SNOW LOAD

“Snow wars” cause leaks, fire, days-long outage in Old Mammoth

A fire at the three-tank propane farm on Old Mammoth Road (at Rose Way) caused propane service to be shut off to 167 customers on Friday, January 27, and as of press time, service had still not been restored to the affected homes.

Mammoth Lakes Fire Marshal Thom Heller, who is leading the investigation into the incident, told The Sheet on Monday that the fire started when AmeriGas workers were attempting to fill tanks at the farm with liquid propane. In a tank farm, the liquid propane (which is 277 times more compact than propane gas) is fed into large tanks. That propane then travels to a “vaporizer,” which is essentially a heater, Heller told The Sheet, that converts the liquid propane to gas to be fed to homes.

The problem, Heller said, was that several leaks were created by the pressure of piles of snow on top of the tanks and connections at the farm.

It’s the result of a “game affectionately known as ‘Snow Wars,’ around here,” Heller told The Sheet.

“There are only so many places to put snow. Sure, everybody’s treading on each other’s terrain, without any consequences in some cases, in others, really burying whatever is at the bottom of the pile of snow.”

When AmeriGas technicians came out to fill the tanks, Heller said, they were unaware of several leaks that had been created by the snow pressure. Liquid propane found its way into cracks and openings in the snow, and when that propane reached the vaporizer, it caught fire.

Mammoth Lakes Fire Department “ended up seeing temperatures as high as 400 degrees in the vicinity of the tanks during the suppression effort,” said Heller. He emphasized that, although that number seems high, it’s “not critical [as it] relates to the steel tanks there…there was see SNOW, page 13

NASA AND SNOW

NASA’s airborne snow observatory comes to town

Dr. Thomas Painter, Lead Investigator for The NASA Airborne Snow Observatory (ASO), says he and his team have found a way to determine precisely how much water is in a given High Sierra basin at a given time.

After his team flies a particular drainage, it takes them just 24 hours to collect the data, feed it into a computerized model called SNOBAL, and generate a short and long-term forecast for how much of that water will manifest as runoff in a river in that basin. Four and a half years into the project, Dr. Painter says his team is able to predict the volume of annual runoff in a given river drainage with as little as 2 percent error. The increased accuracy of those predictions may allow water managers to maximize efficient use of California’s water supply.

The team conducts aerial snowpack surveys from a King Air plane that is specially rigged to allow an imaging spectrometer and a scanning LIDAR machine to capture detailed imagery of the topography below the plane.

LIDAR captures the distance between the plane and the surface of the ground by recording the length of time needed for a pulse of light to travel from the machine to the ground’s surface, and back. This information, collected continually, is then used to create an image of the topography below. During the winter months, flight
Every week I receive several letters in regard to the proposed Multi-Use Facility at Mammoth Creek park. The letters are running 100% against. Which I’m sure will prompt a letter next week from Dan O’Connell (owner of the Rock ‘n Bowl, and the most eloquent and prominent voice in support of the project).

When I mentioned this to Councilman Bill Sauser before Wednesday night’s Council meeting, a visibly annoyed Sauser chucked up all the letters to a localized but determined neighborhood campaign against the project.

Which is incorrect. Yes, the majority of letters are from neighborhood residents, but a significant portion are not.

Further, when did living in an affected neighborhood = negation of one’s opinion?

Fact is, the town has taken a simple request to put a roof on top of the existing ice rink (at maximum, a $750,000 project. Jeff Posey showed me one solution he had researched which he said would have cost as little as $80,000) and turned it into a proposed $10 million-plus boondoggle which destroys an existing, popular park and which does not enjoy widespread community support.

This town has other, more pressing priorities: Striking a deal on the Shady Rest tract (affordable housing), a Village parking plan, air service strategy—to name a few.

You have the MUF plans. Put ’em in a drawer somewhere. Put your roof on the existing rink. See how much organic growth you can achieve over the next few years when you finally have a rink that is operable in all weather conditions. Then come back to the community with the grandiose plan. Which, if you’ve established a track record, might not seem so grandiose a few years down the line. Or, you’ll realize the full implications of the grandiosity and shelve it. Either way, move slowly on this one. Focus on other things.

Snow Removal

To give you a little perspective about the magnitude of this year’s snow event, which the Town's Engineering Manager Haislip Hayes described as a “50-year event” at Council on Wednesday: Hayes said the Town went through 40,000 gallons of diesel fuel in the month of January. The previous record, he said, was 25,000 gallons.

While former Councilman John Eastman described the previous three weeks of snow removal in Mammoth as “dogshit,” asserting that Mammoth had the equipment but not an adequate number of personnel to get the job done, Town Manager Dan Holler noted that the Town has the same number of employees in the road department that it had in the last decent-sized winter of 2010-2011.

Hayes said that in addition to the amount of snow, the type of snow (heavy) has made snow removal more difficult (and costly). You have the MUF plans. Put ’em in a drawer somewhere. Put your roof on the existing rink. See how much organic growth you can achieve over the next few years when you finally have a rink that is operable in all weather conditions. Then come back to the community with the grandiose plan. Which, if you’ve established a track record, might not seem so grandiose a few years down the line. Or, you’ll realize the full implications of the grandiosity and shelve it. Either way, move slowly on this one. Focus on other things.
Crushed cars

Dear Editor:

The bar for the record monthly snowfall in Mammoth Lakes was raised this January. Mother Nature didn’t even need an entire month to lift that bar, but instead she did it in fifteen days. The locals have worked tirelessly to relocate snow as best as possible so the town could continue functioning. The past week has been exceptionally difficult as vacant places for snow dwindled drastically. The Vons grocery store had more than half of its parking lot piled twenty feet high with some of that excess snow. Over the past few days, twenty feet of snow is enough to press down the immense weight. The cars were ruined well before the snow removal crews accidentally unearthed them, ripping the front bumper half off a Honda and gutting the rear end of a diesel Mercedes.

Derrick Pierce
Mammoth Lakes

A few days of sunshine (and some loaders) uncovered these cars in the Vons parking lot this week.

How long must we sing this song?

Dear Editor:

I’m guessing that none of the members of the Mammoth Lakes Town Council—or any of those who are in favor of the proposed Multi-Use Facilities Project at Mammoth Creek Park West—own a property or live near the site. Well, my husband and I do. In fact, our property, which we’ve owned since 2003, is immediately adjacent to the proposed site, and our bedroom window and back deck look out onto what is now a beautiful stand of pine trees.

On pleasant summer evenings, the sound of babbling Mammoth Creek lulls us to sleep. Watching the squirrels and Steller’s Jays from our deck has become a favorite pastime.

The proposed project would take all of that away from us—and from every other tax-paying homeowner in the surrounding area. Moreover, it would put in jeopardy one of our greatest natural resources, Mammoth Creek.

We’re not necessarily opposed to the entire concept of a new Ice Rink or a new community center—though giving the existing facilities a facelift surely would cost less than the $10 million (and growing) budget for the proposed new development. That price, by the way, excludes the $2 million plus that it would cost to decommission the existing ice rink and the cost of likely litigation, estimated to be at least $100,000. One would think that a town owing a $2 million annual payment at 5.7% interest for its airport litigation settlement would be looking for ways to save money rather than spend it so frivolously.

What angers us and our neighbors—to the point of litigation—is the fact that the Town would propose building such a large, commercial-type complex so near to a residential area and to Mammoth Creek. We’ve reviewed the Environment Impact Report, and it’s done little to ease our concerns about this project. In some cases, it’s only made them worse.

Memories are short, so please let me refresh yours with the following excerpt from “These California Cities Could Be Next in Bankruptcy,” USA Today, May 15, 2013:

“Mammoth Lakes. The mountain resort city filed for bankruptcy protection, then withdrew its petition last year after agreeing to a budget restructuring plan making settlement payments on a lawsuit that it lost. A developer, Mammoth Lakes Land Acquisition, filed suit charging that the city breached a 1997 agreement to develop a hotel and condo project.

The Hot Creek project stalled over federal objections that it would be too close to a planned airport runway expansion. A $30 million judgment, plus legal fees, against the city was upheld on appeal, and the city’s liability grew to $42 million, 2.5 times its general fund budget. Standard & Poor’s says the city remains under financial pressure and rates its bonds at junk status.

In October 2015, the Mammoth Lakes Town Council approved the decision to build MUF at Mammoth Creek Park West despite opposition from former Mayor Michael Raimondo and current Mayor Shields Richardson, who said they did not feel the facilities were the best use of public funds. Mr. Raimondo put it bluntly: “We don’t have any money… all we’ve done is cut and cut and cut, and now we’re trying to figure out how to spend two million bucks to build a new site.”

