Nevada 1 of 6 states to participate in Policy Academy

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY – The National Governors Association announced this week that Nevada has been selected as one of six states to participate in a Policy Academy on strengthening post-secondary education performance measures.

The NGA defines a Policy Academy as a highly interactive, team-based process for helping a select number of states develop and implement an action plan to address a complex public policy issue.

In announcing the project, the NGA said: “States must have a strategy for getting more career-ready graduates for the dollars they have, and the NGA Policy Academy will focus on helping states build that strategy.”

“Having good performance metrics is important, but it is not enough,” said Dane Linn, director of the NGA Center for Best Practice’s Education Division. “Governors and other policymakers must be equipped to use performance measures, whether in developing budgets, approving or evaluating programs or deciding how or whether to regulate administrative and academic services. This Policy Academy will help states focus on those measures.”

Gov. Brian Sandoval said, “Nevada is diligently working to improve accountability systems and measures throughout the K-12 system and this Policy Academy will enable us to expand that work through the higher education realm.”

The work will complement the Legislature’s interim funding study, he said.

“As always, higher education’s goals have been focused on continuous improvement in how we educate our students and how we help Nevada’s economy prosper,” said Dan Klaich, chancellor of the Nevada System of Higher Education. “I’m excited we were selected for the Complete to Compete Initiative and I am looking forward to working with the governor and representatives of the Legislature to define accountability metrics that will support our ongoing initiatives related to student success and effectiveness and efficiency.”

The NGA Policy Academy is aimed at improving post-secondary education accountability systems and consists of two workshops, technical assistance from NGA Center staff, and grants of up to $30,000 per state for additional expertise.

The academy is designed to help states strengthen their post-secondary education systems by focusing on efficiency and effectiveness metrics in their accountability systems and incorporating those metrics into their decision making processes.

The NGA Center will help selected states in their efforts to review and revamp their existing state post-secondary accountability system. States will also work with the NGA Center to identify ways to use efficiency and effectiveness metrics as part of the state’s higher education policy agenda.

Funding for the academy is provided by the Lumina Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Nevada’s governor-appointed state team consists of: Heidi Gansert, chief of staff to Sandoval; Julia Teska, a budget analyst from the Department of Administration; Denice Miller, vice president of government relations, MGM Resorts International; Assemblyman Marcus Conklin, D-Las Vegas; Klaich; and Neal Smatresk, president of the UNLV.

Snowboarding movies in Truckee

The premiere of Absinthe Films double feature snowboarding films “twel2ve” and “YES” help support the mission of the Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition.

Doors open at 8pm Oct. 28 at 50-50 Brewery in Truckee. Buy the $10 tickets at Porters and Dave’s or at the door.

TRTA annual meeting

Tahoe Rim Trail Association’s 30th anniversary annual meeting celebration is Nov. 5 at the North Tahoe Event Center in Kings Beach.

The event includes an online auction as well as a silent auction, buffet-style dinner, membership meeting, and presentation of volunteer awards.

The meeting begins at 5pm with a silent auction and cocktail hour. After the cocktail hour will be a buffet-style dinner, presentation of volunteer awards, and a historical presentation of the association’s 30-year history. Space is limited.

The online auction is open Oct. 24-Nov. 12.

The cost for the annual meeting/dinner is $35 per person $60/couple through pre-registration online.

‘Written on the Body’ reception

On Nov. 5 at 6:30 pm, Bona Fide Books is hosting a reception for Shelley Hocknell Zentner’s collection “Written on the Body” at Bona Fide HQ in Meyers.

The event is free and open to the public. Refreshments and entertainment will be provided.

“Written on the Body” is the first public exhibition of a group of oil paintings and figure drawings focusing on women. Zentner, a South Lake Tahoe resident originally from North Wales, U.K., has long had a fascination with the human form and what it reveals.

Zentner’s work will be on display at Bona Fide Books throughout November.

Bona Fide Books is a local independent press located at 1069 Magua St., No. 4, behind the Getaway Café in Meyers.

For more information, contact Kim Wyatt at editor@bonafidebooks.com or visit the website.

Pension news in Calif. goes

from bad to worse

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

California’s big public pension funds are already short tens of billions of dollars. An organization of accountants is about to make the picture look even worse.

A proposed change to pension accounting standards could give more ammunition to conservatives seeking to reduce pension benefits for public sector workers. Gov. Jerry Brown is expected to issue a wide-ranging proposal to overhaul pensions sometime soon.

As Brown and the Legislature prepare to wrestle over pension costs, an organization that sets the industry standards for how government finances are reported, the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, is proposing new rules for calculating pension fund liabilities – the amount of money such funds owe retirees.

The proposal wouldn’t have much effect on CalPERS, the nation’s largest public pension fund. But it would have an enormous impact on the second largest public fund, CalSTRS.

The California State Teachers’ Retirement System already faces a funding gap of $56 billion – the difference between the money it expects to have on hand over the next 30 years and what it will need to pay out in benefits during the same period.

Read the whole story

Bay Area shooting suspect arrested in El Dorado County

By KCRA-TV

SHINGLE SPRINGS – A shooting suspect wanted out of the Bay Area was caught Thursday morning in Shingle Springs, according to the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department.

