

TRPA approves area plan for Placer County

Even though Placer County's Tahoe Basin Area Plan already faces a **legal challenge**, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board on Wednesday voted to approve it.

The vote was unanimous, though board member Belinda Faustinos had to leave the Jan. 25 meeting in Kings Beach early. However, she had expressed her support before she exited.

The approval also means the Tahoe City Lodge is green lighted. The lodge will include 78 condos and 40 traditional hotel rooms. The four-story structure will front Highway 28.

The area plan is the guiding planning document for Placer County's portion of the Lake Tahoe Basin. It has criteria for affordable housing, addresses traffic, parking management strategies, and wayfinding signs.

The lawsuit filed by the California Clean Energy Committee contends the environmental analysis is not adequate, in particular CEQA – the California Environmental Quality Act. Still, the approved document is the law of the land until a court says otherwise

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Missing snowboarder found

near Mt. Rose

By KARNV-TV

Volunteers with Washoe County's search and rescue teams have found a snowboarder who was reported missing in the Mt. Rose area Wednesday night.

The boarder started at Incline Peak, according to the sheriff's office, and his car was parked on the Mt. Rose summit.

The sheriff's office reported just before 9pm Jan. 25 that the boarder was found safe and in good health.

Read the whole story

S. Lake Tahoe receives state transportation dollars

South Lake Tahoe will benefit from the \$127 million the California Transportation Commission is spending on 49 projects in the state.

The money is being spent on aging roads and bridges, make upgrades to transit and rail systems and to encourage use of alternative forms of transportation, including biking and walking.

The funding includes \$47.4 million from the State Highway Operation and Protection Program for 14 "fix-it first" projects that will repair bumpy pavement, preserve roads that are in good condition from deteriorating and upgrade bridges

to make them safer and stronger.

Locally, South Lake Tahoe will receive \$117,000 for construction of bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements between the intersection of Al Tahoe Boulevard and Johnson Boulevard and the intersection of Al Tahoe and Highway 50.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Questions about recreational pot in Nev.

By Rachel Crosby, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Even though recreational marijuana is now legal in Nevada, it doesn't seem legal to some locals.

During a public educational meeting on pot recently hosted by the Metropolitan Police Department's Spring Valley area substation, a man in the audience repeatedly asked questions before making a final request.

One of the big questions was: If recreational marijuana is legal, but there are no dispensaries, where does one get weed?

The answer, police said, is at home. You can legally grow up to six marijuana plants for personal use and up to 12 per household until recreational dispensaries set up shop, which could happen as early as March. After that, you can't technically grow pot within 25 miles of a dispensary.

Read the whole story

Entrepreneurs redefining South Lake Tahoe

By Daniel Duane, Bloomberg

Chris McNamara, an experienced rock climber and BASE jumper, was dangling from a cliff near the city of South Lake Tahoe in March 2016 when he had a vision: “It was snowy and super beautiful, and I realized this place ought to be a world capital of outdoor recreation—San Francisco’s cool, alternative mountain city, like what Boulder is for Denver,” he says. “We’ve got skiing and mountain biking. There’s sailing and stand-up paddling. I’m trying to get other entrepreneurs to realize they can do what I did, trade in their commute for a better lifestyle and still pop down to San Francisco for meetings.”

South Lake Tahoe has 21,000 year-round residents, spectacular nature—and a long way to go in the charm department. Tawdry casinos, strip malls, and run-down motels dominate the landscape. Still, it’s just three hours from the Bay Area; gondolas to the immense Heavenly Mountain Resort depart from downtown; and the average home price is \$390,000, compared with \$1.16 million in San Francisco.

McNamara’s vision shouldn’t be that far-fetched: Of all the areas along the lake, South Lake Tahoe has the best combination of affordability and convenience to skiing and beaches. “My inspiration comes from what Tony Hsieh did,” he says, referring to the Zappos chief executive officer’s \$350 million attempt at revitalizing downtown Las Vegas.

Read the whole story

Disjointed efforts by Tahoe transit officials

By Kathryn Reed

The future of transportation is not going to be a smooth ride in Lake Tahoe.

While four speakers last week focused on technology and transportation, they all sounded like they are working in silos and not together.

What the public wanted based on questions was information about what is being done to lessen the tourist traffic, especially in residential areas on get-away day, and public transit in general.

None of the four speakers could deliver much in the way of satisfactory answers. They did acknowledge that without a functional transit system, people are going to stay in their individual vehicles. And without that local system, there is no reason to engage people in the Bay Area or Sacramento regions about taking some form of transit to get here or working on developing what the transit might be.

George Fink with Tahoe Transportation District, which runs the South Shore BlueGo bus system, admitted that Uber can do a better job than his agency. This is because BlueGo barely goes into residential areas.

