El Dorado County’s Hope House gives thanks

To the community,

Jeff Headrick and his team from Expert Design and Construction in Rancho Cordova recently underwrote all labor and materials to completely remodel a kitchen at a local transitional home in El Dorado County. Working with Assist Local Network out of Folsom, Expert Design reviewed project proposals from throughout the region looking for a project that would exemplify the true spirit of Christmas.

They selected Hope House, a transitional home and 18-month program for women and their children seeking self-sufficiency. Working in partnership with Green Valley Community Church and community volunteers, the program offers housing, educational, employment, counseling and numerous other resources to resident families. The Hope House Program is dedicated to breaking the cycle of homelessness.

Under the direction of Harry and Jennifer Headrick, Expert Design, the award-winning Rancho Cordova remodeling company, assembled a team of 26 contractors and volunteers, many from the Folsom and Sacramento region, to complete the $30,000 project. The team designed, constructed, installed appliances, flooring, granite counter tops, plumbing fixtures, electrical wiring and beautiful cabinets and topped it all off with a beautiful paint job.

We’re so grateful to Jeff and Expert Design and Construction for all that they’ve contributed. Hope House is now a much more functional home conducive with communal living and the project was constructed with the finest craftsmanship. More important, their team demonstrated the power of volunteerism and dedication to this very worthwhile cause.

God bless you all.

Judi McCallum, president

Shannon Bezak, executive director

Mormons leave behind rich history in El Dorado County

By Kathryn Reed

CAMP RICHARDSON – Trudging along in less than ideal conditions – mud so high the wagon wheels barely turn, cold so bitter it is impossible to ever get warm, hunger like the Donner Party knew. And yet, the worst may have been being driven from their home, unwanted, persecuted all because they were Mormon.

Life in the 1840s came alive at the rustic Camp Richardson Lodge last week as Frank Tortorich took on the persona of a young man caught up in the strife. Tortorich, who lives in Amador County, is an educator, researcher, guide, author and member of the Oregon California Trails Association.

William, the character Tortorich portrayed, knew Joseph Smith and later Brigham Young. Starting in the Midwest, marching with the Army to California, then heading back to the Salt Lake area, Tortorich led the nearly 40 people in attendance on what felt like a physical journey through time, as well as through history that has been left out of school curriculums.



Historian Frank Tortorich enlightens people about the Mormon migration that involved El Dorado County. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Smith’s murder in June 1844 and Young’s ascension to lead the Mormon people is part of the story.

It was after Smith was killed that the 25,000-person migration from Nauvoo, Ill., began for the people of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

A couple hundred, including Sam Brannan, went by boat around Cape Horn to California. It was in San Francisco where William would meet up with Brannan again.

A deal was struck between President James Polk and Mormon leaders that in exchange for protection along the route west 500 men would join the Army.

Young’s prophecy that no Mormon would die in battle fighting the Mexicans proved true – though plenty died on the journey. They were part of the Mormon Battalion. It was a grueling march from Santa Fe to San Diego. By the time they arrived in California the war was over.

They were introduced to Catholics, who welcomed them instead of being afraid of people with a different religious belief.

It was now the late 1840s and Young had made his way to the Salt Lake Valley.

With the discovery of gold, some of the Mormons headed to what is now El Dorado County to find some nuggets to take to Salt Lake.

Tortorich talks about James Marshall and John Sutter's gold rush that started it all.

"James Sly, one of our brothers, loved the place. He built a corral about 6 miles up," William says.

(Sly Park exit off Highway 50 may now have new meaning to people.)

The migration east to Utah included 17 wagons, two brass canyons, 150 horses and 150 oxen. The group knew about the Donner Party tragedy and had no desire to go over what was known as the Truckee River route.

Though they lost scouts to Indians along what is know Highway 50 in the American River Canyon, they believed this to be a less treacherous route.

"We went over this summit and it was beautiful; into a valley we called Lake Valley," William told the audience. Then over another summit in the Sierra the men, women and children went. "Brother Biglar wrote in his diary we shall name this Hope Valley."

