All schools in Tahoe basin open on Friday

Ma Nature did not let weather forecasters down – she brought at least 6 inches of white stuff to South Lake Tahoe and Kings Beach, 8 inches in Meyers, 2 inches at Round Hill and 4 inches at the top of Kingsbury Grade on Thursday, with more on its way.

Snowplow drivers have been busy. This means schools throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin are open.

However, a winter weather advisory remains in effect for the Lake Tahoe-Truckee area through 4pm Friday. While the white stuff was not falling this morning, expect more to come in the afternoon. Another 2-5 inches are forecast above 7,000 feet, with 1-4 inches below that elevation.

“The cold and unstable nature of this system favors the development of narrow heavy snow bands, which can produce significantly higher snowfall amounts over a small area,” the National Weather Service in Reno says. “Snowfall rates of 1 to 2 inches per hour are likely in the heavy snow bands.”

Temperatures will remain cold, with single digits overnight Saturday. The sun will come out Sunday before the next system moves in Tuesday.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Low testosterone levels in men should not be ignored

By Mandy Kendall

We've all heard of menopause and the affects it can have on women. Well, low testosterone levels (or Low T) can be responsible for the male version (man-o-pause?) and it can affect men in many of the same ways.

Testosterone, known as the male hormone, is responsible for the typically male characteristics that appear during puberty such as facial hair growth, a deeper voice and muscle growth. Women produce testosterone too, but in much lower quantities than men.



Mandy Kendall

During adulthood, testosterone helps maintain energy, sex drive and is believed to play a significant role in supporting general physical health. However, as men age their levels of testosterone, like any hormone, can drop and it is estimated that 4.5 million men in the United States have low testosterone levels.

Symptoms vary from man to man but can include: fatigue, depression, increase in body fat, decrease in muscle mass, changes in sleep habits and low sex drive. Signs of Low T can appear insidiously over time and are often mistakenly attributed to general stress. Health experts advise men might

benefit from more exercise, a better diet, stress management and more sleep, however it is also recommended to find out if symptoms could be due to low levels of testosterone.

Other than making life somewhat unpleasant for the individual (not to mention those close to them) these signs and symptoms might not seem that urgent to treat, but Low T not only affects quality of life, it can also be detrimental to long-term health. Low T can be a symptom of a more serious health conditions such as Type 2 diabetes, infections, hormonal disorders or testicular cancer. Left untreated low testosterone levels can also cause conditions like reduced bone density or fertility problems.

A simple blood test will help measure testosterone levels and help determine if treatment is required. According to guidelines from the Endocrine Society, the healthy ranges of testosterone in men can vary widely but symptoms associated with Low T most generally appear when blood testosterone levels drop below 300 nanograms per deciliter (ng/dL).

The causes of Low T vary greatly as well. Aging, accidents, health conditions or even some medications can all play a part in low testosterone levels. Recent studies have found a strong link between obesity and Low T in men, especially in men who also suffer from Type 2 diabetes. It is known that fat tissue converts testosterone into estrogen, the female hormone, so reducing fat and building muscle is seen as an important part of maintaining sufficient testosterone levels. With this in mind, exercising with weights and resistance training is seen as an effective way of increasing the levels and circulation of testosterone as well as addressing some of the common symptoms of Low T.

For more information about how to help yourself or someone you know who may be suffering from Low T go online.

Until next time.

Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe, which aligns wellness seekers with their ideal wellness provider. If you have questions, would like some advice, or would like to request some Qwik-e tips on any health and well-being topic, drop her an email at connect@healthconnective.com or keep an eye out on Lake Tahoe News for regular Qwik-e tips on how to make healthy changes one Quick and Easy step at a time.

PTSD help available for veterans

Veterans, their families and friends are invited to an upbeat and informative evening to learn about holistic approaches to post traumatic stress disorder.

The Studio Lake Lake is offering the event Nov. 11 from 4-5:30pm, 1089 Magua St., Meyers.

Biofeedback equipment will be provided to confirm efficacy.

Six no-charge sessions are provided for interested veterans.

For more information, email karla@innerconstellation.com or call (530) 544.5551.

