

LTCC squeaks out a win with facilities bond

By Susan Wood

One couldn't say Lake Tahoe Community College President Kindred Murillo doesn't stand up for the college, judging from her behavior election night to see if the bond measure that would fund infrastructure improvements would pass.

With 100 percent of the precincts voting, the \$55 million bond measure passed with 56.62 percent of the vote. It needed 55 percent to pass.

"I haven't seen her sit yet," said Wendy David, who threw a small gathering at her home to await City Council and Measure F election results. David was chair of the Measure F committee.

"I'm standing until I see the final results," Murillo told *Lake Tahoe News* early in the evening.

Still, Murillo seemed relaxed and confident – and felt a win was in the bag based on the education gained from other elections. The belief is more conservative voters cast their ballots first. Those who are a little flexible with their funds may vote later. Her theory paid off.



Founding and retiring LTCC

board member Roberta Mason
can leave knowing physical
upgrades are coming.
Photo/Susan Wood

Murillo, though, said she respected how seriously voters take new taxes imposed on them.

But after a more than two-year assessment, the time is really now for the college to put its money where its building is, she said. Just to illustrate that point, Murillo declared her staff has all gotten over colds because the heating system lacks reliability. Students and community members as well have mentioned how cold the building is in the winter.

“This (bond measure) is really for them. The college opens doors for people to use for meetings, walks, runs and fundraisers. I want the Tahoe area to feel like it owns the college,” she said.

And what a send-off statement to LTCC’s retiring, founding board member Roberta Mason.

“We’ve received a tremendous amount of support. It’s the perfect time to do (improvement),” Mason told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Novasel headed to Placerville as supervisor



Sue Novasel will be the next El Dorado County District 5 supervisor. Photo/Provided

By Susan Wood

With El Dorado County Supervisor Norma Santiago being termed out of her District 5 seat, it means someone new will be sworn in in January. Sue Novasel is the unquestionable winner with 100 percent of the precincts reporting. She has 3,592 votes or 59.92 percent of the vote.

Her opponent, Kenny Curtzwiler has 2,331 votes at 39.58 percent.

Novasel, who lives in Christmas Valley where Internet reception can be iffy at times, yelled the early numbers across the room to the handful of friends and family gathered to support her when *Lake Tahoe News* told her the news over the phone.

Although absentee results have often been telling in races particularly in this county, Novasel was not taking anything

for granted while the numbers were still changing.

"I'm humbled. I had hoped the voters understood that I have a lot of experience," she said.

The longtime Meyers resident knows that experience needs to be accelerated as El Dorado County is facing huge issues ranging from a consistently fluid budget to having its chief administrative officer resign Nov. 4. Novasel sees that as an opportunity. After all, it's how she started on the Lake Tahoe Unified School Board a dozen years ago.

"There's certainly a lot of dysfunction in the county. I know we need to tighten down with the budget," she said, alluding to a low point as perhaps "a good way to start."

Phone calls to Curtzwiler were not returned.

As with most elections, only a minority of the people who live here actually vote.

However, the hope is that tradition will trump the dismal prediction of Tuesday's mid-term elections for El Dorado County. The voters usually demonstrate more enthusiasm than most of the 58 counties in California. And that's what county Registrar Bill Schultz is counting on this time.

"We're hoping for around 60 percent, and it could be higher. Historically we've had a better turnout than most counties," Schultz told *Lake Tahoe News* on election night.

As of 3pm Election Day, Schultz said his staff raked in a 32 percent return on vote-by-mail ballots at 34,221. More than 73,000 were sent out.

"That's a little higher than June," he said, referring to last summer's primary.

"Most of the time they tell the tale," he added, as most voters turn to an easier way to vote that's been described as

simple as ordering pizza.

In the county of 106,931 registered voters, absentees make up 68 percent. Still, Schultz also heard from election workers that attendance has been better than predicted at precincts.

In El Dorado County, many could be more interested in local issues than watching how much of a margin Gov. Jerry Brown would win by. Having two seats up on the county Board of Supervisors is “the big one right there,” Schultz quipped. And this race could set the pace for that 60 percent voter turnout and strong absentee prediction.

Early analysis has shown that of the 17,825 registered voters in the county’s District 5, 10,752 vote-by-mail ballots were issued.

