DUI checkpoint canceled in South Tahoe

Publisher's note: ***The DUI checkpoint for tonight has been canceled.***

The South Lake Tahoe Police Department will be conducting a DUI/driver's License checkpoint on June 21 from 8pm-1am along Lake Tahoe Boulevard and Pioneer Trail.

The department is continuing its efforts at lowering the number of people killed and injured in alcohol involved crashes locally and through the county's Avoid DUI Task Force Campaign with this checkpoint.

Personnel will be checking drivers to identify offenders and get them off the street, as well as heightening awareness to the dangers of impaired driving.

The summer months are a dangerous time of the year and your odds of being involved in an alcohol involved collision can be high. In 2008, law enforcement statewide reported 7,801 people were injured or killed 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.

South Lake Tahoe Police Department will also be partnering in this summer's Avoid the 6 – DUI Campaign where all law enforcement agencies will put additional officers out on

checkpoints and DUI saturation patrols during the Independence Day holiday and during the end of August/Labor Day nationwide anti-DUI effort, Over the Limit, Under Arrest.

Chinese gang preying on Indian casino gamblers

By Sam Stanton and Chelsea Phua, Sacramento Bee

On a bright, sunny afternoon last week, about 60 people gathered inside Thunder Valley Casino, pressed together five deep at the midi baccarat tables, where the stakes go up to $2,000 a hand.

Others sat intently at the pai gow poker tables nearby.

Almost all were of Asian descent. Most were women.

And each was potential prey in what state and casino officials allege was an unusual and audacious attempt by a Chinese gang to target gamblers at Sacramento-area tribal casinos for extortion and loan sharking.

After a seven-month probe, state Department of Justice officials announced this month they had broken up a scheme that targeted gamblers of Asian descent who frequent Red Hawk, Thunder Valley and at least one other area casino.

Read the whole story

Douglas deputies embrace ID system to find missing kids

Douglas County Sheriff's Office is partnering with AlertID to protect missing and injured children. In an emergency, AlertID will enable the sheriff's office or other emergency personnel to instantly access vital information to help identify and protect children.

This system is the first of its kind and goes far beyond identifying a child after there is a problem. It enables parents to store on a secure web portal information that would be needed should a child become missing, lost or injured. Parents enter their child's photo, profile and basic health information onto the secure portal, and this information is then instantly available to emergency services if ever needed.

AlertID is the first system to provide parents with protection and assistance in case their children are ever lost or injured. It is a totally private and secure system that instantly gives police, paramedics and hospital staff the vital information they need. It also immediately informs parents and their most trusted friends through text, email and phone if there is ever a problem.

AlertID is launching nationally this summer through the global efforts of companies like AT&T and Overstock.com. AlertID's goal is to protect 1 million families this year.

"Growing up in Gardnerville helped me appreciate family and the need to protect our children. Although AlertID is supported and distributed on a national basis, we are especially pleased to protect children right where I grew up," AlertID co-founder Keli Wilson said in a press release.

The service is completely free. Interested parents can gain more information by visiting www.AlertID.com or by contacting

co-founder Keli Wilson at Kwilson@alertid.me.

Incline firms partners with Sylvania in audio-light venture

By John Seelmeyer, Northern Nevada Business Weekly

The top executive of a small developer of audio systems headquartered at Incline Village thinks his company will gain a big voice though an alliance with a global manufacturer of lighting systems.

Artison LLC partnered with OSRAM Sylvania to market a product developed by Artison that allows consumers to install wireless remote audio speakers into recessed light fixtures.

The product known as “MusicLites” also includes a 10-watt LED light that produces the equivalent of a 65-watt bulb.

Read the whole story

Convoluted process for 2 SLT city manager candidates

By Kathryn Reed

It could be a matter of days before the next city manager of South Lake Tahoe is named. The City Council is interviewing two candidates today and a quasi-public panel will interview the men Monday.

Councilman Bill Crawford is declining to be part of today's process.

"I'm not participating in the selection because I don't feel I have anything to contribute because I'm leaving office at the end of November," Crawford told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He is in favor of the council that will be seated at the end of the year hiring the next city manager and having an interim after Dave Jinkens' last day on Aug. 7. At least one new member will be on the council – the person taking Crawford's seat. Mayor Kathay Lovell is seeking a third term and Councilman Jerry Birdwell is on the fence regarding re-election.

Crawford does not intend to vote for any city manager his colleagues deem suitable.

Who are the candidates?

The candidates before the council today are Mike Segrest and Tony O'Rourke.

Although the council has been presented with Segrest being the current town manager of Moraga, a small town in the East Bay of San Francisco, he has given the town his resignation letter. A May 28 article in the *Contra Costa Times* says

Segrest is resigning after being on the job since February 2009 because of his wife's health issues.

Segrest was manager of the town of Snowmass Village, Colo., for five years before moving to California. Last month he was one of three finalists for the town manager job in Telluride, but didn't make the final cut.

