# S. Tahoe council blocks pot club move after signaling it would approve

**By Anne Knowles**

The South Lake Tahoe City Council voted to deny a request from one of the city's medical marijuana dispensaries to relocate its business after last month intimating it would approve the move.

At its June 5 meeting, the council declined to act on City Attorney Patrick Enright's advice to deny City of Angels 2 its request and instead voted 4-1 on a motion directing staff to prepare a resolution to approve the move, according to Nancy Kerry, interim city manager.

But a day before the July 3 meeting, the council received a letter written by the South Lake/El Dorado Narcotic Enforcement Team (SLEDNET) painting a vivid picture of the criminal activity surrounding the marijuana collectives.

"Every day SLEDNET agents are intermingled with the marijuana industry that has become so enormous here, traffickers from outside California have made this city a prime distribution point for the east coast," reads the letter dated July 2. "No longer are we seeing the large scale indoor grows. We see a simpler form of trafficking of marijuana through the U.S. Post offices, UPS and Fed Ex. It is such a significant problem that the U.S. Postal Inspector's Office recently assigned a full time inspector for marijuana trafficking in our area post offices. Now the primary workload for our task force is the sales and distribution of marijuana from traffickers who simply go to the collective, purchase lbs (sic) of marijuana and ship it off in mail."

The letter went on to describe eight cases involving large sums of marijuana in which all of the convicted felons claimed to have been working with one of South Lake Tahoe's three collectives.

"I can provide further examples at your or the city council's request," read the letter addressed to South Lake Tahoe Police-Fire Chief Brian Uhler. "This year alone we have seized $142,708 in marijuana proceeds and worked interstate investigations in New Hampshire and New York."

SLEDNET Task Force Commander Jeff Catchings told *Lake Tahoe News* there are numerous ongoing investigations into people tied to the collectives but no open investigations of the collectives themselves.

"This is a huge problem and we can't turn a blind eye to it," said Catchings. "No other business in South Lake Tahoe has so much criminal activity connected to it."

"This is a game changer," said Councilman Tom Davis several times during discussion of the resolution at the meeting. "This documentation from law enforcement is huge."

"This is out of control," agreed Councilman Bruce Grego, who cast the sole vote to deny the dispensary's move at the first meeting. "I think we need to end it today."

City attorney Patrick Enright cautioned the council that the item under consideration was narrow, focused on whether to allow City of Angels 2 to relocate, but adding that the California court rulings were inconsistent regarding whether cities had the power to ban the dispensaries outright.

And Councilwoman Angela Swanson raised concerns that the city could be opening itself up to some liability if they backtracked on the matter.

"I believe to not support this puts the city in a precarious legal position," said Swanson. "We don't have proof (the marijuana) is going through the collectives. There could be other things going on."

Uhler, who delivered the SLEDNET letter to the council, said law enforcement was working on a way to track the collectives' transactions.

City of Angels 2 owner Gino DiMatteo spoke during the public comment period, assuring the council that his dispensary abides by the law.

"If my collective had anything to hide we would never have offered surveillance to the chief of police," said DiMatteo. "They have access to our security video any time."

DiMatteo was told by his current landlord that he had until mid-July to change his business or vacate his current Third Street location after the landlord, Darcy DeTarr, received a letter from the U.S. Attorney General's Office threatening to seize the property if pot continued to be sold there.

In the end, the council voted down the resolution to allow the dispensary to relocate.

**Correction:** South Lake Tahoe City Council did not vote on a resolution presented at its July 3 meeting and instead directed staff to draft a new resolution that it voted on at its June 5 meeting. The council did not re-vote on an improperly-worded resolution, as originally reported. The story has been changed to reflect that.

# Mammoth Lakes town council votes to file for bankruptcy

**Reuters**

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

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

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

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

Read the whole story

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# USOC opts out of 2022 Winter

# Olympics bid

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

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

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

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

*— Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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

**By Louis Sahagun, Los Angeles Times**

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

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

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

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

Greg Norby, manager of the water district, said the DWP is using the lawsuits to intimidate his agency, hoping it will yield on the water rather than pay for a costly court battle. The district has already run up about $300,000 in legal expenses in the case, he said.

