TRPA reorganization comes with 5 layoffs

By Kathryn Reed

A shake-up at TRPA means five employees lost their jobs last week.

The reorganization is part of the strategic plan the Governing Board will be presented with June 24. The goals of the plan are threshold gain, operational efficiency, streamlining, and community engagement/public service.

The other thing the board will entertain next week is a formal ethics policy – something the bi-state agency has never had.

Julie Regan, chief spokesperson for the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, said management realizes the public perception is money can buy permits and help cut corners. She said the reality is this does not happen.

A formal ethics policy is designed to put in writing that there is no tolerance for favors and to outline consequences if perception turns to reality.

Other staff changes include Jerry Wells losing his title of deputy director and becoming special projects chief. He is spending half his time on the Regional Plan update and the other half on special projects like Homewood. His old job has been eliminated.

Executive Director Joanne Marchetta would eventually like to hire a chief operating officer.

With the elimination of four program managers and a long-range land use planner on June 10, the idea is every employee will

work on thresholds. A new position of resource integration specialist will be created. Two new planners will be hired as well – one part of the reorg, the other because someone voluntarily left.

"With efficiency we want to breakdown the silos. Planning is now all in one department – short and long range. That is a departure from the past," Regan explained. "We want people to think holistically. We are going to have to approach the environment in an integrated fashion."

A cost-savings will be realized in the short-term, but in the long run the reorganization will not help the bottom line.

Mix of regulars, newbies to play Tahoe celeb golf tournament



The American Century Championship, the celebrity golf tournament at Lake Tahoe, celebrates its 21 birthday July 13-18. Michael Jordan, Charles Barkley, Tony Romo, Bode Miller, Troy Aikman, Jerry Rice, Don Cheadle, Mario Lemieux, Taylor Hicks are among the 80 sports and entertainment stars and Hall of Famers competing in the 54-hole, $600,000 tournament on NBC Sports.

South Shore Lake Tahoe is the place to be for celebrity sightings, parties and superstar entertainment throughout the week. The increased participation of entertainment luminaries and new personalities and athletes has tournament buzz

starting early. The event has evolved into a local and national institution, attracting record galleries and attention.

For the fifth consecutive year, the official tournament charity is Livestrong – the organization founded by cancer survivor and champion cyclist Lance Armstrong to inspire and empower people affected by cancer. Since the tournament's inception in 1990, more than $3 million has been raised for a variety of national and local charities.

Newcomers this year include Jared Allen, the Minnesota Vikings' All-Pro, 2010 Olympic U.S. Hockey Team captain Jamie Langenbrunner, professional skateboarder Ryan Sheckler, former Major League Baseball All-Stars and teammates Greg Maddux and John Smoltz.

More than two decades of memories plus sports and entertainment superstars has made the American Century Championship network television's longest running celebrity golf tournament. NBC Sports will televise the second and final rounds of the tournament live on July 17 and July 18 from noon-3pm, with Friday's opening round on ESPN2, 4-6pm.

Tickets are available in advance and daily at the gate. Prices are $15 each day for the Lake Tahoe Celebrity-Amateur on July 13, the practice round on July 14, and for the American Century Celebrity-Am on July 15; and $25 for each tournament round, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. A Season Pass for $60 provides admission for all six days. Kids 10 and under are free with a paid adult. For tournament tickets, information and lodging packages click here. Discounted tickets are on sale at participating Raley's, Nob Hill and Bel Air Foods supermarkets.

Anthology of writings about Sierra Nevada



By Sam McManis, Sacramento Bee

If the Sierra Nevada were a character in a book, it would be the tall, dashing stranger who's easy on the eyes but has a malevolent streak. It would be just as likely to kill you as kiss you, as apt to make you curse its power as worship its looks.

Such a dichotomy is what has made the Sierra – that gorgeous, dangerous wonder running 430 miles down California's spine – an irresistible subject for storytellers from early American Indians to Gold Rush chroniclers to the beat poets to environmentalists and an array of novelists.

