

LTCC-county working to bring UCD to area

By Kathryn Reed

The University of California, Davis at South Lake Tahoe? It's being talked about.

El Dorado County wants a branch campus of UC Davis to possibly be located on the West Slope near the county line with Sacramento, or on Lake Tahoe Community College's campus, or both.

The Board of Supervisors on March 10 will be asked to approve staff time to pursue the campus. On Feb. 24, the LTCC board of trustees gave consent for President Kindred Murillo to work on such an endeavor.

"The No. 1 reason is that I think it would be wonderful for our students to go to a four-year college close by ... someplace where perhaps they could live at home," C.L. (Cherie) Raffety, county treasurer-tax collector, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "I would just like it to be here in El Dorado County because in addition to being an outstanding education opportunity for our students, it also would contribute to the sustainable economic well being."

The advantage to having the campus in South Lake Tahoe is that LTCC has the land, expects to complete the university center in 2018 and has been making in-roads to offering a four-year degree.

"It could be a couple extension programs; maybe start with a few staff members here. I don't see it starting really big because you need to have students," Murillo told *Lake Tahoe News*. "It is something I could see easing into gradually, especially if you create a pathway from the high school, to

the college into Davis. That would be my dream.”

A branch campus could start at LTCC and evolve into a separate campus. UC Davis was once a branch campus of UC Berkeley. It started strictly as agriculture when Davis was a dot on a map, and then evolved into the institution that it is today.

That ag component, though, is something Raffety believes the county could tap into – especially viticulture.

UCD is also known for its veterinary program. And with *Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care* in the process of building a permanent facility practically across the street from LTCC, this could be natural tie-in.

Davis already has a huge presence at Sierra Nevada College in Incline Village, so the draw to Tahoe is already established. LTCC already has meetings with UCD scheduled for March to talk about being part of the university center.

With environmental studies being an important aspect of the curriculum at UCD and it being of utmost concern in Tahoe, Murillo foresees this being a natural fit.

Raffety said with this being the inaugural stage, it’s important to get feedback from the public about their opinions. She welcomes county residents reaching out to supervisors and calling her – 530. 621.5803. If the supes see value in pursuing this idea, then UCD would convene a professor committee that would analyze the pros and cons. It’s likely to be a slow, methodical process.

“It would happen as fast as UC Davis wants it,” Raffety said. El Dorado came up with the idea through the economic development committee. Raffety, who is a former board member of the Los Rios Community College district, is a huge advocate of public education and of offering students as many options as possible.