

Old Mustang Ranch may become conservationists' oasis

By Leslie Kaufman, New York Times

SPARKS — Watching bulldozers pour crushed rocks to force the Truckee River into a more natural serpentine pattern, Mickey Hazelwood, project director for the Nature Conservancy, mused that like many acts of salvation, this one has its roots deep in sin.

For decades, this high-desert site eight miles east of Reno was best known as the home of the Mustang Ranch, the first licensed brothel in the United States. From thin to plump, dwarflike to Amazonian, women hired to suit a range of tastes would line up for inspection by clients in pink stucco buildings tucked into a cottonwood grove 300 yards from the river's bank.

The brothel reopened a few miles downriver in 2006, after the land was confiscated by the Internal Revenue Service and the name and buildings were sold to the highest bidder. Working 12-hour shifts at their new complex, part of which was airlifted from the old site, the women still greet customers in knee socks, push-up bras and other intimate wear.

[Read the whole story](#)

Burn ban in Reno area

expected all week

By Jeff DeLong and Guy Clifton, Reno Gazette-Journal

Health officials on Tuesday issued another Stage One air pollution alert and ordered a burn ban across the Truckee Meadows as particulates associated with wood burning and vehicle exhaust built to unhealthy levels.

Air quality was in the "red" range, and considered unhealthy for the elderly and sensitive people, said Duane Sikorski, air quality supervisor for the Washoe County District Health Department. Pollution was just below unhealthy levels for the general public.

Last Thursday and Friday, health officials declared a Stage One air pollution alert for fine particulates associated with burning for the first time since 1994. It was caused as wood smoke and exhaust was trapped close to the valley floors by cold air.

Read the whole story

People not slowing down on sending gifts

By Kathryn Reed

Little packages, big packages, light ones, heavy ones, cards in colorful envelopes "you see it all this time of year at the post office.

Toni Passot, postmaster in South Lake Tahoe, said Dec. 14 was

the busiest day of the holiday season, with next Monday likely to be the second busiest.



Lines at post offices are normal this time of year.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

Normally one semi-truck takes mail from the South Shore each night to the regional center in Reno. On Monday, the letters and packages heading to destinations near and far filled two semis.

Cristina Martin of South Lake Tahoe was standing in a line about 10 people deep on Tuesday afternoon waiting to send items to her mom in Los Angeles and sister in Arizona.

“Every year I mail packages the week before Christmas,” Martin said.

A woman in front of her mailed off a half dozen boxes that all looked like it might be See’s Candies inside. But the woman sending them wouldn’t reveal what was inside.

Some people needed the front door opened for them because the boxes they were carrying were so cumbersome.

Passot said the amount of mail being sent is about what it was last year. She said it didn’t appear the economy was affecting the volume of packages and letters being sent.

Just like last year, the post office is not having extended holiday hours.

To reach the recipient by Christmas Day, it's suggested all priority mail be sent by Dec. 21. Letters should go out the same day or Dec. 22 depending on the destination.

Research is still being conducted to know if the Bijou post office in South Tahoe will be open this time next year. The U.S. Postal Service is researching the possibility of closing offices throughout the country as a means to save money. Locally, a decision could come at the end of January.

Original attorney to represent Nancy Garrido

By Sam Stanton, Sacramento Bee

An appellate court in Sacramento moved to return defense attorney Gilbert Maines as Nancy Garrido's lawyer today.

Maines had been removed as Garrido's attorney on Nov. 5 by an El Dorado Superior Court judge over allegations that he had boasted about writing a book about the case.

But the 3rd District Court of Appeal in Sacramento today ruled the trial court must reinstate Maines or explain why he shouldn't be on the case.

Read the whole story

LTCC hires VP of business services

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Community College's next vice president of business services will have some adjustments to make when she starts her job, but learning to handle the cold won't be one of them.

Susan Niehoff has been a budget finance officer at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis for the last six years.



