LA firm expected to run BlueGo bus system

By Kathryn Reed

The Tahoe Transportation District board at its special meeting June 17 is expected to award the operation of the BlueGo bus system to Tectrans Inc.



The 5-year-old Los Angeles-based company was one of six bidders to run the South Shore buses, which has routes into Carson City and the Carson Valley. Although it is a young company in some ways, it has changed names through the years and has employees who have been involved with transit for decades.

Interviews of the top three companies were June 9, with the committee recommending Tectrans.

“Tectrans, which has the highest combined score on the Understanding, Experience, Technical, and Proposal criteria had the best interview and also the lowest cost of the top three candidates,” according to the staff report.

Tectrans’ bid came in below the $2,902,633 the TTD board budgeted for transit operations for the 2011-12 fiscal year. The bid is $2,881,088.

The board is being asked at the 11:30am Friday meeting (128 Market St., Stateline) to approve a tentative contract with Tectrans, to have staff negotiate a final contract, and for the board to approve it July 8.

“They had the right balance of size, experience and corporate support to ensure this operation in Tahoe would not founder, but at same time had a really good feel for us as a small

community," said Angela Swanson, South Lake Tahoe's rep to the TTD board.

Swanson also said Tectrans officials have had experience with Northstar-at-Tahoe's bus operations, which was a bonus knowing the Tahoe area.

At the regular June 10 TTD board meeting it was agreed TRC would work month-to-month until another firm is hired.

TRC Consultants months ago said they would not be bidding on a long-term contract. TRC was originally hired by South Tahoe Area Transit Authority to run the buses after MV Transportation was fired by the now-bankrupt STATA board.

TRPA wants opinions about BMP handbook

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency is seeking input as it updates the Handbook of Best Management Practices. It last updated in 1988.

The BMP Handbook provides guidance to consultants, engineers, contractors, homeowners, agencies, and others who are proposing projects in the Lake Tahoe region which may affect water quality. Stormwater is an evolving science and new research provides information that improves BMP effectiveness and design.

Topics addressed in the proposed BMP Handbook update include urban hydrology, site analysis, temporary and permanent BMPs selection, shorezone protective structures, soils restoration and revegetation, approved plant lists, fertilizers, fire

defensible space, inspection, maintenance, and monitoring.

Input will be accepted until Aug. 1. The 1988 BMP Handbook and the Final Draft BMP Handbook are available online.

Input may be submitted online or via email to jchoy@trpa.org.

State officials inspecting South Shore businesses for tax compliance

The California State Board of Equalization sent letters to 12,000 retail businesses in 16 ZIP codes, including South Lake Tahoe, notifying them of upcoming visits by BOE specialists.

Businesses receiving letters this month are located in: Canoga Park (91303); Tarzana (91356); Hacienda Heights (91745); Solana Beach (92075); Anaheim (92804, 92805); San Luis Obispo (93401, 93405); Vallejo (94589); Campbell (95008, 95009, 95011); and South Lake Tahoe (96150, 96151, 96155, 96158).

These visits are part of the Statewide Compliance and Outreach Program that was launched in September 2008. The BOE specialists have visited more than 226,000 businesses statewide, with 313 ZIP codes receiving notifications.

The goal of the SCOP program is to verify that all businesses are properly registered, so there is no unfair business advantage over those businesses that are properly registered and reporting their taxes and/or fees. The SCOP program has found that more than 3.5 percent of businesses operating in California do so without the appropriate permits or licenses that allow for collection of sales and use tax, as well as

other taxes and fees. Non-compliance is a part of the more than $2 billion sales and use tax gap – the difference between the amount of taxes owed and the amount of taxes paid.

The BOE specialists conduct checks for seller's permits of all storefronts and other known business locations. When the specialists visit, business owners are asked business-related questions and are not asked for personal financial information.

For general information, contact the Taxpayer Information Call Center at 800.400.7115.

Registered retailers, as well as service industry businesses, will be checked for appropriate permits and licenses. Those businesses found to be out of compliance will be given instructions on how to register with the BOE and given information about other necessary licenses.

Genoa celebrates its connection with Snowshoe Thompson

Celebrate Snowshoe Thompson with folk products displayed by the Sons and Daughters of Norway, Norwegian dancers, Norwegian fjord horses with a cart and a Chautauqua presentation of Snowshoe Thompson, the man who carried the mail in the late 1800s from Genoa to Placerville twice a month for 20 years.

The June 19 2-5pm event is at Mormon Station State Historic Park in Genoa.

For more information, call (775) 782.2590.

Yard sale benefits Sierra Nevada Alliance

The inaugural yard sale benefiting the Sierra Nevada Alliance is June 25 from 9am-1pm.

It’s at the Sierra Nevada Alliance office, 2489 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

Since 1993, the Sierra Nevada Alliance has been protecting and restoring Sierra lands, water, wildlife and rural communities.

The organization is taking donations for the yard sale – clothes, books, furniture – you name it! Drop-off hours are Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm, or call (530) 542.4546, ext. 302 or email natalie@sierranevadaalliance.org.

All proceeds benefit the Sierra Nevada Alliance.

Opinion: Caution is best policy when looking for conflicts

Publisher’s note: ***This editorial if from the June 15, 2011, Reno Gazette-Journal.***

One of the challenges facing any public official in a small community like this, or even a relatively small state like

Nevada, is the likelihood that sooner or later you're going to have to make a decision that involves someone you know, someone you've worked with or someone who's donated money to your campaign.

