Don’t get caught without ADA plans

By David Kelly

2010 marks the 20th anniversary of the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). During these 20 years, Tahoe Area Coordinating Council for the Disabled (TACCD) has been working to encourage and assist businesses in complying with the ADA. Every year, TACCD requests the Ccty of South Lake Tahoe to name October as Disability Awareness Month to remind all our residents and visitors of the hardships and difficulties endured by seniors and persons with disabilities.

Every day, TACCD works hand-in-hand with government and other agencies to better the quality of life for seniors and disabled persons in a multitude of ways from housing to transportation to accessibility issues and more.



David Kelly

Recently, businesses in our town have been under attack by a person or persons allegedly attempting to punish non-ADA-compliant locations while making a considerable amount of easy money in the process. This behavior is not supported by TACCD. We would much prefer to accomplish the same goals by cooperative instruction and encouragement for the businesses on the South Shore.

As little as a missing sign, a missing accessible parking space, a round door knob in a leasing office, or even

furniture placement in a first-floor commercial building might get the owner sued under the ADA. Fortunately, there is a new state law that provides those in business with a tool to reduce the risk of a lawsuit.

Any business that is open to the public, including landlords with leasing offices, apartment complexes, retail businesses, hotels, and motels, along with cities, counties and every kind of business that is available to the public is vulnerable to lawsuits under the federal ADA and state laws such as the Unruh Civil Rights Act. Many business owners don't even realize they are at risk because they're not aware of the issues that might cause their facilities to be inaccessible, putting them in a position to be sued. Senate Bill 1608, however, gives these owners power to protect their interests.

With SB1608, an inspector licensed and approved by California and known as a CASp or Certified Accessibility Specialty Inspector inspects a business or area accessible to the public for any kind of failure to comply with ADA law. After the inspection, the owner is able to obtain a state certificate that states this business has had a CASp inspection and is either in the process of completion or has finalized compliance with their accessibility issues. This allows the owner to come up with a timetable and plan of compliance, which is important in these tough economic times. The next step is to correct the findings.

Also with the certificate, the owner has the ability to lessen the possibility of a lawsuit. If the owner should be sued anyway, the lawsuit can be put on hold and have an early conference with a judge and the accuser. The CASp inspection can be a financial lifesaver for businesses as lawsuits can cost a non-compliant owner hundreds of thousands of dollars.

There may be tax credits available to offset the costs of inspection and correction. Federal Tax Code Section 44 could give a business owner a tax credit for making eligible access

expenditures. It is important to check with your tax advisor first, but it may be possible under certain circumstances to obtain a tax credit of up to 50 percent of such expenditures. The maximum credit is $5,000 per year.

The problem the community has is business owners who settle a lawsuit before they have gone to court. The accuser then has the incentive to continue filing lawsuits, and the business is still at risk of being sued again in the future.

In the vast majority of cases, those who use a CASp Inspector find that pre-lawsuit compliance costs are minor compared to the cost of hiring an attorney and going to court. SB1608 is the way to help protect a business from consequences that can be avoided with a CASp inspection.

Compliance with the law is imperative, and the sooner the better. Business owners should know this problem is not going away, and could possibly increase over the next few years. TACCD will continue to remind business owners of their responsibility until all our public areas are accessible."

Check the TACCD.org website for a licensed CASp inspector available for this area.

David Kelly is executive directory of Tahoe Area Coordinating Council for the Disabled.

Latinos hit hard by foreclosures

By Jim Wasserman, Sacramento Bee

Latino homeowners have taken the harshest blow from

California’s foreclosure crisis, accounting for 48 percent of homes repossessed from late 2006 through 2009, a nonprofit consumer group reported Tuesday.



Statistics from the Center for Responsible Lending showed that Latino owners surrendered 301,086 homes to lenders – almost half the state’s 625,356 foreclosures during the period.

About 11 percent of California’s foreclosures – 69,176 – occurred in El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento and Yolo counties. Statewide, 41 percent of loans that resulted in foreclosure were made in 2006, the report said.

Read the whole story

Combining art and hiking at Squaw

Music, art, dance and poetry unite in the Sierra Nevada at 6,200 feet in the seventh annual inspiring art hike produced by Trails and Vistas on Sept. 11-12 at Squaw Valley.

Audience members, led by an experienced guide, hike in small groups pausing at 10 art venues, each set against the striking backdrop of towering granite rock faces. Blending art with nature, the hike has had a profound effect on participants who become integral members of this unique experience. It has sold-out the last four years.

