

Cyclist seriously hurt trying to evade being hit by vehicle

Three days after a bicyclist was seriously injured in South Lake Tahoe, officers are still not releasing the name, hometown or age of the victim.

As of early Thursday night, they didn't know the current condition of the man who had to be air lifted to Renown Medical Center in Reno.

The cyclist was traveling east on Highway 50 on the side of the road near Safeway in heavy traffic on July 16 at 2:55pm. As he was crossing Johnson Boulevard, a vehicle turning left onto the boulevard nearly hit him.

"The bicyclist slammed on his brakes in an attempt to avoid the truck. He crashed and hit his head hard. He had a serious head wound," police Lt. David Stevenson told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The cyclist and truck never collided, Stevenson said.

The accident is still under investigation.

A second accident involving a cyclist occurred that day, too, according to a remark Police Chief Brian Uhler made to the City Council on July 17. However, neither Uhler nor Stevenson could provide *Lake Tahoe News* with any information.

– Kathryn Reed

David Walley's hangs on to celebrate 150 years in business

By Yun Long, Reno Gazette-Journal

David Walley's Hot Springs Resort, which dates back to when Nevada was a territory, was on the brink of fading into history.

The Carson Valley property, built in 1862, was near closure two years ago. The restaurant was closed, the property was in disrepair and time share fees weren't paid.

In 2010, Pat Joyce, founder and CEO of Branson, Mo.-based Summer Winds Resort, and his partners stepped in to buy the troubled property as a favor to their lender, Bank of America.

"They came to us and asked if we would have any interest in the property," Joyce said. "Me and my partners flew out there and looked at it. We walked through the property, and we could see some potential there."

Summer Winds officials said it was a good fit within its vacation ownership portfolio because of the variety of outdoor activities nearby.

"Right now in the resort and vacation business, people are driven more by amenities and by active lifestyle-type choices," he said. "That's why the Genoa and Lake Tahoe area is attractive to us because the type of customers that are interested in our resorts are normally people who are middle or upper-middle class folks (who are active)."

So far, the company has invested millions to renovate the restaurant into a fine dining experience and update resort amenities. More money will be spent on the famed outdoor

mineral pools and the spa to bring the resort back as a first-class health spa destination.

On Saturday, the resort will celebrate its 150th anniversary with a barbecue and free concert. In September, it will honor the history of the area with re-enactments open to schools and the public.

“(Walley’s) has had a high profile over 150 years,” said Guy Rocha, former Nevada state archivist. “It has had its ups and downs, but when you look at all (the area hot springs), I would say the hot springs resort emerges as the premier resort.”

Read the whole story

Property tax assessments decline modestly in El Dorado, Placer counties

By Loretta Kalb, Sacramento Bee

If you want to understand why local governments have laid off workers and struggled to maintain services, just look at property taxes.

In the past four years, Sacramento County real estate has lost \$19 billion in assessed value, data from the Sacramento County assessor’s office show.

That means that the county’s secured tax roll now stands at \$113.7 billion, down from \$132.7 billion – the peak recorded in January 2008. And it translates to sharply reduced tax

revenue for local governments, schools and special districts.

No place in the Sacramento region has been immune from the combined effects of the down economy and the loss in property values, though the story is less severe these days in El Dorado, Yolo and Placer counties.

In Sacramento County, Natomas and Rio Linda are recording a disproportionate share of the ongoing decline in property values.

However, east Sacramento, Fair Oaks and Rancho Murieta are doing better, said Sacramento County Assessor Kathleen Kelleher, who described those areas as stable.

Kelleher said she doubts broad recovery can take hold until the unemployment rate shows significant improvement – it's now at 10.4 percent in the region – and the supply of foreclosed homes diminishes.

Foreclosures and other distressed sales have been driving property values down in much of Sacramento County.

This year, the volume of homes foreclosed is averaging about 600 a month in Sacramento County, Kelleher said. "Last year, we were averaging about 1,000 foreclosures a month," she said.

Placer, Yolo and El Dorado counties are seeing more modest declines in property values. In each of those counties, the secured tax roll fell this year by less than a half-percent.

Read the whole story

USFS faces lawsuit over access to Tahoe National Forest

By Amber Marra, Auburn Journal

Multiple groups of motor sports enthusiasts and individual riders are suing the US Forest Service and Department of Agriculture over preparations to close more than 800 miles of trails to off-road vehicles in the Tahoe National Forest.

The lawsuit was filed on Tuesday by Brandon Middleton, an attorney with Pacific Legal Foundation, for six local motor sports organizations and two individual enthusiasts.