Even a supporter of the project, Lynn Alteri-Need, wrote in an article that appeared in The Sheet in October 2015 saying, “Are we a town that has so much money that we can waste this through?”

And that was when the estimated cost of the project was a mere $1.3 million to $1.5 million. So far, the Town Council has paid HMC Architects $200,000 for consulting services and has authorized another $250,000 to “further design, enable additional value engineering work and prepare more detailed cost estimates,” which no doubt will be higher than current estimates.

Anyone with reasonable intelligence would ask if that money wouldn’t have been better spent upgrading the Town’s current facilities.

In closing, I’d like to ask you and the members of Mammoth Lakes Town Council if you would like to live right next to MUF at Mammoth Creek Park West, in the building located closest to the proposed mechanical room and a bedroom window and back deck facing the ice rink? If so, we’d be happy to sell you our place.

Linda Mueller
Mammoth Lakes

Mark L Zila, DDS
IS BACK IN TOWN
AND TAKING APPOINTMENTS!
• EVENING APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE •

452 Old Mammoth Rd, Suite 204
2nd floor of Sierra Center Mall

934-6699

Preventative | Restorative | Cosmetics | Implants
Dear Editor:

After reviewing the Mammoth Creek Multi-Use Facility EIR we choose the “No Project” alternative. In the EIR, the Town recognizes that there are many unmet recreational needs in our community, listing an aquatic center, event and performance venues, multi-use recreational and cultural facilities to name a few. While we understand that the Town is limited by funding and cannot address all of those items at once; it seems shortsighted to not even have a proposal for where those large facilities will be in the future.

Goal 6 listed in the project’s EIR is, “to provide parks and recreational facilities that foster a sense of community”. As parents, we can assure you that if we are driving our children from one recreation facility to another (potentially to locations across town, at Whitmore, or elsewhere), it does not foster a sense of community. What fosters a sense of community is to be able to get out of the car with the whole family and enjoy all the facilities more traditionally in one location (i.e. pools, gyms, meeting & multi-purpose rooms).

If many of the recreation facilities we all desire in the future can’t fit at the Mammoth Creek Park location then other locations need to be reviewed again. This is a very expensive project that we think completely misses the mark – it looks like it is going to be a nice ice skating rink plus a building with a number of different sized “multi-purpose rooms” and office spaces. If providing real indoor recreational opportunities is a goal (Goal 4 in the EIR), we don’t think that these rooms really meet that goal.

We urge people to take the time to look at the plans on the Town’s website or at the library. If you haven’t seen the plan in a while, like some folks we have spoken with, you may be surprised at what is not included. We need to have a bigger vision so that our community ends up with a real community center location, not just disjoint recreational facilities built over time as funding permits. The last day to submit your public comments are February 13, 2017.

TJ and Jen Chase
Mammoth Lakes

Squaring off with Mother Nature

Dear Community Members:

I write this today to express my concern for morale, which can have a huge impact on the many safety concerns brought on by the impact of recent weather events. I have observed behaviors that fuel confusion, anxiety, and anger including a mindset of “every man/woman for themselves.” I have, also, observed inspiring acts of kindness by people in this community.

We are a team. A team that has just begun the season after many drought years where our adversary has not been much of a challenge. Our team is out of practice and has new teammates who lack experience with the beautiful harsh environment that the Eastern Sierra is historically known for. This season Mother Nature stepped up her game. 2010-2011 was our largest snow year in this century measuring at 661.5 inches at the Main Lodge weather plot. We have not had a snowpack of that caliber since then. As of the end of January we have received 335.5 inches, approximately 55% of the 2010-2011 total snowfall. We have had our asses handed to us mainly in part because we are not working together as a collective community. It does not have to be that way. If we work together we, too, will up our game by helping each other build tolerance for adversity and uncertainty.

We are all overwhelmed, exhausted, and oftentimes have moments of not knowing where to even begin in this challenge. While there are many things out of our control (i.e. Mother Nature), there are many things completely within our control and within our influence. Let’s encourage each other to clearly communicate how our limited resources are being deployed including the reasoning behind those decisions. Let’s encourage each other to stay informed and avoid speculation and spreading of rumors as this will only lead to confusion, anxiety, and anger. Let’s encourage each other to listen to one another and if we are going to judge do so with compassion. Let’s encourage each other to help one another help ourselves by getting out there and lend a helping hand in the many ways that are possible.

Mother Nature unleashed 245 inches of snow on us this past month equating to nearly 37% of what we received during the 2010-2011 season. She may continue being a force to be reckoned with or she may not. The season is far from over. Championship winning teams win because they respect and do not underestimate their opponent. They prepare by spending time collectively practicing the skills that make them great. It is time to move forward and communally practice the things that make us boundless.

Brigitte Denton
Mammoth Lakes

Editor’s note: See story for more on community outreach, p. 12.
Drunchies lead to arrest

On January 26, 2017 at approximately 2100 hours, a shoplifting incident was reported at the Bishop Vons. Shortly thereafter, the vehicle reportedly associated with the shoplifting was located traveling northbound on US-6 in the area of Wye Road by an Inyo County Sheriff’s Deputy.

The deputy attempted to stop the vehicle, and a vehicle pursuit ensued as the vehicle began an attempt to evade capture. The fleeing vehicle accelerated northbound on US-6 and attempted to make a left turn onto Dixon Lane. The driver failed to negotiate the turn and crashed through the fence line and into a large downed tree northwest of the intersection of US-6 and Dixon Lane.

Officers from CHP and Bishop PD responded to the scene. CHP conducted a collision investigation and ultimately placed the driver of the fleeing vehicle under arrest for allegedly driving under the influence and driving without a license. The driver was subsequently released to the Inyo County Sheriff’s Deputies and booked for attempting to evade arrest. Bishop PD also arrested one of the vehicle’s passengers as a result of their investigation regarding the shoplifting incident.

LOCAL BRIEF

Willow and cottonwood envisioned along Lower Owens River Project

By James

“Woody enhancement” sounds more like something out of a hooker’s business plan than an environmental goal, but it’s actually about growing trees, in this case along the lower Owens River.

In the century or so of LADWP’s occupation of the Owens Valley, many trees have been lost to falling groundwater tables. Under the Long Term Water Agreement (LTWA), LADWP and Inyo County committed to the goal of promoting tree growth, at least along the banks of the newly-restored (tongue in cheek) river and floodplains. The best laid plans have so far only resulted in failure.

But that doesn’t mean they’ve given up trying.

From February 6 through June 30, 2017, the Landscape Center of Riverside will be planting willow and cottonwood pole cuttings along the lower Owens River as part of the adaptive management plan approved in the 2016-2017 Lower Owens River Project (LORP) work plan approved by the Inyo County Board of Supervisors in April of last year.

LORP envisions trees (under the goal of “woody recruitment”) lining the newly-restored 82-mile-long river’s edge for the first time since the water was reintroduced in the river channel in a 2006 ceremony by then-Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.

Sadly, that vision has been stymied by years of drought and less-than-ideal seasonal water flows. Hopefully, that may change because of this year’s winter storms, which are bringing much-needed relief from the past five years of record-breaking drought. Hope it seems, springs eternal, unlike water in the Eastern Sierra.

Under the $20,000 county contract approved by the Inyo County Board of Supervisors at its January 17 meeting, the Landscape Center’s Certified Arborist Dillon Reynolds will oversee the cuttings, planting and protection to reestablish small groves of willow and cottonwood trees in the lower Owens River floodplain. The cost of the tree planting is shared by the County and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

The supervisors were told that the tree project needs to be completed on, or about March 21, 2017—before the willow and cottonwood bud break. If LADWP’s permit approval process takes six weeks, work can begin on or about February 28.

LORP’s major accomplishment to date has been what is best called “tule and cottontail recruitment” which has largely made the river un navigable, resulting in poor water conditions, and disappointment in general of the lofty expectations envisioned by LORP in the 10 years since the re-watering of the Lower Owens River was forced on LADWP through a lawsuit after many years of deliberate delay, rehabilitation has been far from successful. The most recent LORP Annual Draft Report meeting held in late December showed little progress over the past three years of the project, now in its 10th year of implementation.

SOMETHING WE ALL CAN AGREE ON: WOODY ENHANCEMENT

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The deputy attempted to stop the vehicle, and a vehicle pursuit ensued as the vehicle began an attempt to evade capture. The fleeing vehicle accelerated northbound on US-6 and attempted to make a left turn onto Dixon Lane. The driver failed to nego-
Mono County Supervisors were given an update on the Mono County Jail by Public Works on Tuesday, January 17. The county could receive up to $25 million to construct a new jail, but the application deadline is rapidly approaching.

