Celebrity Golf a massive money maker for LT Airport

By Kathryn Reed

One need never go to Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course to know the celebrity golf tournament is going on now. Just listen. Hear that plane traffic? It's the golfers in their expensive planes flying in and out of Lake Tahoe Airport.

"I can tell you they have a large impact on the airport," Sherry Miller, airport director, said of the celebrities who land in South Lake Tahoe.



A limo is set to transport the group that arrived via this XQJet on July 13 at Lake Tahoe Airport. Photos/Kathryn Reed

They started arriving July 8. Some of the players who are here for the tournament that runs through Sunday come early to get acclimated to the higher elevation, and to walk a few rounds without the media and fans hounding them.

Some fly in on their own jet, which might sit on the ramp for several days. Others come in via charter service. No matter who owns the plane, it’s a financial boon to the airport.

“It means a huge amount to the community,” Miller said of the tournament. “I would venture to say this is our busiest time of year.”

In July 2009, the city collected $12,559 in landing fees, according to Miller. For the entire 2008-09 fiscal year the airport collected $39,180.11 in landing fees.

Lake Tahoe Airport charges a landing fee for planes weighing more than 6,000 pounds. The cost is $3.40 per 1,000 pounds. The average fee is $45.

Falcons pay $60, Gulf Streams range from $70-$256, while King Airs (which the airport sees a lot of) pay about $47.



The celebrity golf tournament will fill the airport's ramp.

Michael Golden at Mountain West Aviation is responsible for collecting the fees. He charges an additional overnight fee.

His crew is also tasked with parking all of the aircraft. Some years it looks like every inch of asphalt is covered with a multi-million dollar plane.

This year, with 10 open hangars, it’s possible some pilots may opt to store the plane indoors.

“July is our busiest month, but it is around the lake,” Golden said. He wouldn’t divulge who flies what or any specifics about money he collects during the annual six-day tournament.

The city gets 11 cents of every gallon of fuel that Mountain West sells. In July 2009, that amount totaled $5,748 – just for the city’s coffers.

And not every pilot fuels up in Tahoe.

Nor does every player come via Lake Tahoe Airport. Minden and Reno are other airports most often used.



Flight Deck restaurant at Lake Tahoe Airport has indoor and outdoor seating with views of the runways.

Before jumping in a vehicle headed for Stateline, Diane and Tom Miller hope the golfers and their entourage are hungry. They opened the Flight Deck restaurant last month at the airport.

“We don’t have any particular plans for Celebrity Golf. I’m

not sure how we will be affected by the planes landing and the limos picking people up," Diane Miller said.

With the city getting a chunk of the gross from the restaurant, the owners and city officials have their fingers crossed people will be hungry on their way in or out of town.

Firewood permits available in Nevada

Permits are on sale now for the Nevada Division of State Parks' wood-sale Wednesdays.

Permits must be purchased at the State Parks Division office, located at 901 South Stewart St., Ste. 5005 in Carson City from 8am-5pm Wednesdays. Permits are $20 (exact cash or check only) per truck and are limited to one permit per address/family for each Wednesday.

Four-wheel drive trucks are required for wood pick up. Permits are being sold per truckload, not per cord. Therefore, only standard trucks – up to 1 ton – are allowed. Flatbeds, stakesides and trailers are not allowed.

Approximately 140 permits are available on a first-come, first-served basis. The sale will end Sept. 1 or once all permits are sold.

The pick-up schedule will be every Wednesday at 9am in July, August (excluding Aug. 18) and Sept. 1.

The wood is located above Hobart Reservoir in the backcountry of Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park. These special permits are being sold at a reduced rate because the wood will need to be

moved by hand over a long distance – up to 150 feet – over steep and rough terrain.

The wood consists of a mixture of pine and fir, some seasoned and some green. Most of the wood is approximately 18 inches, although some odd sized and large rounds are possible.

The wood was cut by Nevada Division of Forestry and Great Basin Institute conservation crews as part of forest health efforts in Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park.

