

Healing circle

Unity at the Lake Healing Circle â€” Star Tahoe Building, 2489 Lake Tahoe Blvd., Ste. 27, South Lake Tahoe on March 8 at noon.

Bring a healing request to share in this powerful and prayerful ceremony. Love offering. For more info, call (530) 544.2266 or visit www.unityatthelake.org.

Fair Play Winery Festival

Fair Play Winery Festival

[Click here for more information.](#)

Mountain Oyster Festival

Mountain Oyster Festival in Virginia City. The popular gourmet event also known as the â€œTesticle Festivalâ€ is March 13. Nearly a dozen nutty cooks compete for the tastiest ways of preparing the little delicacies. But no matter how theyâ€™re cooked or the creative ingredients called for in the recipe, theyâ€™re still sheepâ€™s testicles. The food stands open for sales at about noon. Get there early because vendors have been known to sell out of the little critters in about an hour.

(775) 847.4386

Lake Tahoe ski report, March 3



Forecasters weren't wrong about the storm, it's just been delayed. It is moving in. The blue skies from early this morning have been replaced with gray. Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Council wants outside agency to find SLT city manager

By Kathryn Reed

The majority of the South Lake Tahoe City Council wants an outside agency to recruit the next city manager. Councilman Bill Crawford was the lone voice against that idea at Tuesday's meeting.

Dave Jinkens gave notice earlier this year that he will not seek an extension to his contract that expires in August. He came on board as city manager in 2002.



Dave Jinkens' departure has the council squabbling about how to replace him.

Before the final vote, Crawford proposed having Assistant City Manager Rick Angelocci be the interim city manager upon Jinkens departure. He and Councilman Jerry Birdwell were on the losing end of that vote.

It was estimated it will take four to six months before a city manager is hired.

Crawford's logic was that it would be good to have an interim named now, take the time to find the right person and save the city money in the process.

Birdwell liked the idea of saving money as well.

"We are going to have to start cutting in a big way," Birdwell said. "I think we need to let him work as assistant city manager and see how the economy goes."

He said hotel tax numbers were down in February by half of what they were the prior year at his bed and breakfast.

Mayor Kathay Lovell said she'd prefer "crossing that bridge when get to it" if an interim city manager is needed.

The only member of the public to speak was Kenny Curtzwiler, who doesn't live in the city. He is an advocate of creating

a strong mayor government and doing away with the city manager form of rule.

The city will send out requests for proposals to find a headhunter to find a city manager. No discussion was had on how much the city would pay for a recruiter or what the next city manager's pay range will be.

The idea of waiting until the next council is seated to hire the city manager was broached, but went nowhere. Lovell, Crawford and Birdwell's terms expire at the end of the year.

In other action:

• Jinkens said officials from Target are still interested in talking about opening a store in South Lake Tahoe. The council said it's fine if he keeps talking with them.

• Charter Communications, the cable television supplier to the city, is applying for a state agreement. The city would still see money from the deal, but the franchise agreement would not be directly with the city. The city will need to rewrite some of its regulations to accommodate the change when it goes into affect later this year.

• Council heard a lengthy discussion on the state of disrepair the city's roads are in. Staff said it could cost \$78 million over 25 years to fix them. The funding, though, isn't there. The council asked for an executive summary and recommendations for how to proceed to be given to them at a future meeting.

• Revenues are off by 2.7 percent to date and growing.

2 South Lake Tahoe men guilty in 4-wheeling incident

A federal judge found two South Lake Tahoe men guilty of damaging National Forest lands and ordered them to help pay restoration costs.

Jack G. Burns III, 24, and Kent Johnson, 47, were 4-wheeling in the Twin Peaks Off Highway Vehicle area in South Lake Tahoe on Aug. 29, 2009. They had driven off the designated route in an apparent attempt to avoid a large technical boulder field, according to the U.S. Forest Service. In doing so, they caused damage to an area of about 1 acre.

Additionally, they destroyed log barricades, disturbed ground cover, caused deep ruts in the soil and created new routes with their vehicles, the judge ruled.

The court placed both men on one-year probation and ordered each to pay \$500 to the Forest Service to help pay for restoring the damage. A representative from the Lake Tahoe Hi/Lo four-wheel drive club testified at the trial and stated that the club will be volunteering for restoration work to repair the damage done by Burns and Johnson.

