

Tahoe's animals subject of Sierra Club talk

Will Richardson from Tahoe Institute for Natural Science will talk about Tahoe's animals on Jan. 22 from 7-9pm.

Richardson will present an overview of the strategies used by Tahoe wildlife for enduring long Sierra Nevada winters, and highlight many fascinating examples of how they are employed.

He has a doctorate in ecology, evolution, and conservation biology from the UNR, where he studied bird communities in Sierra Nevada aspen habitats. He is the co-founder of the Tahoe Institute for Natural Science (TINS), a member-supported nonprofit organization seeking to advance the natural history, conservation, and ecosystem knowledge of the Tahoe region through science, education, and outreach.

He will speak at the Tahoe Area Sierra Club meeting at 1195 Rufus Allen Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

Sweet cravings can be body's stress response

By Erin Beresini, Outside

Researchers have fingered several things as sources of sweet cravings. Stress, caffeine, and lack of sleep can all over stimulate your HPA (hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal) axis, the body's stress response system. Researchers believe chronic overstimulation of that HPA axis can impair its function, leading to poor immune activity, memory, and metabolism.

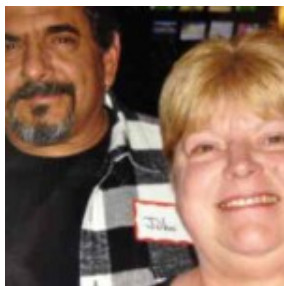
Calorie-dense food like sweets, researchers believe, stimulate the body's endogenous opioid system, which releases endorphins and has a pain-relieving, analgesic effect on the body. It may also help decrease the activity of the HPA axis, helping to calm that overstimulation. If you're constantly craving sweets, it could be your body's way of telling you to chill out, get more sleep, or cut the caffeine.

Of course, there are other reasons why you may crave sweets, particularly right after a meal when you're presumably full. A poorly fueled workout is one of them.

Read the whole story

South Tahoe family needs help

Longtime South Lake Tahoe residents Johny and Bobby Russo, owners of Sierra Appliance Repair (previously known as Honest John's), are experiencing a financial crisis. Their adult son, Tony, has suffered a catastrophic illness and has been hospitalized at Renown Medical Center in Reno since early November. He is making improvement, but the prognosis is for a recovery expected to take at least a year.



Johnny and
Bobby Russo

The Russos have worked together running their business for the last 30-plus years, with Johnny doing the repairs and Bobby handling the office duties. They have made moral support to Tony a priority, which has caused their business to suffer. The combination of lost revenue from the business and unexpected expenses from traveling to Reno has placed them in a financial crisis.

They will gratefully accept any help to get through this crisis. Contributions by check or gift card (Costco, gas, grocery store, etc.) may be mailed to Abi Terry, P.O. Box 9285, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96158.

Questions can be directed to a-terry@sbcglobal.net.

Arts-culture-publishing contribute more to economy in U.S. than travel-tourism

By Dan Gorenstein, Marketplace

For the first time the federal government has tallied up the arts and culture contribution to the nation's economy. It turns out that sector, movies, painting, publishing, cable and more, was worth half a trillion dollars – 3 percent to the gross domestic product in 2011. That's more than the travel and tourism industry.

"Here you have for the first time, comprehensive empirical evidence from the point of view of economists that the arts play a substantial role in the nation's economy," says Sunil Iyengar who runs the Office of Research and Analysis for the

National Endowment for the Arts.

In an instant, writers, app designers, publishers and painters just got a bunch of “street cred.” Nearly 2 million people work in the arts and culture industry which exported about \$40 billion in goods and services in 2011. Some economists say ideas, innovation, and creativity are essential to growing the United States economy.

Read the whole story

No snow: S. Lake Tahoe roads in better shape

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.*

Lack of snow means South Lake Tahoe officials are able to repair roads.

“Our crews do crack sealing and minor patching of the roads, as well as sign maintenance and sweeping and cleaning of the drainage system,” Jim Marino, the city’s capital improvement program manager, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We concentrate the crack filling on roads that have been paved within the last 10 years in order for us to extend useful life. Any cracks over 3-inches wide need to be dealt with by other methods.”

