DON’T HOLD THE KETCHUP
Mammoth Lakes Tourism opts to dump more into FY 2020-2021 Budget
By Page
A
fter running out of time during its previous meeting due to pro-

longed budget deliberation, the Mammoth Lakes Tourism board reconvened on Mon-
day afternoon to finalize the ’20-’21 budget and vote on funding distribution. Part of the reason that MLT’s meeting ran over from last week was due to a conversation about funding air subsidy and domestic marketing during the pandemic. MLT Executive Director John Urdi had originally planned to cut spending on air service subsidies by pausing Denver-to-Mammoth flights while reducing marketing efforts on the East Coast. Mammoth Mountain Ski Area representative Eric Clark opposed the cuts, arguing in favor of continued air service through Denver and marketing in the Northeast. His logic: we have to continue to strengthen travel from those markets, so why stop now?
At Monday’s meeting, Urdi began by going over his logic for the cuts once again. He explained that the reductions in funding mirror a projected revenue reduction for the year ahead, coupled with a projected air travel decline stemming from Covid-19 worries. Clark had a different view. “Air service is a program that we’ve continually been trying to develop,” he said, “half of the expense of [Mammoth Lakes Tourism] are kind of designated to go into the air service category… 75% of the cuts are actually coming from air service and air service marketing as well.”
“I find that position not to be the direction that the board is going,” Clark added, doubling down on his opposition to the budget cuts. “Flying somebody from Minneapolis or Texas through Denver to Mammoth has proven to be very effective see BUDGET, page 5

THE YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS - PART III
Black Lives Matter protesters during an 8:46 moment of silence at Mammoth Creek Park last Saturday afternoon. More photos p.10.

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POLICING THE POLICE
Ingrid Braun on training, budget
By Page
R
ecent protests around the country against police brutality have resulted in increased dialogue and questions about the funding law enforcement receives. Arguments for decreasing that funding advocate for shifting money to other community programs like mental health and social services in an effort to mitigate the issues that often result in calls to 911 and arrests.
Mono County Sheriff Ingrid Braun took time at the beginning of Tuesday’s Mono Board of Supervisors meeting to respond to a letter from a local community member about Sheriff’s Department training and funding. The letter in question, from Claire Landowski, referenced a recent Sheriff’s Department press release about an arrest that county law enforcement played a hand in. The arrest in question was related to a high speed pursuit through Mono County that ended across the border in the Nevada; the person taken into custody was black. Landowski wrote, “First of all, it is unclear why the Sheriff’s department would highlight this particular arrest. Surely Mono County law enforcement agencies make a number of arrests in any given month, but this is the only one posted to Facebook since April 14 (and I’d note that that one highlights the arrest of two Piute men--do you only post the arrests of non-white people?).” She continued, “Second, it seems a violation of privacy and in poor taste to post a photo of the man arrested-- I disagree with the posting of mug shots for low-level crimes. Third, it is inescapable that the department is highlighting the arrest of a black man for speeding while the rest of the country protests the brutal treatment of black people at the hands of police officers. This post is, at best, tone deaf and at worst, blatantly racist.” Braun explained that her department often posts arrests on Facebook when they are noteworthy or out of the ordinary, adding “pursuits are exceedingly rare in Mono County.”
Landowski’s letter also made a number of requests of the Sheriff’s Department training and funding. The letter in question, from Claire Landowski, referenced a recent Sheriff’s Department press release about an arrest that county law enforcement played a hand in. The arrest in question was related to a high speed pursuit through Mono County that ended across the border in the Nevada; the person taken into custody was black. Landowski wrote, “First of all, it is unclear why the Sheriff’s department would highlight this particular arrest. Surely Mono County law enforcement agencies make a number of arrests in any given month, but this is the only one posted to Facebook since April 14 (and I’d note that that one highlights the arrest of two Piute men--do you only post the arrests of non-white people?).” She continued, “Second, it seems a violation of privacy and in poor taste to post a photo of the man arrested-- I disagree with the posting of mug shots for low-level crimes. Third, it is inescapable that the department is highlighting the arrest of a black man for speeding while the rest of the country protests the brutal treatment of black people at the hands of police officers. This post is, at best, tone deaf and at worst, blatantly racist.” Braun explained that her department often posts arrests on Facebook when they are noteworthy or out of the ordinary, adding “pursuits are exceedingly rare in Mono County.”

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Orwell = optimist p. 3/ Become less Clueless p. 12/ Disc jockey p. 15/
2,000 POUNDS = A TON OF GOOD WILL

A few weeks I was forwarded an article with the title: “How the Mammoth Lakes Food Bank is Saving the Town’s Tourism Industry.”

The article was produced by a woman named Madeleine Barber for TTG Media, an industry trade group based in the United Kingdom.

The article was based upon an hour-long phone conversation that Barber had with Mammoth Lakes Tourism’s Executive Director John Urdi.

And it was a well-written, feel-good story, talking about the extra $180,000 raised for the Food Bank in charitable contributions from the community, the challenges he’s faced juggling his day job with the 35 hours/week he puts in at the Food Bank, and even how the Bank has brought the community together and introduced him to new friends.

And the Food Bank has particularly aided those who may be ineligible for unemployment checks and/or CARES Act largesse.

“We recognized that there were a lot of people here that were going to suffer,” said Urdi.

The story wraps up with a description of Mammoth’s bucolic setting and a note of optimism, “after being quarantined in Los Angeles people are going to want to get back to nature.” This is an idea that fuelled the release of a brand-new tagline for Mammoth Lakes: “Release yourself back into the wild.”