Freestyle ski-boarding event at Bijou Center

The 2nd Annual South Shore Rising returns March 7 to the Bijou Center parking lot, South Lake Tahoe.

Registration is open to all ages and disciplines, and will be

that day at Hot Gossip in the Bijou Center beginning at 8am. Cost is \$15 to enter and prize money will be given to the top finishers.

Practice begins at 2pm and the event kicks-off at 4pm. Competitors should feel comfortable on advanced terrain park features. Helmets are recommended.

The feature is being built by Rob Guistina of On Course Events and will consist of a wall ride. Snow for the feature will be harvested from locations near the event.

The event is family-friendly. There will be a disc jockey, giveaways and food specials.

Wounded Warrior ski camps at Alpine Meadows

As part of a week of skiing and celebration, 25 active-duty U.S. soldiers and marines will hit the slopes March 17, March 19 and March 20 for the Wounded Warrior Ability Camp at Disabled Sports USA Far West at Lake Tahoe's Alpine Meadows Ski Resort for ski and snowboard lessons.

The Wounded Warrior Ability Ski/Snowboard Camp was established during spring 2009 through a partnership between the Wounded Warrior Disabled Sports Project and Disabled Sports USA Far West. For a second year, soldiers disabled in Iraq and Afghanistan will visit Disabled Sports from the Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System; the Naval Medical Center, San Diego; and the Naval Health Clinic, Hawaii at Pearl Harbor – three major rehabilitation centers for service members who have been injured or disabled. Ski and

snowboard instruction at Disabled Sports is part of their rehabilitation program.

Disabled Sports works directly with the Wounded Warrior Project (or WWP), a nationwide foundation that offers assistance to severely injured and disabled service members. Some of the many WWP programs provide rehabilitation through outdoor adventure, including skiing and snowboarding. With a mission to provide access to unique, direct programs, WWP sought the expertise of the Disabled Sports USA Far West at Alpine Meadows.

Teaching disabled service members to ski in 2010 has brought the mission of Disabled Sports full-circle. The chapter was founded by the World War II 10th Mountain Division in 1967 in order to offer support and rehabilitation to service members disabled during the Vietnam Conflict.

Today, Disabled Sports continues to offer ski instruction to disabled service members as well as any student living with paraplegia, quadriplegia, amputation, autism, multiple sclerosis, visual impairment, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, head injuries, and muscular dystrophy.

In addition to the Wounded Warrior Ability Camp, Disabled Sports has scheduled a full week of skiing, snowboarding, racing, and parties “all open to the public” from March 16-21.

March 19 “The Phil Bocks Memorial Ability Challenge ski race will team donors, sponsors, and disabled skiers for a fun day of ski racing and on-hill activities. An aprÃ’s ski party and awards presentation follows in the Alpine Meadows Base Lodge. A former resident of Truckee, California, Marine Corps Sergeant Bocks was killed while serving in Afghanistan in 2007. Race registration is open to all. Call Disabled Sports at (530) 581.4161 to ask about registration fees or to register a team of four.

March 20 – The 17th Annual Ability Bash has been known as one of Lake Tahoe’s premier fundraising events. This year’s celebration will offer guests an evening of gourmet cuisine, live music, and a silent auction starting at 7pm at the Alpine Meadows lodge. Individual tickets are \$100; and V.I.P. tables for 10 can also be purchased. Call Disabled Sports at (530) 581.4161 or visit DisabledSports.net to purchase tickets today.

To learn more about Disabled Sports USA at Alpine Meadows Ski Resort, visit DisabledSports.net or call (530) 581.4161. To learn more about the Wounded Warrior Project, visit WoundedWarriorProject.org.

LTUSD approves \$1.8 million in cuts, teacher layoffs

By Kathryn Reed

It was an all too familiar scene with an all too predictable outcome.

Lake Tahoe Unified School District’s board on Tuesday night approved \$1.8 million in budget reductions for the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years, along with reducing certificated employees by 5.688. Board member Sue Novasel was absent.

Board member Judy Cefalu seemed lost in the whole process. She didn’t want to vote. It appeared at that moment in the South Tahoe Middle School auditorium the reality of what it means to be a board member struck her. It’s not all about site visits to classrooms, construction projects and million-dollar grants to spend.



LTUSD CFO Deb
Yates goes
over the
numbers March
2.

Photo/Kathryn
Reed

As board President Wendy David put it, no one wants to cast these votes, but it's the board's job to keep the district solvent.

