

Damage being mitigated; work continues at Emerald Bay

By Kathryn Reed

The contractor doing work for Caltrans near Emerald Bay has been allowed to continue the project after regulators found employees potentially violating the permit by degrading the natural environment.

“A TRPA inspector visited the site (Friday) afternoon and found that adequate protection measures have been put in place as requested, and the project can proceed,” Tom Lotshaw with TRPA told *Lake Tahoe News*. “TRPA will continue to work with Caltrans and California State Parks to assess the disturbance and agree on a cleanup and restoration plan, and TRPA is continuing to pursue its investigation to determine if any civil penalties for code or permit violations will be pursued.”

If the bi-state regulatory agency decides to assess fines, it can be up to \$5,000 per infraton, per day – which means the damages could be substantial.

Stewart Engineering out of Redding is the firm that is being accused of not having its erosion control measures in place. Workers were caught **on video** laughing as a boulder took out a tree.

“The day we were informed about this incident taking place, our resident engineer on the project called the project manager for Stewart Engineering to discuss what happened and find out what he knew about the incident. No one from Caltrans staff was on scene during the filming of the boulder going over the hill,” Steve Nelson with Caltrans told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We immediately contacted a local arborist to visit the jobsite with us and inspect all the damage to trees below the

wall that could have occurred due to this project. The arborist has put together a report for us, detailing the damage and severity of the injuries to several trees below the wall due to any rocks rolling down the slope, along with a plan to mitigate that damage. The arborist will be employed to carry out that plan as soon as the work on the wall is complete.”

The goal is to have the project completed on or about June 20.

Nelson said Caltrans has an approved plan to stabilize the slope below the wall, and to plant a number of sapling sugar pines below the wall. TRPA is reviewing those plans.

Upstart candidates hope to send political shockwaves in Nev.

By Ramona Giwargis, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Going against the “political establishment” is a risky move in Nevada, a purple state where every hard-fought election could shift control of the Statehouse and on Capitol Hill.

Yet some Nevada candidates are running grass-roots campaigns against opponents with much deeper pockets.

State Sen. Patricia “Pat” Spearman is one of five Democratic candidates in the 4th Congressional District, where former Rep. Steven Horsford has plenty of campaign cash and the backing of Nevada’s largest union.

Read the whole story

Verizon looking to improve coverage in SLT

The South Lake Tahoe Planning Commission on June 21 will consider five special use permits for Verizon Wireless.

The company wants to install small scale antennas to existing power poles and supporting equipment in the city's right-of-way.

The locations are: 1983 H St., 1027 Herbert St., 3086 Oakland Ave., 780 Merced Ave., and 969 Bigler Ave.

The meeting will begin at 3pm at Lake Tahoe Airport.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Docs worry about ability to deal with mass casualty

By Kathryn Reed

If a mass casualty incident occurs on the South Shore, it is going to require the resources of neighboring medical facilities to treat the injured.

“In the event of a mass casualty incident, the main effort would be to ensure rapid transportation to the appropriate care centers,” Selwyn Lee, chief medical officer at Barton

Health, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "This would involve field triage by emergency services as well as county assistance to bring in as much help as possible to our hospital. While we do have an outstanding trauma program in place, there are still limitations and the health system could be overwhelmed quickly if the acuity of care is high."

An advantage this area has over others is CalStar being based at Lake Tahoe Airport. CareFlight would also be called in during a tragedy. It is already backup to the primary helicopter ambulance. Plus, there would be ground transport.

Getting patients to another health care facility could be challenging or not even possible depending on the incident and the weather.

Barton has memoranda of understandings with UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento, Marshal Hospital in Placerville, Renown Medical Center in Reno and Carson Valley Medical Center.

Barton Memorial Hospital could treat about 20 people; though how busy the emergency room is at the time of the tragedy would be a factor.

Jenna Palacio with Barton said, "In any given large-scale emergency, incident command would dictate the action plan to prioritize, triage and neutralize the situation. Mass casualty incidents can overload even the most advanced medical centers. The key to providing the highest level of care to every patient in need is to utilize any and all available resources within the established trauma system."

A poll done this spring by the American College of Emergency Physicians found that nine out of 10 emergency room doctors don't believe their facilities are completely ready for major disasters.

Stats from the survey of 1,328 doctors include:

- 93 said their emergency room could not handle a surge in patients from a disaster;
- 49 percent labeled their hospital somewhat prepared;
- 90 percent said they would not have enough medication.

Barton has been a level III trauma center for three years. A team of doctors and staff is available around the clock to react to an event. One of the reasons this designation was sought is because of the remoteness of South Lake Tahoe.

