Grant eases El Dorado County soldiers' ability to vote from afar

El Dorado County Registrar of Voters Bill Schultz is ushering in a new era of helping people in the military and overseas citizens cast a ballot.



A $1.8 million federal grant to El Dorado County will allow El Dorado and 12 other California counties to send ballots and voting information electronically to these voters.

The counties' consortium, known as Cal E-Promise, will provide an easy to use, online interface for voters to access their ballot at their convenience. This is especially important for deployed military voters who may have unpredictable schedules.

Current law does not allow voters to mark the ballot online or return the ballot by email. Electronically delivered ballots must be mailed or faxed back to the Elections Department.

El Dorado County's military and overseas citizens may access their ballot electronically by going to the Elections Department's Military and Overseas Voters website.

Sierra wins award for video produced by South Tahoe company

Sierra-at-Tahoe was recognized by Ski Area Management in the Best Video category in the 2011-12 Marketing Awards. Produced by First Track Productions, Sierra received the “Most Heart-Warming Video” award featuring the Burton Star Wars Experience.

In its inaugural year, the Burton Star Wars Experience is a snowboard experience that introduces 3- to 6-year-old kids how to snowboard in an interactive environment.

First Track Productions of South Lake Tahoe captured this and put together a three-minute video that showcased the experience.

Reno River Festival includes boat race for charity

The Charity Raft Race is returning to the Reno River Festival June 15 at 3pm.

The race, which hits the rapids at the Truckee River Whitewater park for the first time since 2007, is a fundraiser for the Truckee River Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to impacting the Truckee River by providing environmental, educational, access, safety and athlete development programs. Cost is $1,000 per team and includes up to six people. Space is available on a first come, first served basis.

The Charity Raft Race is the kick off for the annual Reno River Festival. A professional guide is provided to each raft.

For more details about the 9th annual Reno River Festival or the Run Amuck, call (775) 784.9400, ext. 119.

Fallen Leaf Lake adding boat rentals, making marina repairs

By Kathryn Reed

While the actual road to Fallen Leaf Lake is a rougher ride than it has ever been, the operations of the community service district are smoother.

Sid Bazett, who is a part-time resident of the South Shore enclave at the edge of Desolation Wilderness off Highway 89, didn't let the fact that the docks aren't in stop him from launching his boat on a sunny Saturday afternoon.

About an hour later on April 28, the board that runs the operations of the lake met at Lake Tahoe Airport.



Sid Bazett gets an early start April 28 to the boating season at Fallen Leaf Lake. Photos/Kathryn Reed

The three board members – Tom Bacchetti, Wanda Knowacki and Stephanie Neidig – agreed to spend the money to repair the breakwater logs and launch dock.

Knowacki described a storm in early December as "unusually violent" which resulted in the damage. Emergency fixes were made to make it safe, but now a more permanent solution is needed prior to the start of the season – which is usually Memorial Day weekend.

California Land Management, the concessionaire for the Fallen

Leaf Lake marina and store, is liable for the first $5,000 per the contract. It's estimated the district will need close to $6,000 to complete the repairs.

John Rich, who for years was the concessionaire at the lake, will do this.

It was mentioned that the district is doing fine financially after a good year with CLM operating the concession. The money for the repairs will come out of the district's operating budget.

CLM's contract for another year was approved Saturday. A change is that the operator, which also runs the U.S. Forest Service owned campground at the other end of the lake, will be allowed eight slips instead of six for rental boats.

Larry Chapman, assistant director of operations for CLM, told the board, "We think we can do more business (with rentals). All the slips have not been rented in the past."

He rents fishing boats and pontoon boats.

The board also agreed to increase the maximum horsepower allowed on the pontoons from 15 to 40. To start with Chapman is going to try using high altitude props to increase power. The reason to do this is for safety concerns because the limited horsepower isn't enough for a boat full of people to get back to the marina on a windy afternoon.

The Fallen Leaf Protective Association is paying for a Tahoe Resource Conservation District employee to be in charge of boat inspections Thursday-Monday, 8am-5pm from May 24-Sept. 10.

In May, CLM staff will be trained by TRCD and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency employees how to use the hot wash decontamination apparatus that is designed to keep invasive species out of Fallen Leaf Lake. Fallen Leaf, unlike Lake

Tahoe, has zero invasives in it.

Chapman said the goal is to have the operations going the weekend or week before Memorial Day so locals can get their boats in the water before the masses descend.

As for the three-member board, they agreed to fill the two vacancies by appointment. They are hoping to be able to do so at the June meeting.

James Kelly, a part-time resident participating by phone, was against doing so by appointment.

