Southwest cutting flights in Reno, Las Vegas



By Reno Gazette-Journal

Reno-Tahoe International Airport is losing six Southwest Airlines flights this fall as part of nationwide cutbacks totaling 106, the Las Vegas Sun reported Wednesday, though an airport spokesman said he hopes the Reno flights eventually will resume.

As part of a schedule change by Southwest, Reno is losing six flights with one round trip each eliminated to and from Boise, Idaho; Los Angeles; Oakland, Calif.; Phoenix; Portland, Ore.; and San Jose, Calif, the Sun reported.

“We expect the flights to return,” Reno airport spokesman Brian Kulpin said Wednesday night, describing the cuts as seasonal and not usual.

“That is what we have been told, and hopefully, that will be the case,” Kulpin said when asked about any assurances from Southwest.

Read the whole story

Schwarzenegger wants more furlough days

By Shane Goldmacher, Los Angeles Times

Most state workers will again face unpaid furloughs again in August under an executive order imposed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, said a union official who was briefed on the plan by the administration.

Roughly 200,000 state workers would be subject to the mandatory days off, though the governor is exempting the union bargaining units that have negotiated rollbacks of future pensions with his administration.

Previous furloughs, implemented to help ease California's budget crisis, ended with the fiscal year that expired June 30. Courts have ruled that Schwarzenegger has the authority to impose the unpaid time off.

Read the whole story

Hwy. 50 delays because of unexploded blasting cap

The discovery of an unexploded blasting cap on a construction site is causing traffic issues on Highway 50 in El Dorado County.

Caltrans is advising motorists to expect delays on Highway 50 near Bass Lake Road.

Beginning at approximately 12:15pm today, eastbound traffic will be held at Latrobe Road and westbound traffic will be held at Bass Lake Road. Motorists should anticipate delays of up to 45 minutes.

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3 women file suit againt El Dorado County Sheriff's Office

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

The El Dorado County Sheriff's Office is the target of a lawsuit – the second in two months – claiming that a "boy's club" in the department subjects women to harassment and discrimination.

In the latest suit, filed Friday in U.S. District Court, three civilian employees of the department allege violations of California fair employment and federal civil rights laws.

Tanya Hunt, a female deputy in the department, filed a similar suit in June. She has since been placed on administrative leave.

Representatives of the Sheriff's Office cannot comment on the suits, said Lt. Bryan Golmitz, citing laws that maintain the confidentiality of personnel matters.

Read the whole story

South Tahoe council – this bud is not for you



By Kathryn Reed

By the end of the year it's possible South Lake Tahoe won't have any medicinal marijuana dispensaries.

On Tuesday the council voted to have staff come up with an ordinance that would ban the three existing collectives as well as any future ones. The divided vote had Councilman Bill Crawford voting no, Councilman Hal Cole abstaining and the other three saying yes.

The vote that appeared to have more to do with emotion than fact was preceded by a presentation by City Attorney Pat Enright that spelled out how to go about banning the medicinal marijuana facilities. He said his report was not biased and that he had no opinion on which way the council should proceed, but his PowerPoint was dominated with material on how to ban these businesses.

Enright started out by saying the council could ban the dispensaries, regulate them or wait until after the November election to see what California voters say about legalizing marijuana. But his presentation did not address the latter two options in much detail.

As the council goes forward, the public will have more

opportunities to comment – and likely more notice than the 24 hours given for the special meeting.

Talk of these outlets bringing more crime to town was brought up July 27, but never substantiated. Lt. David Stevenson, who was in the audience representing the South Lake Tahoe Police Department, was never asked to address the issue whether these businesses increase crime. Nor did the council ask him if they reduce the number of illegal pot transactions on the street.

Nor was it discussed if people are going to smoke pot, if it's better for them to ingest the stuff from the dispensaries that is somewhat regulated or take their chances with what the street-grade grass might be laced with.

Six people from the public spoke, bringing a mixed response for the council to ponder.

After the decision, Shelly Arnold, who works for the Tahoe Wellness Collective, said, "We'll fight it. They will never close us down. We're not leaving."

It was brought up at the meeting how it's easy to get a prescription from a doctor for medicinal marijuana – essentially $200 and it's a done deal. But doctors who are writing illegal scripts are not who the council is going after. Instead, the council wants the pot clubs shutdown even though some people using them are there with legitimate reasons.

