Mega Indian casinos to be built on way to Tahoe

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

A Hard Rock casino-hotel is coming to the outskirts of greater Sacramento, upping the competitive ante in the region's increasingly crowded gambling market.

The Hard Rock Cafe International chain has announced it will partner with the Enterprise Rancheria Indian tribe to build a mega-resort in Yuba County, not far from the Toyota Amphitheatre in Wheatland.

While preliminary site work is under way, neither Hard Rock nor the Enterprise tribe would discuss details about the resort.

Meanwhile, two more tribal casinos are in development in the region. Caesars Entertainment Corp. and the Buena Vista Band of Me-Wuk Indians announced they broke ground in April on a $168 million casino outside Ione, about 30 miles east of Sacramento. The Wilton Rancheria tribe plans to build a $400 million casino, hotel and conference center in south Elk Grove, although it hasn't yet scheduled a groundbreaking.

Read the whole story

Scooter 'treasure hunt':

Nighttime chargers make big money

By Carolyn Said, San Francisco Chronicle

Each night after dinner, David Padover invites his kids to join him in a high-tech scavenger hunt through their San Jose neighborhood. They pile into his Subaru Outback, turn on an app and hunt for electric scooters with drained batteries, pressing a button to make their quarry sound a tone and flash lights.

Their usual haul: a dozen or more scooters, which they plug into power supplies in the living room and kitchen.

“It’s instantaneous success,” said Padover, who rises early to drop off the scooters at designated locations to be ready for commuters. “You’re there, there’s a dollar sign for the scooter. It appeals to my competitive spirit.”

As motorized scooters for rent have flooded cities nationwide, a new gig has sprung up — people scouring the streets as freelance “chargers.” It’s easy to start, signing up with a few clicks and then being mailed charging packs, which look like laptop chargers.

Read the whole story

As wildfires get worse, these

tools will help keep you safe

By Wes Siler, Outside

As the fire season lengthens and as wildfires become both more severe and more common, we need to start rolling information about them into our everyday lives—just like we do with the weather forecast. Luckily, visualizing the spread of a wildfire has gotten as easy as predicting afternoon showers thanks to three powerful new tools.

The first in an upgrade to the government's all-agency fire data clearing house InciWeb, which has gained a new map feature for each of the fires it reports. So instead of a wall of bureaucracy-speak, you can instead actually see exactly where a fire is burning when you go read about it. This info is updated each morning. Straight from that page, you can follow links to the fire's hashtag on Twitter and Instagram for photos and crowdsourced information. A Facebook link directs you to the page of whichever agency is responsible for managing the fire, where that agency posts live updates and critical information.

Read the whole story

K's Kitchen: Salad hot off the barbecue

By Kathryn Reed

Salads are often an entrée in the summer, but sometimes I want something other than lettuce and fruit. That's when the

barbecue gets fired up.

With how warm it has been lately, the last thing I want to do is get the kitchen even hotter. Again, the barbecue is the answer.

This ensemble was so incredibly easy to put together. Chopping the vegetables took the most amount of time. Any variety of veggies would work, so pick your favorites. The cooking time will depend on what you choose.

The assortment I had were done pretty fast, so you will want to make sure the orzo is already on the stove. If you have a side burner on your grill, this is a great time to use it so you aren't heating up the house.

The marinade is tangy, giving a refreshing finish.



Grilled Vegetable Orzo Salad

- 1 medium red onion, quartered
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded and quartered
- 1 yellow bell pepper, seeded and quartered
- 1 medium zucchini, cut into quarters
- 1 medium-size yellow squash, cut into quarters
- 1 portabella mushroom sliced in strips

- Olive oil cooking spray
- 10 ounces uncooked orzo
- 3 T red wine vinegar
- 3 T grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 T extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 T lemon juice
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- ½ tsp pepper

Preheat grill to at least 400 degrees.

Place vegetables on oiled grates. Cook until slightly charred. Chop vegetables into small pieces, and put in a large bowl.

Prepare orzo according to package directions for al dente; don’t use salt. Drain and rinse under cold running water; stir orzo into vegetable mixture.

Add vinegar, Parmesan, oil, lemon juice, salt, and black pepper. Pour into veggie-orzo mixture.

NCAA to study possible effects of widespread legal wagering

By Associated Press

The NCAA plans to study how the expansion of legalized betting

could affect college athletics and member schools.

The NCAA announced Thursday it will create a working group of "subject matter experts" to assess areas such as officiating, NCAA rules, federal and state laws, and the use of integrity services. NCAA leadership has already called for federal regulation on sports betting. NCAA rules prohibit sports wagering by athletes and athletic department employees.

