Placerville tent city permit about to expire

By Kevin Oliver, KCRA-TV

Three dozen people are wondering where they will go if the Placerville City Council doesn’t approve a permit allowing their tent city to continue.

Rebecca Nylander moved into a tent after her mother died and she found herself on the streets. She has become part of the leadership council governing who gets to join the ranks of the three dozen people sharing the space on the outskirts of the city.

“It’s not a joke. It’s really stressful,” said Nylander. “Especially for those of us who know how vulnerable our people are and don’t know how we are going to keep our people safe.”

Nylander fears she will not only lose this temporary roof over her head but the small community that has supported her.

The tent city was set up as a sort of experiment in July 2012. Placerville has allowed it to operate under a temporary permit which expires Nov. 15.

Read the whole story

Polar Express tickets going

fast

In its third season, the all-ages Polar Express train ride from the frosty Northern Nevada landscape to the North Pole has won the hearts and minds of thousands of children and families.

This year the V&T doubled the number of train rides for this season. With the added trains, remaining coach tickets are available Nov. 24, Dec. 1, Dec. 5, Dec. 12, all departing at 8pm.

Set to “The Polar Express” motion picture soundtrack, pajama-clad children can relive the magical story on the Virginia & Truckee. During the journey, the conductor will punch tickets and chefs will serve hot chocolate, followed by a reading of Van Allsburg’s classic. At the North Pole, Santa will step aboard and greet the children.

The V&T’s engine and holiday decorated passenger cars leave the Carson City Eastgate Depot (seven miles east of downtown Carson City) and travel nearly two miles before stopping at Santa’s mythical North Pole retreat.

The limited coach tickets are $38 for adults and $29 for children (free for children under 2 who sit on a lap). The train Nov. 22-Dec. 22 on Friday, Saturday and Sunday with departure times of 5pm, 6:30pm and 8pm.

To purchase tickets, call 877.724.5007.

Then and now: Highways change names





“You Are Here” at the bottom center of the billboard’s map indicates the Spooner Summit junction of highways 50 and 28 in Nevada.

The billboard was likely from the early 1950s because it shows only U.S. 40 through Truckee – which became Interstate 80 in late 1950. It also labels today’s Mt. Rose Highway which is State Route 431 as 37. This was its previous designation until the early 1960s. Highway 267 between Kings Beach and Truckee is not shown.

Note: The older photo is from the Special Collections Department at UNR and the newer one from Bill Kingman.

– Bill Kingman

Lake Tahoe search and rescue volunteers regularly risk

their lives to save others

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – While it's mostly tourists whom search and rescue teams help, it isn't always live bodies that are carried out of the wilderness.

Domino is brought in to assist with avalanche and cadaver calls. Through their dog is how Scott and Heather Longoria got involved with the El Dorado County Search and Rescue team.

Because teeth hold a scent for years that is often a tool used to train dogs. Domino showed how well he is trained at Harrah's Lake Tahoe last week during the weekly Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe lunch. He sniffed out a tooth under a table after being given the command "seek".

"We probably bring closure to 10 or 15 families a year in the greater Lake Tahoe Basin," Scott Gabler said of rescues that turn into recoveries.



Scott Gabler talks Oct. 30 about the roll of search and rescue volunteers in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Photo/Kathryn Reed

In the three years he has been with SAR he has responded to 150 searches that equated to 2,300 hours. His work earned him

state recognition earlier this year.

The Tahoe unit of the El Dorado County SAR is a group of 25 volunteers who drop what they are doing to help strangers – and often at the same time putting themselves in precarious situations. They respond to upward of 100 calls a year.

“The vast majority are urgent in nature,” Gabler said. “Search and rescue operates in the background until it’s needed.”

He said about three-quarters of the people in need are tourists. And because they don’t know the terrain, or understand the winds and temperature of Lake Tahoe, or aren’t prepared SAR often comes to the rescue.

But not all incidents can be prevented. Accidents happen.

Search rescue team members may train for one of the specialized teams. Some are adept at rope rescue. Most often rock climbers find themselves in trouble at Lovers Leap, though the cliffs at Angora can also be treacherous.

Most water rescues are on Lake Tahoe, with very few involving the Upper Truckee River. It’s people on human powered craft and motorboats who call for help.

Ice axes and crampons are standard equipment for the mountaineering team.

Trips to ski resorts are fairly routine for SAR. And many times SAR is out there without backup from ski patrol.

“We get calls typically when someone goes out of bounds. And typically it’s at the end of the day,” Scott Longoria said.

It’s not always easy to find people. The person might not know where they are or the ping from a cell phone could be misleading.

The latter was true last winter when four Stanford students

called to say they were lost. Their snowshoe excursion nearly ended with a recovery because one of the women was already taking her clothes off – a sign hypothermia had set in.

They had set out at noon dressed more in workout clothes than winterwear. They had no provisions to stay out in single-digit temperatures.

The cell phone died, but the initial ping showed they were near Angora. The reality is they were near Stanford Sierra Camp. When crews figured this out they chipped ice out of the marina at Fallen Leaf Lake to be able to use the boat that happened to still be in the water. The foursome was rescued about midnight.

SAR is often assisted on rescues by a California Highway Patrol helicopter out of Auburn as well as CalStar stationed at Lake Tahoe Airport.

An annual fundraiser and community donations keep SAR afloat. The fundraiser is the third Wednesday in June at Riva Grill in South Lake Tahoe. For more info about volunteering or donating, go online.

Letter: Truckee River Watershed Council says thanks

To the community,

The Truckee River Watershed Council would like to thank the 450-plus community volunteers that spent a beautiful fall day working on 14 projects throughout our watershed on Oct. 20.

