SNC changes leadership to save money

Richard Rubsamen tendered his resignation as president of Sierra Nevada College on Friday.

Provost Lynn Gillette will be the new president effective Nov. 1.

Board member and Finance Committee Chair Atam Lalchandani announced to staff and faculty on Oct. 7 that Rubsamen made the offer recognizing that administration costs were top-heavy. He further noted that Rubsamen's leadership is evidenced in the continued success of the college over recent years.

"I was tasked by the board with planning for financial sustainability in order to insure the long term health of the college. It was clear to me where reductions had to occur. While the idea of leaving the college is very difficult, it is the right thing to do. I need to lead by example and practice what we teach," Rubasmen said in a statement.

Adminstration and staff were asked to take cuts of 5 percent to 10 percent, while faculty saw no pay reductions. Rubsamen will continue at the college working with the board to ensure a smooth transition for several months.

California Assembly reports

on lawmakers' spending misleads public

By Jim Sanders, Sacramento Bee

Assembly records show that Bob Blumenfield spent $150,099 to run his office for the first eight months of this legislative year.

None of his colleagues, in fact, spent more than $297,579, according to budget information Assembly leaders recently made public.

Yet the Woodland Hills Democrat actually spent more than three times that much, because salaries of some of his personal staff were charged to the budget committee he chairs, a Bee analysis shows. Spending reported for other members is similarly misleading.

The Assembly routinely underreports the amount of money used to run legislators' personal offices and overreports the operating costs of committees that do the brunt of the policy work in the house. The practice obscures how the lower house's $146.7 million budget truly is spent at the Capitol and protects legislators from public criticism of their spending.

Chiefs of staff for 40 of 52 Democratic lawmakers, for example, do not count as a member expense in records released to the public.

More than 170 aides bankrolled by committees are not committee staff – they serve as personal office aides to the chairman or chairwoman, The Bee found.

The key issue is not accounting but transparency: Californians pay the tab but have no practical way of determining how much each lawmaker spends to run his or her office.

“The Legislature and its leadership have perfected shell games to an art form,” said Jon Coupal, president of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association.

Others say the Assembly’s practices are neither new nor unreasonable because duties tend to overlap between committees and legislative offices.

“You’re looking for black and white,” Assembly administrator Jon Waldie said of job duties. “Black and white doesn’t exist in this building.”

Read the whole story

Vail Resorts’ CEO talks about the future of the ski industry

By SKI

As CEO of Vail Resorts, which owns Vail, Beaver Creek, Breckenridge, Heavenly, Northstar and other properties and ventures, Rob Katz oversees one of the largest and most sophisticated ski-resort operations in the world. Katz is a strong believer in the power of emerging technologies to connect skiers to each other and to their favorite mountains.

SKI › What areas of a resort’s operation will change the most in the immediate future?

RK › Snowmaking. The snowmaking of the future will use vastly less energy and will have a very tight system of recycling water, automated in such a way that snow is only made in

exactly the right moments during the day, and you can use snowmaking not just for early or late season but also cost effectively during the season to continually optimize the conditions.

SKI › How will skiers and boarders get to the top of the mountain?

RK › We will still be using the same basic technologies, but the lifts will run much faster, be much larger and will carry more people. The process will be more streamlined, but the modern lift system works pretty well today. We need to make it easier to get from your transportation to the lifts. That's where you could see giant conveyor belts.

SKI › What about trails? How will they differ?

RK › Trail design hasn't changed radically in the past 75 years. Honestly, we don't want to alter the mountain experience so much that people lose a sense of nature. Terrain parks are a completely different story. There is unlimited potential for new features and experiences. You could ski loop-de-loops, moderating thrill and creativity with safety. The runs will look the same. The parks, however, will look nothing like today.

Read the whole story

Ways to celebrate October being World Vegetarian

Awareness Month

By Toby Amidor, Food Network

Meat, dairy and high-fat ingredients are often used to add texture and flavor to recipes. Problem is, you might also be adding artery-clogging saturated fat and cholesterol. But eating a plant-based meal doesn’t mean a tasteless one – make these ingredient swaps to create flavorful, filling meals with less (or no) meat and dairy.

Instead of: Beef

Try: Mushrooms

Mushrooms have a firm texture a ton of rich flavor, so they’re a perfect substitute for meat. Use finely chopped porcini mushrooms for a meat-free bolognese sauce, add sliced mushrooms to chili or stew or use Portabello mushroom as a hamburger substitute.

Instead of: Chicken

Try: Tofu

Firm tofu absorbs whatever flavor you add to the dish and maintains a meat-like texture when cooked in a stir-fry, stew, chili and pasta dishes.

Instead of: Cream Sauce

Try: Homemade Plant-Based Sauces and Chunteys

Creamy sauces are a delicious once-in-awhile treat, but choosing more healthful ones for everyday meals will save you a boatload of calories and fat! Try making your own tomato, miso or barbecue sauce. Or, top your main course with a homemade fruit or veggie chutney.

Read the whole story

Control burns in Tunnel Creek area

The Nevada Division of Forestry will be conducting prescribed burns at Tunnel Creek in the Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park backcountry during October and November, weather permitting.

The Tunnel Creek road from Highway 28 to Tunnel Creek Station may be closed in order to conduct the burns. Signs will be posted throughout the area when burns are being conducted.

Nearly 100 acres will be treated in 15 phases.

The burns are part of ongoing fuels treatment and forest restoration efforts in the Lake Tahoe area.

The Tunnel Creek burns are being conducted by the Nevada Division of Forestry in cooperation with the Division of State Parks, Division of State Lands and the North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District.

Contact Robert Gregg at (775) 684.2725 for additional information.

