SLT mayor engaging residents in conversation



Matt Sanchez talks about issues at the hotel he manages as Councilmembers Wendy David and Tom Davis, back right, listen. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

While vacation home rentals, marijuana and SnowGlobe were prominent topics at the inaugural “mayor’s conversation,” other issues came to light that aren’t always before the South Lake Tahoe City Council.

Mayor Wendy David launched the monthly get-together on Jan. 24. The purpose is to have an informal discussion with anyone in a relaxed atmosphere. She plans to bring a guest with her each time, with Councilman Tom Davis being her partner on Wednesday.

While people have the opportunity to come before the entire council at the meetings and talk for three minutes on any topic, the state open meeting law prevents the electeds from engaging in a dialogue. These sessions, though, allow for back-and-forth communication without legalities getting in the way.

More than two dozen people wandered in for this first gathering at Peet's inside Raley's at the Y.

Matt Sanchez, the new manager of the Elizabeth Lodge on Pioneer Trail, spoke about his frustrations with a seedy element of the community hanging around his property "because of its past reputation."

"Our place is safe now," he said. There was a time, he said, when a different class of people paid a nightly fee. That's not true anymore. But they are still in the neighborhood, loitering and giving off an unsafe vibe, according to Sanchez.

Police Chief Brian Uhler, who stopped by briefly, vowed to increase patrols in the area. But he said hanging out isn't a crime, pointing to how the U.S. Supreme Court has stuck down most loitering laws.

Another person asked about what is going to happen with roads since the **ballot measure failed** last fall.

David said obviously the need to fix the roads has not gone away, but there is no timeline to put it on the agenda for the council to have a discussion about it.

Davis said pot holes will continue to be filled, touched on **Sierra Boulevard** being revamped, and revealed Third Street leading to Barton Memorial Hospital will be seeing improvements this year.

A former El Dorado County snowplow driver voiced his frustration with snow removal in the city limits.

Dan Browne, a frequent critic of the City Council, was at the meeting with an opinion on just about every topic. He asked why the city spent $100,000 on the fireplace at the airport when “80 percent of the population won’t see it.”

Instead of listening to the mayor’s response, he got up and went to talk to someone else. David, though, explained to the others who chose listen that the money came from a **land deal with Barton Health** which per FAA rules mandated the proceeds be spent at the airport. In addition, the heating and air conditioning systems had outlived their usefulness, so much of what was done was efficiency oriented, not cosmetic. Even so, what the airport lobby – aka City Hall – looked like prior the renovation was sketchy at best.

As for the VHRs, pot and SnowGlobe, it was like a rehash of any council meeting when those subjects are on the agenda.

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Note:

· The mayor conversations will be the Wednesday after the second City Council meeting starting at 9am. Locations will vary.

The last straw: Is time up for this plastic relic?

By Jacopo Prisco, CNN

Every day, Americans throw away 500 million plastic straws, enough to circle the Earth twice, or fill 125 school buses.

That means the average American uses over 35,000 of them in a lifetime. But that could even be a low estimate, according to Adrian Grenier, who leads a campaign called Strawless Ocean.

Worldwide, plastic straws are the sixth most common type of litter, according to Litterati, an app that identifies and maps trash, and among the top 10 marine debris items according to environmental advocacy group Ocean Conservancy.

Read the whole story

Calif. lawmakers preparing for more disasters

By Liam Dillon, Los Angeles Times

Dozens of Californians lost their lives in wildfires and other natural disasters in recent months.

In response to the widespread emergencies, Gov. Jerry Brown and legislators want to change insurance rules, emergency alert systems and debris removal policies and spend more money on fire protection. If passed, these new laws would add to the many protections already enshrined in state law for those who have experienced natural disasters, including substantial relief from property taxes.

State officials are warning residents should expect more natural disasters due to the effects of climate change.

Read the whole story

Nev. gets nearly all F’s in annual tobacco control report

By Mick Akers, Las Vegas Sun

The American Lung Association’s 2018 State of Tobacco Control report, which grades states on policies to prevent and reduce tobacco use, shows that Nevada lags in anti-tobacco measures.

The 16th annual report graded states in five categories, with Nevada receiving four F’s and a C. It received an F in tobacco prevention and control program funding, tobacco taxes, access to cessation services and minimum age. The state got a C in the Smoke Free Air category.

Nevada’s leading cause of preventable death is tied to tobacco use, with 4,050 deaths attributed to smoking between 2005-2009, the study showed. The state sees $1.08 billion in health care costs due to smoking each year.

Read the whole story

Luxury ski bus to service Bay Area-North Shore

By Tony Bizjak, Sacramento Bee

A Bay Area entrepreneur is launching a luxury weekend bus service to Tahoe for people who hate driving in Tahoe’s often

congested winter traffic.

Greg Riessen, a transportation planner and avid skier, will launch Tahoe Convoy in two weeks, running Friday night buses to Truckee, Squaw Valley and Tahoe City, with a return bus Sunday evening.