Call Joy Elwood at (775) 684.2793 for information.

Fireworks spark inquiries

By Susan Wood

Your calendar hasn't failed you.

The fireworks spectacle on July 13 was set from Tahoe Lakeshore Lodge through a private party so large it takes up most of the resort and spills over into Lakeland Village, lodge and city officials confirmed Wednesday.

The 10-minute, professional-grade display prompted calls to the South Lake Tahoe police and fire departments, along with emails to **Lake Tahoe News**, from residents on both sides of town.

American Discount Tire, which celebrated its 50th business anniversary, secured the permit with the city fire marshal for the lavish extravaganza involving 500 people and at least 150 trips given away to honor its employees. The company is better known for throwing large volleyball tournaments on the beach.

It was the first for fireworks off shore on a barge.

“It was a Catch 22. If (organizers) had advertised the fireworks, people would have showed up. It was a private party,” said Ray Zachau, city fire marshal. He was on hand to watch the display.

According to Zachau, the 5-inch fireworks shells were half the size of those used in the traditional 4th of July displays.

Fallen Leaf Lake becomes a study about past droughts

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

Vacationers skim the surface of Fallen Leaf Lake on water skis or kayaks, oblivious that scientists are investigating the depths for signs of natural disasters to come.

Last week, scientists began crisscrossing the lake with a $450,000, state-of-the-art sonar tool that will map the lake bed in unprecedented detail.



What's beneath Fallen Leaf Lake is of interest to

scientists.
Photo/Kathryn
Reed

They’re looking for two things:

• Subsurface seismic faults that could bode earthquakes and even tsunamis for the Tahoe region.

• Ancient trees along the outer edges of the lake bottom that are evidence that the region is subject to recurring 200-year droughts of catastrophic proportions.

Read the whole story

Ex-Tahoe resident Joseph Balius files for bankruptcy

By Kathryn Reed

Joseph Balius, best known in South Lake Tahoe for leaving Lake Tahoe Community College students who were residing at the Alder Inn in a lurch when he skipped town, has filed for bankruptcy.

Balius, whose first name is Shelly but goes by his middle name of Joseph, filed the paperwork with his wife, Kira, in Las Vegas. Court documents show a Henderson address for the couple. It is believed they moved to this town next to Vegas when they abruptly left Tahoe last fall.

There is a creditors’ meeting on July 30 in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, District of Nevada, with South Lake Tahoe residents part of that group.

The Balius' attorney did not return phone calls.

South Lake Tahoe police officials did not return a call inquiring if they still had an open case against Balius.

The issue with the students has long since been settled.

South Tahoe's children's memorial no longer in the dark

By Candice Williams

It was a dark, cold winter night in February 1991, when a vehicle carrying five teenage boys hit a patch of black ice, spun out and crashed into a tree on Pioneer Trail. Three of the young men perished in the accident. Their names are Rory Hrbacek, Sandy Haynes and Casey Wells.

Out of her heartache, a young mother, Sue Hrbacek, the mother of Rory Hrbacek, began a personal crusade in the name of her young son and the other two boys to have a guardrail installed and 13 trees removed, including the tree that ended the lives of the three young men. Never again would that tree bring pain and suffering to another family in our town.



South Lake Tahoe Children's Memorial now has lights. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Instead of having the largest tree destroyed, her dream was to turn the object of her grief into a perpetual memorial to her son, his two friends and all children of our community who have passed away far too early.

In October 1994, Hrbacek’s dream became a reality when the city of South Lake Tahoe offered the serene setting along Highway 50 and Wildwood Avenue where the memorial log was erected. Out of pain and tears came a ministry of healing and peace.

The memorial began with 36 names engraved on brass plates and, sadly, has grown to 223 names. It began as a way to remember our local children, but has expanded to include the memory of children from at least 14 other states and four foreign countries.

