Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• The South Lake Tahoe City Council is having a special meeting March 12 at 6pm at Lake Tahoe Airport to discuss all things loop road. Click here for the economic study the Tahoe Transportation District paid for that looks at the mountainside proposal for rerouting Highway 50.

• U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit employees Katie Kuchenbecker and Jacob Quinn received regional engineering awards. Kuchenbecker was selected as the Region 5 engineer of the year, and Quinn the Region 5 technician of the year.

• Volunteers are needed for the Tahoe Environmental Research Center Science Expo on March 18-21. Contact Hannah Leigh at hkleigh@ucdavis.edu or (775) 881.7560, ext. 7474. TERC is on the Sierra Nevada College campus in Incline Village.

• The Reno River Festival celebrates its 10th anniversary at the Truckee River Whitewater Park May 11-12.

• The Tahoe Donner Association has submitted a revised project for the Tahoe Donner Marina Facility Improvement Project, with updated site, grading, landscaping and lighting plans. For information, contact Jenna Endres at (530) 582.2922 or jendres@townoftruckee.com.

T.J. Maxx caught in middle of water issue

By Kathryn Reed

A potential $409,907 water problem is beginning to simmer and could reach boiling stage if a solution is not found by the end of the month.

When T.J. Maxx opened last fall in South Lake Tahoe it did so with a temporary agreement in place between Lukins Water District and South Tahoe Public Utility District. The building is a Lukins customer.



T.J. Maxx opened in November without a definitive source of water for fire suppression. Photo/LTN

Days before the store was to open the fire marshal said there was not adequate water pressure to suppress a fire. This had to do with the store putting in a whole new sprinkler system.

An agreement was quickly reached that if there were a fire, the intertie between the water companies would be opened so the fire could be extinguished. The agreement expires June 1 and Lukins has until April 1 to present STPUD with a permanent solution.

Jennifer Lukins, who runs the 956-customer company, was at the STPUD meeting March 7, where the board directed staff to continue working on the issue. Cass Amacker was there representing the Garfinkle family. The Garfinkles, who are from the Bay Area, are the longtime owners of the building.

As a small private water company regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission, Lukins' job is to provide domestic water, not water for fire protection. That is part of the conundrum.

This issue could have been completely avoided a handful of years ago when the Garfinkles were approached by STPUD when the district was doing a project on Highway 50. The district wanted an easement across the property and in turn offered the Garfinkles a free water connection. The Garfinkles never responded to the district's offer.

That water connection has a six-figure value.

One of the alternatives outlined in Thursday's STPUD board packet is the $409,907 one-time capacity charge fee for the 8-inch intertie.

Lukins told *Lake Tahoe News* she did not know about that option and the cost until she read the agenda.

"We have an existing connection and they want to charge us," Lukins said.

Of the six options presented by South Tahoe PUD, Lukins likes No. 5.

It says in part, "Leave the intertie open, with or without the 'loop' restriction, and install a pressure trip valve at the intertie which would only operate if the pressure dropped to a preselected figure in the Lukins water system. … If the board desires to entertain a fire only option for the intertie, and assume that the trip valve would only register during a fire

event, the charge would be $147,566.52 for an 8-inch fire only connection.”

Lukins said her research shows that the trip valve should cost $40,000. That’s the route she would really like to go.

Lukins, even if the company wanted to, would need CPUC approval to spend money on the upgrades and the state would determine how and which ratepayers would be affected.

Ultimately, though, whatever route the water districts determine is the best course will likely be the financial responsibility of the landlord and/or tenant.

“I think what is best is for better fire protection,” Lukins said, even if that means that property ultimately ends up becoming a South Tahoe PUD customer. That is part of last year’s agreement, that if a resolution is not found, STPUD gets the Garfinkle building as a customer without having to compensate Lukins.

Tahoe ski legend to speak

The Lake Tahoe Historical Society will present Martin Hollay on March 9 with the second part of his ski story.

Hollay learned to ski in his native Hungary, lived through the heavy bombing in World War II by the Allies and the rape of his country by the Nazis.

