

Science of wildfires and tree-killing beetles

By Tara Lohan, KQED-TV

So far this year 4,636 wildfires in California have burned more than 200,000 acres. That's more fires than this time last year and more fires than the five-year average. In fact, in the last few decades, the number of large fires are on the rise across the Western United States and the length of the fire season continues to expand.

There are some areas, particularly in parts of the southern Sierra Nevada, where up to 85 percent of the large trees are dead or dying.

One of the biggest reasons for this is warming temperatures, which are impacting snowpack and ushering in an earlier spring. California has an added challenge of dealing with a five-year drought. The drought and climate change have allowed bark beetles to get the upper hand in swathes of forest in the Sierra Nevada, creating what ecologists call "pulses" of tree mortality. To the average person it looks like a lot of red needles on dead trees.

Read the whole story

Super long dog walk all about hospice awareness

By John Bartell, KXTV

When you are 1 foot tall and just 16 pounds, it takes a lot of steps to get from point "A" to point "B".

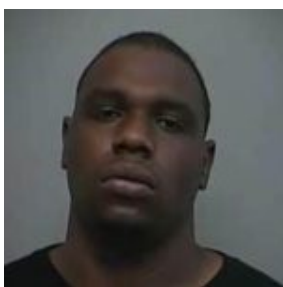
A Chihuahua from Sacramento is about to take the walk of his life – 375 miles on rugged trails from North Lake Tahoe to Point Reyes Sea Shore.

Jeff Douglas, a chaplain at advanced hospice, and Hachi are walking to make people aware of the option of hospice.

Read the whole story

Cops link Fairfield man to SLT robbery-murder

A suspect was arrested today who police believe was involved in the January robbery that resulted in the death of an Amador County man.



Andrew Adams

Andrew Adams, 25, was taken into custody in Fairfield on Sept. 15 on robbery charges.

On Jan. 30 Dennis Wright, 40, was gunned down in the parking lot of the Beverly Lodge in South Lake Tahoe during a drug deal turned robbery/murder.

Other arrests in this case include:

- Tevarez Lopez, 33 – charged with murder
- Domenic Randolph, 22 – charged with murder
- Tristan Batten, 18 – charged with murder
- Harvest Davidson, 20 – charged with murder
- Vanessa Muzio, 18 – charged with accessory to murder.
- Dion Jermaine Vaccaro, 24 – charged with murder.

Arrests of additional outstanding suspects may follow.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

• Douglas County Public Library in Minden presents A Gathering of Local Authors on Oct. 5 from 4:30-6:30pm. This free event will feature appearances by Todd Borg and Mike White. Other participating authors include: Mary Ansari; Ken Beaton; Tracy Clark; Tammy Grace; Sandie La Nae; Bill “Wade” Morgan; Mary Randall; Jerry and Janine Sprout; Lin Wilder; and Kimberly Wilkes. They will sell their books, meet readers, and sign autographs.

• The 14th annual Septoberfest put on by Kiwanis Club of Tahoe Sierra is Sept. 22 at 6pm at MontBleu in Stateline. Go **online** for info or to buy a \$45 ticket.

• Caltrans proposes to construct safety improvements on Highway 50 in the Camino area, east of Placerville from Still Meadows Road to Upper Carson Road. There will be a meeting

about it at Camino Elementary School on Sept. 20 from 5:30-7:30pm, with a presentation at 6pm.

• The Great Sierra River Cleanup, a project of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy aimed at keeping the rivers and lakes of the Sierra clean and free of litter pollution, is Sept. 17 from 9am-noon. For locations, go **online**.

• Thomas the Tank Engine, part of the V&T Railroad, is inviting kids to the Ready Set, Go tour on Oct. 21-23 and Oct. 28-30 in Virginia city. Cost is \$19. Tickets are available **online**.

TRPA-created commodities impact development

By Kathryn Reed

As the economy continues to improve in South Lake Tahoe, it means people want to build – it's happening at both ends of town as well as in mid-town at Harrison Avenue.

But what most of these developers need is commercial floor area, or CFA. This is a commodity created by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency as a way to control growth. It worked – to a point.

The problem today is that instead of a free market and zoning dictating development, it is money – as in who has a bank account big enough to pay for CFA. The other problem is the city has a loose policy as to how CFA is divvied out, and no firm price.

City staff said the going rate for CFA is \$30 per square foot.

Plus, it's not like there is an unlimited supply of CFA.



