

Watercraft inspections becoming more limited

Starting in October boat inspections will move to select launch ramps and winter hours will begin.

Tahoe Resource Conservation District inspectors will be stationed at Cave Rock and Lake Forest boat launches from 6am-4pm seven days a week, weather and construction permitting. All boats without an intact Tahoe inspection seal are required to get an inspection during daylight hours.

Decontaminations are available at Cave Rock and Lake Forest throughout October as long as weather permits. Decontamination fees will apply for watercraft that are not clean, drained and dry. Watercraft that have been in a known infested waterbody will also require a precautionary decontamination at no cost.

Boats with intact inspection seals are permitted to launch at all open launch facilities; however, inspections are only available at Cave Rock and Lake Forest.

Boaters are encouraged to confirm hours and inspection locations **online** or call 888.824.6267.

During the 2016 boating season, Tahoe RCD watercraft inspectors performed more than 7,500 inspections. In total, more than 15,000 vessels launched at Lake Tahoe, including both newly inspected vessels and those with intact Tahoe-issued inspection seals.

Tax revenues good omen for SLT budget

By Kathryn Reed

The budget the South Lake Tahoe City Council will be asked to approve on Tuesday has been built with cautious optimism.

City Manager Nancy Kerry likes to look at the big picture when putting numbers together. In particular she is paying attention to models that show recessions in the last 50 years have hit on average every six years. It's been eight years since the last one.

And while that last recession was a doozy, Kerry doesn't want to forget the lessons learned from it. She doesn't want to spend money with abandon or overinflate the payroll with employees.

The global economy has a direct correlation to Lake Tahoe as a whole because if money tightens elsewhere, people tend to stop traveling. And with a tourist-based economy, the area gets slammed harder when the economy heads south.

The California travel forecast is for the international tourist market to shrink a bit.

South Lake Tahoe's three main revenue sources are hotel, sales and property taxes. The first is all tourists, sales is a mix of locals and others, and property taxes are both as well, though with second homeowners at 70 percent they are still the predominant purchasers of houses here.

Property taxes grew 3.5 percent in fiscal year 2014, 4.7 percent in FY 2015 and are expected to hit 4.3 percent this year. The 2016-17 budget calls for a spike of 5.1 percent. But after that the city projects property taxes to be flat at 1.5

percent for several years. The upward trend in the last few years is attributed to housing being one of the last sectors to recover from a recession, so it's just now that prices are returning to prerecession figures.

With sales tax, the city saw an increase of 9 percent in FY 2014, 3.7 percent in FY15, and a 7.4 percent was budgeted for this year. The budget that goes into effect Oct. 1 forecasts a 1.4 percent increase.

TOT has been fabulous of late. In FY 2014 there was a 17 percent increase from the previous year, it was up 16 percent in FY 2015 and it expected to hit 8 percent at the close of this fiscal year. The budget for 2016-17 calls for a 4 percent increase. After that the city is reeling in the numbers, saying a 1 percent increase is likely.

Kerry believes now might be the time to rethink having 25 percent reserves. After all, that money was not touched during the Great Recession. Lowering that percentage to 20 would loosen up the overall budget a bit and still have plenty in the bank for a catastrophic situation. To change the allocation would take a four-fifths vote of the council.

There is much to be celebrated with where the city is today economically compared to recent times. The city is \$100 million better off today than it was five years ago. Half of that is from state and federal grants; the other half is what the city did via health care and debt refinancing. The city's debt accounts for 4 percent of the General Fund. Refinancing bonds has lessened that burden.

The General Fund for 2016-17 calls for \$38.4 million in revenue and \$37.2 million in expenses for a net revenue of \$1.2 million.

"This is the first budget in the city's history that we can find where we are budgeting with a positive cash flow," Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Between 2010 and 2012 the city was experiencing \$5 million in structural deficits. Thirty percent of the workforce was laid off. In 2003 the city didn't even have any reserves.

A little more than three years ago Kerry said for the South Shore to be an economically viable region \$1 billion in capital investment would be needed. That goal, through public and private dollars, is more than halfway to being a reality. It includes such things as single-family residences, BevMo and the hotel complex at Edgewood Tahoe.