“Trauma III designation recognizes Barton Hospital as a critical access point for patients seeking trauma care. Unlike other hospital facilities, trauma centers guarantee the resources for in-depth emergency care and the immediate availability of emergency medicine physicians, surgeons, nurses, lab and X-ray technicians, and life support equipment 24-hours a day,” surgeon Kim Evans told *LTN* in 2015.

Renown is a level two facility, while UC Davis Medical Center is a level one. These levels are usually found in urban centers.

Barton said advantages to the community with it being a trauma center include expanded blood bank capabilities, expedited patient evaluation, priority access to diagnostic technology, increased staff aptitude for traumatic injuries, training standards for care and response timing ensuring patients would be treated within a specific time frame.

Tourniquet training and education in the event of a mass shooting or other traumatic incident is provided by Barton to first responders through a program called Stop the Bleed.

“Uncontrolled bleeding is the No. 1 cause of preventable death from trauma. The greater the number of people who know how to control bleeding with an injured patient, the greater the chances of surviving that injury,” Palacio told *Lake Tahoe*

News.

The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) is lobbying Congress to pass the Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation Act of 2018, with the goal of the federal government taking a more active role in medical preparedness. It was introduced last month by Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C.

“Hospitals and emergency medical services continue to suffer significant gaps in disaster preparedness, as well as national drug shortages for essential emergency medications,” ACEP President Paul Kivela said in a press release. “These shortages can last for months, or longer, and constitute a significant risk to patients.”

Ranalli now faces Nov. challenge for EDC supervisor

The latest update from El Dorado County Elections Department is affecting the outcome of the June 5 District 4 supervisorial race.

To win outright without going to a runoff in November it requires a candidate to garner 50 percent of the vote plus one.

As it stands with results posted in the late afternoon of June 8, incumbent Mike Ranalli has 49.6 percent with 4,900 votes, while Lori Parlin is second in the three-person race with 37.99 percent with 3,753 votes.

There are still more provisional votes to be counted.

The election must be certified by July 5.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Vail Resorts posts third quarter results

By Ben Miller, Denver Business Journal

Vail Resorts reported third-quarter Epic Pass season pass sales this week; , net income and quarterly earnings all rose.

The Broomfield, Colo.-based ski resort operator reported that unit sales of its Epic Pass rose 12 percent and rose 19 percent by sales volume in the latest quarter.

Net income rose by more than 41 percent to \$256.3 million in the latest quarter from \$181.1 million a year earlier.

Vail owns Tahoe area resorts Heavenly Mountain Resort, Kirkwood Mountain Resort and Northstar.

[Read the whole story](#)

Fire consumes West Shore house

A house in Tahoma was destroyed by fire on Thursday.

Firefighters got the call at 9:48am June 7.

Flames consumed 50 percent of the two-story structure by the time firefighters arrived. The house was near Antelope Way and Alder Street.

The cause was related to hobby work being performed by the occupant, according to officials.

There were no injuries.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Several Nevada candidates have criminal records

By Ramona Giwargis, Las Vegas Review-Journal

One candidate has been charged with theft and wiretapping. Another was convicted of domestic battery and accused of waving a gun while drunk. One was an Army deserter.

These are a few of the political candidates on the Nevada ballot this year – and it's causing deep concern in some political circles.

Nevada voters have many choices at the ballot box, including electing a new governor.

Read the whole story

Caltrans contractor in hot water with TRPA



The contractor working at Emerald Bay is accused of violating the permit.
Photo/Susan Wood

By Kathryn Reed

The contractor doing work on Highway 89 near Emerald Bay could face a slew of violations from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and possibly other agencies.

A video on the White Trash Brigade Facebook page shows workers with Stewart Engineering of Redding, the contractor hired by Caltrans, laughing as a large boulder rolls down the hillside and takes out a tree.

Caltrans did not respond to repeated emails.

TRPA was first notified May 21 about the company allegedly disposing of rocks and asphalt.

“TRPA investigated and found large boulders from the project area and tailings of sediment and asphalt extending down onto California State Parks property, with damage to trees, slope destabilization, and impacts to a stream environment zone in this highly sensitive natural area,” Tom Lotshaw, spokesman

for the bi-state regulatory agency, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

At that time a cease and desist order was issued until the company came into compliance with the permit which mandated erosion control measures be in place and to adhere to other aspects of the contract.

TRPA officials went back out to the site on June 7 and said the company was still violating the permit. Stewart was given 24 hours to fix the problems or have the site shutdown. TRPA will be back out there this afternoon to see where the project stands.

