Opinion: Legislature should reject threat to leave TPRA Compact

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the May 24, 2011, Reno Gazette-Journal.***

More than 40 years after Nevada and California governors agreed on the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency compact and President Richard Nixon signed it into law, it may well be time for the two states and Congress to get together and take a new look at how well the often-controversial pact is working to meet its primary goal: the protection of the lake's world-renowned clarity.

But threats from Nevada to withdraw from the bi-state agency will not get the job done.

To lawmakers' credit, the Nevada Senate Government Affairs Committee on Monday agreed to eased back on a bill that would have withdrawn the state from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency immediately.

Instead, the committee approved an amendment that turned the bill into a threat of withdrawal if significant changes aren't made in the coming years. It set 2013 as the deadline, with a two-year extension possible if the state believes progress is being made.

That threat isn't likely to play any better in California, or in the halls of Congress, however, where Nevada, with its casinos on the state lines of north and south Tahoe, long was considered the stumbling block to making progress at the lake.

Read the whole story

USFS to show off Spooner Summit Fire Station

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit is having open house at the new Spooner Summit Fire Station from 11am-1pm on June 1.

Staff will be on hand to answer questions about the green construction techniques used in the fire station, the Spooner Summit fuels reduction project, USFS Engine 44 and Patrol 44, and the job of a wildland firefighter. Smokey Bear will make a guest appearance.

The Spooner Summit Fire Station is located at 2367 Highway 50. For more information on the open house, call Cheva Heck at (530) 543.2608 or Lisa Herron at (530) 543.2815.

Gaines gives Tahoe residents earful on TRPA, state budget

By Kathryn Reed

Money, TRPA, redevelopment agencies, water meters, ADA lawsuits, and California's lousy business climate were some of the topics brought up Tuesday during an open forum with state Sen. Ted Gaines.

This was Gaines' first visit to South Lake Tahoe since being elected to the state Senate in January. The Republican from

Roseville is keeping up his tradition of visiting various parts of his district to connect on a more intimate basis with constituents.

In a one-on-one with *Lake Tahoe News* before the event started May 24 at Riva Grill, Gaines touched on how forest management practices continues to be a priority with him.



Ted Gaines speaks to constituents May 24 in South Lake. Photo/Kathryn Reed

He wants to create more public-private partnerships to make sure fuel thinning projects continue as the more traditional sources of funding dry up.

“If we can negotiate the right deal, it shouldn’t cost the taxpayer money,” Gaines said. “You need to look at what satisfies (the logging company) and what satisfies our goal.”

Gaines spoke a bit about his bill that would require Tahoe Regional Planning Agency’s Governing Board to file the 700 financial disclosure form. He had to do this when he was on the Placer County Planning Commission – a non-elected position.

“When you are making a financial decision for an agency, the public has a right to know any financial issues that should be

disclosed," Gaines said. "It's part of living in a fish bowl. They are making huge decisions about the local economy at the lake."

To the whole group he said he hopes SB271 in Nevada will bring what he calls much needed change to TRPA.

"While I agree (TRPA) has been overzealous with its authority, (the board) needs local control. My concern is you get people who are appointed who have special agendas," Gaines said.

He believes a fully functioning TRPA will bring economic vitality to the Lake Tahoe Basin, along with the desired environmental improvements.

But Gaines is also not in the camp with the League to Save Lake Tahoe supporters.

"I'm tired of the League to Save Lake Tahoe litigating every project," Gaines said.

Lew Feldman asked the senator what his take is on Gov. Jerry Brown's desire to do away with redevelopment agencies.

Gaines said in a conversation he had Monday with the governor's staff he does not believe that idea is going to go forward even though it was in Brown's May revised budget.

"I'm not convinced there is enough support on either side to get is approved," Gaines said.

Deb Howard brought up how redevelopment is the key to getting affordable housing built in South Lake Tahoe.

Gaines said even if redevelopment agencies are abolished there would still be a mechanism for getting that type of housing built as well as dealing with blighted areas.

When it comes to the state budget Gaines is adamantly opposed to continuing with the tax hikes that are supposed to expire

this year. Brown wants them on the books for another five years and has tied his budget to them continuing.

Gaines recognizes the economy is still fragile, but sees glimmers of improvement in the technology, tourism and trade sectors.

Gaines also wants a better business climate for the state and will keep trying to get useless and conflicting legislation off the books.

