

South Lake Tahoe may outsource airport management

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Airport in the near future may not be run by people on South Lake Tahoe's payroll.

"It's not so much what we save in employee costs, as it is having a more entrepreneurial approach to managing the airport," City Manager Tony O'Rourke told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We have vacancies in the hangars, we hope to have commuter service. Technically, this is an enterprise operation and it should break even."



Lake Tahoe Airport is busy one time of year -- during the celebrity golf tournament.

Photo/LTN file

Instead, the city is subsidizing the airport by about a half million dollars each year. If the airport ever evolved from being primarily a general aviation facility into a commuter hub, that figure would drop substantially.

The City Council at its Dec. 13 meeting is expected to vote on

whether a request for proposal to replace the management at the airport with private operators should go forward. A change could come in February.

Five people work for the city.

“The city needs to know what is best for the city and that is what they will find out by putting an RFP for certain services at the airport,” airport Manager Sherry Miller said. “They will find out if it’s less expensive to have their own employees or more expensive, and what kind of qualified people they can get.”

O’Rourke said instead of having the entire operation run privately, it would be the management. He wants to base it on what the Minden airport did in the last year.

If the airport were to ever get any form of commercial services, the downstairs offices used primarily by the city attorneys would need to be vacated for security and baggage claim.

“That would be a nice problem; to have to relocate them,” O’Rourke said.

State finally prevails – Kindertown day care closed

By Kathryn Reed

Kindertown Day Care and Preschool will not open Monday. It may never open again, at least not with Maria Barrows-Crist as owner-operator.

Officials from the California Department of Social Services showed up at the South Lake Tahoe center Friday about lunchtime with an order from a judge stating the center would be closed at the end of business Nov. 4.

“Thirty-nine kids over the weekend will have to find alternate care,” Barrows-Crist told *Lake Tahoe News* through tears.



Community
efforts to
keep
Kindertown
open
ultimately
were not
enough.

Photo/LTN file

She looks at the pictures on the walls in the center, of the people who have supported her for the past 33 years – and especially in the past two years during her licensing struggles – and she feels she has let them down.

“I feel like such a failure,” Barrows-Crist. “I really did fight.”

When troubles first started, Kindertown received money from the state as well as private funding. She had 130 children and 20 employees in September 2009.

About 7,000 kids have come through the doors since Judy Kurtzman first opened Kindertown on July 1, 1973. Barrows-

Crist is the third owner.

Her saga with the state began in September 2009 when the officials tried to close the facility based on a series of allegations. Each time Barrows-Crist wins in court the state comes up with more charges. This time, though, the state won. That hasn't happened before during all of this back-and-forth legal maneuvering.

Officials from the state were not available for comment late Friday afternoon.

Barrows-Crist said she was caught off-guard because she didn't believe anything would happen until the Nov. 18 hearing before El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Warren Stracener in Placerville. In October he ruled there is no harm keeping Kindertown open until his decision is made later this month.

But the state took the case to the appellate court, which said the center should be closed until Stracener makes his ruling.

So, it's possible Kindertown could open again Nov. 21 if she were to win in two weeks. But by then parents will have found alternative care for their children and the five employees may have moved on as well.

Plus, Barrows-Crist is now representing herself in court because she can't pay what she owes attorney Mike McLaughlin and therefore has no money for any legal counsel. McLaughlin could not be reached Friday.

The state said they would notify the families by phone and provided Barrows-Crist with a letter to give families as well. The one thing she felt good about Friday was reaching most of the parents before the state did.

If this closure is permanent, Barrows-Crist hopes a buyer will come forward soon. The business has been on the market for a number of months.

Bankruptcy, Barrows-Crist said, may be her next experience with the courts.

Dugard reaching out through JAYC Foundation

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

Kidnap victim Jaycee Lee Dugard has produced her first public service announcement in support of the JAYC Foundation which offers support to families that have suffered abduction or other traumatic incidents.

Dugard was kidnapped by Phillip Garrido in 1991 when she was 11 and held for years in his home.

The 20-second announcement, which you can watch below, shows Dugard asking people to act when they see something wrong.

[Read the whole story](#)

Bonanza Park expected to be built in 2012 in S. Lake

With bids coming in higher than expected, Edgewood Companies decided to rebid the Bonanza Park project in South Lake Tahoe.

People are expected to be using the Y area park in 2012. The plan is construction will start as close to May 1 as weather

allows.



Bonanza Park
is expected to
be a reality
in 2012.

Brandon Hill with Edgewood Companies told *Lake Tahoe News* a decision should be made this month regarding who the contractor will be. Two finalists are in the running. Originally the company had expected to spend about \$200,000 on the nearly 1 acre park.

Hill said, "The dog park was scraped by the community and the council. We were happy to accommodate the desires on the majority of stakeholders."

Amenities will include:

- large turf area
- walking path
- children's play area and equipment
- half court basketball
- horseshoe toss
- picnic pods
- native demonstration plantings
- programable LED lighting

- low flow irrigation
- permanent BMPs to handle storm flows.

