# Icy Truckee highway leads to serious injuries for driver

**By Barbara Barte Osborn, Sacramento Bee**

A solo accident on icy Highway 267 near Truckee injured an Auburn woman, brought down power lines and closed the road in both directions Tuesday morning.

The 52-year-old woman, whose name is not being released because no criminal charges were involved, was flown to a Reno hospital with major injuries, said California Highway Patrol Officer Tony Prisco.

The accident occurred at 7:48am just south of Brockway Summit on Highway 267, which connects Truckee with north Lake Tahoe at Kings Beach.

According to the CHP, the driver lost control of her Toyota 4Runner while traveling southbound on the road’s icy surface.

The vehicle left the roadway and went down a hillside, striking and severing a power pole and stretching its lines across both lanes of the highway. The road was closed for about 25 minutes, Prisco said.

The Toyota came to rest upright at the bottom of the hillside. The driver was extricated by the North Lake Tahoe Fire Department.

# Personalities, not policy dominate S. Tahoe council meeting

**By Kathryn Reed**

The South Lake Tahoe City Council should worry less about what lobbyist it has and instead hire a therapist to get them to play nice together.

## Analysis

In a testy show of unfriendliness, the five on Tuesday more overtly than at any other council meeting demonstrated a tremendous amount of hostility – mostly at each other. While the five should have opinions of their own, at the end of the day the majority vote rules. It's called democracy.

That is not to say 5-0 votes demonstrate democracy.

But for councilmembers to be acting in a rogue manner instead of being the voice of the entire council on the respective committees and board positions they sit on is not what they were elected to do.

While these councilmembers more so than others in the recent past have been good about giving reports at council meetings regarding the work they do elsewhere on behalf of the city, not everyone regularly reports back and some act on their own without the consent of the full council.

Mayor Claire Fortier attacked fellow councilmembers Tom Davis and Angela Swanson for what she called a lack of transparency

by these two. Those two are the city's Legislative Committee – or Leg Committee as it is commonly referred to.

Davis and Swanson lashed back, offended that Fortier questioned their personal and professional integrity. These two have regularly given updates to their colleagues, and therefore the public.

Davis said during the exchange, "I thought in closed session things were resolved."

This was in reference to an item discussed the morning of June 5 in closed session about the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Regional Plan update. It was on the closed session agenda because of the threat of potential litigation – even though the Regional Plan has not been voted on and it's not the city that would be sued. Though the city could file a lawsuit, this is not likely. The TRPA won't even vote on the Regional Plan update until December at the earliest. Without knowing what exactly was discussed, it's impossible to know if this was a violation of California's open meeting law – the Brown Act – where there was dialog behind closed doors without the public being privy to some unknown threat of a lawsuit about something that hasn't even been approved. It appears to be a loosely veiled guise to be able to discuss things without the public being able to listen.

Councilmembers have told *Lake Tahoe News* that Fortier as the rep to the TRPA Governing Board has not been forthcoming until Tuesday about the intricacies of the Regional Plan update.

Fortier after the meeting said that's not true – she has been upfront with her colleagues.

"Not only am I updating the council, so is (Director of Development Services) Hilary (Roverud)," Fortier told *Lake Tahoe News*.

However, while Fortier has sat on the TRPA committee that came

up with the Regional Plan update, there has been no public discussion with the council as to what collectively the city of South Lake Tahoe wanted in the document. Fortier would report when the meetings were, but did not in open session say what was discussed. Those committee meetings were public and not held behind closed doors so she was legally able to discuss what was said.

While she wants in writing from the Leg Committee what their deliverables are, she has not put in writing information about her work on the Regional Plan committee.

Fortier used to be on the Leg Committee, and wanted to continue to be a rep, but was essentially voted off by her colleagues earlier this year because of her workload as mayor and being on the Governing Board.

The agenda item on June 5 that led to the heated exchange was about what to do with the two lobbying firms the city hired a year ago. In the end it was agreed on a 4-1 vote, with Fortier being the lone dissenter, to keep them on through the November election and then decide what to do.

