Jones: real world experience in governmental accounting

Publisher's note: ***Lake Tahoe News is profiling candidates for South Lake Tahoe City Council and Douglas County Commission. The stories are being published in the order they were received.***

Name: Alice Jones

Age: 34

How long have you lived in South Lake Tahoe?: 8 years

Job/profession: CPA; Controller, Tahoe Keys Property Owners' Association



Alice Jones

What would you build or tear down on the South Shore to make it great, as in what Whistler is like?: South Lake Tahoe should not aspire to be like another town. We do not need to build or tear down anything; instead we need to focus on maintaining and repairing what we already have. South Lake Tahoe is a place where families can come to camp or stay in a rustic hotel or cabin to ski, hike, bike, or just spend the day at one of our beautiful beaches. It used to be a place where locals could live and raise a family without earning a six-figure salary. This is what makes South Lake Tahoe unique and desirable for many locals and tourists alike. As we

continue to tear down and build up to try to be like more upscale communities such as Whistler or Vail, we end up losing locals and middle class tourists. South Lake Tahoe does not need to be posh to be a desirable destination. We will never be able to draw the same tourists as Whistler or Vail nor should we try.

What form of recreation do you participate in? What recreation improvements would you strive to make in SLT?: I enjoy hiking, swimming, mountain biking, and snowboarding. I think our recreation center and swimming pool could use some upgrades. It is an older facility that could use a facelift. I would also like to see the facility include a fitness center with cardio equipment and free weights as well as a smaller kids pool with water features.

Recreation tourism is expected to be the driving force of the South Shore economy in the coming years, and according to a decade-old study, the majority of the South Lake Tahoe residents would like to see cycling-type facilities and maintenance projects. So, what do you specifically plan to do to improve our substandard, dangerous bike paths and lanes and roads beyond hiring a consultant to tell us how bad they are?: Well, it is obvious that the Public Works Department needs additional funding, the question is where that funding comes from. I think that the city can achieve efficiencies in other departments and reduce waste in order to shift funding to the roadways. If we want private property owners to improve their properties, the city needs to set an example by improving the infrastructure and maintaining city roads. The city has obtained grant funding for the Bijou and Sierra Tract erosion control projects, but they should not ignore the other roads not being funded by this grant. It is entirely unacceptable that the city spent nothing on its roads, not one dollar in 2003-04 and 2004-05 when the economy was booming. It is always less expensive to maintain what you have then to let the deferred maintenance go so long that more expensive

replacements are now necessary.

What are the three major issues facing South Lake Tahoe and how do you expect in four years to make it so they are not major issues when your tenure is through?: The single greatest issue facing South Lake Tahoe is our aging infrastructure. That problem is multifaceted and includes issues with our roads, sidewalks (or lack thereof), erosion control, street lights, and recreation facilities including parks, beaches, and restrooms. Many years of deferred maintenance and lack of a long range funding plan has got us to where we are now and it will take many years to dig ourselves out of this hole, no pun intended. City residents and taxpayers will need to be patient as we work to right the wrongs of many years. That being said, the time is now to lay the foundation of this fundamental change in priorities.

What compelling idea have you read in the citizens' input of the revamped, in-progress update of the city's General Plan?: I have not read the citizens' input of the revamped, in-progress update of the city's General Plan so I have no comment on this question at this time.

How do you plan to boost revenue in SLT?: By taking care of our city and making sure that the infrastructure is well maintained and upgraded we will draw more tourists. I can only imagine what it is like for the families who travel here. The condition of our roads, failure of our public transit, and aging of our recreational facilities must not make a very good impression. Follow that up with marijuana dispensaries on every corner in town you may come to the impression that South Lake Tahoe is not a very family-friendly destination. We do not need to be a ritzy ski town, but we do need to have decent roads and bike trails for biking, sidewalks for walking, and a clean well maintained Lake Tahoe Boulevard. If the city does these things well, then the city has done its job to help the local economy. The economy may continue to lag, as it does in the rest of the country, but that is outside the scope of what

the City Council can realistically impact.

What stands out to you in the 2010-11 budget?: The lack of a sustainable budget. Whenever you depend on reserves to balance the budget there is cause for concern. It will likely be a significant amount of time before the city realizes any additional revenue from an economic rebound. Just as there was a lag in the revaluation of property with regards to property tax revenue loss there will be a delay in the realization of any property tax revenue increases as a result of property value increases. Sales tax and TOT revenue more closely mirror "real time" economic activity but only comprise a small portion of total revenue sources. The city needs to adjust to realistic revenue projections and cut expenses accordingly.

