

Placerville man charged in 3-state drug ring

By Maneeza Iqbal, News 10

SACRAMENTO – A three-state drug trafficking bust led to the arrest of 14 people and the seizure of 1,300 pounds of marijuana.

Dylan Hudson, 26, of Placerville was charged with conspiracy to grow and distribute marijuana and possessing marijuana with intent to distribute on Thursday by a federal grand jury, said Lauren Horwood, spokesperson for the U.S. Attorney, Eastern District of California.

On March 8, a tip lead police to a private shipping company in West Sacramento, where authorities seized 80 pounds of high grade marijuana, then allowed the empty crate continue on to Chicago, California Attorney General's Office said.

In Chicago, officers followed Hudson and Jon Stansfield, of Chicago, to Milwaukee, Wisc, where they arrested the two men and seized another 120 pounds of marijuana and \$300,000 in cash.

On the same day, authorities executed a search warrant on Hudson's property on the 3000 block of Charm Way, in Placerville, where 946 pounds of processed marijuana, 2 pounds of hash, eight firearms, \$100,000 in cash, \$35,000 in silver bars and gold coins, three generators and two ATVs were seized, the attorney general's office said.

Read the whole story

South Tahoe businesses fined for not clearing sidewalks

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe's reputation for not enforcing its laws is changing. Twenty-three letters went out this month alerting property owners they are violating the city's sidewalk snow removal ordinance.

The city will have enforcers out this weekend to see if more letters need to be written when this storm is over. Fines will keep going up.



Snow in late
February
covers the
sidewalk along
Highway 50.
Photos/LTN

"We get complaints from people who know about the ordinance and want to know why businesses are not complying. They are tired of walking in the road and slipping in icy, snowy conditions," City Manager Tony O'Rourke told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The city delayed implementation of the ordinance for a year so businesses could put a plan of action together for this winter. Even with the mild winter, property owners have let the snow accumulate, which at times forces pedestrians into

the travel lane along Highway 50.

Even though this is the first year for South Tahoe's sidewalk snow removal ordinance, it has been state law for years. The problem is no one has enforced it.

The problem with leaving the snow is it becomes a health and safety issue.

The city ordinance says, "It shall be the duty of all owners, and their tenants, of real property within the city whose property borders, or is an easement, any improved sidewalk or walkway to maintain the sidewalk or walkway in a safe condition for its use by pedestrians and other members of the public. The duty created by the ordinance shall include the duty to keep the sidewalk or walkway free and clear of all dirt, sand, gravel, filth, rubbish, ice and snow."

In addition to the year delay, Explorer cadets with the city hand-delivered – before the white stuff started coming down – to each business on Highway 50 information about the policy.

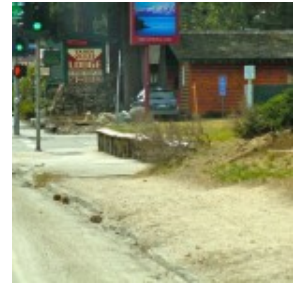
After the first significant storm, warning letters went out.

Repeat offenders received a letter dated March 19 that said, "A significant effort was made to make you aware of your above stated responsibility prior to this winter season. As of [time], March 19, 2012, the sidewalk/walkway adjacent to your property/business had not been adequately cleared. Twenty-four hours had elapsed since the end of the most recent snow event and no action had been taken to remove the snow/ice from the sidewalk/walkway adjacent to your property. You are, therefore, assessed a fine of \$50"

That payment is due April 20. As of March 30, one business paid the fine, three are appealing it and one has been dismissed.

The entities receiving a letter and fine are:

- Ski Run Liquor Market
- Bank of America
- South Lake Tahoe Senior Center
- Lake Tahoe Unified School District
- American Gasoline
- Chapel of the Bells
- Whiskey Dicks
- Trout Creek Motel
- Sky Lake Lodge
- Tahoe Mountain Wedding Chapel
- Re/Max Realty Tahoe
- Nickelodeon Motel
- Tahoe Retreat
- Head Shop
- 76 Conoco Phillips
- Coldwell Banker
- Tahoe Nails and Spa
- Staple
- Church of Christ Scientist
- Thrans Florist



Dirt and concrete walks in front of Chase realty offices have not been adequately cleared.