Although the international tourism market at Mammoth Lakes is small at 18%, almost half of that is made up of visitors from the UK.

I finish the story and the first thing I said to my cynical self was, “I wonder what that cost.”

So I tracked down the author of the story and wrote her the following email:

Dear Madeleine:

My name is Ted Carleton and I live in the Mammoth Lakes, Calif. area. Someone recently forwarded a piece you wrote about the Mammoth Lakes Food Bank, which appears to have achieved fairly wide circulation.

I was interested to note that the Food Bank initiative was something it wished to highlight.

But it is rather depressing … that everything, no matter its mission, no matter its intent, is ultimately boiled down to a marketing opportunity.

I do object to the suggestion (that was indeed made to me) that the story didn’t cost us anything. At best, that’s a disingenuous claim. Hmm. So if I don’t pay the prostitute, but I pay my friend to pay the prostitute, I’ll see her later, does it count as a trip to the brothel? Or maybe I simply object to myself and my lousy business acumen. I wrote a Food Bank story a few months back and didn’t get paid a dime for it.

Point being … I dunno. Marketing ain’t free, and MLT decided that the Food Bank initiative was something it wished to highlight.

But perhaps the fundamental question is this: Does a story about a community that saves itself with a Food Bank linger in a person’s brain to the extent that they’ll book a trip to that destination a year or two later?

And is this the best use of local marketing dollars right now?

Many thanks,
Maddie

*£2,000 equals $2,500.

According to MLT’s Michael Vanderhurst, Black Diamond, MLT’s media agency in the UK, was responsible for bringing about the recent Travel Trade Gazette (TTG) feature.

TTG is described as one of the leading travel trade publications in the UK, and a key source of keeping the primary airline, tour operator, and travel agent contacts abreast of updates and developments with destinations around the world.

TTG requested details of “positive new stories” that were helping the tourism industry during lockdown. MLT and Black Diamond shared details of the MLT food bank initiative with the hope that we could generate an article highlighting the efforts of the food bank and how it has helped the local community and workers while many businesses have closed.

The resulting feature is said to have reached 120,000 readers online, and was also posted on TTG’s Facebook (12,300) and Twitter (47,000) pages, and has helped Mammoth Lakes stand apart from other destinations.

The latest numbers The Sheet had available at its fingertips from FY 2017-2018 show that MLT pays Black Diamond a $20,500 annual agency fee. MLT spent an additional $42,500 for P.R. work that year.

By the way, I listened in on the Bishop City Council meeting on Monday. Council made zero changes before approving its deficit-spending 2020-2021 budget. The city has let go of part-time employees and retained all the full-timeers. It has also implemented a hiring freeze.

The city will also place a 1% TUT (Transactions and Use Tax) increase on the November ballot in a bid to shore up its finances. Council members spent a whole bunch of time wordsmithing the ballot language so as to assure voters that the tax hike is all about preservation of essential services. Mayor Laura Smith voted against the measure so she can say she did, though indicated during deliberation she was willing to approve a three-quarter point hike.
Nothing more, nothing less

Dear Editor,

In a June 6th letter to the editor, Ryan Carey states the Mammoth Lakes Police Department displays a racist symbol on their patrol vehicles. The symbol in question is a black rectangle with a blue line running horizontally through the middle. Carey knows this symbol is racist because he read about it on the internet near the bottom of a Wikipedia article after bypassing the actual meaning and origin of the phrase.

For a police officer the thin blue line can have several meanings (see the above-mentioned Wikipedia article and Chief Davis’s response). The symbol referenced by Carey is a remembrance to officers who have died in the line of duty. Nothing more, nothing less. That design can even be worn in lieu of an all-black mourning band on a peace officer’s badge after another cop is killed in the line of duty. I refuse to let an ideologue bypass the actual meaning and origin of the phrase.

The thin blue line is for Natalie Corona, Ronil Singh, Wytasha Carter, Bronson Kainama Kaliloa, Damon Gutzwiller, et al. I guarantee the men and women who served with those on this list are all equally heavy hearted regardless of the skin color of the decedent.

Thank you.

Jack Benham
Kentfield

Orwell was an optimist

Dear Editor,

How about putting a black fist next to the thin blue line and above the black fist put the rainbow flag and above to the rainbow flag a ‘My other car is a boat’ sticker, above that a ‘Dog is my co-pilot’ and above that a ‘SKI NAKED’ and above that an ‘ORWELL WAS AN OPTIMIST’.

But then, they might not be able to see out the rear windshield. So, department policy should limit it to one sticker for, how would they put it, public safety. That sticker should have to be the thin blue line flag or just the thin blue line, because, as Chief Davis said, they mean the same thing. At the police station, the Town should mandate that they lower the American flag and raise the thin blue line flag. If they don’t have it, I’m sure someone in town has one and would be tickled to lend it out.

What does Chief Davis mean by ‘order’? How about ‘chaos’? What side of that binary are the police on? How about the world isn’t binary. How about it’s complicated.

Thanks for the protection

Rick Bellis
Former MLPD Officer & Game Warden

Remove the stickers

Dear Editor,

The debate regarding the ‘thin blue line’ flags and stickers needs to broaden and deepen.

Chief Davis and members of his department have responded to concerns about this flag/sticker with a nauseating doublespeak that could turn any American into a ‘chaos and order, anarchy and the rule of law’ adherent. It’s a false choice that fosters a built-in adversarial ethos.