What needs to be done to allow businesses to thrive in SLT?: The city needs to adopt business-friendly regulations and help businesses to comply without unnecessary expense.

What have you done to help South Lake Tahoe be a better community?: I volunteer at my children's schools and I am involved in local sports, clubs, and cooperatives.

What boards, commissions, or other experience do you have?: Prior treasurer at Tahoe Parents Nursery School. I am also very involved with the board of directors at the Tahoe Keys Property Owners' Association and have helped guide them in long range planning and financing of large infrastructure projects including replacement of underground water lines. As controller, I keep separate accounting records for 38 separate funds. I have helped the board come up with long-term funding plans that are realistic and achievable.

Why should voters vote for you over someone else?: I have real world experience in governmental accounting and financing and long-term funding plans for maintenance and repair of infrastructure. Additionally, I care about the city. I am raising two children here and have no other agenda other than

making our city a better place for locals and tourists alike.

BlueGo, the public transit, is mired in lawsuits and bankruptcy. Do we need public transit on the South Shore? If so, how do you propose to make it functional?: Obviously we need public transit. We need to come up with a realistic business model and provide prudent oversight of any transit administrator. We need to work on a revenue plan, including grant funding if at all possible, to reduce taxpayer subsidies. At all times, adequate oversight should be maintained.

Do you support commercial air service at Lake Tahoe Airport? Why or why not?: I support commercial air service without taxpayer subsidies. I don't know if that is a realistic objective and I tend to think that if it was economically feasible, one of the past commercial airliners would still be operating at South Lake Tahoe. The sad reality of the commercial airline business is that they are cutting capacity and flights at almost every airport. Commercial airliners are not in an expansion mode and likely will not be considering South Lake Tahoe without significant subsidies. I could be wrong and I do think that the matter is worth investigating. I do think we should try to market our airport to potential airliners, however, I am skeptical that it can be done without a significant subsidy.

Is there any individual, group or organization you would not take campaign money from? Why?: I haven't taken money from anyone yet. I'm not sure who I would refuse from, but obviously that would be handled on a case by case basis.

Nepotism and favoritism runs rampant in the city when it comes to hiring preferences. The council sets policy. What type of policy would you write regarding nepotism and favoritism?: Policies are very important and they should be written with the assistance of the city attorney and others with expertise in specific fields. I would probably defer to a labor code

specialist when developing a specific hiring policy because many of the issues have legal ramifications. Obviously, nepotism and favoritism within hiring practices need to be addressed. Other issues that also generally need to be evaluated from time to time are procurement procedures as well as procedures for soliciting bids.

Tell us something about yourself that voters don't already know: I like to sing to my kids, even though I am a horrible singer. I will do anything for my kids.

Bear sightings in Tahoe just part of living in the woods

By Kathryn Reed

It's the lull before the storm when it comes to bear activity, though Lake Tahoe homeowners who are having their houses broken into might disagree.

Normally this time of year with all the berries, abundance of pine nuts and ripe Manzanita bears have plenty of natural goodies to eat. It often means they are not finding it necessary to search in vehicles or homes for food like they do during the summer.



A bear

saunters in the yard on Sonoma Avenue in South Tahoe in 2009. Photo/Joy Rothschild

However, at the September Meyers Roundtable meeting El Dorado County sheriff's Lt. Les Lovell said one thing keeping deputies busy right now are bear calls.

He suggested people call the department (530.573.3000) if there's a break-in, but if a bear is just wondering by, that is normal, and no need to do anything.

In South Lake Tahoe, a bear hit three houses on Oakland Avenue early one September evening.

Ann Bryant, who runs the BEAR League, recommends people call her nonprofit (530.525.7297) if they are seeing bears more often than they like or if bears are breaking into houses.

"Sometimes it may be a neighbor doing something wrong," Bryant told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We go out and snoop around and determine why a bear is hanging around. We see what we can do to stop it."

Bryant said before the bears tuck themselves in for the winter expect them to be foraging for food practically around the clock. They tend to find dens beginning in mid-November through early January.

Another source for help is Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care at (530) 577.2273.

