

LTUSD on verge of creating winter sports academy

By Kathryn Reed

Prom, football games, hanging with friends, a diploma. In part, that's what high school is all about.

But in Lake Tahoe, where some of the world's best skiers and snowboarders call home, they don't have those high school memories because they were on the slopes more than they were in the classroom. And some leave town to be able to get the training and education they want. That all might change for the next generation of Olympians and X Games competitors who hail from the South Shore.



On Tuesday night, the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board of education will have a one-hour study session about creating the South Lake Tahoe Mountain Sports Academy, with a vote to be taken later that night.

LTUSD expects to partner with Sierra-at-Tahoe, and Tahoe Sports and Entertainment, owners of the South Lake Tahoe Ice Rink.

(Board member Judy Cefalu won't be able to vote because her son, Chris Cefalu, is president of Tahoe Sports and Entertainment.)

The idea would be to create a schedule for students where they are at South Tahoe High School in the morning and on the slopes or ice in the afternoon.

"We have had to send a few of our alpine racers to Sugar Bowl to balance their education," John Rice, general manager at

Sierra, told *Lake Tahoe News*. This program would keep them on the South Shore.

Sugar Bowl is the closest academy, with one near Vail and others on the East Coast.

Sierra has a proven history of turning out world-class athletes – Travis Cabral, Travis Ramos, and Jamie and Joanie Anderson, to name a few.

Moving, ditching classes or home schooling are the choices skiers and snowboarders have today.

Maddie Bowman, who will lead the Pledge of Alliance at the March 27 meeting, is the rare exception of being a world-class athlete (silver in the superpipe at this year's Winter X Games and second overall in the Dew Tour rankings) and skiing for the high school team.

LTUSD Superintendent Jim Tarwater said parents and students for years have been asking for an academy.

"The timing is right. We have the strong educational facilities," Tarwater said in reference to the infrastructure and associated programs that have come with the 2008-voter approved Measure G.

The academy, which could be running by the start of the 2012-13 school year, would come under the district's alternative education program. Amy Jackson would likely be the counselor for the students. Between 20 and 30 kids are expected to enroll initially, with it growing from there.

It's anticipated students from the West Slope and Sacramento area may also be initial registrants. The district does not foresee getting into the business of housing academy kids.

While the cost of the programs is not finalized, the district will neither make money nor incur additional costs. But it will realize average daily attendance dollars – the way

California schools receive money from the state.

Rice expects the ski-snowboard program to cost less than \$10,000 per year. Tarwater said the hockey academy will be closer to \$15,000. (Neither Chris Cefalu nor Van Oleson of TSE returned a phone call.)

Incorporated into the fee will be the cost of busing students to their training locations and back.

Rice provided the following rough schedule for student-athletes:

Fall: September-November (first quarter)

Conditioning begins school calendar year

Baseline physical condition test (possibly tie into sports medicine component that will open at STHS in fall 2013)

Winter: December-January (second quarter)

Daily on mountain training

Events as qualified and registered

Spring: January-March (third quarter)

Daily on mountain training

Events, competition

Summer: March-June (fourth quarter) (resort closes mid-April)

School sports medicine lab, media

End of season progress report, summer training plan

Voluntary participation: social events, soccer, volleyball, beach days.

Tarwater said by breaking the academy into quarters it will

mean being able to compress some of the academics during the time when the slopes are bare.

Another component could be to integrate various aspects of the high school curriculum into the academy – for instance having students interested in digital media film the racers and tying in sports medicine classes.

Rice envisions working with Lake Tahoe Community College on backcountry awareness for academy students. He also anticipates this type of academy helping athletes secure scholarships to compete at the college level.

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Meeting info: Study session about the proposed academy begins at 5pm March 27. A vote on the proposal is farther down on the agenda. The meeting is at the district office on Al Tahoe Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe.

Learn about Lake Tahoe maritime history

Capt. Jeff LaRoche, a local yachtsman, will present “Early Lake Tahoe Maritime History”, including underwater video of the Steamer Tahoe and the restoration of the 1921 Kneass built cruiser Quic-Chakidn on March 28 at 6pm.

This is part of the Explore Tahoe Winter Speaker Series at 4114 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

A \$5 donation is requested. A \$5 flat rate is offered in the

public parking garage after 4pm the day of the program.

For more information, call (530) 542-4637 or email crystalrangeassociates@yahoo.com.

Fees may be going up at Lake Forest boat ramp

The Tahoe City Public Utility District, operator of the Lake Forest boat ramp, is hosting a public workshop March 27 from 11:30am-1pm about plans and proposals for the upcoming season.

At this workshop, TCPUD will share a proposal to change operations and to increase the daily launch fees and season pass rates for 2012. Currently, revenue from pass sales and launch fees do not cover the operational costs for the boat ramp and the proposed rate increase would help meet the TCPUD's goal of reducing the property tax subsidy of the boat ramp.

The workshop will be in the TCPUD Board Room, 221 Fairway Drive, Tahoe City.

Early Lake Tahoe Maritime

History

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Voices: Tough times means hard choices for Placer County school board

By Dave Delgado, Sacramento Bee

When the only choices available are lousy ones, chances are, the final decision rendered will be bad. Trustees of a Placer County school district are faced with decisions to reduce offerings in music, increase significantly the number of students in classrooms, nearly eliminate paraprofessional instructional assistants, discontinue the department that purchases and distributes textbooks and materials, and reduce by 20 to 25 percent the number of educators supporting staff from the district office. This after shuttering a school three years ago.

All bad choices. But lately, there are no good choices to be had.

