Southwest canceling Reno-San Jose nonstop flight

By Yun Long, Reno Gazette-Journal

In April, Jerry Garrity's commute will go from one hour to at least three-and-half hours.

Garrity, 58, makes multiple trips a month between his home in Reno and his real estate brokerage firm near San Jose, Calif., on Southwest Airlines, which handles more than 50 percent of Reno-Tahoe International Airport traffic.

But the airline will permanently discontinue its two daily nonstop flights between the cities in mid-April. Southwest is the only airline to offer nonstop service from Reno to San Jose and vice versa.

"There has always been a nonstop flight from San Jose to Reno," Garrity said. "And to go for a flight to Los Angeles or Las Vegas and then back to San Jose is turning a 50-minute flight into a four-hour-and-10-minute flight."

Read the whole story

Business confab mixes marketing, gaming

Carl Ribaudo, who runs Strategic Marketing Group in South Lake Tahoe and is executive director of Ski Lake Tahoe, will be one of two speakers at a Minden business gathering.

Bill Eadington, professor of economics and director of the Institute for the Study of Gambling and Commercial Gaming at the UNR, will be the other speaker at the Northern Nevada Development Authority, Business Council of Douglas County, and Carson Valley Chamber & Visitors Authority joint membership breakfast meeting.

The Nov. 8 event is from 7-9am at the Carson Valley Inn, 1627 Highway 395, Minden.

Cost is $35 at the door, $25 in advance. To register, go online.

Variety of questions put STPUD candidates on the spot

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – The six candidates running for the South Tahoe Public Utility District board had to think on their feet a bit more than is usual at election forums.

Instead of each being asked the same question, Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe – sponsors of the event, asked different questions of each candidate. This meant no time to think, no time to essentially repeat what had been said before.

Ann Swallow kept the Wednesday afternoon event at Harrah's Lake Tahoe rolling along as each candidate was asked two unique questions. With time remaining, she asked them all to comment on their thoughts about the Brown Act – the California open meeting law.

While not all were able to precisely define what it does, they agreed transparency and openness in government is important – that backroom decisions are not the way to conduct public business.

Claude Gunsch, Mary Kortge, John Runnels and Randy Vogelgesang are vying for the seat being vacated by Marylou Mosbacher, while Dale Rise and Kelly Sheehan are going after the seat Rise currently has.

Here are the questions and answers in the order they were asked:

• What vote by the board in the last year do you disagree with and why?

Gunsch: He could not think of one.

• Who will you vote for for the seat you are not a candidate for and why?

Kortge: Kelly. She is great. I know her and she will do a good job. We share a lot of views.

• Do you believe snowmaking is good or bad for the groundwater supply – and why?

Runnels: The district entered an agreement to supply Heavenly Valley for this purpose. It increases revenues for the district. I don't see a problem with it. As long as the aquifers are replenishing, I see it as a good thing.

• What are your thoughts on term limits for the STPUD board?

Vogelgesang: I have not in the past been a strong proponent for term limits. The longer I have thought about it in relationship to STPUD, I'm in favor of it. The longer you are on the board the tougher it is to be an independent voice on behalf of the community and you side with recommendations from staff too often.

• Do you agree legal counsel should be present at STPUD board meeting, as is now the case? Why?

Rise: I've discussed this with staff. I don't believe counsel should be there. Mostly I've noticed counsel has little interaction during the board meetings. I believe we should have a part time in-house counsel instead of outside counsel.

• If you didn't need a majority of the board, what one change would you make immediately upon being elected?

Sheehan: I would eliminate (district) seats. I would have the top two vote getters be elected.

• How do you expect STPUD to look, operate, function four years after your term expires compared to today?

Gunsch: With my knowledge of the district I can make changes that save ratepayers money with infrastructure.

• With STPUD's water being very drinkable and plastic in landfills considered horrendous, would you back an initiative that had STPUD working with South Lake Tahoe's Sustainability Commission to ban plastic water bottles from being sold in STPUD's jurisdiction or some other related campaign to reduce the sale of water bottles?

Kortge: I'm against water bottles – they cause cancer and all sorts of other things. Maybe we should bottle our own and sell it. I think it would be hard to put a ban on it. People buy a ton of bottled water every day.

• The Desert Research Institute in Reno supports cloud

seeding. Do you think the water districts in the basin should get together to fund their own cloud seeding so more moisture falls and in turn speeds up replenishing the groundwater? Why?

Runnels: No. It's an unnecessary expense. There is no shortage of water. I think the money could be spent on other projects.

• The district last week announced it would be resuming the turf buy-back program. What are your thoughts about the program?

Vogelgesang: In general I think it's great, but with grant money only. If it were funded with our money, I would not support it.

• Liberty Energy offers free energy audits. Part of those audits includes giving out low flow showerheads. Would you support the district installing low flow toilets for customers who want them? Why?

Rise: Yes – anything to slow consumption. We offer a timer for showers. I believe before I got here we had a program for low flow toilets.

