

SLT affordable housing eliminated for tourist units



A few empty trailers still occupy the parcel behind Hotel Azure. Photo/LTN

Publisher's note: *This is one in a series of stories about affordable housing in the Lake Tahoe-Truckee region. All articles may be accessed via the home page under Special Projects, 2017 Affordable Housing.*

By Kathryn Reed

A few dozen South Lake Tahoe residents have been removed from their affordable housing units so more tourist accommodation units can be erected for a project that isn't even permitted.

The owners of Hotel Azure, who live in San Francisco, also own the mobile home park behind that property along Rufus Allen Boulevard. Today it is a skeleton of what was once a low key housing area. The trailer park has been vacant for about four months.



“There were only about six tenants left prior to closing. All were bought out at fair market value and agreed to sell,” Rich Bodine, director of operations for the hotel, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Where they went is unknown.

The people living in the trailers were renting space from Azure, which used to be called Inn by the Lake.

The plan is to put tiny houses on that land. But instead of them being available for residents, they will be a variation on hotel lodging. They come premade and will be placed on a concrete slab.

“It will give them a sense of renting a home, but still have amenities of a hotel,” Bodine said. The company wants to compete with the Airbnbs of the world.

Bodine predicted everything will be in place by 2019. First up, he said, is getting the infrastructure in place.

Really, the first step is getting the permits.

According to Tom Lotshaw with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, “... in 2013 the owners of the mobile home park submitted an application to subdivide the existing mobile home unit spaced, but that application had issues and has been on hold ever since.”

The city doesn’t even know about these plans.

“The Development Services Department is not aware of the project and there is no pending application proposing such a project,” South Lake Tahoe planner John Hitchcock told *Lake*

With no project even being considered by the regulatory agencies, that 2019 date could be farfetched, and it means local residents could have still been in their homes.

Fire near Mt. Rose 35% contained

Updated 5:35pm:

The fire burning near the Mount Rose Highway is 35 percent contained and has burned 29 acres.

Lightning started the Whites Fire on Aug. 1 near the White Creek Trailhead southwest of Reno. Access to trails in that area is closed.

“The fire is burning in an area that is rocky and extremely dense with vegetation, timber, and forest litter. Our crews have done a great job reinforcing fire lines, suppressing spot fires, and mopping up hot spots within the fire perimeter,” incident commander Stacy Saucedo said in a statement. “We are hoping to have the fire 100 percent contained by the end of the day Thursday.”

Timberline Drive remains open to locals only, and there is no access to the Whites Creek and Thomas Creek Trailheads on the Carson Ranger District.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Would-be buyer of KMS fails to come up with money

The former Kingsbury Middle School property is back on Douglas County School District board's agenda.

The electeds will be asked to approve or deny a sales extension to Patrick Taylor at the Aug. 8, 3:30pm meeting in Stateline. The Cave Rock resident a year ago entered into an agreement to purchase the Stateline site for \$3.15 million.

He has been given multiple extensions. The latest expired this week. He did not come up with the requisite money to keep the property in escrow.

Taylor was not available for comment.

His plans had been to turn the site into affordable housing. Not everyone is thrilled with that idea based on the density proposed and what it would do to traffic congestion.

If the extension is denied, then the district could put the property back up for sale. It's possible the board would seek another appraisal since the market has changed in the basin. Taylor's was the only formal offer to date. The school site was closed eight years ago this summer.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

\$94.6M invested in Tahoe's environment in 2016

By Kathryn Reed

In the last five years, 137 environmental projects have been initiated in the Lake Tahoe Basin, with 207 in the planning stage. They will cost \$1.5 billion to implement, but only \$670 million has been secured.

This was some of the information delivered at last week's Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board meeting.

Kim Caringer, TRPA's division manager of the environmental improvement program, gave an overview of accomplishments to the board.

Project categories include: water quality, watersheds, habitat; forest health; transportation and air quality; sustainable recreation; science; and program support.

In the last year, 20 projects have been completed. These include work in the forest, aquatic invasive species, stream restoration, erosion control and air quality projects.

In 2016, \$94.6 million was spent on environmental projects in the basin. California contributed the most with \$53.1 million, \$13.2 million from the feds, \$12.6 million in private sector funding, \$8 million in local government dollars, and \$7.6 million from Nevada.

Of note is that while the federal Lake Tahoe Restoration Act was signed last year by President Barack Obama, it has not been funded. It is supposed to bring \$415 million to the basin in a 10-year period. The original LTRA was approved by Congress after President Bill Clinton launched the Lake Tahoe Environmental Summit in 1997. (This year's summit is Aug. 22,

10am at Valhalla, hosted by Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif.)

