

Hard Rock wants to turn up the sound on fun



Lake Tahoe Hard Rock owners are spending \$60 million to renovate the property.

By Kathryn Reed

A song, like poetry, can capture a mood, leave an edible mark and forever resonate throughout time. It can be head-banging, soul-searching, spine-tingling.

“Music is different to every single person. So is how you interpret it,” Don Marrandino, general manager of Lake Tahoe Hard Rock, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Marrandino knows his music, knows Lake Tahoe and is gambling on the two being perfect together.

It's the music that lures people into Hard Rock establishments. Then the unique memorabilia – from tickets to playbills to outfits to instruments – keeps them in the zone.

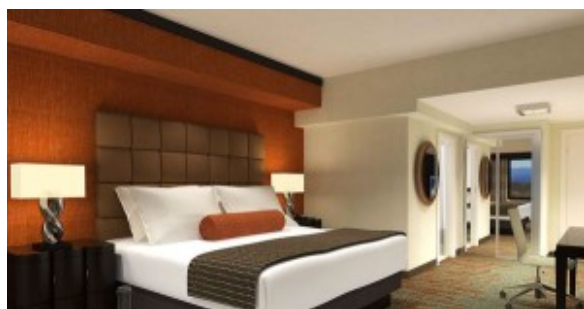
It's more like a museum than casino in many ways. One doesn't need to gamble to get the full flavor of a Hard Rock.

What the Hard Rock tries to do is put a little of its spell into all corners of the property so people will want to come back, stay longer and spend the night. It would be near impossible to see everything on one or even a handful of visits. And, of course, the music is always changing.

The 539-rooms of what was the Horizon hotel-casino at Stateline have been gutted to their studs. Contractors are scurrying to finish the \$60 million remodel as soon as possible. Reservations are being taken starting the night of Jan. 9.

An earlier opening date is possible – maybe even New Year's Eve.

“One thing we're adamant about is we don't want to open when we are not ready. We hope in the next several weeks to have a better idea of when we are ready to do so,” Marrandino said.



This rendering shows how the rooms are being revamped.

He said there have been challenges to dealing with an old building – it opened in 1965 as Del Webb's Sahara-Tahoe – but nothing that has cut into the time or could not be overcome.

Marrandino would like to recapture some of the glory days of the old property by having people who once played there take to the stage again. He wouldn't mention any names in particular.

While the great and even obscure sounds from the 1960s to today will boom from the speakers for all to hear, the new casino will also have a separate venue for music.

Specifics about most of the property are being kept underwraps – including if the concert hall will be anything like The Joint in Las Vegas, how big it will be or if anyone has been booked.

First, more than 500 employees need to be hired and trained, which started last month.

Tats, piercings, unnaturally colored hair – they have a place in front of the house. Yes, Lake Tahoe Hard Rock wants authentic people to work at the Stateline hotel-casino, not people who look like everyone else.

“The employees are allowed to be themselves. The only thing we demand is they treat customers like they are their best friend,” Marrandino said.

The preview center that opened this summer in the Heavenly Village will close Oct. 15. There are no plans to have a Hard Rock retail outlet outside of the casino property. But do expect different merchandise than what has been sold elsewhere. This is because the creative geniuses are working on winter specific logowear.

“We are putting stuff together that has never been done before at a Hard Rock. It should make for fun holiday presents,” Marrandino said. (This suggests a pre-Christmas opening.)

Whenever opening day is, it will begin a phased approach. Marrandino said it could take two years for the entire

property to be fully operational.

No word yet on specifics about the dining establishments. But Executive Chef Jonathan Snyder won't be the only local with a position of authority. The human resources director and marketing director also grew up here.

As for what will happen to the Hard Rock Café next door at Harveys, their public relations firm says they are staying open. The café and hotel-casino are owned by different entities.

Douglas County seeks block grant applicants

Douglas County is accepting applications for the 2015 Community Development Block Grant program.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is expected to allocate approximately \$2.3 million for grants toward community facilities, planning and capacity building, economic development, micro enterprise programs, and low/moderate income development.

Eligible projects must meet one of the following: 1) benefit low-to-moderate income persons, 2) aid in the elimination of slums or blight, or 3) solve an urgent need that poses a threat to the public health and safety.

Grant applications must be submitted by Nov. 6 at 5pm.