The park replaces an old hotel that has been demolished. Edgewood is building the park partly in exchange for tourist accommodation units that can be used at the future Edgewood Lodge.

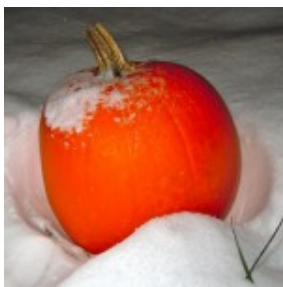
– Kathryn Reed

Tahoe covered in white, schools open

While stars are in the sky first thing this Friday morning, there is definitely plenty of snow to shovel in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Most highways in and around the basin have some restrictions. For details, click on the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News*.

However, the white stuff is not enough for schools to call it a snow day.



The seasons
are changing

in Lake Tahoe.

Photo/LTN

For those wanting to make it a powder day, Boreal is resuming operations today. It will be a couple more weeks before other Tahoe area resorts power up the lifts.

The snow that fell Nov. 3 was preceded by wicked winds, with ridge tops recording 100mph gusts.

About 4 inches fell in South Lake Tahoe, while Sierra-at-Tahoe received a foot.

The National Weather Service in Reno is calling for a 60 percent chance of snow today, mostly sun Saturday, 80 percent likelihood of snow Saturday, and sun again Monday. It will be in the 30s and 40s during the day, with overnight temps in the teens.

– Kathryn Reed

Corporations rethinking how they use water

By Leslie Kaufman, New York Times

SAN FRANCISCO – From the cotton field in rural India to the local rag bin, a typical pair of blue jeans consumes 919 gallons of water during its life cycle, Levi Strauss & Company says, or enough to fill about 15 spa-size bathtubs. That includes the water that goes into irrigating the cotton crop, stitching the jeans together and washing them scores of times at home.



The company wants to reduce that number any way it can, and not just to project environmental responsibility. It fears that water shortages caused by climate change may jeopardize the company's very existence in the coming decades by making cotton too expensive or scarce.

So to protect its bottom line, Levi Strauss has helped underwrite and champion a nonprofit program that teaches farmers in India, Pakistan, Brazil and West and Central Africa the latest irrigation and rainwater-capture techniques. It has introduced a brand featuring stone-washed denim smoothed with rocks but no water. It is sewing tags into all of its jeans urging customers to wash less and use only cold water.

To customers seeking further advice, Levi Strauss suggests washing jeans rarely, if at all – the theory being that putting them in the freezer will kill germs that cause them to smell.

Conservation worries are not limited to the clothing giants: food and beverage conglomerates, tobacco companies and metal and mining companies are all starting to reckon with their heavy dependence on water. Pepsico, for example, has embraced a method of sanitizing plastic bottles with purified air instead of water at a plant in Georgia. For its Frito-Lay brands, it has identified drought-resistant potato strains that it provides to farmers along with a soil-monitoring method so that crops are watered only when necessary.

The Carbon Disclosure Project, a group that monitors corporations' greenhouse gas emissions, recently added water security to its priorities. Of the 150 companies that responded last year to a questionnaire that it sent to the world's largest corporations, nearly 40 percent reported that water problems had already resulted in "detrimental impacts" to their businesses.

The threat of water shortages was brought home to Levi Strauss last year when floods in Pakistan and parched fields in China destroyed cotton crops and sent prices soaring. Roughly two pounds of cotton go into every pair of jeans that the company manufactures. Although scientists are wary of linking specific extreme weather events to climate change, recent increases in floods and droughts are in line with patterns that experts have long projected would result from global warming. The general rule of thumb is that wet regions will get wetter and dry regions will become even more arid.

Read the whole story

Tahoe's transportation vision outpaces implementation

By Kathryn Reed

If only transportation improvements moved as fast as technology.

No need to use paper or stickers, a computer program can collect the same information more efficiently.

Analysis

But where was the bus to get people to that technology?

Instead, the parking lot was full. And this, at a meeting about transportation where bike trails were heralded. But, then again, it was snowing by the time the meeting wound down.

This is a reminder that no matter how many bike trails are

built or rehabbed, they are not even as seasonal of a resource as a ski resort. After all, those places can be transformed into hiking and biking meccas in their off season. Tahoe bike trails don't even become cross country or snowshoe trails in their off season.

The Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization, an arm of TRPA, rolled out its plan for the future to about 50 people who attended a meeting Nov. 3 at Inn by the Lake in South Lake Tahoe. (No South Lake Tahoe City Council members attended; El Dorado County Supervisor Norma Santiago was a speaker.) About a dozen people attended the North Shore version of the meeting two nights earlier in Kings Beach.



Dozens of people attend the Nov. 3 transportation meeting in South Lake Tahoe.

Photo/LTN

While the Regional Transportation Plan must be updated every four years, the bigger plan is looking out to 2035.

It's hard to embrace what were called the accomplishments since the last plan was put together in 2008 because most of the ideas had been on the books for longer than four years. Transit shelters that are going in this month; the Highway 50 road-water quality project; lighting for Ski Run/El Dorado

Beach; Sawmill, Stateline demo, and Greenway bike projects were touted.

