Water main breaks in South Tahoe

People living along and off Tahoe Keys Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe are without water.

South Tahoe Public Utility District crews expect to fix the underground pipe on Keys Boulevard by noon Saturday.

The water issue was reported at 5:47am.

An employee, who did not want his name used, did not know how many households or businesses were affected by the problem.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Ski report: Put on sunscreen



Lots of sunshine in Lake Tahoe today.

Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Sports Ltd. not leaving South Lake Tahoe

Sports Ltd. in South Lake Tahoe is not going anywhere nor is it changing hands.

Mark Gandt, who owns the store in the Village Center, signed a seven-year lease late last month, according to Lynn Beaman an 11-year employee at the store. Gandt was not available for comment.

Beaman said Heavenly and Vail Resorts have wanted that site for a number of years, thus the rumors around town that the Colorado-based company was taking over the sports store.

Heavenly Mountain Resort officials, per company policy, would not comment on potential or actual acquisitions.

Terry Hackett, who owns the Village Center, was not available for comment.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Tahoe resident passes first step to be on ‘Amazing Race’

By Brenda Knox

PORTLAND – Nineteen degrees. I thought I was still in Lake Tahoe, but I was in Portland on one of the coldest days on record, standing in the unofficial line to audition for the “Amazing Race”.

My teammate Marc and I arrived a week ago Thursday to prepare for the Feb. 26 casting call.

It was 4:30pm Friday and the line had already started. We decided I would stand in line until Marc got back, and we'd wait until the kid we hired to spend the night got there. Well, best-laid plans are sometimes just that.



Being flexible is a good quality to have on the "Amazing Race", but I didn't know it was going to start before we auditioned.

Unprepared for the cold, I stood in line while Marc got our winter gloves, sleeping bags, blankets, and heavy coats. At least I had taken my earmuffs and a pair of gloves downtown with me, and Marc left me his coat. Unfortunately, I had on my thin socks and not so warm shoes. The cold began to set in. I started dancing and moving as much as possible. Another auditioner who had just stopped by to see what was happening was even less prepared because she was coming from work. We continued dancing. People were huddled in sleeping bags and putting up tents. Propane bottles attached to portable heaters started appearing. William, from The Dalles, put on his balaclava, then his thick beanie cap. Time: 5:30pm; one hour down, only 16.5 hours to go until auditions start.

Our overnight stand-in arrives with his mother. She tells me she really prefers her son not to stay out all night in this cold. No kidding. I did not want to stay out in it either, but when you are an "Amazing Race" candidate you just roll with it. I convinced him to stay for a couple of hours so we could get all our warm stuff and some food in our bellies before our overnight on the sidewalk in 10-degree temperatures. Sleeping on the street is obviously not for the faint of heart. I advised Marc of our situation and he indicated he'd be there

in about 10 minutes.

The thought of a warm car minutes away made my fingers feel warmer. Twenty minutes later, I'm still dancing around in the cold and my phone rings. I say to my fellow freezing auditioners, "It's Marc, he's lost." Sure enough, he was. I give him directions, and then begin surveying the crowd, maybe another partner to race around the world with, someone with a better sense of direction. But, I love Marc, and we will work this out. It's 6:30pm; Marc finally arrives. I no longer have feeling in my feet, but the excitement of the experience and adventure propels me on.

Two hours later we return, ready to spend the night in the below freezing temperatures. Another quick side note, we were pulled over by Portland police across for all to see, for making an illegal U-turn when Marc went the wrong direction again. Thankfully, he just gave us a warning. I believe "obey all traffic laws" is more than likely a rule on the "Amazing Race". Obviously, Marc and I have a few things to practice.

We relieved our paid stand-in and had just started to settle in when the organizers of the casting call decided it might not be such a good idea to have all these people spend the night in the cold. I estimate by about 8:30pm there were 300 people lined up. They handed out tickets and told us to get in line at 10am Saturday. We were ticket 22 and we would be in the first 25 teams to audition in the morning. Celebrating the warmth of being inside, we enjoyed margaritas at Stanford's bar.



Brenda Knox and Marc Ockerman

We arrived at Stanford's at 9:15am Saturday, temperature 18 degrees and rising slowly. Looking at the line of roughly 2,000 people snaking along the side streets to Stanford's we are thankful for having lined up the night before and securing ticket 22. After sipping hot mochas at Starbucks, we settle in to the line. At 11am, the first 30 teams are ushered into the restaurant for auditions. We are freezing after standing in line for more than an hour.