A cold patch is used this time of year. It’s a temporary fix using an oil blend. In the summer a more permanent hot mix

method will be used.

“This season we are seeing many potholes and cracks getting larger due to the freeze thaw that we have been having,” Marino said.

The city to date has used about 8,000 pounds of cold patch, which can repair about 320 potholes that are 2-square-feet and 2-inches deep. To fill the approximately 37,000 lineal feet of cracks, 6,000 pounds – or 645 gallons – of crack seal have been used.

“As of right now we are a bit ahead of the normal winter street maintenance compared to heavier snow years, mainly because we are not tied up removing snow. We have utilized the dry spell to begin re-striping roadways and concentrating on sediment pick up. We don’t typically get these long dry spells to do the striping, so that is where we think we are ahead of the game at this stage,” Marino said.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

No buyer yet, but people interested in KMS

STATELINE – While there were no bids for the former Kingsbury Middle School to the Douglas County school board to discuss Jan. 14, that could change.

Douglas County School District Superintendent Lisa Noonan asked the board to put the item on the agenda monthly instead of quarterly. Which they agreed to do. The next meeting is Feb. 11 in Minden.

The asking price is \$4 million.

“There is enough activity to bring it back to the board monthly,” Noonan told the board.

The Stateline school has been on the market for two years. It was closed because of declining enrollment.

Brian Rippet, president of Douglas County Professional Education Association, pointed out to the board that one of the overriding reasons to close KMS and consolidate the two other schools at the lake was so there would be shared staff at Zephyr Cove Elementary and Whittell High schools. Now there is no shared staff. He said it might be time to rethink which schools are used at the lake because Kingsbury has better amenities than Zephyr Cove.

However, deed restrictions prevent ZCES from being sold.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

S. Lake Tahoe budget flush with ‘extra’ money

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe is in the unique position of having about \$1.2 million to spend mid-year.

While the numbers are not astronomical, it is a change from the austerity and deficit modes the city has been faced with in recent years. The “extra” money is carry-over from the last fiscal year that ended Sept. 30. It takes time for fund balances to be known based on bills to be paid and money

coming in so a dollar figure is not known when the current budget is passed. (This is essentially money that was budgeted but not spent or revenues that came in above what was projected.)

It was known when the current budget was approved last fall that there would be \$349,473 in excess. That was immediately put toward the recreation master plan, a police vehicle, actuarial study, computer hardware, improvements at the city pool and few other things.

What was decided Jan. 14 was for \$250,000 to be used for a one-time 2 percent salary adjustment for all permanent full-time employees. The city manager and city attorney have declined to be included. Most part-time and seasonal employees will receive \$250.

Another \$250,000 was allocated for the Harrison Avenue project. That bid will be awarded Feb. 18 and the project will break ground in the late spring.

The council approved this on a 5-0 vote without any discussion. However, all have been meeting with city staff individually. And Mayor Hal Cole and Councilwoman Brooke Laine are the fiscal sustainability committee members and therefore are most active in financial matters.

What isn't determined yet is how another \$534,122 will be spent. Of that amount, \$334,122 is in the bank – also from year-end balance excesses. The remaining \$200,000 is from anticipated sales tax increases based on what the state has told the city.

City Manager Nancy Kerry pointed out that if the council wants to eliminate the paid parking program, the \$534,122 would almost cover the cost of doing so. Eliminating the controversial program mid-fiscal year would create a budget hole of about \$600,000. Included in that is the \$191,000 to pay off the kiosks.

There will be a public workshop on Feb. 10 at 8am at Lake Tahoe Airport at which time the council is expected to make a decision about where the money goes and to potentially create a policy about how to spend money when there are unanticipated revenues.

Cole said after the council meeting he hopes in February a policy will be set to guide this and future councils about how to allocate surpluses.

"I still think it's infrastructure. I know that is broad, but without infrastructure improvements people get frustrated," Cole told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Kerry suggested some of the money could be put aside to deal with the fluctuating state retirement system.

