

Challenger enters STPUD race

Voters will have choices in each of the Nov. 8 races on the South Shore.

Business owner Kelly Sheehan is challenging Dale Rise for his seat on the South Tahoe Public Utility District board.



Marylou Mosbacher is stepping down from that board. Going after that seat are retired district employee Claude Gunsch, homemaker Mary Kortge, business owner John Runnels, and engineer Randy Vogelgesang.

Lake Tahoe Unified School District incumbents Sue Novasel, Larry Green and Mike Doyle are being challenged by student Michael Bischoff.

Bischoff is also running for the Lake Tahoe Community College board, as are incumbents Fritz Wenck and Karen Borges.

The only race people may still file for is the seat being vacated by Mosbacher. The deadline to file is Aug. 17 at 5pm.

– Kathryn Reed

Board recommends financial relief for counties in Nev.

special election

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY – The Board of Examiners today approved a request for more than half a million dollars from a legislative contingency fund to pay the counties for the cost of the Sept. 13 special election in the 2nd Congressional District.

The board, made up of Gov. Brian Sandoval, Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto and Secretary of State Ross Miller, approved the \$539,000 request, which will be considered Aug. 31 by the Legislature's Interim Finance Committee.

Miller said the other options to pay for the election were to pass the costs on to the counties or to use a dwindling pool of federal funds, but that the request from the contingency fund is the best choice. Requiring cash-strapped counties to pay the costs could lead to cutting corners, and Miller said it is important to ensure the integrity of the election.

Miller said his office made every effort to reduce the expenditures to reasonable levels. Initial estimates put the cost at in excess of \$1 million

"We explored every avenue we could to try to reduce costs for the election," he said. "The counties obviously had not budgeted for this election, so allowing them to be reimbursed from the contingency fund gives us a much greater level of comfort that they will ultimately run the election as the public would expect."

Miller said the use of federal Help America Vote Act funds was not recommended because the amount of money in the account is dwindling. The money has in the past been used to buy the electronic voting machines used in the state's 17 counties for elections. The state has used just under \$150,000 in HAVA funds for the special election, in part to provide replacement

voting machines, he said.

Miller said it is too early to estimate the turnout in the election, which pits Mark Amodei, a former state senator, as the Republican, versus state Treasurer Kate Marshall, the Democrat. The race also includes Independent American Party candidate Tim Fasano and independent Helmuth Lehmann. The candidates are seeking to replace former Rep. Dean Heller, who was appointed to the U.S. Senate by Sandoval to replace John Ensign, who resigned.

But Miller said he does expect a low turnout in the race, which encompasses 16 of the state's 17 counties plus a portion of Clark County.

Money in place to build bike path on Hwy. 50 in S. Tahoe

A high-priority bike path project in South Lake Tahoe has received the necessary funding – the El Dorado Beach to Ski Run route.

This is a missing link in South Lake Tahoe and is listed as the highest priority project in the Lake Tahoe Region Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

South Lake Tahoe, Caltrans, and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency officials worked together earlier this year to re-route supplementary funds from the ongoing Highway 50 water quality project to the bike path project.

Approximately \$2 million was rescued when the bid for the Caltrans Highway 50 water quality project from Trout Creek to

Ski Run Boulevard came in under the engineer's estimate. This money was going to return to original grant sources outside the Lake Tahoe Basin when the agencies worked together to re-allocate the funding to the bike path.

The move will also help free up other funds which can go toward other projects such as sidewalks along Pioneer Trail and other high priority transportation projects in the city.

Study: Carson City 10th most expensive metro area for employer-sponsored health care

By Steve Timko, Reno Gazette-Journal

High costs for treating insured adults makes Carson City the 10th most expensive metropolitan area in the United States for health care costs, a study released Wednesday said.

Carson City has an annual health care cost of \$5,931 per person for people with employer-sponsored health insurance, according to the report from Thomson Reuters Healthcare.

No specific figures were available for Reno, but a map included with the report shows costs for treating children and adults through employer-sponsored health insurance were roughly the same as the national average and costs for senior citizens were slightly lower.

Overall spending in Carson City was 145 percent of the national average in 2009, the report said. Costs for treating

children through employer-sponsored health insurance in Carson City were 90 percent of the national average, and costs for senior citizens were 85 percent of the national average.

Read the whole story

State handling arrest of El Dorado County deputy DA

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

State attorneys have taken on the possible prosecution of Gloria Mas, an El Dorado County deputy district attorney who was arrested in July on suspicion of drunken driving.

Mas was arrested in the early afternoon of July 25 at the El Dorado County District Attorney's Office after witnesses said she drove into the parking lot there, appearing to be intoxicated.

According to Mas' arrest report, released by the California Highway Patrol, the attorney told a CHP officer that she consumed two vodka tonics between noon and 1 p.m. while at home for lunch and then drove to the office.

The county DA referred the case to state Attorney General Kamala Harris' office because of the potential for conflicts resulting from prosecuting one of their own.

Read the whole story

2-year-old, father found dead in El Dorado County

By Rick Daysog, Sacramento Bee

The search for 2-year-old Madeline Samaan-Fay ended tragically Saturday night after FBI agents found the toddler's remains in a remote area of El Dorado County.

Federal officials issued an Amber Alert on Friday after the curly-haired child was abducted by her father, 49-year-old Mourad "Moni" Samaan.

FBI agents discovered Samaan's vehicle, a green Toyota 4Runner, Saturday night along with the bodies of the little girl and her father near Grizzly Flat Road and Cosumnes Mine Road southeast of Placerville.

The site is just a few miles away from the Eldorado National Forest.

The car was discovered about 8pm by the El Dorado Sheriff's Department based on a tip to the FBI.

