

Nev. can't find escort services to assess tax

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY — Escort services now fall under the state's newly revised live entertainment tax, but identifying the businesses to begin collecting the revenue has been a challenge for state officials.

The difficulty in identifying the businesses, primarily in Clark County, is also putting a dent in the current two-year state budget to the tune of almost \$20 million.

The Legislature in 2015 modified the tax, which is levied when various forms of live entertainment are provided to customers, and expanded it to cover escort services. The changes took effect Oct. 1, 2015.

Read the whole story

Study: Nev. pension costs cut into ed funding

By Amelia Pak-Harvey, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Jennifer Phillips has seen her salary from the Clark County School District decrease three times over the past few years.

That's not because of a demotion. It's because Phillips, an accounts payable employee, is paying a higher contribution to the Public Employee Retirement System, the pension fund for

Nevada's public employees.

A study argues that increasing pension costs are eating up education funding for students.

Nevada is one of only eight states that experienced both declining per-pupil expenditures and growing pension contributions, according to the study from the conservative Manhattan Institute think tank.

Read the whole story

Tahoe-Truckee expand economy beyond tourism

By Kathryn Reed

There is a movement under way in the Tahoe-Truckee area to build an economy independent of snow and gaming.

Benefits include higher wages in non-tourism industries and year-round jobs.

Two obstacles are the shallow talent pool and regulations. The lack of qualified workers can be solved by importing people from the Bay Area or elsewhere. Regulations – like the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's coverage and commodities rules – will take longer to change.

"This is an affordable place relative to a lot of other tech places," Chris McNamara, owner of Outdoor Gear Lab in South Lake Tahoe, said.

McNamara was one of three speakers Nov. 9 talking about the

region's new economy. Rachel Arst McCullough with Tahoe Silicon Mountain in Truckee and Jamie Orr of Tahoe Mountain Lab in South Lake Tahoe were also on the panel. More than 30 people came to Lake Tahoe Community College to hear how business is different today compared to just a few years ago.



Rachel Arst McCullough, from left, Chris McNamara and Jamie Orr talk Nov. 9 about the region's changing economy. Photo/LTN

People in the Bay Area are realizing their job is not dependent that they be there. They are exchanging long commutes for bike rides and hikes. It's about living the Tahoe dream – immersing oneself in the natural environment, while still maintaining a career.

These “new” workers are also bringing a sense of community to the area.

“The new Tahoe economy is about breaking down silos. What do we want the community to look like as a whole?” Orr said.

She runs a shared workspace (which is completely full). Entrepreneurs, small businesses, nonprofits – they are working under one roof. Some resources are shared, while some enterprises have four walls unto themselves.

These people are then brainstorming among themselves to help each other. It's a different type of networking – beyond the traditional service club or chamber mixer. And as such, they bring others into the fold. In some ways today's work world is like the shared economies Airbnb and Uber have excelled at in their respective specialties only this is about independent contractors creating a niche for themselves.

By creating this new workforce it could help normalize the economy because these jobs aren't dependent on tourists and therefore can provide stable employment. They aren't going to hire and fire based on the weather.

One thing McCullough pointed out is “if you want year-round jobs, you need year-round housing.” Truckee, like the South Shore, has a shortage of long-term rentals.

One of the success stories in Truckee is the makers space where artists are working under one roof, much like how the businesspeople are operating at Tahoe Mountain Lab. Creating something similar is being talked about for the South Shore.

Placer County votes down sales tax hike

Placer County voters said no to a sales tax increase.

Known as Measure M, it was designed to generate \$1.6 billion over 30 years that would have been spent on transit.

Two-thirds of the voters were needed to up the sales tax by one-half cent. It failed with only 63.71 percent saying yes.

Voters overwhelmingly – 79.39 percent – agreed that in the

future the North Tahoe Public Utility District members should be elected at-large instead of by district.

