Snow snarls roads, keeps dumping in Tahoe

Updated Feb. 18 at 9:05am.

By Kathryn Reed

The National Weather Service in Reno was right – it was going to be a storm packed with feet of snow.

According to the agency, here are the storm totals as of 6am Feb. 18:

• Kirkwood – 24-48 in the last 24 hours; 48-52 inches in 48 hours

• Heavenly Valley – 21 inches in 24 hours; 32 inches in 48 hours



Traffic at 4am Feb. 18 right before the passing lane ends in Twin Bridges. Photo/Rebecca Schwartz

• Homewood – 24-32 inches in 24 hours

• Donner Peak – 22-26 inches in 24 hours

• Reno – 4 inches in 24 hours.

The snow map tells a story of snow totals.

A winter storm warning remains in effect until 9am Saturday. Another 1-2 feet of snow could fall at the lake, with 3 feet on the West Shore. Expect 2-4 feet above 7,000 feet.

Winds will be 50-70mph on the mountain passes and ridges.

All schools in Douglas County are closed, as is Tahoe Truckee Unified and Washoe County School District.

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency offices are closed today. It will reopen Tuesday after the holiday weekend.

Roads are nasty, slick and full of snow. Check the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News* for road conditions.

Rebecca and Bryan Schwartz emailed *Lake Tahoe News* at 4am saying, “Stuck at Twin Bridges since 10:30pm. Still here at almost 4am. Twin Bridges is now a three-lane highway with all three lanes going one-way into Tahoe with no movement.”

The next email said, “Got home at 5:30. We were welcomed by a 5-foot berm in front of our house and a one lane, barely plowed North Upper Truckee Road.”

The weather map shows a possibility of white stuff through Tuesday. However, by Saturday night the likelihood diminishes to a 30 percent chance.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Kiwanis Sunrisers crab feed is March 4 at 6pm at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe in Stateline. Tickets are $38. For more information, call (530) 541.5900.

• South Lake Tahoe’s Fallen Angel restaurant didn’t last long. It’s closed and the whereabouts of owner Jens Dressler are unknown. However, Blue Angel Cafe on Ski Run is still open. Jeff and Rosie Cowen are back operating and owning the Blue Angel restaurant, having celebrated the eighth anniversary earlier this month.

• Phil Satre, NV Energy Inc. chairman of the board and former chairman of the board of Harrah’s Entertainment, was to be inducted this month into the Nevada Business Hall of Fame at the UNLV College of Business.

• Californians may access a state website to find out if their property is in an earthquake zone.

• The website toptenrealestatedeals.com put together a Top 10 Most Romantic Homes list, with a castle in Incline Village coming in at No. 1.

• Sierra Nevada College in Incline Village just started offering online bachelor’s degrees in business administration and psychology.

Area tourism officials

contend Armstrong's retirement no big deal

By John Schumacher, Sacramento Bee

As the superstar exits, an obvious question hangs over the Amgen Tour of California pro cycling race.

Has the event grown enough to thrive without him?



Lance Armstrong

Lance Armstrong's decision to retire from cycling, announced early Wednesday in an interview with the Associated Press, leaves the sixth annual race without its biggest draw.

The seven-time Tour de France winner's presence increased crowds the past two years in Sacramento, with an estimated 75,000 turning out to watch a 2.4-mile prologue in 2009 and close to 100,000 lining city streets to view the 104.3-mile opening stage last year.

But the eight-day race, set for May 15-22, has grown in stature. It survived a move from February to May last year, when it began competing for riders with the Giro d'Italia, and it is viewed as good preparation for the Tour de France in July.

"I quite frankly think the race has gotten bigger than just one individual," said John McCasey, executive director of the

Sacramento Sports Commission. “We’re talking about the biggest name in the sport, but I think at the end of the day people will be all wrapped up in the event itself.”

The Tour of California has added Lake Tahoe for the first time, returned to a midrace trek down Highway 1 and thrown in a demanding climb up Mount Baldy in the next-to-last stage.

Stage 2 goes from Squaw Valley to the state Capitol, with the third stage starting in Auburn and finishing in Modesto.

“We would have definitely loved to have Lance here,” said Carol Chaplin, executive director of the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority. “There is some disappointment, but there are going to be so many different aspects of the tour and tremendous athletes who are going to take the spotlight whether he’s here or not.”

Read the whole story

El Dorado County releases funds for BlueGo

By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County on Thursday wrote a check to Tahoe Transportation District for $119,294.65.

The money had been held per legal counsel after the county backed away from its commitment to transit on the South Shore when the former overseer – South Tahoe Area Transit Authority – filed for bankruptcy.