Looking forward the city may have more money in its coffers if voters this November increase the transient occupancy and sales taxes. TOT would be used exclusively for recreation infrastructure, while the sales tax could be used for anything. Voters will be asked where they want the extra sales tax money to go, but the council is under no obligation to follow that suggestion.

Admittedly, the budget doesn't cover the costs of all the needs South Lake Tahoe has – such as roads, future raises for employees (their current contract expires at the end of September 2017 and negotiations are under way), and the nearly \$4.6 million unfunded pension liability. Those are bigger picture issues council members will have to face, though they are not expected to do so at their Sept. 20 meeting.

Feedback sought on signage for Rubicon trail

Off-highway vehicle enthusiasts and interested members of the public may give input regarding sign content for the McKinney Rubicon kiosk at a meeting Sept. 22.

It will be from 1-4pm at the U.S. Forest Service office in South Lake Tahoe, 35 College Drive.

For more information about the meeting, contact Mike Gabor 530.543.2642 or emailmgabor@fs.fed.us.

Free genetic testing for Northern Nevadans

By Pashtana Usufzy, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Free genetic testing is being offered to 5,000 Northern Nevadans as part of a public-private collaboration intended to assess how factors like genetics and environment affect overall population health.

Health care network Renown Health, California-based personal genetics company 23andMe and the Desert Research Institute (DRI) – an environmental research hub that's part of the Nevada System of Higher Education – will partner on the pilot study, according to a DRI news release.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Stacy Noyes has been appointed to the Douglas County

Planning Commission. She will fill out Jim Beattie's term, which expires Dec. 31, 2018.

- The **Guinn Center for Policy Priorities** has released a series of fact sheets on the various state and county ballot initiatives voters in Nevada will consider in November.
 - The Tahoe Area Sierra Club is having a fundraising event at Aspen Hollow Nursery on Sept. 18 at 4pm. Cost is \$15 for members, \$20 for others. There will be wine, vittles and dessert. Julie Carville, author of "Tahoe's Spectacular Wildflower Trails", will sign books and talk about local flora.
 - Tahoe Sports Hub's Boulder Bash is Sept. 24 from 9am-5pm in Truckee. For more info, go **online**.
 - Here is the El Dorado-Tahoe roadwork schedule from Caltrans for next week.
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Reilly: Dedicated his life to education

Publisher's note: *Lake Tahoe News* asked candidates for South Lake Tahoe City Council, Lake Tahoe Community College, Lake Tahoe Unified School District, Douglas County School District, South Tahoe Public Utility District and Lake Valley Fire Protection District a series of questions. We are running the responses in the order received. All profiles may be found under the Special Projects listing and then the 2106 November Candidate Profiles category.



Larry Reilly is running for the Area 1 seat on Lake Tahoe Unified School District's board.

Name: Larry Reilly

Age: 63

Job/profession: Retired English and social science teacher/coach

What boards, commissions, or other experience, including volunteering, do you have?: I have served on the South Lake Tahoe Little League and Babe Ruth baseball boards. I am a member of Kiwanis International. I taught kids workshops for LTCC. I helped start the community basketball program on Saturdays for children 5 to 13 years of age. I have taught summer school social science classes for LTUSD. I was the assistant coach for STHS basketball program for 12 years and the basketball camps for 20 years, including international travel with players for several summers.

Why should voters vote for you over another candidate?: I have dedicated my life to education. I entered school at 5 years old and never left until last year when I retired. I have over 39 years of teaching experience. My wife and I have lived in this community for 37 years. I have two children who have graduated from Lake Tahoe Unified School District and are college graduates. I would like to give back to the students

of Lake Tahoe Unified and the families in South Lake Tahoe.

What distinct experience or competency makes you uniquely qualified to lead effectively as an elected official?: I have worked as a teacher and athletic director/dean of students in my 39 years experience in public education. I have taught civics for over 20 years and understand the all aspects of U.S. government. My students learned the federal, state and local government processes through experiential learning and became informed voters as a result. These experiences uniquely qualify me to serve as a school board trustee.

Public agencies have been under scrutiny the last few years for lack of transparency and accountability. What will you do to ensure both?: The new school board must change the culture in the school district. Communication must be the number one priority. Parents and teachers must understand the strategic plan of the district. Parents, teachers, administrators, and the superintendent and school board must design the best strategic plan for a quality education for all children.

What stands out for you in the current budget that you support and that you would change?: I am currently studying the budget and am not comfortable answering this question completely.

