

Quagga mussel laced barges stopped before polluting other lakes

By Rocky Barker, Idaho Statesman

An armada of 41 flexible barges infested with quagga mussels during construction work in Lake Mead were stopped by Idaho's boat inspection program.

The barges were heading back to Seattle after work on the new Las Vegas water intake tunnel was completed in Lake Mead. Mead has been infested with the quagga mussels that were carried by boat from the Great Lakes.

The mussels reproduce quickly and clog canals, hydroelectric dams, and other structures in the state's lakes and streams and vast network of waterways. They also take over the ecosystems reducing the number of game fish. State officials predicted an infestation here could cost \$91 million.

A week ago one of the barges showed up at an Idaho inspection station at the port of entry on Interstate 84 south of Burley. Idaho Department of Agriculture inspectors stopped the barge and found mussels. They contacted Washington and Nevada officials when they learned that 41 similar barges were heading toward Seattle.

All of the states jumped into action to find, inspect and decontaminate the barges, said Amy Ferriter ISDA invasive species coordinator. Inspectors stopped two barges last Wednesday on Highway 93 north of Jackpot that had been reinspected and decontaminated by Nevada.

"Our inspectors said they were spotless," Ferriter said

Read the whole story

U.S. sues Nevada over employment discrimination

By KRNV-TV

CARSON CITY – The feds are suing the state saying Nevada is discriminating against a man who served our country in active duty. According to court documents obtained by News 4, the case revolves around a man who used to work as the chief deputy controller.

Arthur Ingram was called to serve on active duty with the army reserves after less than a month of holding that state government position. The documents say when he returned several years later, the agency had a new leader who would not give him back the same job. He was offered a lower position with less pay on probationary bases.

[Read the whole story](#)

Nevada has plan, but no money to help problem gamblers

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

The good news for Nevada is that it now has a strategic plan for treating problem gambling.

The bad news: State budget cuts have eliminated funding to put

the plan in motion.

Bo Bernhard, executive director of UNLV's International Gaming Institute, and Jeff Marotta, president of Portland-based Problem Gambling Solutions, kicked off the sixth-annual Nevada State Conference on Problem Gambling Thursday with speeches assessing how Nevada is addressing compulsive gambling, an affliction that affects not only individual players, but their families.

It's believed that 5 percent of Nevadans who gamble have addictive behavior and another 9 percent are at risk.

Marotta said that over five years, academic experts and the Nevada Council on Problem Gambling have shepherded the development of a strategic plan to treat problem gamblers.

Read the whole story

S. Tahoe council fails to deliver city manager's review

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe City Manager Tony O'Rourke says he has asked for a copy of his review, but that Mayor Claire Fortier said he wouldn't see it until May 1.

The review is now nine months overdue. O'Rourke told *Lake Tahoe News* he is used to annual reviews.

His review has been on the City Council's closed session agenda since last fall. This is a common practice for elected bodies to have items as a placeholder so they can talk about

the person in the top role without violating the Brown Act.



Tony O'Rourke

Lake Tahoe News on Tuesday sent the five councilmembers an email asking about O'Rourke's review. Only Councilwoman Angela Swanson responded.

"Employee reviews are confidential and can't be discussed in specific. Tony's performance as city manager has exceeded council's expectations. He made the tough calls for us; tackling a deficit, implementing a staff reorganization and addressing health care and pension issues among other accomplishments in these past 15 months," Swanson wrote to *Lake Tahoe News*. "I expect Tony to continue giving 110 percent to the job until he leaves. We have a strong senior staff prepared to continue the city's business."

While O'Rourke is looking for other jobs, he said, "I've made it clear to them I'm not in a rush. I could be up to a year."

O'Rourke's three-year contract expires in August 2013.

He said it is important to him to be reviewed on a regular basis and welcomes what the council will have to say. O'Rourke also said based on what the city has just gone through he would never expect an increase in pay.

S. Tahoe unites residents to improve neighborhoods

By Kathryn Reed

Bear cans and defensible space were the two primary concerns of residents who turned out for a neighborhood meeting this week.

South Lake Tahoe has divided the city limits into six areas, even though there are really 20 distinct neighborhoods. This was the fifth meeting of residents since last fall. Here is the neighborhood map.

The idea is to revitalize the neighborhoods with a little help from the city and the bulk of the effort coming from residents.