For grant applications, program information, and grant eligibility requirements, contact Dirk Goering at 775.782.6212 or dgoering@co.douglas.nv.us.

Public meetings to evaluate and select two to three grant proposals to forward to the state for funding consideration will be

- Nov. 6 – Board of County Commissioners, 1pm at the county’s historical Courthouse, 1616 Eighth St., Minden. Present overview of CDBG program. County staff will request additional grant proposals.

- Nov. 20 – Board of County Commissioners lake meeting, 1:30pm at the Tahoe Transportation Center, 169 Highway 50, Stateline. Conceptual grant proposals briefly introduced by staff and grantees can present their grant proposal. Public comment taken on conceptual grants.

- Dec. 4 – Board of County Commissioners, 1pm at the county’s historical courthouse, 1616 Eighth St., Minden. Grants ranked (two county specific grants and one statewide grant can be submitted to CDBG). Ranked applications will be requested to submit a complete CDBG application to the county by Dec. 31.

Youth basketball leagues at Kahle

Douglas County Parks & Recreation is registering youth for a fall basketball league at Kahle Community Park.

Registration is open until the leagues are full.

Divisions offered:

3-4 grade

5-6 grade

7-8 grade
3-5 grade girls
6-8 grade girls.

Cost:

\$70 for 3-4 grade
\$80 for 5-6 grade and 7-8 grade
\$85 for 3-8 grade girls.

Nights of Play:

3-4 grades plays on Tuesday evenings
5-6 grade plays on Thursday evenings
7-8 grade plays on Wednesday evenings
3-5 grade girls on Tuesday evenings
6-8 grade girls on Wednesday evenings.
Games are between 5:30 and 8:30pm at Kahle Community Center

Season:

3-6 graders season will run November – March
7-8 graders season will run January – March

Teams usually will have one practice and one game per week.

For more information, call 775.586.7271.

ACC partnering with Warrior Open

This week's 4th annual Bush Center's Warrior Open in Las Colinas, Texas, will act as a feeder tournament for the American Century Championship.

The Texas winner will receive an all-expense paid trip to the 2015 ACC at Edgewood Tahoe in July.

The idea to do this came after retired Army Cpl. Chad Pfeifer at last July's American Century Championship became a crowd favorite and placed fifth.

Study: Access to local trails lowers youth obesity

By Nathan Hurst, Springfield News-Leader

COLUMBIA, Mo. – Researchers at the University of Missouri and the University of Minnesota have found that local governments can help cut record levels of youth obesity by expanding public lands available for recreation.

Sonja Wilhelm-Stanis, an associate professor of parks, recreation and tourism in the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, found that counties with more non-motorized nature trails and forest lands have higher levels of youth activity and lower youth obesity, while counties with more nature preserves have lower activity levels.

Wilhelm Stanis, along with her co-authors Andrew Oftedal and Ingrid Schneider from the University of Minnesota, studied data from every county in the state of Minnesota, comparing youth activity rates and youth obesity rates to amount of public non-motorized nature trails, motorized nature trails, nature preserves, parklands and forest land.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- This marks Sugar Bowl's 75th year. Sugar Bowl Corporation was formed on Oct. 13, 1938, and the ski resort officially opened for skiing on Dec. 15, 1939.
 - High Fives Foundation has been honored with the 2014 op-Rated Award by GreatNonprofits, the leading provider of user reviews about nonprofit organizations.
 - Forest Suites Resort in South Lake Tahoe is having a Pony and Pumpkin Festival on Oct. 11 from 11am to 6pm. For more info, call 775.588.2953.
 - Bill Cottrill is now chief managing officer of Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel, Lorraine Tuner is chief administrative officer and John Steinbach is vice president.
 - Oct. 8 is International Walk to School Day.
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CalFire lobbies for more than minimum wage

By Jon Ortiz, Sacramento Bee

While state firefighters have battled the epic King Fire west of Lake Tahoe, their union has been struggling with a political question: What can they expect financially in the future from Gov. Jerry Brown?

CalFire is in the midst of voting on an agreement with Brown to amend the union's current contract. The deal gives most members a 4 percent raise Jan. 1. Meanwhile, some of the lowest-paid firefighters are receiving a 12.5 percent salary

hike.