Additional commercial floor area was acquired at Harrison Avenue to create a rooftop dining area. Photo/LTN

Jurisdictions have received CFA allocations from TRPA for various reasons that are then earmarked for specific area/community plans. TRPA has since stopped awarding CFA. The city has some banked CFA from trades, sales and development projects.

And while the TRPA recognizes the CFA and tourist accommodation unit commodities are impacting progress, that bi-state regulatory board doesn't anticipate changing the current structure for at least a couple years.

The city's criteria for CFA allocations in part include:

- The project being in an adopted area or community plan;
- The project must be mixed use;
- Distressed properties being remodeled or removed;

- There must be an economic benefit to the community.

Before the August council meeting the city had 57,596 square feet of CFA. With what was approved last month and what is being requested this month, the council will be down to 36,671 square feet if all get green-lighted.

Two applicants came before the City Council last month asking for CFA, and more are expected to do so next week when the electeds meet.

In August, the council voted 3-2 to sell 600 square feet of CFA to Tom Haen at \$20 a square foot. Councilmembers Tom Davis and JoAnn Conner were in the minority. Davis argued that it should be free. Councilmember Hal Cole reminded him that he twice voted to charge for CFA, and said reversing policy now would set a bad precedent.

Haen needs the CFA for a project on Industrial Avenue, which he is trying to bring into compliance.

"There is nothing in the policy in any form to provide CFA or any commodity for free," City Attorney Tom Watson said. "The practice of this council for the last two years is to charge for CFA."

The other request in August was from Mike McKeen and John Cefalu, who are partners in a project at Harrison Avenue.

"Now you are changing the rules on us. That is unfair and unreasonable," Cefalu told the council before the vote.

After some heated discussion, the council unanimously agreed to give the men the 970 square feet of CFA.

Ultimately the council made its decision based on Cole agreeing with Cefalu's recollection that the CFA ended up in the Bijou-Al Tahoe Area Plan from TRPA as an incentive for redevelopment.

Redevelopment is exactly what this project is. Cefalu and

McKeen are demolishing the better part of a building that used to house a bagel shop and standup paddle rental.

“We want to use the upstairs deck. That needs CFA,” Cefalu told *Lake Tahoe News*.

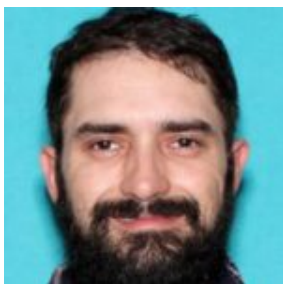
The goal is to be done by Christmas, with a handful of tenants occupying the structure.

“The upstairs will probably be office or light commercial; something that doesn’t require a lot of parking,” Cefalu said.

He wouldn’t say what the bottom area will be, but sources have told *Lake Tahoe News* a brewery is likely.

As for the other uses for CFA, on Sept. 20 three mixed-use projects spearheaded by Steve Leman and Clint Purvance are expected to be on the council agenda. A project on 4th Street needs 5,366 square feet of CFA, South Avenue needs 6,161 square feet, and Emerald Bay 7,828 square feet.

Suspects caught in Douglas child abduction case



Dason Valdez

The suspects accused of abducting two Douglas County children

have been found.

Dason Valdez, 29, and Krystle Reid, 27, were located by Carson City sheriff's deputies just after midnight today. An anonymous tip led to their whereabouts.

Valdez was arrested Sept. 15 on a Carson City warrant. Reid was released at the scene. Charges for both are pending in Douglas County.

According to Douglas County sheriff's deputies, Valdez entered his parent's residence in northern Douglas County just after 5pm Sept. 12, and physically removed his two children after committing domestic battery on his mother.

The children were returned that night unharmed to their grandparents, who have custody of them.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Senate approves Lake Tahoe Restoration Act



Sens. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., and Harry Reid, D-Nev., are staunch backers of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

The U.S. Senate today approved a measure that would bring \$415 million to the Lake Tahoe Basin.

On a 94-3 vote the \$4.8 billion Water Resources Development Act was approved. Dissenting on Sept. 15 were Sens. Mike Lee, R-Utah, Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., and Ben Sasse, R-Neb.

Wrapped into this bill is the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act. The money for Tahoe will be allocated over 10 years for forest fuels management, environmental and watershed restoration, stormwater management and other projects.