Tahoe City community workshop

The community workshop to talk about changes in Tahoe City will be Oct. 17 at 6pm at Granlibakken.

Later this year the North Tahoe Fire Protection District will

be moving into a new Tahoe City station located on Fairway Drive. This will leave the existing building, located in downtown Tahoe City at West Commons, vacant.

A group of community members representing various agencies and organizations including the North Lake Tahoe Historical Society, the Tahoe City Downtown Association, the North Lake Tahoe Resort Association, the North Tahoe Fire Protection District, the Tahoe City PUD and Placer County formed the West Commons Steering Committee. This committee commissioned a small study to come up with several alternatives for the site.

This is what the meeting is all about, as well as to find out what the public would like done with the site.

Film delves into honey bee crisis

John Miller from Miller Honey Farms will share insights on the history of honeybees and there will be a screening of “Queen of the Sun: What are the bees telling us?” plus a honey tasting at Cedar House Sport Hotel in Truckee on Oct. 27.

“Queen of the Sun” investigates the dire global bee crisis through biodynamic beekeepers, scientists and philosophers.

Learn about Miller in Hannah Nordhaus’ book “The beekeeper’s lament: How one man and half a million honeybees help feed America.”

Doors open at 5:30pm, with the film at 6pm, followed by guest speaker and tasting.

Tickets may be purchased in advance online for $10.

Lane files another plan with bankruptcy court

By Kathryn Reed

On the second anniversary of filing for bankruptcy on the scrapped convention center project in South Lake Tahoe, Randy Lane filed a fourth amended reorganization plan.

What he filed Oct. 4 asks for more time – 270 days. The bankruptcy judge in Sacramento is expected to make a ruling Nov. 1. Creditors and other interested parties have until Oct. 18 to offer the court their opinions on that idea.



Four years after the convention center project broke ground it sits idle. Photo/LTN

South Lake Tahoe City Attorney Patrick Enright has indicated his office will be objecting to Lane's request for an extension.

"The plan is to continue to try to work with the people we are

working with, but they are new to the project," Lane told *Lake Tahoe News*. "As I've said for the last four years, I have not given up and I don't intend to until they tell me there is nothing else I can do."

He would not elaborate on who is speaking with or what the 11 plus acres might look like in the future. But he did emphasize the people he is speaking are not the same people who he was talking to two years ago. Two years ago it was Vail Resorts that wanted to operate the hotel that was envisioned.

South Lake Tahoe officials allowed Lane in 2007 to pour the foundation on what was slated to be a more than $400 million convention center-hotel project near the state line without having a consolidated parcel map or secured financing.

Because of this it means multiple people own the fenced off concrete and rebar site – which makes resolution of the bankruptcy proceedings more complicated. Some of the debtors have not foreclosed. Lane owns 13 of the 29 parcels.

Lane is also trying to have the property tax structure changed. A hearing on that is scheduled for March 2012.

STPUD board member, employee at odds

By Kathryn Reed

South Tahoe Public Utility District board members are expected to be given a report at their next meeting about an investigation into whether board President Dale Rise created a hostile work environment for an employee.

At the Oct. 6 board meeting Charlie Solt, employee rep with Local No. 39, said during public comment the worker is requesting the board take appropriate action. What that action might or could be was not discussed.



Dale Rise

Solt said the matter stems from a July altercation.

Richard Solbrig, STPUD executive director, said, “We’ve done a thorough investigation. We have a preliminary report. We are waiting the recommendation from our labor attorney.”

Solbrig said the board at its Oct. 20 meeting should be given a copy of the executive summary for review.

The employee’s name has not been made public.

After the meeting Rise told *Lake Tahoe News* he received a letter Oct. 5 clearing him of the hostile work environment charge, but said he would not make the letter available until the board discusses the matter later this month.

Before speaking with *LTN*, Rise consulted with Solbrig and STPUD attorney Gary Kvistad about what he could say.

“I broke a policy issue. I’m not supposed to talk policy with employees,” Rise said.

Rise was at the sewer and water district on business for his construction business when the alleged incident occurred. He wasn’t there as a board member.

Although Kenny Curtzwiler spoke at Thursday’s meeting – saying

how the investigation was one-sided and that he was part of the complaint – Rise told *LTN* that in fact Curtzwiler was not at the district office when the alleged incident occurred and therefore was not an eyewitness as he made it sound when he addressed the board.

Transporting firewood could mean moving invasive species

As part of a nationwide effort to encourage the public to buy and burn firewood locally, CalFire and the California Firewood Task Force kicked off a public outreach campaign this fall to inform campers, wood cutters, arborists, and the general public about the risks of long-distance movement of firewood.



"Firewood can carry insects and pathogens that may or may not be visible, making it impossible to know if you are transporting an invasive pest from one location to another when moving it," CalFire's Don Owen, chair of the California Firewood Task Force, said in a statement. "Once an invasive species is established in a new area, it can do a lot of damage environmentally and economically as the trees in those areas have no natural defenses to fight off pest attack."

The multi-pronged campaign includes surveying camper knowledge about invasive species and firewood in areas affected by the goldspotted oak borer (an invasive beetle in San Diego County likely brought into the state on firewood), providing firewood posters to campgrounds and parks for posting in public locations, mailing information to industry professionals, and

offering educational Frisbees and playing cards to campers as a way to facilitate one on one interaction with campers while also providing them with useful information.

“As we increasingly become a global community, the movement of invasive pests and pathogens is becoming more frequent. Buying and burning wood locally is a simple way to help minimize the chances of spreading invasive species, and it is something everyone can do with little impact,” Owen said. “The feedback gathered through the surveys will be useful for developing our long-term outreach campaign, helping us ensure that we reach out to our audience as effectively as possible.”