

Budget earmarks \$4.4M for CalFire investigations unit

By Jon Ortiz, Sacramento Bee

Next year's state budget will include \$4.4 million to set up a personnel unit inside CalFire that will oversee internal investigations and employee discipline, according to details, as well as train managers and personnel staff to avoid future problems.

Scandals that have buffeted CalFire for two years prompted Gov. Jerry Brown to propose the Professional Standards Program over objections from the state firefighters' union, CalFire Local 2881. Union leaders worried it would create an incentive to drum up charges or exaggerate minor infractions to justify the 14 positions attached to the program.

The budget represents a compromise.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Brooks' Bar in Stateline was selected by *Golf Digest* as one of the best golf pubs in the world.
- The Bicycle Advisory Committee of the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Facilities Joint Powers Authority will meet July 13

from 9-11am in the downstairs conference room at Lake Tahoe Airport.

- El Dorado County will close Green Valley Road in Placerville from El Dorado Road to Mallard Lane starting June 22, reopening July 2. This closure is necessary to construct the roadway approaches to the bridge, including drainage systems, and connections to adjacent residential driveways. Access will be provided for residents and property owners within the closure limits. Through traffic will not be permitted between El Dorado Road and Mallard Lane.

- The Highway 50-Silva Valley Parkway interchange on the West Slope is now open.

- The Douglas County Public Library continues its Summer Saturday Family Movie series with “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” (rated G) on June 18 at 2pm in the Minden Library meeting room. The movie and popcorn are free. The Minden Library is located at 1625 Library Lane.

Blood donors needed after Orlando massacre

United Blood Services Nevada is asking for donations to replenish its inventory after sending blood to Orlando.

UBS has locations in Carson City, Reno and Sparks. Make an appointment by calling 877.827.4376.

Units of blood in Orlando have been depleted in the wake of the worst mass shooting in U.S. history. On top of that, federal law prohibits men who have had sex with another man in

the past 12 months from donating blood.

Forty-nine people died Sunday at a gay nightclub in Florida and 53 more were wounded by a lone gunman.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Hiker rescued near Caples Lake

A 60-year-old hiker who went missing Sunday night in the Caples Lake area was found this morning at 6.

The name and hometown of the hiker have not been released.

The report came into to El Dorado County Sheriff's Department on June 12 at 9pm. The person had been last seen near the Caples Lake trail at Silverfork Campground.

Search teams were out all night. They found the cold, tired hiker by the trail on June 13.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets

in South Lake Tahoe



Cookie Dough

Cookie Dough is one of two male rabbits who are looking for new homes. They both are friendly, are 3 years old, and each comes with its own cage.

Would a rabbit be a good pet for you? If you are equally happy observing your pet as handling them, have time to spend with them, and understand that a rabbit's natural tendencies include chewing and digging, then maybe a rabbit is for you. Rabbits can learn to respond to their names and use a litter box, and live from 7 to 10 years or longer. The adoption fee is \$15.

Cookie Dough is neutered. He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go **online**.

South Shore educators grapple with mental health issues throughout K-12 spectrum

Publisher's note: *This is one of several stories about mental health issues in the Lake Tahoe Basin that will be running through October.*

By Terra Breeden

In Lake Tahoe Unified School District, 42 children were taken to Barton Memorial Hospital for suicidal tendencies this past school year.

The growing problem of mental health-related issues in children and teens has education officials on both sides of the state line scrambling to become de facto experts in a field that until a few years ago was not on anyone's radar.

"In my experience there has been an increase in mental illness," Nancy Cauley, principal of Zephyr Cove Elementary, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "There needs to be more time taken to examine what we need to do as a community to support these students."

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), 20 percent of children ages 13-18 live with a mental health condition. These conditions include mood disorders, depression, and anxiety disorders. Although the South Shore is a small community, the wave of mental health problems affecting youth is a big concern.

At South Tahoe High School, Nicole Bergner works as an

intervention counselor and gives extra support to higher needs students.

“I see a lot of students with anxiety, depression and trauma-related fallout from family issues,” Bergner said.

Even with the increasing awareness, figuring out the cause of mental health problems in youngsters is tough. Cauley speculates that the recent economic recession may have affected children as much as adults.

“The economic downturn of 2008 had a huge impact on the emotional well-being of children,” Cauley said. “When a parent loses their house, job or income it affects the child. Stability is important and it plays a big part in a child’s emotional well-being and how they respond in the classroom.”



“Teachers and counselors do what they can to support students and families, but it’s hard in a rural community with limited resources and social workers.”

