

Sheriff's departments have highest-paid local government workers

By Brad Branan, Sacramento Bee

David Keyes didn't wear a suit or work in an executive office, but he was the capital region's highest-paid local government employee in 2013.

As a captain in the Placer County Sheriff's Office, Keyes received a base salary of \$122,000, according to recently released data from the State Controller's Office. When he retired in November 2013, Keyes also received \$150,000 for unused sick time, \$19,000 for unused vacation and \$64,000 for other incentives, boosting his final-year pay to \$355,000.

Keyes, 53, did not return messages from the *Sacramento Bee*. Since retiring, he has been able to enjoy his longtime hobby of photography, according to a website showcasing his work.

Keyes' law enforcement sector has more people than any other category on the region's list of 1,000 highest-paid local government employees, The Bee found in an analysis of the State Controller's Office 2013 data. In Sacramento, El Dorado, Placer and Yolo counties, 237 sworn employees from sheriff's departments and 57 sworn officers from police departments were on the list.

Sworn personnel from sheriff's departments received an average of \$106,000, compared to \$73,000 for all local government employees in the region, the analysis found.

Read the whole story

Sandoval stands by increasing taxes

By Ray Hagar, Reno Gazette-Journal

Gov. Brian Sandoval has a message – or challenge – to those who criticize his budget, which includes \$1.1 billion in new and extended taxes:

So what's your plan to finance Nevada's future – especially its struggling education system?

"I have put my marker out there in terms of where I want the state to go and where we have to invest when it comes to k-through-12, higher education, health and human services and public safety," Sandoval said during an interview with the Reno Gazette-Journal on Wednesday.

"And for those who don't want to do that, then they need to do the same thing," Sandoval said. "They need to say, 'This is where I am going to cut.' Because right now, they get to say, 'I have 12 votes not to raise your taxes.' But there are consequences with that."

The "12 votes" refers to a statement Assemblywoman Michele Fiore, R-Las Vegas, made to the Republican Men's Club of Northern Nevada on Tuesday.

Read the whole story

Calif. state pay increased \$1.1 billion last year

By Jon Ortiz and Phillip Reese, Sacramento Bee

California state workers' salaries rose a total \$1.1 billion last year, according to payroll data, while the number of state employees also grew.

The State Controller's Office wrote paychecks for \$16.43 billion in 2014, up 7 percent from the year before. The increase followed three years of essentially flat payroll costs for the state.

Meanwhile, the number of full-time and part-time state workers grew from about 242,000 to about 245,000, or almost 2 percent.

The data, which exclude state university employees and legislative staff, show the largest dollar-amount payroll increases occurred in the state Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (up \$279 million); the prison system's medical caregiver, California Correctional Health Care Services (\$91 million); the Department of State Hospitals (\$82 million); the California Highway Patrol (\$71 million); and the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (\$68 million).

Read the whole story

Aramark dealing with zero

boats, snowmobiles

Aramark's winter season took another hit on Friday when it was announced the Tahoe Paradise will no longer be operating.

The smaller tour boat had been put into service at Ski Run Marina in South Lake Tahoe as a replacement for the Tahoe Queen. The paddle-wheeler was taken off line because of the low lake level and now the yacht faces the same fate.

A woman who handles reservations for the company said the notice came down Jan. 23. She said the email said the boats would not operate until further notice.

Dredging the channel at Ski Run is the responsibility of Aramark, the parent company of the boats. No permit has been sought to do so.

Aramark also operates the M.S. Dixie II out of Zephyr Cove resort. It is out of service while it undergoes renovations.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency permits which boats may operate out of which marina, so it's not like vessels may go wherever they want whenever they want.

The other setback for Aramark this winter is the lack of snow has prevented its snowmobile operations on Spooner Summit from opening.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Nevada fares well in LGBT study

Nevada is one of 18 states in the country that has explicit state-level workplace protections for all LGBT employees. It is also one of 36 states with marriage equality.

This data was released this week by Human Rights Campaign in partnership with the Equality Federation in its first national report assessing the status of state legislation affecting LGBT equality across the United States. HRC is the nation's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender civil rights organization.

"Despite historic progress on issues like marriage equality, a majority of states still struggle to reach even a basic level of equality for LGBT people," said HRC President Chad Griffin said in a statement. "Most states lack statewide non-discrimination laws to protect LGBT people – putting countless individuals and families at risk, and creating inequalities in adoption and surrogacy, employment benefits, and youth safety and well-being."

"Even worse," Griffin said, "equality opponents continue to push deeply harmful laws forward, including those seeking to undermine critical protections in the guise of "religious liberty."

Though same-sex marriage is legal in 36 states and Washington, D.C., more than 111 million people, or 35 percent of Americans, live in states that have marriage but where LGBT people are not fully protected from discrimination in the workplace. And more than 206 million people nationwide live in states where every LGBT person lacks fully-inclusive statewide workplace sexual orientation and gender identity protections.

Advocates in Nevada are expected to focus this year on passing

comprehensive anti-bullying protections for young people.