Supervisors were presented with two options at its January 3 meeting: (1) construct a new jail with add-on facilities like a community health clinic, which comes with a price tag of approximately $25 million, or, (2) refurbish the existing jail with a new annex for approximately $6 million.

Both options would have satisfied the requirements for grant funding through Senate Bill 844. The purpose of Governor Jerry Brown’s bill is to assure inmates have access to medical, dental and mental health care and the facility would have to have a programming space to hold 12-step meetings or GED classes.

The county could receive up to $25 million for a new jail. Higerd called from Sacramento Wednesday, January 25 that there had been a hard 5-percent match with a maximum reward of $20 million. Higherd said the lower-number of beds, 48, but the facility would have to match. In the past, this round of funding that drops the bar on how much a small county would have to match. In the past, there had been a hard 5-percent match with a maximum reward of $20 million. Higerd said the lowering of the match, depending on the county, and the larger $25 million award is a “game changer” and could offer enough to build a new jail.

Supervisor Larry Johnston said he couldn’t emphasize how big this opportunity is for the county. This amount of money might not ever be available again.

The cost of the project must be weighed against other priorities. Supervisor Fred Stump reminded the other supervisors there is no paramedic in District 2, one baseball field in his district is not used because it’s unsafe, roads need repair and the county is facing a potentially expensive lawsuit with Ormat Technologies.

There would also be a snag at the state level. Initial plans for the new jail call include a community health clinic to be located within the new jail call include a community health clinic to be located within the facility, to meet the needs of both inmates and the Bridgeport community. The Bridgeport Clinic was closed at the beginning of January by contractor Mammoth Hospital.

Higerd said the clinic is probably “the most creative and out-of-the-box” idea to go with the new jail. There would be secured entrances and exits to the clinic assuring the two populations do not intermingle.

The county was made aware of the funding in June 2016, and are scrambling to get the application completed and presented to supervisors February 21 and into the state by February 28.

Costs incurred so far include the contract with architectural firm, Nacht and Lewis, not to exceed $111,735, $12,510 for jail population projections and no more than $20,976 for Mike Booher consulting services, plus staff time, according to figures provided in the agenda packet. Booher recently retired after 25 years as the jail supervisor and was brought back for his expertise.

Higerd said additional costs will include State Fire Marshal and state audit fees. Finance Director Janet Dutcher is well versed in audit proceedings and may be able to assist in bringing that cost down.

The county must pay for a California Environmental Quality Act, CEQA, review for the site but county staff may be able to assist and lower the costs of a consultant preparing the documents.

The announcement of funding winners will be in June, just in time for the county to work the costs into the Fiscal Year 2017-18 budget that starts July 1, Chapman explained.

Higerd said he thinks Mono County has a good chance at getting the award.

By Bodine
UP THE LADDER TO THE ROOF ... You’ll be seeing heaven much better if you don’t shovel the damn thing

“If you’re not taking advantage of these nice sunny days to work on trying to free the perimeter of your house, trailer, or whatever it is you’re living in, you’re missing a golden opportunity, because there’s still a lot of winter left,” said Mammoth Fire Marshal Thom Heller on Monday.

Homes across town have been feeling the strain of the heavy snow that fell during Mammoth’s record January, and more snow is on the way. As of press time the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) was calling for a possible 24 inches of new snow at higher elevations (above 7,000 feet) before the weekend is over.

“Right now we’re sitting at a point where some of the pre-1980 homes were not really designed for the type of snow load we’re currently seeing,” said Heller.

Mammoth Town Council issued an emergency declaration on Wednesday, February 1, which may provide additional financial assistance from the state, but the fact remains that roofs in Mammoth need to be cleared, and professional services are in demand beyond their capacity.

After the Town of Mammoth Lakes incorporated in 1986, buildings were required to have a load capacity of 161 pounds per square foot, said local engineer and former Mayor Kathy Cage. Pre-incorporation, homes were required to be built to withstand 135 pounds per square foot.

“So [161 pounds per square foot] is equivalent to about seven feet of snow at normal snow weight,” Cage said.

“We have this kind of a winter every five years or thereabouts. I’ve been here now 29 years and every five years you see the same reoccurring issues, and every year people complain that they have damage … well, yeah, because whoever was responsible was dealing with taking care of that building kind of missed the mark.”

Building owners are ultimately responsible for clearing roofs and the damage that may occur if buildings are overloaded. However, roof maintenance companies are overwhelmed with the demand. A call to D & J Roofing and Snow Removal resulted in a “mailbox full” message. “If you are calling for snow services, we are booked until March,” was the message on Skyline Snow Removal’s voicemail. Property manager Maggie Larson said on January 23 that “I have so many buried properties with people in them and no way to get crews to them because 395 is closed.”

“It’s mind boggling, I just don’t even know what to say,” said an employee at Blizzard Property Management who declined to give her name. “I’m just pretty fried on the whole thing … we’re just trying our best.”

“If you’re an owner of a building, you have a responsibility to get out and take care of the load,” said Heller. “If you’re a tenant you still have a responsibility at a minimum to communicate with the owner that this is occurring … These are the winters that challenge you. If you walk out of a winter like this without any damage to your house … no leaking in roofs, no damage to shingles, then you spent the time adequately dealing with the stresses and the forces that this type of snow load inflicts on your building.”

Cage said that many houses in Mammoth are built with wood, particularly post-incorporation. Wood has a “pretty good Factor of Safety (FOS),” meaning a building could potentially get twice the amount it is rated for and still hold.

“Another tip,” said Cage, “with wood, what pretty much always happens before it breaks is it’ll flex. So if you see a roof sagging or beams sagging, that means, oh yeah, this is kind overloaded.”

“Next spring the roofers and contractors are going to have a field day because there is going to be all sorts of damage,” said Heller. He also advised residents to watch for cracks in sheet rock, and doors and windows having difficulty opening.

“These are indicators to look for … to recognize that building is trying to tell you that it’s under stress.”
SNUGGLING UP TO MT. TYNDALL
Unplanned sleepover for helicopter passengers

By Bodine

Some fly boys were benighted at the base of Mount Tyndall outside Independence when their helicopter's engine light came on Thursday, January 26. The two pilots and hydrographer are employees of Sierra Hydrographics, repairing snow gauge equipment for the Army Corps of Engineers.

At the base of the northwest face of the 14,025 foot peak stands an 18-foot snow gauge/antenna. Hydrographer Steve Rosier said the crew was sent out to repair the gauge after it stopped sending data.

Rosier said the crew landed, snowshoed to the site, fixed the antennae and returned to the helicopter. Soon after take-off, an engine warning light came on and the pilots set the craft back down in the landing spot.

The trio spent about 16 hours next to Mount Tyndall before Guardian Helicopters came to the rescue.

Sierra Hydrographics trains its employees in survival and keeps helicopters stocked with supplies. Rosier said he was sure he would be rescued in the morning, and everybody felt good during the ordeal.

Sierra Hydrographics specializes in transporting heavy objects around by helicopter, and therefore picked up their broken chopper from the Sierra Nevada and took it in for repairs.

Tyndall is located on the border of Inyo and Tulare counties, Sequoia National Park and John Muir Wilderness just north of Shepherd Pass west of Independence.

“IT’s always an adventure,” Rosier said of his job.

MCWD APPOINTS NEW DIRECTOR
By Giles

On January 19, Mammoth Community Water District appointed Eric Kaufman to its Board of Directors. Kaufman will be filling the now vacant position formerly filled by Earl Henderson.

Kaufman is originally from Philadelphia. He studied Computer Science at the University of Connecticut. He is a U.S. Navy Veteran and Commercial Coast Guard Captain. He and his wife and two daughters recently moved to Mammoth Lakes from San Diego. He has worked and continues to work in financial technology, though he would not divulge what company he works for.

Kaufman said he and his family have been coming to Mammoth Lakes to recreate for a number of years. He hiked the John Muir Trail last year, and he and his wife recently decided to buy a condo in town. He said they knew they wanted to be full time residents after they started looking more closely at the community. “We saw the high school, and kids riding bikes around town,” said Kaufman. “Of course it’s gorgeous here, but when we saw the town and the community, we thought, wow this is a place we’d like to raise our kids … it just keeps getting better and better.”

Kaufman said he was motivated to apply for the vacant position on MCWD’s Board of Directors because he wanted to get involved in local government and support his family’s new community. “There are a lot of good practical things that can be accomplished and make a material impact on our community,” said Kaufman this week.

When asked what he brings to the Board of Directors, Kaufman cited his experience working in the private sector. “I feel that my experiences in private industry allow me to work with multiple partners, multiple jurisdictions, and frankly, organizations that have a financial interest, and to problemsolve when that financial interest may be in conflict with the public good.” He said he enjoys working with and learning from people who are experts in their field, and that his past work experience has prepared him to learn quickly and work with diverse partners.

