

Truckee dramatically reduces DUI arrests, crashes

In 2015, the Truckee Police Department led a communitywide campaign to reduce the number of DUI accidents and arrests after there was a significant spike in 2014.

The efforts paid off.

There was an overall reduction of 48 percent in arrests for DUI drivers and a 47 percent decrease in DUI related traffic collisions for the year. Last year there were 83 driving under the influence arrests and 12 traffic collisions caused by DUI drivers. One was a fatality that involved a solo driver.

In 2014, there were 161 DUI arrests by Truckee officers and 23 traffic collisions caused by DUI drivers.

The same number of police officers were on patrol in 2014 as in 2015 and the department did not have any change in its enforcement posture.

“In essence, we believe the reduction in arrests and crashes was the result of a collaborative effort between the community and their police department. The department led this discussion and implemented a number of actions directed at making our roadways safer,” the department said in a statement. “We introduced a robust community discussion about alcohol abuse in Truckee; we reallocated one police officer position to partner with the community on alcohol education, DUI prevention, and worked closely with the courts to address habitual offenders.”

It is also believed that increased transit opportunities in form of shuttles to and from events such as Truckee Thursdays

and New Year's Eve cut down on the drinking and driving incidents.

According to TPD data, 49 of the 83 people arrested for DUI in 2015 had a primary Truckee-Tahoe address.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Realignment more than just altering Hwy. 50

By Kathryn Reed

Panels depicting what the proposed multi-million dollar loop road project could be filled the room at Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel.

Tuesday night's open house about the potential realignment of Highway 50 around Harrah's and MontBleu on the South Shore was an extension of the gathering in **December**.

For Clay Grubb, a trail builder with the Tahoe Rim Trail Association, he is most excited about the proposed overcrossing that would link the casinos to Van Sickle Bi-State Park. It would provide a safer route than negotiating a five-lane highway.

Carl Hasty, executive director of Tahoe Transportation District, said he liked seeing new faces in the crowd on Jan. 26. The environmental documents are still slated to be released this spring, which will be followed by a 60-day comment period. TTD is the lead agency.

A slew of entities will have to sign off on the project for it to go forward – including both state departments of transportation, South Lake Tahoe, Douglas County, TTD and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

The City Council will have to approve the final environmental documents, and relinquish local roads and accept the new highway alignment. For the city streets that would be replaced with the highway it also means figuring out how the connector streets work, routes for emergency vehicles, and how those living in the neighborhood access the new highway and other routes they are accustomed to today.

There will be another loop road meeting Feb. 10 from 4:30pm-7pm at the South Tahoe Middle School multipurpose room. It will feature a presentation of the project, and include a question and answer session. Questions about the project are being taken in advance. Submit them to Tracy Franklin at tfranklin@cityofslt.us by 5pm Feb. 8.

Conner adds more allegations against SLT

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe City Councilwoman JoAnn Conner has added more grievances to her **lawsuit** against the city and City Manager Nancy Kerry.

Conner now claims:

- The council violated the open meeting law in September;
- She can't get things on the agenda in a timely manner;

- Her personal email is being blocked;
- That rules are being created to hurt her personal business.

Who will decide this matter remains unknown. A Placer County judge is tasked with ruling on Conner's attorney's request to have El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Steve Bailey dismissed.

Jacqueline Mittelstadt, a one-time attorney for the city, is representing Conner.

Her accusation about the Brown Act violation reads, "In fact, the discussion was not a performance evaluation of the city manager, but rather, was simply a discussion by all present criticizing City Councilmember Conner for a variety of reasons. It is believed that this closed session violated the Brown Act. The discussion included presentation of documents and allegations of evidence against Ms. Conner by both the city manager and members of the City Council."

This closed session was on Sept. 15. The item to be discussed was Kerry's performance. Conner along with the other four electeds is Kerry's boss.

Kerry on Jan. 27 would not comment about the amended motion.

As for getting something on an agenda, a councilmember needs consensus to do so from one colleague. The soonest it would be on the agenda is two meetings later. Staff also has a huge say in the agenda. The Tuesday prior to the meeting the city manager, city clerk, city attorney, mayor and mayor pro tem solidify the agenda.

Conner last fall asked for the parade policy to come before the council. With November, December and January each having one meeting instead of two, the parade policy has not risen to the top level of importance. Conner has a vested interest

because she owns an event company that puts on parades.

She is also upset with what she deems a change in policy regarding public safety being part of her parades. If the fire department were to be part of the parade, that would in essence mean an elected official was benefitting from taxpayer resources, which is illegal. Police may provide an escort, as is customary any time safety is an issue.

Conner is also disgruntled with what she believes is a change in policy when it comes to her being able to put on events at city property, most notably the rec center. Last summer the council, which she voted for, agreed to alter some of the permit regulations. Because one of her events is slated to bring in more than 1,000 people it's necessary to get a special use permit instead of a just renting the facility.

As for the email, this was part of mandate dating back to **September** where Conner was banned from communicating with staff in any manner without going through the city manager or city attorney.

"People should be shocked and appalled. Today they don't like what JoAnn is saying and tomorrow it might be you. There is no due process," Mittelstadt told *Lake Tahoe News*.

