Beware of carbon monoxide scam

By Claudia Buck, Sacramento Bee

Something didn’t smell right, and it certainly wasn’t carbon monoxide.

Alert constituents and an inquisitive state senator’s office apparently halted a mail scam attempting to con homeowners, based on a new state law requiring carbon monoxide alarms.

The scam was apparently run from a post office box directly across the street from the state Capitol, where lawmakers last year passed SB 183, which requires the alarms as a way to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning deaths.

“It’s absolutely brazen,” said Mark Spannagel, chief of staff for state Sen. Doug LaMalfa, R-Richvale, who said about a dozen constituents reported receiving letters asking them to send $76 in order to comply with the law and avoid a possible fine. LaMalfa’s district covers parts of Placer, Yuba and Nevada counties.

Read the whole story

Software billionaire Ellison acquiring property in Tahoe

By Sarah Tilton and Juliet Chung, Wall Street Journal

One of the nation’s most voracious consumers of trophy real

estate is back on the hunt.

Since the mid-1990s, software billionaire Larry Ellison has accumulated hundreds of millions of dollars worth of top-shelf properties around the world. The portfolio of Oracle Corp.’s co-founder includes five adjacent lots in Malibu; a Newport, R.I., mansion formerly owned by the Astor family; a historic garden property in Kyoto and an estate in Rancho Mirage, with a private, 19-hole golf course.

Juliet Chung on Lunch Break looks at how software billionaire Larry Ellison, perhaps the nation’s most avid trophy-home buyer, has taken serial property buying to new extremes. His latest target: Lake Tahoe.

The list of serial buyers of trophy properties, while thinning in recent years, includes Paul Allen along with Roman Abramovich and other Russian oligarchs. Ellison has a distinctive buying pattern: When he finds an area he likes, he takes a flood-the-zone approach. He often buys several adjacent properties to combine into a single sprawling compound. At the same time, he acquires other noncontiguous properties nearby, increasing his overall holdings in a desirable area.

Ellison has been applying this approach to a new location: Lake Tahoe, the resort area straddling the California-Nevada border. Records show Mr. Ellison has spent $102 million in the last several years buying property, both on and off the market, to assemble three different parcels fronting the 191-square-mile lake. On one of them, purchased over three years for a total of $58 million, Ellison is constructing a compound with more than 18,000 square feet of living space as well as a pond with an island, waterfalls and a tennis court with a pavilion, according to plans submitted to Washoe County.

Read the whole story

S. Tahoe settles case involving CPS

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe has written a check for $39,130 to settle a case involving how police officers removed children from a home on the behalf of Child Protective Services.

“The officers followed the policy and practice at the time (2008), and therefore I would not say they did anything ‘wrong.’ I would say the policy and practices should have been reviewed by city staff in light of 9th Circuit of Appeals decisions that were being issued by the court since about 2007,” City Attorney Patrick Enright wrote in an email to *Lake Tahoe News*.

The $39,230 will be put in a trust for the children and divvied up among the other litigating parties. Who all is involved in the case has not been disclosed.

“Since it involves minors, I am limited as to what I can tell you about the case, except it occurred in 2008 and involved the removal of children in the city by CPS and the police department,” Enright said.

“The city is working with the police department to revise its policy on the removal of children for CPS and will be providing training to the officers. The new policy will be barring life-threatening conditions to the children, the officer must obtain a judicial warrant prior to removing the children and placing them with CPS except in very limited circumstances.”

This is the revised juvenile custody policy.

El Dorado County was also a defendant in the case. That settlement is still in the works, according to Enright.

Opinion: Know what you are agreeing to

By Daniel Rozansky

There is a cost to “free.” There is an additional cost to speed. It’s called privacy.

Each day we pay these costs to download movies, music and buy things on phones, tablets or computers. We agree to terms of service without thinking about the implications. But every day there’s a new rash of lawsuits over privacy rights. What’s the solution? Content providers could create more succinct terms of service to benefit consumers. As a byproduct, they will benefit, too.

The speed-for-privacy trade-off begins with free websites like Google, Yahoo, YouTube and Pandora. It continues with online stores that sift through the clutter to speed up shopping and direct us to products we might like based on where we live, shopping history and website visits.

But what are the websites and content providers getting in return for providing us with this useful information? Important information about us.