The six organizations are Friends of Greenhorn, of Auburn; Friends of Tahoe Forest Access, Webilt Four Wheel Drive Club, Nevada County Woods Riders, Grass Valley 4-Wheel Drive Club and High Sierra Motorcycle Club. The two individual plaintiffs are David Wood, of Nevada County, and another Nevada County woman only identified as "Kyra" in a complaint.

"Off-road vehicle enthusiasts have been undeservedly attacked by environmental groups who paint a picture to their members that simply doesn't exist on the scale they assert," said Jacquelyne Theisen, of Auburn, with Friends of Greenhorn.

The U.S. Forest Service declined to comment on the lawsuit Tuesday morning. It is listed as a defendant along with the US Department of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, US Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell, Regional Forester for the Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Region Randy Moore, and Forest Supervisor at the Tahoe National Forest Tom Quinn.

Pacific Legal Foundation gathered members of the represented

organizations and concerned riders together at the American River Canyon Overlook Park in Auburn on Tuesday.

Read the whole story

Harrison Avenue upgrades on target for summer '13

By Kathryn Reed

A year from now motorists should know which way to drive on Harrison Avenue and how to park. This is because the multimillion dollar project that was first talked about in 1995 is expected to go out to bid in the fall, with construction beginning in May 2013.

This small stretch of roadway in South Lake Tahoe in many ways is like a frontage street. Parking and pedestrian access have long been issues. And they were exacerbated last summer when Caltrans put in curb and gutters along Highway 50 that cut into the city street.

With more than 70 percent of the property owners ready to form an assessment district, city officials on Tuesday agreed to finish the planning. By the time the project is done, the intent is to have transformed this area into a destination, to an even greater extent than what occurred with the improvements along Ski Run Boulevard.



What streets in the Harrison Avenue area could look like.
Rendering/Design Workshop

It will also serve as an extension to Lakeview Commons.

“It will really beautify the whole area and make that the center of town,” Councilman Tom Davis said.

Some businesses are talking about upgrading their properties at the same time the city does its work so things are torn up once and even more visual improvements are made.

While it is a road project, that isn’t all it is. Besides increasing circulation to the entire area – not just Harrison Avenue, it will improve safety, deal with erosion concerns – so it is a water quality project, aesthetically upgrade this location, and ideally help attract new and retain current businesses.

Coleen Shade, planner with R0 Anderson in South Lake Tahoe, explained to the council how some of the streets in the area are going to be one-way and in some cases one lane, diagonal parking will increase the number of spots, paving stones will be used for the sidewalks, crosswalks will be colored concrete, a multi-use Class 1 bike path will go along Riverside Avenue, light standards similar to Ski Run will be erected, and a gateway sign at the boat ramp end will be installed.

It's possible some of the old retaining wall that was disassembled at Echo Summit last year could be turned into seating walls in this hub. Some of those stones have been incorporated into Lakeview Commons.

While all the improvements are on public property except for a few easements, property owners are paying for some of the upgrades. Their total share is nearly \$800,000, which is divided among them based on a formula they agreed to.

One way this area is different than Ski Run is that the property owners are assessed the fee, not the businesses.

Mike McKeen, who owns the Pinnacle Real Estate building, and Duncan Sennott, who owns Sno-Flake Drive-In, attended the July 17 meeting. They both praised the city for its efforts and are looking forward to the changes coming to their neighborhood.

While the funding is in place for the remainder of the planning, the construction dollars are not all secured, though the city knows where it would like the \$3,394,170 to come from. Besides the property owners paying \$792,235, the COP bond will kick in \$1.5 million, the CTC has verbally said \$500,000 is available from the stormwater quality funds – but the board has not voted on this, and the CTC is being engaged regarding funds for the bike trail. If that doesn't come through, the city wants to use Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality improvement (CMAQ) dollars from 2014-15. This would require the project taking two years.

Hilary Roverud, director of Development Services, said the two properties that have not signed on are the Pine Lodge behind Sno-Flake and Pichetti Winery. She said the former supports the project, but is financially unable to participate. The latter, Roverud said, is concerned with San Jose Avenue becoming one-way headed east it will be difficult for people to access the tasting room. But Roverud said it's possible a driveway could be created off Harrison Avenue.

Parking is a concern of Councilman Hal Cole's.

"You can't force people out of cars by eliminating parking," he said.

While the project will add more than 80 spaces to what exists today, Cole and others worry that may not be enough, especially based on the popularity of Lakeview Commons.

Twenty-six spots will disappear from Harrison Avenue, while that same number is added to San Jose Avenue. This is largely done by having people park diagonally instead of parallel.

The city now owns the lot at Harrison and Modesto avenues next to the *Tahoe Daily Tribune*. That land will be parking.

