

Hwy. 50 near Echo Summit to honor fallen firefighter



Mikey
Hallenbeck

Part of Highway 50 will be officially dedicated as the Michael “Mikey” Hallenbeck Memorial Highway on Oct. 14 at 1pm.

The 21-year-old Hallenbeck died in August 2015 fighting the Sierra Fire near Sierra-at-Tahoe. He was a wildland firefighter with the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. He also worked at the ski resort.

Two highway signs represent the Memorial Highway; one is located on the eastbound side of Highway 50 near Mount Ralston Road and the other is located on the westbound side of Highway 50 near Echo Summit. Both were recently installed by Caltrans.

The westbound sign is where the ceremony will take place.

Calif. wildfires bring record

31 deaths



Fires are raging on both ends of California. Photo/CalFire

By Associated Press

The latest on wildfires in California as of Oct. 12 at 6:15pm:

Northern California's wildfires have now killed 31 people – making this the deadliest week of wildfires in state history.

Sonoma County Sheriff Robert Giordano said Thursday night that two more people have been confirmed dead there. That raises the statewide death total from 29 to 31.

The Oakland Hills fire of 1991 killed 25 people by itself, and the Griffith Park fire in Los Angeles in 1933 killed 29.

While no single fire currently burning has killed as many as those, state fire Deputy Director Daniel Berlant says collectively this is the deadliest series of simultaneous fires in the state in recorded history.

Read the whole story

Crews make progress on 2 Eldorado forest fires

Two fires continue to burn in El Dorado County.

The Table Fire as of 6:30pm Oct. 12 was 170 acres and 15 percent contained. It is burning three miles northeast of Ice House Reservoir.

“The fire is in a sheltered location so the predicted winds on Saturday are not expected to have a significant effect,” according to fire officials.

The fire started by lightning more than a month ago. The U.S. Forest Service was letting it burn out naturally, but winds turned it into a wildland fire. No structures are threatened.

The Ice Fire is two miles west of Ice House and White Meadows roads. It is at 30 acres and 95 percent containment. Full containment is expected by Friday night.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Calif. fires making more pollution than a year of traffic



The Bay Area has been inundated with thick smoke; it reached Lake Tahoe on Oct. 11.
Photo/CalFire

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

There's enough wildfire activity in California and Nevada to blanket much of both states with a layer of smoke in the coming days.

In California alone more than 140,000 acres are burning in large, wildland fires throughout the state. A fire in rough terrain near Reno is also contributing to smoke in Northern Nevada.

In just the past two days, fires in California's Wine Country are thought to have produced as much small particulate matter as all the vehicles in the state produce in a year.

Read the whole story

Bank wants to sever ties with Olson

U.S. Bank wants nothing more to do with Patty Olson.

Olson, a pioneer in South Lake Tahoe, has been embroiled in various lawsuits and land disputes regarding her property in town. She owns the strip mall where the lone medical marijuana shop operates in South Lake Tahoe.

Court documents state, "Debtor [Olson] has consistently overdrawn her account with U.S. Bank, which violates its policies and procedures and permits it to close the account under the deposit agreement with the debtor; and 2) debtor has a tenant selling marijuana from whom she apparently still collects monthly rents. U.S. Bank is federally chartered and cannot accept funds from federally illegal activities."

The bank believes Olson may have deposited that rent money at different times this year. Banks are not allowed to take money from the sales of marijuana – medicinal or recreational. She has accounts at more than one location.

According to the bank's court documents, Olson in six months has had the account overdraft six times.

While the bank has the legal right to terminate accounts, it wants to go through the court system to keep everything transparent.

Olson, who now lives in Reno, is challenging the bankruptcy court's ruling. In the meantime, the foreclosure proceedings on her commercial property are on hold.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Heavenly, Ridge to contribute more to bus service

By Kathryn Reed

Tahoe Transportation District on Friday is expected to enter agreements with Heavenly Mountain Resort and Ridge Tahoe for those entities to pay more money for bus service.

These two are the main private partners affiliated with the South Shore bus service.

The TTD board will meet Oct. 13 at 9:30am at the Stateline offices to discuss the proposals that were negotiated this summer.

Heavenly for years has been part of the mix because so many skiers, as well as employees, use the bus to get to the slopes.

“Since 2010, Heavenly has contributed \$850,000 annually to TTD, which it has used as part of its transit service operations budget. Without a mechanism for annual increases, the real value of the contribution has been reduced through inflation,” the staff report says.

The new contract calls for a \$950,000 payment by Heavenly for this fiscal year, which is about 12 percent more than before. Also built into the deal is for an annual 5 percent increase as well as additional increases based on the Consumer Price Index.

