South Tahoe police to be armed with defibrillators

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe residents going into cardiac arrest are about to have a greater chance of survival because more people patrolling the streets are getting trained how to use defibrillators.



The police department spent $10,752.86 on 10 automated external defibrillators for officers.

“It’s important to save lives. We’ve had occasions where cops initiated CPR,” Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*. “This tool is very important to help improve the chances for survival when a person has a sudden cardiac arrest.”

Officers are undergoing training on the apparatus. Before they are put to use the El Dorado County medical director must give final approval.

Officers across the country have been using the medical device for years. Studies show the survival rate dwindles by 10 percent each minute after cardiac arrest begins when the patient does not receive defibrillation.

With police officers often being the first to a scene, the theory is lives will be saved with them having defibrillators instead of waiting for an ambulance.

Workshop about immigration compliance

The North Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce and the Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the Sierra Human Resources Association are offering an Immigration Compliance Workshop on Sept. 22 from 8:30-11am at the Village at Squaw Valley, Mountain Stream Conference Room, 1750 Village East Road, Olympic Valley.

In this workshop, attendees will learn about Form I-9 eligibility verification “best practices” and immigration-related record-keeping requirements, including Form I-9 Do’s and Don’ts, how to create a LCA Public Access File required for employees on an H-1B visa, how to properly document a leave of absence, how to record a bona fide termination when terminating a foreign national employee and how to deal with an audit. The speaker is Gali Schaham Gordon, who practices immigration law in San Francisco where she represents both corporate and individual clients.

Registration is $60 for SHRA and chamber members and $70 for non-members. Seating is limited.

To register and for more information about the workshop, call Laura Moriarty of SHRA at (530) 573.0224 or North Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce Manager Kym Fabel at (530) 581.8764.

Bear hunt protest rally

A bear hunt protest is scheduled on Sept. 16 from 5:30-7pm in Incline Village. For more information, click on bear rally.

Vail Resorts expanding its brand on Internet with acquisitions

By Denver Business Journal

A division of Vail Resorts Inc. said Wednesday it purchased the ski report website SkiReport.com.

The purchase was made by Vail Resorts subsidiary Mountain News Corp., which already operates the website OnTheSnow.com.

Financial terms weren’t disclosed.

The two websites will be merged for the 2011-12 ski season.

Mountain News (which has nothing to do with any media in the Lake Tahoe Basin) said the merger will boost unique annual visitors to the website to more than 12 million. OnTheSnow has been attracting about 9.6 million unique annual visitors.

Read the whole story

STHS student part of dive team studying shark behavior

South Tahoe High junior Sid Loomis will go to great depths to satisfy her curiosity about life under water.

The 16-year-old left for Southern California today to be part of a dive team led by Scott Cassell.



Sid Loomis and
Scott Cassell

On Sept. 17 a team will dive from Catalina to Cabrillo Aquarium near Long Beach. The intent is to not surface for the nearly 30 miles.

Loomis' jobs as lead student ambassador are to drive the boat, oversee the safety of the divers and take pictures.

"The Undersea Voyager Project is trying to raise awareness of the lack of sharks on this swim," explained Carry Loomis, Sid's mother.

The younger Loomis was a crewmember in 2009 when Cassell brought a submersible to study Lake Tahoe and Fallen Leaf Lake. She has also participated in dives last year in Catalina and Bodega Bay.

The group's progress may be followed online.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Artist’s reception in Meyers features watercolors on silk

A reception for Dorothy Davis’s collection “Around the Lake in Silk” will be at Bona Fide HQ in Meyers on Sept. 29 from 5:30-7:30pm.

The event is free. Refreshments and entertainment will be provided.



“Around the Lake in Silk” is a collection of watercolor paintings on silk, featuring iconic Lake Tahoe landscapes, which include images from the Angora Fire and local wildlife.

A 14-year resident of South Lake Tahoe, Davis is a native Californian, born into a family of artists. She has long been fascinated by the natural beauty of the basin, attempting to capture it in whatever medium is at her disposal. She considers herself an expressionistic painter and is best known for her silks, but also works in oil, watercolor, printmaking, sculpture and ceramics. Davis has studied art techniques at local colleges, and has attended plein air workshops with renowned artists such as Charles Movalli, Addie Chernus and Lady Jill Mueller.

Davis’s work will be on display at Bona Fide Books throughout October and can also be seen at Tahoe Art League’s Showcase Gallery in the Ski Run Center at 3668 Lake Tahoe Blvd., Ste. E.

Bona Fide HQ is 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.

Family of IHOP shooter says he was schizophrenic

By Martha Bellisle, Reno Gazette-Journal

Shortly after Eduardo Sencion shot 11 people at an IHOP restaurant, killing four before fatally shooting himself, his sister-in-law told officials that he had been diagnosed schizophrenic and was taking medication.

