

Douglas County manager candidates down to 7

By Anne Knowles

MINDEN – Douglas County has narrowed its search for a county manager to seven candidates who spent Aug. 4 in a marathon of panel interviews, culminating in an evening reception for the public at the Carson Valley Inn.

The county received 72 applications for the job vacated in April by Steve Mokrohisky, who left to become county manager in Lane County, Ore.

The field was reduced to the seven now vying for the job based on education, experience and input on the ideal candidate from the Douglas County Board of Commissioners, said Phil McKenney with Peckham & McKenney, an executive search firm in Roseville, which conducted the search for the county.

The job seekers, who come from Arizona, California, Nebraska and Texas as well as Northern and Southern Nevada, are taking a five-hour community tour this morning and spending the afternoon in individual discussion with the commissioners.

All the candidates have experience in either county or city government or both, and some have worked on water infrastructure issues, a subject that came up often at the informal social for the public.

“Water is the issue that keeps us up at night,” Commissioner Greg Lynn said. “Water at the lake is intractable.”

Lynn said the county needs \$12 million to fix the water infrastructure at Lake Tahoe, which has multiple, unconnected delivery systems.

Christine Vuletich, assistant county manager and chief

financial officer for Douglas and a candidate for county manager, said the county will need \$14 million to replace decades-old worn out water lines.

“We’re working closely with the state revolving fund to get below market interest rates and looking for grant opportunities,” Vuletich told *Lake Tahoe News*.

“There is some aging infrastructure up there and some bold action is needed,” said Tim Hacker, the interim director of parks and recreation for Las Vegas and one of the candidates for county manager.

Charlie Cassens, another candidate, said water and sewer rates are part of the issue. Cassens worked for Lower Colorado River Authority in Austin and Otay Municipal Water District in Spring Valley in San Diego County prior to his current position as city manager in Lake Havasu City, Ariz.

“My fundamental philosophy is we are a public service agency here to make things as easy as possible for people who want to get things done,” Cassens told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Cassens talked about working to get a \$463 million bond measure passed in his current job to build a waste water treatment facility during his brief speech as part of an introduction made by each candidate.

Jim Nichols, former assistant city manager for Midlands, Texas, who is now living in Henderson, has degrees in civil and environmental engineering, which he said helps him understand the challenges facing Lake Tahoe.

“The lake requires environmental attention and I hope I’d be an asset, assuring the lake is protected and preserved for future generations,” Nichols told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Other issues that came up were economic development, tourism and the decline in gaming.

“Gaming has gone down and that’s a challenge for jobs and for revenue for the county,” said Rick Benson, currently county administrative officer for Mariposa County. “It’s a big challenge to fill that void.”

Prior to Mariposa County, Benson worked in Kern County, home of Bakersfield, which he says is diverse area like Douglas County, containing desert, farming and a city.

“It’s always a balancing act, that’s the challenge of a county,” Benson said. “Everybody deserves a full slate of services no matter where they are.”

Mary Lou Brown, city administrator for Grand Island, Neb., said tourism drives the economy at the lake and unites rather than divides the different constituents of the county.

“People in the valley rely on tourism at the lake so they have an interest,” said Brown. “There’s a tie and they care about each other.”

Curtis Calder, currently city manager in Elko, said he’s impressed with Douglas County’s many planning documents which map out a path forward.

“It allows leadership, staff and elected officials, to focus on the highest priorities,” he said, referring to the county’s Economic Vitality Plan and master plan. “Douglas County has a lot of diversity, that’s its strength.”

The seven candidates are scheduled to return Aug. 18 for formal, public interviews with the Board of Commissioners, which is set to announce its selection on Sept. 4.

The goal is to have a new county manager in place in October.

Letter: A sports idea for South Lake Tahoe

To the community,

Sports town? Sure, but we could do better.

So, what are the fastest growing sports in America? Standup paddleboard? Nope. Mountain biking? Nope. Tennis, golf? Google it. The fastest growing team sports are rugby and lacrosse. I don't think either is played here.

They are fast and exciting, but require time, organization and a certain culture to develop.

