Caps for Kids program

The 22nd annual Caps for Kids collection is under way.

The South Lake Tahoe Parks and Recreation Department is again the place to drop off all of your handmade goodies â€“ booties, hats, scarves and mittens are wanted for holiday distribution. All of the donated â€œcapsâ€ will be given to local children this holiday season by Christmas Cheer.

Items should be dropped off at the Recreation Complex, 1180 Rufus Allen Blvd., South Lake Tahoe by Dec. 4. Please include a note with your name and address.

Need an easy crotchet or knitting pattern? Drop by the Recreation Complex or call (530) 542.6056.

Did you turn back your clock?



Check the time. Clocks were supposed to be turned back one hour at 2 this morning to return to standard time – at least in places like Lake Tahoe that do that daylight-saving time thing.

USFS cabin fees on the rise

By Kathryn Reed

People who own cabins on U.S. Forest Service land are getting

a notice in the mail telling them to pay the government more money.

The use fee is going up based on appraisals of the property, which is done every 10 years. The fee is 5 percent of the appraised value of the lot – the vacant lot, not including the structure, according to the Forest Service.



The cost of owning a USFS cabin is going up.

The fees are actually 10 years overdue because of ongoing discussions since 1999 between cabin owners, the Forest Service and Congress.

Some fees are increasing by more than 100 percent because appraisals were not done between 1979 and 1999.

The irony is that with appraisals happening every 10 years, 2009 represents another appraisal year â€“ so the increases are not likely to over for most people.

â€œFor the most part, fee increases range from several hundred to several thousand, again depending on the value of the lot,â€ Cheva Heck, USFS spokeswoman based in South Lake Tahoe, said of the increase now being doled out. â€œOn the other hand, the value of some lots went down and their fees will decrease to reflect that.â€

For the owners who are hit with a 100 percent increase or

more, it will be phased in. Heck said about a half dozen cabin owners in Lake Tahoe will be see a substantial increase in fees.

Recreation residences have a value of $150,000 to $500,000. Those right on the shore of Echo and Fallen Leaf lakes are prime real estate.

â€œâ€¦ fees go back to the U.S. Treasury and a quarter of the funding from these fees and other Forest Service fees comes back to the states through the Secure Rural Schools initiative, for road and school projects primarily,â€ Heck said.

The Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit oversees 594 cabins, which were all just reissued 20-year permits. These cabins range in size from 200 to 1,400 square feet â€“ some with more than an acre of land.

Stimulus money pays for stormwater projects

By Kathryn Reed

Federal money is flowing to South Lake Tahoe for public works projects.

The $3.175 million is part of the federal stimulus package that is being filtered through the stateâ€™s clean water fund. The city applied for the funds earlier this year.

The stimulus money is being used to construct the Sierra Tract Erosion Control Project Phase 1b ($1.675 million) and Al Tahoe ECP, Project 1 ($1.5 million).

â€œThe projects were highly rated since they were â€˜shovel-readyâ€™. The city qualified as an economically disadvantaged community, and the projects would provide water quality benefits by reducing the discharge of pollutants to Lake Tahoe associated with the cityâ€™s urban stormwater runoff,â€ explained Robert Erlich, the cityâ€™s engineer supervisor/stormwater coordinator.

Work started this summer on the Sierra Tract project, with completion expected next year. Curbs, gutters, storm drain inlets, storm drain pipe, water quality treatment basins, and vegetation are part of the mix.

South Lake Tahoe had planned to use Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act money to help pay for both projects. That money is now available for other water quality projects in the basin.

Plans are being drawn up for the Al Tahoe project, which will include replacement of a deteriorated corrugated metal pipe storm drain conveyance pipe, installation of drainage inlets, curbs, gutters, roadside shoulder treatment, and vegetation restoration.

â€œUrban stormwater that has historically flowed directly into Lake Tahoe will be directed through a series of stormwater management devices, including infiltration galleries and filtration vaults, to reduce both the volume of stormwater discharged, and the fine sediment and nutrient loads discharged to Lake Tahoe,â€ Erlich said.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

Les Wright, founder and director of the Lake Tahoe Marathon, was recently named Race Director of the Year at the annual Race Directors Conference.

Hopeâ€™s Closet Thrift Shop benefitting Tahoe Youth & Family Services is open at 2277 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Tahoe. (www.TahoeYouth.org)

The Thai Kitchen recently opened in Tahoe City.

Lake Tahoe Airportâ€™s HeliTahoe has agreed to have an Oregon company provide Bell turbine helicopters for its tours and charters.

Craig Sacco has been named general manager of the Ritz-Carlton Club and Residences, Lake Tahoe.

