Opinion: Water bond language is what state needs

By Lester Snow, Sacramento Bee

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg have asked the Legislature to move California's water bond, Proposition 18, from the November 2010 ballot to the November 2012 ballot.

This move was a matter of setting near-term legislative priorities and ensuring that California's budget and economic recovery are first and foremost on the decision- making agenda. It was a tough decision, but it is the right thing to do.

While there has been strong support for delaying the water bond until 2012, The Bee and a few others have taken the opportunity to pick apart the bond and suggest that it is filled with funding for unnecessary projects.

Read the whole story

Squaw gears up for jazz-brew fest

For one weekend this summer, the Village at Squaw Valley is going to become one of the funkiest places around Lake Tahoe.

Some of the most recognized jazz, blues and funk favorites of this era will perform at the annual Brews, Jazz & Funk Fest Aug. 14-15. from 2-8pm each day.

Continuous live music will be on two stages, with offerings of more than 20 breweries.

Admission is $5 and beers are $4. Proceeds from the event benefit the Humane Society of Truckee-Tahoe.

For more information, visit www.thevillageatsquaw.com or call (530) 584.6266.

El Dorado County resumes budget talks Monday

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

A day after El Dorado County's new budget went into effect July 1, it went $1.5 million out of whack.

Officials anticipated property tax revenue would tumble when they built the 2010-11 budget, but apparently they weren't pessimistic enough.

"We thought 4 percent was conservative," said Laura Schwartz, a county analyst, referring to an anticipated 4 percent drop in revenue.

When late results from the assessor's tax rolls came in July 2, however, revenue was down 6 percent, leaving the $1.5 million gap between revenue and expenditures.

The Board of Supervisors will look at that, and an expected $16 million deficit for 2011-12, when they meet Monday for budget discussions.

Read the whole story

Independence Lake changes not sitting well with users

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

For nearly a century, Kenny Osburn's family camped, fished and played at scenic Independence Lake.

Now, Osburn said, they can no longer do as they wish at a treasured place.

After a $15 million transaction put land around the lake under the ownership of The Nature Conservancy, Osburn and other long-time users are chafing over changes – chief among them the conservancy's prohibition of motorized boats on the lake.

"Our biggest focus is overregulation," said Osburn, 40. "The people that have been using that lake for generations have the most at stake."

Read the whole story

Jail culinary program creates yummy food, future cooks

By Kathryn Reed

When El Dorado County Sheriff Fred Kollar worked in Lake Tahoe the jail was serving TV dinners. Last week he made a special

effort to commend the inmate, yes the inmate, who made the cream puffs.

Kollar has a thing for cream puffs and he told inmate Jimmy Beechler these were as good as the ones his mom made.



Sheriff Fred Kollar raves about the cream puffs made by inmates at the Tahoe jail. Photos/Kathryn Reed

As the high bidder of the “lunch with the sheriff at the jail” during Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra’s Elegant Evening earlier this year, I finally redeemed my voucher on Monday. Joining us was jail commander Lt. Randy Peshon.

It’s under Peshon’s leadership that the culinary program in the jail has taken off in the last three years. In cooperation with Lake Tahoe Community College, three adjunct faculty members (Hugo Lizaola, Bob Grijalva and Trish McGrath) work in the jail kitchen under the supervision of head jail chef Jeanette Shippee.

The inmates who qualify for worker status, are not behind bars for a violent crime and show an interest in the program may apply to be in the culinary arts program that has the same curriculum as LTCC. It means working 12-hour days.

“They come out of here with a GED, culinary arts certificate and resume. Jeanette and I work our contacts to get them a job. The recidivism is almost non-existent,” Peshon explained. “They are out and not coming back. That is where the huge savings to the county comes from.”

It takes eight months for an inmate to complete the program. Their final is serving a complete meal to a public panel.

Peshon was needled by Shippee to take the serve safe class. This class is a necessity for anyone working in a commercial kitchen. Now the inmates are challenged to beat his score.

He’s even learning a thing or two about cooking, which is paying off for his wife.

With state mandated nutritional guidelines as well as the presentation of the food, the inmates are eating well-balanced meals. They can also get meals if they have special diets or for religious reasons.