“The governor’s message to us is he is not beholden to anyone. But I don’t see him acting to reform government. I would like to see him deal with pension reform and regulation reform,” Gaines said.

The senator praised Democrat Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom for going with Republicans to Texas to find out how that state has improved the business climate and to see how it might translate to California. He also pointed out that with Newsom’s business holdings in Squaw Valley that he has his pulse on the Lake Tahoe economy.

Tom Davis wants the senator to do something about the lawyers who have hit up the South Shore and other areas of the state with lawsuits over the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Gaines said he is working with both parties to implement a piece of legislation that passed last year that would address this concern. He said the Trial Attorneys Association is the roadblock.

Andrew Strain bestowed praise on Gaines for interjecting himself into the Highway 50 Echo Summit issue when it looked like the road might be closed while ski season was still going on.

Gaines said he has lots of issues with Caltrans.

“We need to continue to work with Caltrans on their lack of

communication and their skills," Gaines said.

He mentioned how at last weekend's press conference announcing the summit was open he arrived at the designated time but Caltrans didn't start the event until two hours later.

"This nonchalant attitude of theirs needs working on," Gaines said.

Truckee company wins 7 awards at film festival

Truckee video production company Eureka Productions won seven awards this month at the 44th annual Worldfest-Houston International Film festival.

"We are delighted to say that your awards assume a very special significance this year, as more than 4,200 category entries were competing from 32 countries," Hunter Todd, director of WorldFest Houston, said in a press release.

Eureka Productions' awards include "how-to" instructional videos, a screen play and a documentary about the world's largest religious gathering. The complete award list is below, and samples of Eureka Productions videos may be viewed on Youtube.

1. Remi Award: "Fight to Breath Right" DVD, which examines Russian breathing and movement techniques for health and exercise (and sorry, fighting)

2. Remi Award: "Kumbh Mela" DVD, a documentary of the world's largest religious gathering every 12 years in India at Haridwar.

3. Remi Award: “I Will Fight No More Forever” DVD, about a Dutch-Indonesian martial arts master featured in Eureka productions award winning “Magus of Denver’

4. Gold Remi Award: “Heart to Heart” DVD, about healing practices for animals (see “Tapping into the Collective Unconscious” Eureka Productions award, winning in 2010).

5. Gold Remi Award: “Cayuga Park” DVD, a short news story about a small park in San Francisco with its unusual artistic achievement of sculptures by Demi, the man who maintained the park for more than 30 years. The Park is now threatened by BART, to be destroyed.

6. Silver Remi Award: “The American Lightwar,” an original screenplay by Sam Edwards

7. Silver Remi Award: “Best of Masters on the Mountain Healings Seminars” volume II

Eureka Productions has offices in Truckee and Mendcino. It specializes in martial arts and healings seminars, social issues and documentary videos.

Stand up paddle board competition starts at Donner Lake

O’Neill, the original surf, snow and youth lifestyle brand, is poised to make a big impact this summer in the stand up paddle community by bringing SUP to New York City for the O’Neill SEA Paddle NYC; hosting all three stops of the Tahoe Cup Series; adding SUP champion Rob Rojas to its team of high-profile

athletes; and offering a number of products, including O'Zone, 24-7, skins lycra and neoprene jackets, that have been officially endorsed by The Skin Cancer Foundation.



Throughout the summer, SUP competitors will gather in one of the country's most scenic natural settings for the O'Neill Tahoe Cup, an open series for men and women in three board classifications.

Three Tahoe Cup events kick off starting May 28 in Donner Lake, followed by Jam from the Dam in Tahoe City on July 9 and the Fall Classic at South Lake Tahoe on Sept. 18. Top three finishers for all races will be awarded in the three classes, which include youth (18 and under) and Masters (55-plus), along with one overall winner.

The first SUP athlete on O'Neill's roster, Rob Rojas was overall winner of the 2010 Hennessey's International Paddleboard Championships in San Diego, and has taken wins at the Hennessey's U.S. Championships, Hobie Hennessey's Waterman Challenge, Waterman's Sunscreen Paddle for Humanity, Catalina Challenge relay and Tahoe-Nalu Distance Race.

Memorial Day weekend in Tahoe not ideal entree to summer

Don't put away the sweaters. Snow is in the forecast for Wednesday in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Rain is expected below 7,000 feet, snow above that level for most of May 25, according to the National Weather Service in

Reno.



