

Douglas County sheriff's deputy kills suspect

By Reno Gazette-Journal

A Douglas County Sheriff's deputy fatally shot a man who allegedly pointed a shotgun at him Wednesday.

At around 2:10pm, deputies were called to the Gardnerville Cemetery on a report of a dead body, Sheriff's spokesman Jim Halsey said. When deputies arrived, they found David Pendleton, 77, standing next to a truck holding a shotgun, Halsey said.

Deputies attempted to get Pendleton to put the gun on the ground, but he refused and at some point he aimed it at a deputy, Halsey said. The deputy fired his gun at Pendleton, killing him instantly, Halsey said.

Read the whole story

Downed trees a problem in Eldorado National Forest

By Frank Mosbacher

Many roads and trails throughout the Eldorado National Forest are blocked by trees the wind blew over. Forest Service personnel and visitors are reporting that many roads and trails within the Eldorado National Forest are not passable due to trees that fell during recent high winds.

As a result, travelers may find themselves on a road or trail that appears to be open but is impassable due to fallen trees.

“I am concerned about the safety of forest travelers when they are traveling on any forest roads or trails,” says Eldorado National Forest Supervisor Kathy Hardy. “I am also concerned that people will attempt to drive around blocked routes and cause environmental damage. This week we are reviewing the situation and looking at our options.”

Hardy says woodcutters with a fuelwood permit can cut trees that are on the ground and blocking roads. The permits can be purchased at all Eldorado National Forest district offices.

Currently, the seasonal closure of dirt roads and trails, due to wet weather conditions, is not in effect. This could change with a major change in the weather or if too many routes are blocked by trees which cause unsafe conditions for forest visitors. Visitors should check the Eldorado National Forest Service website for seasonal road and trail closure information.

“Our funding to pay for removing downed trees to open roads and trails is rather meager, to say the least,” said Hardy. “We anticipate that some roads and trails will remain blocked into next year and maybe beyond. Visitors will need to do their part in protecting forest lands by not driving around trees that are closing routes.”

Frank Mosbacher works for the Eldorado National Forest.

Vail Resorts' mountain division does well, but company posts quarterly net loss

By Ed Sealoover, Denver Business Journal

Vail Resorts Inc. had a net loss of \$55.7 million, or \$1.54 per diluted share, during the first quarter of its 2012 fiscal year, but officials are optimistic about a good ski season and believe reorganization of its lodging division will yield increased revenue in future years, CEO Rob Katz said Wednesday.

The Broomfield-based company typically suffers losses during the first quarter of each year, when its resorts aren't open for skiing or snowboarding.

But the loss for the three months ending Oct. 31 was 29.5 percent larger than the loss for the same period in 2010, which was \$43 million, or \$1.20 per diluted share. That was due largely to costs associated with the acquisition of the Northstar resort in Truckee in October 2010 and a legal settlement, co-president/COO Jeff Jones said in an earnings call Wednesday.

Vail officials reported revenue increases in some segments, such as a 21.8 percent jump in mountain division revenue driven primarily by increases in dining, retail and summer activities at its four Colorado resorts – Vail, Beaver Creek, Breckenridge and Keystone – and Heavenly and Northstar in California.

Read the whole story

Origami class

Learn to fold your own origami figures using traditional paper folding techniques on Jan. 5 at 2pm at the South Lake Tahoe branch of the El Dorado County Library.

Friends of the Library will supply the materials.

The library is at 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

For more information, call (530) 573.3185.

Holiday Home Show

Ann Thennes is hosting the 8th annual Holiday Home Show Dec. 10 from 10am-4pm.

This festive gathering featuring sales of gift items from local artists and crafters. Everyone is welcome.

Artists include Ann Thennes (gourd creations), Don Hodgkin (fine wood furniture), RearView Miracles (crystal hangings and healing jewelry), Rex Perschnik (carved wooden ornaments), and Tahoe Mountain Soap.

Ten percent of all sales will be donated to community organizations.

Follow signs to 940 Sunset Drive, on the river, near the old amusement park off Lodi Street in South Lake Tahoe.

For more info, call (530) 542.9553.

Vonn wins before hometown crowd; Mancuso 8th in super G

By USSA

BEAVER CREEK – Calling it the most memorable of her 46 career Audi FIS Alpine World Cup wins, Lindsey Vonn of Vail fulfilled the dream she had as a child and won at home in the inaugural women's race on Beaver Creek's Birds of Prey. Despite a less than perfect run, Vonn took a 0.37 victory over Swiss Fabienne Suter to the roar of packed finish stadium.