Read the whole story

# Rabid skunk captured in El Dorado County

**By Carlos Acala, Sacramento Bee**

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

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

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

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

Read the whole story

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# Brush fire spreads to 250 acres north of Reno

**By Riley Snyder, Reno Gazette-Journal**

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

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

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

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

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

Read the whole story

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# Freedom of speech not guaranteed in the U.S.

**By Dan Gillmor, Columbia Journalism Review**

In December 2010, the major payment systems used to buy goods and services online decided that Wikileaks was no longer an acceptable customer. Mastercard, Visa, and PayPal summarily cut off service, putting Wikileaks into deep financial trouble and further marginalizing an organization that had become an object of fear and loathing inside the U.S. government and other centers of wealth and power.

While many in the new media world sounded an alarm, the response of journalists from legacy news organizations was mostly silence, except to take note of what had happened. By ignoring the implications of what had happened—a financial blockade of an organization engaged in recognizably journalistic pursuits—traditional media people demonstrated how little they understood or appreciated the information ecosystem in which they also exist. And by failing to object, loudly, they gave tacit assent to tactics that should chill people who genuinely believe in free speech.

It was not the first time traditional journalists failed to grasp a fundamental reality: Governments and businesses are creating choke points inside that emerging ecosystem—points of control where interests unfriendly to journalism can create not just speed bumps on the fabled information highway, but outright barricades.

This is not just an issue for journalists in places like China or Saudi Arabia or Russia, where governments are creating more and more stringent restrictions on what people can say and do online. It is an American matter as well. In the developed world, Hollywood and other corporate interests have taken the lead in threatening the Internet's freewheeling nature—and they've had plenty of help from government.

The Obama administration has pushed gratifyingly hard to open up speech for dissidents in dictatorships, and decried censorship elsewhere. Yet the US government has also acted to curb online communications it deems objectionable. While this clampdown is often in service of the copyright lobby, the tactics have sometimes smacked more of authoritarian regimes than of the American tradition. The administration's campaign against Wikileaks and prosecutions of journalists' sources highlight the vulnerability of journalism, and the public's right to know, in this networked age, what government is doing in our names and with our money. Years ago, when mass media had achieved economies of scale that created significant barriers to entry, media critics worried about consolidation of a different kind. A small number of giant companies increasingly owned the media most Americans read, watched, and listened to each day. This was a legitimate fear, and while Congress allowed significant concentration it didn’t allow utter dominance by any single corporate entity. Even so, journalism was dominated by newspaper monopolists at the local level and a cozy oligopoly nationally.

In theory and, so far, mostly in practice, the Internet broke things open. We all came to own a printing press, we believed, and we could make what we created available to a potentially global audience.

But a new kind of corporate oligopoly is emerging. Coupled with increasingly controlling activities by government, often in concert with corporate interests, the new choke points threaten to re-centralize media, or at least return control to a few dominant parties. Who are they?

Start with telecommunications carriers. There are two main kinds: wired-line and mobile. Among the former, in most American communities there are, at most, two “broadband” service providers: the cable and phone companies. Keep in mind that both were at one time monopolies established with government protection. (Also keep in mind that cable is vastly superior in bandwidth in most places, in part due to the lack of fiber investment by the phone industry, and is rapidly becoming the de facto broadband provider where it’s available.) These wired-line carriers believe that they should be able to decide what bits of information get delivered in what order and at what speed, if they get delivered at all. Think about what that means: the ability to play favorites in content. Most broadband carriers have instituted bandwidth caps; Comcast has even canceled the service of those who’ve used too much. Carriers are also becoming content providers themselves, as Comcast did when it bought NBC Universal, creating a plain conflict of interest.

