Tahoe City’s Fanny Bridge in need of rehab

By Tony Bizjak, Sacramento Bee

After 83 years of service, Tahoe City’s landmark – but crumbling – Fanny Bridge may soon be relieved of major duty.

Transportation officials have drawn up several alternatives for replacing or supplementing the historic concrete bridge over the Truckee River with a new span a few hundred feet to the north. The new span, possibly four lanes, could help relieve congestion where Highway 89 crosses the river in Tahoe City and improve safety in emergency situations when more vehicles may be trying to get to or from west shore communities.

Read the whole story

Season, timing right for native mountain white fish

By Jill Oberly, Reno Gazette-Journal

Cast. Reel. Repeat. The motions of fly fishing on the Truckee River have a rhythm.

Until the moment a line goes taught, and you discover an unusual-looking fish on the end of your line.

It’s the bottom-feeding mountain whitefish, and it’s about as local as a fish in these parts gets.

Unlike rainbow or brown trout, the mountain whitefish is native to the Truckee River and the Lahontan Basin, as well as Carson and Walker Rivers.

“I hear all the time, people catch them and throw them on the banks thinking they are a trash fish, but they’re not,” said Kim Tisdale, western regions fishery supervisor for the Nevada Department of Wildlife.

The fish often is discarded by anglers. But it is native to the Silver State, and Nevada Department of Wildlife experts said fly fishing for the whitefish, a fall spawner, is about to hit its peak.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Unity at the Lake celebrates International Peace Day on Sept. 21 from 5:30-6:00pm at Regan Beach in South Lake Tahoe. For more info, call (530) 544.2266.

• Need news from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency? The agency has an e-newsletter.

• Nevada Division of State Parks is having a meeting Oct. 12 from 3-5pm to receive comments on regulations about possession or use of weapons in parks. The meeting is in Las Vegas, but will be video-conferenced to the department’s Carson City offices.

• Blue Angel Café in South Tahoe has a deal where if you catch

the fish, they will cook it for you. Call (530) 544.6544 for details.

• South Tahoe High’s boy’s cross country team is having a fundraiser at Berts’ Cafe Sept. 21 from 5:30-7:30pm. Ten dollars buys a salad, spaghetti dinner, and drink.

• Here is Caltrans’ Sierra roadwork schedule for next week, as well as the El Dorado-Tahoe schedule.

Organized ride along S. Tahoe bike paths

On Sunday, a group bike ride called the Tahoe Bike Fun Ride will leisurely ride along South Lake Tahoe’s bike path system from Stateline to Camp Richardson and then back to Stateline.

Led by members of the Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition, bicyclists will meet at the Van Sickle Bi-State Park’s barn under the Heavenly Gondola at 12:30pm. A recreation specialist from the California Tahoe Conservancy will be on hand to share their plans for the future bike trails connecting to the park.

At 1pm, the cycling group will head out along the bicycle path system. The ride is free and anyone on a bike. Youth under the age 18 must wear a helmet.

The ride is approximately 14 miles roundtrip. A support vehicle will be provided for anyone choosing to return to Stateline via the vehicle. The ride may last about three hours depending on group size, number of stops, and skill level.

Opinion: Recreation on USFS land helping California's economy

By John Heil

Outdoor recreation activities in California's national forests contributed $2 billion to local economies and helped sustain an estimated 38,000 jobs in 2010.

The U.S. Forest Service's National Visitor Use Monitoring report released last month shows national forests attracted 170.8 million recreational visitors nationwide and sustained approximately 223,000 jobs in rural communities across the country.

"The Forest Service is proud to be a vital part of our local communities by providing both recreational pastimes and vital economic sustainability," said Randy Moore, Pacific Southwest regional forester. "Outdoor activities are important to California residents and to the visitors who use local hotels, restaurants, or buy groceries and gasoline in the communities in and around the national forests."

National forests in California received nearly 30 million visitors in 2010. The Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, Inyo, Angeles, San Bernardino and Shasta-Trinity National Forests had a combined total of approximately 19 million visitors.

National Forests in California account for 17 percent of National Forest recreation nationwide. The forests offer unique outdoor recreation opportunities such as Mt. Shasta,

Lake Tahoe, Mt. Whitney, and the Big Sur coast, as well as important ecological and prehistoric sites.

“As we seek to improve the health, diversity and productivity of the nation’s forests and grasslands, we have made ecological restoration a top priority,” Moore said. “We want to provide quality recreational experiences and real economic and social growth for generations to come.”

According to the U.S. Forest Service’s National Visitor Use Monitoring Report:

· Recreation activities on National Forests and Grasslands sustain 223,000 jobs in the rural communities within 50 miles of the national forests and grasslands, where visitors purchase goods and services for their recreational activity.