It’s no coincidence that this bastardized flag is black and white. We need public servants with the desire and ability to discern and navigate the gray areas with intellect, sensitivity, and a better sense of who works for whom. We are seeing too many images lately of citizens having their civil rights trampled and curtailed by LEOs. Conversely, we have seen images of compassion, care, and extraordiarily thoughtful policing. The latter need to inform and become the model for the former.

If the people you serve express discomfort with the stickers your officers are putting on patrol vehicles (public property), Chief, BIG UP YOURSELF AND REMOVE THE STICKERS! You are on the wrong side of history at present. Remedy this lameness now please.

Peter Baxter
Crowley Lake
The residents of Down Canyon June Lake are waking up to a horror of SCE tree removal and potentially fatal tree trimming. I live in the Clark Tract, down-canyon in June Lake. Our awareness of the situation here started Friday May 29 when I noticed a man outside my home looking at the trees. It turned out he was a contractor hired by SCE to mark trees for trimming and removal. Upon querying the worker, I learned that SCE was “returning,” after their “emergency” tree removal and trimming of last year, to essentially execute an 80-foot horizontal clear-cut of trees and other vegetation outside. What is most disturbing about what is about to happen is the sheer number of trees they plan to remove. Obviously, what drives this activity is the recent string of devastating California fires caused by utility company electrical equipment, and the desire of those companies to remove themselves from liability.

We, in June Lake, definitely support the concept of fire prevention, but what is hard to support is a fire prevention plan that becomes so extreme that some aspects lack rationality, and thus become unnecessarily destructive to the character of a neighborhood and the preservation of trees.

I have recently learned that SCE did a presentation of this plan to the BOS on April 30, 2020. I assume that their presentation was intended as outreach, but there has been no outreach that I know of to residents, either by SCE or by Mono County. In addition, although SCE claims it will notify all affected private property owners, it does NOT notify vacant landowners, nor does it mail out notices as they claim (in their presentation). Instead, SCE merely puts flyers on doorknobs, or on trees as I have witnessed, which does NOT constitute “notification.” This is especially inadequate in an area where there are so many second homeowners, and at a time when the added Covid-19 crisis dictates these homeowners stay away.

The proposed tree removal and trimming goes beyond SCE’s 70-foot legal easement for high voltage wires in its proposed 80-foot horizontal clear-cut. It is also my understanding that the vertical clearance for 115 KV wires is supposed to be 18 feet, to account for wire sag, not 30 feet as SCE is planning to carry out. SCE is also carrying out 12-foot clear-cut horizontally and vertically around distribution lines, those lower voltage lines that bring power to your homes. In addition, with trees that are only marked for trimming, it should be noted that their style of trimming becomes a death sentence for many healthy trees.

I reached out to Mono County’s Board of Supervisors at Tuesday’s meeting with public comment. My comments instigated the addition of an emergency agenda item at that meeting. The BOS said it would try to get a community meeting with SCE to get clarification and answers to our questions. As a result, they have managed to “hijack” an already scheduled SCE online meeting that was intended for Inyo and Mono County outreach next Tuesday, June 16th at 6 pm. If anyone would like to “Zoom” into this meeting, here is the link: SCE.com/wildfiresafetymeetings

Note that Mammoth Lakes will also be experiencing what June Lake is facing, even if it is only with lower voltage lines.

Ann Tozier
June Lake

Russian roulette
Dear Editor

We didn’t get the chance to respond to Mr. Rogitz’ last letter (the Sheet, May 30), but the delay now lets us share our views on both it, and some of the other letters in your most recent edition.

Firstly, Mr Rogitz asks about expertise. For the record, we both have PhD’s (computer science & biochemistry), and have worked our entire careers in research roles. One of us works in medical research. We feel qualified to opine on how the scientific process works. Mr Rogitz conflates the unsettled science around COVID with the public health and political interactions that inevitably happened as we responded to the pandemic. Blaming science for actions that scientists for that is misguided, but perhaps understandable. What is not understandable is his constant minimization of the dangers presented by COVID-19 and the responses necessary to contain it. One example of this is the completely false statement that the fatality rate for those under 50 is less than the flu. The statistics, while still becoming clear, show that COVID-19 is at least 10x more deadly than the flu for this demographic.

The second letter we want to address is that of Ms. Cage. While no matter well intended, there are several serious problems and misunderstandings in what she proposes. Firstly, anecdotal, personal experiences are not reflective of the overall population. Secondly, even young, healthy people are at risk of death or life-long complications. What Ms. Cage proposes is essentially what Sweden tried, and it hasn’t worked out very well for them at all - they have approximately twice the per-capita fatality rate of the USA, and are very far from developing herd immunity. We propose the following analogy: imagine a large caliber machine gun, loaded with ammunition that is 99% blank (1% real, conservatively reflecting the death rate for COVID-19 in the general population). Would you shoot that gun into a crowd? Of your friends, neighbors and relatives? Would you volunteer to be in that crowd? And for the elderly, or those at more risk (for whom catching COVID-19 is more akin to playing russian roulette with a 6-shot revolver), should we condemn them to a year or more of wearing full PPE for grocery shopping? Of not seeing their family socially? What about their caregivers? We should continue to firmly reject all such calls. Lastly, and perhaps a more minor point, Ms. Cage seems confused about differences between passive and active immunity. You do indeed gain active immunity from vaccines (and we know that given a choice between catching any disease, and getting a vaccine, we’ll take the vaccine every time). Passive immunity comes from being given antibodies only (e.g. through plasma from a recovered victim) and does confer only temporary protection. We mention this because one of our neighbors asked us about this specific issue/letter the other day, and we don’t want this misinformation circulating in the community.

