Court upholds vehicle restrictions in Tahoe National Forest

By Denny Walsh, Sacramento Bee

A federal appeals court has ruled that the U.S. Forest Service was on solid legal ground when it put more than 90 percent of “user-created” miles off-limits to motorized vehicles in Tahoe National Forest.

The forest service’s 2010 action generated disbelief and anger among off-highway vehicle owners, who sued the service’s umbrella agency, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, as well as the service itself and three of its officials, alleging a variety of procedural defects arising out of an environmental impact analysis underpinning the dramatic mileage reduction.

A broad array of environmental advocacy organizations cheered the development and intervened on the side of the government in the lawsuit, filed in Sacramento federal court in 2012.

Read the whole story

Yosemite National Park not allowed on merchandise

By Kurtis Alexander, San Francisco Chronicle

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK — The trademark spat that is prompting the National Park Service to change the names of a handful of

treasured sites at Yosemite, including the Ahwahnee Hotel and Curry Village, has taken a startling turn – to the park's gift shops.

Merchandise embossed with the name "Yosemite National Park," from T-shirts to coffee mugs to pens, will be pulled from store shelves this week because of claims by the park's outgoing concessionaire that it owns the name for commercial purposes, according to the park's new operator, Aramark, which is based in Philadelphia.

Aramark officials, who on Tuesday take the reins of Yosemite's many hotels, restaurants and shops from longtime management company Delaware North, plan to begin selling souvenir items with the name "Yosemite" instead of "Yosemite National Park."

Read the whole story

Soroptimist honors women making a difference



Soroptimist winners from left, Bonnie Driscoll, Tatiana Esposito, Abby Abel, Hunter Turney, Annie Buchser, Allyson

Swain, Tatum Whatford, Mireya Ortega, and Jordawn Amthauer. Not pictured, Sabrina Green. Photo/Provided

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – "It's what you do that counts."

That is what Lydia Rogers said before the recipients of the Violet Richardson Awards were announced last week.

Rogers, president of Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra, and Brenda Knox, president of Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe, hosted the annual awards dinner at Harrah's Lake Tahoe.

This particular award recognizes girls age 14-17 who have taken volunteerism to a new heights. It is named after the first president of Soroptimist "who was committed to creating opportunities for girls and young women through her affiliations with Soroptimist, the Girls Scout Council and the American Association of University Women."

The six young women who were singled out have spent countless hours volunteering at school and in the community. They are: Abby Abel, Allyson Swain, Hunter Turney, Annie Buchser, Sabina Green and Tatum Whatford. Each received $100 from Soroptimist.

The Women's Opportunity Award has been renamed Live Your Dream Award to more aptly reflect what it is. The clubs each select a woman who has overcome obstacles that no one should have to face. They each received $3,000 – $1,000 of which came from an outside donor. The money is to be used to further their education.

"Still today single mothers trying to go to school and better their lives and their employment opportunities is still a very difficult experience. Very few women have the luxury of being able to stay at home and be supported to achieve all of their goals and interests in life," Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe*

News. Although not a Soroptimist, Kerry is the one who increased this year's allocation. "I was one of those women. I didn't know about any resources really available. But I never wanted to give up on the idea that the current job situation could be improved. I really saw myself in those young girls."

For Jordawn Amthauer, she is a single mom, goes to Lake Tahoe Community College and works at the college. She was raised by a single mom. She's been working since she was 13. She is the first member of her family to go to college.

Tatiana Esposito, the other recipient, said, "I was a victim of domestic violence. I didn't think I could do anything on my own."

She grew up in Russia in an abusive household, came to the United States seven years ago, got married, and the abuse continued. She finally left with her two daughters and is on a quest to become a teacher.

The Ruby Award, honoring women who have worked to improve women and girls through their work or volunteerism, went to Bonnie Driscoll and Mireya Ortega. Driscoll is said to have volunteering in her DNA based on the number of organizations she has been affiliated with, while Ortega for years has been providing free or reduced dental care to youth who otherwise would never have their teeth cared for.

"The women tonight should inspire all of us," Rogers said as the evening came to a close.

Opinion: Marjorie Springmeyer – one of a kind



Marjorie Springmeyer

By Kathryn Reed

MINDEN – I'm a firm believer people come into our lives for a reason – even if it is not immediately apparent why.

As a journalist I'm always meeting people. Some of those encounters are more profound than others and have a lasting impression. Such was the case with Marjorie Springmeyer.

What an incredible woman – and I only knew her for a fraction of the 93 years she was alive.

