Home prices sputtering regionally

By Ron Trujillo, Sacramento Business Journal

It was better times, it was the worst of times. It was the age of wisdom, after the age of foolishness.



OK, so I altered a few of the classic words, but when you are dealing with the housing market, changing a few things is almost required.

And a lot has changed, especially in the four-county region during the past few years. In fact, we are talking about a tale of two markets – one with great expectations and the other facing grim reality.

Sacramento-area's median-home price – meaning half the homes sold for more, the other for less – has increased a modest-but-respectable 7.6 percent to $180,000 from the so-called bottom of the market in April 2009, when homeowners hung their heads and home-shoppers licked their lips with the lowest prices in several years.

Read the whole story

Brotherhood thanks community

for Turkey Day support

To the community,

The Brotherhood Motorcycle Club wishes to thank local business and community members here in South Lake Tahoe and Stateline for their generous donations for our annual fundraiser Hogg Wild XV.

We raised a total of $1,000 during the Hogg Wild raffle.



Because of our communities' generosity, we were able to provide 86 turkeys to families in need this Thanksgiving.

The giveaway at the American Legion Post 795 was a huge success thanks to the following individuals, businesses and community members: Thanks to Jim and Christine from Lira's Market for putting the dinner packages together, they really stepped up when the other stores would not. Thanks to Joanne, Wilma, Virginia and Jody from Christmas Cheer, who were there to help distribute the turkeys at the Legion. Thanks to *Lake Tahoe News* and the *Tahoe Daily Tribune* for promoting the giveaway in print and online. Thanks to KRLT radio's Paul Middlebrook at KTHO for letting us go on the air live the day of the giveaway to help promote it. A big thanks goes out to Tom Davis and the employees at MontBleu for donating additional turkeys that day for us to give away. Last, but by no means least, a special thanks to John, Carol and Mary from the American Legion, who were kind enough to open the Legion Hall for us to carry out the giveaway so we were not out in the cold.

The Brotherhood Motorcycle Club could not have done this without the more than $4,000 in raffle prize donations from

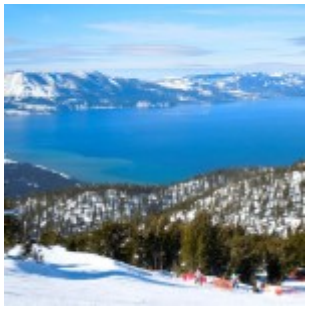
our wonderful community and numerous individuals for our annual event.

Also, a special thanks to Clint Schue and The Brothers Bar for hosting our event.

Thank you South Lake Tahoe.

Brotherhood Motorcycle Club

Next round of storms should cover remaining bare spots



With a 40 percent chance of snow today increasing to 60 percent tonight, the handful of bare spots that could be seen at Heavenly Mountain Resort on Wednesday are likely to be covered up.

Mott Canyon is slated to open today.

The few people who ventured out on this sunny, warm Dec. 1 morning were taking lap after lap on the wide-open terrain. It’s 11am and one guy said he already put in a full day of profitable work. Such is the life of a stock trader.

Full sun is not in the forecast for the entire weekend, according to the National Weather Service in Reno.

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– Kathryn Reed

Pet pictures with Santa in South Tahoe

The 24th annual Santa Paws Benefit in South Lake Tahoe is Dec. 4 from 11am to 4pm

All pets must be on a leash or in carrier.

The event is at Lakeview Plaza (3300 Lake Tahoe Blvd. – where Freshies is).

Pets and family pose alone or together. You receive a CD for color prints or holiday cards. Bows and antlers provided.

Cost is $20. Cash or checks accepted. All proceeds benefit local animals.

For more information, call (530) 542.2857.

Budget gift: State park merchandise

Publisher's note: ***Lake Tahoe News is looking for ideas for gifts that cost less than $20 to share with readers. Read this for details.***



California State Parks Foundation has calendars, T-shirts, hats and other items for less than $20. And the money goes back to the state park system. Several state parks are in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The website has a list of gift ideas.

Holiday season comes to light with Barton's Festival of Trees

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – It was not the traditional Santa's workshop, but a definite holiday buzz was coming from MontBleu's convention center.

By 10am the Mardis Gras tree was well assembled, as was the Party in a Box tree. Food Network star Guy Fieri sent items to Tahoe for a tree with his name on it. Hollywood is showing up with an Eat, Pray, Love tree.

All of these trees and more are part of the second annual Festival of Tree and Lights. The three-day event – Dec. 3-5 – is all about giving local youths some holiday fun, families an indoor activity, and the Barton Community Clinic a unique vehicle to raise cash.

Each designer has a 10-foot by 10-foot space to work in. Decorating the winter wonderland was supposed to be done as

the clock struck midnight Wednesday. Although the public doesn't get to look at the splendor until Dec. 3, Barton employees will be treated to a special event tonight and a VIP gathering was last night.