The SEI assesses states on their LGBT-related legislation and policies, good and bad, in six areas: relationship recognition, parenting laws and policies, non-discrimination laws, hate crimes laws, anti-bullying laws, and health and safety laws and policies. Based on that review, the SEI assigns states to one of four distinct categories.

Nevada and six other states falls into the category Building Equality. These have marriage equality and have taken steps toward more robust LGBT equality, including passing basic non-discrimination and hate crimes laws. Some lack explicit gender identity protections, and several lack comprehensive anti-bullying laws. Bad laws are more common, so advocates work to stop bills that undermine LGBT equality, and pass more comprehensive non-discrimination laws.

The full report, including detailed scorecards for every state, is available online.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Signs near trail in EDC upset users



Seasonal “no parking” rules
are in effect even without
snow. Photos/LTN

“No parking” signs along Lake Tahoe Boulevard and Sawmill Pond Road are being noticed more this year than years past. Part of this has to do with the 1.7 mile bike trail that was put in last fall paralleling the boulevard so more people are in this area. And with the weather more like spring than winter, people are using the trail and wanting to park where they had been allowed to up until a month ago.

There is a wide spot on the north side the road at the intersection of Sawmill Pond that was initially used for parking. Now there are multiple “no parking” signs.

A group of cyclists riding the trail on Friday were miffed this access has been taken away, as well as on Sawmill Pond. They said the U.S. Forest Service owned lot at the pond is icy, creating a whole other set of problems.

“Those signs are not new. We put them up every winter,” Tom Halverson with El Dorado County Department of Transportation told *Lake Tahoe News*. “When there is snow on the ground they park in the street and go play around at the lake. It causes traffic problems for snow removal.”

Thinking winter had arrived when the snow fell in December, the county put up the signs. Halverson said they wouldn't come down until spring.



El Dorado County sign makers need to remember I before E except after C.

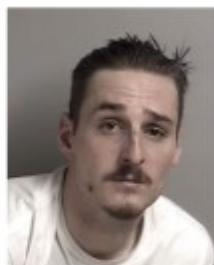
What he didn't know until *LTN* pointed it out is that one of the "yield" signs is misspelled. Halverson said he would go look at it.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Father-son arrested on drug, weapons charges



Richard
Martin



Joshua
Martin

After a three-month investigation, South Lake Tahoe father and his 23-year-old son were arrested Jan. 22 on a slew of drug and weapons charges.

A high-risk search warrant was served at the Tallac Avenue residence Thursday night by South Lake Tahoe police officers and South Lake El Dorado Narcotics Enforcement Team members.

Arrested were Richard Martin, 55, and Joshua Martin. The father is accused of possession of ammunition by a drug addict and possession of firearms by a drug addict. The son faces charges of possession of heroin, possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of ammunition by a drug addict, and possession of firearms by a drug addict.

In November, Joshua Martin was reported to the police as a suspicious person standing in the parking lot of the jail with an adult female. A police K9 found heroin and marijuana packaged for sale, needles and other paraphernalia in his vehicle, according to officers.

Martin and Kimberly Doig, 35, of South Lake Tahoe were on charges of being under the influence of a narcotic and possession of narcotics for sale.

In December, SLTPD patrol officers arrested Martin after a traffic stop. He was allegedly driving under the influence of a narcotic substance. A K9 officer found a needle and a metal spoon displaying burn marks, along with about one pound of packaged illegal marijuana, according to officers. Martin and passenger Anthony Lelis, 25, of Santa Rosa were arrested on charges of being under the influence of a narcotic, unlawful possession of drugs and narcotic paraphernalia and sales of controlled substances.

On New Year's Eve, Martin was again arrested by SLTPD. This time he was accused of a shoplift burglary at Big 5 Sporting Goods. He was in the company of three adults associated with the Tallac Avenue address. The investigation into that case is ongoing. Police charged Martin with burglary, saying he stole from the store Dec. 30 and Dec. 31.

On Jan. 16, officers responded to Barton Memorial Hospital

regarding a gunshot victim. Martin had been shot in the hand. Officers said Martin told them he accidentally shot himself while cleaning a handgun at home. While Martin was at Barton, El Dorado County sheriff's deputies engaged in a pursuit of the vehicle registered to his father, Richard Martin. SLTPD officers assisted deputies when the pursuit concluded within the city. The male driver fled on foot and was not immediately identified and captured.

"A number of various recent contacts between patrol officers and current parolees, and others with prior felony criminal convictions established a common link to the residence on Tallac Avenue. These contacts indicated the likelihood of illegal drugs being sold from, and consumed at, this residence," officers said in a statement.

Inside the house, investigators discovered suspected heroin and unlawful drug paraphernalia, a shotgun, rifle and two handguns, along with ammunition.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Distrust keeps TPRID from moving forward

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – Dysfunction, distrust and plenty of dialogue filled a three-hour meeting of the Tahoe Paradise Resort Improvement District board Thursday night.

