Kokanee Salmon Festival on South Shore Oct. 2-3

This fall marks the 21st year the Taylor Creek Visitor Center will host the Kokanee Salmon Festival.



The event takes place the weekend of Oct. 2-3 from 10am-4pm. The Taylor Creek Visitor Center is located three miles north of South Lake Tahoe on Highway 89.

This free family event encourages participation by children and their parents in a variety of educational and entertaining events.

Participants can learn about the natural wonders of Taylor Creek and take part in many fun activities, including a delicious salmon barbecue, Kokanee trail runs, children's activities, educational and streamside programs, and much more.

Wild Things returns Saturday afternoon at 2 in the Lake of the Sky amphitheater. This free program features live animals that may include a black bear, bald eagle, barn owl, turkey vulture, a beaver, and snakes. Because of the live animals on stage, attendees are asked to leave their dogs and other pets at home. New to the festival is a giant 40 foot inflatable fish for children to explore. "Sammy Salmon", the official mascot of the festival, will make appearances each day.

Both Saturday and Sunday, visitors can learn about the natural wonders of Taylor Creek from Forest Service biologists, as they stroll along the accessible Rainbow Trail. This peaceful walk meanders through forests, meadows and marsh lands to the creek where the Kokanee Salmon spawn within a few feet of your

own feet. A close-up view of this natural event is available in the underground Stream Profile Chamber located along the Rainbow Trail.

With the popularity of the Kokanee Salmon Festival at the Taylor Creek Visitor Center and the Oktoberfest at Historic Camp Richardson Resort, which occurs the same weekend, the parking lot at the visitor center fills quickly. Visitors are encouraged to ride a bike or walk along the bike path between Camp Richardson and the visitor center or take public transportation from South Lake Tahoe. BlueGo and the Nifty Fifty trolley will provide special service for these events and may be reached by calling (530) 541.7149.

For more information and a complete schedule of activities, contact the Taylor Creek Visitor Center at (530) 543.2674 or visit the webpage.

Lake Lahontan water level creates boating hazards

By Reno Gazette-Journal

SILVER SPRINGS—As water levels drop at Lake Lahontan, large rocks and sandbars become exposed and pose a danger to operators of high speed boats or those on personal watercrafts, state park officials cautioned this week.

Ranger Supervisor Tony Beuregard reported that state park staff has pulled the boat ramps out on the Silver Springs side of the reservoir because water levels are getting too low, making the ramps unusable.

“Boating is not recommended for high speed boats or personal watercrafts because there are sandbars, rocks and tree stumps that are exposed,” Beuregard added.

Read the whole story

South Tahoe gears up for Fire Fest 2010

Helicopters will star at Fire Fest this year as they land at the Lake Tahoe Airport for Fire Fest 2010.

Oct. 2 is an opportunity to get a close up look at these amazing machines. Crews will be on hand to answer questions and explain how they help us when we need it most.

Fire Fest is an annual event hosted by our local fire agencies, including Lake Valley Fire District, the U.S. Forest Service, the Tahoe-Douglas Fire District, Fallen Leaf Fire District, South Lake Tahoe Fire Department and the Nevada Fire Safe Council, and sponsored by the Lake Tahoe Kiwanis Club. This event highlights Fire Prevention Week and includes safety agencies, creating a day celebrating fire and life safety for children and families.

Southwest Gas, South Tahoe Public Utility District, Sierra Pacific Power, Clean Tahoe Program and South Tahoe Refuse have added home safety, energy and water conservation to this broad ranging community event with interests for everyone. The South Lake Tahoe Boys and Girls Club and El Dorado County Sheriff STAR volunteers assist with fun children’s activities. The Lake Tahoe Fire Academy volunteers assist throughout the event. Food and beverages, barbecued by the Kiwanis Club, are

available at reasonable prices.

Activities include fire engines and equipment, roll over and vehicle extrication, police dog demonstrations, demonstration of fire resistant building materials and systems, home safety ideas, free hand out material and lots of special attractions for kids, like water fights, face painting, bounce house and Smokey Bear, Sparky and other friends.

What does Fire Fest really achieve? Over the past 17 years, officials have distributed hundreds of smoke detectors and fire extinguishers for local homes, reduced incidents involving children and matches, met the people who help us in emergencies, fingerprinted hundreds of our children, provided bicycle and car seat safety information and, overall, created safer homes, vehicles, streets, neighborhoods and forests.

Fire Fest 2010 is Oct. 2 from 10am to 3pm at the Lake Tahoe Airport. Admission is free. A free shuttle among events that day makes it an even more affordable and low-impact.

Lack of state budget puts strain on individuals, agencies

By Kevin Yamamura, Sacramento Bee

Without a state budget, California is relying on a patchwork of bank loans and personal credit lines to help sustain essential services around the state.

