Border crisis reaching into Nevada

By Tovin Lapan, Las Vegas Sun

Every time the phone rings these days, Rosa Molina steels herself for a heart-wrenching story.

She has been taking far more calls than usual from immigrants, and many of them are sharing tales of abuse and violence. This week, she has already taken a call from a mother who says she paid a smuggler $7,000 to escort her children from El Salvador to the United States, only to be contacted and asked for an additional $5,000 if she ever wants to see her children again.

“The problem started last year, but nobody was paying attention,” said Molina, director of the citizenship and immigration program for the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada in Reno. She connects immigrants with pro bono attorneys, a high-demand service in the area.

The surge of immigrants, mostly children and families from Central America, only recently became fodder for newscasts but has been building for years. Apprehensions of unaccompanied children increased from 16,067 in fiscal year 2011 to 24,481 in FY 2012 and 38,833 in FY 2013, according to Customs and Border Patrol.

The numbers have spiked this year, with 57,525 picked up by Border Patrol in the first nine months of FY 2014. If the increased rate holds, the federal government estimates 90,000 children may arrive before the fiscal year ends Sept. 30.

Molina’s phone was ringing at 10 times the normal rate last year, and she noticed a lot more calls pertaining to recently arrived children and families. Then the flood hit at the end of spring. The office received more than 120 calls in June

alone – a 260 percent increase from normal traffic.

Nevada is not home to any of the government-contracted shelters or other facilities being used for the recently arrived immigrants, but it has not been untouched by the influx.

“Last year, we were seeing more kids traveling alone, mostly between 10 and 14 years old, that were being sent here by immigration authorities because they had family in the area,” Molina said. “Now, we are seeing a lot of women and children together, with the kids as young as 5 years old.”

Typically, the immigrants who show up in Northern Nevada and the Lake Tahoe area have been detained near the Mexican border by immigration authorities and released with a notice to appear in court for deportation proceedings. In Nevada, most end up staying with friends and family.

Read the whole story

Opinion: More shenanigans with Meyers plan

Updated July 18 12:15pm

Publisher’s note: ***Tahoe Regional Young Professionals has issued a statement since the column was posted that says, “Mr. Curtzwiler made the incorrect statement that TRYP was ‘behind the project’ for the catalyst project. This is completely unfounded and untrue. Our organization does not take stances on political or planning issues.”***

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To the community,

The following is a letter sent by [Steve] Teshara. The Jason Drew mentioned is a member of the Tahoe Chamber board of directors as well as a member of the Tahoe [Regional] Young Professional group which is behind this new project.

This is what the original fiasco project was all about.



Kenny
Curtzwiler

Yes, it would be nice to upgrade Meyers, but not at the expense of what is now here. I can’t believe how quiet my opponent has been throughout this whole project. She is on the board and has to know about this and how the community feels. I understand why Norma [Santiago] is quiet and went to a town meeting in Pollock Pines and found out she is not very well liked due to the fact that she is pushing an agenda down there that no one wants either. They actually want to increase the density first proposed as well as the height limit to accommodate this “bed and breakfast” concept when in actuality it is a hotel. Why, oh why, are they trying to be so sneaky about this project, not Brendan [Ferry], but the people who actually run the town. How many town centers do we need? Besides, Meyers is made up of about seven different areas from Golden Bear to Christmas Valley.

Kenny Curtzwiler, Meyers

Here is the letter:

Sustainable Community Advocates

218 Elks Point Road, Suite 202

PO Box 1875

Zephyr Cove, NV 89448

775.588.2488

Date: July 7, 2014

To: Brendan Ferry, Principal Planner El Dorado County

Adam Lewandowski, Long Range Planning Manager Tahoe Regional Planning Agency

Fr: Steve Teshara, Principal

Re: Comments on 3rd Draft of the Meyers Area Plan (June 2014)

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Third Draft and the list of June 2014 changes to the earlier 2nd Draft. As you are aware, I attended many of the early meetings of the Meyers Community Advisory Council and nearly all of the larger community meetings organized by El Dorado County with the assistance of the TRPA. As Chair of the South Shore Transportation Management Association (SS/TMA) I have been involved for the last twenty years in many Meyers Area transportation and community mobility planning initiatives. I have reviewed each of the previous draft Meyers Area Plans.

