NDOT to complete Hwy. 50 work near Cave Rock

Beginning May 7, single lane closures will be in place on Highway 50 near Cave Rock as the Nevada Department of Transportation completes roadside slope repairs.

In the winter of 2016-17, numerous boulders the size of large passenger vehicles fell from a roadside slope onto eastbound travel lanes of 50 near Logan Creek Drive north of Cave Rock.

Last summer, NDOT began construction of a **roadside wall** to reinforce and encase the approximately 60-foot high slope and help prevent future erosion. Anchor bars were drilled into the slope to secure heavy-duty mesh. The mesh was then covered with more than 1,000 yards of thick sprayable “shotcrete” concrete to create what is called a soil nail wall.

Beginning Monday, travel will be reduced to one lane in each direction as construction crews apply the final aesthetic layer of concrete and finalize repairs to roadway surface and curbing damaged by the boulders. The concrete will be hand-sculpted to match colors and textures of nearby natural roadside slopes.

Construction is anticipated to complete, and the highway opened to two lanes in each direction, later this year.

Novasel: Wanting to build on accomplishments

Publisher's note: ***Profiles for the four El Dorado County District 5 supervisorial candidates will be running on May 6 and May 7.***



Sue Novasel

Name: Sue Novasel

Age: 62

Occupation: Incumbent – El Dorado County supervisor

Education: Bachelor's degree from University of Nevada, Reno; AA degree from Lake Tahoe Community College; high school diploma from Salinas High School

What elected, civic, nonprofit boards or groups are or have you been affiliated with and in what capacity?:

El Dorado County – County supervisor (2015-current) and vice chair

Lake Tahoe Unified School District – School board trustee (2003-15); past president

TRPA – current Governing Board member

California Tahoe Conservancy – current board member

Tahoe Transportation District – current board member

South Lake Tahoe Solid Waste Joint Powers Authority – current board member

First Five Commission – current commissioner

EDC VHR Ad Hoc Committee – current member

EDC Cannabis Ad Hoc Committee – current member

EDC Broadband Ad Hoc Committee – current member

EDC Human Rights Committee – current member

California State Association of Counties – current board member

Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care – current board member and past president of the board

Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe – current member and past president

Meyers Community Plan Team – past member

Meyers Roundtable Committee – past chair and member

Lake Tahoe Community College Foundation – past board president.

Why do you want to be supervisor?: I am running because I want to continue to protect and improve the quality of life for our county and our local communities. I believe my 15 years of public service experience and 30 years on various public and private local organizations, my integrity and my continued commitment to work for our community make me the best candidate for the job.

This is a nonpartisan position. How will you conduct your

duties in a nonpartisan manner?: I listen to all sides of an issue before making a decision. It is important to keep an open mind in this job and to understand that there are lots of differing views and opinions on any one subject. Party politics should not play a role in the decision making process – it's about doing what is best for our county – not what is politically correct.

Why should people vote for you over one of the other candidates?: The most important qualifications to this job are possessing the skills, professionalism, and experience to work with others on a board. I feel I am the most qualified and skilled as I have over 15 years as a public servant and an excellent working relationship with the current board. I was recently made vice chair of the Board of Supervisors, which is an honor and an important job for the future of our board. I have the unique skill set needed to collaborate and successfully reach consensus with my fellow board members.

How are you going to resolve the CalPERS issue?: Since the Great Recession, CalPERS (California's state public pension system) has made it difficult, if not impossible, for most of the state's jurisdictions to fully fund future retirements of our public workers. This has left our county with a huge retirement fund debt – and one that our board has acknowledged and is working to solve. Over this last year, our county put away $5.7 million to help with funding this debt. We are expecting to add $1.3 million to a "prefund" account this year in the hopes that we can keep this issue to a minimum. The biggest difficulty is that CalPERS keeps changing their model, thereby adding more debt to jurisdictions around the state. We continue to watch closely these changes and will be proactive in working for solutions to the pension system issue.

Should the government be responsible for solving the affordable housing issue as well as homelessness? Why or why not to both? If yes, how would you solve those issues?: Affordable housing and homelessness are not mutually

exclusive. With the average rental in South Shore well above the “30 percent rule” that says that paying more than 30 percent of your income on housing is “unaffordable,” it’s easy to see why affordable housing is such a huge problem. Government needs to help wherever it is possible since taxpayers end up paying for social services for those who can’t afford to pay for services associated with homelessness. I recently created a Housing Task Force, convening local jurisdictions from around the lake to see what government can do to help. From that task force, a group of private and public members have decided to start a pilot project that is aimed at creating affordable workforce housing. I have agreed to chair the new Housing Tahoe project and am looking forward to starting the project. The goal is to build a new “toolbox” of ways to combat the lack of affordable housing in our community. Our large private employers have also stepped up to be a part of the solution – one such employer, Vail Corporation, has current employee housing and seeking additional property locations for their workforce.

To date the county has not been able to fix the traffic issue in Meyers with tourists clogging up residential streets. What is your solution?: Meyers traffic in nothing new. What is new are the apps and smart GPS in cars that now route more and more traffic into our local neighborhoods. We have tried warning tourists about dangerous snow conditions on local roads through new signs and ordinances but that is difficult to manage and enforce. Our transportation director has created a new “nudge” program that diverts travelers away from North Upper Truckee by using flashing signs and traffic cones, thus making the route looked closed; although it is illegal to actually close the roads to “through” traffic. Nudging has helped but we all know this is not a permanent solution. We have been in talks with CHP for two years about other possibilities – the latest idea is to create an “electronic blackout.” There are still concerns about this idea but the county and CHP are now looking into the legality of the idea

as we continue to search for a solution.

