

THE INSIDE SCOOP

School enrollment drops 2.4 percent

by Scott Neuffer
sneuffer@recordcourier.com

Enrollment in Douglas County public schools has suffered another major blow.

What school district officials had hoped was a sign of stabilization last year, a minor 1.1 percent dip, gave way this year to a loss of 151 students — a 2.4 percent slide.

"There is no guarantee when it will level off or bounce back up," said Superintendent Lisa Noonan. "We've had eight straight years in Douglas County of declining enrollment. We thought we hit that level-off mark last fall, so we're sad to see this. Because new people are moving in, but, clearly, we have other people moving out. It seems to be tied to the economy more than anything else."

Based on two count days in September, the recently released numbers are still considered uncertified. A certified enrollment audit report from the state is expected to be released in November.

The trend, though preliminary, is hard to ignore.

Enrollment at Lake Tahoe schools fell from 439 students last year to 417, a drop of 22 students, or 5 percent.

Carson Valley schools lost 129 students, from 5,836 last year to 5,707, or a 2.2 percent decline.

Total enrollment dropped from 6,275 in the 2011-12 school year to 6,124, representing the largest drop in four years. In the 2008-09 school year, DCSD shed 205 stu-

dents, or 3 percent of its student body. Since then, the rate of decline has slowed to 1.1-1.7 percent.

The recent slide puts current enrollment below 1992-93 levels. Total enrollment in Douglas County schools peaked in the 1998-99 school year with 7,322 students, and it stayed near or above the 7,000 mark until the 2006-07 school year, when enrollment dropped by 187 students, or 2.7 percent, to 6,848.

At individual elementary schools, not counting early childhood special education, enrollment was mostly negative.

Title I variances for underperforming schools under No Child Left Behind, which had provided students the option to transfer to other sites, were not required this year.

Meneley Elementary enrolled 553 K-6 students, up from 535 last year, and Jacks Valley Elementary enrolled 464 K-6 students, down from 493 last year.

Piñon Hills Elementary saw a 10-student drop, from 495 K-6 students to 485; Gardnerville Elementary dipped slightly from 519 to 516 this year; Minden Elementary shrank from 399 to 385; Scarselli dropped from 573 to 539, a 34-student decrease, and Zephyr Cove Elementary shed 19 students from 204 last year to 185 this year.

Carson Valley Middle School's student population remained fairly flat, from 745 last year to 742. Pau-Wa-Lu Middle School actually gained students, from 599 last year to 608 this year. Douglas High dropped from

1,286 students last year to 1,242 students this year, a 44-student decline, and Whittell High School went from 233 to 229.

Some enrollment differences at Douglas High and other secondary schools may be attributed to the growing ASPIRE alternative education program, which enrolled 69 students this year on count day.

Weighted enrollment for the district, which actually determines per-pupil funding, came in at 5,901. That number includes 445 pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students, whom are funded at 60 percent, and 46 students from Alpine County under an interstate agreement.

Fortunately, the district is currently funded at last year's weighted enrollment of 6,053.8 due to the state's hold harmless provision, which allows districts with declining enrollment to use the previous year's numbers.

Of course, if student population declines over a long period of time, per-pupil funding inevitably decreases — the drop is just delayed a year.

Noonan said declining enrollment "adds a dimension" going into next year's budget cycle and state legislative session.

"The governor has made comments that he will not recommend additional cuts to education," Noonan said. "While we'll learn more about this going forward, we're hoping the legislature doesn't have plans to reduce funding for public education, or it will create that double-hit."

Food drive, Genoa music festival all on

I had a couple of calls Wednesday on events happening in what I consider the distant future, but then, I consider Veterans Day the distant future right now.

Gardnerville resident Mike Wiley, who's in charge of the annual Share Your Holiday Food Drive, called Wednesday to say the event is alive and well and is coming 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Dec. 14.

"It will be bigger than ever," he said. Genoa Town Manager Sheryl Gonzales asked me to remind everyone that the Genoa Cowboy Festival will be May 3-5, 2013.

And for my own sanity, Nevada Days, a tad early this year, with the holiday coming Oct. 26 and the parade on Oct. 27. Trick or treating will be Oct. 31. Nevada's actual birthday. Come on by the CVIC Hall for Trick or Treat Safety Street where I'll be dressed as the Silver State, maybe.

Pleasantview resident Carole Duncan called to say there's a hawk eyeing her little dog.

She said that the hawk swooped down on the dog while it was in her backyard and again while she and husband Richard were taking it for a walk.

"We're concerned because there are a lot of people in this neighborhood with small dogs," she said.

Carole and Richard moved to Pleasantview in July, so they probably didn't hear about Paris LaMora, who was hurt while trying to protect her Easter chicken from a hawk back in April.

Dogs, cats, chickens and other smallish animals are prey to the variety of carnivores who call Carson Valley home. Hawks, eagles and owls, bobcats, coyotes, mountain lions and even the occasional bear are all looking for an easy meal.

