Firefighters get wet to train for water rescues

By Andrew Adamson, KOLO-TV

“I’ll put it to you like this, the more you play, the more you find out there’s more hazards than fun,” says RFD Suppression Capt. Greg Claiborne.

In his 27 years with the Reno Fire Department, Claiborne has seen just how dangerous the Truckee River can be. Last year was especially memorable for river rescues.

“We had people that wanted to get in that river because they thought ‘ooh it’s neat, it’s fun, it’s fast, this is the way to be’ and we end up swimming down first street grabbing them,” says Claiborne.

Claiborne and the rest of the Wet Team have started gearing up for what they hope will be a safer summer by doing river rescue training near Verdi.

Read the whole story

Workshop designed to help new, emerging businesses

The North Lake Tahoe Chamber/CVB/Resort Association and Plumas Bank in partnership with the Small Business Development Center of Greater Sacramento/Sierr are offering Financial Projections class April 24 from 9am to noon at the Tahoe City Public Utility District Board Room, 221 Fairway Drive, Tahoe City.

The workshop is geared for existing and emerging business owners. Attendees will learn how to determine their start-up or expansion costs, how to build financial projects, as well as cash flow analysis strategies.

This workshop will be followed by Business Plan Components on May 8, which will discuss legal structure and operation.

The workshops are free for North Lake Tahoe Chamber/CVB/Resort Association members, $25/person for business association members and $50/person for the general public. To register or for more information about the workshop, call Kym Fabel at (530) 581.8764.

Agriculture institute for teachers in El Dorado-Amador counties

Educators from El Dorado and Amador counties are invited to attend the Teacher’s Ag Summer Institute set for June 19-21.

The workshop will bring together classroom teachers, farmers, ranchers, environmental educators and agricultural and natural resource specialists to gain a deeper understanding of agricultural systems and how they sustain the health of people, society, and the natural environment. Teachers will gain an expanded understanding of what agriculture brings to our local community, while providing students with new opportunities to practice critical thinking skills in the classroom, utilizing resources and experiences provided at the

teacher institute.

The Teacher’s Ag Summer Institute combines hands-on, field experiences and sample classroom activities to immerse participants in the vital world of agriculture. Daily topics center around sustainable agriculture themes and are tied to California state curriculum standards to ensure ease in incorporating lessons into the classroom.

Topics will include conservation and stewardship practices; land use and zoning issues; ecological services provided by crop, forest and rangelands; water utilization and conservation; production, marketing and distribution systems; economic and business considerations and the historical context of agriculture in the region.

Field activities will be conducted at working ranches, orchards, farms, forest lands and vineyards located throughout El Dorado County. Educators need little or no background in agriculture to attend the institute.

A $75 participation fee covers transportation to the field sites from the workshop base in Coloma, lunches and all resource materials.

Teachers will prepare and present a lesson plan or class activity, developed from resources and experiences gleaned while attending TASI at a “Back to the Farm” event in July.

Optional continuing education credits will be offered for the workshop series.

Registration is available online; space is limited and teachers are encouraged to register as soon as possible.

For more information contact Wendy West, at (530) 621.5533 or wkwest@ucdavis.edu.

Truckee Donner PUD paying people to get rid of refrigerators

Truckee Donner Public Utility District and Truckee Hometown Sears have teamed up to improve the TDPUD’s Refrigerator Recycling Program. The recycling of older, working refrigerators will save customers energy and money.

Under the program, the TDPUD will pay qualifying customers $30 for each working refrigerator and the recycling is free.

Old refrigerators can use up to $300 per year in electricity whereas new refrigerators typically use about $50 per year in electricity.

Under the new partnership with Truckee Hometown Sears, the program will be expanded to run year-round.

TDPUD electric customers may call the Truckee Hometown Sears store at (530) 550.0110 to see if they qualify for the TDPUD Refrigerator Recycling program and to schedule a pick-up. For additional information on the TDPUD’s energy and water conservation programs, call the TDPUD at (530) 582.3931.

S. Tahoe council fails to deliver city manager's review

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe City Manager Tony O'Rourke says he has asked for a copy of his review, but that Mayor Claire Fortier said he wouldn't see it until May 1.

The review is now nine months overdue. O'Rourke told *Lake Tahoe News* he is used to annual reviews.

His review has been on the City Council's closed session agenda since last fall. This is a common practice for elected bodies to have items as a placeholder so they can talk about the person in the top role without violating the Brown Act.



Tony O'Rourke

Lake Tahoe News on Tuesday sent the five councilmembers an email asking about O'Rourke's review. Only Councilwoman Angela Swanson responded.