A wide range of poetry and prose about the range has been collected in "The Illuminated Landscape: A Sierra Nevada Anthology" (Heyday Books, $19.95, 447 pages), edited by Gary Noy, director of the Sierra College Center for Sierra Nevada Studies, and Sierra historian Rick Heide.

Read the whole story

Happy Trails event a success

To the community,

The inaugural Happy Trails Event on June 5 provided many people an opportunity to “find their happy place” at one of many trail experiences offered throughout the South Shore.

Marianne from Kayak Tahoe offered her expertise in kayaking and identified various shore birds along the way. At Lam Watah Meadows Trail Kim Gorman took participants back in time as she shared the history of the Washoe Indians when they camped in the meadow and pointed



Kayakers on Happy Trails Day. Photos/Provided

to grinding stones that are still evident today.

Other Happy Trails events were led by Kat from Wanna Ride, Meilah from the Tahoe Rim Trail Association, Kirk from Tahoe Institute for Natural Science and Rena from the U.S .Forest Service. The city of South Lake Tahoe Department of Parks and Recreation and Explore Tahoe Visitor Center look forward to hosting Happy Trails 2011 as part of the American Hiking Society National Trails Day Celebration.



Kim Gorman leads a hike on the Lam Watah Trail.

Lauren Thomaselli, Explore Tahoe

LTCC, Bijou Park fuel project to be done without chain saws

By Kathryn Reed

Thousands of trees will be removed from nearly 200 acres in the heart of South Lake Tahoe this month.

The fuels reduction project is concentrated on the campus of Lake Tahoe Community College and across Al Tahoe Boulevard at Bijou Community Park. Work will not interfere with graduation or the upcoming disc golf tournament.

Nor should it disturb neighbors. This is because the loud hum of chain saws won’t be audible.



The equipment used in 2009 at Cold Creek is being used this year. Photo/Danielle Banchio

“There are two standard pieces of equipment. One is a harvester. That does the job of what a gentleman and a chain saw did. It is mechanized equipment. An automated saw cuts the tree at the base and lays it on the ground,” explained Danielle Banchio of North Valley Resource Management. “The forwarder is the second piece of equipment. It follows the harvester through the stand and picks up the logs. It looks like a mini logging truck.”

The ground disturbance is kept to a minimum because a skidder is not used.

College officials were told the equipment often attracts spectators because it is still unique.

The only disruption to the college should be some of the trails behind it near Trout Creek will be off-limits while crews are working. Equipment will be brought in on South Tahoe Public Utility District roads when possible to reduce the need to be in the college parking lot.

“We will get some of the logs and use them at the Ledbetter Terrace,” Sue Niehoff, vice president of Business Services said.

Work could start this week, next week at the latest. Completion is expected to take at least three weeks.



Trees at Lake Tahoe Community College will come down this month. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Cross Check Services, a logging company in Olympic Valley, will be cutting the trees. No more than 500,000 board feet is expected to be culled from the 190 acres. Some of the smaller trees will be used for firewood.

Banchio, who is a registered forester, was hired by the South Lake Tahoe Fire Department as the consultant. Her firm based out of Taylorsville is responsible for designing the project, deciding what treatment to use, and writing the environmental documents for the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and CalFire.

“We are conducting thinning from below. We will start with the smallest, most suppressed trees with a live green crown,” Banchio said. “There aren’t many ladder fuels. We are not seeing 6-foot Manzanita. In that area we need to thin the tree crown.”

The idea is in a wind-driven fire, like Angora in 2007, the flames jump from treetop to treetop because the crowns are so close together. Projects like this one are designed to reduce

that threat. If a fire occurs, ideally it stays on the ground where it is easier to fight and spreads less quickly.

Money for the project is coming from federal stimulus, Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act, and a U.S. Forest Service grant.

Banchio, who is in her third year of working with South Lake Tahoe, expects the city's fuel reduction projects to be completed in 2011.

Half pound pot confiscated, 2 arrested

By Kathryn Reed

A routine traffic stop in South Lake Tahoe ended with a free night's lodging for a couple guys from Utah.

The problem for them is the lodging was at the county jail Tuesday night.



Officer Jake Herminghaus speaks to a suspect on June 15.

