

Growth-control measures rejected in EDC

By Peter Hecht, Sacramento Bee

El Dorado County has long roiled with bitter political battles over new housing developments and perceived threats to the rustic Sierra foothills environment.

But Tuesday night, voters overwhelmingly rejected initiatives that proponents argued would protect rural community boundaries and ban new subdivisions that threaten to gridlock Highway 50 with traffic. They also elected two new county supervisors, Michael Ranalli and Sue Novasel, who both campaigned against the initiatives and "land use planning through the ballot box."

Measures M, N and O went down to ignominious defeat in the face of more than \$1 million in campaign spending by real estate and development groups, including building interests proposing thousands of new homes for western El Dorado County. The political media blizzard – costing more than \$20 per vote based on Tuesday's turnout – broadcast a message that the county's pastoral landscape was imperiled by the growth-control measures themselves.

"It means that even a good ballot argument and proposition is hard to win against \$1 million," said Bill Center, a former county supervisor and co-sponsor of Measure M. "It was basically an electoral carpet bombing with signs and mailings and robocalls and World Series ads. They ran the best campaign that money could buy."

Read the whole story

Rethinking the logic of kids' menus

By Maura Judkis, Washington Post

All that was left of Julia Washington's seared-scallop entree were the baby artichokes. The 10-year-old speared one with a fork, eyeing it with curiosity and contempt.

"I don't know about new things. I don't know how they taste," the fifth-grader from Upper Marlboro said at the restaurant Equinox. "It looks like a mushroom. I don't like mushrooms."

Julia is a typical child. She loves mac and cheese, fried shrimp, ice cream. But she couldn't order from the kids' menu that night, because Equinox has no kids' menu. The restaurant's chef, Todd Gray, does not believe in kid food.

"With the right encouragement, kids will eat anything," Gray said.

Most restaurants don't give children many choices: chicken fingers. Tater tots. Or bland, cheese-laden pizza, accompanied by a cup of limp fruit salad. And some parents are getting tired of it.

"The idea that there is different food for children drives me nuts," said Lynn Fredericks, founder of Family Cook Productions, an organization that teaches healthful family eating. She recently launched the Kids Food Reboot, a campaign to get restaurants to adapt their kids' menus to rely less on frozen french fries and other beige fried foods and more on healthful, fresh and — most important — interesting choices for young diners. Given the chance to eat, say, spaghetti

squash or broccoli rabe, children will rise to the occasion, Fredericks says.

“Children will eat other foods. They will,” she said. “It’s just about how you present it.”

Read the whole story

Financing delays Cal Neva renovations 1 year

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

The Lake Tahoe casino resort once owned by Frank Sinatra will likely stay closed for another year as financing for a major renovation has taken longer than expected.

The Cal Neva Resort & Casino, which has been closed since September 2013, just finished lining up \$49 million in financing for its makeover, the property’s lender said this week.

“It took more time than they had expected,” said Mike Jaynes, president of Hall Structured Finance, a Texas investment company that approved a loan for the Cal Neva renovation.

Criswell Radovan, a St. Helena investment firm, bought the old north shore property in April 2013 and closed it for renovations five months later. The firm’s principal, Robert Radovan, has said he wanted to reopen the Cal Neva in December 2014, in time for what would have been Sinatra’s 99th birthday. Sinatra died in 1999.

Read the whole story

Film stars get intro to El Dorado County

By Ed Fletcher, Sacramento Bee

A spacious foothills ranch house north of Placerville was L.A. north on Monday as transplant filmmaker Deon Taylor continued work on his new movie “Meet the Blacks.”

The courtyard between the home and the garage – overlooking the rolling El Dorado County landscape – was the backlot as young actors and experienced comics took turns posing for pictures with comedy veteran Paul Mooney. Taylor, who is from Chicago but now calls Sacramento home, said he likes to shoot close to home and build the Sacramento film scene.

“While I’m independent and I can choose where to make it, I choose to do it where I can sleep in my own bed at night,” said Taylor, whose previous credits include “Chain Letter” and “Supremacy” with Danny Glover set to be released Jan. 30. “Meet the Blacks” stars comedian Mike Epps, but also features comedians Lil Duval, former boxer Mike Tyson, Mooney and others.

Films set in Northern California have been relatively rare in recent years in part because California’s film tax incentives were no longer competitive with other markets that give major rebates for movies being shot there, said Kathleen Dodge, executive director of the El Dorado/Lake Tahoe film and media office.

Read the whole story

Lake Valley fire regrouping after crushing vote



Proper defensible space spared this house in the Angora burn area. Photo/Lake Valley Fire

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Valley Fire Protection District's desire to tax property owners for fire prevention went up in flames Nov. 4.

