Douglas County students might be able to take college classes during regular school day

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Douglas County School District is considering partnering with Western Nevada College in an expanded dual credit program.

High school students can take WNC classes now, but it has to be after school or in the evenings. The program the district is looking at would be during the regular school day, be just Douglas and/or Whittell high school students, be taught at the Douglas campus of WNC, and include a peer mentor-teacher's assistant in the room who would be provided by WNC.

It could start in the fall with English 101 and Math 126 and then English 102 and Math 127 in spring 2015.

The board unanimously agreed at its meeting Jan. 14 to have Superintendent Lisa Noonan pursue the idea and come back with more specifics, like cost, what to do if students can't afford the class, transportation, opportunities for Whittell students, the fairness of limiting the number of students allowed to enroll and other details.

To take the English and math classes at WNC it costs $555 a semester. If 25 students were to take the two courses both semesters the cost is $28,500.

Districts in Nevada are not uniform in how they handle the costs for high school student-community college programs. Some pay it all, some charge the same $90 fee as an AP class, some

provide transportation.

One thing brought up this week is how students taking WNC classes today pay their way. But they are doing so on their own time and don't get extra support.

The Jump Start College program is being offered by WNC to Carson, Churchill, Mineral and Storey county school districts, too. Those classes would be at the Carson City campus.

John Kinkella, dean of student service at WNC, gave a presentation to the Douglas board Tuesday outlining the benefits:

• The student completes math and English general education college course requirements while still in high school.

• The parent is assured of a supportive initial college experience and a break on tuition and fee costs compared to the university.

• Jump Start College students add to the high school and school district's new performance measures.

"Completions of English 101 is the highest prediction of completing their bachelor's," Kinkella said.

Whittell, with its being on a four-day schedule and having a tiny student body, may present challenges that could not be overcome when it comes to college classes during the regular school day.

Whittell Principal Crespin Esquivel asked about the possibility of distance learning for his students. This will be investigated.

"Overall, I think it's wonderful for kids," Esquivel told the board.

In fall 2008, Whittell had an agreement with WNC. Whittell

teachers taught WNC classes in addition to their regular five periods. One was a section of composition and one of trig/pre-calculus.

Whittell students also used to go to Lake Tahoe Community College on a regular basis. When Nevada did away with the good neighbor policy it meant students in Nevada had to pay out of state tuition even though it's the closest college to them.

LTCC President Kindred Murillo has been working to change that policy.

"We are working on a different strategy. We may kill SB329 and develop a new bill that may be more to the liking of the Senate Education Committee. We are working currently with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office and the Community College League of California to strategize the best approach," Murillo told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We are not giving up, just trying to find a way to make it beneficial to everyone."

Opinion: Fireworks lawsuit unnecessary

By Carol Chaplin

With Tahoe South's two annual fireworks celebrations meeting all state and federal standards, a recent lawsuit that could threaten the annual July Fourth and Labor Day events is totally unnecessary.

Water quality sampling conducted by the state of California's Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board in Lake Tahoe

following the fireworks events has demonstrated that levels of pollutants of concern are negligible within 12 hours of the shows and pose no threat to water quality. In a recent story in *Lake Tahoe News*, Lauri Kemper with Lahontan said that because the perchlorate had dissipated her agency determined there were no long-term effects to the lake from the chemical.



Carol Chaplin

The water purveyors with intake lines near the barges from which the fireworks are discharged have also never reported any effect on the drinking water source as a result of the display.

“The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection encourages the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority and its contractors to continue compliance with any applicable local permits, plans or requirements. NDEP does not require additional oversight of the twice a year firework displays,” JoAnn Kittrell with the Nevada Department of Conservation & Natural Resources was quoted in *Lake Tahoe News*.

As one of the most regulated areas in the nation, Lake Tahoe has multiple agencies at the federal, regional, state and local level monitoring all aspects of the area’s environment and ecology. The Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority and Pyro Spectaculars obtain permits from the U.S. Coast Guard and the local fire department each year to conduct the shows. These are the only required permits for events of this type. Since their inception the fireworks have employed a rigorous cleanup protocol. The LTVA also has a pre-event planning meeting for

each show with Douglas County Sheriff's Department, South Lake Tahoe Police and the Tahoe-Douglas fire marshal.

LTVA and Pyro Spectacular have worked collaboratively with the key regulators in the basin – Lahontan, the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, in the production of the fireworks. Since the introduction of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System more than 40 years ago, no court in the nation has held that firework displays require an NPDES permit.

The fireworks used in the Lake Tahoe shows are designed to burn in the sky. If the shell does not disintegrate the remaining debris is primarily paper, cardboard and string. This is collected from the water after the display. Pyro Spectaculars uses a boat to patrol the fireworks display site for several hours post show and uses nets and other tools to clean up surface debris. The following morning a dive crew and another boat crew are dispatched. Divers cover an 8- to 12-acre area, starting at the launch location and working outward, collecting general trash as well as any fireworks debris. While conducting the cleanup the divers have also assisted by removing invasive Eurasian milfoil plants from the lake.

