

Inventory impacting Lake Tahoe housing market

By Mark Glover, Sacramento Bee

A lack of inventory has dragged down the Lake Tahoe real estate market through the first nine months of 2014, according to the Lake Tahoe, Nevada-based Chase International.

Through Sept. 30 this year, the sales volume of single-family homes around the lake was down 15 percent at \$727.4 million, compared with \$853.7 million in the year-ago period. Likewise, the number of units sold declined 19 percent in the same period, from 1,087 last year to 877 in 2014.

Year over year, Chase said the median sales price of a Lake Tahoe home is down 19 percent to \$472,000, but the average price was up 6 percent to \$829,502. Sales of homes priced at more than \$1 million were down 16 percent; sales of those sold for less than \$1 million were down 20 percent.

Read the whole story

Animal shelter opening on West Slope

El Dorado County Animal Services expects to move animals and most items from the old facility in Placerville to Diamond Springs between Oct. 12-15.

The new facility, located at 6435 Capitol Ave., will officially open Oct. 16. Office hours are Monday through

Friday from 8am-5pm; shelter services, including adoptions and kennel access, will be available Monday through Saturday from 9am-4:30pm.

The new facility will house lost, abandoned and abused animals, including cats, dogs, livestock and small animals. It will also include adoption areas, quarantine areas to safely house sick and injured animals, a barn, pasture areas for livestock and exercise runs for dogs. A public counter will be available for business services, such as obtaining and renewing permits and licenses.

During the move dates, Animal Services will only be open for essential services such as receiving stray animals and allowing owners to reclaim their pets.

Funding for the \$5.7 million shelter came from the county's general fund and tobacco settlement dollars. Local animal welfare groups and citizens also helped raise funds to purchase some needed equipment and other enhancements for the project.

SAT scores drop in math for class of 2014

By Janet Lorin and Oliver Staley, Bloomberg

The high school class of 2014 turned in the lowest math scores on the SAT college-entrance exam since 2000, reinforcing concern that the U.S. is falling behind global rivals in science and math performance.

Math results dipped a point to 513 from last year and from a peak of 520 in 2005, while writing fell to 487, the lowest mark since that portion of the test was first given to the class of 2006. Reading scores rose by a point.

“Flat and stagnant would be the words that we would use,” Cyndie Schmeiser, chief of assessment at the College Board, which administers the test, said on a call with reporters.

U.S. teenagers lag behind peers from Asia in international tests of math, reading and science, prompting calls for improvements to educational standards. Fewer than half, or 42.6 percent, of SAT takers met benchmarks to show they are prepared for college-level work, compared with 42.7 percent last year.

Read the whole story

Start training now for winter sports

By Claire Martin, Denver Post

If you're looking forward to hitting the slopes this winter, start training now to get the most out of that ever-steeper price on your lift tickets.

“When you buy a \$100 lift ticket, you kinda want to go all day,” says Patrick Abramson, a longtime coach for the University of Colorado's snowboard team.

“That means thinking of October and November up to Christmas as time to get ready for a season that really gets going in January. I tell my team to use the fall to really get

prepared. Training prevents injuries, and if you want to progress in your sport, you have to be stronger than you were before.”

Snow sports involve a lot of lateral movement. They require balance and flexibility as well as endurance, said David Stewart, who coaches the Nordic ski teams for the University of Denver.

So even if you’ve sailed through Ride The Rockies, the Triple Bypass and other demanding summer rides, don’t assume you’re ready to step into your ski bindings.

All that cycling may mean your quadriceps are more developed than your hamstrings, creating an imbalance in your leg muscles that could put extra strain on your vulnerable ACL and other knee ligaments, Stewart said.

“Off-season sports, like long-distance running and cycling, are excellent, and great for the legs, but our sport is at least half upper-body as well, and that’s where you generate a lot of your force,” Stewart said.

Read the whole story

SLT grappling with how to improve recreation

By Kathryn Reed

Even without a definitive recreation plan in place, South Lake Tahoe is moving forward with improvements.

This includes going ahead with a bike park at Bijou Community

Park. The topic will be discussed by the Planning Commission this week and will be before the City Council in November. Bike paths are being improved, Regan Beach enhancements are being discussed and ball fields are being upgraded.

But a lot more needs to take place if the area is ever going to live up to its moniker of being a year-round playground.



Improvements to Bijou Community Park are being talked about. Photo/LTN file

Much of the South Lake Tahoe City Council discussion on Oct. 7 was about the draft master recreation plan that the city and El Dorado County are taking comments on. But what each council member stressed is the need to make sure Douglas County is at the table. Douglas used the same consultant for its rec plan.

Lauren Thomaselli, parks manager, on Tuesday pointed out how the South Shore falls below the national average when it comes to providing adequate recreation facilities.

In the more than 1,600 responses the city and El Dorado County have received on the draft recreation master plan, trails continue to be an overriding issue for people. The problem is that they don't connect to one another, are disjointed and many are not in great shape.

The rec and swim center ranks high in terms of importance to people, but low when it comes to being a quality facility.

Another thing that keeps being pointed out is there needs to be a one-stop shop for people to find out what facilities exist on the South Shore, how to rent them, and when they are available.

While a master calendar would seem easy enough to devise, the problem is facilities are owned by various entities – including two K-12 districts, two counties, a college, one city, two states and private companies.

It's not just the 35,000 people who live on the South Shore who want to use the facilities, but the 1.6 million people who visit the area each year. It's a balancing act.

