

Nev. 's \$860,000 execution chamber gathering dust



Nevada's execution chamber at Ely State Prison. Photo/Nevada Department of Corrections

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY — Nevada's new execution chamber at Ely State Prison is finished, but there is no expectation it will be used anytime soon.

The state can no longer obtain the drugs it needs to proceed with an execution.

Nearly \$860,000 was approved for the new chamber by the 2015 Legislature to replace the death chamber at the now closed Nevada State Prison in Carson City.

Read the whole story

Power outage closes Alpine Meadows on Sunday

Update 3:59pm:

Alpine Meadows will not open today because of a power outage.

Liberty Utilities expects to have power restored by 8pm Sunday. At the height of the incident there were 685 customers in this area of Placer County without electricity.

A backhoe took out a power pole just before 5:30am Sunday, which meant the lines came down, too.

About a foot of snow fell at lake level overnight on the North Shore, with even more snow higher.

Sister resort Squaw Valley is open with 15 inches of new snow in the last 24 hours.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Former SLT Councilman Crawford dies at age 82



Bill Crawford touched many lives in the nearly 50 years he lived in South Lake Tahoe.

By Susan Wood

Bill Crawford, who made a name for himself on the South Lake Tahoe City Council, died Friday. He was 82.

Mr. Crawford was more than a two-term council member. He loved nature, was an avid athlete and a teacher who touched many lives.

The news of his Nov. 25 death prompted several family members, friends and acquaintances to say much about him.

"Bill Crawford exemplifies 'service for others' as all of his passionate advocacy was done in the truest of purpose to serve others, to serve his community. It mattered not whether he agreed with a position or opposed a position, in either case he spoke with a steadfast commitment for the betterment of the community," City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Some may say it was Mr. Crawford who had the last word, leaving an undaunted spirit blowing in Tahoe winds of doing what he felt was right and speaking up for the underserved – even if it was unpopular to others.

“My dad did not come by his convictions because it was easy to arrive at. It came from a passion in many things. When he went into city politics before joining the City Council, he had a love of where he lived,” his daughter Marlowe Crawford told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Mr. Crawford served on the South Lake Tahoe City Council from 1998-2002 and 2006-10. In many respects, those years came about in some critical times – redevelopment, vacation home rental ordinances and the mounting issues of unfunded liabilities to cover salaries. The latter represented an under-the-radar issue seldom mentioned but also avoided based on the magnitude of the impact on employee salaries.

“I served on the City Council with Bill from 1998-2002. This was an exciting time for the city as we began to embark and eventually successfully complete the Heavenly-Gondola Redevelopment Project,” Brooke Laine told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Although Bill was a staunch opponent of redevelopment, his perspectives and opinions were sometimes significant to helping the council form a well-rounded approach. Bill often left poems at my council chair relative to topics we would eventually take on. Whether I agreed with him or not, we always respected each other, greeted each other warmly, and always shared a good chuckle about our years on the council. No doubt: he cared.”

His warning to the city about using eminent domain at the expense of the little guy embedded his reputation as one who believed the city should stand up for all citizens – not just for those with power and money.

“In a way, my dad felt the City Council had given up on the

city – that there was going to be some magic bullet, but the city was going to pay a high price for it,” his daughter said. “He thought there needed to be a voice that was not seen as being in the pocket of special interests.”

Marlowe Crawford understood how her father was misunderstood.

“In some ways, it was infuriating to engage with him in debate. But I could talk to him and we’d have these discussions about many things,” she said.

During kinder, gentler times, he enjoyed spending time with his wife of 62½ years, Jonnie. He also liked sharing what Marlowe and her two brothers, Paul and David, were up to.

“People think they know him because of how he was outspoken in so many things, but he was also a private man,” his daughter said, adding how his family meant the world to him.

On any given day, Mr. Crawford liked to sit quietly in his living room and look out the big picture window onto his beautiful front yard near the Tahoe Keys.

He pondered many things, including the role of literature and history in today’s modern-day world.

He often would write letters to media publications and quote famous excerpts, while weaving in the issues of Lake Tahoe’s times. He’d often send the letters to his daughter to fill her in on the latest happenings around town as if to show her there were areas needing improvement. Marlowe grew up on the South Shore, but now lives in Oakland.

At times, he tapped into her knowledge working at the law library to gain insight on a perplexing issue.

“He’d sometimes say to me: ‘Look around. The city’s not in a good place.’ But then I’d say to him: ‘But ,dad, it’s still one of the most beautiful places’,” she reflected.