Do you support current legislation for \$15 minimum wage? Please explain: I can see both sides of the issue from the employer and employee position. I support the minimum wage so that people can support their families.

Do you support Proposition 55? Please explain: Yes, I support Proposition 55 because revenues will maintain funding for public schools and colleges. Moreover, Proposition 55 will increase funding into the state's Rainy Day Fund. The passage of Proposition 55 will ensure school districts not having to return to the 2010 funding levels and protect from having to make massive budget cuts, teacher layoffs, larger class sizes, fewer services, and tuition hikes.

Describe three attributes for a successful board: 1) Engage in realistic goal setting and monitor progress.

2) Make data driven decisions to identify student progress and then justify board decisions based on data.

3) The school board must craft a positive working relationship with the superintendent, teachers, administrators, and parents based on respect, honesty, cooperation, and a strong commitment to student success.

What are your thoughts about public employee defined benefits?: I support benefits for full time public employees.

Please explain your position on contracting out work normally done by staff: I believe that if employees are qualified, they should be considered for the job.

What is your 10-year vision for the school district?: Continue our high rate of graduating students – Expand the CTE program – Increase test scores, continue to increase in student enrollment, continue to support the TWBI and EL programs, increase literacy, reinstate a six year WASC accreditation for the high school continue to attract highly qualified teachers, administrators, and support staff, maintain quality facilities at all school sites, strive to have every student feel connected to and engaged in his/her school through programs such as athletics, academics, activities, career education and community services.

What one vote in the last four years that the current board made do you disagree with and why?: I understand why the school board eliminated the position of the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction during the lean years. In the last three years the board could have hired for this position. We have fallen behind in Common Core, curriculum implementation, teacher training, and student support. We must have a highly qualified curriculum and Instruction leader who will devise a five-year plan that will

give each school the resources for success.

How many meetings have you attended this year for the board you are running for?: I have attended several meetings since January of 2016.

What do you know about the strategic plan, finances, debt, goals of the school board?: Again, I am currently reviewing the data.

Being on the school board means working as a team. How will you work with the next board for the greater good of the community?: I would use my lifelong years of experience as a teacher and coach to build a culture of trust and respect on the board. Effective teamwork must be committed to common goals. Respect of others' opinions and respectful intellectual discourse and active listening to all opinions before making decisions will create trust amongst the board for the greater good of the community.

What should be the three main priorities for the board?: Support for teachers and students to effectively implement Common Core state standards. The most important responsibility of school boards is to work with their communities to improve student achievement. Continue to solicit community input for the LCFF; communication must be our top priority. We must make sure that all parents are aware and informed about the options they have in our schools and forming common goals for our students from that input is essential. Students will have the best educational opportunities when teachers, parents, and community members share their visions and place students needs first.

What do you know about Common Core? What is your opinion about it?: The Common Core State Standards Initiative is an educational initiative adopted by 45 states and the District of Columbia that details what K-12 students should know in English language arts and mathematics at the end of each

grade. The initiative is sponsored by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers and seeks to establish consistent educational standards across states as well as ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to enter college programs or to enter the workforce. The goal of Common Core is to help students improve critical thinking skills and develop a stronger understanding of concepts rather than simply memorize facts. The district must improve Common Core implementation with a strong teacher-training program. Teachers must have the opportunity to shape their curriculum to best meet their students' needs.

How can the school district partner with the city to improve high school graduation rates?: We already have a high graduation rate (between 92-97 percent over the past five years) in Lake Tahoe Unified School District, but there is always room for improvement. Partnership and student internships in our community would engage students in seeing the culmination of their educational experience through hands-on knowledge of careers and work experience that exist in our community. The STHS and Mt. Tallac High School senior project graduation requirement touches on this somewhat, but engaging students in school to work programs directly through local businesses would benefit both students and future employers in our community. "Unity" is the key part in community.

What is your opinion about career and technical education at the high school level?: We need to continue to expand our career technical education programs at the middle and high schools and maintain the ones we have already implemented. The CTE program will continue to draw new students to our district from many areas in California and beyond. Our facilities are second to none and we should continue to explore new programs such as hospitality and hotel management, and computer programming.