He came to the United States and played an important role in the 1960 Squaw Valley Olympics and at Heavenly Mountain Resort.

He will talk at two times Saturday in the museum (3058 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe) noon and 3pm. Reservations must be made, as space is limited – (530) 541.5458. (Leave a message.)

Cost is $3 for non-members, free for Historical Society members.

Opinion: California must keep promise to new teachers

By Liam Goldrick

California's recognized national leadership on developing and supporting new teachers is at risk. That's bad news for beginning teachers – and for the students they teach. Here's why – and how we can fix it.

More than 200,000 new teachers enter the profession annually across the United States – 10 percent of them in California alone.



Liam Goldrick

As New Teacher Center (NTC) reported in our Review of State Policies on Teacher Induction, 27 states require school districts to operate an induction or mentoring program for

every new teacher. California used to be among them.

Seventeen states provide dedicated funding for teacher induction and mentoring. California used to be among them.

Only three U.S. states require and fund a multi-year induction program for every beginning teacher. California used to be among them, too.

The economic recession severely weakened California's widely heralded Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program. BTSA provides new teachers with job-embedded, individualized support aimed at making them more effective educators and helping them to fulfill state credentialing requirements. In 2008, California provided more than $4,000 in dedicated BTSA funding per beginning teacher. Since then, as a result of the categorical flexibility granted to school districts in the face of budget cuts, school districts have been allowed to redirect this funding toward "any educational purpose." According to the Legislative Analyst's Office, 55 percent of school districts have shifted funding away from BTSA and 10 percent have shuttered their BTSA programs entirely.

While these temporary rules were slated to sunset after the 2014-15 fiscal year, Gov. Jerry Brown's proposed school finance reform plan would codify the state's lack of direct investment in beginning-teacher development.

In a recent EdSource Today post, NTC founder and CEO Ellen Moir argued for restoring California's historic commitment to developing a world-class teaching force. She served on State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson's Educator Excellence Task Force, which recommended strengthening and reinvesting in BTSA, so all new teachers receive much-needed, personalized instructional support.

While rightly focused on equalizing school funding, the governor's plan would eliminate dedicated funding for teacher

induction and professional development in the state budget. Given that teachers are the greatest school-based determinant of student learning and that beginning teachers are more likely to teach in high-need, low-income schools and districts, this exclusion merits reconsideration based both on evidentiary and equity grounds.

NTC supports the intent of the governor's school finance reform plan. We believe it can be achieved while restoring our investment in California's beginning teachers.

Comprehensive, high-quality induction programs can be costly—but they achieve results that lesser approaches do not. One California study found a positive return from investments in comprehensive teacher induction: $1.66 for every dollar spent after five years, as a result of reduced teacher turnover savings and enhanced teacher effectiveness. And a federally funded randomized controlled trial found that multi-year induction programs increase student achievement in mathematics and reading.

But we certainly shouldn't throw good money after bad. That's why, as California reinvests in its beginning educators, it also should ensure that its investment has the desired impact. In the past, all BTSA programs were not created equal. Some employed research-based approaches. Others sought to fulfill basic state mandates, but didn't provide new teachers the type of support needed to accelerate their development and keep them in the classroom.

California should continue to require new teachers to participate in a BTSA induction program to advance from a preliminary to a professional teaching credential. But the state cannot continue to let school districts off the hook. Today, districts no longer are required to operate BTSA programs, but teachers with a five-year preliminary credential must still complete an induction or clear credential program to earn a clear credential. This places an added burden on

beginning teachers in those districts to locate a provider (often a college or university) of the support required to advance in the teaching profession. This is not sustainable.

As NTC initially recommended in a 2010 policy paper, California should do more to ensure the implementation of high-quality, standards-based BTSA programs that lead to more effective teaching and improved student learning. The state should deepen its analysis of BTSA impact – not only on teacher retention, but teacher effectiveness as well.

California also should promote program innovation and efficiency. It should encourage consortia approaches to supporting new teachers within existing BTSA clusters and the use of online mentoring.

