Effort under way to lift Nev. property tax cap

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review Journal

CARSON CITY – Officials from cash-hungry local governments are calling for changes to the property tax cap that was enacted by the Legislature in 2005 when land values were soaring, but state policymakers don't appear ready at this point to entertain wholesale changes to the formula in the 2015 session.

Assembly Speaker Marilyn Kirkpatrick, D-North Las Vegas, said she has had conversations with Southern Nevada governments and the Clark County School District about fixing what she called a loophole in the commercial property side of the tax cap that could generate some additional revenue. But fundamental changes to the 3 percent annual increases allowed for residential property and up to 8 percent for commercial property are not part of those discussions, she said.

Gov. Brian Sandoval said he is not considering the idea of changing the property tax cap law either as he prepares his 2015-17 budget.

Read the whole story

Volunteers to plant sugar pines in basin

The Sugar Pine Foundation is scheduling a series of plantings.

The Family Resource Center and Hard Rock Cafe will plant sugar pines at the Dreyfuss Estate at Zephyr Shoals on March 29 from 10am-1:30pm.

Local SOS kids will be planting April 13 form 10am-noon at Golden Bear Trail. Bring water and dress accordingly. Gloves and shovels will be available. Meet near the fire station in South Lake Tahoe.

Tahoe Douglas Rotary will plant sugar pine seedlings behind Kingsbury Middle School in Stateline on April 27 from 9:30am-noon. Bring water and dress accordingly. Gloves and shovels will be provided.

Everyone is invited to help plant on any of these days.

For more info, email michelle@sugarpinefoundation.org.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Rocky and Lola

Rocky and Lola are two very friendly little Chihuahuas who could just about fit in your pocket. They are both about 6-

months-old, and will probably put on another pound or two to get to 6 pounds. Both wag their tails and wiggle those huge ears constantly.

Lola is in charge of Rocky, but in a nice way – and he lets her make all the decisions. They share a kennel now, but don't need to be adopted together.

Rocky and Lola are spayed/neutered, microchipped, tested for heartworm, and vaccinated. They are at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes.

Go online or the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

– Karen Kuentz

Truckee business embracing being Earth-friendly

La Galleria, a long-operating gift shop in downtown Truckee, will host an Earth-friendly celebration on April 4 as part of the downtown Truckee First Friday festivities.

The store will conduct an e-waste recycling promotion April 1-22.

Owners Brooke and Chad Bentley have partnered with Truckee and the Truckee Donner Public Utility District to promote recycling and environmentally responsible living habits. First Friday attendees who stop in at La Galleria can pick up free blue recycling and green yard waste bags, provided courtesy of Truckee. La Galleria will also supply energy and water wheels which show how much energy and water certain appliances or activities consume, along with tips on saving precious resources.

Beyond the First Friday celebration, La Galleria is accepting and recycling used batteries, cell phones and small electronics between April 1 and Earth Day (April 22).

For more information, call 530.587.5444.

Santiago looks back on time as supervisor and forward regarding El Dorado County's needs

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Lean economic times forced El Dorado County to get smarter, according to Supervisor Norma Santiago.

Santiago, who will reluctantly be termed out of office at the end of the year, gave a recap of her experience to Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe last week at Harrah's Lake Tahoe.

She said she is against term limits and hopes that regulation

will one day be removed or be upped to three terms as a maximum.

“The bottom line is the county is well on its way to be a better partner with the community and finding sustainable solutions,” Santiago said.



El Dorado County Supervisor Norma Santiago has a few months left in office. Photo/LTN

Consolidating departments, she said, has made for a more efficient way of doing business. It also reduced redundancies.

The county is working on technological upgrades so all the systems talk to each other and therefore manual work would be decreased.

“We need an economic strategy. We need a workforce development strategy,” Santiago said.

She said county residents are finding jobs elsewhere – including in Douglas, Placer and Sacramento counties.

When it comes to the state, she said it’s imperative El Dorado pay attention to decisions about water.

“Agriculture is a big part of our county,” Santiago said. Water storage will continue to be a huge issue, she added.

She also said the county needs to be at the table for the gas tax discussions. A mileage usage fee is being talked about in Sacramento to fund road improvements. This is because the gas tax revenue is not enough to cover the costs to repair state highways as vehicles become more efficient and people go to the gas station less often.

When it comes to Meyers, Santiago again took full responsibility for causing angst over what was called the Catalyst Project. This is no longer an option.

But what the community has is a $250,000 planning grant that will be used to figure out how to make Highway 50 more manageable, and work on improving trails and the connections to them.

What was missing from Santiago's talk was any reference to the county's dealings with the city of South Lake Tahoe. That relationship has for decades been precarious.

Santiago stressed the need for Lake Tahoe to elect one of three candidates from the South Shore. Two are from the Pollock Pines area now that the district has been reconfigured to cover areas outside the basin. (Beginning March 25 *Lake Tahoe News* will be running profiles on the supervisor candidates.)

She said it's not just about representing Tahoe in Placerville, but how this position is also on the boards for the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, California Tahoe Conservancy, Tahoe Transportation District, Recreation JPA, Waste Management JPA and other Tahoe-centric boards.

However, Santiago said she was not endorsing any particular candidate.

Three of the major challenges for the county, according to Santiago, are how it is going to define itself, building relationships with the state, and the economy.

She briefly touched on the no-growth initiatives being brought forth by West Slope interests that everyone in the county will have an opportunity to vote on in November.

