

Early storms spur eager skiers to book rooms in Tahoe

By Rob Sabo, Northern Nevada Business Weekly

An increase in early-season bookings for winter ski vacations has hoteliers and property managers in the Lake Tahoe region – who have struggled the past few years to fill rooms at profitable rates – optimistic about the upcoming ski season.

And a rise in bookings from international clients gives even further hope that tourism may be returning to the region.



Snow started
falling early
Nov. 7 at
Kirkwood.

Photo/Provided

Don Cauley, general manager of Vacation Station at Incline Village, says bookings are tracking up 10 to 15 percent this year compared to 2009. Reservations for the company's 100 cabins, condominiums and rental homes at Incline Village dipped between 35 and 40 percent beginning in 2008. Occupancy is running higher, Cauley notes, but profits still are down because of lower room rates.

"We are giving up revenues in order to get people to come back," Cauley says. "We are recovering somewhat, but we are nowhere near where we were two or three years ago."

Reservations for ski vacations also are on the rise at Resort at Squaw Creek. Les Pederson, director of sales and marketing, says December bookings are up 23 percent over 2009, while first quarter 2011 bookings are up 40 percent.

“That is encouraging,” Pederson says. “Eventually snow will really get into the equation – this time of year we start to do the snow dance. But so far, so good.”

Bill Cottrill, director of sales and marketing for Embassy Suites Lake Tahoe, located a stone’s throw from the Heavenly Mountain Resort gondola, says bookings spiked with the arrival of snow in mid-October. Snowstorms typically result in a flurry of reservations, he says, and bookings tapered off with last week’s warm weather.

“The pickup we got for the first quarter was amazing,” Cottrill says. “There is a certain level of calls we handle, and when you throw a snow or rainstorm in there that will impact the wintertime. It brings a spike in phone calls. But as soon as it gets back to sunny weather, calls dip back down to a typical pace.”

Read the whole story

STMS not tolerating students who bully, want adults to stop

By Kathryn Reed

“Why do you bully each other mentally and verbally if you are telling us not to?”

"If you continue bullying, what kind of message will you be sending to the children of the world?"

"The commercials you have been making are like cyber bullying."

"Our school is trying really hard to defeat bullying and you are not helping us."

Those are excerpts from letters sent by South Tahoe Middle School sixth-graders to lawmakers. Teacher Cindy Cowen has been engaging her students in a discussion about what bullying is so the incidents decrease.

But students don't understand why adults – especially those who espouse to be leaders – are bullying their opponents and others. They hope their letters will sink in with the politicians to show them that leading by this example is not a great idea and a bit two-faced considering they all seem to say bullying is a bad thing and then they do it.



**Beth
Delacour**

**"We are trying to defeat
bullying and build**

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which can be difficult
at this age.”**

STMS Principal Beth Delacour

Principal Beth Delacour is trying to change the culture by quashing bullying and in turn hopes it will carryover with the eighth-graders when they enter high school.

“It’s all about relationships. I want to see how far we can take this and see if we can go to the community,” Delacour said. “We are trying to defeat bullying and build compassion and kindness, which can be difficult at this age.”

Bullying comes in many forms. Physical is often the easiest to identify, as are verbal taunts. Sometimes what might seem like innocent teasing is really bullying. Laughing at someone and not letting him have a seat at lunch – more bullying.

Delacour recounts a recent struggle at her school where a boy was in her office crying. It had been a long day. Four incidents, which taken individually might not have seemed like much, were in the end too much to handle without help.

Delacour called in the perpetrators. They listened. Hearing how their actions had a compound effect on a fellow student visibly moved them. They seemed to get what they were doing was bullying and that it was wrong.

What’s good about this example is that it was resolved without the victim doing harm to himself or others. But what worries educators and other youth advocates is what happens to the person – young or old – who doesn’t have someone to talk to, or doesn’t have a way to peacefully change what is going on.

On Nov. 9 South Tahoe Middle School is having two morning

assemblies for the entire student body called Rachel's Challenge. The public is invited that night at 7pm to hear the same message in the multipurpose room.

Rachel Scott was the first person killed at Columbine High School in April 1999. Her father, Darrell, founded Rachel's Challenge as a way to stop bullying and violence.

Delacour said she was in tears the first time she saw it.

