

Parking battle at SLT shopping venues escalates



Poaching parking at the Village Center will no longer be tolerated. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

Yellow and red signs went up this week in the Village Center in South Lake Tahoe warning people if they leave the premises, their car will be ticketed or towed.

“What has happened is my tenants have been taken advantage of by the general public and employees of the (Heavenly) Village. In the winter we can have skiers and snowboarders parking in our lot,” Terry Hackett, owner of the center, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

All of this means less parking for people who actually want to patronize businesses in what was the old Crescent V Center.

Hackett said workers from across the street will park at his lot all day to avoid having to pay at the city-owned garage in Heavenly Village. Some employers reportedly allow their staff time to move their vehicles every two-hours to avoid a ticket.

Hackett is having the two-hour signs removed and replacing them with the brighter, more threatening signs.

"The two-hour limit will still be invoked, but the key is you will not be able to use my lot to walk across the street to the gondola or village," Hackett said.

Because this is private property he has a right to make these kinds of rules. What he or those he pays cannot do is harass or accost someone who chooses to violate those rules. People have a right to come and go as they please. But there are consequences for doing so.

The fine is \$55. Towing would be more. The signs say violators will be fined and/or towed.

This is not a new problem. The issue seems to escalate about every 18 months. (The gondola opened in 2000, the Marriott properties in 2002, and Heavenly Village just keeps getting busier – as does Hackett's center.)

"Stateline is a victim of its own success," Hackett said.

When the Heavenly Village area was redeveloped the agreement was that each side of the street would provide parking for its respective patrons. The city garage costs money, Hackett's place doesn't. People tend to go for the freebie.

The first parking agreement was signed in August 2000. At that time there was supposed to be attendant controlled access to then called Crescent V Center, with the city responsible for oversight of the 478 spots.

The agreement was amended in 2002. The 2011 revision calls for a two-hour parking limit at Crescent V, with the city getting revenue from fines and Hackett responsible for cost of enforcement. It says, "No citations shall be issued for any other reason."

Part of the 2017 agreement between the city and Hackett is for the South Lake Tahoe parking authority to subsidize the parking enforcement. The latest iteration of the contract that the City Council agreed to this month gives Hackett \$50,000 for enforcement; that money comes from the parking authority. At one time the city paid \$100,000/year out of the General Fund to enforce parking there.

These payments are ongoing until the city pays off the debt on the parking garage in about a dozen years.

The garage is bringing in about \$800,000 a year, with roughly half going to pay the debt. (The other half is set aside for maintenance, improvements and Hackett. All money collected from parking issues has to be reinvested into parking related matters in that area. The city technically does not own the garage.)

Revenue from any tickets issued by the private enforcement firm Hackett hires goes to the city's parking authority. Less than 100 tickets have been written in the last six months. If the parking gurus were to truly enforce the parking rules and based on the size of problem Hackett says there is, that many tickets could probably be written in a day.

Tires will still be chalked to mark two hours. Businesses have placards patrons can put in their vehicle if they are staying longer. This will ensure they don't get a ticket.

Paid parking is available in the same center behind Raley's. The price changes with demand. There is also the parking garage at Heavenly Village. The casinos are a possibility, but they are starting to charge on select days/nights.

Walgreens merger with Rite Aid falls apart

By David Goldman, CNN

A \$10 billion mega-merger between two of the nation's largest drug stores is no more.

Walgreens and Rite Aid announced Thursday that they are no longer combining forces. Not entirely, at least.

Instead, Walgreens agreed to buy 2,186 Rite Aid stores for \$5.2 billion. That will essentially cut Rite Aid in half, leaving it with 2,350 stores after the deal is done.

[Read the whole story](#)

South Shore casinos haul in the cash

Stateline casinos in May saw their revenues surge by 30 percent compared to 2016, with the win being more than \$17.8 million.

Statewide the numbers were also positive. The Gaming Control Board on June 29 said the overall win was up 3.5 percent to \$991.6 million compared to May 2016.

