

LTCC tuition for some Nevadans to decrease

By Kathryn Reed

Tuition is going down at Lake Tahoe Community College for people who live on the Nevada side of the basin.

Known as the “good neighbor policy”, the legislation was signed by Gov. Jerry Brown this week. A few issues still need to be ironed out, but the hope is the new fees will be in place by winter quarter.

A similar law was signed by Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval in which California basin students may attend Western Nevada College in Carson City at a discounted rate.

Until 2011, there had been a policy in place that allowed Nevada basin residents to attend LTCC at California rates plus a small fee. Nevada did away with that law. Much of it had to do with politics, which is also the reason the two states took so long to come to another agreement.

LTCC President Kindred Murillo has been fighting to get the legislation back in place ever since arriving four years ago. She has had to contend with politicians believing Tahoe is full of rich kids, not realizing so many work multiple jobs and don't have the transportation to take higher education courses elsewhere.

“Another misconception out there is they think people just come to Lake Tahoe Community College to take PE classes,” Murillo told *Lake Tahoe News*. “When we ran the numbers of the students from Nevada they were truly students trying to get job skills, go to the fire academy, get bookkeeping skills or transfer to a four-year school. They were serious students.”

The new law is not as good as the old one. This one provides for a 45 percent discount to Nevada residents. The current California resident tuition is \$31 per unit, or \$1,395 for a full-time student per year. The current non-resident tuition is \$170 per unit, or \$7,650 for full time. That will be reduced to \$93 per unit, or \$4,185 to attend full time. That is a savings of \$77 per unit, or \$3,465 for full-time, year-round attendance.

The California Legislature had no appetite to go back to the original deal that would have made rates closer to what residents pay. State Sen. Ted Gaines, R-El Dorado, carried the legislation. Without the compromise of the higher tuition, it's likely there would have been no deal.

"The Tahoe basin is a single economy that is divided by a political boundary that is of little meaning to the people in the area, who may live in one state and work in the other, and who eat, shop and use amenities in both states. I'm pleased the governor signed the bill," Gaines told *Lake Tahoe News*. "It is a chance for California to improve the lives of the students and families of the Lake Tahoe Basin by making sure that all students get the best, most affordable education and work force training possible."

Each year since the good neighbor policy went away LTCC lost between 65 and 85 full-time equivalent students. This equates to more than 200 students per year because not everyone takes a full load.

How many students will take advantage of the new policy remains to be seen. LTCC will track those who enroll from Nevada to gauge the effectiveness of the legislation.

Placer County deputy's headstone vandalized

The gravesite of a fallen Placer County sheriff's deputy has been vandalized.



William Bean

Placer deputies on Oct. 8 at 7:40pm found the headstone of William Bean at the Colfax Cemetery had been defaced.

Bean was shot and killed in the line of duty when he was a Sacramento police officer. Bean was with the Placer County Sheriff's Office for four years as a deputy prior to his service with the Sacramento Police Department.

Suspects forcibly removed two monumental badges from Bean's headstone. Both badges symbolized his service to the two agencies.

Anyone with information is asked to call Placer County Detective Scott Alford at 530.889.7844 or anonymously to Placer County Crime Stoppers at 800.923.8191.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Quest to save water may come at an ecological cost

By Haya El Nasser, Al Jazeera America

LOS ANGELES – Lush lawns have become vilified during California's historic drought that is searing the state for the fourth consecutive year. And removing thirsty turf has been rewarded with generous incentives from local water districts, rebates so popular that the demand has outstripped funds available.

But now, some ecologists are raising concern that the state's water conservation fervor may be harmful to the environment.

"The key thing is what are we replacing lawns with," said Peter Gleick, president and co-founder of the Pacific Institute, a global water think tank based in Oakland.

Mulch and native plants are the preferred environmentally sound alternatives. But some are painting their brown grass green and even paving over their yards.

Read the whole story

Tahoe median house prices increasing

By Mark Glover, Sacramento Bee

The median price for a home in the high-end Lake Tahoe real estate market continued to climb in the third quarter,

according to Nevada-based Chase International Real Estate.

The median price of a Lake Tahoe home increased 5 percent year-over-year to \$482,500.

Chase said the Tahoe City and South Shore markets saw year-over-year sales gains at 6 percent and 14 percent, respectively.

Read the whole story

'16 election changing health care debate

By Noam N. Levey, Los Angeles Times

With the first primaries of the 2016 presidential campaign just months away, the national healthcare debate is poised to enter a new phase, more focused on consumers' pocketbooks than on re-litigating the 5-year-old Affordable Care Act.