Do you support the expansion of charter schools? Why or why not?: While I believe strongly in the many merits of public

education, I understand why a charter school might meet the educational needs of some families. However, charter schools must be held accountable and meet the same standards as public schools so students have access to a quality education.

What are your thoughts on the accreditation status at STHS?: My understanding is that South Tahoe High School has received a two-year accreditation and is going through an appeal process. While STHS usually receives a six-year accreditation, the current outcome needs to be reviewed so the high school can return to that status. I am interested in hearing the outcome of the appeal so STHS can move forward.

Tell us something about yourself that people may not know: I'm pretty much an open book. One thing most people don't know about me is that I was first in my family to go to and graduate from college.

As a retired teacher, how can the public be assured you will see all sides and not just the teachers'?: My reputation precedes me. I have always been and always will be a student advocate. Decisions I have made as an educator have always been in the best interests of students. I view schools as an all-inclusive learning environment.

Opinion: Calculating Calif.'s unfunded pension debts

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

The "unfunded liabilities" of state and local pension funds

are California's biggest unresolved political issue – at least in financial terms.



Dan Walters

We know, with fair accuracy, how much money flows into and out of those trust funds now and into the reasonably predictable future, as well as the current value of their investment portfolios.

What we don't know is what those investments in stocks, bonds, real estate and hedge funds will earn in the future. And while there's no way to precisely predict those earnings, the assumption of how investments will fare determines the size of the pension debt.

For many years, the California Public Employees' Retirement System and other state and local pension systems have assumed earnings, technically called the "discount rate," in the 7.5 percent to 8 percent range, and they seemed to be generally on target.

Read the whole story

Calif. bill gives biomass

industry a boost

By Nathan Solis, Redding Record Searchlight

Biomass facilities across the state banked their future on Gov. Jerry Brown's signing of Senate Bill 859 on Wednesday, which gives energy providers incentive to consider bioenergy and purchase electricity from those plants.

The bill will allow bioenergy plants to stay in business or at least that is the hope. Contract negotiations between power companies and bioenergy plants will work out the details of who will stay afloat. Current contracts with power companies will term out by the end of this year, leaving many biomass plants scrambling to sign new deals.

SB859, along with Assembly Bill 1613 signed on Wednesday, provides direction on the spending of \$900 million in cap-and-trade funding. SB 859 gives bioenergy the type of incentive solar and wind power enjoys.

Read the whole story

Income inequality gap continues to widen in Nev.

By Adelaide Chen, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Nevada is one of just eight states that saw a slight increase in income inequality from 2014 to 2015, according to Census data that raise questions about the evenness of the state's economic recovery.

The state's increase in income inequality, as measured by a mathematical formula known as the Gini Index, was not steep. But it was statistically significant, according to data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

The index, which ranges between zero and 1 – with 0 representing perfect equality and 1 representing total inequality – edged upward for Nevada as a whole from 0.43 in 2014 to 0.45 last year.

Read the whole story

Hwy. 28 construction to impact drivers

Crews will be on working around the clock on Sept. 21 and Sept. 26-Oct. 7 on the bike path-stormwater project on Highway 28 in Incline Village.

Motorists should anticipate delays of up to 30 minutes with one-lane flagger controlled closures near Hidden Beach, one mile south of Incline Village.

Work will include relocation of a sewer pipe near Sand Harbor as well as an undercrossing tunnel for the shared-use bike path.

In addition, rolling road closures will occur from 7am-9am on Sept. 28 and Oct. 2 for wide load trucks to deliver the precast concrete tunnel. Motorists should expect delays between 30-60 minutes. Northbound traffic will be held at certain locations on Highway 28 from the intersection of Highway 50 to Memorial Point, just north of Sand Harbor..

The roadside parking lot at Memorial Point will be closed from Sept. 27 at 5pm to Sept. 29, and from Oct. 1 at 5pm to the morning of Oct. 3.

After Oct. 7, access will revert to the original road configuration with construction hours returning to Monday-Friday, 7am-6pm through Oct. 20. All lanes will be open during non-working hours.

The project will be constructed over the next two to three years. When done there will be a 3-plus mile shared-use path from the south end of Incline Village to Sand Harbor State Park. An underpass will be constructed beneath the highway to bring the path from the east to west side of the road near the Flume Trail. Three new parking areas will be constructed near the Ponderosa Ranch and Tunnel Creek Café.