Strong induction programs with deep support from local educational leaders and a proven track record will persist in isolated settings across California. This will include the NTC-affiliated Santa Cruz/Silicon Valley New Teacher Project and our many other long-standing partner districts and consortia across California. But our challenge is to extend that opportunity to each and every new teacher in the state.

State policy has an important role to play in this effort. California should restore its commitment and reclaim its mantle as a national leader in supporting new teachers.

As state policymakers aim to equalize and restore education funding, I hope you'll join New Teacher Center in encouraging Governor Brown and the Legislature to reinvest in high-quality beginning teacher induction programs that improve teaching and strengthen student learning in every California school.

Liam Goldrick has served as director of policy for New Teacher Center, a California-based nonprofit organization dedicated to improving student learning by accelerating the effectiveness of teachers and school leaders, since 2006.

Medical condition may have led to crash at Denny’s

Updated: March 7 10pm:

Police believe it’s possible Todd Jackson, 28, suffered a medical emergency Thursday that resulted in his vehicle landing at the entrance of Denny’s restaurant.

He was driving his sons to Tahoe Valley Elementary. The 11- and 8-year-old were treated and released from Barton Memorial Hospital.

Jackson suffered moderate injuries and was transported to Renown Medical Center in Reno for trauma care.

Jackson’s vehicle was swerving across multiple lanes of traffic before crashing into the northeast corner of Denny’s.

The cause of the accident is still under investigation.

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It was a grand slam breakfast of a different kind at Denny’s in South Lake Tahoe on Thursday morning.

An SUV slammed into the building at the corner of Highway 50 and Al Tahoe Boulevard just after 8:30am.

Sgt. Shannon Laney, who is handling the incident, was not immediately available to provide details as he was still working the scene at 9am.



A vehicle took out the front of Denny's in South Lake Tahoe on March 7. Photo/Provided

Paul Schmidt, who owns the restaurant, told *Lake Tahoe News*, "It just happened so we are trying to figure out our next step."

He is waiting to hear what the fire department has to say as to whether the restaurant will be able to stay open.

This is not the first time Schmidt has had an incident beyond his control adversely affect his restaurant.

"I was just joking with my wife that my luck is not very good with that store," Schmidt said.

Schmidt bought the franchise in December 2007. Two weeks later a natural gas explosion closed the restaurant for several months. A couple people sustained minor injuries in that incident, whereas three people were taken to Barton Memorial Hospital with unknown injuries in the March 7 accident.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Study: U.S. shines in cancer treatment

By Michaeleen Doucleff, NPR

When it comes to the state of the nation's health, the U.S. seems to get one poor grade after another. Despite spending more on health care, we've been slipping behind other high-income countries for life expectancy and healthy living.

But when you drill down into the data and look at some specific diseases, there are areas where the U.S. isn't doing too badly, scientists from the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation reported Monday.

The U.S. tops the list at treating brain cancers and ranks third for colorectal cancer when compared to 18 other high-income countries. We're also doing better than average for strokes, falls, stomach cancer and breast cancer.

"Start with the simplest metric of health – death rates – and the U.S. does rather poorly compared to Western Europe, Canada, New Zealand and Australia," says Christopher Murray, director of IHME and a professor at the University of Washington. "But we've made a lot of progress in some of the cancers because of the aggressive treatments we do here," he tells NPR.

For many other diseases, though, the U.S. still has a lot of catching up to do.

When compared with European countries that spend quite a bit on health care, the U.S. fares worse than average for domestic violence, drug abuse and self-harm. And Greece is the only place in Western Europe with more deaths from road crashes than the U.S.

We rank nearly at the bottom for stopping heart and lung diseases, diabetes and kidney problems. This cluster of illnesses, Murray says, is largely the consequence of Americans' biggest risk factors: poor diet, smoking and high blood pressure.

Last December, Murray and his team compiled a mammoth analysis of 235 causes of deaths worldwide and 67 risk factors for various illnesses in 2010. Their latest report, published Monday, takes a look country by country.

To help make sense of all these numbers, they've built some nifty tools for visualizing the data. You can compare disease prevalence and risk factors for each country and region. You can even zero in on dietary choices, such as average salt intake and omega-3 consumption, for each country.