Read the whole story

Road Beat: Hyundai Ioniq, the best hybrid you can buy



The 2018 Hyundai Ioniq – the best hybrid you can buy.

Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

It has been exactly one year since I last tested a Hyundai Ioniq hybrid, however this time around my tester was a base model stickering for just $23,210. My prior test vehicle was a top of the line Ultimate edition. Essential they are the same vehicle except for content. But that doesn't mean that this base unit is a stripper. It isn't as it comes standard with power windows, mirrors, backup camera and most everything else one could want. If you want NAV and power seats, you won't find it on the base.

But there is something that this base model called "Blue" has that was not found in the Ultimate and that is high performance and even better fuel economy. So much so that when I called my prior Ioniq Ultimate the best hybrid with the title "The best hybrid just got better," I was mistaken, as this base Blue model now holds the title the "best hybrid you can buy." Read on and you will understand.

Hybrids main purpose is achieving better fuel economy. The Ioniq not only achieves the best fuel economy of any (non-PHEV) hybrid, it does so with high performance and the lowest price of any hybrid and it is a high content car.

Ioniq is a great looking car in its own right and the best-looking hybrid ever designed as a hybrid with strong shoulders, a sweeping roof and window line and a slightly Kamm tail incorporated into a hatchback design. It is a small compact at 176 inches in length by 72 inches wide on a 106-inch wheelbase. It stands 57 inches tall. But its diminutive size is deceiving as it has the interior capacity of a large car at 123 cubic feet including 26 of those cubes in the cargo hold. The first time I saw one on the road it caught my eye as a great looking ride and actually caught up to it to see what it was. I was surprised to find out that it was an Ioniq.

Nothing has changed under the hood as Ioniq is powered by a 1.6L DOHC, 16 valve, Atkinson cycle inline four-cylinder engine of 104 hp at 5,700 rpm and 109 pounds of twist at 4,000 rpm coupled to a 43 hp and 125 pounds of twist electric motor all driving the front wheels through a super-efficient six-speed dual clutch tranny. Its Lithium-ion polymer 1.56 kWh battery provides the power to the electric motor and has a lifetime warranty. Find that in another hybrid. Bottom line is a combined 139 hp from the engine and electric motor.



Specifications
Price $23,210
Power train
16 valve, DOHC direct injected inline four 104 hp @ 5,700rpm
109 lb.-ft. of torque @ 4,000 rpm
Electric motor 43 hp
125 lb.-ft.
Combined system hp 139 hp
Battery 1.56 kWh L-I polymer
Transmission
Six-speed dual clutch automated manual
Configuration
Transverse mounted front engine/front wheel drive

Dimensions
Wheelbase 106.3 inches
Length 176.0 inches
Width 71.7 inches
Height 56.9 inches
Wheels 15 x 6 inch alloys
Tires 195/65 x 15
Passenger volume 96.2 cubic feet
Trunk volume 26.5 cubic feet
Weight 2,996 pounds
Fuel capacity 11.9 gallons
Co-efficient of drag 0.24

Performance
0-60 mph 7.62 seconds
50-70 mph 4.33 seconds
50-70 mph uphill 6.73 seconds
Top speed Well into triple digits
Fuel economy EPA rated 57/59/58 city/highway/combined Expect 50-55 mpg in rural country driving and 56-57 mpg on the highway at legal speeds.

It is an amazing power system that propels the little Ioniq from 0-60 mph in 7.62 seconds which is 1.3 seconds quicker than my Ioniq Ultimate test. Passing tests also reveal this new-found pep with a 50-70 mph run of just 4.33 seconds and the same run up a 6-7 percent grade only taking 6.73 seconds. My prior Ultimate test had respective performance numbers of 8.91, 4.56 and 8.60 seconds which reflects a significant performance improvement. Compared to a Prius, the Ioniq is about two seconds faster to 60 mph.

About the only difference between the base Blue model and the Ultimate is about 120 pounds less weight. The Blue model also returned slightly better fuel economy, better than any other hybrid the Road Beat has ever tested. EPA rates the Blue at 57/59/58 mpg city/highway/combined and the Blue just about achieves those lofty numbers with a 70-mph highway fuel economy of 55.6 mpg in a two-way run. In a run from Placerville to South Lake Tahoe, the Ioniq Blue returned exactly 58 mpg in moderately aggressive driving that included several full throttle passing runs. It is the first hybrid tested to basically achieve its EPA numbers. Amazing. It always averaged 50 mpg or better in 400 miles of testing. Zero to 60 mph in 7.6 seconds and 58 mpg. Amazing. And the Ioniq feels peppy and very responsive. Helping fuel economy is the Ioniq's ability to run pure electric at speeds of 70 mph and do so for periods of two to three miles, especially when cruising at 50-55 mph. Even with its puny 11.9-gallon fuel tank, expect cruising ranges of 600 miles with reserves.