O'Rourke has been the executive director of Beaver Creek Resort Company in Colorado since 1996. This is not the ski resort owned by Vail Resorts.

According to the company's website, it is "a very special hybrid, combining a homeowners' association, a resort association, with some municipal services added. The Resort Company, a Colorado nonprofit corporation incorporated on April 30, 1979, was designed to help Beaver Creek become and remain a unique resort community."

O'Rourke was in city government mostly in Florida and Texas before taking the job in the Rockies.

The council had wanted to interview four candidates, but two backed out.

Lovell said it's possible the council could choose other candidates to interview if Segrest and O'Rourke don't pass muster with them or Monday's interviewers.

Some recognizable names applied for the position but were not chosen to be interviewed – the current redevelopment director, a former assistant city manager now with Reno, a former housing employee, and the manager of Heidi's restaurant.

Where is the public input?

On Monday, each candidate will have a 90-minute interview before a panel made up of representatives from the five city commissions (Planning, Parks and Recreation, Airport, Latino Affairs, Sustainability), both chambers of commerce, a

disabled advocate and senior citizen representative.

No one from tourism, the city's major sector, is involved; the minimum wage worker isn't represented; the largest landowner – the U.S. Forest Service wasn't invited; the largest employer – Barton Healthcare, is not involved. John Q. Public is also not part of the process.

People have told *Lake Tahoe News* it seems like special interest groups are making the decision about the city manager job, which is the highest position in South Lake Tahoe city government.

When the Governing Board of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency hired now former Executive Director John Singlaub, a broader public panel was involved, which included this reporter. When now former Executive Director Patrick Kahler was hired on at the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, the board interviewed the finalists in public.

Birdwell had proposed having a social at his bed and breakfast for the public to mingle with the candidates, but Lovell didn't like the idea. She also didn't like the idea of having them stay at the Black Bear Inn, fearing the perception it would create. However, the council as a whole didn't have a problem with now City Attorney Patrick Enright staying there when he interviewed. Both city manager candidates are at the Black Bear – staying for free. The city was not going to pay for their overnight accommodations no matter where they slept.

The public may attend the sessions that start at 8:30am Monday at Lake Tahoe Airport, but they will not be able to ask questions. Each panelist may ask two questions and the same questions must be asked of both candidates.

"Each panel will have a scorecard and we will be provided the total score from each group," Lovell said of the process.

It is up to each councilmember as to what weight he or she

gives that scorecard when it comes to making a hiring decision. The council will discuss the matter in closed session on Tuesday at the regular council meeting, but Lovell said it's likely a final decision will require a special meeting.

The council would like to have someone on board before Jinkens leaves.

Lovell said it would be the incoming city manager who hires the next police chief even though Jinkens has started the process and applications are due by the end of the month.

The process

It has been the city attorney, Enright, who doesn't have human resources experience, who the council asked to spearhead the hiring process once consultant Bob Murray culled together the list of names.

The council's lack of confidence in the HR manager is why Enright was brought in.

Enright and Murray have provided the council with possible questions to ask the candidates.

But what the council wants in the next city manager has not been discussed. Nor has it been a collaborative process with staff.

It didn't have to be this way. An entity that wants to discuss the vision for its next leader is Lake Tahoe Community College. That board has agreed to work with faculty and classified staff to outline what it is everyone wants in the next president.

That approach has not been taken by this City Council.

Instead, at the last-minute the council decided to have the candidates interview with eight members of the labor groups

and the eight department heads – separately. This means a time consuming, inefficient four sets of interviews for the candidates.

Gene Palazzo is one of the directors on the panel even though he applied for the job of city manager.

There has been no coordinated effort to ensure the candidates won't keep being asked the same questions. Nor is there a format to share the answers with each panel.

Feds close Nevada Security Bank of Reno

By Jessica Holzer, Dow Jones

WASHINGTON – Nevada Security Bank of Reno was closed (Friday) by state regulators, bringing the number of failed U.S. banks in 2010 to 83.

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. was appointed receiver. Umpqua Bank of Roseburg, Ore. entered into an agreement with the FDIC to assume all of Nevada Security's deposits and essentially all of the failed bank's assets.

Read the whole story

Dugard’s biological dad tells his side

By Alan Duke, CNN

LOS ANGELES – Kenneth Slayton wants to get a message to Jaycee Dugard, the California woman kidnapped as a child and held captive for 18 years.

Slayton would like to get together with Dugard and her two children on Father’s Day, but he said he is being blocked from communicating with the 29-year-old he believes is his daughter.



Kenneth Slayton

When Dugard went missing in 1991, FBI agents investigating the 11-year-old’s disappearance knocked on Slayton’s door because the truck driver had been identified as her biological father.

Slayton said he was shocked by the FBI visit because until then he didn’t know about Jaycee was his daughter.

Read the whole story

MV gets court to freeze South Shore transit agency's assets

By Kathryn Reed

Even though the South Shore bus system's assets have been frozen by a Nevada court, the interim operator lined up to take over at noon Sunday has said it will still do so.

