Signal keeps hands on the bike

By Judi Dash, Los Angeles Times

These turn signals should help improve bike safety

The LED signals on the bike are very visible to motorists behind you.

Motor vehicles come with bright rear turn signals, but cyclists must rely on arm signals, which requires one-handed steering. Not safe.

Help has arrived from the engineers at Buztronics, thanks to an easily installed Signal Pod Wireless LED Bike Turn Signal system. A big, wide flashing signaling unit (called the pod) mounts to the bicycle's rear seat post, behind the rider. A three-button wireless remote-control unit attaches to either side of the handlebars for easy access.

Read the whole story

Study: Health insurance saves lives

By Noam N. Levey, Los Angeles Times

Giving more people health insurance could save tens of thousands of lives nationwide, according to a new analysis of data from Massachusetts, whose reforms became the model for President Obama's health law.

Throughout the national debate over the Affordable Care Act, critics have questioned whether expanding coverage results in better health. The new analysis adds to the growing evidence that it does.

Mortality rates in Massachusetts measurably improved compared with similar places around the country after the state began guaranteeing its residents health coverage in 2006, according to researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health, Brigham and Women's Hospital and the Urban Institute.

The study, published Monday in the Annals of Internal Medicine, also implicitly warns that gaps among states in the health of their populations may widen in coming years. That divide will result from some states taking advantage of federal money to provide health coverage and others opting out of the system.

Read the whole story

LTCC offering travel writing course

Do you love to travel and wish you could better tell the tales of your adventures? Have you written travel stories and would like to learn how to polish them for publication? Lake Tahoe Community College will be offering a special topics course in travel writing beginning May 21.

The six-week class meets Wednesday evenings from 6-9:45. Online registration is open through May 21.

This class is for the novice who is just starting out, as well

as the writer who is polishing her work for publication. The course will cover narrative versus service travel writing; the effective use of arc and storytelling; character and dialog; setting and local color; and sensory image and figurative language in travel and adventure writing; as well as a discussion on publishing travel writing.

This is likely the last time Suzanne Roberts will teach this class at Lake Tahoe Community College. This class is not in the schedule for next year and Roberts does not expect to be an instructor at LTCC beyond next year.

For more information, contact Roberts at robertss@ltcc.edu

Nevada promoting motorcycle safety

Nevada saw a 39 percent jump in motorcycle fatalities from 2012 to 2013. Fifty-three people died last year.

May is Motorcycle Safety Month in Nevada.

Nevada crash data shows the most common factors involved in fatal crashes are speed, rider inexperience and alcohol. Those most often involved in a crash are riders younger than 25 and older than 50.

Officials say: always wear a DOT-compliant helmet, eye protection, gloves, riding jacket and sturdy shoes or boots. Be seen by wearing high-visibility riding gear, ride within the speed limit and stay out of the blind spots of cars and trucks.

Motorcyclists may also take part in safe rider education

programs. Class schedules, locations and fees may be found online.

CTC buying property in South Lake Tahoe

California Tahoe Conservancy is buying three properties in South Lake Tahoe. Hilary Roverud with the city of Lake Tahoe Tahoe talks about the South Y Lodge property on May 9.

Apple, Facebook, others defy authorities, notify users of secret data demands

By Craig Timberg, Washington Post

Major U.S. technology companies have largely ended the practice of quietly complying with investigators' demands for e-mail records and other online data, saying that users have a right to know in advance when their information is targeted for government seizure.

This increasingly defiant industry stand is giving some of the

tens of thousands of Americans whose Internet data gets swept into criminal investigations each year the opportunity to fight in court to prevent disclosures. Prosecutors, however, warn that tech companies may undermine cases by tipping off criminals, giving them time to destroy vital electronic evidence before it can be gathered.

Fueling the shift is the industry's eagerness to distance itself from the government after last year's disclosures about National Security Agency surveillance of online services. Apple, Microsoft, Facebook and Google all are updating their policies to expand routine notification of users about government data seizures, unless specifically gagged by a judge or other legal authority, officials at all four companies said. Yahoo announced similar changes in July.

Read the whole story

USFS taking comments on Incline Lake dam removal

U.S. Forest Service would like to remove the Incline Lake dam in a year.

Before it can do so, comments must be taken on the proposal.

The Forest Service purchased the 777-acre parcel off Mount Rose Highway in July 2008 for its recreational, scenic and natural resource values. During the acquisition process it was determined that the Incline Lake dam and spillway do not meet federal, state or local standards for a high-hazard dam. Incline Lake was subsequently drained.

The Forest Service is proposing to remove the dam and spillway and rehab the area to complement what exists. The agency proposes converting the minor dam to a low-water crossing.

As a result of initial public scoping, the Forest Service also analyzed reconstructing the dam in its current location and configuration. It was determined this is not a viable option.

