

Lake Valley offers chief job to STHS grad

By Kathryn Reed

A South Tahoe High School graduate has been offered the job as fire chief for Lake Valley Fire Protection District.

Tim Alameda comes with a wealth of experience, knowledge of the area as well as the issues throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin.

"I'm a firefighters' fire chief. That is my reputation. I really pay attention to the fine details of how they do their job," Alameda told *Lake Tahoe News*.

While the board made the offer last week, a contract has not been signed – nor has Alameda even seen one. He's expecting to next week.

Today Alameda is a division chief and the fire marshal for North Tahoe Fire Protection District. He is also the chief for Meeks Bay Fire. North Tahoe and Meeks Bay essentially merged a few years ago, but the latter has a separate administrative structure. The department goes from the West Shore to Kings Beach, so essentially half the basin.

The vacancy at the Meyers-based department came earlier this summer when Gareth Harris was shown the door after five years. He survived two votes of no confidence from his staff, as the board was reluctant to part ways.

Board Chairman Bob Bettencourt chose not to speak with *LTN* about why Alameda was the board's top pick.

Alameda got his start as a firefighter reserve in Meyers in the 1980s. At that time it was a joint program between Lake Valley and South Lake Tahoe fire departments.



1977 South Tahoe High grad
Tim Alameda may soon be fire
chief in Lake Valley.

Starting in 1984 he spent 27 years with Reno Fire Department. He went from a rank and file firefighter to the chief.

He already has connections on the South Shore with newly hired Tahoe Douglas Fire Chief Scott Brown and South Lake Tahoe Battalion Chief Tim Spencer having worked at the Reno department.

In 2011, Alameda retired from Reno. North Tahoe recruited him to be a fire marshal. He took this job seriously – spending many a day walking around his jurisdiction, into businesses and talking to people. He was seeing where the hazards were, listened to concerns and helped educate people.

He rose to division chief and then took over Meeks Bay.

Those in the fire community call Alameda a true professional, forward thinker and good with personnel. Until the ink is dry, people were hesitant to go on the record about Alameda. The same goes for his current boss, Mike Schwartz.

Alameda, 57, did not want to discuss the morale issues at the department, the board, or the past.

Once on board he expects to take 90 days to listen and learn.

“I do know the firefighters are extremely respected. We have

had several really bad high angle rescues in Meeks Bay and the Lake Valley guys come over. They are methodical and perfect. It's amazing what they do," Alameda said.

He knows board member Bettencourt from his early 20s – Alameda is now 57 – because as a U.S. Forest Service firefighter Bettencourt taught his community college wildland fire class.

Wildland fires are something Alameda is well aware of. He was president last year of the Lake Tahoe Basin Fire Chief's Association. The wildland urban interface is a constant issue for fire agencies when it comes to protecting the community from a blaze that starts in the forest.

On Wednesday, Alameda is meeting with a forester from the National Forest Foundation, a nonprofit partner of the Forest Service, to talk about forest fuels in Tahoe.

While he didn't lose a structure during the Angora Fire, a house he and his dad built on Boulder Mountain was destroyed.

"I felt a little bit of that pain," he said.

Those 254 houses that burned in 2007 were part of that wildland urban interface.

He was back in the neighborhood last week with his wife, Lisa. Driving through the burn area is something he does from time to time.

As a kid, he spent many summer days fishing at Angora Lakes or hunting grouse in the area.

