South Tahoe bike parade and festival

Tahoe Bike Day Parade & Festival is June 5.

To inaugurate this day, a family oriented Parade & Festival will be at Ski Run Marina in South Lake Tahoe. Everyone is invited to ride in the parade – any age, skill level, type of bike, and decorated bikes are particularly welcome. The parade begins noon following the official ribbon cutting ceremony and travels 2.2 miles over a downtown loop.

The Festival hours are 12:30–5pm.

Click here for more information.

SLT public hearing on redevelopment

The South Lake Tahoe City Council will conduct a public hearing on April 6 at 9am to discuss the proposed redevelopment area that encompasses 20 percent of the city limits.

To learn more about the issue via previous *Lake Tahoe News* articles, click here and here.

The 127-page draft EIR and all the documents related to the proposed redevelopment area are at www.ctcip.org.

Tahoe gearing up for month of bike events

The Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition in collaboration with others will launch June is Tahoe Bike Month as a regional marketing campaign to promote cycling in Lake Tahoe.

The plan calls for leveraging the success of Bike2Work, School, Play Week, America's Most Beautiful Bike Ride, and other events in an effort to bring together the combined resources of the cycling and business communities. Companies, clubs and agencies are encouraged to develop new events and programs during June and be included in this campaign.

This year, three events will be inaugurated: Tahoe Bike Challenge 2 Work, School and Play (May 24-June 4); Tahoe Bike Day Parade & Festival on June 5, at Ski Run Marina in South Lake Tahoe; and the Cyclist-friendly Business Bike Rack program for qualified businesses within the city limits of South Lake Tahoe.

More details will be forthcoming for cyclists, event sponsors, festival exhibitors, and businesses interested in the bike rack program.

For updates, click here or email Ty Polastri at entersport@aol.com.

Eldorado National Forest delays off-road opening

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

Recent storms have postponed the opening of dirt roads and trails to motorized vehicles in the Eldorado National Forest.

Forest Supervisor Ramiro Villalvazo had announced last week that the seasonal closures would be lifted today. But because of this week's storms and forecasts for intermittent storms over the next few weeks, the routes will remain closed.

Read the whole story

Lakeside Inn Casino spoof not completely false



By Kathryn Reed

Whoever was the originator of the Lakeside Inn's day-early April Fools' Day joke probably should get a raise.

Facebook chatter on Wednesday was amusing. For those who don't do Facebook or skipped a day, click to know what's going on.

It was prompting calls to the Stateline casino to find out

where the truth was. PR folks on the South Shore were helping promote the hype via social networking. A slew of local recognizable names/faces were in on the act – Lew Feldman, Jerry Birdwell, B Gorman and Julie Regan. Even Charles Barkley had a quote.

Having a zipline from the top of the proposed 50-story hotel tower to Emerald Bay sounds like more than your average E-ticket ride. The regulatory process for something like that, if it were really proposed, might provide for more spectacular fireworks than the ones shot off over Lake Tahoe each Fourth of July.

"The town has been under so much pressure for a couple years now that we think it's healthy to share the humor," Mike Bradford, president of the hotel-casino said as to why they created the make-believe development project.

But the truth is Bradford for a long time has thought a zipline from somewhere on Heavenly Mountain Resort to the lake would be an ultimate attraction.

Even though what's proposed on Facebook is not going to happen – for many obvious reasons to anyone who knows about the rules and regulations at Lake Tahoe – the property does want a face-lift of sorts.

"What we would like to do is some sort of resort spa development," Bradford told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We will raze all of our rooms and build a whole new facility."

That is the truth.

The 25-year-old property that is considered a locals' spot for gaming and dining, doesn't want to lose that character. But at the same time, it knows gambling is not the primary focus of people living in or visiting Tahoe.

Bradford was at the March 25 Tahoe Regional Planning Agency

meeting where he told the Governing Board he wants to transform the Lakeside Inn.

“It’s no secret he would like to do things,” TRPA spokesman Dennis Oliver said. “He wants to remake his business so he can respond to the decline in gaming.”

Lakeside has acquired neighboring properties to the north for a combined 8-acre parcel.

“Gaming will always be an important part of our economic model, but it will be less a part of it,” Bradford said.

Lakeside has 124 rooms – all without much of a view. They are basic, ordinary and cater to the person coming to town to spend their time in the casino. Because that person for the most part does not exist anymore, Lakeside wants to start over.

Views of Lake Tahoe and Rabe Meadow are from the second floor. But none of the current rooms are that high. That will change in the future.

“The economics of hotels are such that simply redoing rooms isn’t cost-effective,” Bradford said.

Bradford said talks are under way with potential developers as well as boutique hoteliers. He foresees the project to break ground in three to five years, with it taking about a year to complete.

The hotel has a summer-only pool and year-round hot tub. But Bradford said they don’t meet the destination resort standards. That will change if his ideas get implemented. And they are likely to be be some of the initial upgrades.

“I envision a facility that has a more recreation focus,” Bradford said.

With the Tahoe Beach Club one day going in at the end of Kahle

Drive, Lakeside wants to provide its guests access to that development's beach club. The current casino is also within easy access of Rabe Meadow and then Nevada Beach. The proposed Stateline-to-Stateline bike trail will be in the area.

Dining options are likely to expand. Room service will definitely be added, Bradford said.

He expects the remodel of the existing buildings to take on a more modern, European Alpine theme instead using all the logs and rock that are typical of Tahoe.