“Residents are disenfranchised and we are out of the loop,” Kelly said.

Board President Bacchetti said he believes the whole voting issue at the lake has been clarified, even for people whose property is on U.S. Forest Service land. The whole voting brouhaha at Fallen Leaf Lake has gone from the District Attorney level to the Attorney General’s Office. Allegations of voter fraud have embroiled the district for a couple years.

At issue were people voting at Fallen Leaf Lake who voted elsewhere – which is illegal – or not claiming the lake residence as what it is.

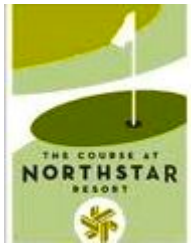
“If you claim your domicile at Fallen Leaf Lake, the district attorney says you are able to vote,” Bacchetti said. “There is a difference between a domicile and permanent residence.”

The board appointments will be until the next election in November 2013.

A key reason to get people on the board soon is that four votes are needed to pass the budget.

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Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Northstar’s 18-hole golf course is scheduled to open May 18.

• *Nevada* magazine’s Great Nevada Picture Hunt photo contest is open to all photographers. Send up to eight submissions via email to tony@nevadamagazine.com by 5pm June 29.

• The May issue of *Men’s Journal* lists Truckee as one of the Best Mountain Towns in America.

• Starting July 16, live music will be offered at Sand Harbor on the stage usually reserved for Shakespeare performances. Details are online.

• Harcourts NV1 Realty recently made two donations to Austin’s House (the only emergency children’s shelter in rural Northern Nevada) — a four-wheel drive vehicle, and supplies and labor to replace the floors in the kitchen, mudroom and hallways.

Opinion: Vote yes to raise

tobacco taxes

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the April 22, 2012, Sacramento Bee.***

Despite its reputation as an unwelcoming place for smokers, California ranks 33nd among states in taxing tobacco. Smoking-related diseases cost us hundreds of millions of dollars yearly in health care and lost productivity. Thousands of young people get hooked on nicotine each year.



California can do better. To save lives, it must do better.

Passage of Proposition 29, on the ballot in June, would be a major breakthrough for public health. This initiative would add $1 to the per-pack tobacco tax in California, currently 87 cents.

There is no dispute that raising the price would result in significant declines in smoking. Health groups backing the tobacco tax hike estimate that it would cause 118,000 adults to quit smoking and prevent 228,000 young Californians from becoming addicts.

Increasing the tax would raise more than $700 million yearly, and under Proposition 29, nearly all of it would go to cancer research and smoking cessation.

While the revenues would decline over time as smoking rates dropped, the funding would nonetheless help scientists come up with better treatments for cancer patients, and possibly new ways to detect tumors in their most early stages.

Opponents of Prop. 29 – largely the tobacco industry and groups that receive funding from cigarette companies – are trying to derail the initiative as the work of "a washed-up politician," former state Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata. It's true that Perata, a survivor of prostate cancer, helped launched the initiative and has raised money for it. But Prop. 29 is supported by the American Cancer Society, the American Lung Association, the American Heart Association and other reputable groups and individuals that can't be smeared by the "taint" of serving in public office.

Read the whole story

El Dorado County Fair releases lineup for summer event

To embrace all things El Dorado County, the theme of the 2012 fair is the Grapest Show On Earth.



The annual event is June 14-17 in Placerville.

Returning for a second year, the El Dorado Day on the Green is all about rock 'n' roll.

The only traveling sea lion show in the U.S. will be at this year's fair.

Swan Brother’s Circus has been providing laughs for more than 35 years. Zippy the clown will be in town.

The Wells Fargo stage hosts Susan Rosen, the “Mistress of Mesmerism,” who will have the audience “hypnotized” with her memorizing act each day of Fair.

Rawhide Express is the solar powered train sponsored by PG&E.

Break a sweat and get those hips moving during one of the free Zumba dance classes on the Plaza Stage.

The Kitchen Craft Stage offers free cooking lessons all day from the “Official Chef of the Fair” Gary Gilligan.

FFA, 4H, Grange and Independent kids will have all of their animals on display: goats, cattle, sheep, swine, rabbits, cavies and poultry.

Browse through the multitude of exhibits ranging from quilts, photography, wool, farming science, floriculture, minerals and mining, preserved foods and so many more.

For additional information, times and a complete schedule, visit the website.

Dissecting demographics key to knowing Tahoe visitors

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Paying attention to what the population looks like is critical to knowing who to market Tahoe to.

That was the overriding message of Emilyn Sheffield. She was

one of two presenters at the annual Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority-Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce tourism conference on Thursday.

