Accidents slow traffic on Hwy. 50 in Douglas County

Updated Nov. 29 at 11:29am.

A single rollover accident near Round Hill early Monday morning temporarily reduced traffic to one lane. A crash a 8:44am occurred later at Bourne curve.

A Nevada Highway patrolman escorted cars headed east on Highway 50 around a particularly slick spot.

“We had a request for sand in that area. I suspect it was black ice in that case,” NHP Trooper Chuck Allen told *Lake Tahoe News* in regards to the first accident.

He said the driver sustained minor injuries.

The second accident involved a pickup pulling a trailer with a snowcat on top of the trailer. This vehicle collided with another one. West bound lanes were blocked. Traffic was rerouted into the east bound lane. Both drivers reported minor injuries.

Despite the slick roads during the four-day holiday weekend, the NHP reported eight accidents in Douglas County. Most were on Kingsbury Grade, a couple on Highway 50 and one on Highway 28.

– Kathryn Reed

Ski report: Sun, cold, sun, cold

Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe, is calling the conditions some of the best he's seen in more than a decade. So, finish reading *Lake Tahoe News* and head for the slopes before the next storm arrives mid-week.



Here is today's ski report.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Boogie is a cute Shih Tzu who is about 2 years old. He is affectionate and likes other dogs and cats.

He was matted when he was found, but the shelter staff gave him a haircut and now he feels much better. He looks a little scraggly now, but with a little professional grooming and some time he will be especially handsome.



Boogie is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs, cats, and rabbits who are waiting for their new homes.

Call (530) 573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, click here.

South Lake Tahoe to create admin time policy

By Kathryn Reed

When South Lake Tahoe City Manager Tony O'Rourke has his staff meeting today one topic on the agenda will be administrative time.

"I want directors to review who warrants it and make sure the hours are appropriate," O'Rourke said.

Some people are given 40 hours, others more than 100 in a year. Thirty-nine employees now qualify for admin time.

O'Rourke was unaware the city did not have a policy in place regarding this practice until *Lake Tahoe News* wrote about it earlier this month. Administrative time is for salaried employees as a sort of comp time.

But the problem is without a policy in place and it not being tracked by the folks in payroll, the abuses of admin time are unknown. It's possible now for people to take the time without earning it. This means instead of taking sick time or vacation

hours, they take this admin time and still have the other hours on the books. This would be a financial impact on the city.

O’Rourke said he wants to add a box that can be checked on timesheets to reflect the use of admin time. This in turn can be tracked to ensure people aren’t using more than they have been allocated and possibly snare anyone abusing the system.

When O’Rourke was hired this summer his original contract called for 120 hours of admin time. He dialed that back to 80.

“I can’t take all that time,” he said of the three weeks.

That’s the other concern of his – is whether the city can afford people to not work.

“How much can you allow people off even if they earned it?” he questions. With fewer employees and the ongoing furlough days, he questions how much admin time can be doled before the public isn’t served.

A temporary admin time policy was written in the early 1990s when Kerry Miller was city manager, but it was never adopted as formal policy. Since then, Human Resources Manager Janet Emmett has drafted a couple possible policies. But former City Manager Dave Jinkens never brought them forward for the City Council to adopt.

“Why this has been untouched for years is beyond me,” O’Rourke said. “It’s an important housekeeping policy.”

It’s possible the council will be asked to address this Dec. 14. If not then, it will be on a January agenda.

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Remember, *Lake Tahoe News* is the only place to get news about Lake Tahoe seven days a week.

Bahrke grinding it up with

expansion of coffee business

By Tom Kelly, U.S. Ski Team

SALT LAKE CITY – Something's brewing again for entrepreneur and two-time Olympic medalist Shannon Bahrke Happe. The Lake Tahoe native, who now calls Salt Lake City home, is expanding her 3-year-old Silver Bean Coffee Company, opening a flagship retail coffee shop at the bottom of Big Cottonwood Canyon just off Interstate 215. B

Bahrke Happe, who won an Olympic silver medal in moguls skiing at the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics, capped a star-studded career with the U.S. Ski Team last February winning bronze in Vancouver. She is the only U.S. freestyle skier in history to win two Olympic medals.



