Opinion: Sacramento steps up for Reno-Tahoe Olympic bid

By Ailene Voison, Sacramento Bee

Last Tuesday, of course, was a very eventful evening in Sacramento. Here They Stayed. Yes, they did.

The City Council approved the tentative financing plan for a sports and entertainment complex – a new home for the Kings – by a 7-2 vote. Mayor Kevin Johnson scored the biggest victory of his political career. The post-vote news conference transitioned into a pep rally, complete with singing and chanting and inspirational speeches.

But David Stern wasn't the only one closely monitoring the proceedings from a distance. There is a potentially huge and ongoing sidebar to this story. Or let me put it like this: Does anyone around here care about curling? Figure skating? Hockey? The Olympics?

Within hours of the arena proposal's passage, Sacramento publicly emerged as a significant player in the Reno-Tahoe bid for the 2022 Winter Olympics. Speaking at a journalists convention Wednesday in Lake Tahoe, Nevada Lt. Gov. Brian Krolicki, chairman of the Reno-Tahoe Winter Games Coalition, identified Sacramento as an important partner in the Olympic bid and a possible site for figure skating, hockey or other events.

"That (council vote) was a terribly important development for us," Krolicki said from his cellphone Friday. "As we do an assessment of all the assets and venues available, having that sports and entertainment complex would be a very useful tool. We need at least eight sheets of ice, and right now, we don't have that. Your airport is a very critical piece, as well."

Read the whole story.

Snow expected from series of upcoming storms

By Loretta Kalb, Sacramento Bee

A series of storms will bring snow and high winds to the Sierra Nevada and drenching rains and winds to parts of Northern California this week, the National Weather Service said today.

The first wave arriving today in the Sacramento area today isn’t expected to drop much in the way of precipitation, said NWS forecaster Karl Swanberg. Showers will be mainly light and intermittent.

But Swanberg said today’s storm front will clear the way for a heavier system expected to reach the valley area Monday afternoon. That storm is forecast to deliver about 0.75 of an inch of rain in the Sacramento Valley through Monday night and Tuesday, with winds gusting to 25 mph. Valley winds should strengthen on Tuesday, gusting to 40 mph.

In the mountains, snow levels will range from the 5,000 feet to 5,500 feet Monday night and Tuesday, Swanberg said, and winds are forecast at 25 mph to 45 mph. At ridge tops, look for winds gusting to 50 mph Monday afternoon and up to 75 mph late Tuesday.

Another storm system should arrive on Wednesday, dropping another 0.75 of an inch to 1 inch in the Sacramento area. To

the north, in Redding, a heavier downpour is forecast of between 2 inches and 3 inches through midweek.

Read the whole story

S. Tahoe has money to loan for home repairs

South Lake Tahoe has low interest amortized or deferred payment loans available to eligible owner-occupied single family homeowners.

The Housing Rehabilitation Program has financing available for: roof repairs, heating, plumbing, flooring, insulating and more.

The loan terms are based upon an applicant’s income, personal circumstances and ability to repay.

This program is available to those who: h ave a home located within the city limits and meet the eligible low income requirements.

For details, contact Lwatson@cityofslt.us or call (530) 542.6021.

Red Hawk Casino receives reprieve from court ruling

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

The Indian tribe that owns Red Hawk Casino said it won a key court ruling Friday that staves off a looming financial disaster, at least for the time being.

A judge said the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians doesn't have to post a multimillion-dollar bond while it pursues an appeal of a $30 million jury verdict against the tribe.

The tribe had argued that it didn't have enough cash or other liquid assets to post the bond. If not for the judge's ruling, the tribe said it couldn't have appealed the $30 million verdict – and the casino was in danger of closing.

"Any efforts to presently execute on the judgment would likely have catastrophic consequences for the tribe and all who depend on the casino for their livelihood," a tribal attorney wrote in a filing recently in El Dorado County Superior Court. The three-year-old casino off Highway 50 in Shingle Springs employs 1,350 workers.

The tribe said it was pleased with the ruling.

"We have moved forward with our appeal," tribal chairman Nicholas Fonseca said in a prepared statement.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Raising money necessary to save state park in Tahoe

To the community,

On March 12, Washoe Meadows Community is hosting a fund raiser at Lake Tahoe Pizza Company to help with our ongoing legal battle to protect Washoe Meadows State Park from golf course development.

In January, 2012, the State Parks Commission once again approved the downgrade in classification of a portion of Washoe Meadows State Park in order to make way for golf course development within the park. Washoe Meadows Community was forced to file a second lawsuit to challenge this decision.

Come join us from 4-9pm for pizza and meet members of our leadership team to get updates on our ongoing efforts to save the park.

There will be music by Tahoe Cool Water and a cash only silent auction. Fifteen percent of all pizza sales will go to the Washoe Meadows Community effort to save the park.

Thanks,

Lynne Paulson, Washoe Meadows Community

Graffiti being encouraged in South Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Drab utility boxes mixed with graffiti are becoming commissioned works of art throughout South Lake Tahoe.