More than 125 people gathered Feb. 28 to remember Mrs. Springmeyer, who **died Jan. 28**.

She used to write me letters – longhand – talking about the city of South Lake Tahoe, her travels, life and a little about her family. We would converse by phone. When I saw it was her calling I would answer if I knew I had the next hour free to chat. She wasn't one who would easily get off the phone.

Mrs. Springmeyer had such wonderful stories to tell about what life was like in Tahoe before it became a tourist destination and overbuilt. Her travels made me want to pack my bags.

I miss our talks – I've missed them for quite a while. I always thought there might be one more.

Her anger, frustration and heartache toward and because of the city are legendary. During the video of her life headlines involving some of that strife were shown – proving the significance it held in her life. She and her brothers, Knox and Bill Johnson, donated land for a City Hall that never got built. Instead, it's where the police department and courthouse are in South Lake Tahoe.

Bill Johnson attended Saturday's service, noting how his sister helped raise him because their mother was busy after their father died. Bill was 3 months old at the time and Marjorie 9 years old.

"When I think of Marjorie she always had a good spirit," Mr. Johnson said.

He and others didn't gloss over the difficulties Mrs. Springmeyer had to endure in her life – spending more than two years in a hospital after a car wreck in high school that killed one person and that left her with lifelong mobility issues, having her three children and husband precede her in death, being bed ridden for the last several years of her life, and all the land issues at the lake.

She had told me the friends were going to see "Gone with the Wind" the night of the accident. It was mentioned at the service this was her favorite movie. One has to wonder if it was just the most memorable.

Her brother and others also spoke of the goodness Mrs. Springmeyer brought to their lives and those around her.

Her long, flowing white hair and penchant to wear bright colored clothes were talked about. So was her love for travel, animals and helping others.

Three Washoe women spoke of Mrs. Springmeyer's love of the tribe and how they had adopted her as a Washoe sister.

One relative talked about her fondness for donkeys.

In 2005 she told me, "I have a burro permit (from South Lake Tahoe). I pay $30. I used to have them at the amusement park. I keep it because they would never let me have another license."

That is the spirit – some might call orneriness – which I admired about Mrs. Springmeyer. She was a fighter, a doer, a don't take no for an answer kind of woman. I respected her for all of those things.

The wind was a constant refrain during the service – her love for it. Now I will forever think of Mrs. Springmeyer when the wind blows and listen just a little harder to what it might be whispering or howling.

Deer Valley ski resort, Stein Eriksen Lodge off the charts when it comes to guest services



Stein Eriksen Lodge is just above the Sterling lift at Deer Valley. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Publisher's note: *This is one in a series of stories about Park City, Utah.*

By Kathryn Reed

PARK CITY, Utah – Anticipating a guest's needs and fulfilling them are what sets Deer Valley ski resort and Stein Eriksen Lodge apart from their competitors.

They are the leaders in their respective industries when it comes to guest services. Employees provide the little touches with ease, as though it is normal. The attitude they bring makes it appear they really enjoy their jobs. The kindness seems sincere, not forced or rehearsed. They may be acting, and if they are, then they should be receiving an Oscar tonight.

Deer Valley workers seem to do everything for skiers – except the actual skiing. And they are doing it just for skiers. Snowboarders still aren't allowed at this resort, which makes a fantastic difference.

A cadre of employees dressed in green and yellow are at the

curb of Snow Park Lodge eagerly opening doors, getting equipment out for people.



Valet service at Deer Valley includes multiple people helping unload a vehicle. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Workers don't hole up in the liftie booth, they aren't chatting with co-workers and ignoring the guests, they don't act annoyed when asked a question from an out-of-towner. They seem to recognize a puzzled look and are quick to offer help. Employees were stationed on the mountain at most of the large maps, giving tips for where to go.

The mountain is known for it's perfect corduroy. In some ways this makes it the ideal place to be on a powder day because most people here want to stick to the groomers so the untouched stashes of that fluffy Utah powder lasts a while. At many of the nearby hotels the daily grooming report is available at the front desk in the form of a mini resort trail map.

Don't get the wrong idea about this mountain that has multi-million dollar houses slopeside. It's not for the faint of heart. There are plenty of steeps, some moguls and blue (intermediate) runs that would pass for black (advanced) in

Lake Tahoe.

In 2002, Deer Valley was the host resort for the Alpine slalom, freestyle aerial and freestyle mogul Olympic events. More than 20,000 people attended each competition.

