McDermid: tourism infrastructure is an area to vastly improve upon

Publisher's note: ***Lake Tahoe News is profiling candidates for South Lake Tahoe City Council and Douglas County Commission. The stories are being published in the order they were received.***

Name: Nancy McDermid

Age: 67

Hometown: Wichita Falls, Texas

How long have you lived here?: Since 1979 in Tahoe, 2000 in the Carson Valley.

Job/profession: Developer-owner-operator limited service lodging properties



Nancy McDermid

What would you build or tear down on the South Shore to make it great, as in what Whistler is like?:

On the Nevada side, the Lower Kingsbury commercial area to the lake needs to be redesigned and rebuilt. There are some newer properties which are very nice, but most of it and in the Stateline Casino corridor are old, dated and need to be re-

done to get more economic life for the next 30-40 years. Doing this would bring the environmental improvements (water quality improvements, etc.) as well as greater economic benefit. We need to continue to look for public-private partnerships to make this happen.

What form of recreation do you participate in?:

Walking, hiking, cycling, golf, swimming, snowshoeing, skiing, kayaking.

What improvements to recreation would you strive to make throughout Douglas County?:

Bikeways on and off road, more trails, greater pedestrian trails, more horizontal and vertical connectivity through trails, a permanent world-class motocross track in the right location, better soaring facilities at the airport, complete the swimming pool at Kahle Park, create sport parks for all ages from toddlers to senior citizens, dog parks.

Recreation tourism is expected to be the driving force of the South Shore economy in the coming years, what do you specifically plan to do to improve bike paths and roads?:

The South Demo project from Stateline to Round Hill Pines for cyclists is one project I fully support. Also, the Sierra Colina and Beach projects have potential for linear public linkage to the lake and to Kahle Park. As for roads, being able to adequately maintain what currently exists is challenging because the funding is shrinking. Again, public-private partnerships could be one way to achieve more paths and improved roads.

How do you plan to boost revenue in Douglas County?:

We are looking at bringing more businesses to Douglas County, businesses that fit our values and quality of life. The LTBPP and the Douglas County Economic Development Vitality Plan are

critical for the future financial stability and sustainability of the county. It is vital we implement the components in those plans.

What stands out for you in the 2010-11 budget?:

We balanced the budget through the cooperation of the different elected officials and departments working together. We have not had massive layoffs or furloughs though our workforce is down 15 percent through retirement and not filling positions. Our employees are terrific and are working hard despite being stretched as they maintain their workload and provide services for the residents.

What needs to be done to allow businesses to thrive in Douglas County?:

We can streamline our permitting process, update our does and design standards, support our current businesses by meeting with and asking them how the county can be supportive and add new businesses which fit our lifestyle. We need to be cognizant of government creep with regard to regulations and ordinances which hamper business.

What are the three major issues facing Douglas County and how to expect in four years to make it so they are not major issues when your tenure is through?:

Tourism infrastructure in the county is an area we need to vastly improve upon, and I would strive to work with our private sector to accomplish providing those amenities for our visitors and residents.

Economic vitality – The LTBPP, the Community Assessment and the Economic Development Vitality Plan need to be implemented by working diligently with other jurisdictions, the private sector, different agencies and our residents to make certain these plans do not just take up shelf space.

Quality of life – We will protect our environment while providing greater public access to public land and by being financially responsible, keeping expenditures in line with revenues.

What have you done to help Douglas County be a better community?:

Since coming to Tahoe in the 1970s, I have engaged in numerous activities to help our community thrive. Whether it was my kids' activities, business activities, fundraising activities, or community volunteer organizations, I have been a tireless, energetic worker. When I say yes to do something, I do not undertake it lightly. I was schooled in my early years by my family to be engaged and make a difference. Two rules I follow: "there are the talkers and then there are the doers" and "always do your best and follow your heart."

