Mammoth Lakes town council votes to file for bankruptcy

Reuters

The leaders of Mammoth Lakes voted on Monday to approve a bankruptcy filing for the ski resort town, just days after Stockton became the most populous U.S. city to turn to bankruptcy court for protection from its creditors.

The vote by the Mammoth Lakes town council to seek Chapter 9 bankruptcy protection was unanimous, according to a statement on the town's website.

The town of about 8,000 residents in the Sierra Nevada mountains about 300 miles north of Los Angeles saw no other options after its largest creditor, Mammoth Lakes Land Acquisition, refused to negotiate concessions, the statement said. Mammoth Lakes Land Acquisition won a $43 million legal judgment against the town stemming from a property development dispute that began in 2006.

A new state law requires financially troubled municipalities to attempt mediation with their creditors before they may file for bankruptcy.

Read the whole story

Electric cars power

California’s summer travel

By Josie Garthwaite, New York Times

It doesn’t sound as sexy as the 1967 Summer of Love, but for Californians with a passion for plug-ins, the warm months of 2012 are turning into the season of the electric car.



Tesla Roadster

Some four years after the $100,000-plus Tesla Roadster became the nation’s only new electric vehicle capable of highway speeds, a wave of more affordable plug-in cars are coming to market. And California, the state with the nation’s largest auto market, the worst air quality and the most stringent emissions rules, is the first to catch the tide.

By summer’s end, nearly a dozen plug-in cars and crossovers may be traveling the state’s highways, including five or so that are arriving before the end of August. The latest models are from upstarts like Tesla and Coda Automotive as well as from global giants like Ford and Toyota.

Aside from the state’s longtime role as a trend incubator, other factors have combined to make this a test bed for what proponents hope will be a new age in personal transportation. The state’s policy makers have set tough emissions rules mandating a rising number of zero-emission vehicles, and they’ve offered tax incentives for buyers. As a hotbed of high technology and entertainment, California has plenty of

influential early adopters with ready cash. An expanded charging infrastructure is being developed and, perhaps most important, battery-powered cars grant access to the coveted car-pool lanes on congested freeways.

Read the whole story

USOC opts out of 2022 Winter Olympics bid

The United States Olympic Committee board voted earlier today to not submit a bid for the 2022 Winter Olympics.

Andy Wirth, president and CEO of Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows and the chairman and president of the Lake Tahoe Winter Olympic Committee Board of Directors, released a statement about the decision.

“Over the past few months, a talented and inspired group of Nevadans and Californians have come together to explore the possibility of hosting the Winter Olympics in Lake Tahoe in 2022. We have always understood that our efforts were contingent upon the USOC’s determination about whether or not to pursue a bid. In light of the decision announced today by the leadership of the USOC, we respect our nation’s Olympic Committee and their decisions, without reservation. The Lake Tahoe region is one of America’s greatest natural gems, and we believe that its place as a Winter sports destination remains unparalleled. While the USOC has chosen not to pursue the 2022 Winter Olympics, I believe, as does our board of directors, that we have laid the groundwork for a return of the Olympic Flame to this region and to our very own Olympic Valley in the future.”

The USOC said it will consider bidding for the 2024 Summer Olympics or the 2026 Winter Olympics.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Mammoth Lakes in water rights fight with L.A. utility

By Louis Sahagun, Los Angeles Times

MAMMOTH LAKES – The people of this small High Sierra ski town have survived drought, forest fires and earthquakes. They have endured economic recessions and volcano scares. But nothing in their history prepared them for the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

The DWP launched a legal attack six months ago for control of the city's primary source of water, Mammoth Creek, which tumbles down the slopes through town. The utility contends it has owned the water since 1905 and Mammoth Lakes has been poaching for decades.

The tiny Mammoth Community Water District says that if it loses the lawsuits, the district would have to buy water from the DWP. That would force the district to raise average rates to levels many locals cannot afford – increasing them by at least 100%, to about $840 a year, one district official said.

The 7,700 year-round residents are largely working-class employees catering to vacationers who travel 300 miles north from Los Angeles. Forty percent are low-income.