And in January the U.S. Ski Team was training for the Visa Freestyle International that was Feb. 4-6. This was the biggest stop on the World Cup tour. The events were staged at the same locations where the Olympians skied. This was the 14th time Deer Valley hosted a World Cup event. It also was home to the FIS Freestyle World Ski Championships in 2003 and 2011.



While the base area can get congested, the rest of the mountain isn’t because the resort limits the number of skiers. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Inside the various lodges that are scattered about the ski

hill the workers are courteous, answer questions about local beers and keep the venues spotless – or as close to it as possible. Food ranges from burgers to grilled venison to slices of cheesecake.

Even little things like the racks holding skis outside the restaurants look nicer than at most resorts. Instead of ordinary metal, they are aesthetically pleasing wood devices that fit in more with the natural environment.

Deer Valley limits the number of skiers to 7,500 a day on its 2,000-acre resort. Lift tickets are $120 a day; comparable to Vail Resorts' properties.



Stein Eriksen's presence is scattered throughout the property. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Sitting above Silver Lake Lodge is a hotel named after Stein Eriksen, a 1952 Olympic gold and silver medalist from Norway

who died in December at age 88. From 1956-58, he was director of Heavenly Mountain Resort's ski school.

While Stein Eriksen Lodge is named after the man known as the father of freestyle skiing, he didn't have an ownership stake in the lodge nor did he make any money off of the use of his name. A trophy case, though, shows off his hardware from his racing days. And there was a time he was like an ambassador for the hotel, mingling with guests and telling stories.

A hotel spokesman said owners are wrestling with how to stay relevant when multiple generations no longer recognize the Stein Eriksen name. They are working on how to keep the name meaningful. And while the service and location are outstanding, I was left with the feeling that the price of the room had more to do with the name and history of the property than the overall experience.



Views from the deck of Stein Eriksen look out to the slopes of Deer Valley. Photo/Kathryn Reed

This Forbes five-star hotel definitely earned that rating when

it came to guest services.

At the end of the day Stein employees are there to assist with the removal of ski boots. What a wonderful luxury that I didn’t know I was missing until that moment. This was after a couple guys hustled down the hill to grab our skis as we were walking up from the ski lodge.

From the valet to the doormen to the restaurant staff – impeccable service, and only worthy of praise. Even the guy who had to come service the television was at the top of the chart for guest services.



Rooms at the Stein Eriksen are comfortable. Photo/Kathryn Reed

What makes this property less than ideal is how it is laid out. The original lodge is where the restaurants are. Through the years it has expanded outward. We were staying about as far away as one could be from the outdoor heated pool, spa, weight room and restaurants. If there weren’t a private hot tub on the balcony of our room (which is the exception, rather than the rule), the communal hot tub across the property would have been inconvenient to get to.

Evening temperatures were in the single digits. This made for a brisk walk to dinner as well as to breakfast.

Casual and more formal restaurants are on property. The scallops are outrageously good, the choices for vegetarians limited, the breakfast good and hearty. The window seats looking out onto all that corduroy are wonderful. A huge wrap-around deck looks like it would be inviting to sit on when the temps are above freezing.

To get to where our skis were stored the front desk staff said the fastest, most convenient route was to walk through the garage. They were correct. But it seemed odd at a five-star hotel to be walking this way. It was another sign that the layout is lacking.



The trophy case belonging to the late Stein Eriksen. Photo/Kathryn Reed

For a luxury hotel that can fetch more than $1,000 a night for a room in winter – four times the amount compared to summer – there is a relaxed, mountain vibe. The wood and rock décor, along with muted lighting in common spaces even makes it feel a bit rustic – in a good way.

The room itself is spacious and comfortable. But it, too, is laid out a bit odd. A long entranceway is wasted space. While overall the bathroom is almost sprawling, the toilet is tucked into what is like a closet that would seem hard to maneuver in for someone larger than I am. The towels are ordinary – not even as nice as the Park City Marriott, though the robes are the best hotel robes I've worn – beyond plush – like being wrapped in a cocoon.

Salt Lake Olympic legacy remains on fast track



Skiers during the summer come off the jumps, landing in the pool on the left. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Publisher's note: ***This is one in a series of stories about Park City, Utah.***

By Susan Wood

PARK CITY, Utah – Hurtling down twists and turns at speeds of 80 mph with complete abandon of the danger if the pilot makes a mistake. The centrifugal force to be reckoned with at 4Gs makes a rookie groan, strain to focus, breath heavy and fight back the wind pushing her head down.

