

Major SLT timeshare changing ownership

The parent company of Caesars Entertainment is about to have a larger role in Lake Tahoe.

Apollo Global Management LLC is acquiring Diamond Resorts International Inc. for nearly \$2.2 billion. Apollo is paying \$30.25 per share.

Diamond Resorts operates the timeshare Lake Tahoe Vacation Resort at Ski Run Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe.

“We look forward to bringing Apollo’s resources to bear and working with the Diamond Resorts’ team to continue to grow and enhance their business,” Apollo partner David Sambur said in a statement.

Apollo and TPG own Caesars. The Caesars unit known as Caesars Entertainment Operating Co., which includes Harrah’s Lake Tahoe and Harveys in Stateline, is in chapter 11 bankruptcy restructuring.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Man charged in South Lake Tahoe bank robbery

Updated 8:45pm:

A South Lake Tahoe man is behind bars for allegedly robbing the El Dorado Savings Bank in South Lake Tahoe on

Friday afternoon.



Gabriel Evans

Gabriel Antonio Evans, 36, was arrested at his residence in the 3000 block of Riverside Avenue at 7:45pm July 1.

Due to Evan's past violent criminal history, the SWAT team was called in to make the arrest, according to officers.

No weapon was displayed. The amount of money taken is unknown. Nor is it known if has been recovered. The robbery happened just before 1pm Friday at the Al Tahoe Boulevard branch.

This is the **second bank robbery** this week on the South Shore.

"We have not made a connection between that bank and this bank robbery at this point," Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Nev. tourism officials funding special events

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Review-Journal

The Nevada Division of Tourism will spend \$200,000 to sponsor

six events – four in Northern Nevada and two in Southern Nevada – to generate tourism in the state.

The Nevada Commission on Tourism voted unanimously Wednesday to spend \$50,000 each to assist the National Championship Air Races near Reno; the Sierra Ski Marketing Council to publicize skiing in the Lake Tahoe area; and the Reno Air Service Corp. to enhance the efforts of public and private partners to recruit air service to Reno-Tahoe International Airport.

A fourth Northern Nevada entity, the Great Reno Balloon Race, will receive a \$15,000 sponsorship.

Read the whole story

Bridging Tahoe's bear selfie problem

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

It's about to get more difficult for careless Lake Tahoe selfie-seekers to strike a pose with their second favorite subjects.

That's because a private, non-profit organization is raising cash to upgrade a South Shore boardwalk that's seen a swarm of selfie-shooters seeking shots with local bears.

The Tahoe Fund, an organization that raises money for conservation, recreation and education causes around Lake Tahoe, is seeking to raise \$28,000 for the project at the Taylor Creek Visitor Center.

The money would pay to raise, widen and add railings to a

boardwalk that overlooks Taylor Creek.

Read the whole story

Placerville hospital settles \$5.5M fraud case

Marshall Medical Center in Placerville must pay \$5.5 million in fines for defrauding Medicare, Tricare and Medicaid.

The settlement announced June 30 resolves the allegations that the West Slope health care organization submitted false Medicare and Medi-Cal bills. Also named in the suit were Marshall Foundation for Community Health, El Dorado Hematology & Medical Oncology II Inc.; and doctors Lin H. Soe and Tsuong Tsai.

The federal lawsuit was filed in January 2012 by whistleblower Colleen Herren. She alleged that she was fired from her job as an oncology nurse in the clinic when she told management about the defendants' billing practices. Herren will receive a 26 percent share of the \$5.5 million per the whistleblower provisions of the False Claims Act.

The complaint alleged that the defendants performed chemotherapy infusions without having a physician present. One of the oncologists referred cancer patients from the oncology clinic to the hospital for blood transfusions and improperly billed Medicare for observation codes that require visits by the doctor in conjunction with the transfusions and no doctor visited. The clinic's oncology nurses used single dose vials on two subsequent patients and billed Medicare and Medicaid for two dosages.

In the settlement, the defendants do not admit liability for the alleged false conduct.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Trailhead Fire continues to grow

The Trailhead Fire has burned 2,161 acres, most of which are in El Dorado County. It remains at 12 percent containment.