What are your thoughts of making Lake Tahoe its own county?: In 1984, a Tahoe County Formation Review Commission was formed and a 108-page financial analysis of a proposed Tahoe County was developed. I have read the report and it sits in my office, if anyone is interested in looking at it. It failed to gain enough support – and that was back in the ’80s when South Lake Tahoe was a large contributor to the county for revenue. We took a down turn when Indian gaming started to pop up in California and Tahoe revenues have dropped dramatically ever since then. With less revenue, a new county would have the effect of reduced services and revenue then what we currently receive from El Dorado. For that reason, I do not support the idea of a Tahoe County.

What entities would you not take money from?: I will not accept campaign contributions from any organization or business whose integrity is questionable; anyone whose activities bring harm to District V or our quality of life; and/or threaten the safety and well-being of our children, neighborhoods, schools, or businesses. I expect to receive support from a wide variety of individuals and entities. Anyone providing financial support must understand that supporting my candidacy does not mean having the expectation of getting my vote on an issue.

What is the No. 1 issue facing District 5 and how do you propose to resolve it?: Affordable housing is a critical issue throughout my district. Development and redevelopment needs to focus on how to address the lack of housing by offering projects that give our citizens the ability to live and grow in walkable, bike-friendly communities – ones that offer plentiful recreation while meeting the infrastructure needs. As a Governing Board member to the TRPA and member of the Housing Tahoe program, we are currently searching for ways to allow incentives for affordable housing. A necessary component of proper housing is transportation. Reliable and free

transportation systems not only benefit our communities by reducing traffic, they also serve as a viable alternative for a cleaner environment while allowing for better transit options when planned with housing projects. This, however, requires state and federal funding which is not so easy to find. As a board member on the Tahoe Transportation District, I support the search for new funding mechanisms that enhance reliable alternative transportation in our communities. A Meyers bus is now being proposed as part of the newest Transportation Plan. I support this bus service as being a critical link in the basin and our district's ability to move forward in long-term transit solutions.

Do you believe supervisors should meet in Tahoe more often? Why or why not?: I would like to meet more often in Tahoe. Logistically, it can be difficult and costly for the staff and other board members to travel and finding a large enough room can be difficult, too, as we recently experienced. I do find that since we have digital services which include videotaping of our board meetings, access to the board meetings and specific topics is much easier for citizens in El Dorado County, increasing citizen engagement and accessibility in a very efficient way. I also attend regular joint meetings with the City Council where the city of South Lake Tahoe and county both present their major issues and discuss items where joint effort is needed. This is an important element to proper city/county collaboration.

Would you support having more tax dollars from the county coming to the South Shore? Currently, more dollars leave the basin than come back.: I want to be sure that District V is getting its fair share and have fought to be sure it happens. However, I don't know of any study or analysis showing that more dollars leave the basin then come back and have my doubts that this is true. For example, the basin, with about 20 percent of the county population, has its own set of secondary offices for more general departments than any other district

or any other jurisdiction in the basin. El Dorado County is the only local jurisdiction to have a local juvenile hall and jail facility. When you add up the costs for those direct and indirect services and facilities, our local expenses and revenues are not far from equal.

What is your vision for the 56-acres in South Lake Tahoe?: My vision the 56-acres area is the same that it was when I participated as a community member on the 56-acre Design Review Committee many years ago. That committee process came up with the Lakeview Commons design and envisioned the entire 56-acres as the "Central Park" of South Lake Tahoe. The design also called for a new farmers market area and a re-design of the entire campground. And although there are issues ahead as to how the county and city work together to fulfill those plans, the plans are there and should be reviewed as we entered into a new agreement between the two jurisdictions.

Do you support having vacation home rentals? Why or why not?: When I travel, I prefer to stay in family homes rather than small, cramped hotel rooms. That being said, I realize that this ballooning type of travel has created some real issues when dealing with unruly, rude and/or over-bearing home renters. I feel that the biggest issue for the county is how to create new regulations so that enforcement can work to regain quiet, peaceful neighborhoods once again. As a member of the County Ad Hoc Committee for VHRs, we are studying enforcement issues and programs throughout the state, looking for viable solutions. We have already established that a new system of enforcement – one done through our code enforcement department rather than the tax collector – is an important first step in the right direction. We have identified seven other areas that will be corrected in the near future. Other issues such as clustering, total occupancy, bans and moratoriums are all to be studied and decided upon soon. A public process has been established where all sides of this contentious issue will be allowed to voice their concerns and

issues.

What have you accomplished in the last four years?: When I was first elected to the board, our county leadership was in turmoil. Since hiring a new CAO nearly two years ago, the culture and workings of the county have vastly improved. Our board developed a new strategic plan and has attached those goals to our budget, thereby ensuring that our top priorities are funding properly. One of those priorities is to improve our deteriorating infrastructure. Our recent purchase of the old Al Tahoe Post Office will improve the El Dorado Center in South Lake Tahoe and proves that we are keeping our promise to infrastructure improvements. In Pollock Pines, we purchased a local park, ensuring that our youth continue to enjoy a proper baseball field as well as improving other recreational programs. As the First Five Commissioner to the Board of Supervisors, I worked to create a new Community Hub program, which will bring critical services to needy families who visit our libraries. In Tahoma, when a road project didn't go as expected, I held a series of meetings and worked on securing funding to fix the problem. I also pushed for new funding for our local roads by making sure that a new compact with our local tribe includes the ability to use the money we receive for badly needed road work – nearly $2.5 million per year in funding. In the future, I will continue to work to make sure our district receives our fair share of funding and needed infrastructure work.