Unfortunately, several of the June changes constrain the value of the Area Plan and make the adopted Community Vision, Plan Purpose, and a number of the stated Goals and Policies, much less likely to occur. I strongly urge you to reconsider these changes.

My comments build on those you recently received from Jason Drew, a Meyers resident. For convenience, I have restated Jason’s concerns from his e-mail of June 29, summarized in the

following three paragraphs:

• Height Limit. The 35-foot height limit is undesirable in the Town Center. This height limit constrains creativity and the potential for architectural character to be integrated in new commercial or multi-family structures. 42 feet provides more flexibility while still keeping structures from blocking viewsheds. The additional 7 feet is not enough to create another full story but does provide for additional dormer or attic space, which is important for architectural character or, in the case of small commercial businesses, the ability to integrate additional onsite covered storage.

• Density. The original plan called for 40 units per acre in what will now be the Town Center. The new draft calls for 15 units per acre. This drastic reduction will make it very difficult, if not impossible, to make the finances work on small commercial or tourist redevelopment projects. Although some participants at the March public meeting were in favor of the 15 units per acre, I don't believe most people in the room understood what 15 units per acre looks like or means for penciling out the finances on a project. For example, many bed and breakfast properties or boutique hotels in other areas of the Basin or in other tourist destinations easily exceed this density. Bed and Breakfast accommodations are often 4 to 5 room facilities on a typically one-quarter-acre lot. This would put B&Bs at 16 to 20 units per acre and exceed the draft revised Plan limit. In order to encourage the type of redevelopment and investment our community wants, the Plan needs to provide density limits that make them viable.

[See specific example of a successful boutique hotel property in Truckee cited below].

• Commercial Floor Area (CFA). The Plan has focused on encouraging and promoting small business. This is commendable, but the requirement that one half of the CFA available in the Plan be set aside for small businesses (defined as less than

2,500 square feet) is troubling. Rarely will a commercial enterprise or small business have the capital to revamp an existing structure, redevelop a blighted site, or develop a new site at this size. Typically what happens is a larger project, with economies of scale, will redevelop or revamp an existing property (which may have multiple structures) at say 8,000 to 10,000 square feet and then will sell or lease smaller spaces to interested small businesses. Rarely do small businesses themselves have the capital to make the necessary investment to revamp or redevelop a site. By setting aside one half the available CFA for businesses less than 2,500 square feet, the Plan will unintentionally limit the variety and pace at which new businesses may start and thrive in Meyers. Please consider dropping this to one quarter of the available CFA or less.

In addition to the above, I respectfully submit the following comments:

• Boutique Hotel Example. The adopted Meyers Community Vision and other language in the Plan reinforce Meyers as "a hub for outdoor activities." Based on this focus, I see the popular Cedar House Sport Hotel in Truckee as an excellent example of the type of lodging property investment that should be allowed and encouraged by the Meyers Area Plan.

The Cedar House Sport Hotel is comprised of 42 units located on 1.34 acres. An event center and restaurant is located on a separate adjacent parcel. There would be no Cedar House Sport Hotel if Truckee had limited tourist accommodation units to no more than 15 per acre.

I encourage you to visit the website. Below is a sampling of the property's marketing position. I have stayed there and know many who have enjoyed the experience, so I can vouch for the claims. Cedar House has some great ratings on sites such as TripAdvisor.

Cedar House Sport Hotel – Where Style Meets Adventure

Cedar House Sport Hotel is:

Inspired by the mountains

Enhanced by nature

Designed for adventure

“The Cedar House Sport Hotel explores our need to connect to nature, emphasizing in its design a harmony that is sympathetic to the human body, mind and spirit. Strength, Structure, Environmental Awareness, and Respect to the natural materials used are found in the themes throughout the design. The Cedar House Sport Hotel was inspired by its setting high in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, nestled in the Martis Valley, just minutes from historic downtown Truckee and Lake Tahoe.”

