Robot another tool for bomb squad



Douglas County officials stand clear of the robot that can blow things up. Photo/DCSO

Douglas County officials got a lesson in how to blow things up.

Tahoe-Douglas Fire District employees showed off the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) vehicle and other equipment that was recently bought with a Homeland Security grant.

The fire department has donated its old EOD to the Douglas County Sheriff’s Office Search and Rescue team. It will be used as a command operations vehicle.

Tahoe-Douglas Bomb Squad Cmdr. Jim Antti demonstrated how the mechanical robot works at the sheriffâ€™s substation in Stateline. The robot will be used to investigate and handle suspected bombs and explosives.

Recognition for Tahoe restoration efforts

Preservation of the Lake Tahoe Basin earned Huffman & Carpenter Inc. of Reno the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers' Lake Tahoe Award of Distinction.

The Corps' Sacramento District honored the wetlands regulatory and hydrological consulting firm for its efforts in project development and implementation of the Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works, Lake Tahoe Program. The project is part of the $3.5 billion environmental improvement program.

Courthouse dispute pits city v. county

By Kathryn Reed

Back room discussions are going on regarding the El Dorado County courthouse in South Lake Tahoe, with the public being kept in the dark.

Marjorie Springmeyer, whose family donated the land for a city hall that never got built, pleaded with the council this month to come clean.



Marjorie Springmeyer

â€œI have asked for a complete accounting on the government centerâ€¦,â€ Springmeyer said. â€œYou sued me for city hall and then you abandoned it. Iâ€™m going to ask again or have my attorney ask for a chain of title on the government center.â€

Now in her 80s, Springmeyer wants this resolved. Documents dating to the 1970s when the transaction occurred are not complete and much of what was agreed to was done verbally.

The Johnson-Springmeyer clan expected a city hall to built where the government center is. Instead, a courthouse is there.

Another issue is a 5-acre land swap between the city and county that may not be complete. The city believes the county still owes it that acreage. Springmeyer also asked for that issue to be addressed.

Councilman Hal Cole, who owns property with Springmeyer, said he would like to accommodate Springmeyer and also wants the chain of title to be made public.

Adding to the confusion of the whole property matter is the 2002 Trial Court Facilities Act that mandates all California courthouses owned by counties become state property. The land becomes the stateâ€™s as well if the county owns it.

In the South Lake Tahoe case, the deed for the land remains the cityâ€™s. The portion of the building used as a courthouse will go to the state.

Even though this was supposed to be a simple transfer, the city in the last year has neglected to signoff on the transfer because of reasons that are discussed behind closed doors.

City officials want the 1972 land agreement resolved before signing anything. The county contends one has nothing to do with the other.

The topic was discussed in closed session by the City Council on Oct. 20 and is expected to be back there again on the Nov. 3 agenda. Itâ€™s possible when the Board of Supervisors has its once a year meeting in Tahoe on Nov. 10, it will be on the agenda.

â€œWe haven’t heard anything from the city,â€ Supervisor Norma Santiago said in an Oct. 21 email.

â€œAt this time, I am unable to provide you with information regarding this matter. I am sorry that I cannot be of more help at this time,â€ City Manager Dave Jinkens said in an Oct. 22 email.

Quality child cares makes a difference



By Tina Barna

Research shows that parents who know their children are being cared for in a safe and healthy environment are better able to perform on the job. This research is not a surprise to any

parent who has looked for quality child care for their child. In response to many recent calls to Choices for Children for information and referral assistance, here are some basics to finding quality child care.

The state Department of Social Service, Community Care Licensing Division is charged with the task of inspecting and licensing Family Child Care Homes and Child Care Centers. In order to do this, they follow a set of clearly defined regulations that are meant to keep children safe and free from harm. An abbreviated list from the Child Care Center Self Evaluation form has the following:

â€¢ Criminal Record Clearances and Child Abuse Index checks done for ALL staff

â€¢ Children are visually supervised at all times; volunteers must be supervised by a teacher

â€¢ Staff to child ratios are met at all times

â€¢ Teachers, aides and the director all meet mandated qualifications

â€¢ The maximum capacity for the facility is adhered to at all times

â€¢ Childrenâ€™s personal rights are protected â€“ No corporal punishment or excessive time out

â€¢ The facility must be in good repair and no hazards or dangerous materials are accessible

â€¢ CPR and First Aid cards are up to date

â€¢ Have and maintain a Emergency Disaster Plan with a current roster of all children in care

â€¢ Post all parent notification requirements for any Type A deficiency or citation

