

Douglas County residents face stormwater fee



The Burke Creek stormwater project under way in Stateline involves Douglas County, Nevada Department of Transportation, Nevada Tahoe Resource Conservation District and the U.S. Forest Service. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Douglas County wants to get a handle on its stormwater. It's been trying to do so for years.

In this incarnation residents are likely to foot the bill via a special fee.

It's estimated that countywide about \$2 million is needed on an annual basis, with much of that money to be used for ongoing maintenance. Individual households are likely to see a \$4 to \$7 monthly bill. It's being called a fee, not a tax.

How this dollar amount was calculated has not been revealed, nor have the valley and lake needs been broken out.

A vocal and concerned group of citizens turned out Sept. 19 at Kahle Community Center to hear what officials had to say.

People are worried money collected at the lake will be used in the valley. The administrative costs are another concern; people are worried not enough money will go for real work. Lack of trust in the county commissioners as a whole was a common theme.

Larry Werner, interim Douglas County manager, and Jeff House with House Moran Consulting led the discussion.

"There is a stormwater plan in place, but it is inadequate because of the lack of funding. It's not because of the lack of expertise," House told *Lake Tahoe News*.

His contract with the county expires at the end of the year. Between now and then the commissioners are each supposed to appoint two people to a committee. That group will take comments from the various public meetings, look at the work that needs to be done, and help come up with a credit program.

The credit program was also met with skepticism at Tuesday's meeting. People wondered how it would be equitable and administered.

There is already a credit program in place for the total maximum daily load (TMDL) mandate handed down from the feds. This credit is given to entities like the county and Nevada Department of Transportation.

In 2011, Douglas County was being more innovative with its TMDL-stormwater issues.

Some people have their Tahoe Regional Planning Agency best management practices certificate and want that to be considered. The various general improvement districts have a

variety of programs in place, but there is no consistency.

Then there are companies like Edgewood Tahoe that receives stormwater from a variety of sources based on being a lakefront business. Patrick Rhamey with Edgewood said it would be “crazy” for his company to pay a dime when it is spending more than \$5 million on stormwater issues related to the lodge construction.

That would be where the credit program comes into play – some entities might get cash back.

Letter: Ag in the Classroom a success

To the community,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many people, organizations and businesses that helped to make our fourth annual Farm Day an amazing success on Sept. 20.

AG in the Classroom did an excellent job of coordinating and providing an outstanding program for over 450 students from Lake Tahoe Unified School District. I would like to give special thanks to Camp Richardson for the generous donation of their site, the AG in the Classroom sponsors and Lake Tahoe Education Foundation for funding of this incredible event, LTUSD maintenance staff for helping with set-up and take down, Chimayo Street Grill for providing the delicious lunches and the over 85 incredible presenters and volunteers from both STEEC, South Lake Tahoe and El Dorado.

This year we were also lucky enough to have many Future

Farmers of America students from both Douglas County and El Dorado County help us. The students got to rotate through 28 hands-on, interactive stations on such topics as forestry, nutrition, water, bees, composting and animals. We had a large number of animals this year that the students were able to learn about and touch, including a calf, horses, chickens, rabbits, goats, sheep, and a turkey.

It was a great experience for so many students and I am extremely grateful for all of the wonderful people who make this possible. We couldn't do it without you.

Beth Quandt, LTUSD science outreach coordinator

Facts about opioids, political cash in Nevada

By Michelle Rindels, AP

Heavy-duty prescription painkillers like hydrocodone and OxyContin are a big part of medicine in Nevada, with doctors prescribing them at a rate that nearly reached one per person last year.

Meanwhile, lawmakers in the state get a huge chunk of their campaign cash from donors with ties to the prescription painkiller business.

But Nevada isn't alone: a joint investigation by The Associated Press and the Center for Public Integrity found that drugmakers that produce opioid painkillers and allied advocacy groups spent more than \$880 million on campaign contributions and lobbying nationwide over the past decade.

The money comes from members of the Pain Control Forum – a loosely affiliated group that touts prescription opioids as having a vital role in improving the quality of life for millions of Americans.

By comparison, groups advocating for limits on opioid prescribing spent about \$4 million nationwide.

Things to know about political spending by the painkiller industry and opioid use in Nevada:

Drug spending: Between 2006 and 2015, members of the Pain Care Forum contributed more than \$855,000 in Nevada. Among all states, Nevada has the highest portion of total political contributions that come from Pain Care Forum members.

Drug lobbyists: There have been about 19 lobbyists hired each year for the past decade to represent members of the Pain Care Forum in Nevada.

Prescriptions: Prescriptions for opioid painkillers are common in Nevada, with nearly 2.4 million prescriptions issued in 2015. That's the equivalent of .83 prescriptions per person.

Drug deaths: The number of Nevadans dying from drug overdoses is on the rise. The state's drug deaths increased 18 percent between 2006 and 2014, with a total of 5,007 during that period. Though the drug death data isn't limited to opioids, the CDC has indicated that prescription opioids and heroin account for the majority of drug deaths.

Housing help available for

Low income in EDC

For the first time since 2008, El Dorado County's Public Housing Authority will open its housing choice voucher waiting list.