"When you put all components of diet together, the U.S. is worse than all countries in Europe," Murray says. "But the U.K. comes close to us."

High blood pressure is still a major problem here, he says, but it's not dramatically worse than in many parts of Europe, including those countries that we associate with the Mediterranean diet.

"Take a place like Spain. Its burden of high blood pressure is about equal to that in the U.S. for women," Murray says. "That's probably because of their high consumption of processed meat."

Europe also shares the U.S.'s biggest cause of disability: back pain.

In fact, lower back pain was the leading cause of disability globally in 2010, with depression coming in second. Anxiety ranks in the top 10 everywhere in the world, except Eastern Europe and East Asia, while Alzheimer's disease and dementia have surged across high-income countries in the past decade.

“The medical profession hasn’t been very successful at coming up with solutions and treatments for mental disorders and musculoskeletal disorders,” Murray says. “We haven’t had any major breakthroughs for these, like we have for cardiovascular disease.”

This IHME work was sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which also supports NPR.

Other interesting patterns emerge when you look at regional levels, Murray says. For instance, there’s a “homicide belt” that runs from Guatemala down to Brazil, in which murder is the dominant cause of death for men, and a “suicide belt” cuts through Southeast Asia to China, which primarily involves woman.

“There’s always all these twists and turns to public health,” Murray says. “That’s why it’s so important to have the risks and causes of deaths at the country level.”

K9 officers receive 3 days of intensive training in Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

A strong police presence was seen throughout various parts of South Lake Tahoe earlier this week.

Thirteen police dogs and their handlers from about a half dozen California law enforcement agencies were in town for an advanced training course March 4-6.



K9 officers spend three days training in South Lake Tahoe. Photos/Matt Morrison

South Lake Tahoe Police Department's two dogs participated, too. This is the first time the department has hosted an advanced training. As host, the dogs and handlers attend for free.

The three-day class was taught by instructors from Vigilant Canine Services International.

While training is part of every day life, a course like this is more intense.

One session had the dogs at Lake Tahoe Airport working with helicopters from the CHP and Reno-Tahoe Helicopters.

"Dogs can get squeamish around loud noises and propellers," Sgt. Josh Adler explained. "This gets them acclimated."



SLTPD Officer Ryan Wagoner gets his dog used to the

helicopter.

Dogs had to climb into the helicopter with it running.

“After that we exposed the dogs to tear gas. They aren’t affected by it, but you need to know if they are or not,” Adler told *Lake Tahoe News*. The officers all had masks on.

One scenario required the dogs to find a bad guy while tear gas was in the air.

Multiple searches were conducted throughout the training.

Dogs also had to work around firearms.

Annual certifications are required per Police Officer Standards and Training. The dog and handler must pass as a team.

Robber makes off with money from El Dorado Savings

An undisclosed amount of cash was stolen Thursday from the El Dorado County Savings Bank in South Lake Tahoe.

A man passed a note to the teller at 2:06pm March 7 that demanded the money. No weapon was visible.

He fled the Lake Tahoe Boulevard bank on foot.



Police are looking for this man. Photo/Provided

The suspect is on video walking down Bal Bijou Road just prior to the robbery. He was last seen fleeing the scene behind CVS Pharmacy.

The suspect was described as a white male adult in his mid-20s, slight to average build with scruffy facial hair, and a black patch of hair on his left cheek similar to a mole.

He was wearing blue pants, black jacket with leather sleeves similar to a letterman's jacket. He had a black hoodie, wore ski goggles and carried a Safeway reusable shopping bag.

Anyone with information is asked to call the police at (530) 542.6100.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

CDC says 'nightmare bacteria' a growing threat

By Lena H. Sun, Washington Post

Federal officials warned Tuesday that "nightmare bacteria" –

including the deadly superbug that struck a National Institutes of Health facility two years ago – are increasingly resistant to even the strongest antibiotics, posing a growing threat to hospitals and nursing homes nationwide.

Thomas Frieden, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said at a news conference: “It’s not often that our scientists come to me and say we have a very serious problem and we need to sound an alarm. But that’s exactly what we are doing today.”