Kaufman said that he knows first hand that being ethical and decent doesn’t have to be bad for business. Nonetheless, he feels that there is an important role to be played by agencies that regulate industries. “Bad things don’t happen in the world because Lex Luthor is out there wringing his hands and drinking scotch … often they happen because of misguided interest or lack of oversight … regulatory bodies exist because industries don’t tend to regulate themselves.” Kaufman said he’s not afraid to be a tough advocate for community drinking water and to seek diverse allies in protecting local interests. He said he’s enjoyed attending public meetings and learning about the area.

Kaufman and his wife, Charlotte, a professional writer, are avid sailors and previously spent about 8 years living on their sailboat, a Hans Christian 36. They spent 2 years sailing the Sea of Cortez and attempted a trans-Pacific voyage in 2014, which was halted due to a medical emergency on board their boat. Their boat and home was lost during that incident, though they and their daughters survived. Ira Glass of National Public Radio’s This American Life interviewed them about their harrowing rescue in 2014.

Kaufman says he has served as a volunteer fire fighter and been a search and rescue volunteer in other places. Midweek, you may find him riding with his daughter as a volunteer chair lift chaperone for Mammoth Elementary School’s Ski P.E. Program.
KEEPING AN EYE ON THE HOUSE OF THE DEVIL
BLM releases plan for Ormat’s Casa Diablo IV

By Bodine

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has released the Geothermal Development Project Groundwater Monitoring and Response Plan (GMRP) for Ormat Technologies’ Casa Diablo IV (CD IV) geothermal power generation project to be located at the existing Ormat facility near the intersection of Highways 203 and 395. The anticipated plan has been in the works for three years and gives the green light to the Nevada-based energy producer’s project. The project will double the plant’s output from 40 megawatts to 80 megawatts.

The thin, 33-page document was described as “fluid” (“pun intended?”) by BLM Bishop Field Manager Steven Nelson at the Long Valley Hydrological Advisory Committee meeting on Wednesday, February 1. For example, there are no specific trigger points spelled out in the plan because there are too many variables, like water chemistry, drought conditions and others unknown to be concrete on any details.

Bill Evans, U.S. Geological Survey Chemist Emeritus and has studied the Long Valley since the 1970s,explained that the presence of chloride in one Long Valley well has been rising, a potential sign of what’s happening hundreds of feet beneath the surface. The direction of flow of underground streams in Mammoth has been studied and mapped for 20 years and is still incomplete.

As part of the plan, Ormat will produce a review of historical data that will be integrated with the data collected during an 18-month pre-production baseline monitoring period expected to start soon. The combined information will be used to establish a baseline that will create expectations of the range of variability in the deep geothermal system, the shallow cold groundwater system, and surface flows in Mammoth Creek —relative to climate, local seismic activity, seasonal recharge, surface water diversion and use, surface water export, and pumping conditions including shallow groundwater production and geothermal production from wells in Basalt Canyon. The geothermal fluid for CD IV will be pumped from Basalt Canyon to the existing Ormat site.

An array of monitoring devices will be adopted to address concerns by the Mammoth Community Water District (MCWD) that pumping of geothermal fluid for CD IV could cause intermittent gliding of geothermal fluid and drinking water. The plan does not address every issue. It does not even address the main concerns of the BLM has with the project, according to MCWD General Manager Pat Hayes.

Hayes stated an email to The Sheet, “The methods to determine whether monitoring data indicates a potential threat to water supplies exists are undefined and unclear. Although the BLM and Ormat have described a long history of data collection, the GMRP does not include a description of what constitutes ‘notable departures from baseline conditions and/or historical long-term trends’ to ‘trigger a comprehensive data review and analysis to determine the appropriate course of action…”

The course of action outlined in the GMRP states that any variations in pressure, temperature, water level, streamflow, conditions or observations that are off the scale compared to baseline or historical conditions will “trigger a comprehensive data review and analysis to determine the appropriate course of action.”

Hayes continued by saying there is no requirement for a second, deep monitoring well MCWD has been asking for. The well would have been located between Ormat’s wellfield and MCWD groundwater wells. It will not be built unless so ordered by the BLM. Hayes believes the second well is needed to detect changes in water before it reaches the Town’s water supply. He says Ormat claims the construction of the $1.1 million second well would make the $100 million CD IV project economically unfeasible.

“By not requiring this second well in the GMRP, the BLM has placed the economic viability of the CD IV project above the community’s water supply,” Hayes said.

“MCWD will continue to press for obtaining the necessary data for evaluating potential impacts and implementing additional precautionary measures that will safeguard and protect MCWD’s water supply,” Hayes said in a prepared statement.

Ormat is sticking to its communication policy and not returning phone calls to The Sheet.

Ormat is sticking to its communication policy and not returning phone calls to The Sheet.

- Mike Bodine
REST
continued from page 2

according to Hayes.
The Town did pull off a rather heroic feat in getting the airport open on Wednesday, January 25. As Highway 395 was closed both that Sunday and Monday, six workers arrived at the airport on Tuesday to find six feet of snow covering the entire runway and apron area. According to Dutton, the six proceeded to put in a 17-hour shift in order to get the airport open for an Alaska Airlines flight which arrived at 10 a.m. the next morning.

To get back to staffing, Hayes said that the Town tries to promise seasonal road department employees 1,000 hours for the season. In the past few years, the Town hasn’t needed the 1,000 hours and has used the employees on other projects. But the point being, it’s an extremely difficult task to know how many hours/seasonal employees to commit to.

And if I may offer what may seem like a rare piece of praise (coming from me) for Town Manager Dan Holler, he is a fairly savvy bean counter and adept when it comes to analyzing needs and numbers and making a best estimate in regard to budgeting.

Winters like this make a mockery of best estimates. However, Eastman did make a salient observation when he noted that the Town may not be paying enough. He said the $17-24/hour being offered isn’t enough to attract employees, especially, he said, given that the state reimburses the Town 50% of its snow removal expenses. If you pay $40/hour, he said, you certainly won’t be wanting for labor.

Meanwhile, some road department employees have worked 16 days in a row, said Hayes.

Dutton described the evolution of the local populace’s attitude as follows. At the beginning of the deluge, “The town doesn’t know what it’s doing!” This was followed by a more solicitous, “When can you get to me?” Now, “Wow, I appreciate what you’re doing given the circumstances.”

This year, five students from Rebecca Thomas’ freshman class at Mammoth High School participated in an annual student speaker contest hosted by the Lions Club of Mammoth. The prompt this year was “Is the right to privacy a threat to our national security?” The winner, Rhona McChesney, received $100 prize, and all other participants received $25. The winner will go on to compete at the Zone Contest on Monday, March 13. The winner of that competition goes on to another regional competition. According to judge Jan Karr, Assistant to the Superintendent of the Mono County Office of Education, “I’ve been judging for a lot of years, and the speeches at this year’s competition were the best I’ve ever heard.” This was the 80th such competition sponsored by multiple District Four California Lions. Fifteen district winners will receive a scholarship of $4,500 each. Four area winners receive a scholarship of $11,000 each and one final winner will receive a total scholarship of $21,000.


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THE SCIENCE OF SLIDES
Mono County forecaster Sue Burak warns residents to be vigilant of avalanche danger

By Bodine

The avalanche that hit a multi-family home in Long Valley on Sunday, January 23 came from slopes ripe to slide. Snow was falling at a rate of 2-3 inches per hour on Sunday, through Sunday night and into early Monday morning. The Sunday/Monday event came with high and sustained winds, loading some already overloaded slopes. Gusts up to 38 mph were recorded in Crowley on Sunday night, according to the National Weather Service (NWS). Wind speeds on the ridgetops were stronger, sweeping snow into avalanche-starting zones.

This is a very simplified interpretation of the forecasts that Sue Burak, avalanche specialist and forecaster for Mono County, provides to Mono County public works and road departments. She has expertise in both frontcountry and backcountry avalanches, but for her work with the county, she concentrates on avalanche paths near roads and residences that have a history of activity like Twin Lakes near Bridgeport, Rock Creek Road (upper and lower), upper Swall Meadows and Long Valley.

Burak’s report of avalanche potential for county roads for the Sunday/Monday event stated that historic paths above Long Valley could avalanche due to the heavy snowfall. She did not predict the avalanche or the precise slope that slid at Long Valley, but she was close. “I knew it was going to happen, I didn’t know where, but I was sure it would happen,” Burak said. The avalanche danger has abated near the Long Valley area, for now.