It isn’t the government borrowing the money directly, but the thousands of businesses that have supplied state operations,

provided medical services and cared for children without reimbursement since July.

Many of state government’s business partners are used to the budget dance each summer: no budget, no payments. But as state leaders push the stalemate into record territory, contractors and care providers wonder how much longer they can last.

“I don’t even let my mind go there,” said Caroline Clausen, who borrowed more than $10,000 against her retirement account to keep Toddler Tech Preschool and Daycare open in Bakersfield. “I just try to take care of the day. I try not to give myself an ulcer.”

Read the whole story

Workshops for writers in Truckee

Tangled Roots Writing offers Saturday Escape Creative Writing Workshops in Truckee form 10am-1pm on Oct. 2, Oct. 20, Nov. 13 and Dec. 4.

Explore creative writing of any genre, connect with a writing community, generate new material, play with language and meaning, explore craft and form, develop a writing practice in a supportive creative environment. Each workshop is different.

They are for any level of experience.

Cost is $35 per day or $30 each for two or more sessions.

Contact Karen Terrey at (530) 386.3901 or tangledrootswriting@gmail.com for more information.

Financial strife forces Amador County chamber to close its doors

By Matthew Hedger, Ledger Dispatch

The Amador County Chamber of Commerce has laid off all of its office personnel and contract help, including long-time Executive Director Jacqueline Lucido.

The announcement came late Wednesday from Acting Chamber President Mark Borchin, who said the decision to terminate three employees and one contractor was painful, but necessary, given the uncertain status of chamber finances.

A memorandum to the affected staff from the chamber's executive committee and obtained by the Ledger Dispatch reads, "Unfortunately, at this time, we do not have the funds to support our current budget and must reduce staff. Effective Sept. 15, 2010, we shall no longer require your services." The memo is signed by Borchin, Tom Blackman, Diane Gassaway, Sharon Lundgren and Kevin Blasingame.

After informing the staff of the decision, visibly shaken staff members began cleaning out their desks, as a locksmith worked on the front door of the chamber office in Jackson.

Read the whole story

Removal of watermilfoil from Emerald Bay a success

Officials doing the work to clear Eurasian watermilfoil from Emerald Bay say the efforts were successful.

Eurasian watermilfoil is a fast-spreading aquatic invasive weed that has been on the rise in Lake Tahoe since its introduction more than a decade ago.

A partnership between Tahoe Resource Conservation District, California Department of Parks and Recreation, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research



Eurasion watermilfoil

Center, and subcontractor A.C.E. Diving covered approximately 8,500 square feet of lake bottom near the pier and swimming beach of Emerald Bay using 8 feet x 40 feet reusable bottom barrier strips in June and hand removal of remaining weeds. On Sept. 14, the barriers were removed to reveal just sand, with no signs of invasive weeds below the barriers.

“We’re very optimistic about the initial results of this pilot project because it demonstrates that it is possible to eradicate the majority of an infestation in a specific locale,” California Department of Parks and Recreation environmental scientist Dan Shaw said in a statement. “These findings will help us establish a control plan for aquatic

invasive weed populations in Emerald Bay and other afflicted areas of Lake Tahoe."

Surveys will be conducted in subsequent seasons to document the long-term success of the removal efforts.

Kirkwood solves short-term power issue, working on final

By Kathryn Reed

Electrical power at Kirkwood is a highly charged subject – and not an issue easily followed without an organizational chart.

This week PowerSecure, a company based in North Carolina that is the largest independent supplier of power in Northern California, was awarded the bid to supply power for the Kirkwood Valley on an interim basis. Their Cummins diesel generators should be working in October.

"They will bring in their own equipment and operators. We have gone to an outsourcing solution that will significantly improve reliability (of power)," David Likins, CEO of Mountainsprings Kirkwood, told *Lake Tahoe News*.



Construction of Kirkwood's

powerhouse
should be done
by Nov. 1.
Photo/Provided

Kirkwood’s electrical issues have been a source of debate for people who live in the valley because the resort, other commercial entities and residential units are off the grid. Complaints of high prices, outages and poor environmental practices have been the mantra for years.

The problem was exacerbated when a New Year’s Day fire destroyed the electrical plant.

Caterpillar diesel engines were brought in to keep the lights on and lifts turning.

In the eight-plus months since the fire a series of events related to the power issue have taken place and more significant dates are on the calendar.

Kirkwood Meadows Public Utility District is having a special meeting Sept. 24 at 3pm in Kirkwood. The public hearing will address issues of connecting to the grid, and costs ratepayers may incur from that as well as the current construction of the replacement powerhouse.

Long term, Kirkwood would like to tie into the grid via going through National Forest and connecting with Pacific Gas & Electric lines. The draft environmental impact statement is under agency review. It should be out for public comment later this year. It’s possible the final EIS could be approved in spring 2011, with construction to tap into the grid beginning next summer.

