Opinion: Reasons Vogelgesang should be on STPUD board

To the community,

My name is Randy Vogelgesang and I am asking for your vote for seat 3 of the South Tahoe Public Utility District board.

My position on the issues was well covered in the *Lake Tahoe News* here.

However, I would like to emphasize a few points.



Randy
Vogelgesang

My engineering experience and my reputation for making common sense, cost effective engineering decisions make me uniquely qualified to represent the ratepayers.

The district and its employees provide an excellent product and we should strive to continue this high level of service, however, all projects need to be evaluated based on necessity, and less expensive options should be considered. In these tough economic times we will need to prioritize our spending and cut costs wherever possible.

I see no reason to justify a rate hike when most of the ratepayers that I know have had their incomes decrease. Wages and benefits for the districts employees should not exceed comparable local private sector jobs.

Until all customers are metered, I would like to lower the metered rate portion of the bill as much as possible. In addition, meter installations need to be done at a more accelerated pace. I don’t think it is acceptable to have customers using the same volume of water paying very different amounts for the next dozen years. The current metering amounts are based on average use in order to remain revenue neutral to the district. However, the district is composed of full-time and part-time residents, neither of which fit the average. It has been known for many years that meters were coming, but inaction has caused this problem.

The priority of the board is to represent the public and oversee how the district spends our money. When making decisions on behalf of the ratepayers I plan on using the same common sense, fiscally conservative, approach that has worked well for my business. The key word in STPUD is public and I will always keep that in mind when making decisions.

Randy Vogelgesang, South Lake Tahoe

What election, issue or candidate had the most impact on your life?

Genoa in process of reinventing itself

By Rob Sabo, Northern Nevada Business Weekly

Nevada’s oldest settlement is set to get a face lift next summer.

Douglas County community leaders are working through a plan to make Genoa’s downtown more pedestrian friendly with improvements designed to increase parking and help shoppers move about more freely. Other proposed enhancements are planned to upgrade aging infrastructure and beautify the historic settlement – and leaders hope the work will lure more travelers to the town.

The Genoa Destination project, working with an already-established $1.5 million budget, seeks to beautify the historic downtown by adding landscaping, burying overhead utilities, repaving disintegrated asphalt and improving walkways, street crossings, lighting and signage.

Currently in the engineering phase, Douglas County officials hope to get projects out to bid by next spring, says Lisa Granahan, economic vitality manager. Work is expected to be completed before the annual Genoa Candy Dance, the largest special event in the Carson Valley. Much of the scoping work was conducted in previous community assessments and economic vitality studies, Granahan notes, which has allowed the project to advance at a much quicker pace.

Read the whole story

Kokanee return to North Shore after 50 years

A stream restoration project on the North Shore is reaping environmental benefits as a small, fall run of kokanee salmon was spotted in the lower reaches of the creek last month.

The run has gone missing since the 1960s when Lake Forest Meadow was filled and numerous stream channels were diverted into a culvert in anticipation of a construction project that was never built.

Restoration work by the Placer County Department of Public Works Tahoe Engineering Division began in 2009. The project reconstructed the historic stream channel close to how it existed prior to modification in the 1960s. Additionally, the meadow was changed back to its historic contours. In all, 35 acres were restored, which required moving 21,000 yards of soil. To restore the natural grade of the area, 3,000 yards of that soil were actually trucked out of the Tahoe Basin.

Kokanee salmon are not a native fish species to Lake Tahoe. Their introduction likely occurred in the 1920s when an overflow of troughs in the Tahoe City fish hatchery allowed kokanee fry to escape into the lake.

The land for the Lake Forest Meadow restoration was acquired by the California Tahoe Conservancy and work began in September 2009.

In 2010, work was completed on restoration of 300 feet of channel on the north side of Highway 28, along Old Mill Road three miles east of Tahoe City. The channel runs south through the Lake Forest Meadow and ends at the outlet to Lake Tahoe in Pomin Park.

The project was finished earlier this year.

