

Loop road proponents looking at community impacts

By Kathryn Reed

Federal law dictates what happens to people who might be displaced if the Tahoe Transportation District ever reroutes Highway 50 on the South Shore. But fair market value today is another story.

One man at Thursday's TTD meeting brought up the fact that he would have to fully disclose to a potential buyer that the loop road could one day take out his property. He said he would not be able to get fair market value today because of this fact.



Alfred Knotts with Tahoe Transportation District looks over one of the loop road maps with Angie Watson who owns apartments in the project area. Photo/Kathryn Reed

A real estate broker in the audience confirmed that everyone with property that could be affected by the project now has to tell a buyer about the loop road. This scenario is the same thing that for years left those in the path of the convention

center project not wanting to improve their properties for fear of not getting a return on investment and unable to sell based on the threat of the parcel being consumed for what became a hole.

Officials are trying to bring transparency to the loop road by talking relocation and acquisition, but some in the audience said notices that have gone out seem more like scare tactics.

This project, though, would not become a hole because it cannot start until all the funding is in place.

There are four alternatives being studied, along with a do-nothing option. The one the TTD prefers would start on the west side in South Lake Tahoe at the vacant lots the city owns before the junction with Pioneer Trail and then go behind Harrah's and MontBleu, coming out at Lake Parkway where a roundabout would be put in. Another starts at the Pioneer Trail intersection. One calls for Highway 50 to be one way and the loop on the mountain side to go in the opposite direction. Then there is the skyway option to move pedestrians around, but would not address the traffic concerns proponents want to improve.

Goals of a loop road include making what is now Highway 50 in the tourist core a city-county street that would be more pedestrian-bike-transit centric, have wide-inviting sidewalks, and feel more like a downtown.

About 30 people turned out for the July 25 meeting – about half of what officials had hoped for.

Mike Lahodny with Bender Rosenthal, a commercial valuation and right-of-way services company, went over the laws that dictate what can happen to property owners, business owners and tenants.

No appraisals or acquisitions can occur until the TTD board certifies the environmental document. But part of the

environmental document is the Community Impact Study (CIS), with the Relocation Impact Study (RIS) being a component of that.

The RIS is expected to be completed by the end of August and the CIS in the fall.

Lahodny said even though the information being collected today will be outdated three to four years from now when appraisals may actually occur, the data is designed to let planners project out what could happen.

The draft environmental documents could be released in spring 2015, with the final document out in fall 2015. It is on the draft enviro docs that the public will be able to make the most comments, though officials are always taking comments.

South Lake Tahoe and Douglas County electeds will have to sign-off on the environmental documents, along with the TTD board. The one place the city and county could derail the project would be to not approve the permits to do the work within their jurisdictions.

The information Lahodny discussed is expected to be on the TTD website today, along with more detailed maps of the parcels that could be affected.

Teen breaks leg hiking on Tahoe Rim Trail



A teenager is airlifted out of the backcountry July 24 on the West Shore. Photo/Provided

A 16-year-old who fractured his leg had to be airlifted out of the backcountry on Wednesday.

The teen was in Ward Canyon below Stanford Rock on the Tahoe Rim Trail.

A California Highway Patrol helicopter airlifted him out July 24. Then North Taheoe fire crews treated him before transporting him to Tahoe Forest Hospital in Truckee.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Bike-riding would-be bank robber changes his mind

A cyclist on Thursday attempted to rob an El Dorado Savings Bank in South Lake Tahoe.



Police are looking for this man.

The suspect passed a demand note to a teller at the 3443 Lake Tahoe Blvd. branch and then appeared to change his mind about following through with the 3:30pm robbery, according to officers.

No weapon was ever threatened or displayed.

The suspect left through the front doors and rode a bicycle east on Highway 50. The bicycle is described as a white or chrome girl's style frame with a large basket on the front and a black bag affixed to the back.

