USFS hits Christmas tree permit limit in Lake Tahoe

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit holiday tree permits are sold-out.

In late November, 3,000 permits were issued on a first-come, first- served basis. No additional permits will be authorized for this season.

The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest is also sold-out of permits.

Other options for cutting a tree on National Forest land include the Plumas, Shasta-Trinity, Lassen and Inyo national forests. In addition, private Christmas tree farms are located in Placer, Nevada and El Dorado counties.

Permit sales in the Lake Tahoe Basin began in 2003 with approximately 750 permits.

Ex-Tahoe resident off to prison for cheating IRS

A fraudulent tax return is costing a former South Lake Tahoe woman two years of freedom.

Gwen Noel Luckett, 59, was sentenced Dec. 10 to two years in prison for filing a fraudulent 2008 tax return in July 2009. That was the first time she had filed a return in six years.

Luckett must also pay $605,692 in restitution to the IRS.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Oregon man breaks both legs in fall on Mt. Tallac

A Portland man was whisked off Mount Tallac via helicopter Saturday after he broke both legs in a 400-foot fall.

Brian Meek, 50, was on snowshoes when he lost traction on the ice. He tumbled down the west bowl area, stopping only after hitting a large rock.

With the snowy and icy conditions of the terrain on Dec. 8 and the location of the victim, technical mountaineering skills were necessary.

El Dorado County and Douglas County search and rescue teams led the effort, with Lake Valley fire, Calstar and CHP assisting. It was the California Highway Patrol helicopter that airlifted Meek to Renown Medical Center in Reno.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Northstar making plans to

turn 40

Shaun White will host Northstar's 40th birthday bash on Dec. 22. The event takes place 40 years to the day the resort opened for skiing for the first time.

Activities for the whole family are planned, including a Burton Snowboard Academy Kids Clinic with White, live music on the mountain and in the Village at Northstar, a sparkling toast and s'mores in the village, 1970s costume contest and après party at Tavern 6330'.

White and Northstar COO, Bill Rock will lead the crowd in a complimentary sparkling cider and s'more toast at 4pm in the Village at Northstar, followed by the costume contest at 4:15pm, and an après ski party at Tavern 6330' in the Village from 4:30-6:30pm.

Ski report: Enjoy the blue skies



It should be a good day to hit the mountains. Storm expected midweek.

Here is the Dec. 10 ski report.

— Curtis Fong

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Bella is one of several dogs who has arrived in Tahoe from a Reno shelter this past weekend to find a new home. Our shelter frequently has available kennels for homeless pets when other nearby shelters have almost run out of space, and so the Tahoe staff brings these pets up here to change their luck.



Bella is a very sweet, small (31 pounds) miscellaneous mix of border collie, whippet, and who knows what else. She is affectionate, gets along well with other dogs, and walks nicely on her leash.

Bella is spayed, microchipped, and vaccinated. She is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes.

Go online to see photos and description of all pets at the shelter.

Call (530) 573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

– Karen Kuentz

North Shore tourism board adds members

The North Lake Tahoe Chamber/CVB/Resort Association Board of Directors election results includes one new director and two re-elected directors, each to serve a three-year term.

The newly elected board members are Eric Sather, general manager of the Resort at Squaw Creek, in the Large Lodging Seat; Kali Kopley, owner of Uncorked Squaw Valley, Uncorked Tahoe City, Uncorked Truckee and Petra in the Village at Northstar, re-elected in the Retail Seat; and Phil GilanFarr, owner of CB's Pizza and Grill, re-elected in the Restaurant Seat.

The directors will take office at the organization's January meeting.

Letter: Meyers chiropractor made Thanksgiving special

To the community,

Thanks to Josh Welch, the guests at Bread & Broth's Thanksgiving dinner on Nov. 22 also received food items to take home with them.

Welch of Safe Haven Chiropractic in Meyers conducted a food drive to help members of the South Lake Tahoe community. From Nov. 1-17 he exchanged chiropractic services for five non-perishable food items. Current, new or reactivating patients received a chiropractic adjustment for their donation.

