Douglas County established affordable housing group

The inaugural meeting of Douglas County's housing task force will be Nov. 6. However, the meeting is closed to the public.

The Affordable Housing Task Force was created to develop quality affordable housing opportunities.

The initial goals include establishing:

- Current pricing for affordable housing in the area or areas where it will have been determined that any affordable housing to-be-developed or supported in connection with the Initiative would be best situated, and should be provided.
- A process by which Nevada Rural Housing Authority can and will assist Douglas County in its on-going efforts to transition qualified real estate owned assets into viable and reliable affordable housing initiatives.
- The availability and viability of specific undeveloped land sites, and/or existing improved property required to initially support Douglas County's affordable housing initiative in those defined areas.
- An initial and preliminary working list of realistically proposed housing development initiatives.

This list of potential affordable housing projects will be created utilizing specific guidelines that will need to be established.

Task force members include:

• Douglas County Community Development – Heather Ferris

• Douglas County Community Services – Karen Beckerbauer

- Community Leader Representing Housing – Rex Massey
- Community Leaders representing the real estate industry – Dennis McDuffee (valley) and Torry Johnson (lake)
- WAVE- Carl Schnock
- Douglas County Business Council – Brandy Thomson
- Douglas County District Attorney's Office – Mary Anne Martin.

Nev. public pension plan lowers expectations

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

A state panel overseeing the $38 billion Nevada public employee pension plan voted Thursday to lower its decades-old assumption about the return on its investments.

The change from a projected 8 percent return to 7.5 percent over the next several years could mean higher contribution rates from public employees and employers – from state workers to school teachers – to offset the lower expectations.

The vote from the board of the Public Employees' Retirement System was unanimous, although state Controller Ron Knecht recommended a much lower rate of return for the plan's investments of 5 percent. He also said the inflation rate should be lower as well, at 1.75 percent.

Fires spark underground power line discussions

By David R. Baker, San Francisco Chronicle

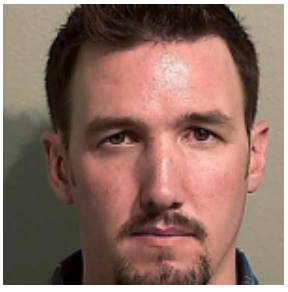
Underground power lines don’t sway in the wind. Tree branches blown sideways by a gale can’t hit them. They don’t sit on wooden poles that can fall down.

They would, in other words, seem to be an ideal way to prevent wildfires in a place like California, which has a history of big blazes sparked by overhead power lines tangling with trees. Investigators are now trying to determine whether that combination triggered the wildfires that tore through the Wine Country this month.

Unfortunately, underground power lines are also very expensive.

Read the whole story

Truckee man accused of rape



James Russell Ferrigno

A Truckee man was arrested Oct. 19 on rape charges.

According to police officers, James Russell Ferrigno, 31, spiked a woman’s drink and then raped her.

She was renting a room from Ferrigno. She told police she suspected Ferrigno of putting a substance in her drink at night, which led her to set up a camera in the kitchen.

Ferrigno faces charges of rape of a drugged victim, rape of an unconscious victim, oral copulation of an unconscious victim, sodomy of a drugged victim and willfully poisoning food.

— Lake Tahoe News staff report

Whole Foods already changing SLT neighborhood



The public will help decide the future of Herbert Avenue. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

A spotlight is being shined on a private street with a very public profile.

Herbert Avenue in South Lake Tahoe is one of those streets that is popular with people who live in the neighborhood. They use is to avoid Ski Run Boulevard.

Now the developers of Whole Foods 365 wants to use Herbert as an access point, which could impact the commercial strip on the other side of the street.

The problem, though, is the city doesn’t own the road. Mike McKeen does.

According to McKeen, in the 1940s the street was dedicated to El Dorado County by the owner at the time. When the city incorporated in 1965, the dedication went to South Lake Tahoe. McKeen in 2003 bought the parcel fronting Highway 50 that

stretches back and includes the apartment complex.

According to City Manager Nancy Kerry, “In 1946 that stretch of land was dedicated to the public – not to the city or the county. It is a dedication to the public.”

McKeen told *Lake Tahoe News* there is some question as to whether the street was ever officially dedicated. He’s been told he has a 50-50 chance of prevailing in court. Instead of going that route, McKeen is opting to work with the city.

He doesn’t argue that there is a prescriptive easement on that stretch of asphalt. The city maintains the road – this includes plowing it, filling in pot holes, striping and any other maintenance.

“It’s not worth the money or time to fight over it. No one wants to lose,” McKeen told *Lake Tahoe News.*

There was a time when he wanted to develop into the street. Now he is willing to work with the city for the betterment for all.

“If I’m going to get any bonus from Whole Foods, it needs to be almost a continuous commercial area,” McKeen said. “I have six tenants in the building. They can’t be hurt at the expense of Whole Foods.”

He envisions one day redeveloping at least some of what he owns so the commercial area seems like one contiguous entity.

Altering Herbert would help make that be more attractive to pedestrians in the area.

The idea being floated now is to have Herbert dead end at Bill Avenue, maybe making it a cul de sac. This would allow the Whole Foods that is going in where Knights Inn used to be to have access to Herbert, for McKeen’s tenants to keep parking, and for the neighborhood to have less traffic.

