Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Candy is a young Chihuahua who would love to find her new home.



She likes to go for walks and is constantly wagging her tail. Candy is very affectionate and would make a great addition to any household.

Candy is spayed, microchipped, and vaccinated. She is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes.

Call (530) 573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

– Karen Kuentz

Panel begins creating uniformed data reporting system

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY – It's hard to know how well Nevada's public school and college students are doing if there is no uniform

and reliable data to view their performance over time.

Gov. Brian Sandoval is working to change that.

He issued an executive order Oct. 7 asking a state education panel to take the necessary steps to create a system to track students through their school years, following in the steps of other states as part of an overarching effort to reform education and improve student performance in Nevada.

That group, the P-16 Council, met last week to begin the process of creating a usable data system to track student performance from early childhood education through college.

The council was created to help coordinate education efforts in Nevada from preschool through post-secondary levels and has the authority to address the data information system for public school students.

In introductory remarks to the council, which includes lawmakers, educators, parents and business representatives, Sandoval said he wants Nevada to create a data system that will put it on a par with states that have successfully accomplished the task, including Florida, Maine, Connecticut and Washington.

The information, including performance measures of educators, is critical to moving Nevada forward in student achievement, he said.

A new panel, called the Teachers and Leaders Council, was created as a result of legislation passed in the 2011 session, Sandoval said. It is charged with developing a statewide performance evaluation system for administrators and classroom teachers. Half of the evaluation must be based on student data, which is why the charge to the P-16 Council is so important, he said.

“This is a historical moment, this is really a crossroads in

the state of Nevada and we have some great opportunities to really improve the delivery of education in this state," Sandoval said.

"There is going to be a huge challenge for all of you," he said. "You have all the resources of this administration to assist you."

State Sen. Barbara Cegavske, R-Las Vegas, elected chairwoman of the 11-member council, said she has been working for years to create a reliable data system for public education in Nevada. It has been frustrating though, to see the money spent on different systems that have failed to generate the necessary information, she said.Right now there is no collaboration or coordination between school districts or with higher education, Cegavske said.

"When you look at other states, Florida, when you look at what they are able to collect and the information they are able to provide, it is just incredible," she said. "It's so exciting. And that's where we need to be and we need to get there."

In a three-plus hour meeting, the council reviewed the current status of data collection efforts, which started with a system called SMART, or Statewide Management of Automated Records Transfer, approved by the Nevada Legislature in 1995. After millions of dollars had been spent on developing the system, lawmakers in 2003 pulled the plug on the project.

The Nevada Department of Education beginning in 2007 developed a new system called SAIN, or System of Accountability Information for Nevada, with a $6 million federal grant. It has longitudinal student data from 2005 to the present, including enrollment, attendance, discipline, course completion and graduation, among other data elements.

The SAIN system has nine of 10 essential data elements, the department said in its presentation, but many issues remain with the database, the council was told.

Erin Cranor, a member of the council representing elementary and secondary education, said Nevada should identify what has already been done in other states that can be used as a starting point.

The council will meet again Jan. 11. A first progress report is due to Sandoval by Feb. 1. It is to complete its work by Aug. 1, 2012.

Opinion: Why does Southwest gouge Reno-Vegas passengers?

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

You'll never get an argument from me that Southwest Airlines is a fine company and a terrific airline.



Southwest was one of the airlines that made it possible for everybody to fly, not just the jet-setting rich and famous. It was a champion of the so-called democratization of air travel.

As the busiest commercial air carrier at McCarran International Airport, Southwest has been a leading conduit for tourists coming to Las Vegas, and every Southern Nevadan should be thankful for the partnership between the airline and the local tourism industry.

That said, Southwest should be ashamed at how it has priced its flights between Las Vegas and Reno.

Today, the base price for a one-way ticket from Las Vegas to

Reno is $91. Make it a round trip and throw in the taxes and the ticket price is $203. And, yes, on Southwest, bags fly free.

But consider a flight between Las Vegas and Los Angeles International Airport, a trip of roughly the same distance. On that, the base price is $49 and a round trip with taxes costs $119.

Why such a disparity? The reality is that Southwest charges more to fly to Reno because it can. It has no competition on the route. The Las Vegas-to-Los Angeles route, meanwhile, is served by American, Delta, US Airways (for now), United, SkyWest and Spirit. You can add JetBlue to the list if you don't mind flying into the Long Beach airport instead of LAX.

Read the whole story

Funding, details of S. Shore economic study come to light

By Kathryn Reed

While spending $10,000 to help fund the economic impact analysis of the South Shore Vision is on Tuesday's City Council agenda, City Attorney Patrick Enright told *Lake Tahoe News* he wants to delay the vote.

This is because no person or entity is stated on the agenda or the staff report in regards to who would receive the check. That's assuming the council votes to be part of the study and wants a check written. A vote could be taken to not fund the project.

Douglas County and Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority have each put in $10,000 and the South Tahoe Association of Resorts is contributing $5,000.