Millions of tax dollars unclaimed by Californians

By Claudia Buck, Sacramento Bee

The IRS may have "missing money" waiting for you.

Millions of dollars in refunds owed to thousands of California taxpayers haven't been claimed, says the IRS. There are two

kinds of refund monies: undelivered and unclaimed.

If your paper refund check was returned to the IRS as “undeliverable” by the U.S. Post Office, you need to claim it. The IRS uses a taxpayer’s last known address, but if you moved and hadn’t notified the IRS, your check may be waiting. Undelivered refunds don’t expire.

As of last fall, there was \$23.4 million in undelivered refunds sitting unclaimed for some 15,700 California taxpayers, including more than 900 in the Sacramento area, said IRS spokesman Jesse Weller.

The other category is unclaimed tax refunds by those who didn’t file a return.

Read the whole story

Calif.’s loss of teacher data grant could affect federal funding

By Diana Lambert, Sacramento Bee

Five years ago, California education officials jumped aboard the data bandwagon.

Nudged by federal mandates and competition for federal school dollars, California applied for and won a \$6 million competitive federal grant to develop a data system to track teacher information, similar to a system the state is developing to track student information.

Last week federal officials stripped the state of the entire three-year grant for the California Longitudinal Teacher Integrated Data Education System, or CALTIDES, after Gov. Jerry Brown vetoed \$2.1 million in funding for it in this year's budget.

The consequences of that action are far-reaching, according to Gloria Romero, California director of Democrats for Education Reform, saying it will hurt the state's chances of receiving millions of dollars in federal Race to the Top funds.

That money, Romero said, "will be sent to the states willing to open up the books in compliance with federal law."

The state already has failed twice in securing those funds. So, what happened?

In this case, the governor's veto message said the data system wasn't critical. Elizabeth Ashford, a spokeswoman for the governor, said Brown wanted assurances that the information collected by the system would be useful at the local level.

Read the whole story

Financial relief may be possible for Nev. special election

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY – Secretary of State Ross Miller is seeking more than half a million dollars from a legislative contingency fund to pay the counties for the cost of the Sept. 13 special

election in the 2nd Congressional District.

The request for \$539,137 from the Legislature's Interim Finance Committee Contingency Fund would reimburse counties for all costs and expenses to conduct the special election to pick a replacement for Dean Heller, who was appointed to the Senate by Gov. Brian Sandoval. The fund has just less than \$12 million.

The request will be considered Monday by the Board of Examiners, made up of Sandoval, Miller and Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto. It will then go to the IFC on Aug. 31.

Former state Sen. Mark Amodei, R-Carson City, is facing Democrat state Treasurer Kate Marshall in the race, which also includes Independent American Party candidate Tim Fasano and independent Helmuth Lehmann.

Counties budget for and cover the costs of administering regularly scheduled elections in Nevada, but Miller said previously that neither the counties nor the state have budgeted for costs to run a special election. As a result, Miller issued emergency regulations he said are necessary to assist the counties during a financially difficult period and are also necessary to ensure the proper administration of the special election by the counties.

Under the emergency regulations, counties must submit invoices and other supporting documents with the request for reimbursement to the Secretary of State's office following the election.

Miller said reimbursement of eligible costs and expenses "will be contingent upon available and authorized state funding."

The district covers all of 16 of 17 Nevada counties, plus a small portion of Clark County. The district has 141,330 active Democrat voters, 172,281 active Republican voters and 60,519 active nonpartisan voters.

Census: Interaction between kids and parents on the rise

Many young children are getting a head start on acquiring the skills needed to read, as family members take time out of their day on a regular basis to read aloud with them, the U.S. Census Bureau reports.

In 2009, half of children ages 1 to 5 were read to seven or more times a week by a family member.

“Selected Indicators of Child Well-Being (A Child’s Day): 2009” uses statistics from the Survey of Income and Program Participation to provide a glimpse into how children younger than 18 spend their day, touching on subjects such as the degree of interaction with parents and extracurricular activities. These statistics are compared with those from earlier years.

While reading interactions are more frequent among families above poverty, reading interactions among low-income families have increased over the last 10 years. In 2009, 56 percent of 1- and 2-year-olds above poverty were read to seven or more times a week, compared with 45 percent below the poverty level. However, while parental reading involvement for children above poverty was not different from rates in 1998, it rose from 37 percent for those below poverty.

According to this latest look into the lives of children, more children are taking honors or advanced placement classes. From 1998 to 2009, the percentage of children ages 12 to 17 enrolled in gifted classes climbed from 21 percent to 27 percent.

At the same time more children are taking gifted classes, fewer are participating in athletics. Regardless of the children's age, participation in sports decreased from 41 percent in 2006 down to 36 percent in 2009.

Other highlights:

- The percentage of children who talked or played together with a parent three or more times in a typical day increased from 50 percent in 1998 to 57 percent in 2009.
- The percentage of children who ate dinner with a designated parent seven times per week on average increased slightly from 69 percent in 1998 to 72 percent in 2009.
- The percentage of children whose parents praised them three or more times per day increased from 48 percent in 1998 to 57 percent in 2009.
- Children 12 to 17 years old were more likely than children 6 to 11 to participate in sports in 2009 (41 percent and 32 percent, respectively).
- Younger children 6 to 11 were more likely than older children to participate in lessons (32 percent and 29 percent, respectively). Lessons include those taken after school or on the weekend in subjects such as music, dance, language, computers or religion.
- In 2009, 5 percent of children 6 to 11 and 9 percent 12 to 17 had ever repeated a grade.

The Survey of Income and Program Participation produces national estimates for the U.S. resident population and subgroups and allows for the observation of trends over time, particularly of selected characteristics, such as income, eligibility for and participation in government assistance programs, household and family composition, labor force behavior and other associated events.

Questions for each child are asked of the designated parent.