

South Lake Tahoe fills city commissions

On Jan. 17 the South Lake Tahoe City Council made a number of appointments to commissions.

They include:

Planning Commission:

- Judy Brown
- Jessee Duyer
- Jenna Palacio
- Angela Swanson
- Craig Woodward

Recreation Commission:

- Jerry Bindel
- Jenn Boyd
- Pete Fink
- Steve Noll
- Jerry Williams

Marissa Fox and Dave Rios were selected as provisional members. This is because the council agreed to increase the number of members from five to seven. For that to take effect it will be brought back at the next council meeting. After that action takes place, Fox and Rios will full members of the rec commission.

Airport Land Use Commission:

- Michael Scott

Building/ADA Board of Appeals:

- Chip Henderson
- Julie Stewart

For these two latter commissions, the council is looking for more applicants. The Airport Commission needs one more person. The Building Commission needs members representing a plumber contractor, heating and ventilating contractor, general building contractor, and ADA member. For more info, email salessi@cityofslt.us.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Flooding, snowstorms take toll on I-80

By Associated Press

The flooding and snowstorms that battered Northern Nevada last week have taken a toll on Interstate 80 in the Reno area.

The Nevada Department of Transportation says I-80 travelers should expect delays this week on the west side of town as crews work to repair potholes from the Keystone exit on the edge of downtown all the way to the California state line.

Westbound travel was reduced to one lane during emergency road work on Sunday.

NDOT says single-lane closures will continue at times in both directions. Speeds will be reduced to 55 mph and no passing

will be allowed.

Liberty makes progress before next storms arrive

Just as Liberty Utilities has restored power to almost all of its customers, another series of storms is lined up, ready to bear down on Lake Tahoe and the surrounding region.

All customers except the 136 who live in the River Road area have had their power restored. Helicopter operations were limited Monday due to weather. Once they were under way, additional damage was discovered. If the weather cooperates and the helicopter is able to fly, Liberty hopes to restore power to these last customers by Tuesday night.

The first storm is expected to arrive Wednesday afternoon. Substantial wind will come, followed by rain and then snow.

According to the National Weather Service in Reno, about a foot of snow is possible in the higher elevations, with snow levels reaching the valley floors by Thursday morning.

A colder system should arrive Friday and Saturday, with the potential for a more potent system Sunday and Monday.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Sandoval report card: Progress made, work to be done

By Sandra Chereb, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – When Gov. Brian Sandoval delivers his final State of the State address Tuesday, Nevada lawmakers will receive a written report card from the administration highlighting achievements realized over the past six years.

Titled “Shared achievements for the Nevada Family,” the report is a synopsis of gains made since Sandoval took office in 2011, when the state was in the throes of recession, the housing market was in the gutter, unemployment soared and state finances were in shambles.

“We were not on the brink, we were over the brink in 2011,” Sandoval reflected during an interview Friday at his Capitol office.

In his first address to lawmakers that year, Sandoval pointed out the obvious: “Nevadans are confronted on all sides with bad news.”

Read the whole story

CDC reports Nevada's first

‘nightmare bacteria’

By Marcella Corona, Reno Gazette-Journal

Public health officials reported a Reno woman who died last year from an incurable superbug – a problem that is spreading in the U.S.

The drug-resistant bacteria made its way overseas and was the first superbug case to be reported in Nevada, the Center for Disease Control said in a report last week.

The bug was resistant to 26 different antibiotics, according to the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.

Read the whole story

Calif. needs bilingual teachers after Nov. vote

By Amy Taxin, AP

While Californians passed a ballot measure to bring back bilingual education in the upcoming school year, educators say a challenge to getting the programs started will be finding more bilingual teachers.

Nearly two decades after banning most bilingual education, Californians voted in November to let schools restore it for both English learners and English speakers whose parents want them to learn Spanish, Mandarin and other languages to compete globally for jobs.

Educators say growing interest in bilingual programs will boost already high demand for teachers trained and credentialed to teach the classes. Schools that already have such programs in California – and in other states, including Utah and Oregon – have brought teachers on visas from overseas to meet the need.

“There is already a shortage for bilingual teachers with just the demand we have right now,” said Joshua Speaks, a spokesman for the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

The overwhelming vote in favor of Proposition 58 is a huge turnaround from the backlash to bilingual education following a surge in immigration to California in the 1990s. Since then, some schools have started bilingual programs but parents of English learners had to sign annual waivers for their children to participate, and many districts were reluctant to take on the paperwork.

Since the measure passed – and with 73.5 percent of the vote – many schools are expected to expand bilingual offerings or start new programs. Among the most popular models are so-called dual language immersion programs mixing English learners and English speakers in the classroom and splitting instructional time between English and another language.

