

Electrical arc at South Tahoe Ross injures 1, cuts power

By Kathryn Reed

An electrical snafu that could be heard outside the Ross Dress for Less store sent one employee to the hospital, knocked out power for more than three hours to the South Lake Tahoe shopping center, and had fire and building inspectors puzzled.

“There’s a lot of voltage in that panel. There’s a lot of safety measures. There are grounders and breaking devices that should have prevented this,” said Dave Walker, South Lake Tahoe building official.



Fire crews keep people from the South Lake Tahoe Ross store June 7 because of an electrical problem.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

He was in front of the store hours after the 3pm explosion waiting for NV Energy crews to arrive. Power was restored to the center at 6:30pm, with Denny’s on the corner of Highway 50

and Al Tahoe Boulevard the last business to get power.

(Rite-Aid has generators to keep the lights on.)

Fire Marshal Ray Zachau said he did the initial inspection on the store before it opened in March 2007. A fire inspection is then required every year. The panel was the same one used by Albertson's, the previous tenant.

Neither Zachau nor Walker would venture a guess why so much energy was emitting from the electrical box. A metal shelf being carried by an employee came in contact with the box, which caused an electrical arc. Under normal conditions that contact should not have done anything.

"I'm really surprised we didn't have a fatality today," Zachau said.

The long-time employee's name was not being released Monday. The store manager, who did not give her name, referred questions to corporate. They have not responded to *Lake Tahoe News'* inquiries.

The manager believes the employee, who was conscious when taken to Barton Memorial Hospital with flash burns, would not have to stay overnight.

Zachau said there was a lot of damage to the electrical system in the store. The arc was so powerful it dimmed the lights across the street at the police department.

No one at the store was answering the phone at 7pm. It's not known when the store will reopen.

Denny's missed the late afternoon crowd, but was able to serve dinner.

"Another half hour and we might have been in trouble," Assistant Manager Heather LaCroix said. But a few hours being closed unexpectedly sure beat the incident in 2009 when a gas

explosion at the restaurant had it shuttered for several months and sent several people to the hospital.

Sacramento, San Joaquin rivers among most endangered

By Central Valley Business Times

The Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers that course through most of the Central Valley covering an area from Fresno to Shasta, are second on a list of the ten most endangered rivers in the nation, says American Rivers Inc.

California's Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta supplies drinking water for 23 million people, irrigates the most productive agricultural land in the country, and provides critical habitat for the Pacific salmon fishery and millions of migratory birds.

"However, outdated water supply and flood management systems have decimated the ecosystem and closed the commercial salmon fishery all while leaving Californians ever more vulnerable to droughts and floods," says American Rivers.

Read the whole story

Clean water crusader Stein dies at 92

By Dennis Hevesi, New York Times

Murray Stein, who for more than 20 years led the federal government's fight against water pollution and did much to overcome the prevailing attitude that the nation's waterways could serve as sewers, died May 24 at his home in Falls Church, Va. He was 92.

His daughter Judith Sloane confirmed his death.

Mr. Stein, who retired in 1976, was something of a diplomat without portfolio, traveling from state to state with the difficult mission of seeking compliance through steps that avoided penalties or court action. His technique was to preside over hearings at which local officials and corporate executives were confronted with evidence of pollution and then invited or cajoled into adopting remedial programs.

Read the whole story

\$11 bil. water bond splits enviro groups in California

By Colin Sullivan, New York Times

California environmental groups are split over whether to support an \$11 billion water bond on the November ballot, setting up a family feud between activists who usually stand shoulder-to-shoulder against corporate interests.

The bond is backed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R), Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D), the California Farm Bureau, construction companies and dozens of irrigation districts, to name its most prominent advocates. But also working for the initiative are the Nature Conservancy, Audubon California and the National Heritage Institute.

That deep-pocketed coalition will be opposed by Sierra Club California, the Planning and Conservation League, Friends of the River and Clean Water Action, among others. Also set to oppose the bond are a number of Democratic and Republican state legislators, mostly from the Bay area and the Sacramento region.

Read the whole story

Flood warnings for Walker, Carson rivers

By Reno Gazette-Journal

The National Weather Service in Reno is warning of potential flooding of the West Walker River near Coleville in Mono County.

The NWS has issued a flood advisory for the West Walker for the next few days, as snowmelt continues. Flows in the river have already reached flood stage near Coleville, and snowmelt is expected to continue as temperatures increase over the next few days.

Read the whole story

EDC sheriff's deputy files discrimination lawsuit

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

An El Dorado County sheriff's deputy has filed suit against the county and her department, charging that a "boy's club" network is allowed to thrive in the Sheriff's Department, discriminating against female employees.

Deputy Tanya Hunt's suit, filed Thursday in U.S. District Court, claims she was subjected to sexual harassment and punitive assignments that have made it impossible for her to work.

In a statement relayed by Douglas E. Watts, her attorney, Hunt said her suit was aimed at "bad actors," not the whole department. "I love my job, and I love serving the people of El Dorado County," she said in the statement.