But the fastest growing non-team sport in America is pickleball. Yes, PICKLEBALL! It also is fast and exciting. And it is also extremely social, inexpensive, and addicting. For those not familiar, it is played on a court, similar to, but smaller than tennis. The paddle or racket is also smaller and the head is solid graphite, composite, aluminum, or even wood. The ball is plastic, and hollow; a wiffleball.

Because the court is smaller, and because pickleball is almost always played as a doubles event, the amount of running is reduced. Volleys are generally longer, and can be extremely fast and furious. Pickleball plays more like a combination of tennis, badminton, and ping pong. It offers the experienced player a wide range of shot options and techniques. But pickleball has an easy learning curve, because it basically relies on hand/eye coordination and sports many people have played before. It is stimulating and invigorating and can be played by all ages. In fact, it is baby boomers and retirement communities which have caused the sport to explode. One community in Florida boasts of over a hundred courts AND long lines.

So, why is there no pickleball in South Lake Tahoe? We are the

only major community, and major recreational complex around the lake without pickleball. It is easy and inexpensive to convert unused tennis courts, or indoor hardwood courts to pickleball. Relining, even on a temporary basis, and setting up a portable pickleball net would cost under \$300. One unused tennis court, outfitted to play pickleball could host three side to side pickleball courts. This is not high finance. This is how to get people enjoying recreational facilities in South Lake Tahoe that have long sat sadly underused.

Clearly our administrators and facilities are handcuffed by underfunding. Still, people and communities all over America have shown enough interest in pickleball to support its rapid growth. Hopefully, we can do the same here by voicing our interest. We can all benefit.

Steve Szekely, South Lake Tahoe

Oily rag causes house fire in Truckee

A house in Truckee was destroyed Aug. 3 when an oily rag spontaneously combusted.

No one was hurt in the 1:10am blaze on Martis Valley Road.

The rag had been place in a confined area.

In addition to significant damage to the house, two vehicles in the garage were charred.— *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Scientist to talk about Tahoe clarity issues

The annual State of the Lake presentation by Geoff Schladow is Aug. 14.

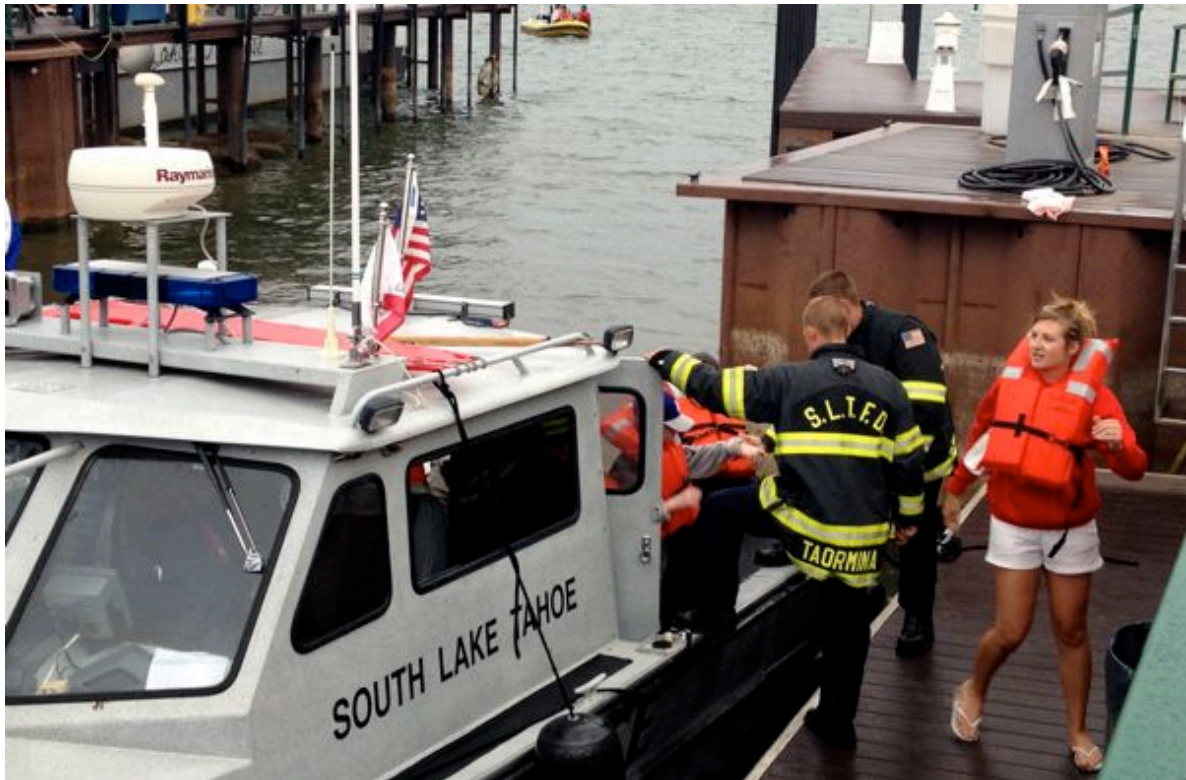
The report includes changes in Lake Tahoe's water quality and ecology over the past year, as well as the examination of the long term trends that have been taking place at Tahoe. Schladow's presentation will cover new clarity data, present developments occurring in the near shore regions of the lake, and review how Lake Tahoe is being affected by the current drought.