The state’s Department of Education estimates California currently has at least 350 dual language immersion programs, though the vast majority of the state’s 1.4 million English learners are currently taught using English immersion. Robert Oakes, a department spokesman, could not say how many districts will start bilingual programs, but expects many will.

“There is a hope and an expectation there will be a big expansion,” he said.

California is already facing a teacher shortage following the economic downturn. Areas where teachers are needed most

include special education, science and bilingual education, Speaks said.

To obtain authorization to teach bilingual classes, teachers must take additional courses and pass additional exams. In the 2014-15 year, the state issued about 400 bilingual authorizations, Speaks said.

Cristina Alfaro, a professor of dual language and English learner education at San Diego State University, said her program annually graduates about 60 bilingual teachers.

"We don't even credential enough to meet the demand for San Diego, and we have a lot of people from out of state and throughout the state who call us," she said. "My phone rings off the hook."

The lack of bilingual classrooms in California over the last two decades, especially at the high school level, has contributed to the dearth of bilingual teachers, said Nicole Knight, executive director of English Language Learner and Multilingual Achievement at Oakland Unified.

"We can't grow our own if we're not developing our skills," she said. "Just because they graduate and they speak Spanish at home doesn't mean they have academic levels of Spanish that are going to enable them to teach in that setting."

To meet the demand, school districts have looked overseas. Los Angeles Unified, which has more than 500 teachers in dual language immersion programs, brought nine teachers and two support staff on visas for Mandarin programs, said Barbara Jones, a district spokeswoman. In Oakland Unified, the district has brought visiting teachers from Mexico and Spain.

With the passage of Proposition 58, efforts are underway to reach out to bilingual teachers from the 1990s who are now in English-only classrooms and get them updated training so they can switch back. Recruiters are also seeking candidates to

enter bilingual teaching programs, especially among high school graduates who received a state seal of biliteracy.

California began awarding high school graduates who demonstrate proficiency in another language the state seal in 2012. Since then, many other states have adopted a similar program.

Alfaro said her university's program will grow to train more teachers if more students enroll, which she expects could happen as the job market expands.

Bilingual education advocates say they expect school districts in California will spend the next year planning as it takes at least a year to establish a dual language immersion program.

"Twenty years ago, bilingual programs sprouted up overnight, and they didn't have the foundation they needed to really deliver on a high quality program," said Shelly Spiegel-Coleman, executive director of Californians Together, which supported the ballot measure. "We want to encourage districts to take their time."

Mysterious pot-related illness popping up

Publisher's note: From Lance Orr, Barton Health medical director of the Emergency Department, "We have seen patients that match the flu-like illness described in this article. Medically speaking, this is referred to as 'cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome.' Symptoms include abdominal pain, nausea, and vomiting and are related to heavy or long term marijuana use. If the patient continues to use marijuana,

symptoms are likely to persist and we have seen patients with this condition return to the Emergency Department. Fortunately, symptoms typically resolve if the patient abstains from marijuana. Though this medical advice is not always taken by patients, the Emergency Department staff and physicians have seen firsthand how heavy marijuana use can cause and prolong this syndrome."

By Mary Papenfuss, Huffington Post

A mysterious marijuana-related illness is popping up with increasing frequency in hospital emergency rooms, particularly in states where cannabis is now legal.

The symptoms are severe abdominal pain and violent vomiting – and most doctors are initially stumped when they encounter patients with the problem.

The illness is cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome, which is linked to heavy, long-term use of marijuana, according to experts. For some reason, the nausea and vomiting of CHS can be relieved with hot showers or baths, which can serve as an important hint for physicians trying to diagnose a patient.

Read the whole story

Power being restored in American River canyon

Strawberry Lodge along Highway 50 has power after being without it for five days.

It came back on about 9:30pm Jan. 14.

Despite the cold, many people stayed at the resort through the darkness. Three woodstoves helped take off the chill. Extra blankets were provided. The annex, the rooms on the other side of the highway, had hot water via the propane.

“We had plenty of propane to cook,” James Clisby with the lodge told *Lake Tahoe News*. He said one of the tricky things was providing coffee. “We put a tray over the grill and heated it up over that.”

PG&E is still reporting pockets of the American River canyon being without power.

Sierra-at-Tahoe has been hit at times.

“We we’re previously affected, but the problem has been resolved. We currently have full power and thank PG&E for their hard work on getting the power restored,” Steve Hemphill, the ski resort’s spokesman, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Elected officials forced off CTC board

By Terra Breeden

The California Tahoe Conservancy’s special meeting on Jan. 13 was primarily to discuss the conflict of interest that has arisen within its regime. The conflict has specifically targeted board members Tom Davis of South Lake Tahoe and Sue Novasel of El Dorado County, who had been on the CTC board as elected officials.

