El Dorado County, auditor win appeal

Coming on the heels of losing the El Dorado County recorder-clerk race in June, political consultant Dan Dellinger has now lost his case in the Third District Court of Appeal.

The jurists upheld a 2016 ruling by the **Sacramento County Superior Court** that awarded more than $30,000 in attorney's fees to El Dorado County in the matter of Dellinger v. Joe Harn, El Dorado County and the Pioneer Fire Protection District.

Dellinger's 2015 superior court lawsuit alleged that county Auditor-Controller Harn, the county and the fire district were guilty of breach of contract, bad faith prosecution, violating Dellinger's civil rights and other transgressions. The court threw out Dellinger's lawsuit in February 2016 and, four months later, ordered him to pay the county's attorney's fees. Later that year, he appealed the order. His appeal was rejected in June.

"On every level, Dellinger's lawsuit was ridiculous," Harn told *Lake Tahoe News*. "I did not have a contract with him, so how could I commit breach of contract? I never sued or prosecuted him, so how could I be guilty of bad faith prosecution?

"Most disturbing to me is that Dellinger spent $27,000 of his own money on his recent political campaign. He could have paid the money he owes to the taxpayers of El Dorado County, but he chose to spend money on himself for political gain, and he failed."

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Microtransit to debut in South Lake Tahoe next week

The League to Save Lake Tahoe is teaming with Chariot to launch microtransit in South Tahoe's most traffic-congested tourist area. The pilot program starts July 9.

Chariot will operate frequent shuttles along a route connecting the Stateline casino corridor to Lakeview Commons in South Lake Tahoe. Each air-conditioned shuttle seats 14.

To ride the microtransit shuttles, people can **download the app**. Riders book a seat using the app and then show their mobile device to the driver.

From its July 9-16, all rides will be completely free. For the remainder of the 90-day program, shuttle seats will cost $3 per trip.

In addition to central destinations in the busiest tourist hubs, stops on the route were chosen to provide links to local bike trails and the Tahoe Transportation District's public transit routes. South Tahoe's bike share service—which the League partnered with LimeBike to launch in 2017—will enable Chariot riders to extend their trip onto the system's dockless rental bicycles and electric scooters.

The League and Chariot will also be partnering with the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority during the American Century Championship.

The League is collaborating with local business leaders to ensure microtransit succeeds, with significant support from the Beach Retreat & Lodge and Round Hill Pines Resort. Local

planners with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the city of South Lake Tahoe have contributed their expertise to ensure that the transit routes are well-planned. Under the terms of the pilot, Chariot will also collect data from its vehicles' on-board GPS systems and share it with the League, Tahoe's local jurisdictions, TRPA and the Tahoe Transportation District.

Tahoe-Truckee real estate market sizzling

The rising price of houses at Lake Tahoe is not slowing down sales.

For the first half of 2018, prices are up 18 percent compared to 2017, with the median price at $679,500. The number sold is up 27 percent for the same time period.

The figures are provided by Chase International.

Million-dollar homes continue to soar. There was a 38 percent jump in homes sold for more than $1 million, while homes priced below the million-mark stayed flat. Tahoe City and Incline Village saw the biggest increase in the sale of million-dollar homes, up 44 and 46 percent, respectively. Incline Village continues to have the highest median-priced home, up 7 percent to $1,180,000. The price of a home in South Lake Tahoe, the lowest median on the lake, rose 12 percent to $502,500.

The East Shore experienced the largest increase in homes sold

for less than a million dollars, up 63 percent.

The price of Lake Tahoe condominiums also continues to rise, with the median price up 8 percent to $422,500. The overall sale of condos on the lake was up 9 percent in volume.

The median price of a home in Truckee rose 10 percent to $737,500, with units sold for more than a million up 49 percent. Homes selling for less than $1 million was down 8 percent.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

3/4 of a ton of trash removed from Tahoe beaches

Volunteers picked up 1,458 pounds of trash from Lake Tahoe beaches on July 5.

It took 499 people to remove the litter left behind from those spending July 4 here.

Cleanup participants gathered at five locations around Lake Tahoe, and together removed litter from six miles of shoreline, including Commons Beach in Tahoe City, Kings Beach, Kiva Beach, Nevada Beach and Regan Beach on the South Shore.

Volunteers sorted and counted the items collected.