This list is only a small example of an exhaustive set of regulations that all FCCHâ€™s and centers must follow in order to meet the state licensing mandate. The goal is to protect our most vulnerable population; our children. Do these regulations equate to quality? The most these regulations can do is ensure the health and safety of children. Quality is much bigger than just making sure the facility meets the minimum requirements. Beyond the basic health and safety requirements, the following are a list of things to look for that identifies a FCCH or Child Care Center striving for a quality environment for our children:

â€¢ Lower child to teacher ratios â€“ the facility works to include parent volunteers or additional aides

â€¢ An environment rich in culturally sensitive materials

â€¢ Parents are encouraged to participate

â€¢ Specific age appropriate activities

â€¢ A plethora of manipulatives and learning materials for the child to choose

â€¢ Highly educated staff in Early Childhood Education and Development

â€¢ Staff who clearly enjoy working with children

â€¢ A warm and inviting atmosphere

â€¢ Clear and consistent communication with the parent about the childâ€™s day

â€¢ Childrenâ€™s continued growth and development monitored through accepted tools such as ECRS and Desired Results

â€¢ NAEYC accreditation

It is essential parents stay involved and active in their childâ€™s education â€“ starting with the earliest of years.

Children must first be safe and secure in order to grow and learn. If you would like more information or would like to check out any of our FREE resources including videos, resource books or to read the licensing regulations, please call or stop by our office. We are here to assist you.

Tina Barna is director of Choices For Children a child care resource and referral agency.

Helping Christmas Cheer

Thanks for the article regarding Christmas Cheer and its need for food. It is so easy to find things from your cupboards, or pick up those super saver items from our grocery stores to drop off at Christmas Cheer.

Unfortunately, until we are reminded by word of mouth, or especially articles like yours, it is too easy to forget to do this.

Even though CC is not open every day, Joanne Shope at CC offered to open the office so we could drop off a carload of groceries we had gotten for them.

Please keep posting this article, so others will be reminded in the coming months.

Thanks again,

Nancy and Eric Schafer

Grants to off-set cost of water meters

Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

Sacramento-area communities will share $52 million in federal recovery act funds to install water meters.

The grants, totaling $717 million for water projects statewide, were announced Thursday by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

The money comes from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act via the State Water Resources Control Board and the Department of Public Health.

Read the whole story

Why don't the resorts play nice together?



Publisher's note: *The following is from a LTN reader whose identity is being protected based on her job.*

"As I drove through Stateline yesterday and saw the casino banner up with Heavenly job fairs, I thought, how does this still happen in our community? We are still unable to include our 3 ski resorts on a banner when they are all having job

fairs the same weekend. It’s obvious to most that South Shore does have two other ski resorts who employ a lot of people and are great community partners. So they have job fairs on the same day as Heavenly but don’t get on the banner? Why does Heavenly get a monopoly on that advertising space and shouldn’t the casinos be helping out all 3 ski resorts in the best interest of everyone? I just don’t get it and it’s very disappointing to see no progress at all with regard to a cooperative spirit.”

Chase: Being independent thinker makes a difference

Zoe Rose, Reno Gazette-Journal

Canadian-born Shari Chase wasn’t sure what she was going to be when she grew up, but whatever it was, she knew it would be something she chose for herself.

“I was always an independent thinker,” Chase said. “From time to time, that probably caused a few problems. When you do things out of the ordinary, people will question you about why you’re doing that, but when it succeeds, they’re thrilled to be a part of it.”

Chase moved to the Lake Tahoe area from the Bay Area in 1984.

Read the whole story

Nordic ski patrol eager to educate

By Gamaliel Ortiz, Sacramento Bee

Once snow touches ground on backcountry roads in the Eldorado National Forest, the snow patrol begins its rounds.

Volunteers in the El Dorado Nordic Ski Patrol make loops or trails for snowshoers and skiers.

The patrol members ski on open areas near Crystal Basin, Loon Lake, Echo Summit and Carson Pass â€“ taking in views of the frozen lake, ice-covered trees, canyons and mountains.

Read the whole story

Forest Service seeks project proposals

The U.S. Forest Service, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit is accepting Round 11 project proposals for Lake Tahoe restoration projects authorized by the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA). Project proposal packages will be accepted through the close of business on Nov. 20.

Lake Tahoe Basin projects under SNPLMA must qualify as an Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) project and be the responsibility of the federal government (federal share responsibility); and have a willing and ready federal sponsor.

Project nominations must be consistent with one of the focus

areas in the June 2006 Federal Vision (pp. 8-9) and fit into at least one category.

(http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/ltbmu/documents/ltbec/revised-FV-Final.pdf)

To submit a Capital Project, go to http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/ltbmu/local/snplma/round-11/ and follow the

required steps. Incomplete packages will not be accepted for consideration.