Burglars hit 2 S. Tahoe Y businesses

South Lake Tahoe police officers are looking for the people who burglarized two businesses at the Y this week.

Cash was taken from the register at Bert's Café on Monday night. The next night two laptops were stolen from Barton University. While the businesses are across the street from each other on Emerald Bay Road, police Lt. Brian Williams told *Lake Tahoe News*, "We have no specific information which connects the two burglaries."

Williams offered the following advice to help prevent a business from being the victim of theft:

• Lock your business doors and windows. This sounds obvious, but this is often overlooked.

• Burglars frequently commit their crimes close to their own residence … even if that may be a tent in a field. Business owners and employees should remain alert and observant to their surroundings; what is normal and what is not.

• Take note of suspicious persons or vehicles around the business, especially at opening and closing time.

• Take note of people wearing inappropriate clothing for the weather, such as heavy coats during warm weather.

• Be aware of people carrying duffel bags or similar items to collect and flee with stolen property.

• Be prepared to take brief mental descriptive notes about people and/or their vehicles.

• Equip your business with an alarm and video surveillance and periodically test this equipment to verify it is in proper

working order.

• Ensure employees are trained in how to operate any surveillance recording gear in order to quickly provide officers with video recordings of the suspect.

• Establish good relationships with neighboring businesses to help watch out for one another.

• Try to keep the inside of your business well lighted, with unobstructed windows so that a clear view from the street or parking will assist police officers to see inside as they patrol the area.

• Use of lighting and video recording gear is particularly helpful at all entrances and exits to the business.

• Some businesses find it beneficial to leave the cash register drawer open and visible from windows to deter a burglar.

• Keep cash at a minimum, and post notices in the doorway of this fact.

• Keep the telephone number of the police department near the phone. (911 for an emergency, 530.542.6100 for nonemergency.)

• Develop and train employees in a plan of what to do in case a burglary is discovered. This should include – alert authorities quickly, do not search through the business before police arrive because the suspect may be hiding inside, protect the crime scene by not disturbing evidence, including unintentionally contaminating any remaining scent at the scene which may enable a police canine an opportunity to track a suspect's path of escape, and position and identify yourself in such a way that responding officers will not mistake you for a possible suspect.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Sierra to close with Customer Appreciation Day

On April 15, Sierra-at-Tahoe Resort will give skiers and riders one last chance to shred Sierra with its annual Customer Appreciation Day. Customer Appreciation Day is all about celebrating the season with fun stories of a season gone by.

Skiers and riders of all ages may purchase a lift ticket for $25 on April 15. All of the proceeds raised from the day's lift ticket sales will be donated to sponsor youth recreation and education including youth baseball, soccer, swimming, and other youth activities.

Sierra Resort will operate a limited number of lifts from 10am-2pm, including Grandview and Easy Rider.

All guests are invited to join John Rice, general manager, and the rest of Sierra Resort's managing team for the official "last run of the season" from the top of Grandview Express beginning at 2pm. Last call at the Sierra Pub will be at 2:45pm, in time for the ending of all winter operations at 3pm.

Nevada close to opening medicinal pot shops

By Cy Ryan, Las Vegas Sun

CARSON CITY – A Senate committee has cleared a bill to permit a network of medical marijuana dispensaries, but those who sell the drug will have to pay a $20,000 licensing fee.

In 2000, voters approved a constitutional amendment to allow possession of medical marijuana if prescribed by a physician. But the law did not permit for dispensaries to distribute it.

State Sen. Mark Hutchinson, R-Las Vegas, said the initial fee for licensing a clinic will be $20,000 with an annual renewal of $5,000. The fees would give the state Health Division money to regulate dispensaries, and any excess would go to aid to public schools, he said.

The Senate Judiciary Committee on April 11 endorsed the bill, which would permit 40 dispensaries in Clark County and fewer in other counties.

Under the bill a lottery will be set up if applications exceed the limit. Nevada companies would receive preference.

