Time to dispose of prescription drugs

On Oct. 29 from 10am-2pm, the South Lake Tahoe Police Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration will give the public another opportunity to prevent pill abuse and theft by ridding their homes of potentially dangerous expired, unused, and unwanted prescription drugs.



Bring your medications for disposal to Safeway at 1020 Johnson Blvd., South Lake Tahoe. The service is free and anonymous, no questions asked.

Last April, Americans turned in 376,593 pounds – 188 tons – of prescription drugs at nearly 5,400 sites operated by the DEA and more than 3,000 state and local law enforcement partners.

Other jurisdictions throughout the U.S. are collecting drugs the same day.

This initiative addresses a vital public safety and public health issue. Medicines that languish in home cabinets are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse, and abuse. Rates of prescription drug abuse in the U.S. are high, as are the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses due to these drugs. Studies show that a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including from the home medicine cabinet. In addition, Americans are now advised that their usual methods for disposing of unused medicines – flushing them down the toilet or throwing them in the trash – pose potential safety and health hazards.

Four days after the first Take-Back event in September 2010, Congress passed the Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act

of 2010, which amends the Controlled Substances Act to allow an “ultimate user” of controlled substance medications to dispose of them by delivering them to entities authorized by the attorney general to accept them. The act also allows the attorney general to authorize long-term care facilities to dispose of their residents’ controlled substances in certain instances. DEA has begun drafting regulations to implement the act, a process that can take as long as 24 months. Until new regulations are in place, local law enforcement agencies like South Lake Tahoe Police Department and the DEA will continue to have prescription drug take-back events every few months.

Veterans Tribute Concert

Veterans Tribute Concert features 200 students from the Lake Tahoe Unified School District Performing Arts Program.

The free concert is Nov. 10 starting at 7pm in the multipurpose room of South Tahoe Middle School.

Barmuda Triangle in Tahoe City

Get your costume together for Halloween Freak Fest in Tahoe City on Oct. 28 starting at 9pm. Must be 21.

This will be a three venue event creating the Barmuda Triangle in Tahoe City (Jake’s, Hacienda, and Lakeside). The fun starts

at Jake’s On The Lake with a dance party with Ryu, no cover charge, Jello shots, and costume contest at 11pm with money prizes.

At 10pm Hacienda del Lago will have a live band, Jelly Bread (SF), and Lakeside will feature two house DJs, Micah J. (NLT) and Joseph Lee (SF).

Bounce from bar to bar to try the drink specials all night at all three venues.

2-day prescribed burn off Hwy. 28

The North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District is planning on conducting a prescribed burn Oct. 17-18, depending on proper weather conditions and fuel moisture content.

The 23-acre prescribed burn will be in Mill Creek drainage area off of Highway 28.

Smoke resulting from the prescribed burns will affect the surrounding area for approximately 24 to 36 hours. People who are smoke sensitive are advised to stay inside and close their windows and doors as much as possible until the smoke dissipates.

For further information, call (775) 831.0351, ext. 0.

Delays on Highway 50 not completely a thing of the past

While the bulk of the construction on Highway 50 in South Lake Tahoe is done, that doesn’t mean all the work associated with it is.

Today through Oct. 28 the sidewalks between Trout Creek and Rufus Allen Boulevard will be worked on. This means some delays for motorists as well as not being able to turn where you want to.



It's 2011 and South Lake Tahoe is finally getting curbs and gutters. Photo/LTN

The filters to trap the sediment before it reaches Lake Tahoe will be in the ground by the end of the month. One is by the Alta Mira Building and the other is at Campground by the Lake.

Southwest Gas expects to wrap up paving at Al Tahoe and Pioneer Trail, and the work at Park Avenue by Wednesday.

The reason these projects were done at the same time is the

gas main on Highway 50 had to be relocated to Pioneer Trail to accommodate widening the highway.

The separate project at Lakeview Commons – across from the campground at the corner of the highway and Lakeview Avenue – will be ongoing through October. An extension from TRPA and Lahontan Water Board is allowing the work to go past the normal Oct. 15 deadline to stop moving dirt in the basin.

Lakeview Avenue will be closed Oct. 18-19 for grinding and paving.

Caltrans crews will be back in 2012 to keep working on the Highway 50 project, but it's anticipated Pioneer Trail will be open.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Northern Nevada's Great Basin Brewing Co. earned a bronze medal for its Outlaw Oatmeal at the Great American Beer Festival in Denver.