Placer County is divided into three Assembly districts. Frank Bigelow retained his seat in District 5 and Brian Dahle did the same for District 1. Beth Gaines is giving up her District 6 seat. It is going to another Republican – Kevin Kiley. (Gaines lost her bid to be a supervisor in El Dorado County.)

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Douglas County says no to 2 tax proposals

Douglas County had the highest voter turnout of any Nevada county on Tuesday at more than 94 percent.

Voters resoundingly said no to the fuel indexing and sales taxes measures, with both going down with more than 60 percent of the vote.

Question 1 would have raised the gas tax in the county, with the money collected going to road improvements. Question 2 was a sales and use tax. The money would have gone toward improving facilities in Douglas County School District.

Term limits meant there would be two new members on the Douglas County School District board. The lake – Area 3 – will be represented by **Keith Byer**, while Area 5 will have Linda Gilkerson.

Assemblyman Jim Wheeler ran unopposed in District 39, so he will continue to represent the lake in the Nevada Legislature.

EDC gets new supe; no surprises for Tahoe reps

By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County's newest supervisor is John Hidahl.

Hidahl, who recently retired after 40 years in the aerospace industry, soundly defeated Beth Gaines. He had nearly 58 percent of the vote on Nov. 8, while she had just more than 42 percent.

Hidahl replaces Ron Mikulaco in District 1. Mikulaco was running for a seat on the board of the El Dorado Hills County Water-Fire district. He came in third out of four candidates, with the top two winning a seat.

Gaines is the representative for the 6th Assembly District, which encompasses the western edge of El Dorado and Placer counties. She has already declared her intentions to run for her husband's state Senate seat in two years. Ted and Beth Gaines have a history of changing statewide seats and moving to accommodate vacancies.

On Tuesday, in the race to replace Gaines for the Assembly seat, it was Republican Kevin Kiley who prevailed over Democrat Brain Caples, 63.9 percent to 36.1 percent.

Ted Gaines easily retained his Senate seat by beating challenger Rob Rowen, 53.15 percent to 36.85 percent.

In the Assembly District 5 race Republican Frank Bigelow keeps

his job. The district includes the South Shore, most of El Dorado County and goes south along the Nevada border to include Mammoth. He garnered 64.3 percent of the vote compared to Democrat Robert Carabas' 35.7 percent

In Congress, the California side of Lake Tahoe will continue to be represented by Republican Tom McClintock.

Not all former El Dorado County supervisors failed at their next election. John Knight is now going to be on the Los Rios Community College District board.

Newcomers to fill South Shore ed boards

By Kathryn Reed

Five newcomers will be joining three South Shore school boards.

Keith Byer was the decisive victor on Tuesday night. He easily beat Mike Kiger for the Douglas County School District seat. Byer had 65.88 percent of the vote.

"I'm honored. This is my first election," Byer told *Lake Tahoe News*. "I hope to do a great job, to bring some balance to the lake schools, budget items and all the things the board has influence in."

He spent election night at a fundraiser for Whittell High School's safe and sober graduation night.

Byer replaces Cindy Trigg who was termed out.

In Lake Tahoe Unified School District the races were closer. Incumbent Mike Doyle barely lost to challenger Bonnie Turnbull in Area 3. Turnbull had 856 votes or 51.69 percent, to Doyle's 792, 47.83 percent.

Upon winning she plans to first do extensive research, which is "what I always do."

She wants to get creative so she can lead education to the next level. She mentioned instead of just focusing on test scores, she advocates balancing testing with cultivating the interests of students. She pledged to have community meetings to discuss the issues.

Prior to the election Doyle's wife told *LTN* he would not talk to us. And he hasn't.

In LTUSD Area 1, just a few votes separated winner Larry Reilly and Annie Davidson for much of Nov. 8. In the end it was Reilly winning by 100 votes. He had 739 votes, or 53.36 percent and she had 639 votes, 46.14 percent.

