Meyers residents map out future for their community

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – With markers in hand, a room full of people started drawing and writing descriptions on maps about what Meyers should evolve into. And much like the discussions being had around the basin, recreation, connectivity and a sense of place evolved as dominant themes.

Moving the boat inspection from where it is on Highway 89 to someplace where it's easier for motorists was an idea. But a bigger idea was to incorporate a visitors center into the boat wash area since this is a captive audience. Plus, the Meyers station is the busiest one in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Having distinct cross country ski routes through Lake Valley Recreation Area and Washoe Meadow State Park, as well as putting in bridges across the Upper Truckee River and Angora Creek that have nothing to do with golfing were some of the ideas.



Steve Bannar talks about trails he would

like developed in Meyers. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Changing land use designations to accommodate the possible relocation of Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care is on the table.

These ideas and more were discussed at a three-hour meeting Nov. 7 at the Lake Valley firehouse in Meyers. The goal is to come up with an updated plan for Meyers – the last one is 20 years old – and have it ready to be presented to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency early next year.

John Hitchcock with TRPA ran the Wednesday workshop.

When someone brought up how Winter Park, Colo., has a commercial area about as long as Meyers' on a state highway and functions better, Hitchcock said, "The problem is the Department of Transportation in Colorado is more progressive than Caltrans."

The highway is so wide in this section of the South Shore because it was going to be a freeway at one time.

El Dorado County Supervisor Norma Santiago would like to see the county take over the right-of-way from Caltrans. This would likely allow businesses to be able to do more with their properties and could take some snow removal responsibilities out of the state's hands.

She also suggested flopping the lanes for the bug station so locals go right through without veering to the right, and those needing to be inspected are off to the side of the road.

Santiago wants a new building that is not an "eye-sore" and meets legal requirements.

Transportation was one of the main topics of the night. Creating park and ride areas to access recreation, plus having

plowed winter recreation parking were brought up.

The fact Meyers does not have bus service other than on-demand was noted.

Being able to have connections to places that don’t involve being on or alongside a highway were mentioned, though so was creating a bike path along Highway 89.

Linking Tahoe Paradise Park and the state park was broached.

The Western Juniper Tree is on the cover of the 1993 Meyers plan because this is the only enclave in the basin where this species is found. People advocated for highlighting this fact in a more public manner.

Yanks Station in the prior plan was touted as where retail would go. It doesn’t exist anymore. In its place is the California Conservation Corps building. So that aspect of the old plan will definitely be revised.

The old plan also called for median landscaping on the highway with five distinct districts, with retail being two of them at opposite ends.

“What is missing from the old plan is mixing uses,” Hitchcock said. This would require not having as many districts.

He also suggested the possibility of having all of Meyers designated an area where special events can take place so it is less limiting than current policy.

Santa Rosa man accused of robbery arrested in S. Lake Tahoe

By CBS-SF

SANTA ROSA – A former Santa Rosa Hydroponics and Growing Supplies store employee was arrested in South Lake Tahoe on Nov. 7 on suspicion of robbing the store last month, Santa Rosa police said.

Jessie Hicks, 28, of Santa Rosa was detained by the California Highway Patrol while he was driving in South Lake Tahoe, police said.

The robbery suspect was armed with a handgun when he entered the store at 4880 Highway 12 about 7:30pm on Oct. 29, police said.

The suspect's face was covered with a cloth and he was wearing a hood, but he addressed the clerk by his first name and demanded cash from the register, police said.

Witnesses identified Hicks as the suspect and an ex-employee of the store and police then broadcast an alert to other law enforcement agencies regarding Hicks' involvement in the robbery.

Based on the broadcast alert, the CHP detained Hicks in South Lake Tahoe and notified Santa Rosa police.

The CHP learned Hicks moved to an apartment in Stateline and the Douglas County Sheriff's Office in Nevada got a warrant to search Hick's apartment, where evidence from the robbery was

found, police said.

Santa Rosa police detectives went to the El Dorado County jail in South Lake Tahoe where Hicks was being held and arrested him on suspicion of the robbery.