Ioniq also has sophisticated four-wheel independent suspension, quick steering (2.66 turns lock to lock) and a tight 35 foot turning circle. However, the standard 195/65 x 15-inch rubber are mounted on 15-inch alloys but with some ugly wheel covers. While 4 pounds shy of 3,000, it still handles nimbly, but the optional 17-inch alloys and 225/45 rubber would make those Mario Andretti wannabes happier.

The ride is very quiet and smooth.

All your basic safety acronyms are present such as ABS, VSM, TC and more. Brakes are strong four-wheel discs (front ventilated) and the headlights are good. It also has an excellent back up camera. However blind spot monitors and lane departure steering assist are not present in the Blue's standard equipment list which is fine with me as I don't have to look for the disabling switch.

Inside is a quality interior with comfortable seats, good rear

seat legroom and plenty of soft touch trim. It is surprisingly nice. OK, so the seats aren't powered with electric motors. But they are easy to manually adjust.

Instrumentation even includes a bar graph tach which is nice for a hybrid and enabled me to report an engine speed of 2,100 rpm at 70 mph. It is also an easy way to determine when you are running pure electric as it is hard to feel otherwise. That's how smooth the Ioniq is. The center stack is easy to use with an HVAC that has separate temp controls for driver and passenger. Nice.

Pricing is a scant $22,200 plus $895 for the boat from Ulsan, Korea. The fancy floor mats add $125 bringing the total Monroney to $23,210. Hyundai Ionic Blue is the hybrid deal on the market. I would love to have one in my garage. Satisfying performance, great looks, fabulous fuel economy at a frugal price.

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.

Alleged Truckee flag burner arrested

By KOLO-TV

A Truckee man was booked Saturday on an arson charge after allegedly burning a store's U.S. flag.

The Truckee Police Department said a U.S. Army veteran donated

a flag which officers hung to replace the damaged flag.

Joshua Everett Lozon, 27, was booked Saturday morning on suspicion of committing arson.

Read the whole story

Scooters on collision course with walkers, lawmakers

By Jim Sallis, The Conversation

Electric scooters are appearing in many major cities across the country, including South Lake Tahoe, bringing fun to riders, profits to scooter makers – and lots of potential risks to walkers and riders.

San Diego, where I live, is at the forefront of the proliferation of electric rideables, and as a physical activity researcher I am an interested observer. Recently, I was enjoying a stroll on the boardwalk when a couple of electric scooters zoomed past. As I saw a young girl start walking across the boardwalk, another scooter zipped by, and I could tell it would not be able to stop in time. The young woman riding the scooter was able to act quickly. Instead of crashing into the girl at full speed, she fell down with the scooter and slid to a stop. There was a crash and minor injuries to the rider, but a tragedy was avoided.

I consider this event a warning about the dangers posed by the electric vehicles that have rapidly become commonplace on local boardwalks and sidewalks. An online search will reveal many reports of injuries. A Dallas woman went to the emergency

room for head injuries the week of July 9, and officials in Nashville are considering legislation there that would require registration for scooters.

Several issues emerge from this new mode of transportation, including whether riders should be required to wear helmets and whether the vehicles should be allowed on sidewalks. And, should drivers be permitted to use them while under the influence? I want to warn local government leaders, electric-rideable companies, and users of sidewalks about the three ways that electric scooters can harm health.

How electric rideables can harm health

Have the rideables come to your neighborhood yet? They will. A market research company predicted electric scooters alone will grow from a $14 billion global market in 2014 to $37 billion in 2024. Bird and Lime, the two biggest scooter makers and both based in California, have placed scooters in nearly 30 U.S. cities in recent months, leasing them to riders seeking a thrill – or an alternative to ride-sharing.

There are many variations of one-, two-, three- and four-wheeled vehicles that share one major flaw. They all go too fast. Scooters go 15 mph, and electric skateboards, mini-motorcycles and one-wheeled devices can go faster.

The problem is that pedestrians walk 3-4 miles per hour, or slower. This means scooters are traveling four times as fast. If there is a clear path, the riders are going at full speed, because that is where the fun and thrills are. But considering the speed, weight of the devices and weight of the rider (sometimes two riders), the result is a dangerous force.