Several Recent Plan Changes Are Inconsistent with draft Plan Goals and Policies

The recent changes in height, density provisions are inconsistent with several Goals and Policies. Here are just two examples:

• Land Use, Goal 1. This goal includes “tourist accommodation.” With the revised density limit of 15 units per acre, no tourist accommodation is likely in the Meyers Area Plan.

• Land Use, Policy 1.2: This policy includes reference to a “bed and breakfast inn.” With the revised density limit of 15 units per acre, no bed and breakfast accommodation is likely in the Meyers Area Plan.

Community Incentive Program

The 3rd Draft Plan eliminates Land Use provisions of the Community Incentive Program related to height and density. A

related change was made to Section 130.A.1 (Scenic Quality).

As with the changes to height and density cited above, those in charge of making these decisions have failed to provide adequate justification to support the changes. No justification is provided in the short table “June 2014 Revisions to the draft Meyers Area Plan”. Absent adequate justification, the specific changes discussed in this memorandum that were made to the Land Use chapter should be reversed. There was substantial rationale for including them in previous draft Plans. In the alternative, corresponding changes should be made to the related Plan Goals and Policies. Goals and Policies cannot promise to deliver what they are unable to deliver.

There is much to like and support in the Meyers Area Plan. Please don’t undermine the Plan with changes that have no basis in good planning.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments for your consideration. I would be happy to discuss further with you prior to the start of formal hearings on the Plan.

Truckee spending money on economic development

Truckee recently allocated more than $2.5 million in for two economic development incentive programs: Economic Development Support Program and the Economic Development Fund Program.

These new programs are intended to help foster a healthy, year-round local economy by providing financial assistance for specific projects.

Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce was awarded a grant for two related projects. The first is to work with the lodging industry on the creation of a tourism Business improvement district. The grant will allow the chamber to work with a consultant for further education, outreach and consensus building among the lodging industry, then the necessary documents preparation and hearing process. It is anticipated this could take nine months.

The second related project for which the chamber was awarded a grant is for an integrated place-based marketing and brand campaign. The chamber led a collaborative economic development initiative, Truckee Tomorrow, which was a partnership with the chamber, the Truckee, Truckee Downtown Merchants Association and Nevada County. The group hired Ryan Sharp of the Center for Strategic Economic Research to work with the community to identify strategies for enhancing economic prosperity. Following several community meetings, the group overwhelmingly chose a place-based marketing and brand campaign strategy. The goal of the strategy is to:

· Brand Truckee – establish a brand position which will refine our current and future marketing (both tourism and economic development)

· Inform and educate – educate potential employees and businesses with key information for moving, relocation or starting a business in Truckee

· Diversify the economy – actively marketing Truckee will recruit tourism and non-tourism businesses that will help diversify the economic base and increase revenue

· Maximize marketing effectiveness – by using marketing channels that maximize reach, such as public relations, social media and internet, while using technology to measure performance and further optimize the marketing spend.

The chamber will be required to acquire matching private

funding commitments prior to moving forward with the place-based marketing and brand campaign strategy.

Series of outdoor dinners benefits nonprofits

Sugar Bowl Resort will kick off its annual dining series at Donner Summit's Lake Mary on July 18.

There will be 13 dinners on the shores of private Lake Mary, with a portion of each evening's proceeds benefiting different local nonprofits.

Chef Alan Davis serves French-inspired California cuisine paired with a wide selection of wines, and creative homemade desserts.

Dinners are from 5:30-9pm. Reservations are highly recommended.

Lake Mary is located next to Sugar Bowl Resort.

Dinner dates and no-profit partners are as follows:

July 18: Donner Summit Historical Society

July 20: Truckee Trails Foundation

July 23: Truckee Donner Land Trust

July 25: Mountain Area Preservation

July 26: Donner Summit Area Association

July 30: Gateway Mountain Center

Aug. 3: Tahoe Food Hub

Aug. 10: Arts for the Schools

Aug. 24: Sugar Bowl Academy

Aug. 31: Excellence in Education

Sept. 1: Humane Society of Truckee-Tahoe

Sept. 7: Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue

Sept. 14: Sierra Avalanche Center

To make reservations, call 530.426.7002.

