

Union challenges LTUSD over Mt. Tallac principal

By Kathryn Reed

Last year Mount Tallac High School was run by a teacher on site, with the principal of South Tahoe High School the actual administrator. This year there is an administrator on campus.

This has led the South Tahoe Educators Association to file an unfair labor practice charge with the Public Employees Relations Board. Lake Tahoe Unified School District officials have this week to respond.

But a resolution could take months. Some form of mediation is likely to occur and could be the route to solving the dispute.

At issue is taking away a teacher's position without the union agreeing to it. It is not about the people, but the jobs they are doing.

When Susan Baker was at the helm of the continuation school in South Lake Tahoe she was a teacher who was paid a stipend to run the facility. When she retired at the end of last year Karen Tinlin was brought from Bijou Community School to be principal of Mount Tallac.

Ivone Larson, principal of South Tahoe High School, had been the principal of Mount Tallac. Larson also oversaw the Independent Learning Academy and the Transitional Learning Center. Now those tasks fall to Tinlin.

"It was the recommendation of Susan Baker and Ivone Larson to have an administrator at that position," Superintendent Jim Tarwater told *Lake Tahoe News*. "As the world turns, the roles change."

It is costing the district about \$10,000 more a year to have

an administrator at Mount Tallac.

Jodi Dayberry, president of the local teachers' union, said she could not comment on the issue because it is a personnel matter.

This is not the first time Mount Tallac has had an administrator at the helm. Jim Stevens was once the principal. When he left the principal at STHS oversaw both schools.

Feds change stance on marijuana policy

By Joe Mazingo, Ari Bloomekatz and David G. Savage, Los Angeles Times

In a significant policy shift by the Obama administration, Attorney General Eric Holder Jr. signaled Thursday that the federal government would no longer interfere in states that allowed commercial marijuana sales as long as they were strictly regulated.

The move comes two years after the Justice Department said federal drug agents would not tolerate large-scale or commercial pot businesses and began a campaign to shut down dispensaries and growers. The crackdown was particularly aggressive in California, where hundreds have been shut down.

The new policy suggests the federal government is trying to find a workable balance between federal law, which prohibits all marijuana use, and laws in a growing number of states such as California that permit it.

Read the whole story

Pedestrian hit in Stateline dies from injuries

The Carson City man who was struck by a vehicle on Highway 50 in Stateline last month has died.

Cody J. Dobson, 31, was hit Aug. 10 and died 13 days later.

No one has been arrested.

"The family of Cody Dobson would like the driver of this crash to know a fatality has resulted in this tragic incident. They have set up a bank account with US Bank in the event anyone would like to donate money. The account number is 153755984306," the Nevada Highway Patrol said in statement.

Officers said Dobson may have been walking on the highway or stumbled from the adjacent sidewalk just east of MontBleu casino prior to being struck. One witness who stopped to render aid told troopers he was driving west when he observed a person lying in one of the eastbound lanes. When he turned his vehicle around to provide assistance, he saw a full size blue Dodge pickup strike the downed pedestrian. The pickup may have a camper shell matching the color of the vehicle.

Officers also said alcohol appears to be a contributing factor because Dobson displayed signs of intoxication at the scene and the hospital.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Trooper Doug Hildebrand at (775) 689.4623 or dhildebrand@dps.state.nv.us.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Smell of smoke in S. Tahoe returns



Smoke did not hinder the Sept. 1 fireworks in South Lake Tahoe. Photos/Howie Nave



As long as the Rim Fire continues to burn near Yosemite, the Lake Tahoe Basin and western Nevada are subject to smoky days.

While mostly blue skies have returned this morning to the South Shore, the smell of smoke is more prevalent than it has

been compared to the past couple days. The most impacted areas are Alpine and northern Mono counties. Afternoons and evenings are forecast to be the worst, according to the National Weather Service in Reno.

The Rim Fire at 228,670 acres is the fourth largest fire in California. It is 60 percent contained, with full containment expected Sept. 20.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Grass Valley command center hub for fire activity

By Peter Hecht, Sacramento Bee

On Aug. 17, as the first calls for assistance came in from a fire 150 miles away near Yosemite, the ridgetop Interagency Command Center in Grass Valley was already at full throttle.

A shared room for tactical supervisors of the U.S. Forest Service, CalFire and the state Office of Emergency Services was directing materiel to the American Fire near Foresthill, then just 7 days old.

Outside, Grumman S-2 air tankers – dubbed “pink bellies” for the color of the fire retardant they drop – were taking off from the Grass Valley Air Attack Base. They were flying sorties over the Foresthill area’s deep forest canyons, where the stubborn fire was soon to top 26,000 acres.

Suddenly, this new Rim Fire was burning in treacherous terrain to the south in the Stanislaus National Forest. Within 24 hours, thunderclouds triggered vicious downdrafts, endangering

firefighters and fanning a massive blaze toward the communities of Groveland, Tuolumne City and Pine Mountain.

Read the whole story

Tahoe air finally OK to inhale deeply

Winds have shifted, making smoke less of an issue in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

However, a dense smoke advisory remains in effect until 5 this afternoon for Alpine County and northern Mono County.



Lake Tahoe on Aug. 31 from Homewood. Photo/Kathryn Reed

On Saturday it was possible to see across the width of Lake Tahoe for the first time in about a week and blue skies ruled the day. This morning a cloud cover is obscuring the blue and there is a chance of thunderstorms Sunday afternoon.

The Rim Fire near Yosemite is at 40 percent containment, with 222,777 acres burned.

While the American Fire near Foresthill is contained, crews are working hard to fully extinguish it. The fire burned 27,440 acres.

A Burned Area Emergency Response team will start work today identifying areas to be repaired prior to winter rains.

