Calif.’s investment in needy students not paying off

By Jessica Calefati, CalMatters

California’s new system for funding public education has pumped tens of billions of extra dollars into struggling schools, but there’s little evidence yet that the investment is helping the most disadvantaged students.

A CalMatters analysis of the biggest districts with the greatest clusters of needy children found limited success with the policy’s goal: to close the achievement gap between these students and their more privileged peers. Instead, test scores in most of those districts show the gap is growing.

The test scores echo a broader and growing concern about the Local Control Funding Formula from civil rights groups, researchers and legislators.

That formula sends more money to schools with higher concentrations of foster youth, kids learning English and students from low-income families. But four years after it was adopted, there are few signs the program is working, and questions have arisen about whether the $31 billion invested so far is being spent effectively.

Read the whole story

Obamacare available

throughout Nev. for 2018

By Sean Whaley and Ben Botkin, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Every Nevada county will have an insurance carrier through the state exchange in 2018, ending two months of uncertainty about coverage.

Gov. Brian Sandoval, speaking outside Renown Health Urgent Care Clinic in Silver Springs in Lyon County, announced in a press conference Tuesday that SilverSummit will offer 2018 coverage in 14 rural Nevada counties.

The subsidiary of Missouri-based Centene has never offered insurance through the Silver State Health Insurance Exchange, which provides coverage through the Affordable Care Act, also called Obamacare.

Read the whole story

Calif. bill would speed up affordable housing projects

By Jim Miller, Sacramento Bee

A California lawmaker has made a key change to expand the reach of a plan designed to speed up construction of affordable housing projects.

The move suggests the Legislature, due to return from summer recess Monday for a final four-week crush of business in the 2017 session, is moving toward agreement on a package of bills aimed at easing the Golden State’s housing crisis.

The measure by state Sen. Scott Wiener, D-San Francisco, would require cities and counties to offer expedited review for affordable housing developers.

Read the whole story

Placer County Sheriff's Office faces lawsuits

By Sam Stanton, Sacramento Bee

Ten weeks after Placer County Sheriff Devon Bell announced that three of his officials had been arrested on allegations of excessive force against inmates at the Auburn Main Jail, his department is facing a series of lawsuits claiming that abuse at the jail has routinely gone unchecked and that video and audio recordings have been altered to cover up the wrongdoing.

At least three cases have been filed so far, and attorneys say several more are expected. The most recent case was filed Friday in federal court in Sacramento by civil rights attorney Mark Merin, who is seeking class-action status to represent hundreds of former and current inmates who may have been victimized.

The lawsuit, filed on behalf of former inmate Beau Bangert, claims that there "has been a group of sheriff's deputies … working at the Auburn Main Jail that frequently utilized unreasonable force against inmates, sometimes individually and sometimes collectively."

Read the whole story

SLT council wants 10-year contract for SnowGlobe



SnowGlobe will be under contract through 2028 when the deal is finalized. Photo/Lesia Witkowsky

By Kathryn Reed

SnowGlobe, the three-day controversial music festival, is going to be part of the South Shore lexicon for another decade.

The South Lake Tahoe City Council on Tuesday agreed to several details in what will be a long-term contract with Chad Donnelly, who first brought the electronic, mostly disc jockey produced bass-centric music event to the area in 2011.

Donnelly had a cadre of people at the Aug. 15 meeting to talk economics, sound and trash.

The current contract with the city and SnowGlobe goes through 2018. This new one would start in 2019. It will be for five years, with the potential for another five years. Donnelly wanted 10 years with two five-year extensions.

“We will never give up the annual reviews. There is always an out clause if the measures are not met,” City Manager Nancy Kerry told the council.

Exact performance measures will be brought to the council at a later date for approval.

Lake Tahoe Community College is an integral player, and without that board’s approval the city’s desires would be quashed. The college board is expected to take up the issue on Aug. 29. It has always had a year-to-year contract. Until last year the field where the soccer teams play was the venue, with the gym as the “green room.” (In 2016, the new community field which was just dirt was the venue site.)



Chad Donnelly, SnowGlobe promoter from Colorado, has made millions off the South Lake Tahoe festival. Photo/LTN

“I did meet with Chad and city staff (Monday) and the proposal addresses many of the concerns raised by LTCC, but I think it is still imperfect as it is currently presented,” LTCC President Jeff DeFranco told *Lake Tahoe News.*

The **college was less than thrilled** with how long it took to remove all of the infrastructure from campus this year, with it looking trashy as the snow started to melt.

