

Nev. incubator's mission: Improve water management

By Daniel Rothberg, Las Vegas Sun

It has attracted interest from a company from Canada and one from California, established operating agreements with two companies in Israel, begun negotiating with three companies from Europe, started examining partnerships in Dubai and opened an ongoing dialog with the public utility in Singapore.

The Center of Excellence, a nonprofit incubator at the Desert Research Institute for water technology startups, has come a long way since it first received funding in 2013. And in the last six months, thanks to an infusion of funding during the legislative session, it's shifted into a higher gear in its quest to improve conservation of one of the most coveted resources in Nevada: water. Its two most recent calls for business proposals – one of which closed Tuesday and the other in September – generated interest from about 30 companies.

The basic premise of its model is to bring companies to Nevada with research and development funding to support projects that simultaneously satisfy the demands of the state's water agencies. This, officials say, will spur economic development in water technology, an area where Nevada has plenty of experience, while supporting higher-education research.

Read the whole story

Revenues decline as Placer County conserves water

By Gus Thomson, Auburn Journal

The Placer County Water Agency has a new budget for 2016 that anticipates a drop in expected expenditures.

The water agency's budget for the coming year of \$101.3 million represents an evolving financial landscape reflecting four years of drought in California.

"Our water and energy sales were down in 2015 as a result of the state's conservation mandate and ongoing drought conditions," General Manager Einar Maisch said. "While we hope a wet winter provides relief in 2016, we are planning for continued conservation."

Read the whole story

Gorman leaving Nevada-based chamber

By Kathryn Reed

After more than nine years as CEO-president of the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce, B Gorman is being asked to move on.

She is leaving in May when her contract is up. The board chose not to renew it.



B Gorman

“Her tenure as CEO was an exceptionally long one for someone in her position. It was definitely time for her to go,” one board member told *Lake Tahoe News*. However, it was not a unanimous vote.

Chamber CEO tenure is usually about five years.

Gorman has been the only leader of this chamber. She started Oct. 2, 2006, taking control of what was the merged Tahoe Douglas and South Lake Tahoe chambers of commerce.

It didn't take long for disgruntled members of the South Lake Tahoe chamber to form a chamber that today some call the little chamber or California chamber. It's been an issue Gorman has had to contend with this whole time.

She plans to stay in South Lake Tahoe and start a consulting firm helping businesses. Gorman did not want to talk to *Lake Tahoe News* now about her departure and future plans.

Prior to moving to Lake Tahoe in 2006 for the chamber job, Gorman had been a regional director for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. She has been a ski instructor at Heavenly Mountain Resort and has a law degree from the University of Connecticut School of Law.

The chamber has formed a committee to search for the next CEO.

SLTFD not giving up ambulance duties

By Kathryn Reed

The South Lake Tahoe City Council on Monday took steps to reduce overtime in the fire department and ensure ambulances are staffed with appropriate medical personnel.

In July the council voted to turn over the ambulance service to Lake Valley Fire Protection District. South Lake Tahoe and Lake Valley fire departments make up what is called the Cal-Tahoe Joint Powers Authority. That entity operates the ambulance contract on the East Slope for El Dorado County

One reason South Lake Tahoe wanted out of the ambulance business is because of the interagency transfers. This takes employees out-of-pocket at times for an entire shift as they transport people to medical facilities outside the Tahoe basin. With a firefighter in that ambulance, it meant fewer people on duty to do that job. Plus, firefighters tend to make more money than an EMT. Lake Valley believed the compensation to make those runs was a profitable endeavor.

Lake Valley, based in Meyers, has dragged its feet to take on the responsibilities like it said it wanted to do and would do. This in turn has cost the city money to continue to staff the ambulances.

SLTFD Fire Chief Jeff Meston said he is still willing to negotiate a deal with Lake Valley, but for now he has to take care of his people, the city and be cognizant of his budget.

While Lake Valley Fire Chief Gareth Harris, board President Dave Huber and JPA Executive Director Ryan Wagoner all asked the council to delay the vote, they didn't explain why things were taking so long.

Huber wants the Lake Valley board and City Council to have a joint meeting. He did not say what might be accomplished if this were to happen. The council expressed zero interest in such a gathering.

