

Your news makes the Sierra Sun shine

Content for briefs is selected from e-mail submissions to Community Editor Amy Edgett at aedgett@sierrasun.com and occasionally the online events calendar. Visit www.sierrasun.com to submit events online. Please limit descriptions to 50 words. E-mail submissions may be 150-300 words. Items are published in the print edition news space permitting.

Sheriff Department's Community Awareness Academy

The Placer County Sheriff Department's Lake Tahoe Station is presenting a Community Awareness Academy, which offers an inside look at the law enforcement agency, Wednesday evenings, through April 13. Participants will hear from members of the department's special units and take "field trips" to the Placer County Jail and morgue, as well as the 911-dispatch center. Classes will be held in the conference room at Placer County Sheriff's Department-Tahoe City Station, 2501 N. Lake Blvd., Tahoe City or North High School, 6-8 p.m. Seats are limited so please make reservations with Community Services Officer Melinda Maehler at 530-581-6382 or e-mail mmaehler@placer.ca.gov. The goal of the academy is to provide a greater awareness and understanding of law enforcement's role in the community.

Truckee High School band concert

Free Truckee High School Jazz and Symphonic Band Concert, March 16, 7 p.m., Truckee High School Auditorium, Truckee. Visit thsbands.com.

Joseph Research Library closed through March 24

The Joseph Research Library will be closed for artifact inventory March 17, and will resume regular business hours 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. March 24, 10115 Donner Trail Road, Truckee, visit www.truckeehistory.org.

A+ Preschool Preview Day

A+ Preschool invites all perspective preschool children, and their parents to participate in the annual A+ Preschool Preview Day, or Thursday, March 17, 10:30-11:30 a.m. for the current school year and 2011-2012. A+ is an educational preschool for 3 and 4 year olds. Their goal is to prepare children for kindergarten. Full day and half day options are available. Check them out at 390 Fairway Drive, Tahoe City. For more information, call Nell Jackson at 530-583-1534 or visit www.tahoeministries.com. License Number: 313609613.

Journey to Southeast Asia

Take a vicarious trip to Southeast Asia with Dewey and Lynda Paul, at the Tahoe Cross Country Center, Tahoe City, March 17, 6 p.m. See slides from their journey; all proceeds benefit SWEP (Sierra Watershed Education Partnerships). Food, beverages, and live music. A \$10 donation is requested. Call 530-525-9457 or visit www.4swep.org.

Trout in the Classroom

Learn how to raise Lahontan Cutthroat trout from egg to fry in a classroom setting. Parents and volunteers welcome. Free to all. Historic Fish Hatchery, 2400 Lake Forest Drive, Tahoe City, March 19, 9 a.m. Call 530-525-9457 or visit www.4swep.org.

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LIFE & Learning



Lego builds community event

During President's Day Weekend, hundreds of children and parents enjoyed LEGO building fun at the Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe Incline Village. After hitting the slopes in the morning, Hyatt guests and local families had the opportunity to exercise their creative energy using nearly a quarter-million green LEGO bricks. From an intricate train engine and massive fortress to 4-foot towers and a detailed scorpion, participants showed that it only takes a few bricks to make something CLICK. LEGO CLICK recognizes and celebrates that exciting light bulb moment when a great idea just comes out of nowhere. For more information and events happening around the country, visit LEGO CLICK on Facebook at www.facebook.com/legoclick.

Submitted to aedgett@sierrasun.com

Tahoe Truckee Unified School District earns rebates of more than \$100,000

Special to the Sun

TAHOE/TRUCKEE — Amid budgetary challenges, a bright spot emerges from the Tahoe Truckee Unified School District (TTUSD) facilities department. Through its energy conservation program the department has been able to save \$501,000 from its baseline over the last two years. Additionally, sizable rebates from both NV Energy and the Truckee Donner Public Utilities District — totaling more than \$100,000 this year alone — continue to help the bottom line.

Saving energy and reducing expenses

When TTUSD began its budget reduction process in 2009, the facilities department saw an opportunity.

"We began investigating any and all energy-related possibilities for saving general fund money," says Anna Klovstad, project manager and energy manager for TTUSD. She explains while many standards were already in place, such as the automatic lowering of the thermostat in the evenings, the first change was to install occupancy sensors to the lights in all classrooms. Another change was to ask staff to remove personal appliances such as coffee pots, space heaters and refrigerators. If they went to work after regular business hours or during weekends, they would have lights but not necessarily heat. This was perhaps controversial, but heating

Presentation at upcoming board meeting

Klovstad will present information on the school district's energy program at the March 16, TTUSD board meeting. With an additional \$60,000 in savings projected for the 2010-2011 fiscal year, Klovstad predicts this will be the best year yet. Additionally, because TTUSD reduced its demand for electricity, it became eligible for rebates from NV Energy and the Truckee Donner Public Utilities District (TDPUD). Last year, those rebates totaled approximately \$19,000. This year, that sum is just more than \$100,000.

an entire building for a few people was not sensible, and the savings realized by these simple steps had a huge impact on the budget, according to Klovstad.

No cost but all the savings

Realizing there would be an initial capital outlay to implement some of the energy cost-saving measures, Klovstad turned to bond funding. The majority of the funds were used to build schools, but there was a small amount still available, so Klovstad requested approval from the citizen oversight committees that oversee the funds to dedicate a portion of it to the energy conservation crusade. As a result, there was no impact to the TTUSD general fund and the savings went directly toward the strapped district budget.

One of the most important — and exciting — investments, says Klovstad, was the installation of the Honeywell Energy Manager. "This program is really slick. I can now drill down our energy usage data to 15-minute increments, and pinpoint excessive usage by meter," she

explains. Some sites have three to four meters, and having data for each in such small time increments allows her to identify additional energy-saving opportunities. In one case, she identified some heating equipment that was running around the clock unbeknownst to staff at that site.

The future's so bright ... I gotta wear shades

It is Klovstad's hope that creating an energy-conscious culture in the schools is also used as a viable teaching tool. "We are in the business of education, and this is a perfect opportunity," Klovstad says. With many measures already in place, Klovstad's enthusiasm for implementing more energy-saving practices is providing a model to help further a conservation culture in TTUSD that can only benefit its students — and the community — for years to come.

— Provided by Switchback PR + Marketing on behalf of the Tahoe Truckee Unified School District.