Jessica DeFranco is a bit nervous Guy Fieri may attend the event because she is decorating the tree with his name. Photos/Kathryn Reed

"Most of the growth is in mini trees and table tops," Kindle Craig, executive director of the Barton Foundation, told *Lake Tahoe News* as she walked among the clutter Tuesday.

Although she would like to be able to have more large trees, the space doesn't allow for it. But MontBleu is not charging for use of the space.

"I'd really like the convention center (across the street) to open so it could be bigger," Kindle said.

New this year is two trips on the Polar Express on Sunday because of the sell-out last year. A Teddy Bear Hospital is also new. A Champagne brunch fashion show had been planned,

but has since been crossed off the event schedule.

The inaugural event raised almost $28,000 for the clinic. With not having the start-up costs associated with last year, organizers are hoping to raise even more money this year. It is also hoped more people will participate. Last year 2,500 people were part of the festival.

More than a dozen trees are elaborately decorated – mostly with a theme, such as the Powder tree. Each tree has a sponsor (Barton's orthopedics are behind this one), and each has a decorator. Sponsors pay $1,200 per tree. The designer is reimbursed up to $600; the other $600 goes to the clinic.

Gifts under the tree – like the goggles, skis and chairlift are donated. In this case, the chair came from Sierra-at-Tahoe.

Then, the tree and everything associated with it is auctioned off to the highest bidder. In 2009, the most expensive tree went for $3,000 even though it had a value of about $5,000.

That money, too, went right to the community clinic coffers.

The clinic plans an $800,000 renovation that will begin next year. It is at capacity with 11 exam rooms, so more will be added, along with a larger waiting area. The clinic saw nearly 1,600 patients in October.

Event details:

Location: MontBleu casino in Stateline

Dec. 3:

9am-4pm Public Viewing of Designer Trees: Tickets are available for purchase only at the door; $5 for adults, $3 for senior citizens (55+), $3 for children (ages 3-12), children 2 and under are free.

5-9pm Family Night: Families are welcome to attend special late night festival hours, free cocoa and cookies. Enjoy a holiday light show provided by Horizon casino. Admission is $25 per family (up to 5 people), which includes one Santa photo. Additional Santa photos can be purchased for $5 each.

Dec. 4:

9am Teddy Bear Breakfast: Tickets are $20 for adults, $15 for children (ages 3-12), children 2 and under are free, $200 reserved table (10 Guests). One Santa photo per family is included. Additional photos can be purchased for $5 each.

Enjoy a holiday buffet in the convention center surrounded by all the trees and holiday lights. Every child is encouraged to bring a doll or teddy bear that will be whisked away and returned to their table adorned with holiday flair.

11am-2pm Teddy Bear Hospital/Gingerbread Junction/Public Viewing of Designer Trees: Children age 12 and under are invited to visit the Teddy Bear Hospital – an interactive place where they learn about their health and hospitals in a safe, “no pokes” environment from Barton Health’s physicians, nurses and staff. Each child will receive a free teddy bear as they are “admitted” to the hospital.

The Gingerbread Junction will have holiday coloring pages and holiday craft projects for kids.

Tickets are available for purchase only at the door. Ticket Price: $5 for adults, $3 for senior citizens (55+), $3 for children (ages 3-12), children 2 and under are free.

6pm Gala: Black-tie optional. Complete with a 10-piece band, five-course meal catered by MontBleu, silent and live auctions, and more; $150 per person, $1,650 Patron Table (10 Guests with sponsorship benefits), $2,000 Benefactor Table (10 Guests with sponsorship benefits).

Dec. 5:

3-5pm and 6-8pm Polar Express: Festivalgoers will ride on the Polar Express Tahoe style. Attendees will dress up in their best pajamas and grab a seat on one of our “trains” (really, they’re school buses). Carols will be sung as they make their way to the first stop to the Red Hut. From there the “trains” will continue on to the MontBleu for a reading of the Polar Express and the songs of the Belles of Christmas choir.

All days:

• The Festival will feature nonstop entertainment on the festival stage with local dance troupes, singing groups and magic shows.

• Santa Claus will be on hand. Santa photos are $5 each.

• Silent auction of mini-trees, wreaths and décor.

• Raffle tickets are $5 each.

• Wish Tree – Make someone’s holiday wish come true. Visit the very special “Wish Tree” and you can do just that – determine how much you would like to give, pull off an existing wish or make your own. Minimum gift is $5.

• Mrs. Claus’ Gift Shop – The Barton Auxiliary creates a holiday store. Shop here for ornaments, décor, See’s candies and the world-famous cheese balls.

