Lame-duck Congress will have plenty of work to do

By Lori Montgomery and Rosalind S. Helderman, Washington Post

Defense contractors have slowed hiring. Tax advisers are warning firms not to count on favorite breaks. And hospitals are scouring their books for ways to cut costs.

Across the U.S. economy, anxiety is rising about the potential for widespread disruptions after the November election, when a lame-duck Congress will have barely two months to resolve a grinding standoff over taxes and spending.

The halls of the U.S. Capitol are already teeming with people warning of disaster if lawmakers fail to defuse a New Year's budget bomb scheduled to raise taxes for every American taxpayer and slash spending at the Pentagon and most other federal agencies.

Last week, hospital executives came to complain about big scheduled cuts in Medicare payments. Next month, university presidents plan to raise the alarm about big scheduled cuts in federal research grants. And the chief executives of Lockheed Martin and other aerospace giants last Wednesday passed out digital countdown clocks ticking off the seconds until "over 1 million American jobs" will be lost to big scheduled cuts in defense.

"How do you plan for chaos?" Marion Blakey, president of the Aerospace Industries Association, sighed during a break between meetings with lawmakers, who could provide little assurance that the spending cuts would be averted. "It's almost a unique moment in government because there's so much at stake. And there's nothing that inspires confidence that this will get done."

The uncertainty is already prompting some firms to take action. Many more say they will be forced to contemplate layoffs and other cost-cutting measures long before the end of the year unless the Republican House and the Democratic Senate come up with an alternative path to tame deficits. But with control of the White House and both chambers of Congress in play on Nov. 6, aides say it is impossible to begin mapping a strategy for compromise until they know who wins the election, by how much and on which issues.

Read the whole story

Expert outlines Reno-Tahoe's good-bad points for attracting businesses

By Jason Hidalgo, Reno Gazette-Journal

Reno-Tahoe is poised to reap the benefits of a resurgent manufacturing industry in the United States, according to a New Jersey-based site selection expert.

Nevertheless, the region still has some work to do to make it more attractive to companies seeking to relocate or expand their business, said Dennis J. Donovan of Wadley Donovan Gutshaw Consulting, a global site selection firm.

High up on the area's to-do list is a familiar issue — changing perceptions outsiders have of the area, Donovan said.

"I think there are misperceptions out there and a lot of people associate the area just with gaming," Donovan said. "They don't realize all the quality-of-life features like

outdoors and recreation or the green (energy) alternatives available, which fit right in with what tech companies and other people are looking for."

Donovan was brought in to share his insights about the area today at a breakfast with business people and community leaders.

The event was organized by the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada (EDAWN) and the Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development.

Getting an informed outsider's perspective, particularly one who specializes in company site selection, about the region is important for gauging Reno-Tahoe's competitiveness with other areas, said Mike Kazmierski, president and CEO of EDAWN.

"We already have a strategic plan for the region and have an idea of what we need to do from an economic development perspective," Kazmierski said. "But we still wanted someone from the outside to come in and let us know how we look like through other companies' eyes, and also tell us whether our plan is on track or not."

Read the whole story

Donna Summer – 1948-2012

Donna Summer, the disco queen of the 1970s and 1980, died May 17 from complications with cancer. She was 63.

Ms. Summer recorded five live videos at the Sahara hotel-casino in Stateline in the last 1970s. (It is now the Horizon.)

She also performed in the South Shore Room at Harrah's Lake Tahoe and the old Caesars Tahoe (now MontBleu). In 2006, Howie Nave, the emcee at Harveys Improv in Stateline, opened for Ms. Summer at Cache Creek casino. In 2008, she was at the Peppermill in Reno.



Donna Summer

When she played Harrah's at the lake it would be for two-week stints, a dinner and cocktail show – so 14 shows per week. This was between 1984 and 1987.

"She packed the place," John Packer of Harrah's Lake Tahoe told *Lake Tahoe News*. "She would fill both shows. She was very high energy – a great performer."

Ms. Summer also owned a home on Kingsbury Grade during the 1980s.

Some of her most popular songs were "Last Dance," "She Works Hard for the Money" and "Bad Girls."

Ms. Summer won five Grammy Awards and six American Music Awards, and charted three multi-platinum albums.

She was born LaDonna Adrian Gaines on Dec. 31, 1948.

Ms. Summer is survived by her husband, three daughters, and four grandchildren.

– Kathryn Reed

U.S. travelers hitting the road means hotels are hiring

By Anna-Louise Jackson and Anthony Feld, Bloomberg Businessweek

Hotels are hiring. That simple statement is giving hope to many long-unemployed or underemployed Americans who see hotel jobs as a pathway back to full-time work – low-paying, long-hours work, but a job nonetheless.

Hotels and motels are getting busier as Americans feel a little more secure economically and are taking vacations.