Mountain bikers join forces to have a voice in Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Free ride, downhill, cross country, or something else – the mountain bike community is becoming one and a force to be reckoned with.

At a two-hour meeting Nov. 5 at the South Lake Tahoe Parks and Recreation Complex, more than 60 cyclists packed the room to express their desire to unite in an effort to have an influence on what is going on in the Lake Tahoe Basin and beyond.

The gathering came out of the three-day conference put on by the International Mountain Bicycling Association in early October. Since then folks from IMBA have been working in the area. They put on a trail building workshop at Kirkwood Oct. 15-17.



Becky Bell
talks about
the early days
of TAMBA.
Photo/Kathryn
Reed

On Friday several IMBA representatives spoke at the meeting led by John Drum, a longtime South Shore cyclist. So did Garrett Villanueva with the U.S. Forest Service.

“What’s lacking is a common voice from the mountain bike community,” Villanueva told the group. Villanueva is the top trail builder for the federal agency. So revered is he that he regularly helps other states and international locales with trail building.

Villanueva organized five trail building days this past summer. No one showed up for three of them.

He wants to bring out an expert to help design a pump track on Corral Trail on the South Shore and bring the Gunmount-Tahoe Mountain trail up to standard – but he needs input from a collective voice of users.

Villanueva said every great cycling destination has a strong bike community.

That’s not the case with Tahoe. It is neither a topnotch mountain bike area, nor does it have the people behind it.

The Whistlers of the world didn’t become cycling meccas solely because city leaders voted for it, but instead they are a

reality because the users convinced the powers that be to build the trails, bike parks, pump tracks, and other features.

Villanueva is hoping that same grassroots force will spin out of Friday's gathering. Based on the enthusiasm in the room Lake Tahoe is ready to rock the mountain bike world.

The assembled group that spanned multiple generations, included both sexes – though mostly guys, had reps from Truckee, North Shore and mostly South Shore, and included a gamut of user groups in the end agreed to resurrect Tahoe Area Mountain Bicycling Association to be the umbrella under which to operate.

Becky Bell, a leader in TAMBA from the get-go with husband Gary, spoke Nov. 5 a bit about the history of the bike club, the work involved and desire to breath new life into it.

The group that met two days ago and anyone else interested in mountain biking is invited to gather Dec. 15 at 6pm at Blue Angel café in South Lake Tahoe to work on some nuts and bolts issues about how TAMBA will run. Four board members exist. The bylaws mandate they choose board members.

There was talk of having chapters within TAMBA to represent the various areas like North Shore, South Shore, Truckee, Reno, Carson City and Kirkwood. From there, it could be broken down into specialties like downhill, cross country and free ride.

A group of twentysomethings in the back of the room is eager to get dirty and build trails. These meetings aren't what they want to be involved in. But process is something the others tried to tell them needs to happen before the shovels come out.

Ernie's secret ingredient – 30 years of good employees

By Kathryn Reed

Plates of food barely leave the cook's hands before a waitress picks them up. Steam rises from the late morning breakfast order. Hot coffee is being poured to a crowd that doesn't care it's almost noon. Money is exchanged.

The waitress – Betsy Sommerfeldt; the coffee pourer – Judy Bruso; and the cashier – Paul Bruso are a formidable trio. Sommerfeldt has worked for Paul Bruso almost since the day he bought Ernie's Coffee Shop 30 years ago. The Brusos have been married for the last 20 years.



Betsy
Sommerfeldt
has been
taking order
at Ernie's for
nearly 30
years.
Photos/Kathryn
Reed

Longevity in the restaurant business is a rarity. Longevity in

Tahoe seems even more rare. A packed house in a recession is impressive.

Drive by the South Lake Tahoe eatery that serves breakfast and lunch seven days a week from 6am-2pm and the parking lot off Emerald Bay Road is nearly always full.

Bruso credits his staff of 20 full-time workers for the success of Ernie's. (Students fill in on a part-time basis during the busy summer season.)

"Good employees create good service, create good food, create a good environment," Bruso said. "If you have a great staff, you are going to be OK. We treat people right and they treat us right."

Sommerfeldt has had job offers through the years, but has never seriously considered turning in her apron for another line of work.

She, like the other waitresses, has locals and tourists who come in specifically requesting to be seated in her section.