50-seat planes being sent to scrap yards

Publisher's note: ***It's the 50-seat Bombardier jets that South Lake Tahoe officials have said would be perfect for Lake Tahoe Airport if commercial service were to return.***

By Mary Jane Credeur and Mary Schlangenstein, Bloomberg News

The 50-seat jets once prized by carriers such as Delta Air Lines Inc. are being culled from U.S. fleets as higher fuel and maintenance bills make them too expensive to fly.



By 2015, U.S. airlines will have about 200 jets with 50 or fewer seats, down from about 1,200, said Michael Boyd, president of consultant Boyd Group International Inc. More than 80 have been scrapped this year, he said.

"These are litters of aluminum kittens – nobody wants them," Boyd said. Their only value is for recycled metal, he said. "The next stop is the Budweiser factory because that's all they're good for."

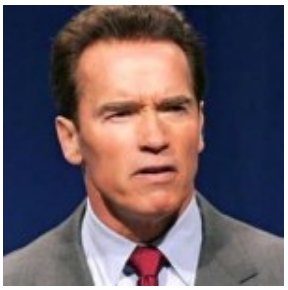
Read the whole story

California reaches deal on long-overdue budget

By Kevin Yamamura, Sacramento Bee

Three months into the state's longest budget impasse, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and legislative leaders reached a handshake deal Friday to close the state's $19 billion deficit, leaders announced after a five-hour meeting.

To bridge the gap, they are relying on about $7.5 billion in spending cuts, as well as delaying a corporate tax deduction and using rosy projections for how much the state will receive in tax revenues and federal dollars, according to sources close to budget talks.



Arnold Schwarzenegger

Standing outside Schwarzenegger's office beside the three other legislative leaders, Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento, said legislators will return to Sacramento next week to finalize their "comprehensive agreement." The Legislature plans to vet the plan in a joint budget committee Wednesday and hold floor votes Thursday.

Read the whole story

Nancy Garrido pleads not

guilty to indictment charges

By Sam Stanton, Sacramento Bee

Using secret testimony from kidnap victim Jaycee Lee Dugard, prosecutors today unveiled a new 18-count indictment charging Phillip and Nancy Garrido with abducting Dugard in 1991, when she was 11.

Nancy Garrido was arraigned and pleaded not guilty to the new charges, which were handed up by an El Dorado County grand jury on Sept. 21. But Phillip Garrido, who has had criminal proceedings against him suspended while the court assesses his mental competency to stand trial, did not enter a plea because of questions over whether he could be arraigned.

Judge Douglas Phimister called attorneys to return to court Nov. 4 to address the issue of whether Garrido would enter a plea or have the judge enter one for him.

Read the whole story



Phillip and Nancy Garrido

Weddings down, poverty up in Nevada

By Frank X. Mullen Jr., Reno Gazette-Journal

Nevada, which leads the nation in both home foreclosures and the percentage of its residents unemployed, also is at the forefront of a national decrease in marriages and a record boom in food stamp recipients, according to the latest census updates.

The economic slump is being blamed for the number of American marriages sinking to their lowest ebb in 100 years and for more families receiving food stamps than ever before.

Washoe County, where marriage became big business in the 1930s, has lost its popularity as a hitching post. With U.S. weddings at an all-time low, the number of people tying the knot in Washoe County has dropped 64 percent in 30 years, according to the county clerk's office.

"Marriage licenses are way, way down," said Karen Erickson, marriage division supervisor, who said the number of licenses issued annually in the county dropped by 6,479 in the last four years alone. At the county's wedding peak in 1978, the clerk's office reported, 36,794 marriage licenses were issued as compared to 10,264 licenses issued last year.

Read the whole story

Kubby: begin by tearing down the excessive regulations

Publisher's note: ***Lake Tahoe News is profiling candidates for South Lake Tahoe City Council and Douglas County Commission. The stories are being published in the order they were received.***

Name: Steve Kubby

Age: 63

How long have you lived in South Lake Tahoe?: One year in South Lake Tahoe, but 15 years in Northstar and five years in Squaw Valley.

Job/profession: CEO of KPAL, a biotech research firm. Previously, editor and publisher of Ski West magazine.