Mr. Crawford enjoyed being in the beauty. He loved being outdoors on his bike, and on the alpine ski runs and cross country ski trails. Once he saw this reporter on skis and like a good trainer-teacher instructed to bend the knees more.

He even found the time to train for a marathon.

Mr. Crawford coached football at South Tahoe High School for one year, but spent more time sharing the latest techniques in cross country skiing and running. Nonetheless, he was best known in academic circles, having taught history at South Tahoe High, the former South Tahoe Intermediate School and Mount Tallac High School. He taught for 24 years.

"I have been a friend of Bill Crawford for nearly 50 years. He was an excellent teacher, a runner, a poet, and a football and a ski coach at South Tahoe High School," Les Wright told *Lake Tahoe News*. "He was a watchdog for the community and school district. He wasn't afraid to tell the emperor that he really wasn't wearing new clothes. He was very passionate about teaching and helping his students. His watchdog personality was controversial at times, but I am sure glad he was part of our community and a longtime friend of mine."

There was a time when Mr. Crawford was president of South Tahoe Educators Association.

Mike Patterson, who years ago had that same role, said, "Bill was always a strong advocate for public schools, students, and teachers. Bill always fought for what he felt was right, regardless of any consequences. He helped teach me what it was to be a union member and later what it was like to be union leader."

Mr. Crawford's own education was also notable, having earned a bachelor's and master's in social science from CSU Long Beach.

Wendy David's interactions with Mr. Crawford were mostly when he came to either a Lake Tahoe Unified School District or City

Council meeting. She has been the leader of both boards.

“Bill Crawford always followed his conscience and spoke his opinion and belief. In doing so he often became our collective conscience,” David told *Lake Tahoe News*. “His poetry questioned the accepted point of view. He often quoted literary figures as a reminder that we are all a part of history in making decisions for the future.”

The Crawfords moved to South Lake Tahoe in 1967.

Mr. Crawford succumbed to a brief illness before his body gave out. He suffered from a stroke two years ago.

No services are planned, and no donations will be requested. Marlowe did ask well-meaning residents to respect her mother’s privacy as she grieves – knowing how difficult it is to hold back gestures in honor of a man committed to causes and caring about Tahoe’s future.

Kathryn Reed contributed to this story.

Charter air service to launch in Truckee in 2017

Starting in January there will be another way to get to Truckee.

Blackbird describes itself as a technology-driven airline delivering a private flight experience at a budget airline price. Blackbird partners with charter companies to fly high demand routes and enables customers to purchase seats at an affordable price.

Its first route will be between Palo Alto and Truckee, with prices starting at \$125 per seat. Flights will be Friday through Sunday, expanding to other days with customer demand.

The plan is to add six additional routes throughout California in 2017.

Blackbird is using software to determine underserved routes, calculate pricing and manage flight logistics. Travelers can book a seat through the mobile app, just like Uber.

For more info, go **online**.

Truckee Railyard finally moves forward

By Mayumi Elegado, Ally Gravina, Dave Zook, and Meghan Herbst, Moonshine Ink

The Truckee Railyard project heralds a lot of firsts. It's the first time the town of Truckee has partnered this closely with a developer. Likely the first time a developer convinced Union Pacific to accept commercial development within a balloon track. The first time this site will diverge from a history of industrial uses. The first Truckee project for Holliday Development, which has been building mix-used communities in the Bay Area for more than 20 years.

After spending 12 years and counting on the Truckee Railyard, owner and developer Rick Holliday acutely feels the pain of being a pioneer. In addition to the pocketful of firsts, the site offers up issues of environmental cleanup, significant

infrastructure updates, airplane flight paths overhead, a railroad running through, and a heap of expectations from the Town.

Truckee Development Associates LLC (led by Holliday Development) is in charge of the Railyard Project. The parent company specializes in public-private partnerships and sustainable infill projects, and so is no stranger to complicated projects. Overall, the field of infill redevelopment is not for the “faint of heart,” Holliday says, but “[the Railyard] is by far the most complex development I’ve ever worked with.”

Read the whole story

Fresh-faced Nev. legislators schooled on everything

By Sandra Chereb, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY — Before the nitty-gritty of lawmaking begins in February, newbie Nevada legislators fresh off the campaign trail need to know the basics.

Orientation began last week for 17 freshman Assembly and Senate members who’ve never served in the Legislature. It was a three-day crash course on everything from learning where the restrooms are and how to use the Legislature’s computer system to tips on dealing with constituents, the press, lobbyists — and one another.