Recently, “night lights” were installed to cast a soft glow of light onto the memorial after dark. The vision came about from another mother’s memory of how her son always reminded her to leave a light on at night so he would not be afraid of the dark. It is her wish that all the children represented on that memorial be at rest with the light on.

The family of Charles “Chip” Allen Williams would like to thank the city of South Lake Tahoe and the Parks and Recreation Department for, again, opening its heart and sense of community to help another family realize a vision to help all families heal through their valley of grief.

At 2pm on July 25, there will be a Dedication of Light at the site of the Children's Memorial. All are welcome to attend.

For more information, contact Candice Williams at (530) 542.2733.

Laid-back start to annual celebrity golf tourney

By Austin Fay

STATELINE- – The first day of the American Century Celebrity Golf Tournament was a relatively sleepy one, with many of the invited players expected to arrive at the Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course today and Thursday.

Blue skies, a chilly lake and the chance of spotting NHL legend Mario Lemieux brought Jeff and Genny Isaachsen 17 hours from Vancouver Island, British Columbia. The die-hard hockey fan couple has been planning the trip for months.



The view from Brooks Sports Bar is ideal. Photos/Austin Fay

Only three days before the couple left for their trip, Lemieux canceled his invitation. But the couple is still determined to enjoy their stay in Tahoe.

The player list isn't final until it's final, but others expected to attend include: John Elway, Michael Jordan, Don Cheadle, Kevin Nealon, Marcus Allen, Dan Quinn, Jerry Rice, Ray Romano, Oscar de la Hoya, Rick Rhoden and Billy Joe Tolliver.

A few celebrities and athletes were in attendance Tuesday, namely Mike Shanahan, coach of the Washington Redskins and offensive coordinator for three Super Bowl wins.

"With the snow-capped mountains and you can hardly count the clouds in the sky, it's one of the most beautiful places to be," Shanahan said.



Brian Baumgartner, left, of NBC's "The Office" talks with an Edgewood employee on July 13.

Emmy-award winning Brian Baumgartner of NBC's "The Office" was stretching his shoulders on the driving range.

Only 50 miles away, the Reno-Tahoe Open at Montreux Golf Club is a sweltering 95 degrees. The British Open at St. Andrews is

also on this weekend in Scotland.

But neither of those has Edgewood's infamous 17th fairway, where sun burned lake-goers pull up their boats on the sand to catch glances of the celebrities or even catch a 50-yard bomb from NFL blow-in Matt Ryan.

Three boys from El Dorado Hills came to see Marcus Allen. Their parents and the young sports fans (two of them brothers) went to the 2007 U.S. Open to see Tiger Woods play. The boys spent the day wandering around having their T-shirts scrawled on with Sharpies by the athletes.

"This one's a baseball player," one boy said, showing off the garbled lines on the shoulder of his white shirt. "It's just a bunch of scribbles but they're celebrities so ...."

Tahoe-Douglas Fire Protection District was also in attendance, standing by in case of health emergencies, or sometimes "golf-ball incidents." Brandon Spry and Brian Zabel, two Tahoe-Douglas paramedics, remember two years ago when Sugar Ray Leonard hit a young spectator in the head at the tournament. Leonard signed the ball and gave the boy a hundred dollar bill.



Crowds are expected to increase starting today.

Altitude, medications and tourists standing in the heat all

day make for a wicked environment to bring out health problems. Stay hydrated if you do head out to Edgewood this week.

It’s $60 for the whole week, with Wednesday and Thursday admission $15 a day. Friday, Saturday and Sunday when the actual tournament goes into full swing, the price jumps to $25 and the athletes will mostly be unavailable for autographs and photos as the tournament will be under way.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Are you going to the American Century Celebrity Golf Tournament? If so, bring your entrance ticket to Lakeside Inn Casino at Stateline for a free drink toke and $5 gaming coupon.

• The Troy Management Group of Reno will spend $776,850 to remodel the Mt. Rose Campground on Mount Rose Highway. The campground is closed this season.

