Heart Opening Retreat

The Heart Opening Retreat on the South Shore of Lake Tahoe is May 7-9.

This three-day retreat is at the Zephyr Point Conference Center. The conference offers time for deep introspection, discovering oneâ€™s heartâ€™s desires, participating in silent meditations and song, and opening up to the power of loving oneâ€™s self, creating a deeper connection to their own language of the heart. The idea is to emerge from the retreat with better resources to handle uncertainty and stress in life.

For more information, contact the Sedona Meditation Training Company (928) 204.0067 or visit www.HeartAwakeningRetreat.com. The cost is $275 and includes meals. Lodging onsite is additional.

Lake Tahoe ski report, Feb. 17



It feels more like spring than winter in Lake Tahoe. Bring out the sunscreen. Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

SMG conference in Tahoe City

Transforming the Destination; Rethinking the Basics is a tourism conference put on by SMG of South Lake Tahoe.

It is June 2 from 8:30am-3pm at Granlibakken Lodge & Conference Center, Tahoe City.

Early Bird Registration through April 15, $95-115 per person.

www.smgtourismconference.com

Buddhist monk talk in South Tahoe

Venerable Geshe Thupten Phelgye, a Tibetan Buddhist monk and member of the Tibetan Parliament in exile, will speak on “Compassionate Lifestyle for Healthy Living” including topics such as how to find more happiness and health by living a more compassionate lifestyle, animal rights and vegetarianism.

March 5 at 7pm at the Blue Angel Cafe Loft, South Lake Tahoe

Major creditor wants Lane et al to have 90-day extension

By Kathryn Reed

Owens Mortgage Investment Fund on Tuesday filed papers with the bankruptcy court in Sacramento requesting a 90-day extension of exclusivity rights for Lake Tahoe Development Company.

LTDC, created by Randy Lane and John Serpa to be the developer of the $410 million convention center-hotel-complex at the state line in South Lake Tahoe, is asking the court for an extension until the first week of July.



Winter 2007 was the last time work was done at the would-be convention center. Photo/Kathryn Reed

LTDC filed for bankruptcy in October and had until Feb. 2 to file a plan for reorganization. It hasn't done so. On March 2 the judge will decide if others get to file a plan or if the Zephyr Cove-based firm still has exclusivity.

"OMIF is owed more than any other player – with filed proof of claim exceeding $28 million – and is the only creditor with trust deed liens on all parcels, ranging from first to third position," OMIF said in papers filed Feb. 16.

OMIF filings also say, "With over $90 million in invested equity and more than $50 million in principal debt financing,

the funds devoted to the Project exceed $140 million, but the recent extraordinarily difficult economic climate has stalled progress and radically depressed the value of land that nearly everyone agrees is truly unique and intrinsically pivotal for the surrounding area. Any expedited sale or similar upheaval under these circumstances is likely to destroy value, probably precluding full recovery by secured lenders, let alone for unsecured creditors or equity."

South Lake Tahoe, which is not a creditor, also filed paperwork on Tuesday after the council decided the day before on a 3-2 vote that the court should grant LTDC a 30-day extension.

"Prior to last week the Debtor had not shown any indication of good faith progress towards (sic) a viable plan. The City does believe if the Debtor can file a plan the Debtor needs to file the plan immediately," the city's court filing reads.

City Manager Dave Jinkens also wrote the court saying Michael Rosenfeld, the investor brought to the table by Lane, has met with the city but has given officials no indication of the project he envisions.

The bankruptcy judge will determine the reorganization plan, with the blessing of the creditors. However, the judge has no say over land use issues in South Lake Tahoe.

Contractors needed for future STHS projects

SMC Contracting, the general contractor for the buildings under construction at South Tahoe High School, is looking for

local construction companies to work on the Performing Arts/Media Arts project that is currently out for bid.

This project is a modernization of the existing theater and newÂ Media Arts building.