"It's kind of like a Cheers atmosphere where everyone knows your name," Sommerfeldt said.

Being a people person makes this line of work ideal for the 51-year-old. She says the interaction with customers is the best part of the job.

Sommerfeldt also has complimentary things to say about the Brusos. She likes that they are hands-on owners. She says their personalities balance each other out – with Paul being a type-A personality and Judy bringing a more calming influence.

The pay is good; hours are flexible – making for employees to be able to enjoy the Tahoe lifestyle. Tips are pooled, so co-workers make sure everyone is pulling their weight. Paid vacation and profit sharing are part of the deal.

Even though the Brusos seem to live at Ernie's, they have plenty of faith in the staff to be able to get away on a regular basis – which could be spending four weeks walking 500 miles across Spain or a month's vacation on the East Coast.

Ingredients of success

Besides the staff, Bruso credits being involved in the community as part of his success story.

"You need to be involved and concerned about what goes on in the community," Bruso said. "We believe in supporting locals, the kids, the schools. That's what makes a community."

Burger nights are one of the most popular fundraisers. Of the approximately 120 Ernie's has hosted for various groups, more than \$300,000 has been raised.

When it comes to the food, changes are continually made.

"We rarely take anything off. We add things based on customer requests or ideas from employees," Bruso explained.

Cassie Chandler, a trainer at Push Fitness, suggested meals infused with more protein. Some of her recipes have been incorporated into the daily mix. (See recipe below.)

"We don't like to tell people what to eat, but we like to have things available no matter what they want to eat," Bruso explained.

The Brusos have been eating a vegan diet for about nine months. But that doesn't mean meat, eggs and cheese are about to disappear. It just means more vegan options for diners.

Eve Hall doesn't change her order – it's always eggs over easy, hash browns and sausage.

"It's always consistently good," the longtime South Tahoe resident said of the food at Ernie's.

For Dave Anderson, he used to get the Mountain Man breakfast (6 link sausages or 6 slices of bacon or 4 country sausage patties or a slab o'ham, with 3 eggs, hash browns or home fries, side of biscuit and country gravy). Now he's on a gluten free diet. But Ernie's can accommodate him so he's still a regular.

Times change

One of the biggest changes occurred seven years ago when the Brusos went from renting the building across the street to having a larger building constructed for Ernie's that they (and the bank) own.

Sommerfeldt said it was an adjustment to get used to the bigger layout and it being noisier, but says overall it is much better.

She said one of the other things to get used to was going to computers.

"I can't believe we added checks by hand all those years," Sommerfeldt said.

The Brusos don't intend to go anywhere anytime soon. Paul Bruso said they might be around for the 40th- and 50th-year celebrations as well.

Ernie's first opened in 1968. It had a few owners until the 30-year-old Bruso bought it in 1980.

"I like the name Ernie's better than calling Paul's," he said.

To celebrate their 30th anniversary, the entire menu will be half price Nov. 8-12. It's their way of saying thank you to the locals who keep them afloat in the off-season.

Ernie's Cassie Chandler-inspired Protein Pancakes

3 egg whites

1 T yogurt

1 T crushed pineapple

1 scoop vanilla protein powder

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp cinnamon

$\frac{1}{2}$ C oatmeal

1 tsp coconut extract

1 T applesauce

Mix ingredients in blender until smooth.

Cook in pan with unrefined coconut oil.

Topping choices – agave, peanut butter, applesauce.

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Munchinator reduces trash to compost-like product

By Kathryn Reed

The contraption looks a bit like a sophisticated high school science project as it rocks back and forth, with steam escaping and a slight rumble reverberating in the large room. The Munchinator is at work.

A team of representatives from Carson City-based Ecologico Logic Inc. brought a prototype of their machine from their Southern California offices to South Tahoe Refuse this week to demonstrate how organic waste can be turned into compost in a

matter of hours.



Mohammed Memon
tells a crowd
Nov. 3 about
his company's
device to
breakdown
organics.
Photos/Kathryn
Reed

More than two dozen cans of pine needles and wood products were dumped into a funnel of sorts to enter the presoaking stage before going to the digester.

It took the firm's research team 10 years to develop the patented naturally occurring microorganisms that breakdown the waste.