Rosa Gonzalez-Perez also told Carson City sheriffs detectives that Sencion had lived with her family on Jodi Lane for about three years, but had moved in with his parents on Truckee Lane about six months ago, according to a video of an oral affidavit for search warrant.



Eduardo Sencion

She also confirmed that Sencion was likely driving the blue mini-van found at the shooting and said the mini-van was used by her in-laws most of the time.

Detective David LeGros told Justice of the Peace Tom Armstrong that officials feared for the safety of the people living at those houses, but when they arrived at the Truckee Lane home, no one was there.

Inside they found “box upon boxes of additional ammo that would be suited for an SKS or AK style rifle,” LeGros told Armstrong. They also found “additional firearms” inside the house, LeGros said, but he did not identify the model.

Sencion began shooting outside the IHOP at about 9 a.m. on Sept. 6, wounding a woman near a motorcycle, before going inside and firing his assault weapon at customers.

Three Nevada National Guard members gathered for a breakfast meeting were killed: Lt. Col. Heath Kelly, 1st Class Miranda McElhiney, both of Reno and 1st Class Christian Riege of Carson City. Also killed was Florence Donovan-Gunderson of South Lake Tahoe.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Cutting jobs helps budget, hurts more important areas

By Hagit Limor

The phone started ringing just after noon on a busy Tuesday in June. The axe was falling again.

Friends at Gannett who had suffered through multiple rounds of cutbacks, furloughs and layoffs had just gotten word that 700

more of their friends were about to get the call no one supporting a family, trying to pay off a car or struggling with a student loan wants to hear. Heads were about to roll.

Each time their phones rang, they wondered: Is this the source I worked for months, nights and weekends, so I could write the story my community needs to know, which incidentally, may help my company sell more newspapers? Or is this the call that will help my company save more money by eliminating my livelihood?

No one questions the challenges facing media outlets today, most especially on the print end of the business. We've all read the numbers on circulation and advertising revenue. We're also reading some other numbers with which you can't argue.

Gannett CEO Craig Dubow actually got a 21 percent bump on his performance bonus alone in 2010, a $1.75 million payout as part of a total compensation package of $9.4 million. That goes a long way toward 700 jobs, the salaries for which rarely reach into six figures.

I'm not picking on Mr. Dubow here. He's not the only media CEO earning millions while laying off thousands over the past few years. I'm not saying he or any of those leaders relish the thought of impacting people's lives so significantly, though it must be nice to delegate that chore downhill.

What I'm saying is that it smells.

No journalist gets in this business to get rich. Most of us live on the low end of middle-class life. We do this because we believe our jobs are essential to our democracy. We serve as watchdogs over the thieves and cheats who would reign even more freely if they didn't have to deal with a free press. We serve to protect our communities.

Hagit Limor is the 2010-11 president of SPJ. She is an investigative reporter at WCPO-TV in Cincinnati.

Read the whole story

Class delves into Internet marketing

As part of its Chamber EDucation program, the North Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the Sierra Economic Development Corporation is hosting a beginner “Internet Marketing – The Superhighway to Success & The Road” class Sept. 21 from noon to 2pm at the Tahoe City Public Utility District Boardroom, 221 Fairway Drive, Tahoe City.

Deadline to register is Sept. 16.

In this beginner class, attendee will learn how to get top rankings on Google, how to pick the right keywords for their business, along with free tools that will improve their business and assist them in tracking website visitors.

The cost is $65/person and participants need to bring their lunch. To register, call the Sierra Economic Development Corporation at (530) 823.4703 or email info@sedcorp.biz.

This class will also be repeated Oct. 4 in Kings Beach at the North Tahoe Event Center.

South Lake Tahoe employees weighing down city's budget

By Kathryn Reed

While South Lake Tahoe employees cry poor, city documents show their wages keep going up. Furlough days that were implemented did not reduce salaries. They reduced take home pay because fewer hours were being worked. But retirement funds were not affected by furlough days.

In actuality, city employees have been getting raises during the recession, while the private sector in large part has seen the opposite happen. In their defense, most of the contracts were agreed to before the recession. But it does show how little foresight there was on the part of staff and council members who agreed to the deals.

The one raise that stands out is just before Dave Jinkens left his post as city manager last year a side letter with the Administrative-Confidential group extended the contract through fiscal year 2011-12 with a 4 percent raise in exchange for a third furlough day.

According to MOUs and documents provided by the city, from 2007-10 Administrative-Confidential, General-Public Works, and the Police Employees groups received 18.5 percent salary increases. Police Officer and Supervisors group received a 26 percent raise in that time period. Fire received a 15 percent raise.

