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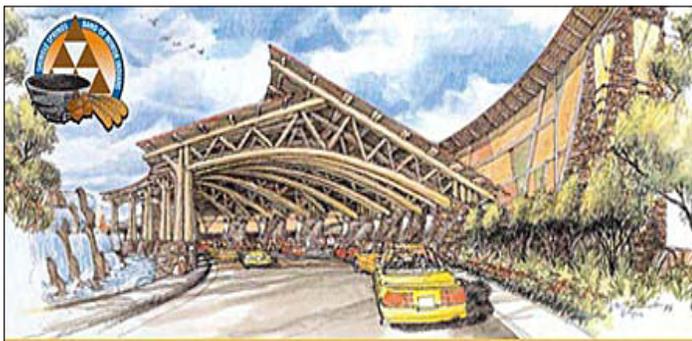
# BASS LAKE BULLETIN

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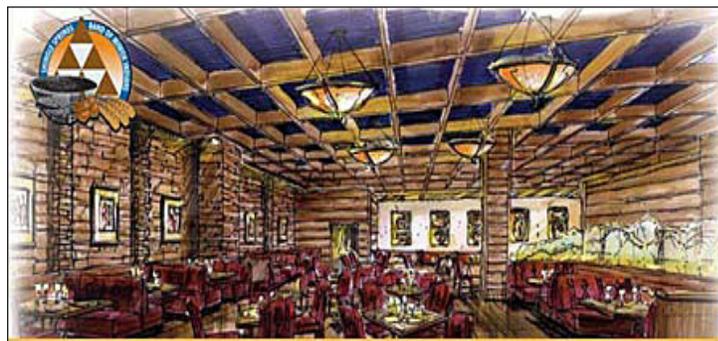
The Voice of the Bass Lake Community

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[www.basslakeaction.org](http://www.basslakeaction.org)



VIEW OF RESORT PORTE COCHERE/ARRIVAL AREA



VIEW OF FINE DINING AREA

## SHINGLE SPRINGS CASINO ACCEPTED BY COUNTY

After many years of legal battles, tribal representatives and county officials have announced that the County of El Dorado and the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians have struck a deal over the tribe's proposed Indian casino. The agreement also covers a Highway 50 interchange project and is expected to bring additional revenue of nearly \$200 million to the county over a 20-year period.

The projected impacts on the Bass Lake area are the addition of high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes to Highway 50, additional traffic on Highway 50, perhaps employment close to home, and the prospect of dining and entertainment being just up the road.

The Board of Supervisors had staunchly defended its position of continuing its legal battles to stop the project, and it appears that the supervisors gave up the fight only after realizing that they would eventually lose the legal battle, which has consumed \$3.5 million of the taxpayers' money in legal expenses taking the tribe, federal Bureau of Indian Affairs, Caltrans and casino backers to court. Supervisor Rusty Dupray reportedly said that he's still against the idea of a casino on the Western Slope, but despite their feelings, Dupray and the other supervisors generally admitted that eventually the tribe would win.

The deal grants El Dorado County \$5.2 million each year for 20 years to offset Highway 50 traffic impacts. According to county documents, it is estimated that the casino will add up to 15,000 additional cars a day on the freeway. The county will have to prefund mitigation projects, such as a carpool lane from El Dorado Hills to Greenstone or Ponderosa, but the ongoing payments from the tribe should eventually cover those costs. The deal also gives the county \$500,000 annually for law enforcement. Another \$78 million over 20 years will cover other anticipated impacts of the casino.

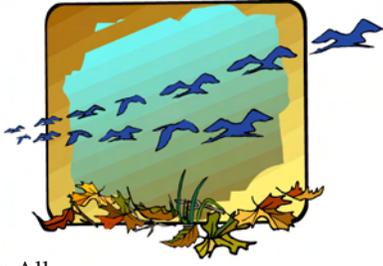
The casino will be built after an interchange to the Shingle Springs Rancheria is constructed. The tribe's only other access to its land is by way of private road owned by a subdivision, which is also in litigation with the tribe. Those legal issues must be hashed out before construction begins on the interchange and casino. Named "Foothill Oaks Casino," the project will sit on 4.6 acres of land inside the rancheria. The project, which will likely be phased, includes a three-story casino, complete with five restaurants, three bars and parking garage, as well as a 250-room hotel. The casino will not be visible from Highway 50, according to tribe officials.

