Holiday bazaar looking for participants

The Zawadisha Fund’s third annual Zawadisha Holiday Bazaar will be at Bona Fide HQ in Meyers on Dec. 7.

The event is from 10am-3pm.

Potential vendors will find all details and a vendor application here. Applications must be submitted online no later than Oct. 15.

The Zawadisha Fund provides small business loans to female entrepreneurs in Kenya.

Passport to Dining tickets on sale

Passport to Dining returns to the North Shore on Nov. 14.

The popular social gathering features food and beverage tastings from up to 35 local restaurants, caterers, breweries, wineries and distilleries.

Tickets are $35 in advance and $45 day of event. For info and to buy tickets, call (530) 546.9000.

The 6–9pm is at the North Tahoe Event Center, 8318 N. Lake Blvd., Kings Beach.

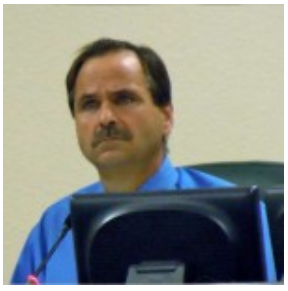
Nutting pleads not guilty; trial set for Feb.

By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County Supervisor Ray Nutting pleaded not guilty to all charges Friday in El Dorado County Superior Court in South Lake Tahoe.

Nutting, 53, faces four felony counts regarding more than $70,000 he received from the state to clear brush from his 350-acre ranch in Somerset. (His brother owns an adjacent 350 acres.) He is accused of not reporting the income, voting on contracts that affected him financially and perjury. After those felony charges were leveled in May, the district and state attorneys general offices filed seven misdemeanor charges against Nutting regarding how he got his $55,000 in bail money. He is accused of taking loans from county employees.

On Sept. 20, Judge Tim Buckley denied the motions to dismiss the charges, as Nutting's attorney David Weiner had requested.



Ray Nutting

"No surprises here," Nutting told *Lake Tahoe News* as he left the courtroom. He directed further questions to his attorney.

“(The judge) said the standard was reasonable suspicion. It’s the lowest of all standards. Anything lower is a mere guess,” Weiner told *Lake Tahoe News* after the hearing.

Weiner has a matter of days to file an appeal to Buckley’s decision regarding the felony counts. He would not say if he intends to go that route.

After the judge rendered his decisions on the motions to dismiss he asked Nutting to enter a plea to all charges. To which Nutting pleaded not guilty.

Buckley had no trouble concluding three of the four counts should proceed to trial, but count two troubled him. This involves the nearly $72,000 Nutting received from the Sierra Coordinated Resource Management Council in 2009 that he attempted to report 4½ years after the fact.

Buckley said the grand jury that leveled the indictment against Nutting was not properly instructed and that because those 18 people had been disbanded without being told not to talk about the case it would be impossible to reconvene them to reconsider that specific count.

Assistant District Attorney James Clinchard said he would not issue any comment about the case. He is trying the case with Deputy Attorney General Peter Williams.

Nutting represents the southern part of El Dorado County, including parts of El Dorado Hills and Cameron Park, Pleasant Valley, Somerset and Grizzly Flat. In the courtroom were his wife, family members, friends and constituents.

Weiner believes the accusations are politically motivated and that the grand jury was “misled by inaccurate, incomplete and prejudiced information.”

“We are looking forward to a jury trial to present the truth,” Weiner said.

The trial is slated to begin Feb. 4 in Placerville. Jury selection could take a week and the trial two weeks.

T.J. Maxx selling goods online

By Taryn Luna, Boston Globe

T.J. Maxx is finally back online.

Eight years after the off-price retailer's first Internet store fizzled – costing the Framingham company $15 million – its new website went live Tuesday, selling women's clothing, accessories, shoes, and handbags.

"Last time, the website was kind of an afterthought," said Jennifer Davis, a senior retail analyst with Lazard Capital Markets. "They didn't put the A-team they have now working on the site. This is a much more legitimate effort."

But for all the company has at stake with Tjmaxx.com, the online store made a low-key debut, without any fanfare. Parent TJX Cos. – which has been working on the project for two years – previously said the site would be up by late fall. T.J. Maxx officials declined to provide any details prior to the site's launch.

Read the whole story

Economic recovery bypassing most Americans

By John McCormick, Bloomberg

More Americans continued to take on roommates or boarders than before the recession, women had fewer children, and people were still flocking to college or graduate school as a way to postpone their entry into the job market.

Those are just some measures of a tepid U.S. economy recorded last year in new Census Bureau reports that offer a portrait of a nation struggling to fully rebound from the worst downturn since the Great Depression. The data show a geographically uneven recovery in which the middle class is slipping and, on the basis of median household income, no better off than it was in 1989.

Unless there's significant progress in the next few years, that reversal could be a watershed in American history.

"There is a remarkable disconnect between overall macroeconomic growth and the prosperity of middle- and low-income Americans," said Jared Bernstein, a onetime chief economist for Vice President Joe Biden who's now a senior fellow at the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities in Washington. "We're not just talking about a fringe group being left behind. We are talking about the broad middle class."

Amid the still shaky economy, demographers say they see a few positive trends – including an uptick in people moving – even if they appear to reflect a bottoming-out of measures collected last year, three years into the recovery.

Read the whole story

Companies cutting spouses from health care

By Julie Rovner, NPR

When UPS told workers that it would no longer offer health coverage for spouses who had their own job-based insurance, it caused a big stir. But the shipping giant has plenty of company.