He called on doctors, hospital leaders and health officials to work together to stop the spread of the infections. “Our strongest antibiotics don’t work, and patients are left with potentially untreatable infections,” he said.

Although the bacteria, known as Carbapenen-Resistant Enterobacteriaceae, or CRE, haven’t spread to the wider community – like some other germs – they are more dangerous, said Frieden, who described them as a “triple threat.”

First, the bacteria are resistant to all or nearly all antibiotics, even those of last resort, he said. Second, they kill up to half of patients who get bloodstream infections from them. And third, the bacteria can transfer their antibiotic resistance to other bacteria within the family, potentially making other bacteria untreatable, as well.

For example, carbapenem-resistant Klebsiella, which caused the NIH outbreak, “can spread the genes that destroy our last antibiotics to other bacteria, such as E. coli, and make E. coli resistant to antibiotics also,” Frieden said.

E. coli is the most common cause of urinary tract infections in healthy people.

In 10 years, the percentage of Enterobacteriaceae resistant to antiobiotics increased almost fourfold, to 4.2 percent in 2011 from 1.2 percent in 2001, according to data reported to CDC.

And the strain that caused the NIH outbreak has increased sevenfold in the past decade, according to a CDC report issued Tuesday.

During the first half of 2012, almost 200 hospitals and long-term acute-care facilities treated at least one patient infected with these bacteria. The CDC did not have statistics for fatalities.

Enterobacteriaceae are a family of more than 70 bacteria, including E. coli, that normally live in the digestive system. Over time, some of these bacteria have become resistant to a group of antibiotics known as carbapenems, often referred to as last-resort antibiotics. During the past decade, CDC tracked one type of CRE from a single health-care facility to facilities in at least 42 states, according to a CDC news release.

Only six states – Tennessee, Minnesota, Colorado, Wisconsin, Oregon and North Dakota – require hospitals and health-care facilities to report CRE infections to state health departments.

The NIH outbreak sickened 19 patients, including the woman who brought the germ with her when she was transferred to the Bethesda facility; 12 patients died. Seven of the deaths were directly attributed to an antibiotic-resistant strain of the bacterium Klebsiella pneumoniae.

When the outbreak erupted, the clinical center’s infection control staff scrambled, walling off infected patients and tearing out plumbing. They swabbed equipment, walls, railings and patients to track and contain the bacterium. Despite these extreme efforts, the outbreak still ticked along for more than a year as the hardy superbug lingered on hard surfaces – and inside patients, among the sickest of the sick.

The seven patients who died of bloodstream Klebsiella infections had immune systems weakened by cancer, anti-

rejection drugs given after organ transplants, and genetic disorders.

Almost all CRE infections occur in patients receiving care for serious conditions in hospitals, long-term acute-care facilities (such as those providing wound care or ventilation) or nursing homes.

These patients often have catheters or ventilators, which can allow bacteria “to get deeply into a patient’s body,” Frieden said.

The germs themselves spread from person to person, often on the hands of doctors, nurses and other health-care professionals.

The CDC said the spread of the germs can be controlled with proper precautions and better practices. Standard infection control precautions include washing hands and dedicating staff, rooms and equipment to the care of patients with CRE. Prescribing antibiotics wisely can significantly reduce the problem.

Patients who are hospitalized can, and should, ask their doctors and nurses to wash their hands before touching them, the officials said. And patients should not always demand antibiotics for their illnesses.

“Not all fevers require antibiotics. The more we use antibiotics, the more we encourage the spread of antibiotic resistance,” Frieden said.

Improv coming to LTCC for 1 night

Lake Tahoe Community College's Theater Arts Department's improvisation group, Random Acts of Improv, is putting on a one-night-only performance March 29 at 7:30pm in the Duke Theatre. Tickets are $5 at the door.

This family-friendly show will feature seasoned improvisation performers, including members of the Tahoe Improv Players, as well as a few fresh faces.

Random Acts of Improv was started in 2012 by department head Susan Boulanger when she realized the level of interest in improvisation by Lake Tahoe performers and audiences alike.

For more information, call (530) 541.4660, ext.240.