# No Saturday mail delivery inches closer to reality




**By Kathryn Reed**

If officials keep moving in the direction they are headed, Saturday home delivery mail service may not exist this time next year.

The U.S. Postal Service is projecting a $238 billion deficit for the next decade.

Eliminating Saturday service would also mean 49,000 full- and part-time jobs would be axed. More than half are likely to evaporate through attrition.

In South Lake Tahoe there are 14 rural routes. Some of the carriers work six days a week, while others rotate the sixth day. They are paid based on the volume of mail and the number of customers.

The most amount of mail is delivered on Mondays, while Tuesdays have the least volume. The average U.S. mailbox receives four pieces of mail a day. Officials say that number will drop to three in 10 years. Mail volume was down 12.7 percent in 2009.

The Postal Service says it makes $1.40 for each delivery. That figure will drop to $1 by 2020, according the USPS. The agency if funded entirely by its own revenue and receives zero taxpayer dollars.

Going from six to five days a week is projected to save $3.3 billion the first year and $5.1 billion a year starting in 2020.

South Lake Tahoe Postmaster Toni Passot said she isn't sure how cutting Saturday delivery would affect the employees she oversees or workers throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin.

"The rural carriers still need to negotiate through their unions," Passot said. "The retail would still be open (Saturdays)."

People with post office boxes would continue to get mail on Saturdays, too.

The Postal Service board of governors approved the cuts this spring. Now it's up to the Postal Regulatory Commission to take action. Congress has the ultimate authority to change the number of days people receive mail even though the USPS is an independent government agency.

"Mostly residential customers would be affected. Most businesses in South Lake Tahoe don't get mail Saturday because the business is closed," Passot said.

She has not heard any feedback from customers about the potential changes.

The change, is approved, is slated to begin early next year.

Locally, the status of the Bijou Post Office remains up in the air. A decision is expected this month as to whether it will be closed. The Postal Service owns the building for the main office in South Lake Tahoe. It leases the buildings for the outlying offices.

# Embracing National Poetry Month

**Dear Bona Fide Readers,**

Each year in April, I recommit to finding a new poet every month and reading [purchasing] their work. Poets have an important job, keeping their eyes open and reporting what they see while the rest of us go about our lives. I hope that you will consider celebrating National Poetry Month by attending a reading, sharing a poem, or perhaps making your own chapbook. The Academy of American Poets has great ideas – you can sign up to receive a poem a day, or download a Poem Flow app for your iPhone.

In April, let us engage with those who do not avert their eyes. In Tahoe, poet and playwright Nathalie Handal, editor of "The Poetry of Arab Women: A Contemporary Anthology" and co-editor of "Language for a New Century: Contemporary Poetry from the Middle East, Asia & Beyond" will read from her new book in two locations. Benjamin Arnold and Bethe Cause will rock Reno, the Berkeley Slam Poets will MC the annual poetry slam at Sierra Nevada College, and the cowboy poets are riding into Genoa – you can check it all out here.

Who are your local poets? What do they see?

Thanks for reading,

**Kim Wyatt, publisher & editor, Bona Fide Books**

# Comments sought on massive South Shore fuels project

The Lahontan Water Quality Control Board anticipates considering waste discharge requirements for the U.S. Forest Service LTBMU South Shore Project at a future water board meeting. Lahontan is seeking written comments no later than May 10.

Click here to review the tentative waste discharge requirements and monitoring and reporting program for the US Forest Service, LTBMU South Shore Fuel Reduction and Healthy Forest Restoration Project.

For more information, ontact George Cella at (530) 542.5426.

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# Rethinking the South Shore music scene

**To the community,**

I would like to see a club that could hold 500-1,500 people, and would have live music playing every night. A venue this size could attract some great bands in a variety of music genres, and would be a popular asset to both locals and tourists.

Something along the lines of The Knitting Factory that just opened up in Reno. Maybe we could get in the loop with them

and get bands to play a day at each venue. To tell the truth, I have no idea how these places run, or how profitable they are, but maybe someone around here does.