· Visitors spend $13 billion directly in those communities within 50 miles of the national forests and grasslands.

· Visitor satisfaction is very high, with an overall satisfaction rate of 94 percent.

· Approximately 83 percent of visitors are content with the value received for any fees paid.

· Nearly 95 million visitors (over 55 percent) come to a forest to primarily engage in physical activity.

Results of the National Visitor Use Monitoring Report are online.

John Heil works for the U.S. Forest regional office in Vallejo.

Ross Stores thrive as buyers look for discounts

By Ashley Lutz and Jeran Wittenstein, Bloomberg News

Ross Stores Inc. is outperforming rival chains in a sluggish economy, luring budget-conscious shoppers with 60 percent discounts on Calvin Klein shirts and Nike sneakers.

At a market value of $8.7 billion, Ross is now less than $100 million away from overtaking Gap Inc., despite having a third as many stores and no e-commerce site. Ross' stock has climbed 18 percent this year, while Gap has dropped 28 percent.

Ross CEO Michael Balmuth keeps promotions and fashion displays minimal to maintain low prices, while placing buyers in New York and Los Angeles to guarantee the Pleasanton company gets hip merchandise.

In a time of high unemployment and falling consumer confidence, the strategy has paid off. Sales gained 9.3 percent last quarter, and the company has raised its forecast for profit this year.

"Consumers haven't ever fully recovered from 2008, and trade-downs to cheaper merchandise aren't embarrassing for people anymore," said Pamela Quintiliano, an analyst with Oppenheimer & Co. "As department stores continue to restrain orders, factories in China are willing to sell to Ross to stay in business."

Ross got its start in 1957 as a full-priced department store in San Bruno. The chain shifted to discounting in 1982, when the store was still limited to the Bay Area. Business has boomed steadily since the start of the most recent recession, with sales rising 41 percent since 2007 to $7.87 billion in the company's last fiscal year.

Ross now has about 1,000 locations, compared with 3,300 for San Francisco’s Gap, including its Banana Republic, Old Navy, Piperlime and Athleta brands.

Placer County offering Community Awareness Academy

The Placer County Sheriff’s Office is looking for people to participate in next month’s Community Awareness Academy.

The series of eight classes gives people an inside look at the agency. Each of the eight sessions covers a different topic. Classes are Oct. 4-27 on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6 to 9pm at the Community Room of the Placer County sheriff’s headquarters in Auburn.

To sign-up or reserve a spot, call Lynn Harrison at (916) 652.2419, or email lharriso@placer.ca.gov.

---

2 South Shore bike projects gain significant momentum

By Kathryn Reed

While implementation of new bike trails at Lake Tahoe seems to move at a glacial pace, on the same day boards on both sides of the South Shore unanimously approved aspects of different projects that will eventually link together.

First came the approval Thursday by the California Tahoe Conservancy board (with Larry Sevison absent) to spend $50,000 that will fund appraisals, preliminary title reports, easement descriptions, maps, surveys and application fees. Also approved was the mitigated negative declaration and mitigation monitoring report for the South Tahoe Greenway.



Rabe Meadow is where the first section of the Stateline-to-Stateline bike trail will be built -- starting June 2012. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The original 9-plus mile trail from Meyers to Stateline has been condensed to 3.86 miles starting in Sierra Tract and ending at Van Sickle Bi-State Park.

“The highest priority is to connect Bijou Park and the community college,” project manager Sue Rae Irelan told the board Sept. 15.

CTC is scheduled to go before the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency board in October for a project permit, which if approved, would be good for three years.

Irelan told *Lake Tahoe News* the earliest construction could begin is 2013. Funding will be the next biggest hurdle.

Deputy Director Ray Lacey reminded those at the meeting at Riva Grill that when the Conservancy was first founded 30 years ago one of the main goals was to acquire the old Caltrans right-of-way.

Three decades later, that is being done, with the Greenway following much of the route that at one time would have been a highway.

While part of the land is still going to be paved for the bike trail, it won't be as wide, nor will it have the other environmental impacts a road would require. However, board member and South Lake Tahoe Councilwoman Angela Swanson said the city would like permission for its motorcycle cops to access the trail when necessary. Silence followed her comment.

That afternoon in Stateline, Douglas County commissioners unanimously approved four items related to the State-to-Stateline Bikeway.

The 30-mile route is broken up into three main sections – the South Demo project, central area, and North Demo project. It goes from Stateline to Crystal Bay.

It is the 3.2-mile South Demo project in Douglas County that will be built first. The final design is expected in February, bids sought in April, and dirt being moved in June.

This will be built in three phases, ideally in three consecutive building seasons, according to Alfred Knotts. He is project manager with Tahoe Transportation District – the lead agency.