Steve Kubby

What would you build or tear down on the South Shore to make it great, as in what Whistler is like?: Aspen Ski Corp chose to go outside the U.S. and develop Whistler because there are fewer regulations and a lot less red tape in Canada. If we want something as grand as Whistler, we have to begin by tearing down the excessive regulations here in Tahoe. However, the only way we could actually become as desirable a destination as Whistler would be if Heavenly built a peak-to-peak gondola to Freel Peak. Right now, Whistler delivers an

astonishing variety of alpine bowls, chutes and cliffs that is missing from the Heavenly experience. Opening Freel Peak would draw skiers from around the planet and provide Whistler with serious competition.

What form of recreation do you participate in? What recreation improvements would you strive to make in SLT?: I'm a skier, fitness fanatic and father. Unfortunately, there are few areas dedicated to kids, and we still don't have improvements such as the athletic fields that were paid for in past bond measures. So the place to begin is to find out why the athletic fields we were promised were never built.

Recreation tourism is expected to be the driving force of the South Shore economy in the coming years, and according to a decade-old study, the majority of the South Lake Tahoe residents would like to see cycling-type facilities and maintenance projects. So, what do you specifically plan to do to improve our substandard, dangerous bike paths and lanes and roads beyond hiring a consultant to tell us how bad they are?: We can't have a world-class resort destination if our roads and paths are like something from the Third World. Fixing our substandard, dangerous bike paths and lanes and roads should be a major priority for the City Council, not an afterthought. If I am elected to City Council, I will enthusiastically support programs to fix these issues as quickly as possible.

What are the three major issues facing South Lake Tahoe and how do you expect in four years to make it so they are not major issues when your tenure is through?: Recently, a local paper published a compelling narrative about the bombing of Harvey's casino 30 years ago. As horrific as that bombing was, the South Lake Tahoe City Council has inflicted an even more devastating event that destroyed 44 businesses, demolished 577 rooms, left a 12-acre crater of decaying concrete, and has saddled the city with several serious lawsuits, all done in the name of redevelopment.

That enormous crater, euphemistically called “The Hole,” has been here for three years and shows little hope of going away soon.

Next, we have the huge crater left by the scathing report on our City Council, by the 19 distinguished members of the El Dorado Grand Jury. This report blasted the City Council as “dysfunctional” and concluded with a stern warning: “This Grand Jury is of the opinion that an accusation for malfeasance or nonfeasance by this City Council may be appropriate.”

As if these two craters aren’t bad enough, there is yet another huge crater we must deal with: the $3 million a year crater in our budget. Fixing these three craters won’t be easy, but I won’t be afraid to tackle these critical issues and do whatever is necessary to deal directly and honestly with finding solutions.

What compelling idea have you read in the citizens’ input of the revamped, in-progress update of the city’s General Plan?: Unfortunately, the city’s General Plan is irrelevant and, except for the dog park, ill-conceived. I’ve read the General Plan and it is a well-intentioned recipe for economic disaster. The city of South Lake Tahoe can’t even operate a parking garage without losing over $160,000 last year, yet its elected officials want to create a centrally planned economy, not unlike the former Soviet Union.

Even worse has been the blowback from the past actions of the City Council, which resulted in so much uncertainty and intimidation that local businesses are reluctant to invest in upgrading their properties. Until confidence is restored, we will be frozen in functionally obsolete infrastructure.

I suggest a good way to begin is to torch the General Plan and start over with something that 1) we can actually afford, and 2) will actually work.

How do you plan to boost revenue in SLT?: Now that the gaming industry is struggling to deal with the impact of Indian casinos, we obviously need a new draw. Fortunately, our city has three world-class medical marijuana dispensaries that can make the difference when it comes to destination resort choices. There are millions of qualified medical cannabis patients who don't want to smuggle their medicine on a plane, or to be forced to buy from strangers once they arrive at their destination. For these patients, many of who are regular people with families, the opportunity to visit a safe, well run dispensary by coming to South Lake Tahoe is a hugely important consideration. Frankly, if SLT can tolerate casinos, it shouldn't be that big a stretch to accept legal cannabis dispensaries as well.

What stands out to you in the 2010-11 budget?: We've dodged the budget bullet for the last time. There is a structural deficit of about $3 million and so far we've been using our reserve accounts to patch the hole. Unfortunately, the reserve accounts are exhausted and there is no plan for covering this deficit next year or for years to come.

What needs to be done to allow businesses to thrive in SLT?: I believe we need to do two things to create a better business environment.

First, we need to slash the red tape and burdensome regulations that make it nearly impossible for businesses to do anything in this city. Our current city regulations make a pile nearly six inches tall. We need to torch 75 percent of those regulations and then make sure we uniformly enforce the rules that are left.