More slots are also expected to be added to the triangular shaped lot where boat trailers go. El Dorado County and the California Tahoe Conservancy are being consulted about that.

Burglary at pot club lands 2 people behind bars

Two people are in custody and a third is being sought in connection with a burglary at Patient2Patient, the medical marijuana collective facing closure by South Lake Tahoe officials.

The dispensary was broken into the night of July 8, with officers being called to the property the next morning.

"The suspects stole a variety of items and intentionally

caused extensive damage to the interior of the establishment," according to a press release. July 18 is the first time police disclosed any information about the theft or subsequent arrests.

Ronald "Ronnie" Gionta, 19, of South Lake Tahoe was arrested July 12. A second suspect, a 16-year-old male from South Lake Tahoe, was arrested July 17. Both face felony burglary charges.

"We suspect a third person, a former collective employee, provided the alarm code to the two suspects who actually forcibly entered the establishment to commit the crime," officers said.

Anyone with information should call the police department at (530) 542.6100 or Secret Witness at (530) 541.6800.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Assemblywoman calls for investigation into State Parks

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

Assemblywoman Beth Gaines on Tuesday called for an investigation into fiscal practices at the California Department of Parks and Recreation after the *Bee* revealed an unauthorized vacation buyout program cost the department more than \$271,000.

In a letter Tuesday, Gaines, R-Rocklin, asked the state's

Joint Legislative Audit Committee to undertake the probe. The vacation buyout “raises serious concerns about the potential for other waste, fraud or abuse that may be occurring in this department,” she wrote.

On Sunday, the *Bee* reported that a deputy director at the Department of Parks and Recreation carried out the buyout program in 2011 without getting approval from the California Department of Human Resources, as required by state law. Due to the state’s precarious budget condition, no vacation buyouts have been approved by that agency since 2007.

The secret program, in which employees at parks department headquarters were allowed to sell unused vacation time back to the state, came at the same time the department was planning to close 70 parks to achieve \$22 million in budget cuts.

Details of the buyout program were laid out in two investigations: an internal parks department audit and a follow-up investigation by the state attorney general’s office. The *Bee* obtained copies of both investigations from the California Natural Resources Agency, which oversees the parks department.

The name of the official who carried out the program was redacted in the investigative documents, and state officials declined to name him, citing laws that forbid disclosing personnel matters. But numerous sources identified the official as Manuel Thomas Lopez, who was deputy director of administrative services at the parks department. Lopez was demoted in October and resigned in May, according to state officials.

Read the whole story

Consultant tied to Judge Bailey pleads no contest

Cris Alarcon, the Placerville man whose firm was subject of an El Dorado County Grand Jury investigation that involved El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Steve Bailey, pleaded no contest July 16 to nine charges.

Alarcon was fined \$6,516 and to summary probation for four years for receiving stolen goods, driving on a suspended or revoked license, displaying false registration on a vehicle, driving without insurance and not having current registration.

Five charges were dropped.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Truckee man arrested on attempted murder charges

By Barbara Barte Osborn, Sacramento Bee

TRUCKEE – A Truckee man has been arrested and jailed for investigation of attempted murder following the stabbing Sunday of a man inside the town's Safeway supermarket.

Jayson Allen Maglaya, 34, was also booked for parole violation.

The victim, a 33-year-old Truckee resident, was transported to Tahoe Forest Hospital by ambulance following the 5:30pm incident. He had been stabbed twice.

His wounds don't appear to be life threatening at this time, according to a Truckee Police Department report.

The men have had an ongoing dispute and became involved in a fight inside the store before the stabbing occurred, according to the report.

Maglaya fled the scene, police said. At 11:45pm, investigating officers learned he was in Truckee's Glenshire subdivision near his residence. Using a thermal imager, police located him hiding under a deck.

He was taken into custody without incident and booked into the Nevada County jail in Truckee at 1:15am Monday.

Anyone with information about the case is asked to call Detective Arnie Lopez at (530) 550.2323.

Placer County residents returning to fire area; containment in sight

By Bill Lindelof, Sacramento Bee

A week after they were forced from their homes by the Robbers Fire, residents of the Brushy Creek and Yankee Jims areas will be allowed to return to their residences.

Daniel Berlant, a spokesman for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, said evacuees will be allowed back into these areas beginning at 9am today. Homes in these areas, he said, account for a majority of the 170 residences that had been threatened by the fire

The cooler weather has allowed firefighters to make progress in corralling a stubborn Placer County wildland blaze.

The Robbers Fire, which started July 11, was 60 percent contained as of late (Tuesday) afternoon, Berlant said.

Total acreage burned is 2,650 acres. The onset of cooler weather, higher humidity and lack of major wind has helped firefighters.

Read the whole story