Upper Truckee River flows into the usually dry Cove East. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Sun will return on Thursday. The Memorial Day weekend is expected to have more sun than clouds. But don’t expect it to be super warm. Highs will be in the low-50s over the weekend and in the 30s overnight.

And it’s going to be windy.

Best places to be out and about on foot or bike will be close to the lake because of all the snow on higher trails.

Cove East is a good bet for an easy walk. Osprey and a bald eagle were seen flying around at this South Lake Tahoe location off Venice Drive on Monday.

The Upper Truckee River has breached its bank and is flooding into the meadow on the Cove East side.

A branch of Trout Creek is now entering into the river before reaching Lake Tahoe.

With this being National Boating Safety week through May 27, it comes with the added reminder that anyone thinking about going out on any body of water should be aware rivers are

running fast, are icy cold and a place where life jackets should be worn.

— *Kathryn Reed*

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Fire at Kirkwood puts Mountain Club off-limits

By Kathryn Reed

With occupancy only at 35 percent for the long holiday week, the people who had planned to stay at the Mountain Club at Kirkwood won’t be severely inconvenienced.

All of those guests and the ones staying in the condos Monday night are sleeping elsewhere because of a fire that started about 10:20pm.

It started May 23 on the third floor in or around one of the units, according Michael Dalzell, spokesman for Kirkwood Mountain Resort. He said the unit with the most damage was not occupied at the time.

Several units in the nearly 50-unit complex had extensive water and smoke damage. The cause of the fire is not known.

Kirkwood fire officials did not immediately return calls. They were assisted by East Fork and Lake Valley firefighters.

Dalzell said it took several hours before the fire was put out.

Those who were evacuated were located to other lodging at the

resort. There were no injuries.

The Mountain Club is a freestanding building in the village that operates on a one-eighth ownership.

Underground parking connects the entire village. This is where the ticket office is, Monte Wolfe’s and the high-performance demo center. Water damaged those businesses as well, according to Dalzell.

However, none of those businesses were expected to be open this weekend.

There is no estimated cost of the damage. A date was not given when some of the units will be able to accessed and/or used.

Boat inspections begin this week in Lake Tahoe

Inspections for Lake Tahoe boaters will take place at roadside inspection stations starting May 25. Off-highway inspection stations will be staffed by Tahoe Resource Conservation District inspectors from 8am to 8pm for the 2011 boating season.

Locations include:

* Meyers at the junction of highways 50 and 89

* Spooner Summit at the junction of highways 50 and 28

* Highway 267 at Northstar Drive near Truckee

* Highway 89 at Alpine Meadows Road near Tahoe City

* Highway 89 at Homewood Resort

An inspection station for Incline Village will be announced this summer. Until that time, Tahoe Resource Conservation District will continue to conduct inspections at Sand Harbor State Park and Ski Beach boat ramps.

Inspections are also required and available at Echo Lake and Fallen Leaf Lake in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Boaters are urged to go online or call 888.824.6267 for updates, fee information, questions or to schedule a decontamination appointment.

Cops to beef-up enforcement over Memorial Day weekend

The Avoid the 6 DUI Campaign will be deploying officers this holiday weekend at DUI/Drivers License Checkpoints and DUI Saturation Patrols throughout El Dorado County to arrest impaired drivers who still don’t get the message.

The Memorial Day weekend is witness to the kick off of summertime recreation and holiday travel, along with many college and high school graduations seeing thousands celebrate their accomplishments. The next 100 days will also see a rise in deaths and injuries as far too many individuals get behind the wheel impaired.

The enforcement campaign begins Friday night with DUI/Driver’s License checkpoint in Placerville with special DUI Saturation Patrols deploying in South Lake Tahoe.

More local DUI Saturation Patrols will be out on Saturday and

Sunday nights in Placerville and South Lake Tahoe. The California Highway Patrol is deploying all available officers Memorial Day weekend onto freeways and county roads in their jurisdiction.

Law enforcement regionwide is asking for support this holiday weekend and all summer:

• Be responsible when hosting a party; don't allow friends and family to drink to excess

• Always promote a designated sober driver

• Report drunken drivers, call 911

Funding for the Avoid Campaign is through a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

History: Hwy. 50 has been closed on and off through the years

Publisher's note: ***This is reprinted from the July 1975 Lake Tahoe Historical Society newsletter.***

Fred (Fritz) Perry shared his experiences and pictures collected over more than 30 years as "Bug Inspector" at Lake Tahoe at the March LTHS meeting.