Lastly, we would renew our request to trust the experts in the areas of public health, epidemiology etc., and take their advice. We don’t claim to be those experts ourselves, but we can recognize that they are trying to get us collectively through this, and defying their recommendations or actively spreading misinformation is neither courageous or smart.

Dallas & Alistair Veitch
Mammoth Lakes

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BUDGET continued from page 1

for us and just stating that we’ll get rid of the Denver flight is not what I want to see.” According to Clark, United has made it clear that the Denver-Mammoth route is important to the airline going into Winter 2020-2021.

Board Secretary Jeremy Goico asked Clark whether the Denver route would even be in the cards for the coming winter, adding “In my mind it doesn’t seem like that’s a possibility.”

“It’s not only possible, it’s scheduled,” Clark countered, “We’ll have to go tell our partner that we do not want those flights.”

Board Chair John Morris asked Clark about the exposure that the Mountain receives from the Denver flight. Clark said plenty, adding that Mammoth Mtn. has already sunk more funding into the Denver connection than MLT.

Ultimately, the board directed Urdi to bring the subsidy line up $250,000 to the original $1,151,000 with discussions to come related to the marketing.

The board also discussed MLT’s direct funding of the Mammoth Lakes Chamber of Commerce as well as contributions to a small business grant fund. The total ask was $478,000; $200,000 for the grant fund, $278,000 for the Chamber of Commerce.

Treasurer Rhonda Duggan agreed, adding “the reserves are there to be spent as long as we show that we’ve gone on and done the cost cutting measures. ”

Retail Representative Matt Hammer went further, stating “It doesn’t look like we’ve gone hard enough, that we’ve reined enough things out, that we’re not really cutting hard enough.”

Salcido pointed to two line items that jumped out to her: 1. wages will only drop 1.3% for the next year and 2. Events funding will only see a 4.8% decrease. Meanwhile the marketing department will be cut 30% ($1,759,933), sales will be cut 24.5% ($137,000), and public relations will be reduced by 34.5% ($101,750). See chart at right

Goico pushed back on the prospect of cutting wages. “I firmly believe that we need to protect our staff right now,” he said. “I don’t think slashing their wages is an appropriate thing to do.”

Caroline Casey defended the special events budget, arguing that her role is almost more vital in the Covid world, as she will oversee the education of event operators on Covid regulations and ensuring that events are operating as safely as possible. Casey also asserted that special events will be key to the region’s economic recovery.

If an event with MLT funding is cancelled, non-refundable expenses must be paid back.

Board members noted another line item, fact-checking, that is currently budgeted for $29,000 dollars.

Marketing Director Matt Gebo explained that the charge is for a firm that continually updates MLT’s website to provide an accurate list of licensed businesses for the Visitor’s Guide. Gebo estimated that doing without using a consultant would take 5 months to complete. The budget will be formally approved at the board’s July meeting.
Skier dies on Humphreys

Mount Humphreys (above Bishop), CA. 06-11-2020 - On 06-09-2020, an experienced local Bishop climber and skier set out to ascend the North Couloir on Mount Humphreys, one of the prominent peaks in the Sierra Nevada and the highest peak in the Bishop area. He has summited the mountain several times by multiple routes. His route this time consisted of climbing the North Couloir, descend the East Arete, and return that evening.

When he did not return, friends set out to look for him. They located his vehicle at the remote trailhead but did not find him and spent the night. Inyo County Sheriff’s Office was notified and Search and Rescue began planning an operation.

The morning of June 10, multiple Inyo SAR members drove to the trailhead prepared to climb the peak and search the area. CHP - Inland Division Air Operations, helicopter H-80, assisted with aerial reconnaissance.

At about 9:30 AM, the missing subject’s friends located him deceased on the snowfield at the base of the North Couloir. Inyo SAR was notified and with the help of H-80 and his friends, brought the climber back home to Bishop. It appears he fell on June 9 while descending the steep snow chute.

Inyo SAR members wish to share this important and heartfelt message with the public: “The decedent was a well-known and respected Eastern Sierra community member, father, husband, friend to many, and mountain person. Our thoughts are with his family and friends during this very difficult time.”

$100,000 bust

LONE PINE, CA, June 10, 2020 – Shortly after midnight on June 9, Inyo County Sheriff’s Deputies conducted a traffic stop in Lone Pine on a vehicle with no tail lights. During the traffic stop Deputies detected a strong smell of marijuana emitting from the vehicle. While temporarily detaining the four occupants of the vehicle, Deputies observed a loaded handgun under the driver’s side seat.

Due to improper storage of a loaded handgun, and the strong smell of marijuana, a canine search of the vehicle was conducted. The vehicle search revealed two additional loaded handguns, narcotics, and $100,665 in cash packaged in shrink wrapped plastic.

All four suspects were arrested for weapon and narcotics charges and are being held at the Inyo County Jail; bail has been set at $75,000 for each. The suspects have been identified as: Martin Perez (32 years old from Reno and Las Vegas NV), Alberto Caro Torres (32 years old from Reno NV), Jose Caro Torres (23 years old from Reno NV), and Cristian Torres (23 years old from Reno NV). Martin Perez and Alberto Torres were later identified as registered Sureños gang members and convicted felons.