Hillary Rodham Clinton, who is campaigning on a detailed program to crack down on rising drug prices and runaway medical bills, is making a play for the hearts of voters increasingly irritated about what they have to pay for healthcare.

Clinton has issued an implicit challenge to her Republican rivals who continue to campaign with broadsides against Obamacare but few details about how they would address consumers' basic healthcare worries.

Most Americans want their elected leaders to protect them from surprise out-of-network medical charges. They want government to ensure health plans have sufficient networks. And they want more information about the prices of doctors' visits, tests and procedures, according to the poll, by the nonprofit Kaiser Family Foundation.

By contrast, fewer than half the respondents want their elected officials to deal with concerns about the Affordable Care Act. Just a third want it fully repealed.

Read the whole story

Brown signs aggressive climate change bill

By Michael R. Blood and Judy Lin, AP

Gov. Jerry Brown signed an ambitious climate change bill on Wednesday, aiming to increase the state's use of renewable electricity to 50 percent and make existing buildings twice as energy-efficient by 2030.

"The goal is clear, and California is in the forefront," Brown said at a signing ceremony at the hilltop Griffith Observatory, where a hazy downtown Los Angeles provided the backdrop.

Brown tried for an even stronger measure that would have also directed state regulators to enforce a 50 percent drop in

petroleum use in the next 15 years, but oil interests defeated that part of the package.

He characterized the loss as a short-term setback and insisted that the world needs to wean itself off fossil fuels as quickly as possible.

"What has been the source of our prosperity now becomes the source of our ultimate destruction if we don't get off it. And that is so difficult," Brown said.

The Legislature approved the watered-down SB350 in the final hours of the legislative session on Sept. 11.

The measure does not specify how California will achieve these far-reaching goals, deferring the details to the state's Air Resources Board, Energy Commission and Public Utilities Commission. The boards' members are mostly appointed by the governor and have broad influence over the state's economic life.

Lawmakers blamed a multimillion-dollar advertising campaign by oil companies, which raised fears of job losses, for defeating the petroleum reduction requirement.

Both houses are controlled by Democrats, but Brown accused Republicans of failing to take action to slow global warming. He recalled that Ronald Reagan, a Republican, was California's governor when the state created the Air Resources Board in response to the smog in Los Angeles, and that Republican President Richard Nixon signed the Clean Air Act.

"That was a time when Republicans really got it. We hope they are going to come back to the good old days of Reagan and Nixon, when people cared about clean air and clean water," he said.

Brown, a Democrat, began the year with a vow to push the most aggressive greenhouse-gas emissions benchmark in North America

through the Legislature.

His goal builds on landmark legislation signed by Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2006. That legislation established the first U.S. program to cap and trade emissions as a way to reduce pollutants to 1990 levels by 2020.

That program, second only to the European Union's in size, imposes extra costs on polluting businesses and has kept the state on track to get a third of its electricity from renewable sources in five more years.

Brown took his campaign around the world, even meeting with the pope in July. But he lost a key political battle among moderate Democrats in Sacramento amid intense lobbying by the oil industry and California's utilities.

Some lawmakers were willing to accept forced cuts in petroleum use if the Legislature could have more power over the Air Resources Board, which has been implementing the greenhouse gas emissions law.

But Brown refused to give up what he sees as his executive authority.

Brown said cleaner-running cars and energy-efficient appliances will improve the environment, but he warned that the world's coming transition from carbon-producing fuels to solar, wind and other renewable energies will be difficult.

"I never want to minimize the task ahead," he said. "It's not going to be easy, and it's not going to come overnight. There is no quick, one thing you can do."

Bankrupt Caesars division amends restructuring plan

By J.D. Morris, Las Vegas Sun

Caesars Entertainment Corp.'s main operating division has adjusted the way it intends to emerge from bankruptcy and wants to prolong its period of exclusive control over its restructuring plan by four months.

The division, known as Caesars Entertainment Operating Co. or CEOC, announced today that it filed an amended restructuring plan in bankruptcy court and asked to extend its exclusivity period until March 15. Court records show Caesars' exclusivity period – during which no one else can file a competing restructuring plan – is due to expire Nov. 15.

Caesars said in a statement that has support from creditors holding more than 80 percent of the division's first-priority debt. It said the plan also provides "enhanced recoveries" to junior creditors.

Caesars is the parent company of Harrah's Lake Tahoe and Harveys.

[Read the whole story](#)

Tahoe yellow cress spared from endangered list



Tahoe yellow cress only
grows in the basin.
Photo/USFS

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

A tiny plant that grows only along the shoreline of Lake Tahoe does not need federal protection after years of successful efforts to prevent its extinction, officials announced Wednesday.