Schladow is the founding director of Tahoe Environmental Research Center.

The free talk is at 6pm, with a no-host bar starting at 5:30pm at TERC, 291 Country Club Drive in Incline Village

A \$5 donation is suggested.

Tahoe Queen runs aground with 257 on board



Passengers get off a rescue boat at Ski Run Marina after the Tahoe Queen ran aground Aug. 4. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

About 300 people had to be shuttled from the Tahoe Queen to shore in rescue boats on Monday afternoon.

The paddle-wheeler was about 30 minutes into its 90-minute voyage Aug. 4 when it hit a sandbar off Regan Beach in South Lake Tahoe. Fire officials estimated it to be about 600 yards from shore.

No injuries have been reported. There were 257 passengers on board and then the crew.

“It’s premature to speculate how this happened,” Dave Freirich, spokesman for Aramark, told *Lake Tahoe News*. Aramark runs the Tahoe Queen out of Ski Run Marina in South Lake Tahoe.

A passenger told *Lake Tahoe News* that the captain said he should have been about 8 feet farther out to miss the sand. Lake Tahoe’s water level is dropping every day as year-three

of the drought continues.

Two boats tried to dislodge the Queen, but to no avail. One was the Paradise. It was able to take about 70 people back to the marina, but never went out again.



The Tahoe Queen is about 600 yards from Regan Beach.

Most people were ferried to shore by either El Dorado County sheriff's, South Lake Tahoe police or fire, U.S. Coast Guard, Vessel Assist or Tahoe Douglas fire boats. Many of them are small and can only take a half dozen people at a time.

However, police and fire officials were not notified about the grounding until people from the boat started calling 911 because they had been sitting on the sandbar for a couple hours, according to Fire Chief Jeff Meston.

"We didn't get any information," Carolyn O'Brien told *Lake Tahoe News*. The Lincoln woman was on the Queen for the first time with her husband and two sons.

All they were told is they were stuck. Then the Queen staff tried to give them a \$17 bill for sodas. They refused to pay it. No food or beverages were offered to passengers.

"We were on board for 3½ hours before anything really happened," Fred O'Callaghan said in terms of rescue boats arriving. The Cambridge, England, resident was on board with his wife and two kids.

The couple said most people on board were well behaved and that only a few seemed to be panicky.

One woman getting off at Ski Run screamed as she had to get out of the small boat. But a South Tahoe firefighter wrapped his arms around her to make sure she was safe and didn't fall into the water.

It had been a rough ride. The temperature was dropping, the wind blowing at about 15 mph, sprinkles falling and the white caps bouncing boats along.

Freirich, with the boat company, said the Queen would be staying the night off shore.