Second, we need to take back local control from the TRPA. While we all agree and support the importance of maintaining our lake's clarity, and while we accept the federal jurisdiction for navigable bodies of water such as Lake Tahoe, it is time to question the authority of the TRPA to operate

within South Lake Tahoe's city limits. I don't believe a federal agency of mostly appointed officials has the constitutional authority to supersede, modify, or dictate to our city's elected officials what we can and cannot do, so long as we conform to California state law. The TRPA may be a noble idea, but it is exceeding its constitutional authority and it is causing more harm than good.

What have you done to help South Lake Tahoe be a better community?: While on the Northstar board I found Placer County reserve accounts for snow removal that we didn't need and converted the funds to fix all of our potholes and pave all of our streets, all from the county's financial reserves. We urgently need to do the same here and I look forward to making it happen.

Since moving to South Lake Tahoe, I've been a staunch defender of our dispensaries and home medical cannabis gardens. I've spoken out against the bogus claim that a cannabis tolerant policy toward dispensaries and home gardens will result in more teen use of marijuana. Such assertions are proved false by studies conducted by the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs. Studies by the state found that since the passage of Prop. 215, the number of ninth-graders reporting marijuana use in the last 30 days has declined by 47 percent. The answer is clear: if you want to increase teen drug use and make gangs and thugs wealthy, then ban the dispensaries. However, if you are genuinely committed to reducing teen use then you must encourage the creation of a safe, well-regulated program to support our dispensaries, as well as the patients who grow for themselves and for their collectives.

What boards, commissions, or other experience do you have?: I have been elected to and served on the Northstar Homeowners Board, as well as the treasure of the Northstar Ski Trails Condominium Association. I also served as a member and fundraiser for the Northstar Ski Team, as well as chairman of the annual Northstar Fire Department, Pancake Breakfast.

Why should voters vote for you over someone else?: Don’t think of this as just a campaign to elect me to City Council. No, listen to me: we’re here to make history. Beginning right here in South Lake Tahoe, we will redefine politics in a revolutionary return to common sense and smaller government. We are going to force government to become our servant, not our master. That’s how to think of this.

BlueGo, our public transit, is mired in lawsuits and bankruptcy. Do we need public transit on the South Shore? If so, how do you propose to make it functional?: Sadly, results don’t lie. Despite a dedicated and heroic effort by the BlueGo folks, mass transit has failed here and there isn’t any public money left to save it. The only hope left is for a private company to step in and try to make it work with their own funding.

If a private transportation company can’t foresee making a profit from public transit in South Lake Tahoe, then the City shouldn’t pretend that we can operate a public transit system successfully.

Do you support commercial air service at Lake Tahoe Airport? Why or why not?: I’ve spoken to the airport manager, who told me that his biggest problem is excessive regulations. So the first step in bringing profitable airline service to South Lake Tahoe is to reduce the role of local government in limiting airport operations. The City Council needs to get out of the airport business and let the private sector take over the operations and funding.

On the other hand, I’m opposed to nighttime take-offs and landings because of aviation noise when most folks are trying to sleep. Here is where I support regulations that set clear limits on noise.

Is there any individual, group or organization you would not take campaign money from? Why?: I’ve already turned down money

from folks who grow marijuana illegally. Our medical marijuana laws are being abused by gangs and outlaws that hide behind the law, which is unacceptable. One of the biggest reasons I support our local dispensaries is that they make illegal growing unprofitable. If Prop. 19 passes, then we will be into a new reality. Until then, if you grow or sell marijuana illegally, don't try to give me money and don't expect any sympathy from me.

Nepotism and favoritism runs rampant in the city when it comes to hiring preferences. The council sets policy. What type of policy would you write regarding nepotism and favoritism?: Nepotism and favoritism have no place in our local government. Considering the "dysfunctional" evaluation of the City Council, an official finding by 19 distinguished members of the County Grand Jury, the City Council must address any appearance of unethical or questionable behavior. We need to set new policy and stick to it.

However, I would not favor firing any current employees simply because they are related, unless there is a clear reason to suspect a conflict of interest.

You have run for governor and president, why do you think the outcome will be different this time?: I ran for governor to counter the dishonest statements that Attorney General Dan Lungren made about medical marijuana, who was running against Gray Davis for governor. I ran for president because my fellow Libertarians asked me to.

