El Dorado Community Foundation accepting grant applications

The El Dorado Community Foundation is accepting grant applications for the $72,000 it has to award various groups.

The El Dorado Community Foundation targets its philanthropic investments to partners and programs that achieve meaningful outcomes and measurable results in specific areas within each of our funding priorities. Grant applicants are required to report on outcomes and results. Grant funding is available in several categories including but not limited to:

• Arts and culture

• Youth and family

• Senior services

• Homelessness

• Education

• Animal welfare

• Health and wellness.

Access an application and learn more about the foundation, its mission, its donors and its community leadership by going online.

For more information, call (530) 622.5621. Grant applications are due by 5pm Nov. 21.

Code enforcement becoming a priority for South Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Inconsistent code enforcement in South Lake Tahoe may be rectified soon.

The City Council at a workshop last week was given an update by staff on where the city stands in streamlining this issue.

Hilary Roverud, Development Services director, told the electeds developing a dedicated code enforcement division will help bring consistency to enforcement. It's too soon to say what that division would look like.

But the problem today is community service officers, the building division, engineering and streets divisions, planning, fire, and finance all are required to enforce various city codes. Therein lies the inconsistency with when things are enforced and the consequences associated with infractions.

Another reason to have staff dedicated to enforcement is that with fewer people working for the city, enforcement is often driven by complaints.

"When you have inconsistent enforcement, you tend to have more violations," Roverud said.

Right now many people violating some policy have multiple avenues to keep appealing the process and never paying a dime to tie up staff time.

To put some teeth into various codes staff is recommending fines be upfront, with the violators able to be refunded the payment if they win their case.

“It would be modeled after parking where they are fined. They can have a hearing. There is one single appeal,” Roverud said. “The idea here is to have one appeal opportunity. Who that appeal would go to is open for discussion.”

Mayor Hal Cole said he would like to look into hiring a part-time employee dedicated to making sure vacation rentals are paying their transient occupancy tax and other city fees, with the rationale that the income collected would more than pay that person’s wages.

“It’s a priority to me because of the lost revenue,” Cole said.

Roverud said while finding the properties online is one thing; it is catching people violating the rules that can be more problematic and time consuming.

On a side note, Police Chief Brian Uhler said 38 locations have been identified since March and are now paying up. But he admitted it is an “involved process.”

City Attorney Patrick Enright said, “We do need seed money to start the process.” The process being a dedicated enforcement division.

The theory is the pot of cash would be a revolving fund that would constantly fund itself via fines not currently being collected, paying for the work not currently being done.

“The idea is to take a few key priorities and simplify things,” Uhler said. As the program evolves more codes could be added to the list for the team to enforce.

City Manager Tony O’Rourke said public safety issues should be No. 1 on the list of enforcement issues.

Uhler, who is also the fire chief this fiscal year, said it's a priority for him to have a fire code officer. A report released earlier this fall was highly critical of South Lake Tahoe's fire code enforcement.

Staff will refine some of its ideas, with possible changes to how enforcement is done and potential creation of a separate division to be on a future council agenda.

Opinion: Caucus fumble makes Nevada look amateurish

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the Nov. 6, 2011, Reno Gazette-Journal.***

When Nevada first became an early caucus state four years ago, it wasn't one of our finer moments.

Organizers, particularly on the Republican side, were not prepared for the higher-than expected turnout, which awarded victories to Hillary Clinton for the Democrats and Mitt Romney for the Republicans. Ballots were in short supply, and some caucus goers, waiting in long lines outside on that cold January day, gave up and went home without taking part.

It was so chaotic in some caucus locations that then State Senate Minority Leader Dina Titus, D-Las Vegas, considered legislative action to restore Nevada's primary election.

"This notion of neighbors getting together with neighbors to talk about politics, that's just not Nevada," she said at the time. "What I found in my caucus is that the meeting didn't lead to collaboration, cooperation and a good discussion. It

led to hostility.”

But when tempers cooled, most observers chalked up the chaos to inexperience. Organizers promised to be better prepared next time.

So much for that notion.

At the moment when our state needed to convince the nation we have our act together and are deserving of political relevance, we took chaos to a new level. Reacting to Florida’s move to hold its primary on Jan. 31, Nevada Republicans announced they would hold their caucus on Jan. 14. What followed was an embarrassing game of chicken. New Hampshire cried foul. Our GOP leadership said the date was firm. Then it wasn’t so firm. Responding to boycott threats from several GOP candidates and the risk of losing delegates at the national Republican convention in Tampa next year, they moved the date to Feb. 4.