The suspect is a white male, possibly in his 70s, approximately 5-feet-9, thin and clean shaven. The suspect has short hair and wore a baseball cap which was black in the front and white mesh in the back. The cap has unknown type lettering on the front. The suspect also wore a black hooded sweat shirt, a dark colored polo style pull-over shirt with thin multi-colored horizontal stripes, black shorts, white socks and black shoes.

Anyone with information should call South Lake Tahoe Police Department, (530) 542.6100, the FBI at (530) 542.4140, or Secret Witness at (530) 541.6800.

SF socialite found dead in Douglas County



Amber Bently

A San Francisco socialite who grew up in Gardnerville, graduated from Douglas High School and is estranged from her husband was found dead in Douglas County.

Douglas County sheriff's deputies said Amber Marie Bently, 34, had been dead for several weeks before her body was found last week in her apartment on High School Street in Gardnerville. She had returned to Gardnerville after separating from her husband, Christopher Bently.

Sgt. Pat Brooks said there is no evidence of foul play. The cause of death is not expected for at least six weeks when pathology reports from the autopsy are completed.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

STPUD water line on Keys

Bld. ruptures

A main water line of South Tahoe Public Utility District ruptured Thursday about 1:40pm.

Crews have been doing work this week on Tahoe Keys Boulevard. The break is between Montana and Oregon on Tahoe Keys Boulevard.

There had been a leak on one of the steel lines. After a while it's common for them to corrode and then fail.

About 500 customers are expected to be without water until 3:30pm.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Woman dies riding personal watercraft on Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

A mother and daughter riding personal watercraft on Lake Tahoe collided Wednesday resulting in one death.

Dawn Finn, 52, of Westwood, N.J., died upon impact July 24, according to officials.

The two women were on individual rented personal watercraft at 1:50pm about 200 hundred yards from Incline Beach when the accident occurred.

The 21-year-old daughter was not injured in the accident. Both women were wearing life jackets. Many family members were on

the beach and saw the vessels collide.

“This was a traumatic injury,” Ed Lyngar, spokesman for the Nevada Department of Wildlife, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

In Nevada, the law is to take the length of a boat and times it by five to know how many feet away the boats should be from each other. If a personal watercraft is 10-feet-long, then it should be no closer than 50 feet from the next boat.

“They were a little too close together. We are not exactly sure what happened. At some point they collided,” Lyngar said. “We have taken possession of the two watercraft. We are looking at them trying to reconstruct what was happening.”

Alcohol is not believed to be a factor. Lyngar said it’s possible a citation could be issued for not keeping the proper distance or recklessness.

“The best way to stay safe is to take a boating education class even if you rent for the day. The more you know, the safer you will be,” Lyngar said.

Cops confiscate cash from S. Tahoe man’s vehicle

A traffic stop in Trinity County ended with \$50,000 in a South Lake Tahoe man’s vehicle being confiscated.

The California Highway Patrol stopped Isaac James Walker, 33, on July 20 about 11:50pm on Highway 299 west of Helena.

A Trinity County sheriff’s K9 unit searched the vehicle, alerting officers to something being in the quarter panel.

Officers said they found \$50,000 in U.S. currency in a heat seal bag.

The Trinity County Narcotics Task Force confiscated the cash because officers believe it was to be used for the purchase of controlled substances. The three duffel bags in the vehicle are possibly what the drugs would have been put in, according to officers.

Walker was released and the investigation is ongoing.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Standoff ends with S. Tahoe woman going to jail

A South Lake Tahoe woman who was holed up in a neighbor's apartment where she had access to a rifle and ammunition was eventually arrested this morning without anyone but her boyfriend being hurt.

Kimberly Ann Leard, 33, was arrested July 25 on felony charges of domestic violence and a misdemeanor charge of resisting, delaying and obstructing police in the performance of their duty.

The incident at the St. Francis Apartments on Emerald Bay Road started about 1:30am with officers called to a unit because a woman was screaming. The argument turned into a physical altercation.

