Grover Hot Springs, Donner Museum hours cut

By Kathryn Reed

Winter operations at state parks in the Sierra are being cut back, with a more comprehensive plan for summer to be released in early 2010.

For the winter, Grover Hot Springs in Markleeville and Donner Museum in Truckee will be closed Mondays and Tuesdays. No winter camping will be allowed at Sugar Pine Point, though itâ€™s available at Grover.

The cuts are a result of the compromise Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger came up with when earlier this fall he decided not to close any of the 279 state parks. Instead, he told the superintendents of the various districts to come up with a way to cut $14.2 million from the state parks budget.

â€œThe most obvious thing we would close is some loops in campgrounds,â€ Pam Armas, superintendent of the Sierra District, said about summer operations.

Most of the state campgrounds in her district â€“ which runs from Mono Lake to Donner Lake â€“ have three loops. By closing one, it means fewer bathrooms to clean and trash to haul away.

â€œWe are not allowed to fill our vacancies and we are not allowed to hire right now,â€ Armas said. This means the manpower isnâ€™t there to keep the parks fully operational.

Usually people can start reserving a campground spot for 2010 on Nov.1. While the plan is being finalized as what to do in the summer, campground reservations will not be taken.

Barton to hand out $23,000 in health grants

Six groups are about to share $23,000 in health grants from Barton.

Barton Healthâ€™s Community Advisory Committee, in collaboration with the Barton Foundation, are awarding their the first Barton Health Grants to help address unmet health needs in the South Lake Tahoe areal

Of the 16 proposals, six came away winners. They are:

â€¢ Bijou Community School â€“ P.T.A. $500, and School Classroom Fitness Equipment $1,170

â€¢ Tahoe Magic â€“ Dentistry Services for Children – $10,000

â€¢ South Lake Tahoe Library â€“ Relaxation and Stress Reducing CDs, pregnancy and postnatal fitness DVDs, and â€œA Health & Fitness Story Time Kitâ€ â€“ total of $700

â€¢ We Can! â€“ Childhood fitness and nutrition program – $7,500

â€¢ Boys & Girls Club of SLT â€“ Triple Play Program to encourage fitness, nutrition and self confidence in youth – $2,000

â€¢ South Lake Tahoe Unified School District â€“ Swine Flu Vaccinations – $1,400.

Winners will be honored Nov. 5 at a Philanthropy Day celebration from noon-2pm at Riva Grill. Lunch is $20. RSVP to the Barton Foundation at (530) 543-5909 before Nov. 2.

Organic, vegan meal at LTCC

Lake Tahoe Community College instructor Chef Steve Fernald and the culinary arts students are preparing an organic vegan Thanksgiving themed feast Nov. 20.

This event is sponsored by the Advocates for Wellness, Animal Rights, and the Environment, A.W.A.R.E., a student club.

Special guest Hope Bohanec, Grassroots Campaigns Director, IDA, will be speaking about â€œEco-Eating: The Power of Your Plate.â€ This presentation will explore the effects of food choices on the environment: global warming, water use and pollution, energy consumption, deforestation, loss of biodiversity and species, as well as the impact of fishing on the oceans.

Tickets are $9 in advance and available for purchase at LTCC Student Services, Nov. 4-18 or online at www.ltcc.edu/news.asp. If not sold-out, they will be $12 at the door.

Dinner will be in the Student Center Cafeteria at 6:30pm, Lake Tahoe Community College, One College Drive, South Lake Tahoe.

Prescribed USFS burning begins Oct. 28

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews will conduct prescribed fire operations in the Rubicon/Tahoe Hills area

starting Oct. 28, and will likely continue through the week depending on weather conditions.

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

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 oncommunity 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.

To view maps that describe current prescribed fire project locations, visit: http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/ltbmu/fire/map-index.shtml.

Lukins water rates to jump 36%



By Kathryn Reed

For the first time in nine years, the 953 Lukins Brothers Water District customers are about to open bills that reflect

a general rate hike.

Annual water bills for the small water company that serves customers near the Y along Emerald Bay Road in South Lake Tahoe will go from $294.84 to $395.52. This is an increase of 36.03 percent.

Jennifer Lukins said ratepayers knew the increase would be coming because the proposal has been before the state Public Utilities Commission for a year and public meetings have been conducted, as well as letters having been sent.

