Time to advertise with LTN before the rates go up

Lake Tahoe News in the last couple weeks introduced two ad sizes to give greater variety to businesses looking to get the word about what they have to offer.

One is the home page ad at the top right. The advantage to this ad is that it will only be sold to one advertiser at a time. That means you will *always* be seen every time people are on the home page.

The other new ad size is the large squares. These are four times the size of the small square ads, but at only twice the cost. Plus, a limited number of them will be sold. The advantage to these ads is that they can be bought so they are seen on nearly every page or specific categories.

Prices are going up Jan. 1. So, if you want to lock in the 2012 rates, it will require signing a contract and paying before the end of the year. If you are interested in learning more about the rates or have other questions, send an email to info@LakeTahoeNews.net with “advertising inquiry” in the subject line.

Remember, *Lake Tahoe News* is the only source for news about Lake Tahoe seven days a week. It’s there 24/7. It’s being read in thousands of cities and hundreds of countries. This makes it in market and out of market media.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Opinion: Overhaul of CEQA looms large

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

It’s been 42 years since then-Gov. Ronald Reagan signed the landmark California Environmental Quality Act, an early victory for the nascent environmental protection movement that has since become a very powerful force in state and national politics.

Whether CEQA and its legislative progeny, including the most recent anti-global warming laws, have truly protected California’s environment or merely morphed into vehicles for those on the political left to pursue other ideological goals remains a bitterly debated issue.

Whatever the reality, with environmental groups now a major component of the Democratic Party and Democrats’ holding virtually unfettered political power in the state, CEQA would seem to be sacrosanct.

However, it appears that Gov. Jerry Brown and the Legislature’s Democratic leadership are poised to revise CEQA in some manner, responding to complaints that it has become an impediment to California’s recovery from the worst recession since the Great Depression.

It’s setting the stage for a potential battle with environmentalists who look upon CEQA as an iconic, almost religious, touchstone.

A hint of that came this year when Sen. Michael Rubio, D-Shafter, introduced a CEQA overhaul.

While it stalled due to pressure from environmentalists, it indicated an appetite among Democrats for change and led to

declarations from Brown and Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg that CEQA reform would sit atop their legislative agendas.

Brown, as is his wont, offered a pithy description of CEQA, once calling it “the blob.” While campaigning last fall for his tax-increase measure, Proposition 30, Brown responded to a questioner that he considered CEQA reform to be “very important.”

“There are many people who work very well under CEQA and don’t want to change it,” Brown said during the exchange in Los Angeles. “And yet, changes are needed.”

Brown signed a CEQA exemption for a new football stadium in Los Angeles and mused about exempting his pet bullet-train project from its provisions. Farmers and other local interests along the planned route of the train have filed CEQA suits to stop it.

Steinberg, meanwhile, helped enact the law that allows the governor to fast-track certain kinds of projects through the CEQA process over the opposition of major environmental groups. And he not only declared that CEQA reform would be a high priority but named Rubio as the new chairman of the Senate Environmental Quality Committee with a mandate to explore changes in the law, saying they are “needed to eliminate abuses.”

If Brown and Steinberg are serious, the forthcoming battle over CEQA is likely to be one of the Capitol’s more interesting, and perhaps significant, tests of the Democrats’ hegemony.

Scholarship set up in former LTCC student's name

A memorial scholarship has been established for former Lake Tahoe Community College student Lyra B. Fisher.

Fisher was tragically murdered this summer, the apparent victim of domestic violence.

Anna Lee, who works at changing students' lives everyday as the TRiO-SSS program specialist at Lake Tahoe Community College, had Fisher as a student. Lee decided to start a scholarship in Fisher's name with the Lake Tahoe Community College Foundation.

"She was a very kind woman who had an incredibly generous spirit," Lee said in a prepared statement. "I got to work with Lyra for about a year and a half. She had decided to come back to school to make very positive changes in her life, not just for herself, but for her young son."

The LTCC Foundation is collecting donations for a scholarship to honor Fisher's life and educational goals. Fisher was working toward an associate degree in criminal justice with plans to become a police officer, Lee said.

Students applying for the Lyra B. Fisher Memorial Scholarship this spring will be asked to write an essay describing how their educational goals will work to end violence in their community.