Water is added at the start, then it is re-circulated to continue working on fresh waste. The amount of water needed depends on what is being processed. The 2-ton system on display used 300 gallons of water.

It costs about \$20 in energy (it runs on electricity) per ton of waste, officials said.

The end product is 20 percent solids, with the rest being water and carbon dioxide. The solid looks like wet pulverized wood chips – with little aroma.

Using this aerobic method to breakdown the waste is cleaner compared to anaerobic organisms that produce toxic gases like methane, hydrogen sulfide and sulfur dioxide.

“The solid is like an organic fertilizer, but it’s not rated as a fertilizer,” explained Mohammed Memon, chief operations officer of Ecologico. “But it’s super nutrient rich. It’s sellable as a growth enhancer.”

He brags of his avocado crop since using the compost in his yard – four harvests a year instead of one.

Ron Cline, director of marketing, said the Munchinator is all about helping the environment. It means less waste going to landfills, which in turn means fewer trucks on the road and byproducts that can be reusable.

Cline said the goal is not to compete with entities like South Tahoe Refuse, but to be a partner. He said his firm has buyers lined up for the solid that the Munchinator produces.

John Marchini, who runs South Tahoe Refuse, isn’t sure his company needs a machine like this because of the chipper they use at the Resource Recovery Center and the ability to sell the end product to users in the Carson Valley.

He said he would be more interested in grinding everyday trash. The state would have to make a ruling if reducing a pile of trash by 25 percent counts the same as diverting it from a landfill.

Marchini’s other concern would be the wastewater if household trash is involved, especially plastics.

The company is giving demos of the system in various cities, but is not limiting the technology to just municipalities.

“We want to take smaller systems to hotels,” Cline said. “We could take this size into cruise ships.”

Although Ecologico is promoting this to get rid of organic waste, it could be used to reduce trash as well as biohazards.

Cline, who lives near the old Meyers Landfill on the outskirts of South Lake Tahoe, said the Munchinator could “process landfill dirt and it would come out clean so you don’t have to truck contaminated dirt.”

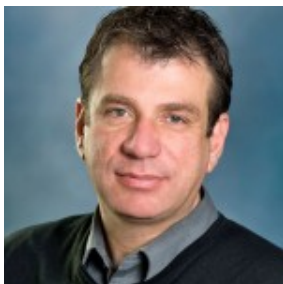
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Dennis J. Oliver – 1963-2010

Dennis Oliver of Incline Village passed away Nov. 3 following a serious, monthlong illness. He was 47.

Dennis was born May 20, 1963.

Dennis was the public information officer for the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and an extremely valued employee of the agency over the last three and a half years, according to TRPA Executive Director Joanne Marchetta.



Dennis Oliver

“Dennis’s love for Lake Tahoe combined with his superlative writing skills made him an exceptional spokesperson for our agency and we are deeply saddened over his loss,” Marchetta said.

Dennis moved to Lake Tahoe from the Bay Area in 2007 and immediately became an active part of the community and passionate advocate for Lake Tahoe. He was a key team member on the successful campaign for a ballot initiative to raise funds for fuel reduction work in the Douglas County portion of the Lake Tahoe Basin and was a board member of the Sustainable Tahoe Congress.

Dennis never hesitated to be involved in civic affairs and was a candidate for the Incline Village General Improvement District board earlier this year.

“Dennis made a major impact on Lake Tahoe during his time here,” said Julie Regan, external affairs director and Dennis’ supervisor and colleague. “We will remember his laughter, his extraordinary talents and especially his unwavering commitment to Lake Tahoe’s restoration.”

Dennis spent more than 27 years as a reporter, editor, writer, instructor and communications professional, including three years covering environmental policy, investigative news and special projects for the Oakland Tribune and six years as director of communications for California Alliance for Jobs where Dennis focused on promoting important public infrastructure projects.

Impassioned for nature and the outdoors, Dennis also authored two regional travel, nature and outdoor guides, “Inside Out Northern California” (1999) and “Camping! Northern California” (2001). Dennis also supported the arts and enjoyed painting in his spare time. He was an avid poker player and supported many charitable poker tournaments at local casinos.

Above all, Dennis was a consummate journalist. His writing was inspiring and poignant and he used his skills to educate local residents and visitors about how to Keep Tahoe Clear.