“The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act highlights our commitment to protecting this unique ecosystem and the economy that depends upon the lake’s clarity. Its passage is an important step, but it is meaningless unless Republicans are willing to step up and get it through the House of Representatives and onto the president’s desk,” Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., said in a statement. “Last month, at my invitation, President Obama visited Lake Tahoe for the very first time to speak at the 20th anniversary of the Lake Tahoe Summit. At that event the federal government, the states of Nevada and California, local businesses, residents and philanthropists all rededicated ourselves to the work of protecting this unique and wonderful lake. As the entire world saw last month, the beauty of Lake Tahoe is unparalleled. We must do everything we can to keep it that way.”

The initial LTRA was passed following the inaugural environmental summit that President Bill Clinton launched in 1997.

The next step is for the House of Representatives to take up the legislation.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Volunteers needed for Truckee River Day

Truckee River at The 21st annual Truckee River Day is Oct. 16.

Volunteers have the choice of a half or full day to work on restoration projects, with different levels of difficulty. There will be 10-12 projects including restoration at Dry

Creek in Russel Valley, seeding and mulching at Elizabethtown in Martis Valley, Aspen protection along Alder Creek, and tree planting in Tahoe Donner. Projects start at 9am or 11am and finish between 2 and 3pm.

The River Fair will be from 1-4pm at Granite Flat Campground, with a special event at 3pm. This community event is presented in partnership with Sierra Watershed Education Partnerships. The fair features environmental activities for kids and adults. Food will be provided free of charge by Northstar.

To participate in this year's restoration projects, go **online**. The deadline for registration is Oct. 12.

Colo. deputy-STHS grad involved in shooting

By Mitchell Byars, Boulder Camera

The suspect in a shootout along U.S. 287 east of Niwot with a Boulder County deputy is currently under investigation for attempted murder but remains in "critical, grave condition."



Teri Rosegard
Javes

The Boulder County Sheriff's Office identified the suspect as Adrian Joseph Shaffer, 37, of Boulder. Shaffer, who is receiving medical treatment, is facing possible charges of attempted first-degree murder and other charges should he survive.

The Boulder County Sheriff's Office today also identified the deputy involved in the shootout as Teri Rosegard Javes, a 19-year veteran of the department. She is a graduate of South Tahoe High School.

Javes was placed on paid administrative leave following Saturday's shooting.

Read the whole story

Turnbull: A new voice with education experience

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.



Bonnie Turnbull is running for the Area 3 seat on the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board.

Name: Bonnie Turnbull

Age: 57

Job/profession: Master's of arts in teaching, California certified teacher

I was a classroom teacher for 12 years for grades 5, art and PE at Pioneer Elementary in Colorado Springs, Colo., and grades 4-6 at Grass Valley Charter School in Grass Valley.

After becoming an Air Force family, it better supported my family to take temporary and part-time work. These listed below represent the range of my work.

- tutoring economically-disadvantaged students in basic skills
- teaching art and puppetry in summer program,
- substitute teaching regularly in a class of developmentally delayed preschoolers
- teaching ESL to adults at LTCC
- teaching art, most recently our Juvenile Treatment Center

-substituted in classrooms at every age level throughout the LTUSD system

What boards, commissions, or other experience, including volunteering, do you have?: I am serving my second term on the Parks and Recreation Commission. I am the former co-vice president of Friends of the Library.

I am an active community volunteer. Here are some examples of educational programs I do.:

Master gardeners of Lake Tahoe classroom presentations

Bringing Arts To School

South Tahoe Environmental Education Coalition programming: i.e. Children's Forest, Wonders of Water field trips

Tahoe Science Center's Science Expo local organizer and presenter

Lake Tahoe History Museum third-grade tour guide

Why are you seeking this position?: This my first campaign ever so this is a big step out for me. I have been encouraged and inspired by our wonderful local leaders to take on more of a leadership role in our community.

Why should voters vote for you over another candidate?: I offer fresh enthusiasm, a new voice, and decades of educational experience, which I would love to use to benefit our community. I am a hard worker, visionary, and would value the opportunity to help lead our district through the adoption of new state standards and in energy innovation.

What distinct experience or competency makes you uniquely qualified to lead effectively as an elected official?: I have an exceptionally wide and deep experience at the cutting edge of public education. While I taught at Pioneer Elementary, we won the highest national award, the Blue Ribbon.

Grass Valley Charter School implements Expeditionary Learning, a project-based learning model. Project-based learning is at the cutting edge of education today and can offer strategies to help balance more traditional teaching strategies.