The Mammoth Unified School District officially “broke ground” for the elementary school modernization project on Thursday morning. The work being done at the elementary school is the first step in a larger plan that will also see the modernization/expansion of Mammoth Middle and High Schools. From L-R: Brooke Bien, Jennifer Wildman, John Starlo, Shana Stapp, Kathleen Taylor, and Deanna Campbell (in sandals)
Mammoth Lakes Town Council held a special meeting on Wednesday to discuss reopening plans.

Mono County permitted hotels/lodging/campgrounds to open this Friday with certain modifications (half occupancy, 24-hour waiting periods between rentals, cleaning regulations, et. al.).

The Town of Mammoth Lakes is slightly behind greater Mono County, but will permit hotels/lodging to open as soon as June 12.

The June 30 short-term rental ban is expected to be modified and/or repealed next week.

“Again, when lodging opens, everybody is kind of asking, does this mean the stay-at-home order and the non-essential travel bans are rescinded? That is not the case. The State has made a statement that says even though businesses are opening up, they recommend you avoid long-distance travel, for vacations and pleasure, as much as possible,” said Stuart Brown, the Town’s Parks and Recreation Director (who also seems to be the only County employee who goes by their first name).

Brown was quick to mention the self-certification portal, located on the Mono County website, that this is on the website. For now the testing results are readily available so people can make use of them.

The COVID-19 update portion of The COVID-19 update portion of the TBID, “said Councilman John Wenzel. “This is really a benefit to the whole group that runs and manages the TBID, management plan, “said Town Manager Dan Holler at Wednesday’s Mammoth Lakes Town Council meeting.

“This is really no different except for the levels of the complexity required,” said TOML Finance Director Bob Patterson, “this is really a benefit to the business community.”

The only General Fund Revenue that took a hit (was below budget) was Sales Tax revenue, which came in at $2 million for 2019-2020, $500,000 off projection. The most interesting budget amendment was $20,000 added to the fireworks display budget. This brings the budget to $30,000 and it appears the Town is, at the very least, considering Fireworks at some point.

Budget wrap

Patterson presented his budget review to Town Council for the third quarter on Wednesday, June 10. Despite the rough year, Mammoth Lakes achieved its budgeted TOT of $13.5 million in February. Obviously TOT revenue was nearly zero for a stretch, but the total expected TOT for the fiscal year ending June 30 is still $16.1 million. Ironically, budget amendments made as COVID-19 spread have been revised somewhat (the Town collected some revenue).

The agenda item passed 5-0.

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SHERIFF continued from page 1

Sheriff’s department, including racial sensitivity and deescalation training, mandatory body cameras, a citizens oversight panel, and budget cuts; she reapplied that 25% of the County General Fund goes to “Sheriff programs.”

Braun explained that officers in the Sheriff’s department are already required by law to undergo extensive training on a number of issues, adding that body cameras are already commonplace on the force. She also expressed interest in a citizen oversight panel, noting that the grand jury is already responsible for investigating complaints against law enforcement.

As for that 25% of the general fund, Braun explained that many departments and services fall under “Sheriff services” including dispatch and first response, fire agencies, jail services and coroner investigations.

The supervisors expressed interest in a further discussion with representatives from Highway Patrol and Mammoth Lakes Police Department to respond the letter as well.

Supervisor Gardner advocated extending the conversation further, stating “a lot of these issues address racism issues but also gets into economic inequity issues and that includes many of our departments and gets to issues of fundamental economic inequality.”

This coming weekend marks the first time since March that many businesses in Mono County can open their doors to customers. New guidance from the state allows for counties with approved certifications to begin opening self-certifying businesses in eleven sectors, including lodging, bars/breweries, campgrounds, entertainment centers, and fitness facilities. Lodging operations in unincorporated Mono County are allowed to open on Friday, June 12 while lodging in Mammoth Lakes will open one week later on June 19.

Another notable difference between the town and county: Mammoth hotels will have to wait 24 hours before they can place guests in a previously occupied room while lodging outside of Mammoth will not. The logic behind that distinction, County Administrative Officer Bob Lawton explained, is that the 24-hour ban would make some businesses outside of Mammoth economically unviable.

During public comment, Grant Oepkes, operator of the June Lake Motel, expressed frustration in the guideline variance between businesses.

“Your inconsistencies are absolutely ridiculous,” Oepkes said. “We need to knock this off. It’s time to step forward and get opened up for business because we have tourists here for business.”

Supervisor Fred Stump responded, stating that the guidelines in question come from the state as opposed to the Board of Supervisors. Stump also added that the supervisors do not control recommendations or asks for Mammoth Lakes.

While the Board has urged local national parks and public lands to open their campgrounds, there was some concern about the county-operated campground at Lundy Lake. Supervisor Bob Gardner asked that the facility be opened, only for Supervisor John Peters to respond that it already had.

County Public Works director Tony Dublino confirmed that the campground was indeed not open, with CAO Lawton noting that lack of staffing capacity was the result of the delay.

The Board received word during its Tuesday meeting that Yosemite National Park would also be opening on June 12, with the Tioga Pass road to open on June 15.

SHERIFF

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The supervisors expressed interest in a further discussion with representatives from Highway Patrol and Mammoth Lakes Police Department to respond the letter as well.

Supervisor Gardner advocated extending the conversation further, stating “a lot of these issues address racism issues but also gets into economic inequity issues and that includes many of our departments and gets to issues of fundamental economic inequality.”

This coming weekend marks the first time since March that many businesses in Mono County can open their doors to customers. New guidance from the state allows for counties with approved certifications to begin opening self-certifying businesses in eleven sectors, including lodging, bars/breweries, campgrounds, entertainment centers, and fitness facilities. Lodging operations in unincorporated Mono County are allowed to open on Friday, June 12 while lodging in Mammoth Lakes will open one week later on June 19.