Statewide, the prediction was for less than 50 percent of voters to turn out. The record low was set in 2002 with 50.5 percent turnout. It is expected that 60 percent of those will be cast via absentee votes. The record was set in 2010 with 48.4 percent absentee voters.

The problem comes when those voters turn them in on Election Day. Those ballots don’t get counted until days after the election, which is why the frontrunners can change and election night results are not solid. It could be as many as 1 million ballots that will be outstanding.

Kathryn Reed contributed to this story.

David, Davis, Swanson – SLT

council



Wendy David



Tom Davis



Angela Swanson

By Kathryn Reed and Susan Wood

Voters in South Lake Tahoe appear to want a little of what they are used to mixed in with something new.

Three seats were up on the City Council, with all of the incumbents seeking re-election Nov. 4. Tom Davis and Angela Swanson are in the top three with 100 percent of the precincts reporting just after 1am Nov. 5.

“The public likes a little change on the council. I think the public recognizes the city is headed in the right way and I got that message out,” Davis told *Lake Tahoe News*. “My message was what we have accomplished within the city.”

He is second with 15.56 percent of the vote or 1,042 votes.



Wendy David, right, talks to supporters on election night. Photo/Susan Wood

It's been a good week of "yes, yes, yes" in Giants terms for top vote getter and newcomer Wendy David.

After her San Francisco team secured a third World Series win in five years last week, she ended a productive tenure on Lake Tahoe Unified School District's board. She was first elected to that board in 1997.

And now, she's in the top spot for one of three seats on the City Council with 18 percent of the vote and 1,205 votes.

What she brings to the council is experience in social services through her vast amount of volunteer work as well as previous paid positions.

David said amid a crowd of about 15 people at her home, including those from Lake Tahoe Community College, that running against six other people, unlike her school board candidacies, made it more of a challenge.

"These are seven competent candidates ... I felt it could be anybody's race," she told *Lake Tahoe News*, adding the notion the voters know that she cares "very much about the community."

Incumbent Angela Swanson came in third at 14.12 percent, 945 votes.

She was unavailable for comment.

While David, Davis and Swanson are the top vote getters, it's possible this will not be the final outcome. Not many votes separate the seven and these numbers are preliminary. Any absentee ballots that were turned in on Election Day will be counted in the next few days. That is why the results could change.

This is Austin Sass' third time to run for council. Until the last update he had been in third place. He had 13.92 percent, 932 votes.

"I think I got across to people that I was independent and not tied to anybody," Sass told *Lake Tahoe News* of why he did better.

Coming in fifth is incumbent Brooke Laine. She was appointed to the seat vacated by Claire Fortier. She has 13.35 percent, 894 votes.

Laine commended David for the position she's in.

Laine's day has been stressful since the start. An auditor came into U.S. Bank where she is the manager. This is daunting even for a grace-under-pressure elected official such as Laine.

"I will respect whatever the outcome is," she said, relaxing at home after about two dozen people had left.

Rounding out the field are first time contender Matt Palacio (12.53 percent, 839) and former Councilman Bruce Grego (12.29 percent, 823 votes).

The council will be sworn in Dec. 9. Those five will then choose among themselves who will be mayor and mayor pro tem. Normally mayor pro tem steps into the mayor's seat. With Laine currently out of the equation, that opens up the likely possibility of Mayor Hal Cole having the job for consecutive

years or Davis taking on his fourth term as mayor.

Other local races include:

Measure H for Lake Valley Fire Protection District would tax residents in the Meyers area only. The money generated would mostly be used for fuels reduction projects. It required 66 percent of the voters to say yes for it to pass. The no votes resoundingly took at 66.48 percent.

Lake Tahoe Community College for the first time has district elections. The one contested race is for the seat being vacated by Molly Blann. Michelle Sweeney won with 52.14 percent (586 votes) with Bob Grant having 47.51 percent (534).

South Tahoe Public Utility District has two seats up, with only one incumbent running. Longtime board member Jim Jones won with 59.06 percent (2,347 votes) compared to challenger Shane Romsos with 40.51 percent (1,610). In the other STPUD race, Duane Wallace trounced Andy Chapman with 65.06 percent (2,495). Chapman had 34.55 percent (1,325).

