

# SLTPD Chief Daniels Leaving

By Kathryn Reed

Embattled South Lake Tahoe Police Chief Terry Daniels is calling it quits after more than 27 years in law enforcement.

As part of a reorganization plan that will be before the City Council on Tuesday, a number of jobs are likely to go by the wayside. This doesn't mean there won't be a police chief or building inspector (Ron Ticknor may be retiring as well), but having people on the higher end of the pay scale retire will save money.



Terry Daniels

“Early retirement is being offered to the chief and to some line people,” City Manager Dave Jinkens told *Lake Tahoe News* on Friday night. “We are not trying to get rid of people.”

But the city is trying to eliminate positions in an attempt to save about \$1 million a year.

Furlough days are still going to be part of the mix even with the retirements. It's expected city workers will have to take four in December and then two days each month through September – the end of the fiscal year.

Most employees are also feeling a 9.23 percent cut in pay in 2009-10.

In addition to the restructuring of city government, the budget is also on the Nov. 17 agenda. The fiscal year began

Oct. 1, therefore the city has been operating without a final budget.

Other people expected to leave the police department are officers Chuck Owens, who has been with the department for more than 20 years, has had stints on the FBI and local narcotics task force; and Scott Willson, who is currently the school resource officer at South Tahoe High School.

It is up to each employee if he wants to accept the golden handshake. They have 90 days to make up their minds.

Retirements in the fire department and public works are also expected.

"Our goal was the equivalent of five people," Jinkens said. "It could be more."

### **Getting to this point**

The city has been working with its various labor groups to rework the contracts to allow for furlough days and the reduction in staff. Those memorandums of understanding will be before the council on Tuesday.

The police officers association has been holding out, not wanting to compromise because of the dissatisfaction with Daniels as well as Jinkens.

An email that was sent by the association's labor consultant, David Swim, to Jinkens Nov. 13 says in part, "In response to your letter, the Association feels as though our proposal of having three frozen positions and potential retirees will clearly meet your initial budget objective. We are concerned and disappointed that our suggestion for cost savings was not considered. We provided what we viewed a viable alternative to address the city's financial deficit and in doing so avoided any additional job losses, furloughs or other negative impact. Since the department has been functioning for the prior 6-7

months down three sworn positions we felt by keeping those same three positions frozen, in conjunction with some scheduling adjustments and the addition of an officer who had been absent for almost three years, we could actually offer better service to the residents of the city.”

Jinkens response to Swim was, “Actually, your proposals for cost savings have been considered and this consideration is reflected in the proposed budget. I previously communicated this fact in a lengthy memo this a.m. though in more general terms. The cost containment measures do not require MOU amendments though impacts may need discussion, but the value of the conversation has resulted in the needed cost reductions for this fiscal year based on our budget assumptions.

“In summary, the cost reductions will come from projected early retirements including the retirement of the Chief of Police, backfilling of the Chief position with an interim appointment until a permanent vacancy is filled and then a likely management reorganization and reduction of one upper command staff, freezing of anticipated vacant CSO position and leaving unfilled one sworn officer position.

“What the future holds in regard to the City’s ability to pay will depend on the economy and require additional discussions with you and Association members in the future.”

## **Terry Daniels**

Daniels, 52, has spent the bulk of his career with the local force. He started in January 1983 after working as a deputy for a year with the El Dorado County Sheriff’s Department.

He became a sergeant in 1991 and not long after added another stripe to become a lieutenant.

Daniels became the eighth chief of police in July 2006. He had worked for four of those chiefs.

Prior to taking the helm of the department, the chief, who was unavailable for comment, was involved in a slew of interesting cases.

He was on the force in 1989 when then Mayor Terry Trupp was arrested on a variety of federal crimes – mostly drug related in what the FBI called Operation Deep Snow. Trupp recently died after serving a number of years behind bars.