In another sign of dysfunction, the city has opted not to meet with Douglas County. The two government bodies met in November, with the idea of having regular joint sessions to discuss matters on the South Shore. The loop road, among other things, was supposed to be discussed this month. That meeting has been nixed.

Fortier said it was Douglas County who canceled the meeting. She said she spoke to Lee Bonner, chair of the Douglas County Commission, and the concern was about the transition going on in the city with regard to City Manager Tony O'Rourke leaving.

"In talking with Douglas County Manager Steve Mokrohisky as well as with South Lake Tahoe Mayor Claire Fortier and (Councilman) Bruce Grego, the decision was made to postpone the meeting. With the TRPA Regional Plan update, Tahoe Summit,

SLT staff transition, and the need to conduct more public meetings on the South Shore Vision Plan, we felt it would be best to meet in late August," Bonner told *Lake Tahoe News*.

But the reality is the commissioners and council members are the ones who set policy. Staff is the same today as it will be when O'Rourke leaves at the end of the month. And the interim city manager, Nancy Kerry, is up to speed on all the issues.

As to whether Fortier will be leaving the council before her term ends, she was asked point blank on Tuesday by Davis what her intentions are.

"When I know, I will tell you," she responded.

Her spouse has accepted a job out of state.

In a lengthy conversation with *Lake Tahoe News* on Tuesday night, Fortier said it's not her ego that is keeping her on the council, but instead her commitment to the voters who elected her in November 2010.

"I am absolutely about what is for the better good of the city of South Lake Tahoe," Fortier said.

In part she defines this as meaning completing her term as mayor and shepherding the Regional Plan to a vote.

"I would like to see it completed so the city can succeed in rebuilding itself," Fortier said of the Regional Plan. She called this her "fundamental issue".

She does not believe she owes it to the more than 20,000 people she represents to tell them decisively if she will fulfill her four-year term or when she might leave before it expires in December 2014.

"I know what I need to accomplish to be an effective city councilman and an effective mayor," Fortier said. "My decisions on the City Council are not based on my spouse's

decisions, they are based on the things I’m committed to.”

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# Winners in LTN paid subscriber contest revealed

Thank you to everyone who became a paid subscriber to *Lake Tahoe News* during our promotion in May. This will greatly increase our efforts to becoming an adjudicated publication.

For those who submitted their paperwork in May, they were in the running for one of two photographs taken by Dirk Yuricich. Patricia Miller won the Mount Tallac photo and Murrough Wallace won the Hope Valley barn photo.

Everyone who becomes a paid subscriber of *Lake Tahoe News* is automatically part of the NEWS Team. This qualifies you for special deals. The next give-away occurs June 8.

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# Opinion: Why businesses choose Douglas County

**By Lee Bonner**

I have been a proponent of bringing new businesses to Douglas County long before I ran for county commissioner. Since 2007, we have lost more than 3,000 jobs and we must bring them back. Our county has invested time and resources in economic development and our economic vitality plan, so it’s crucial that we diversify our economy. To be honest, we should have started in the last decade; but, thanks to great leadership, we are headed in the right direction now.

With counties across the nation competing for jobs, we must ask: Why Douglas County? What makes Douglas a good fit and why should a business move here? We have challenges in not being a metropolitan area or a major transportation hub, but that may also be a strength.



Lee Bonner

Let me start by comparing companies that everyone can recognize and evaluate how they operate strategically. Companies that bring something special. Not by simply copying another product, but actually making things better and more usable. Which companies are game changers? Which companies change the way we live?

It’s much like comparing GE to Apple. To be fair, I admit I

worked for GE for years and love the company. However, when you compare the two models, they are much different. GE takes a product and makes it better and makes it available across the world. Apple creates products that literally change the way we live. By creating the iPod, they changed how we buy our music. Music stores are now dwindling because of Internet delivery. By the creation of the iPhone and iPad, they changed the way we use phones and computers. People are trying hard to duplicate what Apple has created using their own technology, but none can do it better. They created a following and a lifestyle in the products they design and manufacture. Don't get me wrong, GE is a great company, but even as big as they are they don't invent many new products; they primarily take existing products and make them better and then make them more accessible to the world. They have their place and they do it well.

