

Dispute keeps EDC fire district from getting paid

By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County officials are at odds regarding whether it's legal to reimburse the Diamond Springs-El Dorado Fire Protection District \$169,859 in development impact fees.

The dispute stems from a nearly 8-year-old study that has the district out of compliance with the Mitigation Fee Act, which would prevent the county from writing the check.

Emails have been flying back and forth lately between the auditor-controller and county counsel offices. It came to a head this week at the Board of Supervisors meeting.

And, still, the issue is not resolved.

Auditor-Controller Joe Harn told *Lake Tahoe News* he would not sign that check until County Counsel Robyn Drivon gives him a more definitive response regarding how a recent court case affects the money in question. If Harn were to approve the check and it would later be deemed to be illegal, the county could be forced to refund the fees collected improperly because of the out-of-date nexus study.

The money for the fire district is a partial reimbursement for an engine the agency bought in January.

Supervisors in September approved the use of mitigation fees.

Mike Ciccozzi, who works in the county counsel office but is also the acting assistant chief administrative officer, told the board the case that came out this fall does not preclude the fire district from getting paid.

Harn agrees the district should get paid. But he said the

money should come from the General Fund to remove any legal ambiguity.

Harn said beginning in 2013 he told county officials there was an issue with special districts being in compliance with the nexus studies that are required by state law.

On Nov. 17, the board approved the order for Harn to pay the fire district.

The county is considering having a workshop after the first of the year to help special districts understand the ins and outs of things like mitigation fees. Lake Valley Fire Protection District is in a similar situation because its nexus study has not been kept up to date.

The next Board of Supervisors meeting is Dec. 8.

LTCC men's soccer coach resigns

Ben Wade, ex-Lake Tahoe Community College men's soccer coach, has officially resigned.

"After speaking with you today I would like to turn in my resignation as both the director of outreach and equity as well as the head men's soccer coach. I just do not have time to commit to both jobs, the commute from Susanville, and put in the hours that it takes to be a great father and husband," Wade said in a Nov. 16 letter to college President Kindred Murillo.



Ben Wade

In what Wade calls a press release about the resignation that he sent to *Lake Tahoe News* on Nov. 21 it says he is retiring completely from collegiate coaching after 20 years.

"The timing is never right to step down from a program but I feel at peace with my decision," he wrote.

In an email to *LTN* he said, "The fact that I have put my family first over my personal satisfaction and adrenaline of winning championships should be noted. I believe it is a most worthy and noble act."

What exactly transpired to cause the college to remove Wade from his coaching and academic duties has never been disclosed, with the school saying it is a personnel matter and therefore confidential.

Wade had told ***Lake Tahoe News*** he was escorted off campus Nov. 5, but is now saying his assistant coaches led him off campus. In that same article Wade said he had no idea why he was being put on leave.

