Nevada adds fee for home-based businesses

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY – A regulation requiring thousands of home-based businesses to pay a $200 annual fee won approval from a legislative panel.

Secretary of State Ross Miller has been trying to get the regulation approved for several months, but has seen the regulation stymied by strong opposition from some Nevada residents and Republican lawmakers who argued the regulation exceeded his authority.

The regulation affects home-based businesses operating as limited liability companies and corporations that earn less than $27,000. It does not apply to individuals operating businesses out of their homes.

The Legislative Commission's Subcommittee to Review Regulations, made up of four Democrats and two Republicans, approved the regulation on a party-line vote. The same subcommittee deferred action on the regulation in December, sending it to the full 12-member Legislative Commission for action.

That panel, made up of an equal number of Republicans and Democrats, failed to act on the proposed rule at a meeting on Feb. 15.

The subcommittee took up the regulation again this month. The approval means the regulation can now take effect.

Sen. Michael Roberson, R-Las Vegas, a member of the subcommittee, asked how Miller could be given the authority to collect the fee from a new class of businesses since there is

no clear legislative authority to do so.

“That’s been my argument, that we are now forcing home-based businesses, including people who sell Tupperware or whatever product or service, even though they don’t open their home up to the public; they now have to make the difficult choice of waiving the legal protection of our LLC statute or facing this tax increase,” Roberson said. “And I do not think this is the time in our economy in this state to be doing that, and putting those smallest home-based businesses in that difficult position.”

Roberson said the panel should request an official written opinion from Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto on the issue before taking a vote.

But Assemblywoman Debbie Smith, D-Sparks, said lawmakers rely on their own legal counsel and that she was comfortable with the advice from Legislative Counsel Brenda Erdoes that the approval of the regulation on a simple majority vote was proper.

Erdoes said the panel did not have the authority to request such an opinion from the attorney general.

Roberson then asked Miller to request the legal opinion, saying there appeared to be confusion as to what the attorney general’s office position is on the issue.

The regulation will require home-based businesses that are on file with Miller’s office as limited liability companies and corporations to pay the business license fee. The companies had previously paid the fee, but an interpretation provided to Miller’s office by a deputy attorney general in 2009 had exempted them from paying the fee. Miller said that interpretation was a mistake.

The action by the legislative subcommittee was condemned by the group Nevada Families/Eagle Forum.

“This regulation is taxation by regulation,” said Janine Hansen, in a statement on behalf of the organizations. “The process violates the Nevada Constitution which requires a two-thirds vote of the Legislature to impose a tax, and it violates the separation of powers.”

“It is appalling that Ross Miller would seek to impose, by regulation, what he could not get through the Legislature,” Hansen said.

She was referring to Assembly Bill 78, which was approved by the Legislature in the 2011 session but never made it to Gov. Brian Sandoval for his signature.

Erdoes told the subcommittee that there was no two-thirds vote requirement to approve the regulation. The two-thirds requirement applies to the Legislature, not the subcommittee, she said.

Erdoes said a bill passed in the 2009 session, approved with a two-thirds majority, gave Miller’s office the authority to adopt regulations needed to collect the fee. The failure of AB78 to win approval in 2011 has no effect on the regulation, she said.

Following the vote, Miller said: “My office will be enforcing the home-based business exemption in accordance with the original intent of the Legislature, which will level the playing field for the many businesses that have been compliant and paying the appropriate fees.”

The regulation clarifies that the home-based business exemption applies only to natural persons, i.e. sole proprietors or general partnerships who meet the requirements of the exemption.

STHS grad takes a swing at making it in Major Leagues

By Kathryn Reed

Fans crowd Scottsdale Stadium to watch the 2012 Giants – to see their favorite players, new acquisitions and the young guys they want to learn about. Who will be on the 25-man roster is still an uncertainty. But those trying to make the team had to be invited to this audition.

No one said the road to the Major Leagues is easy.

No one said that road is short.



STHS grad Stephen Yarrow hopes to be invited to spring training with the Giants in the future. Photo/LTN

But in some ways it is. About a mile away from this downtown stadium is a training complex with four fields. This is where

everyone who is definitely not going to San Francisco is working out.

One of those players is third baseman Stephen Yarrow, who graduated from South Tahoe High School in 2007.

This is the 23-year-old's first spring training because last year this time he was wrapping up his senior year at USF. Last July he reported to the Rookie League in Arizona, having been drafted by the San Francisco Giants.

While Yarrow hasn't been given his assignment, he expects to start the season – which begins in early April – in single A ball in Augusta, Ga., in the South Atlantic League.

Pablo Sandoval, the Giants current third baseman, spent some time in that same league.

"I'm in a group with guys who will be in single, double and triple A. A lot of them have been in the system a long time," Yarrow said.

It's definitely competitive because everyone wants to get to the next level.

Yarrow's goal this season is to do well enough to get a midseason promotion.

"Usually it takes three to four years to get to the Big Leagues because there are so many levels of Minor League," Yarrow told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He added the main thing this season will be to see how his body does playing so many days in a row.

Days off during the season are rare – five in five months. That's almost 140 straight games. Minor leaguers don't play in September because this is when the Major League rosters expand to 40. They are filled with players from the lower levels.

For Yarrow, it meant a promotion to AAA in Fresno last fall. In those two games his average was .333, with two RBI.

Overall, he finished 2011 with a batting average of .289 for the 20 games he played.

Lake Tahoe News was unable to meet with Yarrow while in Scottsdale last week. Daily schedules for Minor League players are released one day in advance or that day.

