

South Tahoe police to be armed with defibrillators

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe residents going into cardiac arrest are about to have a greater chance of survival because more people patrolling the streets are getting trained how to use defibrillators.



The police department spent \$10,752.86 on 10 automated external defibrillators for officers.

“It’s important to save lives. We’ve had occasions where cops initiated CPR,” Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*. “This tool is very important to help improve the chances for survival when a person has a sudden cardiac arrest.”

Officers are undergoing training on the apparatus. Before they are put to use the El Dorado County medical director must give final approval.

Officers across the country have been using the medical device for years. Studies show the survival rate dwindles by 10 percent each minute after cardiac arrest begins when the patient does not receive defibrillation.

With police officers often being the first to a scene, the theory is lives will be saved with them having defibrillators instead of waiting for an ambulance.

Vail Resorts expanding its brand on Internet with acquisitions

By Denver Business Journal

A division of Vail Resorts Inc. said Wednesday it purchased the ski report website SkiReport.com.

The purchase was made by Vail Resorts subsidiary Mountain News Corp., which already operates the website OnTheSnow.com.

Financial terms weren't disclosed.

The two websites will be merged for the 2011-12 ski season.

Mountain News (which has nothing to do with any media in the Lake Tahoe Basin) said the merger will boost unique annual visitors to the website to more than 12 million. OnTheSnow has been attracting about 9.6 million unique annual visitors.

[Read the whole story](#)

Family of IHOP shooter says he was schizophrenic

By Martha Bellisle, Reno Gazette-Journal

Shortly after Eduardo Sencion shot 11 people at an IHOP

restaurant, killing four before fatally shooting himself, his sister-in-law told officials that he had been diagnosed schizophrenic and was taking medication.

Rosa Gonzalez-Perez also told Carson City sheriffs detectives that Sencion had lived with her family on Jodi Lane for about three years, but had moved in with his parents on Truckee Lane about six months ago, according to a video of an oral affidavit for search warrant.



Eduardo
Sencion

She also confirmed that Sencion was likely driving the blue mini-van found at the shooting and said the mini-van was used by her in-laws most of the time.

Detective David LeGros told Justice of the Peace Tom Armstrong that officials feared for the safety of the people living at those houses, but when they arrived at the Truckee Lane home, no one was there.

Inside they found "box upon boxes of additional ammo that would be suited for an SKS or AK style rifle," LeGros told Armstrong. They also found "additional firearms" inside the house, LeGros said, but he did not identify the model.

Sencion began shooting outside the IHOP at about 9 a.m. on Sept. 6, wounding a woman near a motorcycle, before going inside and firing his assault weapon at customers.

Three Nevada National Guard members gathered for a breakfast

meeting were killed: Lt. Col. Heath Kelly, 1st Class Miranda McElhiney, both of Reno and 1st Class Christian Riege of Carson City. Also killed was Florence Donovan-Gunderson of South Lake Tahoe.

Read the whole story

South Lake Tahoe employees weighing down city's budget

By Kathryn Reed

While South Lake Tahoe employees cry poor, city documents show their wages keep going up. Furlough days that were implemented did not reduce salaries. They reduced take home pay because fewer hours were being worked. But retirement funds were not affected by furlough days.



In actuality, city employees have been getting raises during the recession, while the private sector in large part has seen the opposite happen. In their defense, most of the contracts were agreed to before the recession. But it does show how little foresight there was on the part of staff and council members who agreed to the deals.

The one raise that stands out is just before Dave Jinkens left his post as city manager last year a side letter with the Administrative-Confidential group extended the contract through fiscal year 2011-12 with a 4 percent raise in exchange for a third furlough day.

According to MOUs and documents provided by the city, from 2007-10 Administrative-Confidential, General-Public Works, and the Police Employees groups received 18.5 percent salary increases. Police Officer and Supervisors group received a 26 percent raise in that time period. Fire received a 15 percent raise.

None of these figures is compounded, so it's actually a higher amount.