Expect to see smoke this weekend in Cold Creek area

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews will conduct prescribed fire operations in the Cold Creek area near South Lake Tahoe on Nov. 10.

Crews anticipate burning 3-5 acres, conditions permitting. Operations may last through the weekend.

Residents and visitors can expect to see smoke from this prescribed fire project area. The Forest Service strives to minimize the impacts of smoke on local communities. Smoke-sensitive residents should consider staying indoors and keeping doors, windows and outside vents closed. To directly receive prescribed fire updates, send an email to pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.

Forest Service staff will post road signs around areas affected by prescribed fire, and update the local fire information line at (530) 543.2600, No. 6.

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4 spots available in 2013 Ironman Lake Tahoe

With next year's Ironman Lake Tahoe sold-out, the only way to compete is to submit a picture and a corresponding caption (up to 250 characters) via the North Lake Tahoe Facebook page about why you should be selected for one of four spots.

The contest, titled "What Drives Your Personal Ironman Quest/Race/Triathlon?," runs through Dec. 7.

Ten finalists will be chosen and then asked to create a three-minute video that describes their story. North Lake Tahoe Facebook fans will vote between Dec. 21 and Jan. 6. The winners will be announced Jan. 7.

The Sept. 22 competition will be the first full-distance Ironman event in California since 2001.

Prescribed fire in Crystal Peak Park area on Saturday

North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District's fuels crew will continue their hazardous fuels reduction project in the Crystal Peak Park area on Nov. 10.

They will be pile burning approximately 5 acres.

This project is a cooperative effort between North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District, Truckee Meadows Fire Protection

District, Washoe County Parks Department and Nevada Division of Forestry.

The debris or slash piles were created as a result of a hazardous fuels reduction and defensible space project earlier this year, to help minimize the risk of wildland fires in the area.

The burning piles are expected to produce smoke that may be visible throughout the area. Smoke resulting from the pile burns will affect the surrounding areas for approximately 24-36 hours.

For further information, call (775) 831.0351, ext. 0.

Cost of a house on the rise in California

By Hudson Sangree, Sacramento Bee

Home prices in the Sacramento region continued rising in September at rates that outpaced national gains and mirrored statewide increases in residential real estate values, CoreLogic reported Tuesday.

Across El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento and Yolo counties, home prices rose by an average of 6.9 percent in September compared with the same month a year before, the Santa Ana-based firm said in a monthly report.

California also saw a 6.9 percent price increase during the same period, it reported.

Excluding distressed properties – meaning foreclosures and short sales – home prices in the Sacramento area and the state both increased by more than 8 percent from September 2011 to September 2012, CoreLogic reported.

Nationally, house prices jumped by 5 percent in September from the same month a year ago. That was the largest price gain since 2006 and the seventh consecutive month of year-over-year gains, the firm said.

“Home price improvement nationally continues to outpace our expectations,” Mark Fleming, chief economist for CoreLogic, said in a news release.

Price increases have been especially strong in states such as California, Arizona and Florida that experienced dramatic boom-and-bust cycles, and in energy-rich states such as North Dakota. There are only a handful of states where prices continue falling, including New Jersey and Illinois, CoreLogic said.

“Most states are exhibiting price increases,” Fleming said. “Gains are particularly large in former housing-bubble states and energy-industry concentrated states.”

The local, state and national markets are all improving because of short supply and increased demand, based partly on record-low interest rates.

“Home prices are responding to better market fundamentals, such as reduced inventories and improved buyer demand,” said Anand Nallathambi, president and CEO of CoreLogic.

“So far this year, we’re seeing clear signs of stabilization and improvement that show promise for a gradual recovery in the residential housing market.”

Students learn how to be safe with snow on the streets

Elementary students throughout Lake Tahoe Unified School District this week learned how all that snow gets taken off the streets.

The goal of the city's public works crews visiting the schools was to promote snow safety.



