Letter: Truckee – Don’t throw Tahoe under the bus

To the community,

Tahoe is being ransomed for development. You may have heard the hurrahs. Sierra Watch and Mountain Area Preservation have negotiated a deal to save 6,600 acres on the east side of Highway 267 above Waddle Ranch from development. It’s great, logging will still be allowed, but no one wants to see 1,360 units and 6.6 acres of commercial on that slope.

But there is a problem: a ransom is involved. The transaction is contingent on the new development team, East-West Partners (you remember them) and the current owner, Sierra Pacific Industries’ ability to obtain program approval from Placer County to build 760 units and 6.6 acres of commercial on 1,100 acres on the west side of Highway 267. That land is currently zoned forest – no development allowed. As if digging up that side of the mountain wasn’t problematic enough, here’s the kicker, 112 acres of potential new development and we’ve heard approximately 200 units (they won’t acknowledge any number yet) will be on the ridge inside the Tahoe basin. Drive in about 1.5 miles on the Fiberboard Freeway at the summit of Highway 267 and look up the mountain. What will the new project be like: Think Schaffer’s Mill Road.

The application requires rezoning, a land use amendment, changes to the Martis Valley General Plan, the Placer County Community Plan and the TRPA Regional Plan. It will increase the population by 2,000, vehicle trips by 3,434/day, years of construction impacts, move 1 million cubic yards of dirt and cut down 200 acres of trees. This will be intense.

Why does developing a mere 85 acres zoned forest in the basin matter? The proposed transfer of units from the east to the

west side of the ridge on top of Highway 267 is justified and spun by the saving of 6,600 acres outside the basin in the Martis Valley. As fabulous as Martis Valley is; the Tahoe basin is a designated “Outstanding National Water Resource” that must not be further degraded. And worse yet, another 235 acres could potentially be developed inside the basin in the same flawed way thanks to the TRPA’s recently approved Regional Plan update and it hasn’t even been a year since it was adopted.

Here’s a hyperbole: If you can save New York City from flooding, do you get to develop Lake Tahoe? But seriously, there is a dangerous precedent: if another large landholder who owns land outside the basin agrees to a conservation easement, will the county that oversees the land allow development inside the basin as a worthy trade? You bet they will.

If East-West and Sierra Pacific Industries want to develop 85 acres on the ridge within the Tahoe watershed they should do it the right way. Apply to TRPA and the county on a standalone application with no justification of outside the basin conservation. Sierra Watch and MAP we applaud your conservation efforts, just don’t ensnare Tahoe in the process.

Thank you,

Ann Nichols, North Tahoe Preservation Alliance

Lower health care costs not

reaching rural areas

By Reed Abelson, Katie Thomas and Jo Craven McGinty, New York Times

As technical failures bedevil the rollout of President Obama's health care law, evidence is emerging that one of the program's loftiest goals – to encourage competition among insurers in an effort to keep costs low – is falling short for many rural Americans.

While competition is intense in many populous regions, rural areas and small towns have far fewer carriers offering plans in the law's online exchanges. Those places, many of them poor, are being asked to choose from some of the highest-priced plans in the 34 states where the federal government is running the health insurance marketplaces, a review by the *New York Times* has found.

Of the roughly 2,500 counties served by the federal exchanges, more than half, or 58 percent, have plans offered by just one or two insurance carriers, according to an analysis by the *Times* of county-level data provided by the Department of Health and Human Services. In about 530 counties, only a single insurer is participating.

The analysis suggests that the ambitions of the Affordable Care Act to increase competition have unfolded unevenly, at least in the early going, and have not addressed many of the factors that contribute to high prices. Insurance companies are reluctant to enter challenging new markets, experts say, because medical costs are high, dominant insurers are difficult to unseat, and powerful hospital systems resist efforts to lower rates.

Read the whole story

Study: Coffee a better choice than smoothies

By Michael Mosley, BBC News

Which is healthier – coffee or smoothies?

It seems obvious that the answer must be a smoothie. After all, drinking coffee is a necessary evil while having a smoothie, made from fruit, is part of your five-a-day. But when you look into the scientific studies they reveal something much more surprising. Let's start with coffee.