Opinion: NTPUD making cost-saving infrastructure improvements

By Paul Schultz

The North Tahoe Public Utility District proudly provides three core services to the residents of North Lake Tahoe from the California state line to Dollar Hill; fresh drinking water, transportation of sewage to the Tahoe Truckee Sanitation Agency for treatment, and providing high quality Parks facilities to our residents. The district also prides itself on being responsible stewards of the public's money with recent capital improvements providing more efficiency while grant opportunities allow funds to go further and to do more with less.

In the last three years the district has spent $5,815,611 on capital improvement construction in the sewer and water departments and used grants to leverage the public's dollars to get more done and increase efficiency within the district's systems. Of that total, 21 percent, or $1,235,405, was constructed using grant funds from the U.S. Forest Service through the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act to support new water tanks and upgrades to water lines, including fire hydrants and increasing water line sizes for improved fire flow.

All upgrades are done with an eye toward increased efficiency; replacing leaking water pipes conserves water and reduces unaccounted water losses and pumping costs.

For example, the replacement of 9,500 linear feet of water lines in the Kingswood Estates neighborhood, west of Highway 267 between Lincoln Green and North National Avenue, has resulted in a 37 percent reduction in unaccounted for water that will reduce the costs for treatment, storage, and pumping

expenses. The District is currently replacing sewer mains in the area around Brook Avenue in the Kings Beach grid, which will improve access and help reduce the district's operational costs by allowing the District to abandon an old, mid-block sewer main that runs underneath buildings.

Water and sewer line relocations to support the Kings Beach Commercial Core Improvement Project will take place next construction season under a co-operative agreement with Placer County to minimize the disruption to the customers and help reduce the District's costs. The district has been working closely with Placer County to minimize the number of relocations necessary and has secured grant funding from the U.S. Forest Service through the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act, to pay for two-thirds of the relocation costs in the areas outside the state highway.

Many projects utilize grants for construction while others increase efficiency because of the project. Rehabilitation of sewer pump stations reduces energy use by modernizing pumps and motors that move our wastewater along Highway 28 and up and over Dollar Hill. The recently completed Secline Sewer Pump Station Rehabilitation Project has resulted in a 38 percent reduction in energy consumption from our 2011 usage due to the installation of new pumps and motors.

The North Tahoe Public Utility District is proud of the services that it provides to our community and does all we can to make our resident's dollars go farther by reducing operational costs and seeking grants when they are available. We will continue to move forward in this direction and do all we can to keep rates low while meeting state requirements and maintaining our infrastructure.

Paul Schultz is general manger-CEO of North Tahoe Public Utility District.

South Lake Tahoe set to spend $1 mil. for ladder fire truck

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe's ladder truck is so old that some of the firefighters working for the department were born after it first hit the streets.

Fire Chief Brian Uhler told the City Council on Nov. 6 that the normal life of the vehicle is 15 years. The one the city has title to is 30 years old. In the vehicle world it's an antique, and if it were a person, it would be in a convalescent home on life support.



A ladder truck, like the one Tahoe Douglas brought to the Pioneer Trail fire this fall, allows crews to get above

power lines.
Photo/LTN

The ladder truck is in such lousy shape that it was pulled from service this year because of safety concerns and high maintenance costs.

In the last five years, the current ladder truck has needed almost $100,000 in repairs.

“The vehicle emits a large amount of smoke because a major engine overhaul is overdue and the ladder’s electrical components are known to be unreliable,” Uhler wrote in his staff report.

Rob Hembree, one of the station commanders, pointed out how when the convention center project was approved, it was with the caveat the city had a ladder truck that could fight a fire at that structure.

The tallest building in the city limits is nine stories.

But it’s not just tall structures that benefit from a ladder truck. The house fire on April Avenue and Pioneer Trail in September was extinguished with the help of Tahoe Douglas’ ladder truck.

This type of unit is ideal for fires at commercial properties. It allows a trench to be cut on a roof without getting on the roof. That can save lives. Having a ladder truck in the city limits could help keep fire insurance costs down, too.

With a room full of firefighters, the council heard from official spokesmen from the department as well as impassioned pleas from those working the various rigs.

In the end, the council approved the purchase of a ladder truck for $1,045,501. It will arrive next year. Another $75,000 will be spent on renovating Station No. 2 so the

vehicle can be parked indoors.

The city has negotiated a loan with Republic First National for 10 years at 3.26 percent interest. The loan payments will come from Proposition 172 dollars. Until this week, the approximately $600,000 from this 1992 state initiative went into the city's general fund for fire and police to split.