Today, Alameda says what free time he has is usually spent with his wife. They have an acre in Nevada with horses and bird dogs. Together they hike a lot. Their two daughters are in the Sparks area; they also have family in South Lake Tahoe.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Fire Fest will be at Hard Rock Lake Tahoe in Stateline on Sept. 24 from 10am-3pm – not at Lake Tahoe Airport as it has been in the past. Helicopters will be able to land there.
- TRYP's South Shore mixer is Sept. 14 from 6-9pm at the Landing Resort in South Lake Tahoe. The Sept. 20 mixer from 5:30-8pm is at Crosby's in Incline Village. They are free for members, \$10 for others.
- Dementia whisperer Laura Wayman will help caregivers and loved ones better understand the topic of dementia during a free talk on Nov. 17, 1-3pm at Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel, South Lake Tahoe.
- TRYP will host a workshop titled Improve Your Tax Efficiency on Sept. 21 from 6-7pm at Lake Tahoe Community College. Attendance is free for members and \$5 for non-members.
- The South Lake Tahoe City Council candidate forum on Sept. 20 will be **streamed live** on the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce's Facebook page. The forum is from 5:30-7:30pm at Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel.

Power out to swath of South

Lake Tahoe

Power is out to about 2,000 customers, mostly in the Al Tahoe area of South Lake Tahoe.

Liberty Utilities does not have an estimated time when the power will be restored.

South Tahoe Middle School has lights. Kids are getting educated; the only thing that is out is the Internet. Lights at the district office, though, are not on.

Randy Kelly with the electric company said that because the utility is in fire mode once the circuit goes out it is not automatically tested. This is because if there is a line down, it could start a fire.

“The guys are required to patrol the line to see if anything laying on the ground. And then they test it,” Kelly told *Lake Tahoe News* on Sept. 13.

This can take some time, which is why there is not estimate of when the power will be restored.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Letter: Things are brighter

To the community,

Because so many people only write letters and become vocal to complain I am going to write something to thank two people who have helped me out recently.

After calls, letters and some frustration I finally got the

right people involved to fix the street light that was out on our street.

First I want to thank Jim Marino at the city of South Lake Tahoe for seeing my letters and taking action to get the issue fixed. I will say it was a bit comforting to see Jim get the same run around that I got. While he didn't get me any information I already didn't have it was nice to see a consistent story.

Second I want to thank Kathryn Reed for printing my letters and helping get the attention I needed to get things done. Kae allowed me to use her platform to help not only myself but also my neighbors.

Thanks to both of you for your time and effort.

John Spinola, South Lake Tahoe

Aging and caregiver classes in South Tahoe

The El Dorado County Health and Human Services Agency, Family Caregiver Support Program is offering a free Aging & Caregiver education series in South Lake Tahoe.

The series will be on Oct. 10, 17, 24, 31, and Nov. 7 and 14 from 1-3pm at Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel.

The educational series will provide instruction and support for people who care for or plan to care for an aging family member or friend.

Series topics will include:

- Oct. 10 – Know the 10 Warning Signs: Early Detection Matters: This training will address the 10 signs of Alzheimer's disease. Participants will learn what is involved in getting a diagnosis, risks associated with Alzheimer's and the benefits of early detection.
- Oct. 17 – Aging and Depression: How to Recognize Symptoms/Access Treatment: This topic will cover prevalence, signs and symptoms, risk and protective factors, effective therapies, crisis intervention and support for caregivers.
- Oct. 24 – A Journey in Long Term Planning for Long Term: A frank discussion about the likelihood of needing long term care, documents to have in place and how to prepare them, and options that may be available to pay for long term care.
- Oct. 31 – What is Palliative Care? This discussion will help participants understand the difference between hospice vs. palliative care, including who qualifies and services received under this valuable program.
- Nov. 7 – Medication Safety: This informative talk will address safety issues regarding prescriptions, questions to ask your pharmacist and proper storage and disposal.
- Nov. 14 – Becoming Dementia-Aware: This session will help caregivers and loved ones better understand the topic of dementia.

The educational series will be presented by local experts in their respected fields. Participants may attend one or all of the classes. The classes are free of charge; donations are accepted. Light refreshments will be served. The series is offered as an educational opportunity only; no solicitation of services will be presented.

Advanced registration is requested, but not required for the series. Call 530.621.6151 to register or for questions.