None of these figures is compounded, so it's actually a higher amount.

The fire group chose not to accept its agreed upon 3 percent

raise for 2010.

Here is a salary schedule of city employees by position.

Some workers will get a raise in the next fiscal year based on step-in-grade increases. These come on the anniversary of the hire date.

A full house is expected for the City Council meeting at 7 tonight at Lake Tahoe Airport because of the proposed changes in staffing and programs. Budgets are often considered the most significant decision a council makes – with the vote indicating how the group prioritizes staffing, programs and infrastructure.

While each council member has been apprised of what will be before them and have individually met with city staff, this is the first public discussion of the document and the first real opportunity for the public to weigh-in on the matter.

But this is the eleventh-hour because the budget takes effect in 16 days. Per state law, it must be balanced.

Because negotiations with employee groups are ongoing, adoption of the budget is not even expected tonight, according to City Manager Tony O'Rourke. It will likely require a special meeting to finalize it, but that date has not been set.

Nuts and bolts

To help close the $5.2 million budget gap, employees were asked to pay their share of their retirement and more for health care.

Only the fire association has made the concessions, though as a reward they are slated to get a raise of 2 percent for at least this coming fiscal year. However, because the group has not signed the deal yet, council members could voice their opinion on the matter tonight and potentially negate the deal.

Instead of one nice tidy document called a budget, what the South Lake Tahoe City Council will dissect tonight is a bunch of “proposed departmental summaries.” That’s the city’s lingo for it.

These proposals were put on the city’s website late Tuesday. However, the details behind the proposals are in five binders in the finance department. Christine Vuletich, who is in charge of that department, will have them with her tonight. An actual budget for anyone to look at won’t be available until the end of the year. Some years it has been well after the first quarter has ended.

The proposed budget calls for $94,695,245 in expenses. Of that, $28,157,124 is for the capital improvement program and nearly $11 million is for the ongoing debt. The general fund accounts for $28,607,349 of the total expenditures for fiscal year 2011-12, which begins Oct. 1.

Salaries and benefits are paid from the general fund.

The city has seven associations it works with. Their agreements and amendments, aka side letters, are on the city’s website. Only the General and Public Works contract is up at the end of the month. All other contracts expire Sept. 30, 2012.

However, the General and Public Works did not have its first meeting with all employees until Sept. 12. This, despite, the council in March approving the five-year fiscal plan that called for the salary-benefit concessions or layoffs.

A strike by the Admin-Confidential and Public Works and General employee groups is not possible based on a memorandum of understanding that says, “It is agreed and understood that there will be no strike, work stoppage, slow-down, picketing, or refusal or failure to fully and faithfully perform job functions and responsibilities or other interference with the operations of the City by the Association or by its officers,

agents, or members during the term of this agreement, including the recognition of picket lines or additional compliance with the request of other labor organizations to engage in such activity.”

MOUs representing fire and police do not have such language because they are prohibited by law to strike.

Balancing the budget

In a 27-page memo to the council, O’Rourke outlines the fiscal health of the city and the measures he wants to take to make sure the city keeps functioning.

In part, they include:

• Voluntary separation program offered to employees of General and Public Works Union.

• Elimination of 26 positions, reduction in hours for four employees, and five positions vacated.

• Reorganization of city services. (Read more about this on *Lake Tahoe News* after the meeting.)

• Furloughs will be eliminated except for the Administrative-Confidential group. It saves the city money to keep that group on furlough days until the contract expires in a year.

• All non-represented and management staff paying their full 8 percent PERS contribution.

• Using $500,000 of the estimated $1.8 million health plan reserves. (Employee and retiree health care plans are budged at $5.2 million for the next fiscal year – which is 18 percent of the general fund.)

• Adding $278,000 to the budget through parking meters on Ski Run Boulevard and beach areas in addition to the ones already installed near the Stateline area transit center.

• Borrow $675,000 from general fund operating reserve to pay the proposed Redevelopment Agency continuation payment of $1.8 million.

Example of a city expenditure

Lost in a budget of this magnitude can be the expenses not even thought of by the public. Like the $23 per page the city pays to have minutes taken by the city clerk be transcribed by an outside agency.

Considering a slow professional typist can type 50 words per minute and there are an average of 500 words per page it means the person is making $23 every 10 minutes.

“It is not a matter of wpm and how fast a person can type. The industry standard is per page, which for summary minutes is cheaper than charging for hourly. This is a specialized and technical service,” City Clerk Suzie Alessi told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The city pays $10,000 a year for the service. The savings comes from not paying benefits to a city employee, Alessi said.

Still, it begs the question with all these layoffs, can’t one of those employees type for less than $138 an hour?