

Nevada No. 2 in U.S. for foreclosure activity in April

By Jennifer Robison, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Nevada continued to chip away at its home foreclosures in April.



Nevada has been a leader in foreclosures for years. Photo/Brendel

A Wednesday report from California research firm RealtyTrac found that foreclosure activity across the state was up 39 percent year over year in the month, extending to one in every 555 homes. That was good enough for No. 2 in the nation for default-related activity.

Florida ranked No. 1, with one in every 425 homes in some stage of foreclosure. Maryland, New Jersey and Tennessee rounded out the top five.

Read the whole story

Entertainment venue being created in SLT



Magicians like Danny Cole will have a permanent venue to perform in starting this fall in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Provided

By Kathryn Reed

A long undeveloped commercial space is about to become South Lake Tahoe's first indoor entertainment venue.

The third floor of the movie theater at Heavenly Village was once going to be a residential unit. By November it is slated to be a 110-seat events center with a separate high-end bar-lounge area.

Gary Casteel, whose Trans Sierra Investments owns the site, and Paul Reder of PR Entertainment, plan to spend more than \$1 million converting the vacant area into a state-of-the-art live entertainment destination. This will be in the dome area of the movie theater building.

This week the City Council agreed to sell 5,100-square-feet of commercial floor area to Trans Sierra for \$100,000. Next up is the permitting process. The goal is for it to be open in the fall.

"We need more entertainment in the village. This rounds out what we do," Casteel told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The hub of the South Shore, which opened more than a decade ago, is completely full. Casteel credits the vibrancy of the village to having the right mix of tenants.



"My thought is you could get over the shoulder season if you do events and give people a reason to come up here."

**– Paul Reder,
president PR
Entertainment**

Casteel and Reder's history dates to their days at Caesars Tahoe. Both believe this partnership will be successful, profitable and beneficial for the city as well as the overall region. They've been working on the project for about 18 months.

Reder has produced more than 3,000 shows on the South Shore in

the last 26 years. One of the most successful genres has been magic. He started producing those in 2003. Seven years later he and co-producer Tony Clark won the Merlin Award for Producer of the Year. In the world of magic this is like winning an Academy Award.

When the Horizon closed last year no other casino wanted that type of entertainment even though night after night the magic shows would sell out.

“The magic show concept resonated so well with the community because there was nothing else to do with the family. There are only so many times you can see a movie,” Reder told *Lake Tahoe News*. He said Illusion Fusion sold more than 30,000 tickets a year and that on TripAdvisor it was the No. 1 attraction in Lake Tahoe.

The Heavenly Village venue will host two shows a night, six nights a week. The early show will be family oriented, while the later show will be for those 21 and older. Both will be magic-based. Clark will be the producer and magical consultant.

Reder said his experience is that there is a demand for family entertainment. There is also a demand for year-round entertainment.

“My thought is you could get over the shoulder season if you do events and give people a reason to come up here,” Reder said.

He also anticipates having speakers give talks at the theater, renting the space to community groups, using it for meeting space during the day, and potentially having music acts who want to perform in an intimate setting.

Reder is working now on getting the shows lined up.

The lounge area will include two fireplaces and overstuffed

couches with a living room feel. Areas can be sectioned off for privacy. Small plate, tapa-style food offerings will be available. It will be a place to hang even when not seeing a show.

A separate entrance will be created on the third level of the parking garage so people will be able to walk into the venue from there. Not everyone will be driving since there are about 5,000 hotel rooms within walking distance. The main entrance will be near the movie theater.

The goal is to use locals as much as possible in the next few months – including the architect, designer and construction team.

The only thing left to be known is what the name of the venue will be. Trademark issues are being worked out so that is still forthcoming.

Woman's body found in Placerville

A woman's body was found by a creek in El Dorado County on May 17.

An autopsy revealed no signs of foul play or trauma, according to the sheriff's department. The identity of the woman, who is white and believed to be between 60 and 70 years old, is not known.

Teens walking near Weber Creek in Placerville discovered the body in vegetation. It appeared the body had been there for some time, deputies said.