South Shore visionaries want to change the economic tide. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The South Shore Vision Plan is an idea between public-private alliances to revamp Highway 50 from Ski Run Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe to Kahle Drive in Stateline. STAR paid $50,000 for Design Workshop to put together a plan.

The next step is the economic impact analysis that is estimated to cost no more than $35,000.

LTVA's board voted Nov. 10 to approve allocating its share, with Tom Davis, South Lake Tahoe's rep to the board, abstaining. His issue was with how the item was agendized and that there was no staff report.

Neither board members nor the public would have known money was to be spent that day. In fact, the website as of Nov. 13 only had the Oct. 13 agenda listed.

LTVA board members in an unprofessional, childish banter said things like: "I don't even know what the Brown Act is." "We've always done it this way." "We've never had a staff report

accompanying a request for funds." "We need legal advice."

The public-private, bi-state nature of the board makes things dicey. But it's not the only board that operates this way. The bankrupt-defunct South Tahoe Area Transit Authority was comprised of similar type representatives. TRPA as a bi-state agency goes by Nevada's open meeting laws because they are more restrictive. It helps that TRPA's executive director is a lawyer so she knows the law.

But LTVA hasn't addressed the issue as to which opening meeting laws it should abide by and is essentially operating in a void. No one on the LTVA board is an attorney and no legal counsel goes to the meetings. The board blatantly violated the Brown Act, California's open meeting law, at the Oct. 13 meeting.

LTVA was founded in 1986 by a joint powers agreement between South Lake Tahoe and Douglas County and operates as an independent 501(c)6.

After last week's meeting it was left that LTVA Executive Director Carol Chaplin would call their attorney for advice. Davis said he would talk to Enright. Enright told *Lake Tahoe News* he would be calling Chaplin this week.

Nancy McDermid, a Douglas County commissioner and LTVA board member, after last week's tourism board meeting said it was fine for the county to award the money to individuals.

Enright won't let the city do that based on legal grounds. He said he'd prefer the check go to LTVA.

The City Council's agenda line items don't always say a dollar amount, but the staff report will explain what the full action is. It's like knowing the consequences to ones vote.

That isn't the case with LTVA agendas.

New Business G on the Nov. 15 council agenda says: (g)

Discussion and Possible Direction/Action Regarding Follow-up from the Joint Meeting of the City Council/Douglas County Board of Commissioners held on Friday, November 4, 2011 at Edgewood Tahoe. It is accompanied by the staff report. All of this is easily accessible by the public.

This compares to the LTVA's website which only lists an old agenda, no staff reports and no minutes from previous meetings.

The economic study

Mike Bradford, with Lakeside Inn and Casino, has been leading the project that started with Douglas County wanting a vision for the casino corridor/Lower Kingsbury Grade area. It has evolved from there.

Bradford said it was through the county's Economic Vitality Department that a request for proposal was put out to find someone to do the economic study.

A firm out of Las Vegas, one from Denver and SMG from South Lake Tahoe sent in their bids.

Bradford and Mitchell Mize, director of real estate for Edgewood Tahoe, are the two who reviewed the three bids. They alone picked Carl Ribaudo with SMG to do the study.

(Lynda Ribaudo, wife of Carl, is CFO for Edgewood Companies.)

Bradford, after he made his presentation to LTVA, told *Lake Tahoe News* the reason he and Mize picked SMG is that the "others were static projections with no ability to adjust the model."

Ribaudo also spoke to the LTVA board. He said he came up with the study idea through years of work with real estate modeling.

He said the time consuming part will be getting the necessary

information together to form a baseline model. Within the larger South Shore Vision study will be specifics that would apply directly to LTVA – the Destination Decision Model.

Knowing the number of rooms on the South Shore, then dividing visitors into potential categories like Bay Area, Southern California, out of state, international and knowing the percentage of each group that makes up the total; and putting in dollar amounts for what each group spends on a variety of elements from lodging to restaurants to food in stores to gaming to recreation will reveal the economic impact of the guests, along with the number of people employed to service them, the income of the those workers and the taxes that are generated.

With the SMG model, once the baseline is established, it becomes a "what if?" situation. What if guests increased their length of stay? What if they spent more money? What if occupancy increased? What if the visitor mix changed?

It's that product that Ribaudo and company is bringing to the table. He said no destination this size is doing this type of economic forecasting.

Bradford, after the meeting, said, "I think on a micro level it happens all over the place, it's not happening on a macro level."

In other words, individual businesses have their own way to budget and plan; but the region is not doing it collectively.

Through SMG's plan the LTVA will also be able to track its marketing dollars better and see if there is a return on investment.

The benefits to this plan were outlined in a PowerPoint:

• Understand the economic implications of marketing strategies

• Create community cohesion with a unified economic goal

• Facilitates more creative thinking on how to achieve economic goals

• Ties the reason for tourism promotion to the end results of tourism promotion

• (Ability to) consider alternative strategies

• Manage your segments by revenue stream with different investment strategies.