Tell us something about yourself that people might not know: I have been married to my husband for 34 years and have two amazing daughters. I was a ski instructor at Heavenly and went on to own and operate my own business.

I'm an avid skier in the winter, mountain biker in the summer, and love to use my kayak in Tahoe as often as possible. Many people don't know that I was an Olympic torch runner when it came through town in 1984 on its way to the Summer Games in Los Angeles. The beauty and recreation of Tahoe brought my

family here when I was growing up and it is still the most beautiful place in the world.

Spencer: Experience, vision to rebuild EDC

Publisher's note: ***Profiles for the four El Dorado County District 5 supervisorial candidates will be running on May 6 and May 7.***



Jeffrey Spencer

Name: Jeffrey Spencer

Age: 58

Occupation: Planning professional

Education: Master of Science, transportation management, San Jose State University; Bachelor of science (2), Business administration and business management, University of Phoenix;

Associate of Science (2), business, real estate, Sacramento City College

What elected, civic, nonprofit boards or groups are or have you been affiliated with and in what capacity?:
Committee/panel member, National Academy of Sciences, Transportation Research Board
Board of directors, Natomas Basin Conservancy
President, Dry Creek Conservancy
Planning Commissioner, Yuba City
Chairman, Antelope Planning Council, Antelope
Board member, Sacramento Quality of Life Committee
Vice president, Antelope Community Association
Member, Sunrise Parks & Recreation, Park Development Committee
Member, East Antelope Specific Plan Steering Committee
Facilities chair, Catholic School Advisory Committee, St. Isidore School
Sacramento and California Association of Realtors committees

Commissioner/Scout leader, Boy Scouts of America
President, Mineta Transportation Institute Alumni Association
Member, Sacramento Sheriff Community Representative Forum
Creek Clean-up Area coordinator, Urban Creeks Council
Member, Knights of Columbus
Member, Active 20-30

Why do you want to be supervisor?: It was borne out of frustration with the current issues. I didn't seek to be elected, but rather, many residents that know me and my experience urged me to represent them, and I listened. Working as an elected official should not be just a popularity contest.

I have been in public service over 40 years, holding various community planning and environmental positions. My experience in the federal, state and local government and various nonprofits has prepared me to tackle the job of protecting and rebuilding the communities of El Dorado County.

This is a nonpartisan position. How will you conduct your duties in a nonpartisan manner?: The duties of any elected position is to represent the people. This means to represent all of the people, regardless of partisanship. Our Constitution set up a representative form of government, not a ruling one. Extremism and polarity is not welcome and will not achieve our goals. We need to come together and find consensus and compromise to address the issues we face. When we work together, we can move mountains.

Why should people vote for you over one of the other candidates?: I possess the expertise and heart to tackle our issues. We are a small community, yet have big problems. Past elected officials have been locals with great interest in the issues, but they may lack the outside experience needed to get the job done. I have been working at these various issues my entire career.

What has been lacking is the big picture view. Our housing, economic and transportation issues are not just local issues, they are being felt across the region. To resolve the issues at hand requires an experienced individual with the partnerships and relationships I have forged over many years with government and business representatives at all levels, including the state Legislature and U.S. Congress. No other candidate brings this kind of experience.

How are you going to resolve the CalPERS issue?: I cannot resolve the CalPERS issue single-handedly. State pensions are a contract between the government and unions. They are funded by regular deductions from workers' paychecks and contributions from the state. CalPERS invests the money to cover future benefits.

At the state level, CalPERS was solvent until political policies undermined their investment strategies. Not unlike the Social Security system. People have been compelled to contribute to retirement their entire lives, and now some call

it an “entitlement.” The federal government has borrowed nearly $2.8 trillion as of 2014 from the Trust Fund and used the money for other purposes.

The state government created the issue by dipping into the CalPERS account then passing the buck along to the cities and counties. Gov. Pete Wilson took $1.6 billion from CalPERS accounts in 1991 to help close a state budget gap. Wilson also reduced retirement benefits for new state employees, effectively creating a second class of state workers.

Then Gov. Gray Davis signed SB400 in 1999 that gave employee unions the kind of retirement security normally reserved for the wealthy. The law took effect in 2000, and that same year CalPERS investments were hammered by the bursting of the dot com bubble. Eight years later, the housing market collapsed and the Great Recession set in, putting the pension fund in a deep hole. CalPERS investments lost 3 percent in 2008 and 24 percent in 2009 – wiping out $67 billion in value. The fund has a fiduciary responsibility to maximize investment returns on behalf of the retirees whose money it controls – and on behalf of state taxpayers.

Now you have Gov. Jerry Brown and his state policy creating further problems. CalPERS had a $2.9 billion surplus in 2007 and now has an estimated deficit of more than $138 billion. Last year, CalPERS announced its Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Five Year Strategic Plan, which is a blueprint for the agency’s so-called socially responsible investment strategy. Last summer, CalPERS sent letters to 504 companies represented on the Russell 3000 Index calling for them to develop and disclose a board diversity policy. They have placed undue influence on business.