Artists and performers will present the expected and the

unexpected. This year’s theme, “If Dreams were Clouds” honors the dreamtime. Inspired by dream songs of the land and animals intertwined with the playful and powerful dance of clouds in the sky, artists play with the concept of dreamtime and clouds-floating, twisting, and holding a sculptural figurine before being carried away to another place or sculpted into a memory.

2010 Artists and Performers Capacitor headlines the 2010 Trails and Vistas art hikes throughout the weekend with poetic moving bodies in the landscape set to musical earthly sounds. San Francisco’s interdisciplinary dance company collaborates with the scientific and art community to create mind-expanding, heart-gripping live performances.

Featured artists for Sept. 12 art hikes is the Banana Slug String Band.

Trails and Vistas is also collaborating with more than 20 other artisans to cultivate a transformational experience for every participant.

Hike information and tickets

The nearly 3-mile long hike is strenuous and includes approximately 1,500 gain in elevation. Hikers must be comfortable traversing some rocky areas, including some steep pitches. Hiking groups will depart every 15 minutes with a trail leader (dogs and photography are not allowed). Tickets are $30 for adults and $15 for children. Tickets may be purchased at www.trailsandvistas.org or by calling (530) 587.2757.

Taylor Creek Visitor Center may be torn down, rebuilt

By Kathryn Reed

It was never meant to be a visitor center. And, yet, what was supposed to be the bathroom and storage facility at Taylor Creek have been a visitor center for more than 40 years.

All of that is about to change.



Taylor Creek Visitor Center may be overhauled. Photos/Kathryn Reed

This seasonal South Shore outpost on Highway 89 run by the U.S. Forest Service could be demolished in the next couple years and replaced with a 3,800-square-foot facility that is designed to provide a better experience.

“We want to make it more functional and organized,” Jackie King, USFS interpretive program manager, said of the proposed center.

What is there now was designed in the 1960s. Bats and mice infested the upstairs (it’s been taken care of) – but the area cannot be used.

The originally planned visitor center was not built because funding never came through. The Forest Service adapted. The center is small. With five people it feels crowded.

Making it a better experience just walking from the parking lot is part the plans. It’s not welcoming how it is currently situated, nor from the outer parking area do visitors know a center even exists.



The current Taylor Creek center was built for storage.

A handful of years ago the idea was to construct a 10,000-square-foot center with classrooms and exhibit halls. The public nixed that idea, saying it would overwhelm the site.

Now out for public comment until mid-September is the smaller visitor center proposal. The idea is what’s standing now would be torn down, the trailers would be hauled away and the new structure put up. The cement walkways with the animal tracks would have to be torn out, but King said they are such a talking point with guests that they would be replaced.

“What we’ve heard from the public is make sure you don’t make it an architectural monument that overwhelms the site,” King said.

The idea is for the center to beckon people to come in, to ask questions, to thumb through books. Then it will act as a

gateway, much like it does now, to the Rainbow Trail, Lake Tahoe and the amphitheater.



Interpretive information will remain outside near the visitor center.

Interpretative exhibits will remain outdoors.

It’s the environmental analysis that is in circulation. It’s online and hard copies are at the Forest Service office in South Lake Tahoe and at Taylor Creek. Once comments have been scrutinized, it will be up to the forest supervisor how to proceed. If it’s signed off, at that point the agency will go after funding.

The project is estimated to cost just less than $3 million. It everything goes according to plan, the new center could be running in four to five years.

It would remain a seasonal facility – operating seven days a week from mid-May through October.

Click here for more information and ways to comment.

Free whooping cough vaccinations in Kings Beach

The Placer County Health and Human Services Department, in collaboration with the California Department of Public Health, will offer free Pertussis (whooping cough) shots to adults and children 7 years old and older.

The free Tahoe clinic will be from 4-7pm Aug. 26 at the North Tahoe Community Center, 3813 North Tahoe Blvd., in Kings Beach.

The public is urged to bring any immunization records they have to the clinics.

Outbreaks of whooping cough, a disease also known as Pertussis, have reached epidemic levels in California this year. In Placer County, there were 31 confirmed or probable cases, but no deaths through Aug. 9.

The disease causes coughing fits that make it hard to breathe and spreads easily when someone with the disease coughs or sneezes. Early signs are like a common cold, such as a runny nose, sneezing, low fever and mild cough.

Local and state public health officials are advising whooping cough booster shots for adults and children seven years and older because immunity provided by earlier vaccinations wears off over time.

Newborn infants are at the greatest risk for severe illness and death, and they often get the disease from infected adults or adolescents.

Women of childbearing age can be vaccinated before, during and immediately after pregnancy.

For infants, whooping cough vaccinations can begin when they

are 6 weeks old. Infants are not adequately protected until the initial series of three shots is complete.

