

TOURISM

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improved flow of information between Bodie park rangers and Caltrans would likely go a long way to resolving the problem, not to mention eliminate a lot of needless finger-pointing.

Signs

New signs, one at each end of the Bridgeport town limits, will help visitors find the interesting, but underpromoted museum already in existence, as well as the new, improved visitors center currently in the works.

That is, once it's determined who's going to pay for them. Mono County's Tourism Commission took up the issue of how (or if) it should fund the \$3,900 price tag for the new signage. One consideration: does the signage meet with existing funding criteria. Commissioner Danna Stroud isn't so sure.

"I'm not sold that the funds for the new signs should come out of our limited budget for tourism and marketing," Stroud stated. Part of her concern was that, while the signs would direct visitors to specific points of interest in town, she questioned how that would equate to verifiable nights in rooms (one of the commission's primary objectives), and indeed whether new signage qualified as actual "market-

ing."

Fellow commissioner Bonnie Colgan agreed. "I don't think it meets the established criteria," she said. Indeed, the language of the commission's parameters does mention signage promoting special events, which COULD be interpreted to include the new signage, Stroud said she thought that would amount to splitting hairs. "There is a need," she allowed, yet also cautioned she was "concerned about establishing a precedent I thought we were trying to get away from."

And it turns out that funding the signs is something that may have been inadvertently dropped in the commission's lap. Direction that flowed largely from community member-driven Regional Planning Advisory Committees apparently steered the Chamber of Commerce to take the funding request to the Tourism Commission.

"They [RPAC members] probably weren't really aware of what that meant to us at the time," estimated Mono County Economic Development Manager Sarah McCahill, whose perspective was generally accepted by the commissioners. One thought was why the new signs weren't part of the County's ongoing Capital Improvement Projects list, tacked onto Public Works' Bridgeport Visitors Center upgrade budget.

Mono County Economic Development Director Dan Lyster said that's not the only bump in the road. "If you're putting in new signage on U.S. 395, you'll have to comply with existing Caltrans and County sign ordinances," Lyster explained.

In any case, Stroud suggested putting the matter on the earliest possible Board of Supervisors agenda to request some clarification as to the original direction. "If [the Board] wants us to pay for it, that's fine, but we should re-evaluate and explain to them our budget situation, and explore how to increase that part of it going forward on an annual basis."

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

National Trails Day

Mammoth Lakes is surrounded by the public lands of the Inyo National Forest. There are millions of acres of lakes, woods, meadows, canyons and plateaus ripe for exploration, and hundreds of miles of trails that take you there. Get your summer off to a great start by helping care for one of those trails. Volunteers and Inyo National Forest staff will join together to work on a popular spot just south of Mammoth — the Sherwin Lakes trail — as part of National Trails Day, Saturday June 6, from 8:30 a.m. and ending some time during the early afternoon. The event is co-hosted by Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access and Friends of the Inyo, local non-profit groups dedicated to helping people enjoy recreation on the area's beautiful public lands.

As snow melts each May and June, trails in the Sherwin area are some of the first to see traffic, and the first to require annual touch-ups such as brush and rock removal. Need a few reasons why you should be there? Try these: hone your pruning skills just in time for summer gardening; talk to wilderness rangers about their favorite places in the Sierra; get a guided ecotour of the Sherwin burn area; learn how you can help Mammoth-area trails all summer long; take pride in having dirt under your fingernails; and if those weren't quite enough, we're kicking in a free lunch and raffle prize.

All volunteers are welcome. More info: www.friendsoftheinyo.org or www.mltpa.org.

See anything you like?

This year's Tour of Homes will be held Saturday, June 6 from 1-4 p.m. Join the tour and see some of the most fabulous and unique homes in Mammoth. Tickets available at The Booky Joint for \$25. For more information, call 934.8227.

Java Joint relaunches

The Java Joint, in The Minaret Village Shopping Center, has a new look. Karen Kastner, long time local and owner of the Java Joint, recently announced she's teamed up with Lynne Blanche of Pampered Guest Services and Riki Barbo to bring a new neighborhood cafe to Mammoth Lakes residents and tourists.

Java Joint's casual meeting ambiance has been one of the Town's best kept secrets, but Kastner wants to change that. In addition to great fresh brewed java, Blanche and Barbo have added crepes, smoothies, and new sandwiches (on fresh-baked bread) and salads to the menu. Daily specials, a children's menu and high school lunch specials are also available.

The Joint also features goodies from local baker Stephanie Stanton, whose sweet-tooth tempting treats are known throughout the community. "Her cookies are positively decadent," Blanche opined.

Coming soon, a "dinners to go" menu. Java Joint is located on the ground floor of the Minaret Mall, next to the Booky Joint.

Defend your space

The new president of the Mammoth Lakes Fire-Safe Council is Roberta Regelbrugge, and she urges you to create defensible space around your home.

MLFD Fire Capt. Robert Williams will conduct free home inspections. Call him at 934.2300.

Planning Commission Chair Elizabeth Tenney informs The Sheet that Mammoth Lakes currently tops the list in California for risk of catastrophic wildfire. Regelbrugge warns that some insurance companies are pulling out of communities who ignore this issue.

She also said lawsuits have come down recently where those who have created defensible space are suing neighbors who haven't.



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