Leard's 37-year-old boyfriend was bleeding from the head, hand

and foot when officers arrived. He refused medical treatment.

To avoid the police, Leard went onto the third story balcony, climbed onto the neighbor's balcony and entered that apartment. The neighbor was in the bathroom when Leard came into his apartment. He fled and Leard retreated into her neighbor's bedroom.

The neighbor told officers he keeps a .30-caliber lever action rifle stored in his bedroom in plain view, with ammo right next to it.

"Officers strongly suggested residents in neighboring units leave until the matter was concluded because of the potential for rifle bullets to penetrate walls," Lt. Brian Williams told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The officers tried to talk Leard into surrendering, but she refused. Officers entered the apartment about 2:40am, where they found Leard hiding in the bedroom closet.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Bear near Verdi relocated, traps set in Incline

A 325-pound black bear that was captured by the Nevada Department of Wildlife in Verdi was released this morning in the Gold Ranch area.

The 6-year-old male was captured Tuesday in a culvert trap set near a residence where it was doing some damage to property.



This bear caught near Verdi on July 23 was released today. Photo/NDOW

“This bear has never been in trouble before, making it a perfect candidate for our aversion conditioning program,” Carl Lackey, bear biologist with the state agency, said in a statement.

On July 23, NDOW set a trap in Incline Village in response to complaints of a nuisance bear in one of the forested neighborhoods of that community. “Unfortunately, we’ve had people sabotaging our traps, keeping us from capturing the nuisance bears in Incline Village,” said Chris Healy, spokesman for NDOW, said. “Instead of saving bears, the individuals and groups interfering with our public safety mission could be creating more aggressive and dangerous bears that are being allowed to become habituated to humans. For the sake of public safety and common sense, the deliberate sabotaging of traps needs to stop.”

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Calif. Dems want Obama to back off pot enforcement

By Robin Wilkey, Huffington Post

SAN FRANCISCO – Marijuana may not be fully legal in California, but the state's Democratic Party has made its position clear.

In a resolution released on Sunday, the California Democratic Party requested that President Obama end the federal crackdown against states with marijuana laws on the books:

"The California Democratic Party requests: President Obama to allow the newly enacted marijuana legalization laws in Colorado and Washington to go into effect with no federal interference, and [...] end the Department of Justice interference and raids by federal agencies in states with medical marijuana laws."

The authors cited voter support for marijuana, the cost of enforcing prohibition laws and racially biased punishment as motivations for the resolution:

"18 states and the District of Columbia have passed laws legalizing the use of cannabis [...] and Colorado and Washington in 2012 passed laws legalizing the recreational use. [...]"

"The United States spends over \$20 billion a year enforcing marijuana prohibition laws, and thousands of people are murdered every year involving the smuggling of illegal drugs into the United States and marijuana accounts for over half of these illegal drugs [...]"

"Marijuana prohibition laws are racially enforced with a far larger percentage of African-Americans and Hispanics convicted and imprisoned for marijuana prohibition offenses than their

white counterparts even though marijuana use in their communities is no more than in white communities.”

The party also encouraged state legislators to establish parameters to guide cities and counties in the distribution of medical marijuana, and announced plans to begin a comprehensive study “to produce recommendations for reform of our nation’s marijuana prohibition laws.”

News of the resolution was applauded by marijuana reform advocates, including Marijuana Majority founder and chairman Tom Angell.

“In just the past few weeks, we’ve seen the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the *New York Times* editorial board and now the Democratic Party of our nation’s most populous state call on President Obama to finally follow through on his campaign promises to respect state marijuana laws,” Angell told the *Huffington Post*.

A recent survey released by the Partnership at Drugfree.org, one of the nation’s harshest critics of drug use, indicated that a strong majority of Americans support medical marijuana legalization, and nearly half support recreational use.

“Polls show that the American people support what candidate Obama pledged to do over what President Obama has actually done,” said Angell. “Now would be a good time for the president to start delivering on the changes he promised in 2008.”