As far as neighborhoods being overrun by tourists looking for a shortcut, the panel said that is a law enforcement issue and not something they will be dealing with. The only suggestion was to change the Caltrans owned reader boards.

Joe Marzocco with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency talked about all the data that is collected from people's cell phones. A lot of this is done via Google maps and other apps people are using.

"A lot of third parties are collecting data, mostly from cell phones to track and forecast travel across the region," Marzocco said.

TRPA will use the data as it updates its transportation plan.

Tahoe Transportation District collects data through an app called Swiftly. TTD collects data from riders who have the app – where they get on, off and how long the ride took.

TTD's seven cameras on nearly every bus help collect data too. They aren't just a safety tool. They register bumps and can tell when drivers take a corner too narrowly.

Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition's technology is a bit more static. Through its website there is a bike map with different tools that allow users to find out where various types of trails are, if bike parking is available and other relevant information. Users may also add information.

Sherry Hao with the bike group said a new version of the map may come out this year.

Danielle Hughes, a land planning expert, spoke about the Connect Tahoe concept. It's an idea she is trying to get people interested in that involves putting sensors in the ground and people then using an app to find open parking spaces. She talked about how much time is wasted finding a parking space and the emissions associated with that endeavor.

None of the four talked about the Living Lab at UNR that is being created in Reno, Sparks and Carson City. UNR researchers are using advanced-autonomous systems, computer sciences, synchronized mobility, robotics and civil engineering. Public

transportation is the primary focus.

The initial research will explore how vehicles sense their environment and communicate with other vehicles, infrastructure such as traffic signals and systems, and individual people through their mobile devices. Researchers are working toward safe, synchronized, zero-emission mobility systems.

The other technology that is new is being offered by Uber. The ride share company in mid-February plans to launch a website called Movement which will use Uber's data about routes and travel time from various cities.

Liberty restores power in Truckee

Updated 10:35pm:

Power has been restored.

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A good stretch of Northstar, Truckee and Glenshire are without power.

Liberty Utilities said these customer should expect rotating outages throughout the night and possibly into Wednesday morning due to a problem with NV Energy's North Truckee substation which feeds Liberty's distribution lines.

"We ask that North Lake Tahoe customers who do have service, or those that may have service restored intermittently, please conserve as any alternative temporary power source will not be

able to support the full load,” Liberty said in a statement.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Homewood man found deceased in snow

By Kathryn Reed

A Homewood man was found dead Tuesday morning, laying in the snow outside of his house.

Placer County sheriff’s deputies found the body of Todd Michael Borchardt, 49, about 11am Jan. 24 covered in 5 to 6 inches of snow.

Deputies received a call from the PDQ Market in Tahoma saying a vehicle had been abandoned there. How many days isn’t known. The vehicle was registered to Borchardt.

Looking at his residence the driveway, walkway and steps had not recently been shoveled. Lights were on and dogs were barking inside.

“We checked the house and found his cell phone and personal items. It didn’t look suspicious,” sheriff’s Sgt. Dave Hunt told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We don’t expect foul play.”

North Tahoe Fire was called to help look around the property. Using probes they were able to find the body.

An autopsy will be conducted.

Neither a shovel nor a snowblower was found in the vicinity of the body. Hunt also said it did not appear snow shedding from the roof was a factor.

Neighbors told detectives they had not seen Borchardt for a few days.

The market where the vehicle was located is walking distance to Borchardt's residence on Emerald Circle. It is not known why he chose to leave the vehicle at the market.

Explosive device kills ski patroller at Squaw

Updated 4:42pm:

A ski patroller at Squaw Valley died Tuesday morning during avalanche control activities.

Joe Zuiches, 42, of Truckee was killed Jan. 24 by an explosive device used for avalanche control.

"The cause is believed to be the detonation of an explosive charge, and does not appear to be avalanche related," the resort said in a statement.

Placer County Sheriff's Office and North Tahoe Fire Department are conducting the investigation.

The incident occurred at 8:35am during avalanche control activities at the top of Gold Coast Ridge.

Zuiches had worked at Squaw since 2012.

He is survived by his wife and infant son.

The Joe Zuiches Memorial Fund has been established through **Go Fund Me**.

The resort was closed for the day on Tuesday.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

1 in 45 Calif. residents attended Women's March

By Phillip Reese, Sacramento Bee

The Women's March on Saturday drew historic participation across California, with 50 cities each drawing more than 100 protestors.

Crowd estimates put the cumulative turnout in California between 531,000 and 1.2 million, according to nationwide data compiled by Erica Chenoweth of the University of Denver and Jeremy Pressman of the University of Connecticut.

Read the whole story