“With more people on the road, we’ll need more people working in hotels,” says Jan Freitag, a senior vice president at Smith Travel Research. He cites a 4.1 percent gain in first-quarter hotel bookings as a “very positive sign” that U.S. tourism is rebounding.

The Federal Reserve confirmed the shift in travel in its most recent survey of current economic conditions, with data collected on or before April 2 indicating “strong” trends in

several districts. The St. Louis Fed – which oversees all of Arkansas and parts of Missouri, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois – reported that hotel service companies "announced plans to expand operations and hire new workers." Business travel, essential to hotel revenue, has rebounded enough to restore hotel occupancy levels to 63.6 percent, close to the historic average.

About 7.6 million people, or 5.7 percent of the U.S. workforce, held tourism-related jobs in March, according to the U.S. Travel Association in Washington. The travel industry accounted for "a substantial component" – 2.7 percent – of 2010 gross domestic product, according to a Jan. 19 statement from the White House. The number of Americans working at hotels, motels and casino hotels rose 3.2 percent in March from the same month in 2010, to 1.6 million, outpacing a 2.7 percent increase for all employees, data from the Department of Labor show.

Read the whole story

LTN tidbit 17: Freelance writers deliver the news



May is 31 tidbits about Lake Tahoe News month.

LTN tidbit No. 17:

It takes a tremendous amount of skill to write a thoroughly researched, comprehensive news article that readers will understand.

It can take hours of phone tag. It can take hours talking to various sources. It can take hours sitting at a meeting or going to an event. It takes time sorting through notes. It can takes hours to write.

Lake Tahoe News is thankful to have in its posse a group of fantastic writers. While Jessie Marchesseau, Katherine Hill, Linda Fine Conaboy and Joann Eisenbrandt are not frequent contributors, their stories have added to the rich and diverse topics that have been covered by *LTN*.

Lake Tahoe News is not their only writing outlet, so you may see their bylines elsewhere. That is what the world of freelancing is all about – having multiple bosses with the freedom to say no and not be fired.

Lake Tahoe News is fortunate and thankful for their contributions.

Here is information about becoming a paid subscriber.

History: Osgood’s Toll House has a rich legacy

Publisher’s note: ***This is reprinted from the May 1989 Lake Tahoe Historical Society newsletter.***

The oldest building still standing in the Tahoe basin is now boarded up and waiting for disposition. It is a sturdy, hand-hewn blockhouse which served as a toll station and landmark on the road into Lake Valley. It was built in the summer of 1859 by Nehemiah Osgood and established at the foot of the Meyers Grade where Echo Lake Creek flows into the Upper Truckee River. Osgood’s shortcut was one thousand feet long from the summit to the toll house and reduced the distance form the summit to the floor of Lake Valley. It stood on the left side of the road as one travelled toward the lake. Osgood established his family’s home just across the road from the toll station.

Toll houses dotted the valley in the 1860 and 1870s, especially at the south end of the lake. The operators charged for passage and took the responsibility of keeping their section of the road in good condition as the state had failed to provide adequate funds for building or maintaining the roads. During the Comstock Lode’s highest activity, traffic was heavy as these roads carried all of the supplies and material from California that were needed for mines and miners around Virginia City, Nevada.

Osgood expanded his holdings around the station in 1871 and employed at least three toll keepers to handle the traffic.

The 1867 capture of outlaws by a posse from Placerville was only another part of the passing parade for Osgood’s. No longer in use after the 1880s, it stood empty for three decades. In 1911, the spring thaw broke the dam on Echo Lake Creek and sent tons of water down upon the station washing it form its foundation. It was rescued by the Celio family and placed on a foundation in Meyers near the old golf course.

Local citizens and the Historical Society helped to move the building in 1974 to the site of a proposed museum adjacent to the new county library. Funds for the new museums were never raised and Osgood’s stands today at the corner of Highway 50 and Rufus Allen, a vision and a relic of the past. It is in good condition for its age and the Historical Society is investigating the feasibility of moving that venerable building closer to the museum. Discussions and investigations are under way on its ultimate fate.

Opinion: Professionals take stress out of buying first house

To the community,

After 25 years in South Lake Tahoe, we were able to recently purchase our first home.

We wanted to just give a shout out of thanks to two very special people who helped to make this happen for us.

First, thank you to Ron Yokotake from Associated Mortgage, who

with his magic calculator, pencil, and yellow paper showed us the way to home ownership. Ron is no nonsense, and told us exactly what we could afford, and showed us choices of loans. Any time we ever called Ron, he was always there with answers. Ron is the best. Thanks also, to Jan Alcott, who works in the office for her efficiency and kindness.

Thank you to Doug Rosner, who works at Chase International, for your kind and gentle nature, for your extensive knowledge of, well, everything.

Doug was there for us the whole way … any time we wanted to see a house, he set it up immediately … any time we had questions, he always answered them, and any time we needed advice, he was there. Thanks also to Angie Corry, who works in the office, she was always so nice to us.