Now the fire share will be allocated for capital expenditures. This includes vehicles and other equipment the women and men need.

The first payment won't be due until fiscal year 2013-14, so no revisions to the current budget are needed.

It hasn't been decided what the old ladder truck will be used for. It might have a new life as a training apparatus at the fire academy, possibly it will be the truck decorated for the holidays. But it's so old that parts are hard if not impossible to obtain, and the likelihood of another department wanting it are nil, according to officials.

In other action:

• Harrison Avenue improvements are going forward, with 82.46 percent of the property owners agreeing to form an assessment district. The council then unanimously approved its creation. This means work on the streetscape will begin next building season.

• The city and El Dorado County are joining efforts to release a request for proposal to find someone to conduct a comprehensive parks, trails and recreation master plan. Proposals are due Dec. 14, with the council expected to review them in late January and the county in early February.

• The empty lot at the southwest corner of Highway 50 and Ski Run Boulevard has been sold to an undisclosed buyer for $750,000. The buyer sought the confidentiality clause. The

city is holding to it until all the paperwork is signed. The city had to sell this parcel because it was part of the now defunct Redevelopment Agency.

• Stan Sherer, the Community Development director who was let go earlier this year, filed a $1 million claim against the city. It was reported out from closed session that the council rejected that claim.

Letter: Not giving up on what Prop. 37 stood for

To the community,

Thank you Lake Tahoe News and local businesses. In my efforts to get Proposition 37 passed (GMO labeling) and in doing the small things I could do, I discovered the wonderful kindness and helpfulness of our local people.

It truly is the small business and individuals who make a difference.

Thank you all so much.

I won’t give up on this issue. It’s as important to our health and the health of the planet as global warming. Thank you again,

Peggy A. Cooley, South Lake Tahoe

Tahoe celebrity golf event returns money to South Shore

Twenty-three nonprofits received checks totaling $64,500 Nov. 8 via the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority from the 2012 American Century Championship.

Through its ownership structure, more than 40 percent of American Century profits support research to help find cures for genetically-based diseases including cancer, diabetes and dementia.

Local cancer support programs involving the Barton Memorial Hospital Foundation and the Cancer League received $11,000.

The Boys & Girls Club received $10,000, with $5,000 each to Christmas Cheer All Year, Kiwanis Club of Lake Tahoe, Live Violence Free and Tahoe Youth & Family Services.

Contributions of $500 to $3,000 were awarded to American Youth Soccer Organization, Douglas County Parks & Recreation/Kahle Community Center, Ordinary People Meeting Extraordinary Needs, Sierra House Elementary PTA, South Tahoe BMX Bijou Bike Park, South Tahoe Family Resource Center, South Tahoe High School Grad Night, South Tahoe High School Performing Arts Booster Association, Tahoe Arts Project, Tahoe Community Church Food Pantry, Tahoe Douglas Rotary Foundation, Tahoe Regional Young Professionals, Tahoe Senior Housing II/Kelly Ridge, Tahoe Senior Plaza, Whittell High School – Safe & Sober Grad Night and Zephyr Cove Elementary School.

Letter: Thanks for help at Bijou school

To the community,

Bijou Community School has once again benefited greatly from the kindness of our community. More than 40 Bijou parents, staff, and students along with a few South Lake Tahoe Rotarians built two beautiful native gardens at Bijou this past weekend.

Thank you so much, volunteers, for giving your time and energy to our last-minute project. Also, a huge thanks to Ed Cook Tree Service for donating wood chips, Dale Rise Construction for the very generous donation of more than 20 boulders, and John Fellows of Aspen Hollow for the use of his bobcat.

Lastly, I would like to thank Darah Zurit for her vision and donation of time and energy in creating these beautiful gardens. It is amazing what a few people can accomplish in a short period of time with the support of a wonderful community.

Thank you!

Kathy Haven, South Lake Tahoe

Nevada Legislature includes 21 new members

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY – The 63-member Nevada Legislature will see quite a few new faces when it convenes Feb. 4, including 11 members in the Assembly and 10 members in the Senate, although several newly elected state senators have moved up from the Assembly.

One of the new Assembly members is Democrat Ellen Spiegel in District 20 in Henderson, who served in the 2009 session but lost re-election in 2010. Also new will be Republican Wes Duncan in District 37. Duncan unseated Democrat Marcus Conklin in the only loss by an incumbent in the 42-member Assembly.

