

Opinion: LTN endorsement summary

Lake Tahoe News convened an editorial board to make recommendations on some of the key races and issues on the Nov. 4 ballot.

Here is a recap of the endorsements with links to the editorials:

- South Lake Tahoe City Council – Brooke Laine, Wendy David and Austin Sass
 - El Dorado County District 5 supervisor – Sue Novasel
 - Lake Tahoe Community College's Measure F – No
 - South Tahoe Public Utility District – Shane Romsos and Duane Wallace
 - Lake Tahoe Community College – Bob Grant
 - Douglas County sheriff – Ron Pierini.
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Letter: Vote yes on Measure H

To the community,

As supervisor of Lake Valley's wildfire prevention program for almost 10 years, I have witnessed a great change in our community's awareness and understanding of our biggest hazard. However, I can honestly say that we have so much more work to do.



Martin
Goldberg

For less than \$10 a month, you can both safeguard our community and move our economy forward. Wildfire prevention is cheaper than suppression.

Residents will continue to receive free curbside chipping. Local tree and roofing contractors will continue to benefit through rebates.

With the creation of a fire adapted community, homeowners will see a reduction in their homeowner insurance. A yes on H provides my program and firefighters with sustainable funding.

I am proud of the program and firefighters I have created and I promise you will be proud of us in the future.

Vote yes and be part of Lake Valley's family. I know so many of you personally. I have visited your home, I have given you what I know about wildfire and I have marked your trees. Now I am asking for your yes vote this Tuesday.

Thank you,

Martin Goldberg, Lake Valley Fire Protection District

Letter: TAP thankful for dance group

To the community,

Tahoe Arts Project is excited to begin our 28th year of presenting performing arts in the local schools and community of South Lake Tahoe. We started our season with the Blue13 Dance Company and we would like to thank all involved.

Blue13 performed for over 4,000 students in our South Shore schools, teaching students about traditional dance from India. Close to 500 community members attended the public performance at MontBleu.

Thank you so much to MontBleu for providing the showroom and to the tech crew for all their expertise. A big thank you to Marcia Sarosik for opening her studio for rehearsal space and for sharing some of her Lake Tahoe Shining Stars with us. Pat Ronan donated lodging at Tahoe Lakeshore Lodge and Spa for the group. Thank you Pat, they loved their accommodations.

Thank you to all the volunteers who were there helping at the public performance, especially Girl Scout Troop 174. You girls were a big help.

We appreciate *Tahoe Daily Tribune*, *Tahoe Mountain News*, *Lake Tahoe News*, KRLT/KOWL, KTHO and Lake Tahoe Art Scene for helping us get the word out.

A big thank you to all of you who attended the show at MontBleu.

Tahoe Arts Project is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide cultural enrichment and diversity for the schools and community through performing arts education. If you would like to find out how you can help with our efforts,

please call 530.542-.632.

Thank you,

Peggy Thompson-Blowney, TAP executive director

Letter: Payment issues within EDC

Publisher's note: *The following emails were sent to the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors on Oct. 28.*

Dear Board Members:

The purpose of this letter is to document that the Community Development Agency (CDA) Transportation Division has executed a number of contract change orders in violation of the California Public Contracts Code.

On September 12th, new CDA Director Steve Pedretti informed me that CDA had executed a number of contract change orders in excess of 10% of the original contract price in violation of Board Resolution #102-2012 and California Public Contract Code Section 20137. I appreciate that Mr. Pedretti brought this matter to my attention. On September 12th, Mr. Pedretti also told me that he would put this matter on your Board's open session agenda as soon as was practical.

I am confident that CDA will put this matter on your agenda soon with a detailed report. However, because over six weeks have gone by since I learned of this matter, I felt it appropriate to document this violation of state law.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Joe Harn, auditor-controller

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Mr. Harn is correct regarding the information that I provided him. Additionally, on September 16 I informed your Board of this issue in closed session during my quarterly evaluation. We stopped processing payment of CCO's pending approval by your Board.

My staff provided a draft board letter, and I requested complete backup information, but given my wedding/honeymoon from Sept 25 – Oct 5 the earliest I felt I could have processed a complete package to your Board was Oct 28. Since the Oct 28 meeting is in South Lake Tahoe I chose to wait until Nov 4 to bring this item to hearing. Again, no change order payments have occurred in the interim.

My staff is pulling together additional information that was requested by the Auditor and should be able to provide that information today.

Steve Pedretti

Opinion: What will winter hold?