"You can tell when folks come to the meetings they are tired, but they have some hope left," Tracy Franklin, the city's marketing and outreach coordinator, told *Lake Tahoe News* after the April 17 Neighborhood Service Team meeting that includes Tahoe Keys, Tahoe Island, Tahoe Valley and Gardner Mountain

neighborhoods.

While the areas are large to begin with, the future may call for breaking them into the 20 smaller neighborhoods.

The definition of the teams is, "It is a group of neighbors working together for the good of all, with a common vision, goals and objectives. A Neighborhood Service Team makes decisions on common problems within a community by sharing

ideas and solutions.”



Tracy Franklin
leads a
community
neighborhood
meeting at
Tahoe Valley
Elementary
School.

Photo/Kathryn
Reed

At this particular meeting garbage bears, overgrown lots, and graffiti were the major topics by the residents.

Franklin followed up with information for the meeting attendees who provided their email address. It had contact info for the fire department – (530) 542.6162. That’s who to call regarding defensible space.

And she checked in with South Tahoe Refuse about getting a group deal on the bear-resistant cans that come with a lid that screws shut.

Franklin’s email said, “A marketing campaign could be launched in town to get local residents to sign up for the purchase of their bear can(s). South Tahoe Refuse was contacted regarding this idea and STR does not purchase the containers. It was suggested that local hardware store vendors be contacted to discuss the potential of purchasing bear containers. Currently the bear containers are sold in town for \$99 each. It would be

ideal to try and reduce the cost to \$50-\$60 per can. A volunteer is needed to head up this effort."

Jim Marino, capital improvement manager for the city, spoke about the roadwork in the neighborhood that will start in July. Venice Drive from Tahoe Keys Boulevard to Aloha Drive will be like new by the end of summer. Work on it will be after the bulk of the tourists have come to town, but it could be torn up for a month.

"The roads in this town are simply sitting on native material," Marino explained.

Fill was brought in by the Dillingham Corp. in the 1960s when the Tahoe Keys was built.

"Traffic in town this year will be a mess," Marino said. The city, Caltrans and South Tahoe Public Utility District have projects on the books.

The city expects to go out to bid on Tuesday for its road projects, with possible awarding of a bid by the City Council on June 19 and construction starting in July.

In the state streets – to the right of Keys Boulevard when entering off Highway 50 – an asphalt rubber seal will be applied with the intent it will give the roads another eight to 10 years of life.

This neighborhood group, like others before it, agreed to a neighborhood cleanup day. It will be June 2. Caltrans donates the bags, CalStar donates plastic gloves, the city has a jug of water, residents do the sprucing up. The California Conservation Corps often helps as do various nonprofits. Franklin drives a pickup to haul away the debris.

A Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association employee said all residents are invited to the June 23 Tahoe Keys Garage Sale at the parking lot of the homeowners association as well as the

June 25 5:30pm Lawn Care and Water Conservation program at the TKPOA office.

Here is a list of future neighborhood meeting dates.

Demand increases Marriott's quarterly profits

By Danny King, Travel Weekly

Marriott International's first-quarter profit rose 3 percent from a year earlier, as higher franchise fees more than offset the drop in earnings caused by last year's spinoff of the company's timeshare business.



Marriott's net income was \$104 million, up from \$101 million. Revenue fell 8.2 percent to \$2.55 billion because of the timeshare spinoff; the timeshare business had accounted for about 10 percent of Marriott's sales.

Factoring out currency effects, Marriott's revenue per available room (RevPAR) rose 6.7 percent. North America RevPAR advanced 6.9 percent, while RevPAR increased 5.3 percent in the rest of the world.

[Read the whole story](#)

Truckee area pilot survives crash

By KARNV-TV

RENO – Today around 10:35 in the morning the sheriff's office received a call that there was an over-turned aircraft at Deerwater Air Field in Sierraville.

Deerwater Field is a landing strip only with a taxi way and parking for small aircraft. Responding personnel included the sheriff's office, Sierra County Fire, the Eastern Plumas-Loyalton Ambulance, United States Forest Service, the California Highway Patrol and later investigators from the Federal Aviation Administration out of their Reno office.

A Grass Valley couple visiting the Sierra Hot Springs nearby witnessed the accident and said the plane had flown in at least once prior, landed and took off again.