Formerly known as Section 8, the federal money provides rental assistance to income qualified individuals and families. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or have eligible immigration status.

Applications will be accepted **online** from Oct. 17-23. A computer generated lottery will review and select the 500 applications that will comprise the waiting list.

Poll: Sandoval one of nation's most popular guvs

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

He may not be running for political office in 2016, but Gov. Brian Sandoval is weighing in on races and ballot measures. His latest popularity rating may help in those efforts.

Sandoval, who's amid his second and final term as governor, had the fifth-lowest disapproval rating among governors at 21 percent, a survey by Morning Consult, a Washington-based politics and polling publication, shows.

His approval rating was 62 percent; seven governors had higher approval ratings.

Read the whole story

3 safe after boat begins to sink at Tahoe

Three people were rescued Tuesday afternoon on Lake Tahoe when their boat began taking on water.

The Coast Guard said the distress call was received shortly after 3pm Sept. 20 from the vessel Just Enough. The 25-foot boat was beginning to sink near the California-Nevada border of the South Shore.

The three adults were taken to shore by the Coast Guard, while a Good Samaritan from the vessel Sundance helped tow Just Enough to Tahoe Keys Marina.

No one was injured and what caused the boat to take on water has not been determined.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- The 3rd annual Alpine Aspen Festival will be Oct. 8-9 in Hope Valley. Headquarters for the festival are at the snowpark located on Blue Lakes Road and Highway 88. Festivities are from 10am-4pm. For details, go **online**.

- The El Dorado County Republican Central Committee and

El Dorado County Unit of the California Republican Assembly have united and opened an office at 680 Placerville Drive, Suite C, in Placerville.

- Zephyr Cove Elementary School's annual walk-a-thon is Sept. 30 at 10am. It is a fundraiser for the parents club.

- Slow Food Lake Tahoe's annual canning clinic is Oct. 1 from 9am-1pm. Cost is \$25. Details are **online**.

Sierra lake offers clues about ongoing drought

By Bettina Boxall, Los Angeles Times

In 2000, researchers took a coring from the bed of a small, shallow lake in the Eastern Sierra Nevada mountains.

They analyzed the organic matter and chemicals in the sediments to reconstruct a climate record of the past 10,000 years. They then compared it with reconstructions of ancient ocean temperatures.

The results echoed previous studies that have found a link between past periods of climate warming, cool sea-surface temperatures in the eastern Pacific Ocean and centuries-long droughts in California and the West.

Does that mean that global warming is pushing California to the threshold of endless drought?

Read the whole story

Wind, humidity create high fire danger



More than a half acre burned at Spooner Lake on Sept. 20. The cause is under investigation. Photo/USFS

A red flag warning has been issued for the Lake Tahoe Basin and Truckee areas from noon-8pm Wednesday.

This means hazardous fire conditions because of the strong winds and low humidity. Winds out of the southwest are expected to be 15-25 mph, with gusts of 45 mph.

“The combination of gusty winds and low humidity can cause fire to rapidly grow in size and intensity before first responders can contain them,” according to the National Weather Service in Reno.

Fire personnel are beefing up resources, especially with an arsonist on the loose on the South Shore. A rash of fires have been human started in the last month. Authorities will not say if they have a suspect. Most of these fires have been set on

state or federal lands.

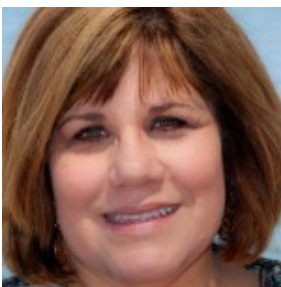
Rain, including thunderstorms, is in the forecast for the Tahoe basin on Wednesday and Thursday. Temperatures are expected to drop dramatically, with the overnight low on Sept. 22 being 28 degrees. Sunny skies will return Friday, and the high Saturday is expected to be 73.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Swanson lone filer to fill LTUSD vacancy

Only one person applied for the vacancy on the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board – Angela Swanson.

The term was created with the resignation of Ginger Nicolay-Davis. She left because she took a paid position with the district. The term ends in December 2018.



Angela Swanson

“I am looking forward to rejoining the board and very much hope the current board members will welcome me to their ranks. The unexpected opening of the seat was a perfect opportunity for me to bring my skills in the areas of facilities, planning and finance back to the board at a time when the district

looks toward reopening Al Tahoe Elementary School, addressing the accreditation issues at STHS and cultivating a new generation of teachers,” Swanson told *Lake Tahoe News*. “I have been an educational activist since I came to South Lake Tahoe as a young mother. That passion has never abated. If selected, I will serve my district and the community to the best of my abilities.”

Swanson was on the LTUSD board from 2005-09. She quit midterm to work for LTUSD. Currently she is working in Livermore as a school facilities planning consultant.

” ... (I) have the flexibility within my current position to work from Lake Tahoe on board days and as otherwise needed to fulfill my responsibilities as a board member. I don’t foresee this posing a difficulty as I have always worked outside the basin. It is my normal,” Swanson said.

Swanson also served on the South Lake Tahoe City Council from 2010-14.

The school board will meet Sept. 27 at which time the remaining four will decide whether Swanson should fill the vacancy for Area 2.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*