• Sierra-at-Tahoe's annual Pray for Snow Party is at Opal Ultra Lounge inside MontBleu casino in Stateline. The Nov. 10 event starts at 6pm for pass holders, 7pm for the general public.

• Warren Miller's "Like There's No Tomorrow" will be shown in the MontBleu Theater in Stateline on Nov. 18 and Nov. 19. Doors open at 6:30pm, with the movie at 7:30pm. Tickets are

$16 plus tax and fees. It will be shown at CalNeva on the North Shore on Nov. 25 and Nov. 26 at 7:30pm.

• Roberta Montalbano is now El Dorado County Office of Education's associate superintendent of Administrative Services.

• Find out where the 7 Best Ski Destinations on Earth are. Read to the bottom – Tahoe is in the mix.

• This is Caltrans' Sierra roadwork schedule for this week.

War on pot industry escalates to threats against media

By Michael Montgomery, California Watch

A U.S. attorney in Southern California says she is preparing to go after newspapers, radio stations and other media outlets that advertise medical marijuana dispensaries, an escalation in the Obama administration's newly invigorated war against the state's pot industry.

This month, U.S. attorneys representing four districts in California announced that the government would single out landlords and property owners who rent buildings or land where dispensaries sell or cultivators grow marijuana. Media outlets could be next.

U.S. Attorney Laura Duffy, whose district includes Imperial and San Diego counties, said marijuana advertising is the next area she's "going to be moving onto as part of the enforcement efforts in Southern California."

Duffy said she could not speak for the three other U.S. attorneys in the state, but noted their efforts have been coordinated so far.

Sacramento's U.S. attorney, Benjamin Wagner, told The Chronicle that newspapers "are not a focus of our enforcement efforts," and he has no plans to prosecute them for running ads. U.S. Attorney Andre Birotte of Los Angeles has not taken any actions against media outlets that advertise dispensaries, said spokesman Thom Mrozek.

Read the whole story

South Lake Tahoe solidifies job cuts, budget up for vote

By Kathryn Reed

On Tuesday, the South Lake Tahoe City Council is being asked to layoff 19 people, not fund six open positions, reduce the hours of three employees, reclassify four people, and either establish or reclassify six other positions.

The action would equate to a $1.7 million savings in fiscal year 2011-12, and $2.2 million the following year.

The savings comes from salaries, pension payments, health care, workers' comp and everything else the city as an employer must pay.

South Lake Tahoe's fiscal year begins Oct. 1. With the council unwilling to pass a budget last month because of ongoing labor negotiations, it is operating on an emergency budget for this month.

On the Oct. 18 agenda are agreements to be ratified by the council with the South Lake Tahoe Firemen's Association and Stationary Engineers Local 39 (General and Public Works).

While the council had a special closed session meeting Oct. 14 to discussion labor negotiations, no reportable action was taken. However, people close to the negotiations have told *Lake Tahoe News* agreements with the other employee groups are possible before Tuesday's 9am meeting. If this were to occur, either a special meeting will be called to vote on contract changes or it could be incorporated into the next regular meeting in November. An addendum to the budget would be made to reflect the changes.

The positions slated for elimination include:

• Assistant engineer – one position

• Engineering manager – one position

• Engineering supervisor/stormwater coordinator – one position

• Fire division chief – three positions

• Heavy equipment operator – two positions

• Housing and redevelopment assistant – one position

• Lead street maintenance worker – two positions

• Legal assistant – one position

• Public works inspector – one position

• Recreation supervisor – two positions

• Recreation coordinator – one position

• Senior accounting technician – two positions

• Special events coordinator – one position

The positions not being funded include:

• Fire chief

• Firefighter

• Information systems technician

• Police officer

• Police sergeant

• Street maintenance worker

• Parks maintenance worker

The following positions are being created:

• Accountant (one position)

• Construction engineer (new classification, one position)

• Director of engineering (new at-will classification, one position)

• Environmental programs analyst (one position)

• Fire marshal (one position, unrepresented)

• Recreation program coordinator (new classification, one position)

Other personnel changes:

• Fire shift commander (three current employees reclassified

from fire captain)

• Human resources technician (one incumbent reclassified from senior human resources administrative clerk)

• Three administrative assistants going from 40 to 32 hours per week.

Employees will be officially notified the same day the council votes, with changes effective 30 days later.

