EDC takes corrective action regarding bullied workers

After a scathing report came out about how employees in El Dorado County feel about their workplace, the Board of Supervisors unanimously voted May 13 to direct staff to implement a plan to turn things around.

The survey revealed significant concerns regarding “bullying, harassment, and retaliation.”

Customer service training is planned for county leadership and staff, along with more robust new supervisor orientations and orientations for the seven other elected department head positions, along with building internal awareness regarding policies and procedures, counseling/coaching, and enhancing employee communication.

An Executive Management Advisory Committee will review existing policies, practices, leadership challenges and recommend changes. Leadership criticisms will be addressed and where appropriate misconduct will be investigated, according to the county. The goal is departments that received low satisfaction levels from employees will receive immediate intervention.

There will also be a management audit of the Human Resources and Auditor-Controller’s offices.

Employees will be able to submit specific complaints, using a new Respectful Workplace Form 111.

Tuesday’s vote allocated up to $250,000 to be spent implementing the plan, including hiring neutral third party consultants to conduct investigations, provide training, coaching and internal support.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Renowned limnologist Charles Goldman will talk about Lake Tahoe, climate change and effects on lakes around the world on June 17 from 5:30-7pm at the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences, 291 Country Club Drive, Incline Village. Cost is $5.

• Four electric vehicle chargers were installed at Diamond Peak Ski Resort and the Championship Golf Course.

• Tahoe Maritime Museum's Ghost Ships exhibit opens May 23. The 6pm reception costs $35. To buy tickets or for more info, call 530.525.9253.

• Tahoe Toys and Treasures is looking to open on Harrison Avenue in mid-June.

Brown unveils 'good news'

budget

By Josh Richman, Jessica Calefati and Tracy Seipel, San Jose Mercury News

SACRAMENTO – Gov. Jerry Brown said today that his revised budget proposal is "good news for California," paying down $11 billion in debt while for the first time setting the state "on a plan to fully fund our teachers' pension system."

But saving money for harder times remains a priority, he said. Brown stood flanked by charts, one of which showed that "balanced budgets have quickly been followed by huge deficits" and the other depicting how unpredictable capital-gains tax revenue – one of the state's most important and most volatile funding sources – can be from year to year.

"Most of that is paid by the most fortunate among us," Brown said. "That variability has to be captured in the rainy-day fund."

And costs of new Medi-Cal enrollment under the nation's new health care law increased by $1 billion just from January to May, Brown noted. That, he said, is another argument for having deep reserves.

Read the whole story

Free yard waste disposal in Placer County

Placer County is offering free green waste disposal for most residents now through Oct. 31.

This is in response to the drought so people will clear their properties of flammable materials. Resident may unload a maximum of 6 yards throughout the summer. This is the equivalent of approximately 40 large plastic bags.

The drop off is at the Easter Regional Materials Recovery Facility at 900 Cabin Creek Road between Truckee and Squaw Valley.
For more info, call 530.583.7800.

Judge limits USFS fees in national forests

By Steve Scauzillo, San Gabriel Valley Tribune

A federal judge has ruled that the U.S. Forest Service can no longer charge fees to visitors who hike, walk and bike in the undeveloped regions of the Cleveland, Los Padres, Angeles and San Bernardino national forests.

U.S. District Court Judge Terry Hatter Jr. ruled in favor of four hikers who were tired of paying fees to hike in these popular Southern California forests, often called the backyard of Los Angeles.

The ruling is a victory for hikers and opponents of the 17-year-old federal Adventure Pass program.

The Forest Service improperly required all visitors to purchase the $5 daily or $30 annual pass upon entering any portion of these forests, even when they didn’t use developed facilities, according to the ruling.

Read the whole story

Millions in Calif. fail to register to vote

By Jim Miller, Sacramento Bee

Zyler Hartman of Sacramento was too young to participate, but he closely followed the campaigns of November 2012, especially the debate over Proposition 37, the ballot measure that would have imposed new labeling requirements on genetically engineered foods.

Hartman is 19 now and could vote in next month's primary election. But taking the first step – registering to vote – "is just the furthest thing from my mind at the moment," he said last week near Sacramento City College, where he is taking a full load of classes.

When polls close next month, voter turnout will be the main benchmark of Californians' election engagement. But missing from the calculation will be millions of Californians who could have voted but did not register.

In a chronic phenomenon of under-enfranchisement in the Golden State, there are at least 6.4 million residents who are eligible to vote but were not on the registration rolls as of early April. California's registration rate is close to last in the United States, and its legions of eligible but unregistered voters make up a disproportionate share of the nationwide total.

