Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Jeff Marsolais has left his job as recreation and land staff officer in the Inyo forest to lead the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit of the U.S. Forest Service. He will be in South Lake Tahoe for 120 days. His official title will be acting supervisor – that's as of Dec. 5.

• The Sierra Nevada Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America presented Bethany Drysdale of the Nevada Commission on Tourism with the Mark Curtis Sr. Professional of the Year Award at the organization's annual awards ceremony last week.

• The intersection of Mount Rose Highway and Highway 28 in Incline will be a roundabout. NDOT plans to bid the project in the spring.

• An unnamed person paid at least $1.1 million (the minimum bid) for Carson Nugget's gold collection. The Carson City collection included 170 specimens of gold.

• South Tahoe Middle School is one of five schools in the country to be part of a pilot program for Teen Truth Live to measure curriculum (much of it focused on bullying) that will be outcome based.

• Applications for the 2011-12 school year are being accepted by Camino Science and Natural Resources Charter School. The El Dorado County school will be operated by Camino Union School District. For more information, call (530) 644.4552, ext. 213.

Tahoe Keys sign put up illegally

By Kathryn Reed

A sign on Tahoe Keys Boulevard reads like the South Shore neighborhood doesn't want anyone to set foot or drive on the streets except for owners.

South Lake Tahoe officials, when told about the sign by *Lake Tahoe News*, contacted the Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association and told them to take down the sign.

For starters, it's on a pole that belongs to the city. Permission was never sought by the TKPOA to erect the sign. The ordinances cited have to do with parking, which is not what the message is trying to convey.



The sign on Tahoe Keys Boulevard before Venice Drive.

Plus, all those streets are city owned – not private.

Mike Marek, architectural control coordinator for the TKPOA, said, "The sign has been there forever. They keep stealing them."

However, people in the neighborhood disagree, saying they

first saw the sign last weekend.

Bob Albertazzi, South Lake Tahoe community police officer, said this is the first he's seen such a sign.

Marek said one of the TKPOA board members wanted the sign up. He wouldn't divulge her name.

But another board member, who didn't want her name used, said the sign issue never went before any committee and never had board approval.

Without a general manager at TKPOA, it appears no one is really in charge. Interviews of general manager candidates will begin soon.

In the mean time, the sign must come down.

S. Tahoe discloses actual salary, benefit figures

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe officials have provided *Lake Tahoe News* with exact dollar amounts for how salaries and benefits are broken down. This intervention was needed because the figures could not be ferreted out based on published documents provided by the city.

Total salaries for 2010-11 are $16,851,913; benefits total $9,849,239; making for a grand total of $26,701,152, according to the city.

There are 205.75 full-time employees in the city. The dollar figures account for the part time and seasonal employees as well.

Lake Tahoe News had come up with nearly $33 million for the total. This is because the budget says the personnel services encompass health, dental, vision and so on.

“We checked the calculation and the difference results because the consultant you had do the calculation included benefits budgeted in the Health Self Insurance and Workers Compensation funds,” South Lake Tahoe Finance Director Christine Vuletich wrote to *Lake Tahoe News*. “Then the actual expenses paid out for health insurance premiums and claims, and workers compensation premiums and claims are paid from these two internal service funds [Health Self Insurance and Workers Compensation]. So the consultant essentially counted these expenses twice.”

LTN admits to having counted them twice and apologizes to readers for first publishing inflated salary-benefit totals. But the exercise points to the convoluted budgeting and reporting processes the city continues to use which in turn makes it impossible for the public to know exactly where its tax dollars are being spent without continued dialog with city staff.

Budgets are not normally so complex.

Ski report: Cold, with lots of fresh powder

It’s a great day to be on the mountain, but dress warm – it’s bitter cold out there.



More resorts are open – Kirkwood today. Sierra is open top to bottom. Heavenly plans to have more lifts and runs in California open.

Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Tornado hits El Dorado County

By Bill Lindelof, Sacramento Bee

A damage analysis by the National Weather Service has confirmed that a tornado did indeed hit near El Dorado Hills on Tuesday.

The damage assessment by the Sacramento office showed that at 1:17pm a tornado developed near the community of Latrobe, about 4 miles south of El Dorado Hills.

The tornado reached speeds of 100 mph, damaging the roof of a building and a power pole, moving a heavy water tank and snapping trees.

Read the whole story

Giving Tree at S. Tahoe library has names of kids in need

The El Dorado County Library, the South Lake Tahoe Women's Center and CASA are partnering together to offer the sixth annual Giving Tree.

The tree is up in the library (on Rufus Allen Boulevard) and decorated with the wishing ornaments of children who are part of the court system, perhaps in foster care, or living in a shelter as a result of domestic violence in their family.

The community can help their wishes come true by buying gifts and returning them unwrapped to the library by Dec. 10.

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4 BlueGo stops to have shelters erected

By Kathryn Reed

INCLINE VILLAGE – Shelters for bus riders, or the lack of them, has been a legitimate complaint for years. Gradually, there will be less to complain about.

Federal stimulus money is paying for four shelters in Nevada – three in the basin, one in valley – all served by BlueGo.