Earlier this year Lake Valley firefighters had a vote of no confidence in their chief. However, the board continues to keep him on.

The City Council voted 4-0-1 on Dec. 7 to change the contract with the firefighters' association, which will then modify the staffing. Councilwoman Joann Conner abstained. At one time she was on the Cal-Tahoe JPA. She resigned from that post earlier this year.

With South Lake Tahoe removing firefighters from ambulances, it will save the city money and could mean less support for Lake Valley because no one in the ambulance can fight a fire.

Lake Valley Fire Protection District runs about five firefighters per shift, in large part relying on the free assistance of South Lake Tahoe, CalFire and the U.S. Forest Service. Those agencies all help each other out.

Seventy percent of the calls SLTFD goes on are medical emergencies. Firefighters respond to 30 to 40 calls a year. Most days there are 16 people on duty.

Going forward SLTFD ambulances will be staffed with paramedics and emergency medical technicians. Six EMTs will be starting Dec. 14.

The other change is three battalion chief positions are being resurrected after being eliminated in 2011. Testing for those jobs is being done now.

The other change for SLTFD is engines will now be staffed with three firefighters.

With an ambulance and an engine responding to most events, it

means five people instead of the current four will arrive.

The change in staffing in many ways is not new. It's what the city had in 2001 when the JPA agreement started, Meston said.

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In other action:

- On a 3-2 vote the council repealed the plastic bag ban affecting everyone but grocery stores. Councilmembers Hal Cole, whose idea it was revisit the issue, along with Tom Davis and Joann Conner voted in favor of the change.

- The council heard an update on the loop road from Tahoe Transportation District Executive Carl Hasty, with the same info that was available at **last week's open house**. There will be a public workshop in early 2016 where the public can ask questions and get answers.

Anderson injured; won't be at Dew Tour



Jamie Anderson

Jamie Anderson won't be defending her Dew Tour slopestyle title this week in Breckenridge, Colo. Instead, the Meyers

resident will be recovering from surgery.

In a training run the snowboarder fell and broke her clavicle. She had surgery at Vail Valley Medical Center.

Anderson had won the event the last three years.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Home invasion on West Slope involves cash, pot

The latest El Dorado County home invasion involving pot occurred Dec. 4.

According to the victims, they were asleep when someone kicked-open the door to the backyard at about 7am. At least two people, one armed with a shotgun, entered the house in Rescue, according to sheriff's deputies. They searched the house, demanding the male resident tell them where the money was.

One male resident received several cuts, including some that required stitches. He was later treated at the hospital and released.

The suspects tied all three victims and left taking money and marijuana. By the time the sheriff's office was called, the suspects had been gone for some time.

Deputies said the house appeared to have been ransacked. In addition, marijuana was seen in almost every room. It looked like the residence and property was being used as a commercial marijuana facility to include growing, drying, processing, and

packaging.

The suspects were described as possibly Hispanic, in their late 20s to mid-30s. One suspect was described as wearing a hoodie and some sort of mask. They were heard talking to each other in English and Spanish.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Supreme Court lets local ban on assault weapons stand

By David G. Savage, Los Angeles Times

In a victory for gun-control advocates, the Supreme Court on Monday rejected a Second Amendment challenge to laws that forbid the sale or possession of semiautomatic weapons that carry more than 10 rounds of ammunition.

The justices by a 7-2 vote refused to review rulings by judges in Chicago who upheld a ban on assault weapons in the city of Highland Park as a reasonable gun-control regulation.

Justices Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia dissented.

Read the whole story

David mayor of SLT; council marginalizes Conner



Austin Sass and Wendy David are now mayor pro tem and mayor, respectively, of South Lake Tahoe. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

Without unanimous support of their colleagues, Wendy David is now mayor of South Lake Tahoe and Austin Sass is mayor pro tem.

Councilwoman JoAnn Conner abstained from both votes this morning without saying why.

As is customary with the December council meeting, the electeds voted among themselves as to who will be the two leaders for the next year as well as which council member will represent the city on a variety of boards.

No one besides David expressed an interest in being mayor.

Councilman Tom Davis was the first to throw his hat into the ring for mayor pro tem.

