LTCC enrollment drops; impact of state budget unknown

By Kathryn Reed

With Gov. Jerry Brown proposing massive cuts to the California Community College system, it's possible even more key courses will be eliminated from Lake Tahoe Community College's schedule.



The need to increase the minimum class size from eight to 12 students in recent years meant the second of a three-segment computer class being cut this quarter. Most community colleges in the state have a minimum class size of 19.

In the past the South Lake Tahoe two-year school could make exceptions for a transfer class that didn't meet the required number of students. Not so anymore.

Officials didn't know if students wanting to take this course will have to wait a year for it to be offered again or if it might be available spring quarter.

Just how slashing $400 million from the state Community College system and $500 million from both the UC and CSU systems will impact students locally and throughout the state remains to be seen.

It's becoming normal for whoever is governor to come out with something in January that doesn't necessarily resemble what is eventually passed by the Legislature. A crystal ball would be needed to know what lawmakers will actually come up with to deal with the $25 billion deficit.

"We appreciate the honesty with which the governor approaches

the budget. However, while community colleges are prepared for their fair share of cuts, we will vigorously resist the census accounting gimmick tied to the $400 million reduction. This will have the effect of reducing math and science classes, particularly at our colleges serving the most vulnerable students," Scott Lay, president/CEO of the Community College League of California, told his constituents. "Further, while it may be fair to ask our students to share the pain of this overall budget problem, the fact that funding for their classes and services is being cut by $370 and their fees are being used to enroll more students simply doesn't make sense."

For now, students at LTCC are contending with fewer class choices as one of the results of previous budget snafus. Still, enrollment was up in fall quarter compared to 2009. Fall enrollment had a total of 2,950 students – 878 fulltime.

However, the numbers have dropped for winter quarter, with 2,036 total, of which 759 are fulltime.

The college historically sees a dip in winter quarter numbers. Part of this is attributed to more jobs opening up and students wanting to be on the ski slopes.

Fundraiser for WHS grad hurt in accident

Fundraiser for Whittell High School grad Jerel Dutton at MontBleu casino in Stateline on Jan. 15 from 6-10:30pm.

Dutton sustained injuries in an accident in Mexico.

Tickets are $10. They may be purchased at Kahle Community

Center, Chase International at Round Hill, Tahoe Sports Ltd., Forever Dance Studio at Round Hill, or at the door.

Plans to extend Tahoe-Pyramid Bikeway this year

By Susan Voyles, Reno Gazette-Journal

The Tahoe-Pyramid Bikeway could be extended by several leaps and bounds in 2011, including opening the first trail in the Truckee Canyon west of Verdi, possibly gaining access along the Truckee River at the S-Bar-S Ranch north of Wadsworth and opening a new stretch through the scenic McCarran Ranch.

Once McCarran is opened to bike riders after a new bridge is built, they will have nine miles of trail to ride from Mustang to Tracy, said Janet Phillips, bikeway leader.

Phillips said work could begin this year on the first four miles of trail into the Truckee Canyon from Verdi after the Truckee Meadows Water Authority signed an agreement in 2010 making its dirt maintenance road public.

That trail, however, won’t be opened until the Fleish suspension footbridge is made sturdier, Phillips said.

A grant to cover $200,000 of a $350,000 in improvements now is in the works, she said.

Mile by mile, Phillips and a band of about 11 professionals and recent retirees now are in their seventh year of pursuing a bikeway following the Truckee River from Lake Tahoe to Pyramid Lake. So far, 68 miles are open, and there are 45 miles to go.

Another 70 volunteers, she said, can be counted on for trail construction, pulling weeds or maintenance.

The bikeway can be a dirt trail or road or a wide road shoulder, such as along California 89 between Squaw Valley and Truckee, Phillips said. The big push, she said, is to get a bikeway opened, making improvements along the way.

Read the whole story

Placer County receives $1 mil. gift for arts

By Auburn Journal

A $1 million donation will help support an arts program aimed to serve Placer County artists, art educators, students and more.

The Susan Cooley-Gilliom Artist Residence and Teaching (ART) Program has been established in memory of the local artist and environmental advocate. Sue D. Cooley, Susan's mother, and the Sky View Foundation, established the program with a donation of $1 million to the Placer Community Foundation.