Nearly 2,600 structures are still in the path of the blaze that started June 28. It is burning in the middle fork of the American River canyon.

The fire became more active Thursday as the inversion lifted in the early afternoon. According to CalFire, crews made good progress on the Placer County side, completing direct line across the west and northwestern edges of the fire.

Shelters have been set up in El Dorado and Placer counties for people who have been evacuated.

Smoke from the fire could continue to be a problem on Friday in the Truckee and Reno areas.

The cause is still under investigation.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

South Lake Tahoe woman missing



Jeanette Marie
Chapman

South Lake Tahoe police are looking for a local woman who has been missing since June 29.

Officers have labeled Jeanette Marie Chapman at-risk because they believe she is not taking her medication for mental health issues.

She is 52, 5-feet-6, 285 pounds, has blue eyes and blonde hair.

Anyone with information is asked to call 530.542.6110.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

NV Energy rates to decrease on July 1

By Jessica Garcia, Reno Gazette-Journal

Resident, commercial and industrial electric customers of NV

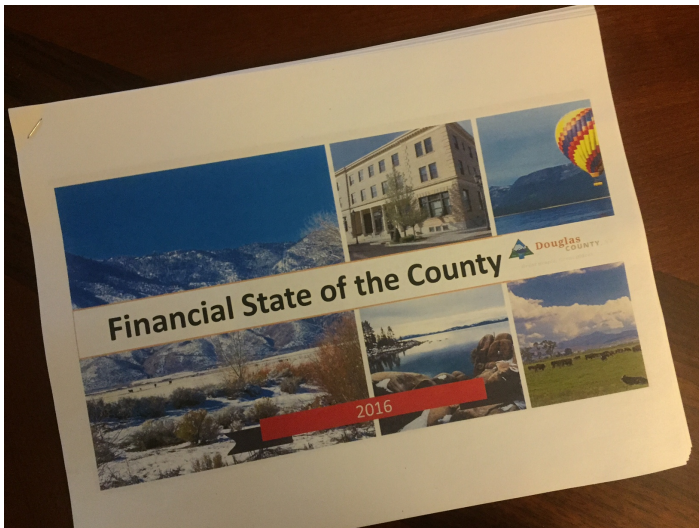
Energy will experience the sixth consecutive quarterly price decrease effective Friday.

The overall electric price decrease is 1.97 percent. Natural gas residential, commercial and industrial customers experienced an overall gas decrease of 9.17 percent.

These costs are associated with fuel used in power production and the company's generating stations. Fuel and purchased power costs are passed through dollar for dollar with no profit to the company.

Read the whole story

Douglas County on stable financial ground



By Susan Wood

GARDNERVILLE – Douglas County appears in adequate shape according to those who man the coffers, but it has a long way to go in returning to the pre-recession banner years in which revenues were more vertical.

That said, diversity may be just what the Nevada county surrounding highways 395 and 50 needs to surpass a marginal 2 percent growth officials project it will experience in at least the year going forward.

Friday begins a new fiscal year for Douglas County; a jurisdiction characterized by the geo diversity of sprawling Carson Valley farms and towering Lake Tahoe casinos.

With a population of 47,710 (as of July 2015) over 738 square miles, Douglas County on June 28 discussed the 2016-17 \$175.3 million budget – roughly \$7 million more than the prior year.

Douglas officials work with a five-year plan as a “priority-based budget,” the first county to do so in the United States.

Priorities include improving cost effectiveness, pursuing alternative service providers, having regional collaboration, and investing resources based on the critical areas.

To accomplish this, county officials sought well-rounded, all-inclusive assistance to come up with a list of goals and must-dos.



The Ridge Tahoe was singled out by Douglas

County officials June 28. Photos/Susan
Wood

"We needed to engage policymakers, employees and the community," said Assistant County Manager Christine Vuletich, who made the budget presentation to about 50 people at the Carson Valley Inn on June 28.

"The county is in good economic health, but that doesn't mean we can rest on our laurels," she summarized "We have challenges, but we also have opportunities."