So when I look at these examples, I ask myself, who is Douglas County? What type of community are we and what can we offer to companies that other counties cannot? Do we make them better? What is our strategic selling point? Are we reselling what other communities have? I believe if you compare our county to others, we have our place and it will not take away from other counties. We need a strong region for us all to succeed and all of our neighboring counties have their own strengths.

When it comes to the real strength of Douglas County, I believe we offer a lifestyle to people and new businesses moving to the area. Our community is unique; from the ranchers, the Washoe Tribe, and our Basque community, to the recreation areas of Lakes of Tahoe and Topaz. In addition to that, our citizens give back in many ways through local charitable and volunteer organizations. It's a part of our DNA and our county vision says it all, "A community to match the scenery."

When I moved here from Atlanta, I no longer had a two-hour, 10-mile commute. Our unique "rush minute" traffic allowed me

to gain some life back. I have free time to ride horses and be with friends; thus, my quality of life went up. Working for GE, we had one of the highest employee retention rates across the company. People want to live and work here, so there are many reasons to move to Douglas County. World-class technology, outstanding scenery, outdoor adventure, safe streets, but most of all we have the Douglas County lifestyle. A lifestyle built on quality of life, open spaces, wild horses, awesome trails, the best Tahoe skiing, bald eagle viewing at calving time, and some of the best people you will ever meet. If you are thinking of moving your business to Douglas County, that decision will change the way you live … for the better. It's truly a lifestyle.

I hope to see you all at the many outdoor events across our community this summer. If you see me, please come say hello. You are all an important part of the Douglas County lifestyle.

*Lee Bonner is chairman of the Douglas County Commission.*

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# K's Kitchen: Asian inspired marinade for barbecued veggies

**By Kathryn Reed**

We have gotten in more barbecue days this summer (and it's not even really summer) than we usually do by the end of June. The warm nights of this past weekend were ideal for being on the back deck and aromas coming from outside instead of from the

kitchen.



I rarely measure ingredients for a marinade and seldom blend them together. Usually I just throw marinade ingredients on the veggies that are cut up in a glass dish. But because I knew I might want to write about this (and remember it for the future) I started documenting what I was doing.

But the mixing separately part, well, that was because of using a spice blend that required it be well incorporated with all the other marinade ingredients. Had I just dumped it right on the vegetables, it's likely not everything would have been evenly coated.

As with so many of my grilled vegetable medleys, the combo had to do with what was in the refrigerator, instead of some well thought out meal. Whenever possible I like for the ensemble to have a mix of colors so it looks good to eat.

Sometimes I decide on the marinade based on the vegetables being used. Certain items on the grill go better with some flavors more than others.

I bought the Chinese spice, soy sauces and rice wine vinegar in San Francisco's Chinatown. However, since then I have learned the Chinese market in the Town and Country Center (think Whiskey Dick's) in South Lake Tahoe has them, too.

The marinade is bound to be good on things other than vegetables – but someone will have to let the rest of us know because I don't do meat.

I had a 9 x 13 glass pan filled with cut up bok choy, mushrooms, red pepper, carrots and tofu.

**Chinese Inspired Vegetable Marinade**

1/8 C pure Vermont maple syrup

¼ C Dijon mustard

1/8 C rice wine vinegar

¼ C dark soy sauce

¼ C light soy sauce

2 tsp (or less) 5 spices (Chinese) powder

Mix all ingredients together until powder is dissolved. Pour over cut up vegetables and tofu. Mix vegetables so all are covered. Refrigerate until ready to grill.

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# What are your memories of the Angora Fire?

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# El Dorado, Placer voters pass tax measures; not all supervisorial incumbents win

**By Kathryn Reed**

Voters in South Lake Tahoe agreed June 5 to revamp the

business tax fee, while voters throughout El Dorado County voted out one incumbent supervisor and voted in another. The countywide Measure C also passed.