The council agreed the city should take the lead on bringing the parties together to create a gatekeeper type system. The electeds tasked staff with getting the stakeholders together and then asked for regular updates to be brought back.

Carol Chaplin, head of the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, said her agency is ready to be the major marketing arm for whatever the city goes forward with in terms of promoting recreation on the South Shore.

Wendy David, speaking as president of Lake Tahoe Unified School District, said the district wants to be at the table too. With the expanded sports medicine facilities at South Tahoe High School, she said this has generated interest in people wanting to bring larger and different types of recreation opportunities to the area.

In the two- to five-year span the city hopes to work on:

- Trail development
- Bike and pedestrian crossings
- Improve the swim-recreation center
- Improve Bijou Park

- Restore Regan Beach
- Upgrade Bijou Golf Course.

Funding to do these things could be the obstacle. Councilmember Brooke Laine more than once suggested dedicating a percentage of excess revenues to recreation capital improvement projects. Her colleagues did nothing with that suggestion.

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Notes:

- More info about the plan is online.
- The deadline to comment is Oct. 10.

Letter: Prop. 47 should be defeated

To the community,

With in-your-face audacity, Proposition 47 is misleadingly titled “The Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act.” Here’s what it actually does:

- Allows for the release of nearly 10,000 criminals from prison
- Downgrades many felonies to misdemeanors
- Shifts financial burden away from the State to local government.



Brian Uhler

I cannot imagine how anyone's neighborhood or school will be safer by releasing thousands of known violent offenders from prison. A better title might have been, "Locals Pay for the State Problem Act."

Our criminal justice system often relies on convicting very dangerous people for crimes that Proposition 47 downgrades to misdemeanors. Proposition 47 downgrades crimes like possession of date rape drugs, stealing guns, forgery, and identity theft. Dangerous and violent gangs rely on some of these so-called minor crimes to get guns and money. If you like the idea of enabling people who commit these crimes, then you might want to vote for this proposition.

In your California Official Voter Information Guide, those who prepared the argument "for" Proposition 47, in bold face state, "PROPOSITION 47 IS SUPPORTED BY LAW ENFORCEMENT." While there may be some strange law enforcement fringe element that supports it, the major law enforcement groups in California vehemently oppose Proposition 47. These include: California Peace Officers Association, California State Sheriffs' Association, California Police Chiefs Association and California Fraternal Order of Police.

I hope this weird and dangerous utopian dream will be thwarted by people with common sense. Releasing 10,000 convicted felons doesn't make anyone safer. Don't be fooled by the misleading name of this proposition and the false claim that it is "supported by law enforcement." Schools and neighborhoods will not be safer. I urge you to vote no on Proposition 47.

Thank you,

Brian Uhler, South Lake Tahoe chief of police

2 flu clinics in South Lake Tahoe

El Dorado County Health and Human Services is providing low-cost community flu clinics Oct. 8 from 9:30am-12:30pm at the senior center, 3050 Lake Tahoe Blvd., and at Bijou Community School, 3501 Spruce Ave. in the teacher's lounge from 3-6pm.

The seasonal influenza vaccine will be available in nasal mist and flu shot forms at the clinics. The pneumococcal vaccine (which protects against pneumonia) will also be available at the flu clinics for those who medically qualify.

The cost per vaccine is \$10, but no one will be denied service due to inability to pay; cash or check accepted.

S. Tahoe council candidates' finance forms

Candidates on the Nov. 4 ballot were to have filed their first campaign finance forms on Oct. 6. *Lake Tahoe News* will post them as we receive them.

The first to be secured are from the South Lake Tahoe City

Council candidates. Matt Palacio has not filed. Bruce Grego, according to City Clerk Suzie Alessi, will be providing an amendment Oct. 8.

Here are the documents for:

• Wendy David • Tom Davis • Brooke Laine • Austin Sass • Angela Swanson.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Gay marriage ban falls in Nevada

By Dan Levine, Reuters

SAN FRANCISCO – Legal momentum for extending U.S. marriage rights to same-sex couples accelerated on Tuesday as a federal appeals court in San Francisco struck down bans on gay matrimony in Idaho and Nevada a day after the U.S. Supreme Court let stand similar rulings for five other states.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco ruled the bans in Idaho and Nevada violated the constitution and said they cannot be enforced, adding to a mounting list of states where same-sex unions are now legal.

The ruling binds all states in the court's region including three that do not permit gay marriage, Arizona, Montana and Alaska, putting the United States on track for legalized gay marriage in 35 states.

Legal pressure mounted for further expansion of marriage rights in the wake of Monday's Supreme Court decision that ended bans in five states but left intact 20 others.

Read the whole story

Brown signs bill to fix fire fee

By Capital Press

SACRAMENTO – The more than 800,000 rural California residents charged \$150 per structure for fire prevention will get some relief in certain cases.

Gov. Jerry Brown signed legislation that reduces the penalty for late payments from 20 percent to 10 percent per month and waives the fee for homeowners who lose their residence to a wildfire or other natural disaster.

Assembly Bill 2042 was authored by Assemblyman Brian Dahle, R-Bieber, and passed unanimously in both legislative chambers.

“Like most north state residents, I'd rather see the fee simply repealed,” Dahle said in a statement. “In the meantime, this bill reforms some of the worst aspects of the fee. In particular, it was egregious that the law taxed homeowners who'd lost their homes to fire.”

Farm groups and rural residents have complained vociferously about the fees, which were enacted as part of the 2011-2012 state budget package to offset costs to CalFire.

Read the whole story