Two bridges on the Western States Trail are standing but damaged. They will be inspected to determine what needs to be done before the public has access to them again.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

NV, N.J. may partner in online gaming

By Sue Zeidler, Reuters

MGM Resorts International is working with Nevada officials who are discussing banding together with New Jersey to create a joint online gaming market, CEO Jim Murren told *Reuters* in an interview.

“I think it’s likely that in 2014 we’ll see a compact between New Jersey and Nevada,” Murren said in an interview following the company’s second-quarter earnings call.

In the past, Murren contended that Nevada alone may be too small a state to provide a large enough online market.

“We’ve really been focusing on Nevada’s ability to compact with other states, create more liquidity,” said Murren.

A.G. Burnett, chairman of the Nevada State Gaming Control

Board, told Reuters he shared Murren's optimism.

"Nevada is striving to do what it can in regards to compacts. We do not jump into the fire without having done a lot of cautious research and study into the particulars of such agreements, and that phase is nearing completion," he said.

Read the whole story

Illegal pot grow may have started Rim Fire

By Paul Rogers, San Jose Mercury News

Investigators searching for answers into what caused the massive wildfire burning in and around Yosemite National Park have made some headway, fire officials said Friday.

Most authorities are mum about the details, but one fire official in Tuolumne County offered a tantalizing clue when he recently told a community meeting that the fire was likely caused by marijuana growers.

"We don't know the exact cause," said Todd McNeal, fire chief in Twain Harte, a town that has been in the path of the flames. But he told a community meeting that it was "highly suspect that there might have been some sort of illicit grove, a marijuana-grow-type thing."

"We know it's human caused. There was no lightning in the area," said McNeal, a former captain with the Sonora Fire Department who has fought fires for 23 years for the Forest Service, the National Park Service and other agencies in the Sierra Nevada.

His remarks, made on Aug. 23, were recorded and posted on YouTube in a video that has gotten surprisingly little attention.

Officially, authorities were saying little.

Read the whole story

Tahoe air improving, but smoke advisory in place

Updated 9:40am:

While the air is clearing in the Lake Tahoe Basin, that is not the case for the entire region.

A dense smoke advisory is in effect until 8 tonight for Douglas, Alpine, northern Mono counties.

The National Weather Service in Reno says, "The density of smoke will depend on day-to-day output of smoke from the Rim Fire which is uncertain. However, south of Interstate 80 and east of Lake Tahoe will see the greatest impacts from the fire through Labor Day. Chances for appreciable smoke are lower through Saturday afternoon north of Interstate 80 and in the Tahoe basin, but will increase by Sunday and Monday as flow aloft turns more southerly."

The Sept. 1 Heavenly Mountain Run has been canceled because of the smoke.

The fire near Yosemite has consumed 219,277 acres and is 35 percent contained.

A spot fire crossed Old Yosemite Road on Friday night, which led to the expansion of the evacuation area in Mariposa County.

According to fire officials, "Continued warmer and drier weather is forecasted for the next several days, which will elevate control concerns and slow burnout progress."

The estimated date of full containment is Sept. 20.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Tahoe City making plans for the future

By Kathryn Reed

TAHOE CITY – As Tahoe City celebrates its 150th anniversary this weekend, it's not just one big party. Some serious philosophical discussions about the town's future are going on.

Tahoe City was once the gateway to Lake Tahoe. It was the transportation hub. It used to have an active nightlife.

Now it is full of rundown buildings, with many of them empty. Tourists tend to stay in Truckee, Northstar and Squaw instead. And the nightlife, well, it's lacking.

Bright spots, though, are the increasing number of bike-pedestrian trails and the excitement of what the now-city owned golf course could evolve into. Think cross country skiing and other winter recreation.



A rendering by Design Workshop of what Tahoe City could look like in the future.

A vision. That is what Tahoe City is creating. For about a year people have been meeting to define this area's future. On Aug. 28 a group gathered at Granlibakken to find out where the plans are and to offer more input.

A concern many have is the height of future buildings. They don't want the charm of the town to be eroded with high-rises or for tall buildings to further prohibit views of Lake Tahoe. Many people are concerned that future development would obscure views of the lake.

Some are also worried things are being done for tourists only – like the idea of putting a hotel along the water. While this keeps surfacing as an idea, it was also brought up that the beach could remain public.

An issue with doing anything – development or redevelopment – is that like Kings Beach many of the parcels are small. It will take adjoining property owners working together to have a significant impact.

But it was also noted that the majority of land is owned by a small number of people.

Integrating the golf course with other recreation was brought up.

Incorporating the Truckee River into the city is an idea. This could be done with a trail or promenade. And some would like to see the river and lake tied together in a manner that is easy for people to experience both.

With the rerouting of Highway 89 because the bridge over the river is no longer seismically safe, it may make the river-lake idea more of a possibility. The realignment of the highway is being studied now.

Design Workshop, which with Placer County planning officials has been leading the vision process, foresees creating side streets so it's not just Highway 28 people are on, as well as having walkways so the golf course would be one of the views as people stroll.

Stephanie Grigsby with Design Workshop said at meetings people have talked about creating a world-class recreation-visitor center of a resort destination quality that locals and visitors would use.

Besides commercial interests, there is the realization of the need for housing, especially for young families. Truckee has done a good job in capturing that segment of the population.

Key obstacles to doing any of these things are all the agencies in the Lake Tahoe Basin and Tahoe City residents feeling like their voices aren't heard because the county seat is off the hill.

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Notes:

- There will be a town hall meeting Sept. 11 at 6pm at the North Tahoe Event Center in Kings Beach that will be about the Tahoe City and Kings Beach plans and Placer County's community plan for the areas.
- The Placer County Planning Commission will hear the Tahoe

City vision in October.