EDSO getting ready to build mega-complex

El Dorado County sheriff's officials are hosting community meetings throughout the county – except in the Lake Tahoe Basin – to enlighten people about the multimillion dollar public safety facility that will be built in Diamond Springs.

The complex is expected to cost $68 million. Of that, $11 million is coming out the county's pockets immediately. The $57.14 million loan secured from U.S. Department of Agriculture will be paid back over 40 years with an interest rate of 2.75 percent.

A 30.7-acre parcel off Missouri Flat and Industrial roads in Placerville had already been acquired, with the main use for the sheriff's department. Five buildings on 12 acres will be for law enforcement. Another 7 acres may become a solar farm. Development has not yet been planned for the remaining acreage.

Construction is expected to begin this spring, with completion in 2019.

Community meetings are as follows:

- Feb. 5, 6pm at the Pollock Pines Community Center, 2675 Sanders Drive, Pollock Pines
- Feb. 6, 6pm at the American Legion Hall, 4561 Greenstone Road, Placerville
- Feb. 7, 6pm at the Pioneer Park Community Center, 6740 Fair Play Road, Somerset
- Feb. 8, 6pm at the El Dorado Hills Fire Station, 1050 Wilson Blvd., El Dorado Hills
- Feb. 12, 6pm at the Pilot Hill/Cool Hall, 1701 Highway 193, Cool.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

LTCC not replacing theater arts instructor

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Community College no longer has a full time theater arts instructor.

The college board earlier this month accepted the resignation of Susan Boulanger.

In an email to college faculty on Jan. 15, Boulanger wrote, "You know by now that I have decided to leave LTCC. I have given it a lot of thought, and I believe it is time for me to move on, to move forward. I don't know what is next – maybe it will be in So Cal, maybe somewhere else, maybe even Tahoe! I'm open to opportunities and trust that God is going to open the right doors for me."



Susan Boulanger

Boulanger's job has been tenuous ever since **October 2016** when it became public that the college was thinking of disbanding the department. Public outcry and a community task force

salvaged the department. The result included drastic changes to course offerings and the number of theater productions reduced from three to one.

Adjunct faculty are taking over the courses Boulanger was slated to teach this quarter.

The spring production – the only performance the college was to have put on this academic year – will be overseen by Dave Hamilton, Boulanger's predecessor before she was hired in 2009. It is going to be a series of four one-act plays.

"It is well documented we were having challenges with demand in our theater program," LTCC President Jeff DeFranco told *Lake Tahoe News.*

Part of this was related to enrollment, part because of how the state a few years back changed how many times a person could take the same class.

DeFranco said the college does not intend to replace Boulanger. While it's possible current faculty could teach one of her classes, adjunct instructors are likely to fill the void. He said the college is committed to continuing to offer for credit classes, putting on one production a year, and partnering with the community so the theater is used more often. Examples of the latter include Valhalla staging a play at LTCC last fall and the "Vagina Monologues" coming in February for two nights.

The college looks to fill full time positions based on need instead of filling a vacancy with the same type of instructor. That is why the theater position is going by the wayside.

Last fall the board agreed to hire a full time wilderness education instructor. The hope is that position will be filled in late spring, with the person able to begin teaching in the summer.

There are more students on the wait list for wilderness classes than all other departments combined. That is reason alone to add staff. Plus, a full time person will be able to grow the department through additional classes.

“If we want to be a premier destination community college, let’s move into that direction and provide true destination programs,” DeFranco said. “We are trying to do more things to bring students to campus.”

To that end, the board on Jan. 23 approved expanding the international program to attract more foreign students, as well as an outreach coordinator position.

A reason to target international students is per their visa they must take three in person classes per quarter. This greatly boosts enrollment.

The outreach person will be a recruiter of sorts as well as a liaison to local high schools.

Also on Tuesday night the board approved adding a full time political science/history instructor. That position has been vacant for two years.

Other staff changes include:

· Director of Institutional Effectiveness Jeremy Brown’s last day was Jan. 12.

· Systems Administrator Bill King retired at the end of December.

· Instructional Dean Michelle Sower is scheduled to be on sabbatical in February and March.

· Faculty members Scott Lukas and Sara Pierce will be taking on the role of faculty on special assignment to help fill the leadership gaps on a temporary basis.

