

Decomposed body found near SLT hospital

Updated June 27 3:20pm

By Kathryn Reed

An autopsy conducted this afternoon on a body that was found behind Barton Hospital on Saturday was not able to definitively determine the cause of death.

“The body was in an advanced stage of decomposition. That is what is proving to be problematic,” Lt. Jim Byers with El Dorado County Sheriff’s Department told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Other than the deceased being a male, no other information has been released.

The autopsy was done in Sacramento because a more in depth exam was required due to the suspicious nature of the death, Byers said.

“Our officers responded to a call about suspicious circumstances – found backpack with animal damage/valuables. A search of the area led to discovering the body, which was located in the county,” South Lake Tahoe Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The body was found by a resident walking her dog. This was in the 1200 block of Winnemucca outside the city limits of South Lake Tahoe, right behind the hospital.

Lori Tupaj didn’t initially realize she had come across a human body because she was focusing more on finding her dog.

“I woke up in middle of night and thought I bet that had to be a person. There was no way the fur would be ripped off. It had to be a person,” Tupaj told *Lake Tahoe News*. “It was way too

big for a dog and too small for a bear.”

She called authorities on Sunday, who told her they had received another call about the remains.

SLT domestic dispute ends in shooting

A South Lake Tahoe woman was shot in the abdomen Sunday night by her boyfriend, according to police officers.

Michael Anderson, 48, of South Lake Tahoe was arrested about 8:30pm June 26 on a felony domestic violence charge as well as discharging a firearm in a dwelling. He has since posted bail.

The victim, who is in her mid-50s, was taken to Barton Memorial Hospital. Police Lt. Brian Williams said the gunshot wound was not life threatening.

“They are both telling us they were struggling over the gun, which is a handgun, and it just goes off,” Williams told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Detectives are still investigating the incident that occurred on Stanford Street.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Fire damages house in South Lake Tahoe



A plume of smoke can be seen from the lake early June 27.
Photo/Andrew Lubrano

Two residential structures went up in flames this morning in South Lake Tahoe.

Firefighters were still at the scene as of 7:30am June 27.

“The main building looks to be in pretty fine shape. The second building is more significantly damaged,” Fire Chief Jeff Meston told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Flames were shooting several feet into the air, thus creating the threat of a wildland fire as well. Several trees were scorched. Crews from the city, Tahoe Douglas and Lake Valley were able to contain the fire to the property on Kubel Street.

Police were able to get the residents out of the dwelling just after it was called in about 6:54am. They then left in an RV.

The cause of the fire is still under investigation. There were a lot of belongings out in the open between the two structures that went up in flames. Because of that it will be harder to put an exact dollar figure on the loss.

Changes in South Shore ambulance service

By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County is hedging its bets when it comes to whether the ambulance service on the South Shore will keep operating as of Friday. Supervisors on Tuesday will be asked to bring in another company to take over the service if the Tahoe group can't make it work by the end of the week.

"It's specifically for standby services and a safety net so to speak in the event the JPA is unable to provide the services," CAO Don Ashton told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The county per state law is required to provide ambulance services. El Dorado has a contract with the Cal-Tahoe Joint Powers Authority, which is comprised of South Lake Tahoe and Lake Valley fire departments. Two elected officials from the member agencies make up the Cal-Tahoe board, with Ryan Wagoner the executive director of the JPA.

The city and Lake Valley for years have been trying to come up with a different scenario either for fire services – there had been talk of a merger/acquisition; or ambulance staffing; and then the city threatened earlier this year to pull out of the JPA.

That threat prompted the county this spring to enter into a contract with Downey Brand LLP out of Sacramento as outside legal counsel. With the city staying in the JPA and a

compromise being worked out, the threat of litigation by the county against the city and /or JPA is not imminent.

South Lake Tahoe initiated an emergency medical services-based service late last year, while Lake Valley continues to staff ambulances with firefighter-paramedics. Each believes their way of doing business is a more cost-effective model and provides better service for residents.

A few weeks ago the board voted 3-1 (Dave Huber of Lake Valley was the dissenter) to have the JPA take on the city EMTs as employees. This is to be in effect as of July 1.

The reason to do so now is that those city employees are temps and if they are to work more than six months, they then become eligible for Public Employee Retirement System benefits. That would be another expense the city does not want to take on.

The JPA is not a PERS agency.

The 12 city ambulance workers are now in the process of reapplying for their jobs with Wagoner. They will receive similar pay, health benefits and a 401(k), Wagoner said. Three of them just graduated from the Lake Tahoe Fire Academy this weekend. Keeping them in Tahoe will give them a better chance to get hired on by one of the local agencies as a firefighter.

An on call list will be developed to help with busy times – like the upcoming Fourth of July period, and to deal with vacations, sick time and when people leave.

Wagoner is hiring a firm that will handle the payroll and human resources aspect of the job. An operations person will also be brought in. There are a lot of pieces to the puzzle to get this off the ground. He was given 30 days to do so, when a few months would be the norm. The lack of time is the JPA's fault because the city for months has been telling everyone what its plans were.

The Department of Motor Vehicles, workers comp, and a slew of state certificates are needed to make the transition. Some of this is just so a bank account can be opened.

Dave Olivo, who is the city's elected treasurer, is now treasurer of the JPA. He is not a voting member and does not write the budget. Wagoner had the treasurer duties since he started in May 2014. State law dictates how the accounting and auditing oversight is to be handled.