Daniels was the supervising officer in 2001 the day 9-year-old Rebecca Aramburo was found with her throat slashed at Campground by the Lake. Her mother is in prison for that crime, while her mother's boyfriend committed suicide in jail.

He has also been involved in controversial officer involved shootings.

Daniels is highly regarded in K9 circles for his command with his German shepherds through the years.

In August he was part of the parade of thousands who celebrated the release of Jaycee Lee Dugard who had been kidnapped from a Meyers bus stop 18 years earlier.

It has been the last three years that have caused Daniels the most strife. He vigilantly fought to have Officer Johnny Poland fired and kept off the force for an incident at the high school in 2006. Last month a judge ruled Poland should be given his badge back.

Earlier this year Daniels did little to discipline his friend Sgt. Jeff Regan. Regan had been arrested on a DUI charge – this coming after he had a prior arrest, though no conviction, stemming from allegedly hitting his wife.

A scathing grand jury report in 2008 left more questions unanswered – about his leadership and the morale within the department.

In his three-plus years, Daniels was able to increase staffing

to a level officers are no longer complaining about. He also has been an active member of the Youth Task Force, through which he got the Police Activities League going again.

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# Invasive aquatics not a priority with EDC supervisors

By Kathryn Reed

A crash course in invasive species was given to El Dorado County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday during their once a year meeting in South Lake Tahoe.

A number of non-native aquatic organisms already call Lake Tahoe home. Although this is not a good, what could be worse is if quagga or zebra mussels enter the water.



Quagga mussel

Last week a federal task force adopted a plan to deal with the invasives. Lake Tahoe is one of four entities in the country with an interstate plan to stop the mussels from migrating. This allows the area to receive federal money to help with inspection costs.

It would cost the Lake Tahoe Basin millions of dollars a year if these mussels ever reached the lake. This would be in lost

property, damage to water treatment plants, and tourists not coming.

The California Department of Fish & Game's website says, "U.S. Congressional researchers estimated that an infestation of the Zebra mussel in the Great Lakes area cost the power industry \$3.1 billion in the 1993-1999 period, with an economic impact to industries, businesses and communities of more than \$5 billion. California could spend hundreds of millions of dollars protecting the state's water system from a Quagga/Zebra infestation."

Eradication isn't possible " at least with today's science and technology.

Ted Thayer, wildlife program manager with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, explained what his agency has been doing to prevent the mussels from entering Lake Tahoe.

Board of Supervisors Chairman Ron Briggs sounded like he knew nothing of the mandatory inspection program that was in place for the entire 2009 boating season.

Supervisor Jim Sweeney got hung up on thinking the mussels had something to do with lake clarity.

Supervisors barely discussed an ordinance from Lake County that encompasses Clear Lake and if they would want to adopt something similar. There was talk by some supervisors that they have little interest in paying for prevention and enforcement.

"I'm not going to take a deputy off the street to fight mussels," Briggs said.

This was after Thayer explained some of the consequences that could occur if the mussels enter Lake Tahoe as well as what has happened to the Great Lakes and Lake Mead.

"You can't walk with your toes in the sand on the beach

with razor sharp shells. The shells gum up engines of boats,â€ Thayer told the five elected officials who were meeting at Lake Tahoe Airport.

Perhaps instead of having the Tahoe supervisor sit on the TRPA Governing Board, one of the other four should so more supervisors have a better understanding of what is going on at the lake with aquatic species and other important subjects.

The TRPA website and DFG website have detailed information about the mussels.

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# Girls camping – all about mud and water

By Kathryn Reed

BIG BEND – Stuck Jeep. Bucket boy. Naked boy. Tarp woman. Burney Falls. Hot springs. Fall foliage. Rain. Rainbow. Friends.



It's good to  
be with  
friends at  
times like  
this.

Photo/Pamala

Valentine

Just another typical girls' camping weekend.

With our annual camping trip being pushed from September to November, we moved the sleeping to indoors at my sister's in Redding. Roughing-it it was not. Comfy bed, long hot showers, full size kitchen, real food, a fire at the flick of a switch – I could get used to this type of camping.