On Wednesday, District Court Judge Dave Gamble froze South Tahoe Area Transportation Authority's assets, bank accounts and fare box revenue per the request of MV Transportation.

MV and STATA have been at financial odds for most of their relationship. They can't even agree on how much STATA is in debt. STATA says it's close to $2 million. MV says it's closer to $3 million.

The Fairfield-based company has filed suit in Minden because STATA is based in Stateline. The suit is to recover the cash it believes it is owed.

"This is a very unfortunate situation that we find ourselves in, but what is further disappointing is STATA's deliberate and blatant disregard for the binding agreement it has with our company to fully pay us for services rendered," Kevin Klika, MV's COO, said in a press release. "STATA left us no other option but to file a lawsuit when it was made very clear earlier this week the agency had no intention of paying us in full."

MV signed a three-year contract last summer to run the day-to-day operation of the bus service on the South Shore that includes BlueGo, Heavenly ski shuttles, Nifty 50 Trolley, routes to Carson City, and service into Carson Valley.

Everything came to a head in May with MV demanding it get paid and threatening to suspend service, and STATA then severing the contract. MV fired back this week with the court order.

STATA's attorney, Mike McLaughlin had a telephone hearing with Gamble on Friday morning asking him to set aside the order. Gamble said no.

The STATA board had an emergency meeting on Friday at 2pm, though *Lake Tahoe News* was never officially notified of the meeting, which would have been normal under opening meeting laws. Representatives of Transit Resource Center (TRC), the consultant working for STATA that will take over running the buses on June 20, were at the meeting.

"Even though MV will no longer be operating the buses on Sunday, BlueGo will continue on. Riders will not have any interruption at all in their service," Stacy Dingman, STATA spokeswoman, said after the closed session meeting. "We are thrilled that we are able to keep our commitment to the entire community."

When McLaughlin was asked prior to the meeting how the bus system would be able to keep operating with frozen bank accounts, which means not being able to pay TRC, he said, "That is the million dollar question."

It has not been made public what the agreement with TRC is now that STATA can't pay that bill either.

McLaughlin said it is possible STATA could issue a bond that would bring it cash to cover some of the debts. He said calls have been placed to bonding companies to inquire about options.

MV's latest actions caught most everyone involved with STATA off-guard.

"I was surprised because as MV knows there are federal funds

in that account. The law states you cannot attach federal funds, so those funds should not have been attached to the order," McLaughlin said.

McLaughlin hopes all parties can be seen by Gamble next week to speed the process along to find a resolution satisfactory to all sides.

MV officials did not return phone calls Friday.

Caltrans projects to cause delays on South Shore

By Kathryn Reed

Highway 50 over Echo Summit will be reduced to one lane for much of next week to repair a retaining wall that was damaged June 14.

David Irwin, 52, of Rocklin was driving his big-rig down the summit into the Lake Tahoe Basin about 3:10pm Monday when his trailer took out a large swath of the rock wall.



The rock barrier on Echo Summit will be

replaced next week.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

California Highway Patrol Sgt. Dan Lopez said Irwin had a permit to be on the highway.

Most of this week the gap in the crumbled wall was left exposed without any markings. Now several orange cones are along the roadway not far from the top of the summit.

One-way controls will be in effect from 7am-5pm June 21-24 while Caltrans erects a new wall.

This project has nothing to with the more complicated and cumbersome project that is coming in May 2011 to replace that entire section of rock barrier with something more sturdy and taller.

The one-way control next week will continue farther down Highway 50. From Pioneer Trail to Lake Tahoe Airport expect delays all week from 7am-5pm as Caltrans repaves that section of road.

Click on schedule to find out about all of Caltrans' projects in the Sierra for June 20-26.

STPUD water meter project costing more than expected

By Kathryn Reed

Cost overruns for the South Tahoe Public Utility District water meter project are approaching a half million dollars.

Campbell Construction Company as of June 16 had put in 165 of the 1,261 meters in the Lake Tahoe Basin portion of El Dorado County that it has been contracted to install.

“During the course of meter installations they have encountered changed conditions including deeper excavations, the need for additional fittings and the occurrence of groundwater,” according to the report principal engineer John Thiel prepared for the STPUD board.

The board on Thursday approved a change order for Campbell not to exceed $452,000. It’s possible a U.S. Forest Service grant will cover that expense. Cost overruns are not covered in the original that is paying for the meter project.

Paul Sciuto, the district’s assistant general manager, believes the firm will meet the Oct. 15 deadline to install the meters. He also told the board on June 17 he was not surprised by the cost overrun based on how fast the plans and specifications were put in place. But Sciuto also does not foresee another bill like this coming before the board.

Within the city, Tiechert Construction has finished the work in the Al Tahoe area. They are now on Gardner Mountain. As of Wednesday, the Sacramento company had finished 545 of the 1,915 meters it will install this summer.