Bidders may stop by the SMC Contracting field office on the STHS campus to view the blueprints. All bidders can pick up the required documents at Tahoe Blueprint (530.541.5042). All bids are due March 4.

Environmental conference at Sierra Nevada College

The 5th biennial conference to learn about the progress made in understanding the Lake Tahoe Basin environment is March 16-17 in Incline Village.

The purpose of this two-day conference is to provide an open forum in which individuals involved in the science and management of the basin can learn about and discuss the latest relevant science and information.

For updates, check the Tahoe Science Consortium website at www.tahoescience.org and the Nevada Water Resource Association website at www.nvwra.org.

The event is Sierra Nevada College, 291 Country Club Drive Incline Village.

Ritz Carlton, Northstar Village developer in bankruptcy

Updated 1pm Feb. 17.

By Kathryn Reed

Most of East West Partners' holdings in the greater Lake Tahoe area are now under bankruptcy protection.

The 335-undeveloped acres known as Northstar Highlands which East West has the rights to build 1,450 units on below the Ritz Carlton; the golf courses Old Greenwood and Gray's Crossing; and the amenities arm called Tahoe Mountain Club went into bankruptcy in Delaware on Feb. 16.

"We are optimistic we will be well positioned for the long term," Blake Riva, a partner with East West, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We don't intend to liquidate any of our holdings."



Old Greenwood golf course is in bankruptcy. Photo/Provided

East West Partners is headquartered in Avon, Colo. Its California operations are based in the Village at Northstar, which it developed. Truckee is the address for all of the properties now in Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

The Village at Northstar is not part of the bankruptcy, nor is the ski resort Northstar-at-Tahoe, nor any of the company's other holdings.

The village's commercial operation is run by CNL, which also owns the ski resort. Booth Creek operates the ski resort. East West Partners sold the residential aspect of the village to individuals. A homeowners association manages the condominiums.

"This filing will not impact the experience of guests enjoying Northstar-at-Tahoe Resort – either on the mountain or in the Village at Northstar. Lodging guests at Northstar-at-Tahoe Resort will also be unaffected," Betsy Cole, CFO of Booth Creek Ski Holdings, said in a press release.

Riva said the bankruptcy is a "combination of the current economic environment and changing financial partners."

The company went from Morgan Stanley to Barclays. Morgan Stanley took a major hit as the banking industry nose-dived in the last couple of years. It could not meet its debt so that's how Barclays got involved.

"(Barclays) reviewed all of our business ventures in Tahoe and concluded the best path forward would be to go through this reorganization," Riva said.

He would not put a dollar figure on the debt owed creditors. However, court documents show the company's real estate holdings have collapsed in value by 60 percent and that it has $61 million in debt.

"The larger amounts are bank loans for projects," Riva said.

Until a reorganization plan is approved by the bankruptcy judge, Riva said a short-term plan is in place to keep the operation going so the public will not notice a hiccup in service.

This should be good news to the Ritz-Carlton, which opened mid-mountain at Northstar in December. East West Partners was the developer of the five-star multi-million dollar resort and is the owner of it.

Ritz officials touted the Tahoe Mountain Club as a selling point to buyers and guests of the high-end hotel before it opened. Now they are downplaying the significance.

“Ultimately it doesn’t mean anything to us,” Ritz spokesman Steven Holt said Wednesday of the bankruptcy.”The Ritz-Carlton is not included in the filing. Our operation is not impacted.”

Riva also said, “The Ritz is a separate entity. We have a separate ownership structure.”

The Hyatt Residence Club, which is at the base of the gondola that whisks people to the Ritz from the Northstar Village, is also excluded from these bankruptcy proceedings. Guests at this Hyatt also have access to the Tahoe Mountain Club.

Riva said the golf courses will be open when the snow melts.

Old Greenwood is a Jack Nicklaus Signature course. The development also includes luxury custom homes and fractional ownership.