So many employers are trying to cut back on health coverage for spouses that it has become a trend. The practice began well before the Affordable Care Act passed, and the connection to the law, in some cases, isn't that direct.

About 12 percent of employers have this provision in their policies, says Tracy Watts, who heads the health care reform team at Mercer, a benefits consulting firm.

Mercer surveyed employers who have some sort of restriction on health coverage of spouses, and found that about half of those employers, or 6 percent, have imposed a surcharge for spouses who could get coverage at their own jobs.

"The other 6 percent exclude spouses who have coverage elsewhere," Watts says. That's the approach UPS is taking.

So is the University of Virginia. Susan Carkeek, the university's head of human resources, says the decision was mostly about simple arithmetic.

Read the whole story

Settlement opens trails in Eldorado National Forest

Off-roaders can rev up their engines.

An agreement reached by conservation groups, off-roaders and the counties of El Dorado, Alpine and Amador settles litigation going back to the 1990s by resolving the status of contentious trails in Eldorado National Forest.

Under the agreement, some trails and dirt roads will reopen, others would remain closed and still others would begin restoration of past damage.

The deal allows for 24 routes to open immediately, closure of 18 routes, and commits the U.S. Forest Service to review all the routes over the next three years and take corrective action to protect meadows, streams and springs.

Forty-two routes in the Eldorado National Forest were closed in 2012 because a federal judge determined designating the routes through meadows violated the forest plan, which bans roads in meadows. Subsequently, forest managers did a new analysis.

LTCC offering free career advice clinics

Lake Tahoe Community College library will be offering a free, weekly Career Clinic on Wednesdays starting Oct. 2 and going through November.

Each session is from 1-3pm with consultant Michael Donahoe. The clinic is available to everyone, not just students.

The clinic is designed to help people with:

- Developing career goals and educational plans.
- Job interview preparation.
- Updating your resume or completing a job application.
- Understanding what employers are currently looking for, and how to provide it.
- Personality assessments – targeting jobs that best match your interests.

Call (530) 541.4660, ext. 232 to make an appointment or sign up at the circulation desk in the library.

Foster parents in Tahoe needed

The Tahoe area is in need of foster and adoptive homes for local kids.

On any given day in South Lake Tahoe there are approximately

100 foster children in need of care. Foster parents are provided with training, financial stipends, and 24-hour support staff. Foster children come with medical and dental insurance.

There will be a training for new foster and adoptive parents on Oct. 5 and Oct. 12.

For more information about fostering or adopting, contact Megan Ciampa at (530) 544.2111 or MeganC@FosterFamilyService.org.

CTC sells 2 public properties to raise cash

By Kathryn Reed

TAHOE CITY – The California Tahoe Conservancy realizes it created a public relations nightmare for itself when it put 330 parcels in the asset lands program.

“We created a perception with some in the public that all 330 parcels are ready to go,” Patrick Wright, CTC executive director, said at the Sept. 19 board meeting at Granlibakken.

He wants to come back to the board with revised guidelines for the program. The original guidelines were devised in March 2012. Wright added that he doubts more than a dozen of the parcels would be sold in the next decade.

“It does seem to me parcels incorporated into neighborhoods should remain open space,” Wright told the board. “We really need to move very slowly and very carefully. That is why you only have two in front of you.”



The one-time conference center near Heavenly Mountain Resort is now private property. Photo/LTN

The board unanimously agreed to sell the Tallac Vista site on Sherman Way and the old drive-in movie theater property on Glenwood Way to Jack and Walsie Jennings. Both properties are in South Lake Tahoe. The couple submitted the higher of two bids on the first property at $1.4 million, and was the only bidder for the second property at $355,000.

The city and El Dorado County will benefit a bit because the 15.46-acre and 8.43-acre sites will generate property tax for those entities now that they will be privately owned.

The Conservancy owns 4,890 parcels in the Lake Tahoe Basin. They have been acquired in a variety of ways – through a litigation settlement and a trade with South Lake Tahoe for the two properties that were just sold. Some have been deeded to the state agency and others bought with bond money.

In the 30-plus year history of the Conservancy this is the first time it has disposed of property for cash.

“Asset lands are parcels of land within the Conservancy’s ownership which are not essential to carrying out Conservancy goals, which could have significant market value, and which are not otherwise restricted from disposal by law or board policy,” according the CTC’s program guidelines.

Ann Nichols, who has been a real estate agent in the basin for years, told the board the public needs to be informed it will no longer have access to property and that a much greater area than those within 300 feet of the property need to be notified of the potential sale.

“I was told you weren’t going to sell sensitive land,” Nichols said in regard to the Sherman Way property. “It shouldn’t be that you can sell sensitive parcels just because you put on conservations easements.”

The Sherman Way site is on a steep hill that was once going to have 150 condominiums on it. It borders Heavenly Mountain Resort and has views of Lake Tahoe.

CTC is requiring no more than 3.15 acres of this property be developed and that the remaining 12-plus acres forever be a conservation easement. At most a single-family residence, guesthouse and outbuildings could be built on it. Either that, or the existing structure could be upgraded. The restrictions are to forever remain with the property.

At the old drive-in location the same building restrictions apply along with a conservations easement over stream zones.

The Conservancy plans to use the money from the sale of these properties for land management activities in the basin and environmental improvement projects.