The LTVA was only made aware of Joseph and Joan Truxlers' concerns about debris after the Zephyr Cove couple contacted media following the July 4 show. Representatives from the LTVA responded immediately to concerns and staff visited the beach and interviewed several year-round residents. Longtime homeowners told the LTVA that they had never witnessed a debris problem with the event.

Quite frankly, we're disappointed in what we believe is an unnecessary lawsuit. In 30 years, this was the first time there was any issue – it was an anomaly. LTVA doesn't need to be threatened with a lawsuit. If there's a problem, we'll fix it. This organization has always been responsible, engaged and

committed to stewardship of the Lake.

We’re involved with numerous partners in various preservation programs to best position Lake Tahoe as a national environmental and business model. As part of our guiding philosophy, we promote our greatest attraction, the lake itself, in an appropriate and sustainable manner. Tahoe is our home, too, and we know its spectacular beauty and clarity is its timeless attraction, and we’ll always take that responsibility seriously.

The July 4 and Labor Day fireworks displays are among the area’s most popular annual events and generate approximately $4 million and $2 million, respectively, in revenue to Tahoe South each year helping locally owned restaurants, motels, retail and attractions whose livelihoods depend on tourism.

We appreciate the support we’ve received from residents and businesses throughout the local community and beyond on this issue. Most responses indicate that the majority is tired of needless litigation, rather the solution is for local cooperation to ensure the continued success of the fireworks and protection of the lake.

Carol Chaplin is executive director of Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority.

Snowboarders down to wire to qualify for Sochi

By USSA

MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN -– Rookie Taylor Gold (Steamboat Springs,

Colo.) punched a ticket to Sochi Friday with his third-place finish at the fourth halfpipe qualifier at the Sprint U.S. Grand Prix.

Defending Olympic Champion Shaun White, who rides for Northstar, took the victory, putting him one podium away from clinching a spot on the U.S. Olympic team for halfpipe snowboarding.

Kelly Clark (West Dover, Vt.) took her second halfpipe victory of the day with Chloe Kim (La Palma) second and Hannah Teter (South Lake Tahoe) third, an identical podium to the third qualifier staged earlier in the day Friday.

The fifth qualifier on Sunday will be the last chance for the halfpipe riders to make their move to score a spot on the Olympic team.

Veteran rider Scotty Lago (Seabrook, N.H.) landed second, which also puts him in a valuable position going into the final qualifier.

After Friday’s qualifier only Lago, White, Gret Bretz (Mammoth Lakes) and Danny Davis (Truckee) can mathematically secure a top-three spot in the qualification standings.

Clark clinched her Olympic team spot at the Copper Grand Prix in December, while 13-year-old Kim is not Olympic eligible.

All other U.S. women are currently capable of mathematically securing a top-three spot in the qualification standings.

Optimist to be honored at basketball game



Tom Haen at the Christmas tree lot. Photo/Provided

South Lake Tahoe Optimist Club is hosting the annual 8th-grade boys basketball tournament at the middle school tonight and then Saturday from 9am-6pm, with the championship games on Sunday at 9am and 11:30am.

This year’s honoree is Tom Haen.

He became an Optimist member in 1998 and has been active in most fund raisers and youth activities the club has sponsored.

Haen stepped up to become president only three years after joining the club. He is a driving force in the club, setting up the annual Christmas tree lot, the duck race and pancake breakfasts.

Tahoe area snowboarders make noise in halfpipe

By USSA

MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN -– Veteran rider Danny Davis (Truckee) pulled out a clutch victory in the third halfpipe snowboarding Olympic qualifier Friday at the Sprint U.S. Grand Prix at Mammoth Mountain. His victory in the progressive, high-scoring qualifier resurrected his Olympic chances and put him in a position to meet qualification criteria with a second place or better in the fourth qualifier.

Defending Olympic Champion Shaun White, who rides for Northstar, did not start the competition after he took a hard fall in Thursday's first slopestyle qualifier.

Kelly Clark (West Dover, Vt.) won for the women after clinching her Olympic team spot at the Copper Grand Prix in December.

Rookie Taylor Gold (Steamboat Springs, CO) finished second, also putting him in great position to clinch a spot on the Olympic team with a podium in the fourth qualifier later in the day Friday.

Matt Ladley (Steamboat Springs, CO) took third with Louie Vito (Sandy, UT) fourth and rookie Ben Ferguson (Bend, OR) fifth.

Defending Olympic Champion Shaun White (Carlsbad, CA) did not start the competition after he took a hard fall in Thursday's first slopestyle qualifier.

Kelly Clark (West Dover, VT) won for the women after clinching her Olympic team spot at the Copper Grand Prix in December.

Rookie Chloe Kim (La Palma) slid into second place, while Hannah Teter (South Lake Tahoe) took third and Kaitlyn

Farrington (Bellevue, Idaho) fourth. Chloe Kim, 13, is not Olympic eligible.

U.S. not one of the top countries to find a healthy meal

By Michaeleen Doucleff, NPR

The Dutch are known for their lax drug laws, tall statures and proficient language skills. Perhaps we should add stellar eating habits to that list, as well.