What boards, commissions, or other experience do you have?:

AYSO soccer (coach, referee, commissioner), LTUSD District Advisory Committee, life member of Barton Hospital Auxiliary, charter member and life member of the South Lake Tahoe Cancer League, Soroptimist International (SLT and Carson Valley), treasurer (three years) of Heavenly Blue Angels, treasurer Leadership Lake Tahoe inaugural class, president of Northern Nevada Ladies Golf Association, president Genoa Lakes Golf Association and Silver Oak Ladies Golf Association, Douglas County Republican Central Committee, Sierra Nevada Republican Women, Douglas County Republican Women, DAWG, Tahoe Rim Trail Association, Carson Valley Trails Association, to name just a few.

Why should voters vote for you over someone else?:

I have successful business and government experience and the energy to work full time as county commissioner. The last seven plus years is a matter of public record with regard to my decisions as a planning commissioner and county

commissioner. I am committed to Douglas County and I offer principled leadership and trusted experience along with the pledge I made four years ago to be accessible to all and beholden to no special interest group, and to work my hardest and smartest to help protect our quality of life in Douglas County.

What would you do to make the lake and valley more unified?:

Douglas county is like a large family; many different individual and unique parts. From Topaz to Ruhenstroth, to Fish Springs to the towns of Gardnerville, Minden and Genoa, to Indian Hills and North County, the East and West Valleys, and Tahoe. All special and all part of the whole. Like families, we need to celebrate our unity and respect our individual characteristics. Perhaps we need to have our visitors authorities and our chambers hold joint meetings and provide events Douglas County.

BlueGo, the public transit, is mired in lawsuits and bankruptcy. Do we need public transit on the South Shore? If so, how do you propose to make it functional?:

Yes, we do need public transit. It is a vital component of the transportation system. The solution for public transit on the South Shore is to have it administered under the Tahoe Transportation District.

What is your stance on the 100-room rule for gaming growth in the county?:

We have five hotel casinos at the lake and two in the valley plus two more which have been approved along with one stand alone casino. Both Washoe and Clark counties require 200-room minimums and Carson City requires the 100 rooms. Thus, Douglas County is compliant with our sister county to the north. Anyone who wants to build a lodging property can do so provided the zoning allows it. A non-restricted gaming license is a privilege granted by the state, and Douglas County

requires Tourist commercial zoning for such a license. One of the Master Plan goals is to support existing businesses. This requirement does that.

Consolidation of water agencies is stalled, yet ratepayers are faced with higher bills. What are your thoughts on this issue?:

We must work over the next few months to find more solutions to the water issues. Higher rates are just not acceptable. We are looking at every possibility from grants to out of the box thinking. I would hope to have a committee to assist the board in crafting solutions.

On the November ballot is an ordinance regarding the Minden airport. What is your position on it and why?:

Commissioners are not able to take positions on ballot questions.

Is there any individual, group or organization you would not take campaign money from? Why?:

Clearly not from any illegal entity or unknown person or organization for obvious reasons.

Tell us something about yourself that voters don’t already know:

In my youth I competed in barrel racing; I have climbed Mt. Whitney, I am a member of the NRA and qualified to carry a 9mm Smith and Wesson.

Sugar Bowl – Definitely more than an E-ticket ride

Publisher's note: ***Lake Tahoe News is providing a glimpse into what skiers and boarders can expect at Lake Tahoe area resorts for the 2010-11 season.***

Sugar Bowl: Finding the sweet spot is easy

• Projected opening date: Thanksgiving, conditions permitting

• Daily adult lift ticket price: $71



Sugar Bowl is a sweet experience. Photo/Kath Howard

• What's new?: Sugar Bowl enters this year with a feather under its cap from last season – being awarded the "Best Guest Service" by the National Ski Areas Association.

• What's special about Sugar Bowl: The Disney-rooted ski resort has discovered the ideal blend of honoring its history and adding onto the next generation of activities in backcountry travel to take advantage of its Donner Pass location touting deep snow and less crowded conditions.