The LTRA is expected to be one of the theme's at this year's summit. With Harry Reid no longer in the Senate, it means more work for the current California and Nevada delegations. The senators have often been in lockstep on Tahoe issues, while members of the House have not always been in agreement.

Other summit agenda items will include climate change, the impacts of last winter and sustainable recreation.

Trump's rural broadband goal won't be easy

By Mark Niquette and Alan Bjerga, Bloomberg

President Trump has promised to expand broadband service to rural areas as part of his \$1 trillion nationwide infrastructure plan. That may be easier said than done.

It would take an estimated \$80 billion to extend broadband to all U.S. areas that lack it, but the White House has initially proposed spending just \$25 billion over 10 years on rural infrastructure needs. At the same time, policy experts disagree about how best to expand rural broadband – and what responsibility government has to subsidize it.

“Our suspicion is the president's plan won't be sufficient,” said Johnathan Hladik, policy director for the Center for Rural Affairs, a Nebraska-based nonprofit that advocates for small farms. “We're happy he's saying it. You also have to do it, and that's where it gets tough.”

Read the whole story

Anti-marijuana group takes aim at Nev. rules

By Colton Lochhead, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Opponents of recreational marijuana say Nevada will be hit with “very serious unintended consequences” if the state does not tighten its regulations of the legal cannabis market.

Kevin Sabet, president of the national anti-pot group Smart Approaches to Marijuana, hammered Nevada for what he called weak restrictions on marijuana edibles and concentrates, a lax tracking system and advertising rules that will increase the risks to public health.

Nevada officials noted that SAM opposed the ballot measure to legalize recreational marijuana and argued that Sabet’s criticisms reflect “a limited understanding of the law and how some of the regulatory provisions came to be.”

[Read the whole story](#)

Rethinking how to prepare for and fight fires

By Andrea Thompson, Climate Central

The West is ablaze as the summer wildfire season has gotten off to an intense start. More than 37,000 fires have burned

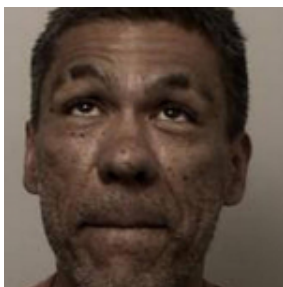
more than 5.2 million acres nationally since the beginning of the year, with 47 large fires burning across nine states as of Friday.

The relatively early activity is quickly becoming the norm, with rising temperatures making the fire season longer than it used to be. The warming fueled by greenhouse gases is also helping to create more and larger fires as it dries out more vegetation that acts as fuel for fires.

This new fire situation means that western states need to be begin to rethink how they prepare for and combat fires, as well as how fire-prone land is developed.

Read the whole story

Man accused of exposing himself at EDC library



Gabriel
Armenta

A transient who is a registered sex offender was arrested at the Placerville Library for allegedly exposing himself to patrons.

Gabriel Armenta, 42, is accused of exposing himself to a woman

and her 18-month-old daughter.

The incident occurred the morning of July 27. Officers said Armenta had been convicted of indecent exposure in the past.

Bail was set at \$285,000. The indecent exposure with a prior is a felony offense.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Mystery surrounds closure of Bank of the West

Aug. 1 marks the second consecutive day the South Lake Tahoe Bank of the West branch has been closed for unspecified reasons.

According to the Tahoe City branch, the South Lake office will reopen on Wednesday. It was closed for “environmental reasons,” according to Tahoe City. The woman said she could not say anything else.

A sign went up on the South Shore door sometime July 31 saying an emergency forced the closure. But it’s not known if the public should be worried.

With that said, El Dorado County, which handles public health and environmental health issues, said it has nothing to do with the closure. The South Lake Tahoe police and fire departments are also not aware of any activity to force the closure.

The phone at the South Shore office doesn’t let callers leave a message. The Tahoe City branch said to call the 800 number.

A person in North Dakota was reached who had no idea what was going on.

The ATM and night drop are still available.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Bear activist sues Nev. officials over 'terrorism' remark

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

A Tahoe-area wildlife activist is suing Nevada officials he says falsely accused him of domestic terrorism.

The activist, Mark E. Smith, is suing the Nevada Department of Wildlife and several of its employees he says, "maliciously continue to make," misrepresentations.

Smith's lawsuit targets wildlife biologist Carl Lackey, game division administrator Brian Wakeling and deputy director Jack Robb.

[Read the whole story](#)