According to a report by the American Council for Capital Formation, the CalPERS fund’s “environmental-related investments comprised four of its nine worst performing private equity funds last year, accounting for more than $600

million in committed capital." It noted that "none of the system's leaders put their own money into environmental investments."

There are those public employees that have taken advantage of the system, boosting their retirements beyond reasonable benefit. We need to address those within our responsibility and make sound decisions.

Politicians need to realize that these accounts are not a blank check for the latest scheme in government, but a security meant to cover those that dedicated their lives to public service.

Should the government be responsible for solving the affordable housing issue as well as homelessness? Why or why not to both? If yes, how would you solve those issues?: Homelessness is a result of a few factors, including joblessness, substance abuse, and mental health. Social programs have not kept pace with these issues and the government has a responsibility to offer help. I am in favor of a hand up, but not a hand out. There has to be limits to assistance as collecting government benefits should not be a career.

The residential population of South Lake Tahoe fell by 9.3 percent from 2000 to 2010, according to the Census Bureau, and the median income cannot afford housing. This is not unique to Tahoe, but across California. However, Tahoe is one of the most unaffordable in the state. According to Zillow, to buy a median house in SLT, you need an income of $114,576. The Tahoe region's average-household-income-to-home-value ratio is 10-to-1, meaning average home cost is roughly 10 times higher than average annual wages. San Francisco, by comparison, is 8-to-1.

Due to a lack of good paying jobs and unaffordable housing we are exporting our future as younger people cannot afford to

live here. The Lake Tahoe Community College is suffering enrollment, largely due to the cost of living. We have more people commuting into Tahoe to work and that affects our road congestion, contrary to environmental policy. What will happen to our community if we eventually have no local residents?

To date the county has not been able to fix the traffic issue in Meyers with tourists clogging up residential streets. What is your solution?: There is no one solution. We need to have a suite of options. The transportation demand has far outstripped our supply. While the economy of the Lake Tahoe Basin is largely dependent on tourism, it also brings many of the traffic problems at a high cost. The traffic problem extends the whole length of U.S. 50. I would work to implement a solution that makes all of the communities along the Hwy. 50 corridor less congested at peak times. It takes time and cooperation by many agencies to accomplish, and I know the ropes to get it done.

I have offered many ideas and suggestions to assist in resolving the problems we are experiencing with weekend and holiday traffic. One is called congestion pricing. Electronic toll collection with congestion pricing was supported by the CHP, the county sheriff, and many citizens in attendance at the meeting in February 2016. Another suggestion is using an odd-even license plate restriction like we saw during the gas crisis, and in critical events such as we saw in February, institute a periodic contra-flow that would improve flow leaving the basin.

One suggestion published in the *Tahoe Tribune* suggested a "better solution is to build a multi-modal transportation system that allows people to leave their cars at home." This is where we need a reality check. That would not work for a multitude of reasons. Plain and simple it is not practical. I support local transit systems, but TTD hasn't even provided regular service to Meyers, which is a community that has no transit. The folks out there cannot get into town for their

shopping, recreation or jobs without a car. Who genuinely thinks a family of tourists is going to load the kids, all their baggage, and bulky recreational equipment onto a bus to come into Tahoe?

What would better serve our residents is to have affordable housing near their jobs, and land use zoning that concentrates tourist accommodations near the attractions. These two would greatly reduce traffic and pollution which are primary goals in the basin.

The simple fact is funding for our roads is not enough to keep up with maintenance, and we have the impacts of about 150,000 people every week, nearly a 700 percent increase in our population. We need to mitigate these impacts and we need to find a way to do it. We always hear what can't be done, but never what can be done. It takes time and cooperation by many agencies to accomplish, and I know we can get it done.

What are your thoughts of making Lake Tahoe its own county?: As with most proposals, there are pros and cons. I have heard that Placer and El Dorado in California should form one county in the basin, and Washoe and Douglas on the Nevada side should form one county in the basin. This may help focus efforts on local issues unique to the Tahoe basin. Still, there are already many layers of bureaucracy and paring down two is not likely to change things much.

The effort would be costly and not likely favorable since both states would have to ratify such a move. I am not in favor of further dividing folks, but rather, uniting them to be a community.

What entities would you not take money from?: I will not take money from any entity that expects a quid pro quo for donating. I also would not accept donations from any illegal or otherwise dubious entities. I would hope that donations come as support for my work ethic and ability to work on the

issues we face. Any entity that expects favors in return will get their money returned. That may be the current practice, but not in my personal, ethical conscience.

What is the No. 1 issue facing District 5 and how do you propose to resolve it?: The district is large and diverse, and no one issue can be attributed to the many people we serve. The Tahoe basin faces a critical problem with housing. The West Slope is facing many development pressures. We need to look at our guiding documents and stick to the plan. We need to enforce the laws on the books instead of creating new, confusing and contradictory ordinances.

The two main issues I see are housing and transportation. We have a serious shortage of affordable housing in the Tahoe basin, while the West Slope is experiencing pressures from urban sprawl. The condition of our roads and congestion needs full and immediate attention.

Do you believe supervisors should meet in Tahoe more often? Why or why not?: Yes. Those elected to represent the people should be seen by the people. Staying out of touch means being out of touch with your constituents. Although we have districts with distinct representation, the whole of the board represents the whole of the county.