Another notable difference between the town and county: Mammoth hotels will have to wait 24 hours before they can place guests in a previously occupied room while lodging outside of Mammoth will not. The logic behind that distinction, County Administrative Officer Bob Lawton explained, is that the 24-hour ban would make some businesses outside of Mammoth economically unviable.

During public comment, Grant Oepkes, operator of the June Lake Motel, expressed frustration in the guideline variance between businesses.

“Your inconsistencies are absolutely ridiculous,” Oepkes said. “We need to knock this off. It’s time to step forward and get opened up for business because we have tourists here for business.”

Supervisor Fred Stump responded, stating that the guidelines in question come from the state as opposed to the Board of Supervisors. Stump also added that the supervisors do not control recommendations or asks for Mammoth Lakes.

While the Board has urged local national parks and public lands to open their campgrounds, there was some concern about the county-operated campground at Lundy Lake. Supervisor Bob Gardner asked that the facility be opened, only for Supervisor John Peters to respond that it already had.

County Public Works director Tony Dublino confirmed that the campground was indeed not open, with CAO Lawton noting that lack of staffing capacity was the result of the delay.

The Board received word during its Tuesday meeting that Yosemite National Park would also be opening on June 12, with the Tioga Pass road to open on June 15.

Speaking of which … the Supervisors will take up the issue of the Tioga Inn in Lee Vining on June 29 at the Lee Vining High School Gym and over Zoom.

LOCAL NEWS

NO REPLACEMENTS

MUSD plans to do less with less

By Jasper Page

On February 10, 2020, Mammoth Unified School District superintendent Jennifer Wildman released a statement to all MUSD families claiming that the school has, “an ongoing budget deficit of about $750,000 a year … If not resolved now, the district could be in financial distress within three years.”

The District mostly solved the problem by incentivizing early retirement.

Tough part is the district has suffered a huge loss of talent and has proposed makeshift coverage to fill the gaps, because retiring staff is not being replaced.

Those retiring this year include Phil DeSoto, Cheryl Hart, Tom Linnanstruth, and Trish Qualls.

“It has been a pleasure and privilege to serve the students and families of Mammoth,” said former eighth grade physics teacher Tom Linnanstruth, “I will always cherish the memories of our time together. I would especially like to thank my wife, family, colleagues and friends for their support through this amazing journey called education.”

Cheryl Hart

“Neither MUSD’s budget nor Covid-19 had anything to do with my decision,” said Cheryl Hart, the former biology teacher for the high school, “It is too bad that all of this is happening at once, but I decided to leave the District before any of this occurred.”

However, MUSD’s budget does have something to do with the way Hart is being replaced.

Three years ago, Hart took advantage of the Reduced Workload program. “This allows teachers who are 55 or older, meaning nearing retirement, to reduce their workload by 50%,” she said. So while Hart taught one semester, Crowley resident Autumn Eanes, taught the second half of the year.

“Ms. Hart and I split the year, so I was on a temporary contract 50% time,” Eanes explained, “I did that for three years, and was paid 50%.”

Eanes will not be teaching next year; she was let go due to her temporary status. Hart won’t be replaced either because of the school’s budget deficit.

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Rumors of the demise of summer camps in the Eastern Sierra are exaggerated

By Hite

Operating a summer camp can be tough. Factor in the current Covid-19 pandemic and it becomes an exponentially bigger headache.

Clay Tyson is 56 years-old and first came to Mammoth in 2004. Tyson had previously owned a climbing gym and in 2010, he officially became a climbing guide for a local business. After seven years, Tyson decided to start his own company called, “Ground Up Climbing Guides.”

“We wanted to address the folks that were coming in and visiting Mammoth Lakes,” said Tyson in a conversation with The Sheet, “We have been experiencing consistent growth year over year.”

For the last six years Tyson and one of his guides, Forrest Schwab, have been running Mammoth Lakes Climbing Camps in the summer. This was in partnership with the Town but they also had their own business to support. Tyson estimated that about a 20-30% of his business comes from the summer programs offered through the Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML).

The business is growing. Ground Up Climbing Guides serves many people throughout the year, both tourists and locals, but in the summer, the company offers an outlet to the local youth throughout the Eastern Sierra.

So when the TOML temporarily suspended all recreation programs Tyson was disappointed. Not just because his business was affected, although that was a negative, but mostly because the children of the Eastern Sierra would have no outlet.

Tyson was determined to figure out a plan to fill at least part of the gap that the suspended Rec programs created. “I knew all the reasons we had to suspend the town programs, so I just looked at each issue and eliminated or lowered the risk,” he said.

Just like that, the biggest issues were transportation and group sizes. Tyson worked with Kat Kelly, Recreation Manager for the TOML, to come up with a plan to be presented to Tom Boo, the Mono County Public Health Officer.

Kelly told The Sheet that as of now, there are not many competing recreation programs offered but every day this changes. Kelly is “hopeful and optimistic,” that as new orders come in the Town will have a clearer picture of what they can and can’t do.

Ground Up Climbing Guides was simply the first to adapt.

Normally group sizes are around 16-20. This year the groups will be no bigger than eight people.

Regarding transportation, parents will need to give their children rides to the trailheads.

There were many minor alterations, such as sanitation and proper distancing, but enough of the risks had been looked at to submit a request for approval to Boo.