Questions have been raised as to whether it is a conflict of interest for Olivo to represent the JPA when he works for one of the member agencies.

"I know (South Lake Tahoe City Attorney) Tom Watson was aware of this appointment because he was at the JPA meeting two weeks ago when the JPA board appointed Dave Olivo. This was actually suggested by (county Auditor-Controller) Joe Harn because Dave has experience," Wagoner told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The JPA board meets this week to finalize everything. But just in case it doesn't, the county – assuming supervisors OK the contract Tuesday – will have Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority on board to take over – even if it's just for a short time. REMSA would come with its own equipment and workers.

As for the JPA vehicles, the city will allow the ambulances to remain at Station 2 through the end of the JPA contract with the county in August 2019.

Other items on the June 28 Board of Supervisors' agenda regarding the JPA include authorizing the purchase of an ambulance for \$160,000 and increasing the dispatch service fee to a maximum of \$66,000/year until the contract expires on Aug. 31, 2019.

Sandoval against recreational marijuana

By Cy Ryan, Las Vegas Sun

CARSON CITY — Gov. Brian Sandoval said he has never smoked marijuana and is against making recreational use legal in Nevada, citing concerns about its impact on young people.

Sandoval said that as a former federal judge, he saw how marijuana use led young people to trouble with the law, and he is opposed to a ballot initiative to legalize recreational marijuana.

Asked if he had ever used marijuana, he answered, “No.”

Read the whole story

Feds financially helping farmers in Calif., Nev.

By Associated Press

The Obama administration is awarding \$48 million in grants in 13 states, mostly in the West, to help farmers and others conserve water and energy amid drought and climate change.

The money will pay for improvements to irrigation and water delivery systems as well as provide technical assistance for

planning and engineering conservation measures.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the grants Thursday in Brighton, just outside Denver. He was in Colorado to speak at the Aspen Ideas Festival in Aspen on Friday.

The grants will help complete 76 projects and save 123,000 acre-feet of water, or about 40 billion gallons, each year, said Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Estevan Lopez.

The projects are in California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

Vilsack said \$15 million of the grants will come from his department and \$32.6 million from the Bureau of Reclamation, part of the Interior Department.

He said the grants are an effort by the Agriculture and Interior departments to coordinate their drought-response efforts. President Barack Obama in March directed government agencies to cooperate on drought preparedness and planning.

"We're not going to go off in one direction and have the Bureau of Reclamation go off in another direction," Vilsack said.

Calif.'s skyrocketing costs prompt exodus of residents

By George Avalos, San Jose Mercury News

Living in San Jose, Kathleen Eaton seemingly had it all: a well-paying job, a home in a gated community, even the Bay

Area's temperate weather.

But enduring a daily grind that made her feel like a "gerbil on a wheel," Eaton reached her limit.

Skyrocketing costs for housing, food and gasoline, along with the area's insufferable gridlock, prompted the four-decade Bay Area resident to seek greener pastures – 2,000 miles away in Ohio.

Eaton is far from alone. During the 12 months ending June 30, the number of people leaving California for another state exceeded by 61,100 the number who moved here from elsewhere in the U.S., according to state Finance Department statistics. The so-called "net outward migration" was the largest since 2011, when 63,300 more people fled California than entered.

Read the whole story

Judge gives Caesars OK to pursue reorg plan

By Tracy Rucinski, Reuters

The casino operating unit of Caesars Entertainment Corp can begin seeking creditor votes for a plan to exit its long and contentious \$18 billion bankruptcy, a U.S. bankruptcy judge said in court on Wednesday.

A confirmation hearing will begin on January 17, 2017, two years after the company filed for Chapter 11 protection.

The bankruptcy of Caesars Entertainment Operating Co (CEOC) has been rocked by creditor accusations that the nonbankrupt

Caesars parent looted its operating unit of choice hotel and casino assets before the latter's January 2015 filing for Chapter 11 protection.

Caesars is the parent company of Harrah's and Harveys in Stateline.

Read the whole story

Nev. measures on energy, medical equipment draw support

By Megan Messerly, Las Vegas Sun

Groups wanting to restore more favorable rates for rooftop solar customers, break up NV Energy's monopoly and exempt certain kinds of medical equipment from taxation each submitted signatures by a Tuesday deadline in an effort to qualify their respective measures for the November ballot.

Backers of the various initiatives were required to submit signatures to county clerks across the state by 5 p.m. Tuesday to begin the signature verification process. Each initiative must draw 55,234 signatures from Nevada voters to qualify the ballot.

Should the three measures qualify, they will join two other initiatives on the November ballot. Question 1 aims to expand background checks on gun sales and transfers throughout the state, while Question 2 would legalize recreational marijuana.

Read the whole story

SLT contemplating leadership at airport

South Lake Tahoe officials are trying to figure out what to do without an airport manager.

Sherry Miller, who has been the director of the facility since 2009, has left for a similar job in Chico.

Ray Jarvis, who heads public works, is in charge for now. He oversaw the airport in Mammoth when he worked for that city.

“We’ll likely recruit for a new manager, but we had already reorganized all maintenance and ops staff to work under the new management and ops in public works, and all airport CIP projects go through public works as well,” City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Mark Carlson, (former finance director), had proposed eliminating the position as it currently is and changing it to a maintenance supervisor.”

With the reorg, it meant Miller had no staff – it was just her.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*