

California officers to increase St. Paddy's patrol

The Avoid the 6 El Dorado County DUI Campaign will be deploying additional officers on overtime this weekend, supporting routine traffic and patrol officers and focusing on drinking driver hotspots. Police, sheriff and CHP officers will have a "zero tolerance" response toward impaired drivers who fail to use a designated sober driver.

"St. Patrick's Day is one of the most widely celebrated saint's days in the world, but all too often it shares that great distinction with a far lesser one – too many people are driving drunk and killing or maiming themselves and others on the road as a result," South Lake Tahoe police Sgt. Shannon Laney said in a press release.

Last year during the St. Patrick's Day period, there were three people killed and 96 seriously injured in traffic crashes across California involving at least one driver or motorcyclist with a BAC of 0.08 percent or higher, according to statistics compiled by the California Office of Traffic Safety.

Law enforcement officials recommend the following steps for a safe St. Patrick's Day:

- Plan a safe way home before the festivities begin and designate a sober driver.
- If you happen to see a drunken driver on the road, don't hesitate to call 911.
- If you know people who are about to drive or ride while impaired, take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get to where they are going safely.

Reno skier dies in Northstar accident

By Reno Gazette-Journal

A Reno man was killed in a skiing accident at a Lake Tahoe-area ski resort Thursday, Placer County, sheriff's officials confirmed Friday.

Few details are known about the accident that claimed the life of 51-year-old Scott David Fritz at Northstar California. No one witnessed the incident, said Dena Erwin, public information officer for the sheriff's office.

"It was some kind of accident. He most likely hit a tree," Erwin said.

[Read the whole story](#)

Impacts of term limits to shake up status quo in Nevada Legislature

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY – For years the Nevada state Senate was a pretty

stable place, with many lawmakers serving for decades.

From one election cycle to the next, the names and faces in the 21-member body didn't change very often.

That reality was altered in a big way when term limits finally began to have an impact on the state Legislature starting in 2010.

And in this election cycle, already it appears that a minimum of nine incumbents, or more than 42 percent of the Senate, will be gone as of Election Day on Nov. 6.

Term limits, redistricting and personal decisions by lawmakers not to seek re-election are all playing a role in the significant turnover.

So in addition to the political ramifications for Democrats, who are trying to hold on to their one-seat majority, and Republicans, who are seeking to retake the majority, the Senate will have to face the reality of multiple new members when the 2013 session begins Feb. 4.

Sen. Mo Denis, D-Las Vegas, said the new reality with term limits and resulting turnover can be viewed as a challenge and opportunity.

"I think that it makes the work of caucuses a little bit more ...; you do more work because you want to make sure you get good people that can move up and work and do the things that need to be done," he said.

"I think the candidate recruitment is an important part of that, that you're trying to get good people that can step up," Denis said. "And at the same time, training people and getting them up to speed. That means you have to do more work in the interim, that kind of thing, so people are up to speed."

There is a loss of legislative institutional memory when long-time lawmakers leave, but it also provides a chance for new

people with fresh ideas to participate, he said.

The Legislative staff has helped by adding more training so new lawmakers are ready to get to work as soon as the session begins, which is also limited to 120 days, he said.

The Nevada Legislature only meets every other year and Denis said the panel is looking at ways to improve the legislative process and make it more responsive to the public.

Sen. Michael Roberson, R-Las Vegas, said the turnover is not a major issue for Republicans because of the quality of candidates being recruited to fill the 10 seats in play.

"It's more of a problem for the Democrats," he said. "I think their caucus is a little chaotic at this point. And so their bench is pretty thin. They lost a lot of experienced state senators. We only lost a couple, frankly, from this past session. So from our perspective we're fine with the turnover. Not so sure the Democrats should feel the same way."

There were worries going into last session that the large amount of turnover in the Assembly and Senate due primarily to term limits would negatively affect the performance of the Legislature, Roberson said. But a number of new lawmakers in both parties and in both houses stepped up to make a major contribution, he said.

The same scenario is expected in 2013, Roberson said.

"So we're going to have a lot of smart people, a lot of very capable people, in our caucus in the Senate next session.

"The key thing is, whether you've been there 20 years or two, we've got to work together to solve the problems of the state of Nevada," he said. "And we've got to get past excessive partisanship and figure out a way to work with each other. That's what the people want. That's what I'm committed to do, that's what our Senate caucus is committed to do."

Term limits continues to take its toll on the ranks of lawmakers. Four state senators, Dean Rhoads, R-Tuscarora, Mike McGinness, R-Fallon, and Valerie Wiener and Mike Schneider, both D-Las Vegas, are all leaving office this year due to term limits. The four lawmakers combined have more than 70 years of service in the Senate.