Speaking of bears, I heard they've started picking apples in Genoa. With the large crop, I'm sure lots of folks will get a visit from hungry ursines packing it away before winter comes. If you don't want bears in your apple trees, pick the apples. Also be extra careful not to leave edible items in cars or outside in the garbage where the bear might get a whiff.

Kurt Hildebrand is editor of The Record-Courier. Reach him at khildebrand@record-courier.com or 782-5121, ext. 215.

Genoa Lakes deal still in play

by Kurt Hildebrand
khildebrand@recordcourier.com

The owner of the Genoa Lakes golf courses denied rumors that the closure of the resort course indicated that a deal to sell the two golf courses has fallen through.

Mario Antoci said Wednesday that while the sale to Mazz Golf Management Co. was not yet a done deal, there's still a good possibility that it will go through by the end of the month.

"The deal is not as strong as we had hoped," Antoci said.

The resort course closed earlier this week for the season, something that happens every year, Antoci said.

"We looked at the tee sheet and it only has two people on it," he said. "We'll close one course during the

winter and keep the other one open as long as weather permits."

He pointed out that come spring, it's likely the resort course will reopen before the older lakes course.

"If there's still snow on one course, we'll open the other course first," Antoci said. "The snow usually melts on the resort course first."

The sale of the two courses, which comprise 36 holes and 564 acres, was expected to close on Sept. 28 when it first came to light in mid-September.

A few days before that date, a press release reported the sale's completion would occur in mid-October.

Mike and Denise Mazzaferri are the owners of Mazz Golf Management Co., and are operating Sierra Sage Golf Course in Stead.

NEWS ITEMS

Teacher seeking classroom donations

Staff Reports

Dana Rosingus, a fifth-grade teacher at Gardnerville Elementary School, is seeking public donations to add modern technology into the classroom and increase student interest and productivity.

The classroom is hoping to receive five Samsung Galaxy tablets using the DonorsChoose.org non-profit charity website.

DonorsChoose.org engages the community in public schools by giving people a simple, accountable and personal way to address educational inequity.

The organization is a nationally recognized charity supported by Oprah, CNN, the Wall Street Journal, NPR, and the Better Business Bureau.

Interested donors can go to <http://www.donorschoose.org/Rosingus> for more information on the project.

All donations made on or before Monday will have the funds

matched, dollar for dollar, if the word "PUMPKIN" is used upon checkout.

The donation is tax deductible and receipts are available.

Gasoline prices rise 2 cents on Thursday

Predictions that gas prices would decrease by the end of the week failed to materialize on Thursday.

Gas prices in Minden and Gardnerville rose 2 cents on Thursday to hit their highest level over the past week.

Discount outlet Pacific Gas was selling regular unleaded for \$4.079 on Thursday afternoon, up from \$4.059 Thursday morning. Both AM/PM Arco minimarts increased their prices to \$4.089.

Only the Gardnerville Chevron showed a substantial decrease of 7 cents, to \$4.429 on Thursday morning. Both Minden and Gardnerville AM/PMs were a cent higher than they were on Monday.

The lowest advertised gas price in the two towns for a gallon of unleaded regular was \$4.059 at the Eagle Gas Station.

The Record-Courier

The Record-Courier, a thrice-weekly publication, dates back to 1880 and has its roots in two earlier Carson Valley newspapers, the Genoa Courier and the Gardnerville Record, consolidated in 1904. Carson Valley home delivery subscriptions are \$52 per year or \$24 for 24 weeks or \$13 for 12 weeks, mail delivery is \$70 per year, \$40 for 24 weeks and \$23 for 12 weeks. Periodicals postage paid at Gard-

nerville, NV post office (USPS 457-540). Postmaster: SEND CHANGES OF ADDRESS to The Record-Courier, 1503 Highway 395 N., Ste. G, Gardnerville, NV 89410. Deadlines for news and letters are Monday noon for the Wednesday issue, Wednesday noon for the Friday edition and Thursday noon for the Sunday edition.

CONTACT US

Phone, 782-5121
Fax, 782-6152 or 782-6132
Voice mail, 782-8278

If you have not received your weekday copy of The Record-Courier by 7 a.m., call our customer service department by noon, Monday through Friday, at 882-2515 and a paper will be delivered. For re-delivery of the Sunday edition call 882-2515 by noon on Sunday.

STAFF

Publisher, Pat Bridges, ext. 208
pbbridges@sierranevadamedia.com
Editor, Kurt Hildebrand, ext. 215
khildebrand@recordcourier.com
News, Sheila Gardner, ext. 214
sgardner@recordcourier.com
Scott Neuffer, ext. 217
sneuffer@recordcourier.com
Caryn Haller, ext. 210
challer@recordcourier.com

Sports, Joey Randall, ext. 212
jrandall@recordcourier.com
Photography, Shannon Litz, ext. 209
slitz@recordcourier.com
Advertising, Adele Hoppe, ext. 224
ahoppe@recordcourier.com
Alex Schumacher, ext. 220
aschumacher@recordcourier.com
Office Manager, Alice Price, ext. 204
Circulation Manager, Tony King, 882-2515, tking@recordcourier.com