The reality that was not stated by any official is the lighting at El Dorado Beach/Lakeview Commons is not what South Lake Tahoe wanted because TRPA said no to overhead lighting. Phase two of Sawmill is a year behind. While the Greenway project is in the permitting phase, there is no money to bring it to fruition.

Much like all the placed based planning sessions for the TRPA Regional Plan that were started in 2005, this had a similar feel. Instead of having to put stickers on white pieces of paper, people could use CrowdBrite to do it electronically. People not at the meeting may log in to CrowdBrite for the next 30 days to contribute ideas. Access is also via the TMP0 website.

One of the interactive components allowed computer users to spend \$650 million on South Shore projects and another \$475 million on North Shore. The categories to choose from included stormwater, bike-pedestrian, road revitalization, transit, and managing transportation demand.

It showed maintenance of existing and future bike paths on the South Shore with a \$6 million price tag.

Those million dollar figures are what the TMP0 expects to have to spend through 2035. The sources are evenly split between local, state and federal entities. It was not explained any further where the money specifically comes from.

The same ideas that have been written or mouthed for eons came spewing forward – have a free bus system, create a class 1 bike trail from Meyers to the Y, clear the bike paths in the winter.

Part of the big picture is contending with California mandated green house emission reductions. By 2020 the amount of

emissions is supposed to drop by 7 percent per person and another 5 percent by 2035.

Karen Fink, TPO transportation planner, said this is the equivalent of everyone not driving one day per month.

A project list will be created based on public input. The draft plan should be out for review in March, with the final plan ready in August 2012.

Staff is working on the premise of complete streets being the No. 1 policy goal. The three programs it is likely to pursue are: reducing employee trips via shuttles or flexible scheduling, real time traveler information via electronic signs, and parking management where entities may share asphalt. Projects will be ones that can be funded in a reasonable future.

How all this public input being collected will be incorporated remains to be seen.

More information is on the Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization's website.

Nevada not alone in bear hunt controversy

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Hunters might be quietly stalking Nevada's woods, but the policy decision that put them there was decidedly noisy.

It packed meeting rooms, led to candlelight vigils and marches on the governor's mansion.

Nevada's first black bear hunt, now under way and possibly nearing an end, is described as the state's most contentious wildlife issue in recent memory.

"It's been mega-controversial," said Chris Healy, spokesman for the Nevada Department of Wildlife.

Nevada's inaugural bear hunt is one sow away from the end of the season after a fifth female was killed over the weekend. Regulations adopted by the state Wildlife Commission set a limit of 20 bears that can be killed; of those, no more than six can be female. Since the season opened Aug. 20, hunters have killed 12 bears – five females and seven males.

But Nevada is far from unique. The issue of bear hunting, now allowed in at least 33 states, has brought impassioned debate in plenty of places.

It happened in California, where a proposal to allow as many as 2,000 bears to be hunted quickly found opposition, forcing plans to be scaled back. It happened in Kentucky, where a proposal to allow harvest of only half the 20 allowed killed in Nevada still stirred up some folks.

It's happened in New Jersey – like Nevada, a flash point for the debate.

The Garden State is now gearing up for its 2011 bear hunt after 592 bears were killed in December 2010, said Lawrence Hajna, spokesman for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

Read the whole story

Missing Reno man found in embankment near Markleeville

By Reno Gazette-Journal

A Reno man reported missing Thursday morning to the Reno Police Department was rescued late Thursday morning after his vehicle was found over an embankment in Alpine County.

Few details were available about the case, but the California Highway Patrol reports the man was found in the vehicle at about 10:48am in the area of Highway 4 and Wolf Creek Road about six miles southeast of Markleeville.

CHP officer Jeff Gartner said the vehicle was over an embankment just west of Chambers Mansion off a road that was closed by mid-afternoon because of an approaching snow storm.

Read the whole story

Convention center site may move out of bankruptcy court

More time. That's what Randy Lane has been given by a bankruptcy court judge in Sacramento.

January is the next scheduled court date for the convention center debtor and creditors.

Last month Lane asked for more time to come up with a plan for the 11-plus acre site that has languished in bankruptcy since October 2009. At that time he was asking for 270 days. At the

hearing on Nov. 1 he was given until Jan. 10 to resolve the property tax issue. In other words, figure out a payment plan.



It could be years before work resumes on the would-be convention center.

Photo/LTN file

One of the creditors is contemplating filing a motion to dismiss the case from bankruptcy court. This, too, is likely to be heard in January.

“It would remove the bankruptcy court from the proceedings, and the parties could either foreclose, sell, reach agreements, etc., without needing the bankruptcy court’s approval,” South Lake Tahoe City Attorney Patrick Enright explained. “The bankruptcy court has certain powers under the bankruptcy code to impose a plan, but without a plan and no real hope of a plan from the debtor, there is little point in the bankruptcy court keeping the case indefinitely.”

– Kathryn Reed