The avalanche that hit the home in Long Valley was a category D4, capable of destroying a railroad car or several buildings, and not a D3-D4 rating as earlier reported. The slide snapped and splintered a Southern California Edison power pole about 25-30 feet below the top of the 40-foot pole, suggesting the flow height of the avalanche to be about 20 feet. These poles are made to withstand horizontal loads of 4,600 pounds. A section of the pole ended up in the road west of the damaged home.

Burak explained the avalanche was spreading laterally by the time it hit the poles and slowed down substantially by the time it flowed over the roadcut and hit the home. “The height of the avalanche was greatly reduced and the speed was so much slower that the flow basically ‘kissed’ the house rather than ‘slammed’ into it as was reported. If the slide had slammed into the house, the outcome would have been tragic,” said Burak.

According to Burak, this avalanche was traveling at about 60 miles per hour. “There is a horizontal thrust of anywhere from 186 lbs. per square foot to 18,580 lbs. per square foot. The vertical component of flow is about 1/4 to 1/2 of the horizontal thrust and the air blast, which is about 18.6 lbs. per square foot, is more than enough to break windows,” she explained.

“I think these numbers may wake people up to the sheer power of this avalanche.”

Burak has kept an interest in climatology her whole life, performing extensive research into the relationship between weather and the types of snowfall. The Eastside makes for a great laboratory. Each canyon in the Eastern Sierra is different, she explained, each with its own unique weather and snowpack.

Avalanche forecasters use a mix of deductive and inductive reasoning, says Burak. “It’s like having an IV of weather data, observations from diverse sources and measuring precipitation rates coming in all day and into the night,” Burak said.

She collects piles of data before, during and after storms. Much of it is the same data with the same results, but it’s an attempt to reduce uncertainty. It’s like forecasting the weather: the most reliable forecast is the one for what’s happening right now.

There’s a team of associates she collaborates with, including Reno NWS, the Utah Department of Transportation, the Sierra Avalanche Center of Tahoe, experienced Caltrans personnel and support from Jeff Walters, former General Manager at Kirkwood Ski Resort and current Mono County Public Works Director. She also relies on historical accounts and other trusted observations.

She takes the numbers and stats and uses her decades of experience to provide assessments and forecasts to the Mono County Public Works Director, Road Operations Superintendent, Road Maintenance Supervisors and the Facilities Superintendent.

Avalanches shouldn’t be a surprise to residents living in prone areas. “When structures are built in an avalanche runout area, it is a matter of when, not if, an avalanche will occur. Mono County has some roads and communities that are located in avalanche runout zones which is where the snow and debris finally come to a stop. The runout zone is also where the snow and debris can pile the highest.”

Walters had just been to Twin Lakes in Bridgeport, a known avalanche area, and said avalanches had slid, making their way very near the bottom of the hills, but did not see any damage to report. “I think we dodged a bullet.”

But, it’s only January and there’s plenty of winter to come.

The next atmospheric river event is set to touch down on the Eastside Sunday and hang out until Tuesday and could bring much more snow.

“The above-average snowpack for this time of year is well advertised,” Burak said. “The landscape is snow covered. It’s obvious that the avalanche paths are filled in. The avalanches that occurred on McGee Mountain for example, partially filled in the gullies on the alluvial fans that can divert debris and dissipate the energy of a slide. We need to be very aware of the avalanche potential as the next series of storms reach Mono County.”
LONG VALLEY RESIDENTS GIVE THANKS
Community members show up to lend a hand, others hope to build something bigger

By Rea

On Saturday, January 28, over sixty Eastern Sierra Community Outreach members showed up to help Long Valley residents Dan Corning, Heidi Vetter, and Tina and Russel Villa dig their many buried belongings out from under an avalanche that struck their home on Sunday, January 22.

Vetter told The Sheet that an inspector was at the home on Tuesday, January 31, “and as soon as we can get the propane tested we can move back in downstairs, it’s such great news.” The Villa family, who have a young infant, Isabel, will face a little longer of a wait—the deck and stairway entrance to their part of the home were completely taken out by the avalanche.

Volunteers swarmed the area on Saturday, taking advantage of a sunny day to dig out the buried home. They dug a 3-foot perimeter around the building, cleaned out Dan Corning’s snow-filled garage (Corning owns Mountaindog Woodworking), un-buried the home’s propane tank and pulled out at least four cars (a fifth was dug out but still walled in by snow at the end of the day).

“All the cars are driveable,” Vetter told The Sheet. Indeed, volunteers marveled that not a single window was broken on any of the vehicles that were buried in the slide, which tore down the slope above the home at around 10 p.m. during the last of the snowstorms that pounded the Sierra in January. Dents, scratches and torn windshield wipers were the only visible damage that could be seen on most of the vehicles, though Russel Villa’s car is still being inspected by an insurance company for frame damage.

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“Today was amazing,” wrote Brigitte Denton, who helped to organize the dig out party. “Each time I looked up from shoveling I saw more and more people arriving to help... It just goes to show how much can be accomplished when we all work together.”

Denton, along with several other local organizers, used the dig out party as a sort of “jumping off” point for a project she hopes will take off: Eastern Sierra Community Outreach. The nascent organization aims to be a resource for neighbors helping neighbors, says Denton. A Facebook page just went live (many of the pleas for help from locals weathering January’s storms had previously been posted on the popular “Buy, Sell, Trade” group), and ski instructor Suzanne Notting-ham, who last week saw volunteers arrive en masse to help save her roof in the Ski Trails mobile home park, is working on an information sheet to distribute to those who wish to volunteer.

“I am a firm believer that highlighting the positive behaviors serves as a strong motivator for others to demon-strate similar actions,” Denton wrote in an email to The Sheet on Wednesday. She made mention of the community’s assistance to Mammoth Lakes Fire Department in shoveling out buried fire hydrants, other good samaritans helping to shovel off their neighbors’ roofs, and “people offering their showers, kitchens, and homes to those who lost propane services in Old Mammoth.”

Dan Corning and Heidi Vetter expressed their gratitude to their community for giving up their bluebird Saturday to help them recover from the slide.

“We are so grateful to all those who showed up to help us, some who did not even know us personally,” wrote Vetter. “This makes us amazed and proud to be part of this mountain community. Thank you to all the local businesses and individuals who have assisted us, including the GoFundMe donors. We feel supported and touched by so many people who contributed in the most meaningful ways, be it from a big hug to places to stay and everything in between.”

“We just want everybody to know that if it wasn’t for the help of the community and everybody backing us...we probably wouldn’t be able to stay up here,” said Tina Villa on Thursday. “We were thinking we might have to go home to Southern California, but through everyone’s support, we’re able to stay, and we’re so happy that we are.”

GoFundMe accounts are set up for both Dan and Heidi (www.gofundme.com/dan-corning-heidi) and the Villas (www.gofundme.com/wsuth/k-the-villas-avalanche-survivors). To find out more about Eastern Sierra Community Outreach, email Brigitte Denton at bdenton@beyondlimitsedu.com or visit their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/ESCom-munityOutreach/.

Above: Stanley the dog survived the avalanche and enjoyed a “pizza bone” on Saturday. Below: Alexia Craven shovels out a boat buried in debris.

Above: Natali Endo holds a “Road Closed” sign, found far from its origin. Below: The deck of the Villas’ home.

A beautiful day for working out those shoveling muscles.

Left: Jon Brusky chips away at a buried car. Right: Michael Montgomery and Zeke Hammack help dig out a trailer.

Pam Bold smiles for the camera as she uncovers Russel Villa’s Chevy Silverado.

A shovel takes a break from digging out a buried car in Long Valley.
surveys are conducted monthly. That data is then entered into ISNOBAL, which compares the “snow-on” data with a snow-free topographic map of the watershed being monitored created from data collected by the same means in the summer of 2012. The difference between the two maps is the volume of snow in the basin at a given time.

ASO also maps snow density from data collected using snow sensors and manual snow surveys. Together, these nearly continuous maps of snow density and snow depth can be used to compute the snow water equivalent, or how much water is present in the snow in a given drain- age at a given time. It’s a lot more accurate than the old method of taking a handful of discrete samples from discrete locations in a basin and using a linear regression to model the snowpack. The new method allows scientists to generate the most representative, or unbiased, estimate of the amount of water in a drainage that is likely to be available for water use from snowmelt and snowpack.

Prior to the winter of 2013, the first ASO aerial snow surveys were conducted, most data about the Sierra snowpack was collected on a monthly basis by human beings, or on a daily basis by sensors left over the winter in river drainages. Often, this meant that snow in the uppermost reaches of a watershed went undocumented, which made it very difficult for Water Managers to predict how much water would flow into riv- ers and reservoirs at a given time. According to Dr. Painter, the long history of manual snow surveys provides us with a good picture of how inaccurate they can be. Painter told The Sheet that, for manual snow counts made prior to 2013, about half of the forecasts were off by 20 percent or more.