Day 1 started with rain, so we nixed the idea of hiking. Instead, the four of us piled into my Wrangler in search of natural hot springs.

Heading east on Highway 299 from Redding I was reminded of the drive to Sierraville from Truckee – pines and oaks intermixed, open space, natural beauty.

Fall is clearly in the air on this first Friday of November. As the rain descends, it delivers a freshness – almost infusing life into the dying oak leaves that are long past their vibrant yellow and now much closer to brown.

A series of small towns I've never heard of roll by on this two-lane road.

We opt to pass our turnoff and head for Burney Falls – a place only Pam had been to.

What a sight.

Water tumbles 129-feet from multiple crevices in the volcanic rock. It's hard to know where to look because it's not just one waterfall. One hundred million gallons cascade down the falls each day.

All of this beauty is part of McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial State Park in the Cascade Mountains. It's on Highway 89, just off Highway 299.



Burney Creek is formed by underground springs. It gets larger as the falls approach. The creek empties into Britton Lake, which is partly inside the state park.

We check out the campground, which is empty except for the deer, just in case we return to real camping one year.

A rainbow appears as we drive, with one end being at a major logging operation – a different pot of gold I suppose.

We continue down Highway 299 toward the town of Big Bend. Our guidebook leads us to a hot springs resort that isn't open. We go to the next one. Turning onto the dirt road, we descend a bit. I'm hoping no one is coming in the other direction.

Zigzagging between rocks and washed out ruts we hit a plateau. I steer us into a pit of mud. We're not moving. The Jeep is in 4-low. Time to pile out – all but the driver.

It moves.

Back in go Pam, Darla and Sue. We carry on a little farther until we reach the edge of Kosk Creek.

We toast to having made it. We chat about the tarp next to us that we presume is where naked boy (the guy in the hot spring) is calling home. That was until we heard rustling and eventually saw tarp woman.

Bucket boy beat us to the springs once naked boy and his friend left. We learned to like bucket boy because as a regular he knew to bring a bucket to cool off the springs with creek water.

Sitting on the edge of the creek that leads to the Pit River, the hot springs and surrounding area have a fascinating history that we learn from bucket boy. We learn how the Indians lived on the land. (We passed a Native American cemetery on the way down.)

We learn about the excellent fly fishing, the popularity of this remote hot springs, the planned development of the closed resort, how high school students are bused to Redding.

We soak in the information as our muscles relax.

Soon it is time to leave. We want to test my 4-wheeling prowess, such as it is, in daylight. I bypass the hole I created coming down and was making good progress until the back end started sliding uphill and the front end spun like a stationary bike.

Finally, the Jeep just didn't move.

Out went the passengers.

This time it took a bit more maneuvering to make it through all of the muck. The slick incline tested me as I jostled to solid ground. The steely look in my eyes proved to my passengers this wasn't the type of mud bath I wanted to stay overnight in.

All loaded up, we headed back to our campsite with its indoor plumbing, easy to light fire and flannel sheets.

A perfect camping trip.

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# **Lark resigns as DCSD superintendent**

**By Kathryn Reed**

Douglas County School District needs a superintendent.

Just months after the board extended her contract, Carol Lark, tendered her resignation at Tuesday's board meeting.



Carol  
Lark

Neither Lark nor board President Cindy Trigg was available for comment Tuesday night. In recognition of Veterans Day, district offices are closed today so comments may be days away.

The board unanimously accepted Lark's resignation, agreeing to pay her \$135,000 plus \$17,500 in vacation in January pursuant to her agreeing not to sue the district.

The agenda for the meeting in Minden said, "The Board will discuss and may take action regarding the terms of a potential agreement with Superintendent Lark relating to her possible voluntary separation from employment with the District and the termination of her employment contract."

The district is expected to figure out a plan this month for a temporary replacement for Lark, with a permanent hire not likely to be on board for months.

