

Placer County sales tax would help road conditions

By Mike TeSelle, KCRA-TV

A ballot measure in Placer County would impose a sales tax increase that could impact everyone who commutes or shops via Interstate 80, Highway 65 and other roads in the county.

The passage of Measure M would impose a half-percent increase in the retail sales tax to raise funds for transportation improvements.

Some commuters said it is easy to spot areas where road repairs or improvements are needed.

Read the whole story

Questioning the easing of Calif. water restrictions

By Adam Nagourney, New York Times

EAST PORTERVILLE – California slashed urban water use over 25 percent in the face of a punishing drought last year, exceeding a mandatory order issued by Gov. Jerry Brown and turning the state into a model of water conservation. Californians tore out lawns, cut back landscape watering and took shorter showers as they embraced Brown's call to accommodate what he warned were permanently drier times.

But this year, after regulators lifted the mandatory 25

percent statewide cut following a relatively wet winter, water use is up again, a slide in behavior that has stirred concern among state officials and drawn criticism that California abandoned the restrictions too quickly. In August, water conservation dropped below 18 percent compared with August 2013, the third consecutive month of decline.

By any measure, California is confronting a complicated new chapter as it enters the sixth year of a drought that has forced it to balance huge demand for a sparse resource – water – from farmers, residents, municipalities and developers. For one thing, the situation is not as dire as a year ago after a relatively normal rainy season. Some of the most searing symbols of the drought, such as near-empty reservoirs, are harder to find.

Read the whole story

Murillo finalist for Bay Area chancellor job

Kindred Murillo is one of three finalists for the chancellor position in Contra Costa Community College District.

Murillo earlier this year tendered her resignation at Lake Tahoe Community College, which will be effective in February.



Kindred
Murillo

The next round of interviews at the Bay Area district will be Nov. 1 with the board of trustees, with a public forum the day before.

Prior to coming to South Lake Tahoe in 2011, Murillo was vice chancellor for the Contra Costa Community College District.

What she likes about the East Bay district is the diversity of students – of which there are about 40,000, and then the unique opportunity to finish projects she started. There are three main colleges, with a new satellite center being built in Brentwood.

“I like impacting lots of people,” Murillo told *Lake Tahoe News*.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Officials say Nevada voting will be secure

By Associated Press

Top state election officials and federal authorities in Nevada say plans are in place to ensure a fraud-free vote on Nov. 8.

Secretary of State Barbara Cegavske told the media Tuesday she's heard fears about voting insecurity in the presidential battleground state.

The Republican state official and the FBI chief and federal

prosecutor in Las Vegas say the system is secure.

They insist they're not responding to GOP candidate Donald Trump's recent comments about the integrity of the vote nationwide.

Cegavske says Nevada uses touch-screen polls with paper printouts that voters can review before casting ballots, and that since adopting the system in 2004 audits have never found a faulty vote.

FBI Las Vegas chief Aaron Rouse says the bottom line for Nevadans is that their vote is safe and will be counted.

Curtain call for LTCC theater department

By Kathryn Reed

To be, or not to be, that is the question regarding Lake Tahoe Community College's Theater Arts Department. Only it won't be Hamlet answering the question.

Ultimately it will be up to the board of education to decide if the department is disbanded, which is the recommendation of staff.



Susan
Boulanger

On Oct. 18, Susan Boulanger, who has run the department since 2009, was told of the likely demise of her department.

She doesn't know if she can fight it, or if she would even try. The rawness of the announcement was still so fresh just a day later.

"Enrollment is down and I don't know what to do. It's just fricking heartbreaking to me. I would have liked to have had a little more time to try some different things," Boulanger told *Lake Tahoe News*. What those thing might have been she could not articulate.

"It's not only my loss to not do the shows, but it's heartbreaking for the people in the community who want to do theater. We are the only game in town," Boulanger added.

That is the double-edged problem for LTCC. It was never just a college program. Many of the actors in the productions were from the community. Yet, most of the classes were students, not the community actors.

Even though the theater community on the South Shore is small, it is also fractionalized. Boulanger has her domain at the college, Liz Niven rules the roost at South Tahoe High School and then there is Valhalla – the summer community arts festival.

Boulanger has been divisive since she got here seven years ago and since then has not wanted to mend or build bridges. It's to the point many STHS students don't enroll in LTCC's classes.

Niven, who also has a reputation for being stubborn, had a good working relationship with LTCC in the past. After all, she was an adjunct faculty member at the theater program

before she got the job to run the high school's department.

Boulanger has also been reluctant to work with Valhalla. Many question why the black box theater is dark in the summer, when so many people are in town. The only time it hasn't been was in 2014 when "August: Osage County" was staged there by Valhalla.

What has sustained Boulanger these seven years is that she is well regarded as a director. In the fall and winter she puts on a play, with the spring performance being a musical. Before her tenure there was a time when the college staged four productions in an academic year. Boulanger has been praised for most of her shows, with some singling out "Death of a Salesman," which was performed in the round.



The fall 2015 production of "Death of a Salesman" was highly praised. Photo/LTCC

But she isn't a collaborator, and that is what's needed to keep theater alive on the South Shore. In most places the theater community is close-knit, they go to each other's productions and cross promote. That doesn't happen here.

No matter Boulanger's personality, for the college administration, it all came down to numbers.