Shannon Bahrke

The Silver Bean Coffee shop was a natural extension for the Olympic medalist and her now husband Matt Happe (they were married in October). The two started Silver Bean Coffee in 2007, building a roasting business and selling Silver Bean Coffee to friends, online and through selected coffee shops at resorts around the country.

The new Silver Bean Coffee shop is at a convenient location for skiers coming and going from Big and Little Cottonwood Canyon. It's located just off Exit 6 of I-215 in the Old Mill shopping and entertainment complex just off SR190. On ski days it's one of the heaviest trafficked roads in Utah as skiers

and snowboarders head up to the Cottonwood Canyon resorts of Brighton, Solitude, Alta and Snowbird.

“The idea for Silver Bean Coffee came together over coffee with friends after a great day skiing,” said Bahrke Happe. “So we wanted our first actual coffee shop to be in a location where skiers could stop by on the way up to the mountains and come back in the afternoon and share stories of their day skiing.

“Coffee is more than just a beverage, it’s really a culture. And it goes hand-in-hand with the sport I love.”

Always true to fellow skiers, Silver Bean Coffee has built its line of specialty roasts around other Olympic athletes with a variety of signature blends. There are 28 blends including many tied to Olympic medalists including Jeret “Speedy” Peterson, Julia Mancuso, Billy Demong and Bryon Wilson, who was on hand to try a cup of his Bryon’s Bronze.

Bahrke Happe’s husband and business partner, Matt, is a native of Nebraska. He came to Utah to ski, opening a highly successful bike shop (Revolution) to pass time between ski seasons. He combined with Shannon on the entrepreneurial venture which has been very successful.

The new coffee shop has a comfy, contemporary feel, friendly staff, tasty treats, and, of course great Silver Bean coffee. It really is the perfect place for skiers to stop on their way to and from a fun day in the canyons.

The two-time Olympic medalist and 2003 World Cup champion retired after last season. And while she spends plenty of time around the coffee roaster and entertaining skiers in the shop, she can also be found helping future stars in the sport she loves.

“I love people, which is one of the reasons I’m so excited about being in the Silver Bean Coffee shop here,” she said.

“But I also want to help young athletes enjoy the sport like I did for so many years. So you’ll still find me coaching at the Utah Olympic Park in the summertime or up on a moguls course during the winter.”

Calif. on sidelines of latest gold rush, Nev. a definite player

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

California is being left behind by the new Gold Rush.



Despite sky-high prices and the state’s rich gold legacy, the industry here is mostly dormant. California trails the leading gold-producing state, Nevada, by a wide margin.

A California revival is hardly imminent. Companies trying to reopen old mines in Grass Valley and near Sutter Creek have slogged through years of red tape, and there are no guarantees of success. The Sutter Creek plan is at least a year away, while Grass Valley is several years from reopening.

Standing in the way: scarcity of capital and strict environmental standards.

There’s a cultural issue, too. Old mining towns still embrace their Gold Rush roots but have become havens for tourists and retirees. Some residents aren’t convinced that blasting

through rock is compatible with boutiques or bed-and-breakfasts.

Read the whole story

Van Sickle Bi-state Park needs money to open in 2011

By Susan Wood

STATELINE – The giant boulder that serves as a welcome sign where Montreal Avenue and Heavenly Village Way meet signals a solid decade of vision and work. But the word that may keep the nation's first bi-state park from opening is money.

The park on the California-Nevada state line is feeling the constraints of budget issues from both states.



Van Sickle Bi-state Park will open in 2011 if funding comes through. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Lead agency Nevada State Parks just underwent a final inspection of Burdick Construction's work on the first of four phases of the Van Sickle Bi-state Park behind Heavenly Village and the Stateline casinos.

It was the long dream of rancher Jack Van Sickle, who donated more than two-thirds of the land for the 725-acre park to the state. Nonetheless, more work is slated to be done by the California Tahoe Conservancy and Tahoe Rim Trail Association. The former agency has placed a bond allocation item on its January board meeting agenda for trailhead interpretative facilities at the park's gateway. The latter organization has pledged to pick up utility costs and other maintenance expenses as well as continued connector trail work next spring.

Then there's the question of when the park will open. The answer teeters on money.