"I can't say for certain someone will be staying with the boat, but it will be monitored. It's grounded pretty good," Freirich said.

He didn't know if the boat will be inspected in the lake, towed to Ski Run once it's dislodged or if damages would be assessed at the marina.

Full moon kayak on West Shore

Sierra State Parks Foundation is hosting a full moon kayak tour on Aug. 10 at 7:30pm.

Paddlers will go along Sugar Pine Point from the highest elevation operational lighthouse in the United States to the parks' southern boundary overlooking Meeks Bay. Park staff

will provide tidbits about the region's cultural and natural history.

No experience needed. This is for ages 12 and older.

The fee includes park entry, kayak rental, mandatory life jackets and safety training. Proceeds benefits foundation programs. Cost \$40 per person.

RSVP to 530.525.9920.

No agreement on what to do after a fire

By Scott Smith, AP

GROVELAND, Calif. – Nearly a year since a historic wildfire charred a huge swath of California's High Sierra, debate rages over what to do with millions of dead trees left in its wake: truck them to lumber mills or let nature to take its course?

One side argues that the blackened dead trees and new growth beneath them already sprouting to life create vital habitat for dwindling birds such as spotted owls and black-backed woodpeckers. Others say time is running out on a golden opportunity to salvage timber to pay for replanting and restoring the forest.

It's a classic standoff between environmentalists and supporters of the timber industry, which contends dead trees and brush pose a new fire hazard.

The U.S. Forest Service is expected to unveil its final decision in the coming weeks on how much of the land burned by

the wildfire, known as the Rim Fire, can be logged.

“It’s not always possible to please everybody,” said Robert Bonnie, the U.S. Department of Food and Agriculture’s Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment. He oversees the Forest Service.

Bonnie declined to say how many trees the Forest Service will allow loggers to haul away in the plan being drafted, but he said the goal is to balance the forest’s health with the needs of the local community.

“We try and do our best with the science we have,” he said.

The blaze ignited on Aug. 17, 2013, when a hunter lost control of his campfire. For two months, flames raced across 400 square miles of the Stanislaus National Forest, Yosemite National Park’s backcountry and private timber land. It ranks as California’s third-largest wildfire and the largest in the Sierra Nevada’s recorded history.

Loggers have already begun removing a small portion of dead trees along roads so motorists aren’t hurt by falling timber. A much more aggressive logging project is under consideration, targeting nearly 50 square miles of forest land.

Environmentalists said they are alarmed by the prospect of logging.

“For us, post-fire logging is the last and worst thing you should ever do in a forest,” said Chad Hanson, a forest ecologist and founder of the John Muir Project, an environmentalist group. “The scientific community is so strongly against this.”

Intense fires create snag forests that are three times as rare as living, old-growth forests, he said. Wood-boring beetles lay eggs in the dead trees, spawning larvae that become food for the woodpeckers. Flowering plants and shrubs sprouting on

the forest floor attract small, flying insects for bats and other animals that the spotted owl swoops in to eat, Hanson said.

Bird species have come back strongly in the burned areas that could be logged, Hanson said. In a recent visit, he pointed to conifer seedlings two to three inches tall sprouting up as a result of the fire. He worries that heavy logging tractors dragging out dead trees will destroy the seedlings.

Hanson questioned the Forest Service's motives for proposing logging.

"When they call it a recovery effort, they're talking a recovery of revenue, not a recovery of the forest," he said.

The national forests are not wildlife preserves, countered Steve Brink of the California Forestry Association, who represents the timber industry. National forests are set aside for many uses, including timber production, he said.

Selling the trees will pay for restoring the forest, creating jobs in a region of California where logging once flourished, Brink said. Removing the burned trees will allow for the forests to be reopened more quickly for public use, he said, noting that the natural regeneration could take a century or two and, in the meantime, shrub brush would dominate.

The dead trees will fall across each other on top of the shrubs, creating prime fire conditions, said Brink, taking a position that environmentalists say has no scientific foundation.