Vogelgesang: Fiscally responsible approach

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.*



Randy Vogelgesang is running for one of two open seats on the South Tahoe Public Utility District board.

Name: Randy Vogelgesang

Age: 59

Job/profession: Civil/structural engineer

What boards, commissions, or other experience, including volunteering, do you have?: City of South Lake Tahoe Building

Board of Appeals, member Tahoe Engineers Architects and Surveyors, member South Lake Tahoe Rotary, president

Why are you seeking re-election to the South Tahoe PUD board?:

To continue building upon my goals and accomplishments of my first term, which I outline below.

Why should voters vote for you over another candidate?:

Because of my knowledge, experience and fiscally responsible approach to the challenges the district faces.

What distinct experience or competency makes you uniquely qualified to lead effectively as an elected official?:

The experience I have gained making common sense engineering decisions in my business has helped greatly when making decisions for the South Tahoe PUD. I try to always use my knowledge of the district and its workings to make decisions in the best interest of the ratepayers. As president of the board for the past two years, I have made it a point to work with all the board members and to treat them with respect.

Public agencies have been under scrutiny the last few years for lack of transparency and accountability. What will you do to ensure both?:

This has been an important issue for me and I have made it a priority to get as much information as possible about the district out to the public. I have long believed that better decisions are made when the public is informed. During my first term the district hosted numerous public workshops focusing on the budget, priorities and long term planning. In addition I have encouraged (along with the board) Richard Solbrig, general manager, to be very active with public outreach on radio, TV and to numerous service organizations. The district's website (www.stpud.us) has recently been upgraded for easier use and greater access to information. At my recommendation, the district started archiving audio files of all of our meetings, which can be heard on the website. In the near future video files will be available on the website.

What stands out for you in the current budget that you support and that you would change?: The district's property tax revenue is still below the level of 2010. The challenge is to offset that revenue loss by increasing efficiency and seeking other sources of revenue such as grant money. It should be noted that the district has cut operations and maintenance spending by 20 percent since 2008-09.

Do you support current legislation for \$15 minimum wage? Please explain: No comment

Do you support Proposition 55? Please explain: No comment

Describe three attributes for a successful board: Communication, respect, cooperation.

What are your thoughts about public employee defined benefits?: I would prefer a defined contribution over a defined benefit plan as a way to control costs.

Please explain your position on contracting out work normally done by staff: I like to have work done in-house as much as possible but sometimes it is more economical to outsource due to expertise or staff work load.

What is your 10-year vision for STPUD?: I would like to continue with steady needed improvements to the infrastructure to keep the quality of our service high, while being mindful of the cost to the ratepayers.

What as an elected official are the three things you are most proud of during your tenure?: Revising the rate structure (consumption vs. fixed costs) to more accurately reflect actual costs, reducing capacity charge fees, increasing transparency, water line upgrades and adding hydrants for fire protection.

Which votes would you change and why?: I am comfortable with the decisions I have made as a board member.

Being on a board means working as a team. How will you work with the other board members for the greater good of the community?: I touched on this above, but let me add that during my first term this board has worked well together, without acrimony, despite differences in opinion.

What should be the three main priorities for the board?: Striking a balance between infrastructure spending and rates. Salary negotiations. Public outreach.

How do you balance the economic situation of the community with the infrastructure needs of the district?: This is the most important question that I deal with on a daily basis. Too much spending on needed infrastructure burdens the ratepayer, but not enough could end up in costing more money in the long run. As a member of the finance committee I spend quite a bit of time working on both the annual budget and the 10-year plan. The way I try to achieve the balance between rates and spending is gathering as much information as I can to make the best decision I can.

STPUD is often criticized for having some of the highest paid public employees on the South Shore. Any comment?: Salary negotiations are one of the most important jobs that the board has. During these negotiations I have always fought for what is best for the ratepayers and will continue to do so.