Calif. voters reject Props. 45, 46, 48; pass 47

By Tracy Seipel and Jessica Calefati, San Jose Mercury News

California voters soundly rejected two hotly contested propositions Tuesday night – one that would have halted excessive health care insurance rates and another that would have raised the state's 39-year-old cap on medical malpractice damage awards.

An Indian gaming proposal also failed.

But voters passed a measure that requires misdemeanor sentences rather than longer felony sentences for six crimes.

Proposition 45 would have given the state insurance commissioner the power to reject health insurance rate hikes for about six million Californians who buy their own policies or who work for small businesses. It had trailed badly all night, as had Proposition 46, which would have raised the state's 39-year-old cap on medical malpractice damage awards, require doctors to take random drug tests and mandate use of a database designed to reduce prescription drug abuse.

"This was a battle worth fighting. But the battle doesn't stop here," Bob Pack, author of Proposition 46, said in a statement released late Tuesday night. He and his wife, Carmen, lost their two children Troy and Alana as a result of medical negligence.

Read the whole story

Reid no longer majority leader

By David Espo and Robert Furlow, AP

WASHINGTON — Riding a powerful wave of voter discontent, resurgent Republicans captured control of the Senate and tightened their grip on the House Tuesday night in elections certain to complicate President Obama's final two years in office.

Republican Mitch McConnell led the way to a new Senate majority, dispatching Democratic challenger Alison Lundergan

Grimes in Kentucky after a \$78 million campaign of unrelieved negativity. Voters are “hungry for new leadership. They want a reason to be hopeful,” said the man now in line to become majority leader and set the Senate agenda.

Two-term incumbent Mark Pryor of Arkansas was the first Democrat to fall, defeated by freshman Rep. Tom Cotton. Sen. Mark Udall of Colorado was next, defeated by Rep. Cory Gardner. Sen. Kay Hagan also lost, in North Carolina, to Thom Tillis, the speaker of the state House.

Republicans also picked up seats in Iowa, West Virginia, South Dakota and Montana, all states where Democrats retired. They had needed a net gain of six seats to end a Democratic majority in place since 2006.

In the House, with dozens of races uncalled, Republicans had picked up 11 seats that had been in Democratic hands, and given up only one.

A net pickup of 13 would give them more seats in the House than at any time since 1946.

Obama was at the White House as voters remade Congress for the final two years of his tenure – not to his liking. With lawmakers set to convene next week for a postelection session, he invited leaders to a meeting on Friday.

The shift in control of the Senate, coupled with a GOP-led House, probably means a strong GOP assault on budget deficits, additional pressure on Democrats to accept sweeping changes to the health care law that stands as Obama’s signal domestic accomplishment and a bid to reduce federal regulations.

Obama’s ability to win confirmation for lifetime judicial appointments could also suffer, including any Supreme Court vacancies.

Speaker John Boehner, in line for a third term as head of the

House, said the new Republican-controlled Congress would vote soon in the new year on the “many common-sense jobs and energy bills that passed the Republican-led House in recent years with bipartisan support but were never even brought to a vote by the outgoing Senate majority.”

Said outgoing Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, a Democrat, “The message from voters is clear: They want us to work together.”

Legislation to approve the Keystone XL pipeline from Canada is likely among the disputed issues to be debated.

There were 36 gubernatorial elections on the ballot Tuesday, and several incumbents struggled against challengers. Tom Wolf captured the Pennsylvania statehouse for the Democrats, defeating Republican Gov. Tom Corbett. Democratic Gov. Pat Quinn lost in Illinois, Obama’s home state. Republican Larry Hogan scored one of the night’s biggest upsets, in Maryland.

In a footnote to one of the year’s biggest political surprises, college professor Dave Brat was elected to the House from Virginia, several months after he defeated Majority Leader Eric Cantor in a Republican primary.

House Republicans defeated 19-term Democratic Rep. Nick Rahall in West Virginia, beat Rep. John Barrow in Georgia and picked up a seat vacated by a lawmaker in North Carolina.

After years of a sluggish economic recovery and foreign crises aplenty, the voters’ mood was sour.

Nearly two-thirds of voters interviewed after casting ballots said the country was seriously on the wrong track. Only about 30 percent said it was generally going in the right direction.

More than four in ten voters disapproved of both Obama and Congress, according to the exit polls conducted for The Associated Press and the television networks.