At the council meeting Donnelly blamed one vendor, said it wouldn’t happen again, but didn’t give specifics how that would be prevented.

It’s likely Bijou Park will become a part of the event for parking or bus drop offs.

The promoter said with a long-term contract he will be able to invest in infrastructure that will help protect the field and reduce sound issues. A commitment was also made to do a better job of cleaning up trash that attendees leave in neighborhoods.

Multiple times Donnelly equated his event to Coachella in Southern California. That three-day spring music festival went from 99,000 people to 125,000 this year with the addition of 46 acres.

Councilwoman Wendy David reminded him that Coachella is in the middle of a field, whereas SnowGlobe is in the middle of a residential area.

SnowGlobe attracts almost 20,000 each of the three nights. At the meeting Tuesday Donnelly said he had no interest in attracting more people, just making it better. However, in his written material that was part of the agenda packet it calls for 27,000 people in 2024, which is what revenues are based on. (That’s a 35 percent increase in the number of attendees.)



Damaged chain link fences remained for months after SnowGlobe 2016. Photo/LTN

Other aspects of the deal include the city's agreeing to not allow another electronic music promoter to have an event at the new ball field either 60 days before or after SnowGlobe. (SnowGlobe is always Dec 29-31.) Donnelly doesn't want a competitor eroding his profits.

Jesse Walker with New Economics Advisory went over an economic report he did from SnowGlobe 2016 that Donnelly paid for. The data he dissected was based on surveys that SnowGlobe employees conducted.

Walker concluded the financial impact was $11.4 million to South Lake Tahoe, with direct spending by concert-goers $6.1 million. They account for 50,785 room nights. (People tend to stay four nights.) On average each attendee spends $123/day, which does not include the price of the ticket. Sales tax revenue was $52,152 and transient occupancy tax $403,465.

(Stateline recorded 9,248 visitor nights, $10,646 in sales tax, $95,515 in TOT, $1.9 million in direct spending, with an overall economic output of $2.8 million.)

A big change with the long-term contract is the distribution of money. The city currently pays Donnelly $50,000. The new

contract won’t have that deal. In fact, Donnelly’s proposal calls for the city’s contribution to go away starting this December and paying South Lake Tahoe a one-time $25,000 signing agreement.

Still to be worked out is if the city will be receiving a percentage of ticket sales or a set fee per ticket.

Taylor Storms, who is a co-founder and principal of Orkila Capital, was at the meeting as part of Donnelly’s financial team. His proposal is a graduated fee of 50 cents to $1.25 to be added to tickets that would be a pass-through to the city that has an estimated value of $11,000 to $33,750.

“This is separate from fixing the field or mitigating sound,” Storms said. “Our intent is if the field is damaged, we would fix it.”

The sod isn’t even in the ground, which is a concern of the entire council. That won’t happen for another month.

“We will be 100 percent responsible for the damage that occurs,” Donnelly said.

Besides the money, the council likes that this event is in essence an insurance policy against the weather. It means people are coming to town no matter if there is no snow. Plus, it brings a different demographic to the region. The festival also has made the hoopla at Stateline almost non-existent, which means less of an ordeal for law enforcement.

West Nile found in Douglas

County mosquitoes

By Lake Tahoe News

Mosquitoes carrying the West Nile virus have been found in two locations in Douglas County.

Douglas County Mosquito Abatement District was notified Aug. 14 about the results from traps set July 31 in the Westwood area of the Carson Valley as well as the traps set Aug. 2 west of Highway 88 and north of Centerville Lane.

DCMAD completed a ground fogging the night of Aug. 3 and on Aug. 4 did a morning aerial adulticide application of 550 acres to the west and north of Westwood. Another evening fogging was done Aug. 9. Based on the test results, DCMAD plans to conduct a fogging the evening of Aug. 16 and also a morning aerial adulticide application.

At the second location DCMAD completed ground fogging the evening of Aug. 2, the morning of Aug. 4, along with a morning aerial application of 80 acres south of Centerville Lane, and a ground fogging again the night of Aug. 10. Another ground fogging is set for morning of Aug. 16 and a morning aerial application on Aug. 17.

