Tahoe Seasons employees not affected by parent company overhaul

Of the 64 people being laid off by Pacific Monarch Resorts Inc., none is from the Tahoe Seasons Resort in South Lake Tahoe.

Las Vegas-based Diamond Resorts bought Pacific Monarch's unsold vacation ownership inventory for $49.3 million earlier this year in a bankruptcy reorganization deal.

"In an effort to consolidate back-office functions with existing Diamond Resorts capabilities, a number of PMR employees in functions such as human resources, accounting, finance, information technology and legal unfortunately were not offered positions," Elliot Sloane, a Diamond Resorts spokesman, said in a statement. "Many of these employees were offered relocation packages to Diamond's headquarters in Las Vegas, but declined the offer. It is worth noting that none of the employees at the acquired resorts (was) terminated and without Diamond's purchase of PMR's assets, the long-term viability of PMR was in serious question."

Layoffs are all in Southern California.

Diamond Resorts also owns Lake Tahoe Vacation Resort in South Lake Tahoe.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Cell phones reveal more than users may realize

By Massimo Calabresi, Time

If someone wanted to create a global system for tracking human beings and collecting information about them, it would look a lot like the digital mobile-device network. It knows where you are, and – the more you text, tweet, shop, take pictures and navigate your surroundings using a smart phone – it knows an awful lot about what you're doing.

Which is one reason federal officials turned to Sprint, Verizon, AT&T and T-Mobile in early 2009 when they needed to solve the robbery of a Berlin, Conn., branch of Webster Bank. Using a loophole in a 1986 law that allows warrantless searches of stored communications, the feds ordered the carriers to provide records of phones that used a nearby cell tower on the day of the crime. The carriers turned over to the prosecutors the identities, call records and other personal information of 169 cell-phone users—including two men who were eventually sentenced to prison for the robbery. With a simple request, the feds cracked a case that might have otherwise taken years to solve.

In the process, they collected information on 167 people who they had no reason to believe had committed a crime, including details like numbers dialed and times of calls that would have been protected as private on a landline.

Such cases are common. In response to a request from Representative Ed Markey, major cell carriers revealed in July that they had received more than 1.3 million requests for cell-phone tracking data from federal, state and local law-enforcement officials in 2011.

By comparison, there were 3,000 wiretap warrants issued

nationwide in 2010.

That revelation has added to a growing debate over how to balance the convenience and security consumers now expect from their smart phones with the privacy they traditionally have wanted to protect. Every second we enjoy their convenience, smart phones are collecting information, recording literally millions of data points every day.

The potential for good is undeniable. In recent years, the average time it takes the U.S. Marshals Service to find a fugitive has dropped from 42 days to two, according to congressional testimony from Susan Landau, a Guggenheim fellow.

Cell phones have changed criminal investigation from the ground up.

“There is a mobile device connected to every crime scene,” says Peter Modafferi, the chief of detectives in Rockland County, New York.

But as smart phones’ tracking abilities have become more sophisticated, law enforcement, phonemakers, cell carriers and software makers have come under fire for exploiting personal data without the knowledge of the average user. Much of the law protecting mobile privacy in the U.S. was written at the dawn of the cell-phone era in the 1980s, and it can vary from state to state. Companies have widely differing privacy policies.

Now conservatives and liberals on Capitol Hill are pushing legislation that would set new privacy standards, limiting law-enforcement searches and restricting what kinds of information companies can collect.

Read the whole story

USFS looking for volunteers to help with kids' programs

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and the South Tahoe Environmental Education Coalition need volunteers to assist with programs and activities for elementary school students in South Lake Tahoe this fall.

Volunteer training will take place Aug. 29 from 2 to 5pm at the Tallac Historic Site located approximately three miles north of South Lake Tahoe on Highway 89.

Volunteers will train with experienced educators to learn skills needed to lead Children's Forest, Outdoor Explore and Kokanee Salmon field trips for students in kindergarten through fourth grade. Volunteers are encouraged to commit to volunteering a minimum of two program days during September or October.

STEEC is a collaborative network of more than 20 local agencies and organizations dedicated to bringing high quality environmental education programs to Lake Tahoe Unified School District students.

For more information, contact Megan Dee at (530) 543.2618 or email mldee@fs.fed.us.

Opinion: Skate the Lake raises money for cancer research

To the community,

B4BC's Eight Annual Skate the Lake Presented by Tahoe Longboards took place Aug. 18 in North Lake Tahoe and was a great success. Over 85 participants pushed for prevention and collectively, more than $10,000 in net funds were raised.

Participants included Tahoe residents from near and friends from afar to encourage people to come together and show one way of living a healthy and active lifestyle. Some who joined in the fun were pushing in honor of loved ones who have battled breast cancer, and others participated because they believe in B4BC's mission of spreading the importance of early detection + active living as the best means of prevention. B4BC was proud to extend its support to the local survivor community through a $2,500 donation to the Gene Upshaw Memorial Tahoe Forest Cancer Center in Truckee.