Funding for the project comes from the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act. Once the Forest Service reaches a decision on the future of the dam, it will begin planning for the remainder of the site.

Comments are due June 6.

More info is online or call Matt Dickinson 530.543.2679 or Anjanette Hoefer 530.543.2822.

Class to focus on dealing with loss

Rebecca Phillipsen with Barton Home Health and Hospice will talk about how to deal with feelings of loss and understanding grief on May 12 from 1-3pm.

People will be taught how to recognize and heal feelings that may be related to grief. This class is designed for people age 60 or older or caregivers who are or are planning to care for a family member or friend age 60 or older.

Classes and materials are free.

To register, call El Dorado County Family Caregiver Support Program at 530.621.6151.

The class is at Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel in South Lake Tahoe.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

• South Lake Tahoe is asking residents to take a Community Wildfire Protection Plan survey.

• Seventy-two Vail Resorts employees helped clean Highway 267 last week.

• Truckee has launched a second survey to collect input from the community on the Truckee Trails and Bikeways Master Plan Update. The survey will run through May 12.

• Debbie Brown is going to open a brewery-restaurant where the Swiss Chalet restaurant used to be in South Lake Tahoe.

• In April, Truckee police officers issued 22 written warnings for cell phone violations and 15 citations for cell phone violations. Of those that were warned or cited, 68 percent reported a Truckee address. Also in April, officers investigated 11 traffic accidents; none involved distracted driving.

Editorial: Swanson for EDC supervisor

Publisher's note: ***Lake Tahoe News convened an editorial panel of six South Shore residents to decide on this endorsement for the June primary.***

Politically savvy, connected locally and beyond, astute in policy and knowledgeable in how to make things happen – that's the type of person Tahoe needs on the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors.

There is only one person running for District 5 who has what it takes to do the job. That person is Angela Swanson.

One of Swanson's strong suits is the ability to build consensus. She proved this on the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board and continues to do so on the South Lake Tahoe City Council.



Angela Swanson

She is undoubtedly the most progressive of the six candidates. She took it upon herself to get involved with the League of California Cities in ways that no other council member has. This brings a voice to South Lake Tahoe that is unique. While she is reimbursed for some of her travel, she does this on her own time. There is no question Swanson is committed to South Lake Tahoe and El Dorado County as a whole.

Swanson is incredibly smart. She knows the issues. She listens. She can change her mind when presented with new information. She is passionate. She cares.

She can step onto the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board, California Tahoe Conservancy board (she was the city's rep), and Tahoe Transportation board (she is the current city rep) without needing to come up to speed. These are all boards that the Tahoe supervisor traditionally sits on, and they are more critical to Tahoe than the Board of Supervisors. This is why who represents District 5 is so critical – TRPA, CTC and TTD have more impact on the lives of those living in the basin than the Board of Supervisors.

Beyond those responsibilities, the primary roles of a county supervisor are to make sure county services are equitably supported throughout the territory and that there is economic stability to provide those services.

Swanson has proved herself to be fiscally responsible on the boards she has served. And she has an awareness of issues that go beyond personal experience.

We hope she can stay focused because at times she seems scattered, which causes her do things that makes us question her judgment. If Swanson can keep it together, she could be the most effective supervisor Tahoe has had – and perhaps the board has had.

However, Swanson has baggage, which gives us pause as we endorse her. She needs to take responsibility for her role in taking money from a man now serving time in prison on drug charges and giving it to a nonprofit education foundation. While there was nothing illegal about the transaction, it raises questions about her ethics and judgment.

By now she should know perception can be much greater than reality. Everyone has made mistakes, had moments they wish they could do over. But Swanson has never publicly taken

responsibility for her role in the questionable donation that came in a brown bag. It shouldn’t matter if the DA cleared her – the public hasn’t and she needs to acknowledge this.

Swanson will only succeed at the next level of political office if she grows up a bit, becomes more mature and takes responsibility for her shortcomings as well as her accomplishments.

While we believe Sue Novasel is electable, we don’t believe she has the breadth of knowledge to tackle the job efficiently. And while she says she will give 100 percent to this job, it has been years since she has had a regular full-time job. The supervisor works more than 40 hours a week – it doesn’t end.

Kevin Brown has clearly done his research and comes across as informed. But his ties to developers and other special interests make us question if he is the appropriate voice for Lake Tahoe.

Gerri Grego needs to get more experience beyond the South Lake Tahoe Planning Commission. She also needs some moxie.

Teresa Piper needs experience to be taken seriously.

Kenny Curtzwiler can’t say he is anti-government and then want to be on an elected body. This doesn’t make sense. We don’t need an outsider on the board.

District 5 will be best served for the next four years if Angela Swanson is on the Board of Supervisors. Vote Swanson on June 3.