

Stricter rules for slot clubs like Dotty's that are expanding to Stateline

Publisher's note: *It is not known how the ruling will affect operations at the old Bill's Casino in Stateline.*

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

The Nevada Gaming Commission on Thursday amended its regulation for licensing small casinos, placing more requirements on establishments like the Dotty's chain.

The amended regulation will require slot parlors like Dotty's to build new amenities within two years to maintain their licenses.

Dotty's caters primarily to women who don't like traditional bars and taverns.

Under terms of the revised Regulation 3.015, licensees will now be required to have a permanent bar with seating for at least nine customers, a contract or service agreement with a licensed liquor distributor and facilities to serve alcohol by the drink, and a restaurant of at least 2,000 square feet with seating for at least 20 customers. Establishments also must be open at least 12 hours a day, if the company wants to have more than four slot machines. With a restricted license for small operations, companies can have up to 15 slots.

Representatives of Dotty's, the company that has been linked to the debate, haven't indicated what their next move will be. When Clark County passed an ordinance listing similar requirements, the company filed a lawsuit.

Dotty's chief operating officer, Michael Eide, estimated remodeling its 60 properties in the chain could cost the

company \$6 million.

Read the whole story

Fire raging in rugged terrain outside Yosemite National Park

A motor home fire is now a massive blaze on the outskirts of Yosemite National Park that has caused the closure of one of the main entrances to the park.

Highway 40 was closed Thursday night after the fire started earlier that day. Travelers may call (209) 372.0200 for information. The fire is outside the park in the Sierra National Forest.

More than 1,000 acres in steep terrain had burned in a matter of hours.

The town of El Portal was not threatened, but residents occupying the two dozen homes in the community of Florea are on a voluntary evacuation.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Montana fugitive arrested in Incline

By Reno Gazette-Journal

The U.S. Marshals Service announced Thursday a fugitive wanted in Montana on federal drug charges has been arrested in Incline Village.

William Ray Nelson, 56, was arrested by the Nevada Fugitive Investigative Strike Team, assisted by U.S. Postal Inspectors after an investigative lead pointed to Nelson being in Incline.

Nelson had been indicted earlier this year for conspiracy to distribute heroin. A warrant was issued for his arrest in May 2011.

Read the whole story

Arson suspected in fire at Bijou Center in South Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Fire officials are calling an early morning fire at the Bijou Center in South Lake Tahoe arson.

Ray Zachau, fire marshal for the city, told *Lake Tahoe News*, "It was definitely a deliberate act."

The cause is not being released. He and other officials were still at the scene at 3:30pm – about 12 hours after the 911 call was made.

Employees of Tahoe Wellness Collective alerted officials to the fire, but no one at the dispensary Thursday afternoon had been there during the fire so no one would comment.

Liz Hallen, who owns Hot Gossip in the center, said she was alerted about the fire from her employee who was trying to open the coffee shop at 7am. Police told her it was a crime scene and the opening would be delayed. (She eventually opened at 8:30am.)

The fire started on the exterior of La Promesa, four doors from Hot Gossip.

Josy Garnillo, owner of the bakery, said officers came to her house about 5am. She didn't answer because she was sleeping. She wasn't aware of the fire until arriving at work Thursday at 9am.

"Water did come inside the building," Garnillo said. That was all cleaned up in time for La Promesa to open at its regular time of 10am.

Zachau said the four sprinklers that went off helped save the building.

Hallen said the sprinklers were not going to put out the fire, which is why she's glad people work late at the marijuana collective.

"We were lucky they were here, otherwise the building would have burned down," Hallen said.

An estimate on the dollar value of the damage won't be available until at least Friday. All businesses were open Thursday – some just opened later than usual.

Zachau said as of late Thursday afternoon no arrests had been made, but officials want to question some possible suspects.

Few Calif. lawmakers release budgets; others say they'll wait

By Jim Sanders, Sacramento Bee

Assemblyman Roger Dickinson does not plan to release his office budget without a nod from Assembly leaders.

The Sacramento Democrat, noting that Assembly Speaker John A. Pérez is creating a task force to consider updating disclosure policies, said, "I'm going to respect that process."

Republican Assemblywoman Beth Gaines of Roseville said she supports disclosing budgets for all 80 members. She doesn't want to release hers, however, unless the entire house does so.

Meanwhile, tough luck for Californians who want to know if Assembly members are exceeding their budgets in a year of fiscal distress.