Much of Kerry's presentation on Tuesday was about the historical financial situation of the city and how the city has achieved positive cash flow. She stressed the cyclical hiring in flush times, firing in lean times is not an effective way to run a city because it ruins lives and doesn't help the public.

The turn around from 2010 when the city was facing systemic \$3 million annual deficits in part is because one-third of the staff was laid off, employees are paying for some of their benefits, reserves were created in 2003, transient occupancy tax is being collected from vacation rentals and other changes were made to how the city does business.

"Now we have a city that is living within its means," Kerry told the council. "We've fixed the fiscal problem now, but I'm still nervous."

The local economy is still on shaky ground. While hotel tax numbers have been going up for the past two years, Councilman Tom Davis who is in the lodging business, said with no snow on the ground room nights could come to a screeching halt and

cautioned his colleagues to be reserved with expectations.

Letter: Barton appreciates community's support

To the community,

A huge thanks to the community for providing baby toys, gift certificates and specialty items for the first baby of the year. Joshua Tapia-Hernandez, who arrived on Jan. 2, was the first baby born at Barton Birthing Center in 2014.

Joshua and his family were welcomed with over \$1,200 in gifts from local businesses and community members. The gifts started with a flower arrangement from Thran's Flowers. To get him off on the right foot, Joshua received donations from El Dorado Savings, Earth Smart Diaper Service, and Tahoe Valley Pharmacy. Toys and fun gift cards came from Big 5 Sporting Goods, Kmart, Kahle Community Center's Two's Day Class, Toy Maniacs, and Tot to Tot.

Special treats for the parents included gift certificates from BeautiControl, Harrah's and Harveys Lake Tahoe, Paradise Beauty Supply, and Tahoe Nails & Spa.

The family also received restaurant certificates from Beach Hut Deli and Round Table Pizza.

Barton's own staff added to the wagon of gifts with donations from the Auxiliary Gift Shop, foundation, human resources, and public relations.

Cathy Vogelgesang, a member of the auxiliary – Barton's dedicated group of volunteers -- even knitted an infant-sized

beanie.

We live in an incredibly generous community and appreciate all the local businesses who showed support for Barton's first baby of 2014.

Susan McLaughlin, public relations coordinator at Barton Health

Olympic qualifiers rescheduled for Mammoth

By USSA

PARK CITY -- The U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association has confirmed a plan to run U.S. only Olympic qualifiers this week at Mammoth Mountain to replace the snowboarding halfpipe and slopestyle competitions that were canceled due to snow and low visibility at Breckenridge on Saturday.

The canceled competitions were the third of five Olympic qualifiers.

Various options were considered by the USSA and it was determined that the most fair way to conduct Olympic qualification in slopestyle and halfpipe was to replace the events and stay at five qualifiers.

The new third qualifiers would be open to any U.S. athletes who were eligible to compete at Breckenridge. The field for the fourth and fifth qualifiers would remain as planned with only the top athletes in the rankings after three events.

Proposed schedule:

Sprint U.S. Grand Prix, Mammoth Mountain (all times local)

Jan. 16

9:30-11am – Slopestyle Final – U.S. Olympic qualification No. 3

1:30-3pm – Slopestyle Final – U.S. Olympic qualification

Jan. 17

9:30-10:45am – Halfpipe Final – U.S. Olympic qualification No. 3

12:10-2:30pm – Halfpipe Final – U.S. Olympic qualification No. 4

Jan. 18

11am-1pm – Slopestyle Final – U.S. Olympic qualification No. 5

Jan. 19

11:40am-2pm – Halfpipe Final – U.S. Olympic qualification No. 5.

Announcement of team nominations to follow.

Flu death in El Dorado County

An El Dorado County resident has died from the flu.

Officials are not releasing the age, gender or hometown of the individual even though counties throughout California provide that information to the media. The person is not a Lake Tahoe

resident.

“Due to patient privacy laws we cannot provide that level of information regarding the fatality. However, I can share with you that we received the report late (Monday) afternoon and we confirmed the fatality as flu-related (Tuesday),” Margaret Williams, spokeswoman for the El Dorado County Health & Human Services Agency, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The H1N1 strain is what is striking most of the country. It is still possible to be vaccinated.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*