Two other senators who are completing their first terms, Shirley Breeden, D-Henderson, and Allison Copening, D-Las Vegas, have announced they will not run for new terms.

Another, Sen. Steven Horsford, D-Las Vegas, is running for the house in Nevada's new 4th Congressional District. Sen. Barbara Cegavske, R-Las Vegas, is a candidate for the house seat as well, and would make the turnover numbers even higher if she wins.

In a surprise move last month, Sen. Sheila Leslie, D-Reno, resigned from her seat in mid-term because she is moving into the district represented by Sen. Greg Brower, R-Reno, where she plans to run for election. One of the two lawmakers will be out of a job on Election Day.

And in another move in what was a busy month for the state Senate last month, Sen. Elizabeth Halseth, R-Las Vegas, announced she was resigning in mid-term for personal reasons.

Leslie's and Halseth's Senate seats will be filled in the 2012 election as well. Assemblywoman Debbie Smith, D-Sparks, has already announced her plans to run for Leslie's seat.

The turnover doesn't only mean new faces, but new leadership as well. Roberson and Denis, the expected caucus leaders for next session, are in the middle of their first terms in the Senate, although Denis also served for a time in the Assembly.

Eight current members of the Senate who are in mid-term and are expected to return in 2013 are freshman, having been elected in 2010. In the 2013 session, only three of 21 members

will have served more than one legislative session in the Senate, although quite a few members do have prior experience serving in the Assembly.

Assembly experience will likely be a factor in the 2013 senate as well, with a number of Assembly members of both parties seeking Senate seats.

STPUD contemplating water, sewer hikes

While a decision about the future of sewer and water rates for South Tahoe Public Utility District is two months away, the notice that it's a possibility will be in the mail next week.



This week the utility board was given a detailed presentation by CFO Paul Hughes and Assistant General Manager Paul Sciuto about the proposed 2012-13 budget. The board is expected to vote on it May 17. That budget goes into effect July 1.

What staff presented was a budget with the assumption rates do not increase.

However, during the nearly two-hour hearing this week the board upon members' request were given scenarios for 2 percent and 4 percent increases.

State law under Proposition 218 mandates the board give ratepayers at least 45 days to comment on the possibility of a rate increase. Letters going out on March 21 will state the board could approve a maximum 5 percent increase on sewer

rates and 2 percent on water rates.

The district is also expecting to alter the structure of metered water rates. This information will also be on the Proposition 218 notice.

Instructions for how to protest the potential increases will be on the mailed form.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

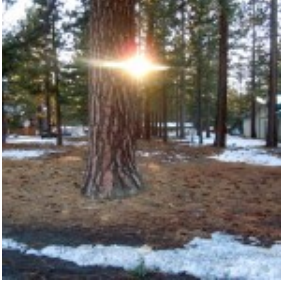
CTC, S. Tahoe land swap may add parking to Harrison Ave.

By Kathryn Reed

The first of two votes was taken Thursday to put sensitive land into the California Tahoe Conservancy's hands and developable property in South Lake Tahoe's control.

The Conservancy board at the March 15 meeting at Lake Tahoe Community College agreed to give South Lake Tahoe 19 acres in exchange for 33 acres. The City Council is expected to vote on the land deal March 20.

"We will trade properties that don't belong in the Conservancy's hands and we get highly sensitive property," CTC Deputy Director Ray Lacey told *Lake Tahoe News*.



The lot at the corner of Modesto and Harrison avenues is likely to become a parking lot.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

The conservancy could restore the property it will acquire and in one case improve the floodplain along the Upper Truckee River. The city could create parking for Harrison Avenue businesses and possibly sell another parcel.

Two of the four parcels the city will acquire are on Highway 50. One is next to the *Tahoe Daily Tribune* that the CTC came to own in 1988 in a deal that involved about 100 properties.

For years the city has talked about turning that into parking. Hilary Roverud, development services director, would only admit conceptual planning shows the dirt lot becoming paved.

However, City Councilwoman Angela Swanson, who is also on the CTC board, told *Lake Tahoe News*, "The Harrison Avenue plan depends on the Tribune land swap."

About 50 parking spaces could go there.

Another parcel the city will get is the old Unocal site next to IHOP. The Conservancy acquired that last fall.

Roverud would not say whether the city intends to keep the parcel, develop it or sell it.

A parcel the city has managed for years but has been under CTC ownership is the grassy area by Regan Beach where weddings are often conducted.

"It will remain deed restricted and the public will continue to have lakefront property," Lacey explained.

The last property in the swap is the community ball field by Lake Tahoe Community College. Ownership came to light during the brouhaha of the SnowGlobe music festival New Year's weekend.

"It's a community asset and makes more sense to transfer that asset to the community," Lacey said.