If all goes as optimistically planned, the urban trailhead may open next summer. Lake Tahoe's Environmental Summit, which will be hosted in August by Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., is usually set against a beautiful backdrop. National Trails Day scheduled in June could be another option.

Either way, Nevada Parks Deputy Administrator Steve Weaver has some doubts about the future of the park. He estimates it will cost up to $20,000 a year to operate – beyond the $2.8 million-plus spent on construction of the first phase. The fire hydrants alone – three in California and four in Nevada – will consume $157 a month.

"There's nothing in this budget to operate this park, and I don't see anything in the foreseeable future," Weaver warned while on an exclusive tour with *Lake Tahoe News* this month. "I think it's very challenging. I don't think anything (more) will be developed in this park in the next decade."

Despite the dire forecast, Weaver is pleased with how the

three-season park is shaping up. A half-mile road with a storm drainage system leads up to a 2½-acre day-use area with four picnic tables, a vaulted restroom scaled down from the flush variety, the start of the irrigation system, fencing, landscaping and a parking lot with 29 spaces. Six are designed for horse trailers. Portions of trails for equestrians, hikers and mountain bikers lead up to a ridge known for its Heavenly-style views along the gondola tower line.

Now, bears and other wildlife mix with the homeless on the park's ridge, which is susceptible to wildland fires. A small blaze started by a homeless encampment sent fire crews out last summer. In 2002, a 673-acre fire was ignited by a cigarette along the California side of the scenic ridge.

With no development money from California, the Nevada park service fronted the costs. But the park system has lost 46 percent of its funding since 2007 and resources are tapped. With Nevada Gov.-elect Brian Sandoval's pledge of no new taxes and fees, the donation box may be out – literally.

Nevada Parks needs help from the patrons and its state neighbors next door even though California's budget is in far worse shape. The Legislative Analyst's Office just announced a shortfall climbing to $25 billion. Voters also failed to pass a measure that would have funded the Golden State's park system through vehicle license fees.

Bruce Eisner of the CTC figures his agency would cough up about $150,000 next year at its Jan. 11 meeting to help fund gravel roadwork at the gateway to the park where the old Van Sickle barn and cabins sit.

"The money is slowly being freed up. We're now in a state of catch-up (with Nevada)," Eisner said.

There are also plans for a restroom at the lower level of the park and an interpretative kiosk for visitors, who will probably wander up from the heart of the South Shore's bed

base on both sides of the state line.

The park, which will be open for spring, summer and fall visitation, is expected to bring out a host of outdoor enthusiasts – including those who have ventured into it from the famed Tahoe Rim Trail which circles the lake.

“This park and trailhead will provide an easily accessible trailhead for the residents and visitors to the South Lake Tahoe-Stateline area and may become one of our busiest trailheads,” Tahoe Rim Trail Association Executive Director Mary Bennington told *Lake Tahoe News*.

This is one reason why the association has promised its operational support to keep the park going year after year.

“We see this as a win-win, even though it is a bit outside our normal mission,” she said.

Bennington added that 100 association volunteers spent National Trails Day last summer building a half-mile of trail. To date, they have completed at least 8 miles of the work called the Daggett project, which links the park trail to the Rim Trail at Kingsbury Grade in two places. The goal is to finish the Daggett connection by the next Trails Day celebration.

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Truckee Tahoe Community Chorus concert

The Truckee Tahoe Community Chorus concert “Sounds of the Season” is Dec. 11 at 7pm and Dec. 12 at 2pm at the Resort at

Squaw Creek.

The program has something for everybody, from light Christmas pops, Hanukkah selections, contemporary religious musical settings, to arias and choruses from Handel’s Messiah.

All children will be admitted free of charge and are invited to join the chorus on stage for our traditional sing along at the conclusion of the concert. For tickets or more information, go to www.singttcc.org. General admission is $12 and preferred seating is $20.

Search resumes for missing Reno hiker

By Channel 2 News

Search crews returned to the Galena Creek area Sunday looking for a hiker that disappeared a week ago.

Crews are looking for 55-year old Rick Gentry who reported himself lost while hiking last Sunday.

Foot teams and K-9 units set out on snowshoes to canvass the hills of Galena Creek Park in the morning.

This is the same area they were searching last week when bad weather forced them to suspend the search.

Read the whole story