• People’s Choice Award – Vote for your favorite Designer Tree by placing your ticket in the bin located next to each Designer Tree.

• Contact: For information or to purchase tickets online or call (530) 543.5909.

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City decorates South Tahoe Y tree

The Y in South Lake Tahoe is getting a little brighter.

Eleven boxes of lights, each containing 48 strings that are 8 feet long started to be strung Dec. 1 on a large tree at the Factory Stores at the Y. South Tahoe firefighters didn't have enough time before nightfall to finish getting all the LED lights on so they will be back today to finish the job.



South Tahoe firefighters put up lights at the Y on Dec. 1. Photo/Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe Fire Department Division Chief Marty Scheuerman was watching as his guys on the ladder truck decorated the tree – a first for the town. He said it was City Manager Tony O'Rourke's idea to "dress up" the town a bit with some holiday spirit.

– Kathryn Reed

Swarm of quakes keeps Reno scientists on their toes

By Frank X. Mullen Jr., Reno Gazette-Journal

Seismologists at the University of Nevada, Reno are keeping their eyes on the ArrowCreek area of Reno where a swarm of 21 small earthquakes were recorded between Friday and Sunday and another small temblor hit Monday morning.

“The earthquakes have all been in about the same spot,” said Ken Smith, a seismologist at UNR’s Nevada Seismological Laboratory. “It’s a little cluster. I felt it in north Reno.”

The strongest temblor was measured at a magnitude 3 on Friday. The quake Monday at 10:22am was a 2.1 magnitude. No damage was reported from either event.

He said such earthquake sequences aren’t unusual in Nevada, but because quake swarms are sometimes precursors to stronger temblors, his lab is keeping tabs on the activity.

Read the whole story

Carson City man hospitalized after being buried in

avalanche

By Kathryn Reed

A Carson City man who grew up in South Lake Tahoe is being treated for severe head injuries he sustained in an avalanche near the Carson Pass.

Darren Johnson, 47, was backcountry skiing with his friend Matthew Beler of South Lake Tahoe on Sunday when he triggered an avalanche as he going from the saddle of Red Peak to Crater Lake.

Beler was able see Johnson's poles sticking out and dug him out in about seven minutes. He was conscious, but responsive at that time. Renown Medical Center in Reno where Johnson was taken is not releasing his status. Alpine County sheriff's officials knew he was alive and still at the hospital early Wednesday afternoon.

"With as much snow that had fallen, the chance of an avalanche was extreme," said Lt. Ron Michitarian of the Alpine County Sheriff's Department.

Even though the two skiers were considered experienced and carried beacons, it is still necessary to understand how that much snow would be unstable.

It took Beler about two hours to ski out to Highway 88 where he was able to flag down a deputy. The deputy in turn called out all the search and rescue crews. A CalStar flight crew located the avalanche field about 12:20pm.

A California Highway Patrol chopper lowered a paramedic to Johnson who packaged him in a rig to airlift him to Blue Lakes. From there CalStar flew him to Reno.

Because Johnson was on a cliff the search and rescue crews on snowmobile were not able to reach him.

Also assisting in the rescue were Woodfords volunteer firefighters, South Tahoe fire and Lake Valley fire.

Squaw's Ganong in top 10 in training run

By Elizabeth Karam, U.S. Ski Team

BEAVER CREEK – Travis Ganong of Squaw Valley produced another strong result, finishing seventh in the second Audi Birds of Prey downhill training run before the race was canceled after 45 racers because of visibility. Austria's Michael Walchhofer, who won the season's opening downhill in Lake Louise last weekend, led the run in 1:48.34.

"The course is in great shape. It's a little slicker than it was the first day – you can really take at it. It's pretty fun," said Ganong, who was 24th Tuesday. "It's my first top-10 in a training run or anything, so I know I have the speed."

Olympic gold medalist Bode Miller led a tight string of U.S. with 11th followed by Steven Nyman of Utah and Andrew Weibrecht of New York in 12th and 13th.

A third training run is scheduled for Thursday at 10am.

Official results, Audi FIS Alpine World Cup, Beaver Creek, Dec. 1, Downhill Training

1. Michael Walchhofer, Austria, 1:48.34

1. Peter Fill, France, Italy, 1:48.34

3. Hans Grugger, Austria, 1:48.40

4. Erik Guay, Canada, 1:48.41

5. Aksel Lund Svindal, Norway, 1:48.65

—

7. Travis Ganong, Squaw Valley 1:48.84

11. Bode Miller, Franconia, N.H., 1:48.97

12. Steven Nyman, Sundance, Utah, 1:48.98

13. Andrew Weibrecht, Lake Placid, N.Y., 1:49.09

32. Ted Ligety, Park City, 1:50.39

40. Marco Sullivan, Squaw Valley, 1:52.64