"The ART Program is a unique and special way that we can honor and remember Susan, while providing permanent support of art education for the region and fellow artists that she cherished," Cooley said.

Beginning June 2011, the ART Program will provide bi-annual artist residencies to established and renowned artists working throughout the West Coast. Through a comprehensive selection process, they will be chosen based upon their proven ability

to create and instruct others in their craft. In addition to the residencies, visiting artists will provide public workshops and lectures hosted through PlacerArts in the spring and Roseville Arts' Blue Line Gallery in the fall.

Susan Cooley-Gilliom's artistic talents, well-known to art lovers and fellow artists in the Placer region, developed through a family legacy rich in weaving and painting. A fine arts painter known for her award-winning pastels and watercolors, especially foothill and Sierra landscapes, Susan always combined her art with her love for the natural environment and her concern for its protection, according to Jessica Hubbard, philanthropic services manager for the Placer Community Foundation.

Read the whole story

Judge's Lakeview Commons ruling may be appealed

By Kathryn Reed

It may not matter what South Lake Tahoe wants regarding Lakeview Commons. Reeve-Knight Construction has filed notice the company intends to appeal the judge's decision that rendered its contract with the city invalid.

Multiple calls to the Roseville-based company went unreturned. However, City Attorney Patrick Enright confirmed Reeve-Knight has filed a notice to appeal.

Clark & Sullivan Construction in Sparks successfully sued the city over the bid process, which resulted in El Dorado County

Superior Court Judge Steve Bailey issuing a decision Nov. 1 that blasted the city for its handling of the bid and rendered the contract null and void.



People may need to get used to this sign near El Dorado Beach. Photo/Kathryn Reed

People close to the issue have told *Lake Tahoe News* if Reeve-Knight goes through with the appeal, it's likely the city will have another stalled construction project on its hands for what could be years with it tied up in legal wrangling.

One difference between this $6 million stalled project and the bankrupt/foreclosed could have been $400 million convention center project is location and functionality.

Lakeview Commons is in the center of town, and a highly trafficked area that is popular with locals and tourists. Access to El Dorado Beach is now cut off.

This compares to the convention center site near Stateline that impacts the players with money in the site, but does not take away an asset from people.

On Jan. 11 the City Council started their morning at 8 in closed session to discuss Lakeview Commons. Enright said no reportable action was taken, but in the same breath said a

public hearing is scheduled for Jan. 25 to decide whether to start the bid process from scratch or to award the bid to Clark & Sullivan.

“Discussion in large part was whether to appeal the decision. We wanted this council to decide it,” Enright said of the closed session.

The city only had 60 days to appeal the decision. Tuesday’s session was 10 days after that deadline. This means it’s possible the council again violated the Brown Act by discussing litigation that isn’t relevant.

South Tahoe is also dealing with angry subcontractors on the project who have not been paid.

Dave Galicia, president of GB Construction in South Lake Tahoe and subcontractor for Reeve-Knight, spoke before the council Tuesday saying he submitted invoices to the city dated more than 120 days ago and has yet to see a dime.

Afterward he told *Lake Tahoe News*, “They are arguing over $35,000.” Galicia said Reeve-Knight billed the city for $140,000 for the work done at the site and the city offered $105,000.

Enright confirmed the city has not paid Reeve-Knight any money.

“We are negotiating with them,” Enright said.

He cited Public Contract Code that requires the city to pay hard costs, but not profits on a contract that has been rendered invalid.

Enright expects that aspect of the issue to be voted on by the council Jan. 25 – the same day it is scheduled to decide how to go forward with the bid. The latter, of course, may be a mute point depending on what Reeve-Knight does.

S. Tahoe commission appointments become personal

By Kathryn Reed

In a thinly veiled attempt to deny Ted Long a seat on the South Lake Tahoe Planning Commission, the City Council on Tuesday delayed appointments to that board for two weeks.

“We can wait so we don’t get a candidate by default,” Councilman Bruce Grego said in his desire to postpone the Planning Commission selection.

Grego repeatedly cautioned his colleagues that just one vote for a person is good enough to get them appointed. It doesn’t take a majority of the council. That rule may be revisited in the future.