Single-use plastics were the most commonly-found trash item, along with 8,061 cigarette butts and 18,235 pieces of plastic, which includes cups, lids, bottle caps and food wrappers.

South Shore fireworks barge catches fire



The South Shore fireworks barge on fire July 5. Photo/TDFPD

Hours after the last firework was shot off July 4 on the South Shore, one of three barges caught fire.

The fire was reported at 12:27am July 5. The fireworks started at 9:45pm July 4 and were over less than 30 minutes later.

The crew on board was unable to extinguish the blaze. Tahoe Douglas firefighters responded with their fire boat and were able to suppress the flames in six minutes.

A boom was placed around the barge to keep any contaminants from floating into other areas of the lake. The barges are positioned just off Edgewood Tahoe in Stateline.

Along with Tahoe Douglas, the U.S. Coast Guard and Nevada Department of Wildlife will be involved in the investigation.

The extent of damage to the barge or things on it has not been reported. There were no injuries

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Calif. gas taxes: Where does your money actually go?

By Erin Baldassari, Bay Area News Group

With a measure to repeal California's recently enacted gas taxes and registration fees heading to the November ballot, many drivers want to know, just where does all that money actually go?

"It's extremely complicated," said Asha Agrawal, the director of the National Transportation Finance Center at San Jose's Mineta Transportation Institute.

It's also a big campaign issue, with tax opponents arguing that politicians can't be trusted to spend these new dollars on the road and rail improvements they're promising.

Read the whole story

Drought back on the map for Northern California

By Amy Graff, San Francisco Chronicle

Drought has crept back into Northern California.

Despite a flurry of late storms in spring, precipitation for the winter season was below normal and the region is facing moderate drought and abnormally dry conditions once again, according to the federal government's U.S. Drought Monitor. What's more, temperatures were above normal throughout winter.

The Drought Monitor's weekly map, released Thursday, shows a large swath extending north of San Francisco through the Sacramento Valley to the Oregon border in moderate drought. The Bay Area and the North Coast went from normal to abnormally dry; parts of the northern Sierra remain normal. It's a dramatic change from just last week when the figure didn't depict any drought conditions in Northern California.

Read the whole story

Nev. Legislature one of highest percentages of women in country

By Audrey Carlsen and Denise Lu, New York Times

A record number of women won Nevada's primaries in June. And there is now a possibility for the Legislature to have more women than men, which would be a first in United States history. Of the states that have had primaries so far, at least eight more have a shot at reaching or surpassing the 50 percent mark in November.

To reach this milestone, however, a woman must win the general election in every district where at least one is running, a difficult feat. Some female candidates are running in

districts favoring the other party, and many are challenging incumbents, who historically almost always win.

“The power of incumbency is so, so strong, particularly at the state level,” said Katie Ziegler, a program manager at the National Conference of State Legislatures. “It’s rare for an incumbent to lose their seat.”

Read the whole story

Truckee workforce housing nets $16M grant

The Meadow View Place workforce housing development in Martis Valley will get a $16.25 million boost from California’s Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program.

The project is one of 19 statewide approved for a grant this year by the state’s Strategic Growth Council, and will be funded by proceeds from the Cap-and-Trade greenhouse gas auction.

Meadow View Place will provide 56 apartments to satisfy the nearby Schaffer’s Mill development’s workforce housing obligation.

Schaffer’s Mill donated the site, Placer County and the Truckee committed key transportation matching funds and the Mountain Housing Council was instrumental in bringing together support.

Under the agreement the county will use $3.5 million of the funding to purchase four electric-powered buses to help expand transit services on Tahoe Truckee Area Regional Transit routes

including the necessary electric vehicle-charging and maintenance infrastructure.

Other mobility improvements would also be funded, with $726,000 earmarked to build a portion of the Martis Valley multi-purpose trail and $1.5 million for transit and pedestrian facilities in Truckee. The balance would be used to provide gap financing for construction of the housing project.

Construction could start as early as 2019.

Smoke in basin from fires outside of Tahoe

Smoke continues to fill the Lake Tahoe Basin.

It is coming from fires burning to the west and south of here. According to the National Weather Service in Reno it is coming from the County Fire near Sacramento and the Lions Fires west of Mammoth.

The wind is supposed to pick up Tuesday afternoon, which could help blow the smoke out of the area.

“Dry and windy conditions are the main concern for most of this week, so be aware and avoid starting any potential fires,” the Weather Service said.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report