Although nobody expected me to win those races, I'm certain that I have the right experience and the revolutionary common-sense ideas to make South Lake Tahoe an economic success story that other cities will emulate. That's why I believe I can win this time: I'm the right candidate for the job.

You are called a one-issue candidate, with marijuana being that issue, how do respond to that statement?: My campaign is

no more about marijuana than the Boston Tea Party was about tea. No, this campaign is all about freedom and forcing the government to keep its unwelcome nose out of our lives and businesses.

I have extensive experience as a successful ski magazine publisher, with 20 years in the Lake Tahoe area, and plenty of experience working with tourist bureaus. As a result, I understand why tourists come here and what it takes to make them come back.

In addition, my job as a CEO of a biotech firm demands that I have a good head for business, something the current insolvent City Council desperately needs.

Can you tell voters about your arrests and any time you served in jail?: After the passage of Prop. 215, those of us who led the campaign to legalize the medical use of marijuana were targeted by law enforcement for raids and arrests.

I was arrested for upholding a law I helped to write and pass, as part of an effort to discredit medical marijuana and its leaders. Although the marijuana charges against me were dismissed, I was temporarily convicted for some tiny fragments of a psilocybin mushroom and peyote cactus found in our guest bedroom.

That conviction was later “dismissed in the interests of justice” by Superior Court Judge David Nelson, on July 3, 2008, in Mendocino County. During the 40 days I was forced to spend in jail for something that was later dismissed, Placer County Sheriff Ed Bonner visited me at the jail and apologized for what was being done to me.

Also, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed a resolution calling for my release. The entire experience opened my eyes to the incompetence and corruption that exists throughout our police and courts. I’ve spent the bigger and better part of my life fighting to protect the rights of my

fellow Californians, and I intend to continue doing so as a member of South Lake Tahoe's City Council.

Tell us something about yourself that voters don't already know: In 1991, I was invited by the Navy to do a story about advanced military aircraft and tactics. I was issued a special top security clearance and given training that allowed me to actually fly a fully tweaked F5, one of the world's most agile military jets.

While at the controls, I broke the sound barrier and exceeded 7 G's. What is it like to pilot an aircraft that is so powerful you can break the sound barrier during vertical ascent? It is the ultimate adrenaline rush, with an exhilarating sense of total freedom and breathtaking views from the knees up.

The only limiting factor is how much punishment your body is able to withstand. As a result of the severe effects of pulling 7 G's, I got airsick. Afterward, the Top Gun Instructors assigned me my official Top Gun call sign, "Chunks."

Tahoe poverty forum to tackle stemming the downward slide

By Kathryn Reed

Poverty with a view has never been more accurate than now.

Though the powers that be would like to remove the phrase from the vernacular of South Shore locals, the truth is the phrase cannot be disputed. Tahoe has gorgeous views and the people

living among the pines at 6,200 feet are poorer today than anytime in recent memory.

When organizers and others gather Oct. 8 in South Lake Tahoe for an all-day summit dubbed Poverty to Prosperity, they will be tasked with coping with the reality of a city whose unemployment rate is at nearly 18 percent, whose permanent residency is stagnant with 70 percent of housing belonging to second homeowners, and a school district with nearly 70 percent of its elementary students qualifying for free or reduced lunches.



Scott Lukas, LTCC professor, is the keynote speaker Oct. 8 at the S. Tahoe poverty forum.

Homelessness in Tahoe isn’t unusual. It’s just a bit invisible. Lake Tahoe Unified School District reports of its 3,993 students 250 are homeless. Some live in motels. Some in cars. Some couch surf. Those 250 don’t live in a traditional home and therefore are considered homeless.

Wendy David, one of the forum’s organizers, sees the increasing destituteness of those living in South Lake Tahoe through a variety of volunteer efforts mostly involving children, as well as being president of the LTUSD school

board. That is why she wants to bring people together to begin a dialog of what can be done to reverse the poverty trend.

Alissa Nourse, Carl Ribaudo, Arturo Rangel, Cindy Hannah and Michael Ward (who will be the facilitator) have been instrumental in making next Friday's event a reality.

South Lake Tahoe is not unique in its financial struggles.

In data just released by the U.S. Census Bureau from 2009 stats, not the ones taken earlier this year, it shows the income gap between the richest and poorest in the United States grew last year by the widest amount on record. Children were a large segment of that number.

The figures show most people taking a hit during the recession last year, but the poor being the worst off.