Still, a majority of those polled supported several positions associated with Democrats or Obama rather than Republicans – saying immigrants in the country illegally should be able to work, backing U.S. military involvement against Islamic State fighters, and agreeing that climate change is a serious problem.

No matter which party emerged with control of the Senate, a new chapter in divided government was inevitable in a nation marked by profound unease over the future and dissatisfaction with its political leaders.

Several Senate races were close, a list that – surprisingly – included Virginia.

There, Democratic Sen. Mark Warner held a narrow lead over former Republican Party chairman and Bush administration official Ed Gillespie.

There was a little good news for Democrats in New Hampshire, where Sen. Jeanne Shaheen was re-elected after a difficult race against former Massachusetts Sen. Scott Brown.

But in Georgia, Michelle Nunn lost to businessman David Perdue, depriving the Democrats of their last chances to take away a Republican seat. In Kansas, 78-year-old Sen. Pat Roberts fended off a challenge from independent Greg Orman, shutting off another avenue for the Democrats.

Among the newly elected Republican senators was Rep. Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia, the first member of her party to win a seat there in more than a half century.

State Sen. Jodi Ernst of Iowa also won, after a campaign that took off when she aired an ad saying she had learned how to castrate hogs as a girl growing up on a ranch.

In statehouse races, Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo of New York won a second term.

Former Republican Rep. Asa Hutchinson was elected governor of Arkansas more than a decade after playing a prominent role in President Bill Clinton's impeachment and trial, and Florida Gov. Rick Scott won a tough race for a new term.

Also winning new terms were Ohio Gov. John Kasich, a Republican and potential presidential candidates in 2016.

Another possible White House hopeful, Republican Gov. Scott Walker of Wisconsin, also won.

The elections' \$4 billion price tag spending was unprecedented for a non-presidential year.

Pierini, Wheeler dominate opponents

By Kathryn Reed

There will not be a new sheriff in town. With 100 percent of the precincts reports, Ron Pierini will be keeping his job as sheriff of Douglas County.

He came away with 11,677 votes or 68.92 percent. Challenger Dave Brady had 31.08 percent or 5,266 votes.



Ron Pierini

"I'm very, very happy with the results. It was almost 70 percent again. That was awesome," Pierini told *Lake Tahoe News*. "It was a very humble reaction I had."

In the June primary there were three contestants for sheriff, with the top two vote getters in the Nov. 4 runoff.

Pierini was first elected sheriff in 1997. He started with the department in 1976 – having been a captain in Tahoe, undersheriff and now sheriff. He said it's too soon to tell if he will be on the ballot in 2018.

What he liked most about the campaign process was meeting new people, and hearing from them and those he knew that the department is on the right course. While he has no plans to drastically alter the course the department is on, he said keeping up with technology is always a goal.

"I always have the intention of never being stale," Pierini said. "I see what our weaknesses are and improve things."

In another contested race in Douglas County, incumbent Jim Wheeler will retain his seat in the state Assembly. The District 39 seat extends to Lake Tahoe. Wheeler had 77.67 percent or 12,924 votes compared to Al Giordano's 3,716 votes for 22.33 percent.

The top vote getters for Kingsbury General Improvement District are Darya Vogt (28.41 percent, 329) and Dan Norman (24.72 percent, 289).

Elected to the Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection board are Kevin Kjer (38.5 percent, 1,023) and Bill Kirschner (33.01 percent, 877).

Nancy McDermid, county commissioner representing the lake, was running unopposed.

Brown, Props. 1 and 2 – winners

By Melissa Pamer, KTLA-TV

Though there were few attention-grabbing statewide races or ballot measures, Californians headed to the polls Tuesday to cast their votes in the 2014 midterm, re-electing Gov. Jerry Brown to an unprecedented fourth term.

Polls closed at 8pm and results trickled in over the course of the evening, but the gubernatorial election was called in favor of Brown almost immediately by the Associated Press.

Turnout was predicted to be low in the state, which had few of the galvanizing races or the kinds of divisive issues on the ballot that other were at stake elsewhere in the country, where Republicans earned enough seats to take control of the U.S. Senate for the first time since 2006.

Nonetheless, a slew of statewide offices were set to be determined. More than 17.8 million Californians were registered to vote in the election, according to the Secretary of State's office.