Susan Niehoff

The LTCC board of education met at a special meeting Monday morning unanimously picked Niehoff over the other finalist.

This is the second go-round of applicants for this position. The board said no one in the first batch met the needs of the two-year school.

Guy Lease, who had the job when the college opened 30 years ago and then rose to be president of the college before retiring in 2007, has been the interim VP for most of this calendar year. He will finish his duties this month.

Niehoff will come on board in January.

Niehoff has an MBA from UNLV.

She has been at the university level for the last 20 years.

Previous positions include cost analyst and assistant to the controller/treasurer of Northwestern University, a budget officer at UNLV, and the business operations manager and chief financial officer for the UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law.

In Minnesota, the finance department is much larger than at LTCC. She was one of a handful of people with the same title. At LTCC, Niehoff will just have President Paul Killpatrick over her.

Report: Reno drinking water some of the country's worst

Publisher's note: *The Environmental Working Group tested water districts in cities with populations of more than 250,000. More information may be found by clicking here.*

Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Officials of the Reno area's primary water purveyor are disputing an environmental group report that ranks the tap water fifth-worst in the nation.

Truckee Meadows Water Authority executives insist the water is some of the best.

The dispute follows release of a report from the Washington, D.C.-based Environmental Working Group that concluded tap water in many metropolitan areas is fouled by a "cocktail of chemical contaminants."

Read the whole story

2 unrelated deaths on South Shore

Douglas County sheriff's deputies are investigating two unrelated deaths on the South Shore of Lake Tahoe.

Deputies went to a house in the 100 block of Mason Court in Glenbrook Monday night and found a 33-year-old man unresponsive in his bed.

Deputies had been called to the residence by friends who had not heard from the man in several days.

"While on scene, deputies also discovered narcotics inside the residence. It is unknown if any of these substances had been ingested by the decedent prior to death," a press release says.

The person's name is being withheld pending notification of his family.

The second death involves an 11-year-old boy.

Deputies were called about 6:25 Dec. 14 to the 700 block of Tina Court in Stateline. The boy was found hanging in the residence.

The initial investigation reveals no evidence of foul play in either case.

Book now; Tahoe is filling up

Jason Hidalgo, Reno Gazette-Journal

The holidays are looking a lot merrier for Lake Tahoe this season as an improving economic outlook, combined with an assist from Mother Nature, has the lake's resorts and lodges more optimistic about the remainder of the year.

Several properties are reporting an uptick in bookings as of early December, including the traditionally slow weeks preceding Christmas and New Year's. The addition of a new high-profile property, the Ritz-Carlton Highlands, Lake Tahoe, also is adding some extra buzz to the region.

Add a healthy dose of early snowfall to the mix, and Tahoe's hotel and resort industry is hopeful it has the recipe for a better holiday season this year.

Read the whole story

STHS security guard's arraignment set

Larry Brown, the South Tahoe High School security guard accused of smoking pot and drinking beer with a female student, is expected to be in court Dec. 30.

Brown, 63, will be arraigned on one charge of furnishing marijuana to a juvenile.

Brown was arrested Nov. 6 during a routine traffic stop in South Lake Tahoe after El Dorado County sheriff's deputies

said they smelled marijuana coming from the vehicle.

Brown was placed on administrative leave by Lake Tahoe Unified School District. It's not known if he is being paid.

2 people survive plane crash in Truckee

On Dec. 13 at about 5:30pm the Truckee Police Department dispatch center received a report of an aircraft accident near the Truckee Tahoe Airport.

Law enforcement personnel located the crash site minutes later, south of the Highway 267 bypass. The pilot and passenger, both from the San Francisco Bay Area, walked

away from the damaged plane uninjured. The pilot of the single engine turbo prop TBM 850 aircraft was on approach to the Truckee Tahoe Airport with limited visibility when he encountered problems handling the aircraft. The plane crashed in an unpopulated area, into several feet of snow.

The investigation into the cause of the accident has been turned over to the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board.