Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Moosejaw, the outdoor retailer, teamed up with Patagonia to offer $10,000 to the three environmental charities that raised the most money in the Moosejaw X Patagonia Charity Challenge Thing. In just two weeks the crowd-sourced funding raised over $110,000 for the 16 charitable groups. League to Save Lake Tahoe placed first by raising over $27,000, winning the $5,000 prize.

• El Dorado County has prepared a draft environmental impact report for the Targeted General Plan Amendment and Zoning Ordinance Update. It is available for public review until July 23 via the website.

• Assistance League of Sierra Foothills received the Outstanding Community Organization Award from the El Dorado County School Boards Association for Operation School Bell, which provides school clothing for disadvantaged and homeless children in elementary and middle school.

• Nevada Department of Public Safety /Nevada Highway Patrol along with the Nevada Department of Transportation and Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) are beginning the Share the Road campaign in Northern Nevada. Nevada is currently ranked 20 out of the 50 states as related to the five categories of bicycle safety – legislation and enforcement, policies and programs, infrastructure and funding, education and encouragement, and evaluation and planning.

• Carson Valley Job Opportunity Fair is April 4 from 10:30am-1:30 pm at the CVIC Hall, 1602 Esmeralda, Minden.

Prevalence of drugs not going away in Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Underage drug use and across-the-board abuse of drugs is nothing new.

But that doesn't mean there aren't plenty of people sounding the alarm that more needs to be done at an earlier age if the cycle is going to broken, or at a minimum the number of users and abusers begins to decrease.

"I think drug education is extremely important. It's not necessarily incumbent on schools, but parents, too. There is an ongoing disconnect between what is going on and what parents know," Matt Underhill, sergeant with the El Dorado Sheriff's Office, told *Lake Tahoe News*.



Drug Store Project has multiple vignettes about the consequences of underage drug use, as well as abuse of drugs. Photo/Provided

Underhill is also commander of South Lake El Dorado Narcotics

Enforcement Team now that the state has pulled out of this regional drug task force.

“Painkillers seem to be most sought after. I think a lot of kids are willing to experiment without knowing what they are ingesting,” Underhill said.

A national study conducted last year by Drugfree.org and MetLife Foundation found 49 percent of teens who misuse or abuse prescription medicines get them from a family member or friend.

According to a 2010 report by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, 72 percent of high school students have consumed alcohol by the end of their senior year.

Robert Leri, superintendent of Tahoe Truckee Unified School District, in his monthly column, wrote, “We were recently made aware of the growing popularity of ‘butter wax’ or ‘shadow wax,’ a concentrated form of marijuana or hash oil that can contain nearly 20 times the THC levels compared to smoking marijuana. Reports have found that students in Washoe County have been using the wax before and during school and also using odorless e-cigarettes to smoke marijuana to avoid detection.” So far, TTUSD does not have that problem to contend with.

Prescription drug use is a major component of the annual Drug Store Project. The April 1 event is all about teaching sixth-graders on the South Shore about the consequences of “pharm parties” where meds are mixed and often ingested like candy.

“In all the research you’ll find that kids experiment (with drugs) around age 9 these days,” Lisa Huard told *Lake Tahoe News*. Huard is a safe schools coordinator and runs the Drug Store Project, which is put on under the umbrella of Tahoe Youth & Family Services.

Huard is a vocal proponent for more education about drugs in

schools.

“Not until fifth grade and middle school is there talk about drugs and the effects on their bodies,” Huard said of the curriculum in Lake Tahoe Unified School District. “We are teaching young kids about nutrition. That is paying off. If we are teaching about food, why are we not teaching about drugs? That goes in the body too.”

She wants research-validated curriculum to be used throughout K-12.

There was a time when LTUSD had more drug education. But state cuts, more emphasis on standardized testing and No Child Left Behind helped put an end to much of what was provided in the classroom.

Underhill believes the education needs to start at the elementary level.

“I do think an ongoing education program at a young age to supplement what the family is teaching is very important,” Underhill said. “Not teaching anything is not working.”

LTUSD Superintendent Jim Tarwater said at the K-5 level the emphasis is on fitness and health.

The district is working with the South Lake Tahoe Drug Coalition to be able to provide more education for youth. “We don’t have much now,” Tarwater admitted.

He believes catching students at the middle school level will keep them from having drug issues when they reach high school.