- Chase International
- Star Tahoe Offices
- Speed Trac.

El Dorado County owns the senior center.

The issue with the school district was confusion over whether the city was taking responsibility of snow removal in front of South Tahoe Middle School this year or starting next year. The city will be responsible going forward and the district's fine has been waived.

Besides businesses, the city has had to figure out how to clear walkways it's responsible for.

"It's so much more labor intensive to do sidewalks than streets," explained Stan Sherer, community services director. "We have made adjustments with our crews on addressing sidewalks. We can't hold the public to higher standards than ourselves."

Marnell Heinz, the city's street superintendent, will be

making a presentation about snow removal to the Sustainability Commission on April 4 at 3pm at Lake Tahoe Airport. The meeting is open to the public.

Plus, there are areas in town where the walkway is dirt – which presents the conundrum of clearing vs. moving dirt.

“Dirt areas lead to inconsistencies in removal areas,” Sherer said.

One of the outstanding issues is regarding the Caltrans right-of-way. Legally, those new sidewalks put in last summer by the state are their responsibility until the entire project is completed and the city takes possession.

However, Caltrans won’t clear the area where it owns the right-of-away.

“Our position throughout the region, including Truckee and Susanville, is that we do not remove snow from the sidewalks. Yes, we know we own the sidewalks until construction is complete. But at this point, Caltrans still does not maintain sidewalks,” Deanna Shoopman, Caltrans spokeswoman, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Lake Tahoe News has submitted a Public Records Request to Caltrans to secure documentation about encroachment permits from the Y to Stateline in order to assess the areas in the city Caltrans is legally responsible for. For now, the city is doing the state’s job.

Internet gambling prompts rare meeting of Gaming Policy Committee

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

Gov. Brian Sandoval will solicit all viewpoints on Internet gambling – including those of Las Vegas Sands Chairman Sheldon Adelson and other critics – to develop policies to manage and regulate the rapidly changing industry that could be headed to the United States someday.

Sandoval, presiding over the first meeting of his revamped Gaming Policy Committee on Wednesday, said the 11-member panel's objective would be to recommend public policy positions and suggest legislation in advance of online gaming approval and to make sure Nevada continues as a global leader in industry regulation and commercial competition.

The 90-minute meeting was primarily a policy review session for the committee, comprising industry leaders, state legislators, regulators and the public. Sandoval said the committee's purpose would be finely focused and within a strict timeline – he wants the group's efforts to be completed by the end of August so that it can issue a report and suggest bill drafts in advance of the 2013 legislative session.

Sandoval said the committee would meet four more times, roughly every four to six weeks, and he encouraged representatives of the gaming industry to weigh in with their views on how Nevada could best leverage Internet gambling and enable the state to be the gold standard in regulation and policy.

The Gaming Policy Committee is a seldom-used sounding board to discuss issues critical to the industry. The committee was initiated by Gov. Grant Sawyer in 1961 and last used by Gov. Richard Bryan in 1981 to discuss pari-mutuel race wagering. Over the years, the committee has addressed the role of entertainment in the casino setting as well as discrimination and equal rights in casinos.

Read the whole story

Invasive species war spills into Minnesota court

By Josephine Marcotty, Star Tribune

The ice went out on Christmas Lake last week, and soon a new gate will go up at its only public boat ramp, signaling the start of what may be the most contentious boating season yet in Minnesota's two-decade fight over zebra mussels and other invasive species.

The gate, installed in November, is more than a method to keep invasive species out of one of the most pristine and exclusive lakes in the metro area. Some see it as a challenge to individual privacy and a virtual Minnesota birthright – unfettered access to any lake or river in the state.

Those two imperatives – protecting the lakes and keeping them open to all – are at the heart of a lawsuit filed last week by three west-metro lake associations against the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The associations claim the state has failed to devise a comprehensive plan against invasive species and has thwarted their efforts to protect the

lakes they treasure.