Two by two we audition after handing in release waivers and providing our contact numbers. Two minutes was all the time we had to give it our all. Wearing black sweaters with red underneath, we introduced ourselves and talked. We don't dance, we don't sing, we don't play instruments, but we stood close, arms entwined, attempting charm and a bit of conflict, and it was over as fast as it started.

Now, we wait and hope that this was only the first step in our quest for an adventure around the world.

Brenda Knox lives in Tahoe Paradise and Marc Ockerman is a former Stateline resident who lives in Palm Springs. The "Amazing Race" is a reality television show pitting teams of two against other contestants in an array of adventures throughout the world. The Tahoe duo should find out this month if they make it to the next stage in the selection process.

Gambling via cell phone may be an option

By Liz Benston, Las Vegas Sun

Imagine gambling on digital blackjack on your smart phone while stuck in traffic in the Spaghetti Bowl or dropping money into a slot machine while doing 80 across a high-desert highway west of Ely.

This will be the newest face of legal gambling if one local company gets its way: playing the games anywhere in Nevada – even lounging in your backyard pool.

Cantor Gaming says it will press the Nevada Legislature this year to allow gambling using the same 21st century technology that surfs the Internet, sends e-mail, views movies and listens to music. It's a big leap for a state that only recently allowed gamblers to use handheld gambling devices in select casinos. Gamblers may also bet remotely, but only on sporting events.

"People want to be able to (gamble) where and when they choose," Wall Street veteran and Cantor Gaming CEO Lee Amaitis said.

Significant regulatory and political hurdles stand in his way, however.

Nevada law allows gamblers within the state's borders to make sports bets remotely by setting up a casino account and downloading software onto a home computer, logging on by cell phone or by using a pager. Such gambling doesn't violate federal prohibitions of Internet gambling because it occurs over a private wireless network rather than the World Wide Web and doesn't cross state lines.

American Wagering, which operates the Leroy's sports books, received regulatory approval last year for technology enabling gamblers in Nevada to make sports bets using BlackBerrys.

Applying that technology to casino games such as blackjack, slots and roulette is a relatively small leap for a company like Cantor. For regulators who must consider the business and social implications of new gambling technology, it's a potential chasm.

"This would be a huge policy shift for the state," Gaming Control Board Chairman Mark Lipparelli said.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Vail turning South Tahoe into company town

To the publisher,

Based on Vail's commercial moves in town, i.e. buying a vacation home rental property and soon I surmise we have an octopus in our midst with tentacles reaching to put a lock on the business community to be the big shot around town.

[Mayor] Hal Cole, bless his heart, once upon a time said he didn't want South Lake Tahoe to be another Vail or Aspen. Well, head's up Mr. Cole. It seems we are doomed to be a company town divvied up between the likes of Marriott and Vail. The bottom line is this – when profits roll into these organizations the money will fly out of town. We're in the money export business. In the process, small business will be driven out. Also, judging by recent events, Vail's tentacle

reach into city government.

Finally, these are events, trends, and conditions. Using the above to judge the direction commerce is going in town, be prepared for the octopus to squirt loads of ink around here.

Bill Crawford, South Lake Tahoe

Rodgers bringing Super Bowl arm to Tahoe's celeb golf tournament

By Dan Hixman, Reno Gazette-Journal

Super Bowl MVP Aaron Rodgers of the Green Bay Packers has committed to play in the annual American Century Championship celebrity golf tournament at Edgewood Tahoe this summer, the tournament has announced.

Rodgers, who has been an annual participant in the tournament since 2005, led the Packers to a 31-25 victory over the Pittsburgh Steelers earlier this month in Dallas.

Rodgers joins such regulars as Michael Jordan, John Elway, Jerry Rice, Jack Wagner, Charles Barkley, Kevin Nealon and Ray Romano, as well as seven-time champion Rick Rhoden and defending champion Billy Joe Tolliver.

Read the whole story

Learn to cope through guided meditation

Feeling stressed out and overwhelmed? Struggling with money, health, relationships or your career? Ready to make positive changes in your life and don’t know where to begin?

Learn how to use the elements of nature to become more balanced,clear blocks and release tension at a Guided Meditation Workshop on March 19 from 1-5pm.

Facilitators are Maxine Alper and Chris Alper.