The land the Conservancy will be getting includes where the former drive-in movie theater on Glenwood Way was and the acreage adjoining the Upper Truckee River west of Sunset Drive.

The Conservancy is likely to restore more than 100,000 square feet of coverage at the old drive-in, with about 12,000 square feet being in a stream environmental zone.

Another agenda item Thursday also involved how the Conservancy manages land. The board adopted the Asset Lands Program Guidelines.

Four properties are part of this equation, with no others being considered. This was stressed so people don't think the Conservancy is going to be in the habit of selling land to keep itself afloat.

Most of the 5,000 parcels the CTC owns could not be sold based on the money used for their purchase.

Lacey said, "Asset lands are parcels of land within the

Conservancy's ownership which are not essential to carrying out Conservancy goals and which could have significant market value."

To be sold are the drive-in site the CTC traded that day with the city. A single-family home could possibly go there. The Conservancy will retain restoration credits.

Part of the Lyon's Ranch that was acquired in 2008 will be sold. Possibly two houses could go there. The CTC is keeping what it needs for trails and river access.

The vacant lot between Tahoe Valley Pharmacy and the Factory Stores at the Y will be sold.

The last piece is the Tallac Vista facility near Heavenly. CTC took possession in the 1980s as part of a legal settlement that resulted in 150 condos not being built there.

When these properties hit the market they will be available to anyone.

Truckee man dies in Alaska avalanche

By Casey Grove, Anchorage Daily News

A second man, a 26 year-old from Truckee, has died after a Haines-area avalanche Tuesday that killed a heli-skiing guide,

Alaska State Troopers said.

The “huge” avalanche buried two men from a group of six skiing Takhin Ridge about 11am Tuesday, said troopers spokeswoman Megan Peters, relaying reports from a trooper in Haines. The ridge is south of Mile 33 of the Haines Highway, where helicopters whisk skiers to and from the backcountry.

[Read the whole story](#)

Douglas deputies to be out in force on St. Paddy’s Day

The Douglas County Sheriff’s Office will be participating in several high-visibility traffic enforcement details over St Patrick’s Day.

Due to the typical alcohol consumption associated with St Patrick’s Day celebrations, DUI incidents tend to increase during this celebrated festival.

On the nights of March 16 and 17, Douglas deputies working in conjunction with deputies of the Carson City Sheriff’s Office, will conduct increased DUI enforcement patrols on the highways and roadways within Douglas County and Carson City.

This enforcement detail is partially paid for by a grant from the State of Nevada, Department of Public Safety, Office of Traffic Safety.

Bear found in Incline Village killed by wildlife officials

By Anne Knowles

A male black bear identified by the Nevada Department of Wildlife as the animal who ripped siding off an Incline Village home last month was caught and euthanized on Wednesday.



The male bear captured and euthanized by NDOW on March 14, according to the BEAR League.

Photos/BEAR League

NDOW discovered the bear after responding to a call it received from an individual in Incline Village the morning of March 14. NDOW officials tranquilized the bear and then positively identified it based on distinctive markings and patterns of behavior gleaned from accounts of witnesses to the incident in February, according to Chris Healy, spokesman for NDOW in Reno.

He declined to say how many people saw the bear rip siding off a home last month, but Healy said the bear trapped and put down Wednesday was positively identified by several people, including an NDOW biologist and people living in the Incline Village neighborhood.

"We are totally confident we identified the bear," said Healy.

Soon after the incident last month, NDOW trapped another male bear and released it because the agency believed the animal it was looking for was a female based on sightings of a mother with two cubs in the area.

Advocates for non-lethal handling of bears say the department trapped the wrong bear again, and killed it.

Ann Bryant, executive director of BEAR (Bear Education Aversion Response) League in Homewood says she believes the bear seen peeling siding off the house was a female. She says there have been sightings of a male bear rummaging through garbage in the area, but that bear has been chased into another location now and is not the bear captured by NDOW.

Bryant says the garbage-trawling bear is about 2 years old and weighs about 150 pounds, while the bear captured yesterday by NDOW was about 3 years old and 250 pounds.



A male bear
seen
rummaging
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away,
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BEAR League.

“And the coloration is all different,” she said.

Bryant thinks the bear euthanized by NDOW was lulled out of hibernation by the traps set by the department.

NDOW’s Healy says the department is under fire for doing its job. He says that in 15 years NDOW has captured 900 bears and euthanized about 10 percent of them for public safety concerns.

“What do they want us to do if there is a wild bear?” Healy said. “These are dangerous situations made worse by amateurs.”

Healy says Incline Village residents should be more concerned about stricter garbage collection ordinances since it is garbage that attracts the bears.

“Blaming us is like blaming the guy who cleans up after the circus parade,” said Healy.

BEAR League’s Bryant concedes that garbage ordinances could be better enforced but says that is not the answer. The problem,

said Bryant, are people who are afraid of the bears and interested only in killing them, not managing them.

