

Pierini, Wheeler leave challengers in the dust

By Kathryn Reed

Douglas County voters clearly want Ron Pierini to be sheriff.

Assuming he carries the momentum he had Tuesday into November, he will continue on as sheriff.



Ron Pierini

With 100 percent of the precincts reporting June 10, Pierini dominated his opponents by tallying 69.36 percent of the votes with 6,335 votes. David Brady had 20.67 percent, 1,888; and Michael Gyll 9.97 percent, 911.

The top two – Pierini and Brady – meet again in November.

“It’s been quite an experience for me because I never had to go out and do the things I am today. I look forward to November,” Pierini told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Pierini was appointed to be sheriff by county commissioners and then elected in 1997. Every four years since then he had not had a challenger until this year.

He spent time going door-to-door, at debates and talking to residents at other locations.

“It solidified the fact we are doing a good job,” Pierini said

of the feedback he received.

He has led a department that has seen its budget cut by \$2 million and the loss of 10 positions. Despite the cutbacks, the department's arrest to prosecution rate is 38 percent. Nationwide the average is 22 percent.

Pierini praised his deputies for the work they do and their ethics, underlining the fact the department has not had to deal with any scandals.

In the other contested race in Douglas County, incumbent Jim Wheeler will retain his seat in the state Assembly. The District 39 representative had 4,435 votes for 62.32 percent, while challenger Robin Reedy has 2,681 votes or 37.68 percent. This seat extends to Lake Tahoe.

Nevada was expecting a low voter turnout that could set a record. The state allows early and mail-in ballots. Those could account for two-thirds of the votes cast. They represented 18.74 percent of the votes in Douglas County.

Gambling hall another option instead of N. Nevada casinos

By Stephen Magagnini, Sacramento Bee

Next month, the largest gambling emporium in Sacramento County will open in a long-dormant shopping center on Antelope Road off Interstate 80 in Citrus Heights.

Kings Casino LLC of San Diego has invested \$15 million in the

Stones Gambling Hall, a double-barreled complex with two card rooms and a Wild West flair built around a 180-seat bar and restaurant. Developer Ryan Stone, a newcomer to the casino business, said he's in the process of filling 400 jobs for dealers, cashiers, cooks, bartenders, waiters and security guards.

Tingle called Stones Gambling Hall a "mini-version of Thunder Valley," the wildly successful Indian casino on Highway 65 in Placer County. Tingle said the card room would have a restaurant equivalent to those found in Indian casinos.

In order to compete with Thunder Valley and other Indian casinos, Stones Gambling Hall will have to attract the region's Asian gamblers, who play pai gow poker as well as poker, blackjack and baccarat, said Ken Adams, a Reno-based gambling consultant. The casino's location right off I-80 could help, he said.

Read the whole story

Calif. teacher tenure laws ruled unconstitutional

By Jennifer Medina, New York Times

LOS ANGELES — A Los Angeles Superior Court judge ruled Tuesday that teacher tenure laws deprive students of their constitutional right to an education, a decision that hands teachers' unions a major defeat in a landmark case that overturns several California laws that govern the way teachers are hired and fired.

“Substantial evidence presented makes it clear to this court that the challenged statutes disproportionately affect poor and/or minority students,” Judge Rolf M. Treu wrote in the ruling. “The evidence is compelling. Indeed, it shocks the conscience.”

The ruling, which declared the laws governing how teachers are hired and fired in California to be unconstitutional, is likely to set off a slew of legal fights here and in other states, where many education reform advocates are eager to change similar laws. The ruling brings a close to the first chapter of the case, *Vergara v. California*, but both sides have made it clear that they plan to appeal any decision that goes against them to the State Supreme Court.

The plaintiffs argued that California’s current laws made it impossible to get rid of low-performing and incompetent teachers, who were disproportionately assigned to schools filled with poor students. The result, they insisted, amounted to a violation of students’ constitutional rights to an education.

But lawyers for the states and teachers’ unions said that overturning such laws would erode necessary protections that stop school administrators from making unfair personnel decisions. They also argued that the vast majority of teachers in the state’s schools are competent and providing students with all the necessary tools to learn. More important factors than teachers, they argued, are social and economic inequalities as well as the funding levels of public schools.

Read the whole story

West Shore water company vandalized

The West Shore's Glenridge Water Company's water tank has been prone to vandalism, with the latest coming late last month.