The fire group chose not to accept its agreed upon 3 percent raise for 2010.

Here is a salary schedule of city employees by position.

Some workers will get a raise in the next fiscal year based on step-in-grade increases. These come on the anniversary of the hire date.

A full house is expected for the City Council meeting at 7 tonight at Lake Tahoe Airport because of the proposed changes in staffing and programs. Budgets are often considered the most significant decision a council makes – with the vote indicating how the group prioritizes staffing, programs and infrastructure.

While each council member has been apprised of what will be before them and have individually met with city staff, this is the first public discussion of the document and the first real opportunity for the public to weigh-in on the matter.

But this is the eleventh-hour because the budget takes effect in 16 days. Per state law, it must be balanced.

Because negotiations with employee groups are ongoing, adoption of the budget is not even expected tonight, according to City Manager Tony O'Rourke. It will likely require a special meeting to finalize it, but that date has not been set.

Nuts and bolts

To help close the \$5.2 million budget gap, employees were asked to pay their share of their retirement and more for health care.

Only the fire association has made the concessions, though as a reward they are slated to get a raise of 2 percent for at least this coming fiscal year. However, because the group has not signed the deal yet, council members could voice their opinion on the matter tonight and potentially negate the deal.

Instead of one nice tidy document called a budget, what the South Lake Tahoe City Council will dissect tonight is a bunch of "proposed departmental summaries." That's the city's lingo for it.

These proposals were put on the city's website late Tuesday. However, the details behind the proposals are in five binders in the finance department. Christine Vuletich, who is in charge of that department, will have them with her tonight. An actual budget for anyone to look at won't be available until the end of the year. Some years it has been well after the first quarter has ended.

The proposed budget calls for \$94,695,245 in expenses. Of that, \$28,157,124 is for the capital improvement program and nearly \$11 million is for the ongoing debt. The general fund accounts for \$28,607,349 of the total expenditures for fiscal year 2011-12, which begins Oct. 1.

Salaries and benefits are paid from the general fund.

The city has seven associations it works with. Their agreements and amendments, aka side letters, are on the city's website. Only the General and Public Works contract is up at the end of the month. All other contracts expire Sept. 30, 2012.

However, the General and Public Works did not have its first meeting with all employees until Sept. 12. This, despite, the council in March approving the five-year fiscal plan that called for the salary-benefit concessions or layoffs.

A strike by the Admin-Confidential and Public Works and General employee groups is not possible based on a memorandum of understanding that says, "It is agreed and understood that there will be no strike, work stoppage, slow-down, picketing, or refusal or failure to fully and faithfully perform job functions and responsibilities or other interference with the operations of the City by the Association or by its officers, agents, or members during the term of this agreement, including the recognition of picket lines or additional compliance with the request of other labor organizations to engage in such activity."

MOUs representing fire and police do not have such language because they are prohibited by law to strike.

Balancing the budget

In a 27-page memo to the council, O'Rourke outlines the fiscal health of the city and the measures he wants to take to make sure the city keeps functioning.

In part, they include:

- Voluntary separation program offered to employees of General and Public Works Union.
- Elimination of 26 positions, reduction in hours for four employees, and five positions vacated.
- Reorganization of city services. (Read more about this on *Lake Tahoe News* after the meeting.)
- Furloughs will be eliminated except for the Administrative-Confidential group. It saves the city money to keep that group on furlough days until the contract expires in a year.

- All non-represented and management staff paying their full 8 percent PERS contribution.
- Using \$500,000 of the estimated \$1.8 million health plan reserves. (Employee and retiree health care plans are budgeted at \$5.2 million for the next fiscal year – which is 18 percent of the general fund.)
- Adding \$278,000 to the budget through parking meters on Ski Run Boulevard and beach areas in addition to the ones already installed near the Stateline area transit center.
- Borrow \$675,000 from general fund operating reserve to pay the proposed Redevelopment Agency continuation payment of \$1.8 million.