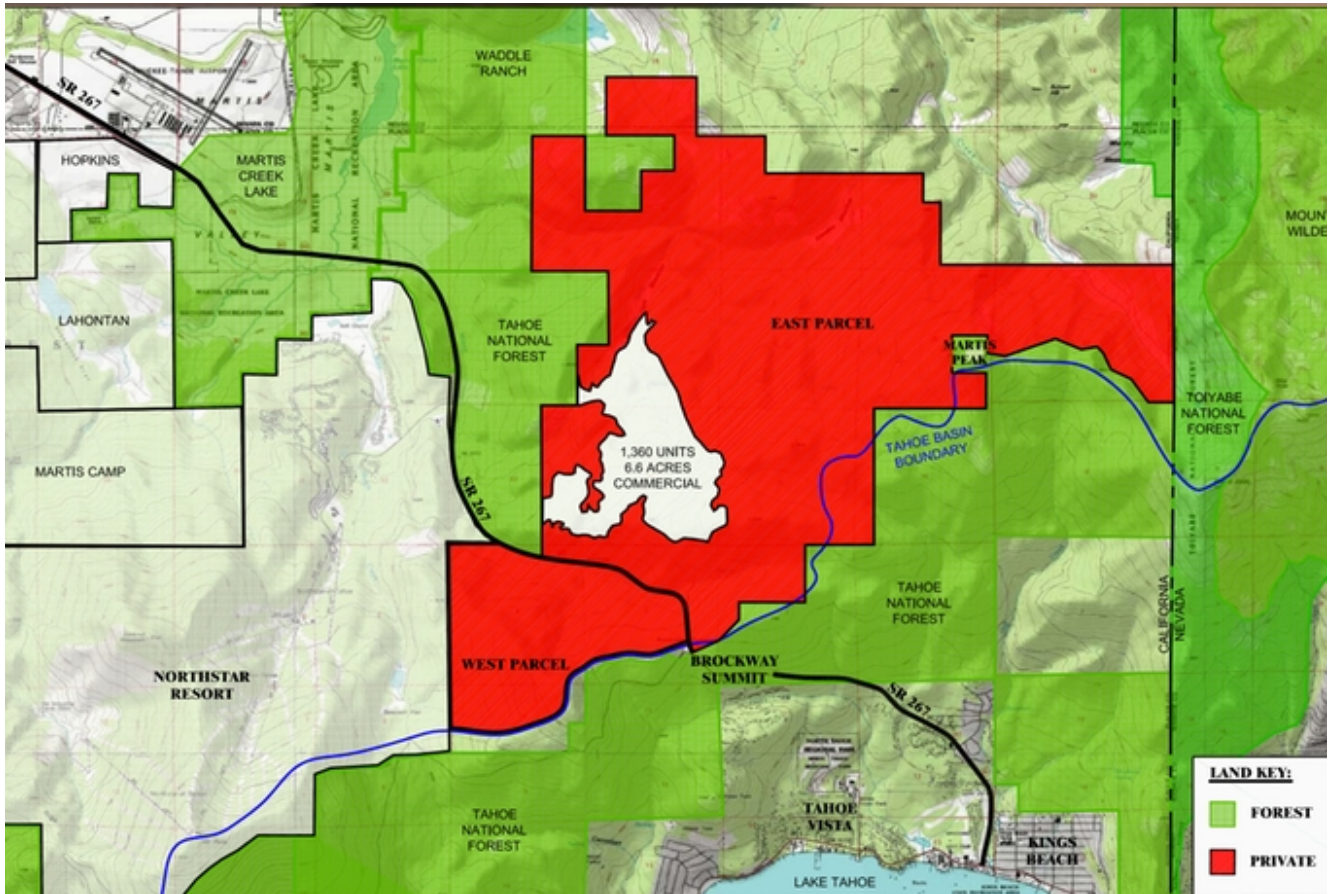
"There was confusion, there was obviously some anger on my part when I realized it was not in the best interest of my family or LTCC to finish out the rest of the season. The **closed session** dealt with my Equity job, not soccer. Two weeks prior I had spoken to administration about terminating the Equity position so that I could pursue a recruiting director position," Wade told *LTN* in an email.

Murillo was not immediately available for comment. The resignation is expected to be on the college board's Dec. 8

agenda.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Impacts of Martis Valley project questioned



This map shows where the proposed development would go.
Map/Provided

By Kathryn Reed

KINGS BEACH – Developers tout the preservation of thousands of acres of open space and the reduction of houses that would be built in addition to permanently retiring 600 units.

Opponents question the impacts to the Lake Tahoe Basin, which this development would border, overall traffic, air quality and other environmental concerns.

The Martis Valley West plan would transfer residential and commercial uses from the east parcel to the west parcel, preserving the 6,376-acre east parcel.

On Nov. 19 the Placer County Planning Commission heard the pros and cons of the proposal. The commission was taking input and not voting on anything. The draft environmental impact report is being circulated for public comment.

Sierra Pacific Industries owns the land, with Mountainside Partners the developers. The 760 units proposed to be built are outside of the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Kurt Krieg with Mountainside Partners told the commission that when it comes to visual issues the studies show “less than significant impacts”. Traffic, he said, will not be a problem now that fewer units than what the land is zoned for will be built, thus having a 35 percent reduction in vehicle mile trips than if there had been full build-out. As for water, the site has wells that can be tapped. Krieg also pointed out that stormwater does not flow into the Tahoe basin.

He noted a study by the Conservation Biology Institute that backed up his assertions.

Blake Riva, principal with the company, went over some numbers:

- 50,000 acres of contiguous open space from Martis Valley through the Mount Rose Wilderness Area;
- 24,000 acres of open space in the Tahoe basin;
- 1,360 residential units currently zoned for the east parcel;

. 40 miles of existing private trails would become public.

The benefits, though, don't outweigh the negatives, according to opponents.

The League to Save Lake Tahoe Area Sierra Club, Friends of the West Shore and others all asked for the draft EIR to be rewritten with more detail and then be recirculated.