El Dorado deputy arrested on drug charges

An El Dorado County sheriff's deputy assigned to the local drug task force was arrested Tuesday on drug charges.

Douglas County sheriff's deputies were called to the home of Mark Zlendick in Gardnerville on May 19 because of an alleged domestic dispute.



Mark Zlendick

Investigators said they found narcotics and paraphernalia at the house on Centerville Lane.

Zlendick, 47, was arrested on charges of possession of a controlled substance, trafficking methamphetamine, conspiracy, and possession of paraphernalia.

He posted the \$55,640 bail.

Zlendick has been with El Dorado County Sheriff's Department since 2004. He was a member of the South Lake El Dorado

Narcotics Enforcement Team when arrested. El Dorado has placed him on paid administrative leave.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Gunman robs Kings Beach pharmacy

A Rite-Aid in Kings Beach was robbed Saturday.



The suspect walked into the store May 16 about 5:30pm, brandished a gun and demanded Norco and methadone. He left on foot after receiving the pills.

The suspect is described as Hispanic or Caucasian, 5-feet-11 to 6-feet, with dark hair. He was wearing a light blue surgical mask.

On May 1, a man believed to be the same suspect robbed the pharmacy inside the Sierra Market in Colfax. He was wearing a surgical mask and asked for the same pills.

There have also been pharmacy robberies in Incline Village and Reno.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Placer County sheriff's Detective Sage Bourassa at 530.581.6322. To remain anonymous and be eligible for a cash reward of up to \$1,000, call Placer County Crime Stoppers at 800.923.8191.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

2 people flee SLT drug lab explosion

By Kathryn Reed

Two people are being sought in connection with a drug lab that blew up in South Lake Tahoe on Tuesday night.

The suspects were seen running from the apartment on Larch Avenue after the 8:20pm explosion on May 19. Glass was blown out and a small fire started. However, the damage was minimal. The building inspector did not condemn the residence.

“Sometimes the violence of the explosion is enough to extinguish any type of flame,” Police Chief Brian Uhler explained.

The two suspects were using butane to extract THC. Stems, seeds and other byproducts of a marijuana plant that are not sellable can have the honey oil extracted from them to be made into edibles or it is smoked. The process to get this concentrated THC, though, is “extremely dangerous”, according to Uhler.

“We live in a forest. With the oncoming season of what is expected to be worst fire season ever, we need to do things to get control of what is an excess production going on,” Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He encourages people to report suspected illegal marijuana grows as well as if people see neighbors with a large number of butane canisters. Estimates are more than 400 illegal grows exist in the city limits.

South Lake El Dorado Narcotics Enforcement Team is handling

the investigation into Tuesday's blast. Area hospitals have been notified in case someone with injuries that may be consistent with that of a butane fire show up.

USDA allocates \$21 mil. to help farmers battle drought

By Matt Stevens, Los Angeles Times

A branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture will provide \$21 million to help farmers and ranchers in California and other states install new irrigation systems, plant cover crops and implement other water conservation practices, officials said Monday.

The funds, made possible by the 2014 farm bill, will be distributed to the most severely drought-stricken areas of eight states, as determined by the U.S. Drought Monitor.

It is not clear how much of the money will go to California, but in a call with reporters, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said the state has already received more than \$27 million from the Natural Resources Conservation Service for drought management practices this fiscal year.

Read the whole story

SLT making it easier to access Connolly Beach



South Lake Tahoe officials want to ensure the public has access to Connolly Beach. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Three bear boxes, boulders and a beat up bike rack are what welcome the public to Connolly Beach from the parking lot. The pavement is in disrepair. Vehicle access is through the hotel maze.

A sign says no alcohol is allowed on the beach, but the owners of the Beach Retreat Hotel have set up a bar. Farther down are four hammocks with signs saying they are only for hotel guests.

This stretch of sand in the middle of South Lake Tahoe has been contentious for years. And even though the state Supreme Court has weighed in on the topic, the city and current owner – Urbana Realty Advisors – are still not on the same page.

