

Free pet adoptions at EDC shelters

A Placerville company is giving future pet owners a gift this month – free animal adoptions.

TravelLite RV Rentals is paying for all December pet adoptions from the El Dorado County animal shelters in Meyers and Diamond Springs.

The savings can be significant. Normally fees are \$120 for dogs, \$42 for cats, \$40 for small livestock and \$15 for other smaller animals.

Licensing fees, which range from \$23 to \$34.50, are still up to the person adopting the pet.

For more information, call the shelters: Meyers, 530.573.7925 and Diamond Springs, 530.621.5795.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Calif. eyes stricter water conservation rules

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

As the drought enters its fifth year, California is considering tightening its urban water conservation standards.

In a series of proposals released Wednesday, state officials said they might require urban water districts seeking to avoid state conservation mandates to prove they have a five-year

water supply on hand.

Under rules that went into effect earlier this year, urban districts have to show only a three-year supply to get out from under the state's previous mandates, which required savings of 25 percent. With the more relaxed standards now in effect in most of the state, Californians haven't been conserving as much as they did last year. Officials with the State Water Resources Control Board have raised the idea of imposing a tougher mechanism for reducing consumption.

Read the whole story

NHP looking for van that hit pedestrian in Stateline

Nevada Highway Patrol troopers are looking for the driver of a minivan that hit a pedestrian in the Stateline casino corridor.

The incident occurred Nov. 13 at about 4am in front of Harvey's.

Troopers said there was a verbal altercation between the driver of a white Ford minivan and a pedestrian that included objects being thrown at the pedestrian. The pedestrian began to run after the white minivan on Highway 50. Then the pedestrian was struck by the left side of the van.

The victim was transported to Barton Memorial Hospital with non-life threatening injuries.

The driver of the minivan is described as a Middle Eastern adult male, possibly in his mid- to late 20s, with short black

hair. The passenger in the van is described a white adult female in her early 20s with long blonde hair.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Trooper Sal Navarro at 775.684.4469 or snavarro@dps.state.nv.us.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Task force begins overhaul of Nev.'s juvi system

By Sandra Chereb, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – A task force of judges, prosecutors, legislators, youth advocates and juvenile probation officials on Tuesday began considering options to improve Nevada's juvenile justice system and break a cycle of recidivism.

Gov. Brian Sandoval established the task force in July to thoroughly review Nevada's juvenile system and propose changes. Sandoval has indicated that overhauling the state's approach to criminal justice for youths and adults will be on his agenda for the upcoming legislative session.

Nevada was chosen from among 18 states to receive a federal grant for the juvenile justice effort, which came in the form of technical assistance from the Council of State Governments Justice Center. The center evaluated Nevada's juvenile system and outlined suggestions for improvements.

Read the whole story

Attic volunteers to be replaced with paid staff

By Kathryn Reed

Devastated. That is how some volunteers with Barton Auxiliary feel after being told they can no longer donate their time at the Attic Thrift Shop or Barton Memorial Hospital's gift shop.

The new rule takes effect Jan. 1.

Auxiliary members learned at their Nov. 21 meeting that paid staff would be taking over their volunteer positions at the thrift and gift stores. They can apply for those jobs. But these people weren't looking for a paid job and the constraints that come with it. They want to give back to the community. Many are older, retirees.

Barton Health CEO Clint Purvance delivered the news in person.

According to the synopsis in the group's monthly newsletter that came out this week, the reason for the change is "due to state and federal laws that prohibit volunteers from working in a commercial retail environment."

During the 10-months the health conglomerate was without a human resources director consultants were brought in to look at various aspects of the organization.

"It was discovered we may be viewed as not in compliance," Purvance told *Lake Tahoe News*. This is in regards to the use of volunteers.



For the first time since the Attic opened in 1961, paid employees will operate it starting in 2017. Photo/LTN

Sandy Killian, Barton auxiliary president, initially deferred comment to Barton's human resources director. Then Barton PR sent out a statement in her name that said, "Yes, we are a bit sad, but are committed to making a positive impact on Barton's patients, families, and visitors."

However, with other auxiliary members she is not being as conciliatory.

One member told *Lake Tahoe News*, "It's sad that this has happened. Volunteers have been and still are the heart of Barton."

The auxiliary primarily makes its money through the thrift shop. The group also has an annual holiday fair each November, operates the hospital gift shop and sells the popular seasonal cheeseballs.

Most of the money is earmarked for a special project at the hospital that the group agrees to. The auxiliary has given more than \$6 million to the hospital.

Each year scholarships are also doled out. This year \$19,500 went to 14 students in the Lake Tahoe and Carson Valley areas.

The South Lake Tahoe thrift store opened in 1961. Through the years it has raised millions of dollars. In the early days the auxiliary was responsible for paying the doctors at Barton Memorial Hospital.

In 2010, the auxiliary turned 50. There were 89 volunteers that year who “gave” 29,393 hours to the hospital. This saved the health care system \$600,000.

“The net revenue generated from both locations will continue to fund the auxiliary’s student scholarships and an annual project, such as acquiring a 3-D Breast Tomosynthesis mammography machine, to benefit the health and wellbeing of our community,” Mindi Befu, spokeswoman for Barton Health, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The auxiliary members will be absorbed into other volunteer jobs if they so desire.