I tell myself to sit upright to protect my back, not realizing that after the one minute ride my elbows jammed inside the sled would be the points of my body to have bumps and bruises while gripping the cables seated directly behind the driver, Olympic silver medalist Shauna Rohbock of Orem, Utah.

At the Utah Olympic Park built for the 2002 Salt Lake City Games, I stepped into her vehicle of choice to partake in the second fastest bobsled track in the world. The fastest is at Whistler, British Columbia.

I held on tight to the confidence my four-member bobsled team thrown together with Rohbock at the helm would come out of the open chute surviving and thriving. Jake (the Olympic Park worker in back) told us how rare it is to experience the track without the shade. The sun can wreck the consistency of the track surface in 15 minutes.



The U.S. bobsled team gets ready for the World Cup event in January. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The U.S. Bobsled and Skeleton Team was in town on this January day for World Cup races along with multiple international teams. Before our run from the top, the chatter on the radios reflected a sense of urgency to keep the practice schedule. The track starts with a 400-foot drop and has 15 curves that make even the fastest roller coaster seem like an E-ticket ride. For $175 a person in winter or $150 in summer, the park provides the public rides on the Comet bobsled that start about a third of the way down from the competition start.

“It’s an experience you don’t have anywhere else,” said Sandy Chio, marketing director for the Utah Olympic Legacy.

The legacy foundation that employs 325 employees (60 year-round) was formed to maintain the Olympic facilities and no host events. Venues include the mega Olympic Park just outside Park City; cross country skiing mecca Soldier Hollow southeast of Deer Valley in Midway; gigantic Olympic Oval in suburban

Salt Lake City; Maverik Center for ice hockey in West Valley City; Peaks Ice Arena in Provo; Salt Lake Ice Center in downtown; Utah Jazz Stadium in town; Snowbasin ski area northeast of Salt Lake City; The Ice Sheet at Ogden; Deer Valley Ski Resort; and Park City ski resort.

They are staging grounds for Olympians and wannabes. They also provide entertainment for spectators or those who are enamored with learning about the venues.

In January, *Lake Tahoe News* visited four of the 11 venues, and met with Park City officials and Olympic Legacy staffers to get a glimpse of what it's like to host the Games, as well as the work involved before and after. Lake Tahoe hosted the 1960 Winter Olympics at Squaw Valley and the West Shore. For years, a Reno-based group has formed a committee and toyed with the idea of putting on another worldwide event, albeit strategically moving the date every few years to better its chances. The latest quest is for the 2026 Games, of which Salt Lake City has expressed an interest in as well.



The ski jump has different starting points based on one’s skill level. Photo/Kathryn Reed

A park for all seasons

On an estimated $26.3 million investment, the Utah Olympic Park opened with the bobsled-luge track, and ski museum in 1991, four years before the state received the bid to host the 2002 Games. (Salt Lake also bid on the 1998 Games.) Upon winning the bid, plans were quickly put into place that with a $48 million upgrade the park would add chairlifts, storage buildings, roads, bridges and water lines, replace its 90-meter Nordic ski jump and accommodate a new 120-meter jump ramp.

At first glance, one can see from the steepness at the top this isn’t for the faint of heart.



The public may experience a scaled-down version of the Olympic bobsled course. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Tour guide Patrick Rosevear stressed the real slope isn't as bad as one thinks.

"Every day, we see 12- and 14-year-olds jump. It's actually the second safest sport," he insisted, noting jumpers are really only 7 feet in the air despite how it looks on television. Of course, they are flying about 130 feet off a 36-degree ramp at 55mph. If there's an 8- to 12mph crosswind, jumps are canceled.

At 7,350 feet, Utah Olympic Park has the highest ski jumps in the world.

The freestyle aerial ramps send mogul and hot-dogging skiers 50 feet up in the air. The 40-degree landing is so steep a snowcat must be winched to groom there.

During the summer freestyle aerial skiers train in a 10-foot deep, 1.2 million-gallon swimming pool, which opened last year upon the $1 million donation from Olympic skier Spence Eccles

– a philanthropist who also owns the Goldener Hirsch hotel near Deer Valley.

The freestyle venue hosts many after-school programs for children. The park itself boasts more than 400,000 visitors.

Many are fascinated with the bobsled-luge track maintained by a $15,000 cooling system serving 100 miles of pipes. Rosevear noted that even though a participant sits up instead of lying down like the skeleton (considered one of the easiest and safest "by a huge margin") the luge represents one of the most dangerous sports.