(John Biglar became the third governor of California and at one time called Lake Tahoe Lake Biglar, but that never took.)

Finally, the group made its way along the Carson River, knowing its name because John Fremont had called it such after his friend Kit Carson.

All the wagon trains the Mormons saw headed west were advised of this new route over the Sierra instead of possibly having the same fate of the Donner Party.

William didn’t live long upon his arrival in Salt Lake. His widow remarried a man with the last name Kimball. They moved into the Wasatch mountains, calling their outpost Kimball Junction. Today it is known as Park City.

This night was part of the Lake Tahoe Historical Society’s Winter Program.

Prescribed burn in North Upper Truckee area this week

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews will be conducting prescribed fire operations in the North Upper Truckee area starting Wednesday and possibly lasting through Friday depending on weather conditions.

Crews are looking to accomplish approximately 2 acres each day.

Residents and travelers can expect to see smoke from prescribed fire project areas.

State and local fire management agencies may also be conducting prescribed fire work during this period.

This and other prescribed fire projects are designed to reduce wildfire risks to communities and critical resources. Smoke management is part of every prescribed fire burn plan, and efforts will be taken to reduce actual or potential smoke impacts on community areas.

Bay Area woman dies on slopes at Granlibakken

A 22-year-old Bay Area woman died snowboarding at Granlibakken ski resort in Tahoe City over the weekend.

Rahsheka Keith, who graduated from UC Santa Cruz last May, was using her snowboard like a sled when she slid into a lift tower on Jan. 22, authorities report.

She had attended high school in Lake County.

This is the fourth ski related death reported at a Tahoe resort this season. On Jan. 19, Maison T. Ortiz, 15, died when he lost his footing walking down the slick slopes of Mount Rose and slid into a tree. Nancy Blachly, 58, of South Lake Tahoe was pronounced dead Jan. 12, two day after being found on the slopes of Heavenly Mountain Resort. Shawnte Marie Willis, 25, of Tahoma was found in December in a tree well two days after being reported missing at Alpine Meadows.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Sandoval mixes optimism with harsh reality

By Guy Clifton, Reno Gazette-Journal

Gov. Brian Sandoval mixed an optimistic tone with harsh

reality in his first State of the State address on Monday, announcing a focus on economic development, fundamental changes to state programs and calling for “shared sacrifice” during the economic downturn.

In an broad-based, hour-long speech to a joint session of the Nevada Legislature and a packed gallery, Sandoval outlined a $5.8 billion budget, which takes the state general fund back to 2007 levels.

“Some believe government is the only solution to our current plight,” Sandoval said. “I disagree. Unemployment, foreclosures, bankruptcy – the cure is not more government spending, but helping businesses create jobs. The key is to get Nevada working again.”

Sandoval proposed “consolidation, elimination, or centralization” of 20 state departments and said jobs will be eliminated and “layoffs will occur.”

His budget calls for cuts in per-pupil spending for K-12 education and sharp cuts to higher education.

“Our education system is broken,” Sandoval said. “Not the people, but the system.”

He called for ending teacher tenure, relying on student achievement data to evaluate teachers and administrators, providing parental choice in selecting schools, and giving individual school districts more autonomy.

“Educators who are effective at teaching students and leading schools are paid exactly the same as those who are failing,” he said.

Read the whole story

El Dorado County DA opposes delay in Garrido trial

By Sam Stanton, Sacramento Bee

The prosecutor in the Jaycee Lee Dugard kidnap case is asking a judge to deny a delay in the trial of Phillip Garrido, saying the suspect “has manipulated the legal system and escaped justice for too long.”

El Dorado County District Attorney Vern Pierson said in court papers that there is no valid reason to delay the Feb. 28 jury trial set to determine whether Garrido is mentally competent to stand trial on charges that he kidnapped Dugard in 1991 when she was 11 and sexually assaulted her repeatedly.

Garrido’s public defender, Susan Gellman, filed papers last week stating that she still has an enormous amount of evidence to review and still may ask for a change of venue in the case.

