

7 people to be interviewed for SLT police chief

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe expects to have a police chief on the force in October. Interviews for the seven candidates vying for the top cop job in the city are Sept. 13.



One of the seven is local, with the rest from outside the basin. Martin Hewlett, captain and acting chief of the department, is not the local candidate. He took over when Terry Daniels retired at the end of 2009.

“Hopefully, I will have the challenge of picking between a couple really good people,” City Manager Tony O’Rourke said.

Although the decision is ultimately O’Rourke’s, he is convening a slew of panels on that day to interview the people. Sworn and non-sworn officers, and department heads are a couple of the panels.

A citizens group has also been called. It is comprised of at least one person from the South Lake Tahoe Women’s Center (not Leanne Wagoner who is married to Officer Ryan Wagoner and daughter-in-law to Mayor Kathay Lovell), B Gorman from the Nevada-based chamber, David Kelly from the Tahoe Area Coordinating Council for the Disabled, a rep from the Latino community and perhaps others.

A peer review of people from the basin will ask candidates questions, too. Lt. Les Lovell of the El Dorado County Sheriff’s Department is not on the panel.

“I’m not going to these groups to see who they would hire. I want to know what they see as strengths and weaknesses in the

candidates,” O’Rourke said. “I would hope after going through the gauntlet of interviews there would be some consistency, but there might be an aberration to look at.”

He wants someone who has strong managerial and strong community skills.

O’Rourke plans to interview all the candidates before the panels do.

After the September interviews, the hope is two finalists will emerge. Further background checks on them will be done, with possible secondary interviews to follow.

O’Rourke wants to have a chief by early October.

Warning: Phone scam targets Douglas County

The Douglas County Sheriff’s Office advises citizens to be aware of a new “local” version of a telephone scam.

The scammer calls the victim claiming to be a volunteer or employee of the Douglas County Senior Citizens Center. The scammer claims he/she is soliciting funds on behalf of the Senior Center to donate to the American Cancer Society.

The scammer tells the victim that if they would like to donate to the fund, they can provide their credit card or debit card information to the employee/volunteer, and the donation will be automatically deducted from their account.

There has been only one reported successful incident of this nature in Douglas County; but citizens – particularly senior

citizens who are the typical targets of these scams – are advised to be cautious of such incidents.

Travis Lee, director of Douglas County Senior Services, advises that his staff does not solicit credit card or debit card information from people, and would never solicit seniors for donations of any sort.

This fund-raising scam is just the latest of ongoing identity theft/monetary theft scams where suspects use the telephone, mail or computer to try to get people to reveal their personal or financial information.

It doesn't matter why the suspects are calling. The reasons are just different variants of the same scam – to get personal identification or bank account/credit card information for fraudulent purposes.

Protecting yourself is simple: Never give this type of information out when you receive such a telephone call, mail or online contact. If you would like to donate to a charitable organization, do so by contacting that organization directly.

Lack of incentives keep companies from moving to NV

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

Nevada has built its reputation as a low-tax haven to encourage companies to relocate their businesses here in recent years.

But low taxes alone won't be enough to lure companies when rival states offset the low-tax advantage with economic

incentives to move, a group studying the economic diversification of the state was told Monday.

John Restrepo, head of the Las Vegas-based Restrepo Consulting Group, told members of the New Nevada Taskforce, that despite the state not having a corporate income tax, a personal income tax or an inventory tax, rivals like New Mexico, Utah and Oregon are still more appealing to corporations because of the quantity and quality of the incentives they offer.

Mike Skaggs, director of the Nevada Commission on Economic Development, added that the state is outgunned budget-wise by Georgia, Indiana, Colorado and Utah, among other states.

It was the second meeting for the New Nevada Taskforce, which was formed by Lt. Gov. Brian Krolicki earlier this summer to chart a course for the state's economic development and diversification efforts. Critics have called the formation of the 28-member task force a political ploy by Krolicki, who is up for re-election in November.

Read the whole story

Disgraced ex-Tahoe-Douglas fire chief faces accusations in Bay Area

By Michele Ellson, Oakland Tribune

Last week wasn't the first time Alameda fire Chief David Kapler faced allegations he misused fire department resources. Kapler was accused of misusing his department vehicle when he was chief of another fire department nearly two decades ago,

one of a host of allegations that ultimately led to his resignation from that job.

He resigned as chief of the Tahoe-Douglas Fire Protection District in 1991 after the allegations surfaced that he misused a department-owned vehicle.

Two developers also accused Kapler of soliciting contributions in exchange for the right to build, and he came under fire for soliciting ski passes, a mountain bike, vacations and other contributions for a program to curb fire department absenteeism, newspaper articles written at the time reported.

Kapler said he was cleared of all wrongdoing in connection with the allegations in Tahoe. He also said his Tahoe-Douglas contract allowed him to take a district vehicle for personal use.