Back in 2009, county leaders knew it had mountains to climb in terms of overcoming weak economic growth, a drop in building permits, baby boomers retiring but spending less, and skyrocketing unemployment that peaked in 2010 at 14 percent. In comparison, it was 4.3 percent in 2005. This year, it came in at 6.2 percent.

Part of this Nevada unemployment had to come from Douglas County's own labor force, which was reduced by 80 staffers between 2010-12 to sustain financial stability.

After all, the major portion of a county's General Fund expense is personnel at 71 percent, which dwarfs other costs.

Public safety makes up the largest chunk of resources spent for county services at 30 percent, followed by culture and recreation consuming half that.

On the other side of the coin, General Fund revenue for the county is dominated by property tax at 45 percent. And the housing market also experienced a crunch in recent years.

As for other challenges, many local governments struggle with keeping afloat with rising costs from retiring personnel.

When asked how the county plans to balance those increasing expenses, Vuletich responded after the meeting: "We planned

for that.”

Nonetheless, the county’s chief financial officer called the latest numbers highlighting more Nevadans entering or re-entering the workforce after a long-fought battle with the jobs market as “one bright spot” that the local economy is pulling itself by its bootstraps.

“Douglas County continues to make great progress despite the financial and infrastructure challenges we face,” interim County Manager Larry Werner said in a statement. “We must focus on capital improvement and asset projects and continue to invest in our greatest asset – a high performing workforce.”

More jobs in transportation, trade, construction and education mark a path to prosperity. These are things the task force hoped for when creating the county’s Economic Vitality Plan in 2010. They are keeping an eye out for possible trends, possibilities and opportunities to further nurture.

Other areas of potential revenue revolve around aviation, with the Minden Tahoe Airport being home to 20 businesses.

In the past, the economic drivers were limited to tourism and construction – but both industries plummeted in the recession. Now diversity is the key. And whereas tourism will always have a place in helping to boost revenue, the county is seeking and encouraging businesses that offer other options. This may mean tourism-oriented businesses reinventing themselves.

If the county’s “Spotlight” awards of businesses of the year are any indication, then entrepreneurs may be responding to the call. They were honored Tuesday night. Two are based at Lake Tahoe – one new, one seasoned.

- Round Hill Pines Beach Resort received the award in the Sports and Recreation category

- Ridge Tahoe received the award in the Tourism and Hospitality category
- Continuum Packing Solutions received the award in the Manufacturing and Production Category
- Battle Born Wine received the award in the Retail category
- Jacobs Family Berry Farm received the award in the Entrepreneur category
- Valley Eyecare and Eyewear Gallery received the award in the Business and Professional Services category
- The Pink House received the award in the Restaurant category.

Lisa Granahan, the county's economic vitality manager, highlighted a few points of interest driving the county economic engine that appear to echo some of the award winners.

"We have a real opportunity in the manufacturing sector, showing an 11 percent growth in the last few year," she said, adding the industry has become a focus given its association with better incomes for county workers.

What tops the list?

Granahan cited outdoor, recreation and lifestyle.

Pertaining to the lake, the econ manager believes recreation and entertainment represent the keys to prosperity.

"Gaming is part of the economy, but it's not the driver," she said.

What is an area to improve on?

"Transit," Granahan responded, without batting an eyelash. "Look at Park City," she said of a successful example. "We

leave a huge amount of money on the table from (transit)."

No holiday for Cave Rock construction crews

Crews are a quarter of the way finished with the overhaul of Cave Rock on Highway 50.

Work will continue through the holiday weekend.

Nevada Department of Transportation is constructing an approximately 60-foot long and 27-foot tall tunnel extension of the westbound, lakeside Cave Rock tunnel to enhance safety and reduce the potential of rock fall onto the roadway. Lighting and white paint will be added inside each tunnel for better visibility and two new radar-activated overhead signs will be installed to automatically notify drivers of bicyclists or potentially icy conditions in the tunnels.

Paving and water quality improvements will also be made.

Traffic has been reduced to one lane in each direction through the eastbound Cave Rock tunnel, with 25 mph speed limits.

Oversize and overdimensional semi-trucks are not permitted through the tunnel during construction.