Voters overwhelming said no. Nearly twice as many people voted no (66.48 percent, 1,323 votes) compared to those who said yes (33.52 percent, 667 votes.)

"Basically people don't want a tax increase," Dave Huber, chair of Lake Valley's board of directors, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We are going to regroup and see where we go from here."

The next board meeting is Nov. 13.

Measure H would have replaced Measure M with a \$120 fee tied to the consumer price index. Projections were that it would

bring in \$1 million a year. It would not sunset.

Measure M, which has existed since 1986, remains in effect. Property owners pay \$20 year, it is not tied to the CPI, and it has no expiration date. The \$150,000 raised each year goes to the general fund.

While the bulk of Measure H would have gone to fuels reduction projects, allocations also called for upgrades to facilities and equipment.

"The district still has a difficult future ahead of it financially," fire Lt. Martin Goldberg told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He believes the measure didn't pass because of the CPI, no expiration date and people paying the CalFire tax that they see no benefit from.

Goldberg believes residents care about wildland fire prevention, but they don't want to pay for it.

Private property owners are not doing their part to be fire safe, he said.

"You are only as safe as your closest neighbor. If there is fuel to burn on their property, then yours is likely to catch fire as well," Goldberg said.

But residents have said they don't want to pay for their neighbors', that it should be that person's burden and should not be shared.

California has defensible space laws on the books that allow local fire departments to take punitive action against property owners who aren't in compliance. Until now, Lake Valley has gone the passive route – namely through education. It would be up to the board if fines were to ever be issued.

Also, likely to go by the wayside is the chipping program. People could limb trees and take out small ones, then have the

matter chipped. That could then be used as mulch.

The fire district is applying for a grant from CalFire that could extend the chipping program another year. The \$10 million the state is offering is from the fee that has been collected. Lake Valley is in the running for \$25,000.

LTCC squeaks out a win with facilities bond

By Susan Wood

One couldn't say Lake Tahoe Community College President Kindred Murillo doesn't stand up for the college, judging from her behavior election night to see if the bond measure that would fund infrastructure improvements would pass.

With 100 percent of the precincts voting, the \$55 million bond measure passed with 56.62 percent of the vote. It needed 55 percent to pass.

"I haven't seen her sit yet," said Wendy David, who threw a small gathering at her home to await City Council and Measure F election results. David was chair of the Measure F committee.

"I'm standing until I see the final results," Murillo told *Lake Tahoe News* early in the evening.

Still, Murillo seemed relaxed and confident – and felt a win was in the bag based on the education gained from other elections. The belief is more conservative voters cast their ballots first. Those who are a little flexible with their funds may vote later. Her theory paid off.



Founding and retiring LTCC
board member Roberta Mason
can leave knowing physical
upgrades are coming.
Photo/Susan Wood

Murillo, though, said she respected how seriously voters take new taxes imposed on them.

But after a more than two-year assessment, the time is really now for the college to put its money where its building is, she said. Just to illustrate that point, Murillo declared her staff has all gotten over colds because the heating system lacks reliability. Students and community members as well have mentioned how cold the building is in the winter.

"This (bond measure) is really for them. The college opens doors for people to use for meetings, walks, runs and fundraisers. I want the Tahoe area to feel like it owns the college," she said.

And what a send-off statement to LTCC's retiring, founding board member Roberta Mason.

"We've received a tremendous amount of support. It's the perfect time to do (improvement)," Mason told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Novasel headed to Placerville as supervisor



Sue Novasel will be the next El Dorado County District 5 supervisor. Photo/Provided

By Susan Wood

With El Dorado County Supervisor Norma Santiago being termed out of her District 5 seat, it means someone new will be sworn in in January. Sue Novasel is the unquestionable winner with 100 percent of the precincts reporting. She has 3,592 votes or 59.92 percent of the vote.

Her opponent, Kenny Curtzwiler has 2,331 votes at 39.58 percent.

Novasel, who lives in Christmas Valley where Internet

reception can be iffy at times, yelled the early numbers across the room to the handful of friends and family gathered to support her when *Lake Tahoe News* told her the news over the phone.

Although absentee results have often been telling in races particularly in this county, Novasel was not taking anything for granted while the numbers were still changing.

"I'm humbled. I had hoped the voters understood that I have a lot of experience," she said.

The longtime Meyers resident knows that experience needs to be accelerated as El Dorado County is facing huge issues ranging from a consistently fluid budget to having its chief administrative officer resign Nov. 4. Novasel sees that as an opportunity. After all, it's how she started on the Lake Tahoe Unified School Board a dozen years ago.

"There's certainly a lot of dysfunction in the county. I know we need to tighten down with the budget," she said, alluding to a low point as perhaps "a good way to start."

Phone calls to Curtzwiler were not returned.

As with most elections, only a minority of the people who live here actually vote.