"I am deeply troubled by this presidential election. My own race is feeling much less important," Davidson told *Lake Tahoe News* as Donald Trump was winning Nov. 8. She was at Divided Sky in Meyers watching the results, with most everyone paying attention to the presidential race.

Troy Mathews ran unopposed for Area 4 in LTUSD.

Down the street at Lake Tahoe Community College it will be Nancy Dalton filling the seat of Area 4 trustee. She beat Dave Hamilton 927 to 687 votes, or 57.29 percent to 42.46 percent.

"I am just so looking forward to serving on the board," Dalton told *Lake Tahoe News*. She has been attending board meetings since the first of the year.

Hamilton all along supported Dalton if voters didn't support him, saying she will make a good board member.

“I will be involved in other things in other ways,” Hamilton said.

Familiar faces win STPUD, Lake Valley Fire seats

By Susan Wood

In the management of fire and water, South Shore voters seemed to go with the flow in opting for those who have already been serving.

With 35.48 percent of the vote, or 4,076 cast for the top spot, current South Tahoe Public Utility District Board Chairman Randy Vogelgesang characterized his run this time in a high profile election as “humbling.”

“The last time I ran in an off year, so I didn’t know if the vote would hold up,” he told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Vogelgesang represents a board member who understands the duty before him – especially when it means all citizens expect wastewater to leave their home and clean drinking water to enter it.

“We’re going to spend about \$35 million in this district. I really appreciate their trust,” he said of the voters.

Incumbent Kelly Sheehan captured the second seat on the STPUD board with 27.72 percent of the vote or 3,184 ballots, according to El Dorado County Elections.

“I’m excited. My goal was to remain on the board. I feel good about where I am. I feel I have something to contribute,” she

said while serving in her South Lake Tahoe bar, Steamers.

The third candidate Nick Exline secured 2,212 votes at 19.25 percent; the fourth is Kirk David with 17.29 percent of the vote – 1,986 counted.

For an agency dependent on STPUD's fire flows, the Lake Valley Fire Protection District has three seats open.

The top spot goes to former Lake Valley staff Leona Allen with 1,796 votes at 29.93 percent. Phone calls to Allen were unreturned. This will be her first term.

Incumbent board member John Rice as the second top vote getter by raking in 27.85 percent of the vote with 1,671 cast.

With 23.20 percent of the vote, incumbent Bob Bettencourt edged out Tony Sears who had 18.47 percent.

"I feel as far as Lake Valley goes, we've moved so far in the last six months. We have a new leader, and there's togetherness in the house we haven't seen in a while," Rice said, referencing the hiring of Fire Chief Tim Alameda to replace former head Gareth Harris.

Rice, who has a stellar reputation as the general manager of Sierra-at-Tahoe ski resort, pledged to continue to make a difference in the community.

"If there's anything this election has taught us it's that everyone's not happy. Pretending everything's good is wrong," Rice told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Measures P and T pass in S. Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Recreation, roads and a say in the loop road. That's what voters in South Lake Tahoe want.

Measure P, with more than the required two-thirds needed to pass, sent a message that locals want better recreation facilities. It will increase the hotel tax from 10 to 12 percent for most properties, while those in the redevelopment area will pay 14 percent instead of the current 12 percent. It is estimated to bring in \$2 million per year.

The measure passed with 3,214 votes, or 67.65 percent.

"This is unbelievably exciting," City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The transient occupancy tax would be raised 90 days after the election is certified, which is 28 days from now.

First thing on the to-do list is to build a new recreation center to replace the outdated, dilapidated 40-plus-year-old structure. Preliminary designs have been drawn.

The goal is to begin construction in 2018, with people able to use the facility in 2020.

The council would sell bonds to pay for the facility, then use the revenue from Measure P to pay that debt.

While Measure U did not pass, the advisory measure wanting to have had that money go toward roads dominated the proposals. U would have raised the sales tax by one-half cent to 8.5 percent. While the city asked voters where to spend the money – roads, housing or facilities – the allocation was not

binding. However, roads did get the most support.