Donations may be sent to LTCC Foundation, One College Drive, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150.

For questions or more information, call (530) 541.4660, ext. 210.

El Dorado County-Red Hawk Casino revised agreement doesn’t help Lake Tahoe area

By Kathryn Reed

Red Hawk Casino and El Dorado County have rewritten their agreement from 2006 and still the Lake Tahoe Basin portion of the county isn’t getting a dime.

“We’ve had the biggest negative impacts on the East Slope. They get all the positives and we get all the negatives,” South Lake Tahoe City Councilman Tom Davis said of folks in the Placerville area.

The South Shore economy tanked for a variety of reasons – a big one being the proliferation of Indian casinos on the three main routes into the Lake Tahoe Basin – Red Hawk on Highway 50, Thunder Valley near Interstate 80, and Jackson Rancheria along Highway 88.



Red Hawk Casino has had financial issues since it opened in December 2008.

The 2006 agreement stemmed from a settlement involving a

lawsuit the county had filed against the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians in regards to the interchange that needed to be built to access the casino from Highway 50, along with environmental concerns.

Ultimately, the Indians agreed to pay the county $5.2 million a year for 20 years.

“All the money that the tribe paid to the county was for mitigation … the negative impacts we expected when the casino went in,” Ed Knapp, who today became chief county counsel, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “The original agreement hammered out with the tribe was the richest agreement ever in American history of a local public entity and an Indian tribe.”

This was pre-recession, and although gaming was declining, it was still a huge reason to come to the South Shore. Red Hawk opened in December 2008.

While officials on the South Shore made noise about how the Indian casino would be bad for the basin section of the county, the supervisors only saw the potential dollar signs in front of them. What they didn’t listen to were projections that gamblers stopping in Shingle Springs would never make it to Tahoe so it negatively impacted the county as a whole.

No money from the tribe has been used to mitigate that negative impact.

The money must be “spent on things impacted by the casino,” Knapp said.

Davis told *Lake Tahoe News*, “I always advocated some of that money should come to the East Slope because our casino business is impacted.”

Not a penny has been spent in Tahoe on Red Hawk’s impact on the South Shore.

“The business community is unclear as to why El Dorado County

would in essence subsidize poor business performance of one select business to the detriment of the county's citizens, especially those located in the Tahoe basin," B Gorman, CEO-president of Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "While we may not have all the relevant information, it is difficult to understand why such a concession would be given to a gaming business that has wrought such harm on our local economy."

The 2006 agreement said the money was to be used to build carpool lanes on Highway 50 near the casino to alleviate what officials' thought would be a dramatic increase in traffic. The traffic didn't materialize. And then the federal government offered stimulus money for the same roadwork.

Three payments by the tribe have been made to date. Half was spent to get what became the federal project shovel ready and the other half is sitting in the bank.

County Supervisors Jack Sweeney and Ron Briggs, who are on the Indian Gaming Special Distribution Funds committee, got the revised agreement on a November agenda. It passed 5-0.

Supervisor Norma Santiago said, "There is nothing to indicate Tahoe got screwed. (The money) can be used for specific roads in the area impacted by the casino. The entire county made out very well in the deal."

But neither she nor Knapp could explain how the entire county benefits.

The new deal calls for $2.6 million to be paid by the tribe to the county for road improvements in the general area of the casino.

The other $2.6 million will be given back to the Miwoks for the tribal health clinic. The clinic is open to all county residents.

However, instead of being billed for services rendered, the county is paying a flat fee for the health center even if not a single Band-Aid is ever used on a non-tribal county resident.

In some respects, the new deal amounts to the county only collecting half of what it was originally promised.

This is good for a casino that is financially troubled and just recently renegotiated the deal it has with the state.

Then there is the little issue with the county budget having not been revised, so the $2.6 million check that is due by Dec. 14 can’t be written to the tribe.

Learn techniques to get kids to listen better

Learn about effective ways to reduce tantrums, power struggles and other negative behaviors of children on Dec. 11 from 10-11am.

Special guest presenter and early childhood specialist Kristin Torres will be giving a presentation on effective, positive discipline with young children at the Tahoe Tot Spot, 1012 Al Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

For more info, call (530) 541.5994.