Dry sticks and logs were placed against and all around the water tank to create a campfire in the woods. The area is extremely dry and this kind of activity could lead to a catastrophic forest fire.

"Before this recent incident, the majority of the vandalism was tagging the water tank with graffiti. The owner has assumed it's kids messing around at the tank," Kelli Twomey with the water agency told *Lake Tahoe News*.

"The campfire didn't cause much damage, but the concern is the risk of something like this causing a forest fire."

Community members are asked to report any suspicious behavior near the water tank, which is located just north of Meeks Bay, in Glenridge. Call the water company at 530.525.6659 or the Meeks Bay Fire Department at 530.525.7548 with any information. A reward is being offered.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Judge awards Ruvo's company

\$5 mil.-plus

By Eli Segall, Las Vegas Sun

After years of court battles, Las Vegas alcohol distributor Larry Ruvo's company has been awarded more than \$5 million from a competitor that was found to have illegally undercut him.

But whether Ruvo, who also has a place in Glenbrook, collects all of his court-ordered payments is another issue.

District Judge Mark Denton last week ordered alcohol distributor Guy Azera's companies to pay Southern Wine & Spirits of Nevada \$5.36 million in damages, fees and interest.

The ruling comes almost a year after a local jury found that Azera's firms had committed fraud, civil conspiracy, unfair competition and other tactics that illegally crimped Ruvo's business.

It was the first time a Nevada jury awarded punitive damages for violations of the state's alcohol distribution laws, and Ruvo's victory in the case helps ensure that consumers drink authentic, quality alcohol, his attorney E. Leif Reid said.

Read the whole story

Krolicki leaves office having made a difference

By Susan Wood

Nevada Lt. Gov. Brian Krolicki may serve his last day on the job come January, but it will always be Labor Day in which he made the most lasting impression on former state official Sue Wagner.

Fourteen years ago on that day, Wagner narrowly survived a plane crash with Krolicki while campaigning for her lieutenant governor's seat, along with Nevada Treasurer Bob Seale, who was also injured. Seale's wife died. Krolicki was ejected from the plane and got help at a farmhouse miles away.

"He calls me every Labor Day," Wagner told *Lake Tahoe News* in a soft voice. "I'll always be indebted to him for that. He was instrumental in getting us out of the plane."



Brian
Krolicki

Like others in high-profile state office posts, Wagner complimented Krolicki on his two terms as lieutenant governor – in particular for going "out of his way" to bring business into the state. Krolicki's background is in finance for the private sector and has used it effectively in the public arena.

"He's done an incredible job as lieutenant governor," she said.

Wagner believes Krolicki has managed to view life with a seize-the-day mentality since surviving the plane crash, causing him to excel in his long list of endeavors and accomplishments. They include his service as chairman on the

Reno Tahoe Winter Games Coalition and his tenure as president of the state Senate.

Wagner is in good company with her assessment of Krolicki. Gov. Brian Sandoval holds Krolicki in the same high regard.

Since coming into the highest state office, Sandoval has been tested in the last few years with an ensemble of tragedies, ranging from a mass shooting at the IHOP in Carson City to an air show disaster in Reno.

"We've talked about that day, and I can't wish that on anyone. If you survive something like that and you remind yourself to make the most of each day, then there's something to that with Brian," Sandoval told *Lake Tahoe News*, further admitting to having spent poignant moments with "BK." The two Nevada leaders have embraced their nicknames. Sandoval joked he's referred to as "BS."

The duo has traveled extensively together.

Sandoval said Krolicki is protective of his home turf – Lake Tahoe, but he has also covered the far reaches of the high desert state. Krolicki, his wife and their three daughters live in Stateline.

"He can never get enough of Nevada," Sandoval said.

He reflected on a time when both men wanted to get home after attending the Ely Crab Crack. They left Ely in the middle of the night and kept each other awake chatting.

"You really get to know somebody when you travel Highway 50," said the governor, who has known Krolicki personally and professionally for 20 years.

"I respected him immediately for his work ethic, and he's a family man," he said, also citing Krolicki's sense of humor.

Sandoval said he hasn't been privy to whether Krolicki ever

thought about challenging the popular governor in their Republican Party.

"Whatever he chooses to do, I'm sure he'll do it extremely well," Sandoval said.

Nevada Commission on Tourism Deputy Director Larry Friedman, who threw out "ambassador" as a title for Krolicki, shared those thoughts.

