

STPUD water meter project grows by more than 80%

By Kathryn Reed



A lackluster economy is boding well for South Tahoe Public Utility District.

It means instead of 1,525 water meters being installed in 2010, a total of 2,775 will be.

This is the result of the initial bid coming in much less than anticipated. The district expected to use the bulk of its \$4.38 million grant from the federal stimulus package on 1,525 meters.

However, all eight bids came in at less than \$3 million. The project was awarded Oct. 29 to Tiechert of Sacramento for \$1.98 million.

"That did free up some money," said John Thiel, principal engineer at STPUD. "We were burning the midnight oil this weekend to get the specifications done (for the next round)."

This is because a contract needs to be in place by Dec. 22 or the district loses the cash it hasn't spent. It was just on Friday that the board gave the go ahead to start advertising for the additional meter project. The board is expected to award the second bid on Dec. 17.

Technically, the additional 1,250 meters will be the third bid on meters. This is because 163 were installed this fall off of

Ski Run Boulevard and near Los Angeles Avenue.

The Tiechert contract is for meters in the Al Tahoe, Glenwood and Gardner Mountain areas.

The next bid will be for work in the Angora burn area, Twin Peaks, North Upper Truckee and Christmas Valley areas.

“There is additional money so we can do quite a bit more than we thought,” Thiel said.

Water meters are going to be mandatory by 2025 per California law. The total cost to install the 10,000 meters for STPUD customers is estimated at \$20 million. The more grants the district can obtain, the less impact to ratepayers.

Gibbons wants to overhaul landfills

Gov. Jim Gibbons this month announced his intention to sponsor a major initiative to completely eliminate landfills as presently known.

“There have been huge leaps in recycling technology,” Gibbons said in a statement. “We can conserve natural resources, create clean energy and create jobs by looking at landfills not as places where we bury our trash, but as places where recycling and energy recovery begin.”



Gov. Jim
Gibbons

Gibbons said at least 75 percent of the trash now sent to landfills in Nevada can be recycled or used as a renewable energy source using existing technology. Similar results have been attained by the San Jose, according to his office. Gibbons recently toured a waste recycling operation there.

“Federal law does not allow us to ban the importation of waste from California. But state law allows me to require enough recovery that a waste stream becomes an asset. The availability of economical recycled materials will encourage manufacturers to locate in Nevada,” Gibbons said. “Mandated waste recovery can be a significant part of diversifying our economy and provide much needed jobs.”

Cefalu extends lead over Wallace

It may be a bit awkward tonight at the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board of education meeting.

With challenger Judy Cefalu now 11 votes ahead of Duane Wallace, it's just a matter of time before she replaces him on the board.

The El Dorado County Elections Department expects to certify the Nov. 3 election on Nov. 19. On Dec. 8, LTUSD will have its organizational meeting where Cefalu will be sworn in (assuming the vote totals don't change), and the president and clerk will be selected.

Wallace was appointed to the board this summer to fill the term vacated by Angela Swanson.

Not much is on tonight's agenda. [Click here](#) to see it.

In other election updates, Measure B, the initiative to alter the 2000-voter approved Measure S to allow bike maintenance funds to be used for ball field improvements, lost ground. With two-thirds of the voters needed to pass it, last count had it at 60.79 percent.

No other significant changes have occurred since Election Night totals were tallied. The changes came counting provisional votes.

Nancy Garrido's attorney removed from case

By Sam Stanton, Sacramento Bee

Nancy Garrido's court-appointed attorney has been removed from the case, pending a possible appeal later this month, court records indicate.



Nancy Garrido

The move took place last Thursday in a secret court hearing during which only Nancy Garrido, defense attorney Gilbert Maines, court staff and security officers were present, according to El Dorado County Superior Court records.

Read the whole story

LTVA putting the ‘South’ in Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority is making a concerted effort to leave the blue world behind.

The multimillion dollar “blue world” ad campaign never quite had the ring to it that tourism officials had hoped, and certainly not the buy-in from the South Shore community that it was intended to promote.