Santa Paws photos

Lake Tahoe Humane Society and SPCA’s 23rd Annual Santa Paws Photo Event to benefit local Tahoe animals in need is Dec. 5 and Dec. 6 from 11am-3pm inside Lakeview Plaza, 3300 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe. (Next to Bank of America.)

It costs $20 for multiple poses on photo CD and includes raffle ticket.

There will also be a pet gift sale, food and drink.

Pets must be on a leash or in carrier.

Information: (530) 542.2857.

Students learn where their garbage goes

By Kathryn Reed

Looking at the pile of trash, the students pointed to the toilet in the middle of the heap.

Walking through the South Tahoe Refuse yard they came upon oil drums, cans of paint that were separated out, a chair that looked useable if a few repairs were made, and a snowblower.



Jeanne Lear gives students a tour of South Tahoe Refuse on Oct. 30. Photo/Kathryn Reed

These nine students from Whittell High and Zephyr Cove elementary schools got an education in garbage on Friday at the South Lake Tahoe facility that is responsible for disposing of their weekly trash.

Normally itâ€™s Whittell students who participate in the

Enrichment Fridays, but all schools were out of school in honor of Nevada Day so some of the younger students came along.

Enrichment Fridays are the result of parents wanting to give students at WHS something to do other than hang out at home now that the 7-12 school is off on Fridays.

Mostly itâ€™s seventh- and eighth-graders who participate in the monthly outings because 80 percent of students in grades 9-12 are in sports. It was the athletes missing school that led to the creation of the four-day school week that started this semester.

The idea is to have the event be educational and fun â€“ like a school field trip. Parents are working with businesses to make it work for everyone and not cost much.

Sept. 25 was the first Enrichment Friday. It designed to show students what pubic transportation is all about, including how to bring a bike on a bus.

That theme was carried over to this month when the students and adults took BlueGo from Kahle Community Park in Stateline to Third Street in South Tahoe. Then they walked the block or so to South Tahoe Refuse.

Even though lunch at a garbage company might seem odd, the students didnâ€™t think twice about diving into the pizza boxes â€“ freshly ordered for them.

A short video about the operation of the 40-plus-year-old operation explained how things work.

Afterward, John Marchini, whose family started the operation, explained that the plant is recycling about 49 percent of the garbage it collects, with that number sometimes hitting 54 percent.

Even with the blue bag recycling program that started this

year, he said employees working the assembly line still sort out a ton of recyclables.

Jeanne Lear with STR told the students the 250 tons of garbage the company collects each day could fill their multipurpose room.

â€œThink about what you are putting in the garbage bag and if you needed it in the first place,â€ Lear said to the students.

She showed them how packaging is wasteful, buying in bulk is good, and that buying goods made with recyclable material is the best.

Tori Jimenez, a Whittell eighth-grader, said she liked learning that there are little things she can do to protect the environment.

The next Enrichment Friday is Nov. 20 â€“ Tibetan Day. Dec. 4 will be at MontBleu for the Festival of Trees and Lights.

Preserving 100,000 acres in the Sierra

By Paul Rogers, San Jose Mercury News

TRUCKEE â€” In the 1860s, Congress created a huge checkerboard of land ownership across California's Sierra Nevada mountain range when it granted every other square mile to railroad barons along the route of the transcontinental railroad.

Now, nearly 150 years later, one of Silicon Valley's most high-profile couples is working to buy back the squares for

nature.

Jim and Becky Morgan of Los Altos Hills â€” he, the retired CEO of Applied Materials and she, a former Santa Clara County supervisor and Republican state senator â€” have launched an ambitious project to raise $100 million in the next five years to preserve land across the Sierra.

Read the whole story

Indoor fire safety

By Sallie Ross-Filgo

The colder days and nights of autumn remind us to get ready for indoor fire safety. Be extra cautious with wood stoves and fireplaces and keep anything that will burn at least 3 feet away.

Have your chimney inspected or cleaned every year.

Donâ€™t use large amounts of paper or cardboard to build a fire in your fireplace or wood stove.

Never burn charcoal indoors because burning charcoal gives off the poisonous gas carbon monoxide.

Finally, donâ€™t use flammable liquids to start or add to a fire that is already lit.

Sallie Ross-Filgo works for the South Lake Tahoe Fire Department.

Spook-tacular



Halloween isn’t just for little kids who like candy. Big kids like to dress up, too – and eat candy.

Businesses and houses throughout the South Shore of Lake Tahoe are decorated for the holiday. Ghosts and witches are in abundance. Spiders and their webs are woven around doors.

Plenty of activities are planned throughout the day and evening – check the Events page on *Lake Tahoe News*.

Today is also Nevada Day – the day the Silver State was admitted to the Union. Click here to find out what is going on in Carson City.

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