Read the whole story

10-year-old girl averts being abducted near South Tahoe Y

A 10-year-old South Lake Tahoe girl was able to escape on her bike after a man more than three times her age tried to lure her into his vehicle.

Police officers are calling the Aug. 25 11:25am incident a possible attempted abduction. The incident occurred at the corner of Third Street and Ruth Avenue.

The victim told officers she had been riding her bicycle on Third Street when a white, four-door car pulled in front of her bicycle and stopped. The driver told her something in an

attempt to lure her, and then told her to get into the car. The victim fled the area on her bicycle, got to a place of safety and they contacted the police.



Artist's
rendering of
the suspect.

Officers responded to the area but were unable to locate the vehicle.

The suspect is a white male, about 35 years old, a little more than average weight, shaved head, blonde eyebrows, with a mole on the left side of his neck.

The suspect's vehicle is described as a white four-door car with a squared-off rear end. The victim believed she saw a Toyota emblem on the vehicle.

Anyone with information concerning this person or related information is should call South Lake Tahoe Detective Doug Sentell at (530) 542.6100.

Federal grant provides

academic aid to LTCC students

Lake Tahoe Community College has received a \$219,900 grant to provide academic and other support services to low-income, first generation and disabled college students.



The U.S. Department of Education money is designed to increase student retention and graduation rates, facilitate their transfer from two-year to four-year colleges, and foster an institutional climate supportive of the success of these students.

The first chunk of money is for this coming school year, though it's anticipated the grant will be for five years.

Program services may include: instruction in basic study skills; tutorial services; academic, financial, or personal counseling; assistance in securing admission and financial aid for enrollment in four-year institutions; assistance in securing admission and financial aid for enrollment in graduate and professional programs; guidance on career options; mentoring and special services for students with limited English proficiency; and grant aid.

Lake Tahoe Community College, when applying for the grant, said it expects to help 140 students with the Student Support Services Program money.

In fall 2008, 80.2 percent of the South Shore college's total enrollment was eligible for SSS services and 48.3 percent of the fall 2008 entering students who demonstrated academic need were SSS eligible students, the college told the feds.

Kindertown day care wins case against state

By Kathryn Reed

Kindertown is staying open.



The Kindertown bus will keep rolling.

It was Sept. 23, 2009, that Maria Barrows-Crist told the parents of her South Lake Tahoe day care the state would be shutting the facility down the next month.

It didn't happen then and it's not going to happen now. Judge Stephen Bailey ruled Aug. 26 the state Department of Social Services had no basis to close the center that has been operating for more than 30 years.

"This court holds this bias against the licensee constitutes an abuse of discretion and constitutes cause to set aside the decision," the 26-page ruling says.

Through tears on Thursday night, Barrows-Crist felt vindicated – but not 100 percent relieved.

"They almost forced me to bankruptcy," she said. "Look what they have done to my family. Since October 2007 they started harassing me. I really feel like I have been harassed. How about the people who don't fight for their rights."

Crist v. the state of California cost the plaintiff \$85,000 in attorney fees. Mike McLaughlin replaced her first attorney last fall and went the distance for Barrows-Crist. Another \$300,000 in income was lost in the last nine months, she said.

It's come down to needing to have a yard sale on Aug. 27-28 at 2241 Idaho St., South Tahoe to help raise the money needed to pay the bills.

Through it all, 35 families remained with her – never taking their children out of the center. She has 100 children now. The general childcare is full, and people are calling to get in.

If the state would pass a budget, cash for the state preschool would roll in.

The ruling backs what McLaughlin presented in court and discounted what the state's attorney had to say. The decision says there is no proof Barrows-Crist's daughter was using drugs at the work place or under the influence while there. It backs other decisions by the center that the state took issue with.

Barrows-Crist wants to celebrate, to throw a party, but the dollars aren't in her bank account to do so right now. For now, she sends thanks through *Lake Tahoe News* to the city, lawmakers, friends, families and people she doesn't know who supported her through the ordeal.

Firefighters pounce on Meyers

brush fire

Firefighters this afternoon put out a small vegetation fire near Pioneer Trail and Highway 50 in Meyers.

“The quick response by firefighters from all three agencies (Lake Valley, CalFire, USFS) prevented it from getting larger and potentially putting the community at risk,” Lake Valley spokeswoman Leona Allen said of the 1:3pm blaze.

Lake Valley Fire Protection District is asking citizens to be cautious with cigarettes, campfires, barbecue grills and anything that could cause a fire.



Beth Brady
with the
Forest Service
and CalFire
Battalion
Chief Mike
Webb
investigate
the cause of
the Aug. 26
fire.
Photo/Leona
Allen

High winds on Thursday and Friday are making them red flag warning days – meaning an increased threat of fire in the dry conditions.

Thousands of companies get warning on taxes

By Claudia Buck, Sacramento Bee

More than 40,000 California businesses that have not filed their 2008 state income tax returns are getting warning letters from the Franchise Tax Board.