While talk on the street is those left behind are getting raises, this is only a partially correct statement. After two years, furloughs are being eliminated for most city employees. They will be paid for their time worked. Their hourly wage is not increasing. Their take-home pay increases because they are working more. In most dictionaries, that scenario does not define a raise.

If one uses the city manager as an example, the contract Tony O'Rourke signed in August 2010 called for a salary of $175,000 year. He has yet to be paid that because furloughs immediately meant his pay was $150,000. Though his pay is restored, the net effect of paying his share of PERS means his annual check is $161,000.

For the public, it means 23,000 hours more of service available each year. Those hours also equal to the salary of 11 full-time employees.

The lack of employees working is most noticeable with the road crew. Many of the snowplow drivers work roads in the dry months. But with all the overtime accrued while plowing and the inability to take furlough days because Mother Nature doesn't cooperate, is means about a third of the road crew at any give time isn't working during the summer/fall to get the back time for hours worked during the winter. This is one reason potholes go unfilled for long stretches.

It’s possible still that some of the snowplow drivers originally set to be laid off will remain on the city’s payroll.

The overall difference in savings from this fiscal year to next is in large part based on paying out accrued sick and vacation time, along with any severance that may have been negotiated.

While many have said that cuts should come from the top – that has happened. Most of those jobs were slashed in March. Overall, the reduction in staff from the spring saved the city $1.8 million. Of the nearly $3.6 million in personnel savings this calendar year, 53 percent of that comes from management cutbacks. Management-type employees represent 15 percent of the city’s workforce.

Even though it’s slashing of the budget that is the focus, the city is looking at ways to increase revenue. However, the three main revenue sources still remain – property tax (with many saying the Tahoe area has not hit bottom even though the 2011-12 budget calls for a modest increase), hotel tax (talk of raising it in 2013 to pay for roads), and sales tax (which is flat). Not much can be done to increase those sources of revenue.

A suggestion brought up by a member of the public to charge utilities for cutting city roads could bring in about $70,000 a year. With the work done this construction year, it might have been four times that amount.

A recreation tax is being talked about for 2013. The city has a multi-decade agreement with Heavenly Mountain Resort that lift tickets cannot be taxed. This was done when ASC owned the ski resort.

The budget is slated to be discussed at 2pm Tuesday. The meeting starts at 9am at Lake Tahoe Airport. This is the Oct. 18 City Council agenda. Mayor Hal Cole will start the morning

with the state of the city address.

Treat Street returns to S. Tahoe with help of TRYP

Trick or treat with Tahoe Regional Young Professionals at KRLT's annual Treat Street on Oct. 31 from 5-8pm.

Every Halloween KRLT takes over a local motel and fills rooms with local businesses and nonprofits to hand out candy to kids in a safe, controlled environment. Thousands of children attend decked out as superheroes, princesses, magicians, monsters or in some creative creation at Pine Cone Acre Motel (735 Emerald Bay Road, South Lake Tahoe).

TRYP members and volunteers will be passing out candy, serving hot cocoa and s'mores – in and around the haunted house. TRYP needs volunteers from 4-6pm and 7-10pm. Email TahoeTRYP@gmail.com to volunteer, to donate candy deliver bags to to Brandi Ledbetter-Brown at Tahoe Production House, on Highway 50 near Tahoe Keys Café and the car wash.

Brownie Troop honoring founder and a Tahoe newborn

Girl Scout Leader Tammy Blanchard and her South Lake Tahoe Brownie Troop No. 123 intend to "make the world a better place" by remembering and celebrating the founder of the Girl

Scouts of the USA, Juliette Gordon “Daisy” Low’s, on her birth date – Oct. 31.

The troop will be honoring the first-to-be-born-on-that-day baby girl at the Barton Memorial Hospital by furnishing a basket of baby products and handmade birthday cards.



South Lake Tahoe Brownie Troop No. 123

Founded in 1912, Girl Scouts of the USA is a leadership development organization for girls, with 3.2 million girl and adult members worldwide. Girl Scouts of the Sierra Nevada, with whom Troop 123 is affiliated, serves more than 6,400 girls with assistance from 1,900 volunteers in 23 counties in Northern Nevada and Eastern California.

To donate new baby items for the basket, contact Girl Scout volunteer Linda Kabealo at (760) 238.0091, or Peggy Wright at Barton Memorial Hospital (530) 543.5547.