

Time to apply for grants from Barton Foundation

The Barton Foundation will be awarding \$50,000 in grant funding to improve community health.

This annual grant cycle provides funding for programs and services that positively impact the health of the local community. Applications are being accepted through May 31.

Grant criteria and the application may be found **online**. For more information, contact Marty Chartraw at 530.543.5784.

The Barton Foundation's community grants fund local programs that address the area's most pressing health needs, as identified by Barton Health's 2015 Community Health Needs Assessment: mental health, substance abuse, and access to healthcare services. Grant proposals addressing one or more of these top three issues will be prioritized.

Local organizations including government agencies, nonprofits, and schools are encouraged to apply.

'Giants in the Sky' at LTCC

Tahoe Arts Project will present "Giants in the Sky" this month performed by 30 South Tahoe Middle School students at Lake Tahoe Community College's Duke Theater.

ACT ONE is designed to help fill a void for middle school-aged students, given the absence of drama and other arts programming available.

This story explores the world of giants who live above the clouds. Ever since they left Earth a long time ago, the giants have made a life up above where their job is to keep the sky beautiful.

The performances are May 18 and May 19 at 7pm. Tickets will be available at the door beginning at 6:15pm; adults \$10 and children \$5. Doors open at 6:30pm.

Bus service on South Shore in state of flux

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Public outcry is forcing the Tahoe Transportation District board of directors to take more time before deciding how to reconfigure public transit on the South Shore.

George Fink, who manages the bus system, painted a financially bleak picture for the board at the May 11 meeting. Part of the funding the agency receives from California is dependent on fare revenue. TTD isn't close to meeting those numbers.

In order to do so staff is proposing reducing hours, eliminating routes, and altering on-demand access. A 50 percent cut across the transit spectrum is being considered.

TTD is dealing with not having enough workers, an inefficient fleet, lack of funding and the inability to meet performance measures.

Fink explained two-thirds of the riders on Route 50 are paying a reduced fare, while half of those on Route 53 are not paying full fare. Fink said that is out of whack and not sustainable.

He said it's time to reduce the number of discounts available.

The board on Friday agreed to raise the senior discount from age 60 to 65, with those ages 5-64 considered general public who will pay full price. The Emerald Bay shuttle prices are going from \$2 one way to \$4, with the discounted rate doubling to \$2.

Many who attended the Friday meeting spoke about how changing the on-demand service would detrimentally impact the lives of those who are dependent on the service and have no alternative to get where they need to go. Many who use the service can't drive.

One person called the bus service a "stabilizer" and another said it is her son's "life line." Two people in the health care profession spoke of how patients rely on the service to get to appointments.

Taxis were said to be unreliable and for some cost-prohibitive.

TTD staff had recommended drastically cutting the service, which included no longer going to the Meyers area. The board delayed making any decision on changing accessibility.

"Until we know where the transit routes will be we can't really apply changes to demand response areas," Steve Teshara, chair of the TTD board, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He said the compelling testimony and the possibility of partnering with others like Barton Health were reasons to not take action Friday.

As for changing the routes used by the masses, public comment was extended a month to July 13. Cutting service hours per day in half is being talked about. Potential changes include eliminating the ski shuttles. While those are well-used, they are subsidized by Heavenly Mountain Resort so riders don't

have to pay. What the ski resort might do in the future remains to be seen.

Board member Marsha Berkgigler, who represents Washoe County, said, "I'm concerned we are taking transit away from the people using it."

Opinion: Inexplicable war on trees

By Patt Morrison, Los Angeles Times

Do we ever really pause to think of a tree as its own self? Not as a picturesque forest backdrop to our vacation selfies, not as lumber for a deck, nor as the makings of a campfire – but a tree as a living thing with billions more of its kind, that, all together, undergird our human existence, and, in fact, make it possible?

No, it's not likely that we do. We treat thousand-year-old groves as if they were last season's growth of Christmas trees. We guard our money, we put alarms on our cars, but for the forests that clean the air and enrich the soil, we just mow them down like so much field corn. We post no guards on old-growth woods, and so timber cartels simply hack down and steal trees that are older than the printed word, cut them up and sell them for millions of dollars on a black market for rare wood, like illegal weapons or poached ivory.

Richard Powers lived among the trees for his new novel, "The Overstory." It sets the scale of human life against the magnificence of our arboreal heritage, with characters who come to think "arborescently" about trees as fellow creatures

who can be the saving of humanity; but first, we have to save them.

Read the whole story

Brown wants budget surplus to help with homelessness

By John Myers and Liam Dillon, Los Angeles Times

Even in the wake of previous tax windfalls, Gov. Jerry Brown's announcement on Friday was breathtaking: The state has collected an unexpected \$9 billion in tax revenue in recent months, \$3 billion more in cash than projected in January.

The money is the latest installment in a fiscal winning streak of historic proportions in California. And, as in previous years, the governor's newly revised budget seeks to divvy it up on either short-term spending or long-term savings by putting it into government reserves.

"This is a time to save for our future, not to make pricey promises we can't keep," Brown said. "I've said it before and I'll say it again: Let's not blow it now."

Read the whole story

Incline Village man suspect in abuse case



Nicholas
Lightfoot

By Associated Press

The attorney of a man wanted in a child abuse and domestic violence investigation in Incline Village said authorities did not have enough evidence to issue an arrest warrant.