The smaller increase is in line with Brown's policy that no union would get an across-the-board pay raise larger than the one he negotiated last year with the mammoth SEIU Local 1000. The larger percentage raise was prompted by – get this – the latest increase in California's minimum wage.

Employees in the Firefighter I classification earned as little as \$8 per hour, a dollar less than the state minimum wage that went into effect July 1. The 12.5 percent increase fixes that for now, and the contract amendment under consideration grants another 12.5 percent raise next year, ahead of the state's hourly minimum going to \$10 in 2016. Some fast-food workers earn more.

Read the whole story

ZCES students walk to raise money



Zephyr Cove Elementary students raise money Oct. 2 during the annual walk-a-

thon. Photo/Provided

Zephyr Cove Elementary School students participated in the school's annual walk-a-thon Oct. 2 to raise funds necessary to support school activities.

Now in its fifth year, the walk-a-thon represents 15 to 20 percent of the Parent Club budget which helps to support school programs, such as field trips and class projects. With school enrollment up almost 10 percent this year, the funds are well needed and will support a new "place-based" education focus at ZCES. This focus immerses children in the ecology and history of the Lake Tahoe Basin through hands-on projects, special programs and field trips.

More than 30 parents volunteered to assist the 185 students. Several parents and many of the staff also participated by walking and running with the students. The annual event is conducted on the field across from Zephyr Cove Elementary. Each lap represented one-twelfth of a mile. At least five students surpassed the 100 lap mark (over 8 miles).

Bears keeping wildlife officials busy

By Scott Sonner, AP

You'd be hungry too if you couldn't find any food and were used to eating the equivalent of more than 80 cheeseburgers a day.

An already busy bear season has exploded in the Sierra Nevada with nine hungry bruins captured since Wednesday morning near

Reno and Lake Tahoe as an ongoing drought continues to make food scarce in the mountains. A 10th was hit and killed by a car Thursday in south Reno.

Since July 1, Nevada Department of Wildlife officials have caught 42 black bears and released all but two back into the wild. They said two repeat offenders had to be killed – one so bold it was rummaging through picnic baskets in July on a busy Tahoe beach.

Cars have killed an additional 10 bears as the animals move into more populated areas from the parched foothills on the Sierra's eastern front, where streams are down to a trickle and the usual supply of berries and insects is lacking.



Bears and cubs are prolific on both sides of the state line. Photo/Kathryn Reed

A surge in activity is expected with cooler temperatures this time of year, when a typical bear's food intake jumps from 3,000 to 25,000 calories a day, said Chris Healy, Department of Wildlife spokesman. That's the human equivalent of 83 McDonald's cheeseburgers.

The animals are going through hyperphagia, a physiological change in which they eat as much as they can to store fat for winter hibernation.

“Nothing much gets in the bear’s way when they are this hungry,” said Carl Lackey, the agency’s chief wildlife biologist. “Nature’s dinner bell is ringing.”

He noted a third consecutive year of drought has exacerbated bear encounters with humans.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife captured 97 bears last year and 83 in 2012, mostly between July 1 and Dec. 1. The 10-year highs and lows were 159 in 2007 and 40 in 2009.

On Thursday, game wardens and wildlife biologists were back on the trail of nuisance bears raiding garbage cans and climbing trees near residential areas in search of fruit. Over the past two days, they’ve trapped two mother bears and three cubs in the same part of west Reno, a sow and two cubs at south Tahoe near Stateline, and a 2-year-old near Carson City.

“It’s pretty wild,” Healy said Thursday after they captured the latest one near Carson City. He said the separate bear families caught in Reno on consecutive days were “literally at the exact same spot.”

Tahoe woman accused of robbing marijuana grow

By Stephanie Hull, KRCR-TV

KESWICK – Shasta County Deputies arrested five people after they allegedly tried to rob a marijuana grow Thursday

afternoon.

Those arrested were Adam Wert, 34, of Redding; Angela Wert, 33, of Lake Tahoe; Nora Hunter, 32, of Redding; Sean Vallodon, 43, of Redding; and George Howard, 51, of Redding.

Deputies received a call around 3:30 p.m. that shots were fired at a marijuana grow on Iron Mountain Road, near Matheson Road. One victim called police and told them about a confrontation with the armed suspects, and said he was going to arm himself.

When deputies arrived, the victims reported five people had driven away in three vehicles.

Read the whole story