



Washoe County Update

To: Gerlach-Empire CAB

From: Lorrie Adams

Date: December 2011

HOT NEWS: Stay Snow Safe!: Public Works removes snow from hundreds of roads in unincorporated Washoe County with over 80 snow routes. Every storm in Nevada is unique and snow removal is a tough business. You can help by removing obstacles from the roads during snow removal operations, keeping children from playing in roads and shoulders during snow removal operations (we can't see them!) and staying home during a storm, if you can. For the first time, County crews will be using a brine solution in their

snow and ice control measures. The brine solution is applied prior to a snow event, and lowers the temperature at which snow begins to accumulate on roadways. Additionally, the brine layer helps break the bond between compacted snow and the roadway allowing it to be more easily removed from the roadway, and reduce the amount of sand required on roadways, which in turn helps expedite cleanup and improves air quality. **Remember that snow removal is a very difficult job. Operators deal with long hours, traffic, night shifts, emergencies, and driving in severe weather conditions. Please be as courteous and safe as you can.** For more information, visit: www.washoecounty.us/pubworks/sno_ice_control.htm

HOT NEWS: 2012 Residential Dump Days: Mark your calendars! Waste Management's Quarterly Residential Dumps Days for 2012 are: **January 7 and 8; the week of Earth Day in April; July 7 and 8 and October 6 and 7.** For more information, visit: www.wm.com or call 775.329.8822.

HOT NEWS: First Flu Case Confirmed: The Washoe County Health District has received its first laboratory-confirmed report of influenza. Tests indicate type A H3. Common signs and symptoms of the flu include: fever over 100° F, aching muscles, chill and sweats, headaches, dry cough, fatigue and weakness and nasal congestion. Influenza type A can be treated with antiviral drugs, if administered within the first 48 hours of onset of symptoms. Drugs can reduce the severity and shorten the duration of the illness among healthy individuals. **Parents are reminded not to give aspirin to children and adolescents who show signs of the flu.** Cases of Reye Syndrome, a serious neurological disorder that can cause death or permanent brain damage, have been linked to the use of aspirin by children infected with influenza and chickenpox. Non-aspirin products can be used to treat symptoms of the flu. Remember: flu vaccines are available at pharmacies, health providers, physicians, and the Health District. More information, visit: www.washoecounty.us/health/cchs/flu and www.inFLUencenevada.org

Manager's Office: www.washoecounty.us/mgrsoff

Redistricting: The Board of County Commissioners conducted a first reading of an ordinance designed to amend Chapter 5 of the Washoe County Code relating to County Commission Districts. After each census, the Commission is charged with balancing the population of Washoe County across each of its districts. The second reading and public hearing for this ordinance changes is scheduled for December 13, 2011 at 6pm. For more information, visit: [www.washoecounty.us/mgrsoff/2011_redistricting%20 Project](http://www.washoecounty.us/mgrsoff/2011_redistricting%20Project)

Regional Parks and Open Space (RPOS): www.washoecounty.us/parks

Bartley Ranch Regional Park Update: Much of fire-damaged Bartley Ranch Regional Park re-opened on Thursday, December 1, 2011. The Park's western and southern ridges were the most heavily damaged when the Caughlin Fire swept through the Park on the morning of Friday, November 18 and these areas will remain closed during rehabilitation for the safety of the public. Areas that will remain closed include the popular Flume Trail, Quail Run Nature Trail and portions of the Ranch Loop Trail which connect Bartley Ranch to Anderson Park. The loss of vegetation and erosion issues have made these areas unstable and unsafe for public use. Keeping these areas closed will also help to protect natural resources during rehabilitation. **Signs and barriers have been placed inside the park to alert park visitors about areas that remain closed.** Rehabilitation efforts are already underway and are expected to last until the spring.

Open Space Purchase: Washoe County Commissioners approved the purchase of 13.32 acres of vacant land near Verdi to be used as open space and passive recreation. The parcel, located directly across the river from existing open space, will increase the amount of open space along the Truckee River, contribute to better water quality and provide additional access to the Truckee River. The County will pay \$840,000 for the parcel, plus approximately \$5,000 in closing costs. All monies are coming from existing State Question Truckee River (SQ-1) and Washoe County Regional Parks, Trails and Open Space (WC-1) bonds.

Community Development: www.washoecounty.us/comdev

One-Stop Shop for Business License: The ability to apply for a business license in the Truckee Meadows just got a bit easier. Now, business owners can apply for a business license at a single location to conduct business in the cities of Sparks and Reno, or Washoe County. In an effort to streamline the requirements for a business license, the two cities and Washoe County have collaborated to share and process business license applications to the business community and citizens of the region. The ability of a business owner to obtain all three local business licenses from a single location provides a high level of customer service to the business community as a whole, ultimately enhancing economic growth and development. Phase Two will create an on-line delivery system for processing renewal notices and accepting payments. The third and final phase of the project will allow local businesses to acquire a single business license providing the sale of goods and services throughout the region. The new business licensing process was sanctioned by the efforts of the elected officials of the cities of Sparks and Reno, and Washoe County that began in spring 2011.