NLTRA looking for lodging, marketing committee members

The North Lake Tahoe Chamber/CVB/Resort Association is accepting applications for three open seats on its Marketing Committee, as well as open seats on its Lodging Committee.

The North Lake Tahoe Chamber/CVB/Resort Association Marketing Committee is made up of board members, appointed lay (community) members and a Placer County CEO representative. Lay members are selected based on marketing experience, type of business affiliation and geographic representation with an emphasis on those representing small business, event management, restaurant, retail, cross country and activity providers.

The Marketing Committee seats will each serve a three-year term from January 2013 to December 2015. The North Lake Tahoe Chamber/CVB/Resort Association Executive Committee will review applicants and provide a recommendation to the organization's board of directors at the January meeting.

Individuals for consideration need to submit a letter of interest and resume to Chief Marketing Officer Andy Chapman, of the North Lake Tahoe Chamber/CVB/Resort Association by Dec. 28 at 5pm via email, Andy@PureTahoeNorth.com, or by mail at Attention: Marketing Committee Application, North Lake Tahoe Chamber/CVB/Resort Association, P.O. Box 5459, Tahoe City, CA 96145.

For the North Lake Tahoe Chamber/CVB/Resort Association Lodging Committee, applicants must own or operate a lodging facility in eastern Placer County. The committee meets the first Thursday of every other month.

Individuals for consideration need to submit a letter of interest and resume to Visitor Information Services Manager

Emily Sullivan-Detwiler, of the North Lake Tahoe Chamber/CVB/Resort Association by Dec. 28 at 5pm via email, Emily@PureTahoeNorth.com, or by mail at Attention: Lodging Committee Application, North Lake Tahoe Chamber/CVB/Resort Association, P.O. Box 5459, Tahoe City, CA 96145.

Nevada tourism conference focuses on international traveler

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

SPARKS – Increasing international visitation and taking advantage of technological innovations to increase the number of tourists visiting the state dominated the conversation at the opening day of the lightly attended Governor's Conference on Tourism on Tuesday.

Nearly every presentation referenced strategies to use technology to do more with less and mining new markets for more visitors – strategies that run parallel to Gov. Brian Sandoval's economic development program.

Even the Nevada Tourism Commission meeting that preceded the opening of the conference at John Ascuaga's Nugget was filled with presentations from the state's newest representatives working in foreign countries to get tourists to visit Nevada.

About 150 people are attending the event, which routinely drew nearly 1,000 people in its pre-recession heyday. While the state's tourism conferences generally attract more people when

they’re in Las Vegas, the 2010 event in Reno – the first one in three years after the stagnant economy forced cancellations in 2008 and 2009 – had more than 200 people present.

Claudia Vecchio, director of the Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs, which oversees the Tourism Commission, said she felt the two-year void of not having the event probably has hurt turnout. She said she expects to appeal to large resort operators to be more supportive next year.

But for those attending, the day was filled with updates on the state of the state’s most important industry.

In his opening address, Sandoval applauded the work of the state’s tourism innovators, listing Ascuaga, Steve Wynn, and Reno’s Carano family among them, and explained how events like Elko’s Cowboy Poetry Gathering have been transformed into a world-renowned attractions.

“And our work, of course, is not yet finished,” Sandoval said. “Nevada will continue to be a nationwide leader in innovation by creating more experiences that enhance the quality of life for Nevadans and the quality of tourist visits. Innovation does not have to be grandiose campaigns and programs. It can be small steps that doing something better, more efficiently and more creatively can make a difference.”

Sandoval noted that tourism generates more than $56.5 billion in traveler spending and employs more than 447,000 Nevadans – 30 percent of the state’s work force. The industry accounts for 26 percent of the state’s tax revenue and 12.5 percent of the state’s gross domestic product.

Sandoval also referenced the state’s efforts to establish a brand, a project that has been delayed and is now expected to be unveiled in the spring.

“We talked about this effort at last year’s tourism conference, but we still have a ways to go. But I know you

will appreciate and embrace that brand once it’s completed. Good things take time, so please be patient.”

Lt. Gov. Brian Krolicki followed up with a summary of the Tourism Commission’s international efforts.

In a strategy shared by the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, the state pays representatives in prospective markets to sell Nevada as a destination. The state’s representatives in Australia, Brazil, France, South Korea and Mexico are attending the conference and addressed Tuesday morning’s commission meeting.

