Greenstone Quarry

Greenstone Quarry at Divided Sky in Meyers on June 17 at 10pm.

Reggae Mondaze

Reggae Mondaze on June 14 from 10pm to 1am the next day at Divided Sky in Meyers.

Reducing business tax up to South Tahoe voters in November

By Kathryn Reed

Taxes, if voters think it's a good idea, will go down next year for most businesses in South Lake Tahoe.

The City Council on Tuesday unanimously agreed to put on the Nov. 2 ballot the proposal to reduce the business license fee by 10 percent and raise the cap to $10,000. This means 3,417 businesses will see their annual fee go down and 50 are

expected to pay more.

Because it’s a tax issue the people must vote on it. It will take 50 percent plus one vote to be approved.

Equitability is the reason the council wants to do this. As is stands, some small and large businesses are paying about the same with the cap at $3,000. That threshold is below what many cities charge.

Plus, a 10 percent cut could be significant for businesses that are barely paying rent, let alone annual bills. Business licenses are due every summer and are based on the gross income of a business. The rates cannot increase more than 3 percent a year based on the Consumer Price Index. That is a current criteria and one that will remain in the ballot language.

Councilman Bill Crawford said when he was on the board the first time there was a push to do much the same thing but the council never brought it to voters. That was back when the city had four times as many car dealerships. They were rather vocal opponents to raising the cap.

The city expects to collect an additional $101,593 per year with the scenario that will be before voters.

It will most likely cost between $12,000 and $17,000 for the city to place it on the ballot.

Meyers resident Kenny Curtzwiler was the only person to speak during the public comment period. He brought up the issue of Heavenly Mountain Resort not paying taxes on its lift tickets from the gondola or scenic rides.

It’s a service and not a product is why sales tax is not collected. The city doesn’t have an amusement tax, which those sales could fall under.

Still, the council seemed a bit baffled as to why the resort

doesn’t have a business license to operate the gondola.

The city’s Redevelopment Agency and Heavenly have an agreement dating to before construction started at Heavenly Village in the mid-1990s that prohibits the city from assessing certain fees or taxes on lift tickets until the city’s Redevelopment Agency pays off its $112 million debt it incurred to build Heavenly Village, where the gondola terminal is. That debt is scheduled to be repaid in 2039.

Heavenly does have a business license for the California Lodge as well as its separate retail shops in town. Why the Saddle Road operation has a business license is unknown because it is in El Dorado County and not in the city limits. The maintenance yard is in the lower lot, which is in the city limits.

“When they report revenue we have no way to know where it comes from,” said Christi Bozes, South Lake Tahoe accounting technician. This means a business like Heavenly with more than one outlet can combine the revenues into one pot so ticket sales at one location are not isolated. So, even though the gondola does not have a business license, this does not mean Heavenly is not paying its share of taxes from revenue generated at that location.

Heavenly spokesman Russ Pecoraro was not in his office when reached after 5pm Tuesday and therefore didn’t have all the facts at his finger tips.

Pecoraro and city councilmembers said more details about Heavenly and what it pays to the city will be forthcoming this week.

In other action the council:

• Listened to a presentation by Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority Executive Director Carol Chaplin about the Amgen Tour of California starting in South Lake Tahoe in 2011. The council

unanimously supports the effort to make this a reality.

• Approved the Ski Run BID to carry on for another year. It was a 4-0 vote, with Councilman Bill Crawford explaining how a May 25 meeting between him and the BID board resolved most of the issues that precluded him from voting yes last month. Councilman Hal Cole no longer owns property in the area so he could vote.

• The taxi ordinance is going to be reworked by staff based on comments from three people in the industry who basically said the same thing at previous meetings. Those remarks were not incorporated into the final document. This will cost the city, aka taxpayers, staff time as well as a couple hundred dollars to post the necessary documents to notify people about the next hearing.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Northstar-at-Tahoe's mountain bike park opens June 11.

• NV Energy has a rebate program for commercial properties retrofitting their buildings. The offer expires July 9. Call 800.342.6335 for details.

• On July 1, the Red Cross offices in Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, east Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tuolumne and east Yolo counties will merge to be the Sacramento-Sierra Chapter.

• Washington, D.C.-based Violence Policy Center ranks Nevada fifth highest in the nation in the rate of gun deaths. Data

from 2007 shows 31 percent of Nevada households own a gun.

• Riva Grill's deck opens June 16 at Ski Run Marina. Money collected that night benefits the El Dorado County Search and Rescue team. For $18 eat from a giant buffet from 5-7pm and listen to Trey Stone Band from 6-9pm.