One newly elected Assembly candidate's future is in legal limbo. Democrat Andrew Martin won in Assembly District 9 in Las Vegas, but a Clark County District judge on Monday ruled him ineligible for the seat because he did not reside in the district. The ruling could be appealed to the Nevada Supreme Court.

Democrats now have a 27-15 majority in the Assembly.

In the 21-member Senate, five of the new members have all served in the Assembly. They include Democrats Tick Segerblom, Kelvin Atkinson, and Debbie Smith, and Republicans Scott Hammond and Pete Goicoechea.

A sixth new member, Joyce Woodhouse, previously served a term in the state Senate but lost re-election in 2010.

Only four new Senate members have no previous legislative experience: Democrats Patricia Spearman, who defeated Democratic incumbent John Lee in the primary, Justin Jones and Aaron Ford; and Republican Mark Hutchison.

Democrats maintained their narrow 11-10 edge over Republicans in the Senate for the 2013 session after several extremely close races split between the two parties in Tuesday's election.

Legal battle looms in states approving use of recreational pot

By Sari Horwitz, Washington Post

The approval of ballot initiatives legalizing recreational marijuana use in Washington state and Colorado on Tuesday could set the stage for a significant legal battle with the Justice Department, one that may bring fresh scrutiny to federal drug policy.

On Wednesday, the Justice Department said it was reviewing the initiatives but would not comment further on how it would respond to the first attempt by any state to legalize marijuana for reasons other than medicinal purposes. A spokeswoman for the Drug Enforcement Agency said that its "enforcement of the Controlled Substances Act remains unchanged."

The ballot initiatives in Colorado and Washington state are a step beyond the measures that have legalized marijuana for medicinal purposes in the District and 17 states, including Massachusetts, which passed such an initiative Tuesday.

In the run-up to the latest initiatives, the Justice Department was unusually muted about the possible conflicts

between federal and state laws, even as former DEA officials called on Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. to publicly oppose the measures.

On Wednesday, Democratic Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper signaled his awareness of the legal conflict with the Justice Department, cautioning voters that the marijuana initiative violates federal law.

“The voters have spoken and we have to respect their will,” Hickenlooper said in a statement. “This will be a complicated process, but we intend to follow through. That said, federal law still says marijuana is an illegal drug, so don’t break out the Cheetos or gold fish too quickly.”

Colorado Amendment 64 allows individuals 21 and older to buy up to an ounce of marijuana at retail stores that are regulated. Possession of marijuana would be legal, although it would not be legal to use the drug publicly. Washington’s Initiative 502 is similar and allows adults 21 and older to buy up to an ounce of dried marijuana; up to a pound of a marijuana-infused product, such as brownies; or up to 72 ounces of marijuana-infused liquids.

Supporters of the measures argued that they would bring in hundreds of millions of dollars in tax revenue, with the funds being used for education, health care and other government services. They also said that the initiatives would give proponents a chance to show that decriminalization of marijuana could benefit the country’s war on drugs.

In Colorado, the measure was supported by more than 300 physicians in the state, including Bruce Madison, the former associate medical director of faculty at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, who said that current laws waste “hundreds of millions of dollars in a failed war on marijuana, by ruining thousands of lives by unnecessary arrest and incarceration, and by causing the deaths of hundreds of people

killed in black-market criminal activities.”

Opponents of the measures in both states warned of a federal crackdown and unauthorized drug use by children. They also argued that the states could attract “drug tourists.”

A similar proposal legalizing marijuana use was on the ballot in Oregon but did not pass.

In September, nine former DEA administrators wrote a letter to Holder expressing their concerns about the initiatives. The attorney general did not respond.

“To continue to remain silent conveys to the American public and the global community a tacit acceptance of these dangerous initiatives,” wrote the former administrators, who oversaw the DEA under both Democratic and Republican presidents from 1973 to 2007. “We urge you to take a public position on these initiatives as soon as possible.”

The Justice Department can file suit to try to block state laws that it deems to have violated federal statutes. It did so, for example, after Arizona passed a law in 2010 that the state said was aimed at cracking down on illegal immigrants but that the Obama administration believed was unconstitutional.

On Wednesday, Justice spokeswoman Nanda Chitre would not comment on whether a lawsuit is being considered. “The Department of Justice is reviewing the ballot initiatives, and we have no additional comment at this time,” Chitre said.