Hutchinson said Senate Bill 374 establishes a system of "tight controls" to track the marijuana from seed to sale.

State Sen. Greg Bower, R-Reno, said there was a "disconnect" between the federal law that prohibits the sale of marijuana and the proposed state law. But he called allowing dispensaries the "next logical step" in carrying out Nevada's constitutional amendment to allow medical marijuana.

Committee Chairman state Sen. Tick Segerblom, sponsor of the bill, said he has seen press reports that the governor would be open to considering the measure, which now goes to the full

Senate.

The bill originally suggested dispensaries be non-profit organizations, but that was changed to allow for-profit groups to run them. The initial bill also called for a $5,000 license fee, which was raised to $20,000 by an amendment adopted by the committee today.

Besides the authorized 40 clinics in Clark County, there would be a maximum of ten allowed in Washoe County, two in Carson City and one each in rural counties.

Eldorado forest supervisor talk

Kathy Hardy, forest supervisor of the Eldorado National Forest, talks about forest health on April 10 at the Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe meeting.

Music festivals thriving throughout U.S.

By Chris Talbot, AP

NASHVILLE — Coachella and Lollapalooza are sold out. Bonnaroo's nearly there, too. But eager fans need only be patient: Wait a few years and chances are you'll have a star-

studded music festival of your own within driving distance.

New music festivals are popping up more quickly than you can count in the U.S. As the summer festival season gets under way this week with the sprawling Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival down in the desert in Indio, Calif., some of the most successful promoters in the scene are looking ahead to next year and beyond when they'll launch new ventures in untapped markets.

"I do think that there's really plenty of opportunities for people to create some great festival experiences," said Ashley Capps, a co-founder of the Bonnaroo Music & Arts Festival in Manchester, Tenn. "In fact, I think in many ways the audience in America is just now starting to fully embrace festival culture."



Wiz Khalifa was one of the headliners at SnowGlobe 2012 in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/LTN file

After a disastrous run when festivals disappeared more quickly than the family farm in the late 1990s, a small group of concert promoters established beachheads – the four mega giants Coachella, Bonnaroo, Lollapalooza in Chicago and Austin City Limits Festival in Texas. Each of those has survived a decade or more and continues to gain in popularity.

In the last five years, several others have taken root like

the Pitchfork Music Festival in Chicago, the Hangout Music Festival on the beach in Gulf Shores, Ala., Outside Lands Music & Arts Festival in San Francisco, Governors Ball Music Festival in New York, Mountain Oasis Electronic Music Festival (formerly Moog Fest) in Asheville, N.C., and Forecastle Festival in Louisville, Ky. Even more are being started by artists themselves – Metallica and Wilco among them.

That abundance comes with its own problem: As more festivals debut worldwide, the competition for top headliners becomes more intense.

As does the scrutiny. Put McCartney, Mumford & Sons and Tom Petty and The Heartbreakers at the top of your bill, like Bonnaroo, and you'll get few complaints.

Throw The Stone Roses up there, as Coachella did, and there's going to be some yammering, as festival producers found this year. Many fans asked, "Who?" when the British rock band appeared atop the festival's lineup and speculated the '90s holdovers might hurt attendance.

Yet the complaints had no effect on ticket sales. Coachella, which recently expanded to two weekends, sold out both. Lollapalooza, with headlining '80s band The Cure, sold out in a record four hours.

"There's always going to be complaints about every lineup. You have to look at tickets sales," said Charles Attal, whose C3 Presents produces Lollapalooza and the Austin City Limits Festival. "If they're selling out in an hour, it's the fan experience. I don't think it's about one band."

For Grace Potter, who plays in 10 or more festivals a year and recently started her own Grand Point North Festival in Vermont, festivals are about the experience of discovering new bands. But she acknowledges that there may be a burnout point.

"I think that it's absolutely (viable) for the next 10 years,

but at a certain point, if we fractalize it too much, you're really diluting the water too much because people have to make choices of what they want to do," she said.