"It's the steering. If you come into a turn and you miss by one inch at 91 mph, it can eject you off the sled," the guide said as a hush came over the tour van. In the luge, the riders wear spikes on their gloves to paddle – not to stop.

For a more relaxed experience, guests may peruse the two museums at the park. One is dedicated to the history of skiing and the other to the 2002 Olympic Games. A whole wall displays Park City's Olympic giant slalom racer Ted Ligety. Another exhibit features Olympic bobsledder Steve Holcomb, who brought home a medal in the last Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia.



The Oval is used by the U.S. Olympic team to train, but is open to residents as well. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Making the skate world go round

For those who like to get a quad burn on two blades, the Utah Olympic Oval has much to offer for the Olympian, aspiring youth or spectator hoping to catch a glimpse at the next Apollo Ono. The Olympian showed up for an exhibition event last November as part of the Oval's quest to offer events that bring in visitors. There's also "cosmic curling" for others wanting to figure out this mysterious sport.

The Oval was built on a 5-acre footprint in Kearns outside Salt Lake City in 1994, a year before Utah received the bid. Olympic revenues were used to cover the up to 4,000-seat oval and build an ice sheet in the center of the track. This sheet is now deemed "the fastest ice on Earth," Oval Operations Manager Todd Porter told *Lake Tahoe News* on a special tour. It's also the highest, at an elevation of 4,675 feet.



Todd Porter, who oversees the Olympic Oval, stands between the running track and ice for racing. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Porter talks poetically, albeit with a chemist's know-how, about the Oval's massive central cooling system, which seems like it could span the globe with pipes. Depending on the event, the ice changes consistency. It's this control that

attracts Olympians such as Jessica Smith-Kooreman, who trains in Salt Lake. She owns four short-track speed skating World Cup titles and came in fourth in 2014 at the Sochi Winter Olympics.

“I moved here for the facility itself. It’s the best and safest ice because it can be controlled. In the Olympic year, we had the ice switched to what is in Russia. Most places can’t do that. The Oval is good for taking care of its athletes,” she told *Lake Tahoe News* on a break from training. “You’re able to push your limits every day.”

The Oval schedules a host of “learn-to” programs that may spur the next Olympian. It can rent 1,000 skates, but all of the efforts seemed futile in the beginning, Porter admitted.



Olympian Jessica Smith-Kooreman raves about the ability to change the consistency of ice at the oval. Photo/Kathryn Reed

“At first, marketing to people around here was tough because they thought it wasn’t for them,” he said.

But getting the word out is paying off. Porter reported a record week of attendance between the Christmas and New Year's holidays, with 20,000 people taking in the large facility the size of four football fields. The place houses 10 locker rooms and a tunnel taking visitors from one side to the other. The concessions are managed in house.

Even the weight room is an experience, with television cameras set up for trainers to evaluate their athletes' performances.

It's the Europeans who appear to appreciate the facility the most, making it a stop on their U.S. vacation – with Netherlands television blasting skating events on site.

"To them, it's like (visiting) Yankee Stadium," Porter quipped.

The Oval loses about a $1 million year, but "that's the key part of where the (financial) endowment comes in," Porter stressed.

Still, Porter is always thinking of new ways to attract revenue and save money. The Oval has adapted a solar program designed to save the facility $2,000 a month in energy efficiency.



Deer Valley lets

skiers know where the Olympic events were. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Patience, perseverance to put on the Games

It takes good fortune, luck, money and will, according to Park City officials in describing handling the Olympics. After all, the region had tried a handful of times.

“The first challenge was no one believed we could actually do it. At the start, we thought it was a joke,” former city staffer Myles Rodeman, one of the architects of the 2002 Games, told *Lake Tahoe News.*

Rodeman, who was involved with the effort for 13 years, recalled the effort like it was yesterday. Ski racer and then Mayor Brad Olch walked in his office asked, “What do you think of us going in with Salt Lake for the Olympics?” Thus began a transformation of the ski town that was hard to imagine at the time.



The Olympic Oval is located a ways from Park City and Salt Lake City. Photo/Kathryn Reed

This was the 1980s when the ski industry was clawing out of a dismal period, so a boost for the economy seemed like a promising idea if it were to pay off.

Although now it takes at least $20 million to justify the investment of actually staging the Games, the $7 million raised at that time, mostly by private companies, for the bid was a lot of money. A master plan was devised, the local Rotary became a lobbying partner, and the Ski Utah organization discussed who would be best suited to host the ski events. Park City and Deer Valley appeared prime as host resorts – but not without a little power struggle and politics.