A bill passed by the 2011 Legislature made the crash course mandatory for all new lawmakers. The mandate came as a result

of term limits imposed by voters in 1996 that restricted legislators to 12 years of service in both the Assembly and the Senate.

Read the whole story

California companies get billions in tax breaks

By Teri Sforza, Orange County Register

Businesses in California were given state tax breaks worth about \$2.67 billion over the past two decades, with more than half the money going to two sectors of the economy – those trading in war and circus.

These tax breaks – denounced as “corporate welfare” or praised as “business incentives” – totaled \$889.3 million for aerospace and military contractors, and \$389.4 million for entertainment and media companies, according to public data compiled by the nonprofit Good Jobs First.

The biggest breaks went to two aerospace defense giants, Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman. In 2014, the Legislature approved a controversial bill aimed specifically at Lockheed, a key subcontractor for Boeing on a bid to build next-generation bombers for the Air Force. The bill granted Lockheed a tax credit of 17.5 percent of wages paid to its workers, worth \$420 million over the 15-year life of the deal.

Read the whole story

Caltrans planning for 2017 construction season

While Caltrans is done with road work in the Lake Tahoe Basin for now, the transportation department will be back in 2017.

Next season will mark the start of Caltrans' final major water quality project as part of the Lake Tahoe environmental improvement program. The project is on Highway 50 in South Lake Tahoe from the Y to Trout Creek. It's expected to be completed in 2019.

Work also will begin in earnest next season on a Federal Highway Administration Central Federal Lands Highway Division project that will build a new bridge over the Truckee River in Tahoe City, replace the existing Fanny Bridge, and convert a portion of Highway 89 into a complete street design that will be relinquished to Placer County after construction.

The project, which will include three new roundabouts, is scheduled to be done in summer 2018. The \$30.1 million construction contract, which also includes building the Dollar Hill shared-use path adjacent to Highway 28, was awarded to Martin Brothers Construction.

This season Caltrans and its contractors completed work on two projects on Highway 89 and made significant progress on a third this season.

Curbs, gutters, sidewalks and drainage systems were added to a five-mile stretch of Highway 89 from the Y intersection in South Lake Tahoe through Camp Richardson to Cascade Road. The roadway also was widened and repaved.

Another project from Cascade Road over Emerald Bay to the Eagle Falls viaduct also recently wrapped up construction.

Along the West Shore, all but about 10 percent of the work has been completed on a multi-year project rebuilding the highway from Tahoma to Tahoe City with curbs and gutters, drainage treatment facilities, new pavement and wider shoulders throughout.

In addition to Caltrans' work on Highway 89, Placer County has completed its \$50 million water quality and streetscape project on Highway 28 in Kings Beach. The work included new curbs and gutters, sidewalks, landscaping and street lighting. It also reduced the highway from four lanes to three and included construction of two roundabouts.

Placer County to allow indoor-outdoor pot grows

By Lake Tahoe News

Following the passage of Propositions 64, Placer County supervisors are trying to keep pace.

The state recreational marijuana initiative allows people to grow a limited amount of pot indoors.

Supervisors voted 4-0 to allow limited cultivation inside and outside in the unincorporated areas of the county – which includes Lake Tahoe. Supervisor Jennifer Montgomery was not at the Nov. 22 meeting.

The ordinance will go into effect 30 days after the second reading, which is scheduled for Dec. 6.

The county is taking a two-phased approach to recreational marijuana. The first is to focus on allowing limited personal cannabis cultivation and banning commercial cannabis activities.

However, the supervisors did not entirely rule out the future possibility of commercial cultivation for medical cannabis.

At Supervisor Jim Holmes' suggestion the board supported creating a cannabis working group made up of county staff from all relevant departments, as well as representatives from Placer's cities and the medical cannabis industry – for their consideration.

Staff is coming up with the tools needed to enforce the ordinance.

They will return to the board in the coming months with detailed requirements for outdoor cultivation.

The cost of starting up and implementing the county's enforcement program in its first year is included in the current budget. Annual costs in the future are expected to be \$609,000, including staff, vehicles and equipment.

SLT cemetery truck catches on fire



A cemetery truck was damaged by fire on Thanksgiving Eve. Photo/Provided

A fire at Happy Homestead Cemetery was contained to an old truck.

While the cause is under investigation, South Lake Tahoe fire officials told *Lake Tahoe News* it could be organics in the back of the truck or an electrical issue.

The fire started Nov. 23 and will quickly put out.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*