Marijuana is the district’s No. 1 problem. It’s the same for law enforcement when it comes youth users.

“I think we definitely need to have better controls over medicinal marijuana because it’s ending up in the hands of a lot of kids who are not patients,” Underhill said. “It’s

becoming really accessible. Whether it’s sold or furnished, it is very accessible.”

Tarwater told *Lake Tahoe News*, “If kids on campus are caught using, usually it’s not alcohol, usually it’s marijuana. Instead of sending them off campus for three days, we will have in-house suspension.”

This will start next year for grades 6-12. The Drug Coalition is spearheading this idea. Agencies associated with it will provide drug counseling for the students.

Once in high school there is drug education in the ninth-grade health class.

What Huard would like more of is prevention education. Intervention is great, but by that time there is already a problem.

But it’s not just the youth in the community who are using drugs. Educators and officers say one of the stumbling blocks is kids are seeing their parents use. It’s hard to tell them “no” at school when at home the answer is “yes”.

In 2012, Barton Health through the Community Health Needs Assessment identified substance abuse as the most important health issue that needed to be addressed.

“The facts speak for themselves. South Lake Tahoe has four times the national average of illicit drug use. As a healthcare provider, we see a high percentage of chronic drinkers and a high rate of drug-induced deaths,” John Williams, CEO of Barton Health, said in this month’s executive team update.

Besides the hard drugs, Tarwater said school officials have noticed an increase of e-cigarette use. A trend in schools across the country is putting marijuana in an e-cigarette to avoid detection.

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Other things to know:

• The Caucus on International Narcotics Control Chairman Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., and Co-Chairman Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, are sponsoring a hearing on heroin and prescription drug abuse. The March 26 will be rescheduled.

• On April 8 from 7-8:30am the Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce is hosting a panel discussion on Underage Drinking and Drug Abuse as a Community Issue. The meeting is at the Truckee Tahoe Airport. Cost is $12 or $10 for members.

• The DEA's National Prescription Take-Back Day is April 26 from 10am-2pm at locations throughout California and Nevada. More info is online.

• More information about Drug Store Project is available online.

• Truckee police officers will start making visits to Truckee High School with Trax, the drug-detecting dog, to ensure no illegal drugs are being brought to campus.

Olympic Valley using crowdfunding for incorporation

Incorporate Olympic Valley has launched an Indiegogo crowdfunding campaign: Squaw Valley, Help Determine Its

Future. The campaign will raise funds to incorporate Olympic Valley.

In 2013, local residents came together to form Incorporate Olympic Valley in order to promote local control of their future. Currently all decisions about municipal service delivery and tax dollars are decided by the Board of Supervisors based in Auburn.

To incorporate, a town must show it is financially viable, receive an approved application by the Placer Local Agency Formation Committee and be placed on a ballot for registered Olympic Valley voters. The residents of Olympic Valley have already raised more than half of the money needed, but to bridge the gap, IOV has launched an Indiegogo campaign to cast a broader fundraising net. All funds raised will be used for expenses such as legal, professional, and other fees associated with completing the state-required process for forming a town.

To learn more about the campaign or to donate, go online.

Overgrown Sierra forests gulping water

By J.N. Sbranti, Modesto Bee

Numerous billion-dollar proposals to create more water storage in California are competing for attention and funding during this third year of drought.

But there may be a less-expensive way to increase water flows:

Start thinning out the overgrown Sierra Nevada forests.

Cutting down trees may not sound environmentally friendly, but researchers from UC Merced and elsewhere think that may be just what's needed to restore forest health and increase water runoff.

"It's one of the lower-cost options (to increase California's water supply) … and it also would reduce the probability of big destructive fires," said Roger Bales, a UC Merced engineering professor who specializes in mountain hydrology. "There could be measurable and significant gains" – a hypothesized 9 percent increase in snowmelt runoff – if the forests are properly thinned.

Read the whole story

Drought puts spotlight on water thefts



Folsom Dam creates one of California's main water storage areas. Photo/LTN

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

It’s amazingly easy to steal water from a California stream. Even in this epic drought, the state has no way of monitoring exactly who is tapping into its freshwater supplies and how much they take. And those who do get caught taking water they have no right to often are allowed to keep taking it for years just by promising to obtain a permit.