It appears the Tahoe yellow cress now has a promising future and does not need to be listed as an endangered or threatened species, officials from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said.

Fifteen years of work by a coalition of land managers, conservationists and private property owners has “truly exemplified” the most basic function of the Endangered Species Act – cooperation toward conservation of sensitive ecosystems and the plants and animals that depend upon them to survive, said Ted Koch, supervisor of U.S. Fish and Wildlife’s Reno office.

Read the whole story

Rescuers find missing Bay Area man in Incline woods



A Bay Area man is carried out of the wilderness in Incline. Photo/Provided

A Bay Area man was found barefoot, dehydrated and suffering from exposure this week by Washoe County sheriff's search and rescuers in Incline Village.

At approximately 7:30am Oct. 5 deputies responded to a report of a suspicious vehicle abandoned on a dirt fire road off Allison Drive in Incline Village. Deputies found evidence that someone may have left the vehicle and wandered into the wilderness.

They determined the vehicle belonged to Ivan Cooper of San Leandro who had recently been reported missing by his daughter.

Searchers located Cooper in the forest about a half a mile from the vehicle lying in a bed of pine needles. They carried him from the woods and he was then transported to a local hospital. He is expected to make a full recovery.

"I'm told that Mr. Cooper may not have survived the night given his condition," Sheriff Chuck Allen said in a statement.

SLT council to consider censuring Conner

By Kathryn Reed

The South Lake Tahoe City Council will consider censuring Councilmember JoAnn Conner at a special meeting on Oct. 19.

Mayor Hal Cole called for the meeting to address the behavior and language of Conner toward multiple city employees as well as her interactions with colleagues. He said she is creating a hostile work environment.

Cole told *Lake Tahoe News* the exact wording of the agenda is being worked out, but that two items will likely be on it:

1. A vote to support City Manager Nancy Kerry's decision to ban Conner from having one-on-one access with any staff member.

"We don't have to do this. I'm concerned with what I'm hearing and reading that JoAnn is making this personal between her and Nancy. It is not personal. It is about protecting the city. It sends a message that it is not just Nancy doing this, that we concur," Cole said.

2. There will be a resolution brought forward to censure Conner.

If the majority of the council votes to censure Conner, she will still be able to do her job. It is essentially a vote to say they object to her behavior. At the local level

impeachment is not an option by the council.

"When I feel my employees have been threatened, I need to protect them and the city coffers," Cole told *LTN*.

Last month Kerry told the council she would no longer allow Conner to interact with staff and vice versa.

Conner's abusive behavior has been the norm for the nearly three years she has been on the council, according to city staff. Non-city staff has told *Lake Tahoe News* many stories about Conner's vulgarity and hostility. Those interactions, though, point to a pattern of behavior, but are not anything the council can address.

In February the council had an open meeting during the weekend strategic planning session in which the five aired concerns about Conner's behavior. Tears were shed and an honest dialog was had. Later that weekend Conner called it healing. The other four believed Conner when she said change would be forthcoming.

Cole said Conner took some responsibility in February for her behavior, but since then she has reverted to her old tactics of bullying.

Those tactics reportedly include abusive, threatening, repulsive and belittling comments. This, by definition, is harassment.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission says harassment is when "the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive."

The EEOC goes on to say, "The victim does not have to be the person harassed, but can be anyone affected by the offensive conduct."

Conner – as are all the council members – is the boss of the

city manager and city attorney. They in turn have an obligation to protect their respective employees or they could be held individually liable. Stopping the interaction between Conner and staff is a form of protection.

Conner was not available for comment late Wednesday. However, she has been active on social media in pleading her case. On Facebook she posted, "I still have no information on the specific charges, just lots of innuendo and hearsay, therefore I cannot explain it, defend it, or change it." She claims her challenge of the sign permit fee has something to do with what is going on. Cole said the sign permit is irrelevant to what is going on.

She sent a letter to a number of people on Oct. 7, which was forwarded to *LTN*. In it she begs for support.

The email said, "I believe this is a power play to silence the voice of the people. I have always been different from the other Council Members, and am the most active advocate for the 'little people,' veterans, seniors, and small business owners.

"I believe they do not like that I do not automatically defer to Nancy Kerry or go along with their agenda. They cannot attack me on my work, as I have accomplished too many good things for the people, so I believe they are attempting to attack me on innuendo and hearsay, to tarnish my reputation, so I will either quit or not run again in 2016."

At no point does she address the allegations made against her about her conduct. She will have an opportunity in 11 days to do so at the special meeting.

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Notes:

- The meeting is Oct. 19 at 3pm at Lake Tahoe Airport.