By Sandy Evans Hall

Let me get my crystal ball. With the little dusting of snow

that we received this month and the change to a much chillier temperature outside, I bet you are all thinking about winter. Am I right?



Sandy Evans
Hall

Since I have no crystal ball, let me look at my recent Destimetrics report from Sept. 30 and see what's happening at ski resorts across the U.S.:

- GOOD – Early data through March 2015 shows a 7.4 percent gain in occupancy for the upcoming season.
- GOOD – At this point, occupancy is gaining in all five months of the season that data are available.
- GOOD – The average daily rate (ADR) is up a strong 7.5 percent at \$391.
- GOOD – Revenue is also up a very strong 15.5 percent at \$76 with increases in all four months.
- NOT SO GOOD – The Dow Jones Industrial Average declined very slightly in September, losing 0.3 percent, or minus 55.55 points to finish the month at 17,042.9.
- BAD – Consumer confidence declined sharply in September, losing 7.9 percent to finish the month at 86 points. This is the first time the index has been below 90 points since June 2014 and is the first decline in confidence since April.
- GOOD – The national unemployment rate declined sharply in September, shedding two basis points and closing the month at 5.9 percent, the first time the rate has been below 6 percent since June 2008.

So, we have a combination of good, not so good and bad. Certainly early booking patterns are a good sign and how the economy plays out over the coming months will have some impact on the industry. Unemployment numbers are good for the economy but are bound to play havoc with hiring for the ski season. Weather is a big wild card and fingers and toes are crossed that we don't see a ridge set up again this year.

Sure wish I had a crystal ball.

Thinking, dreaming snow.

Sandy Evans Hall is CEO/executive director of the North Lake Tahoe Resort Association.

Letter: Asking the supervisors to listen

Publisher's note: *The following letter was sent to the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors in advance of the Oct. 28 9am meeting at Lake Tahoe Airport.*

To our Board of Supervisors,

I would never be so bold as to say I know what everybody in Meyers wants for this community, but my shop has been like Grand Central Station ever since the Oct. 16 Planning Commission meeting. Overall consensus – extremely disheartened – and not just because the meeting was impossible for the average, gainfully employed, Meyers person to attend.

Disheartened because this whole mess could have been avoided

if the agencies had just been honest and forthcoming. Our community's fear of a huge Catalyst Project, stress of unraveling rumors and the waste of time searching out the facts was completely unnecessary. The county's Planning Commission came all the way up here from Placerville, only to get a bunch of well-spun information, some of which just barely resembled the truth.

"Theme Zoning". Seriously? Myself and others, including candidate for supervisor Sue Novasel, felt obligated to correct staff on several counts, but it appeared as though the Planning Commission had decided on their recommendations for the Meyers plan already.

I was disheartened because one of the planning commissioners, when referring to building height and density, stated, "It really doesn't matter anyway".

Well, it matters to me. When the TRPA rezoned us without notice it changed west Meyers particularly, our density for future building went from 10 units per acre to 40 units per acre, among other things, and this new Meyers plan aligns perfectly with what the TRPA has planned for us, not what we, the people who live and work here, want for us. West Meyers is a highly controversial portion of the Meyers' commercial corridor since it was the proposed location for the much despised Catalyst Project.

We are all disheartened that the Planning Commission recommended continuing with an informal advisory council for Meyers. This is precisely why communication between the county and the community failed. We need to follow the Brown Act or we will forever be hearing things like "Did we vote on that? She said we voted. Well, I guess we voted but I don't remember."

I am sure, after meeting with members of this board previously, that you are honest, hard working people and will

listen to our businesses and residents with a fair and open mind and will not be influenced by the TRPA or Nevada chamber. This plan has too many issues yet to work through, far too many to write in this note.

Please consider a legitimate survey of the community's vision for the new Meyers Community Plan – and let me get back to work.

Angela Olson, Meyers

Letter: Heavenly serves at Bread & Broth

To the community,

In a just a month, the snow surface crew members from Heavenly Mountain Resort will be working hard to see that Heavenly's skiing and snowboarding guests will be experiencing great snow conditions.

But on Oct. 20, Todd Rudis, grooming manager, Lupe Barrientos and Kyle Henderson, grooming supervisors, and Daniel Huizar, grooming lead, were hard at work volunteering alongside Bread & Broth volunteers to feed less fortunate members of the Lake Tahoe South Shore community.

The Monday dinner was the 10th Adopt A Day sponsorship for Heavenly Mountain Resort for this year and B&B deeply appreciates the history of funding and service provided by Heavenly through the Vail Echo Foundation.