Capps, a longtime promoter based in Knoxville, Tenn., says he plans to open a couple more festivals in 2014. Attal also says his company is looking to expand where they find the right combination of site and willing partners. The proliferation is being fueled by a simple thing, Attal said.

"If you're going to pay $200 or $300 to see 130 bands, it just makes more sense to do that than to go see two bands in an amphitheater for $100," he said. "It's just the economics and the experience you're getting for what you're paying for it. It's a no-brainer for the music fan."

And once indoctrinated, the enthusiastic festival-goer is likely to attend more than one per year. Capps says the pattern in the U.S. is beginning to resemble Europe, where there's a thriving culture and room for everyone.

"The thing that I always note is in Europe there are hundreds of festivals, hundreds," he said. " And in the (United Kingdom) alone, which is as we know a fairly small country, there are several hundred rock festivals of all different sizes, but quite a few large ones."

The guys in Metallica have been playing that European circuit since the mid-1980s, headlining with acts as diverse as Neil Young, Phil Collins and Bjork. Guitarist Kirk Hammett said each country has its own landmark festival – Glastonbury Festival in England, Holland's Pinkpop Festival and Roskilde Festival in Denmark are among the largest.

"It's great because every country kind of puts their own cultural identity imprint on the festival," Hammett said. "You go to Pinkpop, you have stuff that's very unique to Dutch culture. That's a very cool thing. What I would like to see is a bunch of festivals thrown across the United States that were

thematic in that way, too.”

Metallica is leading the trend of new festivals curated by artists. The band founded Orion Music and More, which debuted in Atlantic City, N.J., last year and will pop up this year on Detroit’s Belle Isle. The band started working on the idea in earnest after being invited to play Bonnaroo five years ago.

“We went to Bonnaroo not really knowing what to expect because most festivals in America at least up to that point that we’d been aware of were a little more regional and more niche,” drummer Lars Ulrich said. “So when we went to Bonnaroo that was the first festival we’d experienced in the U.S. that had a European feel in terms of the variety. We saw it work at Bonnaroo and we thought maybe we could do that.”

Nels Cline, guitarist for Wilco, says he’s never attended a festival as a fan and occasionally finds himself wondering why fans would subject themselves to some of the conditions.

“I don’t get camping on site,” Cline said. “I played the High Sierra Festival a few years ago where I was jammed into a tent. They had the whole band sleep on the grass next to the jam hut where jam bands play till 6 in the morning. It was in the cruel and unusual category. And I’m pretty resilient.”

Cline is pleased to report Wilco’s Solid Sound Festival, housed at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art in North Adams, offers an experience that doesn’t necessarily require wilderness survival skills.

“It’s super chill,” Cline said. “There’s no gouging on water. There’s street parking. And you get to also look at some art while you’re there. It’s a cool scene and it’s not just in a big pasture or something. There are indoor venues, outdoor venues, big ones, little ones. It’s pretty civilized.”

STAR provides layer of security for residents

El Dorado County Sheriff’s Team of Active Retirees has two programs that can assist citizens while away from their homes and on vacation.

The STARS unit provides training, literature, and Neighborhood Watch information to assist communities in establishing their own programs. Data shows that active Neighborhood Watch programs deter crime and help build a safer community.

STARS will also provide vacation checks on your home while you are away. STAR members check the perimeter of your house to ensure you have not been a victim of a crime and your house is in good condition. Their presence deters crime. If they find a problem, they immediately let deputies know who will investigate the circumstances and make you aware of the outcome. This is a service which is offered at least twice a week to homeowners on vacation.

These services are offered and available to any citizen living in the unincorporated area of El Dorado County free of charge. If interested in utilizing these services, or becoming a STAR volunteer, the Tahoe number is (530) 573.3005.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• State Sen. Ted Gaines, R–Rocklin, on April 10 voiced his strong opposition to Assembly Bill 468, a measure that would implement a new, 4.8 percent tax on property insurance policies to create a "disaster relief fund" in California.