Gray’s Crossing is on the outskirts of the town of Truckee off Highway 89. The private 18-hole golf course by Peter Jacobsen and Jim Hardy is surrounded by houses, including *Sunset* magazine’s 2007 Idea House.

East West Partners is not the only developer in ski towns to face economic hardship. Intrawest earlier this year sold the Village at Squaw to Squaw Valley Ski Corp. Intrawest also owns Whistler Blackcomb, site of the alpine skiing events for the Olympics.

Lake Tahoe Development Company is in bankruptcy over the $410 million hotel-retail-convention center complex in South Lake

Tahoe across the street from Heavenly Mountain Resort’s gondola.

SMG tourism conference

The SMG Tourism,Technology + Marketing Workshop will provide hands-on sessions ranging from social media to SEO basics. With two different tracks, for beginners and more advanced technology users, the workshop will provide valuable basics for those unfamiliar with online technologies, as well as more advanced strategies for those who are already implementing online marketing programs.

Technology has impacted tourism marketing in a multitude of ways, inherently changing the marketing landscape. Tourism executives need to stay informed and understand how these changes affect their marketing strategies, and how using technology can positively impact their bottom line.

For more information, including speakers, agenda, registration and more, click here.

When: March 17, 2010

Where: Embassy Suites, South Lake Tahoe

Time: 8:30am-2:30pm

Rahlves not letting dislocated hip stop him

By Matthew Piper, USSA

NORDEN – Casey Puckett (Aspen, CO) and Daron Rahlves (Sugar Bowl, CA) have had to fast track their recoveries from recent injuries, but their performances training in Rahlves' hometown have bolstered their coach's opinion that the pair should contend for medals.

"Daron and Casey have surpassed my expectations in many ways," said U.S. Olympic Ski Cross Head Coach Tyler Shepherd. "Both have been determined and motivated to get the job done in Vancouver."

The two-man Team is wrapping up an on-snow camp at Sugar Bowl, where the resort built a skiercross course just to give the Americans a chance for some final training before heading to Canada.

Shepherd said the veteran Olympians – the two have been to a combined 11 Games with the U.S. Alpine Ski Team – weren't pulling any punches despite making the trip to Sugar Bowl for "an easy tune up."

"These guys put that 'easy' to bed, and showed me they are in very good form," Shepherd said. "Considering that both are coming back from injuries, their recoveries have been outstanding. I'm not sure other athletes would be capable of such speedy recoveries, but these guys are extremely motivated.

"I stand by what I've been saying, and will say it again that

both Daron and Casey will be podium threats.”

Rahlves dislocated his hip by wrecking in the opening race of the X Games in Aspen, Colo., a little more than two weeks ago, but already he is back on the racecourse and feeling strong. He took fourth in his last World Cup event in Lake Placid on Jan. 24, following a second place in St. Johann, Austria.

“The recovery from my hip dislocation has been amazing,” said Rahlves, who has been doing four to six hours of physical every day, topped off with acupuncture and pool sessions. “The first week on crutches progressed to on snow by Week 2 with minor discomfort.

“Having an Olympic competition just three weeks out has been a huge motivator,” he added. “Staying positive and getting the most out of every day has worked well. On snow, I started off slow and ramped up my intensity on each run. My goal is to ski smooth, relaxed and focused.”

Puckett was hampered by a shoulder injury, but said he “turned a corner” in camp and will be ready when ski cross kicks off as an official Olympics event on Sunday.

Shepherd was grateful his athletes could have access to such a course so late before the Games.

“Sugar Bowl has gone above and beyond, and I can’t thank them enough for the tremendous training venue they have provided,” he said. “A full SX course that would rival any World Cup course, all to ourselves.”

Puckett actually arrived in Vancouver last week, marching in the opening ceremonies, then heading back to Sugar Bowl. He and Rahlves will arrive for a Thursday press conference, with training beginning Friday.