– Teri White, Douglas County School District superintendent

Nicole Zunino, the intervention counselor at South Tahoe Middle School, told *Lake Tahoe News* that social media is also a cause of mental health issues in youngsters. On social networking sites such as Facebook and Instagram, impressionable children are hit with a barrage of images and

advertisements, coercing them to compare themselves to others and influencing their self-esteem.

The rise in school shootings nationwide has created fear on campuses and contributes to student mental health issues such as anxiety disorders, as well.

"I wonder why we are seeing so much anxiety and what comes to mind is that this generation is seeing school shootings regularly and we are living in this time of fear," alternative education counselor for LTUSD Amy Jackson said.

Jackson told *Lake Tahoe News* that after her young son experienced a school shooting drill, which is now a commonly practiced training drill at schools, he was fearful, and later, wanted to talk about it.

The reasons for mental health issues are vast and they effect children differently depending on the child's age.

"With younger children, there might be more issues with their family environment and with older children it tends to be more peer-related," Terri White, superintendent of Douglas County School District, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Lake Tahoe teachers and faculty are trying to identify the problems that arise at different ages. But in elementary schools, recognizing a mental health issue can be especially difficult.

"Elementary kids hide it pretty darn good," Jackson said. "The little guys need counseling, but these mental issues can be hard to identify. You don't see the symptoms until middle school or high school."

Identifying a mental health problem is much easier when the child is an adolescent. However, by this age, the perils of anxiety or depression can be far greater.

"For us, the thing we see with adolescents is suicidal

tendencies and trying to deal with their problems by turning to risky behavior,” White said.

Lake Tahoe education officials are doing whatever they can to combat mental health problems in schools. At STMS, faculty members conduct six prevention groups a week to help students cope with anxiety and depression. In the weekly meetings, students are taught to regulate their emotions instead of acting out. Relaxation techniques, deep breathing exercises and “I”-statements are utilized to assist children in dealing with their mental health issues.

“Teachers are the first line of defense,” Nicole Zunino, intervention counselor at STMS, said. “They are the eyes and ears of the school. We pick students with patterns of behavior and academics to place in these groups”



10 warning signs of mental health issues in teens

- Being sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks
- Severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities
- Drastic change in behavior or sleep habits

- Repeated use of drugs or alcohol
- Extreme difficulty concentrating or staying still
- Seriously wanting to harm or kill oneself
- Not eating, throwing up or using laxatives to lose weight
- Significant weight loss or weight gain
- Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason.

Source: *NAMI*

For children with mental health problems, it's important for parents to be involved. Recognizing their child's harmful behavior and providing support is the first step. LTUSD education officials work closely with students, but stress the importance of parental participation.

"We try to get parents involved because the outcome will be better," Zunino said. "We also work really closely with agencies in town like Barton Health.

LTUSD students with known mental health problems are given personalized counseling and support from intervention counselors like Bergner and Zunino. LTUSD also provides specialized education programs to ignite their interest in school subjects and divert them away from harmful behavior.

"We are very good at customizing a student's education," Jim Tarwater, superintendent of LTUSD, said. "We have certain programs that will hook a kid and have stories where kids have had 180 degree turn-a-rounds."

In Douglas County, schools have a hard time providing counseling for students with mental health issues. Currently, there are no mental health counselors on staff. There simply aren't enough resources available for DCSD schools to provide on-campus counseling.

"If we have children who are struggling with mental health, we refer them out and connect them with outside agencies like the Tahoe Youth & Family Services," White said. "But that can be difficult because of health insurance."

White hopes to rectify the lack of support and provide more in-depth care to students with mental health problems. DCSD has applied for a social worker grant through the Department of Education and has plans to work with Project AWARE, which provides social workers to schools through a partnership with UNR and the Department of Education.

"Teachers and counselors do what they can to support students and families, but it's hard in a rural community with limited resources and social workers," White said.

At Zephyr Cove Elementary, Principal Cauley says that regardless of limited resources, children with mental health-related problems are given individualized support at the school.

"When we are made aware that a child needs mental health support we work with the parents and community to help that child," Cauley said. "No matter what a child has, we always work with every possible team member to ensure that student is successful in school."

Letter: Meyers resident wants TRPA to respond

Publisher's note: *This letter was sent to the executive director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and reprinted with permission.*

Dear Ms. [Joanne] Marchetta

This is with regard to the Tahoe Hockey Academy (THA) proposal, up for a public hearing on the TRPA Governing Board June 22 general agenda.

About a month ago our Christmas Valley neighbors learned of the proposed hockey-rink-cum-high school intended for the bottom of Old Meyers Grade, and that it had already been at least partially approved through the county's permitting process. This came as a shock to all of us, as we are located right in this area, but had no idea. We learned only by happenstance from an **online news source** that this project was in the works, permits issued, and was evidently on its way to the TRPA for a "final review."