Read the whole story

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3 miles of bike trail may be built near Stateline this year

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Construction on the Stateline-to-Stateline bike route may begin this year if permitting goes through and funding is secured.

The 3.2-mile segment that could be built this year is out for public comment – a necessity of environment documents being prepared by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and U.S. Forest Service. This section would go from the casino area at Stateline to about 0.3 miles north of the entrance of Round Hill Pines Beach.

Ultimately, the Stateline-to-Stateline trail will go from the California-Nevada state line at Stateline to the California-Nevada state line in Crystal Bay.



Part of Rabe Meadow may be incorporated into the Stateline-to-Stateline bike trail. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Public hearings about the project started last week. The first was Jan. 20 before the Douglas County Commission. The next day the Tahoe Transportation District board was briefed on the plan. On Feb. 3, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board will take public comment.

Nancy McDermid, county commissioner and TTD board member, said

the county is behind the project.

Comments may also be submitted in writing by Feb. 14 to Garrett Villanueva, assistant forest engineer, U.S. Forest Service LTBMU, 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150-4500.

The goal is to have the final document completed in the spring, with permitting to begin shortly thereafter.

Several routes were looked at, with a shoreline route ruled out because of private property issues.

Two main routes are part of the documents under review. One parallels Highway 50 on the mountain side. The other crosses Rabe Meadow, merging with the Watah Trail for a short while, before meandering around Round Hill.

Proposals call for more parking at Kahle Drive and Highway 50, along with signage, bike racks, picnic tables and restrooms.

Patrick Rhamey, director of real estate development for Edgewood Companies, said golf course officials support the project, but talks are not finalized.

“Our board will have to take action if an easement is requested,” Rhamey told the TTD board on Feb. 21.

More information about the proposed project is online.

Structure of Tahoe mountain bike group takes form

The next general TAMBA meeting is Jan. 26 at 6pm in Room G2-b

at Lake Tahoe Community College in South Lake Tahoe.

At the Jan. 5 leadership meeting the following positions and officers were proposed, with the seven board position terms staggered as noted:

– President, Kevin Joell, 1 year

– Vice president, John Drum, 2 years

– Treasurer and Truckee liaison, Linda George, 1 year

– Secretary, Lauren Lindley, 2 years (might include database, email distribution, and membership coordination)

– Trail committee lead, Ben Fish, 2 years

– Agency liaison/government affairs director, Kevin Crifasi, 1 year

– Communications, outreach, PR coordinator, Nils Miller, 1 year

– Advocacy coordinator/youth outreach and education, Pete Fink

– North Shore liaison, Mike LeFrancois

Open position to be considered/filled later is the events director.

Police: Body found at Mt. Rose a suicide victim

By Jaclyn O'Malley, Reno Gazette-Journal

Washoe County Sheriff's deputies say a body found Saturday at

the Mount Rose Summit was of a person who likely died from suicide.

Deputy Armando Avina said Monday that detectives are not treating the death as suspicious.

Read the whole story

Power out in parts of South Lake Tahoe

Updated Jan. 24 2:33pm: ***South Tahoe High School got out early today because of the power outage. According to district officials, the power company could not say when the power would be back on so the school had to cancel classes. The power is back on.***

By Kathryn Reed

Nearly 3,500 electric customers on the South Shore are without power.

“It could be a problem with the breakers,” said Randy Kelly with Liberty Energy. “We will transfer the load to other circuits.”

The power went out shortly after 11am Monday. Kelly said it could be back before 1pm.

NV Energy, the company that had been responsible for providing electricity to the entire Lake Tahoe Basin, sold its 45,000 California customers to Liberty as of Jan. 1. NV is still responsible for the substations and has been called by Liberty to come assess the problem.

People without power are in the North Upper Truckee area, down Lake Tahoe Boulevard, and into the Tahoe Island area.

Residents in the Tahoe Island area have reported four outages since the beginning of the year – on days when weather has not been an issue.