• El Dorado County Office of Education has hired Ed Manansala as the associate superintendent of Educational Services.

• Full House Resorts' lease with an affiliate of Hyatt Hotels Corporation for the Grand Lodge Casino at Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe in Incline Village has been extended and is now scheduled to expire Aug. 31, 2018.

• Keep the Sierra Green is in the running for a $25,000 grant. Voting is through April 22 to bring the money to Truckee. Click here for more info.

• There will be free paper shredding on April 20 from 10am-noon at the Squaw Valley Village parking lot; and free electronic waste dumping that day from 10am-2pm.

NV TRPA board member's lobbying work questioned

By Anjeanette Damon, Las Vegas Sun

CARSON CITY – At a legislative hearing this month on a

controversial bill that could determine the future of the bi-state agency tasked with protecting the Lake Tahoe environment, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency board member Steve Robinson urged the committee to preserve Nevada's ability to abolish the agency altogether.

In his view as a board member, the threat that Nevada could pull out of the agency was the catalyst for recent progress toward fixing the dysfunctional agency in charge of overseeing development and environmental protection in the Lake Tahoe Basin.



Politics cast more clouds over Lake Tahoe than Mother Nature. Photo/LTN file

But Robinson, who represents Nevada's Conservation and Natural Resources Department on the TRPA board, never mentioned that he is also a contract lobbyist for a firm that pushed through the state law allowing Nevada to abandon its decades-old compact with California to protect Lake Tahoe in the first place.

Robinson was testifying on Senate Bill 229, a measure backed by environmentalists that would preserve the bi-state Compact by repealing the 2011 law allowing Nevada to withdraw from the TRPA if changes aren't made to ease development around the lake.

The hearing highlighted Robinson's dual role as both lobbyist

and TRPA board member – a role that environmentalists say represents an inherent conflict of interest when it comes to protecting Lake Tahoe.

Robinson is the former government affairs director for R&R Partners, one of the largest lobbying firms in Nevada that was retained by Tahoe businesses to shepherd through the 2011 law, Senate Bill 271. Robinson is no longer an employee of R&R Partners, but is contracted with them to lobby for two mining companies.

Robinson, and the state official who gave him the job on the TRPA board, say he is able to keep the two roles separate. Robinson said he lobbies only on mining issues, not any Tahoe-related legislation.

“I was a bureaucrat for 30 years, both at the federal level and the state level,” Robinson said. “I think I know what conflicts are, and this ain’t one of them.”

But critics argue it’s impossible to dismiss R&R Partners’ role as chief cheerleader for SB271.

“Given the role R&R played in passing SB271, it certainly concerns me,” said Kyle Davis, political director for the Nevada Conservation League, of Robinson’s dual role. “He’s been very good at making it clear when he’s working on TRPA issues and when he’s working on R&R issues. But the TRPA issues are completely intertwined with what R&R does. I don’t know how you keep the two separate.”

Leo Drozdoff, director of the Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, appointed Robinson to the TRPA board in January 2011. Typically, Robinson’s seat on the board is held by the director of the department.

But Drozdoff said he wanted someone with more expertise on Tahoe issues, as well as the time to be a truly engaged board member. He selected Robinson, who has worked as a senior staff

member for three Nevada governors and is the former deputy director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department.

“We don’t see it as a conflict,” said Pete Ernaut, president of R&R Partners. “He asked if he could be on the board and given Steve’s background, this is an appointment that is well in keeping with his area of expertise.”

Drozdoff said he “made no bones about” the fact Robinson worked for R&R Partners, even including that fact in the press release announcing his appointment to the TRPA board.

But Robinson’s association with the lobbying firm didn’t become relevant until R&R Partners took the lead role in ushering SB271 through the Legislature in 2011.

“When all this stuff came about with 271, I talked to Steve at length about it,” Drozdoff said. “He said they have various firewalls in place and he’s not involved in any lobbying efforts.