Right now, the ASO receives fund- ing from NASA and the California Department of Water Resources. Ac- cording to Jeff Payne, Water Resources Director at the Friant Water Author- ity, Friant has decided to fund data collection by ASO in the San Joaquin drainage for the next three years. His organization decided to invest in the ASO project because it “has broad public benef- its.” Southern California Edison and Los Angeles Department of Water and Power have both expressed interest in ASO’s data.

Dr. Painter noted that this year could be the first time scientists have had access to comprehensive data about the Sierra snowpack during an above average snow year. With such a large snowpack, accurate informa- tion about how much runoff will flow through rivers and into reservoirs and when will likely save water manage- rers a lot of reservoirs. According to Gehrke, this has historically been an issue in heavy snow years where the snowpack persists well into the summer at elevations greater than 9,000 feet. Most manual snow surveys and snow sensors collect data below 9,000 feet. In the case of Tuolumne, that leaves a third of the watershed undocumented, and can lead to unexpected flooding or wasted water due to reservoir spillage. In addition, Dr. Painter is experi- menting with various Radar tech- nologies that could be used to survey snow from space. “ASO is the central proven method, but we’re trying out all kinds of radar technologies (which operate similarly to LIDAR except that they use radio waves) because those pass through clouds, which gives you the ability to operate them from space,” said Painter.

Painter’s crew made daily flights from Hot Creek Aviation Friday, January 27 through Tuesday, January 31. They surveyed the Lakes Basin, the Kings River Drainage, San Joaquin River Drainage, and the Tuolumne River Drainage, and the Merced River Drainage.
**BARS & MUSIC**

**Happy Hour**/
The Liberty Sports Bar and Grill. Pursuit of Happiness Hour, 3-6 p.m. $1 off draft beers, $2 off wine. $4 well drinks, $2 off specialty drinks. $5 Flatbread. 
*Open Saloon, 4-7 p.m. daily and all night on Mondays.*
*Robby's 4-6 p.m. every day.*
*Australia Hof, 4-6 p.m. Sun.-Thurs. Fri.-Sat. 4-5 p.m.*
*Whitebear Restaurant Bar & Lounge Unwind with daily drink and food specials 4-6 p.m. Half price sushi Mondays.*
*Cocktail Cellar Happy Hour 4:30-7 p.m. daily and all day Sunday. $3 dollar menu items, drink specials.*
*Pete's Bistro Happy Hour. $22 pasta bolognese, salad and glass of wine, 5:00-6 p.m. Specials on cocktails, wine, beer and menu items.*
*Happy Hour @ Sushi Rei. 4-5 p.m. daily. Half off apps and $5 hand roll + small sake. Sundays are all-night happy hour. Late night happy hour Fri-Sat 9-11 p.m.*
*Happy Hour @ The Bistro at Snowcreek. 4:30-6:30 p.m. daily. Mammoth Tavern Happy Hour Tuesday-Sunday 3:30-5:30 p.m. Closed Mondays.*
*Smokeyard weekend Happy Hour 4-6 p.m. in the bar only.*
*Side Door Happy hour 3-6 p.m. Side Door Wine Tasting, Sunday February 12th from 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.*
*Mammoth's famous Slocum's Happy Hour 4-6 p.m.*
*Giovanni's Happy Hour, daily 4-6 p.m. Large pizza and a pitcher of beer gets you free wings. *Lakanuki Happy Hour daily 3-6 p.m., $4.50 margaritas, Mai Tais. Happy Hour drink specials 10 p.m. - close.*
*Black Velvet Coffee's Happy Hour, from 4-6 p.m. every day. $1 glasses of wine for $5.*

**February 3-4**/
*Joe Gray Jr. at the Baby Grand playing smooth jazz at Tamarack. 5:30-9:30 V7/A (Vincenzo Thomas Amato & Matt Duggan) play 53 Kitchen & Cocktails starting at 9 p.m. Visit www.mammothmountain.com for info.*

**Saturday, February 4**/
*The Idle Hands String Band plays the Mountain Rambler Brewery. 8 p.m.*

**Sunday, February 5**/
*Super Bowl Party @ The Eatery & Mammoth Brewing Co. Tix are $25 and include food. Kickoff: 3:30 p.m. See ad. p. 2.*
*Super Bowl Party @ Liberty Sports Bar & Grill. $10 cover buys entry to quarterly prize raffle. See ad. p. 9.*
*Watch the Super Bowl @ John’s Pizza Works on large screen TVs. See ad. p. 7.*

**Tuesday, February 7**/
*Taco Tuesdays at the Outlaw Saloon, $2 off tacos (beef, chicken or fish) with topings.*
*Trivia Tuesday @ Mammoth Brewing Co. 7 p.m.*

**February 10-11**/
*Taco Tuesdays at the Outlaw Saloon, $2 off tacos (beef, chicken or fish) with topings.*
*Trivia Tuesday @ Mammoth Brewing Co. 7 p.m.*

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Poetry Out Loud

Students from Coleville, Lee Vining, and Mammoth Lakes will compete in the 7th annual Poetry Out Loud county competition on Sunday, February 5 at Memorial Hall in Bridgeport at 2:00 p.m. for a chance to represent Mono County in the State finals in Sacramento. The winner then will go on to compete at the $20,000 prize at the national level in Washington D.C. For the first time, the competition is being held in the County Sea in the Heavenly Memorial Hall beside the County Courthouse. The event is free to the public.

Inyo County’s Poetry Out Loud Competition will be held on Thursday, February 9 at the ICA Theater at 6:30 p.m.

Each participating student will present their two favorite poems from the official Poetry Out Loud selection of published poems eligible for this year’s contest.

Sponsors include California Arts Council and Mammoth Lakes Foundation.

MUF comment period

The Town of Mammoth Lakes is circulating for public review a Draft EIR for the proposed Mammoth Creek Park West New Community Multi-Use Facilities Project. A 45-day public review period for the Draft EIR ends on February 13, 2017. Town staff will respond to all comments received on the Draft EIR.

Copies of the Draft EIR are available at the following locations: Town of Mammoth Lakes, Community and Economic Development Department, 437 Old Mammoth Road, Suite R; Mammoth Lakes Library, 400 Sierra Park Road. All comments and responses to this notice should be submitted in writing to: Sandra Moberly, Community and Economic Development Manager, P.O. Box 1609, 437 Old Mammoth Road, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546, 760.936.3633, or via email at smoberly@townofmammothlakes.ca.gov.

The Town will conduct a public meeting during the regularly scheduled Planning and Economic Development Commission Meeting on Wednesday, February 8, 2017 at 2:00 p.m. in Suite Z. Additional information about the project can be viewed online at www.planmcp.com.

AARP Tax Aide Program

The Mono County AARP Tax Aide program started back up on Feb. 1. Program is open to all.

Last year, committed volunteers helped 509 folks prepare their returns – both Federal and State (and in some cases, multiple states). All of the preparers are trained and certified and many have been doing this for over 8 years.

This year Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 1-5 p.m.

Appointments: 760.934.5674, but drop-ins also welcome.

TOWN STUFF


June Lake Citizens Advisory Committee “Short Term Rental Subcommittee” meeting @ 6 p.m. followed by regular meeting at 7. June Lake Community Center.

February 7-9/ 36 Lunchtime Special at Mammoth Ice Rink. Skate away your lunch hour. 12:10-3 p.m. $2 School Skate Special from 1:30-3 p.m.

Tuesday, February 7/ Toddler Time @ Mammoth Lakes Community Center, with Angela and Victoria. 9:30-11:00 a.m.

Mammoth Lakes Library Makerspace open house 2-6 p.m. Come and see the newly expanded space!

MHS Basketball takes on Mojave @ home. Girls varsity plays 3 p.m. Boys Varsity plays 4:30 p.m.

Mono County Board of Supervisors meets starting 9 a.m. Bridgeport Courthouse.

Financial Aid Workshop for High School Seniors/Parents. 4:30-6:30 p.m. @ the MHS Library Computer Lab. Bring your 2015 Tax Return! We will work on the FAFSA or Dream Act Application on-line with help from Mrs. Petersen & Mrs. Cuellar.

Wednesday, February 8/ Story Time @ Mammoth Lakes Library, 10:30 a.m.

TurboKick classes at the Mammoth Lakes Community Center with Steph, 6:30-7:30 p.m. $7 drop-in rate. Info: 562.706.4273.

Eastern Sierra Tri-County Fair Grounds meets 9 a.m. @ the Fairgrounds office in Mammoth.

Mammoth’s Planning and Economic Development Commission meets. 2 p.m. Suite Z. Minaret Mall.