“When people see this, they see what we can do with graffiti and spray paint,” Dakotah Jensen told the South Lake Tahoe City Council.



Green utility boxes, left, are being turned into art, right, throughout South Lake Tahoe. Photo/LTN

Instead of being paid for his talents, Jensen and others in the 4-year-old Sphere of Influence program are being given the tools (paint) and the canvas (utility boxes) to express themselves.

That’s how Jensen and Bernardo Ayon, two South Tahoe High students, described what they are doing. Ayon said it shows urban art can be a positive thing.

When the city in 2008 started experiencing a surge in graffiti on public and private buildings, including dumpsters, in stepped a local businessman with the idea to have local students create approved artwork throughout town.

Sphere of Influence was born. Matt Kauffmann oversees the program that has had about 40 students go through it.

He would like to have a wall to showcase this type of art.

For the dumpsters, South Tahoe Refuse sanitizes them before the young painters do their wizardry.

All designs are first OK'd by the city. They must have a mountain-sports theme like flowers or mountain bikes.

Kauffman said more than 100 sites have been painted, with plenty more needing something other than the standard green they come with.

The public is noticing – including Phyllis Shafer, chairwoman of Lake Tahoe Community College's art department.

She wrote a letter to the city saying, "Not only have I been impressed with the artwork that has been presented in the applications for these projects, but also the ability and willingness of the artists to work within certain stipulations and still produce highly creative works of art."

Opinion: Important to recognize what trees do

By Daniel Berlant

Trees are an essential part of California's climate and are vital to improving the state's air quality and conserving water. To help educate Californians on the value that trees provide to building successful, healthy cities and neighborhoods, California is celebrating March 7-14 as California Arbor Week.

CalFire is partnering with California ReLeaf to encourage cities, nature groups, schools, and youth organizations to celebrate California Arbor Week by planting trees in their communities. California ReLeaf is an alliance of community-based groups, individuals, businesses, and government agencies working to protect the environment by planting and caring for trees and the state's urban and community forests.

"Trees offer so many more benefits than what we see," said CalFire Deputy Director Bill Snyder. "Their importance to the environment, climate, economy and the overall well-being of California is critical."

Research shows that trees clear pollution from the air, catch significant amounts of rainwater, add to property values, cut energy use, increase commercial activity, reduce stress, improve neighborhood safety and enhance recreation opportunities.

"Trees make California's cities and towns better. It's that simple," said Joe Liszewski, executive director for California ReLeaf. "Everyone can do their part to plant and care for trees, ensuring that they are a resource long into the future."

The goals of Arbor Week include educating Californians about trees, encouraging tree planting, teaching elementary school children the environmental, social, and economic benefits of trees, and protecting the state's valuable natural resources.

As part of the department's mission, CalFire is charged with protecting California's forests by maintaining the sustainability of the state's natural resources including both urban and wildland forests. CalFire is encouraging everyone to be a part of California Arbor Week by planting a tree. It's important that you carefully plan before you plant a tree to ensure that your tree is properly placed to avoid growing into powerlines and buildings. Get more planting tips on the CalFire website.

Daniel Berlant works for CalFire.

Did you spring forward?



Did you remember to turn your clocks forward one hour? If not, you might be late for whatever you are supposed to be.

It's the return of daylight saving times.

Truckee Rotary crab feed benefits Sierra Expeditionary Learning School

Get your tickets for a fun-filled night of all-you-can-eat Dungeness crab, live auction action and Truckee camaraderie. The 2012 Rotary Crab & Pasta Feed will be at the new Truckee Community Recreation Center on March 24.

All proceeds benefit Sierra Expeditionary Learning School, a public charter school in the Tahoe Truckee Unified School District. SELS board member Erica Stein said the school plans to use the money raised from the auction to start a capital campaign fund to pay for needed additional classroom space.

For the past 18 years, the Rotary Club of Truckee has organized the Crab & Pasta Feed to benefit one worthy local nonprofit. While Rotary provides the venue, the auctioneer and the bidding audience, the selected organization must organize and run the event's live auction in order to receive its proceeds. In previous years, groups have earned up to $14,000 for their causes.

The bar opens at 5pm, dinner is served at 7pm and the auction will begin at 8pm. Tickets are $40 for adults and $20 for children 16 and under. Tickets can be purchased through any Truckee Rotarian or by calling Steve Randall at (530) 582.7720.

Washoe County cuts budget dealing with graffiti

Washoe County Sheriff Michael Haley said he is being forced to immediately eliminate graffiti investigations conducted by his office due to budget cuts instigated by the Board of Commissioners.

“This action is counter-intuitive to the philosophy of my office and staff and was made only after careful analysis of the impact of the board’s reductions on our operations,” Haley said in a press release.

Sheriff’s support specialists who had been dedicated full time to documenting graffiti incidents and violators will be re-assigned. A deputy who was dedicated to full-time investigation and enforcement of graffiti reports will move to patrol.

Allowed to continue is the graffiti abatement efforts using inmate and community service work crews.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report