Caltrans on track with closure of Hwy. 50 in spring 2011

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Caltrans is one step closer to having all the hurdles cleared so it can close Echo Summit in both directions next spring in order to replace the dilapidated rock wall.

It was a brief hearing Aug. 5 before Jim Baetge at the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency office in Stateline. With that behind them, Caltrans hopes to have the permits from TRPA on Monday. Then the internal environmental certificate can be obtained.



Sandbags will be replaced next year on Echo Summit. Photos/Kathryn Reed

The plan calls for replacing the wall that dates to 1939 with a sturdier, higher barrier that will be 32 inches off the ground. It's all in the name of public safety.

"We don't believe it will impact the scenic quality," Steven Gaytan, Caltrans transportation engineers, said after Thursday's hearing. "It will look better than the sandbags."

Some of the areas that have crumbled or been plowed into by vehicles have sandbags as a makeshift barrier.

With TRPA rules mandating no dirt be moved before May 1, Caltrans hopes to secure a waiver so construction can begin in April. This is all dependent on the weather.

No matter the exact start date, Highway 50 in to South Lake Tahoe from the west will be closed for two weeks – 24 hours a day. The next 36 days it will be reduced to one-way controlled traffic.



Highway 50 from Johnson Pass -- a not-so-well maintained county road.

If it's a less than ideal snow year, work could be done by Memorial Day. If it's like this past winter, a traffic nightmare could snarl summer travel.

Sue Barton with the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority and Steve Teshara representing South Shore Transportation Management Association both said this is the best alternative so the work is expedited.

The thinking is May is one of the slowest months on the South Shore, so ideally businesses will not be severely impacted.

Plus, there are plenty of ways to get to South Tahoe without

crossing Echo Summit. Johnson Pass is a route locals know about. The back way by Kirkwood on Highway 88 is a scenic alternative. Coming down via the West Shore on Highway 89 is another option.

Culprit in high-speed chase headed for prison

By Kathryn Reed

Christopher Wadstein of South Lake Tahoe pleaded guilty this week to being a felon in possession of a firearm, and evading a police officer and reckless driving.

His latest arrest was June 29 when he led law enforcement on a high-speed chase through South Lake Tahoe that ended in the Upper Truckee Meadow.



Christopher Wadstein on June 29 headed to Barton Memorial Hospital. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Wadstein, 21, entered the guilty pleas on Aug. 2. He is scheduled to be sentenced Aug. 16. He faces up to three years in prison.

Although what led officers to be looking for Wadstein was a kidnapping in the early morning hours of June 27, he was not charged in that crime.

South Lake Tahoe police officers never divulged details of that incident. They deferred comment to the District Attorney's Office – which did not charge Wadstein with kidnapping.

The woman who was allegedly held against her will was not physically harmed.

Relay for Life kicks off Saturday in Stateline

The countdown is on for the annual American Cancer Society's Relay For Life event, Aug. 7–8 at Kahle Community Park. With 37 teams, 10 restaurant sponsors, 26 business sponsors and seven media sponsors the committee anticipates a great turnout and to raise more money than last year's event.

This year marks the 26th anniversary for Relay for Life, and the South Shore is celebrating its fifth year. The all-night event will be at Kahle Community Park beginning at 4pm Saturday, with closing ceremonies at 6am Sunday.

Teams, up to 12 members, take turns walking around the track throughout the event to symbolize that cancer never sleeps.

Although it is encouraged to have teams organized and raising funds prior to the event, all individuals are welcome and teams can join Saturday. In not already on a team, a donation of $10/person includes participation and Relay for Life event T-shirt.

South Shore is fortunate to be one of the only Relay for Life events that offers a Canine For a Cure Dog Walk. Please respect that Kahle has graciously allowed dogs from 7–8pm. All dogs must be on a leash and leave by 8:15pm. To ensure an accurate count for doggie-goodie bags register dogs prior to the event at Dog Dog Cat, located in the Village Center near Raley's; otherwise, registration is available on site. A $10 donation per dog is encouraged.

Schedule of Events:

4pm -– Opening Ceremony, Survivor Lap, Caregiver Lap and entire event lap to kickoff event

4:30–6:30pm -– Live music with Martin & Vargas

5–6pm – Survivor Dinner – free meal will be provided to all cancer survivors. Food will be carnival style at various team's campsites with suggested donations depending on type of food.

7-8pm –– Canine For a Cure Dog Walk

9-10pm -– Luminaria Ceremony with presentation from a cancer survivor

8-10pm -– Live music with Michael Clark and band

5–6sm -– Coffee and light breakfast items available for donations

6am -– Closing Ceremony & Awards

For more information about the South Lake Tahoe Relay For Life

event, to register a team, ways to get involved or make a donation visit: www.sltrelay.com or www.relayforlifetasteoftahoe.com.

Night of music to raise cash for TAP

Pat Ronan, owner of Tahoe Lakeshore Lodge and Spa in South Lake Tahoe, is hosting a benefit for Tahoe Arts Project that will feature the music of Niall McGuiness, Trey Stone and Rocky Sleight.