UPCOMING

Thursday, February 9/ Inyo County Poetry Out Loud competition (recitation by high school students) @ the Inyo Council for the Arts (ICA) Theater. 137 So. Main St. in Bishop. 6:30 p.m. See sidebar, this page.

Saturday, February 11/ The Foundation for Excellence at BUHS is hosting a “Salsa and Sombrero Fiesta” at the Tri-County Fairgrounds featuring music by Incendio. Starts 5:30 p.m. Tic: $40 or $75 for 2. Dining, Dancing, Margaritas, Pinata Baffle. Info: 760.347.6005.

COSA Bird Walk in Bishop. Meet 8:30 a.m. at the BLM/USFS building on West Line. All levels welcome. Info: hillarybehr@yahoo.com.

Coffee with Supervisor Bob Gardner @ Trout Town Joe in June Lake from 9-10:30 a.m. This is a chance for citizens meet Bob to discuss any topic of interest. Look for add’l upcoming events in Lee Vining and Mammoth as well.

Motocross practice @ the Tri-County Fairgrounds. Gates open 6 a.m. $30 practice free. Spectators free. Camping reservations Info: 760.873.3588.

Owens River cleanup with California Waterfowl Association. Pleasant Valley Campground, 8 a.m. Lunch for volunteers. Info: Chris 818.288.3271.

February 11-12/ Chamber Music Unbound presents The Felli Piano Trio in a concert entitled “Love is in the Air”

Tickets are available online (www.chambermusicunbound.org), at the Rocky joint, the Inyo Council for the Arts, or at the door on concert nights. Saturday show: 7:30 p.m. at Cerro Coso College in Mammoth. Sunday show: 4 p.m. at Cerro Coso College in Bishop.

AT THE MOVIES

Minaret Cinemas

La La Land (PG-13): Hollywood musical nominated for a record 14 Oscars this year.


For movie times, call 760.934.3131 or visit mammothlakesmovies.com

MLH Homebuyer Education class

Mammoth Lakes Housing will host a FREE Homebuyer Education class on Wednesday, February 15th at 12 p.m. at 587 Old Mammoth Road, Suite #3. Stop by to learn about affordable housing, credit scores, local down payment assistance programs, and more. Info/ RSVP: 760.934.7470 or patricia@mammothlakeshousing.org
Sierra Employment Services is hiring for the following positions:

**Class B Driver $DOE**  
Office: 235 Main St., Mammoth Lakes  
Housekeepers M $13-$18  
Cooks M $11-$14  
Snow Shovelers M $20-$25  
Call 760.924.0523 or 760.873.8599  
See our full job list online at www.Sierralemployment.com

Accountant or full charge bookkeeper needed for a full service athletic, competitive pay, medical insurance, 401(k), profit sharing, flex time. Send resume via email to butsheroa@gmail.com or Fax resume to 760.934.5386.

Work With The Best. Footloose Sports, #1 in the industry, is looking for a motivated individual, is passionate about winter sports, and motivated to provide the best in customer service. We have full and part-time positions open in our sales, rental and ski school. We’re looking for responsible individuals who work as hard as they play. Experience is preferred, but not required. Great lifting and a clean DMV are required. Please call 760-924-3961 or stop by the store located at 1401 Tavern Rd. Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546. Interviews will be conducted for qualification and to pick up an application.

My Mammoth Shuttles is a commercial bus line that operates in Mammoth Lakes operating since 2009. We are currently looking to add to our team and are looking to hire a professional, friendly, self-motivated individual(s). 2 years passenger driving experience preferred. A CDL is preferred but not required. Qualified candidates must pass background check and pre and random drug testing. Join our DMV record is a must. This is a full time, part-time, full-time position with evenings and weekends hours ranging from 4-12 per week or more. Driver/Chauffeurs can expect to make between $15-32/hr with gravy tips. This is an ideal opportunity for someone who already has a part time or full time job and is looking to pick up a few more hours. Must be open to work some weekend shifts and holidays.  
For more information call 760-709-6459 and to send resume email to info@mymammothshuttles.com.

The Town of Mammoth Lakes is looking for a Temporary Snow Removal Operator. Full-time for the winter season. This is a Class B required. Visit www.townofmammothlakes.ca.gov for more information. Mammoth Spa Creations is looking for additional members for its team. These are Full Time, Year Round positions. We have immediate and ongoing needs for a Spa Maintenance position and an Office/Sales Associate position. These positions also offer great benefits, benefits, benefits, holidays. Experience is preferred, but not required. Full-time and a clean DMV are required. Please call 760-924-3961 or stop by the store located at 1401 Tavern Rd. Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546. Interviews will be conducted for qualification and to pick up an application.

Mammoth Rock’ N Bowl is looking for additional employees. We are looking for full-time employees. The Rock has a new expansion and we need more people to help. We offer full-time and part-time positions. Please call 760-924-0400 for more information. www.mammothrocknbowl.com

Sierra Nevada Resort & Spa

Housekeepers ($11)  
Cooks ($12)  
Maintenance Worker

Please complete an application at 164 Old Mammoth Rd. or email resume to janet@sierralulus.com

Part Time Year Round Maintenance Labo­ner Needed For Condominium Complex. You may complete an application at 2289 Sierra Nevada Road or email you contact information to info@sierraonline.com.

Full time position available. Seeking a responsible, outgoing hospitality/ reservation agent for local management company. Excellent phone/customer service skills required. Previous reservation experience preferred. Flexible 32-40 hours per week. Starting immediately. $12-14/ hr DOE. Please email resume to cindy@mammothsierraonline.com

Gomez’s Restaurant & Tequillaria is looking for a full time dishwasher/ Line cook to work in our fast-paced restaurant. We have immediate and ongoing needs for Line cooks, Hosts, Hostesses, Bus personnel, and dishwasher. We have a full kitchen and open concept service. Sportswear, parkas, pants, packs & duffels. Hems, too! Call 760.873.4499.

The Following Person Is Doing Business As:

**Help Wanted**

**Help Wanted**

**Help Wanted**

**Help Wanted**
Aquarius: This next year of your life looks promising, especially for aspects of your career. That’s why you should keep tending and weeding the soils of your work life, because it will lead to blossoms, particularly starting this fall. The good news is the struggles of last year will become fertilizer, including anyone who’s been trying to feed you fertilizer, including anyone who’s been trying to feed you fertilizer.

Pisces: It’s all right if you don’t have all your ducks in row. It makes them harder for others to shoot down anyway. That’s why all you’ve got to is keep on happily and hopefully ducking and bobbing along. You never know what kind of miracles will be awaiting along the next leg in your journey, and, sooner or later, you will find something worth quacking about.

Aries: Since your fellow fire sign of Sagittarius mentioned Pato Banton without passing along one of the reggae star’s lyrics, please accept these as a new mantra, and as a sign of your increasing luck: “I do these as a new mantra, and as a reggae star’s lyrics, please accept without passing along one of the Banton!”

Taurus: This much we know is true:
A) In a world full of Justin Biebers it’s always best to be a Johnny Cash.
B) Never forget why you started.
C) Talking to some people is like trying to fold a fitted sheet. Q) Bowling is a great thing to do in your spare time.

Gemini: For Geminis in relationships, this would be a good time to introduce a regular reconnecting routine into your life. You could go out for coffee or wine, or go for a Nordic ski or take a yoga class or give each other earwax candles or schedule some mind-boggling booty shaking. For all you singles out there, try this line: “My mom would kill me if she knew I didn’t buy a drink for someone with a smile, and booty, like yours.”

Cancer: This next year promises to be very full and fulfilling for your work life. And while it will be easy to get consumed by all your progress and celebrations, don’t forget to keep your eyes on the prize, which should be your home and family life. Please remember that kicking butt and taking names isn’t nearly as fun if you don’t have people to share it with.

Leo: Just in case you forgot, we’re all meant to be broken. But unlike piñatas, we can be fixed and our insides aren’t made entirely of candy. That’s why your latest mantra comes from Papa Hemingway himself, “The world breaks everyone, and afterward many are strong at the broken places.” Since he’s talking about you, use this line to your new toast.

Virgo: According to the Christian Science Monitor, marijuana was once used by the U.S. government as a truth serum. Canada has the most lifetime pot users per capita. Marijuana usage among youth in Colorado has gone down since it was legalized—apparently, because if the old people are doing it, it can’t be that cool. The lesson here is: you need to relax more and stop worrying about little things like useless statistics.

Libra: One of the challenges most Libras have is making up their minds. You folks are so good as seeing things from different perspectives that your thoughts often cancel each other out. It will help if you realize that even you can’t see everything, and, quite frankly, you don’t want to. Life can be a lot like cable television: there’s a lot of stuff to look at, but most of it is crap.