However, the hope is that tradition will trump the dismal prediction of Tuesday's mid-term elections for El Dorado County. The voters usually demonstrate more enthusiasm than most of the 58 counties in California. And that's what county Registrar Bill Schultz is counting on this time.

"We're hoping for around 60 percent, and it could be higher. Historically we've had a better turnout than most counties," Schultz told *Lake Tahoe News* on election night.

As of 3pm Election Day, Schultz said his staff raked in a 32 percent return on vote-by-mail ballots at 34,221. More than

73,000 were sent out.

"That's a little higher than June," he said, referring to last summer's primary.

"Most of the time they tell the tale," he added, as most voters turn to an easier way to vote that's been described as simple as ordering pizza.

In the county of 106,931 registered voters, absentees make up 68 percent. Still, Schultz also heard from election workers that attendance has been better than predicted at precincts.

In El Dorado County, many could be more interested in local issues than watching how much of a margin Gov. Jerry Brown would win by. Having two seats up on the county Board of Supervisors is "the big one right there," Schultz quipped. And this race could set the pace for that 60 percent voter turnout and strong absentee prediction.

Early analysis has shown that of the 17,825 registered voters in the county's District 5, 10,752 vote-by-mail ballots were issued.

Statewide, the prediction was for less than 50 percent of voters to turn out. The record low was set in 2002 with 50.5 percent turnout. It is expected that 60 percent of those will be cast via absentee votes. The record was set in 2010 with 48.4 percent absentee voters.

The problem comes when those voters turn them in on Election Day. Those ballots don't get counted until days after the election, which is why the frontrunners can change and election night results are not solid. It could be as many as 1 million ballots that will be outstanding.

Kathryn Reed contributed to this story.

David, Davis, Swanson – SLT council



Wendy David



Tom Davis



Angela Swanson

By Kathryn Reed and Susan Wood

Voters in South Lake Tahoe appear to want a little of what they are used to mixed in with something new.

Three seats were up on the City Council, with all of the incumbents seeking re-election Nov. 4. Tom Davis and Angela Swanson are in the top three with 100 percent of the precincts reporting just after 1am Nov. 5.

“The public likes a little change on the council. I think the

public recognizes the city is headed in the right way and I got that message out,” Davis told *Lake Tahoe News*. “My message was what we have accomplished within the city.”

He is second with 15.56 percent of the vote or 1,042 votes.



Wendy David, right, talks to supporters on election night. Photo/Susan Wood

It's been a good week of “yes, yes, yes” in Giants terms for top vote getter and newcomer Wendy David.

After her San Francisco team secured a third World Series win in five years last week, she ended a productive tenure on Lake Tahoe Unified School District's board. She was first elected to that board in 1997.

And now, she's in the top spot for one of three seats on the City Council with 18 percent of the vote and 1,205 votes.

What she brings to the council is experience in social services through her vast amount of volunteer work as well as previous paid positions.

David said amid a crowd of about 15 people at her home, including those from Lake Tahoe Community College, that running against six other people, unlike her school board candidacies, made it more of a challenge.

“These are seven competent candidates ... I felt it could be

anybody's race," she told *Lake Tahoe News*, adding the notion the voters know that she cares "very much about the community."

Incumbent Angela Swanson came in third at 14.12 percent, 945 votes.

She was unavailable for comment.

While David, Davis and Swanson are the top vote getters, it's possible this will not be the final outcome. Not many votes separate the seven and these numbers are preliminary. Any absentee ballots that were turned in on Election Day will be counted in the next few days. That is why the results could change.

This is Austin Sass' third time to run for council. Until the last update he had been in third place. He had 13.92 percent, 932 votes.

"I think I got across to people that I was independent and not tied to anybody," Sass told *Lake Tahoe News* of why he did better.

Coming in fifth is incumbent Brooke Laine. She was appointed to the seat vacated by Claire Fortier. She has 13.35 percent, 894 votes.

Laine commended David for the position she's in.

Laine's day has been stressful since the start. An auditor came into U.S. Bank where she is the manager. This is daunting even for a grace-under-pressure elected official such as Laine.

"I will respect whatever the outcome is," she said, relaxing at home after about two dozen people had left.

Rounding out the field are first time contender Matt Palacio (12.53 percent, 839) and former Councilman Bruce Grego (12.29

percent, 823 votes).

The council will be sworn in Dec. 9. Those five will then choose among themselves who will be mayor and mayor pro tem. Normally mayor pro tem steps into the mayor's seat. With Laine currently out of the equation, that opens up the likely possibility of Mayor Hal Cole having the job for consecutive years or Davis taking on his fourth term as mayor.