Councilmembers Bruce Grego and Jerry Birdwell admitted to never having been in one. Only Councilman Bill Crawford said he had visited two of the dispensaries. Grego and Birdwell said they sat outside at least one club and said the people going in had no visible ailment requiring the use of marijuana.

Cancer patients don't all look anemic with bald heads. Glaucoma would be hard to detect sitting in a vehicle.

This is not to say abuse isn't a real possibility at the clubs. Arnold claims her collective alone has 2,700 patients – that's more than 10 percent of South Lake Tahoe's population. That is a high percentage even without the other two dispensaries included of locals in need of medicinal marijuana. It's not known where the customers of each of the collectives reside.

In other action at the special July 27 meeting:

• The council agreed to discuss at the Aug. 3 meeting the possibility of buying the *Tahoe Daily Tribune* building to convert it to a City Hall.

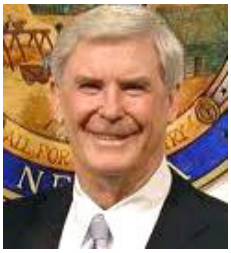
• The council agreed to consider moving the Aug. 17 meeting to Aug. 19 to avoid a conflict with the annual Environmental Summit.

Guinn called a 'great citizen of Nevada'

By Emily Richmond, Las Vegas Sun

Former Nevada Gov. Kenny Guinn was remembered Tuesday as a common man with an uncommon sense of duty.

More than 1,200 people filled the pews at St. Joseph, Husband of Mary Catholic Church on West Sahara Avenue for the two-hour funeral Mass. Among them were family and friends, lawmakers and business leaders, former campaign workers and public employees. Republican Guinn was remembered as always putting the needs of the state above party politics, and expected others to do the same.



Kenny Guinn

Six bagpipers and four drummers led the procession into the church. Clergy – including Bishop Joseph Pepe of the Diocese of Las Vegas – and pallbearers escorted Guinn's casket, draped in a simple white cloth with a small gold cross. Former Nevada First Lady Dema Guinn, supported on either side sons Jeff and Steve and with a procession of family behind them, followed her husband's casket to the front of the church.

Guinn, who served as Nevada's governor from 1999 through 2006, died July 22. He was 73. The Guinns' 54-year marriage was a testament to their love and faith in each other, said Pepe, who led the funeral Mass. And Kenny Guinn's commitment "was present wherever he was – what he brought was a sense of responsibility, understanding, fairness, caring and warmth."

Read the whole story

DUI check, more patrol for Tahoe's Hot August Night crowd



In preparation for Hot August Nights, the South Lake Tahoe Police Department will be conducting a DUI/driver's License checkpoint on July 29 from 8pm-1:30am, along Lake Tahoe Boulevard and Pioneer Trail.

This will be followed up July 30 and July 31 with extra officers on roving DUI Saturation Patrols from the "Avoid the 6" Multi-Agency DUI Task Force searching for possible impaired drivers.

The summer months are a dangerous time of the year and your odds of being involved in a drunken driving crash can be high. In 2008, law enforcement statewide reported 7,801 people were injured or killed in alcohol involved collisions during the three summer months of June, July and August.

A major component of the checkpoints, beyond taking dangerous drivers off the road, is to increase awareness of the consequences of impaired driving and to encourage using sober designated drivers. A DUI checkpoint is a proven effective method for achieving this goal.

By publicizing these enforcement and education efforts, the South Lake Tahoe Police Department believes motorists are deterred from drinking and driving.

In addition to these DUI operations, law enforcement agencies throughout the region are putting more officers out on checkpoints and DUI roving saturation patrols during the end of August/Labor Day 18-day nationwide anti-DUI effort.

The checkpoint and other DUI enforcement patrols are part of the city and county's ongoing traffic safety efforts. Officers will also be checking for those who are driving with a suspended driver's license as well as those who are unlicensed. Any motorist found driving with an invalid license may have their vehicle impounded for 30 days and be issued a

citation.

The funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

If you see a drunken driver, call 911.

Defensive response to grand jury report by South Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe City Council members had almost nothing to say before the city's response to the scathing grand jury report was voted on. The written response by City Manager Dave Jinkens agrees with little that the independent panel chastised the city about and instead gives a flimsy defense to many accusations.