In a collision, the pedestrian will always be the loser. Putting these speeding motorized vehicles alongside pedestrians is a disaster waiting to happen. I could not find much data on injuries from electric rideables, but a study using the U.S. National Electronic Injury Surveillance System

reported 26,854 injuries to children from hoverboards alone in 2015 and 2016.

A second way that electric rideables can harm health is by reducing walking. Ads for the devices claim they reduce car trips and carry public transit riders the first and last mile of trips.

But do they? I challenge the companies to provide evidence about this. Based on my observations, the devices mainly replace walking with riding. And it is well documented that low physical activity is one of the biggest health threats worldwide, being a major contributor to epidemics of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, cancers, dementia, etc.

The third way electric rideables can harm health is by making sidewalks hostile territory for pedestrians. Though scooters and other rideables are not allowed on the sidewalks, almost all the rides I see are occurring on sidewalks. If speeding electric vehicles become common on sidewalks, then I predict pedestrians will stay away. Our research group based at UC San Diego has shown that the better sidewalks and street crossings are designed for pedestrian safety and comfort, the more people of all ages walk for transportation.

Thus, I am concerned that competing with electric vehicles will make sidewalks less safe and comfortable for pedestrians. The U.S. already has among the lowest rates of walking and bicycling for transportation in the world. Will we now turn over the sidewalks to electric vehicles and further reduce our activity levels?

Walking is already too dangerous. About 6,000 pedestrians were killed in 2017. The Governors Highway Safety Association reported that the number of pedestrian fatalities increased 27 percent from 2007 to 2016, while at the same time, all other traffic deaths decreased by 14 percent. Clearly, the roads are not safe for pedestrians, so shouldn’t we protect sidewalks as

a safe place for walking?

A quick fix: Slow things down

Local governments are actively working on responses to this obvious new danger. The first step in San Diego has been to enforce requirements for helmets, speed and single riders on the boardwalk. I have seen no such enforcement on sidewalks just a couple of blocks away. This infographic with safety instructions for electric rideable use is a good start to education for riders.

I have some further recommendations that will support safe use of electric rideables while improving conditions for walking and bicycling.

Let’s start by declaring sidewalks the domain of pedestrians, with motorized devices limited to those used by people with disabilities (#sidewalks4pedestrians). At least on sidewalks, the rights of pedestrians should come before the rights of vehicle riders.

Electric rideables should be allowed wherever bicycles are legal, which are bike facilities, lanes, protected bike paths and on the streets, but not on sidewalks. But there’s a problem with bikes and rideables on the streets – riding on the streets is not as safe as it could be on bicycles or rideables.

I envision a win-win scenario in which electric vehicle companies and bicycle advocates join together to advocate for rapidly building networks of protected bicycle facilities that can also be used by rideables. Most U.S. cities are unsafe for bicycling, so improvements are needed. Some of the electric rideable companies have market values of more than $1 billion, so they have the capacity to lobby cities for infrastructure that will safely accommodate their products.

I expect bicycle, pedestrian, health and environmental

advocates would be happy to work with electric rideable companies to achieve long-sought goals for safe bicycling that are likely to produce more bicycling, less traffic congestion, fewer carbon emissions and healthier people. The electric rideable phenomenon is very new but growing rapidly, so the need for research on electric rideables is as urgent as the need for action. We need evidence to guide policies that will ensure electric rideables do not harm health and will possibly improve health.

Jim Sallis is professorial fellow, Mary MacKillop Institute for Health Research, Australian Catholic University; emeritus professor, Department of Family Medicine and Public Health, UC San Diego.

Editorial: Nev. fares poorly in study on public-sector pension promises

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the July 21, 2017, Las Vegas Review Journal.***

Government union chiefs often blame the nation's looming public pension crisis on the failure of politicians to properly fund the benefits. A study, however, reveals that a major problem is the tendency of elected officials to offer more and more goodies courtesy of the taxpayers.

The analysis, by Illinois-based Wirepoints, looked at state pension data from 2003-2016 and found it is "the uncontrolled growth in pension promises that's actually wreaking havoc." The growth in "accrued liabilities has been extreme in many

states, often growing two to three times faster than the pace of their economies," Wirepoints concluded. "It's no wonder taxpayer contributions haven't been able to keep up."

Nevada finished high on the list of problem states.

