Reno trying to alter reputation of being bike unfriendly



By Kara Lapoint, Reno Gazette-Journal

Verdi resident John Leeming has been screamed at, honked at, foghorned and has had doors opened at him from moving vehicles – all while riding his bike around Reno.

Dean Deming shares similar experiences, and then some: being run off the road and getting hit from behind.

“Every time I go out, I wonder if it will be the last,” Deming said.

Leeming and Deming are among bicyclists who say they feel a sense of fear when riding. And according to Sgt. Jim Stegmaier of the Reno police Traffic Division, that fear is legitimate.

Read the whole story

North Shore gearing up for long July 4 weekend

North Lake Tahoe plays host to a number of Independence events and celebrations beginnng July 2.

“The Fourth of July holiday traditionally brings thousands of visitors to North Lake Tahoe,” Bill Hoffman, executive director of the Incline Village Crystal Bay Visitor Bureau, said in a statement. “And this year is proving to be no different. Our drive market, especially the Bay Area, Sacramento and Northern Nevada, already has reservations on the books, many taking a few extra vacation days to enjoy all the lake has to offer.”

Incline Village pulls out all the stops with a multi-day celebration, scheduled for July 2 through July 4, called Red, White and Tahoe Blue. Special events include a 4th of July concert, flag raising, special lunch for veterans, patriotic chalk drawing contest and ice cream social for children, parade, dress-up-doggie contest, opening ceremonies and rubber ducky race. The festivities culminate with the Fourth of July Fireworks at 9:30pm.

Fireworks get under way at Kings Beach July 3. The show starts at 9:30pm and can be best seen from the Kings Beach State Recreation Area. There’s also a Viewing Party at the North Tahoe Event Center, starting at 6:30pm on the water in Kings Beach. For $10 attendees get entry to front row fireworks, live music and dancing, along with a no host bar and food available for purchase throughout the evening.

The Village at Squaw Valley hosts new releases and summer classics as part of its Summer Movie Series July 1 at dusk. Flicks are shown in the plaza on the big screen under the stars. The Squaw Valley 4th of July Fine Arts and Crafts Festival is July 2-4, while the resort’s popular Mountaintop Stargazing is July 2-3. There is also a Family Disco Skate Party scheduled for July 2 at the High Camp Ice Pavilion.

The holiday weekend also starts on July 1 at the Village at Northstar in Truckee with a Family Golf Clinic at 4pm, followed by the annual Outdoor Movie Night (every Thursday, Friday and Saturday night through Aug. 28), with the “Bee

Movie", "Little Giants" and "Earth" running over the July 4 holiday weekend. The resort is also hosting Kid's Adventure Day Camps, giving parents some solo time, with interactive learning experiences that involve nature hikes, games and activities.

Tahoe City's 64th annual fireworks celebration begins at 9:30pm at Commons Beach July 4. Prime viewing spots are from the beach, where family picnics are popular, as well as various locations throughout town along North Lake Boulevard.

On the West Shore just outside of Tahoe City, Granlibakken Lodge has got a Western barbecue July 4. Guests here get a special rate when they stay two nights with the third night free and can walk or ride bikes to the Tahoe City fireworks.

It's an old-fashioned July Fourth Holiday Celebration in Truckee July 4 with a morning Truckee Firecracker Mile fun run and walk for all ages followed by a 10am hometown parade in historical downtown along Commercial Row.

MV gets court to freeze South Shore transit agency's assets

By Kathryn Reed

Even though the South Shore bus system's assets have been frozen by a Nevada court, the interim operator lined up to take over at noon Sunday has said it will still do so.

On Wednesday, District Court Judge Dave Gamble froze South

Tahoe Area Transportation Authority's assets, bank accounts and fare box revenue per the request of MV Transportation.

MV and STATA have been at financial odds for most of their relationship. They can't even agree on how much STATA is in debt. STATA says it's close to $2 million. MV says it's closer to $3 million.

The Fairfield-based company has filed suit in Minden because STATA is based in Stateline. The suit is to recover the cash it believes it is owed.

"This is a very unfortunate situation that we find ourselves in, but what is further disappointing is STATA's deliberate and blatant disregard for the binding agreement it has with our company to fully pay us for services rendered," Kevin Klika, MV's COO, said in a press release. "STATA left us no other option but to file a lawsuit when it was made very clear earlier this week the agency had no intention of paying us in full."