Boo approved the alterations and Tyson began nailing down the details.

The first camp will be offered on June 24. After that, there will be two camps a week. One two-day camp on Monday and Tuesday. And one three-day camp Wednesday-Friday. These camps will run for five weeks.

According to Tyson, the changes will benefit the children. “Having smaller groups just means more attention is paid to each individual kid,” said Tyson, “If enough kids sign up, we can group them by ability and age and get them on the terrain that best suits them. Similar to ski instruction, getting kids on the right terrain helps make the most of the day. If a couple things go right, the summer season will be every bit as busy as last year. It will just look different.”

For parents who might still be wary of sending their kid to a summer camp, Tyson told The Sheet, “They’re smart to be cautious. I would encourage [those parents] to read our operations manual on our website. But if you want to recreate, the best place to do it is outside with a smaller group.”

The climbing guides are used to this type of risk-assessment. “At the end of the day, guides are in the business of analyzing the risks and attempting to mitigate them,” said Tyson, “My main message is that I am really excited about this. It is an opportunity to offer a service to the Town. Kids in Mammoth Lakes are not used to being cooped up.”

For more info: Call Clay Tyson at 609-647-4787 or visit www.groundupclimbingguides.com
An estimated 500+ protestors took part in Saturday’s protest in Mammoth Lakes, organized by Melissa Rodriguez, Joaquin Garcia, Cesar Pina (below left), all rising seniors at Mammoth High School. The march began at the Village parking lot, went down Main Street, up Old Mammoth road and concluded with a vigil at Mammoth Creek Park. “We wanted to give something back to the community,” said Pina. “Due to the current climate, we felt this was the best thing possible.”
LEE VINING  HIGH SCHOOL
CLASS OF 2020

James Rangel | Aero Huntsman | Claire DeBaillets | Giovanni Gamon | Stephanie Gomez | Ahtziri Cortez | Benjamin Trefry

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IRRIGATION SCHEDULE
Based on your property’s address

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SPRINKLER TIMES:
- 7 AM - 9 AM & 8 PM - 11 PM
- NO OUTSIDE WATER ON FRIDAYS

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Office Space For Rent: $600/month, 2nd floor location w/views, New Floors, Closet, Conference Room, Private Lease, Commercial use only. Please call Sarah at 760.934.8372.

Bigwood Condo for sale Bishop/Mammoth. Recent timing belt, AC, good. Fireplace fair, int good. $3,900 OBO. 628.393.8025

For Sale

2006 Subaru Forester. 150,000 miles, for sale Bishop/Mammoth. Recent timing belt, AC, good. Paint fair, int good. $3,900 OBO. 628.393.8025

"That person whose mind is quiet enough through consistency and self-control, who finds contentment in himself, who neither breaks down in adverse fortune nor crumbles in fright, nor burns with any thirst need nor dissolves into wild and futile excitement, that person is the wise one we are seeking, and that person is happy." - Cicero

So … this book is ultimately a refresher in old-time values. Modesty, perseverance, sin. That’s right.

"If you take away the concept of sin, you may lose the thing the good person struggles against."

Or … "Sin is just our perverse tendency to fuck things up, to forget the short term over the long term."

There is a particularly insightful few pages regarding parenting, as Brooks explores the idea of parental love as becoming almost merit-based. That parents love and sacrifice for their children by providing as many opportunities as possible for them, with the idea that their children’s achievements will reflect brightly upon them. Like a quid pro quo.

So kids today receive greater praise, greater honing (Parents with college degrees invest $5,700 more per year per child on out-of-school enrichment activities than they did forty years ago), but … it does seem to come with strings attached.

So in the old, children-should-be-seen-but-not-heard days, there was an overt expectation of obedience. These days, Brooks observes, that expectation still exists. It’s just obscured.

Brooks acknowledges that he, like many others, was consumed with his Adam I self for many years, and says he wrote this book, in large measure, to “save my own soul.”

So … as Eisenhower oft-exhorted in his farewell address, seek balance between overt expectation of obedience and doing good deeds for others to recognize.

Let’s pause here for an interlude regarding the 1955 coming-of-age film “Clueless” which we randomly watched fit them.
**TOWN STUFF**

**Saturday, June 13/**

**Monday, June 15/**
FREE COVID-19 testing at June Lake. The pop-up private health clinic will be at the June Lake General Store from 9:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. Free testing, masks, hand sanitizer and flyers.

**Tuesday, June 16/**
Inyo County Board of Supervisors meets starting 8:30 a.m. over teleconference. For Zoom link: visit https://zoom.us/j/868254781. Agendas available at inyocounty.us Mono County Board of Supervisors meets @ 9 a.m. over teleconference. For agenda and meeting: https://monocounty.ca.gov/meetings

**Wednesday, June 17/**
FREE COVID-19 testing at the Public Health pop-up clinic in front of the Mammoth Food Bank from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Free testing, masks, hand sanitizer and flyers.

**Inyo County hosts a weekly business to business webinar** hosted by Aust. CAO Leslie Chapman. Time: 3 p.m. For details/link, visit www.inyocounty.us. Mammoth Lakes Town Council @ meets @ 4 p.m. Visit the Town ebsite @ www.townofmammothlakes.ca.gov to attend via granicus.

**Thursday, June 18/**
Mono County’s Covid-19 weekly community conversation. 5:30 p.m. Log-in information at coronavirus.monoounty.ca.gov.