When it comes to permits for construction, the district has high fees. Do you believe they are fair? Why or why not?: During my first term the board not only stopped large planned connection fee increases, they were lowered. It is my belief that these fees are still too high. I would rather make it easier for us to have more customers using our services than discouraging connections.

Tell us something about yourself that people may not know: My wife Cathy and I have lived in South Lake Tahoe for more than 30 years and raised two kids, Laura and Scott, who are now

adults.

Opinion: Time for casino industry to shatter glass ceiling

By Jan Jones, Las Vegas Sun

Two. That's the number of women who are among 34 highest-paid executives in Nevada's casino industry.

And it's not just about the money. If you look at the 10 most prominent gaming companies, there are only three women among the 50 most-senior executives.

It's very likely that America is about to elect a female president (and based on current polling, she'll have the support of a majority of Nevada voters). There's a good chance that Nevada is about to elect a female U.S. senator. Two out of the last three mayors of Las Vegas were female (including yours truly). And the state ranks sixth in the country when it comes to the percentage of elected leaders who are female. Clearly, a majority of Nevadans believe that women are as capable as men of holding top leadership and executive positions.

So what's going on in the gaming industry, which is far and away the largest employer in the state?

[Read the whole story](#)

The long, steady decline of literary reading

By Christopher Ingraham, Washington Post

The percentage of American adults who read literature – any novels, short stories, poetry or plays – fell to at least a three-decade low last year, according to a new report from the National Endowment for the Arts.

In 2015, 43 percent of adults read at least one work of literature in the previous year. That's the lowest percentage in any year since NEA surveys began tracking reading and arts participation in 1982, when the literature reading rate was 57 percent.

The NEA's numbers, released last month, are meant to capture reading for pleasure. They explicitly exclude required readings for work or school. The survey also makes no differentiation between physical books and works read on e-readers, in an attempt to capture the broadest possible range of leisure reading.

Read the whole story

2 Douglas County toddlers

safe after abduction



Hailey and Lucas
Valdez

Updated 9:41pm:

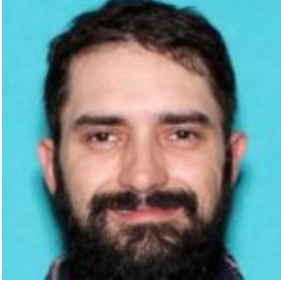
The children were returned to their custodial grandparents by a friend. The children are now safe and unharmed. The suspects are still outstanding.

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The father of two Douglas County children is accused of forcibly abducting them this evening.

An Amber Alert has been activated.

Dason Valdez, 29, does not have any custodial rights to the children.



Dason Valdez

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 placed into a White 2000 Mazda four-door Protégé. The vehicle did not have any license plates. The direction of travel is unknown. The suspects are homeless, according to authorities. Krystal Reid, 27, accompanied Valdez, deputies said.

Valdez is described as white, 5-feet-7, 165 pounds, brown hair and brown eyes, with a full beard. Reid is 5-feet-4, 130 pounds, brown hair and green eyes.

The two children, Hailey Valdez, 4, is white, 3-feet-tall, 30 pounds, dirty blonde hair and brown eyes. She was last seen wearing a purple top with ruffled sleeves and purple pants. Lucas Valdez, 2, is white, 2-feet, 20 pounds, dirty blonde hair and brown eyes. He was last wearing a blue T-shirt.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Fast, cold storm to blow

through basin

The first snow of the season in Lake Tahoe is expected to fall on Tuesday – just not at lake level.

Forecasters at the National Weather Service in Reno are calling for up to 3 inches above 10,000 feet. The snow level is not expected to drop below 9,000 feet.

The rest of the basin should expect cold temps and rain. Thunderstorms are in the forecast starting late Monday night.

The storm is expected to clear out quickly, with the sun returning Wednesday. By Saturday the high in South Lake Tahoe is forecasted to be 78 degrees – 16 degrees higher than Tuesday.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*