NDEP has money for water quality projects

Nevada Division of Environmental Protection has approximately $1 million in federal funding available to provide grant assistance for projects that prevent or control nonpoint source water pollution.

Nonpoint source water pollution occurs when rain, snowmelt and irrigation water flows over developed or disturbed land, carrying with it contaminants including oil, sediment, pesticides, bacteria and nutrients.

All proposals must follow the guidelines that are online.

State, local and tribal governments, nonprofit organizations and educational institutions are eligible to apply. A non-

federal match of at least 50 percent of the total project cost is required.

Examples of projects eligible for funding include:

- Water quality improvement projects;
- Implementation of best management practices to protect water quality;
- Public education programs aimed at reducing NPS pollution;
- Implementation of low impact development practices;
- Identified projects from an approved watershed implementation plan and/or total maximum daily load implementation plan.

Proposals will be accepted until Sept. 5.

Thunderstorms expected to linger in Tahoe

The storm that rolled through the Lake Tahoe Basin on Thursday afternoon isn't over for some people.

- For only the second time in the American Century Championship tournament's 25-year history play stopped because of weather.
- The California Highway Patrol is warning motorists that boulders have tumbled onto Highway 89 near Squaw Valley.
- Power is not expected to be restored to Nevada Energy customers in Incline Village until midnight.
  The Clear Creek Fire is 35 percent contained, no evacuations and roads all open; however, lightning on July 17 started two fires in the general area. One is

near Old Clear Creek Road and Golf Club Drive, and the other is near Genoa Peak.Heavenly Mountain Resort's gondola stopped taking people up about noon because of the threat of lightning.

The National Weather Service in Reno is calling for afternoon thunderstorm through Saturday that could produce flash flooding. A flash flood watch is in effect until 9pm July 19.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

South Shore party scene to be ramped up with Hard Rock hotel-casino opening in winter



Hard Rock Lake Tahoe expects to open in the 2014-15 ski season.

By Kathryn Reed

Party central – that is what the former Horizon casino is about to be transformed into when it opens this winter as Hard Rock Lake Tahoe.

Don Marrandino, aka Big D to those who knew him when he oversaw Harrah's Lake Tahoe and Harveys from 2003-05, is going to run the property. He is headquartered out of the Las Vegas Hard Rock where he recently returned after having a stint in Atlantic City.

Lake Tahoe News in March was the first publication to reveal the Stateline property would be a Hard Rock Hotel.



Don Marrandino, who has worked at Lake Tahoe before, will be overseeing the Hard Rock. Photo/Kathryn Reed

"The Hard Rock is known for music and fun," Marrandino said July 17 during the public announcement.

And Marrandino is known for his love of rock 'n' roll. He is a huge fan of Bruce Springsteen and Sammy Hagar.

What the music venue or restaurant scene will be like at the new hotel was not released – just that there will be plenty of both. Marrandino was with Caesars Entertainment when Toby Keith opened his I Love This Bar & Grill at Harrah's Las

Vegas. Keith’s closest restaurant to Tahoe is in Folsom. And Keith has played at Harveys Outdoor Concert Series more than once.

Hagar has his Cabo Wabo at Harveys. Plus, there is a Hard Rock Restaurant at Harveys.

Hard Rock restaurants and hotels are separate companies that no longer have anything to do with each other. The restaurant is essentially a concessionaire of the hotel.

Marrandino told *Lake Tahoe News* he doesn’t see a problem with the restaurant next door, saying the hotel’s marketing will be so different no one will be confused.

Marrandino also promised to create the area’s largest outdoor pool party. Entertainment will be poolside, too, just like in Vegas.

Anyone familiar with the Las Vegas Hard Rock knows the property is all about partying – from the Rehab pool to the 4,500-seat Joint music venue.

When the Tahoe property first opened in 1965 as Del Webb’s Sahara-Tahoe, Elvis Presley, Phyllis Diller and the Osmond Brothers would play there. It was like having a Las Vegas style hotel-casino in Lake Tahoe.

It may return to that same glory.

MontBleu’s showroom is the largest on the South Shore with seating for 1,400. A larger capacity indoor venue has long been talked about within the community.