When the meadow was filled in the 1960s, it became drier than normal and vegetation was reduced. This lack of riparian vegetation then reduced wildlife habitat, encouraged erosion, and reduced opportunities for the public to enjoy the area.

In the now finished project, water flows through the meadow and has re-established a more natural environment. The finished grade of the meadow is closer to the top of the water table, which encourages greater vitality for the plant community. The restoration has increased species richness associated with riparian, meadow, and wetland habitats.

Funding for the $2.7 million project was provided by:

* U.S. Bureau of Reclamation;

* U.S. Army Corp of Engineers;

* U.S. Forest Service;

* California Tahoe Conservancy;

* Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

Long-awaited Harrison Ave. upgrades in works in S. Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

While South Lake Tahoe is never likely to have a downtown based on how haphazardly the city was allowed to develop and that the main road is a state highway, another five blocks are about to be removed from the blighted category.

Harrison Avenue between Los Angeles and Lakeview avenues is

ranked No. 2 on the city's list of priorities for capital improvement projects.



The dirt area will become diagonal parking, Harrison Avenue (on the right) will be one-way, and sidewalks along Highway 50 are already in (not shown). Photo/LTN file

No drastic changes are proposed from what has been talked about for the last 14 years. But the funding to do the complete streets overhaul is still not in place. The price tag in 2006 was at least $1 million. The total amount today is projected to be $1,625,844.

The bulk of that money ($805,770) is likely to come from the certificate of participation bond the council will vote on and likely execute early next year.

Money is starting to trickle in. At the Nov. 1 City Council meeting the five electeds accepted $275,074 from the Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization's Regional Surface

Transportation Program to begin the planning and design of Harrison Avenue.

“We think the economy has persuaded business owners to look at things differently now,” Jim Marino, South Lake Tahoe capital improvement project manager, said.

In the past, the owners on this frontage street paralleling Highway 50 have dragged their feet. Coverage is a big concern, along with parking.

What has been on the books for years are what the city is going with – making Harrison Avenue one-way, diagonal parking, sidewalks and a class 1 bike trail.

Part of the bid package for the project includes looking at forming a business improvement district, much like what the Ski Run area has.

Mayor Hal Cole is concerned if one property owner disagrees with the plans that the whole project will be doomed. With a BID, that is less likely to happen.

A design proposal is expected to be presented to the council at the Nov. 15 meeting.

Marino said business and property owners have been involved in design aspects.

With Caltrans this summer-fall putting in curbs and gutters along this stretch of the highway, the transformation has begun. Plus, the area ties into all the improvements being done at Lakeview Commons.

In waiting this long to actually move forward, the California Tahoe Conservancy has changed its mind about the parcel it owns next to the *Tahoe Daily Tribune* building. It is now willing to swap it for the land the city owns on Glenwood Avenue where the old drive-in was. The city would use the Harrison land for parking.

Marino expects to have Harrison Avenue be a shovel-ready project in 2012, with building starting the following construction season.

In other action:

• A contract with Clean Tahoe Program that ends Sept. 30, 2015, was signed, with the contingency an audit or review of the books is done this year because one has not been done since 2008.

• An agreement was signed with Nichols Consulting Engineers to begin the planning process of putting in sidewalks on Pioneer Trail between Highway 50 and Larch Avenue.

• The city is paying nearly $35,000 to equip the snow removal fleet with GPS navigation systems. It will cost the city nearly $6,000 a year to keep the system running. The point of it according the staff report is to provide “greater flexibility in vehicle assignments for the streets superintendent.” The public will also be able to view snow removal by neighborhood or street.

• A two-year contract with the Stationary Engineers, Local 39 was approved. Those general and public works employees will pay 4 percent of their PERS contribution this fiscal year and the full 8 percent in 2012-13. No COLAs are part of the deal. They agreed to changes in the health care plan which would take effect when all other groups sign-off on that aspect of the deal.

USFS resumes fire operations in Angora Fire area

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews are scheduled to resume prescribed fire operations in the Angora Fire area near Mule Deer Circle on Nov. 2, weather permitting.