The suspect's vehicle was stopped on westbound Highway 50, based on a Be On The Lookout Bulletin.

The right lane of traffic was blocked for a short period of time, but everything was moving smoothly again as of around 7am Thursday.

The suspect is a disgruntled security guard who shot at his supervisor at an apartment complex, according to the Richmond Police Department.

The man was considered armed and dangerous, a Bay City News report states.

Read the whole story

South Tahoe settles with former transit employee

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe has paid John Andoh, former transit administrator for the now defunct South Tahoe Area Transportation Agency, $5,000 to settle the claim he filed in

August 2010.

The civil rights lawsuit filed in federal court in Sacramento was against South Lake Tahoe, the city police department and Officer Russell Liles.



John Andoh

Police Chief Brian Uhler, who was not head of the department at the time, was aware of the allegations, but not that a settlement had been reached when contacted by *Lake Tahoe News*.

Assistant City Attorney Nira Feeley said she would provide *Lake Tahoe News* with a copy of the agreement, but has yet to do. So, it's unknown if the city admitted to wrong-doing or cut a check to make the case disappear or some other scenario.

Neither Andoh nor his attorney, Jeff Felton, returned calls.

A series of events, mostly in 2009, led to Andoh seeking legal counsel and the lawsuit being filed.

Halloween costumes don't have to be expensive

By Siobhan McAndrew, Reno Gazette-Journal

Only Zephyr Schneider knows he isn't covered in plants from a

dark and scary swamp filled with alligators, snakes and insects.

Instead, the 9-year-old is wearing leaves from a plastic plant that used to sit in his living room, starfish he got on a family vacation to Monterey and his sister's old snow boots.

"You could go out and spend $65 on a costume or you could try to be creative and use what you have," said Jessica Schneider, Zephyr's mom and owner of Junkee Clothing Exchange in Reno.

Schneider opened the recycled clothing more than three years ago and has been pleasantly surprised to find a big part of her business comes from people looking for costumes.

"I think people bought the bag costumes for years but were just dying for something more fun," said Schneider, who dresses many of the partygoers for the themed crawls that have become a mainstay of Reno's downtown bar scene.

She can rattle off the costumes she has done for the Santa Crawl, Pirate Crawl, Zombie Crawl and a recent Naughty Disney Party thrown by college kids at UNR.

Read the whole story

Apple Hill bursting with flavors of the season

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

World Apple Day will have its 21st anniversary on the 21st (Friday), and apple experts – nutritionists, markets and producers – from Sonoma to Camino are all telling us the same

thing: They never heard of it.

Californians haven’t exactly adopted World Apple Day – a British idea – but that doesn’t mean apples aren’t getting a lot of attention lately.



Apple Hill has all kinds of apples. Photo/LTN file

Apple Hill just finished its busiest weekend of the year, said Ann Wofford, director of the Apple Hill Growers Association, a collection of 55 orchards and other agricultural businesses in El Dorado County.

Liz Applegate, a nutritionist at UC Davis, is promoting the apple as vigorously as she does all year.

“It does more than keep a doctor away,” she said, alluding to its weight-control benefits.

October is also National Apple Month, according to the U.S. Apple Association.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Recognizing the efforts to upgrade STHS

Publisher's note: ***The following letter was sent to Lake Tahoe Unified School District Superintendent Jim Tarwater and is published with permission.***

Dear Dr. Tarwater:

My wife and I were among the many proud people you addressed at the grand opening of the Tahoe Arts & Design Academy.

We've lived here over 10 years, have one grandchild presently attending high school and another who soon will be. And though I earn my living as a writer and creative professional, words and ideas to express what you have created do not come easily.

I'm aware of the numerous board, staff and team members that worked together to make this dream become a reality. And I'm aware of the thicket of governmental issues you all had to wade through to keep this project on course, on time and on budget.

But at the end of the day, you were the driving force behind it. You were the agent of change. And you are the one who, to your eternal credit, re-opened the Meyers Elementary School and did so in record time. That was when I first became aware of your propensity toward pragmatic and your focus on creating positive change.

What South Tahoe High is now offering is an opportunity of immeasurable proportions.

It's an enlightened portal to the real world. A portal capable of opening minds, inspiring lives and getting students excited about learning. And it's all encased in a stimulating environment positively charged with possibilities.

For those interested in the creative arts, the new theater and its ancillary elements are nothing short of amazing. As someone who has spent endless hours, days and weeks in film production and post-production around the country and the world, I’m thrilled to have this creative learning center in our backyard.

At a time when our local economy is so difficult, with homes being foreclosed and jobs becoming scarcer, it was wonderful to be in a setting that was so upbeat, and hopeful.

We now have a campus that offers our kids the very best and challenges them to take it and make the most of themselves. Whichever direction they want to head, it’s all here and it’s state of the art. I only hope they realize what a valuable asset they have before them.

Thanks again for all that you and your team did. You have created far more than a series of structures. You have created a mind opening, life changing opportunity for our kids and an exciting new reason to be proud to call South Lake Tahoe home.

Sincerely,

James Barr, South Lake Tahoe