“They have identified a route in an already disturbed area,” Likins said.

But the need for a powerhouse in Kirkwood remains even if the

area that touches on El Dorado, Alpine and Amador counties taps into the grid.

The grid connection will be a single point instead of a loop, meaning when a line is down or something else happens to the power supply, Kirkwood will be in the dark. A backup will be needed to keep the lights on.

That is why plans are going forward to replace the powerhouse. That building is under construction now. The building and underground distribution system will be replaced this fall.

“We lost about 60 percent of our circuits in the fire. We could Band-Aid through those issues last winter. It was a very fragile system,” Likins said. “Instead of a bowl of spaghetti, we had a strand,” he said of the wiring.

During the winter and spring months all of the connections will be made and the exhaust system put into place. The goal is for it to be operational in spring or summer 2011.

The entire cost of this project is close to $10 million. The exact cost will depend on the final design of the interior. The structure is big enough to handle alternative energy, but may not need that if everything goes through with the grid connection.

Earlier this month Kirkwood Meadows PUD sold $5.5 million worth of bond anticipation notes to help fund the power plant.

Those general obligation bonds will be repaid through property taxes, water and wastewater fees. Electrical users won’t be hit until the sale of Mountain Utilities goes through. Mountainsprings Kirkwood is selling the utility to KMPUD.

The sale of the land between the two entities closed this month. The sale of the utility is expected to close in June 2011 after the California Public Utility Commission signs off on everything.

What skiers will notice this winter in regards to the powerhouse is parking near Red Cliffs has been eliminated. Even though 80 spaces were lost, more than three times that number have been created slopeside. This means less walking.

The theory is residents and visitors will have uninterrupted electrical service as the changes take place.

If Mother Nature cooperates, expect the lifts at Kirkwood to be spinning before Thanksgiving – via the Cummins engines.

STPUD board president sentenced for 3 misdemeanors

By Kathryn Reed

Dale Rise, president of South Tahoe Public Utility District's board of directors, was sentenced today for three misdemeanor counts of resisting arrest.

Rise was arrested in September 2009 on felony charges after he got in a confrontation with officers at his South Lake Tahoe residence. Officers were called to the house by his daughter.



Dale Rise

He pleaded guilty to the three misdemeanors on Sept. 2. Last

spring he told Lake Tahoe News he wanted the case to go to trial. Why he pleaded guilty is not known since he didn't return phone calls.

Rise was sentenced to a 52-week anger management course, three years probation, 500 hours of community service, $2,250 in fines, and peaceful contact with his wife and daughter. The latter means if an argument between them becomes unpeaceful, it will be a violation of his probation.

At the Sept. 17 sentencing before El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Suzanne Kingsbury the judge gave a little lecture to Rise about the importance of police officers being able to do their job and enter a home when need be. She used the analogy of how law enforcement didn't thoroughly investigate what was going on where Jaycee Lee Dugard was held captive for 18 years and how if officers don't investigate, then no one knows what crimes might be occurring behind the door.

"We thought it was a fair disposition," said Pete O'Hara, El Dorado County deputy district attorney.

He called Kingsbury's analogy "appropriate."

When it comes to Rise's position on the STPUD board, nothing will change unless his colleagues want it to. State law and utility district code only call for the removal of a director if convicted of a felony.

Burning Man exhibit at Sierra Nevada College

For the past 20 years during the week prior to Labor Day,

Nevada’s Black Rock Desert is transformed into a temporary community celebrating the Burning Man Art Festival. Sierra Nevada College is having an exhibition of 14 life-sized photographs and three mannequins documenting day and nighttime Burning Man costumes.

For the past five years, Geoffrey Nelson has set out to document the most creative and unusual of these costumes that he encounters during the festival. A Tribe of Artists: Costumes and Culture at Burning Man will be on display from Sept. 20 through Nov. 18 at the college’s Prim Library, main floor.

Drawing more than 50,000 participants from around the world, the Burning Man Festival is known for its fire, sculptures, theme camps, and its unusually attired participants. The photos are primarily shot in a portable, tent-like photographic studio that he transports and constructs on the playa where Burning Man takes place. Dealing with overwhelming dust storms, heat, and extremely loud “art cars,” Nelson has photographed more than 200 participants since he started the project in 2005. From these photos emerged this unconventional show, A Tribe of Artists: Costumes and Culture at Burning Man.

Nelson has been a professional photographer for more than 30 years, beginning his career in the Bay Area. He graduated from the UC Berkeley and has widely exhibited throughout the United States. Nelson has published a number of books.

Library Hours: 8am-10pm, Monday-Thursday; 8am-5pm, Friday; 10am-4pm Saturday; 2pm-10pm Sunday

For more information or to schedule a group visit, contact Betts Markle at emarkle@sierranevada.edu or (775) 881.7511.