Washoe County Library System: www.washoecountylibrary.us

Library System Increases Fines and Fees: The Washoe County Library System Board of Trustees has approved the following changes to library fines and fees, effective December 1:

- Overdue fines on adult library cards will increase from 20 cents per day to 25 cents per day for each item.
- The maximum fine per item will increase from \$7.00 to \$9.00.
- The exam proctoring fee will increase from \$10.00 to \$20.00 per exam.

REMINDER: Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA): www.IRS.gov

The Internal Revenue Service and Washoe County are looking for volunteers to assist in preparing tax returns next year. Volunteers of all ages and backgrounds are welcome. Attached is a flyer with contact information. All volunteers receive tax training in cooperation with community partners and the IRS. Individuals with good computer skills are especially needed to assist in preparing and transmitting returns electronically through the IRS E-file program. Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites provide a great service for eligible lower-income taxpayers to get free tax preparation during the tax filing season. And, by partnering with Nevada-based coalitions like the United Way, thousands of Nevada taxpayers will get much needed tax assistance in 2012.

Training: Training will be held in January and volunteers generally study online with Link & Learn Taxes (www.irs.gov/app/vita) to obtain their volunteer certification. The Link & Learn program is an interactive course that teaches the steps needed to prepare basic individual income tax returns accurately. Classroom training is also available. Once certified, volunteers spend as little as three to four hours per week from early February through mid-April.

Last year, volunteers helped over 9100 Nevada taxpayers to receive over \$3 million from the Earned Income Tax Credit and distributed more than \$11.7 million in total refunds. However, the IRS estimates that approximately 20-25% of the Earned Income Tax Credit is left unclaimed. Come help families in your community!

Volunteers can help in three separate capacities:

- Return Preparer – A return preparer will actually prepare tax returns.
- Site Coordinator – Coordinates and supervises all aspects of a free tax site. They also act as site manager and may also prepare returns.
- Greeter – Someone to greet taxpayers, answer questions and provide forms.

Volunteer Orientation Location: **The United Way/Join Together Northern Nevada, 811 Ryland Street at 12:30 pm and at 5:30 p.m. on December 13.** Both are one hour long. To sign up, visit: www.nevadavolunteers.org type VITA in the search window, or contact Mike Lee, United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra at: 775 325-8913. More information about the IRS volunteer tax preparation programs is available at www.IRS.gov

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District: www.washoecounty.us/mgrsoff/TMFire.html

Transition Plan: The goals of the Board of Fire Commissioners (BOFC) are to create a financially sustainable fire district that maintains current fire stations, supports volunteers and provides for future fire service regionalization. Due to reductions in revenue and

increased operating costs, the BOFC determined that the District could not afford to continue the fire services contract with the City of Reno and terminated the agreement effective June 30, 2012. The year-long process to stand-up Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) is outlined in a transition plan, which is available at: www.washoecounty.us/mgrsoff/TMFire.html Below is a brief update on recent events:

- October 27: BOFC directed staff to merge administration and operation of TMFPD and Sierra Fire Protection District (SFPD).
- November 3: TMFPD Open House: Attendees were able to ask questions directly of staff and elected officials. The focus of the open house was on the transition plan and structure of TMFPD. The open house was recorded and is available online at: www.washoecounty.us/mgrsoff/TMFire.html
- November 8: BOFC approved the role of the Joint Fire Advisory Board (JFAB) and incoming staff during the transition process. Employee job descriptions/pay grades were approved. Staff was directed to research the potential for a Regional Fire Advisory Board. An update is expected at the December 13th meeting.
- November 11: Recruitment for TMFPD began and will close on December 16, 2011.

BOFC meet during the regular meetings of the Washoe County Board of Commissioners. Agendas are available online three business days prior to the meeting at: www.washoecounty.us/bcc/agendas.html

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension (UNCE): www.RadonNV.com

January is National Radon Action Month: Protect your family, test your home for radon. Most people associate lung cancer with smoking, but nonsmokers can get lung cancer from a dangerous gas in their home! Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas present in many homes and buildings, yet few people know about the health risk or have tested their homes for it. Because radon is colorless, odorless and tasteless, the only way to know if it is in a home or building is to conduct a simple test. Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among nonsmokers. Every year, radon-induced lung cancer kills more people than secondhand smoke, drunk driving, falls in the home, drowning or home fires. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates 21,000 Americans die each year from lung cancer caused by indoor radon exposure. The only way to know a building's radon levels is to test. A simple three-day test can determine whether a home has elevated levels of radon. If high levels of radon are found, there is a way to reduce or mitigate radon levels. For more information, presentation dates, times and locations, call the Radon Hotline at 888-723-6610 or visit: www.RadonNV.com