Other local races include:

Measure H for Lake Valley Fire Protection District would tax residents in the Meyers area only. The money generated would mostly be used for fuels reduction projects. It required 66 percent of the voters to say yes for it to pass. The no votes resoundingly took at 66.48 percent.

Lake Tahoe Community College for the first time has district elections. The one contested race is for the seat being vacated by Molly Blann. Michelle Sweeney won with 52.14 percent (586 votes) with Bob Grant having 47.51 percent (534).

South Tahoe Public Utility District has two seats up, with only one incumbent running. Longtime board member Jim Jones won with 59.06 percent (2,347 votes) compared to challenger Shane Romsos with 40.51 percent (1,610). In the other STPUD race, Duane Wallace trounced Andy Chapman with 65.06 percent (2,495). Chapman had 34.55 percent (1,325).

Pierini, Wheeler dominate opponents

By Kathryn Reed

There will not be a new sheriff in town. With 100 percent of the precincts reports, Ron Pierini will be keeping his job as sheriff of Douglas County.

He came away with 11,677 votes or 68.92 percent. Challenger Dave Brady had 31.08 percent or 5,266 votes.



Ron Pierini

"I'm very, very happy with the results. It was almost 70 percent again. That was awesome," Pierini told *Lake Tahoe News*. "It was a very humble reaction I had."

In the June primary there were three contestants for sheriff, with the top two vote getters in the Nov. 4 runoff.

Pierini was first elected sheriff in 1997. He started with the department in 1976 – having been a captain in Tahoe, undersheriff and now sheriff. He said it's too soon to tell if he will be on the ballot in 2018.

What he liked most about the campaign process was meeting new people, and hearing from them and those he knew that the department is on the right course. While he has no plans to drastically alter the course the department is on, he said keeping up with technology is always a goal.

"I always have the intention of never being stale," Pierini said. "I see what our weaknesses are and improve things."

In another contested race in Douglas County, incumbent Jim

Wheeler will retain his seat in the state Assembly. The District 39 seat extends to Lake Tahoe. Wheeler had 77.67 percent or 12,924 votes compared to Al Giordano's 3,716 votes for 22.33 percent.

The top vote getters for Kingsbury General Improvement District are Darya Vogt (28.41 percent, 329) and Dan Norman (24.72 percent, 289).

Elected to the Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection board are Kevin Kjer (38.5 percent, 1,023) and Bill Kirschner (33.01 percent, 877).

Nancy McDermid, county commissioner representing the lake, was running unopposed.

Daly out as CAO, Knorr takes over in EDC

By Kathryn Reed

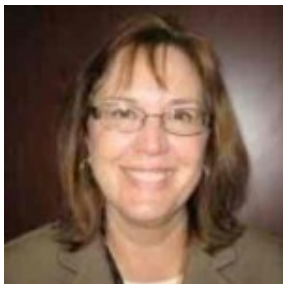
El Dorado County Board of Supervisor on a 3-2 vote Nov. 4 accepted the resignation of CAO Terri Daly. Supervisors Norma Santiago and Ron Briggs were in the minority.

Santiago and Briggs also are the two supervisors who are being termed out and won't be in office starting in January.

Human Resources Director Pamela Knorr has been appointed temporary chief administrative officer.

This action came one week after Daly had removed all of her personal belongings from her office. In all of this time she has had access to the county email system. Today she sent the

following email to employees:



Terri Daly

To all my fellow employees:

As you probably have already heard announced at the Board of Supervisors meeting today, I am leaving the county's employment. It has been a mutual decision. From my perspective, I feel that the culture of the county is no longer conducive to any further positive change under my watch.

It has truly been an honor to work with the employees of this county over the past four years. You do amazing things each and everyday – you save lives, you improve lives, you do things to improve the county. As the CAO and as a resident of the county, I thank you for all the work you do. You make my life better because of your work. Thank you.

Best success in all you do.

Terri

Daly was not at work on Monday, but she did go to lunch with many of the department heads.

In open session on Nov. 4, Briggs said how he supported Daly and did not believe she had been dealt with fairly.

"Norma has been a supporter of Terri, and will likely provide input on her accomplishments and successes in the near future, which are many in the four years of her time with the county,"

Judi McCallum, Santiago's assistant, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Daly has been accused of creating a hostile work environment, with her department being one of the worst morale-wise when an outside consultant was hired to investigate the inner workings of the county. She turned a budget surplus into a budget deficit. This was done in part by hiring more than 100 people – many of them to work in the CAO's office.

Knorr used to work for Alpine County and is Daly's friend. Daly gave her a \$30,000 raise – though, the board OK'd it.

It is unusual that Assistant CAO Kim Kerr was not given the job as acting CAO. She, too, is a friend of Daly's and comes with her own baggage, including financial issues when she was city manager in Ione, as well as handling of contracts in El Dorado County.