· Recruitment is under way for the director of Institutional Effectiveness.

· The administrative assistant to the dean's position is vacant.

· A program coordinator for Apprenticeship & Work-Based Learning is being sought; this is a grant-funded position.

Experts: More deadly mudslides inevitable

By Jeremy P. Jacobs, E&E News

MONTECITO – Experts analyzing the catastrophic mudslide that claimed 20 lives here say there's no doubt it will happen again.

The big question: Will the state and local governments act to reduce the risks created by development in mudslide-prone areas?

"California tries to lead by policy, but unfortunately, we make advancements by crisis. That is our history," said Susan Lien Longville, chairwoman of the San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District. "Every time there is a major flood event, we have task forces and we do studies."

Longville knows. She was part of a task force convened by the state Legislature following a 2003 mudslide that killed 16 people in San Bernardino. The task force drew up recommendations and a "model ordinance" that offered guidelines and requirements for development.

No county or city has adopted it.

Read the whole story

Man falls to his death at EDC water treatment plant

El Dorado County sheriff's officials believe a man died after falling into an untreated raw water conduit between Jenkinson Lake and EID's water treatment plant in Pollock Pines.

Deputies responded to the area on Jan. 22 at 6pm and were unable to locate the missing person.

El Dorado Irrigation District personnel began to reduce the flows to the plant while emergency responders continued their search for Tory Robert Mayes of Pollock Pines. His body was recovered Tuesday afternoon.

After an extensive search of the EID conduit line by the sheriff's patrol and dive teams, EID, Sacramento Metropolitan Fire Department and El Dorado County Fire Department, medical personnel determined that because of the length of exposure, water temperature, and circumstances surrounding the incident, rescue operations have transitioned into a recovery mission. Next of kin has been notified.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

STR tired of trash scattered in neighborhoods

By Kathryn Reed

South Tahoe Refuse is fed up with having to pick up after dozens of residents whose trash is everywhere but in a proper container.

Jeff Tillman, president of the South Lake Tahoe-based company, said consistently his crews have to deal with between 75 and 100 cleanups each of the five days they provide service on the South Shore.

“I’m tired of playing patty cake with them. It’s time to hit them hard,” Tillman told the South Lake Tahoe Basin Waste Management Authority board last week.

His crews are directed to pick up whatever garbage isn’t in a can. This takes time, and time is money.

Tillman admitted it’s possible some people don’t even know their trash has been strewn about – mostly likely by animals, with ravens being one of the biggest culprits. But he also knows that based on the repeat offenders “some of these people don’t care.”

STR changed its policy a few years ago to start trash collection at 7am. This was to stop people from putting out garbage the night before, which gave animals more opportunity to feast and make a mess. While this has helped, it has not solved all the problems.

Tillman was hoping the board would take on the enforcement arm if his company supplied evidence. His crews have cameras to document the problem, with each occurrence being date stamped.

South Lake Tahoe, El Dorado County and Douglas County are the

member agencies of the waste management authority.

At the Jan. 19 meeting the board agreed to have STR come back with a proposed fee to assess violators, and for each member agency to devise a fee and appeal process. There are ordinances on the books now that can be used through code enforcement to tackle some of the issues. This additional fee for STR's efforts would go beyond that.

Tillman made it abundantly clear that he is not looking for another revenue source, but for the problem to go away and if doesn't, then for the violators to held accountable.

The board said it wants to be part of the solution, and respective staff said they'll work to make it happen.

There was talk of mandatory bear boxes for repeat offenders.

Here are samples of trash problems provided by Clean Tahoe, which also is tasked with litter issues.

Caesars trust rejects offer from MGM Growth Properties

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Review-Journal

They came. They saw. They were rejected.

MGM Growth Properties' offer to buy a Caesars Entertainment real estate investment trust spinoff that serves as a landlord to 20 properties, including Caesars Palace, has been unanimously rebuffed by the board of Vici Properties.

Vici CEO Edward Pitoniak said in a statement last week that

his board believes shareholders would have superior value in not taking the MGP offer of $19.50 a share, which is worth an estimated $5.85 billion.