Would you support having more tax dollars from the county coming to the South Shore? Currently, more dollars leave the basin than come back.: Unfortunately, in government budgets, there are donors and recipients. The populace and economy in Tahoe is the strongest among the cities in El Dorado. This would be one argument in the “pros” column to make Tahoe its own county. The needs are distributed throughout the county and the budget is made to cover those needs. I will work with our CAO and staff to represent the whole district’s interests to the best of my ability.

What is your vision for the 56-acres in South Lake Tahoe?: I

do not have a different vision than what already exists. The analysis should be on the benefit for the county to keep it or transfer it. TRPA has limited coverage and development allocations, so other than what is there, we need to assess what else can be done. It will take a full view of the costs, revenues, benefits, and existing law and ordinances before anything should be decided.

Although surrounded by the city, the county has services that it provides at that location. The county has let their investments fall into a terrible state of disrepair. If the city has defaulted on their agreement, it is wasteful to allow these facilities to become so bad. People deserve decent facilities to serve them. Again, a full cost/benefit analysis needs to be completed.

Do you support having vacation home rentals? Why or why not?: Vacation home rentals is a complicated issue. Although I support private property rights that come into the issue, also we have zoning laws and one of the basic principles in real estate, the right to quiet enjoyment. I support licensing and letting the industry show they can be responsible. I have proposed a Vacation Home Owners Association to police the members. It should not be the responsibility of the taxpayer for the liability of benefits and retirement of more public servants policing commercial interests. VHRs are an industry and we do not want to suppress commerce, but we must also protect the rights and liberties of our residents.

Zoning, in its basic form, attempts to separate residential property use from commercial property use. We are experiencing incompatible uses. Houses are generally built for families and not typically built to be used as a business.

Years ago, people would allow their second home to be used by family and friends that knew the neighbors and respected the tranquility of the neighborhood. Today, these are being advertised internationally by online services and our housing

stock is being snapped up by outside investors solely for the purpose of making a profit. Vacation-home owners say they rely on the income. That makes them a commercial enterprise. We have to use our common sense.

South Lake Tahoe has 1,400 vacation rentals, mainly entire homes, in neighborhoods. South Lake Tahoe has 15,000 housing units, but more than half of them are second homes or seasonal rentals. These mostly are non-resident investors and speculators that have driven up the cost of housing to be unaffordable to those that live here. Only 18 percent of local residents can afford to buy the median-priced home, and 75 percent of our residents spend more than 50 percent of their income on housing.

Jim Hamilton, 2005 president of the California Association of Realtors, told a group, “Real estate was never intended to be an ATM machine. This country was not founded on owning a home and making millions of dollars. Real estate should be about home ownership.”

The landscape of real estate is changed. Ethical standards are in question. How is it an investor can bid up a home with the intention of making it a business, yet use a standard market appraisal and obtain a regular mortgage? Any other business has to use proper methods such as an income-based appraisal and business financing. We have to question the logic of allowing businesses to operate in our residential neighborhoods. Absentee investors do not live and work here. Residents report they feel trapped in their homes and on extremely bad traffic days, they tell of people that have done the unthinkable such as leave their cars, knock on the door and ask to use the bathroom, or even relieve themselves in the yard. My priority lies with the residents who live here and vote for me to represent them.

Unmovable traffic congestion, bad behavior, and the trash have left locals in a fit. It is a tourist economy, but even

welcome guests can wear out the welcome mat. We need to protect home ownership and affordability for our residents.

The one thing we know since I was a Realtor is that the landscape of real estate is changed. Ethical standards are in question. How is it an investor can bid up a home with the intention of making it a business, yet use a standard market appraisal and obtain a regular mortgage? Any other business has to use proper methods such as an income-based appraisal and business financing. We have to question the logic of allowing businesses to operate in our residential neighborhoods. Absentee investors do not live and work here. Residents report they feel trapped in their homes and on extremely bad traffic days, they tell of people that have done the unthinkable such as leave their cars, knock on the door and ask to use the bathroom, or even relieve themselves in the yard. My priority lies with the residents who live here and vote for me to represent them.

Tell us something about yourself that people might not know: I was a part-time actor and have been in movies and industrial films. “An Operation Lifesaver” film that I was a principal actor in won both a Telly (the industrial equivalent of an Academy Award) and a Communicator Award.

Union, lawyers spar over wildfire ‘shadow lobbying’

By Taryn Luna, Sacramento Bee

A high-stakes battle over wildfire liability is turning ugly between interests at the California Capitol.

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1245, which represents PG&E employees, is working with PG&E on a controversial pitch asking state lawmakers to reduce property damage liability for utility companies in the aftermath of the devastating 2017 fire season. The insurance industry, consumer attorneys and other groups are pushing hard against changes to existing state law.

There's big money for special interests and financial consequences for consumers on all sides. The current system in California could leave PG&E on the hook for as much as $15 billion for the fires last year. Changes could put more of the responsibility on insurance companies and, as some argue, make it harder for homeowners to recoup losses.

Read the whole story

D.C. Dems playing favorites in race against McClintock

By Emily Cadei, Sacramento Bee

Officially, the national Democratic party has stayed out of the hard-fought Democratic battle to take on Rep. Tom McClintock in California's 4th district. But unofficially, D.C. Democrats have sent a pretty clear signal about who they favor to finish among the top two candidates in the June 5th primary.