A special thank you to all who fundraised including top fundraisers (1. Randy Scheidt – Valley Springs 2. Arnie DePietro – Valley Springs and 3. Araseli Lopez – Sunnyvale, as well as the following sponsors for their support: presenting sponsor Tahoe Longboards, GoPro, Sun Bum, Mamasake, New Belgium, Hartline Construction, Hurley, Paul Mitchell, Woodward Tahoe, Tahoe Dave's and The Alley.

To kick off Breast Cancer Prevention month, B4BC's second yearly longboard-a-thon, Skate the Coast, will take place in Southern California on Sept. 29 and will consist of an 18-mile course that will run from the Santa Monica Pier to the Redondo Beach Pier.

Celebrity improv players coming to South Shore

Laura Hall, musical director of “Whose Line Is It Anyway”, and her actor-musician husband, Rick Hall, will be on the South Shore over Labor Day weekend.

The Halls’ performance schedule includes two shows at the Valhalla Boathouse Theatre.

They will join with the Tahoe Improv Players on Sept 1 at 7:30pm for an evening show where audience suggestions are turned into hilarious scenes made up on the spot.

On Sept. 2 at 7:30pm, the Halls present “The Laura & Rick Hall Show”. Their show includes original songs filled with their experiences in life: finding and appreciating love, having faith, raising children, childhood memories and the places where these memories took place.

The Halls began their careers working at “The Second City,” Chicago’s famous school of improvisation and sketch comedy theater.

Tickets are $10 the first night and $18 the second. Special two-show tickets may be purchased for $25.

Incline coach helps save a stranger’s life

By Alyx Sacks, KRNV-TV

Joe Humasti is a golf and ski coach for Incline High School.

Humatsi has coached for 30 years and has been trained in CPR since 1972, but until now has never had to use it.

“It comes back just like a reflex, the reflex takes over your emotions and you’re just in a different zone,” Humasti says.

Humatsi says his instincts just took over Sunday when he was working at his other job as security the Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe in Incline Village.

A woman staying at the hotel felt faint, but denied be taken to the hospital.

“I just had a feeling that something might be wrong, she just didn’t look right,” Humasti says.

So a little later in the day Humasti went to check on the woman at her room and her daughter answered the door.

“She was frantic and she just said, “My Mom is not doing well.” She was faced down on the bed I immediately went over there, rolled her over asked her if she was OK, no response, started CPR immediately,” Humasti says.

Read the whole story

SLTFD station 2 will be closed next week

South Lake Tahoe Fire Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News* the temporary closure of station 2 will be from Aug. 27-31.

(LTN first reported about the possibility of this happening on Aug. 18.)



"(The) same number of actual people (will be) working on a day-to-day basis, just deploying them a little differently," Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The change goes from 8am Aug. 27 to 5pm Aug. 31.

In an email he sent to staff that *LTN* obtained, Uhler writes, "During this time, I ask that you position the ladder truck at station 3 so any needed response will not require stopping and changing apparatus."

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Voters registered in El Dorado County who will be overseas for the Nov. 6 election have a variety of ways to get a ballot. Check out this website for details.

• September is when Sugar Pine Foundation volunteers collect seeds. To volunteer, contact Maria at maria@sugarpinefoundation.org or (650) 814.9565.

• The 24th annual Alpen Wine Festival is Sept. 2 from 2-5pm at the Village at Squaw Valley.

• Hyatt Lake Tahoe has a new food initiative called "Food: Thoughtfully Sourced, Carefully Served" that focuses on providing fresh, local food and beverage selections. This includes a revamped kids' menu.

• This video shows how Lake Tahoe should be promoted. It's a 10-month time lapse video of Lake Tahoe by Justin Majeczky.

Settlement reached in Fallen Leaf Lake firing case

When the Fallen Leaf Lake Community Services District board meets Sept. 1, the settlement agreement with former General Manager Tom Barnes is expected to be ratified.

Barnes had sued the district for wrongful termination after being fired in 2010. He had asked for unpaid leave while he received treatment for cancer. He was denied that request and subsequently fired.



Tom Barnes

The settlement is for $280,000.

“All I can say is that the civil action was settled and because of the settlement there cannot be any appeal. The district has insurance that will pay the settlement and at this time, prior to the board meeting scheduled to approve the settlement, it is premature to comment,” Tom Bacchetti, president of the Fallen Leaf Lake board told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Jacqueline Mittelstadt, Barnes’ attorney, declined to comment and said her client did not want to comment either.

– Kathryn Reed

Dose of vitamin D may prevent childhood colds

By Thomas H. Maugh II, Los Angeles Times

For kids who get a lot of colds during the winter, a boost in vitamin D levels may be just what the doctor ordered, researchers reported Monday. Supplementing vitamin D intake for children who were deficient halved the number of colds the children contracted, a team reported in the journal Pediatrics.

Observational studies have suggested that low vitamin D levels are associated with an increased risk of colds. The new study is apparently the first to show that supplementing children’s intake of the vitamin can reduce their risk of colds.

Dr. Carlos A. Camargo Jr. of Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston and his colleagues studied 247 third- and fourth-graders in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, as part of a larger study called the Blue Sky Study. They picked the city because the combination of an extremely cold climate and the high latitude restricts the amount of time children play outside in the sun. Sun shining on the skin is a major source of vitamin D. Moreover, foods and milk in Mongolia are not routinely supplemented with vitamin D.

Read the whole story