Local residents like myself are anxious for some clarity, re just what is being authorized with this proposal, and via what process, exactly. To say the least, its progress through El Dorado County's permitting channels has been covert and swift. It took some research to uncover any info at all about this "academy," as even residents closest to the site had not been noticed. Below is what we've learned:

- The proposal is to establish a boarding school for up to 100 high school students.
- This is to be a 24/7 business complex with additional structures that so far include housing for 100 students plus staff, an ice rink for hockey competitions,

basketball and tennis courts, and stadium lighting. Other development is yet to be determined.

. A large parking lot is planned, to accommodate the many vehicles that presumably won't interfere at all with local traffic, pedestrians or animals. (This would be the supposition, if an impact study could be located, but so far that particular search has yielded nothing).

Despite the significance of this "proposal," information has been challenging to uncover, and muddled when we do. The above facts came from the THA website, which has now been sealed. A still further example of misdirection, the actual identity of the THA is a moving target. The THA is also known as the Lake Tahoe Hockey Academy, LTHA, and the California Hockey Academy, or CHA. The obfuscation alone raises some obvious questions. Given the tax and fee benefits for the county and TRPA, the answers may be equally obvious, but I think our community would appreciate your response.

Specifically, how is it that a grades 9-12 boarding school with a hockey rink was allowed to process through the county's permitting system as a "recreational (that is, day-use) facility?" As if a picnic area with a few tables was up for approval? And why is this proposal, now that some pertinent facts have been dragged to light, still being treated by TRPA as legitimate business? Has there been an environmental impact study? It's clear that this proposal should either be resubmitted with valid information and the appropriate impact research, or better yet, permanently tabled.

On its website the TRPA promotes itself as "A Voice for Lake Tahoe." Good, because Meyers is part of Lake Tahoe, and our community is hoping that you and TRPA will use that voice to protect our idyllic neighborhood from the threat of a school/competitive sport facility materializing on top of us. TRPA's stated purpose to "Insure an equilibrium between the Region's natural endowment and its manmade environment" seems

formulated to mandate intervention in exactly this kind of struggle. We are hopeful that our rural quality of life here will be spared a ribbon-cutting festival at the bottom of Old Meyers Grade.

I speak for many when I say that we are in hopes that you will help us.

Audrey Morrow, Christmas Valley

Editorial: Orlando the latest in a horrific parade of violence

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the June 12, 2016, Los Angeles Times.*

The murder of at least 50 people in Orlando early Sunday was an act of terrorism, pure and simple. It appears to have been driven by Islamic extremism and anti-gay sentiment, and yes, once again, a gun designed for no other purpose than to kill a large number of people in a short amount of time was central to the crime.

The killings occurred near closing time of a nightclub that caters to the LGBT community, when Omar Mateen – reportedly a New York native who was living in the Fort Pierce area, 120 miles north of Miami – entered with an AR-15-style semiautomatic rifle and let loose in a barrage that lasted, as one of the survivors said, a song's length of time. It was the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history, moving instantly to the top of a list that roils the stomach. Over the next

few days, investigators will try to understand the dangerous interplay of religious fundamentalism, gay hatred and whatever other motivations drove Mateen to his demented actions.

It should go without saying that not all Muslims should be blamed for the acts of fanatics and fundamentalists. That remains as true as ever. Sunday's tragedy also shows that the Obama administration has been right to view Islamic State not as some far-away militia that poses no threat to the U.S., but as a dangerous group whose hostility to this country can have immediate and terrible consequences.

Read the whole story

Breakfast, rummage sale to help SLT seniors

South Lake Tahoe Senior Center (3050 Lake Tahoe Blvd.) is having a pancake breakfast on June 18 from 8-11am.

The cost for adults and teens is \$5, for those 12 and younger it's \$3.

A rummage sale is also planned from 8am-3pm. Items will be new or slightly used, including clothing, household items, tools, and more.

These events benefit the South Lake Tahoe Senior Citizens.

For more info, call Arline at 530-545-1277.

How to find great Sierra camping without crowds

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

It's not that Kimberly and Patrick Wilkes don't like you.

They just don't want to look at your messy campsite or listen to you snore when they're trying to enjoy nature.

And to show it's nothing personal, they presume you don't want to spend your camping trip in the shadow of their tent either.

That's why the husband and wife team from Gardnerville spent two years visiting 3,416 campsites in the Eastern Sierra and Death Valley and rated each by the level of privacy it affords.

Their efforts resulted in a guidebook, "Eastern Sierra and Death Valley Camping with Privacy."

Read the whole story