Roza Calderon, Regina Bateman, Jessica Morse

Campaign finance reports reveal that the number two House Democrat, veteran Maryland Rep. Steny Hoyer, donated $7,000 to former State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development staffer Jessica Morse in late March – $2,000 from his congressional campaign and $5,000 from his political action committee, AMERIPAC.

The DCCC has not weighed in on the 4th district contest, which is not a top-tier race for the party at this point. President Trump won the sprawling district, which includes Lake Tahoe, by a comfortable margin in 2016, and McClintock has faced little competition in recent elections. But the contest has crept onto Democrats' radar in recent months, thanks to local grassroots organizing efforts and a flood of money that has buoyed Morse and a second Democrat, Regina Bateson, a political science professor on unpaid leave from MIT. Political handicappers have moved the race from "safe" Republican to "leans" Republican, as a result.

Less than a month from the primary election, Morse and Bateson remain locked in a fierce race for party votes.

Read the whole story

Paris: Military background an asset for DCSO

Publisher's note: ***Four people are running for the position of sheriff of Douglas County Sheriff's Office. Their profiles will run May 4 and May 5.***



Dean Paris

Name: Dean Anthony Paris

Age: 47

Occupation: Retired Marine Corps military law enforcement

What groups, nonprofits, other civic involvement are you part of outside of work?: Member of the Carson Valley Chamber of Commerce, member of WAVE (Welcome all Veterans Everywhere), volunteer for the Carson Valley Community Food Closet.

What is your opinion about teachers having guns at school?: It is a constitutional right to carry a firearm. However, a teacher needs to focus on the education of their students, not analyzing a treat or possible threat. There are a lot of cons with arming teachers. First, who is going to pay for training, certification and the firearm for that teacher if they are found qualified to carry a gun? Second, who is going to cover the cost of personal protection insurance for that teacher? A

third is the firearm going to be carried on the teacher during the day or secured in a classroom? Who is going to make the decision on which teachers will be allowed to carry or is it a volunteer basis? How many teachers will be authorized to carry a firearm?

Vacation rentals are allowed at Lake Tahoe. Should they be allowed everywhere in Douglas County? Why or why not?: I would have to look at the statics before I can make a recommendation.

How best to enforce vacation home rental regulations?: This is something new to me and I am not familiar with and would have to conduct more research.

Why do you want to be sheriff?: My time in the Marine Corps I have learned how to be a successful leader by setting the example and I enjoy helping others to succeed. I believe in bottom-up leadership which allows others the opportunity to become leaders. My core values guided me through my career in the military that I have so honorably served the people of the United States for 20 years now I would like to serve the people of Douglas County with the same honor and leadership that I gave the Marine Corps. I will be constitutional sheriff and protect what you" the people value most."

Why should someone vote for you over someone else?: I have the proven leadership and experience that made me a successful leader in the Marine Corps for 20 years, with the leadership, knowledge and experience I can lead the sheriff's office. My ethics, my leadership and my values have never been questioned. I hold will hold all personnel accountable to include myself and always set the example.

How are you going to deal with people driving under the influence of marijuana?: As sheriff, I will ensure that the deputies are currently trained and certified to recognize the indicator(s) of person(s) under the influence of marijuana,

and per Nevada Revised Statue Section 484C.110(3) the suspected offender will be charged and processed for that violation.

What do you believe is needed for a good relationship between the sheriff's department and county commissioners?: More open communication between the commissioners and the sheriff's office.

If the commissioners cut your budget by 10 percent, what program or people would you cut? Please be specific.: The sheriff's office's budget comes out of the General Fund which is controlled by the county commissioners, but if I had to cut funding I would have to start with training. I would not cut personnel. With the new five-year budget for personnel the office can keep the deputies we have now and is paid for five years.

What is your relationship with businesses at Lake Tahoe that work with the sheriff's office on various events? If anything, what would you consider changing?: I currently don't have relationships with Lake Tahoe business, but it will be my priority to be involved and work on those relationships. I do know the sheriff's office does aid with summer events at the lake and that assistance would continue. But I would need to know what the business would want from the sheriff's office.

Deputies use targets to practice marksmanship. Is there a better way to train people so not so many unarmed people are being shot? Please elaborate.: There are various ways to train deputies to engage a threat. You can conduct training using paintballs or sim munitions which allows the deputies to experience a real-life experience of being shot at while returning fire and the ability to engaging that threat without causing harm to incident bystanders. Another option is computer-based training scenarios, the computer places the deputy in real life situations and anytime during the training if a bystander is shot the training scenario stops or if it a

bad shooting the training scenario will stop. Then the instructor can walk and talk through the training and educate the deputy on what went wrong with the shooting and how to address it.

If you could make the rules for New Year's Eve at Stateline, what would they be?: The sheriff does not make the rules, the sheriff enforces the law.

Douglas County sheriff's deputies make less than South Lake Tahoe police officers and El Dorado County sheriff's deputies. Does this hamper efforts to recruit employees? Do you believe deputies should be paid more? Why or why not? If yes, how would you go about getting them more money?: It does hamper efforts to recruit new deputies, but let's look at other aspects, California pays a lot more in taxes so yes, the officers and deputies in the Tahoe region do make between $2 to $3 more per hour then Douglas County. The cost of living is currently high in Douglas County so trying to hire new deputies with high housing prices is discouraging potential sheriff candidates. Looking at the new pay agreement the current pay, incentives, and the increase is locked into a five-year plan. I would propose to the commissioners for additional money and attempt to hire new deputies buy offering incentives to live and work in Douglas County.