The dead trees can be logged for about two years after a fire and then they disintegrate, losing value as timber, Brink said. He fears that environmentalists will file lawsuits to run out the clock if the Forest Service's decision doesn't suit them, he said.

In July, wildlife advocates sued the Forest Service, arguing

that officials have failed to protect spotted owls and black-backed woodpeckers from logging of burned trees in other parts of the Sierra.

“They know if they can stall the process, the brush wins, deterioration will take over – and they win,” Brink said.

Parts of Yosemite National Park backcountry that burned in the Rim Fire reopened in April with a warning that visitors should be careful of falling trees. The trees that fell across roads were removed, but logging is not allowed in the park, Yosemite spokesman Scott Gediman said.

Craig Pedro, the administrator of Tuolumne County, said he is worried about logging trucks flooding the roads and causing traffic hazards. But community leaders are united behind anything that brings the forest back to life sooner rather than later, Pedro said.

The local economy depends on people coming to fish in the streams, hunt deer and pick mushrooms, he said, adding that much of the forest is still closed with no end in sight.

K's Kitchen: Corn muffins with kernels

By Kathryn Reed

Corn often seems to be the missing ingredient from corn muffins. That's not the case with the recipe below.

It was such a novelty to taste kernels of corn in the muffins.

Even though corn is not in season year-round, these could be

made all the time. I like to parboil corn, let it cool, then take the kernels off the cob. I put the kernels in freezer bags until I want to use them some time during the winter or spring.

Normally, I think of corn muffins to serve with chili in the winter. I had these with a salad. (I froze some of the muffins, so we'll see if that works.)

I cooked them three different ways. One way was using cupcake liners in a normal size tin. The other was to spray a mini muffin tin with a non-stick spray. The third was to spray an 8 x 8 pan.

The mini muffins were the best. In two bites the morsels were devoured. And they were perfect complements to the salad.

The wrapper on the bigger muffins was greasy on the outside, but the muffins were fine. It was just too much bread for me. But I liked this size muffin for breakfast.

The pan is the traditional way I have had corn bread. This gives the option to cut into various size pieces.

I thought they had so much flavor that I didn't put anything on them. But butter or honey would be good.



Corn Muffins

$1\frac{1}{4}$ C flour

$\frac{3}{4}$ C cornmeal

1 T baking powder

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp baking soda

$1\frac{1}{2}$ C buttermilk

$\frac{1}{2}$ C vegetable oil

$\frac{1}{4}$ C honey

6 T butter

$\frac{1}{4}$ C sugar

4 large eggs

1 C fresh corn kernels (2 ears)

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line muffin tins with paper liners or coat with cooking spray.

Beat butter and sugar in mixing bowl until fluffy. Add eggs one at a time. Gradually add dry ingredients.

Beat in buttermilk, oil and honey. Mix well.

Add corn, and mix on low speed until blended.

Pour mixture into liners and/or pan. Bake for about 15 minutes or until golden. Insert toothpick in center; if clean, muffins are done.

Bay Area couple dies boating

at Lake Tahoe

A San Ramon couple died early Sunday when the boat they were in struck a pier near Meeks Bay.

Tatiana Nikolskaya, 44, and Vadim Raizanov, 45, died on impact.

“The hull of the boat was split in half from the force of the impact. The possibility that alcohol may have been a factor is being investigated and autopsies are scheduled for early this week,” El Dorado County sheriff’s deputies said.

The accident occurred Aug. 3 at 1:40am. A group of people had been sleeping on the dock and were awakened by the impact of the crash.

The boat was a 19-foot 1997 Glastron. Deputies said it was traveling at a high rate of speed.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Tennis champs crowned at Zephyr Cove

With the heat finally breaking on the final day of the 31st annual Tahoe Tennis Classic, all the sizzle was coming off the rackets of the finalists.

One hundred seventy-four players from nine states participated in the three-day tournament at Zephyr Cove Tennis Club that ended Aug. 3.

The closest final was in the 7.0 mixed doubles match, with the winners having never played together until this tournament. It took three sets and two tiebreakers for Tina Fobel of Zephyr Cove and Kurt Massing of Tyler, Texas, to beat Eric and Katie Hetrick of Benicia 7-6, 5-7, 7-6.