Scorpio: Sometimes honesty really is the best policy. For example, as Mark Twain reminded us, being honest gives you less to remember. He also wrote, “Honesty is the best policy—when there’s money in it.” That’s why an honest line like this often works, “Let’s go. You’re the best looking person in here and I could really use some quality snuggle time.”

Sagittarius: To help you feel happier and more balanced, please add more silence and more positive music into your life. Listening to stuff like Mozart, Pato Banton or Cat Stevens is like giving your soul a hug. As the latter sings, “Well if you want to sing out, sing out. If you want to be free, be free. Cause there’s a million things to be. You know that there are.”

Capricorn: To help you relax, trust and enjoy your life more, please remember, recite or write on a dry erase board these lines from poet Robert Frost, “In three words I can sum up everything I’ve learned about life: It goes on.” From conservationist Rachel Carson, “It is not half so important to know as to feel.” And from Clouds, “Love your enemies—it annoys the hell out’em.”
SPORTS

SOCCER IN THE SNOW
Weather wreaks havoc on high school sports
By Bodine

S now is great if you’re wearing ski
or snowshoes, but cleats get no
traction in the stuff. Tom Cage, Mammoth High School
Husky girls varsity soccer coach told The Sheet the weather has been a
“nightmare” for the team. As of
Wednesday, February 1, the team had
played 5 league games in 10 days,
making up for cancelled and resched-
uled games. The team has another 4
or 5 league games to go.

Mammoth girls will be playing
home games in Bishop if that field’s
clear. If not, Cage said, the team will
keep looking south until they find a
place where they can play, even if it’s
in Mojave.

“A home game, two hours away…
only in Mammoth,” Cage said.

Stacy Van Ness, Bishop High School
Athletic Director, said that so far only
one soccer game has gone as sched-
uled. There’s been too much snow
and ice on the roads or the fields to
host a game.

Basketball games are easy to
reschedule, says Van Ness. Most of
those games were cancelled due to
road conditions. Except for a leaky
roof, which is not uncommon, bas-
ketball games can be played no mat-
ter the weather.

Lizzy Van Ness, the Central Section has
extended its deadline for play and
there have been no forced forfeitures,
either. Burroughs High School in
Ridgecrest graciously offered the use
of its fields for play, but that won’t
clear the roads.

Van Ness couldn’t remember why
each game was delayed or cancelled,
there’ve been so many, but she of-
her own.

The girls team

Van Ness said she couldn’t remem-
ber the last time the Bishop team
practiced outside. Soccer players
have practiced on a field while it was
snowing, and they’ve also practiced
inside the gym and at the Tri-County
Fairgrounds.

Mammoth’s two soccer teams have
been practicing in the gym, sharing
that space with two basketball teams.
Practices have also been held at Mill-
pond, outside Bishop.

Despite the conditions, Mammoth
is 5-1 in league play and tied for first
place in the Desert Mountain League.
Mammoth varsity boys are ranked
first with a 5-0 record. Bishop boys
varsity is ranked second in the High
Desert League with a 4-2 record, girls
varsity stands at fourth place, 2-2-1.

Bishop JV has only played a single
game. Mammoth Junior Varsity has a
2-1 record.

The cancellations throw an icy
wrench in everybody’s schedule. Van
Ness explained. Referees, umpires
and coaches have day jobs and lives
and have already scheduled game
days and practices, which now have
to be rescheduled.

Cage said this season has been
challenging but Athletic Director
Heidi Thompson keeps working hard
to find alternative locations.

“The kids are giving up a lot more
than they expected,” Van Ness said, as
their schedules have to be rewritten
as well.

The calendar is still in flux and
more snow is falling, but for the most
current schedule of games call Mam-
moth High School at 760.934.8541.

AND HARTLEY TAKES …

L ebron James is the most whiny
ass, most “everyone motherloven’me
superstar athlete I have ever
seen. And he has taken his ridiculous-
ness to a whole new level. He is now
complaining that “he, Kyrie Irving
and Kevin Love” are doing everything
and they “gotta get some help.”

How much help does he need?
How many teams have three great
players? How many teams have one
great player? How many teams have
given their star player GM privileges
to trade away Andrew Wiggins?
How many teams have given their star
player negotiation powers to get
Shumpert paid?, J.R. Smith paid and
got Tristan Thompson a max con-
tract even though he’s basically a role
player? Cleveland has the HIGHEST
PAYROLL IN THE NBA.

The NFL says “diagnosed concus-
sions” are down. The NFL is so full of
$**t that it is impossible to tell. I guess
concussions are down … diagnosed
concussions, I mean. Every week we
watch games and see players com-
pletely sideways and wobbling off the
field and then return to play two or
more games after the independent con-
sequence neurologist brain and spinal
and brain tissue specialist “examines” him and verifies
he can say the sky is blue.

The Eagles want QB Carson Wentz
to have input on player moves and
pickups. I cannot contain my laugh-
er. A wasted pick of a QB who can’t
throw the ball farther than 7 yards
beyond the line of scrimmage a few
days removed from his rookie season
who doesn’t know anything is going
to have input on player and roster
moves. I wish I were a Browns fan so
I could be real happy about this team
sucking for the next 10 years. Nah …
I don’t wish I were a Cowboy fan for
anything.

The Raiders are about to screw up
the best thing going for them in years.
Everyone had been saying Al Davis’
son Mark is breaking the trend of cra-
zzy his dad had going. But the genetics
appear too strong. The Raiders have
a move to Vegas planned. They have
corporations ready to invest. They
had this major individual (Billionaire
Sheldon Adelson) ready to invest
hundreds of millions of dollars. But
then Mark Davis, the Raider owner,
one of the least affluent owners in the
NFL, with a 10-year old kid haircut,
overplays his hand and chases off
Adelson, thinking Goldman Sachs
would step in if Adelson walked. Now
Goldman Sachs is pulling out, too.

I can just see him in the negotia-
tions with these investors … there’s a
WILLIE WONKA AND THE CHOCO-
LATE FACTORY VIBE EVERYWHERE.
Yeah … and I want lots of bubbles,
bubbles everywhere. And girls with
… yeah, we want strippers walking up
and down the aisles doing in-seat lap
dances. I think this is gonna work.

Mark Davis … welcome to San An-
tonio, or welcome back to Oakland.

The San Francisco 49ers hired John
Lynch as GM. John Lynch, who has
as much experience in an NFL front
office as I have with sobriety. Are you
kidding me? How is John Lynch quali-
fied to be an NFL GM? Because he went
to Stanford like Elway? They gave him
a 6-year contract. If you are a Niner fan
… sell everything now. Your next GM
in two years will be Elway.

Oh … there is a football game this
week. Without the Steelers playing,
I almost forgot about that. Let’s see
what we’ve got.

Coach: Do we need to discuss this?
The Pats have better coaching.
QB: Matt Ryan is the hottest QB
right now. Tom Brady is the BEST
EVER. I can’t stand Brady but he is
downs the best ever.

RB: Falcons have a great tandem.
I think they benefit from the wide-
open offense driven by the passing
game. I think we are going to see it
regularly. When you think they aren’t
going to run, they maul you. When
you think they are going to run, one
of their leprechaun receivers eats you
up. I will take the Pats RBs in the red
zone and the Pats RBs are great out
of the backfield, too. Give the Falcons
the edge, but the Pats coaching …

Receivers: Everyone will say the Falcons have the best.
Players: I guess Julio Jones is.
Sanu and Gabriel are good, too,
but they’re made better by all the
distraction Julio creates. The Pats
receivers are precise, detailed and quick.

Defensive: The Falcons are better
than last year, but the Pats are bet-
ter than they are and possess the
best scoring defense (least amount
of points given up this year) in the league.

Intangibles: One Falcons RB is
saying after the game he is looking
to get paid like the best RB in the
league. The Patriots are “focused on
the game.”

My guess: The Pats will make this
game look like something no one
expects. The Pats will ugly it up for
the Falcons. They will put pressure
on Matt Ryan … watch defensive line-
en Alan Branch and Chris Long.
Something about Chris Long makes me
think he will have a huge game. Also
TE Martellus Bennett. A couple of
veterans who took big pay cuts to
come to New England in pursuit of
a ring. Branch is just a beast in the
middle. I think the Pats will do things
on defense to reduce the speed of
the Falcons. They are fast, but you
have to hit them off the line, move
them around. I think the Pats will do
that. The way to beat the Patriots is
to pressure Brady up the middle on
defense and Atlanta really doesn’t have
that personnel. Their best pass rusher
is from the outside in Vic Beasley and
Brady can handle that. Take the Pats
to win 32-23.
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