Read the whole story

SLT police arrest domestic violence suspect

Updated 10:25am:

A multi-hour standoff on Monday night ended without South Lake Tahoe officers able to apprehend the suspect. However, officers this morning were back at the same residence near the Y with the belief the man was there.

On Jan. 23 at about 7:30am the victim came home to find Brandon Bannowski asleep in her bed. Officers responded and a foot pursuit ensued.

Bannowski fled to the state streets by hopping fences and running through backyards. He was eventually apprehended by officers and K-9 behind O'Reilly auto parts. Bannowski was taken to Barton Memorial Hospital for treatment of minor injuries and booked into jail on charges of domestic battery causing traumatic injury, violating a restraining order, brandishing a weapon, and resisting arrest.

Officers said on Monday Bannowski violated a restraining order by entering the home of his ex-girlfriend, threatened her with a baseball bat and choked her.

The victim is safe, according to officers.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Polystyrene ban could be broader than SLT

By Kathryn Reed

The South Lake Tahoe City Council at its Feb. 6 meeting is expected to solidify its desires for a ban of polystyrene, also known as Styrofoam.

Four tiers are expected to presented to the electeds, who last fall asked for staff to bring back details about what such a ban might look like.

Members of the South Lake Tahoe Basin Waste Management Authority were given a preview of what the council will be presented. The idea is that perhaps a basinwide ban might be contemplated. This group's members are South Lake Tahoe, El Dorado County and Douglas County.

It was suggested the presentation be made to the Local Government Committee of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency when it meets in Stateline at the end of February.

The tiers to be considered by the city include:

· Ban polystyrene single-use containers used for take-out food.

· Ban retail sales of polystyrene, which would include

items like foam coolers and food containers.

· Ban all products using polystyrene on goods packaged outside the city limits like egg containers and trays meat comes on.

· Ban all polystyrene products at special events.

The latter is already part of the special use permit, so it would be included in any future ordinance or resolution the council comes up with.

Any combination of these ideas could be implemented.

Tracy Franklin, the city's communications guru, in her presentation on Jan. 19 said many restaurants are already using a biodegradable, sometimes compostable material for to-go containers. She has spoken with other eateries and explained how the price point is not much greater to make the transition.

More than 100 cities or counties in California already have some sort of ban on polystyrene. The material is bad for the environment and people's health, especially if they reheat the food in the container.

Franklin said in speaking with local retailers the response was that their corporate offices are already used to how Californians operate – meaning they will adapt if the city says certain goods can't be sold or used here.

She added that the Poultry Council is asking for a two-year grace period to work on coming up with a suitable alternative packaging material.

Officials with South Tahoe Refuse were at the Friday meeting. While they agreed polystyrene is not recyclable and does not breakdown, they want to make sure whatever is used next that there is a market for it.

Still, even if the “new” products can’t be recycled, at least they will eventually breakdown at a landfill, something polystyrene will never do.

Cortez Masto talks shutdown, spying and pot

By James DeHaven, Reno Gazette-Journal

Count Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto, D-Nev., among those with who hope to hear more from Dayle Elieson.

Masto – in a wide-ranging Friday interview that touched on everything from the shutdown to government spying – said she was still looking forward to meeting and talking more with Elieson, the ex-Texas prosecutor and U.S. Attorney who now holds the fate of Nevada’s nascent legal marijuana industry.

Elieson was named as Nevada’s top federal prosecutor on Jan. 5, one day after the Trump administration issued a memo that freed up U.S. prosecutors to enforce federal laws against marijuana, even in states that have legalized use of the plant.

Read the whole story

Despite legality of pot, stoned driving hard to detect

By Brad Branan, Sacramento Bee

When a 22-year-old Hayward man allegedly slammed his Cadillac into a California Highway Patrol vehicle and killed Officer Andrew Camilleri on Christmas Eve, he was under the influence of alcohol and marijuana, officials said.

CHP reported that Mohammed Abraar Ali had a blood-alcohol level of .11, above the state limit of .08 for motorists. While it’s not clear how the agency documented Ali’s cannabis consumption, he said he got high at a Christmas party, authorities said.

Proving intoxication from weed is more difficult than it is with alcohol, as law enforcement does not have a device like a breathalyzer for alcohol. Without such a tool, law enforcement must rely more on roadside sobriety tests.

Read the whole story