In Placer County, Measure F passed.

All results from Tuesday's California are preliminary until certified, but these are the results from 100 percent of the precincts reporting from both counties.

South Lake Tahoe City Manager Tony O'Rourke told *Lake Tahoe News* the passage of Measure B is a, "A small, but important step toward credibility."

He also sees this as a test case for summer 2014 when it's likely voters will be asked to increase the hotel tax and institute an amusement tax.

Measure B will up the maximum some businesses pay – from just more than $3,000 to $20,000 a year – while lowering the license fee for the majority of South Tahoe businesses. The change occurs July 1.

It passed with 55.23 percent of the votes. The vote was 924 to 749.

Measure C, which allows El Dorado County department heads to approve expenditures of $10,000 or less, was approved by 51.11 percent of the voters.

Both measures needed 50 percent plus one vote.

Incumbent El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Warren "Curt" Stracener was the top vote getter with 42.32 percent. He faces

Joe Hoffman in a November runoff.

In El Dorado County, three supervisorial positions were up. Jack Sweeney was termed out. Brian Keith Veerkamp was the top vote getter for District 3 with 2,910 votes, or 32.91 percent. Incumbent Ray Nutting came in with 67.93 percent or 5,830 votes. Challenger Ron “Mik” Mikulaco unseated John Knight with 46.56 percent or 502 more votes.

In Placer County, Jennifer Montgomery, who represents Tahoe on the Board of Supervisors, handily won with 53.75 percent. Her nearest challenger, Jerry Johnson, had 16.16 percent.

Kirk Uhler with 60.20 percent was tops for District 4, while Jim Holmes took District 3 with 65.23 percent.

Measure F, which keeps the transient occupancy tax in place for all things Tahoe, passed in Placer County by 84.08 percent. This was not an increase to the TOT, but instead kept the status quo.

Despite the dismal turnout expected in an election where the Republican delegates have selected their presumptive nominee and President Obama stands uncontested, El Dorado County’s turnout is not expected to have the worst turnout.

“Mainly, people in our county vote. We’re always better than three-quarters of the state,” El Dorado County Registrar of Voters Bill Schultz told *Lake Tahoe News* late Tuesday night.

The Golden State is conducting its first open primary with a mix of various parties on the same ballot.

“It causes a little more confusion among the voters,” Schultz said.

Ted Gaines, who represents El Dorado and Placer counties in the state Senate, declared victory early. The Roseville Republican will face Democrat Julie Griffith-Flatter in November. Four people were vying for the seat.

Gaines, who has a second home on the North Shore, has long been an advocate for Lake Tahoe.

He told *Lake Tahoe News* on Election Night, “We need to make sure we are looking out for our natural resources and use those natural resources in a responsible manner.”

Reforming government, working to help the small business owner and not increasing taxes are his mantras. Gaines is also a proponent of “good forest management”.

With redistricting, the South Shore will be in the 5th Assembly District, in which Republicans Rico Oller and Frank Bigelow are the top vote getters. Oller represented Tahoe in the Assembly from 1996-2000 when it was the 4th Assembly District.

Beth Gaines, R-Roseville who currently represents Tahoe in the Assembly, is now running in the 6th District, which will encompass parts of El Dorado and Placer counties. She is the top vote getter with 36.9 percent. She will face Regy Bonner in November. Bonner came in with 531 votes more than Andy Pugno.

Statewide, the votes were still coming in early Wednesday on Proposition 29 – the tobacco tax – so it was unable to be called at 1:20am.

Proposition 28, which revises term limits, passed.

*Susan Wood contributed to this story.*

# Congress members speak at 10th-grade level

**By Laura Chilaka, California News Service**

WASHINGTON – Members of Congress speak at a 10th-grade level – down almost a full grade since 2005 – raising the question of whether they are embracing a more effective communication strategy or dumbing down their messages, a new report says.

The findings published by the Sunlight Foundation, a nonpartisan government transparency group in Washington, found that California representatives use more complex words – speaking at about the 12th-grade level.

