

Comment's retraction denied

HR director shared public comment in Dec. 4 meeting

By CHLOE COCHRAN Staff Writer

SANDPOINT — During Tuesday's business meeting, a majority vote denied a Board of County Commissioners action item requesting the county's human resources director to retract a public opinion he made during a Dec. 4 special meeting.

The action item was put in front of the board by Commissioner Asia Williams, who said HR Director Jonathan Holmgren "publicly asserted that the County Fair Board had 'been operating beyond the scope of its responsibility for some time and has veered into the lane of responsibility that belongs to the BOCC. This has resulted in the Fair Board thinking that they employ the County Fairgrounds personnel

and can direct their work."

A memorandum submitted with the item further alleges that the statement — made in an open meeting and then published in the Daily Bee — cast a negative light on the volunteer fair members of

See DENIAL, A2

<u>BRIEFLY</u>

Verbal approval for state disaster in Bonner County, Clark Fork floods

31831 HWY 200 E, SANDPOINT, IDAHO

By CHLOE COCHRAN Staff Writer

CLARK FORK — The Office of Emergency Management has indicated to Bonner County commissioners that they received verbal approval of a state disaster emergency for Bonner County flooding near Clark Fork by Idaho Gov. Brad Little.

In a special meeting Dec. 22, commissioners issued a delegation letter of authority to the Idaho Office of Emergency Management, designating Director of Emergency Management Bob Howard as a point of contact, to commit funds on behalf of the county with the intentions of managing the flooding disaster.

With the state's assistance of the disaster, Commissioner Brian Domke shared that financial assistance will be up to a 50/50 cost share with the county.

See FLOODS, A3

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North Idaho ski areas open after slow start

By KAYE THORNBRUGH Staff Writer

Amid challenges such as warm temperatures and strong winds that caused power outages across the region, all three ski areas in North Idaho remain open. However, operations are limited in some cases.

Silver Mountain Resort has faced a rough start to the ski season, with five total days on skis so far and just three with chairlifts spinning. The last day of ski operations was Dec. 7.

"We've had some big rain events, heat waves and windstorms that have wreaked havoc on our snowpack," Gus Colburn, Silver Mountain marketing manager, said Tuesday. "Like many others in North Idaho, we lost power to the mountain for a few days and our lift mechanics dealt with electric issues stemming from the loss of power."

Silver Mountain reopened Tuesday for tubing and scenic gondola rides and will stay open seven days a week through April, weather permitting. Ski terrain will open as soon as there's enough snow.

"Right now, it is still too thin to ski on, but we are optimistically waiting for snow to return to the mountain so we can get the chairlifts spinning again," Colburn said. "We can't wait to welcome our Silver Mountain family back to the mountain and get on the slopes."

Though Schweitzer reported a similar slow start to the season, the resort village is in full swing with dining, lodging and programming through the holidays.

Five trails were open at Schweitzer as of Tuesday.

Schweitzer opened top-to-bottom skiing off the

Great Escape lift on Monday and, after receiving another inch of snow overnight, expanded on Tuesday with another route from the top. As of Tuesday afternoon, five trails were open and three lifts were spinning.

Snowmaking efforts continue on lower-elevation terrain as conditions permit, with a priority focus on Creekside Express and the beginner area.

"It's been a challenging start to the season, but we are feeling more optimistic now that temperatures have lowered and we've seen a few inches of fresh snow over the last couple days," Taylor Prather, marketing communications manager for Schweitzer, said Tuesday.

For everyone's safety, it's essential to respect closures.

"Patrol is working hard to keep areas roped off for safety, so our 'duck a rope, lose your pass' policy is emphasized purely due to hazardous conditions off-piste," Prather said.

At Lookout Pass, 22 trails are open, which

equates to about 350 acres of sliding, and two lifts are operating.

Matt Sawyer, Lookout Pass marketing director, said he has skied every day the trails have been open. Lookout Pass is now open seven days a week.

"I'm having fun and can't wait for the next

day's flakes to fall," he said.

There's plenty of winter left, Sawyer said, and most people don't visit the mountains before Christmas.

"So stay positive and make plans to get out on the slopes this winter," he said.

Photo via Schweitzer

Sandpoint moving toward C-PACE

By JACK FREEMAN Staff Writer

SANDPOINT — The City Council voted 4-1 to take a step toward becoming the sixth city in Idaho to implement a C-PACE program.

As an economic development tool, C-PACE allows private businesses to leverage private capital from PACE Equity for energy efficiency or green energy-based building improvements.

Don Schulz, a representative for PACE Equity, said the program does not use public dollars,

See C-PACE, A3

Community brings cheer to 'Tots' drive

By CAROLINE LOBSINGER Staff Writer

When Georgia firefighters rappelled down Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, they brought along Santa Claus, Superman and Spiderman for the ride.

After all, the young patients at the hospital couldn't make it in to see Santa, and the Jolly Old Elf

See TOTS, A3

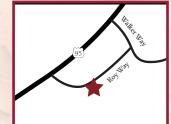
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