Vonn became the first American to win four World Cup races in a row and tied German superstar Katja Seizinger for the most career World Cup super G wins with 16. Vonn has now won 14 of the last 19 super G's, never finishing lower than third.

Julia Mancuso was eighth; Leanne Smith 11th.

Vonn spent 45 minutes signing autographs for the legions of young fans after the race.

"This morning I woke up and I was really anxious and nervous. My stomach has been in a knot all day. When I got to the start I was totally freaking out. I wanted to win in front of my home fans so badly; mentally I was a wreck," Vonn said.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- Mount Rose opens Dec. 9.

• Placer County is seeking applications from residents interested in serving as the county representative on the Placer Mosquito & Vector Control District's Board of Trustees. For application forms or more information, call (530) 889. 4020 or go online. When the webpage appears, hit the "Apply to serve on a Committee or Commission" link under the "Quick Links" section at the right side of the page.

• Incline Village General Improvement District Chairman Ted Fuller faces legal consequences if the state Attorney General's Office finds him in violation of the state open meeting law again. Senior Deputy Attorney General George Taylor said cutting off two public speakers – once on July 27 and the other time Aug. 10 – was in violation of the individuals' right to speak based on the opening meeting law.

• "Top Chef Masters" finalist Traci Des Jardins will host a special four-course tasting at her Manzanita restaurant inside the Ritz-Carlton, Northstar on Dec. 10, 5-10pm.

• Justice of the Peace Tom Perkins will seek election to a full term as justice of the peace for East Fork Township. Perkins was appointed in 2010. The East Fork Township includes all of Douglas County except Lake Tahoe.

Opinion: Everyone deserves a little holiday cheer

It's that time of year of holiday parties. They range from subdued affairs to extravagant undertakings.

Some people have commented on *Lake Tahoe News* publicly and to *Lake Tahoe News* privately about parties South Lake Tahoe is having.

So, we looked into it.

Yes, those employees, too, get to celebrate the season. Just like a lot of other public employees do – here and across the country.

Several departments are having a holiday “lunch” – which the director of that department is paying for. When it comes to the police department, that party is being paid for (\$35/person) by each employee. It is after “normal” hours – more of a dinner party.

City staff has done this before. This is not entirely new.

The city manager is coordinating a lunch for Dec. 15 – just like last year – during the regular lunch hour for employees to attend. In the 2011-12 budget the lunch is covered up to \$700. Estimates are this year's lunch will cost \$500.

At this lunch employee service awards are given. These are awarded at quarterly lunches instead at City Council meetings.

Pass judgment as much as you like. You are the one looking in the mirror.

At *Lake Tahoe News* we like to think people deserve a thank you – at least once a year. No matter who they work for.

With that said, thank you to everyone out there – employed or looking for work or volunteering – as long as you are doing what you can to make this town, this basin, this world just a little better – or have done so perhaps when you were more capable – Thank You.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff*

Economists: Parks will bolster economy

By Jim Robbins, New York Times

Challenging the notion that protecting public land locks it up, more than 100 economists, including three Nobel laureates, are calling on the president and Congress to create more parks and other protected preserves in the West as a way to bolster state economies.

The economists also urge the creation of something similar to the Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps, which built trails and maintained infrastructure in national parks.

“We urge you to create jobs and support business by investing in our public lands infrastructure and establishing new

protected areas such as parks, wilderness and monuments,” they wrote in a letter. Such areas “attract innovative companies and workers, and are an essential component of the region’s competitive advantage,” they added.

The drafting of the letter was organized by Headwaters Economics, a nonprofit organization that studies the economics of natural resources, with a tilt toward preservation. Ray Rasker, an economist with Headwaters, cited a study by his organization that found that Grand County, Utah, home to the tourist mecca of Moab, has been doing quite well: jobs there grew at a 7 percent annual rate in the 1990s and have been growing 2 percent annually during the current recession.

“In the last 40 years, the fastest growth in the West has been in communities adjacent to protected public lands,” Rasker said. “This is what’s creating jobs currently at a time of high unemployment – we need policy that creates jobs.”

The idea of expanding preservation does not go over well among everyone. Many people in Western states see the creation of new federally protected areas as putting land off limits to mining, logging and other uses and potentially harming the economy.

