

Top EDC official named in suit by ex-employee

By Kathryn Reed

The woman who is acting chief administrative officer for El Dorado County is being sued by a former employee who worked for her when she was CAO in Alpine County.

Robert Levy, former undersheriff of Alpine County, in the 19-page lawsuit alleges Pam Knorr along with three supervisors at the time and a private citizen violated his civil rights, conspired to do so, discriminated against him based on age, failed to prevent discrimination and retaliation, violated the Public Safety Officers' Procedural Bill of Rights Act, and defamed him.

"Her theory was a younger, cheaper workforce was better," Jeanette Viduay, investigator with the Watts Law Office, told *Lake Tahoe News*. The Folsom-based firm is representing Levy.

Gayle Tonon of Truckee is representing all of the defendants, but did not return multiple calls.

"Generally I can say sometimes counties settle items and sometimes they choose to litigate. I think there are good reasons behind each of those choices," Knorr told *Lake Tahoe News*.

She is confident in the job she did in Alpine County, stating, "I sleep like a baby every night."



Pam Knorr, temporary head of El Dorado County and former CAO of Alpine County, is a defendant in a labor lawsuit.

Knorr deferred further comment to Tonon.

(Knorr was hired to be the human resources director for El Dorado County, and still is, in addition to be acting chief administrative officer because of CAO Terri Daly's departure last month and Assistant CAO Kim Kerr leaving later this month. She worked for Alpine County from 2008-13.)

When Knorr left Alpine County the chairman of the Board of Supervisors wrote a glowing letter dated Aug. 9, 2013, on her behalf. In part it says, "Most importantly, Pamela took on the mantle of CAO at a difficult time for the county and made vast improvements in our operations. It was with reluctance that the Board of Supervisors accepted her resignation and she would be welcome back here at any time."

Terry Woodrow signed the letter. Woodrow is still on the board.

Also named in the suit are former Supervisors Tom Sweeney and Phillip Bennett, current Supervisor Don Jardine, and Nancy Thornburg, volunteer assistant archivist for Alpine County.

Viduay, with the firm representing the employee who filed the suit, said, "(Levy) wants the truth to come out about Pamela

Knorr. I, like him, don't believe she should be the CEO of any county. She is like a snake charmer."

Viduay said Knorr was able to charm three of the supervisors, which when it comes to a five-member board is all that is needed.

Levy had been undersheriff since 2000, though he worked for the sheriff's department since 1995.

The court filings say, "In the aftermath of county and Knorr harassing, attacking, and demoting plaintiff, these defendants assigned certain of plaintiff's job duties – including certain law enforcement tasks as well as tasks related to plaintiff's years-long work on county communications projects – to individuals who possessed inferior job qualifications and experience, and who were significantly younger than plaintiff. As a direct, foreseeable, and proximate result of defendants' discriminatory actions, plaintiff has suffered and continues to suffer substantial losses in earnings and related employment benefits, and has suffered and continues to suffer extreme emotional distress, humiliation, damage to his professional reputation, and diminished employment advancement opportunities in his chosen profession, all to his damage in an amount to be proven at trial."