Nearly 30,000 entities in the state hold valid water diversion permits, including individual property owners, farmers and water utilities. Some have meters or gauges to measure their diversions, but the state has no ability of its own to monitor those gauges in real-time. People and entities with water rights are required to regularly report their water use to the state, but many don’t, and the state has no way of knowing if their accounts – self-reported – are truthful.

In average water years, many of these issues don’t matter much. But the weaknesses are expected to complicate matters this year as the state struggles to stretch limited water supplies during the worst drought in 40 years. This spring, it is likely the State Water Resources Control Board will order some water rights holders to divert less water to ensure enough flow for cities and wildlife, something that has not been done since the drought of 1976-77. The state’s ability to enforce such curtailment orders will be sorely tested.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Tahoe Rim Trail Association is partnering with Shuttle Around Tahoe for the Segment Shuttle Program to transport people to trailheads to hike a different segment each week. For more information, call 775.298.4485.

• Gov. Jerry Brown has reappointed Richard Wade, 60, of Pollock Pines to the CalFire board, where he has served since 2011.

• The South Lake Tahoe DMV office has postponed this week's renovations. The office is not temporarily closing.

• The Reno Transportation Commission has agreed to bring a bus to Sand Harbor every weekend from May 23 through Labor Day for the next three years. It program will cost $55,000 per year. Passengers will pay $5 each way, with youths and seniors paying half that amount.

• All comment sheets from the March 19 Meyers Area Plan workshop are online. A comment form is there. Staff is reviewing all the comments and will revise the Meyers Area Plan based on the feedback and input. The revised Meyers Area Plan will then be posted on the county's website for further review and comment.

46-month sentence for tax

evasion scheme

An El Dorado Hills man is going to prison for 46 months for tax evasion.

Donald M. Wanland, 56, was sentenced March 25 for 28 criminal counts, including tax evasion, failing to file tax returns, and removing, depositing, and concealing assets from the IRS in defiance of a levy.

Wanland is a Sacramento-area attorney who was convicted of the 28 tax-related counts on Sept. 26 after a two week jury trial.

During sentencing, U.S. District Judge Lawrence Karlton said lawyers have a "special duty" and stated, "it is particularly distressing when a lawyer just disregards the law."

The California State Bar has placed Wanland on interim suspension.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

UC chief joins skeptics over online courses

By Sharon Bernstein, Reuters

SACRAMENTO – University of California President Janet Napolitano on Monday joined a growing chorus of higher education leaders who have expressed skepticism about the use and cost-effectiveness of courses that are offered online.

Napolitano's remarks at a Sacramento luncheon came as the 10-

campus system struggles to overcome a possible $125 million budget shortfall for next year, a gap many had hoped would be repaired over time via low-cost online course offerings that would let the state educate more students while saving money.

“There’s a developing consensus that online learning is a tool for the toolbox, but it’s harder than it looks and if you do it right, it doesn’t save all that much money,” Napolitano told about 500 policy and education experts at a speaker series sponsored by the Public Policy Institute of California.

Read the whole story

Travel photographer to share work in Truckee

Photographer Nicole Dreon, who has made a name for herself by capturing images of landscapes and people during solo travels around the globe, will present the Spirit of Adventure at the Cedar House in Truckee on May 20.

See imagery from Dreon’s focus on women athletes in eastern and central Africa.

Spirit of Adventure benefits Adventure Risk Challenge, an organization dedicated to integrating literacy and wilderness programming to inspire and empower underserved teenagers from Tahoe and Yosemite.

Doors open at 5:30pm for hosted appetizers and a cash bar. The presentation will take place from 6 to 7:30pm. Tickets are $20 per person and are available online, then click on the Tahoe Teasers tab .

Red state residents pay fewer taxes than blue states

By Reid Wilson, Washington Post

The average American family pays nearly $7,000 in state and local taxes in a given year, but the actual amounts vary wildly. A Californian who lives on the western side of Lake Tahoe pays almost three times more in state taxes than their neighbor on the Nevada side of the lake. Someone living in Portland pays more than twice as much as a neighbor living across the Columbia River in Vancouver, Wash.

That’s according to a study by WalletHub, a publication of Evolution Finance, which found residents in blue states pay much more than residents of red states. The company used a typical American family making a median income and living in a median home to weigh average relative tax bills.

Wyoming residents pay the lowest state and local taxes, an average of $2,365 per year, the study found. Residents of Alaska and Nevada pay less than half the average tax rate.

Read the whole story