Read the whole story

**Opinion: TMDL really means
Total Madness Delivered by**

Lahontan

By **Claire Fortier**

Four simple letters, TMDL, spell significant consequences for the city of South Lake Tahoe, and the entire Lake Tahoe Basin. What started with the best of science and intentions has morphed into a disjointed and costly regulatory process that could tie-up local financial resources for years, if not decades.

Worse, we don't even know if these new standards, which are an expensive administrative game-changer for local jurisdictions, will work on a small scale, much less for the entire region. The first real results are at least 15 years away.



Claire Fortier

The regulations, however, may start as early as this week, now that Lahontan Water Board has imposed them.

Further, we don't know what non-compliance means. It may well result in staggering mandatory penalties that could bankrupt the city.

When first conceived, the challenge to increase lake clarity to 100 feet in 65 years was a noble cause. According to scientists, greater clarity in the middle of the lake could be achieved by reducing fine sediment runoff into the lake. Much of the problem lay in the 10 percent of the Lake Tahoe watershed that had already been disturbed or built upon.

What that meant to most of us who live at Lake Tahoe was that by fixing what was aging and crumbling – our roads and dated infrastructure and architecture – we could improve the Tahoe economy and environment at the same time. That was a win-win for us.

The science was reassuring. The deliverable – a cleaner, clearer lake – was measurable. The economic possibilities were invigorating. With the new TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) standards, investors wouldn't face the costly and time-consuming regulatory process that stalls so many good projects at the lake.

But the TMDL model was flawed. First, scientists never factored in the water quality of the near shore, the place most people see and feel Lake Tahoe. Second, it was assumed that all water (rainfall, snow) eventually landed in the lake, which is simply not true. Much of the precipitation in the Lake Tahoe Basin is absorbed into the ground, which contributes miniscule amounts of fine sediment to the lake. Finally, the definition of TMDL, even the measurement of clarity, varied from one state to another.

While the clarity challenge, which trigger Lake Tahoe's unique TMDL, has the backing of two states and the EPA, the reality of TMDL has markedly different interpretations and implications.

First, there is federal interpretation. TMDL is not unique to Lake Tahoe. It is a mandatory measurement of any impaired water body. What's unique to Lake Tahoe is exactly what the EPA claims on its website: The underpinnings of "final restoration plan are among the most advanced ever applied to a TMDL in the nearly 40-year history of the Clean Water Act. The Lake Tahoe TMDL has blazed new ground"

The problem is that Lake Tahoe's water clarity goal is an aesthetic measure, judged entirely on how far down a dinner

plate can be seen at mid-lake, and not a pollutant discharge problem, which is the standard for most EPA TMDL.

Then there is the U.S. Forest Service's TMDL interpretation. As owner of more than 80 percent of the land in the Tahoe basin, the Forest Service may embrace the TMDL goals, but is not be held to the same standards or requirements.

Nevada, in the meantime, has its own answer on the clarity challenge. It is a shared public-private responsibility dependent in large part on private development and investment.

Finally, there is the California interpretation, or more to the point, the Lahontan Water Board's staff interpretation of TMDL. That interpretation places the regulatory and financial burden on local government. Local jurisdictions must figure out how to meet b Lahontan's TMDL and stormwater objectives, and must do so while populating, monitoring and reporting on the very model that determines that TMDL effectiveness.

Precisely how these standards are met is up to the individual localities. Lahontan has no long-term management plan. What Lahontan offers is an array of options in its "tool box." But some of the tools (like costly, state-of-the-art street sweepers) have never been proven in Tahoe.

Nor has Lahontan given the jurisdictions any clue as to the consequences of not meeting the TMDL. Theoretically, it could cost the city a minimum of \$3,000 a day if it fails to meet the model numbers.

Worse, Lahontan has no overall plan to incorporate TMDL into other aspects of the Lake Tahoe regulatory or funding process. TMDL was supposed to establish a standard, and in theory, reduce the regulatory nightmare that is Tahoe. But what is required for California won't be imposed in Nevada and the standards for the TRPA may not dovetail with Lahontan's requirements.

While the Tahoe TMDL model faces some significant challenges, it may well be the new pathway toward Lake Tahoe restoration. But it needs some significant tweaking and some real collaboration between regulatory agencies around the lake, local government and the EPA. Lahontan's plan simply isn't ready for prime time.

But even if Tahoe TMDL reached a successful, collaborative conclusion, the real question is who is going to pay for it?

And that's one no one can answer at this point.

Claire Fortier is on the South Lake Tahoe City Council and is that elected body's representative to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.