The notices give businesses 30 days to file a return or show why there is no tax filing requirement. Businesses that disregard the notices could face penalties, interest and fees.

In this region, the notices went out to 1,452 businesses in Sacramento County; 173 in El Dorado; 312 in Placer; 130 in Yolo and 59 in Yuba.

[Read the whole story](#)

1 year after 18-year ordeal Dugard tries to regain her life

By Kathryn Reed

One year ago today Jaycee Lee Dugard was released from the horror she had known for the previous 18 years. Those formative years from age 11 to 29 were spent cloistered in a

ramshackle backyard compound in the Bay Area. After being kidnapped from her school bus stop in Meyers, she was repeatedly raped, bore two children to the man accused of raping her and was unable to tell her children what their father had done to her.

Dugard is free now. At least to some extent.

Normal as most people define it is not likely to be something Dugard, her daughters or even her mother, Terry Probyn, will ever know. For now, the four are living in an undisclosed location in California.

"We have an agent in the area where they are living now," FBI agent Chris Campion told *Lake Tahoe News* this week. He worked the case when Dugard was snatched from the street in 1991. He was there a year ago as news was coming from the Bay Area that she had been found.



Jaycee Lee
Dugard and her
mom, Terry
Probyn.

Photo/ABC-20/2

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The agent in the vicinity of the Dugards speaks to them weekly, if not more. How long the FBI will be involved is anyone's guess.

"We take the needs of the victims and witnesses very seriously, especially in these kinds of cases where there is

uncharted territory," Campion said. "We don't know what their needs are going to be over the years. There are a just a ton of things you don't think about."

One thing the FBI helped sort out was obtaining birth certificates for the girls. The older one turns 16 this month, while the younger will be 13 in November.

The two didn't attend school, though reports are they are bright despite no formal education. Dugard was days from finishing fifth grade when she was kidnapped.

This is reportedly the longest time a child has been held captive and found alive. There is no precedent for knowing the psychological ramifications Dugard might endure the rest of her life, let alone her children coming to grips with who their father is and his sordid past.

As for the exact help they are getting, Campion said that is up to the Dugard clan to tell the world.

Probyn had planned to speak to Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe on Wednesday, but canceled days before when it came out that a tabloid had bought pictures of Dugard and her daughters. That unwanted publicity has her rethinking being in public.

Instead, Campion and Lt. Les Lovell of the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department spoke to the private, no-guests invited lunch.

Both spoke with *Lake Tahoe News* earlier in the week. District Attorney Vern Pierson, who is in the middle of a penalty phase of a murder trial, said through his secretary he is not making any comments about the Dugard case at this time.

Law enforcement changes

Campion doesn't think anything could have been done differently on June 10, 1991. He doesn't believe setting up

roadblocks sooner would have made a difference, nor the fact that it was the next day before 20 FBI agents swarmed the town. The FBI had a permanent presence on the South Shore at that time and still does.

"In this case, I don't think it would have prevented them from getting out of the basin," Campion said. "It is a good idea to have a roadblock system in place. That is probably one thing we do better now."

At the time of Dugard's kidnapping the FBI was already doing away with the old school policy of waiting 24 to 48 hours for a ransom call. Sexual predators were on their radar screen.

In the time since Dugard was taken, the response to child abductions has been even faster by all branches of law enforcement.

Being proactive is another change. This means getting people off the streets who have a thirst to commit sexual crimes. This is done with nabbing people with child pornography, those distributing it, and people traveling to meet unsuspecting young people they may have met on the Internet.

The local sheriff's department implemented a number of changes, some of which are detailed in this story.

The California parole system has taken a beating for not having found Dugard sooner. The incompetence resulted in a \$20 million payout by the state to the Dugards. Had that aspect gone to trial, speculation is the award would have been much higher.

Whether the family will be able to live a life of normalcy before or after the criminal trial remains to be seen. Again, it's that word, normal.

Not knowing where they are living or the type of help they are getting, it's unknown if the \$20 million will be enough for

them to live on for their lifetimes. It's unknown if the teens would want to go to college or be able to even cope in that atmosphere.

A community reacts

Between Soroptimist and the sheriff's department, the program a Fighting Chance was developed. This teaches youngsters to fend off would-be attackers or kidnappers. It even goes into what to do if you are taken.

Even though Dugard, her mom, step-dad and half-sister had only lived on the South Shore a short time before the kidnapping, it rocked the community. The "it can't happen here" syndrome was shattered.

South Lake Tahoe embraced the Probyns as they struggled to carry on with their lives. Years later they would move and divorce.

On Sept. 6, 2009, more than 2,500 walked down Highway 50 in South Lake Tahoe to rejoice in Dugard's release. The parade was cathartic for so many who were here in 1991.

The accused

Phillip and Nancy Garrido are sitting in jail cells in Placerville, both accused of kidnapping Dugard; Phillip Garrido faces rape charges. It came out last week that attorneys in the case are questioning his competency.

The next court hearing is scheduled for Oct. 1.