There have been numerous claims down the years that drinking coffee will increase your risk of a whole range of terrible things from heart disease to cancer.

These claims have been largely based on case control studies, where you take a group of people who drink coffee and compare them with another matched group who don't.

The problem with this approach is that coffee drinkers are more likely than non-coffee drinkers to have other "bad" habits, like drinking alcohol or smoking, so it is hard to tease apart what is really doing the harm.

A more reliable way to get at the truth is to do what is called a prospective cohort study. You take a group of disease-free individuals, collect data about them, then follow them for a large number of years to see what happens.

Read the whole story

Study: Meat producers ignore calls for reform

By Eliza Barclay, NPR

Five years ago, a landmark report excoriated the animal agriculture industry's practices and laid out a roadmap for how it could do better. But in the years since, the problems are just as bad – and maybe even worse.

That's the conclusion of the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future. This week, the center scolded the industry again with a review of how it has fared in the years since the Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production released its original report.

These pigs, newly weaned from their mothers, are at their most vulnerable stage of life. They're getting antibiotics in their water to ward off bacterial infection.

"From a regulatory, or legislative, standpoint, we have actually regressed on many of these issues in the last five years," says Bob Martin, who served as executive director of the original Pew commission, which included policymakers and scientists. Martin is now a program director at the Center for a Livable Future.

Though the Pew commission is not a foodie household name, its 2008 report has subtly shaped many consumers' view of how our food animals are produced. It's not the rosy view – it's the highly critical one.

Back then, the commission identified the most worrisome systemic problems of producing 9.8 billion food animals every

year in the U.S. It called out the animal agriculture industry for the excessive use of medically important antibiotics, particularly the industry’s habit of giving animals low doses for non-therapeutic uses like growth promotion.

Read the whole story

Backcountry avalanche training in Tahoe City

With winter fast approaching, it is time to prepare backcountry ski equipment and refresh those avalanche safety skills.

On Nov. 7 at 7pm Alpenglow Sports will provide a free educational forum to prepare backcountry enthusiasts of all ability levels for the upcoming season. In the first of two installments of the annual Community Avalanche Safety Seminars, the Tahoe City shop will provide an evening for backcountry travelers to refresh their skills, learn new information, and witness the latest equipment in avalanche safety.

Ricky Newberry, director of ski patrol at Kirkwood Mountain Resort and ambassador for Backcountry Access and K2, will give professional-grade expertise on topics like terrain assessment and risk management, beacon rescue skills, probing technique, companion rescue and float air bag technology.

The seminar will last two to three hours, and will consist of an indoor and outdoor component, the majority of which will fall on education and field-testing. Backcountry enthusiasts of all ages and abilities are encouraged to participate. Bring

your favorite beacon, a headlamp and appropriate clothing for cold weather. Adult beverages provided and potluck-style food is encouraged. The event will be limited to 75 people, so arrive early.

While the evening is open to any and all interested, it does not take the place of formal avalanche education or a AIRE or AAI Level 1-type course.

Call (530) 583.6917 with any questions.

Lake in El Dorado County for sale

By Tom DuHain, KCRA-TV

Bass Lake in El Dorado County is for sale, and a school district is negotiating to purchase it.

The 90-acre lake, a rock dam and another 58 acres of land around the lake are being offered by the El Dorado Irrigation District.

The lake is home to a variety of water fowl and fish.

“You’ve got geese, herons, pelicans and egrets,” said John Thompson, of the Bass Lake Action Committee. “All the wildlife is coming through here to Bass Lake. It’s an asset to the community.”

Irrigation district officials said they no longer need the lake, which was used for water storage. As excess public

property, it was first offered to public agencies.

Read the whole story

Ron Rose – 1930-2013

Legendary South Shore musician Ron Rose died Oct. 22. He was 83.

Born Rupert Ronald Rose on June 18, 1930, in Warren, Ohio, he began playing piano at age 4.

Jazz was hot and Ron took to it quickly. Before ever learning to read music, young Ron became an expert at his trade. In his hometown he was a bit of celebrity by his teens and playing at every town gathering from dances to roller rinks.