Sierra House students learn about snow safety. Photo/Provided

"When you see the snow removal machines in your neighborhood, it's important to go inside and play to remain safe. Remember to keep toys, sleds, shovels and your pets out of the road so they do not get damaged," Azril Kalik told Sierra House students.

Other important safety tips are for students to remain at the bus stop and to not play in the streets throughout the year

and for students to wear seatbelts at all times when traveling in vehicles.

A snow motor grader and a snow blower were on site for students to view and go inside of after the classroom presentation.

– Tracy Franklin, South Lake Tahoe PIO

Carson Valley gearing up for annual holiday parade

Carson Valley’s brightest celebration of the holiday season will take to the streets during the Carson Valley’s 17th annual Parade of Lights on Dec. 1 beginning at 5pm.

Residents and visitors are encouraged to line Highway 395 between Gilman Avenue in Gardnerville and Minden Town Park to watch dozens of colorfully decorated floats.

The theme is Silver Bells of the Sierra. From bells on horse bridles to youth choirs ringing out holiday songs, the ways the theme will come to life is only limited by the imaginations of the float builders.

The parade route is altered this year, with floats staging on Gilman Avenue east of Main Street and entering Highway 395 at Gilman to make their way to Minden Town Park.

In addition to serving as the start of the parade,there will

be holiday music in Heritage Park, heaters and fire pits. Immediately following the parade, Minden will provide fire pits and live entertainment along Esmeralda Avenue.

Grand marshal is retiring Douglas District Court Judge Dave Gamble.

For questions or information, call (775) 782.8144.

‘Mother Nature’s Child’ to be shown in Incline

Presented by the Teacher Education Department of Sierra Nevada College, “Mother Nature’s Child” explores nature’s powerful role in children’s health and development through the experience of toddlers, children in middle childhood and adolescents.

The film marks a moment in time when a living generation can still recall childhoods of free play outdoors. This will not be true for most children growing up today. The effects of “nature deficit disorder” are now being noted across the country in epidemics of child obesity, attention disorders, and depression.

The Nov. 13 6:30pm screening of “Mother Nature’s Child” will be followed by a panel discussion featuring David Manahan, director of the Sierra Expeditionary Learning School; Ashley Phillips, project director at the Sierra Watershed Education Partnership; and students from SNC’s Outdoor Adventure Leadership program.

The film will be shown in TCES 139-141. Contact Beth Bouchard at bbouchard@sierranevada.edu or (775) 881.7459 for more information.

Safeway workers-management reach consensus on contract

By Heather Somerville and George Avalos, San Jose Mercury News

Safeway struck a deal with union leaders early Thursday, ending more than 15 months of negotiations and easing fears that the recent bout of labor strife in local grocery stores might spread to the region's largest supermarket.

The tentative contract lays out new agreements on health care, wages and other prickly labor issues, and would cover Safeway employees in the Bay Area and Northern California through October 2014.

"This new agreement provides our employees with among the best wages, benefits and working conditions in the region, while ensuring the company can compete successfully in the future," said Karl Schroeder, president of Safeway's Northern California Division.

While Safeway turns an amicable corner in labor negotiations, family-owned grocery Raley's remains locked in a bitter stalemate with union members who went on strike Sunday and show no sign of leaving the picket line.

Ron Lind, Local 5 president of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union, would not disclose the specifics of the Safeway agreement, but said he was pleased that the union health plan

was unscathed in the final offer.

“Members are relieved,” Lind said. “They’ve seen what happened at Raley’s and Nob Hill. I think they are relieved to have a peaceful settlement.”

The Safeway contract awaits approval by members of Locals 5, 8 and 648 of the UFCW, and labor leaders said Thursday they expected to finalize the contract in less than a month.

“We will recommend strongly that they ratify this contract, and I’m confident that they will,” Lind said.

The agreement could put pressure on Raley’s to bend to union demands on pay and benefits. Save Mart, the other major grocer in the region, has already signed a deal with the UFCW.

A Raley’s spokesman said this week the company’s offer is better more generous than the Save Mart contract, and Raley’s will keep stores open and continue serving customers until the union votes. The strike is the first in Raley’s 77-year history.