None of eight capital-area Assembly members argued that office records should be kept confidential, but only one – Dan Logue – has agreed to join a handful of colleagues in bucking Pérez by disclosing their spending immediately.

"The bottom line is, it's the people's money," said Logue, R-Linda.

Logue released his office's expenditures for the year thus far, \$262,795. Unlike some colleagues, however, he did not release projections for coming months that would show whether he'll end the year with a surplus or deficit.

The Assembly currently waits 12 months after the end of each legislative year to release a list of each lawmaker's expenditures by category. This year's statistics, for example, will be unveiled after Thanksgiving week of 2012.

Bob Stern, president of the Center for Governmental Studies, said the Assembly's longtime practice of releasing year-old spending summaries each Nov. 30 curtails public interest. "It's past, it's old, and they do it at a time when they're out of session," he said.

Read the whole story

South Shore bus bankruptcy case pushed back 2 months

The court hearing originally scheduled for today pertaining to transit on the South Shore has been postponed nearly two months.

At a hearing earlier this month, Heavenly Mountain Resort asked the bankruptcy court in Reno to change the status of the case from a Chapter 11 to a Chapter 7. The court decided to appoint a trustee – or neutral party – to study the facts of the case and make a recommendation.

At issue is MV Transportation has sued the now bankrupt South Tahoe Area Transit Authority in hopes of getting back the

nearly \$2 million the Fairfield company says it is owed.

STATA oversaw BlueGo, the South Shore buses. Tahoe Transportation District took over for STATA last year.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Obama edict on deportation a relief to undocumented students

By Stephen Magagnini, Sacramento Bee

For years, Roberto Guzman was afraid to drive to class at Sacramento City College for fear he would be pulled over and deported to Mexico.

Now Guzman – whose parents brought him to California from Zacatecas state when he was 2 – is among thousands of undocumented immigrants breathing easier.

The Obama administration announced last week that it would deport only those “who pose a threat to public safety and national security.”

That means Guzman, 19, and millions of other undocumented immigrants in the United States will no longer be targeted for deportation. About 300,000 undocumented immigrants facing possible deportation will be reconsidered on a case-by-case basis.

How long this review will take – and who exactly will be allowed to stay – is unknown. Those subject to “prosecutorial

discretion” – meaning they are no longer a law enforcement priority – include a significant number of the nation’s 12 million undocumented immigrants, including: Veterans and those serving in the military; minors and the elderly; pregnant or nursing women; victims of domestic violence, trafficking or other serious crimes; those suffering from serious mental or physical disabilities and illnesses; and those in the United States since childhood.

“I was really ecstatic,” said Guzman, who leads Sac City’s Dream Team Club – about 20 undocumented students fighting for legalization. “A lot of people I know didn’t like driving because they put themselves at risk of being caught. Now I can drive freely to the store and relieve some of this fear.”

Read the whole story

Placer County supervisors make much less than their peers

By Ed Fletcher, Sacramento Bee

The five Placer County supervisors agree on this: At \$30,000 annually, they’re underpaid. They also agree that nobody is going to do anything about it anytime soon.

The board earlier this month heard a staff report comparing an array of county salaries to those of similar-sized counties, other local entities and private-sector equivalents.

The report revealed that the county has a smaller per capita workforce than most of its peers, that Placer County employees

earn about what their public-sector counterparts do and that comparing private- and public-sector jobs is easier said than done.

The numbers also showed there is a clear disparity between Placer County supervisors' compensation and that of county supervisors from similar-sized counties.

Set at \$30,000 in 1992 by voters, Placer supervisors' pay is \$69,821 less than the \$99,821 average paid to supervisors in El Dorado, San Luis Obispo, Santa Cruz, Solano, Sonoma, Contra Costa and Sacramento counties.

Including benefits, the average annual supervisors' salary of the seven "matching" counties (as selected by county staff) comes to \$121,683 – almost four times the Placer supervisors' total take of \$31,154.

Read the whole story

LTUSD to replace 2 buses in its fleet

With the wheels on the bus going round and round, Lake Tahoe Unified School District needs more of those yellow contraptions.

At the Aug. 23 meeting the board agreed to buy two buses to help transport the nearly 1,800 students who twice a day ride the buses.



Two buses used to transport students to athletic events will be put into the home-to-school fleet. They have about 150,000 miles on them. The new ones will be used for the longer trips.

The cost for the two is \$327,000. With an interest rate of about 2 percent, it will take the district seven years to pay the debt.