5 hurt in 2-vehicle accident on Hwy. 267

A head-on collision on Highway 267 injured five people Sunday.

Maxwell Edward Jones, 19, of Sutter Creek was driving near Tahoe Vista at about 6:30am Jan. 24 when his vehicle crossed

the center line, striking a vehicle head-on.

Jones was flown to Renown Medical Center in Reno with major injuries. The family of four in the other vehicle was taken to Renown by ambulance

Treasa Marie Larrabee, 55, and Eric Larrabee, 52, sustained major injuries, while two 13-year-olds had minor injuries. The family is from Durham.

According to the California Highway Patrol, alcohol and drugs were not a factor in the collision.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Report: Most Nev. households mired in financial hole

By Eli Segall, Las Vegas Sun

Despite the slowly improving U.S. economy, more than half of Nevada households are locked in “perpetual financial insecurity,” says a new report, as the state remains near the bottom of the pack nationally for residents’ financial health.

Nevada has some of the highest rates of bankruptcy filings, underemployment, delinquent mortgages, uninsured residents and student-loan defaults, according to the nonprofit Corporation for Enterprise Development, or CFED.

The state also has some of the lowest rates of high school graduation, residents with college degrees, early childhood education enrollment, strong consumer-credit scores and small-business ownership.

Read the whole story

Reno man accused of pimping out women in SLT

A Reno man is accused of operating a prostitution business in South Lake Tahoe.



Daniel Gordon

Daniel Gordon, 37, was arrested Jan. 21 on charges of felony pimping as well as driving on a suspended-revoked license.

Three women were arrested on charges of prostitution. Their names are not being released pending further investigation to see if they are victims of human trafficking.

South Lake El Dorado Narcotics Enforcement Team officers lately have been investigating complaints of prostitution in South Lake Tahoe. The investigation focused on individuals who conduct human trafficking through advertisements for escort services placed on websites such as Backpage.com.

SLEDNET officers said they have observed an increase in prostitution, locally and in the surrounding areas, but would not pinpoint the area.

Ski town rents push workers to the edge

By Jack Healy, New York Times

BRECKENRIDGE, Colo. – On nights when she could not crash on a friend's couch or unroll a sleeping mat on an attic floor, Chelsea Lilly tucked her silver Subaru into a supermarket parking lot or a dark spot along a mountain pass, wrapped herself in a green Army blanket and watched movies on her phone until she fell asleep.

Getting work at a day spa in this bustling ski town had been easy, but finding an affordable apartment this winter proved almost impossible. So Ms. Lilly, 34, bounced along an itinerant path of couches and borrowed bedrooms that has become a fact of life for workers in jewel-box tourist towns across the country. Nights in the Subaru got so cold that she shivered awake every few hours and ran the engine to thaw out.

The miners who once pried gold and silver from the heart of the Rocky Mountains would attest that living in paradise has never been easy. These days, soaring home prices and a shift toward weekend vacation rentals have created a housing crisis in ski country, one that has people piling into apartments, camping in the woods and living out of their trailers and pickup trucks.

Read the whole story

California wildfire losses pegged at \$1 billion

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

Northern California's twin wildfires last fall caused an estimated \$1 billion in insurance losses, state regulators said Monday.

The estimate by the state Department of Insurance makes clear that the Butte and Valley fires last September were among the costliest in California history.

The department said the Valley fire, which destroyed 1,958 homes and other buildings in Lake, Napa and Sonoma counties, caused \$700 million in covered losses. The Butte fire, which claimed 818 buildings in Amador and Calaveras counties, caused \$300 million in insurance losses.

[Read the whole story](#)

Lawmakers reject bills aimed at artificial turf

By Laurel Rosenhall, CalMatters

Is it safe for children to play on fields made of ground up

old tires?

That's a question California scientists are studying in the wake of alarming media reports that featured cancer-stricken soccer players describing years of diving into artificial turf made of recycled tires.

The substance known as "crumb rubber" has made its way onto thousands of California schools and parks, where it helps cushion falls and conserve water. It's formed into mats on playgrounds and ground up into granules that cover fields of synthetic grass.

One reason so many play spaces are made of crumb rubber is that the state gives away money to encourage its use. To keep some tires out of landfills, California's recycling department has given \$42 million in grants since 2005 to communities that use materials made from old tires.

Read the whole story

Developer interested in Kings Beach event center

With the event center in Kings Beach being underutilized and the cost of maintenance an ongoing issue, the board operating the facility is entertaining all inquiries about how to make it more financially viable.

The North Tahoe Public Utility District operates the beachfront facility.

Earlier this month there was a closed session meeting between the district's board of directors and a group

contemplating building a hotel in Kings Beach. The group might be interested in tapping the event center for meeting space.

Those close to the discussion said the talks are very preliminary.

Laulima Development based in Menlo Park is the firm that met with the board.

“Laulima Development is a privately owned real estate company engaged in the acquisition, design and development of distinguished urban infill properties in the western United States. Laulima Development brings decades of experience to its office, residential, retail and mixed-use developments,” the company’s website says.

Any operational changes or capital improvements to the center would have to be approved by the board in open session.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*