Personally, I would love to have some variety of music in town. Harrah's does what they can, but it's either not in their best interest or they just aren't into anything other than the older bands or country.

A larger Whiskey Dick's type venue is what I'm thinking, with a cover of $8-$30 or so, depending on who's playing. Of course the bigger bands would be on the weekends, but we still could have some interesting up and coming bands on the weekdays, and mid-week specials to pull people in.

This would create some jobs, fill some beds, and the bands/people that come up to see them would spend their money around town. I know, it could be said that these people probably won't be "big spenders",

but some of them will, and we have many motels to fill, and burger/pizza joints to keep busy, all business is good.

An eclectic mix would be cool – blue grass, rock, punk, folk, alt country, rap, jazz, reggae, etc.

Location? My suggestion would be Bill's. If the "Pearl" is approved down the road, it will not conflict. The location is great, and it's the right size.

**Janill Gilbert, South Lake Tahoe**

# Teen dies in car crash near Alpine Meadows

**By Barbara Barte Osborn, Sacramenot Bee**

ALPINE MEADOWS – An Easter Sunday collision on snowy Highway 89 South took the life of a 19-year-old woman.

Nevada County Chief Deputy Coroner Paul Schmidt said Wenjie Li died of blunt-force trauma when the car in which she was a passenger struck another vehicle.

**Read the whole story**

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# Lake Tahoe ski report, April 7



Bring the sunscreen if you are headed to the ski slopes. Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

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# Grego to be subject of special meeting

**By Kathryn Reed**

South Lake Tahoe City Councilman Bruce Grego will be the topic of a special meeting this month to ferret out the details, ethics and legalities of him being reimbursed nearly $1,000 for an attorney to do 3.5 hours of personal work.

Grego contends the work is in the interest of taxpayers because it goes to the heart of him being able to do his job, which is to vote on issues regarding the would-be convention center that is merely concrete and rebar at this point. He says getting the stalled Stateline area project moving is why he ran for office in 2008.



Bruce Grego

At the April 6 council meeting his colleagues agreed to have a special meeting. A date has not been set, but April 15 is being looked at.

“I will reserve my comments for the special meeting,” Grego said Tuesday.

For more details about the issue, click here.

Usually council members have the city attorney seek the opinion from the Fair Political Practices Commission as to whether a conflict exists.

The FPPC decision essentially lets Grego and the city decide if a conflict exists. Grego for more than 10 years has represented the Lakeside Park Association. This nonprofit water district or South Tahoe Public Utility District could be the water district for the project.

"… Councilmember Grego will have to consider whether it is reasonably foreseeable that decisions about the Chateau project would affect his personal finances by resulting in increased or decreased income from legal work from Lakeside Park Association of $250 or more in a 12-month period. Because the Commission does not act as a finder of fact in providing advice, the foreseeability of a particular financial effect is a determination that must be left, in most instances, to the informed judgment of the public official," the FPPC wrote.

The Fair Political Practices Commission's ruling is dated June 4, 2009. It is addressed to former City Attorney Catherine DiCamillo and not Dennis Crabb, the attorney Grego hired to write the letter on his behalf.

Also at the special meeting will be a discussion on the city budget because expenses are exceeding revenues.

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# Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• The fedora-wearing bank robber struck again last week – in Grass Valley for the second time. South Lake Tahoe and Kings Beach have been hit this year, too.

• Tahoe-Douglas District is raising its sewer fees from

$42/month to $45/month starting July 1.

• Tony Driskill is general manager of KRLT/KOWL radio stations that broadcast from Stateline.

• A 40-year-old Whitell High School record for the 800 meters was broken last weekend by junior John Robinson when he ran a 1:58.80. The old record was 2:03.04.

• Chris Klesh, who divides his time between South Lake Tahoe and Palm Beach, is CEO of Lifetime Leisure Experiences. He says he's a luxury travel expert and lifestyle consultant who can show people how to have a luxury vacation for 10 cents on the dollar.