Greg Norby, manager of the water district, said the DWP is using the lawsuits to intimidate his agency, hoping it will

yield on the water rather than pay for a costly court battle. The district has already run up about $300,000 in legal expenses in the case, he said.

Read the whole story

Green ways to celebrate Independence Day

Huffington Post

Sizzling temperatures, long days and melting popsicles mean one very important thing – the Fourth of July is just around the corner. Independence Day is a time to embrace your patriotic side by doing what Americans do best: having fun!



Unfortunately, some of the best summer activities come with a hefty eco price tag. Here are a few ways to green your favorite Fourth of July pastimes, so you can have your fun while still being kind to the land you live on.

Read the whole story

Fireworks fly over ‘Lights on

the Lake’

KRNV and MyNews4.com

Tahoe South’s famed “Lights on the Lake” Fourth of July continues to generate international buzz, with the latest accolades coming from The Discovery Channel and Bing.com/MSN.



Bing.com’s new travel section powered by MSN, recognized Tahoe’s synchronized music and light firework display as No. 9 in the world, along with Paris, Sydney and Hong Kong.

The Discovery Channel’s Top 6 places in the U.S. to watch July 4 fireworks displays, include “Lights on the Lake.” The latest plaudits add to a growing list that also includes notables from NBC’s Today Show, USA Today, Travel & Leisure and ForbesTraveler.com.

With the Sierra Nevada and Lake Tahoe as backdrop, the 24-minute display is set to digitized streamed music by radio stations KRLT 93.9 and KOWL 1490. The pyrotechnic extravaganza is celebrated annually by more than 100,000 on the shore of South Tahoe, and tens of thousands who watch from all points on the lake by boat and across the shores to the west, east and north.

The show begins at 9:45 p.m. with best viewing spots around South Shore’s sandy beaches, including the new Lakeview Commons area, Nevada Beach, Timber Cove Marina, Bijou Community Park, Edgewood Tahoe or on the lake a board M.S. Dixie II and Tahoe Queen Paddlewheelers.

Read the whole story

Rabid skunk captured in El Dorado County

By Carlos Acala, Sacramento Bee

El Dorado Animal Services is advising residents to be alert to protect themselves from rabies after the capture of a rabid skunk last week.

The skunk was seen chasing cars and exhibiting extremely aggressive behavior, according to an agency news release.

The incidents occurred in the 300 block of Placerville Drive, near a movie theater.

An Animal Services officer saw the skunk and captured it. The animal subsequently tested positive for rabies.

Read the whole story

Chris Nelson – 1935-2012

Chris Nelson died June 29, 2012, at his home in Tahoe Donner. He was 76.

Well known for his efforts on behalf of the Tahoe Donner area, the founding director of the Truckee Tahoe Community Chorus and the OK Chorale, Chris and his family have been residents of the area for more than 16 years.

On Nov. 8, 1935, Chris was born on a farm in Richfield, Utah,

where his parents Neil and Reva raised him and his brothers, Ted and Dan.

Though he began his musical career as a trombonist playing principal chairs in the University Orchestra, the Utah Symphony Orchestra under Maurice Abravanel and in back up orchestras for major stars such as Johnny Mathis. Chris also had a superb vocal talent that allowed him to have a major influence in both instrumental and vocal genres.

As a student, he worked as the assistant director of bands and studied conducting under Forrest Stoll. Later, his studies included conducting under Dennis DeCoteau of the San Francisco Ballet. He earned his bachelor and master's of music degrees from the University of Utah. It was at the university where he met his wife, Sharilyn. They married Dec. 17, 1962, and have one son and two daughters.

Upon college graduation, Chris taught elementary and junior high music. In 1964, the couple moved to Las Vegas where he built a 100-voice chorus at the junior high level. Though he had little training in vocal-choral music, he was extremely successful and his choirs won many awards. The real reason the Nelsons moved to Las Vegas was for Chris to play in professional "relief" bands, a band that fills in when a performer's main band takes a night off. Always the principal trombone, he played professionally behind some of the greatest jazz and pop singers in the world with gigs in Salt Lake City, Reno, Los Angeles and Las Vegas.

In the late-1960s, Chris took a high school position in Belmont, Calif., where he began one of the state's first high school jazz bands. In 1971, Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill recruited Chris to start the community college's jazz band and build the music program. He was chair of the music department for 15 of the 28 years he taught there.