Some stats from the report:

• U.S. residents below half the poverty line – $10,977 for a family of four – rose from 5.7 percent in 2008 to 6.3 percent in 2009. This is the highest level since 1975 when this statistic was first recorded. The 2009 poverty level was $21,954 for a family of four.

• The 2009 poverty rate in the U.S. was at 14.3 percent – the highest since 1994. (It was at 13.2 percent in 2008.) That's 43.6 million people or nearly 1 in 7. This is the highest since poverty figures began being kept in 1959.

• In the four county region of El Dorado, Placer, Yolo and Sacramento counties the poverty rate in 2009 was 13.4 percent in 2009, 12.1 percent in 2008 and 11.1 percent on 2007.

• Child poverty is at 20.7 percent, up from 19 percent in 2008.

• People with employer-provided health plans declined from 176.3 million to 169.7 million in 2009.

• 2009 was the largest single-year increase in U.S. residents without health insurance since the government began tracking the figures in 1987.

At the forum in South Tahoe, which is open to the public, the day will begin with El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Suzanne Kingsbury providing opening comments at 9am. In her work she has seen plenty of changes and is in constant contact with those considered impoverished.

Scott Lukas, a cultural anthropologist at Lake Tahoe Community College, will provide the keynote address. He will delve into the differences of generational and situational poverty – both of which exist locally.

After lunch a panel discussion with representatives from the business community, education, health care and others will take on the poverty topic. The public will be able to weigh-in before the day wraps up at 4pm.

“Why it’s important to have a community forum is it’s not one sector that will change things. It will take all sectors of the community,” David said.

The simple goals are for this to begin a dialog, for forum attendees to take it upon themselves to derive achievable goals, and for collaboration among concerned parties to be realized.

David anticipates tourism will be a component of the discussion because it is the chief employment sector.

If people are not coming to the area, it means businesses have fewer hours to give to workers, which means they have less money to spend, which in turn puts them on or past the brink of being able to pay their bills. This means downstream the businesses the tourism workers go to are being frequented less or not at all, and potentially service oriented businesses are not getting paid. It also means social agencies being tapped

when resources to give are dwindling because fewer have the means to give.

“We need leaders to say it is a concern that so many are on the edge, that we are losing families, that we want kids to have jobs,” David said.

Poverty to Prosperity Forum details:

• Oct. 8

• 9am-4pm

• Embassy Suites Lake Tahoe, 4130 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe

• RSVP to Lori Blackburn at (530) 295.2403

• Sponsors – Child Abuse Prevention Council, El Dorado Community Foundation, Lake Tahoe Gaming Alliance, First 5 El Dorado, Tahoe Youth & Family Services, El Dorado County Office of Education

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Tahoe Creamery ceases operations

By Reno Gazette Journal

Tahoe Creamery, which operated ice cream shops in Sparks and the University of Nevada, Reno and a manufacturing site in Minden, has ceased operations.

Tahoe Creamery owners could not be reached for comment Thursday, but a recorded voice at the Minden plant informed callers, “We are no longer manufacturing ice cream due to the

stressful economic climate.”

Launched eight years ago, Tahoe Creamery operated on Galleria Parkway in Spanish Springs and inside the Joe Crowley Student Union on the UNR campus.

The company’s ice cream products also were sold at Northern Nevada grocery retailers.

TRPA, USGS pay for high resolution GIS imaging of basin

By GISCafe

eMap International was contracted by a consortium of regional and federal agencies which included the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) and US Geological Service (USGS) to provide 8-band multispectral high-resolution WorldView-2 satellite imagery over the Lake Tahoe Basin. Given the short growing and cloud-free season in the Tahoe Lake Basin, the specifications of the project required that the high-resolution imagery covering 1,100 square kilometer of coastlines, forested valleys and jagged mountain peaks be collected inside a 45-day window with less than 10% cloud cover.

By working closely with DigitalGlobe, the owner and operator of WorldView-2, eMap delivered the specified 2-meter 8-band multispectral and 50-cm panchromatic satellite imagery to the Consortium ahead of schedule and with nearly no cloud-cover (less than 1% across the Basin). Upon receipt and review of

the WorldView-2 data, Toby Welborn, a geographer at the USGS Carson City, NV office, said, “This is going to be a fantastic dataset to work with and will provide incredible insight into all types of issues and interests in the Tahoe Basin.”

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