Fire consumes South Tahoe mobile home

A mobile home on Julie Lane in South Lake Tahoe was destroyed by fire Monday night.

South Lake Tahoe and Lake Valley firefighters found about one-third of the double wide mobile home consumed by fire when they arrive at 10:21pm June 12.

Firefighters said the attic space was hot and full of smoke.

“The quick action of the initial attack crews kept the fire contained to the structure and kept it from spreading to adjacent structures,” Marty Scheuerman, South Tahoe division chief, said in a statement.

No one was living in the mobile home.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Lake Tahoe Labor Day Classic Baseball Tournament is Sept. 2 starting at 3pm. It ends a noon Sept. 5 in South Lake Tahoe. The tournament is for ages 10u,12u,and 18u. For more information, go online.

• The Heavenly Gondola will operate through Sept. 5 from

10am-5pm for sightseeing.

• Lake Tahoe Music Festival's three summer acts are at Northstar-at-Tahoe – Blues Traveler is July 21, Colbie Caillat on Aug. 4, and Michael Bolton Aug. 25.

• Charles Barkley, always one to demonstrate how not to swing a golf club, is contemplating playing left handed at next month's celebrity golf tourney at Edgewood Tahoe in Stateline.

• The John M. Studebaker International Wheelbarrow Races are at the El Dorado County Fair on June 19 at 5pm in the grandstands.

Lawmakers propose raising retirement age for public workers

By Jon Ortiz, Sacramento Bee

Earlier this year, former Assemblyman Roger Niello proposed a ballot initiative that contained a politically explosive idea: set 62 as the full retirement age for all California public employees, including current workers.

Another idea floated by a pension reform group includes making "defined benefits payable when employees reach the retirement age established by the Social Security Administration" – now 62 years old.

The Little Hoover Commission, an independent state oversight agency, has suggested that looming pension costs as baby boomers retire threaten to crush state and local government

programs. Part of the solution, the commission says, is giving current workers less incentive to retire early.

Retirement age is increasingly under discussion as strapped local and state governments scrutinize a range of expenditures, from cellphone costs to employee pay and benefits.

Nearly 60 percent of California voters think the minimum age for drawing a government pension needs to be increased, according to a March Field Poll.

Many public pension systems allow retirement as early as 50, although benefits increase if workers stick around longer.

Read the whole story

Voluntary evacuation lifted for Donner Lakes area community

The voluntary evacuation order for the Serene Lakes community was lifted after clean-up work was done on the last active property known to be affected by a propane leak.

The order was lifted by the Truckee Fire Protection District and Placer County Sheriff’s Office in consultation with the county’s Environmental Health Division and county Office of Emergency Services. The order was put into place about two months ago to encourage property owners to avoid Serene Lakes as much as possible until the propane emergency was resolved.

Emergency officials cautioned the public needs to be aware the

potential for new propane leaks still exists.

Since March, 42 properties at Serene Lakes, a community near the Donner Summit, have been affected by propane leaking from the plumbing that connects the tanks to houses. Leaking propane was the likely cause of an April 8 explosion that demolished an unoccupied three-story cabin in Serene Lakes.

$2 tickets for all Tahoe residents to El Dorado County Fair

The folks at the El Dorado County Fair are offering a special incentive to make the trek to Placerville a little easier for Tahoe residents.



The $2 Tahoe Trek Ticket offers entry to the June 16-19 fair for $2 per person per day. That’s more than 70 percent off the price of an adult ticket at the gate and more than 50 percent off the price of a child’s ticket.

“We got the idea to offer this special pricing for Tahoe residents when gas prices started to climb and construction work on Highway 50 threatened to make it especially tough for Tahoe residents to get to Placerville,” fair CEO Jody Gray said in a statement. “It just really seemed like Tahoe residents deserved a break. It’s important to us that people who live in the eastern part of our county also get a chance to enjoy the fair.”

Tahoe residents can obtain their $2 tickets at the fair entrance by presenting one of the following:

1) A current California or Nevada ID with a Tahoe address

2) A current utility bill in your name with a Tahoe address

3) A Tahoe merchant receipt showing a Tahoe address, dated the day you attend the fair.

Making the trek easier is the fact Echo Summit is open in both directions on weekends without delays.

For more information, go online.

Opinion: Time to rethink Homewood's development plans

By Rochelle Nason

Tahoe's West Shore is an icon of California's natural beauty. Emerald Bay is one of the most photographed spots on Earth. The entire stretch of shoreline and forest, from Camp Richardson to Tahoe City, with its lake vistas and abundance of public lands, provides inspiration to millions of visitors as well as to its tiny local population.

Unfortunately, the area suffers from terrible traffic congestion and air pollution. Evidence of the poor decision-making of the past is obvious everywhere: A huge landslide scars Emerald Bay because of road construction. The watershed continues to suffer from past mining practices. Forests and meadows are degraded by logging and grazing. Extensive overdevelopment abounds, even on fragile soils and steep

slopes.



Rochelle Nason

Is our society capable of making better decisions today? Some are hailing a proposed expansion of Homewood Mountain Resort as part of the solution to the West Shore's environmental problems. But we at the League to Save Lake Tahoe (known for our motto "Keep Tahoe Blue") believe this proposal must be downsized and improved to protect and enhance the watershed, scenery and other environmental features and to avoid worsening traffic congestion.

We recognize the challenge facing the developer. When JMA Ventures purchased the property at the height of the real estate boom in 2006, it assumed expensive legal and moral obligations to stop the property from polluting the lake and to reduce wildfire risk. But we are deeply concerned at its proposal for a host of rule changes to squeeze hundreds of condo and hotel rooms into this small community. Further, changing the protective rules at Homewood could lead to similar transformative changes throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin – yet no analysis of such dramatic changes has been done.