"My overarching statement is this EIR is the most confusing I've ever reviewed," Tahoe Vista resident Ellie Waller told the commission. This is from a woman who is well-versed in reading these types of documents. "The placement of cumulative impacts in the executive summary and not having a separate chapter like most EIRs is a prime example."

A theme among the 10 people who spoke was cumulative impacts. Most said the information in the draft EIR is not substantive enough. And when people wanted to bring up the adjacent proposed **Brockway Campground** the chair of the commission, Ken Denio, didn't want to hear those concerns. He wanted to only hear about the draft EIR. But the people's point was the cumulative impacts section is so minimal it does not allow a robust discussion about what they perceive as real impacts.

"It is really astounding that this project will take the level of service from a D to an F. F is gridlock," Laurel Ames with the local Sierra Club said of the traffic impacts.

Jennifer Quashnick with Friends of the West Shore questioned how the environmental document could look at traffic as though only 20 percent of homes would be occupied. She said even if these are predominately second homes, there is still the real possibility they could be full on many weekends.

One person asked for the entrance to not be on Highway 267 if possible.

Loren Enstad, who was fire chief of North Lake Tahoe Fire District from 1980-99, said firefighting resources are already stretched and that this project will add to the problem.

As for visual impacts, Anne Nichols with North Tahoe Preservation Alliance, said, "If you can see the lake, the lake can see you."

While this project is outside of Lake Tahoe, the basin will be impacted. People have asked the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency to weigh in, but have not had that request acknowledged by the bi-state planning agency.

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Notes:

- Comments will be accepted until Dec. 22 at 5pm; email them to cdraecs@placer.ca.gov. The extension makes it a 60-day comment period instead of 45 days.
- The draft EIR is **online**.

Utah prosecutor investigating Reid

By Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — A Utah county prosecutor said Wednesday he is investigating Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., in connection with a pay-to-play scheme involving two former Utah attorneys general.

Davis County Attorney Troy Rawlings, a Republican, said in a

statement that he's looking into allegations related to the Senate leader.

Rawlings declined to disclose the allegations and only said the claims are based on information from witnesses in the attorneys general case.

Reid, who hasn't been charged, fired back at Rawlings in a statement from his spokeswoman Kristen Orthman. She said Rawlings is using "Sen. Reid's name to generate attention to himself and advance his political career, so every few months he seeks headlines by floating the same unsubstantiated allegations."

Reid has denied wrongdoing since a businessman said in 2013 that a former Utah attorney general arranged a deal to pay the senator to get rid of a federal investigation into a software business.

Federal prosecutors declined to file charges in the case.

Rawlings said he has a duty to follow up on leads in the attorneys general case and has been granted permission to investigate possible statewide crimes in relation to the case.

He said he's limited by what he can disclose due to judicial rules but decided to confirm that he's investigating Reid in response to questions from a local newspaper.

"To simply ignore and run from what has been presented by multiple witnesses and sources . . . would mean I am either intentionally blind, or overly worried," Rawlings said in the statement.

Reid's name came up as Rawlings looks into the actions of former Utah attorneys general John Shurtleff and John Swallow.

The two were arrested last summer after prosecutors said the men engaged in a wide-ranging, pay-to-play scheme where they traded favors with businessmen in trouble with regulators

during their combined 13 years running the state office.

Swallow has pleaded not guilty to bribery charges. Shurtleff has pleaded not guilty to obstructing justice charges. Both have trials scheduled in 2016.

Rawlings renewed his criticism of the U.S. Department of Justice for limiting what information he has access to and what he can investigate.

Justice officials closed their investigation in 2013 without filing charges. FBI investigators stayed on the case to help state attorneys who took it over.

"It is not up to the DOJ to tell me who can and who cannot be investigated and what evidence is relevant and material to a state case," Rawlings said.

Justice officials declined comment.

Rawlings has been the top prosecutor since 2007 in Davis County in northern Utah. He won his first election to the post after working as an attorney in the office for six years. He started his career as a defense attorney.

He has partnered several times with Salt Lake County's Democratic district attorney, Sim Gill, including on this case before the two divided duties.

Gill backed Rawlings' actions on the case. Gill said he and Rawlings both committed to following all leads when they took the case, and this one falls to Rawlings since he's the one with authority to handle statewide crimes.

"I trust Troy to do what he deems is right and appropriate," Gill said. "I think he's trying to do his due diligence."

The disclosure by Rawlings that he's looking into the accusations against Reid was first reported by *City Weekly*, a newspaper in Salt Lake City.