• Last year's snow total: 431 inches

• Lift hours of operation: 9am to 4pm

• Skiable terrain: 1,500 acres

• Number of lifts: 13

• Vertical feet: 1,500

• Directions: Take Highway 89 north to Interstate 80 and head west to the Soda Springs exit, drive a few miles up the road to the resort.

• Website

— Compiled by Susan Wood

Wanting to do tricks in the snow leads to trampoline park

By SF Appeal

Aspiring athletes, kids having birthday parties, and people just looking for something to put a bounce in their step can now head to a new trampoline park that opened in San Francisco.

House of Air, a park located in a historic airport hangar in the Presidio, is the brainchild of two action sports enthusiasts.

Founders Dave Schaeffer and Paul McGeehan met in Lake Tahoe around 2003 and took a class on how to do aerials on trampolines so they could do tricks on the mountains during snow season.

“We always thought, well gee, they only had one trampoline. Imagine if we got a whole space and just filled it with trampolines,” Schaeffer said.

Read the whole story

Interactive earth science demo for youths

Celebrate Earth Science Week with the UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center in Incline Village.

Hands-on science activities and demonstrations will begin at 3pm Oct. 13.

Special 3-D visualization lab presentations will be shown at 3:30 and 4:30pm. Green building tours will be available at 4pm and the grand finale will include a full-group, interactive presentation on earth sciences, including Earth’s energy, the Carbon Cycle, and the Green House Effect at 5pm

This for children ages 8-14.

It is free.

Location: Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences, 291 Country Club Drive, Incline.

---

2 El Dorado County sheriff's candidates in final lap

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

One of the area's longest-running local elections – a two-year marathon – is nearing the finish line.

"It's kind of like 'Groundhog Day.' It just goes on and on," said Craig Therkildsen, who faces John D'Agostini in a Nov. 2 run-off for El Dorado County sheriff.

D'Agostini decided to run against then-El Dorado County Sheriff Jeff Neves back in September 2008, he said.

Neves' decision to step down, announced in 2009, set off a 12-month, six-candidate race that ended in June when D'Agostini edged Therkildsen – a sheriff's captain whom Neves favored as a successor – in the primary.

Read the whole story

Soroptimist annual wine tasting Nov. 12

Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe's 2010 An Evening of Food & Wine Tasting is Nov. 12 from 6-9:30pm at Harrah's convention center in Stateline.

Eighteen restaurants and 32 vintners are part of the event.

Tickets are $65 each and can be purchased from a SISLT member or online.

In addition to the main event there will be a silent auction and a raffle.

For the past 40 years, all money raised by Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe has been directed back into the community through educational scholarships, youth activity sponsorships, the South Lake Tahoe Women's Center and numerous other projects that enhance services and the quality of life in the community.

If you have any questions or would like to donate an item to this year's event, contact Valerie Conners at (530) 544.8545.

Expansive views of Lake Tahoe from Snow Valley Peak

By Kathryn Reed

SPOONER SUMMIT – One of the hazards of wanting to get some incredible views of Lake Tahoe is that it takes a bit of climbing. But those 2,000-feet of uphill to get to Snow Valley Peak are worth it.

Fortunately, it's not one of those grueling routes that make you think housecleaning would have been a better activity. But it isn't something parents with little kids are going to want to try.

The six miles (one way) are part of Tahoe Rim Trail.



Brenda Knox on her way to Snow Valley Peak. Photos/Kathryn Reed

“The trail beyond here is incredible,” Brenda Knox says of the area past our turn around point at Snow Valley Peak. She has done the entire 165-mile TRT.

Mount Rose would be the next exit point of the Tahoe Rim Trail. Sand Harbor isn’t far away, but it’s not visible from the part of the trail we’re on. Part of this route is used for the Tahoe Rim Trail’s endurance run.

Even though the four of us did an out and back on this September Saturday, it’s possible to do a circle by going down to North Canyon Road. This is the dirt road mountain bikers use to access the Flume Trail. It means having to circle around Spooner Lake at the end.

Now the fall colors should be in abundance.

We start our morning at 7,146 feet at Spooner Summit. Snow Valley Peak is 9,214 feet.