Because education funding comes with so many strings, the board is left with the task of explaining to the community how millions of dollars are being spent on new buildings while layoffs and furloughs are in the near future.

The problem is there can be no co-mingling of different funding sources.

LTUSD is dealing with continued reductions in state dollars as well as enrollment that won't stop sliding downward. The last official enrollment number was 3,966 students, but Superintendent Jim Tarwater says it's been dropping 12-15 students a week this calendar year.

With an unemployment rate nearing 17 percent in South Lake Tahoe, Bill's Casino closing, other casinos laying off workers, the city cutting staff, the hospital making cuts – it means families are moving to where the jobs are – which isn't Lake Tahoe.

In California, districts are paid based on average daily

attendance. The state has reduced the per pupil allotment from \$6,376 to \$5,186 for the school year starting this fall.

But the cost of doing business doesn't change much – teachers and staff need to be paid, lights turned on, buses filled with gas, paper to write on, pencils to write with.

March 15 is the deadline for the district, per state law, to let teachers know if they'll be hired back next school year. With two resignations coming in this week, the district is hoping others will retire so no pink slips are actually sent out.

Only two of the nearly 60 people at the meeting spoke. Birgit Lukins, who has been in the front office at South Tahoe High School for 16 years, was in tears as she talked about the possibility of her co-worker losing her job.

"The attendance office is not a one person job," Lukins said. "I would be willing to take a three-day furlough."

That is one of the scenarios the board approved Tuesday. Teachers would lose three staff development days and all staff would be furloughed three days. It would save the district \$285,000.

Based on they only work 180 days, the reduction in pay is 1.3 percent. It would not affect their long-term pay scale or retirement.

It is something that needs negotiating. This will take place in May with the unions after all the sun-setting labor rules are dealt with in April.

If the unions don't agree to the furlough days – something that has occurred for most government workers throughout California – it will mean losing a full time counselor, a maintenance worker and the high school attendance technician Lukins spoke of.

If the governor and Legislature come up with different numbers that are less drastic, the furlough days could be rescinded.

No matter what happens on that front, the board agreed to reduce the reserves from 3 percent to 1.5 percent. This puts that fund at \$500,000.

Board member Larry Green asked if reducing the reserve will affect the district's bond rating. CFO Deb Yates said no.

Tarwater isn't concerned the county or state will force districts to immediately replenish reserves to what is supposed to be a minimum threshold of 3 percent.

"They couldn't enforce it because districts would be bankrupt," Tarwater said.

Some of the other cuts in 2010-11 include: saving \$100,000 by not offering vacation buyouts, losing a person at the district office or everyone taking six furlough days to save \$60,000; reducing elementary office staff hours or cutting a full-time position; cutting from transportation; losing a custodian; not paying the city of South Lake Tahoe for grounds keeping; and reducing stipends for lead teachers.

The district plans to offer a golden handshake (aka pay incentive to retire early) to at least 15 people, which would bring a savings in 2011-12.

On March 9 the school board will be discussing more budget issues. The 2010-11 budget is expected to be adopted in June.

SLT Women's Center on letter writing campaign

Dear South Lake Women's Center Supporters,

As many of you know, last year the governor cut 100 percent of the state domestic violence funding from the budget via line-item veto.

As a result of this cut, many shelters in California had to close their doors or severely reduce the services they provided victims of domestic violence and their children. For our center, we lost \$220,000 in funding – about 15 percent of our overall budget. This caused a public outcry and the community of domestic violence supporters began working to find ways to reinstate the funds.

Thanks to the outcry of supporters in California, the Legislature reinstated about 70 percent of the funds for one year. These funds will end as of June 30, 2010.

In an effort to find a long-term solution the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence (CPEDV) has created a postcard campaign with the goal of securing state funding for life-saving shelter services.

How can you help?

Mail postcards to our representatives in the Legislature:

Sen. Dave Cox

State Capitol

Sacramento, CA 94248-0001

Assemblyman Ted Gaines

State Capitol

Room 4144

Sacramento, CA 94249-0004

All postcards must have a 44 cent stamp and not a postcard stamp.

We also encourage you to pass on the postcards to your friends and allies who understand that supporting domestic violence shelter services benefits the whole community and state.

Thank you for all your support,

Sarah Sanchez, development coordinator South Lake Tahoe Women's Center