The Netherlands ranked as the easiest country in the world to find a balanced, nutritious diet, the advocacy group Oxfam Tuesday.

France and Switzerland shared the second slot. And Western Europe nearly swept the top 20 positions, with Australia just edging into a tie for 8th.

The United States tied with Japan for 21st place, despite the fact that we have the most cheap food available worldwide. Our friendly neighbors to the north, Canada, took the 25th position out of 125 countries.

Read the whole story

Stockton school shooting leaves impact 25 years later

By Josh Richman and Mark Emmons, San Jose Mercury News

STOCKTON – The graves of the children buried here long ago in the cold January ground are about a mile from Cleveland Elementary School. But except for the passing cars, chirping birds and the occasional freight train rumbling nearby, the resting place is mostly silent.

Twenty-five years ago today, Cleveland Elementary was the scene of one of the nation's worst school shootings – years before Columbine, Virginia Tech and Newtown. Former South Lake Tahoe resident Patrick Edward Purdy's three-minute shooting rampage left five children dead and 30 teachers and students wounded. All but one of those killed were offspring of Cambodian refugees who had survived the murderous Khmer Rouge.

"This just doesn't ever go away. I think that's something the outside world just doesn't get," said Judy Weldon, 65, a retired teacher who tended to the wounded that day. "Yes, we all grow and move on and change. But we never, ever forget."

The scars aren't just emotional. Rob Young, then a first-grader, still carries a bullet fragment in his chest after being shot twice. The shooting, he said, "will forever be a part of me."

But amid a renewed national gun debate reignited by an even deadlier school massacre 13 months ago in Connecticut, those who survived Stockton's horror can add an epilogue to Purdy's deadly lesson: Painful memories never go away but don't necessarily define the course of people's lives.

Read the whole story

Vox Musica coming to South Lake Tahoe

Vox Musica: Music Worth Sharing will be at Lake Tahoe Community College on Jan. 31.

Vox Musica, directed by Daniel Paulson, was founded in 2006 in a niche of untapped potential in Sacramento's budding classical music scene. This women's vocal ensemble enjoys the privileged position of nurturing the choral arts by combining outstanding vocal artistry with innovative programming.

Vox Musica is committed to excellence in performance of diverse and challenging choral literature for women's voices and is dedicated to promoting new works, including many premiers and commissioned works.

The 7pm event at Duke Theatre is put on by Tahoe Arts Project.

General admission seating will begin at 6:30pm. Tickets are $12 for adults, $5 for children and $10 for seniors, and can be purchased in advance at the visitors centers in California and Nevada. To charge tickets by phone, call (530) 542.3632. Tickets will also be available at the door if not sold out.

Vox Musica will be performing in the schools the week of Jan. 27-31.

No snow: LTCC cancels classes, loses students

Publisher's note: ***This is one of a series of blurbs about how the lack of winter is impacting businesses in the Lake Tahoe Basin. If you have an idea, please email it to info@LakeTahoeNews.net.***

Snow conditions have forced Lake Tahoe Community College to cancel 13 wilderness education classes.

These classes include:

• Nordic Skate Skiing (3)

• Telemark Skiing (4)

• Backcountry Skiing (2)

• American Institute for Avalanche Research and Education (AIARE) Avalanche certification classes (4).

Between the 13 courses there were 204 enrollments. This equates to 4.6 full-time equivalent students. FTEs are in large part how LTCC is funded by the state.

"We are concerned we are losing some part-time students due to the reductions of employees at the ski resorts and local hotels and restaurants. This is very hard to prove, but we do see a drop (in students) when the snow is not good. Two years ago we saw a drop in students when the ski resorts started laying off," LTCC President Kindred Murillo told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Community Education's Nordic track opened briefly when snow first fell in the basin. It has since been shut down until conditions change. Thirty people purchased season passes.

“LTCC remains optimistic and focused to helping the local community continue to revitalize its economy, even during these difficult unsnow times. We believe we have to have the conversation that asks the question ‘How does LTCC have to change in order to prosper with global warming and the changes to the alpine climates?’ Our answer – destination college,” Murillo said.

It’s official – California is in a drought



Cold overnight temps keep Taylor Creek frozen, but there is no snow along the banks. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Josh Richman and Paul Rogers, San Jose Mercury News

SAN FRANCISCO – Gov. Jerry Brown on Friday officially declared that California is in a drought emergency, as the state struggled with the lowest-levels of rainfall in its 153-year history, reservoirs were at low levels and firefighters remained on high alert.

The governor asked Californians to reduce their water

consumption by 20 percent. In practical terms, the drought declaration streamlines the rules for water agencies to transfer extra water from one part of the state to another. It also raises public awareness.

Brown was governor in 1976 and 1977, one of the most severe dry periods in the 20th century. The most recent extended drought was 1987-1992. The last governor to declare a drought declaration was Arnold Schwarzenegger, who did so during a period of low rainfall in 2008 and 2009. Brown lifted that declaration in 2011 after a wet winter.

The Sierra Nevada snowpack on Thursday was 17 percent of normal. Last year, most cities in the state received the lowest amount of rain in any living person’s lifetime – with records going back to 1850.

Read the whole story