

Enroll

Continued from page 1

— 51 fewer than the actual number this fall.

"It's positive for two reasons," she said. "One is that it shows our estimates were conservative; we always want to be conservative. No. 2, although one year does not make a trend, the rate of decline is 50 percent lower than our projected decline."

During the last five years, the average rate of decline has been closer to 2 percent. Enrollment peaked in the 2004-05 school year with 7,210 students district-wide.

The following year enrollment had fallen by 175 students, or 2.4 percent. That dip marked the start of a seven-year decline. The biggest drop came in the 2008-09 school year, when the district lost a whopping 205 students, or a 3 percent decline.

The 69-student drop this year represents the smallest decrease, both in terms of percentage and number of students, in the last seven years. In other words, the bleeding may be slowing to some degree.

The breakdown of enrollment school by school reveals relatively stable populations.

On the surface, Douglas High School lost 68 students, dropping from 1,354 last year to 1,286 this year. However,

Luna explained that at least 56 students in the Douglas system are now at the alternative education ASPIRE program in Minden, which has been expanding.

Including all early childhood and pre-kindergarten students, the district's elementary schools saw a 44-pupil drop from 3,319 elementary students last year to 3,275 this year.

In kindergarten through sixth-grade alone, Piñon Hills Elementary dipped from 505 students last year to 495 this year. That includes 20 students who transferred to Piñon Hills from Jacks Valley and Meneley elementary schools under No Child Left Behind Title I variances.

Although 13 students from Jacks Valley transferred to Piñon Hills under the provision, Jacks Valley's population remained rather flat — 493 students in K-6 this year compared to 495 last year.

A similar scenario played out at Meneley Elementary. Although 28 students transferred to Scarselli and seven students left for Piñon Hills, Meneley still enrolled 535 students in K-6 this year, down slightly from 538 last year.

Scarselli enrolled 573 students versus 574 last year, including the recent influx from Meneley. Gardnerville Elementary lost only three students, dropping from 522 to 519.

Minden Elementary School

experienced the largest drop in enrollment, falling from 428 last year to 399 this year, a difference of 29 students. Luna attributed this to a larger-than-average sixth-grade class last year that has now entered the middle school, among other grade-level factors.

Carson Valley Middle School enrolled 756 students last year and 745 this year, a small decrease of 11 students. Pau-Wa-Lu Middle School gained one student with 599 this year versus 598 last year.

At Lake Tahoe, Zephyr Cove Elementary gained nine students, jumping from 195 last year to 204 this year in grades K-6. Whittell High School, which includes middle school grades, increased from 232 enrollees last year to 233 this year.

Although Lake enrollment has declined by as much as 50 percent over the last decade, prompting the closure of Kingsbury Middle School, it now appears to be flattening out, Luna said.

"What we've noticed with the economic downturn is that there's actually been a rise in population at Zephyr Cove Elementary School," she said.

Her conjecture is that more people are utilizing second homes at the Lake while the economy recovers.

"It's not going to recover to where we used to be, but we are holding a much steadier population," she said.

Bus

Continued from page 1

Lee said that expanded BlueGo service in the Valley will free up drivers for the new routes.

"We can do more work in the Valley now because Blue Go will be taking people to Carson City five times a day."

Lee said BlueGo is looking for places to expand its coverage and will be leaving from the Ranchos for Carson City five times a day.

The BlueGo routes are expected to include a stop at the Starbucks plant for folks who work there.

"We're hoping to target people who want to save gas to go to work or school in Carson City," he said.

Three years ago budget cuts forced the reduction of the Douglas bus system from 10 drivers to four.

"The DART Express is designed for people who are planning their lives around us," DART Coordinator Linda Skaggs said.

Lee said the new bus stops will be marked and that he hopes to set up a shelter and a bench at the Ranchos stop.

The county's dial-a-ride service will continue.

Resident Larry Porter asked whether the BlueGo buses will be equipped to help his handicapped son, Buddy.

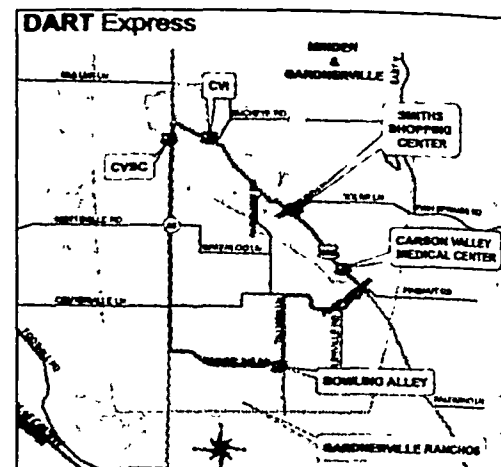
Lee assured him that they will be able to help.

Douglas buses will cost \$2 to ride for adults, \$1 for students and a suggested donation of \$1 for seniors 60 and older. Children 11 and younger are free with an adult. BlueGo transfers will be at the Tillman Center and the Carson



Shannon Litz

Genevieve West talks about the bus routes while Nancy Andrews listens on Wednesday at Silver Strike Lanes.



Valley Inn. With a transfer, riders can go as far as Johnson Lane without additional charge. Riders heading to Indian Hills or Carson City will pay an additional \$2.

Regular rider Nancy Andrews said she preferred that the service have stops with signs out.

"They tell us to flag the bus down, but I have trouble flagging the bus down."

BlueGo is being operated by the Tahoe Transportation District.

"We're happy we are able to open up some options for people," Skaggs said. "We hope people can use the bus to get to work. We've been waiting a long time for a new route."

A Great Night of Comedy & Awards!

LOCAL HEROES

"I wish the world were full of Brians. You gave me faith in men, and you believed in me when I didn't even believe in myself."

Brian Putzer
Douglas County D.A.'s Office - Special Victims Response Team
Nominated by a former Domestic Violence client for his emotional support and effective confidence-building with victims. Putzer is a supportive resource and collaborative partner with FSC advocates.

Dr. Ralph Herbig
Dr. Herbig Family Practice, Gardnerville
For his service on the Domestic Violence Task Force; and for his compassion and generosity often providing medical exams and prescriptions for injured victims - free of charge.

Pastor Pete Nelson
Carson Valley United Methodist Church
For providing ongoing spiritual, emotional, and financial support for victims and their children. "Pastor Pete" is always there.

Amy Partipilo
Deputy, Douglas County Sheriff's Office
For her work with Domestic Violence victims; officer training on Domestic Violence; child safety and car seat programs, and for her service as Advisor to the FSC HOPES Haven Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Program.

Chris Griffith
Deputy, Douglas County Sheriff's Office - DARE Program
Nominated by several students for encouraging leadership, and for his dedication to prevention education. In addition to covering substance abuse, children are prepared for other peer pitfalls/dangers such as dating violence, stalking, and abduction.

LOCAL HEROES

Tickets \$25 Info. Call Adrienne Monroe Family Support Council 782-8692
Sat. Oct. 1st 6:00-7:00 p.m. Cocktails ~ Hors d' Oeuvres ~ Silent Auction
CVIC Hall Minden 7:00 p.m. Presentation of Awards ~ Professional Comedy!

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Kat Simmons

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CVIC HALL

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