Whether or not to allow El Dorado County to have a larger role is one of the major items that still needs to be resolved. The

board is contemplating a one-year agreement that would have the county parks staff help streamline some of the administrative duties.

It was reiterated multiple times that the county has no desire to take over the park. But distrust lingers because the first draft of the South Lake Tahoe-El Dorado County Recreation Master Plan stated just the opposite.

Even with the language being removed from the master plan, motives are still being questioned.



TPRID board members, from left: Lorraine Anderson, Judy Clot, Victor Babbitt, Sue Novasel and Peter Nelligan.

This board is responsible for operating the recreation facility that includes Lake Baron. Tahoe Paradise RID was created in 1965. It includes 2,200 residences, 4,400 parcels and is 10 square miles. The park gets its money from renting the facility – mostly for weddings, grants and \$50,000 a year from Measure S/R. Steve Dunn, who is the park manager, lives on site; with the free rent being part of his compensation package.

Dysfunction was proved multiple times Jan. 22. Board members admitted they didn't know which version of a resolution or memorandum of understanding they were supposed to be voting on. Several copies were in front of them. None was dated, so it was unclear which was the most current.

The public also was not privy to what was supposed to be voted on.

It was agreed that the accurate documents would be given to

the board and then released to the media for distribution. The board will take the issue up in two weeks.

Not much of the more than 30-item agenda was discussed because the board members were anything but brief in their comments, were argumentative with one another and then allowed the public to join the dialogue.

It took 42 minutes to get through rearranging the agenda and for the first vote of the night – which was who should be the chair.

This was Sue Novasel's first meeting as a board member. Her colleagues on the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors appointed her to it. On a 3-2 vote the TPRID board voted her in as chair for the next year. Members Judy Clot and Lorraine Anderson were the dissenters. They both wanted Clot to be chair. Victor Babbitt is the vice chair, voted in on the same 3-2 vote. Peter Nelligan on a 5-0 vote is secretary-treasurer.



Many park users want dogs to be allowed at Tahoe Paradise. Photos/LTN

The five agreed to meet again in two weeks – Feb. 5 at 6pm at the Lake Valley fire station off Highway 89. The main purpose is to resolve the MOU issue with the county – whether to have one, and if so, what it should include.

Novasel is working on getting training for the board about the Brown Act – California's opening meeting law, and wants

meeting notices posted on the county website – and make it so people can sign up for email alerts about meetings. Some of this, though, may not be possible without the MOU.

The public asked the board in the future to consider allowing dogs in the park on a leash and for the board to be elected. As it stands now, current members vote a new board member in. Elections have been conducted in the past, but the expense has made it cost-prohibitive. It was suggested the MOU contain an item saying the county will pick up the costs of an election.

Measles cases intensifies vaccination debate

By Adam Nagourney and Abby Goodnough, New York Times

LOS ANGELES – A measles outbreak that began at Disneyland is spreading across California and beyond, prompting health officials to move aggressively to contain it – including by barring unvaccinated students from going to school in Orange County. The outbreak has increased concerns that a longstanding movement against childhood vaccinations has created a surge in a disease that was declared eliminated in the United States in 2000.

Health officials said 59 cases of measles had been diagnosed in California as of Wednesday, with an additional eight related cases spread through Utah, Washington, Oregon, Colorado and Mexico. Among those infected are five workers at Disneyland, where the outbreak was spotted in mid-December; 42 of the 59 California cases have been linked to the Disneyland outbreak.

The cases were a continuation of what health officials said was a worrisome increase in measles in Orange County and other places where parents had resisted the urging of health professionals to inoculate their children. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 644 cases of measles from 27 states last year, by far the largest number since 2000.

Before measles vaccines became commonplace in 1963, about three million to four million Americans a year contracted the disease, the agency said, and 400 to 500 died from it.

Read the whole story

Washoe County replacing boat that sank



This is a 28-foot Titan T280 Pilot similar to the Washoe County Sheriff's Office new Marine 9. Photo/Titan Boats

Washoe County Sheriff's Department is replacing the boat that sank on Memorial Day with 28-foot Titan T280 Pilot aluminum

boat with twin 300-horsepower Mercury outboard motors that cost about \$275,000.

The new vessel will be ready for the upcoming boating season. It is expected to be delivered the second week of May.

It will be equipped with the most technologically advanced radar, sonar, and GPS systems to assist with search, rescue and lifesaving missions along with routine marine patrol functions.

The new boat replaces the 14-year-old Marine 9 vessel which sank at a mooring off Incline Village during extreme weather conditions on May 26. While the Sheriff's Office is still waiting for a determination as to the exact cause of the incident, a survey of the old vessel conducted by Washoe County and Traveler's Insurance found structural issues and concluded the boat to be a total loss.

The insurance company is paying \$101,000, with the remaining \$173,543.94 to come from drug forfeiture money. The all-volunteer marine unit will also ask for donations from residents of Washoe County to help support additional enhancements. Anyone interested in donating to Marine 9 may call 775.832.4104.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report