His first job as a Plant Quarantine Inspector was a seasonal job at Smith River in 1931, in connection with the opening of a bridge which shut down the last ferry on Highway 101 between San Francisco and Portland.

He came to the Tahoe area at the Truckee station in 1937 and after a session or two of desert living came to the South Shore in May, 1944 when the Agricultural Inspection Station was located generally at the site of the present Union Oil Station at 4102 Lake Tahoe Blvd. (corer of Poplar). The original California-Nevada stateline – the Von Schmidt line as it became known – was in this area. A later survey placed the line at its present location.

The Inspection Station, at the end of a 20 year lease period in Stateline was moved to it Meyers location in May, 1952, when the State purchased five acres for $3,600 from the Celio family.

Mr. Perry recalled the light traffic of the Forties. (His log for Saturday, April 20, 1945 showed clear weather, first car by at 8:30 a.m., second arrive at 10:20 a.m.). Gas rationing severely restricted summer travel and Highway 50 was closed over Echo Summit at the first big snow storm. Two men were assigned to road work, picking up rocks falling down, etc., as long as the road was open. One year, the two, particularly anxious to spend Christmas with their families, were elated when the first foot of snow fell about December 20th. One of them, “Dutch”, was instructed to plow the highway from Stateline down to the “Y” where the plow was stored; then they could go home. When Dutch passed Globin’s, Frank Globin asked him to make a run around the resort and then invited him in for a bit of pre-Christmas cheer. As a result, Dutch forgot to stop at the “Y” and plowed the road all the way up to Twin Bridges. Consequently the men had to stay on duty until after the next snow sometime after January 1st.

1943-33 was the first winter Highway 50 was kept open over the Summit. However, the following year the Army ordered that the State keep Highway 50 open 24 hours a day, or they would keep it open, taking it over as a Military Highway. All snow equipment was then moved to the Truckee area and Highway 50 was closed in the winter until after World War II. Although construction started before the war, the “new” or present route of Highway 50 over Echo was not completed until the close of hostilities.

The Inspection Station endeavored to cooperate with the government agencies during the war years, but had some difficulty with the OPA who were concerned with restricting recreational travel. The log books of the station were always open to the OPA people, but the personnel were not able to testify to the accuracy of their entries. The OPA attempted also to stop cars along the road; however, in a spirit of helpful friendliness the men at the station managed to get the word around that drivers were not obligated to stop for them.

Inspectors were also requested, unless they were too busy, to report to the Board of Equalization occasions when their inspection disclosed more than two bottles of whiskey or more than three packs of cigarettes in a car. Although, ever anxious to cooperate, the inspectors always seemed to be too busy, as can readily be noted from the April 20, 1945 log entry quoted earlier.

Further entries in Fritz’s log book showed the first scheduled Greyhound bus of the year went through the station on June 5, 1945; however, there was no regular bus service until many years later. An entry for August 16, 1945 noted the end of gas rationing.

He recalled the personalized service of the crank-style telephone system of the day. The telephone office located between Camp Richardson and Taylor Creek, was operated by Chick and Doris Ernst who rigged up a signal for the fisherman

at Taylor Creek whenever they saw the game warden pass.

Fritz also told of early days at the Stateline casinos including the night he thought the inspection station was on fire when he first saw the red reflection from the Neva Club's new sign – the first neon sign on the South Shore. Anecdotes of his meeting with baseball's famed Ty Cobb and millionaire Max Fleischman were related. One of Mr. Perry's summer assistants was Gene Farmer, now a well known television writer and associate producer of "That's My Mama". Farmer ran away from an orphanage at 15, lied about his age to join the Marines. After the Korean war he worked at the bug station to help pay his way through college, eventually receiving his Ph.D. from Stanford. During that time he also worked for the Perry septic tank service, known as "GERANIUM". Mr. Perry boasts of having the only septic tank truck operator with a Ph.D.

One year the inspectors cared for a doe struck by a car. When she recovered it was too late in the season for her to migrate and she stayed at the station, becoming completely tame. She developed a passion for tobacco and was constantly stealing the inspector's cigarettes. She was given to the Richardsons the following year and remained with their private herd until they could no longer support the herd. She eventually was hit by a car and killed in front of the lodge.

Although regulation governing plants brought into California have not changed, the inspection of cars been curtailed for economic reasons. Just before he retired, Mr. Perry said he was required to operate seven stations on a 3-day a month basis.