• One of the largest adult softball tournaments in the nation will be in Reno July 9-11. The Coors Light 48hr Boneyard Blast tournament runs around the clock in Reno and Sparks. More than 2,500 players and their families are expected.

Pony Express riders rumbling into Nevada

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Hoofing it through Nevada starts today as Pony Express riders leave their overnight rest stop of Woodfords this morning en route to Genoa, Carson City and destinations farther east along Highway 50.

"I think the unique part about the Pony Express was the endurance where you had man and beast trying to beat the elements," said Les Bennington, president of the National Pony Express Association.



Les Bennington and Rich Tatman with the National Poney Express Assocation in Stateline on June 8. Photo/Kathryn Reed

He and others from the association spoke to a couple dozen people gathered in front of the famous Pony Express statue at Harrah's Tahoe on Tuesday morning about this being the 150th anniversary of the famous mail delivery system.

Indian troubles along the way were normal. One rider died while on horseback. Others were ambushed at the stations.

Although the Pony Express was only in existence from April 1860 to November 1861, the lore of days gone by lingers on.

"Everyone enjoys history of the West. Everyone grew up wanting to be a cowboy," said Rich Tatman, California division president.

Bill Cody's "Wild West" shows helped spread the romantic notion of the bygone era. Better known as Buffalo Bill, he often had a Pony Express rider being chased by an Indian in his shows that were performed all over the States as well as in Europe.

The volunteer association was formed in 1978, with this being 31st year the ride has been re-created. Normally it goes 24 hours – just like the real one did. And usually it takes 10 days from Sacramento to St. Joseph, Mo.

Because of the significance of the anniversary, the route started in San Francisco on Sunday, which is where the western

terminus was, and riders are stopping.

More than 500 people will have ridden part of the route by the time the last horse arrives in St. Joe on June 26. Each only goes for a handful of miles before someone new is in the saddle. Some people ride more than one leg.

Most years the riders come through the South Shore to the enjoyment of crowds that often top 50 people.

Click here for more information about the anniversary ride.

Collectible sticker showcases work of Truckee photographer

Sunset, Bonsai Rock by Elizabeth Carmel has been selected as the Tahoe Arts and Mountain Culture collectible sticker No. 4 to honor the alpine lake sanctuary and the interconnectedness with nature and one another.

“It was calling me all day,” Carmel, a landscape photographer and retired urban planner from Truckee, said in a press release.



She captured the intensity of an early December evening when alpenglow saturated the sky and lake surface, gently bathing Carmel on the shore.

To promote the local art community, each year TAMC Editor Becky Bell creates a collectible sticker featuring artwork from a local artist that captures the essence of Lake Tahoe.

With only a limited print run, the TAMC stickers can be found at shops and events throughout Lake Tahoe and Truckee.

Run-off for El Dorado sheriff; CA-NV races set for Nov.

Publisher's note: ***Updated 9am June 9 with link to Alpine County.***

By Kathryn Reed and Susan Wood

It will be John D'Agostini and Craig Therkildsen vying to be sheriff of El Dorado County in November.



Voters cast ballots at Lake Tahoe Airport on June 8. Photo/Kathryn Reed

With 100 percent of the precincts reporting, it was D'Agostini with 9,277 votes or 25.26 percent and Therkildsen with 8,479

votes or 23.09 percent.

To avoid a runoff one of the six candidates would have had to receive 50 percent, plus one vote in Tuesday's primary.

With glitches at two of the Lake Tahoe precincts, votes had to be recounted. All the ballots were reported about 1am.

D'Agostini, a district attorney investigator in Amador County who lives in Mount Aukum, told *Lake Tahoe News* he believes what put him over the top is voters wanting to "get away from business as usual."

However, the man he will face in five months is a captain in the sheriff's department. This clearly indicates a large percentage of voters are comfortable with someone from within.

Therkildsen has spent his entire career in the county, with the first year at the South Lake Tahoe Police Department and 27 with the sheriff's department, nearly five of those in South Lake.

"I think experience in the community and experience in the department (is the difference)," Therkildsen said.

Both candidates said the outpouring of support humbled them. The next closest opponent is Bob Luca with 7,111 votes, 19.36 percent.

In other contested races in El Dorado County, Karl Weiland beat Michael Gordon for assessor, 65.42 percent to 34.11 percent.

Keith Brooks will retain his judgeship. He surpassed challenger Robert Huckaby 75.74 percent to 23.85 percent.