West Slope businessman pleads guilty to stealing from tribe

By Denny Walsh, Sacramento Bee

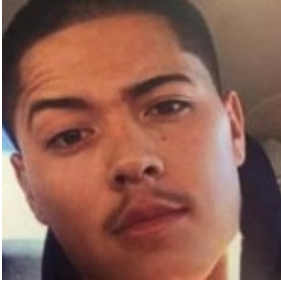
Like his two co-conspirators before him, Darrell Patrick Hinz on Friday confessed his role in an \$18 million theft from the United Auburn Indian Community, which owns the booming Thunder Valley Casino Resort near Lincoln.

Hinz pleaded guilty before U. S. District Judge Troy L Nunley to conspiring in the massive fraud with Bart Wayne Volen, a developer and contractor who did a building project for the tribe, and Gregory Scott Baker, the tribe's administrator at the time. Hinz also admitted laundering the loot to hide its source and filing a false income tax return for the year 2007.

[Read the whole story](#)

Missing SoCal man last seen in Truckee

A Barstow man on his way to Truckee for a job interview has not been heard from for nearly a month.



Daniel
Gallardo

Daniel Gallardo, 19, stayed with relatives in Reno on Oct. 26. The interview was the next day. He was to start work Oct. 28 but did not show up.

He drove a 2012 white Nissan Altima with California license plate 7NUA045. The car is also missing. In this time Gallardo has not used his credit cards or social media.

Gallardo is 5-feet-6-inches, 130 pounds, brown hair and brown eyes.

Anyone with information is asked to call Reno police at 775.657.4774 or Barstow police at 760.256.2211.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Realities of prescription drug abuse

By Amy Rothermel, Deseret News

Prescription medications are part of millions of Americans' daily existence – at least 60 percent of Americans take at least one prescription drug according to the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. While medications can

be helpful and even life-saving, some are addictive and have a high abuse potential.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, drug abuse was the top cause of injury death in the United States in 2013. Amazingly, this means more Utahns died from overdosing on prescription drugs than in traffic accidents.

Some people start taking these medications as prescribed for legitimate pain but end up becoming addicted to them.

Read the whole story

Cops: Marijuana least of the nation's drug worries

By Christopher Ingraham, Washington Post

America's cops overwhelmingly do not see marijuana as a major threat to their communities, according to results of a survey released this week as part of the Drug Enforcement Administration's "2015 National Drug Threat Assessment Summary."

The DEA asked a nationally representative sample of over 1,000 law enforcement agencies what they saw as their biggest drug threats. Marijuana came in at the bottom of the list, named by only 6 percent of survey respondents. The share of law enforcement agencies naming pot has been declining steadily since the mid-2000s, even as states have moved to legalize medical and recreational marijuana during that time period.

By contrast, nearly three quarters of police departments named heroin and meth as their top drug threats this year. The

perceived threat of heroin has more than quadrupled since 2007, according to the survey. And after rising sharply from 2007 to 2013, the threat posed by prescription painkillers has subsided considerably in the past two years.

[Read the whole story](#)

Nev. students outscore expectations, but few tested

By Trevon Milliard, Reno Gazette-Journal

Students performed better than expected on Nevada's new and more challenging standardized tests aligned to Common Core, but state officials are taking the results with a grain of salt.

"We can't make an inference of how the state really performed," said interim State Superintendent of Public Instruction Steve Canavero, releasing 2015 scores to public schools on Tuesday with many caveats.

The state – like all others across the nation – must annually test all third through eighth grade students in math and English language arts, but only a third of Nevada's 213,500 students did so this spring. Schools were plagued by repeated crashes to the online exams, with both the testing company and test-maker unable to fix the problem.

[Read the whole story](#)

Sandoval questioning refugee resettlement

By Associated Press

Gov. Brian Sandoval says he doesn't think he has power to halt refugee resettlement in Nevada, but he's seeking a second opinion.

He's asking the attorney general for a legal opinion on how much authority the governor has over refugee resettlement, and the implications of the state taking any action.

Sandoval's office issued an update Wednesday, two days after the governor asked President Obama not to send more Syrian refugees to Nevada until the White House thoroughly reviews the refugee screening process.

The request comes after deadly terrorist attacks in Paris.

Sandoval had a conference call with Obama and other governors Tuesday, and said he left convinced that refugee security clearance needs review and federal officials need to coordinate more with states on refugee placement.