Before Councilman Bill Crawford had to leave the July 27special council meeting, he said he considered the report and response to be the same – "vague."

The vote was 3-1 to accept the response as written by Jinkens and prepared with City Attorney Pat Enright. City Councilman Jerry Birdwell was the dissenting vote, though he said nothing at the meeting.

Afterward he told *Lake Tahoe News*, "No. 1, I think the grand jury report was correct. I saw no need to answer and argue about the report. I accept the report and as I have previously stated, I take it as constructive criticism and that we need to do better."

He said he is trying to do what he can to make the council run as smoothly as possible. Birdwell points to his stance on the issues involving Johnny Poland, the city cop who successfully fought his termination case, and former City Attorney Jacqueline Mittelstadt, who resigned after the city tried to fire her, as proof he was right.

Birdwell is good with how he is conducting himself on the council, but agrees with the grand jury there that there is plenty of room for improvement.

Jinkens read part of his staff report into the record on Tuesday, saying, "I am proud of the work of city government as a whole and city employees to deliver efficient, effective and a high quality of service to the people of South Lake Tahoe each and every day of the year. Employees are our greatest resource and we must work with them and the community in a positive and constructive manner to address the pressing needs of our community."

Click on response to read the city's unedited and therefore not quite final version to what it will submit regarding the 2010 El Dorado County Grand Jury report.

The response defends the reimbursement for outside legal counsel to Councilman Bruce Grego, even though the grand jury questions it.

In the 20-page response *LTN* learned "the city manager is 'technically' the director of finance" and the city manager is the personnel officer.

It addresses the nepotism issue by giving only estimates of

how many married couples work in the city (seven) and how many family members (eight) work for the city. This doesn't include council and commission members.

Even with 30 of the 195 full-time employees related, this would represent more than 15 percent of the workforce having a perceived conflict. And that's just the number the city admits to. It doesn't include those who are engaged or living together.

The city's response says, "The statement of the grand jury gives insufficient information to determine if alleged concerns by complaining parties are on a city-wide basis or in one or more city departments. In order to properly evaluate this statement, more information is needed and requested about the situation."

But the city won't reveal to *Lake Tahoe News* who all is related by blood and marriage between full-time and part-time employees, council members and commissioners, and only gives estimates in its response. How can the city know if there is problem, if it doesn't know who is related and therefore who is reporting to whom?

Instead of addressing the issue internally, it has put the onus back on the grand jury – a body that is seated for one year.

This theory seems to contradict a segment of the city's response under "overview and comments" that says, "The City Council, city manager, city attorney and all department heads have a duty to ensure that the workplace is productive and devoid of illegal harassment and discrimination of any kind."

While that statement is a fact, many city workers who have spoken to *Lake Tahoe News* say it is not a policy that is practiced.

The response in another section further says, "The city will

review within the next six months its existing nepotism policies in the personnel rule and MOU from a legal perspective and with representatives of recognized employee associations to determine if changes are needed and the city manager will report his findings to the City Council."

Considering there will be a new city manager in 10 days and the council will be changing by at least 40 percent in five months, it's hard to know if there will be follow through on the above statement.

At one point the grand jury calls the council "bush league". To this the response begins, "The city is unfamiliar with the term 'bush league'."

The 1982 dictionary at the offices of *Lake Tahoe News* defines "bush-league'" as, "of or pertaining to a bush league; mediocre; second-rate."

Washoe-Douglas-Alpine counties form public safety partnership

By Susan Voyles, Reno Gazette-Journal

The Washoe County Commission approved a number of agreements Tuesday.

They include:

Communications system: An agreement with Douglas County and Alpine and Calaveras counties in California to create a Tahoe partnership to develop a multi-agency public safety

communications system.

Read the whole story

Gibbons, Reid spar over $175 mil. Nevada loses in ed funds

By Michael Martinez, Reno Gazette-Journal

State and local educators said Tuesday that they plan to move ahead with some of the strategic reforms for public schools outlined in their application for federal Race to the

Top grant money, even though Nevada was not among 19 semifinalists and will not get the $175 million for which the state was eligible.

The money sought was part of a $3.4 billion pot aimed at improving struggling schools nationwide.

The announcement that Nevada has no chance to compete in the second round of Race to the Top grant competition also sparked a rancorous political exchange between Republican Gov. Jim Gibbons and U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev.

Read the whole story