The foundation analyzed floor speeches as reported in the Congressional Record, using the Flesch-Kincaid scale, which rates speeches based on the complexity, length and difficulty of words and sentences. Congress speaks at roughly the same level as the typical American, who speaks between the ninth- and 10th-grade levels.

Among Northern California lawmakers, Dan Lungren, R-Gold River, and John Garamendi, D-Walnut Grove, are at polar extremes – with Lungren's speech the equivalent of a college senior and Garamendi's not quite a high school freshman.

Lungren was the highest-rated member in Congress, followed by another Californian – Lucille Roybal-Allard, D-Los Angeles.

One sentence from a recent Lungren speech went on for 62 words – boosting his score under a formula that links longer

sentences and more syllables with higher-grade levels. Members with the lowest ratings typically use sentences containing seven to eight words.

“The challenge is how to introduce a full thought or a full argument,” Lungren said in an interview.

“One of the challenges of dealing with communication today — when you have people tweeting on Twitter and limited to 140 characters — is that people are interested in shorthand and symbols rather than full words.”

Congress’ movement toward plain language is illustrated in the Sunlight Foundation’s database, which tracks the most popular words spoken by lawmakers on the House and Senate floor.

**Read the whole story**

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# Felon on the loose in Douglas County

An ex-felon has fled California and could be in Douglas County, according to officials.

Douglas deputies got word that Randy Nourse, 48, was at the Summit Crest Apartments on Mica Drive in north Douglas County.

When the SWAT team entered the apartment at approximately 6:50pm June 5 no one was inside.



Randy Nourse

It is unknown at this time where Nourse is hiding. Anyone with information on the whereabouts of Nourse is asked to call (775) 782-.5126.

Nourse has an extensive felony criminal history in California for burglary, robbery and narcotics offenses. There is no information that Nourse is currently armed or has access to weapons, however anyone who observes him should use caution and do not approach him, according to deputies

Nourse is described as male, Caucasian, 48, 6-foot-1, about 215 pounds, large build, with balding light-colored brown hair and blue eyes. Nourse was last known to have a mustache and long goatee (brown and grey in color). Nourse also has several tattoos on his neck.

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# Lobbyist Whittemore linked to $400,000 in donations

**By Martha Bellisle, Reno Gazette-Journal**

A *Reno Gazette-Journal* investigation into Harvey Whittemore's election campaign activities in Nevada found that the embattled former lobbyist, his family and associates have given more than $400,000 to people running for mayor, county

commissions, city councils, the Legislature and other offices during the past decade.

After a recent grand jury investigation into Whittemore's campaign contributions to Congressional candidates, the *Reno Gazette-Journal* examined his contributions to local and state officials. The *RGJ* compiled a database of donations from various expense reports filed throughout the state during recent election cycles. Among the findings:

• In two cases, candidates received thousands of dollars from Whittemore companies and employees on the same day. A Washoe County Commission candidate received checks from nine contributors tied to Whittemore on a single day in 2004, and a gubernatorial candidate received four $10,000 checks from Whittemore employees in 2005, as well as $10,000 from Whittemore and one of his companies during that campaign.

• At least four of the employees who gave to the county commission and gubernatorial candidates were part of the recent FBI investigation into whether Whittemore used friends and employees to skirt contribution limits in Congressional races. In particular, federal officials gathered information for their investigation about contributions employees made on a single day in 2007 to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev. Whittemore-related contributions on that day topped $115,000.

Federal officials have been investigating whether Whittemore violated federal campaign finance laws by allegedly funneling donations through employees to Congressional candidates. Campaign giving in which the donor goes through other people to make donations above the legally allowed contribution amount is sometimes called using a conduit. The practice is a violation of federal law.

Nevada Secretary of State Ross Miller said using a conduit to get around campaign contribution limits also is a violation of

Nevada law. State laws say it is illegal to make a contribution in the name of another and to exceed campaign contribution limits. In Nevada, the limit is $5,000 per candidate per election.

**Read the whole story**