Example of a city expenditure

Lost in a budget of this magnitude can be the expenses not even thought of by the public. Like the \$23 per page the city pays to have minutes taken by the city clerk be transcribed by an outside agency.

Considering a slow professional typist can type 50 words per minute and there are an average of 500 words per page it means the person is making \$23 every 10 minutes.

“It is not a matter of wpm and how fast a person can type. The industry standard is per page, which for summary minutes is cheaper than charging for hourly. This is a specialized and technical service,” City Clerk Suzie Alessi told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The city pays \$10,000 a year for the service. The savings comes from not paying benefits to a city employee, Alessi said.

Still, it begs the question with all these layoffs, can't one of those employees type for less than \$138 an hour?

Gas prices surge – especially in South Lake Tahoe

By Yun Long, Reno Gazette-Journal

It's pricey to fill up the tank in South Lake Tahoe.

According to the AAA September survey released Tuesday, the town, along with Eureka, Calif., is the most expensive place to fill up in the contiguous U.S. at \$4.08.



St. Louis has the cheapest gas in the nation with \$3.25.

Across Nevada, prices rose in September. The average for a gallon of unleaded fuel jumped 17 cents to \$3.71. The average price in Reno increased 14 cents to \$3.81, after a 6-cent rise in August.

“Although demand for gasoline has fallen over the past week, which typically helps keep prices down, storms in the Gulf and East Coast have applied upward pressure on gasoline prices in several parts of the country,” AAA Nevada spokesman Matt Skryja said in a release. “In Nevada, the state’s average price for gasoline has recently been relatively steady.”

Read the whole story

Identities released of drivers in Hwy. 50-Glenbrook accident

Updated Sept. 14 9pm: The driver of the 2011 Dodge Avenger 4-door sedan was 49-year-old Gregory Brewer of South Lake Tahoe. The truck driver was 43-year-old Marcus E. Freemyer of Reno.

By Kathryn Reed

A head-on collision near Glenbrook on Tuesday morning did not result in life-threatening injuries for either driver, but it did make for a slow drive.

Nevada Highway Patrol Trooper Chuck Allen told *Lake Tahoe News* the driver of the Dodge sedan was taken to Renown Medical Center in Reno for a “significant injury to the leg.”



A truck carrying Lake Tahoe Marathon medals was in an accident Sept. 13. Photos/Les Wright

The driver of the truck was not injured.



The driver of this sedan sustained a leg injury.

Allen said the driver of the car took his eyes off the road, drifted into oncoming traffic headed west and then struck the three-axle truck.

Les Wright, who runs the Lake Tahoe Marathon, said the truck involved in the accident was on its way to the South Shore to make a delivery.

“Every year something happens to our finishers medals. While stuck behind traffic for 45 minutes today I got two calls from our importer and our delivery truck that the delivery truck was in a serious accident,” Wright wrote in an email to several people.

The 10:50am accident blocked three lanes of the highway for about 30 minutes. The entire highway was open at 3:18pm.

Local media denied access to

opening of safe at old Bill's Casino

By Linda Fine Conaboy

STATELINE – Oprah Winfrey Network has reportedly been given exclusive media rights to witness the opening of the safe found at the old Bill's Casino in Stateline.

Lake Tahoe News was at the casino Tuesday at 2pm – the time Douglas County sheriff's Sgt. Jim Halsey had said the safe would be cracked.



Instead, a construction worker said Oprah's people would be allowed in when they arrived, but he would not let this reporter in.

Several calls to Mike Laub, the current owner of the property, about this new development have gone unanswered. So, what he might have been paid to keep the news away from local and other media is not known, nor is it known if the safe was opened or if it was taken elsewhere.

The construction worker told *LTN* the contents of the safe would be revealed in January when the results of the filming would be disclosed.

Laub had brought in other locksmiths to try to open the safe, but all were unsuccessful.

The safe was discovered during the major remodel of Bill's Casino. (A CVS and Dotty's casino will be the two anchors.) Previous owners Harrah's Entertainment did not know about the safe that was discovered in the walls of the building, under a

stairway.