“We knew other resorts up the (Big and Little Cottonwood) canyons would be most difficult to serve in terms of transportation and avalanche conditions,” Rodeman said.

The Olympic Oval in Salt Lake seemed a bit problematic with its location being so far out.

There were so many considerations in hosting the Olympics.

Take transportation. During the Games, the Utah Department of Transportation forced truckers to re-route on Interstate 80.

Take parking. It’s no easy task, but up to 3,500 spaces were created in parking lots outside the downtown area of Park City.

“It was an incredible effort. You could not drive a car here,” Rodeman said.



This style of

sign is a signature for the Salt Lake Games that is seen at all the legacy venues. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Take the swag. During the bidding process, a “necessary” amount of generous “gifts” are traditionally given to Olympic Committee board members. In these staged events, one might see an assortment of items that exemplify a host city’s profile. At one event, Salt Lake City brought salt-water taffy, pins and hats but lost the bid. Nagano, Japan, won the 1998 bid using violins, computers and cars. Salt Lake won with rifles from Browning, a local company, Rodeman noted. The stakes for hosting appear high.

“Right there, I thought we lost (the bid),” he said. “In those days, you have to get all the (committee) members to support you.”

These days, regulations surround gifting internationally. Much of this came out of the 2002 Games.

Take hometown rules. Utah suspended all drinking laws for the 25 days surrounding the Olympics.

Take housing – which takes creativity as well. The athlete housing now serves as student dorms at the University of Utah.

Take security. The 9/11 terrorist attacks had occurred five months prior. The celebrations were staged in downtown Park City, making city officials and organizers nervous with the feds slow in coming.

“We needed security, but we didn’t want to look like we were armed for the cameras,” said Rodeman, who was in Atlanta on a

scouting tour during the 1996 Summer Games when the bomb exploded.

City officials and Olympic organizers toured five Olympic towns to see how they fared in the process – the Georgia city, Nagano, Sydney, Lillehammer and Calgary.

Olch, who served as Park City mayor for 12 years during the Olympic endeavor, recalled how the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary were considered as netting a less-than-desirable "Olympic performance" before and after the Games.

So Salt Lake City decided to plan to build facilities under the supervision of the Salt Lake City Olympic Committee ahead of schedule.

"We really stepped up there," Olch told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We had the experience (with ski venues), and the community got behind the sports venues and the whole Olympic thing."

The 40-year Park City resident admitted to spending "a lot of time talking to a lot of people convincing them it's a good thing," and in the end, "it worked out incredibly well." Olch insisted he wouldn't live anywhere else.

"Sure, putting on the Games is always challenging, but it exceeded all our expectations in how well it went and with what it did for our community – the list is quite long," he said.

Park City Public Affairs Manager Phyllis Robinson agreed.

The city put out a communitywide visioning process recently and asked its residents what they were most proud of Park City. The Olympics were mentioned often.

"I remember standing on Main Street. We were having this great party. (Comedian David) Letterman was at the bottom of the hill, and I thought this is something really special. I thought: 'Holy crap, we pulled this off.' With businesses,

everybody put something in the pot to make this happen."

Her colleague, Economic Development Manager Jonathan Weidenhamer, said it's possible in the Lake Tahoe region. He visited Tahoe last year during a South Shore tourism forum on economic and community revitalization and turned it into a tutorial.



Deer Valley immortalizes those who medaled in the events at the ski resort. Photo/Kathryn Reed

He pledged the South Shore would find a way to get the loop road project through if the region gets the Olympic Games.

"When you have the mission to get the Olympics, you can move mountains," he said.

Park City taxpayers faced a slew of bonds and tax measures, while a $70 million endowment kicked off the Utah Olympic Legacy foundation – the driving force behind maintaining the benefit of hosting the Olympics.

The 2002 Games cost $1.6 billion, with a little more than half coming from the state. It ended up netting $100 million. The

profit went into the foundation coffers to run the Olympic facilities, Foundation President Colin Hilton told *Lake Tahoe News*.

While it was an overall winner, Park City businesses lost money during the two-week period. This was expected. The entire Main Street was closed to vehicles the entire time.

“The sole focus is on our continued legacy. We’re not caught up in living in the past. We’re living the legacy with our people and programs, contributing to the Olympic movement,” Hilton said.



The museum focuses on the 2002 Games and Utah’s ski history.

Already, the Salt Lake-Park City region hosts many World Cup events and makes the programs “the fabric of the community.”