What is lacking in the department right now in terms of personnel or equipment or other resources? How would you address those needs?: I would hire two more school resources officers and push for more funding for recruitment of new deputies.

What do you think is the biggest issue facing Douglas County Sheriff's Office and how do you plan to resolve it?: Moral, and the status quo. I would want to be involved with the deputies, get to know them and their families, have family functions, establish team building exercises to help boost morale. I would also empower my personnel to lead, be involved

and working side by side with the deputies and doing and always set the example.

Body cameras are about to be required throughout Nevada. What are the pros and cons?: We are in a profession that is always under the watchful eye of society and cell phone cameras. I do support the use of body cameras by law enforcement personnel for several reasons. First, the cameras are designed to record what the deputies see in real time, and that the recording can be used in a trial as evidence. Second, it's a system of accountability that will ensure that the deputies are maintaining a standard of professionalism while interacting with the public. Additionally, when a civil complaint is filed against a deputy, the recording from the body camera shall be used to either corroborate the claim or clear the deputy for any wrongdoing.

Tell us something about yourself that people might not already know: During my time in military law enforcement, I have investigated over 55 cases of domestic violence, over 80 assaults, around 50 thefts of property, 25 sexual assaults, six child abuse cases, processed 12 DUIs, investigated eight suicides, and written over 400 traffic citations. As a leader, I was always setting the example and responded to as many calls for service as I can. It's not that I was micromanaging my Marines but supervising and assisting with calls for service because "we too" had a shortfall of manpower. And instead of putting the burden and pressure on my Marines as a leader I chose to do the right thing and to be active and either assist in the investigation or take one over so they can move on to other calls for service. The numbers show that I have the experience in investigating and that I do understand the aspects involved in responding to and investigating crimes. Military law enforcement does the same types of functions as civilian officers. But the one difference that we as military police officers have to be concerned with on every call we respond to is never to let our

guard down because the military are trained killers, and almost every household has a service member that can be armed, and they know how to use it. I am a bottom-up leader and believe in empowering your juniors and allowing them an opportunity to become leaders. I have mentored over 100 Marines in my career and helped them in the advancement of their career. I always have but my Marines first ahead of myself and as your next sheriff I will be there for the people of Douglas County and the sheriff's office. When I see a problem, I approach the problem, provide a solution and follow through to the end.

Brady: Political and law enforcement experience

Publisher's note: ***Four people are running for the position of sheriff of Douglas County Sheriff's Office. Their profiles will run May 4 and May 5.***



Dave Brady

Name: David J. Brady

Age: 62

Occupation: Financial advisor, Brady & Associates, a financial services firm

What groups, nonprofits, other civic involvement are you part of outside of work?: Board member and treasurer, Carson Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Douglas County Community Services Foundation. Board member, Suicide Prevention Network. Rotarian.

What is your opinion about teachers having guns at school?: I believe it is the responsibility of law enforcement Agencies to provide for public safety and the responsibility of teachers to teach. I would strive to increase law enforcement presence in the schools, and add additional school resource officers where financially feasible.

Vacation rentals are allowed at Lake Tahoe. Should they be allowed everywhere in Douglas County? Why or why not?: Vacation rentals bring a host of problems in the communities in which they are located. (Parking, noise etc.) Should the Douglas County change its position on vacation rentals in the valley, I would involve law enforcement when particular situations become problematic and beyond the scope of the code enforcement officers.

How best to enforce vacation home rental regulations?: Add additional code enforcement officers, and add fines or fees where regulations are not being followed.

Why do you want to be sheriff?: I have long had a passion for public safety and law enforcement in particular. I became a police officer in 1978, and have been involved in different capacities for 25 years. I want to contribute my broad based background, education, and work experience to enhancing and improving the delivery of law enforcement services in Douglas County.

Why should someone vote for you over someone else?: I have the proper education (master of public administration) for the position, as well as extensive executive level leadership and management experience in both the public, as well as the private sector. Having served on the Douglas County school board for nine years, and as your county commissioner for six years, I have a deep commitment and understanding of the community. I will bring a broad range of skill sets to the position that will enhance my leadership ability and lead to successful outcomes.

How are you going to deal with people driving under the influence of marijuana?: I served as a DUI investigator and was responsible for approximately 300 DUI arrests while a police officer in Redondo Beach, I understand that the marijuana issue is more complex, due to the inability to determine THC levels because of the lack of suitable tests. Valid detection for cannabis is time-consuming, and tests cannot determine an approximate degree of impairment. An objective investigation to determine the extent of intoxication may not lead to a conviction, without an accurate and timely way to determine THC levels. Extensive training will be required of deputies. The most important expectation is to determine objective symptoms of intoxication, and make an arrest if appropriate to protect for the safety of the driver and the public.

What do you believe is needed for a good relationship between the sheriff's department and county commissioners?: Having served as a county commissioner, I believe communication is key in dealing with all the elected officials. I would work to build and maintain positive, constructive and candid dialogue with each commissioner, as well as the county manager.

If the commissioners cut your budget by 10 percent, what program or people would you cut? Please be specific.: A 10 percent cut in the budget would mean a reduction of approximately $1,650,000. Capital expenditures for vehicles

would be eliminated, saving $300,000. Additionally, I would conduct an operational audit to determine the appropriate staffing structure of the organization and eliminate positions deemed not critical to the operation of the department. Considering that over 80 percent of the budget is salaries and benefits, personnel would have to be reduced. As an example, I believe the department is top heavy, and would reduce positions through attrition, rather than reduce positions on the street.