Smaller cost of living increases based on the Consumer Price Index occur about every two years. The last one was Sept. 1, 2008.

The previous general rate increase was 25.46 percent in 2000. Prior to that that it was in the early 1990s that Lukins had a general rate increase.

South Tahoe Public Utility District, which encompasses most of the South Shore on the California side, has small annual rate increases. Single-family residences in that jurisdiction pay $467.88 a year.

Lukins said the company that was started by her grandparents in the 1940s would like to have smaller, more consistent rate increases but the firm doesn’t have the staff to deal with the work involved to make that happen.

The company has three full-time employees. The rate increase will allow the hiring of a part-time person to work in the field.

Lukins had wanted to increase prices by 66.7 percent, but the state PUC scaled that back.

The company plans to use the additional $126,460 in annual revenue for operating expenses.

Lukins is still trying to obtain funding to upgrade its old and outdated infrastructure. A meeting with Lukins and city staff is expected soon so all are on the same page as to what is being done to secure state, federal and private money for that endeavor.

Harrah's posts $1.6 billion third quarter loss

Steve Green, Las Vegas Sun

Still struggling with the recession, Harrah's Entertainment Inc. of Las Vegas today posted a $1.33 billion charge against earnings to write down the value of certain assets around the country, and overall posted a third quarter loss from continuing operations after taxes of $1.621 billion.

The loss, compared to a loss of $123.2 million a year earlier, was driven by the one-time writeoff as well as a 13.7 percent decline in quarterly revenue to $2.282 billion.

Read the whole story

Cocores: Reasons to be on STPUD board

Letter to the Publisher,

My name is Peggy Cocores and I hope to be your candidate for Seat 5 in the STPUD election on Nov. 3.

WATER IS THE ISSUE. Safe, clean, and AFFORDABLE. As a business woman, independent voice, and 39-year local, my mission and promise to you is fiscal responsibility,24/7 representation with openness and integrity.

The STPUD board and the incumbent have known for 5 years that we are going to be put on meters and yet they didn’t plan for the financial losses which could fall upon the district, nor did they tell the ratepayers what we are potentially facing in terms of cost. We will have to make adjustments and I want to make sure we are properly represented when decisions are made as to how we will be assessed. My goal is to keep rates as fair and equitable as possible.

As a business woman, I will approach district matters using common sense, and pledge to work with whomever is elected.

I believe in giving back to our community and I pledge that as your elected official, I will keep you, the ratepayers, informed first and foremost. I promise to remember you are the “Public” in South Tahoe Public Utility District.

Please support me on Nov. 3.

Vote Peggy Cocores for Seat 5 South Tahoe Public Utility District.

Thank you,

Peggy Cocores

Segals: Reasons to vote for Wallace

Letter to the Publisher,

Duane Wallace has been a friend of ours for over 20 years. During that time, we have agreed on many different issues and respectfully disagreed on others. However, the one passion we always agree on is the ongoing commitment to serve the children of our community.

Duane has devoted much of his time and energy working for the benefit of others. He has been involved in many different groups and organizations ranging from the Lake Tahoe Educational Foundation to coaching Pop Warner football and wrestling, just to name a few. Duane continues to be an advocate for the children in our community as exemplified by his long term involvement with after school programs such as the Boys and Girls Club. He was appointed to the LTUSD board because of his proven strong leadership skills, his ability to work well with others and his ongoing commitment to children.

Duane will always be an independent voice that we can depend on to make sound fiscal choices which will serve our school employees, our children, as well as our community at large.

We support Duane Wallace for the LTUSD School Board and encourage everyone to vote for him on Nov 3. A vote for Duane is a vote for our children, our schools and our community.

Janice Halpern-Segal and Harry Segal,

South Lake Tahoe

Fish stocking to resume at Jenkinson Lake

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

Regular fish stocking programs will resume at Jenkinson Lake near Pollock Pines.

El Dorado Irrigation District officials announced that the lake, the centerpiece of the district's popular Sly Park Recreation Area, has been removed from the state's list of lakes and streams where fish stocking was suspended last fall.

Read the whole story

Heavenly Foundation ski swap

Heavenly Ski and Snowboard Foundation annual Swap at MontBleu in Stateline.

The moonlight madness pre-sale costs $5 and is Nov. 20 from 6-11pm; while the swap on Nov. 21 from 10am-5pm is free.

For more information, call (530) 541.7354.