Luxury home market in Tahoe holding its own

By Jason Hildago, Reno Gazette-Journal

Home values for the region's luxury homes fared better than the overall housing market in the third quarter, with some areas even seeing price gains, according to Dickson Realty's latest Luxury Trends Report.

South Lake Tahoe's luxury home market posted the biggest jump in median sales price in the region, up 83 percent from the same quarter last year at $2.2 million. Truckee's high-end market also reported an increase, with its $2.3 million median sales price representing a 33 percent jump. Reno-Sparks saw median sales price for its luxury homes rise to $1.15 million, up 13 percent from the third quarter of 2008.

Read the whole story

Polar Express – Lake Tahoe style

On the evening of Dec. 3, children on the South Shore of Lake Tahoe can be transformed to the magical journey made famous in author Chris Van Allsburg's book "The Polar Express".

Children and their families begin their journey of make-believe from either the South Tahoe Recreation Center or the Forever Dance Studios (behind Safeway at Round Hill).

Conductors will escort passengers aboard the "Polar Express"

buses where they take a journey to a fantastical wonderland (The Red Hut) where singing and dancing chefs will board to serve hot chocolate and candy canes.

Carols will be sung in anticipation of your arrival at the Festival of Trees & Lights at MontBleu in Stateline and the "North Pole."

A reading of the "Polar Express", musical entertainment from the â€œBelles of Christmasâ€, a kid-friendly dinner buffet, a pajama contest, and a surprise from Santa awaits all passengers.

Tickets are going fast – $25 for adults and $20 for kids. For more information or tickets call the Barton Foundation at (530) 543.5614 or go to www.festivaloftreeslaketahoe.com.

Prescribed burn in Tahoe Paradise

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews will begin prescribed fire operations in the Baron Lake area, beginning Nov. 24 as weather and staffing allow.

Residents and travelers can expect to see smoke from prescribed fire project areas.

Other fire protection agencies, state and local, may also be conducting prescribed fire operations during this period.

This and other prescribed fire projects are designed to reduce wildfire risks to communities and critical resources. Smoke management is part of every prescribed fire burn plan, and efforts will be taken to reduce actual or potential smoke

impacts on community areas.

To learn more about the efforts to reduce catastrophic wildfire risks in the Tahoe Basin, visit: http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/ltbmu/documents/fuel-reduction-projects/10-year-plan/LTBCFP_Public_Presentation_8_3.pdf.

Lake Tahoe ski report, Nov. 24



It’s another chilly morning in Tahoe, but the winds are calm and many ski resorts in the basin are operating. Click on the ski report to find out what is going on today. The report is from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Technology makes learning more interactive

The parent club at Zephyr Cove Elementary School recently contributed some new technology – a Starboard – to the second-grade class.

It became fully operational and interactive this month.



Susan Desrosiers uses new technology to teach Trinity Kirvida-McGowan and Logan Chapman. Photo/Provided

“(We) watched a few PowerPoint presentations about Veterans Day, we then looked at photos from the Vietnam Memorial. We read the book ‘The Wall ‘and saw photos of the real thing.,” teacher Susan Desrosiers said. “The kids are astonished by the touch screen. MyHomework Club students used the board to take Reading Counts quizzes and I had a line. The third-grade students wanted to come back to second grade to use it and were upset they didn’t have it in class last year. It is a wonderful educational tool.”

Information for drivers in Nevada

Motorists traveling Nevada highways during the Thanksgiving holiday may receive instant, free information on road conditions with the Nevada Department of Transportationâ€™s

511 Nevada Travel Info System.

The system posts current Nevada road, construction, weather and accident reports to an easy-to-remember 511 phone number and www.nevadadot.com website. Before traveling, motorists simply dial 511 toll-free, 24 hours a day from within the state. Designated by major section of state road, callers then select their state route number for automated road conditions, weather forecasts, scheduled event road closures and construction updates. Out-of-state callers can dial 1-877-NV-ROADS to receive the same information.

The road listings are also available under â€œ511 Travel Infoâ€ at NDOTâ€™s www.nevadadot.com website. On the site, a Nevada road map zooms into the userâ€™s desired state travel route, with different icons detailing construction, accidents and weather closures. Similar information is also available in easy-to-read text format. Online and by phone, users must select their chosen road by state route number.

Thanksgiving holiday travelers can also find winter driving safety tips on the departmentâ€™s website at www.nevadadot.com/winter.

Leadership group providing free holiday lights to businesses

This holiday season will bring the first â€œLight Up Lake Tahoeâ€ to the South Shore, when businesses around town will be aglow with exterior holiday lighting.

Lights will be provided at no charge to interested businesses.