Lark, 64, has not been liked at the lake by parents who continually questioned her leadership and perceived lack of understanding of the differences between the lake and valley.

Her handling of the radon issue at Zephyr Cove Elementary was one of many issues parents took issue with since she was hired in 2006.

Lark inherited a district with consistent declining enrollment. She came on board with the decision to close

Kingsbury Middle School already made a€“ though the issue was still a heated battle in her first year. Like most districts in the country, budget cutbacks were the norm in her brief tenure.

Lark’s contract was to have expired in July 2011. That agreement was hard fought by the seven-member board which has often been at odds with Lark. At many board meetings, Lark seldom spoke – an uncommon occurrence by a person running a school district.

Before coming to the district that straddles Lake Tahoe and the Carson Valley, Lark spent two years as assistant regional assistant superintendent of Clark County School District in Las Vegas overseeing 27 schools; immediately preceding her move north she spent a few months as acting regional superintendent in charge of 61 schools.

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## **STPUD water meter project grows by more than 80%**

**By Kathryn Reed**



A lackluster economy is boding well for South Tahoe Public Utility District.

It means instead of 1,525 water meters being installed in 2010, a total of 2,775 will be.

This is the result of the initial bid coming in much less than anticipated. The district expected to use the bulk of its \$4.38 million grant from the federal stimulus package on 1,525 meters.

However, all eight bids came in at less than \$3 million. The project was awarded Oct. 29 to Tiechert of Sacramento for \$1.98 million.

“That did free up some money,” said John Thiel, principal engineer at STPUD. “We were burning the midnight oil this weekend to get the specifications done (for the next round).”

This is because a contract needs to be in place by Dec. 22 or the district loses the cash it hasn't spent. It was just on Friday that the board gave the go ahead to start advertising for the additional meter project. The board is expected to award the second bid on Dec. 17.

Technically, the additional 1,250 meters will be the third bid on meters. This is because 163 were installed this fall off of Ski Run Boulevard and near Los Angeles Avenue.

The Tiechert contract is for meters in the Al Tahoe, Glenwood and Gardner Mountain areas.

The next bid will be for work in the Angora burn area, Twin Peaks, North Upper Truckee and Christmas Valley areas.

“There is additional money so we can do quite a bit more than we thought,” Thiel said.

Water meters are going to be mandatory by 2025 per California law. The total cost to install the 10,000 meters for STPUD customers is estimated at \$20 million. The more grants the district can obtain, the less impact to ratepayers.

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# LTVA putting the 'South' in Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority is making a concerted effort to leave the blue world behind.

The multimillion dollar "blue world" ad campaign never quite had the ring to it that tourism officials had hoped, and certainly not the buy-in from the South Shore community that it was intended to promote.



LTVA is changing its marketing to emphasize activities.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

The 2010 summer ad campaign will be the first from Duncan Channon.

A subtle change that not everyone is apt to notice is the change in website addresses. Ads in *Ski* and *Skiing* magazine are using [www.tahoemouth.com](http://www.tahoemouth.com).

"We are stepping out of the blue as this point," LTVA Executive Director Carol Chaplin said.

She won't go into detail about the new campaign, but said it is more activity oriented.

"We are trying to capitalize more on – everything you want to do is right here," Chaplin said. Gaming is still part of the message, but doesn't dominate it like years past.

She won't divulge the new tagline for the ad campaign just yet, but one thing the LTVA board has wanted to emphasize is differentiating between the South Shore and North Shore.

The new URL does just that – it clearly indicates the link is going to provide information about the south end of Lake Tahoe. The North Lake Tahoe Resort Association uses [www.gotahoenorth.com](http://www.gotahoenorth.com).

For people still using [www.bluelaketahoe.org](http://www.bluelaketahoe.org), it directs them to the LTVA's main webpage.

The entire campaign will be ready for the public to see after the first of the year. The ad agency was in the area in October shooting footage – stills and video.