Hilton, one of the early architects of getting the Games to the area, was also more than pleased with the outcome. He is thrilled a new generation is carrying on the tradition – from the athletes (with 50 local Olympians living in the region) to those working behind the scenes at city offices who may have worked in other jobs at the time but stepped up to support the effort.

Assistant City Manager Matt Dias worked in a Park City restaurant during the 2002 Games.

“The Olympics are an incredibly important part of our community’s history, story and legacy. We take great pride in all of the hard work done by various community members and stakeholders that made the Games such a tremendous success,” he said. “Unlike other Games, the vast majority of the 2002 venues and infrastructure was either repurposed and returned to their prior uses and/or built new and now house vibrant and robust programs to ensure self-sustainability.”

Dias singled out the Utah Olympic Park for its off-season programs for providing a backdrop for events, boosting the local economy by filling restaurants and hotels and attracting teams to the area.

Time running out for drought relief

By Jon Erdman, Weather.com

While this fall and winter have provided needed rain and Sierra snow in California, time is running out for significant drought relief from this strong El Niño as we head into

spring.

After an optimistically wet start to the rainy season in the Golden State, including the highest Sierra snowpack measured in five years in late January, February has trended much drier, despite a record-tying El Niño.

Tahoe City has barely managed just over a foot of snow – 13.5 inches to be exact – in February, so far, virtually all during one storm on Feb. 18-19.

According to the California Department of Water Resources, snowpack water content Feb. 25 ranged 84 to 96 percent of the late-February average in the Sierra.

Read the whole story

The surprising history behind leap year

By Brian Handwerk, National Geographic

It's that time again: This Monday, Feb. 29, is a leap day, the calendar oddity that occurs (almost) every four years.

For centuries, trying to sync calendars with the length of the natural year caused confusion—until the concept of leap year provided a way to make up for lost time.

"It all comes down to the fact that the number of Earth's revolutions about its own axis, or days, is not equal to or connected in any way to how long it takes for the Earth to get

around the sun," says John Lowe, leader of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)'s Time & Frequency Division.

Read the whole story

LTCC taking education to prison inmates



Inmates at Folsom State Prison are receiving an education from Lake Tahoe Community College staff. Photo/LTN file

By Kathryn Reed

Being in prison does not mean being sentenced to a life without education.

For nearly a year Lake Tahoe Community College has been striving to educate a slew of inmates in Northern California correctional facilities. There are 127 active students, with 234 inmates having been part of the program since it started in spring 2015.

Shane Reynolds, who heads the incarcerated student program for LTCC, gave an update to the board of education on Feb. 23. About every two weeks he is at the prisons, working one-on-one with inmates, delivering materials, seeing how he can help them succeed. LTCC is affiliated with the five prisons that are under Folsom State Prison as well as High Desert State Prison in Susanville.

Instructors from LTCC videotape lectures. Regular online classes are not an option at this level of prison because Internet access it limited or nonexistent.

Students are given packets of work from the English, math and history departments. The whole sequence of math classes is required. Instructors Bruce Armburst and Wynn Walker make trips to the prisons to offer tutoring.

Next quarter geology will be offered.

As with all classes, these students have deadlines for turning in coursework and are graded like any other student. LTCC is the only college offering incarcerated students the opportunity to make the dean's list and honor roll – of which seven have done.

"We want to be leaders in education to the incarcerated," Reynolds told the board.

LTCC works with the state board of governors when it comes to getting these students enrolled and then receiving payment as though they were taking classes on campus. Their books are also provided for free. The college is not losing any money on this remote education program, but instead is actually getting credit for the students as though they were in South Lake Tahoe.

The goal is that after nine quarters these students would have an associate of arts degree in social sciences that would be transferable to a UC or CSU. Most are taking three four-unit

classes per quarter.

One thing Reynolds said needs improving is the bridge from prison to higher education once the person is released.

At the start these incarcerated students are given a 29-page guide detailing what is expected of them, it has the course descriptions, program details and a brief history of the college. It is an outline that would be beneficial to any student.

“The students want to know what is going on on campus. They want a connection to the campus community,” Reynolds said.

Reynolds, though, reiterated multiple times that this is a unique population working under constraints that those on campus aren’t contending with. Many of the prisons were on lockdown at various times last fall. All learning stops at times like that.

It took two quarters for Reynolds to convince prison officials that pencils should be allowed. The concern is they would be a weapon. Staples keeping papers together were another no-no at the get-go. It took three quarters to change the policy.

The next goal for Reynolds is to have the local jail be part of the incarcerated student program.