“Our schedule today is quite unusual. It is as close to an off day as we receive; that being said we only practice for a couple of hours, from 10:30-12:30, but then we go straight into meetings about health insurance, 401(k) and travel policies. I have heard that these meetings may take awhile, anywhere from one to three hours,” Yarrow told *Lake Tahoe News* on March 13.

Practice has been going for a couple weeks. Scrimmages with other teams start this week.

While fans are eager to see the Major Leaguers, Yarrow said those players don’t interact a ton with guys at his level.

Just in case he isn’t able to put his finance degree to use managing the millions of dollars he makes in baseball, Yarrow spent part of the winter interning for a hedge fund in San Francisco, where he lives.

Yarrow is well aware the odds are against most people with dreams of playing for a Major League team.

“I feel incredibly lucky to still be playing baseball at 23,” Yarrow said. “The game of baseball passes everyone. For some it passes at 18; for some it passes at 42 and they get to the Hall of Fame. Eventually, it will happen. It is good I have a backup plan for when that does happen.”

Reno River Festival

The 9-year-old Reno River Festival is changing dates – June 15-17.

Former Freestyle World Champion Ruth Gordon-Ebens has taken over as festival director.

The event includes freestyle, boatercross, and slalom kayaking competitions, as well as the Run Amuck fun run. Live music takes the stage throughout the weekend, along with Yoga in the Park and enough food and drink to satisfy most tastes.

This is the first year dogs will be part of the festival as competitors – with Splash Dogs and the Biggest Little Dog Jog.

For more details about the 9th annual Reno River Festival or the Run Amuck, including registration, vendor, volunteer and sponsorship information, go online or call (775) 784.9400, ext. 119.

The festival is at the Truckee River Whitewater Park at Wingfield located in the heart of downtown Reno.

‘Treasures of Zephyr Cove’

The annual Douglas County lake schools fundraiser ‘Treasures of Zephyr Cove” is April 21 at 6pm at MontBleu in Stateline. For more information, click on the poster.

Tahoe City Cross Country Area fund raiser

Lake Tahoe weather historian Mark McLaughlin will talk about this winter’s wild and wacky weather and where it stands historically at a fundraiser for Tahoe City Cross Country Ski Area.

McLaughlin will also be selling and autographing his two ski books, the double award-winning “Longboards to Olympics: A Century of Tahoe Winter Sports” and his newly released “Skiing at Lake Tahoe”. Both books will be discounted to $20 each, payable by cash or check. After the presentation chef Douglas Dale will cook up a three-course meal.

The event is March 31 from 6-8:30pm.

Limited tickets are available at $85 per person. This is an evening out for adults.

All money raised benefits. Reservations can be made at Tahoe Cross Country Ski Area or can be purchased by calling (530) 583.5475. The event is at the yurt at the ski center.

‘The Royal Family’ on stage at STHS

“The Royal Family”, a comedy by George S. Kaufman & Edna Ferber, opens March 23 in the Viking Theatre in the Tahoe Arts & Design Academy at South Tahoe High School. Show dates are March 23, 24, 30, 31 at 7pm and March 25 and April 1 at 2pm.

Tickets are $5 for students and $10 for everyone else. This three-act play is suitable for children age 6 and older.

Information regarding advanced ticket sales will be posted online. Arrive early to purchase tickets at the door.

SAT workshop offered at LTCC

There will be a three-day workshop on the South Shore to prepare students for the SAT.

This workshop will help to prepare students for the SAT/PSAT. With completion of the SAT prep class, students will understand the format, pacing and content of the test and how to maximize test scores; study, practice and improve reading, math, and grammar skills; learn and utilize proven test taking strategies.

When: April 15, 22 and 29 from 1 to 5pm.

Where: Lake Tahoe Community College, Room G5, South Lake Tahoe.

Cost: $225.

To register and for more information, go online.

Nevada tribal interests to discuss tourism opportunities

Nevada Indian leaders and others will gather April 3-4 in Elko to discuss tourism promotion at the Nevada Tribal Tourism Conference. About 60 participants from the Western United States are expected at this event, now in its fourth year.

Tribal tourism allows Nevada Indians opportunities to sustain and strengthen their cultural legacies.

Nevada is home to 27 federally recognized tribes, including the Washoe, Paiute and Western Shoshone.

Among the conference speakers are Leslie Kedelty, executive director of the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association and David A. Leonard of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

For information on the Nevada Tribal Tourism Conference and to register, go online.

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El Dorado County Fair looking for entries

El Dorado County Fair officials are looking for people whose talents lie in art, baking, sewing, computers, dancing, floriculture, horticulture, literary arts, minerals and mining, needle art, photography, preserved food, quilts or wine making.



This year’s fair in Placerville is June 14-17.

Details about entering are in the guide.

The following materials must be submitted, in most cases, by May 11:

Entry forms completed with Divisions and Classes.

Entry fee, which varies with the Division of interest.

Entries are due in June.

In 2011, the competition received more 5,100 entries.

PG&E fined for El Dorado fire

By Denny Walsh, Sacramento Bee

Once again, human error has cost Pacific Gas and Electric Co. millions of dollars.

It was announced Thursday that the utility giant and two companies working for it paid $29.5 million to the federal government to settle lawsuits over two forest fires in 2004.

The old bugaboo of carelessness combined with high-voltage power transmission lines caused the fires in national forests, this time in El Dorado and Trinity counties.

Since 2009, PG&E has shelled out at least $16 million to state and federal governments in connection with wildfires.

“These fires cause lots of damage, and some of the harm cannot be remedied with money,” said U.S. Attorney Benjamin Wagner in announcing the most recent settlements at a Thursday news conference.

Read the whole story