Friedman mentioned being impressed that Krolicki only missed the state's Rural Conference one time in eight years. He cites Krolicki's accessibility to many residents over the years as a commendable quality.

"Not only has he always been at the awards ceremony we've asked him to speak at, he has stayed the whole time. This is huge. He enjoys it, and he's fun," Friedman said. "The constituents are there, and they have access to him."

And beyond Nevada, Krolicki has a reputation for touting the state overseas – whether it involves trips to China, Japan or India. Friedman said he overheard the latter nation's officials saying "he gets it" when it comes to tourism.

"He made such a difference when he was there. He reached out to everybody," Friedman said.

And now the state could be gearing up to reach out to him. Friedman mentioned talk of a tribute to Krolicki at next fall's Governor's Conference in Reno. Details are being worked out.

Personally, Friedman noted Krolicki's tenacity in the early years. He referenced Krolicki's two blind dates he had with his wife, Kelly. They were seven years apart. But the last one must have sealed it for them.

To those who know the lieutenant governor well, patience and dedication are two of his strong virtues.

Jon Killoran, executive director of the Reno Tahoe Winter Games Coalition, cited the long-standing commitment Krolicki has maintained to get the Olympics back to the Tahoe-Reno region. The coalition is working on securing the 2026 Winter Games; a full two decades after Krolicki became involved in the effort.

“First and foremost, his passion and vision have always been there since the time of bringing the Olympic project to my attention,” Killoran said, calling the chairman very approachable to everyone – even across the party aisle.

The executive cited Krolicki’s die-hard dedication to hosting the World Financial Group’s curling event in Las Vegas in January.

“That was a watermark moment for our movement,” Killoran told *Lake Tahoe News*. Some competitors went on to represent countries at the Winter Games in Sochi, Russia, a month later.

The accomplishments don’t end there. Krolicki has helped to organize the World Curling Federation Congress next September at the Peppermill in Reno, the first North American city to host the event.

Killoran said the events have built credibility for the state and the Olympic movement.

“It’s been a pleasure and an honor to work with him,” Killoran said.

Krolicki seems to feel the same way about those he has worked with over the years.

“I’ve walked in that capitol building for 24 years, and I’ve had many, many good memories,” he told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Some days were better than others, as in all jobs in public service.”

Gaining good jobs for Nevadans and promoting the state are

goals Krolicki holds near and dear.

“Economic opportunities and job creation is what public service is really about,” he said.

Apparently, he may soon live on the other end of that mantra.

“I’m excited about the possibilities,” he said, declining to provide specifics of what he’s planning to do.

He didn’t rule out a future public service opportunity.

“There are incredible successes that will forever outlast my time here. It’s been a great privilege,” he said. “It’s time to step down. I think that’s healthy to see where the journey takes us.”

Krolicki has earned the reputation of being a survivor – one who takes a tragic experience and turns it into a lesson for his professional life. He speaks of the plane crash.

“That accident was brutal. It took away or forever changed some extraordinary people. I was the only one not physically impaired from that crash. I must be the luckiest man in the world – not many people get to walk away from being ejected from an airplane. My public service has been a great way to manifest that,” he said.

There are other reasons he feels lucky – and a survivor.

His wife Kelly was a catch he wouldn’t say no to on their double blind date. He snickered at the thought of her agreeing to it for a second time years later. She first met him prior to the plane crash.

He believes they were in different places of their lives on the two dates. Now, they have blossomed in similar interests, including travel, the outdoors and time with their girls, ages 12, 14 and 16. When asked if it’s expected the male suitors would come to the door to greet the girls, his response was

quick and decisive in pure Nevada style: “The Krolickis wholeheartedly believe in the Second Amendment.”

But the right to bear arms may take a back seat to the right to give bear hugs to those who have worked so closely with him and will miss “BK.”

“I’ve always said I have the best job in Nevada because I work for the nicest guy. He’s ethical and honest,” Linda Frederick, Krolicki’s longtime assistant, said.

Frederick followed Krolicki from his wife’s golf course development company to Krolicki’s two terms at the state treasurer’s office to now – logging 14 years with the man.

In that time, Krolicki created the Nevada College Savings Plan and the Nevada Prepaid Tuition Program, along with the Gov. (Kenny) Guinn Millennium Scholarship. As state treasurer, Krolicki endured some of the largest corporate failures in U.S. history during the Enron and WorldCom scandals. Krolicki ensured Nevada taxpayers didn’t lose money in the financial disasters. In 2004, his peers selected him as the nation’s “most outstanding state treasurer.”