“It’s another notch in their belt,” said Bryant. “And NDOW feeds into it and caters to them.”

Community colleges looking at ways to trim budgets

Publisher’s note: *A spokeswoman for Lake Tahoe Community College in South Lake Tahoe said the elimination of summer school is not being considered as a way to deal with a shrinking budget.*

By Richard Bammer, Vacaville Reporter

Seeking to relieve some fiscal pressure before the start of fall classes, Solano Community College leaders canceled the summer session at its four campuses, shaving \$1 million from the 2012-13 budget.

“It’s painful to have to do this,” Jowel Laguerre, the Fairfield-based college’s superintendent-president, said shortly after issuing a press release.

Alluding to the prospect of getting rosier financial reports from the state Department of Finance, he said, “The thinking was it’s going to get better and it hasn’t.”

The decision, which top college staff members made late Thursday before making it public Friday, accomplishes several things, Laguerre noted.

Besides the budget reduction, it will allow the college to keep a mostly full schedule of classes in the fall and spring semesters; protect more faculty and staff jobs; provide a financial cushion if voters reject Gov. Jerry Brown's November tax initiative; and brings expenses and revenues into a closer balance, he said.

"We have run classes for 500 to 600 more students than the state pays us for," Laguerre said. He noted the decision not to offer summer classes gives SCC "a more secure financial base."

Expressing a note of caution, he said that if Brown's tax initiative – the Schools and Local Public Safety Protection Act of 2012 – fails, then the college faces an additional \$2.2 million cut in January, he said.

"We have to plan in a way that the potential for the revenues not to be there is real," said Laguerre, who oversees 9,100 students, and 160 full-time and 400 part-time faculty.

Read the whole story

Barton doc, Tahoe patients part of national drug study

By Jessie Marchesseau

William Cottrell, a physician at Barton Osteoporosis & Bone Health, is partnering with the pharmaceutical company Amgen to

host an observational study for the osteoporosis drug Prolia.

The drug was approved by the FDA and released to pharmacies in 2010. So this is not a trial to see if the drug works or what the side effects are. Rather, observational studies like this one are designed to see if the patients like the medication, if they choose to continue using it, how they tolerate the side effects and other such factors.



William
Cottrell

Cottrell has not only had Prolia available to his patients, but has been educating other physicians on the drug for more than a year.

“I do it for the mental stimulation and satisfaction,” he said of teaching other doctors about prescription medications. “There is nothing more rewarding than educating your peers to their satisfaction.”

Prolia is not the first prescription drug Cottrell has chosen to learn and subsequently educate his peers about. He says doing so allows him to learn all the ins and outs of a medication and find the answers to questions he may never have thought to ask.

“There are some physicians that are much more curious than others, and I’m a very curious guy,” he told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The reputation and relationships Cottrell developed among the medical science community from doing such presentations

prompted Amgen to approach him about participating in the Prolia study.

At a couple presentations and conferences over the years, Cottrell had also crossed paths with Doreen Spires, a former research biologist and the current clinical research coordinator for the study. With a background in pharmaceutical research and 16 years of investigating bone density issues, Spires was an ideal candidate to partner with Cottrell for the Prolia study.

However, an invitation from Amgen was not enough to earn Barton Osteoporosis & Bone Health a spot among the 90 participating facilities in North America. They had to meet a set of strict guidelines put forth by the pharmaceutical company as well as pass an inspection including the Barton pharmacy and lab. Cottrell, Spires and Barton passed on the first try.

“Even the study coordinator said it was very unusual to pass the first time,” Cottrell said. “It was a compliment not only to me, but to the hospital.”

The study will observe 600 patients nationwide, of which Spires and Cottrell were asked to observe 10. However, patients’ response to the study far exceeded the team’s expectations.

They signed up three the day the study began in September 2011. The other seven spots filled up in no time, so they asked for 10 more. The request was granted, and again, the spots filled quickly. When they requested five more, Amgen granted them 10. Though they have not reached their 30-participant threshold yet, Cottrell and Spires will be signing people up through the end of March.

“The benefit to the patient is that they’re helping other patients in the future,” Spires said.

The study will last for two years with participants receiving injections of Prolia every six months. The first group of patients are just now coming in for the second treatments. Part of the study is seeing how many participants stick it out for the full two years, but Spires says so far most of the patients are happy with the twice per year protocol of the drug.

This is Cottrell's first time participating in this type of study, but he is already looking toward the future.

"If they like the way you do things, they ask you to do things down the road," he said. "And the dream drug for bones is in the pipeline, and Amgen has it."

For questions regarding the Prolia observational study or to become a participant, contact Barton Osteoporosis & Bone Health at (530) 543.5490.