Services are pending.

Staff members at TRPA are initiating an arts and environmental education fund in his memory. For additional information, contact Jeff Cowen, TRPA community liaison, at (775) 589.5278 or email to jcowen@trpa.org.

Totals change, winners don't as they plot path for S. Tahoe

Updated Nov. 5, 2010, 8:28am.

By Susan Wood

A qualified congratulations came early and from far away Wednesday to longtime South Lake Tahoe resident Claire Fortier, when her 86-year-old father L. "Ren" Renshaw called at 5:30am Eastern time to wish his daughter well for ending up as the prospective front-runner in the City Council race.

Angela Swanson got an early-morning kiss goodbye from her husband declaring: "You're ahead," when in the darkness he left his wife, the third in line for three seats on the City Council. She later received a call from former fellow school board member Larry Green, who she encouraged to run for his seat for Lake Tahoe Unified. The gesture seemed to come full circle in South Lake Tahoe civics.



Tom Davis knows the fence at El Dorado Beach, aka Lakeview Commons, is a sore spot with residents.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

Veteran former Councilman Tom Davis started the morning with a congratulatory call from current Councilmember Hal Cole, who has served alongside the former vacation rental property manager and casino marketer during his 12-year run on the town's board.

This year, 10 candidates ran for the seats being vacated by Kathay Lovell, Jerry Birdwell and Bill Crawford. Fortier took in 1,402 votes at 16.62 percent; 1,279 ballots, or 15.16 percent of the vote, were cast for Davis; while Swanson edged out the rest of the pack with 1,024 votes at 12.14 percent of the tally. The trio takes office Dec. 14. Those numbers were updated as of 5pm Wednesday.

However, 1,000 votes still need to be counted along with the 222 provisional votes, elections officials told *Lake Tahoe News* Thursday morning.

All results are preliminary pending until final tabulations, which are expected in the next 10 days. The deadline is cut short by the state from the usual mandated 28-day

certification to be able to turn around results from the special election, which was on the same Nov. 2 ballot, for the 1st District Senate race. There will be a runoff Jan. 4 between Ted Gaines and Ken Cooley to replace the late Dave Cox. If Gaines wins, he'll vacate his Assembly seat and a special election will be necessary.

El Dorado County voter turnout was 54.57 percent. Election officials had predicted it to be 65 percent. In South Lake Tahoe, 41.8 percent of the 8,747 registered voters cast ballots. Those numbers could go up slightly as the provisional ballots – or problem forms – are counted by hand.

County elections data cruncher Joe Zitzelberger admitted the close contests are “subject to change.” Swanson increased her lead with the latest numbers to 48 points over fourth place businesswoman Joy Curry.

The city's Measure E, which aimed to raise the business tax in the city, lost by seven votes based on the most current data. It had been a dead heat when first reported. Mayor Pro Tem Hal Cole did not know if the city would seek a recount.

“I don't think I've ever seen a 50-50,” Zitzelberger said before the count changed.

Ready to take office

Despite the vote totals not locked in, the three frontrunners for council are looking ahead to tackle a lengthy list of tasks facing the city – from the beleaguered BlueGo transit system to Lakeview Commons' bankrupt construction project, a site designed as a gathering place for a community in need of something to cheer about.

“Yes, we have a heck of a lot to do, but rather than it seeming overwhelming, I'd like to think that this is one group who can focus on achieving,” Fortier said.

Jumping out of the starting gate, Fortier – a former newspaper editor and medical office chief – wants to have at least one council retreat to “immediately” nail down a few priorities. Other councils have developed a long list of goals.

Davis, who has a prolific history of South Shore volunteerism, would also like to narrow the goals to ensure the emphasis remains on the highest priorities.

“What I learned on the campaign trail is we all have the same goals,” he told *Lake Tahoe News*. Davis listed tourism, recreation, public safety and roads as core priorities in need of attention.

“I think we have a great council. This is not about me. It’s about we,” he said, later quoting the late city Mayor Norm Woods’ advice to him: “Tom, all you need to do is count to three.” Woods was referring to a quorum needed on a five-member board to get the work done.

Davis, Fortier and Swanson admitted to being three different people with varying approaches, but pledged to work together.