[Read the whole story](#)

Reusable bags aren't what people are using



By Catherine Saillant, Los Angeles Times

It took a while to get into the habit, but when Liz Wetton goes to the market, she always brings her reusable bags. The Malibu mother of three said she feels guilty if she forgets them.

“It’s easy this way and you just feel better,” said Wetton, loading groceries into a Volvo station wagon in a Ralphs parking lot off Pacific Coast Highway.

It’s a common sight in environmentally friendly Malibu, which a year ago banned retailers from dispensing plastic bags. But for the vast majority of California, the question remains: paper or plastic?

Read the whole story

Significant bus schedule changes in BlueGo’s future

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Despite a room full of MV Transportation officials, the wheels are literally and figuratively in motion to move them out and TRC Consultants in.

Much of Friday morning’s South Tahoe Area Transit Authority’s board meeting was what bus service on the South Shore may look like in the future.

During public comment, Nate Smith, president of the western division of MV, said STATA's interpretation of the letter his company sent on May 17 is not accurate and that "we believe little or no effort was made to resolve the issues."

At issue is the more than \$2 million STATA owes MV as well as what the exact dollar figure is. MV wanted to suspend service until some cash had been handed over. STATA's response was to cancel the contract.

During a break Smith told *Lake Tahoe News* that transitioning from one company to another in such period of time would be hard to do. But Smith said all license numbers on the BlueGo buses for California and Nevada will be off by the noon June 20 deadline and that his firm will do what it can to make things go as smooth as possible.

Bob Blanchet with the Teamsters Union flew out from the East Coast for the meeting and was silenced by board Chairwoman Nancy McDermid when he tried to speak about employees and if the new company would honor the union. He arrived late and was not able to speak during the open comment period.

"Sir, I'm asking you to sit down," McDermid told Blanchet as he tried to get out a few words.

"No way in hell are they (union friendly)," Blanchet told *Lake Tahoe News* in reference to TRC.

The 70 employees of MV joined the Teamsters this year. STATA officials have said they want to keep the employees. The union issue is not being discussed openly.

Before going into closed session the board voted on TRC's contract, with all but board member Stacy Dingman saying yes.

"I would love the luxury of more time to do more personal investigation to feel I have all of the information," Dingman said after the meeting in reference to TRC.



Gordon Shaw of
LSC
Transportation
Consultants
talks to the
STATA board on
June 4.
Photo/Kathryn
Reed

Most of the morning was spent listening to Gordon Shaw with LSC Transportation Consultants out of Tahoe City give a presentation about money, equity and efficiency. The operations committee of STATA is going to meet next week, with the whole board assembling the morning of June 25 to possibly take action on a short-term plan for the financially plagued bus system.

In the presentation Shaw said the plan is to work with a \$4.56 million annual budget, put 10 percent in reserves and use \$70,000 to repay the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

Some confusion was evident by the board as to whether the reserves would be used to pay the \$20,000 a month MV is supposed to start receiving July 1 or if more should be taken out off the top for that debt.

In the scenario presented by Shaw on June 4, it would mean 3,431 hours of service – or 5 percent – would have to be cut. This would bring bus service to 60,893 hours a year.

His presentation then focused on equity v. efficiency.

“Equity is when you have service everywhere. Efficiency is you put resources where the people need it most,” Shaw explained. “The last few year there was probably too much equity and not enough efficiency.”

Some of the proposals include increasing the number of buses on Highway 50, eliminating service in Meyers, disbanding neighborhood service at the Y and Al Tahoe areas, mixing skiers-regular users in the winter, and focusing primarily on the Y to Kingsbury Grade.

Everything is on the table. No decisions were made Friday. Timing was also talked about. Shaw proposes changing routes after Labor Day. Board members say the financial situation is so dire that taking action sooner, possibly in a staggered approach, may be what’s needed to keep the system running.

Five people spoke during the public comment period, including Blanchet who didn’t really get to speak.

John Stenersen, who is a BlueGo bus driver, cautioned the board to not blend skiers with regular riders because skiers leave behind wet seats and have their gear with them. He also said it’s necessary to pay attention to the size of bus being sent to the Ridge at the top of Kingsbury Grade because it’s tight to get around up there.

Jennifer Rodriguez said she stopped riding BlueGo when the last set of changes went into place. She is also a dispatcher and said many people call about getting a ride to Barton Memorial Hospital.

South Tahoe man sues Facebook regarding privacy policy

By San Jose Business Journal

Facebook Inc. has been sued over disclosure of data that could be used to identify users who click on ads on the social network.

David Gould of South Lake Tahoe sued the Palo Alto company in U.S. District Court in San Jose, saying it had violated its privacy policy when it gave an advertiser his personal information.

Read the whole story

Job market worse for Nev. teens than adults

By Bill O' Driscoll, Reno Gazette-Journal

They're holding on to their jobs with both hands at Papa Murphy's pizza in Spanish Springs.

As one of the toughest summer job markets for teenagers in memory approaches, those working at Papa Murphy's said they are fortunate to have found work when the shop opened in February.

"I was extremely lucky," said Heather Harper, 16, a student at nearby Spanish Springs High School. "A lot of my friends ask me if we're hiring. They need jobs."

Read the whole story