Bad food equals bad behavior, Peshon said. No slop, like what is sometimes depicted in the movies, is served here.



Lt. Randy Peshon has learned cooking skills as part of his work in the jail.

“In the early ’80s every meal was a TV dinner. It took 20 to 30 minute to heat up,” Kollar said. “It would be expensive today and it wouldn’t meet nutritional requirements.”

Baking is what Shippee likes to focus on. She teaches at LTCC on occasion, so it’s not just inmates who benefit from her culinary skills.

For several years she has had her charges enter the El Dorado County Fair. And each year several ribbons are awarded to the inmates. Oftentimes this is the first time any of them has won anything.

Carlos Gonzalez, still dressed in his inmate white cooking uniform, is a little shy about talking about his blue first place ribbon for his dinner rolls. Having had one of the light, fluffy rolls with my lunch that day, I’d say they are a definite runner-up to my mom’s dinner rolls.

Gonzalez said he and Shippee came up with the recipe.



Inmates Carlos Gonzalez and Eric Malone show-off their ribbons from the county fair.

Eric Malone has ribbons from the past two county fairs. For this summer’s fair he entered a chocolate raspberry bar (second place) and a chocolate raspberry cream cake (first

place).

“It was kind of nerve wracking trying to prepare everything. You think you have more time than you really do,” Malone said.

In the past he won for an almond kiss cookie and a triple layer brownie.

It was Malone who had a strong influence in what was served to the sheriff. He admitted to being a little nervous cooking for the sheriff.

“You worry if it’s going to turn out,” Malone said.

For the July 19 lunch, Malone said, “Me and Jeanette threw it together.” The idea was coming up with one dish that could be served three ways to accommodate the three of us. I skipped the chicken, Peshon wanted just the chicken and Kollar could eat everything.

Malone came up with the name of the pasta dish at the last minute while back in the kitchen after everything was cleaned up.

Our lunches were served in the same plastic trays the inmates get, along with a carton of milk. Individual slots in the tray hold the food, so no worries about items touching one another.

A green salad with a side of ranch dressing occupies two slots, the yummy dinner roll, a decadent cream puff, and pasta primavera as the entrée fill the other areas.

Per meal costs are $1.10-$1.15, according to Peshon. This does not include labor. When you serve more than 100 people three meals a day, shopping in bulk pays off.

Inmates have a minimum of 15 minutes to eat a meal. Luckily, no one was watching the clock while I was there.

Considering my voucher said I could bring a guest and I

didn’t, I’m thinking I may call the sheriff up again for another lunch or maybe wait until the new guy gets in office. I wouldn’t say the food is a reason to commit a crime, but I would suggest bidding on this item or the lunch with the jail commander at the next Elegant Evening.

Sheriff in the Jail Meal

1 purple onion, julienne

2 zucchini, quartered

2 yellow squash, quartered

1½ red bell peppers, julienne

8-10 mushrooms

2 tomatoes

1 C basil, chiffonade

1 full bowl broccoli

Cook all of the vegetables, toss with cooked pasta. Serves five.

Publisher’s note: ***Lake Tahoe News will feature an interview with Sheriff Fred Kollar on June 26.***

Smoker leads to evacuation at 968 Park Hotel

By Kathryn Reed

Saturday afternoon’s rain showers contributed to 968 Park

Hotel near Stateline being evacuated that night.

Hotel staff had put cushions and other pool items under a concrete stairwell when the rain started. The thinking was that most summer storms in Lake Tahoe blow through fast and that they would retrieve the items fairly quickly and put them back where they belong.



Remnants of the smoldering items at 968 Park Hotel on July 24. Photos/Kathryn Reed

But what happened is the flammable items were left there.

Being a non-smoking facility means guests of the 58-room South Lake Tahoe hotel have to go outside to light up. One of them either dropped a cigarette, ashes or match down the stairwell to cause the combustible materials to smolder, according to officials.

That distinct smell of something having been on fire and then doused with water lingered in the back parking lot where the cushions laid.

“It all adds up to something very unsuspicious,” said Sgt. Brian Williams of the South Lake Tahoe Police Department. “They had an excellent response to the emergency and the facility evacuated very well.”