What is your relationship with businesses at Lake Tahoe that work with the sheriff's department on various events? If anything, what would you consider changing?: Currently, I do not have a relationship with the businesses, but it would be my expectation as sheriff to work directly with anyone or any business to make sure their needs are addressed and adequately met.

Deputies use targets to practice marksmanship. Is there a better way to train people so not so many unarmed people are being shot? Please elaborate.: The Sheriffs Advisory Council purchased a Fire Arms Training Simulator (FATS) for the department approximately five years ago, which is an excellent training tool when it comes to "shoot, don't shoot" situations.

If you could make the rules for New Year's Eve at Stateline, what would they be?: Having worked New Year's Eve as a reserve deputy sheriff for approximately 10 years, I believe DCSO has done a great job in their approach to maintaining public safety and order. In light of the recent developments in the Las Vegas shooting, greater coordination with the casino properties regarding access to hotel rooms overlooking the casino corridor might be a consideration. The summer concert series need to have the same consideration, unfortunately.

Douglas County sheriff's deputies make less than South Lake Tahoe police officers and El Dorado County sheriff's deputies.

Does this hamper efforts to recruit employees? Do you believe deputies should be paid more? Why or why not? If yes, how would you go about getting them more money?: At present, I am unfamiliar with the compensation and benefits paid by SLT and El Dorado County in relation to DCSO deputies. I would certainly look to pay a competitive wage and benefit package, once an analysis has been completed. It may be that we can't compete with California agencies, but I would expect to work with DCSO Association to clearly identify opportunities that would enhance the ability to recruit and retain employees. I believe our starting pay is low relative to other agencies, but becomes more equitable with time and tenure on the job. Increasing entry level compensation needs to be addressed. Finding ways to reduce turnover saves the county money and cost savings should be redirected where appropriate.

What is lacking in the department right now in terms of personnel or equipment or other resources? How would you address those needs?: Initially, I would conduct an operational audit, as mentioned before, to determine the appropriate structure and staffing of the organization. Staffing ratios for the department are low by national standards. Currently, the ratio is 0.95 deputies/1,000residents for DCSO while the national ratio is 2.5 deputies/1,000 residents. Consider as well, the county is 750 square miles. I would look to reallocate resources to the street, and increase the number of area cars using "predictive policing" to concentrate LE resources where and when the data indicates a need. Additionally, I would engage in "expenditure control budgeting" to look for opportunities to save money within the budget and use these monies to pay for additional deputies to increase the ratios mentioned above.

What do you think is the biggest issue facing Douglas County Sheriff's Office and how do you plan to resolve it?: Currently, the biggest issue facing DCSO is the turnover of personnel. In the past 18 months, the department has hired 24

new deputies to replace the deputies that have left the department for various reasons. The turnover is a function of low morale which was documented in the most recent grand jury report. High turnover undermines good service, professionalism and morale. I would have a climate survey conducted which would interview each employee to determine where there might be opportunities for improvement within the organization, and do follow up exit interviews of deputies that have left to best determine the scope of the problem. I would communicate any and all findings to the employees and prepare a plan of action to address the issues identified from the interviews.

Body cameras are about to be required throughout Nevada. What are the pros and cons?: The argument against body cameras centers primarily on cost. Purchase of the equipment, storage of film content, and the training of deputies, as well as the need to hire additional personnel to maintain the equipment, are requirements to be considered. Body cameras will serve a very useful purpose in that they have the potential to reduce litigation costs or expensive settlements. The cameras provide value information that can be used as evidence, and will benefit the deputies and the individuals the come in contact on the street. False claims by either party can be verified through the use on body cameras.

Tell us something about yourself that people might not already know?: Graduated USC magna-cum-laude, kidney donor, and a twin.

Calif. bill would expand pot

deliveries

By Taryn Luna, Sacramento Bee

There’s a problem with access to legal weed in California, and a Senate bill may help solve it.

A 2016 voter-approved measure to legalize marijuana in the state gave cities and counties the authority to pass regulations outlining the types of weed businesses that can operate within their borders. With limited time to craft rules before the law took effect at the start of the year, many towns approved outright bans of all marijuana businesses.

Read the whole story

Calif. attorney general race goes negative

By John Wildermuth, San Francisco Chronicle

The race for attorney general is getting nastier, with Democrat Dave Jones going on the attack against retired El Dorado Superior Court Judge Steven Bailey , who with Los Angeles attorney Eric Early is one of the two Republican candidates in the contest.

On Monday, Jones sent out a news release calling Bailey the leading GOP candidate in the race and none-too-subtly pointing out that “this candidate is under investigation for 11 counts of judicial misconduct.”

Jones, the state insurance commissioner, also made sure to

point out that Bailey is supported by “numerous conservative organizations,” including the Pro-Life Council and Gun Owners of California.

Read the whole story

Las Vegas-style public lands bill pitched for N. Nev.

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

Northern Nevada communities could get a taste of Las Vegas-style land management practices if Washoe County officials get their way.

A draft of the proposed Washoe County Economic Development and Conservation Act seeks to replicate the idea behind the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act, also known as SNPLMA.

Since Congress passed the southern Nevada version which became law in 1998, sales of federally owned land in the Las Vegas-area generated more than $3 billion, much of which has been used to fund conservation in Clark County and around Nevada, including at Lake Tahoe.

Read the whole story