The tribe maintains that the Foothill Oaks Casino will deliver significant economic benefits to the people and business community of El Dorado County. According to tribal leaders, the construction of the casino will pump \$83.7 million into the local economy, and 70% of this money will be spent locally. Fifteen hundred new jobs will be created with an estimated annual payroll of \$20 million, and the tribe will have a "local preference" policy for hiring casino employees. The tribe will contract with police, fire, emergency medical, and waste removal service providers, providing much needed revenue for more officers, firefighters, equipment and facility improvements. First year estimated revenues from the facility of \$194 million, the local \$20 million payroll, plus the \$40 to \$60 million spent locally each year on contracted goods and services, are expected to contribute to a significant increase in annual county sales tax revenues.

In addition to being an economic engine for the county, the tribe maintains that the gaming revenues from the casino will allow them to provide adequate housing, improve roads, quality healthcare and educational opportunities for all tribal members. ~

*(Artist's conception casino drawings courtesy of the Shingle Springs Rancheria)*

## THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Hello All,

Last month I said that Fall was coming. I think I can now safely say that it is here. Last weekend Fran and I spent several hours outdoors winterizing the yard: storing the patio furniture, wrapping up the cushions, and taking down the umbrellas.

Luckily we had already cleaned and patched the fabric arbor cover in anticipation of the rain. I'm glad that was already done. I do like the covered arbor, because it lets us barbeque all winter.

Then we brought out our space heaters, the tall ones like they have in restaurant patios. We bought a couple on sale last winter, and they have been a boon on the cool evenings when we want to sit outside and watch the beautiful sunsets. After replacing the sparker batteries, they fired up just fine, and we had an opportunity to use them to sit outside the other evening.

In the course of storing away all the summer gear, we found all of our festive holiday decorations and regalia on their shelves in the garage. Fran and I agreed that the reason we have so many brightly-lit holidays in the winter is because we need cheering up on those dark and dreary days.

Come the first frost, we will all have the chore of raking up the leaves, another sign of the passing season. I'm glad that we have two big green waste cans, because it looks like we will be able to fill them up pretty soon with no trouble.

I expect to be putting out the pumpkins and other Halloween decorations soon, then it will be Thanksgiving, and then . . . Well, let's not get ahead of ourselves just yet. First, let's all enjoy the change in the weather, from the long hot Summer to the brisk cool Fall.

*John E. Thomson*  
President

## DAY OF THE DEAD, OR DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

This is an ancient festivity that has been much transformed through the years, but which was intended in prehispanic Mexico to celebrate children and the dead. Hence, the best way to describe this Mexican holiday is to say that it is a time when Mexican families remember their dead, and the continuity of life.

Two important things to remember about the Mexican Day of the Dead, or Día de los Muertos, are first, that the holiday has a complex history, and therefore its observance varies quite a bit by region and by degree of urbanization, and second, it is not a morbid occasion, but rather a festive time. Skeletons and other somewhat macabre symbols are used to represent the holiday, much as skeletons, witches and such are used at our Halloween, which began as All Hallow's Eve.



The original celebration can be traced to a Mesoamerican native tradition dedicated to children and the dead. In the Aztec calendar, this ritual fell roughly at the end of the Gregorian month of July and the beginning of August. In the postconquest era, in a vain effort to transform the observance from a pagan to a Christian celebration, it was moved by Spanish priests so that it coincided with the Christian holiday of All Hallow's Eve, which in Spanish is Día de Todos Santos.

Mexicans now celebrate the day of the dead during the first two days of November, and in most localities November 1 is set aside for remembrance of deceased infants and children, often referred to as angelitos (little angels), and those who have died as adults are honored on November 2. The modern festivity is characterized by a blend of ancient pagan and introduced Christian features, much like we celebrate Halloween.