Doug Rosner the best real estate agent ever.

We never really knew that we could buy a house, but after meeting Ron and Doug, who make a great team, we were able to do it and we just wanted to express our gratitude to them publicly for a great experience, and if you are wondering if you can and hoping to have a little piece of the American Dream, it is possible.

Sincerely,

Jody and Sallie Filgo, South Lake Tahoe

LTCC literary journal looking

for writers

The *Kokanee* literary journal is accepting submissions of poetry and prose.

Lake Tahoe Community College students, former students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to submit up to five poems and/or 10 pages of prose (fiction or literary nonfiction/memoir) for consideration.

Include a 50-word bio written in the third person.

Submit as an attachment to Kokanee@ltcc.edu by May 31. Write "Kokanee Submission" in the subject box.

USFS listens – saves popular trails in Fallen Leaf Lake area

By Kathryn Reed

While a final decision has not been made about what the Fallen Leaf Lake-Camp Richardson area trail system will look like, the U.S. Forest Service has incorporated the public's views into the alternatives that are now under consideration.

Two trails on the far end of Fallen Leaf Lake that end on private property were going to be decommissioned as was a trail on the west side of Taylor Creek.



Jacob Quinn with the U.S. Forest Service on May 16 talks about plans to change trails in the Fallen Leaf Lake-Camp Richardson area. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Public outcry has the Forest Service rethinking its original plans. Those three trails are in Alternative 4 – the preferred alternative of the six that will be included in the environmental analysis when it is released in mid-July.

“We would devote significant energy to keep those trails and get the easements,” Jacob Quinn said of the trails on the west end of Fallen Leaf.

Quinn, who is leading the charge on this project for the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, gave a presentation Wednesday at the South Lake Tahoe branch of the county library.

By some accounts, those trails have been used for close to 100 years.

The trail next to Taylor Creek has a steep bank that is eroding that could mean relocating that section back about 35 feet. Otherwise, that trail is not likely to see much upgrading.

“There may be be stone steps or native material to get to the creek,” Quinn said.

Quinn explained the five ratings for trails go from being accessible for practically everyone to rugged where being hit by a branch while mountain biking would be expected.

All Forest Service trails in the basin are open for multiple uses – hiking, biking, equestrian – but trail builders create routes that are more desirable for certain users to naturally keep them separate.

“It’s not just recreation we look at,” Quinn told the group.

This is why the trail to Mount Tallac via Spring Creek will be decommissioned. This is a breeding area for northern goshawk.

This summer the agency will also try to determine if Lahontan cutthroat trout are in Taylor Creek.

Yellow cress is one of the plant species the Forest Service will be paying attention to.

While more than 13,000 acres are included in the plan area of this heavily used system on the South Shore, a much smaller area will be touched.

The point of the Fallen Leaf Lake Trail Access and Travel Management Proposal is to create a user-friendly trail system with routes that are all designated and then maintained by the Forest Service. Gone will be the user-created trails.

The problem is trampling on so much land compromises vegetation and habitat. It’s also a safety concern because land managers may not travel those routes and therefore not find someone who is injured.

In showing maps of what is in the area now compared to what could be there in several years when the work is completed, more loops and fewer offshoots are visible.

But new routes are also slated to be built – like one between Tahoe Mountain and Fallen Leaf Lake. More parking is expected

to be put in at Tahoe Mountain, too.

Gone completely, at least as proposed now, will be all the routes from West Way through the meadow to the dirt trails to the east of the paved Camp Rich trail. People in the Tahoe Keys-Tahoe Island areas use this to avoid the masses on the paved trail. A private property owner who lives part time on that street in fall 2009 cut off access to mountain bike riders who would use the edge of his property to get to or from the meadow. According to Quinn, even the California Tahoe Conservancy parcel farther up the street will no longer be an access point for the meadow.

Unrelated to this massive project is the repair work to the Pope-Baldwin Bike Path (aka Camp Rich paved trail) that started Tuesday. This is a stopgap measure to fill in the holes on the heavily used route.

——-

Note: More information about the project is online. The draft EA when it is released this summer will be out for public comment for 30 days. The final EA is expected to be done in mid-October.

Healthy bones lecture

William Cottrell will discuss focusing on the makeup of healthy bones versus bones with osteoporosis, causes of osteoporosis and the diagnoses of osteoporosis at a free lecture June 27.

“Fractures after 50 years of age are a warning that your

skeleton may be weak," Cottrell said in a statement. "Weaker bones that are prone to break is the general definition of osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is a silent medical condition, meaning that you have no warning until a bone breaks."

Medical organizations, including the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, say 50 percent of second fractures can be prevented with appropriate evaluation and treatment.

The doctor will address the nutritional requirements and treatment options for fracture prevention.

The talk is at the Carson City Community Center, 851 E. William St., Carson City from 6-7pm.