Riessen said his company is starting carefully, with service every other weekend and only a handful of Bay Area and North Lake Tahoe stops. He said the company will add a South Lake Tahoe bus and run every weekend if ridership is good.

Read the whole story

Pioneering snow-sports filmmaker Warren Miller dies



Warren Miller's legacy as a snow-sports icon will live on. Photo/LTN

By Ron Judd, Pacific NW Magazine

Warren A. Miller, the pioneering snow-sports filmmaker whose

infectious zeal for the “pure freedom” associated with skiing, snowboarding and other pursuits inspired multiple generations of adventure-seekers around the globe, died Jan. 24 at his home on Orcas Island. He was 93.

A quick-witted, self-taught filmmaker who first filmed his own scenes for an annual self-narrated ski movie shown in small venues, Mr. Miller produced more than 500 adventure-sport films. His name, carried forward in a sports-media company, Warren Miller Entertainment, from which he was disassociated in his later years, became synonymous with snow sports across North America.

To his legions of fans, Mr. Miller’s annual ski flick amounted to cinematic manna from heaven — an overdue shot of cold air and deep snow to stoke the fires within winter warriors who had suffered through the long, hot months of snowless summer.

Read the whole story

Schools open, resorts prepping for powder day



Sunrise on Jan. 25 at Sierra-at-

Tahoe. Photo/Sierra-at-Tahoe

Even though Mother Nature dumped just less than a foot of snow overnight, all schools in Lake Tahoe Unified School District, Douglas County School District and Tahoe Truckee Unified School District are open on Thursday.

Incline Village schools are on a two-hour delay.

A winter weather advisory remains in effect through 4am Friday. Snow showers are expected to resume this afternoon, with another 3-7 inches at lake level and the possibility of a foot of snow above 7,000 feet.

Expect some delayed openings at the ski resorts as they work to clear the snow off chairs and implement avalanche control measures. Call the resort or check their websites for specifics.

Sierra-at-Tahoe is reporting 15 inches of new snow and Northstar received 13 inches up top and 11 inches mid-mountain.

Chain controls are up on the highways in and out of the Tahoe basin. Click on the state icon on *Lake Tahoe News'* home page for current conditions.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Panel: Tahoe snowfall a

casualty of climate change



Noah Diffenbaugh, a professor at Stanford University, talks climate change Jan. 23 at Harveys. Photo/Terra Breeden

By Terra Breeden

STATELINE – In Lake Tahoe, warm weather patterns are affecting snow levels. A panel of weather experts pointed out the difference between the snowfall in 2017 and current snow conditions as an example of extreme weather events.

“When you have snow in November last year and now it’s January and there’s no snow, you can call that extreme weather,” meteorologist and CNN weather supervisor Brandon Miller said.

Miller is one of several people in town this week for Operation Sierra Storm, a national weather conference. In part the participants are addressing global climate change and the growing occurrence of extreme weather events, like the recent California drought.

The conference on Jan. 23 was led by keynote speaker Noah

Diffenbaugh, a geoscientist and professor of earth system science at Stanford University, and included a panel of renowned meteorologists from U.S. news sources.

One of the reasons for having the conference in Lake Tahoe is to discuss how global warming is affecting snowfall conditions and how extreme weather events contribute to visitation and the economy of the community. National trends in climate change were addressed as well.

“The National Weather Service asserts that climate change is happening, and it is caused by mankind. The question we cover is what does that mean for the future,” Paul Goodloe, a TV meteorologist for the Weather Channel said.

Goodloe, who covered the winter storm in Tahoe last week for the Weather Channel, said that the heavy rain and lack of snow was caused by a warm tropical air mass at 8,000 feet. He asserted that as global warming continues, weather will be prone to “wild swings” in California at high elevations, as seen in the substantial difference between last year’s snowfall and this year’s.

“This is the type of pattern caused by climate change,” he said. “You start to see snow levels at higher feet and more drought in California.”

Goodloe pointed to Louisiana towns currently being threatened by rising seawater and major storm events in Alaska and North Dakota as other instances of extreme weather caused by global warming.

“Eventually, it’s going to mean relocating people from their native land,” Goodloe said.

Diffenbaugh began his presentation at Harveys by pointing out that humans are altering the chemistry of the atmosphere and ocean by emitting greenhouse gases.

“As scientists we know this because we can measure it,” he said. “Altering carbon dioxide levels alters the Earth’s temperature.”

2017 was the second warmest year on record, with 2016 being the warmest. Scientific research taken from different studies points to humans as the cause.

Diffenbaugh lives in California and has studied the California drought extensively. Although droughts do happen naturally in the state, research shows that drought occurrences have doubled in California in the last century. Diffenbaugh believes that the extreme weather related to the last drought was caused by global warming.

“The California drought was a severe event for the state’s economy. It also killed over 100 million trees and led to the wildfires we’ve experienced,” he said.