The hotel sign out front said “full house.” Wayne and Joan Brown of Naples, Fla., were on the other side of the street with many of the other guests watching the four-engine response by the South Lake Tahoe Fire Department, along police and ambulance personnel.

Wayne Brown said smoke could be smelled on two of the three floors. Joan Brown had to change fast from her nightgown into something more presentable for standing on a street.

No one appeared to be scared. This could have been because no flames were ever seen.

The manager on duty wanted nothing to do with the media.

The call came in at 9:04pm. People were let back in about 40 minutes later.

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Stand-up paddle boarding becoming a must-do sport



By Allen Pierleoni, Sacramento Bee

Let’s see, how does this go again?

First, climb on top of the paddleboard and lay the paddle perpendicular to the board. Rise to the knees and pick up the

paddle. Position the nose of the board into the wind coming off the lake. Uh-oh, the surface is rippling. That’s no good.

Take a few more strokes and get the board moving. Now rise slowly to the feet, pushing up with the hands and arms, bringing along the paddle. Position the feet on the board’s center point.

The learning curve is supposed to be five minutes and the thrill immediate, I’d been told. But wait – the board was getting tippy. … Whoa! Ker-splash!

Lake Tahoe is cold in the morning, as I was reminded several times recently during a quick how-to session on flatwater stand-up paddleboarding, or SUP.

Read the whole story

Casino industry turning toward green practices

By William Ng, Incentive Travel

As green consciousness and corporate social responsibility expand in the incentive travel market, hospitality stakeholders have been hard at work remaking major and small casino locales alike. Resort operators like Harrah’s Entertainment and MGM Mirage have transformed their properties into environmentally minded resorts. Began initially as employee engagement and internal cost-efficiency measures, the investments are now meeting a growing demand for low-carbon and socially conscious incentive travel programs.

Image polishing

The initiatives are changing preconceived notions that gaming destinations can't be green. "We're moving back of the house to the front of the house," Gwen Migita, Harrah's Entertainment's corporate director of social responsibility, says about the impact-reduction changes that have happened behind the scenes.

Read the whole story

Teshara wants to bring sustainability to Tahoe region

By Kathryn Reed

ROUND HILL – Neat stacks of paper fill every inch of Steve Teshara's desk. They continue onto a side table. He goes to another room to get a piece of paper, this one with unemployment stats for the Lake Tahoe area and beyond.

"I think the community is at a real tipping point," Teshara said. He points to the loss of 10,000 full-time residents in the last decade, how tourism is changing, and the role gaming plays today and into the future.



Steve Teshara

has been host of TV show aired on Douglas County public access since last fall. Photo/Kathryn Reed

In the 37 years he has lived at Lake Tahoe, Teshara has seen an abundance of change – and recently, not for the good. He wants to lend his expertise to turn things around.

Teshara opened Sustainable Community Advocates in April, the same month he stepped down as head of the North Lake Tahoe Resort Association. He had thought about opening a consulting practice in 2002 when he left the Gaming Alliance, but the NLTRA job opened up and he jumped at that.

“Sustainable Community Advocates was established to assist clients in the development and advocacy of strategies, initiatives, action plans, and projects designed to support and ensure the long-term viability of communities and regions. Sustainability promotes equity, strengthens the economy, protects the environment, and promotes healthy, safe communities,” the website says.

Two key projects Teshara is working on are the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency’s Regional Plan update and the Prosperity Plan.

“I think sometimes people are more infatuated with the process than the end result,” Teshara said.

Part of the sustainability part of his job is integrating land use, housing and transportation issues.

He spends his times at meetings and sifting through all the

written material his clients don’t have time for.

Through the Prosperity Plan the idea is to blend economic development with the environment. It’s also possible the three philanthropic foundations in the region – Parasol, Truckee Tahoe and El Dorado Community – will begin to work more collaboratively.

“I like to connect the dots with people that have not been connected before,” Teshara said.

EID issues water flow warning for recreationists

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

People planning visits to Caples Creek or the Silver Fork of the American River from Aug. 2 to 6 are urged to use caution because of fluctuating water levels.

The El Dorado Irrigation District announced that test flow releases from Caples Lake,

Read the whole story