In 2011-12 the 188 students in theater arts equated to 25.26

full-time equivalent students. Those numbers for 2015-16 dropped to 82 enrollees or 14.61 FTEs. That's a decline of just more than 56 percent. Usually one degree per year was awarded, with 2011-12 hitting a record of three. To the college, that is unacceptable.

There were not enough students to sustain the lone faculty member. (Years ago the department had one full-time and two adjunct faculty members.)

Most small colleges don't offer much in the way of theater classes. The only vibrant program is College of the Siskiyous, which is down the road from Ashland, Ore.

But the enrollment numbers at LTCC were going down even when Dave Hamilton ran the program before Boulanger took over.

Boulanger attributed the declining enrollment in part to the increase in tuition and the town not recovering from the recession.

The change in how the state stopped students from taking classes over and over again for credit did not impact the theater program like it did physical education and culinary arts.

This has been a department that has always had to fight for its existence. It just seems like now might be the final curtain call, at least in terms of a traditional college program.

Boulanger's future with the college remains to be seen. Today, she'd like to keep teaching. There is a process for her to go through to make that happen. She also said she might like to be part of the next incarnation of theater at LTCC.

There is a process for ending the theater program. The Academic Senate will hear the case. This is set for Nov. 4, but could be moved up. Normally it's not until two weeks later

that those members would take a vote on the issue. This would be an advisory vote. In the end it's the board of trustees who cast the final and deciding vote.

Staff is recommending the college put money into helping create a community theater that would be run by a nonprofit.

"We would like to see more productions like music or dance festivals. All kinds of things could be going on in that theater all the time," LTCC President Kindred Murillo told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We believe the community theater model would bring all the people interested in theater to the college to do productions."

La Niña may make an appearance this winter

By Dianne de Guzman, San Francisco Chronicle

Forecasts are already showing a possibility of La Niña in our future, with the Climate Prediction Center for the National Weather Service rating our chances at about 70 percent.

The system is predicted to be weak and short-lived, possibly arriving early next month. La Niña is not expected to make it through the winter, and forecasters gave it about a 55 percent chance of it lasting past December.

Read the whole story

Hotel-apartment project planned for Truckee

Comments are being taken on a proposed 76,500-square-foot, 127-room hotel and five three-story apartment buildings with 138 rental units adjacent to the Truckee Cemetery.

Maryland-based Triumph Development wants to develop the 10 acres at 10470 E. Jibboom St.

The CEQA document for the project has been released. People have until Nov. 14 to comment on the mitigated negative declaration.

The tentative map shows the property being subdivides into two parcels; 2.76 acres for the hotel and 7.57 acres for the residential component.

The apartment buildings would have 33 studios, 54 one-bedroom units, 42 two-bedroom units, nine three-bedroom units, and common amenities such as barbecue and picnic areas, a bocce ball court, a volleyball court, playground, and rooftop decks.

East Jibboom Street is proposed to be extended from the current end of the road south of the Truckee Cemetery, through the project property, to Donner Pass Road. A roundabout is also proposed at the future intersection of Donner Pass Road/Stockrest Springs Road/East Jibboom Street.

More plan details are available **here**.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Legalized pot raises DUI concerns

By Patrick McGreevy, Los Angeles Times

The defendant told an LAPD officer he had smoked pot five hours before he was pulled over on Melrose Avenue for driving erratically. A blood test found a significant level of the chemical THC in his system, and a drug recognition expert ruled he was too impaired to drive safely.

But a Los Angeles County Superior Court jury deadlocked on whether the young, off-duty valet had committed a crime by driving under the influence of marijuana, which he said he smokes for back pain and anxiety.

Similar outcomes are being seen all over California by law enforcement officials who say an initiative that would legalize recreational use of pot fails to properly address the issue of drugged driving.

Read the whole story

Commission aims to accelerate new casino games

By Thomas Moore, Las Vegas Sun

Getting new casino games in front of gamblers faster is the idea behind a change in regulations being considered by the Nevada Gaming Commission on Thursday.

The commission will meet in Carson City to vote on amendments to regulations that would create a New Innovation Beta process intended to speed up the development of new games by letting game makers quickly test their products in the real world.

At present, game makers use field trials to see if games can technically stand up to real-world use and to see if gamblers find them easy and fun to play. However, games are required to meet all of Nevada's regulatory standards before field trials can begin.

Read the whole story

USFS: Reconstructed river weathers storms

According to the U.S. Forest Service, the weekend storms did not adversely impact the multi-million Upper Truckee River rerouting project.

"Flows in the Upper Truckee River (UTR) came up over the design capacity of the pumped diversion system, as well as the design capacity of the new channel on Sunday night," Theresa Cody, a hydrologist with the U.S. Forest Service, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Most of the UTR flows followed the bypass channel we built into the newly constructed channel. Some over bank flows extended into the project's temporary access road and existing channel backfill before re-entering the new channel. However, these overbank flows were shallow with low velocity."

Cody there were no signs of "accelerated erosion," but added crews will further assess the situation as the water level

dissipates.

"We also will be downloading the data from our turbidity meters, and will be able to determine differences in turbidity measurements collected above and below the project, throughout the event. Data will be reported to Lahontan, per our permit requirements," Cody said.

The goals is to complete the existing channel backfill and the last channel connection by the end of the month.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report