South Tahoe on course to change how it does business

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe is taking a different course of action than ever before. It plans to implement its approved strategic plan.

“If you don’t develop an action plan and then fund it, the plan sits on the shelf. And that’s why so many strategic plans fail,” Nancy Kerry, the city’s spokeswoman, explained after the May 17 council meeting.

During the City Council’s afternoon work session, City Manager Tony O’Rourke went over the business plan. This is the final document for the council to approve in order to get the city on track and functioning better. It’s expected to be adopted at the June 7 meeting.

The strategic plan and five-year financial plan were approved earlier this year. They are components of this bigger plan.

“The business plan is the culmination of a comprehensive process undertaken by the city staff at the beginning of 2011 to evaluate community needs and interests and identify the key strategic priorities to move the community and city organization forward,” O’Rourke wrote in the introduction to the council.

In the next 18 months the city intends to achieve measurable goals. That is one of the unique aspects to this. Employees – from department head to the bottom rung – will be held accountable.

“What is different with this plan is we identified what we are

doing, what our core services are," Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*. "This links performance measures to every initiative."

It's not that the city intends to implement a ton of new things. Part of the process in developing the business plan included assessing what works, what doesn't, what can be improved upon, what to eliminate and what to initiate.

To create a better business climate the city intends to create a business resource center. O'Rourke called it "one-stop shopping" to get things done "much more expeditiously."

Quarterly reports will be presented to the council starting in October. Each fall the city will present a state of the city report to the community. Progress reports on the strategic and business plans will be included.

When the city's revamped website is up this summer it will include an electronic newsletter to let the public know what is going on – especially in terms of achieving goals in the strategic plan.

One goal of O'Rourke's is to create more events to generate income via hotel room and sales taxes. He mentioned bringing a juried art show to Ski Run Marina in August and working with Heavenly Mountain Resort to host an adventure race Labor Day weekend.

However, Councilman Tom Davis took issue with the city being so proactive, instead wanting to defer to Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority to handle the bulk of the events. Davis is the city's rep to the LTVA board.

But Carol Chaplin, executive director of LTVA, has repeatedly said publicly and to this reporter that her group is about helping with events, not being the lead organization.

"We have more resources," O'Rourke said in response to Davis' contention that LTVA should be in charge of events. "They

don’t have the staff to do events.”

O’Rourke called the LTVA a marketing group.

When it comes to fiscal sustainability, O’Rourke said, “We will develop a financial trend monitoring system. We want more early warning information about our finances.”

This is practically revolutionary for a city that has for decades been reactive to the economy instead of in-line or proactive.

Another component of the business plan that is being finalized is an asset inventory. This includes land in stream environmental zones owned by the city, tourist accommodation units and commercial floor area.

“We have tangible assets we can sell. We want to make sure we inventory it and treat it as a bank account,” O’Rourke said.

In other action the council:

• Agreed to transfer eight parcels under purview of the Redevelopment Agency to the city to ward off a land grab from the state. The transfer does not include the parking garage, transit center near Stateline, or common areas at Heavenly Village.

• Unanimously passed the medical marijuana ordinance. Enforcement begins at the end of the year. Next up is to devise an ordinance allowing dispensaries to grow the crop.

• Approved the General Plan update and related environmental document.

• Learned four bids have been submitted to operate the South Lake Tahoe Ice Arena. The council is expected to choose one of the four (Robert Perkol, South Lake Tahoe park supervisor; I.C.E. of Alameda; Tahoe Sport and Entertainment; Rink Management Services Corporation) at the June 7 meeting.

• Will consider at its next meeting who will be the representative to the California-based chamber of commerce because Davis is stepping down after having a run-in JoAnn Conner.

Opinion: Political games between South Tahoe and LTUSD

Publisher's note: ***This letter was first read into the record at the May 17, 2011, South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting.***

I thank the city manager, Mr. (Tony) O'Rourke, for his criticism of my remarks on the $250,000 that he favors giving to the school district. Clearly, I hit a nerve by saying the act is undisciplined. I stand by it.

It's ridiculous under the economic circumstances to consider financial aid to the school district.



Bill Crawford

The city manager's laundry list of my votes is twisted out of context for the most part. Half-truths are half lies, sins by omission. Also, how much time and money was spent on researching his list?

The city manager claims I sit on the sidelines throwing

stones. There is an easy fix for that. Give me 15 minutes on the city's agenda on the subject of the relationship between the school district and city over past years.

And because of my past experience with four city managers, I have become a skeptic. All play politics and so at times they are not truthful when disclosing their agendas. Thus, I observe, deduce, and apply. In Mr. O'Rourke's case he seems too have a mean streak and has a thin skin. And as the kids say, that's not cool.

Bill Crawford, South Lake Tahoe

Pony Express talk

On May 24 at 7pm in Camp Richardson's lodge, the Lake Tahoe Historical will present a "first person" account of the Pony Express at Tahoe.

Specialist Kim Copel and historian Frank Tortorich will relate stories of this short lived, but exciting endeavor.

The event is free.

Taste of Downtown

Carson City's 18th Annual Taste of Downtown is June 18 from 5:30-9pm.

It benefits Advocates Against Domestic Violence.

The event features more than 25 restaurants, wine bistros, pubs and more covering 11 city blocks.

Live bands at various locations ward off food comas and keep the atmosphere lively.

Tasting runs from 5:30 to 9pm and music continues until 11pm.

For tickets and more information, call (775) 883.7654.