$2.42 million grant given to South Tahoe company

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger announced Wednesday that four California rural businesses will receive more than $11 million in loan guarantees intended to expand opportunities for rural economies, spur job creation and support local communities.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the awards to 24 states as part of the USDA Rural Development's Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program, an ongoing, specialized program tailored to promote rural business and economic growth which received additional funding through the Recovery Act.

The four California recipients of loan awards are:

* MSKB Tahoe Properties, LP; Farmer Mac II LLC: $2,242,000 loan. MSKB Tahoe Properties, LP received a $2.242 million guaranteed loan to purchase two adjacent motels in South Lake Tahoe that will benefit the community by adding to the tourism infrastructure as well as creating and retaining jobs. MSKB

Tahoe Properties bought the combined 41-unit Secrets Inn and Heavenly Inn near Stateline from private investors for $2.75 million.

* Alta & Saginaw Associates, LLC; Suncrest Bank: $3,055,000 loan.

* Aghaloo DDS, LLC; Midwest Business Capital/UMWSB: $1,600,000 loan.

* Viscon California, LLC, LPOD, Inc., and M&W Porter Properties, LLC; National Bank of California : $4,250,000 loan.

STHS library needs books for its shelves

South Tahoe High School needs 175 new books for its library to provide students and teachers with the resources they need for reading, research and curriculum supplements.

“The library plays a critical role in increasing literacy and test scores among students, as well as contributing to the lifelong joy of reading,” Douglas Dilts, the school’s librarian, said in a press release. “It is critical that we keep our library collection current and relevant.”

The library is looking to parents, community members and businesses for help in raising the needed funds. The school is participating in a new online fundraising program called Funds4Books, sponsored by Mackin Educational Resources, a school library and classroom vendor with 26 years of experience.

For every $15 donated, the library can purchase a new book that is ready to be shelved and checked out. Most important, 100 percent of every donation goes to the library.

The fundraiser will run from April 7 through May 19. To participate, donors go to the South Tahoe High School library's website and click on the Funds4Books logo. Donors then log in to South Tahoe High School's fundraising page with the code 135f. From there they can donate via credit card. For those without computer access or a credit card, the library will accept "Funds4Books" checks.

For more information about the fundraiser, please contact Doug Dilts at (530) 541.4111, ext. 240 or by email at ddilts@ltusd.org.

Truckee burglary suspect in custody

On Aug. 7, 2008, the Glenshire General Store in Truckee was burglarized overnight by a suspect who used a distinct method of operation to gain access to the property.

On Jan. 2, 2010, the Glenshire Store was burglarized again, and the suspect's methods were identical to the 2008 burglary. Detectives focused their attention on Adam McGregor, who was a suspect in the 2008 burglary. McGregor had been in prison for the past year for other burglaries in Northern California, and was released in late December.

In late January, McGregor was arrested in Butte County for attempted burglary and is in custody awaiting trial.

On Feb. 22, Truckee police officers received notice from Department of Justice that the evidence collected from the 2008 burglary had been analyzed and led back to McGregor.

Through the Nevada County District Attorney's Office, a felony arrest warrant was issued for McGregor, who is currently serving time in Butte County.

This investigation is continuing as McGregor has been linked to dozens of other burglaries in Northern Nevada and Northern California involving several other agencies and jurisdictions.

Do you want free wine?

Lake Tahoe News and the El Dorado Winery Association are teaming up to offer LTN readers two free tickets (value $150) to Passport Weekend. Twenty-six wineries will be participating, with lots of deals and food at each one.

The annual event is the weekends of April 10-11 and April 17-18. It's your choice which weekend you go.



Of course you have to do a little work to get them. Three judges are going to determine who describes their favorite wine experience the best. And if we really like what you write, it will be published on *Lake Tahoe News*. Even if you don't win, we might publish what you write.

Some rules: no more than 500 words, must use your first and last names (which will be published), home town (you don't have to live in El Dorado County), phone number (so we can verify you wrote it, but it won't be published), photo of

yourself-wine-something (optional, but will be worth extra points), deadline is April 5 (winner will be announced on LTN April 6).

The writing: wine is the subject matter; it can be about the health benefits, the perfect bottle for that perfect occasion, a favorite winery, a bad experience, cooking with wine – anything about wine. Extra points will be given to people writing about El Dorado County wines.

Send story and photos to info@LakeTahoeNews.net.

For those who don't win the tickets for the 19th annual Passport Weekend, you can still buy them. A limited number exist. Tickets are $75 each, which is good for one full weekend. Designated drivers pay $25 per person for food and non-alcoholic refreshments.

During Passport Weekend, El Dorado's foothill wineries feature gourmet food and wine pairings, library and barrel tastings, and special wine sales. Many of the wineries showcase the work of local artists and offer musical entertainment.

For tickets, event details and a map of participating foothill wineries, click here or call 800.306.3956.

Centuries-long Sierra dry spell focus of study

By Mark Grossi, Fresno Bee

Scientists have found evidence in Sequoia National Park of a centuries-long dry spell – and clues about how the Sierra Nevada could be changing.

The researchers studied tree rings on dead giant sequoias, the largest trees on Earth. They found that during a warm, dry period between A.D. 800 and 1300, fires were more frequent, suggesting more fires may be ahead for a Sierra facing similar conditions today.



No water under the Tahoe Keys Pier in November 2009. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Their findings have been published in the most recent edition of the journal “Fire Ecology,” said Thomas W. Swetnam, lead researcher and director of the Tree Ring Laboratory at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

Information about how sequoias responded to the 500-year warm spell is important because scientists predict climate change may subject the forest to a similar environment again, Swetnam said.

Read the whole story