Experts say there are multiple reasons for the shortfall, such

as residents here moving more often, bureaucratic hurdles and uncompetitive statewide contests that fail to capture the public’s attention. Whatever the causes, the result is the same: an electorate that is whiter, older and wealthier than the state as a whole and a large share of the population disengaged from the laws and representatives chosen in its name.

Read the whole story

USFS to pile burn in Tahoe basin

The U.S. Forest Service plans prescribed fire operations around the Lake Tahoe Basin for much of the rest of the month.

Luther Pass Campground off Highway 89 will be one of the main sites.

Areas affected will be posted with road signs. Updates will be available by calling 530.543.2600, ext. 6. Prescribed-fire notifications are available by emailing pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.

Barton sponsoring health lectures

Barton Health is putting on two wellness lectures in June.

The first is titled The Healthier You – 10 Steps to Better Living. Kenneth Spielvogel, a doctor with Barton Women's Health, will talk June 4 from 6-7pm at Lake Tahoe Community College's board room.

On June 17 from 6-7pm Kyle Swanson, a doctor with Tahoe Orthopedics and Sports Medicine, will talk about preventing shoulder injuries.

This talk is also at the LTCC board room in South Lake Tahoe.

Virginia Crespo – 1952-2014

By Robert D. Dávila, Sacramento Bee

Virginia Crespo, a prominent El Dorado County activist who was a leader in political and civic groups, died April 26 of a heart attack caused by heart disease, her husband said. She was 62.



Virginia Crespo

A Sacramento native, Mrs. Crespo had a strong interest in public affairs since she served as a legislative intern at the state Capitol in 1968. She was widely consulted by local officials in El Dorado County as an informed resident in many areas of community life, including housing, transportation,

culture, education and voting.

She was founding president of the Placerville Area League of Women Voters and president of the El Dorado West Republican Women Federated club. As chairwoman of a citizens advisory group, she played a key role in funding and construction of the Bass Lake truck lane on Highway 50. She kept an eye on government spending as the first woman president of the Taxpayers Association of El Dorado County.

Read the whole story

Master gardeners teach techniques for Tahoe

Publisher's note: ***This is one in a random series of stories about gardening in Lake Tahoe.***

By Kathryn Reed

People have been gardening in Tahoe for eons with varying degrees of success.

But 23 residents of the basin are masters at it.

This is the second summer for the UC Cooperative Extension Lake Tahoe Master Gardeners. While master gardeners have been around for some time, the concept is new to Tahoe.



A master gardener demonstrates a strategy for managing a gopher problem at the Evans Family Garden in the Angora burn area. Photo/Provided

They've been busy. In 2013, 1,200 volunteer hours were logged and they made contact with 1,421 people at events, workshops and farmers markets.

"We are a little intimidated ourselves about being master gardeners. People spend their entire career on one butterfly and we are tying to deal with all of Tahoe," Bonnie Turnbull, one of the master gardeners, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Our primary focus is educating people on science-based information. We are trying to make sure people are trying to take care of their environment."

They are doing this by having booths at events like Earth Day, the Tuesday farmers market that starts next month in South Lake Tahoe, and putting on workshops. All involved are volunteers.

Coming up June 7 is the June Day Jamboree: Vegetable Gardening Seminar and Plant Sale. The 9am-1pm event is at Lake Tahoe Community College's demonstration garden and costs $15. (Call 530.543.1501, ext. 101 for info or to register.)

Topics include: Choosing What to Grow, Improving Your Soil, Planning Your Layout, Strategies for Extending the Growing

Season, Summer Maintenance, and Harvest.

Part of the protocol of being a master gardener is not making a profit. Money collected should only cover the costs involved to put on a program.

Worm bins and composting were the popular topics at the South Shore Earth Day event.

“I think the only trouble is if people expect us to answer every question,” Turnbull said. While an answer may not be immediate, the gardeners do have the resources to track down the information and get it to the person.

Issues they are interested in run the gamut from wanting to educate people about how flammable juniper is to knowing invasive weeds to proper watering to what veggies grow well.

Turnbull was picking asparagus, Swiss chard and spinach from her garden last month.

“You have to be flexible and willing to deal with disappointment,” Turnbull said of growing vegetables in the basin.

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Notes:

• More info about UCCE Master Gardeners Lake Tahoe is available online.

• The group is on Facebook.

• Here is a list of master gardener events for this summer.