For more information, call Placer County Community Health at (530) 546.1970. Whooping cough information also is available on the county website at www.placer.ca.gov.

Cooking class in Minden

Buona Sera Ristorante & Bar in Minden is having a cooking class with the chef on Aug. 30 from 5-7pm. This is a practical course for a group, followed by a tasting dinner with the chef.

Individual fee is $25, plus materials and ingredients fee not to exceed $22.

Bring your apron and knives.

Call (530) 632.9516 to signup.

Coastal Cleanup Day

Last year, more than 3,000 volunteers around the Sierra came together to remove more than 100 tons of trash. More than 100 communities, across 22 counties and stretching across 500 river miles pull appliances, cigarette butts, beverage cans, baby diapers, tires, furniture, and more from the rivers and streams that supply California with 65 percent of its water.

This year’s cleanup day is Sept. 25 from 9am-noon. If you aren’t part of an assigned group, drop by El Dorado Beach to be assigned a location.

This event is in partnership with California Coastal Cleanup Day, an acclaimed statewide event that brings together tens of thousands of volunteers to clean up debris from our state’s beaches, lakes and waterways.

This year, six Tahoe area organizations have joined together to put on this event in South Lake Tahoe. Choose one of our 13 clean up sites to take part in this epic event. Click here to sign up.

Bring your own bag for the debris, plus gloves and water. Buckets could be used instead of individual bags.

All volunteers are invited to a cleanup celebration afterward. Enjoy food and drinks, local music and raffle prizes.

Call Ellen Nunes at Clean Tahoe for more information – (530) 544.4210.

South Tahoe backs state bill to ban plastic bags

By Kathryn Reed

Four out of five South Lake Tahoe City Council members believe residents of the city are capable of washing dirty reusable bags. Bruce Grego’s lack of confidence in the citizenry had him voting no on a resolution to support Assembly Bill 1998.



“I have misgivings about this. I think it’s a potential hazard,” Grego said at the Aug. 19 council meeting.

He doesn’t think people who use reusable bags will know to wash them if juice from meat were to drip in it or an egg were to break. Those were his examples.

Mayor Kathay Lovell pointed out how she has had no problem using the bags for a couple years without contamination or threat of salmonella.

Two members from the public spoke late Thursday afternoon to the benefit of getting rid of one-time use plastic bags.

That is what the bill wending its way through the Legislature would do. Right now it is in the Senate Rules Committee. It would prohibit stores from offering single-use carry out bags at supermarkets, convenience stores and large retail establishments with pharmacies. It would allow for bags in the produce section.

Assemblywoman Julia Brownley, D-Santa Monica, has said, “Californians use 19 billion single-use plastic bags a year and they cost more than $25 million a year to collect and take to landfills.”

What the city did with its 4-1 vote was to essentially endorse the piece of legislation.

Change in food processing could save millions of gallons of water

By Robert Rodriguez, Fresno Bee

Millions of gallons of water run through fruit processing plants every year, generating high costs and an ocean of waste for companies nationwide.

But all that could change with technology developed by Fresno State professor Gour Choudhury.

Choudhury, a specialist in food processing systems, has devised a system that uses air, rather than water, to blast peels off fruit. The invention could slash the water use by 80%, saving companies each tens of thousands of dollars a month.

The project has been three years in the making and could soon be on the market as an eco-friendly solution for processors of peaches, tomatoes and other soft fruit that needs to be peeled.

Read the whole story

Winery wins $900 in LTN advertising at Sample the

Sierra

Lake Tahoe News congratulates Chevalier Winery of Shingle Springs for winning the advertising give-away at Saturday's Sample the Sierra.



Chevalier Winery is in Single Springs.

The inaugural event brought out more than 500 people to Ski Run Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe to taste wine, sample food, and enjoy art and other booths that all have a connection to the Sierra.

Chevalier Winery CFO Jeanette Chevalier entered her card in *Lake Tahoe News'* drawing. The winery won $900 worth of advertising on *Lake Tahoe News*. Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce CEO B Gorman picked the winning business card at the end of the event Aug. 21.

For those who signed up for a subscription, you should receive a confirmation email soon. That will then start your free subscription that brings you a daily email listing what has been posted in the last 24 hours. If you don't receive the confirmation email, it's in your spam folder or we couldn't read your email address. Just go to the home page of LTN, near the bottom right enter your email address to subscribe.

Thank you everyone for your support of *Lake Tahoe News*, Tahoe's daily news source.

It was a pleasure to meet all of you.

Look for *Lake Tahoe News* at future community events.

Kathryn Reed, LTN publisher