Making the challenge even greater is that no one who's been elected to office wants it said that he or she can't put aside parochial interests to make a fair, reasoned decision on any issue. They can't be swayed, they insist, by campaign contributions or friendship.

That's no excuse, however, for ignoring the possibility of a conflict of interest. Rather, it makes it all the more important that public officials be especially alert for the possibility of a conflict and take whatever action is necessary to avoid it.

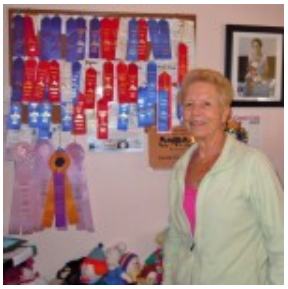
Read the whole story

Fair more than animals; Tahoe craftspeople win awards

By Kathryn Reed

A long Tahoe winter might be responsible for the number of blue ribbons awarded at this year's El Dorado County Fair to people living in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Jonnie Crawford entered six items in the knitting category and came away with six ribbons.



Jonnie Crawford needs another board to hang her knitting ribbons. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Jon Helman submitted two needle art pieces and was rewarded with two ribbons.

Though neither South Shore resident requires bad weather to work on their crafts, both admit a little more time was spent on projects this winter because indoor activities were more fun than outdoor on many days.

Everyone may see their handiwork at the fair, which starts today and goes through Sunday. The entry fee for Tahoe residents has been reduced to $2 each day.

Crawford is a veteran of winning – and knitting. She has been entering items in the local fair for more than a decade. Each year she has won something. The blue, red and white ribbons along with best of show fill a bulletin board in one room of her South Tahoe home. She learned to knit from her grandmother when she was in kindergarten, and has shared the hobby with her daughter and granddaughter.

Helman, a teacher at Sierra House Elementary School, started doing cross-stitch in 1989 – partly as a way to pass the time in winter. Pointing to how former Rams defensive lineman Rosey

Grier picked up needlepoint as a way to calm his fear of flying, Helman said he is secure having a hobby that is not common for men.

Helman did not know he won two first-places until contacted by *Lake Tahoe News* this week. His best until now for needle art was third place. (With a friend, he has previously earned two seconds for winemaking.)

“I got a lot of sewing done this year with the miserable weather,” Helman said.

Half of his pieces are original, half come from a pattern.

“Some take a couple years to finish. They are real complex,” Helman said.

The one he just started has 66,100 stitches.

“It’s going to take a while,” Helman said.

This is the fifth year Crawford has been awarded best of show. Each class is judged and awarded first, second and third. Then all the first places are judged, with the winner being awarded best of show.



Jonnie Crawford designs knit fingerless gloves.

Crawford was in Placerville on June 10 for the judging. Even

though she is a veteran competitor, she admits to having butterflies in her stomach as the judge inspects her work.

“She judges the inside and the outside,” Crawford said. “She looks to see if it is practical.”

This year Crawford received three firsts, two seconds, a third, and the best of show. She entered three sweaters, a pair of socks, a hat, and shawl.

She was shocked the socks won. She would have voted for the lace shawl.

A bookshelf in the Crawford living room is devoted to knitting books. Some patterns, though, are original. Her daughter designed the winning socks, while Crawford did the work.

Crawford and Helman share their work with friends and family. Much of Crawford’s husband and children’s wardrobes consists of her sweaters. For Helman, a unique gift to new parents is a birth announcement – in needlework.

While both would like to make some money off their creativity, the reality, they say, is it’s cost prohibitive.

Crawford said with the wool yarn manufactured in Norway and Great Britain she orders online, plus labor a sweater may cost $500.

Helman sold one of his pieces for $400. He thinks he made $1 an hour, plus matting and framing.

They create for the love it – and to pass the time during a long a Tahoe winter.

“It’s something to keep me sane,” Crawford said of her knitting.

Fair-goers can be star of stunt show in Placerville

For the full four-day run of the El Dorado County Fair (June 16-19) the Hollywood Stunt Adventure offers fairgoers the opportunity to work one-on-one with a professional stunt man and learn the skills of the trade.



First, you'll start with tumbling techniques practiced on mats, then progress to the mini trampoline and ultimately—if you learn your lessons well—graduate to the jump tower where you'll experience up to five exhilarating jumps—landing on a gigantic professional stunt airbag.

With your friends and family watching, you'll become the star of the show. And, you can have your picture or video taken, in action, as a keepsake of your adrenaline-fueled adventure.

Several times daily the professional stunt men and women will take a break from coaching to present the Hollywood Stunt Exhibition Show. The show features a 50-foot aerial straitjacket free fall escape, and the world's only full-view water torture cell escape, and reenactment of famous jumps and high falls from current action movies .The final night-time performance will also include a special "arm burn high fall stunt "as the finale.

The exhibition show plays five times daily on the main lawn of the El Dorado County Fairgrounds and is free with admission to the fair. Fifteen- to 20-minute stunt classes with up to five participates in each class are offered throughout the four-day fair for an additional fee.

For more information, call (530) 621.5860.

Incline Village fireworks

Incline Village takes things to the next level with their traditional Red, White & Tahoe Blue festivities scheduled for July 1-4, which includes patriotic chalk drawing contest, opening ceremonies with a tribute to veterans, doggie dress-up contest, beer tasting and brats, brunch with Shakespeare, firecracker trail trek and free fireworks July 4 at 9:30pm off Incline Beach.

For more information, go online.

Tahoe City fireworks

Tahoe City celebrates 65 years of fireworks at Commons Beach at 9:30pm July 4. This event is free and is also popular with families.