• A few years ago the district had a rebate offer for people who bought energy efficient washing machines. What are your thoughts on these sorts of rebate programs?

Sheehan: I agree with anything that doesn't raise rates, but is an incentive to decrease use. But grant money only – no rate increase.

The election is Nov. 8. Vote by mail ballots have already arrived in mailboxes.

Hwy. 267 delays likely as work wraps up

Caltrans is alerting motorists that up to 10 minute delays are excpected on Highway 267 from Oct. 19-21 form 7am-6pm.

Crews are winterizing wrapping up for the construction season.

This work is part of a $2.6 million road improvement project from Northstar Boulevard to Brockway Summit. This project will resume spring 2012.

Event raises money for kids to study geology in Yosemite

Sierra Expeditionary Learning School’s fourth- and fifth-graders will be at the Tahoe Donner Golf Course on Oct. 23 to raise money for a trip to Yosemite so they can learn geology.

The Pitch and Putt event is from noon-5pm. Tickets are $15 for adults, $8 for children, or $45 for a family. The cost includes: Pitch and Putt fun, prizes for all age groups, local pros facilitating the contest, on demand chipping contests and a barbecue lunch.

For more information, contact Julie Brisbin at (530) 414.3602 or jbrisbin@truckeecharterschool.org.

Mountain bikers gathering to work, ride this weekend

It’s all about mountain biking this weekend – riding and trail building. TAMBA says dirt conditions are pretty amazing and the weather will be sunny and in 60s.

Oct. 22 is Trail Day No. 2 on Toads (Saxon Creek. Work will be on the upper sections of Toads, picking up where work was left off last month.

Ride to the work area and then ride down afterward. All tools will be at the site.

Meet at the rock sections at 9:30am, which is about one-half mile down from the intersection of Saxon Creek and the Tahoe Rim Trail. Work will end about 3pm.

Watta Bike Shop will be hosting a free barbecue with drinks for all volunteers. The lunch will be provided on the trail from Yellow Sub, including free Clif Bars. No need to work all day.

Bring water, long sleeves, sunglasses, gloves, your bike.

On Oct. 23 is a group ride from Stagecoach to Star Lake Connector and Cold Creek Trails.

This will showcase what the U.S. Forest Service did this summer with the Star Lake Connector Trail. This section of single track connects the Tahoe Rim Trail at Star Lake down to High Meadow and Cold Creek Trail.

Sunday’s ride will start at Stagecoach Lodge and follow the Rim Trail out to Star Lake, after eating lunch at Star riders then descend down the new Star Connector Trail and continue on to the descent of Cold Creek Trail while ending on Powerlines back to Ski Run Boulevard. Blue Dog Pizza near the Heavenly

Gondola is offering discounted pizza after the ride to all paid TAMBA members.

To carpool, meet at 10:30am on Ski Run Boulevard on the mountain side of Pioneer Trail between Needle Peak (near Hansens Tubing Resort). If you do not need to car pool, meet at 11am at Heavenly's Stagecoach Lodge parking lot.

This ride is about 20 miles, with close to 3,000-vertical feet of climbing and 4,000 vertical of decent over some fun rocky trails.

RSVP to these events by emailing trails@mountainbiketahoe.org.

Perimenopause subject of health talk

The next 2011 Barton Health & Wellness Lecture is Oct. 26 from 6:30 to 7:30pm with Allison Steinmetz from Barton Internal Medicine.

The free event is at Lake Tahoe Community College's board room, 1 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe.

The doctor will discusses perimenopause, which is the process of change that leads up to menopause. She will provide remedy options, natural and hormonal for menopause. Steinmetz believes if women know what to expect, it can ease them into this new phase of life.

For more information, call (530) 543.5656.

National Food Day

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.

Officials working to

eliminate traffic jams by Sand Harbor

By Susan Voyles, Reno Gazette-Journal

On a typical summer day, more than 3,000 people – most of them from Northern Nevada – jam into Sand Harbor State Park on the East Shore of Lake Tahoe.

A long line of vehicles clogs Nevada 28 as motorists wait to pay to enter the park. They park, sometimes illegally, on the side of the road and then walk along the edge of the narrow, two-lane highway.

With the roadway cut between steep slopes, boulders and cliffs, there is simply no place else for people to walk or park. The crowded highway has gotten to the point where park and transportation officials are going to take action by next summer to make the route safer.

“People walk along the highway with coolers, kids and dogs. It’s really no safe place to walk,” said Karen Mullen, a planning consultant for the Tahoe Transportation District and a former Washoe County parks director.

Motorists, including emergency vehicles, can be blocked from heading south on the highway.

“It’s very dangerous,” she said. “Everybody is getting together and working on solutions.”

Read the whole story

Panel discussion for parents about youths drug use

The Youth Task Force is having a parent information meeting Oct. 20 at 5:30pm to discuss drugs and alcohol.

The panel presentation will include law enforcement, drug counselors, doctors and probation officials.

The event is at South Tahoe Middle School’s multipurpose room.

For more information, contact Heather at Tahoe Youth & Family Services, (530) 541.2445.