LTVA is changing its marketing to emphasize activities.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

The 2010 summer ad campaign will be the first from Duncan Channon.

A subtle change that not everyone is apt to notice is the change in website addresses. Ads in *Ski* and *Skiing* magazine are using www.tahoemouth.com.

"We are stepping out of the blue as this point," LTVA Executive Director Carol Chaplin said.

She won't go into detail about the new campaign, but said it is more activity oriented.

"We are trying to capitalize more on – everything you want to do is right here," Chaplin said. Gaming is still part of the message, but doesn't dominate it like years past.

She won't divulge the new tagline for the ad campaign just yet, but one thing the LTVA board has wanted to emphasize is differentiating between the South Shore and North Shore.

The new URL does just that – it clearly indicates the link is going to provide information about the south end of Lake Tahoe. The North Lake Tahoe Resort Association uses www.gotahoenorth.com.

For people still using www.bluelaketahoe.org, it directs them to the LTVA's main webpage.

The entire campaign will be ready for the public to see after the first of the year. The ad agency was in the area in October shooting footage – stills and video.

Internally, LTVA expects to have its strategic plan in place in the next month.

Not only are website addresses changing, but the entire LTVA website is going to be revamped.

The current www.ltva.org will be more for community partners seeking industry information, with password-protected destinations. Chaplin called it a “resource site” and “internal tool”.

When the ad campaign is more solidified Chaplin expects to show it off to small groups in February and then to the broader community at April's tourism conference. By May, it will be on the airwaves.

The \$800,000 campaign is geared mostly to the broadcast mediums in the Bay Area and Sacramento Valley.

South Tahoe to entertain pot club moratorium

By Kathryn Reed



When the South Lake Tahoe City Council meets in a week it is expected to discuss the possibility of creating a moratorium on medicinal marijuana collectives.

Most of the councilmembers have said the three collectives in town are more than enough.

Cody Bass with the Tahoe Wellness Center told the council on Nov. 3 he favors a moratorium as well.

"We are slow. I don't think we need a fourth (collective)," Bass said.

The irony is that same day the council heard the appeal on the Do It Center. Free market dominated – let good service and pricing dictate which business survives. It doesn't matter how many hardware-like stores are within walking distance – at least city code is written that way.

Apparently when it comes to a more controversial subject like medicinal marijuana, a free market system is not what the council wants to have.

Clearly, the conflict between state law which allows the sale of pot for medical use and the federal ban on it presents all California cities with a dilemma. But it is hard to understand how South Lake Tahoe can regulate the number of one type of business and not others.

Some of the discussion last week centered on whether the collectives could be regulated by where they are located. No one mentioned the possibility of treating them like the medical entity they are purported to be and therefore mandating they fit the criteria all medical offices do.

As it is now, none of the collectives has a business license.

Bass said when his dispensary tried to renew its license it was denied.

Business owners sign a statement acknowledging, “No use that is illegal under local, state, or federal law shall be allowed within the city of South Lake Tahoe.”

Bass said staff in the business license department wouldn’t give him the license because of that statement.

Council will also need to decide who regulates the collectives. Police Chief Terry Daniels had wanted to craft an ordinance earlier this fall that would give the police department oversight. Police have jurisdiction over taxi cab drivers and massage therapists.

The entire matter could be a moot point and another waste of taxpayer money because California keeps pushing toward legalizing marijuana.

The council meets Nov. 17 at 9am at Lake Tahoe Airport.

Kirkwood eager to reduce energy consumption

By Jim Sloan, Sacramento Bee

Few businesses feel as threatened by global warming as the ski industry.

And few resorts are poised to go to the same lengths – and expense – to combat it as Kirkwood and the hardy folks who make their homes in the snowy, windswept Kirkwood Meadows.

Although only a few hundred people live year-round in Kirkwood, the community is ready to spend up to \$30 million to overhaul its aging, dirty and expensive power system and

reduce its contributions to global warming.