Generalizing broadly, the holiday's activities consist of families welcoming their dead back into their homes, and visiting the graves of their close kin. At the cemetery, family members engage in sprucing up the gravesite, decorating it with flowers, setting out and enjoying a picnic, and interacting socially with other family and community members who gather there. In both cases, celebrants believe that the souls of the dead return and are all around them. Families remember the departed by telling stories about them. The meals prepared for these picnics are sumptuous, usually featuring meat dishes in spicy sauces, chocolate beverages, cookies, sugary confections in a variety of animal or skull shapes, and a special egg-batter bread, "pan de muerto," or bread of the dead. Gravesites and family altars are profusely decorated with flowers, primarily large, bright flowers such as marigolds and chrysanthemums, and adorned with religious amulets and with offerings of food, cigarettes and alcoholic beverages. Because of this warm social environment, the colorful setting, and the abundance of food, drink and good company, this commemoration of the dead has pleasant overtones for the observers, in spite of the open fatalism exhibited by all participants, whose festive interaction with both the living and the dead in an important social ritual is a way of recognizing the cycle of life and death that is human existence.

In some homes, observant families create an altar and decorate it with items that they believe are beautiful and attractive to the souls of their departed ones. Modern urban Mexican families usually observe the Day of the Dead with only a special family supper featuring the bread of the dead. In southern Mexico, for example in the city of Pueblo, it is good luck to be the one who bites into the plastic toy skeleton hidden by the baker in each rounded loaf. Friends and family members give one another gifts consisting of sugar skeletons or other items with a death motif, and the gift is more prized if the skull or skeleton is embossed with one's own name.

The Day of the Dead can range from being a very important cultural event, with defined social and economic responsibilities for participants, to simply being a uniquely Mexican holiday characterized by special foods and confections as is the case in all large Mexican cities. ~



Speed Compliance trailer stationed on Summer Drive

## SPEED COMPLIANCE TRAILER VISITS BASS LAKE

Bass Lake residents traveling on Summer Drive in September no doubt saw the Voluntary Speed Compliance trailer placed in the road to remind drivers how fast they are going. These trailer-mounted radar speed signs are a popular method of keeping speeds in check in busy neighborhoods. The large digital display of "YOUR SPEED" effectively reminds drivers to slow to a safe speed, and studies have shown that a substantial percentage of motorists continue to keep their speed in check after the radar speed sign has been moved on to protect another location.

In areas where children walk to school, more than anywhere else, the focus is on the prevention of vehicle-pedestrian crashes. Slower vehicles are far less likely to be involved in pedestrian accidents. For instance, an alert and skilled driver traveling 20 MPH who spots a child in the road 50 feet ahead will be able to come to a full stop within that distance. The same driver traveling 30 MPH would barely even get his foot on the brake pedal before hitting the child.

Often overlooked is an equally important issue: Even if the accident is not prevented, by reducing the speed at which a vehicle-pedestrian crash occurs, the risk of death or serious injury is reduced. And the critical speed range for achieving the most dramatic reduction in injury and death is the very speed range that we are typically dealing with in neighborhoods and school zones! Reducing vehicle-pedestrian crash speed from 30 MPH to 20 MPH decreases the

likelihood of death from 45% down to 5%. Put another way, a vehicle-pedestrian crash at 30 MPH is *nine times as likely to result in death* as the same accident at 20 MPH.

Studies and observation constantly show that radar speed signs have the greatest impact on those vehicles that are traveling most substantially above the limit. So a reduction in average speed of just a few miles per hour actually represents a substantial reduction in the speed of those few drivers who represent the greatest risk.

A number of traffic engineers have concluded that radar speed signs provide the best of all worlds, in that they effectively slow traffic, cost less than most other methods of traffic calming, do not impede emergency vehicles in any way, and rather than raising the ire of the public, they more typically garner praise from community members. ~



## MEDIAN HOME PRICES FALL EXCEPT IN WEST

Home sales in other portions of the country continued to decline last month, and the nation's median home price dropped for the first time in more than a decade. Meanwhile, home prices in the 13 western states actually increased three tenths of one percent (0.3%) in the period.

The National Association of Realtors said existing, or previously owned, homes changed hands at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 6.3 million units in August. That was down 0.5% from July and 12.6% from a year earlier.

### Prices Fell Elsewhere

The price decline was largest in the Northeast, down 3.9 percent, followed by the South, down 2.6 percent, and the Midwest, which declined 1.1 percent.