As a result of his food drive, he collected 35 bags of canned and dry foods which he gave to the Bread & Broth program for distribution to needy members of our community.

Welch believes giving from the heart without expecting anything in return is what creates a strong community. Bread & Broth salutes Welch for his care, concern and generosity for those who are less fortunate and need a helping hand.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

North Shore launching free ski bus shuttle

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Less than one hour before the Tahoe Transportation District board was to vote on creating a free ski bus shuttle on the North Shore, negotiations were still ongoing.



This is because days before the Dec. 7 vote Northstar and Diamond Peak ski resorts backed out of their previous commitments. Squaw Valley-Alpine stepped in at the last minute with another $40,000 to ensure five of the six planned buses would be able to roll starting Dec. 22.

“We actually are participating in the program. There is recognition that our already existing shuttle system plugs into the system that is being contemplated for the region. Our shuttles currently provide service to/from Incline Village and Tahoe Vista,” Jessica VanPernis with Northstar told *Lake Tahoe News* after the meeting.

However, the signs being devised won’t say Northstar.

TTD board President Steve Teshara acknowledged Northstar has a network of buses for its guests, but added that it is not part of the larger regional coordinated transit program that will be launched this month.

Northstar had originally committed to $86,800 for the coordinated program.

VanPernis said that offer was withdrawn “because our existing shuttle services are being utilized as part of the system being proposed.”

That is not at all how it was presented at last week’s meeting.

Brad Wilson, general manager at Diamond Peak, did not return a phone call. The Incline Village resort had originally said it would put up $7,700 for the shuttle.

Talks have been going on in earnest for the last year to devise such a ski bus shuttle, though people have actually been discussing it for the last 20 years.

“Resort operators realize you can go to other ski destinations and have this seamless transit,” Teshara told *Lake Tahoe News*. They wanted to finally implement such a service in Tahoe. Plus, North Shore has the largest concentration of resorts in North America.

The bus service will run on weekends and holiday weeks from Dec. 22-March 31.

Amador Stage Lines was awarded the contract at the Friday meeting. The main reason Amador won out over El Camino Charters is that they guaranteed, per stipulations by TTD, that each bus will be accessible by disabled people.

Buses will seat 38. Skiers and snowboarders will bring their equipment on board.

Funding comes from:

• Homewood Mountain Resort – $5,700

• Squaw Valley-Alpine Meadows – $169,000

• Truckee – $5,000

• North Lake Tahoe Resort Association – $65,900.

All but $20,000 of that total will go to the bus company. That $20,000 will be used for marketing and other expenses – which include signs.

Other ski areas are on the route – including Boreal, Royal Gorge, Donner Ski Ranch and Sugar Bowl.

There are more than 30 stops that ring the North Shore and jut into Truckee. The schedule is broken into morning and afternoon time periods.

Route and times may be found online.

Santa arrives in Meyers via modern sleigh

MEYERS – Santa had some special elves and reindeer with him as he arrived in Meyers on Sunday night.

He traded in Rudolph's red nose for the lights of the Calstar helicopter to guide him to the landing zone near the Divided Sky restaurant. Instead of little men assisting him, he was escorted by bodyguards, aka deputies, from the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department.

This was the second year for Meyers to celebrate the season with a tree lighting, Santa, the Lake Valley fire truck all a glow, free flowing hot cocoa and buttered popcorn to munch on.

New this year was the guys from RISE (Mike Miller and Marley Reel) printing their "trucker hats" at a discount and with all the proceeds going to the Meyers Community Alliance.

The Alliance is the name for what was the Meyers Business Group. It's a grassroots group that is in the process of establishing itself as a nonprofit that is all about embracing Meyers as a destination as well as creating events like the annual tree lighting.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report



Hundreds of people attend the Dec. 9 Meyers tree lighting.



Santa makes his way under sheriff’s deputy escort to all the waiting kids. Photos/Kathryn Reed



Popcorn and hot cocoa are popular with all ages.