While it was common for husbands and wives to be playing mixed doubles, the Rittimans of Zephyr Cove were a mother-son combo. Holly and Mitch Rittiman were runner-ups in the 8.0 mixed doubles. Mitch Rittiman then partnered with his dad, Ross, to win the men's 8.0 doubles.



Ross, Mitch and Holly
Rittiman

Winners of the Tahoe Tennis Classic are:

- **Combined women's 7.0 doubles:** Louise Brown of Vallejo and Eric Hetrick of Benicia defeated Brenda Stewart and Tracey Samoluk of South Lake Tahoe 7-5, 6-2.
- **Combined women's 8.0 doubles:** Christina Fegert and Krista Kip of Reno beat Sharla Freeman of Ashland, Ky., and Charna Knerr of Stateline 6-3, 6-0.
- **Combined women's 9.0 doubles:** Carol and Holly Tretten of Reno beat Christina Fegert and Krista Kip of Reno 6-2, 6-4.
- **Combined women's 10.0 doubles:** Kristi Cargill of Sacramento and Holly Tretten of Reno defeated Kim Iliffe of Mill Valley and Colleen Warren of Coronado 6-4, 6-3.
- **Men's 50 doubles:** Ryan Johnston of South Lake Tahoe and Rob Wheatley of Palm Desert defeated Randy Houston of Palm Desert and Mark Peterson of Truckee 7-6, 6-3.

- **Men's 65 doubles:** Gregory Shephard of Napa and Tad Yukawa of Palm Desert beat Bill Matthews of Ranch Mirage and Jess Torres of Alta Loma 4-6, 6-3, 7-6.
- **Combined men's 7.0 doubles:** Bart Tretheway of Chicago and Ray Tretheway of Sacramento beat Mark Allione of South Lake Tahoe and Phil Sheridan of Zephyr Cove 6-2, 6-4.
- **Combined men's 8.0 doubles:** Mitch and Ross Rittiman of Zephyr Cove defeated Denis Diehl and Steve Reid of Reno 6-2, 7-6.
- **Combined men's 10.0 doubles:** Blake Beavers of Tyler, Texas, and Mickey Navarro of Waco, Texas, beat Michael Kiskinen of El Dorado Hills and Paul Thompson of Rancho Cordova 6-4, 2-6, 6-4.
- **Combined mixed 7.0 doubles:** Tina Fobel of Zephyr Cove and Kurt Massing of Tyler, Texas, beat Eric and Katie Hetrick of Benicia 7-6, 5-7, 7-6.
- **Combined mixed 8.0 doubles:** Karla Johnston and Adam Turner of South Lake Tahoe beat Mitch and Holly Rittiman of Zephyr Cove 6-3, 6-3.
- **Combined mixed 10.0 doubles:** Blake Beavers of Tyler Texas and Kim Iliffe of Mill Valley beat Keri Mills of Davis and Paul Thompson of Rancho Cordova 7-6, 7-5.

All players were guaranteed a minimum of two matches during the three-day tournament. Besides the six courts at Zephyr Cove, play was also at Lake Village in Stateline and Pinewild in Marla Bay.

This was the first year the nonprofit Zephyr Cove Tennis Club Foundation ran the tournament. The foundation is operating the facility on behalf of Douglas County, which owns the courts. The goal is to make Zephyr the best place at Lake Tahoe to play tennis.



Zephyr Cove Tennis Club Foundation President Carolyn Wright, right, honors Tahoe Tennis Classic founders Hersch and Sheryl Herschmann. Photo/LTN

At the annual players' dinner on Aug. 2 the foundation honored Hersch and Sheryl Herschmann for creating the tournament and running it for three decades.

Foundation President Carolyn Wright expressed appreciation for their efforts for the last 30 years and said how it took a dozen people this year to do what just the two of them were able to do each year.

The tentative dates for the 2015 Tahoe Tennis Classic are July 30-Aug. 2. With more people participating, it is evolving into a four-day tournament.