The developer argues that, if it must abide by the limits in effect when it purchased the property, it will have to either sell the property or shut down the ski resort and find another use for the land. However, there is no persuasive evidence that a smaller project could not be economically feasible.

A better vision for Lake Tahoe would direct intensive development to sites near transportation hubs, housing and

existing infrastructure. We have helped make this model a success on the South Shore. But today, piecemeal planning is resulting in large project proposals that move development from urbanized casino areas to less appropriate areas – a sad step backward in land-use planning.

The League is urging the developer to work with the community, conservation groups and regulators to create a vision for the resort that all can support – one that does not sacrifice long-term conservation for short-term economic benefits.

More fundamentally, we are asking the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency to consider: How much additional development can the West Shore of Lake Tahoe sustain? What development rules should apply to the basin as a whole? What is the big-picture plan to save the lake? We owe it to future generations to plan carefully to keep Tahoe blue.

Rochelle Nason is the executive director of the League to Save Lake Tahoe.

LTUSD retirees to be recognized

The Lake Tahoe Educational Foundation will honor retirees from the Lake Tahoe Unified School District at the regular school board meeting June 14 at 6pm in the board room at the district office on Highway 50 at Al Tahoe Boulevard.

Retirees are invited to bring guests. They will be recognized and presented with gift ertificates to Passaretti’s Restaurant.

The LTEF will host a cake and punch reception on the lawn outside the meeting room.

The public is invited to attend.

Information meeting about altering Measure S

The Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition and Norma Santiago, El Dorado County supervisor, are hosting a public information session about the possible November ballot measure to redirect existing recreation funds from Measure S.

The meeting is June 16 from 5-7pm in the Cedar Room of the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center on Rufus Allen Boulevard.

The proposed measure would allow accumulating Measure S funds to be used for rehabilitation of older bike paths and build youth ball fields. It would also create a bicycle advisory committee to advise the Community Facilities District Recreation Joint Powers Authority, the body which administers the Measure S funds, on bicycle needs in the community.

The meeting will be an informal, drop-in event. Attendees will have the opportunity to get copies of the proposed ballot measure language and resolution for consideration, ask questions of the JPA board members (which there are three) and JPA staff (which is just John Upton), and learn how to provide additional input on the proposed ballot measure.

The JPA will meet June 30 at 9am at the El Dorado County Library to make a final decision on whether to place the measure on the ballot.

Outdoor upgrades turn Bijou into destination play area

By Kathryn Reed

Scrambling onto rocks, rolling around in grass, throwing a Frisbee, sitting at tables with friends, watching trees blow in the gentle wind. Life at Bijou Community School is a whole lot different now.

Dirt, and more often mud, is what the South Tahoe elementary school students played in. Not anymore.



First-graders Aidan Anton and Martin Valdez play on one of the new boulders at Bijou Community School. Photos/Kathryn Reed

With the force and determination of parent Kathy Haven behind the project, she corralled the necessary people, businesses

and officials to make this a reality.

The nearly two-year project culminated June 9 with students patiently gathered on the blacktop listening to all the adults talk before they were allowed to run to the grassy field.

As a bit of a test, they were given treats, with the lesson being – use the bear boxes for the trash. With no plastic wrappers visible by the time they headed back to their classrooms Thursday afternoon, these Tahoe kids understand about not creating garbage bears.

Principal Karen Tinlin expects fewer students will be in her office with scraped knees and elbows now that they have a softer surface to play on.

Superintendent Jim Tarwater said practically the first day on the job six years ago Tinlin was complaining about the dirt in the back of the school.

Dale Rise was a bit overwhelmed looking over how this dirt field he grew up next to is now a showcase of sorts. His construction company donated significantly to the project.

The school district came up with half of the $50,000 expense through Measure G bond dollars, while the community came through with the rest. Big George Ventures, Tahoe Asphalt, Heavenly Mountain Resort, Tahoe Sand and Gravel, Barton Health Foundation, Bijou PTA, Adams Concrete Design, Dale Rise Construction, Signs of Tahoe, Tahoe Bear Box Co., De Celle Memorial Tahoe Relay, Ed Cook Tree Service, Aspen Hollow, Western Turf, Earth and Stone Landscaping, Fuller Construction and Cafecitos either gave cash, supplies or reduced their prices to make this a reality.

“It has been amazing how our community has contributed. For example, when I called Tahoe Asphalt about their big boulder sale, they asked how many we needed. When I said about 40, they came back with ‘we’ll just give them to you’,” Haven

said. “It was amazing.”

Rotary Club of South Lake Tahoe was another huge component of getting this project completed. They along with parents and other volunteers like the entire Tahoe Derby Dames team finished putting everything in on June 4 – in the rain.

Twenty-three trees have been planted – mostly aspens and red maple. Five came last year, and seven more are on order.

Not all of the 12 picnic tables have been installed. Some hardware needs to arrive. One table is ADA compliant.

“I’m very happy to see this park for the community,” special education teacher Charna Silver said. “The fact that it’s attached to our school is a bonus.”

This is the only park between Rufus Allen Boulevard and Stateline.

The soccer-size field could be used in the summer for tournaments.

Between the blacktop and the field are the play structures. Haven’s next goal is to have exercise stations on the far corners of the field.

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Overdue backpacker found safe

A local backpacker reported overdue by friends on Saturday walked out of Desolation Wilderness on Sunday afternoon safely.

“The subject was lost, ditched his camping gear, but was able

to work his way out near Loon Lake. All ended well with no injuries at about 5pm," El Dorado County sheriff's Lt. Les Lovell told *Lake Tahoe News.*

The young man, as he was described by officials, went into Desolation Wilderness by himself.

The search began Saturday. Sheriff's search and rescue crews were assisted Sunday by other agencies.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report