On Friday, the Washoe County Sheriff's Office announced deputies were searching for 39-year-old Nicholas Lightfoot, of Incline Village, for his alleged involvement in the child abuse and domestic violence case.

"We stand by our press release," spokesman Bob Harmon said Friday. "Mr. Lightfoot is the suspect in an ongoing child abuse investigation, and therefore, should turn himself in immediately."

Read the whole story

3rd edition of MRG agreement before SLT council

By Kathryn Reed

At the May 15 South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting the electeds will be asked to spend \$11,500 in taxpayer money on a contract that even the interim city attorney said she has questions with.

The council **earlier this month** discussed the bill from MRG. Consensus could not be reached on what to do.

Now the item is on Tuesday's consent agenda. This is where slam dunk issues usually are placed. However, it is possible for anyone – even a member of the public – to pull any consent item off for discussion.

What's different in the packet this time is that the October and November agreements from the firm are included. Only one was earlier this month.

A major difference is a new letter dated May 7 from Mary Egan, principal of MRG. It has revisions from the previous two documents. A major difference is the removal of language having to do with providing the city with written documentation of her work. The latest correspondence, which like the others was to interim City Attorney Nira Doherty, said, "I continue to agree not to discuss the scope or product of work, or my participation in it, with third parties."

What isn't known is if the deputy district attorney investigating the allegations of illegal activity being conducted during closed sessions by the electeds will want to interview Egan and if she would do so with or without a subpoena.

Report: Climate change ruining Calif.'s environment

By Peter Fimrite, San Francisco Chronicle

Bigger, more intense forest fires, longer droughts, warmer ocean temperatures and an ever shrinking snowpack in the Sierra Nevada are “unequivocal” evidence of the ruinous domino-effects that climate change is having on California, a new California Environmental Protection Agency report states.

The 350-page report released Wednesday tracks 36 indicators of climate change, including a comprehensive list of human impacts and the effects on wildlife, the ocean, lakes, rivers and the mountains.

The study pulled together research from scientists, academia and research institutions and found that despite a marked downward trend in greenhouse-gas emissions in California, including a 90 percent drop in black carbon from tailpipe emissions over the past 50 years, CO2 levels in the atmosphere and in seawater are increasing at a steady rate.

[Read the whole story](#)

El Dorado, Placer counties

part of opioid lawsuit

By Lake Tahoe News

El Dorado and Placer counties have joined a lawsuit against opioid manufacturers and distributors because of the opioid epidemic. Thirty California counties are part of the legal matter in federal court.

The lawsuit calls for drug companies to end practices that have led to the epidemic and seeks legal damages for the taxpayer money spent by the counties to respond to the crisis.

More than 500 public entities have filed similar suits.

The complaint alleges that many of the nation's largest drug manufacturers misinformed doctors about the addictiveness and efficacy of opioids. Defendants named in the lawsuit include Purdue Pharma; Teva Ltd.; Janssen Pharmaceuticals Inc. (a wholly-owned subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson); Endo Health Solutions Inc.; Allergan PLC; and Mallinckrodt.

The lawsuit also names the nation's largest drug distributors – Cardinal Health, AmerisourceBergen and McKesson Corp. – which allegedly failed to monitor, identify and report suspicious opioid shipments to pharmacies, in violation of the federal Controlled Substances Act; as well as other large national distributors and retailers.

From 2008 to 2016, 87 El Dorado County and 93 Placer County residents died from opioid-associated overdose.

In El Dorado County, more than 183,000 opiate prescriptions were written in 2016 in a county with a population of approximately 184,000. The county had nine deaths attributable to opioid overdose, which is higher than the state average of 4.6 deaths per 100,000 residents.

In 2016 an estimated 5.1 percent of the population aged 12 and

older or 9,000 people, in the county misused opioids and approximately 1,600 had an opioid use disorder. In 2016, the county had a rate of 8.9 emergency department visits per 100,000 people due to opioid overdoses and 13.3 opioid overdose hospitalizations per 100,000 residents.

In 2016, in Placer County 14 people died from opiates. That year the rates of hospitalizations and emergency department visits due to opioids were higher than the statewide average.

Calif. tight power supplies not an issue in Tahoe

While California's electric grid operator this week said supplies could be in short supply this summer, that likely won't be the case for Liberty Utilities customers.

"Liberty Utilities is a winter-peaking utility, with our peak demand typically occurring between Christmas and New Year's. With milder temperatures during the day and cooler temperatures at night, Liberty Utilities' customer demand during the summer is not as great as utilities such as PG&E and SMUD that experience their peaks during the summer months," Travis Johnson, vice president of electric operations for Liberty, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Liberty provides electricity for the California side of the lake, Truckee, Alpine County and other areas.

The California Independent System Operator, the grid operator, on May 9 said supplies could be limited because of below average hydropower production and reduced generation. This has to do with the snowpack in the Sierra being dismal this

winter.

Liberty gets most of its power from natural gas, with less than 10 percent coming from hydro.

“About 25 percent of our total power mix is from our own Luning Solar Energy Center dedicated entirely to our own customers. By this time next year, we will have another 10MW of solar energy in our mix when the Turquoise solar facility is completed. At that time, a full 30 percent of our energy will be from solar that Liberty produces itself,” Johnson said.

For the rest of the state, though, there could be rolling power outages.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*