MV signed a three-year contract last summer to run the day-to-day operation of the bus service on the South Shore that includes BlueGo, Heavenly ski shuttles, Nifty 50 Trolley, routes to Carson City, and service into Carson Valley.

Everything came to a head in May with MV demanding it get paid and threatening to suspend service, and STATA then severing the contract. MV fired back this week with the court order.

STATA's attorney, Mike McLaughlin had a telephone hearing with Gamble on Friday morning asking him to set aside the order. Gamble said no.

The STATA board had an emergency meeting on Friday at 2pm, though *Lake Tahoe News* was never officially notified of the meeting, which would have been normal under opening meeting laws. Representatives of Transit Resource Center (TRC), the consultant working for STATA that will take over running the

buses on June 20, were at the meeting.

“Even though MV will no longer be operating the buses on Sunday, BlueGo will continue on. Riders will not have any interruption at all in their service,” Stacy Dingman, STATA spokeswoman, said after the closed session meeting. “We are thrilled that we are able to keep our commitment to the entire community.”

When McLaughlin was asked prior to the meeting how the bus system would be able to keep operating with frozen bank accounts, which means not being able to pay TRC, he said, “That is the million dollar question.”

It has not been made public what the agreement with TRC is now that STATA can’t pay that bill either.

McLaughlin said it is possible STATA could issue a bond that would bring it cash to cover some of the debts. He said calls have been placed to bonding companies to inquire about options.

MV’s latest actions caught most everyone involved with STATA off-guard.

“I was surprised because as MV knows there are federal funds in that account. The law states you cannot attach federal funds, so those funds should not have been attached to the order,” McLaughlin said.

McLaughlin hopes all parties can be seen by Gamble next week to speed the process along to find a resolution satisfactory to all sides.

MV officials did not return phone calls Friday.

Caltrans projects to cause delays on South Shore

By Kathryn Reed

Highway 50 over Echo Summit will be reduced to one lane for much of next week to repair a retaining wall that was damaged June 14.

David Irwin, 52, of Rocklin was driving his big-rig down the summit into the Lake Tahoe Basin about 3:10pm Monday when his trailer took out a large swath of the rock wall.



The rock barrier on Echo Summit will be replaced next week. Photo/Kathryn Reed

California Highway Patrol Sgt. Dan Lopez said Irwin had a permit to be on the highway.

Most of this week the gap in the crumbled wall was left exposed without any markings. Now several orange cones are along the roadway not far from the top of the summit.

One-way controls will be in effect from 7am-5pm June 21-24

while Caltrans erects a new wall.

This project has nothing to with the more complicated and cumbersome project that is coming in May 2011 to replace that entire section of rock barrier with something more sturdy and taller.

The one-way control next week will continue farther down Highway 50. From Pioneer Trail to Lake Tahoe Airport expect delays all week from 7am-5pm as Caltrans repaves that section of road.

Click on schedule to find out about all of Caltrans' projects in the Sierra for June 20-26.

STPUD water meter project costing more than expected

By Kathryn Reed

Cost overruns for the South Tahoe Public Utility District water meter project are approaching a half million dollars.

Campbell Construction Company as of June 16 had put in 165 of the 1,261 meters in the Lake Tahoe Basin portion of El Dorado County that it has been contracted to install.

"During the course of meter installations they have encountered changed conditions including deeper excavations,

the need for additional fittings and the occurrence of groundwater," according to the report principal engineer John Thiel prepared for the STPUD board.

The board on Thursday approved a change order for Campbell not to exceed $452,000. It's possible a U.S. Forest Service grant will cover that expense. Cost overruns are not covered in the original that is paying for the meter project.

Paul Sciuto, the district's assistant general manager, believes the firm will meet the Oct. 15 deadline to install the meters. He also told the board on June 17 he was not surprised by the cost overrun based on how fast the plans and specifications were put in place. But Sciuto also does not foresee another bill like this coming before the board.

Within the city, Tiechert Construction has finished the work in the Al Tahoe area. They are now on Gardner Mountain. As of Wednesday, the Sacramento company had finished 545 of the 1,915 meters it will install this summer.

Taste of Tahoe raising thousands of dollars to fight cancer

With Taste of Tahoe at the halfway point, more than $30,000 has been raised. The money goes toward the South Shore's Relay for Life event, which raises money for the American Cancer Society.

The South Shore's Relay for Life is Aug. 7-8 at Kahle

Community Park in Stateline.

Each week a restaurant on the South Shore has volunteered to be the featured dining establishment. The eatery donates a part of the profits to Taste of Tahoe.

