Truckee contemplating building 300-seat theater

The Truckee-Donner Recreation & Park District is considering developing a nearly 300-seat professional quality theater near the Truckee Community Center with a price tag between $7 million and $12 million.

The recreation board is looking for input for residents and second homeowners.

To participate or for more information, contact the Lester Consulting Group at info@lcginc.net or 877.569.2890.

LTN tidbit 21: Invisible contributor leaves her mark



May is 31 tidbits about Lake Tahoe News month.

LTN tidbit No. 21:

As with many people associated with *Lake Tahoe News*, Kim Wyatt has many roles. Most of which are behind the scenes.

Her vast experience as an editor is often the skill we tap into most. Her fingerprints are there – though they are invisible to the reader. She takes over the editing on occasion when the publisher leaves town. Wyatt can take charge of the back end when needed.

Wyatt is also a skilled writer – which *LTN* readers will get to witness next month.

Her acumen in the publishing world is an asset that is priceless.

Here is information about becoming a paid subscriber.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Woody is a 1-year-old Treeing Walker Coonhound. He is a high energy, curious and social dog. He loves to go for runs and will need this exercise to be a good companion.



Woody will frequently stand up on his hind legs in order to get closer to people who come to see him.

He gets along well with the other dogs at the shelter, but gets very excited around the cats and while not aggressive toward them, his high energy immediately puts them on the defensive.

Woody is a sweet, affectionate, goofy young dog who will fit in well in an active household.

Woody is neutered, microchipped, and vaccinated. He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go online to see photos and description 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.

– Karen Kuentz

Minority babies now the majority in U.S.

By Carol Morello and Ted Mellnik, Washington Post

For the first time in U.S. history, most of the nation’s babies are members of minority groups, according to new census figures that signal the dawn of an era in which whites no longer will be in the majority.

Population estimates show that 50.4 percent of children younger than 1 last year were Hispanic, black, Asian American or in other minority groups. That’s almost a full percentage point higher than the 49.5 percent of minority babies counted when the decennial census was taken in April 2010. Census Bureau demographers said the tipping point came three months later, in July.

The latest estimates, which gauge changes since the last census, are a reflection of an immigration wave that began four decades ago. The transformation of the country’s racial and ethnic makeup has gathered steam as the white population grows collectively older, especially compared with Hispanics.

The census has forecast that non-Hispanic whites will be outnumbered in the United States by 2042, and social scientists consider that current status among infants a harbinger of the change.

“This is a watershed moment,” said Andrew Cherlin, a sociologist at Johns Hopkins University who specializes in family issues. “It shows us how multicultural we’ve become.”

Although minorities make up about 37 percent of the U.S. population, the District and four states are majority minority — California, Hawaii, New Mexico and Texas.

Read the whole story

Birding festival on South Shore

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and the Tahoe Institute for Natural Science are putting on the third annual Lake Tahoe Bird Festival on June 2 from 10am-4pm.

The free event is at the Taylor Creek Visitor Center, located three miles north of South Lake Tahoe on Highway 89.

The event includes guided bird walks every hour from 10:30am-1:30pm along the Rainbow Trail, information on bird feeding and landscaping, a talk on binocular and spotting scope use, a migration discussion by Will Richardson and a presentation by master falconer Marie Gaspari Crawford that includes live birds of prey.

For a schedule of activities, go online.

Opinion: U.S. should be embracing foreign tourists

By Matthew Yglesias, Slate

For a depressed economy, exports function as a magic elixir. Demand—and with it jobs—appears from outside, generating new income that cycles through the economy. This is why President Obama, as part of his recovery strategy, has set a goal of doubling exports over five years.

Talk of exports normally conjures up images of factories and container ships, but many of America’s exports are services.

The nation’s biggest service export is in some sense not an export at all—it’s travel and tourism, an industry begging for respect on National Travel and Tourism Week. I’m pleased to report that America’s international travel export sector is healthy, with nominal revenues reaching an all-time peak last year of $153 billion—about 1 percent of GDP. Still, despite recent successes, it’s not clear that American tourism has ever really recovered from the tough blow it took after 9/11, suggesting there’s plenty we could do to further boost the industry.

As far as the national balance sheet goes, tourism functions exactly like an export. Foreigners come here and spend money, leaving extra funds in American hands, with which we can purchase oil and Chinese toys. It’s an export realm in which the United States has very strong fundamentals.

Read the whole story

O’Rourke presses to upgrade S. Tahoe’s infrastructure

By Kathryn Reed

On June 5, the South Lake Tahoe City Council is slated to have a workshop on the capital improvement program, or the infrastructure of the city.



At the June 19 meeting, the council is expected to approve the certificate of participation that is basically a $5 million loan. That money is slated for roads, Harrison Avenue upgrades and revamping Linear Park. (This will be City Manager Tony O'Rourke's last meeting before beginning a job in Washington.)