Five people applied for the five-member Planning Commission.

Long, a controversial ex-councilman, filed for six commission seats. He was appointed to two on Jan. 11 – the Latino Affairs Commission and Delinquent Refuse Hearing Board.

One of the problems with the application process is the person does not have an opportunity to rank which seats he or she would prefer to be on or how many. It’s possible Long or anyone else has an interest in serving their community in various ways, but not necessarily for all seats applied for.

For those who are interested in serving on the Planning Commission, contact City Clerk Suzie Alessi at salessi@cityofslt.us. Those who applied in the initial round

need not reapply.

The Parks and Recreation, and Airport commissions received the most number of candidates, while some received the minimum, and the General Plan Advisory Commission is short a member.

Much discussion centered on a potential conflict of interest Claudio Bellotto may have by being appointed to the Airport Commission because he operates a helicopter business out of Lake Tahoe Airport. While this was ruled to not be a conflict, nothing was brought up about the fact he is dating the airport's senior administrative assistant.

The council put him on the commission.

Appointments made Tuesday include:

• Airport Commission – Bellotto, Kris Keesling, Ike Marr.

• Building Board of Appeals – Keith Cloutier, David Huber, Dale Rise, Randy Vogelgesang, Robert Wirth.

• Delinquent Refuse Hearing Board – Long, David Kelly, David Newell.

• General Plan Advisory Commission – Richard Belli.

• Latino Affairs Commission – Long, Pedro Lopez, Paul Moniot, Mary Rodriquez, Liliana Sanchez Ruvalcaba.

• Parks and Recreation Commission – Seth Martin, Jonathan Moore, Chip Morrill, Jennifer Scanio, Les Wright.

• Sustainability Commission – Newell, Morrill, Jason Collin, Joy Curry, Juliana Prosperi, Kay Ogden, Tom Wendell.

El Dorado, Sacramento sheriffs eager to loosen weapons permit rules

By Hudson Sangree, Sacramento Bee

New sheriffs in Sacramento and El Dorado counties say they are preparing to fulfill their campaign pledges to make it easier for residents to obtain concealed weapons permits.

El Dorado County Sheriff John D'Agostini and Sacramento County Sheriff Scott Jones said the attack on U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, which left six dead and 14 others wounded in Arizona, hasn't dissuaded them from fulfilling their campaign promises. Arizona does not require concealed weapons permits.

Both Jones and D'Agostini won runoff elections in which concealed gun permits were a major issue.

As the suspect in Saturday's mass shooting, Jared Lee Loughner, 22, made his first court appearance Monday, Jones said the shooting in Tucson had reinforced his faith in California's concealed weapons law.

Read the whole story

'9500 Liberty' at LTCC

The movie "9500 Liberty" will be shown Jan. 22 at 6pm at Duke Theatre on the Lake Tahoe Community College campus in South Lake Tahoe.

The feature-length film was initially shot in segments that were uploaded to YouTube. It’s about a county in Virginia that passed a restrictive immigration law before Arizona passed its version. The Virginia law has since been overturned.

The movie is in English with Spanish subtitles.

Donations are being accepted on behalf of the college’s HOPE Club, which will use the money for scholarships.

Rail jam at LTCC

Lake Tahoe Community College is creating a different kind of educational environment – a rail jam and more on Feb. 12.

The rail jam is 5-10pm . The fee to enter has not been set, but signups will be just before the competition begins. Ages 9 and older may enter. Cash prizes will be awarded.

The festivities will begin at 2pm with local bands playing.

All of this will be in the parking lot near the Duke Theatre on the campus of the South Lake Tahoe college.

The night will wrap-up with a movie – possibly something for a local filmmaker – in the theater. It will start when the rail jam finishes.

Check the college website for updates.

El Dorado sheriff keeps No. 2 position in the family

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

New El Dorado County Sheriff John D’Agostini has picked his brother-in-law to be undersheriff, a position re-established today by the Board of Supervisors.

Yolo County Sheriff’s Captain Rich Williams, selected for the second-in-command position, is the brother of D’Agostini’s wife, according to a release from the Sheriff’s Office.

Read the whole story