This one day of work has a long-lasting, positive impact on

the watershed. Together, we:

Completed floodplain restoration Coldstream Canyon.

Erected fencing along Cold Creek to protect vulnerable trees from beavers.

Re-routed and maintained four separate trails to encourage trail use and protect sensitive wetlands, fragile streambanks and native habitat.

Continued restoration of the old Town Corporation Yard by planting plants, spreading native seeds and mulching the area.

Planted conifer trees and sugar pine seedlings to help promote healthy reforestation.

Placed gravels in Prosser Creek to improve fish habitat.

Relocated barriers on the bottom of Martis Creek Lake to eradicate Eurasian water milfoil.

Removed the remnants of an old barbed wire fence that presented a hazard for wildlife, dogs and people in Martis Valley.

Surveyed for invasive New Zealand mud snails in the Truckee River.

Restored an eroded area at the Donner Lake boat ramp to prevent further damage.

Released over 400 fingerling Lahontan Cutthroat trout in the Truckee River to help with LCT recovery.

We are especially grateful for contributions from our dedicated project partners:

The USFS Tahoe National Forest, Truckee and Sierraville; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Martis Wildlife Area; California State Parks, Donner Memorial State Park; Sugar Pine

Foundation; Tahoe Donner Forestry; Tahoe Divers Conservancy; Tahoe Resource Conservation District; Town of Truckee; Trout Unlimited, along with the Feather River and Truckee Chapters; Truckee Donner Land Trust; Truckee Donner Recreation and Parks District; and our 50 group leaders.

This event would not be possible without these dedicated volunteers who give their time and energy to planning, preparing and managing the day's restoration projects.

Donors to the Truckee River Watershed Council, Vail Resorts Echo, and the Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce, Sierra Watershed Education Partnerships (SWEP), US Fish and Wildlife Service, Ed Lupyak, Stefan McLeod Photography.

Kathy Whitlow, Truckee River Watershed Council

Sierra to host dodgeball tourney at Steamers

The second annual Sierra Snowball Fight: A Dodgeball Tournament at Steamers is Nov. 14.

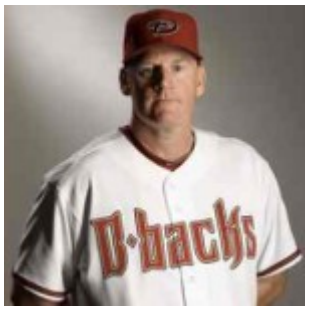
Sierra-at-Tahoe fans and season passholders will be able dodge, dive, dip, duck and dodge again while helping support the local community.

This is an all ages event and everyone is welcome so come cheer on the competitors and compete in a variety of quirky games and possibly walk away with some swag. The event will take place at Steamers Bar and Grill in South Lake Tahoe at 7pm.

Grab five friends and start training to be crowned Snowball

Champions. Team space is limited. Sign up by calling (530) 543.3139.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Carson City High School grad and former Giants third baseman Matt Williams is now the manager of the Nationals.

• Longtime Tahoe Resource Conservation District employee Kim Boyd was recently promoted to district manager.

• In *Conde Nast Traveler*'s annual reader poll three ski area lodging properties made the list of top resorts in Northern California: Ritz-Carlton at Northstar (5), Westin Monache Resort at Mammoth (12), and PlumpJack Squaw Valley Inn (13).

• The November issue of *Ski* magazine touts Basecamp Hotel, 968 Park and Stardust Lodge as worthy places to stay in South Lake Tahoe. The same issue has an interesting article on the founder of Mammoth Mountain resort.

• Northstar has fired up its snowmaking guns.

Few problems with pot in California

By Adam Nagourney and Rick Lyman, New York Times

LOS ANGELES — In the heart of Northern California's marijuana growing region, the sheriff's office is inundated each fall with complaints about the stench of marijuana plots or the latest expropriation of public land by growers. Its tranquil communities have been altered by the emergence of a wealthy class of marijuana entrepreneurs, while nearly 500 miles away in Los Angeles, officials have struggled to regulate an explosion of medical marijuana shops.

But at a time when polls show widening public support for legalization — recreational marijuana is about to become legal in Colorado and Washington, and voter initiatives are in the pipeline in at least three other states — California's 17-year experience as the first state to legalize medical marijuana offers surprising lessons, experts say.

Warnings voiced against partial legalization — of civic disorder, increased lawlessness and a drastic rise in other drug use — have proved unfounded.

Instead, research suggests both that marijuana has become an alcohol substitute for younger people here and in other states that have legalized medical marijuana, and that while driving under the influence of any intoxicant is dangerous, driving after smoking marijuana is less dangerous than after drinking alcohol.

Although marijuana is legal here only for medical use, it is widely available. There is no evidence that its use by teenagers has risen since the 1996 legalization, though it is an open question whether outright legalization would make the drug that much easier for young people to get, and thus

contribute to increased use.

Read the whole story

FAA to allow more electronic devices on flights

By Reuters

The Federal Aviation Administration said on Thursday it will allow airlines to expand the use of portable electronic devices in flight.

The agency said it is immediately providing airlines with guidance for implementation, the time frame for which is expected to vary among carriers.

Read the whole story

Holiday Festival benefits TAP

Tahoe Arts Project’s second annual Holiday Festival is Nov. 16 from 10am-5pm at South Tahoe Middle School’s multipurpose room.

Santa will be on hand from noon-2pm, Marcia Sarosik Dancers will perform from 2:30-3pm, and activities for children will be going on throughout the day.

The event is free.