The county released its two buses back to TTD earlier this year.

The dollars are not out of the county's general fund. It its broken down this way:

• $62,633.33 – California Transit Assistance Funds

• $56,661.32 – Local Transportation Funds.

Both allocations are from Nov. 1, 2010, – after TTD took over – through June 30, 2011.

The county is not giving TTD money for the time STATA was still in charge, which was from July 1-Oct. 31, 2010.

Neither Carl Hasty nor Alfred Knotts, the two paid transportation guys with TTD, returned phone calls Feb. 17.

Despite TTD not having all the former STATA players on board, so the budget is not as flush as had been hoped for, the district has hired a public relations firm to get its message out.

The Feb. 16 press release says in part, "Latest figures indicate an 8 percent passenger increase in core service routes – most related to South Shore, while facing challenges to maintain established budget parameters."

But the release does not say what the time frame is – such as since TTD took over or from a year ago. Nor does it explain what "core service routes" are. Without a call back from the above TTD personnel, who were listed on the press release as the contact people, the release created more questions than substance.

Nor did the release say anything about the county paying its share.

The TTD board meets again March 11, when more route modifications to BlueGo, the bus system, are expected to be voted on.

Surge in annual use at Reno-Tahoe airport

By Bob Brundage, Reno Gazette-Journal

More than 3.8 million passengers and 113 million pounds of cargo went through Reno-Tahoe International Airport in 2010, an increase in both categories over 2009.

The report from the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority shows annual growth of 1.8 percent for passengers and a 10.4 percent increase in cargo.



Travelers pick up their luggage from Reno-Tahoe airport. Photo/LTN file

In 2009, 3.76 million passengers and 102 million pounds of cargo flew into the airport.

“The numbers tell a story of the airport’s commitment to the community,” said Krys Bart, airport authority president/CEO. “The airport plays a vital role in this region’s economy and we are doing all we can to add flights, cargo and business to our community.”

In the third quarter of 2010, Reno-Tahoe International was named by the Air Transport Association as the No. 1 airport in the nation for adding commercial flights lost during the recession. The airport added 17 flights.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Deficit shouldn’t preclude investment in future

By Robert Reich

The federal budget deficit will hit nearly $1.5 trillion this year, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Should you be worried? It depends on what we’re borrowing the money for.

But it’s impossible to have an intelligent discussion about this because the federal deficit is a swamp of misleading figures hiding within a cloud of confusion inside a fog of misinformation.

Which is probably why most Americans think it ought to be reduced but don’t want to make any sacrifices to do so. According to a recent CNN poll, only 1 American in 5 regards the federal deficit as such a big problem as to justify cuts

in Social Security or Medicare – which, along with national defense, are the biggest spending items.

So we get House Republicans piously promising to reduce the deficit without coming up with any serious proposals to do so. And the president says he intends to reduce the deficit but then devotes his State of the Union address – presumably his campaign theme leading up to 2012 – to the importance of spending more on the key "investments" of education, infrastructure and basic research.

By the way, the president is absolutely right about those investments. But he's not going to get anywhere if they're competing for dollars with Social Security, Medicare and defense. And he doesn't have a prayer of getting extra dollars to help hard-pressed states that are disinvesting like mad in education and infrastructure.

Robert Reich, former U.S. secretary of labor, is professor of public policy at UC Berkeley and the author of the new book "Aftershock: The Next Economy and America's Future." He blogs at www.robertreich.org.

Read the whole story

Investment banker accused of fraud; Holly's Place survives

By Jessie Marchesseau

"I don't know what to say. It just really, really, really hurt a lot," Holly Eimer, owner of Holly's Place, said of her experience with former financial planner Lori Zoval.

Zoval is the South Lake Tahoe resident indicted last July on charges of wire fraud. The charges stem from an investment fraud scheme allegedly enacted by Zoval while working as an investment banker in Folsom. However, Eimer said she was also swindled out of hundreds of thousands of dollars by Zoval.

Sitting in the common area known as the Rainbow Room at Holly's Place, Eimer describes how Zoval became a trusted friend and colleague who nearly cost her this business. Holly's Place is a dog-friendly vacation retreat in South Lake Tahoe. The pet-friendly sanctuary sits on more than an acre in the center of town and consists of four studio units, one cabin and the Rainbow Room which was formerly a barn. The community kitchen, flickering wood stove, casual sofas and ping pong table within make the Rainbow Room a cozy place for guests to hang out, and, of course, dogs are always welcome.



Holly Eimer of South Tahoe is trying to be recover after being swindeled out of hundreds of thousands of dollars. Photo/Jessie Marchesseau

"I don't care about making money," Eimer said. "I just want people to love this place as much as I do."