"I feel excluded even though I know my feet treaded there as a kid," Sue Hoy told the City Council on Tuesday. She said the beach is now "totally unwelcoming."



Hotel owners have strung private hammocks on the public beach.

As with all beaches in California, the public has a right to access the sand below the high-water mark at any hour of the day, every day of year.

The court, though, ruled the public also has access from the high-water mark – 6,229.1 feet – to 100 feet toward the hotel. No one bothered to survey this at the time of the 1985 decision. The city recently did. That 100 feet goes into the buildings.

This is why the city wants all of the beach to be accessible to the public. The courts said so. However, access to the 100

feet from the high-water mark is only available June 1-Sept. 30, sunrise to sunset.

The South Lake Tahoe City Council on May 19 was updated on where things stand regarding what is better known as Timber Cove Beach and gave staff direction on how to proceed.

No one from the property attended the meeting.

“They can’t ask the public to leave unless they are disruptive,” City Manager Nancy Kerry explained.



The gate at Bal Bijou is coming down by the end of May.

The gate at Bal Bijou will be removed before June 1 so the public has access to the beach parking area without having to drive through the hotel property. A tree needs to come down and paving in some areas will occur.

Eighteen of the parking spots are public.

Signage will be placed on the beach to help explain ownership and usage issues.

The California Tahoe Conservancy is also interested in

ensuring the public has access. It owns a tiny lot to the west of the Beach Retreat property. With the lake so low, it's possible to walk from the CTC lot to Connolly Beach without any obstruction.

Chris Mertens, an environmental planner with CTC, said his agency wants to provide another access point to Connolly Beach. To make that happen talks need to be initiated with the hotel owners as well as Tahoe Shores, which is on the other side of the CTC lot.

Another issue the city is working on is how to actually spell Connolly.

—

In other action:

- The council accepted a \$98,000 donation from Lisa Maloff for the purchase of a K-9. The money will also pay for the four-legged officer's training and equipment.
- Pump Trax was awarded the \$60,550 bid to design and oversee the construction of the Bijou Bike Park.

Reid: Raise cap on rooftop solar limits

By Amber Phillips, Las Vegas Sun

The cap limiting how many homeowners in Nevada can provide solar power to the energy grid is "way too low," said Sen. Harry Reid, the Democratic minority leader.

Reid's comments are the first from a member of Nevada's

congressional delegation on the matter and come as Nevada's largest rooftop solar companies – SolarCity and Sunrun – lobby state lawmakers to raise the current 3 percent cap.

If the cap is not raised, the rooftop industry will shed thousands of jobs in a state that touts itself as No. 1 per capita for solar jobs, industry lobbyists say.

Read the whole story

SLT council gives Kerry two-step salary increase

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe City Manager Nancy Kerry on May 19 received a glowing review from the City Council.

“She is really one of the best city manager’s in the state,” Mayor Hal Cole told *Lake Tahoe News*. “If anyone deserves a raise in this community, she does.”



Nancy Kerry

Kerry, who has officially had the job since fall 2012, will receive a 4½ percent raise immediately and 2½ percent in one year. Altogether this will put her at about \$185,000 a year,

which is what former City Manager Tony O'Rourke was making when he left. He also had other perks like a car allowance that she has always refused.

She has a five-year rolling contract.

Cole praised Kerry's ability to save the city about \$52 million through changes to employee benefits and dealings with the now defunct Redevelopment Agency.

"The city would be in much worse condition if she were not here," Cole said.

Cole said he is an advocate of merit raises – which this is – and not cost of living adjustments.

In the past Kerry has turned down raises the council offered.

"I wanted to take the time to prove myself and for the council to feel comfortable that I earned it," Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Kerry is making a name for herself in the state with the changes she has brought about in South Lake Tahoe. The governor asked the League of California Cities to create a task force to deal with employee benefits. The league appointed her to the task force.

Kerry has also been asked to speak at the league's annual conference in the fall about the employee and retiree benefits. She put together a panel who will speak to that topic.