According to DCMAD, most effective way to avoid West Nile virus disease is to prevent mosquito bites. DCMAD advises people to take the following precautions throughout the summer months:

· Use insect repellents when outdoors. Repellents containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, and some oil of lemon eucalyptus and para-menthane-diol products provide longer-lasting protection.

· When weather permits, wear long sleeves, long pants, and socks when outdoors. Mosquitoes may bite through thin

clothing, so spraying clothes with repellent containing permethrin or another EPA-registered repellent will give extra protection. Don’t apply repellents containing permethrin directly to skin. Do not spray repellent on the skin under clothing.

· Take extra care during peak mosquito biting hours. Take extra care to use repellent and protective clothing from dusk to dawn or consider avoiding outdoor activities during these times.

· Mosquito-proof your home. Install or repair screens on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes outside. Use your air conditioning, if you have it. Empty standing water from flowerpots, gutters, buckets, pool covers, pet water dishes, discarded tires, and birdbaths on a regular basis.

Airlines add extra winter flights to Reno airport

By Jason Hidalgo, Reno Gazette-Journal

Last winter’s record-setting snow is set to pay dividends for Reno’s airport this coming season.

Several airlines will be offering additional service to Reno-Tahoe International Airport during ski season, with some extra flights being extended as late as April. Five carriers will be offering the additional flights, which include routes in the West, Midwest and South.

The extra flights bring up the number of total seats available for the winter season to its highest level in more than 10

years. This is also the earliest that the airport has seen these many additional seasonal flights announced for the winter season, said Brian Kulpin, spokesman for Reno-Tahoe International Airport.

Read the whole story

Novasel, Laine appointed to CTC board

The California Tahoe Conservancy will look different at its September meeting.

This is because the Legislature this summer changed state law to allow elected officials to serve on this state board.

On Aug. 15 the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors and South Lake Tahoe City Council voted separately to appoint reps from their respective entities to the CTC board.

The county put Supervisor Sue Novasel back to the board; the council chose Councilwoman Brooke Laine.

Laine had been on the CTC board during her first term. She will be on the CTC board until January when the council makes its usual annual appointments.

The issue came to a head last year when the old law was discovered, which then led Novasel and Councilman Tom Davis to resign and their respective colleagues to appoint non-electeds to the CTC board.

Placer County has chosen to have a non-elected representative for a number of years.

— Lake Tahoe News staff report

North Tahoe wastewater treatment facility workers fed up



Five member districts collect wastewater that flows to TTSA through the Truckee River interceptor along Highway 89. Photo/Provided

By Meghan Herbst, Moonshine Ink

Board meetings at the Tahoe-Truckee Sanitation Agency are usually sparsely attended and over in 30 minutes. In June, employees and concerned citizens piled into the modest board room at TTSA, and the monthly meeting turned into a two-hour standoff.

The players: The TTSA board of directors, under the leadership of 28-year president of the board Oz Butterfield, supported by General Manager LaRue Griffin; and the majority of employees who have been attempting, since February, to gain formal

recognition from the board that they are now a union-represented workplace. Employees say they have followed the letter of the law when it comes to representation – the majority of workers included in the bargaining unit voted by authorization card in February to join the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Chapter 1245.

As North Tahoe's only wastewater treatment plant, TTSA provides a crucial service to the public – filtering and processing sewage and keeping the Truckee River watershed free from related pollutants. But this key public agency is facing serious internal unrest, stemming from what employees say has become a culture of secrecy and harassment, rife with mismanagement and favoritism that poses a threat to TTSA's level of service to the community.

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2 women plucked from cliff in Desolation



The CHP helicopter brought the women to a field in Strawberry on Aug. 13.

Photo/Provided

Two people had to be rescued from Desolation Wilderness on Sunday after they got stuck on the ledge of a steep cliff.

El Dorado County search and rescue team members were called to help Lisa Tran and Sarah Pollo, both from the Sacramento area, who were stranded near Lake Sylvia. This is at an elevation of about 8,700 feet. According to the rescue team, the women could not get down or up.

Because of the location and distance into the wilderness the California Highway Patrol used a helicopter to retrieve the duo. Search and rescue volunteers with the assistance of the helicopter team used long ropes to lower both hikers to safety. The rescue took more than four hours.

There were no injuries from the Aug. 13 afternoon rescue.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report