This sunny outlook may be what has kept Eimer and Holly's Place going after losing three cabins to foreclosure, dealing with a tax nightmare and watching her nonprofit, Tahoe Helping Hands, go belly-up. She estimates that hiring Zoval cost her nearly half a million dollars.

Eimer met Zoval through the South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce in 2006. She says she was impressed right from the start and soon hired Zoval as her financial planner. By the end of the year, Eimer had hired Zoval on fulltime to run Tahoe Helping Hands, an organization she set up to make the retreat wheelchair accessible.

"I remember feeling like she might really be interested in my idea," Eimer said, "because my idea has been, for the last 10 years, making this place wheelchair accessible for people like myself."

Eimer was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1989, and though she is not in a wheelchair now, she knows she might be someday. For Eimer, the disease has affected her cognitive abilities more so than her physical abilities, something she suspects may have made her an easy target.

"I wanted to help people," she said. "I wanted to help people because I know what it's like to have MS."

Eimer said Zoval convinced her to refinance three of her properties and opened numerous credit card accounts under the name Tahoe Helping Hands. She said Zoval then used the credit cards extensively on trips, hotels and a lavish lifestyle, leaving Eimer with thousands of dollars in unpaid credit card bills.

Zoval was in charge of the overall financials of Tahoe Helping Hands for nearly two years. Then in October 2008, Zoval went on a business trip to San Diego and never returned.

Eimer said she considered Zoval a friend, and had even allowed

Zoval to live on the property with her son and boyfriend while she was employed there. However, after Zoval left, Eimer discovered bills, loans, mortgages and taxes had not been paid, and she was facing foreclosure.

Having founded Holly's Place more than 20 years ago, tears well in Eimer's eyes as she talks about losing three of her cabins. Her dream of a retreat for people with disabilities is all but gone now. And after what has happened, at 61, Eimer is ready to start slowing down.

"It's time to downsize and time to rest," she said, "and I just hope I can financially make it."

Eimer was more than willing to provide financial documents to the FBI last summer for use in the case against Zoval. Eimer said she does not want Zoval to do this to anyone else.

Zoval pleaded not guilty at the initial hearing six months ago, but the case is still in the pre-trial stage. She is out on bond, and her lawyer, Mark Reichel, said she is "working hard to support her family through a tough time."

At a hearing before the judge on Feb. 11, the U.S. Attorney's Office in Sacramento reported a proposed plea agreement had been offered to Zoval. Details of the agreement have not been made public. Reichel requested a continuance until April 8 to further review the case and continue negotiations on the proposed plea agreement.

If Zoval pleads not guilty at the April 8 hearing, the case will be set for trial at that time. Reichel said he does not know how Zoval will plead.

AT&T dealing with email problems

Some AT&T email customers are experiencing problems. People are able to send emails, but those sending emails to sbcglobal.net clients are having emails bounced back to them saying the account does not exist. It does exist, it’s just that AT&T is having issues.

AT&T says the problem is on their end. They are expecting the problem to be resolved by 9:30pm.

Lady Antebellum in Stateline

Harveys Lake Tahoe and Another Planet Entertainment are bringing America’s hottest country group, Lady Antebellum, to the South Shore.

The group’s “Need You Now” tour going to be part of the Lake Tahoe Summer Concert Series at Harveys Outdoor Arena in Stateline on July 29 at 7:30pm.

Tickets are via Ticketmaster outlets and apeconcerts.com. Prices are $39.50, $59.50, $69.50, $89.50 and $125.50, plus applicable fees.

Lady Antebellum booked at Harveys in July

Harveys Lake Tahoe and Another Planet Entertainment are bringing America's hottest country group, Lady Antebellum, to the South Shore.

The group's "Need You Now" tour going to be part of the Lake Tahoe Summer Concert Series at Harveys Outdoor Arena on July 29.



Tickets go on sale March 7 at 10am via Ticketmaster outlets and apeconcerts.com.

Opening acts will be announced soon.

After selling out headlining concerts in New York, Los Angeles and Nashville, and fresh from their five wins at the recent Grammy Awards, ACM and CMA Vocal Group of the Year, Lady Antebellum is headed to Stateline.

Lady Antebellum first took country music by storm in 2008 with the release of their self-titled Platinum certified debut album, which generated the hits "Love Don't Live Here," "Lookin' for a Good Time" and their No. 1 hit, "I Run to You."

Tickets are $39.50, $59.50, $69.50, $89.50 and $125.50, plus applicable fees. Show time is 7:30pm.