Read the whole story

Barton's telemedicine receives cool reception in Carson Valley

By Ed Vogel, Las Vegas Review-Journal

RENO – A California company might become the first from another state to practice “telemedicine” in Nevada.

The Board of Medical Examiners was told Friday by its lawyers that it cannot prevent the Clinician Medical Group of Bakersfield from using television technology to treat Nevadans.

Board lawyers Edward Cousineau and Lyn Beggs said state laws allow the company to do so.

Read the whole story

SLT ready to develop prime corner lot

By Kathryn Reed

A valuable piece of real estate in South Lake Tahoe sits idle – used only by people taking a shortcut from Ski Run Boulevard to Highway 50.

City staff hopes to have development ideas in place so the City Council can vote on them in January.



South Lake
Tahoe is
trying to
figure out
what to do
with this
parcel.

Photo/Kathryn
Reed

“A large restaurant on the corner keeps coming up (as an idea),” Gene Palazzo, city redevelopment manager said this week. “People are all over the board.”

Because the value of the swath of dirt is much less than it was a few years ago, the city isn’t interested in selling it at this point. It wants to control the use on that highly visible acreage.

With the land developed, then the city can also garner tax increment because it is in a redevelopment area, as well as sales tax once a business is operating.

These 2 acres were originally owned by Embassy Suites, which built the lodging property on the lake side of the street

years ago. Even though that property changed hands a few times and is now a Diamond Resorts entity, the deal was this vacant parcel had to be developed in a certain time period or it would revert back to city ownership.

Development didn't occur, so the city has the deed.

The parking garage that belongs to Diamond Resorts that is adjacent to the city's lot has 125 spaces in it deeded to the empty parcel.

Depending on how things shake out, underground parking could become a component of the development.

Palazzo said he would be engaging Diamond Resorts and the Ski Run Business Improvement District in conversations before a plan of action is brought to the council.

The parcel comes with 24 tourism units, but Palazzo doubts they will be used. Zoning also allows for 13,000-square-feet of commercial floor area.

A request for proposal would be sent out after the council chooses the type of development it wants. With the short building season in Lake Tahoe, it's likely construction would begin in 2011.

Red Hawk casino kidnapping leads to 5 arrests

An altercation at Red Hawk casino near Shingles Springs last month culminated in the arrests of five people Friday, seizure of several guns, ecstasy, marijuana and cash.

Search warrants were executed simultaneously at four locations by El Dorado County sheriff's SWAT, Folsom Police SWAT, Sacramento County sheriff's SWAT and Stanislaus County sheriff's SWAT. One was served in Orangevale, two in Folsom and one in Riverbank.

Arrested were Jesse Madrigal, Steven Santiago, Ricky Mora, Stephen Lizotte and Ernie Lizotte.

The arrests stem from an Oct. 14 incident when several Hispanic males and females confronted two Caucasian males and a Caucasian female while at the Red Hawk Casino.

Several of the Hispanic males confronted the Caucasian males asking them if they were "Placerville Peckerwoods." The Caucasian males denied any gang affiliation and our investigation did not reveal they had any gang ties, according to officers.

At the same time one of the Hispanic males also made threats to sexually assault the

Caucasian female. The Caucasian female became enraged and attacked the Hispanic male that made the comment. One of the Caucasian males attempted to separate the female from the Hispanic males when he was punched and hit with a beer bottle, authorities said.

Red Hawk security responded to the area and the groups separated.

One of the groups went to an elevator where they confronted a female victim that had not been involved in the original incident. The group told the victim she was going to get them out of the casino using her vehicle and they would let her go once they were at the freeway, officers said.

The victim was forced to move with them through the casino floors to the parking garage. Once in the garage, the victim

was able to get away from the group and contacted Red Hawk Casino security and ultimately El Dorado County sheriff's deputies.

Using security video from the casino, detectives were able to identify the suspects who were involved in the kidnapping of the victim.