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# SLT council to vote on smaller redevelopment area in May

**By Kathryn Reed**

It will be May before a decision is made regarding the future of redevelopment in South Lake Tahoe.

The City Council on Tuesday approved Councilman Jerry Birdwell's motion to have staff bring back the project with the boundaries redefined, any mention of Lukins Brothers Water District removed, and a resolution with El Dorado County and South Tahoe Public Utility District sought.

Councilman Bruce Grego wants the performance bond language to be rewritten to reflect the various size projects that might come forth as well as compensate for inflation during the 40-

year lifetime of the proposal.



Consultant Don Fraser explains redevelopment on April 6. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Councilman Hal Cole recused himself from the proceedings that lasted most of the day because he has property that borders the area.

The city's planning commission will first be tasked with going over the new proposal. That meeting date has not been set. The council is expected to vote May 4.

The redevelopment area will not change near the Y, but now the idea is to have it stop at the Upper Truckee River before hitting Al Tahoe Boulevard, and then leapfrog to include Harrison Avenue.

John Runnels was the first to speak at the public hearing. Representing the Citizens Alliance, he said, "We don't believe the size is helpful or needed."

He would prefer redevelopment were put on hold longer so the Tahoe Valley Community Plan could be approved. That plan is expected to be up for a vote late this year.

Adrian Gooch, a city employee who retired this year and has

worked in redevelopment, spoke as a citizen in favor of the project. She pointed out how the county ignored the city's concerns regarding Red Hawk Casino and the financial consequences the Indian casino would have on the South Shore, as well as how STPUD didn't work with the city regarding water hookups.

A mantra on Tuesday was the city needs to do what's best for it. But on the flip side was a drum beat for cooperation and working together. Several people suggested the plan be put the voters.

City Attorney Patrick Enright said he knows of no city to have done this, but it is possible.

Between the letters and verbal comments on Tuesday the 40 people who weighed-in were in favor of the project by a margin of more than 2-to-1.

Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce, South Tahoe Association of Realtors and Heavenly Mountain Resort all favor the project.

Staff and consultants reiterated how the plan that first began percolating in 2005 will not involve eminent domain, no specific projects are planned, no taxes will be increased and that the purpose is to create a funding mechanism for future improvements through tax increment.

What has the county and STPUD alarmed is that once a redevelopment area becomes law, it freezes their allotment of property tax dollars. It's possible if the city's 4 percent growth model comes to fruition, these entities could see increases to the property taxes awarded them. It's also possible they will reap fewer property tax dollars.

There are 10 entities in the city receiving property tax allocations that would be affected by redevelopment. Lumped together, all education gets 34 percent of the taxes, El

Dorado county 21 percent, the city 18 percent, special districts 11.5 percent and South Tahoe PUD 11 percent.

Another issue with the county is whether five parcels are in the city limits.

“(Resolution) of the five parcels would not mitigate our concerns,” Mike Applegarth with the county told *Lake Tahoe News*. “It boils down to a significant loss for the county in tax increment.”

He said the county doesn’t believe the city has proved economic blight exists.

Ken Weitzman, who has lived in the area for decades, said he considers the tax increment collection to be a slush fund that could be used at the discretion of any seated council for their favorite projects without oversight by the citizenry.

Another resident, Michael Cullan, said the city needs to do something, and fast.

“We are spiraling the drain. We need to take action,” Cullan said.

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# Ex-STHS security guard faces 3 charges

**By Kathryn Reed**

Larry Brown, the former South Tahoe High School security guard, will be arraigned next month on one felony count and two misdemeanor counts related to his arrest in November involving marijuana and a 16-year-old student.

Brown’s attorney on Tuesday asked El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Steve Bailey to make all the charges misdemeanors. That didn’t happen.

The three charges are related to providing marijuana to a minor.

Assistant District Attorney Hans Uthe told *Lake Tahoe News* he plans to review the taped interviews between Brown and officers. “I want to see how upfront he was,” Uthe said.

Brown, 63, no longer works for the school district.

The student was never charged.

The defense had subpoenaed her for the April 6 preliminary hearing but never called her to the stand.