“But I won’t disagree that it does create a bit of a conundrum.”

Robinson has been heavily involved in working on the measure now before the Legislature to repeal the 2011 law. He meets informally and formally with lobbyists on both sides of the issue.

But Drozdoff said he would expect nothing less from his appointee to the board, saying the DCNR wants to broker a compromise on the issue. And he has no concerns about Robinson’s private employment.

“Yes, I am confident that when he is taking a position at the Legislature, that position is consistent with mine,” Drozdoff said.

But environmental groups pushing to protect the compact aren’t so sure.

They point to Robinson's testimony this month, when he took the microphone as a "neutral" witness on the bill to repeal the 2011 law but then advocated to preserve it.

"The specter of the possibility of Nevada's withdrawal was absolutely essential to changing the hearts and the minds of those on both sides," Robinson said of the recent collaborative effort from California and Nevada officials to fix inherent problems at the TRPA.

"While that legislation certainly has some faults, the option to withdraw should remain."

Darcie Goodman Collins, executive director for the League to Save Lake Tahoe, said Robinson's testimony as a TRPA board member was "inappropriate," given his business interest with R&R.

"He works for R&R lobbying firm, which represents a lot of special interests," Collins said. "In my opinion, he's not adequately and honestly representing the (state) department."

On the point of allowing Nevada to withdraw from the Compact, however, Drozdoff and Gov. Brian Sandoval tend to agree with R&R's position.

Sandoval signed SB271 in 2011, and according to Robinson, does not support the law's repeal this year. Nor does Drozdoff, who echoed R&R's argument that more time is needed to change the direction of the TRPA.

Sandoval was non-committal when asked if he is concerned about Robinson's dual role.

"I'll have to think about that," Sandoval said. "I'll chat with Leo about that."

Potential conflicts of interest abound at the Legislature, where lawmakers hold regular "day jobs" and meet only every other year. Some lawmakers work for lobbying firms, labor

unions, or other companies that have business before the Legislature.

In that environment, some didn't blink an eye at Robinson's dual role.

"I hadn't really thought about it and I wasn't aware of it," said Sen. Aaron Ford, D-Las Vegas, the chairman of the Senate Natural Resources Committee that heard the repeal measure. "It doesn't sway me one way or the other, the fact he works for R&R and is also a board member. I am able to compartmentalize people's roles in certain things, but also give credence to the position stated."

But Robinson said he is confident the two roles don't conflict, particularly since he is not retained by R&R to lobby Tahoe issues.

"I know what's in my mind and my heart," Robinson said. "There are a lot of people at the Legislature involved in a lot of things, including legislators. I just don't see this as a conflict."

Forum to focus on beavers in the basin

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board's staff is hosting a forum to receive input from agencies, land managers, and interested parties regarding beavers, beaver habitat modifications, and beaver management in the greater Lake Tahoe-Truckee area.

Many people have an interest in beavers because of the

critical role they play in natural ecosystems. Unfortunately, the habitat beavers create can often cause conflicts with our existing or planned land use.

The Water Board regulates the discharge of waste to water; beaver management may result in such discharges. We are conducting this forum to provide a means for interested parties to voice their concerns, identify issues, and gain an understanding of applicable regulations pertaining to the management of beavers.

Invited agency representatives and others are encouraged to briefly present information concerning their area of interest or jurisdiction, followed by opportunities for questions and group interactions.

The forum will be April 19 from 1:30–3:30pm at 971 Silver Dollar Ave., South Lake Tahoe.

If you have questions, call (530) 542.5464.

Ski report: Closing dates approaching



These resorts will be closed as of April 15: Heavenly, Sierra-at-Tahoe, Sugar Bowl, Royal Gorge, Boreal and Bear Valley.

Kirkwood, Mt. Rose and Squaw Valley are open until April 21. Alpine Meadows is open Friday-Sunday into May. Mammoth is open

through Memorial Day.

Here is the April 11 ski report.

– Curtis Fong