UN report warns of fewer bees, other pollinators

By Seth Borenstein, AP

Many species of wild bees, butterflies and other critters that

pollinate plants are shrinking toward extinction, and the world needs to do something about it before our food supply suffers, a new United Nations scientific mega-report warns.

The 20,000 or so species of pollinators are key to hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of crops each year – from fruits and vegetables to coffee and chocolate. Yet 2 out of 5 species of invertebrate pollinators, such as bees and butterflies, are on the path toward extinction, said the first-of-its-kind report. Pollinators with backbones, such as hummingbirds and bats, are only slightly better off, with 1 in 6 species facing extinction.

"We are in a period of decline and there are going to be increasing consequences," said report lead author Simon Potts, director of the Centre for Agri-Environmental Research at the University of Reading in England.

And it's not just honeybees. In some aspects they're doing better than many of their wild counterparts, like the bumblebee, despite dramatic long-term declines in the United States and a mysterious disorder that has waned.

The trouble is the report can't point to a single villain. Among the culprits: the way farming has changed so there's not enough diversity and wild flowers for pollinators to use as food; pesticide use, including a controversial one, neonicotinoid, that attacks the nervous system; habitat loss to cities; disease, parasites and pathogens; and global warming.

The report is the result of more than two years of work by scientists across the globe who got together under several different U.N. agencies to come up with an assessment of Earth's biodiversity, starting with the pollinators. It's an effort similar to what the United Nations has done with global warming, putting together an encyclopedic report to tell world leaders what's happening and give them options for what can be

done.

The report, which draws from many scientific studies but no new research, was approved by a congress of 124 nations meeting in Kuala Lumpur on Friday.

“The variety and multiplicity of threats to pollinators and pollination generate risks to people and livelihoods,” the report stated. “These risks are largely driven by changes in land cover and agricultural management systems, including pesticide use.”

But these are problems that can be fixed, and unlike global warming, the solutions don’t require countries to agree on global action – they can act locally, said Robert Watson, a top British ecological scientist and vice chairman of the scientific panel. The solutions offered mostly involve changing the way land and farming is managed.

“There are relatively simple, relatively inexpensive mechanisms for turning the trend around for native pollinators,” said David Inouye of the University of Maryland, a co-author of a couple chapters in the report.

One of the biggest problems, especially in the United States, is that giant swaths of farmland are devoted to just one crop, and wildflowers are disappearing, Potts and others said. Wild pollinators especially do well on grasslands, which are usually more than just grass, and 97 percent of Europe’s grasslands have disappeared since World War II, Potts said.

England now pays farmers to plant wildflowers for bees in hedge rows, Watson said.

There are both general and specific problems with some pesticide use, according to the report.

“Pesticides, particularly insecticides, have been demonstrated to have a broad range of lethal and sub-lethal effects on

pollinators in controlled experimental conditions," the report said. But it noted more study is needed on the effects on pollinators in the wild. Herbicides kill off weeds, which are useful for wild pollinators, the report added.

The report highlighted recent research that said the widely used insecticide neonicotinoid reduces wild bees' chances for survival and reproduction, but the evidence of effects on honeybees is conflicting.

In a statement, Christian Maus, global pollinator safety manager for Bayer, which makes neonicotinoids, said: "The report confirms the overwhelming majority of the scientific opinion regarding pollinator health – that this is a complex issue affected by many factors. Protecting pollinators and providing a growing population with safe, abundant food will require collaboration."

Potts said global warming is "very clearly a real future risk" because pollinators and their plants may not be at the same place at the same time. England has seen one-quarter of its bumblebee species threatened, and those are the type of bees most sensitive to climate change, he said.

England has lost two species of wild bumblebees to extinction and the U.S. has lost one, Inouye said.

The story of honeybees is a bit mixed. Globally over the last 50 years, the number of managed honeybee hives – ones where humans keep them either as a hobbyists or as professional pollinators – has increased, but it has dropped in North America and Europe, where there is the most data, the report said.

Potts said the number of managed hives in the United States dropped from 5.5 million in 1961 and dropped to a low of 2.5 million in 2012, when colony collapse disorder was causing increased worries. The number of hives is now back up slightly, to 2.7 million.

Dennis vanEngelsdorp, a University of Maryland bee expert who wasn’t part of the report, praised it for looking at the big picture beyond honeybees.

Doing something is crucial, he said.

“Everything falls apart if you take pollinators out of the game,” vanEngelsdorp said. “If we want to say we can feed the world in 2050, pollinators are going to be part of that.”