Privacy is a commodity. Your personal information is being bought and sold with your approval when you agree to the terms of service. Does anyone bother to read Facebook’s or iTunes’

terms of service or take the time to understand what they are agreeing to? Parents, do you have any idea what personal information your children are giving up? Probably not. That's why websites and other online service providers should voluntarily agree to shorter terms-of-service language so consumers can identify what important privacy and other rights they give away when clicking "I Agree."

First, an abbreviated terms of service should clearly state the information being collected. As information available through technology extends further and further past such simple things as your name and address, the privacy becomes less apparent. For example, the GPS technology that maps your route home also can track where you are right now or log where you go every day. Each time you visit a website, content providers collect "cookies" coupled with your IP address to create a log of your online behavior.

Daniel Rozansky is a partner at Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP in Los Angeles.

Read the whole story

NLTRA looking for board members

Each November members of the North Lake Tahoe Resort Association elect members of the board of directors.

This year, there are five open seats, including small lodging, recreation, ski area, real estate/property management and at-large. Small lodging and recreation are two-year terms, while ski area, real estate and at-large are three-year terms. The

filing deadline for interested candidates is Oct. 28 at 5pm.

Nine of the 11 seats on the NLTRA board represent a category of chamber/NLTRA membership. Those interested in running for a seat must be an owner or manager of an active member in good standing or the designated representative of that member, of the membership category that he/she represents. According to the organization's bylaws, one business may not have more than one board seat at a time, regardless of the number of membership categories for which that member may qualify.

For election purposes, consistent with the bylaws, a qualified board candidate must be from a business which has a primary office or location within the Placer County portion of the North Lake Tahoe membership area. The business must also have a Placer County business license.

The small lodging seat is open to any single lodging property with less than 100 rooms. The recreation seat is open to any business selling recreational services, excluding ski areas with no other forms of recreational activities. The ski area seat is open to any business that offers downhill skiing, snowboarding, cross country skiing or a similar snow sport. The real estate/property management seat is open to any business that manages, rents or sells properties. The at-large seat is a full member that has voting privileges.

Ballots will be mailed to voting members by Nov. 8, and are due to the CPA office of McClintock Accountancy Corporation by no later than Dec. 6. The results will be announced Dec. 7 at the NLTRA board meeting, 8:30am, Tahoe City Public Utility District board room.

For more information about the election or to file for nomination of a board seat, call Kym Fabel at (530) 581.8764 or kym@puretahoenorth.com.

National Food Day celebration in Reno

The River School Farm is celebrating National Food Day at its farm, 7777 White Fir St. in Reno, on Oct. 24 from 5:30-8pm.

Community members can join the farm for a potluck dinner, networking and brainstorming. Group discussions will be on different topics related to community food issues. The event is sponsored by the Local Food Network of the Truckee Meadows whose goal is to increase local food purchases to 20 percent by 2020.

A $5 donation is suggested, and participants should bring a potluck dish to share.

National Food Day is an initiative sponsored by the Center for Science in the Public Interest, a nonprofit group that has lobbied for food labeling, better nutrition and food safety since 1971. The center encourages local communities to participate by organizing local food events. The goal is to address food issues and to create healthier communities through better nutrition.

For more information or to RSVP for the local Northern Nevada Food Day, contact Phillip at (775) 224.1877 or email LocalFoodSystem Network@gmail.com.

A vision for South Shore's future begins to unfold

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Vision – that is what has been missing from the South Shore.

"If we are going to be a world-class outdoor destination, we need the commercial areas to complement the scenery," Mike Bradford told Douglas County commissioners Thursday.



Design Workshop's vision for the South Shore near the state line.

The county in its quest to bring economic vitality to the lake and valley created 12 project areas to focus on, with the casino corridor at Stateline being one of them. Bradford, who is part owner and runs Lakeside Inn and Casino, is the leader of that project.

As he brought others into the scoping process it became evident work needed to start at the state line and spread from there – which meant going into South Lake Tahoe.

While in the past the line separating California and Nevada

has been a point of demarcation for those in charge, tourists never saw a line – except for where it was legal to gamble.