"Employee reviews are confidential and can't be discussed in specific. Tony's performance as city manager has exceeded council's expectations. He made the tough calls for us; tackling a deficit, implementing a staff reorganization and addressing health care and pension issues among other accomplishments in these past 15 months," Swanson wrote to *Lake Tahoe News*. "I expect Tony to continue giving 110 percent

to the job until he leaves. We have a strong senior staff prepared to continue the city's business."

While O'Rourke is looking for other jobs, he said, "I've made it clear to them I'm not in a rush. I could be up to a year."

O'Rourke's three-year contract expires in August 2013.

He said it is important to him to be reviewed on a regular basis and welcomes what the council will have to say. O'Rourke also said based on what the city has just gone through he would never expect an increase in pay.

Sick birds making their way to South Lake Tahoe

By Cheryl Millham

About the third week in March, we started receiving dead adult Pine Siskins at an alarming rate. The first thing we thought about was West Nile virus (WNV), so we started giving out that phone number (877.WNV.BIRD). It is a toll free number and, if the lab is interested, they would give instructions on how to handle the carcass. Remember: Humans cannot contract WNV from the dead bird. The only way to contract WNV is if a mosquito bites the sick or dead bird, then bites you.

At this time of year, mosquitoes are not yet present at our altitude. Walk around your house and empty any containers that are filled with standing melted snow water which mosquitoes will breed in.

Because of this die out of the Pine Siskins, I called our California Fish and Game biologist – who is also in charge of all of the wildlife rehab centers in the state – to report this situation. I was told by her to call Avian Disease Specialist Krysta Rodgers and report the die off to her, which I did.

I found out that some recently deceased Pine Siskin carcasses were sent to the lab and salmonella was the culprit. In my conversation with Rodgers, the Pine Siskins that were tested were from Placerville, which were on their way up to Lake Tahoe for the summer.

I told Rodgers that we are above the 6,000 foot elevation and still have snow with freezing weather, so I didn't think salmonella was here yet and that Placerville is at about 2,000 feet.

She agreed with me that these birds are exposed at lower elevations where salmonella is present. When the birds arrive at Tahoe, they are met with snow, cold and no food. In that weakened condition, they die.

Krysta asked me to inform the community, especially those who feed the Pine Siskins, do not put out the yellow socks, filled with Nyjer seed, until, at least May 1. This way, the sick birds will not be spreading germs on the yellow socks and, maybe, with some luck, we can stop the Salmonella die out.

As always, should you have any questions on this, or any matter dealing with wildlife, please feel free to contact us at (530) 577.2273.

Have a great summer.

Cheryl Millham is executive director of Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care on the outskirts of South Lake Tahoe.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Freshies restaurant in South Lake Tahoe raised more than $1,700 for Live Violence Free this week during the trading spaces lunch.

• Peak viewing of the Lyrid meteor shower will be Sunday from midnight until first light. Expect an increase in shooting stars this weekend.

• Esthetician Alyssa Deacon has joined Sierra Cosmetic Laser in Truckee.

• Jackie Nielsen, a wedding producer for 30 years in Lake Tahoe, has come out of retirement to operate Romantic Lakefront Wedding Chapels and Events in South Lake Tahoe.

• Read what Road Trips for Couples has to say about A Massage at Tahoe.

Opinion: Transit officials not acting in public's best interest

By Kathryn Reed

On the same day the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board is scheduled to discuss the Regional Plan update there will be a community presentation on the loop road project.

But they will be separate, likely overlapping meetings. That means people have to decide which meeting to attend. How stupid is this? What are people thinking? Are they trying to cram the loop road through without scrutiny and due diligence? Oh wait, the diligence is met even if no one is there.

And it's an afternoon meeting. How many people affected by it – positively or negatively – could make it?

The transportation meeting was announced Friday. Yes, yesterday.

When the dual meeting was pointed out to Tahoe Transportation District officials by *Lake Tahoe News*, their flak Phil Weidinger responded, "TRPA will also be holding the RPU discussion at South Shore the following day.

"TTD has several meetings and various project deadlines approaching, including a presentation to the City Council on May 1, a board meeting on May 11 [to include the results from Wednesday's public meeting], plus other public forums and outreach to keep assignments moving, on track and to ensure deadlines are met."

Really?

The loop road has been talked about since the 1980s and now

there is a rush? When has the South Shore ever cared about deadlines? After all the Regional Plan was supposed to be updated in 2007.