This is why a principle called “network neutrality” has emerged in recent years. It essentially says that the carriers should not favor one kind of content, or conversation, over another. The carriers have challenged the Federal Communications Commission’s tiny moves toward network neutrality, and it’s not hard to see why. If they can have a duopoly, with little incentive to truly compete, they can use that dominance to cut deals with big content companies at the expense of smaller players, including what startup media operations might want to provide. And as the carriers become content providers themselves, the incentive to make these choices grows. Comcast says that its own streaming video service won’t count against its bandwidth cap, unlike streaming video services it doesn’t own; a loophole in the FCC’s already-weak regulations may give the cable giant cover. (Note: I own a small number of shares in Netflix, which offers a video streaming service that does count against the cap.)

The serious potential for problems with wired-line broadband is nothing next to the actual situation with mobile carriers. They’ve already won the FCC’s approval to discriminate in their network practices, and they have bandwidth limits a fraction the size of wired-line carriers’ limits. Clearly they cannot handle the kind of traffic that a cable or DSL line can bear, given network limitations, but they’re using relative scarcity to create customer-controlling business models. Recently, AT&T’s mobile arm declared its interest in charging some application developers for preferred connections to their customers. Who could afford that? Companies like Facebook, certainly, but smaller players would be hard-pressed to compete in such an environment.

**Read the whole story**

# Grant will help Nevada measure student achievement

**By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau**

CARSON CITY – Nevada's Department of Education has been awarded a $4 million grant from the Institute of Education Sciences to develop a system to measure individual student achievement over time.

Nevada was one of 24 states to receive funding to support the design and implementation of Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems.

The grant will come to Nevada in a three-year cycle. The funds will allow the Nevada Department of Education much needed access to link, by the use of one unique student identifier, students starting from pre-kindergarten through high school and following them through postsecondary education and workforce development.

Gov. Brian Sandoval has asked that this data be used to both improve student outcomes and to fill Nevada's diverse economic job needs.

"All the accountability measures we have enacted require better use of data," Sandoval said. "This grant will move Nevada closer to a fully integrated system that follows learners from childhood to adulthood."

Julian Montoya, assistant director of Assessment Data and Program Accountability, said: "Having this type of P-20W data will allow us to develop an early warning system. With an early warning system, we can direct students to the type of college or career ready jobs and into a field which will allow them a successful outcome for both the student and their state."

Sandoval issued an executive order on Oct. 7, 2011, asking a state education panel to take the necessary steps to create a system to track students through their school years, following in the steps of other states as part of an overarching effort to reform education and improve student performance in Nevada. The grant is an important component of the effort.

That group, the P-16 Council, is working on the issue and will meet again July 5.

A national report showed that Nevada made progress in this effort in 2011. The Data Quality Campaign’s seventh annual state analysis, Data for Action 2011, shows that states have made major progress building their student data systems. More states than ever – 36, up from zero in 2005, including Nevada – have implemented all of DQC’s 10 Essential Elements of Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems.

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# Reno fire grows to 70 acres, no structures threatened

**Reno Gazette-Journal**

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District Fire Chief Charles Moore said a Nevada Division of Forestry helicopter is also responding to the Pinehaven Fire.

He said the fire will ultimately be in Reno’s jurisdiction.

“We were a unified command with Reno but I believe it’s transitioning to a Reno command and we may be minimizing our role here fairly soon,” Moore said.

1:30 p.m. update: The Pinehaven Fire has grown to 70 acres, but is not threatening any structures, said Christie Kalkowski, a spokeswoman for the Sierra Front Interagency Dispatch Center.

Ground crews with 60 responders are on scene. Two single-engine air tankers are also attacking the blaze.

Read the whole story

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# Sleeping man attacked by mountain lion

**By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee**

A man was attacked by a mountain lion near Nevada City early Sunday while sleeping alongside a tributary of the Yuba River.

The California Department of Fish and Game confirmed the unusual attack after investigating the scene and the man’s injuries.

Fish and Game said the man was traveling through Nevada County on a planned hiking trip when he decided to stop for the night to sleep. He laid a sleeping bag out on the ground and went to sleep. Around 1 a.m., he was attacked in the sleeping bag by a mountain lion for what he described as 90 seconds to 2 minutes.

The man said the animal bit and clawed him through the sleeping bag, through a cap he was wearing and through his clothes. The lion ceased the attack, looked at him from 15 feet away for another 15 to 30 seconds, then ran into the night.

Read the whole story