Before it was Bill's the site was Barney's Casino. According to authorities, the safe could be linked to the 1968 murder of the old Barney's proprietor, Richard Chartrand.

Because Chartrand was killed in 1968 in a spectacular car bombing as he departed his home in the Skyland neighborhood, and because the killing has never been solved, the buzz is this may have been a mob-style murder. Rumors have it that there is a great deal of money still missing, leaving investigators wondering if it could be stashed in the newly-discovered safe.

11th defendant sentenced in El Dorado-Placer drug case

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

A 46-year-old Mexican national has been sentenced to 11 years and 3 months in prison for his involvement in a marijuana and methamphetamine trafficking conspiracy in El Dorado and Placer counties.

U.S. District Judge William B. Shubb on Monday sentenced Adrian Ortega-Diaz of Michoacan, Mexico, one of 12 people in a drug trafficking conspiracy that involved multiple firearms, and significant quantities of marijuana and methamphetamine, according to a federal Department of Justice news release.

According to court documents, Ortega-Diaz acted as a manager of a conspiracy to grow marijuana on public lands and to distribute marijuana and methamphetamine in Northern

California. He and his co-conspirators were charged with running two marijuana grows, one in El Dorado County and one in Placer County, on public land, with each containing more than 1,600 plants. Investigators seized a number of firearms and more than 3,300 marijuana plants, plus several pounds of high-grade methamphetamine in Elk Grove and the Stanislaus County community of Denair.

Read the whole story

Nason resigns as ED from League to Save Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Rochelle Nason was adamant Wednesday morning when she spoke with *Lake Tahoe News* – saying she is not resigning as executive director of the League to Save Lake Tahoe. However, a press release arrived at 2:34pm saying otherwise.

Nason did not answer the phone when called this afternoon.

The press release says, “League to Save Lake Tahoe Executive Director Rochelle Nason has resigned today, effective October 2011, after nearly 20 years of working to protect and restore Lake Tahoe. League Program Director Carl Young will serve as interim executive director, with Nason serving as a senior advisor, until a new executive director has been selected.”



Rochelle Nason

Nason has had the top position since 1993, having been the League's attorney for one year before becoming executive director.

The League has been chastised more than usual in the past year for continually suing entities in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Many call the environmental group obstructionists who only file lawsuits, provide no real leadership and offer no solutions to the problems in the basin.

While the League is based in South Lake Tahoe, Nason spends the bulk of her time in Berkeley. She said in the press release that traveling between the Bay Area and Tahoe is not something she wants to continue.

The last lawsuit the League lost was the decision last month regarding the Sierra Colina project in Stateline.

Dissension in the ranks surfaced this summer when Nason said the League's annual fundraiser on the West Shore at a house that involved an illegal extension of a pier was essentially no big deal. The League's board president, Robert Damaschino, said otherwise. At the time, in a statement, Damaschino said, "The League to Save Lake Tahoe views the environmental violations that took place at the site of our fundraiser as a very serious matter. We support the efforts of TRPA and the landowner to correct them and assure they are not repeated."

Most board members never issue statements, instead deferring to staff to speak for the League.

In the Sept. 14 release, Damaschino praised Nason's leadership – "The entire Lake Tahoe Basin will continue to benefit for years to come from what she has accomplished over the past two decades."

El Dorado County judge admonished by judicial commission

By Carlos Alcala, Sacramento Bee

El Dorado County Superior Court Judge James R. Wagoner has received public admonishment from the California Commission on Judicial Performance.

The admonishment is the lowest of three levels of public discipline administered by the Commission and has neither further sanctions nor appeals.

The commission's investigation showed that Wagoner, currently assistant presiding judge in El Dorado County, acted outside his authority in having Penny Arnold jailed on July 16, 2010.

Wagoner left his second floor courtroom in the Main Street Courthouse in Placerville and ordered Arnold to his courtroom.

When she would not comply, he had bailiffs arrest her for contempt.

Read the whole story