The school district has a long history with tremendous frugality of budget. The operating tenet always was “Take care of the kids and take care of the people who take care of the kids.” Historically, more dollars were spent in classrooms – closest to the kids – than in nearly any district in the state of California. The ratio of administrators to staff was among the lowest.

Yet it was not the case that the teachers were close to the highest paid in the area. Quite the opposite. Money was channeled toward small classes, paraprofessional support, robust teacher training, up-to-date curriculum and supplies, tremendous libraries and computer labs, and very well maintained facilities.

Read the whole story

USFS in legal fight over coverup of employee who may have used pot

By Denny Walsh, Sacramento Bee

The Moonlight Fire was the U.S. Forest Service’s worst nightmare.

For two weeks in September 2007 it raged like a fire-breathing dragon across 65,000 acres in Plumas and Lassen counties, devouring everything in its path, including 46,000 acres of lush national forest.

But there is an additional troubling dimension to this catastrophe, one that, like the fire itself, still haunts the Forest Service. From the start, there was a recognition of potential legal complications if it became known that a Forest Service patrol officer claimed another agency employee may have been smoking marijuana while he manned the lookout tower closest to the site where the fire started.

That fear has now been realized. A timber company being sued for causing the fire has filed documents in court that reveal the government tried to cover up the claim, causing dissension within the Forest Service.

Long before the devastating wildfire was contained, federal and state investigators were satisfied that a bulldozer belonging to a company harvesting timber for Sierra Pacific Industries hit a rock and a spark flew into dry duff on private property.

Sierra Pacific and the logger, Howell's Forest Harvesting, strongly dispute that.

The final report on the fire, publicly released on June 30, 2009, included no mention of suspected marijuana use by the Red Rock lookout the day the fire started.

In court papers, Sierra Pacific lawyers describe the report as "completely sanitized."

Read the whole story

Rahľves' Banzai Tour part of

TV special

As part of the Red Bull Signature Series, Rahlves' Banzai Tour airs March 27 on NBC Sports Network at 10pm.

This one-hour special pits four skiers head-to-head in an intense top-to-bottom competition at four Lake Tahoe resorts – Kirkwood, Alpine Meadows, Squaw Valley and Sugar Bowl.

The brainchild of 12-time World Cup winner, world champion and four-time Olympic skier Daron Rahlves, this ski cross event features shoulder-to-shoulder battles on ungroomed terrain, with riders making a run for it with the most decorated U.S. male downhill athlete ever.



Contenders in
Rahlves'
Banzai Tour at
Alpine
Meadows.
Photo/Jeff
Engerbretson

Rahlves' Banzai Tour is part of the Red Bull Signature Series – made up of 35 hours of one-of-a-kind programming on NBC and NBC Sports all year.

Meeting about roundabout on Mt. Rose Highway in Incline

Q&D Construction and the Nevada Department of Transportation are hosting a meeting March 29 at 5:30pm at The Chateau at Incline Village to discuss road work projects scheduled to begin April 1.

The project includes erosion control improvements from the summit of Highway 431 to the intersection of Highway 28 and from the same intersection northwest to Crystal Bay along with construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Highway 431.

The erosion control work being performed on highways 431 and 28 is designed to capture stormwater runoff and filter out sediment before it reaches Lake Tahoe. The installation of a roundabout at the intersection is aimed at improving safety for all those on the road while easing congestion during peak traffic periods.

The Chateau at Incline Village is located at 955 Fairway Blvd. at the Championship Golf Course.

To better understand the roadwork schedule or answer any questions on the roundabout and erosion control projects taking place, contact Scott Magruder at (775) 888.7777.

NHP increasing patrols in Douglas County

The Nevada Highway Patrol will be stepping up enforcement on Highway 395 in Douglas County at the end of this month for a non-disclosed period of time with special emphasis on stopping and citing motorists who exceed the posted speed limit.

Motorists can expect to see an increased presence of troopers in marked NHP cruisers as well as on motorcycles saturating this area.

Additionally, troopers from the newly formed Special Enforcement Detail, or S.E.D. team, will be assigned to this speed enforcement campaign to augment the visible presence of troopers already stationed in the Carson-Minden areas. This team is comprised of a sergeant and five troopers whose primary mission is to present a highly visible presence where high crash activity and increased calls for service areas are known, and where large volumes of traffic are expected during commute times and for special events.

In addition to the speed enforcement campaign, troopers will be looking closely at other traffic violations such as reckless or aggressive driving, following too closely, passing on a double-yellow line, talking or texting on a hand-held cell phone while driving and lane change violations.

Drug giant settles its CalPERS probe that involves Stateline man

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

Caught up in the CalPERS bribery case, a drug-benefits supplier will pay \$2.75 million to settle an investigation into its dealings with the man at the heart of the scandal.

Medco Health Solutions of Franklin Lakes, N.J., agreed to the settlement Friday with California Attorney General Kamala Harris. The company didn't admit any wrongdoing and said the settlement was helpful "in clearing Medco's good name."

Company spokesman Lowell Weiner and the AG's office said the settlement amount represents the state's cost to investigate.

"There has been no finding that anybody at Medco did anything wrong at any time," said Weiner.

Still, the company's decision to hire Stateline businessman Alfred Villalobos – the man accused of bribing CalPERS officials – was costly.

It destroyed Medco's lucrative relationship with Cal-PERS and may have prompted other clients to drop the pharmaceutical giant.

Medco agreed to be sold last summer.

As for CalPERS, the settlement marks the latest chapter in a scandal that has dogged the nation's largest public pension fund since 2009.

Read the whole story