As a nonprofit, all-volunteer program, B&B is dependent upon our many generous AAD sponsors, anonymous donors and

volunteers who have been an integral part of our success in feeding the needy of our community.

“After being a part of the community for so many years, it is nice to get a chance to give back to the people who help made this place so great,” said Kyle Henderson. “Everyone is so nice and seeing the smiles on their faces makes it all worth it.”

Seeking to give back and help others, is a frequent feeling shared by our sponsor volunteers and the B&B volunteers who regularly give of their time to improve the lives others. It’s a heartwarming experience.

For more B&B information, go online or find us on Facebook.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Opinion: Measure M is misleading

By Larry Weitzman

During a presentation at the always-spunky Taxpayers Association of El Dorado County meeting, District 4 supervisorial candidate Howard Penn said he believed in a free market. But when asked to explain that philosophy with his contradictory support of Proposition M, Penn said something to the effect that he was not “that free market.”

A few days later during an interview with Penn he admitted that Measure M would not stop 33,000 homes, as there are about 17,500 buildable lots currently. Of those 17,500 lots many have unbuildable topography and many more have no utilities

and need expensive offsite improvements, so the number of buildable lots is much less. But Measure M will only stop about 15,500 additional proposed lots if the conditions of Proposition M are not met. More on those conditions later.



Larry Weitzman

Mike Ranalli, also vying for District 4 supervisor, says he is a free marketer as well and opposes the layers of bureaucracy and regulation that Measure M will bring, but he favors the General Plan as approved by the voters in 2004 and says that any General Plan amendment needs to be approved by the voters and that would include any zoning changed needed for large developments which Measure M seeks to prevent.

Ranalli said, "The General Plan is our contract with respect to our quality of life in EDC and we should live by it."

Most, if not all, of those proposed 15,500 dwellings are now prohibited by the current existing General Plan anyway. To say that Ranalli is for the development of 33,000 homes because he is not for Measure M is absolutely untrue. The question becomes who is not telling the truth.

But that didn't stop Penn from creating a campaign sign addition to his larger campaign sign that says, "Stop Mike Ranalli's 33,000 Home Plan." Penn knows it's an exaggeration at best and at worst it's slimy, sleazy and dishonest politics. In a phone interview when asked about the sign Penn admitted to it being a bit of an exaggeration. Ya, think? According to Ranalli, he has no plans to build any houses and he has nothing to do with Marble Valley, San Stinko or any

other EDC development.

An analysis of Measure M shows it is fraught with pitfalls, the first being where, when, why and how Level of Service F, which is poorly defined in the measure, is controlling. The measure says "If Caltrans determines that traffic on any Highway 50 road segment west of Placerville has reached, or is forecast to reach, Level of Service F (LOS + F stop and go, gridlock) during weekday, peak-hour commute periods, then the county shall not approve single-family detached housing subdivisions of five or more parcels until cumulative Highway 50 traffic levels are improved and stay below LOS F."

The first problem is Measure M becomes effective if anywhere on Highway 50 is declared LOS F, whether that problem is near downtown Sacramento, Rancho Cordova or Folsom or anywhere in between. Such a problem has nothing to do with El Dorado County. So if Rancho Cordova with new development creates LOS F at Sunrise or Mather, then El Dorado County suffers under the guise of Measure M. That is untenable. And LOS F doesn't have to be real, it only needs to be forecast. It only needs to be prognosticated by a bureaucrat with a crystal ball and that could be very political.

Second is the fact Measure M does not prohibit attached or other higher density housing, it only prohibits single-family detached housing. That means Measure M will encourage even higher density development, which is the opposite effect of trying to stop development. Can you imagine El Dorado Hills full of townhomes and condos. Measure M would not prevent that, and by the elimination of single-family detached homes from the development palette, Measure M would encourage such higher density housing (townhomes, condos and apartments). In other words, Measure M would have the opposite intended effect.

Developers would love it and most residents of El Dorado County would loathe it. And developers would claim

townhouse/condo development would certainly be more affordable and satisfy the demand for moderately priced housing. What politician doesn't love the phrase "moderately priced housing and homes."

Third, Measure M gives all discretion of determining LOS F to a giant bureaucracy, Caltrans; meaning people outside of EDC will make the decisions. The problem with that is that government is political and just a forecast of LOS F would stop development. Forecasts are nothing more than guesses. And then there is the adage that "liars figure and figures (can be made to) lie." This provision will cause wasteful and costly litigation. And with telecommuting on the rise, LOS F will even be more difficult to forecast.