Other businesses and media outlets, like *Lake Tahoe News*, have stepped up to the plate to give to this cause either with money or advertising.

For more information about Taste of Tahoe, click here.

Animals, children steal show at El Dorado County Fair

By Kathryn Reed

PLACERVILLE – Brooks & Dunn are right, cowgirls don't cry.

With bodies flying, sheep stomping on or near them, and the crowd whopping it up, it was the young girls who got up, dusted themselves off and looked like they were ready to ride the bulls in the pen behind the arena. The boys, well, a few of them left in tears.

Mutton bustin' can be a rough sport.



Megan Ehle, 7,

of Placerville is off to a fast start in mutton bustin'. Photos/Kathryn Reed

The announcer assured everyone at the El Dorado County Fair on Friday that every child was there because he or she wanted to be – not because their Wrangler-Roper-Stetson clad parent wanted them to be.

Broken into age groups 4-5 and 6-7, girls and boys compete together. Several of the little ones didn't look quite old enough to be riding. It didn't appear much would have stopped them.

Megan Ehle, 7, had a big grin on her face after her first mutton bustin' contest. A little scratch near her elbow will be a reminder of the day's fun.

Across the fairgrounds the animals are the ones being judged.

When Jennifer Weber, 16, first started raising swine it was difficult when auction day would come. Even though she knows she'll be in tears today when 6-month-old Sammy is sold, the paycheck will be welcome.

She and her Hampshire took first place on Friday in senior showmanship. Weber would take the pig for walks on her family's 6 acres in Shingle Springs. Some of its favorite foods include blackberries and Jelly Bellies.

To those who didn't grow up on a farm or don't live on one now, the judging for the goat milking champion was eye opening. Mammaries are the big deal in this competition.

Plenty of farm animals are on display – beef cattle, swine,

turkeys, chickens, rabbits, guinea pigs and goats.

For those who don’t want to mess with animals, there is the mechanical bull. Plus, there’s a ton of meat to eat.

Aromas of all sorts fill the grounds, ranging from sizzling beef to kettle corn.

The four-day event that wraps up Sunday is worth going to multiple days because there is so much going on. Music genres run the gamut – some professional, some competitive.

Demonstration halls are filled with baked items, photographs, knitting, quilts, canned goods and more that were entered by county residents to be judged. Some of the amateur photographs look like the shooter should consider switching professions, they are that good.

At the games of chance and carnival rides is where most of the teenagers could be found.

To find out what is going on at the fair on Saturday and Sunday, click on schedule.

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Hot August Nights expanding to Long Beach

By Ray Hagar, Reno Gazette-Journal

Hot August Nights officials said Thursday that the region’s largest special event will begin in Long Beach, Calif., in 2011 before coming home to Lake Tahoe and the Reno-Sparks

area.

Both mayors of Reno and Sparks said they fear that expanding the special event to Long Beach might be the precursor to the event eventually leaving Northern Nevada.

Hot August Nights, a celebration of classic cars and rock ‘n’ roll, began in Reno in 1986. Organizers estimate that it brings in 800,000 people and $3.5 million to the Reno-Sparks area each year.

It will expand to Long Beach next year after widespread requests from cities wanting part of the event in their communities, said Bruce Walter, Hot August Nights executive director.

Read the whole story

Green Thumb Gardening Series

A variety of gardening related classes are being offered on the South Shore starting June 27.

The Green Thumb Gardening Series is sponsored by the Tahoe Resource Conservation District, Lake Tahoe Community College and UC Cooperative Master Gardener.

Classes include learning about soil, landscaping with stone, selecting trees, water conservation, BMPs and more.

For more information, click on green or call (530) 543.1501, ext. 107.

Swim and other rec programs in South Tahoe

Summer registration is under way for all programs and classes at the South Lake Tahoe Parks & Recreation Complex.

There are Saturday, evening and morning swim lesson sessions available. Private lessons are going on now and continue throughout the year.

Saturday Drop-in Swim Clinics run 8-9am with Derek Beller.

Another CPR/AED class is running July 12 from 5:30-9pm.

Water Exercise runs Monday–Saturday 9-10am and the Deep Water Vertical Exercise class runs Monday and Wednesday at 6:30pm.

If you have questions, call (530) 542. 6056, check out www.recreationintahoe.com or stop by the Recreation & Swim Pool Complex at 1180 Rufus Allen Blvd., South Tahoe.