Sheffield, who is a professor at CSU Chico, also brought 20 of her students to the South Shore. They spent several days in the area essentially testing the tourist product.



Professor Emilyn Sheffield suggests ways South Shore tourism officials can draw more people to the area. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The other speaker was Ralf Garrison, director of MTRiP – Mountain Travel Research Program. Much of the information was the same that he delivered at the Mountain Travel Symposium at the Resort at Squaw Creek earlier this month.

The two-hour event April 26 at Harveys drew a crowd of about 100 people.

Using information from the Census to project trends in demographics, Sheffield said it's important tourism leaders in Lake Tahoe realize that California's population by 2020 is expected to be 41 percent Latino, 37 percent Anglo and 12.5 percent Asian.

She said while Tahoe has relied on Anglos in the past, this cannot continue unless the region wants to be an exclusive

enclave.

Sheffield added that while the Tahoe South website redesign looks good, it needs more.

“You only see Anglos. You need more diversity of photos and more diversity of spokespeople,” Sheffield said. Too many white people on the website was her complaint. People who travel want to see people who like them doing what they might do in whatever location it is.

Sheffield added that growth in the Asian market could be good because historically they are interested in gaming. But she said Hispanics overall don’t like the snow, so it’s good the area has four seasons.

Sheffield suggested three things for the South Shore to focus on:

• Recapture the Baby Boomers by reconnecting with them through their values of peace, love and harmony with nature. She added that if hotels are not pet-friendly, they would lose this group.

• Rethink what accommodations are like. Boomers and Hispanics are traveling not as couples, but multigenerational. This means two rooms, two bathrooms in a single unit. Sheffield said they tend to rent houses instead of condos. With the Latinos, they like to go places where people know how to speak Spanish.

• While the millennials have meager means today, they are the future. “Expect them to be loyal,” Sheffield said. That’s why they should be lured to Tahoe today. She said they may only have $200 to spend in a weekend, but they will spend it all. Hostel-like accommodations may be the answer for lodging, then the rest will be spent on food and entertainment. And for this generation, make sure there are enough plugs for all of their digital devices.

Garrison pointed out how tourism businesses need to look beyond the traditional people they market to. He said a resort in the Tahoe area during January had an 80 percent spike in ski school business – when there was no snow.

The resort was attracting beginner skiers who felt safe to drive the mountain roads.

“So it shows there are different ways to market,” Garrison said.

Reduced funding for Nevada Homeland Security division

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY – Nevada’s Homeland Security Commission this week adopted a drastically reduced plan to continue the fight against potential terrorist attacks, leaving six ongoing programs without funding because of declining federal support.

Led by Commission Chairman and Gov. Brian Sandoval, the panel of law enforcement and other emergency services providers unanimously adopted a plan that will see $4.3 million in total federal funding this year, a 60 percent reduction in funding from 2011 when Nevada received $10.8 million.

The commission approved funding for 10 projects and programs,

including its three threat analysis, or “fusion” centers, but another 11 received no funding. Six of the 11 were to sustain existing programs, from the Washoe County Silver Shield program to the Carson City Regional Citizen Corps. Silver Shield programs are those designed to protect critical infrastructure, from water systems to government operations.

The projects receiving funding were the result of a collaborative effort by the statewide commission.

The federal funding comes via two programs: the Urban Area Security Initiative and the State Homeland Security Program through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Federal support for both programs was reduced significantly this year. The UASI funding totaled $2.66 million, down from $5.7 million last year, and the SHSP funding totaled $1.65 million, down from $5.14 million in 2011.

Even so, Rick Martin, program manager for the state Division of Emergency Management, said the funding priorities developed by commission members and support staff and funded today will keep Nevada safe.

Truckee restaurant to display student artwork

Dragonfly Restaurant in Truckee will host the Arts for The Schools’ seventh annual Student Art Show on May 10.

The art exhibit kicks off with an opening reception from 4-6pm to view and buy the art pieces crafted by students throughout the region.

Dubbed “Artists in Bloom,” the show will feature more than 400 pieces of Tahoe Truckee children’s artwork. Art pieces were selected from a variety of elementary school classes throughout the region, including artwork created in the Arts For the Schools Artist-in-Residence program.

This year’s show features selected poetry and images of student’s paintings on eggs created under the direction of Cathee St. Clair. The art pieces will be on sale and all proceeds benefit Arts For the Schools.

For more information about Arts For the Schools or for sponsorship opportunities, go online.

Dragonfly is located upstairs at 10118 Donner Pass Road, in the heart of downtown Truckee.