Davis resigned at the end of Friday's meeting. He told *Lake Tahoe News* it was important for the board to know why.

Who will take his place remains to be seen. The city on Tuesday has its annual reorganization meeting when it comes to who is seated on which board-committee-commission. There is talk of having former Councilman Hal Cole, who is no fan of the agency's – especially Executive Director Patrick Wright, be the appointed representative.

El Dorado County Board of Supervisors on Jan. 10 temporarily appointed Senior Deputy County Counsel Paula Frantz to the CTC board.

"The county Board of Supervisors remains of the opinion that the claimed incompatibility of offices issue is without merit and that Supervisor Novasel, as the elected representative for District V, has demonstrated the highest ethical and professional standards while serving on the CTC board," CAO Don Ashton told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The CTC meeting agenda had two discussion items:

- The applicability of the doctrine of incompatible offices to the Conservancy board and potential legislative options to remedy the issue.
- Status of projects and partnerships with South Lake Tahoe.

The lone action item pertained to the Greenway Bike Trail.

It was noted the two discussion items and this special meeting came about after ***Lake Tahoe News*** in December brought the potential conflict to the public's attention.

That story points out the conflict issue only came to light after the city and Wright began to have disagreements. At the same time Davis was calling for the board to evaluate Wright who had not had a performance review in three years. (That

review is slated to occur in June.)

California Deputy Attorney General Marian Moe opened the CTC board meeting with a statement saying the dilemma was complex and that it addressed an array of issues from contracting as an official to economic disclosure problems.

Moe explained that CTC members Davis and Novasel stirred up conflicts of interest by being on the board and by being elected officials at the same time. The Conservancy was created in 1985.

The doctrine states, "Members might have potential conflicts of interest related to voting on matters within jurisdiction of both the Conservancy and El Dorado County."

Moe expressed that although there has been a lot of tension within the board, the CTC is looking for a solution.

"We want elected officials to continue to serve in the Conservancy," Moe told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The problem stems from a law that requires CTC board members to automatically vacate their position if a conflict of interest arises.

"When we set up the commission to create the Conservancy, we had no idea that the conflict of interest would become the issue it is today," board Chairman Larry Sevinson said. "I have to apologize because unfortunately, we let it fall through the cracks."

Some board members expressed their disappointment in the system.

Davis at the end stated he couldn't continue as a member of the board until the issue had been clarified. Davis said he wanted to be transparent with the public and then resigned from the board.

"It's been an honor working with this board, every one of you is a class act," Davis said. "But after this discussion, I officially reassign from the board. This is a non-voting item. I'm going to go get lunch."

Davis took his belongings and left the room after speaking.

Novasel, who was sitting in the audience, said following the September meeting she was asked to resign from the board. At that time she refused to.

"I think this board is incredibly valuable to our community and it was under the threat of losing my office that I am no longer on the board. I'm sitting in the audience instead," Novasel said.

The CTC is now looking to the Legislature to update the law to avoid the conflict of having elected officials on the CTC board. Board members said they want the new legislation to reflect the conversation that took place during the meeting. A draft of the proposed legislation had already been sent to the governor's office.

"We are very much interested in seeking a legislative remedy to work toward the greater good for our community," board member Todd Ferrara said. "There is nothing to gain in the long term from any of this confusion."

When it came to the Greenway, the CTC staff wanted the board to approve a memorandum of understanding regarding how the maintenance for the bike trail would be funded. El Dorado County's rep on the board – an attorney – said she wasn't about to vote for an MOU that the board had not even seen.

It was also pointed out that the board that oversees Measures S-R has not voted to fund the maintenance, yet the CTC staff said this is in part where the money to maintain the trail would come from.

While the city and Lake Tahoe Community College support the trail and land swaps to make it a reality, neither entity has money for maintenance.

The CTC board voted down the agenda item because of its presumptive nature, and lack of detail and facts.

Kathryn Reed contributed to this story.

Sandoval to Congress: States need say in health care

By Sandra Chereb, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY — Gov. Brian Sandoval on Friday said overtures by Republican leadership in the House of Representatives seeking input from states on the Affordable Care Act was a “positive consultation process” that he hopes continues as Congress considers repealing the law.

Sandoval was the first Republican governor in the nation to expand Medicaid eligibility as allowed under President Obama’s signature health care law. With Republican President-elect Donald Trump about to take the reins of the nation and Republicans in control of both the Senate and House, GOP members in Congress have made it a priority to repeal the law, creating angst for many who have received health coverage under its provisions given the uncertainty of what will replace it.

In a response to a letter from House Republican leadership, Sandoval said states are “integral players” in the conversation “and the decisions that are made going forward

will have a profound impact on our citizens' lives and the health care providers who serve them."

Read the whole story