous, is that it will sit vacant for another eight years. But some board members are reluctant for the district to expend money when

the zoning and VMT issues are not their problem.

Vehicle miles traveled, while always an issue in Tahoe, has been getting more attention of late with projects inside and outside the basin.

At the July meeting of the Regional Plan Implementation Committee of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency there was a lengthy discussion about the topic. VMT for the TRPA has more to deal with air and water quality than congestion. But it's gridlock that impacts drivers – locals and tourists.

"We can't build road capacity therefore the only thing we can do then is restrict car use," RPIC member Bill Yeates said.

There was talk of needing to think outside the box as well as work on basics like offsite parking and a reliable transit system.

That discussion will affect the KMS site if and when the affordable housing project goes before the TRPA.

Letter: Imperative to vote yes on Prop. 52

To the community,

This November, please vote yes on Proposition 52. Proposition 52, the Medi-Cal Funding and Accountability Act, extends the current partnership between the state and California hospitals to help fund the health care needs of 13 million children, seniors, and low-income families in California.



Clint Purvance

In the last two years, the number of Med-Cal recipients in South Lake Tahoe has doubled. El Dorado County receives \$20,136,379 in federal funding each year and without this money our working families who would not be able to afford health care services.

Prop. 52 is not a tax increase. It allows hospitals to pay an upfront fee that is matched by federal money to fund the health care needs of Medi-Cal patients. Prop. 52 prevents lawmakers from moving the funds to other places and can only be used for the intended purpose: health care for children, seniors, and low-income families.

Since 2009, this funding partnership has existed and provided about \$18 billion in federal funds. Without these additional funds, children, seniors, and low-income families would be at risk for losing access to critical medical services.

Barton Health is dedicated to providing and expanding health care services to all community members, regardless of their income. Prop. 52 is supported across party lines and by more than 1,000 health care systems, taxpayer groups, businesses, and children's advocate organizations from around the state. As the CEO and president of Barton Health in South Lake Tahoe, I encourage all California voters to vote yes at Prop. 52.

Clint Purvance, CEO and president Barton Health

Carson City fire fully contained



A wildland fire on Oct. 13 burns in Carson City. Photo/Reno Fire Department

Updated 11:40pm:

A wildfire that started at 5:30pm on Thursday in Carson City has been fully contained. The actual acreage burned had not been reported.

While several structures were threatened and residents had to be evacuated in south Carson City, no buildings were lost.

Crews are expected to be at the Clear Creek Fire site through the night, especially with the forecast for high winds.

The area had been under a “red flag” warning because of high winds associated with the storm that is headed this way.

Highway 395 remained open Oct. 13, but several roads were closed.

The fire was burning east and south of the intersection of highway 50 and 395, blowing toward the old Indian School.

Electricity was out in the neighboring area.

No cause has been determined.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Free sand bags available in S. Lake Tahoe

South Lake Tahoe has sand bags are available at no cost year-round.

The sand lot is located at the city's public works yard located at 1160 Rufus Allen Blvd., which is next to Campground by the Lake.

To pick up sand bags, proceed through the gate at 1160 Rufus Allen Blvd. and drive to the back of the lot. At the back of the lot is a large sand mound, shovels and bags. Residents fill their own bags and transport back to their residence. There is a 10-bag limit.

Access to sand bags is available Monday-Friday 7:30am-4pm.

N. Nevadans see pros, cons of Raiders stadium in Vegas

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Review-Journal

RENO – When it comes to the debate over a \$1.9 billion domed football stadium, rural and Northern Nevada tourism leaders aren't much different from their counterparts in Southern Nevada.

They love the idea of having a major-league sports team to support but hate the thought of the public investing \$750 million to help pay for it.

Developers of the Las Vegas project have said they need to stage 46 events per year to generate enough incremental visitation to pay for the stadium and provide an economic benefit.

[Read the whole story](#)