Ron Briggs had an easy time retaining his supervisorial seat over the three challengers, collecting 55.47 percent of the vote.

In Placer County, incumbent Rocky Rockholm (42 percent) was unseated by challenger Jack Duran (58 percent).

Placer County Auditor-Controller Katherine Martinis will retain her job over Casey Tanner with a vote count of 62 percent to 38 percent.

Nevada had plenty of interesting races in its primary, too. The numbers represent 100 percent of the precincts reporting.

A recognizable name in the Incline Village General Improvement District race – Dennis Oliver – trailed all contestants. He is the spokesman for the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

A familiar face to Lake Tahoe won the Republican contest for Assembly District 39. Kelly Kite, a former Douglas County commissioner known for his no-nonsense style of governing, raked in 32.77 percent of the vote over his challenger with 2,922 votes. This seat includes an area that spans from the East Shore of Lake Tahoe to Topaz Lake, including Douglas, Carson and Washoe counties.

If elected, the Minden resident pledges to keep Tahoe in mind as he gets down to business and moves up to the next hierarchy of government.

“Both the North and South shores of Lake Tahoe are very important to the entire state,” Kite told *Lake Tahoe News*, while relaxing at home late Tuesday night after sending family members home.

The seat is open because James Settelmeyer is looking to be the state senator in the Capital District. He won the Republican primary with 83.73 percent.

Stateline resident Brian Krolicki had 72 percent of the vote in a quest to retain his seat as lieutenant governor. He will face Democrat Jessica Sferrazza, who collected 43.13 percent of the vote.

Rep. Dean Heller, with 83.7 percent of the vote, faces Nancy Price who squeaked by her Democratic opponent with 45.36 percent of the votes.

In the Nevada governor's race, Republican Brian Sandoval stunned incumbent Gov. Jim Gibbons by doubling the percentage of votes the much-troubled leader of the Silver State secured – 55.53 percent, 27.2 percent.

On the Democratic side, Rory Reid pulled 70.07 percent of the vote heading into the November general election.

Keeping government in the family, Sen. Majority Leader Harry Reid captured an easy victory over his Democratic opponent with 75.32 percent of the vote.

Reid will head into the November midterms with a highly contested contest with Republican challenger Sharron Angle, who edged out challenger Sue Lowden in the primary election with 40.09 percent of the vote.

For more results for the following areas click below:

• El Dorado County

• Placer County

• Alpine County

• California

• Douglas County

• Carson City

• Washoe County

• Nevada

Financial aid class for college students/parents

Westface Financial, an independent financial planning company in Truckee, is offering a free College Planning Relief workshop June 15 at 6pm at the Truckee Community Arts Center.

Presented by Beatrice Schultz, a licensed College Planning Relief specialist and co-founder of Westface Financial, the workshop will educate parents on how to be efficient with their money while sending a child to college.

Most parents qualify for more financial aid than they think. This workshop provides parents with specific steps they can take right now to assure they don’t overpay for college, that they clearly understand the process, and maximize their aid qualification.

Attendees of the workshop will:

• Learn specific tactics to making college more affordable

• Better understand the total cost of college and how to prepare

• Know what steps to take right now to maximize aid qualification

• Understand the Public vs. Private school comparison and myths surrounding each

• Discover best practices on school selection

The one-hour workshop is free, but reservations are required. Students are also encouraged to attend. To reserve a seat,

call (530) 725.8599 or sign up at www.westfacecollegeplanning.com.

Boxer faces biggest challenge in years with Fiorina on ballot

By Rob Hotakainen, Sacramento Bee

Former businesswoman Carly Fiorina won the Republican Senate nomination Tuesday night, setting up a November matchup with Democratic Sen. Barbara Boxer.

Fiorina, the former chief executive officer of Hewlett-Packard (HP), had 58 percent of the vote, with 12 percent of precincts reporting as of 9 p.m. Former Rep. Tom Campbell was second, with 23 percent, and Assemblyman Chuck DeVore was third, with 17 percent.

Read the whole story

California election system does 180 with Prop. 14

approval

By Susan Ferriss, Sacramento Bee

Disgruntled California voters have blown up their election system by approving Proposition 14, which tosses out the current political party-based primary system in all but presidential races.

The measure was far ahead in returns, with about 60 percent of votes in favor and 40 against with more than 20 percent of precincts reported.

Backed strongly by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Proposition 14 called for a new “open” primary, in which all candidates for an office – except those in presidential primaries – appear on a ballot given to voters regardless of party registration.

Read the whole story