Brown had been expected to easily win over Republican challenger Neel Kashkari. Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom was seeking a second term, and all the other top statewide offices were before voters too.

Read the whole story

Daly out as CAO, Knorr takes over in EDC

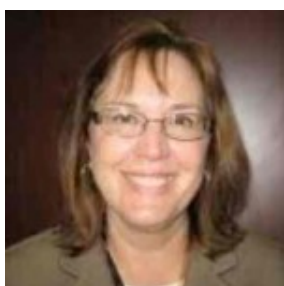
By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County Board of Supervisor on a 3-2 vote Nov. 4 accepted the resignation of CAO Terri Daly. Supervisors Norma Santiago and Ron Briggs were in the minority.

Santiago and Briggs also are the two supervisors who are being termed out and won't be in office starting in January.

Human Resources Director Pamela Knorr has been appointed temporary chief administrative officer.

This action came one week after Daly had removed all of her personal belongings from her office. In all of this time she has had access to the county email system. Today she sent the following email to employees:



Terri Daly

To all my fellow employees:

As you probably have already heard announced at the Board of Supervisors meeting today, I am leaving the county's employment. It has been a mutual decision. From my perspective, I feel that the culture of the county is no

longer conducive to any further positive change under my watch.

It has truly been an honor to work with the employees of this county over the past four years. You do amazing things each and everyday – you save lives, you improve lives, you do things to improve the county. As the CAO and as a resident of the county, I thank you for all the work you do. You make my life better because of your work. Thank you.

Best success in all you do.

Terri

Daly was not at work on Monday, but she did go to lunch with many of the department heads.

In open session on Nov. 4, Briggs said how he supported Daly and did not believe she had been dealt with fairly.

“Norma has been a supporter of Terri, and will likely provide input on her accomplishments and successes in the near future, which are many in the four years of her time with the county,” Judi McCallum, Santiago’s assistant, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Daly has been accused of creating a hostile work environment, with her department being one of the worst morale-wise when an outside consultant was hired to investigate the inner workings of the county. She turned a budget surplus into a budget deficit. This was done in part by hiring more than 100 people – many of them to work in the CAO’s office.

Knorr used to work for Alpine County and is Daly’s friend. Daly gave her a \$30,000 raise – though, the board OK’d it.

It is unusual that Assistant CAO Kim Kerr was not given the job as acting CAO. She, too, is a friend of Daly’s and comes with her own baggage, including financial issues when she was city manager in Ione, as well as handling of contracts in El Dorado County.

Ex-S. Tahoe post office worker going to prison

Mark E. Leung, 60, of South Lake Tahoe, was sentenced today to one year in prison and ordered to pay \$160,000 in restitution for making a false statement to obtain workers' compensation benefits

According to court documents, Leung worked for the U.S. Postal Service until 1987 when he claimed he sustained a work-related injury. Leung never returned to full-time employment with the Postal Service and began receiving workers' compensation benefits in 1987.

From September 2007 through November 2012, Leung received approximately \$160,000 in benefits from the Department of Labor. To obtain the benefits, Leung submitted an annual certification form and also had his medical providers attest that he could not perform any work due to the pain that limited his mobility and range of movement.

While claiming he was totally disabled from employment, Leung maintained a yearly ski pass in Tahoe; skiing at least 40 days per ski season, according to U.S. Attorney Benjamin Wagner. Wagner also said Leung was observed performing arduous physical labor on numerous days.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Nevada agency wants crackdown on Uber 'aliens'

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Review-Journal

The state's battle against Uber is on.

The Nevada Transportation Authority late Thursday unanimously supported Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto's strategy to take legal action against illegal passenger carrier activity in the state.

Commissioner Keith Sakelhide wondered aloud why the board that regulates buses and limousines statewide and taxicabs outside Clark County even had to vote on the measure.

"Is it really necessary to have an agenda item for the attorney general's office to do its job?" Sakelhide said.

But Chairman Andrew MacKay said taking up the issue was important because "actions of a certain magnitude should be ratified by the full board."

And the arrival of Uber has hit Nevada with the magnitude of a major earthquake.

In two public comment sessions conducted by the board, representatives of the industry encouraged regulators to use whatever means necessary to prevent illegal operations.

Read the whole story