Measure U needed only a simple majority, but lost with only 42.26 percent wanting it.

Kerry was not completely discouraged by this turn of events.

“If the public is saying the highest priority is roads, I will recommend the council have a dedicated tax go to roads,” she said. That vote, though, could be two years away. It will likely be discussed at the February strategic plan workshop.

Measure T was the other South Lake Tahoe initiative on the ballot. This was brought forward by concerned citizens who want the town to have a say in the loop road. This is the proposal to turn Highway 50 near the state line into a city street and city streets into the highway, going from near Pioneer Trail, then behind Harrah’s and MontBleu.

“It forces the city to seek approval of the citizens before they can start supporting something,” Bruce Grego, one of the advocates for Measure T, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “It doesn’t stop the process; it just requires another level of consent.”

T passed by 2,852 votes, or with 60.5 percent. It required a simple majority.

Next up will be the Dec. 5 court hearing. City Councilman-elect Jason Collin brought a lawsuit to stop the measure from going on the ballot. The judge allowed it, saying he would take action after Nov. 8. The judge could order a settlement conference, a trial date or something else – there just won’t be resolution that day.

Laine, Collin elected to SLT City Council



By Susan Wood

Former South Lake Tahoe City Councilwoman Brooke Laine returns to the panel with a renewed vigilance, joining newcomer Jason Collin. They captured the two seats with 22.32 and 16.71 percent, respectively.

That's Laine with 1,887 votes and Collin with 1,413, the El Dorado County Elections Department reported early Wednesday morning. The election will be certified in 28 days.

One thing is for sure in this year of election unpredictability – the council has evolved over the years with varying personalities, missions, visions, challenges and

tasks.

Serving this community often serves as a balancing act for candidates considering politics and people. The two seats came up for grabs this 2016 election with longtime member Hal Cole bowing out and JoAnn Conner trying to answer to the community again. Conner, who didn't return phone calls election night, came in fourth with 11.97 percent, or 1,012 votes, El Dorado County Elections reported.

Tami Wallace's 1,359 votes at 16.08 percent had her in third. Another City Council returning candidate, Ted Long, follows behind with 968 votes at 11.45 percent.

Laine has served six years on the council; the first term during a critical time for the city managing redevelopment.

They say timing is everything.

Laine admitted to *Lake Tahoe News* her "heart wasn't in it" during that last go-around two years to serve on the council and wondered if the community sensed it. Her nephew had just died.

"I needed that space," she said.

Now she's returning strong and confident because there's a lot to accomplish.

"I'm in this because I feel the future of our community is at a tipping point. I always felt there was more to do," she said.

She emphasized that this 2016 election is about the community moving forward, adding she hopes for those with dissenting voices to have "public discourse that's polite."

"This national election has shown a divide. People are so unhappy. We as a council cannot allow it to get to that level. We'll have to adjust and make accommodations," Laine told *Lake*

Tahoe News.

She proceeded to thank those who believed in her during the campaign.

Collin congratulated Laine and said he felt “excited” about his own race. He was saying goodbye to a few friends from his home when *LTN* called.

Although Collin early on became known as a widely supported candidate, he said he “honestly didn’t know what to expect.”

What he’s not surprised about is how close the race turned out to be.

On the other hand, Wallace told *LTN* she predicted the top four vote-getters would be who they are.

She pledged to run again for council again because if anything “there’s not a single one of these people who I couldn’t work with” even though they “may not agree 100 percent of the time.” She wants to work with patriarch Councilman Tom Davis and embrace his institutional knowledge.

The rest of the field included: Danny McLaughlin with 6.7 percent; John Shearer with 6.58 percent, Trey Riddle with 2.77 percent; Bob Topel with 2.64 percent; and Patrick Jarrett with 2.42 percent.