As for her future, Santiago said she wants to take time off to explore the possibility of running for another office in 2016. While she did not specify which one, there is speculation it will be for state Senate.

Letter: Heavenly works the Bread & Broth line

To the community,

In honor of St. Patrick's day, members of Heavenly Mountain Resort's mountain operations wore green and served corn beef and cabbage to Bread & Broth's dinner guests on March 17.

Thanks to the Adopt A Day sponsorship by Heavenly Mountain Resort and the generous donation of the corn beef by the Knights of Columbus, all those who attended the dinner at Grace Hall got a taste of the customary Irish dinner.

Representing Heavenly's mountain operations were Dave Hager, snowmaking manager; Todd Rudis, grooming manager; Kyle Henderson, grooming supervisor; and Mike Thomas, terrain park manager.

They were an energetic crew. HagerD described their involvement as an "experience of a lifetime and a chance to pay it back." Thomas also added that it was "eye-opening to see this type of outreach in the community."

Bread & Broth acknowledges that the meal service we offer to

the community can only be realized by the generosity of our many donor and sponsors. Heavenly Mountain Resort and their employees are monthly participants in B&B's Adopt A Day of Nourishment program and their involvement in the program is greatly appreciated.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Learn how to get a good night's sleep

Tahoe Health Touch is offering free emotional freedom technique classes each month, with a different focus each time.

Classes will be at Rejuvenate in South Lake Tahoe, behind Nepheles on Ski Run Boulevard.

The first class is April 1 from 6-7pm. The focus is on using EFT to help get a good night's sleep.

For more information on EFT, go online.

Blame your parents if fried foods make you fat

By Michaeleen Doucleff, NPR

When it comes to fried foods, sometimes I feel cursed.

My husband can eat as many spicy, crispy chicken sandwiches as he wants and never gain a pound. But for me, just smelling the chicken fryer seems to expand my waistline.

Now doctors at Harvard Medical School show what we've all suspected: Some people do indeed pay a higher price for indulging in French fries and Tater Tots. And we have mom and dad to blame for it.

French fries: There are probably other reasons besides acrylamide to avoid these tasty snacks.

People with higher genetic risk for obesity gain more weight when they eat fried foods than people with lower risk, a team from Harvard Medical School reported Tuesday in the British Medical Journal.

Read the whole story

Tahoe's seismic monitoring being upgraded

By Kathryn Reed

Earthquake stations throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin are being upgraded so the Nevada Seismic Laboratory in Reno can create a shake map for first responders.

The information collected will be able to tell emergency personnel what is happening and where to go to provide help.

Graham Kent who heads the lab – and who is a 1980 grad of South Tahoe High School – gave a presentation March 20 to the California Tahoe Conservancy board. The board OK'd a license

agreement for a seismic sensor on one of its properties in Placer County.



Sierra Nevada seismograph station is upgraded by John Torrisi. Photo/Nevada Seismic Lab

The Reno lab is upgrading its sensor vaults with modern broadband microwave communications systems.

Kent explained that the cameras would also be able to provide real-time photos that could be advantageous to fire crews.

The goal is that video would all be available to everyone through the lab's website. This in turn would then ideally be used by the media and through social media to spread information about a disaster.

The cameras will be active 24/7.

While some people don't think of Tahoe as being a hot bed of seismic activity, it is.

Kent said more seismic research has been in the Lake Tahoe Basin than any other basin in the world.

"Each earthquake we get here causes minor landslides," Kent told the board.

He showed a simulation of what would happen if there were a

major earthquake that then generated a lake tsunami. It wiped out much of what is on land, including Inn by the Lake where the meeting was being conducted.

The West Tahoe Fault hasn't had major action in 4,500 years. Scientists say it's due because history shows it erupts every 4,000 to 5,000 years.

Faults lie under Angora, Cascade, and Fallen Leaf lakes. Plus, there are the Incline Village and Stateline faults.

The seismic stations have an 18-foot triangle antenna mast with a solar panel, antennae, equipment enclosures, seismograph and 32-foot connecting cable. It could be installed this spring.

Lab officials are responsible for installation and maintenance. Although this particular CTC property is slated to be traded to State Parks, the negotiations with that state agency are that all agreements that are in place are to be honored.

In other action:

• The board approved guidelines for a volunteer program.

• It was brought up how non-action items did not have an accompanying staff report. Board members are OK with this because the items for the most part are an update. But for the public that is not previously aware of the issue, they are left in the dark.

• Staff is going to focus on 17 parcels – six near the Y in South Lake Tahoe, nine in Meyers on Highway 50 and two in Kings Beach – to be sold under the Asset Lands Program. The board agreed to notify a wider area, include why the parcel had been obtained and what funds were used to acquire it. Of the 333 lots in the program, 227 are residential. At this time there is no plan to sell the neighborhood lots. Tahoe Vista

resident Ellie Waller suggested the board visit the sites before they are sold. The board agreed to do so.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Sierra House Elementary School Principal Ryan Galles will tell the school board March 25 about plans to create the Sierra House Mountain Academy. The meeting starts at 6pm.

• Earth Day Festival is April 26 from 10-4 at Bijou Community Park in South Lake Tahoe.

• Tyler Cannon, owner of Sprouts, is selling the ski and bike rental business next door to Fred and Ginger Inc. out of Zephyr Cove.

• The South Shore’s annual tourism forum is April 15 from 3:30-5:30pm at the Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel in South Lake Tahoe. Cost is $10 for Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce member and $15 for others.

• The Kings Beach Highway 28 construction project will begin the week of March 31.