Krolicki is not only a veteran of financial affairs, he has assisted military veterans in their post-war efforts, hosting conferences at both ends of the state.

In the earlier years of community service, Krolicki served as a Douglas County planning commissioner and member of the Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Task Force for the state.

Where he will land after being termed out as the No. 2 man in Nevada politics remains to be seen.

Man missing from Ice House area

Vernon "Cody" Mathews, 23, has not been heard from since June 6.

Mathews was dropped off at the family cabin in the Ice House area June 4. His mother spoke with him via telephone June 6 just before he went for a hike.

Mathews was staying at the cabin alone. He has no vehicle and his personal belongings are still at the cabin.

He is 6-feet, 3-inches tall and weighs between 160 and 220 pounds. He has shoulder length strawberry blond hair and a full red beard. It is not known what he was last wearing.

There is no indication of foul play, however Mathews' cell phone has not been used since June 6.

Search and Rescue teams from Placer, Nevada, Sacramento and Douglas counties are assisting in the search. Canine units, horse mounted units, off road vehicle units and ground units are being used.

If anyone has information, they are asked to call 530.621.6600.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

2 die, 3 hurt in motorcycle

pileup

Two people died and three were injured in an accident on the Geiger Grade that involved three motorcycles.

The accident occurred June 7 just after 9am on Highway 341 approximately 2½ miles south of the Highway 395 junction.

Nevada Highway Patrol troopers said a 2001 orange Harley Davidson driven by James L. Wood, 68, along with passenger Linda J Esterling-Wood, 64, both of Silver Springs, was riding in tandem with a 2004 Black Harley Davidson motorcycle driven by Robert E. Sanders, 60, of Reno along with passenger Lisa M. Cissna, 47, also of Reno. They were traveling south when Woods' motorcycle collided with a 2001 Black Honda motorcycle driven by Jacob W. Jensen, 43, of Sparks. All three three riders were ejected from the bikes.

After the initial collision between Jensen and Woods; Sanders' motorcycle traveled over Jensen's motorcycle which was on the ground. This caused Sanders and Cissna to be ejected off their motorcycle.

Wood and Sanders both died at the scene. Jensen was taken by Care Flight to Renown Medical Center with severe injuries. Esterling-Wood was transported by REMSA to Renown, also with severe injuries. Cissna was also transported by REMSA to Renown but was release later that afternoon.

Although the accident is still under investigation alcohol does not seem to be a factor.

Witnesses or anyone with more information are encouraged to call 775.689.4623.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Poll: Little appetite for drought spending

By Bettina Boxall, Los Angeles Times

Most Californians surveyed say the statewide drought has had little or no impact on their daily lives, and a majority oppose the suspension of environmental protections or large-scale public spending to boost water supplies, a new USC Dornsife/Los Angeles Times poll has found.

Although 89 percent characterize the drought as a major problem or crisis, only 16 percent say it has personally affected them to a major degree.

Despite widespread news coverage of the drought – one of the worst in recent decades – the state’s major population centers have largely escaped severe mandatory rationing. Even agriculture, which as California’s thirstiest sector is inevitably hit the hardest by drought, has partially compensated for reduced water delivery by pumping more groundwater.

That has softened the drought’s effect on many, apparently blunting the desire for drastic remedies and big spending on water projects.

Read the whole story

Northstar's final EIR for master plan being circulated

Placer County has released the final environmental impact report for the Northstar Mountain Master Plan.

On-mountain improvements include upgrading existing ski lifts, widening existing ski trails, replacing and adding ski lifts and ski trails; and infrastructure to accommodate these features including on-mountain skier service facilities and upgrades, snowmaking facilities, utilities and seasonal spur roadways.

In addition, the plan includes other recreation components such as camping and relocation of cross country ski facilities. Actions associated with this project include:

- Martis Valley Community Plan Amendment to the land use diagram
- Rezone
- Zoning text amendment to allow ski lift facilities and ski runs in the timberland production zone
- Conditional use permit.

Written comments may be sent to: Environmental Coordination Services, Placer County Community Development Resource Agency, 3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190, Auburn, CA 95603, or to cdraecs@placer.ca.gov.

The complete final and draft EIR are available online.