Read the whole story

National park ozone pollution rivals large cities

By David Keiser, Gabriel E. Lade and Ivan Rudik

Most Americans associate U.S. national parks with pristine environments that represent the very best of nature. In the 1916 law that established the National Park Service, Congress directed the new agency to "conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

But over the past century it has become increasingly hard to protect the parks from impacts of human activities outside their boundaries. In 2015 the National Parks Conservation Association, a national advocacy group, released a blistering report giving many popular parks poor grades for unhealthy air, haze and impacts from climate change.

In a study just published in "Science Advances," we analyzed levels of ozone, the most widely monitored pollutant in parks, and their impact on visits to 33 national parks from 1990 to 2014. The sites we studied included popular parks such as

Acadia, the Grand Canyon, Great Smoky Mountains, Joshua Tree, Sequoia and Kings Canyon and Yosemite. We found that while cities once had more “bad air days” with unhealthy ozone levels than national parks, today parks and metro areas have virtually the same number of unhealthy ozone days per year on average. We also found that park visits fall on high ozone days – especially during summer and fall, when peak ozone levels typically occur.

The impact of bad air days

Regulatory efforts to protect the national parks have a long history. The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1977 and 1990 designated parks as Federal Class I Areas, granting them special air quality and visibility protections.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s 1999 Regional Haze Rule increased these protections by requiring states to develop and implement plans to improve visibility and air quality in parks and wilderness areas.

However, these regulatory actions have spurred contentious debate and litigation. Environmental groups argue that these measures are not stringent enough, while some states and industries call them too costly.

Major sources of park air pollution include power plants, automobiles and industrial facilities. Unlike other pollutants emitted directly from these sources, like sulfur dioxide or lead, ozone is a secondary pollutant. It forms in the atmosphere through chemical reactions between nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds and sunlight. Nitrogen oxides originate from the usual urban pollution sources, but biogenic sources like trees are actually the largest source of volatile organic compounds, above industrial sources and cars.

Ozone pollution is a serious threat to human health and the environment. It has been linked to increased respiratory symptoms, hospitalization rates and mortality. It also is

correlated with poor visibility in parks, and can damage sensitive plant species.

Ozone trends over time

To our surprise, for most of our study period we found that average annual ozone concentrations in national parks were nearly identical to those in metropolitan areas. However, summertime levels and the incidence of unhealthy days told a different story.

Since ozone forms in sunlight, levels typically are highest on hot, sunny days. When ozone levels exceed the national standard, which is currently 70 parts per billion, local and regional governments may issue alerts or urge people to avoid outdoor activities.

In 1990 cities had far more days bad ozone days on average than national parks. But through the decade, summertime ozone and unhealthy ozone days worsened in national parks. By the year 2000, ozone levels in national parks were, on average, very similar to those in metropolitan areas. Explaining this increase was beyond the scope of our study. According to the National Park Service, pollution in national parks can come from many sources, including power plants, industrial sources, vehicle emissions and wildfires.

Since the early 2000s, ozone levels in both national parks and metropolitan areas have improved. But bad air days still occur. On average, among the locations we studied, metro areas currently have 18 unhealthy ozone days per year, while parks have 16.

Bad air days drive away park visitors

To see whether visitors responded to changing ozone levels in the parks, we matched monthly visitation data from the National Park Service with various measures of monthly average ozone levels. We found that a one percent increase in ozone

concentrations was associated with approximately a one percent decrease in park visitation on average. This response was most pronounced during summer and fall, when both visitation and average ozone levels are highest.

Why do visits decrease when ozone is high? We see two possibilities. First, visitors may worry about adverse impacts on their health. Second, visibility is typically poor when ozone levels are high because ozone participates in chemical reactions in the air that can form haze.

We found stronger evidence that health concerns keep visitors away. Park visitation has a robust negative correlation with the incidence of unhealthy ozone days, perhaps because of air quality warnings that accompany these high levels.

The value of further ozone reductions

Across the United States, ozone levels declined by 31 percent between 1980 and 2016. But city residents and tourists in national parks still experience unhealthy ozone levels for two to three weeks per year. Exposure to high ozone levels may be particularly harmful in national parks, since health effects from ozone are greater during exercise, such as hiking, backpacking or rock climbing.

Although we found that some people decrease their visits during unhealthy days, we still observed that since 1990, nearly 80 million visitor days have occurred during high ozone periods. This suggests that improving air quality in U.S. national parks could produce significant human health benefits. We hope that state and federal policy makers will weigh these benefits of improved air quality along with their costs as discussions move forward on air pollution regulations.

David Keiser is assistant professor of economics, Iowa State University; Gabriel E. Lade is assistant professor of economics, Iowa State University; and Ivan Rudik is assistant

professor of applied economics, Cornell University.