During the school year there are 16 full routes and one part-time route, in addition to buses used for field trips and going off the hill.

Steve Morales, LTUSD facilities director, told the board Tuesday the home school fleet on average is 14 years old. With a more robust replacement program, the average age would be closer to 10.5 years, he said. Funding, though, is drying up. In years past there has been funding available to help defray the costs.

The buses being used to transport athletes to games are not all doing well, with one bus last year with track students on in breaking down en route to an event. This necessitated parents coming to the rescue to get the runners to their meet on time.

–Kathryn Reed

Measure S bonds to be resold

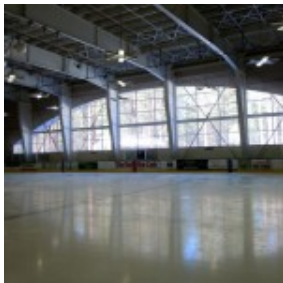
to accommodate South Lake Tahoe ice rink privatization

By Kathryn Reed

Measure S bonds are going from tax-exempt status to taxable. At least that is what South Lake Tahoe wants done with them.

But the city is just one-third of the equation. The joint powers authority that oversees the voter approved recreation measure must vote on the change for it to go forward. It's not known if the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors and Tahoe Paradise Park board as the other members of the JPA need to individually agree to the change.

"I don't know enough of the details to be able to comment on it," El Dorado Supervisor Norma Santiago told *Lake Tahoe News* on Tuesday night. She is also chairwoman of the JPA.



Private operators are about to benefit from a taxpayer funded ice rink in South Lake Tahoe.
Photo/LTN file

She said she plans to talk to Councilwoman Claire Fortier at

today's TRPA meeting – they are Governing Board members – to find out what is going on.

What is going on is the city needs to change the bonds to accommodate the IRS when it comes to having a private operator who wants to make a profit run the city-owned ice rink.

The status quo could prevail if the operators didn't intend to make money – some to be reinvested in the property and some for themselves.

The issue is that ice rink was built with Measure S money.

The bond money is one big pot – same with the debt, according to JPA administrator John Upton. It's not like the ice rink is paid for or has a precise number of dollars still owed. In total about \$4.5 million is still outstanding, though a payment of about \$140,000 on the principal is slated for Sept. 1.

IRS rules state private entities cannot make money off tax-exempt bonds. When Measure S was approved by voters who encompass the same boundaries of Lake Tahoe Unified School District it was envisioned the ice rink would always be run by South Lake Tahoe.

With the rink losing more than \$100,000 a year, the City Council on July 12 voted to turn the operation over to Tahoe Sports Entertainment. At that time it was not known the bond structure would be an issue.

At the Aug. 23 council meeting the five, with little discussion, agreed to go forward with changing the bonds.

City Attorney Patrick Enright told *Lake Tahoe News* after the meeting there is no downside in doing this, especially with interest rates so low.

Taxpayers will not see any changes to their \$18 annual assessment on their property tax bill.

Upton, the lone paid staff member to the recreation JPA, said Tuesday night, if the debt payment schedule is higher than it is now, the city would incur those costs.

What happens is the current bondholders will be paid back. To do so prior to Sept. 1, 2012, there is a \$37,500 penalty. This could be absorbed with the refinancing, according to Upton, or could be paid by the city.

Then new bonds are sold for the outstanding amount.

In the interim, an addendum to the agreement between the city and Tahoe Sports Entertainment that was sealed Aug. 23 calls for the latter to be able to take over the rink operations by the end of the week. The IRS grants a waiver that is good for 50 days.

Upton said all of the likely changes pose no threat to Measure R; the Nov. 8 ballot proposal that would redefine how the recreation funds can be spent.

In other action at the Aug. 23 council meeting:

- After much back and forth, on a 3-2 vote the ordinance governing medical marijuana dispensaries passed the first reading. Councilmembers Bruce Grego and Angela Swanson were the dissenters. It comes back for a final vote Sept. 13, with it taking effect one month after that.

On a side note, it was disclosed that no one has applied for a residential grow permit – which is necessary to have starting in December.

El Dorado County is investigating creating an ordinance that mirrors South Lake Tahoe's.

- It was agreed a letter would be written in support of bringing the Tour de California cycling event back to the South Shore in 2012. Tour officials are expected to name host cities in October.

- Wood Rodgers Inc. is not going to receive \$67,000 for work done because the council is fed up with bills presented after the fact and not being notified by staff of overcharges by contractors or professional service providers.