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Hawaii trip draws Incline parallels

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Special to the Bonanza

Incline Village has got to be the greatest place in the world to live . . . as long as you can get to some tropical place for about two weeks in the middle of winter.

I just returned from a fortnight's thaw in Honolulu, so I am lightly bronzed and just fat enough to get through the rest of the frigid season. Despite differences in climate Hawaii has a lot in common with Tahoe. Both have breathtaking natural beauty, high costs for nearly everything and a public sensitivity about the environment.

From a political and geodemographic standpoint Hawaii reflects what the United States will look like in the future.

Lily-white anti-immigration Republicans would splutter and fume to pick up the phone and be told: "for Japanese press one, for Korean press two, for Filipino press three" but those folks were all there long before the Caucasians.

Speaking of which, presidential campaign results to date pretty clearly show that ethnic voting is on the decline.

Obama has done well with white Democrats and McCain appears to have wrapped up the GOP nomination despite his support of the immigration reform bill. Republican candidates such as Tom Tancredo and Duncan Hunter, hoping to capitalize on an anti-immigration base, have been consigned back to their congressional districts by GOP voters who have more important things on their minds so maybe we have learned something from the Rainbow state's inclusiveness.

Hawaiians, like Incliners, spend a lot of time and money trying to reinvent themselves.

This month a legislative task force released the Hawaii 2050 Sustainability Plan based on a \$1.7 million, two year study involving over 10,500 individual interviews.

The study was designed to assess the state's future needs and offer an implementation plan to meet them, complete with benchmarks.

The Plan includes wide-ranging proposals.

Some include improving the education system to prepare students for jobs, improving on student achievement, assuring availability of work force housing, boosting renewable

energy from 5 percent to 20 percent of the total, promoting recycling and waste reduction strategies, making more long-term care beds available and, finally, encouraging residents to attend a cultural event every three months.

One area not addressed was public transportation, probably because Honolulu has an excellent bus system.

If all this sounds kind of familiar it's because Incline/Crystal Bay residents have also engaged in a lot of formal soul searching about what our little hamlet's future holds and how to fix what needs fixing.

IVGID, through several different boards and at least two general managers, has usually been the catalyst to organize these studies over the 16 years I have lived here.

Although TRPA sometimes gets into the act.

One of the problems with getting anything in the way of comprehensive future planning done is that of jurisdiction. In Hawaii the legislature took charge, funded the study and approved the remedies.

In Incline the scope of items most needing fixing would involve at least two unconnected jurisdictions in Nevada, the county and the school district, so it is awkward at best to try to do anything effective.

Perhaps that's why there have been four legislative attempts to form Incline/Crystal Bay into a separate county and one to form a separate school district since 1980.

There are plenty of qualified, intelligent volunteers in our community to engage in a sustainability study and come up with a comprehensive plan just as they have in Hawaii.

Indeed we have done this on numerous occasions.

We just seem to lack a legal vehicle with the jurisdiction to implement the policies a majority of us would like to see.

Too bad.

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