- Operations may continue through the weekend.

Residents and visitors can expect to see smoke from this prescribed fire project area. Smoke may be visible on Lake Tahoe Boulevard. The Forest Service strives to minimize the impacts of smoke on local communities. Smoke-sensitive residents should consider staying indoors and keeping doors, windows and outside vents closed. To directly receive prescribed fire updates, send an email to pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.

Forest Service staff will post road signs around areas affected by prescribed fire, and update the local fire information line at (530) 543-2600, ext. 6.

Opinion: Candidates need reminder that Nevada is important

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the Oct. 27, 2011, Reno Gazette-Journal.***

Now that Nevada Republicans have settled on Feb. 4 as the date for their presidential nomination caucuses, their challenge is to sell the idea to the candidates, as well as to the party's

own rank-and-file members.

That may not be as easy as mollifying those Eastern states that insisted on keeping some distance between their primaries and the Nevada caucuses, but it’s even more important.

With campaign money and time tight nearly a year before the presidential election, the Republican candidates are carefully choosing their spots, campaigning where they believe they have something to gain, or lose. So far, they hadn’t shown much interest in Nevada until former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney visited Las Vegas last week and told an audience in the state hit hardest by the mortgage crisis that the foreclosure process should be allowed to play itself out. (That was followed by a quick visit to Vegas, a city he’s already insulted several times, by President Barack Obama, who announced an expanded program to help homeowners refinance their mortgages.)

That’s pretty much what happened four years ago. The Republican candidates generally stayed away from Nevada, while the leading Democrats regularly made the rounds. That likely helped Democrats get out the vote in the 2008 election for Obama.

Read the whole story

Full moon snowshoe excursions

Trek on snowshoes by moonlight. Professional, knowledgeable guides will discuss natural history and astronomy topics as well as facts about the moon.

Stops include taking in the views and enjoying snacks and hot

drinks.

Tahoe Adventure Company’s full moon snowshoe trips, which start in Tahoe Vista, are for all levels of nature enthusiasts.

Dates: Dec. 10 ~ 4:30-7:30pm

Jan. 7 ~ 4-7pm

Feb. 7 ~ 4:30-7:30pm

March 8 ~ 5-8pm

April 6 ~ 6:30-9:30pm

Trip includes snowshoe trek with all gear, hot drinks, trail snacks, professional guides, natural history discussions, and permit fees.

Cost: $65 per person.

Call (530) 913.9212 or go online for details. Reservations required.

Snowshoe, star gazing trek

Tahoe Adventure Company and Tony Berendsen present telescopic tours of the midnight sky.

It all starts with a two-hour guided sunset snowshoe followed by a two-hour tour of the midnight sky with Berendsen.

This tour is for kids, teens, and adults.

Meet at the North Tahoe Regional Park in Tahoe Vista for the 4:30-8:30pm tour.

Trip Includes snowshoes, poles, star tour professional astronomer, professional guides, hot drinks, trail snacks, natural history discussions, and permit fees.

Cost: $75 per person.

Dates: Dec. 28 ~ Crescent Moon in Aquarius

Jan. 14 ~ Orion on the Rise

Feb. 18 ~ Taurus the Bull on High

March 24 ~ Regulus and Mars; war in the sky.

Call (530) 913.9212 or go online for details. Reservations required.

El Dorado County Board of Education needs member

Dolores Garcia, a well-respected member of the El Dorado County Board of Education since 1996, recently passed away which created a vacancy in trustee area three.

The board will appoint her replacement Nov. 29. All interested residents of the newly aligned Supervisorial District III are encouraged to apply. The applicants must to submit a letter of application and a candidate information sheet to Vicki L. Barber, El Dorado County superintendent of schools. To request the candidate information sheet, call Janet Maruniak (530) 295.2217 or email jmaruniak@edcoe.org.

Regular El Dorado County Board of Education meetings are the first Tuesday of each month, with occasional special meetings.

Applicants chosen to participate in the interview process will be notified by Nov. 23.

The term expires on Nov. 30, 2012.