Of the 19 markets that are tracked, 12 showed year-over-year

gains.

This is the third straight month the state has shown improvement.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Rural Nev. to lose all Obamacare plans next year

By Anjeanette Damon, Reno Gazette-Journal

Blaming the uncertainty over health care reform in the U.S. Senate, insurance carriers will stop offering plans under the Affordable Care Act in nearly all of Nevada's rural counties, including Carson City and Douglas County.

In total, about 8,000 Nevadans will lose their insurance, with no options to buy a different subsidized plan on the federal health exchange. More than 5,000 of the people affected live in Carson City, Douglas, Storey and Lyon counties.

"My administration is working diligently to identify solutions to ensure there is, at the very least, a safety net available to rural Nevada residents who will be left without any options for coverage in the wake of these devastating and unfortunate decisions," Gov. Brian Sandoval said in a written statement. "The reduced footprint of carriers on the exchange will leave more than 8,000 Nevadans with no coverage, and that is unacceptable."

Read the whole story

Expert: Quake storm near Truckee no big deal

By Dustin Quiroz, Reno Gazette-Journal

The Truckee area was shaken up Tuesday morning, but experts say it's nothing to fear.

Around 30 small earthquakes were recorded north of Truckee with the highest magnitude reaching 4.1.

While this may appear unusual, Mickey Cassar, a seismic records technician with the Nevada Seismological Laboratory, said it's just another case of seismic activity.

[Read the whole story](#)

Traffic-clogging Camp Rich light goes dark



The lights at Camp Richardson on June 28 are all covered and inoperable. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

A tool designed to relieve congestion in Camp Richardson did just the opposite.

That red light at the corner of the ice cream shop and the road leading to the Beacon is now covered up.

Caltrans last October installed the light as a safety measure because so many pedestrians cross Highway 89 there but drivers often failed to stop. However, what the light did instead was create a worse traffic mess. On non-holiday periods and not even on weekends vehicles were backed up to 15th Street.

“It was allowing the pedestrians to control the traffic rather than giving pedestrians a break,” South Lake Tahoe City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*.

People would hit the button and the light would come on. There wasn't a delay as there is on most crossing lights.

But that wasn't the only problem.

"With no green people don't go right away after the red goes off," CHP Lt. Cmdr. Terry Lowther told *Lake Tahoe News*. So, while traffic had the right-of-way, they weren't taking it.

The light only showed red, flashing red or nothing. People are programmed to not drive until they see green after a red light.



The light working on June 25 – a Monday afternoon – is perfect for pedestrians, horrible for drivers. Photo/LTN

Lowther said the light is programmable and that his agency is working with Caltrans to make it function for all involved. It's not known if this new technology actually works for the volume of foot/bike and vehicle traffic this stretch of road handles this time of year.

The city, El Dorado County, California Highway Patrol, Caltrans and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency have feverishly been working on a solution. As of June 28, the lights are covered up and not operating.

"This is not the weekend to have experimental pedestrian traffic lights," Kerry said.

After the Fourth of July holiday a more permanent decision should be forthcoming.

A super long-term solution is the possibility of a more comprehensive plan to manage traffic in this area. That, though, would also involve the U.S. Forest Service because the feds own most of the land.

While TRPA, the Tahoe Transportation District and others keep on the broken record of wanting fewer cars everywhere in the basin, they don't provide any other means for people to get from point A to point B. Then on the flip side are the agencies trying to get more tourists to the area. It's a conundrum where divergent interests are in conflict, and the driving and walking public are ultimately caught in the middle.

Zephyr Cove couple sentenced in fraud scheme

A Zephyr Cove couple and their daughter from Illinois have been sentenced in a scheme where they misused a federal internship program.

David Marzano will be going to prison for 26 months, with three years probation to follow his release. He also must pay restitution of \$815,570. His wife, Laura Blair, and their daughter Janece Burke were each sentenced to five years probation. Blair was ordered to pay \$815,570 and Burke \$271,856.67 in restitution.