There is also a provision in M that forever freezes zoning of the current general plan. What if the General Plan gets amended by the voters, then what? More expensive and wasteful litigation. Measure M is a poorly written dangerous idea. It hasn't been vetted as it should have been and it certainly shouldn't be a litmus test of whether a candidate is for or against development and what kind of development.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.

Letter: Meyers Catalyst Project renamed

To the community,

Meyers: Did you know the Catalyst Project is back on the table?

The following letter and referenced attachments will also be provided to the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors for the Oct. 28 meeting.

The Meyers community deserves a clear and transparent process:

Our efforts, along with others in the community, have focused on engaging the public, repeatedly requesting the county and TRPA to ensure full community involvement, including the use of a validated survey, and attempting to help convert the acronyms, ever-changing terminology, and “TRPA-speak” into terms the general public can better understand. There are many issues which have not yet been vetted with the Meyers community. In addition, the Meyers Community extends well beyond those who were able to attend a 9am meeting on a workday (Oct. 16), and members of the Nevada-side’s Tahoe Chamber.

We were told by our county supervisor that our community gets to decide what we want built here.

“What can be built in Meyers is up to the community of Meyers.” – Supervisor Norma Santiago, Feb. 23, 2014, guest column

We were also told the Catalyst Project was gone.

“The catalyst project is dead. You have my word on it. If you want, I’ll put it in writing.” – Supervisor Santiago, Feb. 26, 2014

“There is no catalyst project. There is no large development.” – Supervisor Santiago, Feb. 23, 2014.

However, the current recommendations to move forward with a plan that is contrary to most public feedback, that pushes TRPA’s new zoning on our community without full vetting with the public, and that recommends the inclusion of the provisions which allowed the “Catalyst Project” in the plan,

run contrary to the promises made to our community.

El Dorado Planning Commission recommendations:

We are concerned the Planning Commission recommendations before you do not represent the outcome of a clear and transparent, communitywide process. On Oct. 16, your Planning Commission was presented with information about different drafts of the new Meyers Area Plan, and provided with “options” to pick and choose on for height, density, and other issues. However, the results of the feedback that had been obtained to date from the community – a great deal of it from TRPA and EDC’s own surveys – were not made clear, nor was the community ever told that once they made a selection, it could be easily overturned by one meeting. Many residents and business owners have volunteered extensive time and resources in an attempt to ensure a transparent and clear update process, as noted in the attached letter signed by several of us that were able to attend the Oct. 16 Planning Commission meeting. We also posted a summary of the results of the agencies’ own surveys along with ours on our website – we encourage you to read the surveys directly, including the hand-written comments. We have also previously submitted petitions with upwards of 200 signatures opposing the larger developments allowed by the January 2014 versions of the “Incentive Program.”

Comparison: Community’s feedback vs. EDC Planning Commission Recommendations:

Community feedback:	Planning Commission recommendation:
Retaining regulations which keep developments on the SW end of town less dense (10-15 units/acre)	Making developments throughout the entire Meyers 'strip' more dense (40 units/acre)
Limiting height to buildings similar in size to Bob Dog's Pizza and Century 21 (35 feet or less)	Allowing building heights which are 10 or more feet taller than Bob Dog's Pizza and Century 21 (42 feet throughout, and 45 feet for the Incentive Program)
A blend of existing and new businesses which retain the smaller scale of Meyers and fit within our community (Design and uses closer to 1993 Community Plan)	Incentives which draw in large corporate/resort-owned developers who can afford the requirements, thereby threatening the viability of existing smaller businesses, not retaining the smaller scale of Meyers, and creating new development that does not fit within our community (More height, more density, more uses)
Notification when large projects are proposed (Conditional Use Permit requirements, MAC required to follow Brown Act for public process)	Not requiring consistent notification when large projects are proposed (Many uses now "Permissible," and MCAC not subject to Brown Act for public process)
A new Meyers Community Advisory Council (MCAC) elected by <u>local residents</u> (The community already assumed the MCAC would be subject to Brown Act in new plan - the question was whether locals or BOS elect the members)	Not requiring the Meyers Advisory Council (MCAC) to even follow the most basic public meeting laws, let alone to be elected by <u>local residents</u> .

Continuing confusion of terms:

In the table above, which represents the language in the March surveys, the reference to the CIP "as is" in El Dorado County's surveys referred to the January 2014 draft, or the "second draft" as it is now referred to, with the height, density, and other incentives (which your staff are now referring to as "the top Tier"); most surveys did not support it as it was outlined in the January 2014 aka 2nd draft aka Tier One of the Community Incentive Program (aka Catalyst Program).