“It’s not clear to the general public that the battleground for zebra mussels in 2012 is Minnesota,” said Joe Shneider, president of the Christmas Lake Homeowners Association, one of litigants. “Every state east of us has lost the war,” he said.

But some say the lawsuit and the gates will only inflame the debate, not solve the problem.

“Those aren’t their lakes,” said Vern Wagner, executive director of Anglers for Habitat. “Those lakes belong to the citizens of Minnesota.”

DNR officials say they are doing more than ever to fight such invasive species as zebra mussels and milfoil. The Legislature has increased funding from \$3.8 million in 2010 to an expected \$8.6 million this year. And now the DNR is asking for laws that would require boat owner education, give the agency authority to conduct mandatory boat inspections, and allow it to delegate that same authority to counties and cities.

When critics complain about the lack of a statewide plan, what they really mean is that they want the state to inspect every boat before launch in any of the state’s 13,000 lakes, said Luke Skinner, supervisor of the state’s invasive species program.

Not only would that be breathtakingly expensive, officials said, but it raises profound questions about the reach of government into the privacy of the state’s 800,000 boats.

Read the whole story

Injured cub leaves Tahoe to return home to the wild

By Kathryn Reed

No. 8626 is home.

While still small at 35 pounds, this black bear left Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care at the break of dawn Thursday headed for Soda Lake near San Luis Obispo. This is the area where she was picked up in September and where California Department of Fish and Game officials released her later Thursday.

At Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care animals don't receive names. This is because they are not pets and this is not a zoo. It's a rehab facility for wildlife.



The last bear cub rehabbed this season at Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care was returned to the wild March 29.

Photos/Kathryn Reed

When this bear came in she was without a mom, was wandering around San Luis Obispo, and not eating even though she would scamper up pear and apple trees.

When Kevin Willitts, LTWC's veterinarian, examined her he

found an injury under her chin. An abscess had formed that made her unable to swallow. She was losing weight. Arriving at 16 pounds, she couldn't afford to lose much more.

Every two days Willits would work on her until the sore healed.

He was there when DFG picked her up March 29. He took blood, looked at her chin. No evidence of any injury.

"She's not the same bear," Willits says. And that's a good thing. Now she is a healthy bear ready to live in on her own.

It was a slow road to recovery. It was soft foods to begin with – like oatmeal and applesauce. She eventually graduated to solid foods.

Still, being so small, she was never put in with the five other cubs Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care took in last year. Those animals were returned to the wild earlier this year. But based on this one's size, she was kept longer to put a little bulk on her and to give her a better chance at surviving.

Marc Kenyon, associate wildlife biologist with DFG, said a colleague this week had checked the area out where the bear was to be released.

"The rains we've gotten have really greened up the area," Kenyon said, adding there is plenty of food and water for this youngster.

Normally bears are released into a den while they are hibernating. With bears out and about, a den was not her destination.

To get her into the cage in the back of the pickup she had to be tranquilized. Mixing the Telazol, which comes in powder form, with water, Kenyon puts it in a syringe that is the attached to what looks like a long pole.

She's upstairs in the bobcat cage wondering who these people are.

It takes a few minutes for her to get woozy. When she is too out of it to harm anyone, Willits hands her to LTWC volunteer Barry Trammell. He carries what looks like an oversized stuffed animal to the scale in the garage. (LTWC is operated out of the Millhams' home on the outskirts of South Lake Tahoe.)

A monitor is hooked to her tongue to gauge her heartbeat. All her vitals are taken. Kenyon and his two assistants were to do the same when they reached their destination.

At this stage the bear can still feel, see and hear. She's not totally out. On the table though, her eyes are covered to protect them and not have her become agitated so as to raise her heartbeat.

Kenyon put a tag in her ear – just in case she is caught again they know her history.

Cheryl Millham isn't sad to her go. It's the right thing. And it's what she and husband Tom have been doing for 34 years – rehabbing wild animals.