• The Black Bear Inn is offering dinner – but only for people who stay overnight. Chef Alex Elsaesser joined the South Tahoe bed and breakfast this summer. He is using fruits and veggies from the farmers’ markets; Overland Meat Company for meat, wild fowl, free-range poultry and fresh seafood; and Grass Roots for dry ingredients.

• Placerville voters will decide in November if they want the sales tax to go up a quarter cent to 8.75 percent.

• Budget Travel calls Donner Lake one of the best lakes to

visit for summer fun.

Killpatrick, Rosner attend final LTCC board meeting

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Community College's front office is going through massive changes.

Tuesday's board of trustee meeting was the last for Paul Killpatrick and Diane Rosner. Killpatrick is leaving the presidency for a job in Washington. Rosner tendered her resignation as dean of Instruction and Social Sciences two weeks ago.



Diane Rosner

The application period for the interim president position was extended to July 27, the next board meeting. The appointment had been on the July 13 board agenda.

Susan Middleton, vice president of Academic Affairs and Student Services, had already been tapped to be the acting president until she retires Aug. 31. Tom Greene, a former counselor at LTCC, will come on board when she leaves.

The other relatively new face on campus is Susan Niehoff, vice

president of Business Services. She’s only been on campus since January.

North Shore venues ready to bring on the music

North Shore takes its music outdoors with a variety of concerts and festivals – all part of the destination’s High Notes – North Tahoe’s Summerlong Music Series, running through August.

The lake’s music campaign also has a new website, www.TahoeHighNotes.com, that covers all the weekly free events, festivals and headliners.

Visitors to the country’s largest alpine lake will find outdoor live performances – free of charge – every night of the week, except Mondays. Sundays rock out at Tahoe City’s Commons Beach, which features Hot Buttered Rum July 18. It’s Blues Tuesdays at the Village at Squaw Valley with Candye Kane July 20, and live music Wednesdays at the Truckee Regional Park and Thursdays on Commercial Row. Kings Beach is lakeside Fridays with Downbeat July 23, then Tahoe City Saturdays for Heritage Plaza’s Unplugged. The Village at Northstar also does a variety of live music on weekends.

There are also a number of ticketed musical events held throughout the region. In addition to its popular Shakespeare on the beach, the Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival now provides a Monday and Friday night music series, which is also at the scenic Sand Harbor Beach State Recreation Area just outside of Incline Village.

Right on the Truckee River, River Ranch Lodge has its 18th Annual Under the Stars Concert Series with reggae, bluegrass, funk and rock, with Pato Banton & The New Generation Band July 22 and Prezident Brown from Jamaica Aug. 5.

The Lake Tahoe Music Festival is set for July 22 to Aug. 7, ranging from Broadway to classical to rock to jazz and big band swing. This year the festival is taking their Orchestra Night on a swingin' ride … straight to the "sing era" of the '40s and '50s with Simply Sinatra, starring vocalist Steve Lippia, who will be belting out tunes including "My Way," "New York New York" and "Mack the Knife" July 29 at Old Greenwood. Combining R&B, jazz and pop sounds, Natalie Cole, a nine-time Grammy Award-winner, is an unstoppable force in music and will perform Aug. 5 at Northstar-at-Tahoe. The festival's first country concert stars country legend Wynonna at Northstar July 31.

Wanderlust returns to Squaw Valley July 29 to Aug. 1 with yoga, music and nature at the festival's forefront. The music is a mix of styles and genres ranging from indie rock to electronic to alternative world to kirtan. The impressive lineup includes the Brazilian Girls, whose latest album was nominated for a Grammy, as well as MC Yogi, who combines his loves of yoga with hip-hop music. MC Yogi made history when he released his video "Vote for Hope" in support of President Barack Obama.

In Lake Tahoe's historic casino corridor, the Crystal Bay Club offers a host of free concerts throughout the week, as well as ticketed bands from the Bay Area.