Ironically, it's gaming that has erased the line for local officials and what is bringing them to the same table. Indian casinos in California have put the kibosh on gaming being king of the South Shore. While people move to Lake Tahoe for the outdoors and tourists have been drawn to the area for the same reason, it took the casino industry to be in decline for a decade for those who control the marketing dollars to realize a new business model is needed.

Lake Tahoe News first reported in July that the South Shore Vision Plan was in the works. Aspects of it were outlined for Douglas County commissioners at their Oct. 20 meeting in Stateline. A formal presentation will be made to that board when it has a joint meeting with the South Lake Tahoe City Council on Nov. 4 at noon at Edgewood Tahoe. It is a public meeting.

What the commissioners agreed to Thursday was to put up $10,000 of the $35,000 needed to fund the economic analysis of the plan. Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority and South Lake Tahoe are each being asked to put up $10,000, while the South Tahoe Alliance of Resorts is giving $5,000. The latter paid the $50,000 to Design Workshop to create the plan.

Dealing with TRPA

"We are giving the reigns to the governments to move forward and get it into the (TRPA) Regional Plan," Bradford said.

One issue to overcome in order to get this plan on the ground is to allow the five counties and one city in the Lake Tahoe Basin to have greater control of their destiny instead of being told what to do by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

Harmon Zuckerman, who until last month when his contract was not renewed was spearheading the much overdue Regional Plan

update, supported a more liberal approach to planning than had occurred in the past. Sources have told *Lake Tahoe News* that Arlo Stockham is pulling back on transect planning that integrates mixed uses. However, TRPA says just the opposite is true. In fact, the plan is to give greater authority to local jurisdictions.

With the TRPA being Big Brother in the basin, for the last 40 years local jurisdictions have been under the bi-state regulatory agency's thumb. While local politicians have not orchestrated an Occupy Lake Tahoe movement, they are talking and do want more control of what happens in their borders.

When the TRPA Governing Board meets Oct. 26 at 9:30am in Kings Beach it will hear a presentation from staff about the approach.

In some ways, South Lake Tahoe may have the most power because its boundaries are entirely within the basin. This compares to the five counties whose seat of governance is outside the basin.

"This plan should serve as a foundation, a catalyst for what can and should happen for the South Shore and Douglas County," Douglas County Manager Steve Mokrohisky told *Lake Tahoe News* before the meeting. "I think everyone recognizes the current model does not allow for pedestrian friendly development, access to the lake, and has challenges regarding the environment."

The plan

Richard Shaw with the Aspen office of Design Workshop will be at the November meeting to go over the 32-page South Shore Vision Plan. (He was not available to comment for this story.) The plan will be available to the public at that time.

What is presented in the document is not completely new. The loop road directing traffic off Highway 50 and around the

casinos is still the major focal point. Overall, the plan goes from Ski Run Boulevard to Kahle Drive.



Stateline Avenue is being propoased as a gateway to lake recreation. Renderings/Design Workshop

“The cost of Loop Road is something in the $70 million range. That is a tough nut to crack,” Mokrohisky said.

Both state transportation departments are likely to be asked to fund the bulk of the work, with the possibility of tapping into the federal jobs bill if that were to pass.

Mokrohisky said the county is talking to NDOT and that it will be up to city officials to get Caltrans on board.

While the plan put forth by Design Workshop is just that – a plan – it is something the government bodies on the South Shore need to vote on to proceed with. That could happen at the joint November meeting in two weeks.

The plan calls for a minimum sidewalk zone of 20-feet from Park Avenue to the Horizon. The speed limit would be 25mph, with multiple crossings for pedestrians.

The idea is it would make the state line area a more walkable, downtown destination, with the bulk of the traffic diverted behind the casinos.

While this idea has literally been talked about for decades, the powers that be believe now is the time to carry the idea forward.

“The principal focus at this point is from Stateline to the end of Loop Road. If we can get that fixed, the rest will be easy,” Tony O’Rourke, South Lake Tahoe city manager, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He is one of the nearly 50 people who has been involved in the process to work with Design Workshop to build the vision.

“This is a bold, progressive plan. I like the whole thing,” O’Rourke said. “Clearly it’s an attempt to redefine that corridor. It’s dated and old and won’t meet the needs of destination guests.”