The Ridge has been part of the mix since 2010. The time-share company’s contribution has been \$140,634 per year.

The new agreement also includes a nearly 12 percent annual increase, the 5 percent ongoing yearly adjustment, and the CPI increase.

In total, TTD provides about 55,000 hours of bus service a year. Most of this is on the South Shore, but it also has commuter routes off the hill in Nevada. The operating budget is about \$6.9 million a year.

Will Wine Country disaster push Congress to fix fire budget?



The Tubbs Fire in has spread into Lake County.
Photo/CalFire

By Emily Cadei, Sacramento Bee

Washington It's a rare point of bipartisan agreement in

divided Washington: The federal system for funding firefighting is broken, and that's hurting our ability to prevent fires from breaking out in the first place.

But lawmakers are at a loggerheads over how to fix the problem, a split that breaks down on largely regional, rather than partisan, grounds. Some in the House and Senate, however, now hope that national coverage of Northern California's devastating fires could finally spur a congressional compromise, a bit of a silver lining emerging out of all the destruction.

At the root of the problem is the fact that forest fires are not treated like other natural disasters.

Read the whole story

Sandoval, Laxalt disagree on commerce tax

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – Gov. Brian Sandoval said Tuesday he disagrees with Attorney General Adam Laxalt's proposal to eliminate the commerce tax.

Sandoval responded to a report in the Nevada Independent that Laxalt, expected to announce a bid for governor in the coming weeks, wants to repeal the levy sought by Sandoval and approved with some Republican support in 2015.

Sandoval said the tax on businesses with gross revenues that exceed \$4 million annually will bring in \$391 million over the

current two-year budget, every dollar of which is going directly to public education, from Zoom schools to autism programs.

Read the whole story

SnowGlobe 2017 plans being solidified

By Kathryn Reed

While a contract has not been signed, most of the particulars have been worked out to ensure SnowGlobe, the three-day music festival, returns to South Lake Tahoe in December.

Lake Tahoe Community College is having a different role this year compared to the past. No longer will buildings on campus be used by the festival organizers. Instead, a tent will be set up at Bijou Community Park for the concert to run its administrative components from there.

The college parking lot will continue to be the drop off location for patrons coming via bus.

With the college and city being partners in the community ball fields consortium, the two entities together regulate what happens with the two new fields. Sod was put in this fall, so this will be the first time the three-day concert will be on the new fields. Last year it was just on the dirt. Prior to 2016 the concert was on the soccer field.

The college board at its meeting on Oct. 10 gave direction to staff to essentially finalize the contract. It should be before the board in November for a vote.

“As related to the field, we are making sure they are protected,” LTCC President Jeff DeFranco told *Lake Tahoe News*.

There are three tiers to renting the ball fields. The least expensive level is for local nonprofits, then for nonprofits using it as a fund raiser, and the highest fee reserved for for-profit organizations like the Colorado-based SnowGlobe. DeFranco said the rental rate for SnowGlobe will be \$50,000. This is about double the price of the least expensive rate.



This will be year-seven for SnowGlobe in South Lake Tahoe.
Photo/Lesia Witkowsky

The city at a meeting earlier this year had wanted to implement an assessment per ticket that would be used for field maintenance. If a long-term contract were ever entered into, like promoter Chad Donnelly wants, this component could be part of that deal. Donnelly would like a 10-year commitment from the city.

The electeds have agreed SnowGlobe can come back in 2018, but

beyond that they want to see how the field holds up. That assessment will come in the spring after the snow melts.

The college agreement, though, would be for just 2017.

The rental fee is strictly to be used for long-term maintenance, not any damage associated with the festival. Another part of the contract will deal with promoters being responsible for repairs.

“The other discussion was to ensure concrete requirements about demobilization,” DeFranco said. The board wants to put some “teeth” into the contract.

The college, city and residents were frustrated last spring as the site started to look dilapidated because remnants from the concert littered the area long after the promoters left town.

DCSD considers options besides selling KMS

Douglas County School District’s board of education wants professional input regarding what to do with the shuttered Kingsbury Middle School site.

While the district is in the process of getting it reappraised, and that information should be available by the end of the month, selling the property might not be the only option.

When the board met Oct. 10 staff was directed to find a real estate consultant who could help with exploring alternatives.

“They talked about whether the district should enter the

rezoning process to see if would make the property more marketable,” Superintendent Teri White told *Lake Tahoe News*.

As it stands now, any new owner would have to go through the regulatory process to have it zoned for their intended purpose.

There’s also the possibility the district could retain ownership and lease the property to someone. This would be dependent on the income covering the district’s liability and other expenses.

KMS is likely to be back on the November agenda, as the appraisal should be available then. At that time the board is expected to vote to put the property back on the market.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*