While the marketers have found niches that will bring visitors to the state’s rural attractions, they acknowledge that Las Vegas is a major draw for foreign tourists.

Zelie Breval, the state’s representative in France, said Death Valley National Park and Nevada’s gateway town of Beatty have strong appeal to her customers.

Benjamin Diaz, the representative in Mexico, has helped position Lake Tahoe to be a stronger attraction for his customers than Aspen and Vail, according to online surveys. Visits from Brazil have been buoyed by a vast improvement in the visa application process.

Ana Beatriz Di Pietro, who represents the state in Brazil, said improved air service to Las Vegas should expand that market.

South Korea’s Amy Lee and the agencies she works with have created customized tours that will take visitors to Las Vegas, the Grand Canyon, Death Valley and Lake Tahoe in one trip.

Panama-based Copa Airlines now offers one-stop service from several Brazilian cities to Las Vegas through Panama City.

U.S. Travel Association President Roger Dow told the conference that the wait time for visa applications has shrunk

from more than 90 days in June 2011 to less than five days in September, thanks to efforts by the U.S. State Department.

Ultimately, Dow said, he hopes Brazil joins Taiwan and South Korea in visa waiver programs that result in citizens not having to apply for a visa to visit the United States. He said he expects approval of new waiver programs for Brazil and Poland to be forthcoming.

The international marketing component also has been enhanced by the development of Brand USA, the nonprofit operation that has begun marketing the United States in foreign countries.

Amir Eylon, vice president of partnership development for Brand USA, said the enactment of the Travel Promotion Act has started to pay off, as the organization has begun distributing ads in countries regarded as “low-hanging fruit.”

The first campaigns were launched in May in Japan, the United Kingdom and Canada using catchy theme music – “Land of Dreams” by Roseanne Cash – and quick-hitting images of destinations and people from across the country to carry the message. A one-minute version of the ad, which has a tagline of “Discover this land, like never before,” is a slice of a music video Cash produced for Brand USA.

Eylon said it’s still too early to quantify the effectiveness of the ads, but anecdotally, he said, the campaign has been a hit overseas and with American tourism leaders who have seen them.

Incoming S. Tahoe council to be busy at first meeting

Besides swearing in a new member and then picking a mayor for the next year at the Dec. 11 South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting, the five have a full agenda.

Tahoe Transportation District officials are slated to give an update on projects. Separate is a consent agenda item involving funding between the TTD and the city.

This comes right after the California Tahoe Conservancy briefs the council on its strategic plan.

Parking meters are scheduled for a vote.

And it's possible a subcommittee will be re-established to deal with the Chateau project. That's the name that was given to the never-built convention center-hotel debacle near the state line.

South Tahoe Refuse officials will be at the meeting seeking a 1.57 percent rate increase to take effect Jan. 1. There will be a public hearing.

Harrison Avenue's environmental and design will be discussed during a public hearing.

The meeting starts at 9am at Lake Tahoe Airport.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• On July 9, Gov. Jerry Brown signed into law Senate Bill 991. It amends Section 400.1 of the Family Code. This law allows county supervisors, while in office, to perform marriage ceremonies starting Jan. 1.

• A Safeway worker says the Fox gas station in South Lake Tahoe will become a Safeway station in January.

• The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit anticipates selling out of holiday tree permits as early as Dec. 10. If you are interested in obtaining a permit, call (530) 543.2694.

• Tioga Pass is closed for the season.

• This video shows that making snow is a science unto itself:

Mancuso's 11th the best for U.S. in super combined

By USSA

ST. MORITZ, Switzerland – Slovenia's Tina Maze mastered incredibly flat light to stretch her Audi FIS Alpine World Cup overall lead to 187 points over reigning champion Lindsey Vonn (Vail) with a super combined victory Friday in St. Moritz, her

third win of the season.

Vonn, who stood fourth after the opening leg of super G, skied out in the slalom portion and dropped to fourth in the overall standings.

Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley posted the top U.S. finish with 11th and Laurenne Ross of Bend, Ore., was 25th.

Stacey Cook (Mammoth Mountain) went out in the slalom.

The race was one of only two scheduled World Cup super combined events this season and will not award a discipline title, however it will be a medal event at the World Championships.