Conner said it was important for the mayor and mayor pro tem to attend ceremonial functions. She listed a few where that did not happen, to which then Mayor Hal Cole had to correct her to say he attended things she wasn't aware of.

During Sass' proclamation as to why he should be mayor pro tem he stated how the position is so much more than attending functions, and that it is more about leadership.

David agreed. "Leadership does equal making decisions," she said.

She threw her support behind Sass, saying the two had worked well together on committees in the past year.

Cole, hearing what David had to say about Sass, sided with her.

The votes for mayor and mayor pro tem were 4-0-1.

This was the same vote for the commissions, with Conner abstaining.

The council changed how it voted on entities beyond the council by having members weigh in on their desired position before the Dec. 7 meeting. At the meeting each council member voted on a preprinted ballot for whom they wanted for each position.

Conner was essentially removed from all of her duties except for one that has her working with people outside of Lake Tahoe. She remains the representative to the League of California Cities.

This comes on the heels of Conner having been **censured** by the

council earlier this fall and being **banned from talking to staff**. Those actions were the result of her bullying nature that has resulted in city employees filing complaints against her and other leaders in the community like El Dorado County Supervisor Sue Novasel and Lake Tahoe Community College President Kindred Murillo voicing their inability to work with Conner.

The committee-board reps are:

- California Tahoe Conservancy – Davis
- El Dorado County LAFCO – Sass
- Tahoe Regional Planning Agency – Cole, Sass as alternate
- Tahoe Transportation District – Sass, Davis as alternate
- Abandoned Vehicle Abatement – Cole
- Cal-Tahoe JPA – David and Davis
- Clean Tahoe – David
- Tahoe Prosperity Center – David
- Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority – Davis
- Recreation JPA – Sass
- Waste Management Authority JPA – David, Davis as alternate
- Redevelopment Successor Agency – Cole, Davis as alternate
- Community Play Consortium – David.

The ballot came with some standing committees being eliminated or representation to the committee being eliminated. Because

this is a policy decision that had not been put on the agenda
it will come back for a future vote.

The proposal is to not send a council member to the following
entities' board meetings:

- Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce
- South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce
- South Lake Tahoe Lodging Association
- South Tahoe Public Utility District.

It is proposed to eliminate the following city committees or
subcommittees because they are considered completed:

- Airport Master Plan
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- LTUSD, LTCC MOU
- Single Room Occupancy
- Policy for Giving to Nonprofits
- Warm Room Project
- Senior Citizens Center.

Transportation bill allocates

\$26 billion to Calif.

By Carolyn Lochhead, San Francisco Chronicle

WASHINGTON – Congress has agreed for the first time since 2005 on a long-term transportation bill that will raise federal spending on highways by 5 percent and transit by 8 percent in its first year. Over the bill's five-year life, California will get \$26 billion in federal funds for a variety of transportation projects, a 14.5 percent increase.

Retiring Sen. Barbara Boxer, a California Democrat who joined hands with conservative Sen. James Inhofe, R-Oklahoma, in a monthslong drive to break through conservative antipathy in the House to increasing government spending on domestic programs, counted the legislation as a major achievement when it was announced late Tuesday.

The bill lacks a sustainable funding source, all but ensuring that when it expires in five years, the funding deficit that has allowed roads, bridges and transit systems to deteriorate for years will be even worse. Instead of securing a stable source of dedicated revenue, congressional negotiators scoured the budget for obscure alternatives, from raiding the Federal Reserve's cushion against bank losses to revoking the passports of citizens behind on their taxes by \$50,000 or more in an effort to get them to pay up.

Read the whole story

Vail Resorts earnings not as bad as forecasted

By Ben Miller, Denver Business Journal

Vail Resorts Inc. said its season pass sales were up 13 percent in unit sales volume and up 19 percent in dollar sales volume, and the summer season was a success, but the company still reported a loss for its most recent quarter.

The Broomfield, Colo.-based company Monday posted results for the three months that ended Oct. 31, which it regards as its fiscal first quarter.

It reported a loss of \$59.6 million, or a loss of \$1.63 per share, which is less than the loss a year earlier of \$64.3 million, or a loss of \$1.77. Analysts polled by Thomson Reuters First Call expected a quarterly loss of \$1.75 per share.

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