I am a graduate of the city's leadership program, Citizens' Academy, am serving my second term on the Parks and Recreation Commission, have gathered support and shepherded the Tahoe Discovery Center project through to concept development stage, and have numerous other leadership experiences throughout the city.

Public agencies have been under scrutiny the last few years for lack of transparency and accountability. What will you do to ensure both?: Electing representatives who have the courage to dialog with the community and stakeholders and to make clear decisive decisions in the open is the best solution. Representatives must also have the commitment to stand behind their decisions and to continue the dialog with the community as changes are enacted..

What stands out for you in the current budget that you support and that you would change?: The district has taken a great step forward by contracting with Climatec to evaluate investments in future energy savings. We must plan for the transition to alternative energies. I would like to evaluate how energy might be more efficiently, and cleanly, applied

Similarly, we should look at transit dollars. Perhaps we can find ways to more efficiently support access to our schools of choice, availability of transit for field trips, after school programming and sports, while reducing our carbon footprint through strategies like innovative scheduling and sharing of resources.

Money saved should be allocated to core services such as teacher training and collaboration time. The teachers are the center of education and need the tools, time and training to

implement new and challenging programming, services and strategies.

Do you support current legislation for \$15 minimum wage?

Please explain: I support a higher minimum wage. As one of our larger employers, the school district can help support our families by offering a living wage. When families can afford the basics of food, clothing and housing, they can better support their children's education and development.

Do you support Proposition 55? Please explain: California schools already spend less per pupil, and have higher class sizes than the national average. It is essential to, at a minimum, sustain our current level of funding. Prop. 55 will extend a current tax on the wealthiest Californians to support public health and education. As a great society, we must take care of our people through basic health and education services.

Describe three attributes for a successful board: 1. Open mind. Values diverse perspectives and can team effectively in working toward a common long-term vision

2. Time to devote to research, communications, meetings, and

3. Integrity and trustworthiness to operate openly, respectfully, and always with the best interest of students in mind

What are your thoughts about public employee defined benefits?: Defined benefits for our public school employees are an essential part of the employment package. The specifics are subject to negotiation.

Please explain your position on contracting out work normally done by staff: The school system, as major employer in our community, has a moral obligation not to "outsource" jobs from the community and undermine support for our local workers.

However, contracting out work may be useful in some situations.

For examples.

- Temporary work which would otherwise overburden staff
- Gains a higher level of expertise not generally affordable or needed long term
- Offers a cost-sharing opportunity

What is your 10-year vision for the school district?: The past boards have guided the district through the building of a world-class high school facility and other infrastructure upgrades.

Let's keep working to make sure our delivery is as gorgeous as the building. Education is more than test scores. We must chart with solid agreement on what qualities are essential. I believe that we must start with the child and connect him or her to the wonder of the world by offering moments of discovery, the opportunity to follow passions, the blending of disciplines through project-based work, and fostering social and emotional development

The community into the schools, the schools into the community. It takes a village—and the great outdoors—to raise our next generation. The entire community—especially the school board—needs to be responsive to and flexible to the community whom they represent.

Look to the future. The board needs a plan that supports the demands of a new century. Let's support the adoption of Common Core standards—with their focus on critical thinking and problem-solving skills and Next Generation Science standards—with the focus on by offering the time and opportunities for training, planning, parent communication and collaboration.

Lower district carbon footprint and increase energy independence.

What one vote in the last four years that the current board made do you disagree with and why?: Before committing to reopen of Al Tahoe, I think we need a comprehensive cost benefit analysis. Opening a new building incurs the costs of structural upgrades, hiring more administration, adding bus routes and leaves the Boys and Girls Club homeless. A rec center may be able to accommodate them, but we are years away from a building. We need to be clear that any growth in school population is a significant enough, long term trend that it warrants a permanent solution.

The board has guided the district through the building of a world-class high school facility and other infrastructure upgrades. Now, I would like to see focus shift to teachers, the key to our kids' success. Let's support their adoption of Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards by offering the time and opportunities for training, planning, parent communication and collaboration.

How many meetings have you attended this year for the board you are running for?: Few. I have dedicated many, many hours to working directly with students over the last decade. I am inspired to run for office because I want help craft larger solutions with, and for, my community. People who know me will vouch for my extreme diligence in researching and preparing for any role or project I undertake. To that end, I am have been studying minutes from past meetings, board policies and current trends in education in preparation for this role.