The city is hosting a meeting Oct. 25 from 6-7:30pm at the Senior Center to gather community input about what the future of Herbert Avenue should be.

LSC Transportation Consultants, an engineering and planning firm with offices in Tahoe City and Colorado, has been hired by the city to do a traffic study.

The future of the street will ultimately be up to the City Council.

Halferty Development, the firm that owns the old Knights Inn parcel and adjacent lot on Ski Run, has the right to have an ingress/egress on Ski Run, Herbert, and two on Highway 50.

The original traffic study had parking on Herbert at the commercial strip owned by McKeen going from perpendicular to parallel. This would dramatically decrease the number of spaces.

Already employees in the area are affected by the elimination of spots because of the redevelopment project. Lloyd Avenue used to be where they parked, but that street has been abandoned and essentially incorporated into the project area.

McKeen said he sent a letter to 82 people in the neighborhood seeking input about Herbert Avenue changes, with many favoring altering Herbert. This week everyone may weigh in.

AT&T up for a $27 million tax refund in Nev.

By Anjeanette Damon, Reno Gazette-Journal

AT&T is the business that has applied for a substantial sales and use tax refund, claiming it mistakenly paid Nevada taxes it owed other states, according to a statement released Saturday by the company's Nevada president.

The company could receive as much as $27 million back over three years, which could create significant budget issues for local governments.

"The Department of Taxation is currently in the process of reviewing a claim submitted by AT&T," said Stephanie Tyler, AT&T's president for Nevada and the Pacific Northwest. "Until the department has had the opportunity to complete a thorough review of the claim, it would be premature for us to speculate or further comment on the matter."

Read the whole story

Vacationing in U.S? Be warned, some countries say

By Shivani Vora, New York Times

Natural disasters like Hurricanes Maria and Irma and the recent wildfires in California have led to a spate of warnings from countries that want to caution their citizens about the risk of traveling to the United States, but the advisories are also noting potential for violence in the wake of the Las Vegas shooting and the potential for terrorist attacks as well.

While warnings for travel to the United States aren't new, they have picked up significantly in the last few weeks,

following these events, said Ed Daly, who oversees the content for the Global Intelligence Division of iJET International, a travel intelligence firm based in Annapolis, Md.

“After a lull, there was a rash of incidents which happened one after the other and led to these advisories,” he said.

Read the whole stories

Fund to help Tahoe woman with medical bills

A **GoFundMe** account has been set up for Tina Pearce as she fights for her life.



Tina Pearce

On Oct. 12, Pearce was on Interstate 80 with her beloved 12-year-old beagle Lucy going to the 24-hour emergency vet in Reno when her vehicle was **hit head-on** by a drunken driver, driving on the wrong side of highway.

Pearce was airlifted to Renown Medical Center in Reno with serious injuries to her face, legs and pelvis. With no injuries to her chest, or arms, it is believed that Lucy ended up between her and the steering wheel, taking the brunt of the impact.

Lucy was Pearce’s life. She was getting Lucy the care she needed and in the process saved Tina’s life.
Pearce is still in ICU recovering from her injuries. She faces more surgeries in the coming weeks.

The fund has been created to help with those expenses.

Spending at holidays expected to rise 6%

By Alexandra Stratton, Bloomberg

High-income shoppers will fuel holiday spending in the U.S. this year, even as less affluent consumers keep their purse strings tight.

That’s the finding of a survey released Tuesday by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP. The firm expects Americans overall to increase spending by 6 percent this season, but those with household incomes below $60,000 will cut their outlays for both gifts and entertainment as they deal with stagnant wages.

“There’s both an intent and ability for the higher-end consumer to spend extra this holiday,” said Steve Barr, U.S. retail and consumer leader at PwC. There are times when shoppers with lower income levels are the growth engine in holiday spending, he said. “But under the current scenario it’s really not possible.”

Read the whole story

Blue-green algae in Keys disappearing

By Kathryn Reed

The cautionary signs that have dotted the canals in the Tahoe Keys are coming down.

“As expected with the seasonal change, the shorter days (less sunlight) and cooler temperatures have helped control the cyanobacteria levels,” Mary Fiore-Wagner with Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board told *Lake Tahoe News.*

The most recent water samples taken Oct. 16 show “non-detectable levels for Anatoxin-a (this is the toxin that domestic pets-dogs) may be especially sensitive too due to increased exposure), and low (below 0.8 ug/L) or non-detect levels for microcystins. Additionally, the TKPOA area is no longer supporting the summer recreationalists entering the Tahoe Keys waterways for both contact and non-contact water recreation, so exposure potential to any cyanotoxins is minimized.”

These numbers are below the mark that necessitate a public advisory.

The blue-green algae was first detected in August. Warning signs were placed throughout the South Lake Tahoe neighborhood. People had been advised not to touch the water, allow dogs to drink it, or to eat the fish from it.

Cyanobacteria blooms can look like slicks of opaque, bright green paint, or “pea soup,” but closer inspection often reveals the grainy, sawdust-like appearance of individual

colonies, according to the state Water Board.

Scientists don’t definitively know why-how it is created or how it goes away.

“We did recommend that TKPOA continue routine visual monitoring and one more sampling run within a month’s time to confirm that cyanotoxins have maintained at non-detect and/or insignificant levels that no longer pose a potential risk to human or animal health,” Fiore-Wagner said.