"They are going on to their next step of life. No animal should be kept in a cage," Cheryl Millham said.

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Carson City casino must surrender gaming license

By Cy Ryan, Las Vegas Sun

CARSON CITY – A Carson City casino and its owner have agreed to pay a \$2,000 fine and surrender their nonrestricted gaming license for permitting employees to work in the business without registering with the state.

The High Sierra Brewing Co. and its owner Alan Adam have signed a stipulation with the state Gaming Commission to end the complaint filed against them in January.

Read the whole story

3 Truckee men accused of burglary

Three Truckee men were arrested March 28 on burglary charges.

A second homeowner four days earlier had reported his house ransacked, with skis, snowboards and distinctive-rare alcohol missing.

A Truckee officer patrolling the area noticed a pair of the reported stolen skis at a house near the victim's.

A search warrant reportedly led to additional items located inside and outside the residence. The three occupants arrested were Benjamin Feathers, 22, John Schilder, 20, and Nicholas Carlozzi, 19.

Stockton chiropractor dies snowmobiling near Truckee

By Keith Reid, Stockton Record

A Stockton chiropractor who dedicated decades of his life as a University of the Pacific booster, as a youth basketball coach and to local service clubs died Saturday in a snowmobile accident in Truckee.

James Darnall, 55, was with friends at a popular recreational area Saturday five miles off Highway 267 in Truckee. Emergency response teams were dispatched to the area just after 3pm to a call that Darnall had driven a 2011 Ski Doo snowmobile eastbound into a tree, California Highway Patrol Truckee office manager Terri Fisher said.

Darnall is remembered by his friends and family as a kind and caring man who was an Eagle Scout in high school, a dedicated husband to Carrie and father to daughters Colleen, 26, and Melanie, 24.

A 1978 Pacific graduate who played tight end on the university's football team and catcher on the baseball team, James Darnall became active in the booster club after becoming a successful chiropractor.

"For 30 years, he's been active as a booster and Rotary Club member," Carrie Darnall said. "He was a caring doctor for his patients, a good family man and a good father."

In the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in New York,

Darnall felt it was his duty to fly east to volunteer his services as a chiropractor. He spent several late-night shifts helping volunteers and public safety workers with their physical ailments.

Read the whole story

Wells Fargo in South Lake Tahoe robbed

South Lake Tahoe police officers are looking for a man who they believe robbed a bank Thursday morning.

The suspect demanded money from the teller working at the Wells Fargo Bank inside Raley's at the Village Center. He did not use a gun during the 10:10am March 29 robbery. Officers are not disclosing how much money was stolen.



Officers are looking for this man in connection with a March 29 bank robbery in South Lake

Tahoe.

The suspect is described as a white male, in his 20s, with a light mustache and goatee. The suspect wore a black hooded sweat shirt, dark sunglasses, dark pants and black shoes.

If anyone has information related to this event, call (530) 542.6100.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Efforts renewed to name Lake Tahoe cove after Samuel Clemens

By Cy Ryan, Las Vegas Sun

CARSON CITY – The state is considering taking another stab at naming a cove on the east shore at Lake Tahoe after Samuel L. Clemens, better known as Mark Twain. But an ill-fated campfire at Tahoe is slowing the efforts of the state Board on Geographic Names.

The state board initially submitted the proposal to name the cove. But the national geographic names board rejected it on a split vote.

Bob Stewart, a member of the geographic names board, said the board hopes to convince the U.S. Forest Service to withdraw its opposition to the name change.

As a young man, Clemens followed dreams of riches in timber and mining but won fame as the author of “The Adventures of

Tom Sawyer” and “The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.”

Clemens and friends hiked from Carson City to Lake Tahoe in September 1861 to stake a claim for cutting trees to sell the timber. While camped at the area of the cove, Clemens started a campfire to cook dinner. Stewart says Clemens left the fire unattended and the flames spread, burning in the forest. Clemens, in later letters to his family, said the flames burned only dead trees and brush.

Read the whole story