Meyers Landfill: contractor sought, toxic plume moving

By Kathryn Reed

A settlement has not been reached, but resolution to the debacle known at the Meyers Landfill is getting closer.

The El Dorado County Board of Supervisors will accept bids to cap the toxic site until Dec. 15, with the bid expected to be awarded Jan. 12.

The more than 20 acres of U.S. Forest Service land off Pioneer Trail on the outskirts of South Lake Tahoe has sat idle for years after the county stopped using the property as a dump. When the Forest Service figured out gunk from the trash site had decomposed into a toxic mess that was leaching contaminants into the soil, it sued the county and a plethora of other entities.

That lawsuit has for years been mired in a bureaucratic mess. Much of the problem is centered on who is going to pay the clean-up costs.

â€œThe Forest Service engineers' estimate for the project is $5.5 million; however, given the current bidding climate, it is highly likely that the bids will come in below that amount,â€ Supervisor Norma Santiago said. â€œThis does not include ongoing operations and maintenance (O&M) which has been estimated by the USFS as $1.1 million over a 30-year period. Who will pay for the O&M is still under the ongoing negotiations through the mediation process.â€

Meetings with both sides have been taking place on a regular basis lately. Resolution is expected to come before supervisors award the bid in January so itâ€™s known where the money is coming from to pay for construction of the cap, installing surface drainage controls, and putting in passive landfill gas extraction and parameter monitor systems.

Part of the funding will be a $750,000 grant the county received from the California Integrated Waste Management Board for the project.

â€œAdditional funding will be coming from settlement agreements that have been finalized during the course of the mediation,â€ Santiago said.

Forest Service officials found out in November that the plume is moving. A series of wells were drilled with the one on Hekpa Drive showing low levels of vinyl chloride and other volatile organic compounds.

â€œIt was about 160 feet down. There is no reason anyone would come in contact with it. No drinking wells or private wells are in the area,â€ Forest Service spokeswoman Cheva Heck said.

Neighbors have been advised of the situation and offered one-on-one meetings with the Forest Service if they have questions.

â€œSampling results from Saxon Creek did not detect vinyl chloride or others VOCs, and there is no danger of exposure due to contact with the water in the creek,â€ Heck said.

More drilling will be necessary, most likely this winter, to establish the outer limits of the plume.

LTUSD students not feeling safe or healthy



By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe's kids aren't so healthy. And they don't feel safe.

Results from a statewide survey taken last fall show an increase in tobacco, alcohol and marijuana use by some Lake Tahoe Unified students.

Students in grades five, seven, nine and 11 take the survey every other year. It's a way for districts to know what problems students are facing and identify what programs might need to be put in place to address those concerns.

Lisa Huard, who was the safe schools coordinator until her position was eliminated this school year, believes students are honest with their responses based on information the schools have, as well as the number of suspensions, expulsions and arrests.

In 2004, 5 percent of the seventh-graders said they regularly smoke tobacco, in 2006 the ninth-graders (so the same class) had 14 percent say they were users, while in 2008 as 11th-graders 22 percent were lighting up.

More members of the class of 2010 are drinking alcohol and smoking pot as they get older. As seventh-graders, about 10 percent were imbibing, 32 percent at ninth-graders and 44 percent this school year.

When it comes to marijuana, 7 percent of next year's graduating class took a hit as seventh-graders, a quarter of them did as ninth-graders and 36 percent do today.

"Those same children report a decrease in caring relationships with a teacher or other adults at the schools over the years, a decrease in high expectation from a teacher or other adult at their school, and a decrease of opportunities in meaningful participation at their school," Huard said.

Huard says the way to stop the escalation in drug use and risky behavior is to start the education at an earlier grade level. She would like to see schools be less test oriented and more student oriented.

"Schools in general are focusing on the test scores and not focusing on the life scores of our youth," Huard said.

South Lake Tahoe Police Chief Terry Daniels also believes teaching kids sooner rather than later is important. "Energy needs to go to preventive programs," he said, adding that he supports efforts being made in the schools.

From the 2008 survey:

51 percent feel safe at school all of the time;

40 percent of seventh-graders, 31 percent of ninth-graders and 22 percent of 11th-graders are afraid of being beaten up;

79 percent of fifth-graders, 68 percent of seventh, 53 percent ninth and 55 percent 11th-graders ate breakfast on test day.

According to the report, "Students who attend school hungry or malnourished may experience compromised health, well-being, and school performance."

Huard believes it takes the entire community to set an example and be responsible for youth. Why didn't you call the cops when the kids down the street had a party? Why didn't you talk

to the parents? Why did you give a dirty look to the kids congregated on the corning smoking cigarettes instead of telling them about lung and throat cancer? Why did you buy a six-pack for your kid brother? Those are questions Huard is asking. When she doesn't have to ask them anymore, the survey results

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Storm warning canceled, but snow keeps falling

Publisher's note: *Updated 2:10pm.*

More than a foot of snow has fallen at lake level in the last 24 hours.

The winter storm warning that was supposed to last until 4pm has been canceled because the storm has moved east, weather officials said. But that really isn't true.

It's continuing to snow at Squaw Valley. The tram and funitel did not start running until noon. The lines at Red Dog and Exhibition were long this morning.