Infrastructure improvements will begin before the COP money is in hand.

"We don't have to wait for the COP. We will reimburse the general fund," O'Rourke told *Lake Tahoe News*.

In other words, O'Rourke is OK'ing the city to take money from one fund to be used in other, without a definite guarantee fund No. 1 will be repaid. O'Rourke is literally banking on the assumption the council still favors the COP process. Because it's not a tax, residents don't have to vote on it – though it will be taxpayer money that pays back the loan.

At a meeting in July 2011, Councilman Tom Davis said, "The interest is $32 million over a 30-year period so really it's $10 million a year. (The COP) just doubled the cost."

O'Rourke at the May 15 council meeting went over the five-year budget scenario in a big picture scenario without getting into the nitty-gritty.

As with most financial documents, it's not stagnant and it's built on presumptions that don't always come true.

For instance, transient occupancy tax collections in March were 8.2 percent less than the previous fiscal year at the same time. This meant the city needed to make a $600,000, or 6 percent mid-year adjustment to the budget.

O'Rourke told the council it should cut the 25 percent

operating reserve to 20 percent. The money in the fund now equates to 35 percent of the general fund. He said that excess, so to speak, should go to capital improvements over several years. This would include purchasing fire trucks.

Adjusting the reserve would need to be brought back to the council and four of the five need to approve it.

What wasn't discussed at the meeting this month was merging resources with Lake Valley Fire Protection District.

While the city in March appeared hot to get to the negotiating table, no meetings between the departments have ever occurred.

O'Rourke told *Lake Tahoe News* the city is doing an analysis of what is appropriate.

He said, "We're of the mindset of let's date before we get married."

O'Rourke added that consolidation is not off the table, but more research needs to be done before that would occur.

He also said going forward the budget has Brian Uhler remaining as police and fire chief.

When it comes to what happens at Harrison Avenue, that could be decided today as city staff meets with business owners.

"We want to see it improved, but if there is any delay by property owners or no interest, we can move the money elsewhere," O'Rourke said. "There is no lack of needs."

An item that could come with a price tag of close to $500,000 is upgrading the finance department's software and hardware. However, the idea is it will create efficiency in the department, and therefore throughout the city. An RFP has been released.

A stream of revenue could be collecting more hotel tax. A

request for proposal was released May 14 seeking firms that could primarily go after delinquent or non-existent taxpayers.

Red flag fire warning for Tahoe on Monday

Firefighters in the Lake Tahoe-Carson City-Reno area will be on high alert Monday afternoon as winds increase and humidity drops.

“The combination of gusty winds and low humidity will create critical fire weather conditions Monday afternoon and evening,” the National Weather Service in Reno said.



P.J. White, 14, of Carson City isn't likely to find calm water Monday on the canals of Tahoe Keys like he did May 20. Photo/Kathryn Reed

A red flag warning is in effect from 1-11pm on May 21. A red flag warning means that critical fire weather conditions will occur.

A fire weather watch is in effect from Tuesday morning through Tuesday evening.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

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2 business education classes

planned in Truckee

As part of its Chamber EDucation program, the North Lake Tahoe Chamber/CVB/Resort Association in partnership with the Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce and the Sierra Human Resources Association is hosting “The Customer Connection” and “The Guest Service Experience” on May 23, 9am to noon and 1-4 p.m., respectively, at Cedar House Sport Hotel, 10918 Brockway Road in Truckee.

“The Customer Connection” is geared for public agencies, municipalities, education, health care, non-profit organizations and non-sales environments. This workshop will discuss the service chain and service culture, as well as how you influence the perception of your community. Emphasis will be placed on body language, non-verbal communication, phone etiquette, difficult customers and conflict resolution, how to craft your own personal mission statement and creating a plan for common customer issues.

“The Guest Service Experience” is designed for resort, hospitality, hotel and golf course staffs, as well as grocery, recreation, restaurant and retail establishment employees. This workshop will focus on “service is sales” in terms of up selling and cross selling, the art of suggested products and services and acting as everyone’s concierge. Emphasis will be placed on body language, non-verbal communication, phone etiquette, difficult customers and conflict resolution, how to craft your own personal mission statement and creating a plan for common customer issues.

Walk-in registration is $59 for chamber and SHRA members and $69 for nonmembers.

For more information and/or to register, contact Laura Moriarty of SHRA at (530) 573.0224 or North Lake Tahoe Chamber Manager Deanna Frumenti at (530) 581.8764.

JJ Grey & Mofro

JJ Grey & Mofro will bring their old school rhythm and blues and down-home roots rock to kick off the inaugural Star Sessions: Northstar Concert Series in the Village at Northstar on June 22 at 8pm. Doors open at 6pm.

Pre-sale general admission tickets are $22 and will be available at the Tickets & Season Pass Office in the Village at Northstar or by calling 800.GO.NORTH.

Tickets the day of the concert are $28.