Swanson commended Davis’ community mindedness and Fortier’s smarts. The school facilities planning consultant and former school board member plans to use her contacts in Sacramento to get the city a little help from the state. She was pleased to learn Proposition 22, which bans the state from taking funds from local jurisdictions, was headed for passage.

“I think people are sick and tired of the state not taking care of its financial house,” she said. Still, the reality of closing a \$15 billion shortfall could prove painful for California, she added.

Like Fortier and Davis, Swanson anticipates working closely with the current council, consisting of Cole and Bruce Grego.

“We all have different approaches, and don’t always agree, but

I've found myself saying 'I'd never thought about (things) that way,'" she said. "We all share the same passion for the community."

Fortier, Davis, Swanson take over South Tahoe council

By Susan Wood

With all precincts reporting from El Dorado County at 1:30am Wednesday, Claire Fortier, Tom Davis and Angela Swanson have won the tight South Lake Tahoe City Council race consisting of 10 diverse candidates.



The trio going for the three seats vacated by City Councilmembers Jerry Birdwell, Kathay Lovell and Bill Crawford has name recognition – with Davis and Swanson already having served to mold public policy in a town that Fortier has declared is at “a tipping point.” Davis served on the council for 12 years. Swanson held a seat on the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board.

Fortier – a former editor of the *Tahoe Daily Tribune* – is the top vote getter with 16.57 percent, or 1,283 votes. She's followed by Davis with 15.28 percent of the vote, 1,183 ballots; and Swanson at 12.05 percent or 933 votes.

All votes are preliminary and must be certified by the county. Final votes for all races are usually tabled within a few weeks. The council candidates will take office Dec. 14.

For a job that pays less than \$500 a month, they are apt to be

making pennies per hour.

They come in having to deal with two stalled construction projects – Lakeview Commons and the convention center. The latter is in bankruptcy court. They also must deal with a bankrupt transit system that is mired in lawsuits.

Unemployment is near 18 percent in the city, roads necessitate four-wheel drive without snow or mountain bike tires, storefronts are empty, the electorate angry.

Rounding out the council ballot are:

Joy Curry, 899 votes, 11.61 percent

Alice Jones, 877 votes, 11.32 percent

Elizabeth Hallen, 820 votes, 10.59 percent

Steve Kubby, 830, 10.72 percent

Adrian Gooch, 442 votes, 5.71 percent

Georg May, 205 votes, 2.65 percent

Clint Schue, 146 votes, 1.89 percent

Doug Cichowicz, 96 votes, 1.24 percent

Other Tahoe related issues

Measure E, the business tax fee hike for South Lake Tahoe, came in dead even with 1,462 for it and 1,462 against it. It needed to pass by one vote to proceed.

City Clerk Suzie Alessi and city Treasurer Dave Olivo had an easy Election Day – they ran unopposed.

Assemblyman Ted Gaines, R-Roseville, won both of his races – to retain his Assembly seat and in the special election against three others for the state Senate seat of the late Dave Cox. Gaines will face Democrat Ken Cooley on Jan. 4 in a

run-off for the state Senate seat. If he wins, he will have to resign the Assembly seat, which means a special election to fill that vacancy.

Rep. Tom McClintock will easily retain his congressional seat that includes the California side of the Lake Tahoe Basin. He has nearly twice the number of votes as his Democrat opponent Clint Curtis.

Douglas County commish seats go to McDermid, Bonner

By Stephen Ward

An incumbent and a challenger have won the Douglas County Commission seats.

Incumbent Nancy McDermid is the winner in the race for county commissioner of District 4, defeating challenger Lawrence Howell with 51.2 percent of the vote with all the votes counted. However, these are unofficial results until certified.

This District 4 seat is considered the Lake Tahoe seat even though the person does not have to reside at the lake. McDermid lives in the Carson Valley, while Howell lives in Stateline.



Nancy McDermid

This will be McDermid's second term as county commissioner.

McDermid shared her appreciation with *Lake Tahoe News* after the final count came in.

"It's been a long year," she said. "I'm very honored and humbled to be elected once again to represent the people of Douglas County."

The re-elected commissioner went on to discuss the parallels between her experience in the lodging business and the priorities she has for the coming term.