Several signs along the mostly soft dirt trail say “vista point” so hikers can go slightly off the trail for views of Lake Tahoe and the Carson Valley. Seeing both at once is always such a contrast in what this area has to offer – the liquid blue alpine lake v. the barren high dessert.

Camping in this area must be done in designated sites. Signs point the way. These are the rules of Nevada's Lake Tahoe State Park.

Up we go, passing beneath towering pines that are spaced so the terrain can be enjoyed without feeling closed in. Shrubs are close to the ground, including Manzanita.

The sign says 1.5 miles more as we are about to begin the trek across the ridge. The four of us agree it feels like a whole lot more than 1.5 miles.

A few wildflowers are out, but not many.

Lake Tahoe unfolds below us. This is one of those hikes where the size is so obvious. Often it doesn't look 22-miles long or 12-miles wide.

Directly across from us the mouth of Emerald Bay opens up, with the peaks of Desolation Wilderness looming over her.

From this vantage point it's obvious how Fallen Leaf Lake is at a higher elevation than Tahoe.

The wind is whipping. It's only Labor Day weekend and fall is definitely in the air. We take shelter behind a small rock outcropping to have lunch before making our way down. Marlette Lake is a short distance from us.

But it's the views of Lake Tahoe that make this 12-mile roundtrip hike worth doing over and over again.

Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe take Highway 50 to the top of Spooner Summit. Just past the turn off for Highway 28 is a small parking area on the left for the Tahoe Rim Trail. (You may feel like you're headed to the Carson Valley because it's just over the crest.) Park, walk. Trail goes to the right for the peak, to the left for Spooner Lake.

It’s also possible to access the trail by parking at Spooner Lake, but it costs money to do that.

ngg_shortcode_0_placeholder (Click on photos to enlarge.)

Winemaker dinner at Lone Eagle Grille

Lone Eagle Grille in Incline Village kicks off its Winemaker Dinner Series with Gregory Graham on Oct. 15 at 6pm.

Nine years ago Graham set out to produce world-class wines from Lake County. His hands-on approach to winemaking, complemented by 25 years of experience, is giving consumers fresh, structured, fruit-forward vintages that are reflective of a high quality wine grape growing region.

The wines will be paired with a four-course meal.

Cost is $120 per person.

For reservations, contact Cecilia Cuff at Lone Eagle Grille at (775) 886.6899.

The restaurant is at 111 Country Club Drive, Incline Village.

Ely has a cure for railroad

fever

By Mel Shields, Sacramento Bee

How about planning a special holiday trip on an old-fashioned train? Ely, Nev., the home of the Nevada Northern Railway Museum, offers excursions every weekend on a steam train and even gives you the opportunity to operate one.

Eastern Nevada is an undiscovered joy, especially in the fall. It is a land of ranches and communities the interstate has passed by. Elko is its most populous city, but Ely is one of its most historic, having been built along the Pony Express route and the Central Overland Trail. It’s the seat of White Pine County and close to Great Basin National Park. It’s the location of the historic Hotel Nevada, built in 1929, where it is still possible to stay and dine.

The town itself is packed with outdoor sculptures and murals. It’s a bustling little city of slightly more than 4,000 people. It is also the birthplace of Pat Nixon, the late first lady.

Read the whole story

South Tahoe provides answers to budget questions

On Sept. 29, *Lake Tahoe News* ran a story about the South Lake Tahoe budget for fiscal year 2010-11, which started Oct. 1. In that story a list of questions was posed to city staff. They went unanswered.



However, the city's Finance Department provided answers to the questions on Oct. 8. Click on answers to read what the city has to say.

LTN will analyze the answers in the coming weeks as well as the more complete budget documents that were provided by the city. Those documents were only secured after much back-and-forth about what a public document is and when the public ought to be able to view said document.

LTN is striving to provide transparency about where local tax dollars go, the budget process, the reliance the city has on grants, as well as bring awareness to the difficulty there is in getting straight, timely answers from some city departments.

– Kathryn Reed