In other words, the Catalyst Program was renamed to the Incentive Program; then the Community Incentive Program, then the Top Tier of the Community Incentive Program. The January 2014 draft is now referred to by staff as the "second draft," and the June 2014 as the "third draft." Worse yet, most people had no idea there were any new drafts until late January when we began our efforts. Therefore, the "new draft" was thought to be the January draft. Further, as most people appeared unaware that TRPA's Regional Plan called for any changes to

Meyers zoning and land use, references to “existing draft” or “existing plans” were often thought to mean the 1993 Meyers Community Plan; however for over 18 months, staff often made references to lowering height or density compared to the “existing plan,” which to the agencies, generally meant the first draft Meyers Area Plan that represented the RPU’s plan changes. Even professional planners would cross their eyes to follow these terms.

Yet the changes have been advertised in media messaging, as well as handouts for the public, as “reducing” height, density, etc. For example, we’ve attached the technical response to a handout provided to the public at our community-led meeting. One obvious example is pasted below:

EDC: “The Area Plan reduces maximum height limits to 35 feet for most projects, and in limited cases allows for up to 45 feet for projects that meet a series of requirements to ensure they improve walkability, benefit the environment, and provide other community benefits (Land Use and Zoning Ordinance section 70).” Our Response: “More apples and oranges. The ‘starting point’ height under the 1993 Plan was 26 feet; TRPA’s Town Center zoning raised it to 56 feet, so the draft Area Plan is simply less of a TRPA-proposed increase compared to the 1993 Community Plan. Regardless, the question now is, does Meyers want 45 foot tall (approx. 4 stories) buildings?”

We request you delay your recommendations and submissions for CEQA review until the community has been fully engaged in this process. This would not only provide the information needed to direct planners regarding the community’s interests, but it would also allow our community to have a new Plan we can be proud of, and which supports our vision for the future.

Sincerely,

Angie Olson, Jennifer Quashnick, Diana and John Sanders, Moya

Letter: Domestic violence victim speaks out

Publisher's note: *Lake Tahoe News is withholding the letter writer's name to try to protect her identity.*

To the community,

My story was recently published in your newspaper and I'd like to write this for two reasons. Primarily, to say a special thank you to all the people who helped me, but also to bring light to a nasty subject, domestic violence.

First, I want to thank my neighbors and first responders. I especially want to thank (police Sgt.) Shannon Laney who I truly believe saved my life. He helped me focus and tried to keep me calm.

I want to thank the very competent and capable EMTs that responded so quickly. They did a great job.

I want to thank the entire staff at Barton Hospital; they were so supportive and comforting. Every nurse, even the dietician, made me feel they cared deeply. I especially want to thank the ICU team and Dr. (Kimberly) Evans. They saved my life. I couldn't buy all these people enough flowers and gift baskets to show my appreciation.

Shelly, the social worker there, has a great big heart and I am grateful for her kind words of support and encouragement.

I want to thank the SLTPD as well for doing a great job

serving and protecting, safely and quickly resolving the situation.

Thank you to Bryan and Yolanda and the others at the DAs office for your help and support. Thank you from the bottom of my heart to those who helped my baby. Thank you for keeping him safe and for continuing to do so while I heal.

I met so many kind people and I wish I could thank you all in person. I hope this will let you know how special you all made me feel.

However, the irony isn't lost on me that October is domestic violence awareness month. I'm also writing this letter to hopefully reach that person out there that needs to see or hear about this story. Domestic violence is a two-way situation. If you see the signs in your life, you must get help as soon as you know. Whether you are victims or violators, seek help. Both deserve a healthy relationship and both need to heal. Do something before it's too late because domestic violence is a life and death situation, and, yes, it really can happen to you.

I saw the signs and I lied to myself constantly. I thought my situation was somehow unique.

Please take action to stop DV. Show your support, wear the ribbons, and donate to DV related causes. Here in SLT we have Live Violence Free if you need help or if you'd like to help, I am sure they'd happily point you in the right direction.

Lastly, tell all our young men and women about the dangers and consequences of DV. Most important we all need to model these behaviors of healthy relationships to everyone we come across. That's a tall order, I know, but I believe there are so many who've just never seen the behaviors we're all expecting of each other. If you don't see it, how can you learn it. I hope this letter reaches those who need it.

Again, thank you, thank God. I am grateful for a second chance.

South Lake Tahoe DV victim