"Lodging properties provide the same amenities, so it really comes down to serving the people," she said. "That's what I'm here to do. We need to meet the challenges Douglas County faces and work together with the board, staff ... to craft solutions to the problems we face."

McDermid, 67, cites cooperation as the main reason she was able to balance the 2010-11 budget. She believes the county's tourism infrastructure needs to be vastly improved and aspires to make public transit a vital component of transportation on the South Shore, even though the transit agency she was chairwoman of is now in bankruptcy.

McDermid spent the majority of her night making stops at various locations, such as the Republican headquarters and Doppelgangers Brewery and Grill in Carson City.

Lee Bonner has unofficially won the District 2 seat with 50.72

percent over incumbent David James Brady.

Bonner, a 51-year-old Minden resident for more than five years, told *Lake Tahoe News* he was pleased with the results as he arrived home after spending the night with roughly 60 supporters and close friends at the Tahoe Ridge Winery in Minden.

“First off, I’d like to say I’m very humbled the people of Douglas County have trusted me to be their commissioner,” he said. “It has meant a lot to me. I’ve only been here about five years, and to get the people’s vote ... it means a lot.”

During the interview, Bonner also thanked Brady for the five years he spent as commissioner, wishing him the best in his future endeavors.

Bonner campaigned on creating jobs as a focal point, as well as promoting education and dealing with the state Legislature when it reconvenes in February.

Brady was appointed to the Douglas County Commission for District 2 in 2005 by the late Kenny Guinn, and was elected to the position in 2006.

The winners will take office in January.

South Lake Tahoe hires police chief from outside department

Updated Nov. 2, 2010, 12:36pm.

By Kathryn Reed

The first police chief hired from outside the department was sworn in this morning at the South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting.

Brian Uhler becomes the eighth chief, taking over a department that has had a rocky time of it in recent years, especially under the leadership of former Chief Terry Daniels. Capt. Martin Hewlett has been the leader of the department since the start of the year after Daniels left.

Several members of the police department were on hand as Uhler was sworn-in and given his badge at the end of the Nov. 2 council meeting. He said a few perfunctory words before the meeting was adjourned.

Uhler, 49, most recently was a captain in the UC San Francisco police force. He was laid off in August after two years on the job. Before that he spent 25 years with the Corpus Christi, Texas, police department. He retired as a commander.

Uhler has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and a master's degree in public administration, and is a graduate of the FBI Academy.



City Manager
Tony O'Rourke,
right, Nov. 2
gives South
Tahoe Police
Chief Brian
Uhler his
shield.

Photo/Kathryn
Reed

"He really understands the whole police operations," City Manager Tony O'Rourke told *Lake Tahoe News*. "He is very smart and strategic. He doesn't come across as a typical cop."

This is O'Rourke's first hire since coming on board in August. His next appointment, which could be before the end of the year, will be director of Parks and Recreation.

In the series of panel interviews, Uhler was the top candidate for the chiefs of police. O'Rourke sent most of the several dozen resumes to a police chief he knows in Florida who ranked Uhler as the top candidate on paper.

Uhler was one of three finalists. No local candidates made the final list.

Uhler called the five panels in one day an "endurance event."

Uhler has experience in all aspects of a police department, which appealed to O'Rourke.

"A lot of chiefs come from administration or the political side. This guy has proven himself on the street," O'Rourke said.

Another key for O'Rourke was to hire someone who could mentor the younger officers. Liking the outdoors was another selling point. Uhler is a hiker, skier and cyclist.

"You have to share the values of why people are here. He shares those values and embraces them," O'Rourke said.

On top of that, even though Uhler spent so many years in Texas, he is a Giants fan. He drove into town last night after the Giants were crowned World Champions after beating the Texas Rangers in Game 5 of the World Series.

Uhler has a little experience with snow. He spent some time in Mammoth – though it was as a youth. With his father in the aerospace industry, he moved around a bit as a kid. After high school he joined the Army, where he entered the military police. He went to the Corpus Christi department after being discharged.

Uhler is divorced with two children. His son is in college in North Carolina. His daughter will move to Tahoe this winter to attend Lake Tahoe Community College.

He will be making a base salary of \$142,000, with a 1.5 percent longevity incentive boosting his pay to about \$145,000 year.

Uhler's first day on the job will be Nov. 8.