Other jobs involving auxiliary members include: 14 members work at the hospital’s front desk and guide patients and their families throughout the hospital; approximately 10 volunteer at the Skilled Nursing Facility as field trip and activity assistants; on-going programs include blood drives, wellness lab draws, the comfort cart, and liaisons for physician offices; special events include the Festival of Trees & Lights, Holiday Faire, Cocktails for a Cause, Mom’s Morning Out, Tiki Golf Tournament, and sports physicals at the high schools.

“We truly consider each member important and will continue to find new and exciting ways they can be more involved in improving the health and wellbeing of our community,” Befu said. “In no way is this a reflection on the efforts of the volunteers as they have done an outstanding job.”

One way the public may benefit from the change is that it is well known volunteers take first crack at all donations, so there might be better items on the Attic's floor to buy now that auxiliary members won't have first dibs.

Why you should call, not email, your legislators

By Daniel Victor, New York Times

Kara Waite, an English teacher at Bunker Hill Community College in Charlestown, Mass., made a rule for herself: For every political rant she posts on Facebook, she must pick up the phone and call a legislator.

"It's kind of a swear jar for political action," Waite said recently.

Activists of all political stripes recommend calling legislators, not just emailing – and certainly not just venting on social media. Several lawmakers, along with those who work for them, said in interviews that Waite is right: A phone call from a constituent can, indeed, hold more weight than an email, and far outweighs a Facebook post or a tweet.

Read the whole story

Independent presidential candidate requests recount in Nev.

By Megan Messerly, Las Vegas Sun

Independent candidate Roque “Rocky” De La Fuente has requested a recount of the results of the presidential election in Nevada, his campaign confirmed Tuesday.

De La Fuente said in a statement Tuesday that he is asking for recounts in Florida and Nevada “to create a nationwide awareness of the vulnerability of our election system” and to ensure that “your vote counts for the candidate for whom it is cast.”

Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein has made similar recount requests in recent days, moving to challenge election results in Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania.

Read the whole story

Nev. lawmakers learn about pot from Ore.

By Chris Kudialis, Las Vegas Sun

PORTLAND — Nevada State Sen. Tick Segerblom’s eyebrows raised as he walked into an Oregon marijuana dispensary Tuesday as part of a day-long fact-finding tour of the state’s recreational marijuana industry.

“I’ve realized how good we’ve got it in Nevada,” said Segerblom while walking by a display case full of marijuana flower at Pure Green Medical Marijuana Dispensary just west of Portland’s downtown district. “I think this is going to be a smooth transition.”

Segerblom was one of five Nevada legislators who toured Portland dispensaries and met with Oregon’s Liquor Control Commission, which starting Jan. 1 will regulate the state’s recreational marijuana program. The Nevada contingent is gathering information so they can implement policy for recreational marijuana sales in Nevada, which voters approved earlier this month.

Read the whole story

California Democrats secure supermajority

By Jeremy B. White, Sacramento Bee

Broadening the path to long-sought deals on affordable housing, transportation infrastructure and climate change, California Democrats have again captured a two-thirds supermajority in both houses of the Legislature.

Enough late votes were counted in Southern California’s 29th Senate District for The Associated Press to project that Democrat Josh Newman defeated Republican Assemblywoman Ling Ling Chang, R-Diamond Bar. The outcome gives Senate Democrats 27 seats, the supermajority threshold in the upper house. Assembly Democrats secured their two-thirds margin earlier this month.

Chang initially led balloting for the 29th, which is anchored largely in Orange County, but she slipped behind as officials tallied provisional and late-arriving mail ballots in the days after the Nov. 8 election. The latest update Monday put Newman 2,136 votes ahead.

Read the whole story

Community tells LTCC board theater is a must



Nearly 70 people listen Nov. 29 to why Lake Tahoe Community College may disband the theater arts program. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

The drama that was staged before the Lake Tahoe Community

College trustees Tuesday night was complex, passionate, sorrowful and heartfelt.

It's like today is intermission and the audience is left not knowing how many acts there will be in the future. That's because the script is not finished.

This production of sorts was actually the college administration's opportunity to present to the board and public why the theater department may be disbanded following this academic year. It was also the public's first chance to speak directly to the board.

"This program does great work. That has never been the question for us. We know the productions are of high quality," Michelle Risdon, interim vice president of Academic Affairs, said. "We are looking for change in this program. Whether the program is discontinued or not it has to change."

Most people were unaware until **last month** that the college was even considering doing away with theater arts as a credit program. Not enough people are taking the classes to make it a viable program, according college officials. They stressed how few people actually get a degree.

Many of those who spoke Tuesday during the 2½ hour special board meeting pointed out that getting a degree is not satisfactory criteria. Many shared their experience of taking courses that have benefitted them despite having no desire to act. Actors spoke of how they have been able to hone their craft.

Susan Boulanger, head of the department, was repeatedly praised for her teaching acumen. She sat in the audience, near the back. While she showed emotion as various people spoke, she remained silent, unable to direct this spectacle.

All of the 21 people who gave testimony Nov. 29 want theater in some form to exist at LTCC. Administrators also want the

college to have theater, but as a true community theater model and not an academic model.

Stephanie Arrigoth, professor at Western Nevada College and producer-director of the Western Nevada Musical Theatre Company, suggested LTCC's program would be viable with fewer productions, developing online courses and having fewer sections of classes so enrollment would increase. She also suggested the possibility of renting the theater out to other groups in a hybrid model.

What the board wants is still unknown.

A task force of community members will be assembled to hash out options. Enrollment numbers from winter and spring quarters will be evaluated. The president – who will be new and has yet to be hired – will make a recommendation to the board, then the board will make the ultimate decision.