Warmer temperatures and less precipitation means less water in California. Diffenbaugh noted that we can expect warmer weather patterns and events as global temperatures rise. This could mean warmer winters and less snow in Tahoe.

“We are getting to the point where every year is a warm year,” he said. “If we look to the future, what we find when we look at climate change models for California is that the likelihood of another warm year is 100 percent.”

It seems as if extreme weather events like the California drought will become the “new normal” as global temperatures rise. Although there are still people who deny the existence of climate change, many people now consider global warming an impending threat.

“Polls tell us that people trust scientists more than politicians,” Angela Fritz, meteorologist and deputy editor of the *Washington Post*, said. “They know that climate change is happening and that they have to make changes to accommodate

it.”

Over the years, public opinion has shifted on global warming, going from outright denial to a widely accepted fact, which has made climate change easier for journalists to cover. However, 10-15 years ago, it wasn’t that way.

Miller shared a personal anecdote about how he had a conservative upbringing and denied the existence of climate change for many years. Even as a young meteorologist, when he witnessed the growing number of extreme weather events such as storms and floods, he didn’t accept that the events were caused by climate change. It took years of seeing weather patterns grow warmer for him to believe in climate change.

Miller’s story related to the current White House administration’s climate change denial, which all the panelists agreed would not affect the progress the U.S. has made to adapt to and moderate global warming.

“The administration can do as much as they want to unravel the progress we’ve made in the last decade, but industries and the public are already on the same page,” Fritz said. “They’re going to do what’s in their and everyone else’s best interest.”

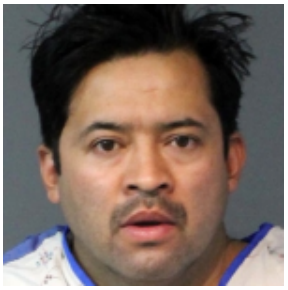
To demonstrate how industries are already adapting to climate change., Goodloe showed a short video about an automobile manufacturing plant in Ohio that is harnessing wind energy as a source of renewable power.

The panelists also addressed the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, an agreement within the United Nations to aggressively curb greenhouse gas emissions and limit global warming by 2 degrees Celsius. The meteorologists admitted that the U.S. withdrawal created a setback for climate change, especially when America is the second largest contributor of greenhouse gases in the world.

However, the panelists pointed to states like California that continue to honor the Paris Agreement despite the decisions made by national leaders.

“California is setting the standard and it will be a leader and trend-setter for the nation,” Goodloe said.

Man found dead in Incline Village residence



Ismael Resendiz-Moreno

One person is dead and another is in custody as Washoe County sheriff’s deputies continue to investigate the suspicious death in Incline Village.

Investigators found a man deceased on Jan. 23 in a residence near Southwood and Tahoe boulevards. The victim’s name has not been released.

Ismael Resendiz-Moreno, 44, was apprehended at the location. He was charged with battery with a deadly weapon.

The relationship between the two has not been released.

Anyone with information is asked to call Secret Witness at 775.322.4900.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Rural discontent settles in the state of Jefferson

By Tay Wiles, High Country News

It was a pleasant day for September in California's Central Valley, sunny and hot but not unbearably so. Kayla Brown sat cross-legged on the grass under an oak tree in a public park, surrounded by friends and family, including her husband, parents and two sons. Brown, who is 27 and sprightly, with a blonde ponytail and blue eyes, was holding court on 19th century American history and the run-up to the Civil War. A lot of Californians "actually sympathized with the Confederates," she said.

Brown was in Marysville, just north of Sacramento, to take part in a Civil War re-enactment, a hobby she's had since she was 11. Today, as usual, she was dressed as a Confederate. "I've been dying epically, valiantly, for the South for three days," one member of the group said, smiling, as they took a break from the day's skirmishes. Brown added: "The North was morally right, but somebody's got to be a Confederate."

Brown's youngest son, 18 months old, toddled by, swinging a slice of apple tied to a string, making swooshing airplane sounds. "I hate public schools," Brown said, moving the conversation from history to contemporary politics. The Common Core curriculum is a sham, she said; grade-schoolers are

forced to learn about topics like contraception and gender identity. That’s why she is homeschooling her children. Gun laws are too strict in California, and mountain lions are over-protected. “We have more lions than anywhere else in the country,” one member of the group said. “That’s because we’re not allowed to shoot them for eating our livestock,” another added. (California residents can, in fact, shoot a mountain lion that is killing domestic animals, though they need to obtain a permit from the state.)

People here call far Northern California — the 20 or so counties north of Sacramento — the North State. The region is largely rural and white (though the Latino population has risen in recent years and there are several Native American tribes), and its politics are mostly red (only four counties went for Hillary Clinton in 2016). But the North State is also an idea that encompasses a shared regional identity for people like Brown, who has lived here her whole life and never wants to leave. “You have a lot of rural folk, people who have been here for three, four, sometimes even five generations,” she told me at the re-enactment. “We’re literally tied to the land.”

Read the whole story