The Horizon closed earlier this year after having been neglected for years. Photo/LTN

Brothers Jon and David Park are infusing nearly $60 million to revamp the property from top to bottom. All 539 rooms are being remodeled, with the goal of creating a four-star hotel. The 25,000-square-feet of gaming will include slots and table games.

The Park family split their holdings last fall, with the brothers getting the Horizon. The brothers formed Neva One LLC. They promised not to be absentee property owners. After all, the Park family has been part of the Tahoe-Carson Valley fabric since the 1800s.

(MontBleu, which is across the street from the Horizon, is an Edgewood Companies property. The lease with Tropicana Entertainment out of Las Vegas expires in 2028.)

Warner Hospitality, which owns or manages 10 casino properties in Southern Nevada, Iowa, New Mexico, California and Washington, will operate the hotel. Warner owns the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino that will open this summer in Sioux City, Iowa, and manages Hard Rock Las Vegas.

The promise is for the Tahoe Hard Rock to open during the 2014-15 ski season.

Heavenly Mountain Resort wants a part of the Hard Rock action.

John Wagnon, who heads the ski resort's marketing department, repeatedly said, the Hard Rock is "a game changer."

"It elevates the entire region," Wagnon said. "They have the same target audience. It couldn't be a better fit for Heavenly."

That audience is young, likes to drink and likes to party. Heavenly was trying to showcase its young attitude with the Heavenly Angels (young women not dressed in much wearing platform shoes on the mountain handing out Champagne) during the announcement, which was at the resort's gondola midstation.

There's a small storefront near the gondola in Heavenly Village that is a preview center for Hard Rock Lake Tahoe.

Saving water without letting the lawn die

By Anjali Hemphill, CBS13

An El Dorado Hills woman is taking big steps to save water during the drought, rigging up her home to the point where she's cut her water use by more than half.

Marie Levy has built her own water-saving system from simple products you can find at any hardware store. She's even figured out a way to reuse water more than once.

"Every year in California it's dry," she said.

Levy doesn’t hide her lawn watering during the drought. In fact, she’s proud of it.

“It’s about one load of wash to water my grass for an hour,” she said. And I can do that every day of the week and not run out of water.”

She’s discovered a way to save water wasted every day and put it to good use. She built her own system without any professional experience.

Read the whole story

LTUSD registration about to open

Students entering kindergarten in the Lake Tahoe Unified School District in August need to be registered at their local school.

A child must be 5 on or before Sept. 1, 2014. If your child will turn 5 before Dec. 1, they qualify for transitional kindergarten.

California law requires:

1. The child’s birth certificate.

2. Proof of immunization, which includes the Varicella (chicken pox), Hepatitis B and for most children, the last booster shot. Children will not be enrolled in school without presenting an up-to-date immunization record.

3. A health examination upon entry to school. Schedule with

your family doctor or clinic.

4. Oral health examination upon entry to school (dental examinations that have occurred in the last 12 months meet this requirement).

5. Proof of California residency.

Call the school for an appointment to register. Staff will be available starting Aug. 4:

Bijou Community School 530.543.2337

Sierra House 530.543.2327

Tahoe Valley 530.543.2350

South Tahoe Middle School 530.541.6404

South Tahoe High School 530.543.2255.

The first day of school is Aug. 25.

Judge’s ruling on Calif. death penalty stuns experts

By Maura Dolan and Victoria Kim, Los Angeles Times

A federal judge’s ruling that California’s death penalty is unconstitutional was described by legal experts Wednesday as stunning and unprecedented.

The ruling by U.S. District Judge Cormac J. Carney found that decades-long delays and uncertainty about whether condemned inmates will ever be executed violate the constitution’s ban

on cruel or unusual punishment.

Carney issued his ruling in a decision that overturned the death sentence of Ernest Dewayne Jones, a Los Angeles man sentenced to die for the 1992 rape and murder of Julia Miller, his girlfriend’s mother.

In overturning Jones’ death sentence, Carney noted that the inmate faced “complete uncertainty as to when, or even whether” he would be executed.

He pointed out that more than 900 people have been sentenced to death in California since 1978 but only 13 have been executed.

Read the whole story