The trio had been indicted in March 2015. U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Alabama handled the case. The scheme, prosecutors said, spanned 13 states, starting in July 2009.

Marzano has already been to prison. In 2002, he pleaded guilty in the U.S. District Court of the Northern District of Georgia to a conspiracy involving the unlawful smuggling of aliens. The conviction stemmed from a staffing agency Marzano operated in the Atlanta area that utilized an illegal alien workforce. For that offense, he was sentenced to 15 months in prison, followed by three years of supervised release.

After getting out he started to use the aliases Paul Cohen and David Cole. He started a series of staffing agencies and shell companies based in Chicago. The women also went by other names.

"Together, and with the assistance of others, these defendants engaged in a massive, nationwide fraud scheme designed to unlawfully profit from U.S. Department of State Exchange Visitor Programs," according to the U.S. Attorney's Office. "In addition, the defendants created various shell companies with names that closely resembled well-known corporations. One such shell company was Crowne Partnership Group, which, despite representations made by the defendants, had no association with Crowne Plaza Hotels."

More than 200 foreign nationals were duped by these three. They lost thousands of dollars.

"Rather than receiving the high-level managerial training they expected, the victims were pawned off as cheap foreign labor to restaurants, hotels, and theme parks. The victims were also required to live in housing arranged by the defendants' companies. The businesses where the victims worked paid Marzano directly, but the victims only received a small portion of the wages they earned," according to court documents.

In June 2015, Burke pleaded guilty to conspiring with Marzano and Blair to commit wire and mail fraud. In April 2016, Blair pleaded guilty to the conspiracy charge. Marzano then pleaded

guilty to conspiracy, as well as a charge for substantive wire fraud.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Nev. rural Airbnb operators earned \$5M in 2016

By Jason Hidalgo and Nancy Trejos, Reno Gazette-Journal

Nevada's rural Airbnb hosts posted the fifth-highest average income in the nation for the home-rental service's non-urban locations.

A report released Tuesday by Airbnb found that rural host income in Nevada averaged \$9,000 in 2016. Only California, Hawaii, Delaware and Oregon reported higher host incomes last year, with California's \$11,900 leading the nation.

Nevada was also one of a select number of states where rural hosts earned more on average than their urban counterparts. In 2016, Nevada Airbnb hosts in urban areas reported an average income of \$7,400. Part of this could be attributed to the Tahoe effect, said Jasmine Mora, a spokeswoman for Airbnb.

Read the whole story

Work on I-80 affecting Donner Lake Road access

Bridge painting work has closed Donner Lake Road under the Interstate 80 overcrossings.

This section of roadway will be closed until Aug. 18 while crews perform overdue painting and bridge preservation work. Ramps to and from I-80 will remain open, allowing motorists to access the next available exit.

Motorists wishing to access Donner Lake Road from westbound I-80 should continue to the Castle Peak exit (No. 176) to reverse direction and use eastbound I-80 to reach the Donner Lake Road exit. Motorists coming from Donner Lake on Donner Lake Road who wish to travel west on I-80 should travel east to the Donner Pass Road exit (No. 184) to cross over and access westbound I-80.

DUI suspected in fatal Hwy. 50 accident

A Carson City woman is accused of driving under the influence in the accident that killed a woman this week on Highway 50 just west of the entrance to Hidden Woods neighborhood

Officers have not released the name of the 40-year-old. She remained at Renown Medical Center in Reno on June 28 with non-life threatening injuries. She will be going directly to jail when medically able to.

Killed in the June 26, 4:39pm accident was Sranthon Bunnag,

52, of Thailand. She was here on vacation.

According to the Nevada Highway Patrol, the Carson City woman was going east when her vehicle crossed a double yellow line and struck the westbound vehicle head-on. Bunnag was in the front passenger seat.

There were five other people in Bunnag's car. All were taken to Barton Memorial Hospital with non-life threatening injuries.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report