Part of the vision put forth by the Design Workshop says, “Retail activities will frame places for pedestrians; the centers of activity will be engaging places, providing for event programming and strong design appeal; the streets will be developed with outside dining, landscaped edges and ‘complete street design character’; local community orientation and service can be incorporated creating a rich mix of retail opportunities.”

Giving the casinos a makeover is proposed – especially at the ground level to have them be something other than spacious, vacant gaming venues.

Access to the lake has long been talked about. This, too, is a bit of an irony considering all the marketing-tourism gurus say people come to Lake Tahoe for the lake. One would think if this were the main reason, people wouldn’t be having such a hard time finding it if that were their goal.

Now the gurus say no one can find the lake and it needs to be more of a focal point.

“We need to deliver the lake to residents and visitors,” Mokrohisky said. “I have known people who came to Lake Tahoe and they are here several days before they see the lake or get access or know how to get there. This plan lays out the fundamental principals of what we need to do to provide access.”

The plan says, “A new public recreation beach will expand to the north side of Stateline Ave. to fulfill needed water based recreation. Scenic views will result form the recreational acquisitions.”

Maybe someone should ask the visitors and locals why they are here. Maybe it’s the mountains and not the lake.

What’s next?

After the elected officials on the South Shore review the plan in two weeks they will be tasked with deciding how to go forward. Douglas County without even seeing the full presentation is on board to study if the plan is economically feasible. Presuming that study is funded and comes to fruition (LTVA will oversee the bid process), and then environmental analyses will be conducted.

Bradford said the economic component would likely look at what happens if nothing were done, and then forecast for five, 10 and 20 years out.

Everyone agrees public buy-in is crucial. Also agreed to is to make any plan a reality it will take public-private partnerships.

Jobs and tax revenue – those will be the economic indictors that will push the plan forward.

If the numbers work, then the environmental concerns will be

looked at. Lake clarity, total maximum daily loads, coverage, height issues, transportation, density – all of that would be addressed. That is why if TRPA doesn't get its Regional Plan done by the latest deadline of December 2012 (originally it was due in 2007), nothing will happen.

The other buy-in needed is from private property owners who have not been at the table but whose property the planners have other ideas for.

The right players, the right time – the stars being aligned – that is what makes this vision different, according to officials.

"The vision plan creates a path we can head down together," Mokrohisky.

Dance convention coming to MontBleu

Mountain Magic's 13th annual Swing, Hustle and Night Club Two Step Convention and Championships to be at MontBleu in Stateline Nov. 3-6.

New this year will be a mini intensive workshop with Michael Kiehm and a Latin Dance Party.

For more information and details, go online.

Domestic violence discussion

On Oct. 28 from 6-8pm is a panel discussion in South Lake Tahoe about domestic violence. Click on flyer for details.

Drug lab found in S. Tahoe apartment, resident arrested

By Kathryn Reed

A homemade contraption to extract THC from marijuana, along with ecstasy and Oxycontin pills were seized from an apartment in South Lake Tahoe on Thursday afternoon.

“This can blow up just as easily as a meth lab,” SLEDNET Cmdr. Jeff Catchings told *Lake Tahoe News*. “They are very dangerous, especially the type of lab he had.”

Officers with South Lake El Dorado Narcotics Enforcement Team went to the residence on Lake Tahoe Boulevard just after 2pm on a probation search. Tyrone Brown, 27, was on probation for domestic violence.

Now Brown faces charges of being in possession of a drug lab, manufacturing narcotics, possession of narcotics within 1,000 feet of a school (there is a preschool close by), and possession of the pills. An enhancement could be added because a child was living in the house.

He posted bail, which was set at $117,500, the same day.

Brown’s girlfriend and her 11-year-old daughter also live in the apartment. The woman was not arrested, but Catchings said

Child Protective Services has been notified. It’s possible she could be charged with maintaining a house for drug use.

“We did not see a need to remove (the child) from the house since we removed the problem – namely him,” Catchings said.

Evidence the suspect was selling drugs was found, but not much money, Catchings said.

Some of the trash from the lab was scattered on the lawn of the Sierra Vista complex. Now it’s in police custody.

Catchings said butane honey oil labs are not common in Tahoe, but they are growing in number. Marijuana sellers have to do something with the leftover product – dump it, burn it or extract it. The extracted product is sellable.

Catchings explained the extracted THC can be put in food products, smoked and used in other ways.