What do you know about the strategic plan, finances, debt, goals of the school board?: If elected, of course, I will immediately dedicate myself to learning everything that I can about the district. As a homemaker and high school parent, I have the time to dedicate to understanding this complex institution at the heart of our community.

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?: The board members are community representatives, and our community has diverse voices so opinions and experiences will naturally differ. The board receives and consolidates the range of community, student, and teacher concerns and ideas, then helps shape policy to address those concerns keeping student success as number one priority.

Therefore, working as a team to find common ground is crucial. Steady, wise progress rests on compromise. Therefore the board is designed with a democratic structure which means nothing meaningful is accomplished without the agreement of a majority—and preferably more.

What should be the three main priorities for the board?: Advocating for school policies, budget allocation and curriculum which best support children's achievement. Establishing a long-term vision which drives every aspect of the district's program. by being responsive to the values, beliefs and priorities of our entire school community, then evaluates the school system's progress toward accomplishing the district's vision

Communicates that progress to the local community. An ambassador for public education. Board members are advocates for students, the districts' educational programs and public education. They build support within their communities and at the state and national levels.

Setting strategic goals for achieving energy independence throughout our school system which will help ensure our schools remain viable into the future.

What do you know about Common Core? What is your opinion about it?: Common Core standards, in concept, are a significant improvement over earlier national standards. They focus more on developing thinking skills and less on rote learning of

information. Vast amounts of data are readily available on the world wide web. Being able to wisely adapt and apply that data to the rapidly changing conditions is key to student success.

However, the devil is in the (test) detail. Any high-stakes, national testing program carries great risks because the test questions—both content and style— drive the curriculum. Unless we have a national dialog about what makes high quality education, we leave it to test developers to determine it.

Content: Science is embedded into the literacy test for elementary grades. Science may be reduced to knowledge of vocabulary. We will likely sacrifice time spent learning the analytic thinking skills of the scientific process like critical thinking, accurate testing of hypotheses, and problem solving. Also, if we do not regularly test and publicly post results from distinct science tests as with other subjects, science will be de-valued in classrooms.

Style: To keep testing profitable and affordable, four for-profit publishing companies distill learning into small, easily-tested bits. So, for example, we may test spelling but not the complex task of writing though, in the world of word processing, teamwork and rapid change, effective communication is a key skill for success.

How can the school district partner with the city to improve high school graduation rates?: Our graduation rates are already wonderful. However, getting out of our silos benefits everyone by maximizing resources and opportunity. Coming to agreement on most effective management of our playing fields is a good start. Exploring opportunities with TTD to bring public buses to the high school to support transit for after school programs may support broader participation in after school opportunities. Strengthening our partnership with LTCC can offer new opportunities for our highest achieving students. If district facilities, like the theater, were more available as the public the schools would better serve as

welcoming centers of community life.

What is your opinion about career and technical education at the high school level?: We have invested in extraordinary career and technical education facilities and a dedicated program coordinator. We provide high school students with highly motivating experiential, hands-on, and whole child education. I would like to see these strategies permeate education at every level. They are highly motivating to students and build the classroom community.

However, I also hear community concerns that more fundamental skills like financial management, are not sufficiently addressed.

Do you support the expansion of charter schools? Why or why not?: Charter schools fill a need or desire not met by traditional schools. Therefore, they can provide valuable alternatives to families. However, the implementation of charter schools can be problematic without proper oversight.

The fundamental issue is that public schools must be aware of and responsive to community needs in a way that fills the desire for an alternative school.

I have been a teacher in both traditional and charter schools, but I am a staunch supporter of public schools so fundamental to a democracy. The best solution is for traditional schools to embrace the charter school practices of responsiveness, community engagement and innovation.

What are your thoughts on the accreditation status at STHS?: I wait to see if procedural errors—as have been suggested—are the cause of the loss of accreditation. Until then, I have no opinion.

Tell us something about yourself that people may not know: I love the Tahoe lifestyle. Whether it's paddling a six-person outrigger canoe, hiking, road or mountain biking, skiing or

tending my vegetable garden, I love to be outside, I am a strong supporter and participant in the arts. I sing in TOCCATA, a regional choir that brings classical choral music to the Reno-Tahoe area.

You often are aggressive in how you go about getting what you want. How will this work in a team setting like the school board?: Yes, I do have a passion for making a great idea come true. But I love few things better than working with an inspirational team to accomplish great things. In fact, job sharing for four years as a teacher remains one of the highlights of my career.