The date, in and of itself, isn’t terrible. Nevada will be the first western state to cast its votes. But by then it might not matter. Just look at how the candidates have responded to the final early state schedule, which puts Nevada fifth after Iowa (Jan. 3), New Hampshire (Jan. 10), South Carolina (Jan. 21) and Florida (Jan. 31).

Read the whole story

Raley’s scraps health coverage for some retirees

By Darrell Smith, Sacramento Bee

Raley’s will stop providing health coverage to its retired hourly employees 65 and older in July 2012, the supermarket chain said in a letter to retirees.

The letter, dated Oct. 24 and signed by Michael Teel, Raley’s president and chief executive officer, said the chain is struggling to maintain profitability amid a down economy, increased competition and escalating health costs.

“Unfortunately, due to the economic downturn and increased competition we are struggling to sustain our business,” the letter read. “We have … determined that Raley’s can no longer cover the cost of this benefit.”

Raley’s declined to comment Friday, but Jerry Landers, its senior director of human resources, issued a written statement reiterating the reasons for the change given in the letter.

The statement also noted, “We are continuing to provide generous medical coverage for our retirees under the age of 65, which is the most expensive time for individuals to purchase their own plans.”

But retired hourly workers over age 65, like Shirley Kinnett, 75, of Sacramento will have to pay for the coverage out of pocket starting July 1, 2012, carving out cash from a fixed income.

“I know retirees are going to be distraught by this. They’ve got to be,” Kinnett said.

Read the whole story

Tahoe symphony plans holiday concerts

Tahoe Symphony Orchestra and Chorus begins its seventh season with its annual holiday production of Handel’s Messiah.

The program includes selections from the Messiah as well as many holiday favorites. Vocal soloists include Tammy Brock, Katharine DeBoer, Joy Strotz, and Anna Helwing, sopranos; and Stuart Duke, baritone.



Performances are:

Dec. 14 at 7pm at Trinity Church in Reno.

Dec. 16 at 7pm in the Resort at Squaw Creek in Olympic Valley.

Dec. 17 at 4pm in the North Tahoe Events Center in Kings Beach.

Dec. 18 at 3pm in St. Theresa Church in South Lake Tahoe.

Dec. 20 at 7pm in the new Assumption Catholic Church in Truckee.

General admission to all concerts is $25 adults, $20 seniors, and $5 students with preferred seating available for $35. Special pricing for room and dinner/concert combinations at Squaw Creek Resort are available by calling (530) 581.6615. Tickets for all concerts are available at the door or online.

For information, call (775) 313.9697 or visit Toccata online.

Leonids Meteor Shower

Once a year, the Lake Tahoe Basin's night sky erupts with a flurry of shooting stars – the Leonids Meteor Shower.

Tahoe Rim Trail Association, Tahoe Institute for Natural Science and Space Science for Schools is having an event Nov. 17 from 7-9pm. It is a free, family friendly gazing party.

Bring your lawn chairs, warm blankets, winter jacket and hat, snacks and hot chocolate. Minimal hiking involved. (Directions to the trailhead will be provided upon registration for this event).

You must register in advance online.

For more information, call (775) 298.0012 or email Tom at programs@tahoerimtrail.org.

This event is subject to cancellation due to a cloudy or snowy weather forecast. Registrants will be notified via email.

El Dorado County late to the game to support Measure R

By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County Board of Supervisors waited until the last possible date to give its blessing to Measure R, and even then the discussion nearly spun out of control.



The board – whose approval is necessary for R to be valid if approved by voters on Tuesday – voted 5-0 Nov. 1 to agree to amend the original Measure S recreation initiative approved in 2000.

Because Board of Supervisors meetings are not available to be seen except in person, *Lake Tahoe News* did not receive a copy of the meeting to review until Nov. 7 – thus the reason for the timing of the story.

Supervisor Jack Sweeney brought up the issue of refinancing the bonds. Supervisor Norma Santiago was adamant, and correct, when she said refinancing and Measure R have nothing to do with one another.

Still, tied to the motion to approve support of Measure R was that a letter needs to be sent to the JPA board that oversees Measure R (of which Santiago chairs) to let it be known the county wants input on any refinancing.