LTN pointed out via email to Weidinger, TTD staff, South Lake Tahoe Mayor Claire Fortier (who is also on the TRPA Governing Board), Councilwoman Angela Swanson (who is also on the TTD board) and the TRPA flak, that the meetings on April 25 and April 26 do not have the same agenda items even though both pertain to the Regional Plan update. At least that is what TPRA has told *LTN*.

On top of that, the Wednesday TRPA meeting is in Incline Village and the transportation meeting is in Stateline. It's not possible to jump between the two meetings. TRPA officials have said to expect both of their meetings to be all-day events.

Considering the TTD and TRPA offices are in the same Stateline building on Market Street, better communication would be expected – unless of course, the transportation folks don't really want anyone to comment on taxpayer dollars being used to reroute traffic on Highway 50, or the uprooting of California residents to the benefit of mostly Nevada businesses.

Here is information about TRPA's meeting schedules.

As for the TTD meeting regarding the displacement of renters to the benefit of Stateline area businesses, the meeting is April 25 from 2-3:30pm at Embassy Suites in South Lake Tahoe.

The agenda says the meeting will include:

• Accurate updates, facts, information

• Impacts on neighborhood residents

• Impacts on businesses in the Village Shopping Center, Heavenly Village and along the Highway 50 corridor

• Current status of project

• Other issues like safety, economy, environment.

South Shore residents deserve better from transportation officials. Don’t make residents and power brokers decide which meeting to attend. Both are important. We deserve better.

Slew of Nevadans win tourism awards

Tourism professionals and volunteers from throughout Nevada were honored at the 22nd annual Rural Roundup conference in Incline Village.

One winner was selected from each of Nevada’s six tourism territories – geographical areas of similar culture and geography – and two other awards recognized achievements on a statewide basis. A new award was added this year to recognize a tourism partner that has helped promote Nevada internationally. The June Stannard Scholarship was awarded to a Nevada high school senior who will be pursuing a degree in tourism or hospitality.

VolunTourism Award recipients are:

Reno-Tahoe Territory: Sue Knight is the proprietor of the Wild Rose Inn Bed and Breakfast in Genoa. Knight has been a longtime member of the Reno-Tahoe Territory, currently serving as secretary, and is actively involved in hosting

familiarization tours to the territory.

Cowboy Country Territory: Kitty Nash serves as secretary for Cowboy Country. She was instrumental in creating the successful “Dream Vacation to Cowboy Country” contest and she currently is developing the territory’s quarterly e-newsletter.

Pony Express Territory: Wayne Cameron is the executive director of the White Pine Chamber of Commerce and has been involved in community activities in Ely for more than four decades.

Indian Territory: Ben Aleck is Northern Paiute and has been the collections manager for the Pyramid Lake Visitors Center and Museum in Nixon since 2000.

Silver Trails Territory: Arlette Ledbetter is the director of tourism for the town of Pahrump and has applied her creativity and strategic planning to promoting the Nevada Silver Trails.

Las Vegas Territory: Charlene Ham is the special events coordinator for the Henderson Convention Center and Visitors Bureau.

Statewide Excellence in Grants Award: The Wells Chamber of Commerce uniquely leveraged two marketing grants and one infrastructure grant to benefit the town that was greatly damaged in a 6.0 earthquake in 2008.

Statewide Excellence in Tourism: Marvin Minnick is a 32-year resident of Nevada and has been involved with tourism since joining the Pahrump Tourism Board in 2006.

Nevada International Award: American Airlines, Germany, was honored for its ongoing promotion of Nevada’s rural destinations and events.

June Stannard Scholarship Winner: Brooke Aiazzi of Yerington is this year’s winner of the annual $1,000 June Stannard

Memorial Scholarship to pursue a college degree that will lead to a career in the tourism industry. She is a senior at Yerington High School.

Tips for getting kids to have healthy relationship with food

By Casey Seidenberg, Washington Post

My 9-year-old saw a headline in my email that read “10 Foods You Should NEVER Eat!” He grabbed me and said, “Mom, have you read this? I thought there weren’t foods we should never eat. You said all foods were okay once in a while.”

I was so proud.

As a mom who knows too much about our food system and the potential hazards to my children, I struggle to maintain a smile when my kids are handed red food-dyed snacks at soccer practice or served Coke at a birthday party. I was worried I had forever damaged them by cringing around certain food products. So the fact that my son understands that healthful foods are better choices, but that all food is okay in small doses, makes me sigh with relief.

Many children grow up with eating disorders and unhealthy associations to food. So how do we help our kids have a healthy relationship to food?

Read the whole story