**TOWN STUFF**

**Ongoing:**
Mammoth Taxi Delivery brings you free local restaurant deliveries. Call for availability. 760.937.8294.

Vons offers two hours of shopping Monday-Friday from 7-9 a.m. for those shoppers who may be virus-vulnerable.

Mammoth Food Bank open 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. on MWF

As of May 26, most Mono County Library locations will offer pre-arranged pick ups for library materials. You only need a library card and an internet connection. Visit monocolibraries.org for a link to a video tutorial using the online catalog to search and place a hold on a title.

**National Parks status:**
Yosemite National Park is open. Day-passes are required for entry.

Mono County lodging/campgrounds can open June 12.

Mammoth Lakes lodging/campgrounds can open June 19.

The Lakes Basin Road in Mammoth Lakes will be open by June 20, possibly earlier.

The Devils Postpile Ranger Station is closed for the season.

The Mono Basin Visitor Center is closed, but visitor questions are being answered via phone call daily, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, 760- 647-3044.

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7.93.030 OF THE MONO COUNTY CODE TO EXTEND THE ORDINANCE NO. 09-20-20

ORDER OF SUPERVISORS AMENDING SECTIONS 7.93.010 &

7.93.020 OF THE MONO COUNTY CODE

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Supervisors of the

MONO COUNTY, State of California, do ordain and pass

the following Ordinance:

Section 1: Adoption of Ordinance

The Ordinance No. 09-20-20 (currently set to expire on July 28, 2020) and any related extensions of this Ordinance are hereby amended in the following manner, to the extent permitted to be amended pursuant to this ordinance, to enhance and extend the protections of the Ordinance No. 09-20-20, as set forth in Section 7.93.030 of the Mono County Code.

WHEREAS, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Board also declared a state of emergency under Ordinance No. 09-20-20, the Governor issued Executive Order N-28-20, authorizing local governments to impose substantiative limitations on residential or commercial evictions. That authorization was in effect through May 31, 2020;

WHEREAS, on March 16, 2020, the Governor declared a State of Emergency due to the imminent threat presented by COVID-19 and the asserted ability to take immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety for the reasons contained in the findings set forth in this ordinance, which are incorporated by reference herein, and that it is necessary to prevent the County of Mono from suffering displacement of tenants due to COVID-19-related loss of income, such that the failure to pay rent is directly related to a substantial loss of income for the reasons stated in this ordinance.

WHEREAS, on July 8, 2020, the owner of residential or commercial real property shall not terminate a tenancy if the tenant demonstrates that the failure to pay rent is directly related to a substantial loss of income for the reasons stated in this ordinance, the court may be permitted to modify the 90-day notice period by order of the court if a substantial loss of income is demonstrated.

WHEREAS, on May 29, 2020, the Governor issued Executive Order N-46-20, extending his prior authorization for local governments to impose substantiative limitations on residential evictions through July 28, 2020;

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health orders have led to a substantial loss of income for a substantial number of tenants due to COVID-19-related loss of income, such that the failure to pay rent is directly related to a substantial loss of income for the reasons stated in this ordinance.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Supervisors of the County of Mono DO ORDER AND ADOPT the following:

Section 2: Effective Date

This Ordinance shall take effect immediately as an urgency ordinance and shall be in effect, in part, pursuant to Government Code Section 65009(b), if made in advance of the meeting. A sign-up to reserve a time at the public hearing described in this notice, or in writing to the Planning Commission, Planning Commission, 600 E. Third Street, Suite 100, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546, is required.

Notice of Public Hearing

Notice of Public Hearing

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The Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML) may never get its coveted ice rink. But … as of May, our town has a disc golf course.

Some people might be thinking, 'I thought we already had a disc golf course.' Well, that is partly true.

"Course targets were trees marked with tape and tee pads boarded by branches that were loosely maintained by the Mammoth Lakes Disc Golf Club (MLDC)," said Stuart Brown, the Town’s Parks and Recreation Director. "The Town of Mammoth Lakes, in partnership with the MLDC and the Inyo National Forest wanted to build a ‘real’ course and began discussions over three years ago to identify, design and install an 18-hole Professional Disc Golf Association (PDGA) sanctioned course that could be incorporated into the Town’s special use permit."

I played the old course. Eh. The new course is a huge upgrade, featuring baskets that have a bright orange strip on top, making every hole easy to spot. Before the baskets, the hardest part of the course was finding the next hole.

The new course was designed by DiscGolfPark. One of its designers, Avery Jenkins, is a former Disc Golf World Champion who now works for the company designing courses.

"I spent numerous hours over several days with Avery and MLDC players crisscrossing the course, evaluating each and every tee pad and proposed basket location," said Brown.

The course was completed in late May and is now open to the public. There are two versions of the course, one long and one short. Right now, only the long course is set up. The short course tee boxes will be installed as fundraising efforts allow.

The real question: Is it fun? Yes. And any sport that allows you to drink beer while playing has definite upside.

When The Sheet (Page joined) played the course there were all types of people out there. Individuals with the whole disc golf bag setup. Serious players. But there were also groups of many different sizes. Groups of five or so that managed to have even more dogs than people. Then a group of teenage girls who also brought their dog. Even a group of middle-aged men whose main goal was clearly to drink beer.

The forest is a perfect setting. It is open enough to play, but provides enough cover to provide solitude and a challenge to the player.

In terms of difficulty, the course plays long. Beginners might struggle on the par 4’s and the lone par 5. Players who have played before should be fine. The trees are certainly the main obstacle on the course as they act as disc magnets.

So overall the course is about an 8/10. A couple beers and that rating skyrockets to a 10/10.
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