Internally, LTVA expects to have its strategic plan in place in the next month.

Not only are website addresses changing, but the entire LTVA website is going to be revamped.

The current [www.ltva.org](http://www.ltva.org) will be more for community partners seeking industry information, with password-protected destinations. Chaplin called it a "resource site" and "internal tool".

When the ad campaign is more solidified Chaplin expects to show it off to small groups in February and then to the broader community at April's tourism conference. By May, it

will be on the airwaves.

The \$800,000 campaign is geared mostly to the broadcast mediums in the Bay Area and Sacramento Valley.

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## South Tahoe to entertain pot club moratorium



By Kathryn Reed

When the South Lake Tahoe City Council meets in a week it is expected to discuss the possibility of creating a moratorium on medicinal marijuana collectives.

Most of the councilmembers have said the three collectives in town are more than enough.

Cody Bass with the Tahoe Wellness Center told the council on Nov. 3 he favors a moratorium as well.

“We are slow. I don’t think we need a fourth (collective),” Bass said.

The irony is that same day the council heard the appeal on the Do It Center. Free market dominated – let good service and pricing dictate which business survives. It doesn’t matter how many hardware-like stores are within walking distance – at least city code is written that way.

Apparently when it comes to a more controversial subject like



medicinal marijuana, a free market system is not what the council wants to have.

Clearly, the conflict between state law which allows the sale of pot for medical use and the federal ban on it presents all California cities with a dilemma. But it is hard to understand how South Lake Tahoe can regulate the number of one type of business and not others.

Some of the discussion last week centered on whether the collectives could be regulated by where they are located. No one mentioned the possibility of treating them like the medical entity they are purported to be and therefore mandating they fit the criteria all medical offices do.

As it is now, none of the collectives has a business license.

Bass said when his dispensary tried to renew its license it was denied.

Business owners sign a statement acknowledging, "No use that is illegal under local, state, or federal law shall be allowed within the city of South Lake Tahoe."

Bass said staff in the business license department wouldn't give him the license because of that statement.

Council will also need to decide who regulates the collectives. Police Chief Terry Daniels had wanted to craft an ordinance earlier this fall that would give the police department oversight. Police have jurisdiction over taxi cab drivers and massage therapists.

The entire matter could be a moot point and another waste of taxpayer money because California keeps pushing toward legalizing marijuana.

The council meets Nov. 17 at 9am at Lake Tahoe Airport.

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# SLT ready to develop prime corner lot

By Kathryn Reed

A valuable piece of real estate in South Lake Tahoe sits idle – used only by people taking a shortcut from Ski Run Boulevard to Highway 50.

City staff hopes to have development ideas in place so the City Council can vote on them in January.



South Lake Tahoe is trying to figure out what to do with this parcel.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

“A large restaurant on the corner keeps coming up (as an idea),” Gene Palazzo, city redevelopment manager said this week. “People are all over the board.”

Because the value of the swath of dirt is much less than it

was a few years ago, the city isn't interested in selling it at this point. It wants to control the use on that highly visible acreage.

With the land developed, then the city can also garner tax increment because it is in a redevelopment area, as well as sales tax once a business is operating.

These 2 acres were originally owned by Embassy Suites, which built the lodging property on the lake side of the street years ago. Even though that property changed hands a few times and is now a Diamond Resorts entity, the deal was this vacant parcel had to be developed in a certain time period or it would revert back to city ownership.

Development didn't occur, so the city has the deed.

The parking garage that belongs to Diamond Resorts that is adjacent to the city's lot has 125 spaces in it deeded to the empty parcel.

Depending on how things shake out, underground parking could become a component of the development.

Palazzo said he would be engaging Diamond Resorts and the Ski Run Business Improvement District in conversations before a plan of action is brought to the council.

The parcel comes with 24 tourism units, but Palazzo doubts they will be used. Zoning also allows for 13,000-square-feet of commercial floor area.