A joint environmental assessment has been signed off by the TRPA and U.S. Forest Service.

The three South Shore segments are broken up as follows:

• Casino area to Kahle Drive

• Kahle Drive to Elks Point Road

• Elks Point Road to Round Hill Pines.

The middle section will be built first because it is all on Forest Service land through Rabe Meadow.

“It’s a heavily used trail in the existing form,” Knotts told the commissioners.

The latter section will finally provide non-motorized access to the beach at Round Hill Pines – also a Forest Service property.

Planning has begun on the north end, with a site visit last week. More difficult terrain issues exist there. A meeting about that section is scheduled for Oct. 5 at 6pm at the Chateau in Incline Village.

First Reno Air Races crash to involve spectators; 3 dead

By Reno Gazette-Journal

10:06pm update: A spectacular air race that drew tens of thousands of spectators Friday transformed into a horrific war scene after a veteran pilot crashed his vintage plane on the tarmac just feet away from VIP box seats, forcing officials to cancel the remaining two days of the event.

Early estimates were that three people, including pilot Jimmy Leeward, 74, of Ocala Fla., died in the crash at the National

Championship Air Races. But that number was likely to increase, based on witnesses who described the scene as “carnage.” At least 54 were injured, 12 in critical condition.



The plane as it crashed in Reno on Sept. 16. Photo/Ward Hughes courtesy of Reno Gazette-Journal

The National Transportation Safety Board took over the investigation Friday evening. A three-person team was already at the Reno Stead Airport, where the air races take place, in case of a crash. This was the first fatal crash at the Air Races since 2007, when three pilots during the event. This was the first crash in the event’s history to involve spectators.

Witnesses said the pilot appeared to lose control of his P-51 Mustang called the Galloping Ghost due to a mechanical malfunction, and he put it into the ground instead of keeping it on the path into the stands, potentially saving hundreds of lives.

“He was a very experienced, talented and qualified pilot,” said Mike Houghton, executive director of the Air Races, which have been in Reno since 1964.

Leeward had been flying since he was 14 and had competed in the air races since 1975. His medical records were up to date

and his flying history was clean, Houghton said.

The plane disintegrated on impact, sending shrapnel into the crowd and tearing limbs off bodies, while the blast from the explosion ripped clothes off some spectators, witnesses said.

Read the whole story

Zephyr Cove family escapes injury at Reno Air Races

By Kathryn Reed

A ticket seller recommended the Dauschers not buy box seats for today's Reno Air Races. It may have saved the Zephyr Cove family's lives.

"We were sitting in the stands, maybe a half football field away. It was close … a little too close for comfort," Ellen Dauscher told *Lake Tahoe News* minutes after returning home tonight with daughter Jillian and husband Andy. "It was the last race of the day. All of a sudden one plane pulled from the pack. It went straight up and then was nose-diving. They also had aerobatics in the day. I thought he was going to pull out."

The pilot of the P-51 Mustang Galloping Ghost died on impact. The death toll from the Sept. 16 crash at the Reno Stead Airport was at three as of 7:30pm, with it expected to climb. Dozens were injured.

The plane landed at the VIP, handicapped area, with shrapnel scattering into the box seats, according to the South Shore witnesses. Had they bought the box seats, it could have been a

different outcome for these three.

Jillian Dauscher, 17-year-old senior at Whittell High School, said, “We were leaving and then heard a guy behind us talking. He was closer. It was terrible. He saw arms and legs in different places and didn’t see a full attached body.”

Dauscher is on her way to obtaining her pilot’s license. She was supposed to take her cross-country flight Saturday. That has been postponed. But she called her instructor and will be in the air with him instead. (She flies out of Lake Tahoe Airport.)

“I know I can do it, but it will be hard to get right back out tomorrow after witnessing this today,” the young pilot said.

Her mom grew up in a flying family, having gone to hundreds of air shows without witnessing an accident.

“I’m just so sad for the people who were injured and killed today. All I can think about is we were very lucky,” Ellen Dauscher said.

South Lake Tahoe City Councilman Tom Davis left the Reno Air Races minutes before the plane crashed.

He had been there the better part of the day, but wanted to beat traffic so he left.

But he had seen the P-51 Mustang Galloping Ghost in the pit earlier in the day.

When countless ambulances, police and fire trucks went by, he knew it had to be a crash, but looking back didn’t see any smoke. While the plane did not catch fire, it left a sea of destruction.

Davis has been going to the show for close to three decades, and was there in 1999 when Gary Levitz’s P-51 split apart.

“I saw Levitz’s plane disintegrate in front of me,” Davis told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Prior to Sept. 16, 16 people had died in the races, which first started in 1964.