Photo/Kathryn
Reed

The two are accused of having a half pound of marijuana in their possession – a felony.

Officer Jake Herminghaus said he smelled marijuana coming from the vehicle when he pulled the two over behind the Denny's at Highway 50 and Al Tahoe Boulevard about 12:30pm June 15.

Herminghaus said that kind of find isn't unusual, but it doesn't happen every day either.

An ounce of marijuana sells for about $300, so the value of what the two Utah guys reportedly were transporting was about $2,400.

Thousands of ballots not counted in June primary

By Loretta Kalb, Sacramento Bee

It's the flip side of vote-by-mail ballots.

As the number of people voting by mail balloons in California, another trend is growing, too: Thousands of California ballots went uncounted in last Tuesday's election because they arrived too late – after polls closed at 8 p.m.

"It's very sad to see," lamented William E. Schultz, El Dorado County's registrar of voters. "I think that probably the Legislature should think about having a five-day window for ballots to be received, and as long as the county has not certified the election … to give the voter a right to have his

vote counted.”

Read the whole story

Gamut of music genres to fill North Shore’s night air

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

There will be free music outdoors every day but Mondays.

Sundays rock out at Tahoe City’s Commons Beach, which kicks off June 20 with four local bands. It’s Blues Tuesdays at the Village at Squaw Valley, starting July 6 with Earl Thomas, and live music Wednesdays at the Truckee Regional Park, starting June 16, and Thursdays on Commercial Row June 17. Kings Beach is lakeside Fridays starting July 2 with The Blues Monsters, then Tahoe City Saturdays for Heritage Plaza’s Unplugged, which will begin June 26. The Village at Northstar also does a variety of live music on weekends.

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

The Reno Philharmonic will perform Broadway on the Beach July 12 and Orgone plugging funk, soul and Afro beats Aug. 20. Sugaray lights us the stage with blues and souls July 16 and

Aug/ 9, with Paul Thorn performing southern rock Aug. 2.

The Village at Northstar presents the Beerfest & Bluegrass Festival July 10 with tastings from 25 breweries for guests ages 21-plus, and live music from three premier bluegrass bands – Mud Thump, The Brothers Comatose and the Dixie Bee-Liners.

Right on the Truckee River, River Ranch Lodge has its 18th Annual Under the Stars Concert Series with reggae, bluegrass, funk and rock, also for adults, beginning June 24.

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 its 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 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 Obama. Through an incredible grassroots network, the video reached more than a million people in less than three weeks leading up to Election Day.

The Crystal Bay Club offers a host of free concerts throughout

the week, as well as ticketed bands from the Bay Area.

For information on any event, call 877.949.3296 or click here.

Taste of Tahoe moves to Murphy's Irish Pub

Murphy's Irish Pub on Emerald Bay Road in South Lake Tahoe is this week's featured restaurant for Taste of Tahoe.

Taste of Tahoe is the a tasty way to raise money for the South Shore's Relay for Life. The Relay raises money for the American Cancer Society. The event in the first weekend of August at Kahle Community Park in Stateline.

Murphy's Irish Pub will donate a portion of its proceeds now through June 19 to the local Relay for Life.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

• Applications for police chief of South Lake Tahoe Police Department are being accepted until June 30. More info at www.cityofslt.us or (530) 542.6050. The person is expected to be appointed in September.

• Four people will be interviewed for South Lake Tahoe city manager. The council didn’t see all of the applications as some had wanted. There will be a public panel of nine people: a commission chair or their rep, one representative from each chamber, one person from the senior center, and one from TACCD.

• The trial for Larry Brown, the former South Tahoe High security guard accused of furnishing marijuana to a 16-year-old female student, will begin Aug. 4.

• Incline Village is downscaling a bit with a Circle K opening soon on the corner of Highway 28 and Northwood Boulevard.

• Capisce restaurant will open soon in Zephyr Cove at the intersection of Highway 50 and Elks Point Road.

• Après Wine Company in the Ski Run Center in South Tahoe is serving lunch from noon-4pm, Monday-Saturday.