Last month's sales decline was steepest for condominiums and cooperatives, with sales down 3.5% from July and 14.5% from August 2005. Sales of single-family homes were unchanged from July but were down 12.3% from a year ago.

Nationwide, home prices are coming under pressure. The median sales price of an existing home was \$225,000 in August, down 1.7% from a year earlier. That was the first year-to-year price decline since 1995 and the second sharpest in the nearly 40 years the data have been collected.

Prices fell faster for condominiums than for single-family homes. In August, the national median price of a single-family home fell 1.7% from a year ago to \$225,700. The median price of an existing condominium fell 2.4% from a year earlier to \$223,200.

Economists had been expecting a price correction for some time, after months of slowing sales and an erosion of confidence among home buyers. The price decline will help the housing market by making homes more affordable and by helping to reduce rising inventories of unsold homes.

*(continued on page 4)*

Falling prices have a flip side. If their homes are worth less, consumers may feel less wealthy and therefore spend less on goods and services, a worrisome trend for the broader economy. In the short term, economists say that the recent drop in gasoline prices should offset the effect of declining home values.

The inventory of unsold homes rose 1.5% last month to 3.9 million housing units, a 7.5-month supply at the current sales pace, and the biggest supply since April 1993. The increase was smaller than in July, when inventories rose 3.2%.

Some economists say prices will have to continue to fall before a sizable number of buyers jump back into the market.

### Local Prices Remain Stable

The Sacramento Bee reported recently that median sales prices for all homes and condominiums rose slightly in five of eight Sacramento-area counties from July to August, according to figures released by DataQuick Information Systems of La Jolla.

The company reported price increases in Amador, El Dorado, Sacramento, Sutter and Yuba counties, ranging from 0.3 percent in Sacramento to 10.5 percent in Amador. Prices fell in Nevada, Placer and Yolo counties.

Though median prices have bounced up and down all summer, the July to August rise occurred in more area counties than any month this year.

At \$448,000, the median sales price—the point at which half the homes sell for more and half for less—was 12 percent lower in Placer County than August 2005. The Yolo County price of \$419,000 was 8 percent lower than the same time last year, and the \$362,000 median sales price in Sacramento County was 6 percent lower. Prices were also down in Sutter, Yuba and Nevada counties. Prices were higher in Amador and El Dorado counties.

El Dorado County, with its median price of \$498,000, is still seeing higher sales prices than last year.

Median sales prices first fell below last year's levels in June in Sacramento, Placer and Amador counties. In July it spread to Yolo and Sutter counties, according to DataQuick.

Real estate agents say the combination of lower home prices, falling mortgage rates and people taking homes off the market is finally trimming the region's record-level for-sale inventory. ~



## PROPERTY TAXES

### HAWK VIEW RESIDENTS TO GET ASSESSMENT

The mechanism is in place to assess the future residents of Hawk View an additional \$381 a year on their property tax bill to provide road and drainage facility improvements and maintenance services for their neighborhood.

In the case of Hawk View, a condition of approval of the Hawk View tentative subdivision map was to form a zone of benefit to provide a funding mechanism for the ongoing maintenance and eventual replacement of the roads and drainage infrastructure within the subdivision. There are no registered voters currently residing within the boundaries of the proposed zone of benefit.

California State law requires approval by registered voters to establish a special tax. However, when no one resides on a piece of land, the landowner gets to vote as to whether a special tax may be levied on the land. County Counsel has opined that a landowner election would satisfy the voter approval requirement; therefore, the board authorized a mailed ballot landowner election.

The Engineer's Report submitted with the zone formation application determined that

the road and drainage zone would require an initial assessment of \$381.00 per parcel. These revenues will fund both maintenance costs and an infrastructure replacement reserve. The projected number of parcels within the zone is 114, which will ultimately result in annual revenue of \$43,434.00 before adjustments for inflation. The special tax allows for an annual inflator.

A zone of benefit is governed by the County Board of Supervisors, and in this case the Special Districts Unit of the Department of Transportation will serve as liaison between the residents in the zone of benefit and the Board.

The Department of Transportation will conduct a mailed ballot landowner election on November 3, 2006 to consider the proposed zone of benefit and accompanying assessment. The landowner (the developer) is expected to approve the formation of the zone and the assessment. ~

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