Injured motorists in 7-car crash identified

Troopers from the Nevada Highway Patrol are still piecing together the seven-vehicle crash that happened on Highway 395 near Jacks Valley Road in Douglas County on Monday afternoon.

The accident happened shortly after 1pm when a yellow 2001 Freightliner tractor pulling an empty 53-foot trailer, driven by 38-year-old Martin L. Preciado of Barstow failed to stop the commercial motor vehicle safely behind other southbound vehicles that were stopped for the red traffic signal light at Jacks Valley Road.

Preciado applied the brakes and slammed into the rear of a green 1992 Honda Civic two-door that was in the left of the two southbound lanes, driven by 50-year-old Miguel E. Nunez of Reno. Nunez was airlifted from the scene by Care Flight to Renown Regional Medical Center for injuries labeled as critical. His current medical condition was not available.

The big-rig also slammed into the rear of a green 1995 Ford Explorer, driven by 55-year-old Carlin M. Kempton of Gardnerville that was in the right lane adjacent to the Honda

Civic. Riding in the SUV with Kempton were her mother and son; 81-year-old Billie M. Hawks of Gardnerville, and 26-year-old Jonathan H. Kempton. Kempton was airlifted to Carson Tahoe Hospital while her mother was flown to Renown Regional Medical Center. Jonathon Kempton was driven by another family member from the scene to Carson Tahoe Hospital.

Kempton and her son have been released from the hospital and her mother has been upgraded to fair condition at Renown.

The other injury reported in the seven-vehicle collision involving a total of eleven motorists was a claimed injury by Judith D. Marek, 71, of Carson City. She was the right front passenger riding in the silver 2001 Buick four-door sedan driven by her husband, Claude E. Marek. She and her husband were able to drive away from the scene.

The other involved vehicles included a gold colored 2008 BMW X5 driven by Laurel Champlin, 53, of Carson City, a white 2008 International dump truck driven by Terry L. Edis, 56, of Gardnerville, a 2004 black Chevrolet van driven by 30-year-old Ryan McElfish, and his passenger, David P. Candia, 33, both from Carson City.

The collision resulted in both southbound lanes to be closed for more than four hours.

Witnesses to the collision are encouraged to contact Trooper Mike Stapledon at (775) 689.4623 or Trooper Jennifer Stewart at the NHP Carson City substation at (775) 684.7280.

Non-competitive bike ride in Diamond Valley

There is a new ride coming to town on June 11 that challenges kids and families alike. It will be quite different than the other big rides for hardcore cyclists in the area.

As part of this year's "Alta Alpina Challenge: Riding the Wild Sierra" cycling event, the Alta Alpina Cycling Club is organizing a fun, non-competitive ride for people of all ages. Designed to accommodate cyclists of all abilities, the course will allow riders to experience the scenic beauty of the Sierra foothills along the popular road riding area of Diamond Valley. Options for the ride range from 15 to 20 miles.

For more information, go to the website or call 877.845.2453.

The Alta Alpina Challenge: Riding the Wild Sierra is a cycling event which encompasses five distinct rides: The Family Fun Ride is a ride aimed at local individuals and families along with the companions of cyclists participating in one of the other rides. There is also a metric century, century, five pass challenge and "The World's Toughest Double Century", the eight-pass challenge.

Snow expected to stick overnight in Tahoe

With flurries in the air this afternoon, it's merely a precursor to what will amount to a few inches, according to the National Weather Service in Reno.

A winter weather advisory is in effect from 5pm Tuesday to 11am Wednesday.

Forecasters are calling for 2 to 6 inches at lake level and in the Carson Valley, with 5 to 8 inches above 7,000 feet, and 10 inches or more near the Sierra crest.

Visibility is expected to be poor. Chain controls will likely be in place.

Highs will be in the low 40s for the next couple days, returning to the 50s Thursday. Thursday and Friday are likely to be dry, with rain in the forecast for Saturday.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Sex offender outside ice rink raises concerns

A registered sex offender was found loitering near the South Lake Tahoe Ice Arena on May 16 – a place heavily frequented by children.

Officers were alerted to the situation when a citizen called in a report of a suspicious person.

The man was not arrested.

However, officers said they submitted paperwork to the office of federal probation because they believe this to be a violation of the man’s probation conditions. The case has also been delivered to the local District Attorney’s Office with a request for review regarding a possible violation of a local city ordinance which prohibits registered sex offenders living

in restricted areas or from being present at specified locations.

The identity of local sex offenders is available online and then searching by a variety of query options including name, ZIP code, city or county.

The Megan's Law website reveals 33 registered sex offenders living in South Lake Tahoe.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Hilary Hodges has been appointed the permanent director of Development Services for South Lake Tahoe.

• Kirkwood has a proposal in to the U.S. Forest Service to expand its bike park. Comments may be sent to mmusemeyer@fs.fed.us with "Kirkwood Bike Park Expansion" as the subject.

• The South Lake Tahoe City Council crafted a letter to League to Save Lake Tahoe dated May 9 that was distributed to regional media May 16.

• Don's Cakes is open on 12th Street and Emerald Bay Road in South Lake Tahoe.

• The annual Tahoe Bike Challenge is May 23 to June 3.Be sure to build your team and register online.

Wildlife in action

These pelicans were noticed migrating and settling down for the evening on Easter.

The next morning before opening my shop – Fast Print Lake Tahoe – I went out and caught them rousing to start their migration again.



Pelicans migrate through South Tahoe.
Photo/Ed Smith

The picture is of that moment.

– Ed Smith