The event is at Unity at the Lake, Star Tahoe Building, 2489 Lake Tahoe Blvd., Ste. 27, South Lake Tahoe.

Cost is $25.

For more information, email info@creatingwithintention.com.

Wells Fargo giving back to community

Wells Fargo & Company invested $1 million in 120 Northern Nevada nonprofits and community organizations in 2010. In addition, Wells Fargo team members served 12,000 volunteer hours to help their neighborhoods and communities succeed.

Wells Fargo’s latest Corporate Social Responsibility Report “Working Together for the Common Good” is now available online. In this report, the company provides an update on its progress to integrate social and environmental responsibility

into its business practices, operations and culture.

Nationwide, Wells Fargo invested a record $219 million in 19,000 nonprofits in 2010, up 9 percent over 2009. In addition, Wells Fargo team members contributed more than $55.3 million and 1.3 million volunteer hours to 25,000 nonprofits and schools.

TRPA extension designed to spur redevelopment in basin

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – South Lake Tahoe developers and property owners have two years to come up with a viable plan to transform the Raley's and Mikasa centers at the Y and still retain special incentives from TRPA.

Both properties are part of the Community Enhancement Program the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency initiated in 2008.

"The focus of the CEP is to encourage revitalization projects in downtown and recreation areas that demonstrate substantial environmental, as well as social and economic benefits. The program provides incentives for mixed-use development projects on existing disturbed or underutilized sites," TRPA's website says.



The old Mikasa and Miller's Outpost buildings are part of the Community Enhancement Program. Photo/LTN file

Big components of the CEP are allocations for commercial floor area, tourist accommodation units and multi-residential bonus units. TRPA has in effect made these items commodities that are sold and traded among jurisdictions. There are also a limited number of them arbitrarily set by the TRPA. The CEP has added to that overall pot without the project developers needing to secure them in some other way.

While the Governing Board of the bi-state regulatory agency at its February meeting cited economics and the realization project proponents are not able to get financing as reasons to extend the CEP permit for two years, the truth is no movement has even occurred at the two South Tahoe locations.

This compares to Homewood, which is in the middle of the environmental document process. Boulder Bay – the project to renovate the Tahoe Biltmore in Crystal Bay – will be before the Governing Board on March 23.

“Limbo” is the word Hilary Hodges, interim director of the Development Service Department for South Lake Tahoe, used this week in describing to *Lake Tahoe News* where the Tahoe Valley

Community Plan is. That document is relevant to the CEP discussion because without it developers must work in the confines of current zoning regulations.

Building heights and multi-use projects would likely be stumbling blocks working with today's rules. Those issues are being addressed in the city's General Plan and TRPA's Regional Plan.

The odd thing is the TRPA stipulation for a project to be included in the CEP was it had to be part of an approved community plan. Neither of the South Tahoe projects is in a community plan because one is not approved for the Y. A plan area statement governs that area, but that is not in the league of a community plan.

"The two CEPs at the Y are in the program with the condition that they can't break ground until an approved community plan is adopted for Tahoe Valley," explained TRPA spokesman Jeff Cowen. "Homewood is doing its master plan as part of its CEP application."

Hodges said, "The city would like to move Tahoe Valley forward." The problem is TRPA's Regional Plan update that was originally supposed to be approved in 2007 has had one delay after another. The importance of the Regional Plan's completion is so the city's document would conform to it. If it doesn't, then it's possible lawsuits would ensue or permits would never be issued.

Hodges would not venture a guess to when the Tahoe Valley Plan would come before the council. Last year the original community team came together in hopes there would be movement, but TRPA expressed concerns with going forward, so the group was disbanded again.

At the TRPA meeting last week, Wyatt Ogilvy spoke on behalf of the BB LLC project on 18 acres in downtown Kings Beach. The mixed-use project is one of nine CEP projects.

“Ultimately by providing a two-year extension you provide the incentive to move forward and adequate time,” Ogilvy told the board. He said his group is going forward with hiring an environmental consultant to prepare the necessary documents.

Dave Ferrari, general manager of Ferrari’s Family Resort in Kings Beach, has plans to overhaul their business, which would also come with significant environmental improvements.

“Our head is above water, but not by much,” Ferrari said. He said it’s hard to move forward with short time lines to get things done when financing is not in place and permitting and environmental review can take years.

Ultimately the board agreed to the two-year extension of the CEP permits, with a review of where the projects are in one year.