[Read the whole story](#)

California bill to cap state

employee pay makes it out of committee

By Jon Ortiz, Sacramento Bee

A bill that would cap California state employees' pay at no more than what the governor earns cleared the Senate Public Employee and Retirement Committee on Wednesday on a 3-1 vote.

Senate Bill 1368, authored by Sen. Joel Anderson, R-Alpine, would limit the annual pay of state officers and employees, including overtime, to the governor's salary, currently \$173,987 per year.

The measure exempts current salaries set by contracts but requires the limitations to take effect for those employees once those deals expire. Anderson's bill also includes exemptions for public safety workers and judges.

Read the whole story

Explosive device doesn't keep S. Tahoe pot club from opening

By Kathryn Reed

All three marijuana dispensaries in South Lake Tahoe are back in business. Patient2Patient had to clean up a mess left from an incendiary device being thrown into the collective Thursday and City of Angels 2 was hopping Friday afternoon after

closing for a couple weeks.

With April 20 having significance in the world of pot users – they call it four-20 – it's not known if whoever is responsible for causing damage to Patient2Patient wanted to stop today from happening at least at this one collective.

If that was the desire, it didn't work. The collective is open today.

In fact, owner Erika Triglia was too busy helping someone to be able to speak with *Lake Tahoe News*.

Four-20's historical roots are muddled, with different theories as to how it came to be a date of significance to marijuana advocates.

Police officers are investigating the April 19 10:15pm incident. Lt. David Stevenson told *Lake Tahoe News* this crime has nothing to do with the explosive device found last week on Tallac Avenue.

Two employees of Patient2Patient were in the building when the explosive was hurled through a side window. A small fire started, but overall the damage was minimal, according to Stevenson.

Down the road and on Third Street at City of Angels 2 people were coming and going from the collective. Owner Gino DeMatteo had abruptly and obviously temporarily shut down the facility earlier this month.

On April 20 he told *Lake Tahoe News* he didn't owe anyone a reason why he closed and is back open.

Town of Mammoth on the verge of being bankrupt

By Norimitsu Onishi, New York Times

MAMMOTH LAKES — It was a seemingly perfect day at this ski resort town high in the Sierra Nevada last week, one that could have redeemed the season's poor snowfall under brighter circumstances. Families here on spring break were enjoying the slopes or shopping at the luxury outlet mall. Some stocked up at the Vons supermarket for dinner, while others braved the half-hour waits at the town's popular restaurants.

But despite the appearance of prosperity, the government of Mammoth Lakes is considering bankruptcy because of its inability to pay a \$43 million legal judgment in a development dispute dating back to 1997. After entering a mediation process under a new California law, the town now faces a 90-day deadline to reach an agreement with its creditors, raising doubts about the future of this longtime getaway for residents of San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Town officials say they hope that mediation will allow them to avoid filing for bankruptcy. But so far, the developer that won the lawsuit, Mammoth Lakes Land Acquisition, has refused to participate in the mediation process.

Now, amid rising anxiety and recriminations, this resort town, like other more modest municipalities across the nation, is facing sharp budget cuts. They could affect not only services to full-time residents, but also ones like free bus shuttles

that cater to tourists.

“We’re afraid if the services drop too low, people will choose not to come, and then it becomes a downward spiral,” Jo Bacon, the mayor, said in an interview at the Java Joint, a cafe in a 1970s shopping mall that also houses the local government.

Mammoth Lakes, a town of about 8,200 residents and a budget of \$17 million, has become the second municipality after Stockton to use a new state law that requires local governments to hire a third-party mediator to negotiate with creditors before declaring Chapter 9. The union-backed law made it harder for local governments to file for bankruptcy and was intended to protect public employees in cities with large work forces, like Stockton, which entered the mediation process in February.

In Mammoth Lakes’s case, its problems are rooted in the 1997 deal with Mammoth Lakes Land Acquisition. The town gave the developer the rights to build a hotel, residential and retail project near the local airport in exchange for making airport improvements. But the town backed out of the deal after the Federal Aviation Administration, which provided Mammoth Lakes with grants to improve the airport, objected to development nearby.

The developer sued in 2006 for breach of contract and was eventually awarded a \$30 million judgment. The town exhausted its legal appeals last year, and the amount has grown to \$43 million.

Read the whole story