The best part is not a single obstacle is to be seen. Snow is everywhere. Fat skis are recommended.

This in from Rachael Woods at Alpine Meadows, "As of 9am light snow is still coming down. In the past 24 hours, Alpine Meadows has received 23 inches of snow at the base lodge (elevation 6,835 feet) and 36 inches of snow at the mid-mountain level (elevation 7,500 feet). So far, this storm has brought a total of 49 inches of snow at the base lodge and 99 inches of snow at the mid-mountain level."Avalanche danger is

posted as “considerable” today.



Sue Wood makes shoveling look like a dance move Sunday morning. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Most of the highways in and around the Lake Tahoe Basin have controls on them today. Be sure to check ahead of time with Caltrans and NDOT. Or click on the icons at the top of the Home page of *Lake Tahoe News* to know about the road conditions.

Neighborhoods in the basin are the last to be plowed so chains or four-wheel drive may be needed there and not on the highways.

If you are flying out of the Reno-Tahoe airport today, call to make sure your flight is on time and has not been canceled.

Temperatures will hover around freezing today. Expect a break in storms on Monday, with more of that white stuff coming down on Tuesday.

Active octogenarians being sought



Bona Fide Books in Meyers is interviewing for its series on rad octogenarians, 8 on 80. If you know anyone who fits the bill, perhaps in a lift line on a powder day, let us know by clicking here.

AT&T plans to erect tower in South Tahoe

AT&T is proposing to install a telecommunications tower at 2543 Lake Tahoe Blvd. in South Lake Tahoe. That property is where Tahoe Grille is.

The proposal calls for an 80-foot “stealth tree monopole tower.” It would have 12 antennas mounted to the pole. Equipment would be installed in a 30 foot by 30 foot fenced area.

Send comments to: Project 61096570-SLF, c/o EB1 Consulting, 11445 E. Via Linda, Ste. 2 No. 472, Scottsdale, AZ 85259 ro call (781) 273.2500.

Lake Tahoe ski report, Dec. 13



Snow – it's the word of the day, the word of the hour, the word every minute in Lake Tahoe right now. Here is your daily ski report brought to you by Curtis Fong, the Guy from Lake Tahoe.

Budget gifts: Works by Tahoe authors, artists



Publisherâ€™s note: *Get in the spirit and share your idea for a gift valued at $20 or less. Click here for details.*

Kim Wyatt, publisher of Bona Fide Books in Meyers, sent in these suggestions:

What better gift for under $20 than a book? South Shore â€™s two fine literary journals, "EDGE" and "The Kokanee", would make excellent stocking stuffers and can be found online and at the Lake Tahoe Community College bookstore in South Lake Tahoe.

Consider supporting your local writers, like poet Suzanne Roberts or thriller writer Todd Borg.

Local artists like Dirk Yuricich, Kristen Schwartz, and Kit Night offer affordable note cards and prints. Shops like Gaia-Licious, The Enchanted Florist, and, if in Truckee , Brickelltown, also offer local handcrafted items.

www.suzanneroberts.org

www.toddborg.com

“EDGE”: www.tahoewritersworks.com

“The Kokanee”: Can be purchased at the LTCC Bookstore

www.dirkphotoz.com

http://www.faerymed.com/boutique.html

www.kitnight.com

www.gaialicious.com

Crawford: Curtzwiler wrong about Poland vote

Lake Tahoe News **readers,**

In the December issue of the *Tahoe Mountain News,* Kenny Curtzwiler wrote, “I am here to tell you that the first vote on (John Poland) whether or not to appeal the arbitration decision was 5-0 not to appeal.”

That’s news to me. I was elected in November 2006 and during my term there has not been a 5-0 vote on the Poland case for or against an appeal.

The Ski Bum should disclose when the 5-0 vote happened and who told him that the vote was taken. Until he does so his claim is poppy-cock.

And if the Ski Bum is going to toot his own horn, he needs to

get it in tune.

Bill Crawford, South Lake Tahoe city councilmen

Spate of injuries concerns Olympic ski officials

By Christopher Clarey, New York Times

Nine weeks before the Winter Olympics begin in Vancouver, international skiing officials are scrambling to address safety concerns raised by a recent spate of horrific crashes by some of the worldâ€™s most accomplished skiers.

Two reigning menâ€™s world champions and a former womenâ€™s World Cup overall winner are among those whose Olympic hopes have ended because of major accidents in recent weeks. At least two other medal hopefuls sustained serious injuries in crashes earlier this year, including Daniel Albrecht of Switzerland. Albrecht sustained brain injuries in January and was in an induced coma for three weeks.

Read the whole story

Draft EIR on South Tahoe

redevelopment plan is out

The public has until mid-January to weigh-in on the draft environmental impact report for a proposed redevelopment area in South Lake Tahoe.

The project area takes up 1,300 acres, encompasses much of the south end of town and affects businesses and residences.

In September the City Council approved the release of redevelopment plan for public review. Click here to read more about it.

The 127-page draft EIR and all the documents are at www.ctcip.org.

The City Council is expected to take action on all the documents in early March. Meetings will be scheduled before then to gather public input.