Reno sportscaster remembered as consummate professional

By Lenita Powers, Reno Gazette-Journal

JK Metzker, the sports director at KTVN Channel 2 News who died Sunday after a hit-and-run accident in Reno, was described by those close to him as a consummate professional on the job, but more importantly a great guy, devoted husband and father at all times.

On Sunday, Reno Police arrested Ryan Joseph Rhea, 23, of Sparks in connection with the accident. Officials said alcohol appears to be a factor in the case, which is still under investigation.

Rhea was booked into Washoe County Jail on one felony count of hit-and-run causing death. Additional charges may be filed pending the results of blood tests.

The accident occurred Saturday at 11:50 p.m. on North Virginia Street near Mackay Stadium after the end of the Nevada-Hawaii football game.

Metzker, 41, was not covering the game, but had gone to see it as a fan with some friends.

Read the whole story

Opinion: California's rich soak up solar subsidies

By Dan Morain, Sacramento Bee

The sun shines on the beachfront mansions of Malibu and La Jolla, just as it does on Compton and Barrio Logan in San Diego.

It beams down on the most upscale part of Clovis and its golf course development of Brighton Crest, and on the gritty flats of south and west Fresno.

But based on how California policymakers dole out valuable subsidies for solar panels placed on the residential roofs, the poorest parts of our sunny state might as well be on the dark side of the moon.

California is in the midst of by far the nation's most ambitious program to convert to solar energy, one that began in 2006 when then Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger declared that during the next decade, the state would place solar panels on a million rooftops.

To pay for it, the California Public Utilities Commission earmarked $3.3 billion, spread over 10 years, taken in small slices from utility customers' monthly bills.

It was high concept, bold and visionary, and not the least bit

efficient. There is no more costly solar power than that which is placed on residential roofs.

“Socially, it is a complete money loser,” said professor Severin Borenstein of the UC Energy Institute at UC Berkeley.

The Public Utilities Commission reported earlier this year that California Solar Initiative subsidies have amounted to $885 million so far. They’ve created 924 megawatts of power spread across 94,900 locations owned by large and small commercial users, and residential customers.

Read the whole story

El Dorado, Placer foreclosure numbers on the rise

By Rick Daysog, Sacramento Bee

New foreclosure filings in the Sacramento area continued to surge in October as lenders worked to reduce their backlog of distressed properties.

Irvine-based RealtyTrac said 2,628 foreclosure starts were filed in the capital region last month, a 14.4 percent increase from the previous month.

The new foreclosures – or notice of default filings – translate into one filing for every 176 homes in the four-county Sacramento region, which was the seventh highest rate in California, RealtyTrac said.

“The October foreclosure numbers continue to show strong signs that foreclosure activity is coming out of the rain delay

we’ve been in for the past year as lenders corrected foreclosure paperwork and processing problems,” said James Saccacio, chief executive officer of RealtyTrac.

Read the whole story

Buddy Werner league signing up skiers

Buddy Werner Youth Ski League is looking for participants.

This all-volunteer not-for-profit corporation providing slalom and giant slalom ski race training for the youngsters of South Lake Tahoe and the West Slope of El Dorado County. All practices and races are on Sundays at Sierra-At-Tahoe starting Dec. 11.

Skier registration info:

Nov. 15, 5:30–8pm, Mountain Mikes Pizza, 2650 Cameron Park Drive, Cameron Park

Nov. 16, 5:30–8pm, Round Table Pizza, 1062 Emerald Bay Road, South Lake Tahoe

Nov. 17, 5:30–8pm, Round Table Pizza, 512 Main St., Placerville.

Eligibility requirements:

Skiers must be between the ages of 7-14, but shall in no event be beyond the eighth grade as of Dec 10, 2011.

Skiers must be able to stop, turn left, turn right, and be able to independently load and unload from the ski lift while

on skis.

First child is $75, two are $140, three from the same family are $195. This does not include lift tickets/season pass. A Sierra Fast Pass is also required.

For more information, call Chris Peterson at (530) 642.8572.

Tree lighting in Kings Beach

Santa and Mrs. Claus will help light Christmas tree Dec. 2 at the North Tahoe Event Center in Kings Beach.

The event at 8318 North Lake Blvd. is from 5-7pm.

The annual community event will include photos with Santa, a cookie swap, craft stations for the kids, hot cocoa, candy canes, homemade soup and more.

For more information, call (530) 546.9000.

Animal adoptions half price in Tahoe Vista

A New Hope Animal Foundation is offering half off the cost of adoptions for all animals at the Placer County animal shelters in Auburn and in Tahoe Vista from Nov.15-Dec. 15.

All animals housed at both shelters are eligible for this promotion. The Auburn animal shelter is located at 11251 B

Ave., Auburn and the Tahoe Vista shelter is located at 849 Shelter Road, Tahoe Vista.

Preview the animals available for adoption online.

For more information, call (530) 546.1990.