

Grover Hot Springs, Donner Museum hours cut



By Kathryn Reed

Winter operations at state parks in the Sierra are being cut back, with a more comprehensive plan for summer to be released in early 2010.

For the winter, Grover Hot Springs in Markleeville and Donner Museum in Truckee will be closed Mondays and Tuesdays. No winter camping will be allowed at Sugar Pine Point, though it's available at Grover.

The cuts are a result of the compromise Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger came up with when earlier this fall he decided not to close any of the 279 state parks. Instead, he told the superintendents of the various districts to come up with a way to cut \$14.2 million from the state parks budget.

"The most obvious thing we would close is some loops in campgrounds," Pam Armas, superintendent of the Sierra District, said about summer operations.

Most of the state campgrounds in her district "which runs from Mono Lake to Donner Lake" have three loops. By closing one, it means fewer bathrooms to clean and trash to haul away.

"We are not allowed to fill our vacancies and we are not allowed to hire right now," Armas said. This means the manpower isn't there to keep the parks fully operational.

Usually people can start reserving a campground spot for 2010 on Nov. 1. While the plan is being finalized as what to do in the summer, campground reservations will not be taken.