Bring food, beverages, blankets and low back chairs, but no pets.

A suggested donation of $10 per person will support Tahoe Arts Project's mission of bringing professional performing arts into the schools and community of South Lake Tahoe.

The event is Aug. 12 from 7-9pm.

Lakeshore Lodge and Spa is Behind Heidi's Restaurant on Highway 50.

Call (530) 542-3632 for more information.

Smart phones on agenda at

Tahoe area tech conference

Publisher's note: ***This week's technology conference at Northstar-at-Tahoe has brought out a who's who in the tech world, like Bill Gates, and other representatives of today's leading companies.***

By Alexei Oreskovic, Reuters

About 200,000 smartphones and other devices based on Google's Android operating system are sold every day, CEO Eric Schmidt said on Wednesday, underscoring the strong challenge to rivals like Apple's iPhone.

The world's No.1 search engine is hunting for new revenue opportunities as growth in its core Internet business slows and as new technologies like smartphones and social networking services transform the way consumers access the Web.

Schmidt expects revenue from search advertising on mobile phones to eventually exceed the revenue Google generates from searches on PCs. But he could not predict when.

"It looks like Android is not just phenomenal but an incredibly phenomenal success in its growth rate," Schmidt told reporters on the sidelines of the Techonomy conference in Lake Tahoe, California, where he spoke on a panel earlier.

Read the whole story

Prop. 8 likely headed to

Supreme Court

By Maura Dolan, Carol J. Williams and Rong-Gong Lin II, Los Angeles Times

A day after Proposition 8 was thrown out in court, both sides in California's debate over gay marriage are focusing on the next fight in a battle that is likely to end up before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Opponents of gay marriage immediately vowed to appeal a federal judge's ruling saying same-sex unions were legal in California. [Updated at 10:30 a.m.: Gay-marriage opponents formally filed the appeal Thursday morning.]

Read the whole story

The next step will come Friday, when U.S. District Chief Judge Vaughn R. Walker holds a new hearing. The judge stayed his order allowing gay marriage at least until then. And it remains unclear if –and when – gay marriages will begin again in the state.

Lawyers on both sides expect the ruling to be appealed and ultimately to reach the Supreme Court during the next few years.

4-H Camp open house on South Shore

The 4-H Camp in Stateline is having an open house Sept. 12 from 10am-2pm.

The event is an opportunity to see changes to the camp and to learn what future changes are in store.

Lunch is sponsored by Nevada Farm Bureau Federation and a donation of $5 is suggested.

In addition to lunch, the camp beach will be open for swimming, and tours of the cabins and new dining pavilion will be available. Various groups will have exhibits set up, and there will be a presentation on the history of 4-H in Nevada.

Click here for more information.

30th annual Squaw Valley Mountain Run on Aug. 7

Hundreds of runners and hikers will make an annual pilgrimage to the top of Squaw Valley on Aug. 7 to enjoy a great workout with stunning views of Lake Tahoe and the High Sierra. This year marks the 30th year of the Squaw Valley Mountain Run, and organizers expect more than 500 entries.

Starting at the base of Squaw Valley, the course climbs the 3.6 mile Mountain Run trail up to High Camp where awards, a raffle, music, refreshments and beer will be provided for participants.

Many parents choose to push a stroller or carry infants as an added challenge. The fastest time on record is 29 minutes, set by Shiloh Mielke from Weaverville, N.C., in 2008. Delbert Wichelman, age 85, is the oldest competitor and a regular at the race.

Participants can choose to run or hike up to High Camp, or

they can participate in the guided Flower Walk at High Camp on easy rolling terrain.

All participants in the run/hike and flower hike will get a souvenir beer mug, beer (or lemonade for kids), snacks, a free Cable Car ride back down, and will be entered in the Mountain Run raffle. Awards for the uphill competitors will be given for top three places in five age categories.

Cost of entry:

(Pre Registration) Adult – $35; 18 & Under – $20

(Day of Event) Adult – $45; 18 & Under – $30

About the event:

The event is part of La Sportiva Mountain series and attracts top runners from across the country, as well as recreational runners and hikers. The organization of the race was taken over by The Auburn Ski Club Junior Nordic Team four years ago as a fundraiser. The club has continued the tradition of the event being a way for many people to celebrate life following personal struggles with cancer or in memory of a loved one who may have been less fortunate. Every year 20 percent of event proceeds go to The Tahoe Forest Cancer Center to help cancer patients receive the treatment they need.

More information and downloadable entry forms (to mail in) are available at www.squawmountainrun.com. Participants can sign up online at www.active.com.

Rock Sugar at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe

Rock Sugar plays at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe on Oct. 30 at 7:30pm.

Tickets are $25.

For more South Shore Room information, call 800.786.8208 or purchase tickets online at www.SouthShoreRoom.com.

Foreigner at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe

Foreigner plays at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe on Oct. 8 at 7:30pm.

General admission tickets are $50. Must be 21 or older to attend.

For more South Shore Room information, call 800.786.8208 or purchase tickets online at www.SouthShoreRoom.com.