A request for proposal would be sent out after the council chooses the type of development it wants. With the short building season in Lake Tahoe, it's likely construction would begin in 2011.

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# Tahoe focus of Board of Supes meeting

By Kathryn Reed

All things Lake Tahoe are on the agenda of the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors when the gang meets Nov. 10 on the South Shore.

This is the board's once a year meeting when they leave Placerville and make their way to Lake Tahoe — the other part of the county they rule over, but seldom visit.



Happy  
Homestead  
Cemetery  
district is on  
the Board of  
Supervisors'  
Tuesday  
agenda.

Supervisor Norma Santiago, the lone voice of the basin, said an ordinance regarding invasive species will be brought forward. It is based on Lake County's ordinance. That area is home to Clear Lake.

Another issue will be the appointment of two board members to sit on the Happy Homestead Cemetery board. First supervisors must decide to expand the special district board to five members from three. The theory is bringing the board to five members will allow it to function better.

The only applicants for the board are John Poel and Joe Tillson.

The cemetery district has been in a state of unrest for the past year as it deals with two members who have been on for a short time, and a staffing situation that not everyone is happy with.

Lakeview Commons is also on the agenda. For what was expected to be a slam dunk at an earlier meeting is now a growing concern and could derail what was known as the 56-acre project.

Supervisors will meet Tuesday at Lake Tahoe Airport at 9am.

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# Greenberg brings radio show to Tahoe

**By Kathryn Reed**

STATELINE – “My mantra is if it’s in a brochure, I don’t want to know about it.”

Travel guru Peter Greenberg is not going to endear himself to tourism executives with that sentiment “and he’s fine with that. He is all about giving listeners of his weekly worldwide radio show what they want. And that is the truth.



Todd  
Offenbacher,  
left, tapes a  
segment for  
Peter  
Greenberg's  
Nov. 28 radio  
show.  
Photo/Lake  
Tahoe Visitors  
Authority

Greenberg taped his show at Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course on Wednesday afternoon. He has been coming to Tahoe for 30 years, but this is the first broadcast from the basin.

He has a couple rules about his show – “no heads of chambers of commerce, no visitor or convention center chief, no one who is selling anything.

“My audience knows better,” Greenberg told *Lake Tahoe News* after he wrapped up his show as the sun was setting over Lake Tahoe.

Greenberg interviewed five locals with different stories, though all fairly well known throughout the South Shore.

Terri Marceron – supervisor of the U.S. Forest Service office that regulates the entire Lake Tahoe Basin. Todd Offenbacher – Resort Sports Network host and founder of Tahoe Adventure Film Festival. Dave Borges – local chiropractor and historian. Curtis Fong – “the guy from Tahoe” and coordinator of two

major cycling events around the lake. Allen Biagi – chairman of Tahoe Regional Planning Agency’s Governing Board.

In two hours, the five told their stories. The show will air the Saturday of Thanksgiving weekend (Nov. 28). To find a station that carries it, log on to [www.petergreenberg.com](http://www.petergreenberg.com).

Greenberg is all about asking locals what they like. That’s how he finds authenticity in a location – not those brochures in hotel lobbies.

“My job is not to promote you. It is to give the audience choices,” Greenberg said.

Greenberg isn’t your average travel journalist who writes happy stories because he’s gotten a freebie. He’s a veteran of the news business, having worked for publications like *Newsweek*. He is the travel editor for CBS News and does regular segments on “The Early Show”.

The 36 hours he spent on the South Shore (he left this morning) don’t seem like a whirlwind to him. Deadlines are in his blood. He knows how to get a story, churn it out and move on to the next one.

This travel show of his takes him to all corners of the world. It’s not a vacation for him – it’s work.

His vacation time comes in six-month increments each year when he returns to Fire Island, N.Y., where he is a firefighter. It’s a job he’s had since he was 18.

Greenberg’s theory on all resort communities is, “You know why someone comes here, so why mess with it.”