South Lake Tahoe city attorney resigns

By Kathryn Reed

Jacqueline Mittelstadt is moving on – this time by choice.

She gave notice Wednesday. Her exact last day still needs to be negotiated, but it will be a matter of weeks.



Jacqueline Mittelstadt

Mittelstadt came on as South Lake Tahoe's city attorney in June. Three months later on a split decision the City Council began the process to fire her for reasons that remain murky and were not fully aired in open session.

Two months down the road, in early November, the council reversed course and decided to keep Mittelstadt as assistant city attorney and bumped Patrick Enright into the city attorney's seat.

What direction the council will take now is unknown. This had been the first time two city attorneys were on staff. Mittelstadt said there is more than enough work to keep two attorneys busy.

Enright was not available for comment. Mayor Kathay Lovell and Mayor Pro Tem Hal Cole were not aware of Mittelstadt's impending departure until *Lake Tahoe News* called.

“The city seems more divisive then I’ve ever seen it. It comes from the top down,” Cole said. “There is a morale problem in the City Council and I see that trickling down into the whole organization. It seems like personality becomes more important than policy.”

Mittelstadt sat down with *Lake Tahoe News* on Wednesday to talk about her brief stint here. She said many have encouraged her to stay until after the election in November when three seats are up on the council. But she isn’t willing to take that gamble.

Asked what she would do if she were mayor or city manager for the day, Mittelstadt said, “I would invite disagreement, open dialog, be forthright in what I say. My actions would be consistent with my words. Above all, I have the philosophy of doing the right thing, what is in the best interest of the community.”

She simply said, “I don’t fit into the culture here.”

Mittelstadt says there’s nothing she would have done differently that could have avoided the brouhaha last fall.

“I followed the direction the City Council gave to me and that’s what city code required me to do,” Mittelstadt said.

Financial issues about the use of out outside counsel, whether contracts were in place, whether bids for this work were sought, and how City Manager Dave Jinkens could hire outside counsel without the city attorney or council knowing all came to light upon investigations by Mittelstadt and Enright.

Life for Mittelstadt unraveled from there. Like Cole said, personalities seemed to become more dominant than policy.

She says there is a need for outside counsel because of their specialties. But she also said the city was in the habit of paying $30 per email from an attorney.

Mittelstadt has a number of job offers on the table. She won't say if it's public or private practice she is looking at or where.

She leaves with a heavy heart, having made friends, joined Soroptimist, and having fallen in love with the beauty of Lake Tahoe.

KTHO – Ask the TRPA

Call in to KTHO FM 96.1/AM-590 (530.544.8255) this morning starting at 10:15 when *Lake Tahoe News* Publisher Kathryn Reed moderates the Ask the TRPA radio show. Or listen online at www.kthoradio.com.

State of Douglas County presentation

Douglas County's 2010 State of the County presentation will revisit the county's history, celebrate a decade of success and chart the course for the future.

The event begins with a social at 6pm on March 15 at the CVIC Hall, 1602 Esmeralda, Minden.

The presentation starts at 6:30pm featuring Guy Rocha, historian and former Nevada archivist. Rocha will deliver a

historical perspective on Douglas County. Following Rocha, Commission Chairman Michael Olson and Vice Chair David Brady will take the opportunity to recognize, promote and celebrate the significant progress that has been made in Douglas County during the last decade. County Manager Michael Brown will conclude the presentation with a focus on current projects and plans for the future.

The State of the County presentation borrows and expands on an idea from the *Record Courier's* December 2009 Progress edition that focused on many of the positive

community impacts made during the past decade. Many of those stories, with more from the lake, are incorporated into the presentation.

Windy Washoe Valley on NDOT's radar

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Commuting between Reno and Carson City, Ann Slater thinks of Washoe Valley as â€œthe Twilight Zone or hell, depending on the day.â€

Thatâ€™s because the scenic valley is prone to nasty weather â€" particularly wind gusts with the strength to topple big rigs.

â€œI can feel it blowing the car around. Itâ€™s spooky,â€ said Slater, 54. â€œI donâ€™t drive next to trucks. I stay as far away from them as I can for that reason â€" that they might blow over.â€

Read the whole story

Feds, Nevada at odds over wildlife management

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

An escalating â€œwarâ€ over Nevadaâ€™s declining mule deer population and management of predators such as mountain lions and coyotes has top officials with the Nevada Department of Wildlife clashing with members of the commission that oversees them.

Federal wildlife officials have declined to proceed with plans to kill lions and other predators â€” a controversial proposal approved by the Nevada Wildlife Commission in December â€” because the idea is not supported by state biologists and Ken Mayer, NDOW director. The idea was pushed by two sportsmen groups which insist the state is doing too little to protect deer from predators.

After the decision by federal wildlife officials, Nevada Wildlife Commission Chairman Dr. Gerald Lent, last week announced formation of a committee to explore new ways to restore Nevadaâ€™s mule deer population, which critics say the department has failed to do.

Read the whole story

Gaming win down in January, but better than expected

By David McGrath Schwartz, Las Vegas Sun

Gaming revenues dropped 3.2 percent in January compared to the same month a year ago, a figure that was better than expected. Nevada casinos reported a gaming win of $883 million in January, with casinos on the Las Vegas Strip down 3 percent.

But that could be good news.

January 2009 had both Chinese New Year and Super Bowl weekend, both big gambling events. Those events this year fell in Febuary. Because of that the state’s Gaming Control Board had expected a double-digit decrease in January, said Frank Streshley, chief of the Gaming Control Boardâ€™s tax and license division.

Read the whole story

Lifeguard training at SLT rec center

Lifeguard-first aid and CPR/AED class begins March 29 and continues on Sundays, April 11-May 2.

Cost is $165 at sign up and a separate $10 is due at the first class. Fee includes book, hard case with mask and certificates.

Students must be a minimum of 15 years old before the last day

of the class and be able to pass the pre-skills tests: 300-yard swim and timed 40 yard deep water 10 pound brick retrieval and exit from pool without using assistance. The pre-skills must be passed on the first class to be able to continue the course. This is not a-learn-to-swim class.

Space is limited.

All classes are American Red Cross and successful completion will include the Lifeguard /First Aid and CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer certificates.

To register, drop by the South Lake Tahoe Parks & Recreation Complex at 1180 Rufus Allen Blvd. For more information, call (530) 542.6056 or click here.

Vail Resorts profits below expectations

By Denver Business Journal

Vail Resorts Inc. posted a smaller profit in its most recent quarter Wednesday, falling short of analysts' expectations.

The Broomfield-based ski-resort and hotel operator again cited a dropoff in real estate closings as a factor.

Vail Resorts (NYSE: MTN) reported results for the three months ending Jan. 31, which it regards as its fiscal 2010 second quarter.

It posted attributable net income of $40.7 million, or $1.11 a share, down from income of $60.5 million, or $1.65 a share, in the same quarter a year earlier.

Read the whole story

MS Walk at Camp Richardson

Annual National Multiple Sclerosis Society Walk at Camp Richardson on May 15.

To send a donation, make all checks payable to: National MS Society. Mail to: Angie Keil, 1021 Al Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150.

For information, contact Rob Quadri at (530) 543.5540.

Kiwanis Crab Feed

Kiwanis Lake Tahoe Sunrisers 28th Annual Crab Feed, March 19 at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe in Stateline at 6pm.