“TRPA is continuing to investigate this incident for potential civil penalties of up to \$5,000 per day for each code violation, and is also working with Caltrans and California State Parks on a plan to clean up and restore areas impacted by this unfortunate incident,” Lotshaw said.

Because this is an ongoing investigation the number of violations has not been determined.

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Publisher’s note: There is profanity in **the video** that may be offensive to some people.

Homeless damaging sensitive S. Tahoe landscape



Known as The Mayor in the homeless encampment, he wishes South Lake Tahoe had a shelter. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

A homeless encampment of about 20 individuals in the middle of South Lake Tahoe has been given a seven-day notice to move on or else they'll be forcibly removed.

Tucked into the meadow off the bike path behind Motel 6 is a community hidden from most people. Tents and makeshift shelters protect them from the elements. Cooking devices vary from crude stoves to old barbecues. Some have coolers. Bikes are common.

Wood has been cut from the area for fencing and other uses.



Mr. Cotter is responsible for building the bridges.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

Two sturdy bridges – built well, maybe even to code – cross what would have been wet areas not that long ago.

Well-worn paths lead from one “home” to the next. It used to be the paths were narrower, with better tree canopy.

“Most people out here are local people. They have found a safe, positive environment. A good place to sleep,” says The Mayor. This man has been out here on and off for three years, having lived here through the last winter.



Officer Johnny Spaeth is trying to build a rapport with the people living in the woods. Photo/Kathryn Reed

He laments about the lack of affordable and low-income housing. He said so many come into the meadow with only their paperwork from jail. Their options are limited.

Some who call this area home have jobs. What they don't have is a traditional home.

"The city really needs a shelter," The Mayor told *Lake Tahoe News*. "The city's shelter is the county jail in a lot of ways."

His home is one of the larger areas, with some nicer elements like a hammock.

If this weren't on private land (it's owned by Knox Johnson), and harming the environment (trash, human feces, needles, illegal wood harvesting, illegal trail building, trampling an incredibly sensitive landscape) it would be an ideal location

to pitch a tent. It's walking distance to the lake, the bike path, public transit, a grocery store and many other amenities.



Propane canisters the homeless had been using.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

"We're always going to have a homeless issue. The idea is to make it the least impactful on the environment and community," Officer Johnny Spaeth told *Lake Tahoe News*. He is South Lake Tahoe Police Department's homeless expert. "A red line for us is open flame," Spaeth says as he looks at where briquettes had been started on the ground and have left a visible imprint.

While South Lake Tahoe has had a homeless population for years, last year was the first time an actual encampment started to form. This year it's a true community.



The entrance to this site is on the other side, with rooms sectioned off. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Spaeth knows most of the individuals by name. He knows which “home” belongs to each person. Still, what they are doing – camping outside a designated campground – is illegal.

He understands they are “just trying to get by in life,” but at the same time with so many people in the meadow it is degrading the natural environment, and presents health and safety concerns.

Spaeth has been working with the people to get them to clean up the mess. The department provided them a dumpster to get rid of things. It’s behind the old Carrows and is nearly full of what looks like trash. Next to it are seven propane canisters these people had been using that they hauled out.



Officer Johnny Spaeth listens to Matt tell him how he's gotten rid of most of his junk. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Matt thanks Spaeth for working him, giving him time to sort through his stuff.

"It's just down to the basics for me," Matt tells the officer. He says someone, though, has been mining the dumpster and taking goods.

A decades-old backpack hangs from a tree. A tarp covers things. A bike and books are in the open.

These people have been creative with the resources they have. They've repurposed items to make it work for them.

On June 7 people in the encampment received official notification from law enforcement that they have seven days to move out, though Spaeth had been telling them this day was coming, which is why the dumpster was brought in. Anything left behind will be considered abandoned property and will be considered trash.

Where they will go is anyone's guess.

The Mayor called it a game of hide and seek. But the cops always seem to find them.



This tent is for storage because the homeless have issues with food and wildlife. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Dispersed camping is what the homeless have traditionally done here – meaning there's a tent here and there, not a community. This is less impactful to the environment because people pick up and move on. There isn't the wear and tear on the land.

Spaeth said when appropriate officers will help people get connected to social services, but he acknowledges "resources in the basin are limited."

Most of the people in this encampment are men between the ages of 20 and 40, though for the last month or so three women have consistently been here.

Arresting them isn't what officers want to do. After all, being homeless isn't a crime. Where they pitch a tent, that's what crosses the line – and potentially some behavioral issues could get them in trouble with the cops. There have been fights and issues with aggressive dogs, things that can happen in any neighborhood.

“More people come out here every day. They have nowhere else to go,” The Mayor said. In less than a week, though, this meadow will be off-limits.