Santiago said the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Facilities Joint Powers Authority has not received a letter from the city indicating its desire to refinance the bonds.

County Auditor-Controller Joe Harn at the meeting said instead of finding another way to spend the taxpayers money going from S to R, the money in the kitty could be used to pay off the debt early. He also said this would not help property owners until years down the road.

Then Supervisor Ron Briggs took the conversation on another tangent by saying he believes the Tahoe Paradise Resort Improvement District should become a community services district. The Tahoe Paradise park is the third party to the recreation JPA along with the county and city. But he didn’t have an reasons to back up his thoughts.

Santiago said the Tahoe Paradise people have no problem being one of four resort districts in the state.

Supervisor Ray Nutting said for eight years he was the county's rep to the Tahoe Paradise board and that he sees no reason to twist that board's arms to be something it doesn't want to be.

Finally, the discussion came back to the actual agenda item – supporting an amendment to Measure S to make Measure R viable.

Sweeney said, "I think it's righteous to put money in the ground."

Sandoval to revive Gaming Policy Committee

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

Gov. Brian Sandoval said last week he would revive the 11-member Gaming Policy Committee to advise regulators, legislators and him on how Nevada can maintain its edge as the leader of gaming regulatory policy at a time when technology is expanding industry boundaries.

Sandoval told the State Bar of Nevada's Gaming Law Conference that the committee would have discussions that could lead to policy decisions, legislation and regulations overseeing the rapidly changing gaming industry landscape.

"I hope to sketch a new road map for the journey ahead," Sandoval said. "We will preserve our position as the gold standard in gaming regulation and in the provision of gaming entertainment. We will be second to none on the globe."

The Gaming Policy Committee was created by the Legislature in 1961, meeting at the call of the governor to discuss gaming policy matters. Sandoval said a subcommittee of the review committee last met in 2007, but that the full committee hasn't met since Richard Bryan was governor in the 1980s.

The committee is chaired by the governor and includes one member of the state Senate, one member of the state Assembly, one gaming commissioner, one member of the state Gaming Control Board, one member of a Native American tribe in Nevada and five appointees. Of the appointees, two would be non-restricted gaming licensees, one would be a restricted gaming licensee and two would be from the public.

Read the whole story

Still looking for winner of Soroptimist wine tasting tickets

Ready to sample wine from 30 vintners and food from about 20 restaurants?

It's time for the annual Evening of Food & Wine Tasting put on by Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe. This is the group's big event to raise money that is then given back to the community.

Lake Tahoe News is partnering with the service club to give-away two tickets to the Nov. 11 6pm event at Harrah's Lake Tahoe.



Soroptimist wine tasting is Nov. 11 at Harrah's in Stateline. Photo/LTN file

The winner will be randomly chosen Nov. 9 from the people who write a comment below about why service clubs are important.

The contest is open to everyone who is part of *Lake Tahoe News'* special NEWS subscriber list. All you have to do is send $40 to *LTN*, then you are added to the subscriber list, you will be sent a T-shirt as our thanks, and you qualify for this and other great promotions.

Send checks to Lake Tahoe News, P.O. Box 13406, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96151 or pay via credit card through PayPal on the website at the bottom right of the home page.

Please include your email address so we can ensure you are subscribed to receive the daily digest. To receive the daily email, which lists what has been posted in the last 24 hours, enter your email address at the bottom right of the home page.

Please don't forget to include your mailing address and shirt size – S, M, L, XL or 2X.

If you don't win the two wine tasting tickets, they may be purchased for $65 each from a SISLT member or downloaded a fax order form for credit card orders.

You must be 21 to attend the event.

Documentary about end-of-life issues

“Consider the Conversation” is a documentary done by Terry Kaldhusdal, a teacher and filmmaker from Wisconsin as well Mike Bernhagen, the director of community outreach and care partner relations at Rainbow Hospice in Wisconsin.

Together they joined forces to create a documentary exploring the American struggle with communication and preparation for the end-of-life. This film explores multiple perspectives on end-of-life care and includes information from medical personnel, patients, family, clergy, and national experts from around the country. Featured is Martin Welsh, a physician from Placerville and his challenges with ALS.

The film will be shown for free Nov. 17 at 1pm at the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center, 3050 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.