Ron Rose

It was at one of these gatherings where he'd meet the love of his life, a petite blonde with a strong will to dance, Dorothy Louise Palmer. He'd later learn her strong will was a powerful force he would rely on to build a life and family together.

They were married in the summer 1950. They were blessed with the birth of their first daughter, Sandra Lee, in June 1951.

One year later, their second daughter, Rhonda Jean, was born. Ron was playing gigs in the Ohio area and anywhere else he could to provide for his family such as Virginia Beach and Biloxi. While in Ohio, their son, Jeffrey Scott, was born. Soon to follow was daughter, Lynda Jo.

In 1958 Ron was invited to play at North Lake Tahoe at the North Shore Club. Upon arrival, Ron suspected his life would take a new turn. In fall 1958 he walked in to Harveys Lake Tahoe Casino where he played a tune for Bill Ledbetter, Harvey Gross' son-in-law. He was hired on the spot and returned to Ohio to prepare his family for a move West.

At Harveys Ron found the reliable work he'd hoped for as he and Toots continued to grow their family. As they moved, Toots was pregnant with their second son, and final addition, David Allen. The hard winters in Tahoe were no match for Toots who had grown up in a working Ohio family and knew how to take care of herself. She continued to chop wood, plan around a tight budget, and shovel endless snow. Ron worked countless nights at the casino, a star on the South Shore.

Ron's tunes at Top of the Wheel drew crowds from all over. Jazz lovers and young professionals from San Francisco and Sacramento would drive all night to hear him play and dance well into the night. Throughout his 43 years at Harveys, he would rub shoulders, play music and often host family dinners for talents coming through the South Lake Tahoe area, including BB King, Liberace, and Jay Leno, to name a small few.

A local living legend, Ron released three albums during his career among many single recordings and traveling from coast-to-coast sharing his love of melody and jazz.

The Rose family gained the reputation as a stronghold in the small Tahoe community. Always enough food to spare, family dinners created a community and family gatherings were

commonplace.

The life of Rupert Ronald Rose will be celebrated Oct. 30 from 1-3pm at Montana Health and Fitness Community Center (Resort Course Genoa Lakes) 468 Mountain Meadows Drive, Genoa.

NHP increasing DUI enforcement

Additional Nevada Highway Patrol troopers will be on duty the three-day Nevada Day holiday weekend, as well as next Friday and Saturday evening in the greater Reno-Sparks area, in an effort to identify any motorists who may be impaired.

With federal funding secured by the Nevada Office of Traffic Safety's Joining Forces grant program, this particular initiative will allocate 15 additional overtime shifts in an effort for an increased presence of troopers to be highly visible saturating our area highways during these periods. Several of the troopers scheduled for this weekend's assignment will be working closely with officers from the Reno Police Department.

Workshop in S. Tahoe covers

all things audio

Audio 101 is a three-day workshop with six-hour sessions that will cover topics such as how the ear perceives sound, acoustics, and sound travel.

There will be hands-on learning of setting up a sound system with speakers, basic connections, equalization, mixing and routing of signals, as well as power management.

The workshop is Nov. 4-6 from 9am-4pm each day, including lunch at Tahoe Production House – 2291 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

The cost is $315 per student, with preregistration required. Here is a registration form.

For more info, email info@tahoeproductionhouse.com.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• The American Planning Association recently honored the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. The Regional Plan won the Western Planner Sheldon D. Gerber Award for Excellence in Environmental Planning as well as the Nevada APA award for Outstanding Environmental Plan. Senior planner Theresa Avance received the Professional Planner of the Year from the Nevada APA.

• El Dorado County Early Care and Education Planning Council needs another board member. Call (530) 295.2312 for an application packet and additional information. The deadline to apply is Nov. 19 at 5pm.

• El Dorado County Child Abuse Prevention Council is accepting applications for three board seats. Call (530) 295.2312 or email eblakemore@edcoe.org for an application packet and additional information. The deadline to apply is Nov. 19 at 5pm.

• The U.S. Revolution tour will be stopping in Boreal Feb. 23-28 with athletes competing in halfpipe, slopestyle and cross.

• Porter Robinson will play at MontBleu in Stateline on Nov. 30 at 9pm. Tickets are $35.