

# Donner Museum construction startles area residents

By Barbara Barte Osborn, Sacramento Bee

Construction of a new museum at Donner Memorial State Park in Truckee is shocking many residents and visitors despite years of warnings that the project would disturb the site.

“Since last week, I’ve been getting calls and hearing it every day on the bus,” bus driver Rick Stafford, a longtime resident and history buff, said of the project, which was first planned about 15 years ago and has been in the preliminary stages for eight.

“Nobody saw it coming,” Stafford said. “They thought it was dead because of the budget crisis.”

The construction site – with large piles of uprooted tree trunks and boulders – is quite visible from the historic park’s Donner Pass Road entrance. A bulldozer stands near the debris in a recently cleared area between the museum parking lot and buildings used for maintenance and seasonal employee housing.

On the other side of the parking lot, near the current Emigrant Trail Museum, the Pioneer Monument statue peers over a few standing stumps of recently cut trees and through a wire fence.

The 9,324-square-foot, \$6.8 million High Sierra Crossing Museum – now expected to be completed in early 2013 – will stand between the much-smaller current museum and Donner Pass Road.

**Read the whole story**