Lights are to be installed in time for the Dec. 4 kick-off, and kept on through the holiday/winter season. The lights will be removed by volunteers and stored for next yearâ€™s â€œLight Up Lake Tahoe.â€

More than a dozen local businesses have agreed to participate, and the project has received initial funding from local organizations. While participation is free, businesses are being encouraged to make donations of any amount. All donations are tax-deductible, and sponsors will be recognized on banners and promotional materials. Proceeds benefit Tahoe Turning Point, a private, nonprofit agency that provides group care and residential treatment for young men ages 12 to 18.

Lighting and fund-raising efforts are planned to continue past the Dec. 4 kick-off and throughout the holiday/winter season.

â€œLight Up Lake Tahoeâ€ is an effort of Leadership Lake Tahoe participants Jaime Aust, Anthony Davis, Lisa Ramsey-Simpson, Georgette Riley and Dustin Wunderlich.

For more information, contact Jaime Aust at Jaime_aust@hotmail.com or (530) 543.5614.

For information on sponsorship opportunities, contact Dustin Wunderlich at dustin.wunderlich@gmail.com.

For information on Tahoe Turning Point, visit www.tahoeturningpoint.org.

Spirit of Thanksgiving permeates the walls of Grace Hall

By Kathryn Reed

Walking up to the parish hall, that distinct smell of Thanksgiving fills the cold autumn air.



Dave digs into his apple pie at St. Theresa on Nov. 23. Photo/Kathryn Reed

About 30-people deep are bundled up outside of St. Theresaâ€™s in South Lake Tahoe. It was an early Thanksgiving for the hundreds who came to dine this Monday night. For most, it will be their only Thanksgiving meal this week. For even more, it will be their only hot meal of the week.

Last year Bread & Broth served 250 people. This year, enough food for 400 was prepared. Before 5pm, more than 200 people had come through the doors.

Dave thinks he may have been to all 21 of the Thanksgiving dinners prepared by the nonprofit. Heâ€™s at the church hall on most Mondayâ€™s when Bread & Broth serves a free hot meal

to anyone who wants it.

â€œA lot of people donâ€™t realize how integral this is to our lives,â€ Dave said



Grace Hall becomes one big family. Photo/Kathryn Reed

as he finished his apple pie. â€œI donâ€™t think the appreciation is adequate.â€ This he said of those who partake in the meal.

Ed pointed to Diane Weidinger across the room and said, â€œShe does a little better than anyone else when it comes to cooking a meal.â€

He talked about the â€œsubtle nuancesâ€ of the flavors that filled his plate.

Turkey, stuffing, corn bread, a roll, mashed potatoes, pumpkin pie, apple pie, juice, milk, coffee â€“ it was a feast.

Tables are filled with all ages, couples, families, men and women. Some in need of food. Some wanting companionship more than a meal.

In the foyer are sweaters and other warm clothing for the taking.



Bread & Broth makes the evening special. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Mary grabbed a blanket that she was going to strap to her bike as she was about to ride in the dark to her quasi home at the Y. For now sheâ€™s with a friend, but heâ€™s getting married soon and will be moving. Sheâ€™ll be homeless again soon.

On the give-away table she looked for shoes for a homeless friend, but couldnâ€™t find any.

She was chatting outside with Leslie. Leslie lives in a motel room near Stateline.

The two women raved about the meal and complained about the cold Tahoe night.

Hot meals are served in South Lake Tahoe for free every Monday at Grace Hall at St. Theresa Catholic Church and at Lake Tahoe Community Presbyterian Church on Fridays. Both start at 4pm and are part of Bread & Broth.

To donate or volunteer, call Diane Weidinger at (775) 588.3993 or email dianeweidinger@yahoo.com.

RSCVA won’t cut events to balance $1.6 million deficit

By Ray Hagar, Reno Gazette-Journal

The Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority is facing a projected $1.6 million deficit for the current fiscal year, because of falling room rates and room taxes, as well as a decrease in revenues from its facilities, RSCVA documents reveal.

To balance the budget, about $1 million will be cut from the operations budget and a portion of the water rights at its closed Northgate Golf Club will be sold, said Ellen Oppenheim, RSCVA president and CEO.

The RSCVA board of directors voted unanimously to allow Oppenheim to proceed with the plan to balance the budget late last week.

Read the whole story

Santa’s helpers needed

Help make someoneâ€™s Christmas brighter. The South Lake Tahoe Branch Library is inviting Santaâ€™s Helpers of all ages to help make wreaths and tree ornaments for Assisted Care patients at Barton Hospital on Dec. 5 from 10am-noon. Enjoy Christmas music and refreshments while you work. For additional information, call Jan at the library (530) 573.3185.