The Tahoe Transportation District board this month approved a basic shelter like what is used at some South Lake Tahoe locations. (Ron McIntyre abstained.) It is enclosed, has a roof, benches and is completely see through. A gap at the bottom lets air through, which makes is not become a sauna on hot days. The openness provides a modicum of safety.



The bench on the other side of the sign will be a covered bus shelter soon.

Douglas County does not have a typical or standard shelter that is already approved, thus the reason the board needed to pick a design. Several options were presented to the board. The design Mammoth has chosen costs close to $100,000. That was quickly nixed.

The South Tahoe version costs about $8,000 each.

Staff suggested what was approved be used for the more urban areas and possibly have a more alpine look for outlying areas. As more money for shelters comes in the board will tackle the design issue then.

TTD board member and Douglas County Commissioner Nancy McDermid wanted her board to give input on which shelter to

pick, but the TTD board went ahead with its vote.

It was suggested that in more rural areas where bears are a problem bear boxes should be installed at the shelters like what the North Shore did.

The shelters will be put in front of Horizon and Harveys, on Kingsbury Grade at Market Street, and at the bottom of Kingsbury Grade at Foothill Road. These are sites the Nevada Department of Transportation identified as priorities.

There was talk about shelters South Lake Tahoe has but is not using. No one at the TTD meeting knew who owned them. South Tahoe City Councilman Bruce Grego is on the TTD board and was at the meeting.

An email by *Lake Tahoe News* to Assistant City Manager Rick Angelocci produced an answer. He said the eight shelters are not assembled. One was bought by ABHOW for the Kelly Ridge project and the rest by the now bankrupt South Tahoe Area Transit Authority when John Andoh was transit administrator.

“Mr. Andoh was in the process of obtaining the required TRPA permits and assistance to install them when he parted ways with STATA. TTD staff has now committed to complete the process of obtaining permits through TRPA and getting the shelters installed at the highest priority sites,” Angelocci wrote.

But that can’t really be happening since TTD doesn’t even know who owns the shelters.

Angelocci went on to say, “Based on the infrastructure [or lack thereof] each of the shelter sites will need a platform of pavers or concrete to secure the shelters to. In most cases this will require additional land coverage. The shelter locations must also be coordinated with the Caltrans Highway 50 project so there are no conflicts. Site design has to also comply with ADA access.”

Dreaming of a new kind of ski area

By Devon O'Neil, ESPN

"I want to partner with the United Nations," says Jamie Schectman. "I want to have a family that's currently in Afghanistan come to one of our ski areas and see how we're running things and then go back to Afghanistan and start one of their own [ski areas] in collaboration with us. How's that for ambitious?"

Yes, it's ambitious. But he's not without a plan. Schectman recently co-founded the Mountain Riders Alliance, a group whose mission is to develop environmentally-friendly, rider-owned ski areas throughout the world. And sure, they have some abstract ideals, but it's key to remember that MRA was formed in response to a larger phenomenon, the big-business ski industry.

"We feel like the sport has taken a turn and forgotten about us. We're skiers first," says Schectman. "Some ski resorts come into a town, don't embrace the community, and drive out the locals and soul. We don't want to be like that."

Schectman, 41, and five partners are within a month of announcing their purchase of a North American ski area, which they plan to transform into a "ski-energy center" and operate on minimalist terms and with a mix of old-school, community-focused strategies as well as innovative, modern energy solutions.

Read the whole story

Truckee Donner Land Trust fundraiser at River Ranch

River Ranch Restaurant will donate 30 percent of diners' total food bill to the Truckee Donner Land Trust on Dec. 9 from 6-9pm.

Make reservations (530.583.4264) at least a day in advance, and be sure to tell the person you are dining for the Truckee Donner Land Trust.

The River Ranch is on Highway 89 at Alpine Meadows Road.

Public employee compensation takes center stage

By Dan Balz, Washington Post

SAN DIEGO – Rick Snyder, the former Gateway executive who was just elected governor of Michigan, calls it the next big national issue, on a scale with health care in its importance to the economic vitality of the country. But unlike health care, this battle will be fought in the states, not in Washington.

Snyder is talking about public employee compensation. Like almost every governor in the country, Republican or Democrat, he has identified the issue as a priority in his strategy to deal with looming budgetary shortfalls and structural deficits

that plague state governments. The changes governors will seek could produce pain for many state workers and their families and will generate strong resistance from powerful public employee unions.

Snyder is one of a trio of newly elected Republican governors in the industrial Midwest. (The others are Ohio’s John Kasich and Wisconsin’s Scott Walker.) Each will inherit a state government hemorrhaging dollars and a state economy that has suffered from long-term job loss, particularly in the manufacturing sector.

They will come into office in January after campaigns in which they promised to slash their budgets, to avoid raising taxes (and cut them where they can), and to revitalize economies that have proven stubbornly resistant to past economic development schemes. But even before they can implement their longer-term plans to boost their economies, they will have to address their budgets.

Asked where he will have to try to cut, Snyder quickly pointed to public employee compensation. “I view that as one of the toughest things I need to do as the next governor,” he said Thursday morning over coffee at the Republican Governors Association meeting.

Read the whole story