Once the Nelsons moved to California, skiing became a big part

of their lives. While Sharilyn learned to ski at age 6, Chris, despite his growing up in Utah, didn't ski until graduate school. Even this past winter Chris was gliding effortlessly through the powder at Sugar Bowl (frequently with his grandchildren). He spent 10 years as a ski patroller at Sugar Bowl and taught skiing at Squaw Valley for nine years. He also started the Tahoe Donner Ski Club, which now has a membership of more than 250.

Extremely athletic, Chris began playing golf after moving to Truckee, frequently playing several times a week. When Chris wasn't singing or playing outdoors, he could be found in the kitchen of the home he designed and helped build in Tahoe Donner. He was an accomplished cook who trained at the Hotel Utah in Salt Lake City and worked summers while in college at the Grand Canyon Hotel on the North Rim.

Retirement allowed him to expand his musical accomplishments. Eleven years ago he launched the community chorus, which has more than 60 singers from the Truckee, Tahoe, and Reno area. It has become Truckee's major classical performing arts organization. The biannual concerts present styles ranging from jazz to classical, spiritual to standards, frequently with orchestra.

He also developed a highly lauded barbershop ensemble, the OK Chorale, that has performed programs of his own writing and composing.

For the past two years, Chris worked on the Performing Arts Commission (reporting to the Truckee Donner Recreation & Park Department) and been instrumental in the planning and design of a performing arts center for Truckee. There will be on a bond issue on November's ballot for the center.

Music was the center of Chris' life. The silence of his voice and his trombone will leave a tremendous void, save for the numerous students he inspired to become professional musicians

and dedicated audiences for fine music. Through them, his voice and musical gift will continue to resonate.

Survivors include his wife of almost 50 years, Sharilyn Nelson of Truckee; son Matt Nelson of Phoenix; daughters Courtney Murrell of Truckee (husband Mark Murrell, children Megan and Gavin), and Kimberly Eilian of New York City (husband Kevin Eiliam, son Jerome); brothers Ted Nelson of Florida and Dan Nelson of Utah; and several nieces and nephews.

A celebration of life will be in this fall when the Truckee Tahoe Community Chorus assembles for its concert season.

Donations may be made to the Truckee Tahoe Community Chorus, P.O. Box 10756, Truckee, CA 96162.

Opinion: Google cars data collection warrant scrutiny

By John M. Simpson, Special to the Sacramento Bee

What do autonomous cars driven by robots like those Google is developing have to do with your privacy? If the answer is nothing, then why won't Google and the author of a bill to allow them on California highways accept an amendment requiring that the new technology collect only data necessary for the operation of the vehicle and no other purpose?

You may remember the last time Google deployed high-tech vehicles around the world. The result was "Wi-Spy," the

biggest wire-tapping scandal in history when the company's Street View cars sucked up data from tens of millions of private Wi-Fi networks, including emails, health information, banking information, passwords and other data.

We don't want that to happen again. If amended, Sen. Alex Padilla's Senate Bill 1298 could offer privacy protection. The Assembly Transportation Committee heard testimony about the bill last week and held it over for action Monday.

Read the whole story

Brush fire spreads to 250 acres north of Reno

By Riley Snyder, Reno Gazette-Journal

A rapidly spreading brush fire threatening several homes in Palomino Valley prompted a massive response Monday night from more than 60 firefighters who ultimately had to suspend operations overnight.

The blaze was about 250 to 300 acres as of about 9:30 p.m., Truckee Meadows Fire Department Chief Charles Moore said. Moore said it was about 10 percent contained as of Monday night.

"This fire went from an area of twenty to thirty feet to what you see here in about thirty minutes," he said.

About 10 to 12 structures were in the path of the fire, but the fire burned around them because of defensible perimeters, he said. Because the fire has spread up a ridge, most of the firefighting had been through the air, with crews operating

late into Monday and expected to continue Tuesday morning.

There have been some evacuations, but specific numbers were not available late Monday. Search and Rescue teams were dispatched to warn residents on the other side of the ridge to evacuate, he said.

Read the whole story