

Buffett discusses NV Energy, solar rates and Elon Musk

By Daniel Rothberg, Las Vegas Sun

Since Nevada utility regulators decided to increase bills for rooftop solar customers, Warren Buffett has found his name at the center of the debate over the rates.

Media reports have depicted Buffett – the chairman of Berkshire Hathaway, NV Energy’s parent company – as locked in a battle with SolarCity Chairman and Tesla CEO Elon Musk over the future of the grid. Solar advocates have been critical and politicians have been outspoken about him on the campaign trail.

Meanwhile, the billionaire investor remained largely quiet. But in past days, Buffett has broken the silence, including Monday to CNBC.

[Read the whole story](#)

Calif. on course for another drought year



Lake Tahoe is rising. The photo on the left was taken Nov. 9, 2015, and the one on the right on March 1, 2016. Photos/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

Even though the region is going into a wet cycle, that news isn't enough to lift California out of its four-year drought.

While the snow survey at Phillips Station today was the best March reading since 2011, statewide the water content is below average.

At the field adjacent to the road leading to Sierra-at-Tahoe the snow depth on March 1 was 58.3 inches, water content 27.1 inches, which is 105 percent of the long-term average. Statewide the snowpack is 83 percent of average.

Frank Gehrke, who takes the measurements near the top of Echo Summit, said even though conditions are better than a year

ago, what is on the ground is not enough for officials to say the state is out of danger.

Historically, half of the state's annual water comes as rain or snow during December, January and February. The importance of this is that the Sierra snowpack provides the water downstream for about one-third of California.

It will take a "March miracle" like 1991 and 1995 to lift the state out of the drought. The forecast for now at least looks like this month will be wetter than February, but only time will tell if a miracle is brewing.

"We are looking to enter a very active pattern this weekend and into next week," Tony Fuentes, meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Reno, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

It's too soon to forecast what the moisture totals will be, but he said to expect rain at lake level to begin with and then snow. Snow levels will start at about 7,000 feet. The rain is expected to start Thursday night in the basin.

The moisture this winter has caused the lake to rise. The natural rim is at 6,223 feet. As of March 1, Lake Tahoe's level was at 6,222.25 feet.

"That is a huge volume of water to make up that 1 foot," Fuentes said.

On March 22, 2015, the lake was at 6,222.83 feet. When it fell below the rim in October 2014, this was the first time in five years. Other times it was below the rim were 1977-78, 1961-62 and 1930-36. The record low of 6,220.25 feet was set in 1992. (Records have been kept since 1900.)

Ski-town weed: Deterrent or draw?

By Trevor Hughes, USA Today

BRECKENRIDGE, Colo. — Chicago-based travel agent and mother-of-four Lynn Farrell represents a kind of worst-case scenario for Colorado's ski towns and resorts.

"Who really wants to ski where everybody's stoned?," asks Farrell, president of Windy City Travel. "It is a concern."

It's the second full ski season since Colorado legalized recreational marijuana sales, and the cannabis culture — or at the very least, concerns about the cannabis culture — remains very much top of mind for many out-of-state visitors. Talk to East Coasters, particularly, and you hear worries about pot smokers lighting up in the lift lines or filling gondola cars with pungent smoke, an image at odds with Colorado's carefully crafted and otherwise well-deserved image as a clean-living destination for families.

And while most Colorado residents would tell you very little has changed since marijuana sales began, the perception this is the Wild West of Weed persists.

Read the whole story

Bowling event to benefit Big

Brothers Big Sisters

Big Brothers Big Sisters of El Dorado County's first fundraising effort in the South Lake Tahoe area is April 2.

The inaugural Bowl for Kids' Sake will be from 11am-1pm at Tahoe Bowl. The proceeds from this event will be used to provide preventative one-on-one mentoring services in the South Lake Tahoe community.

Contact the Laurie at 530.626.1222 to register as a captain or team member.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Placer County is seeking input on medical marijuana regulations. For more info, go **online**.

• The spa at the Atlantis casino in Reno has received the Forbes Travel Guide four-star designation. It is the only spa in Northern Nevada with this designation.

• Mark Kushner is now CEO of Tahoe Expedition Academy, the independent K-12 school in Kings Beach.

• Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce's Business Expo is April 1 from 4:30-8:30pm at Harveys in Stateline.

Comments push Squaw final EIR to spring

Because of the number of comments received on the draft environmental document for the proposed development at Squaw Valley the final EIR has been delayed until sometime this spring.

Legally the final environmental impact report must answer questions that were addressed in the draft. There were more than 350 comments.

The massive project has been controversial since it was first proposed. Commenters brought up things like traffic, safety, and water issues, along with questions about how the development will look.

While the group that wanted to incorporate Olympic Village has given up on that idea, there is a petition going around to "Keep Squaw True".

Over a 25-year span owners of the ski resort want to build 850 lodging units, add 300,000 square feet of commercial area, and build an indoor recreation area.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Sierra's rental boss more than one of the guys



Mark Reeves, front, likes working along side his staff in the ski rental shop at Sierra-at-Tahoe. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

TWIN BRIDGES – Controlled chaos. That's what the rental shop at Sierra-at-Tahoe looks like on a busy Saturday.

Workers stand out because of their royal blue shirt or jacket. They are surrounded by a sea of people trying on boots, having bindings worked on and getting sized for skis and poles. And while they are all eager to hit the slopes, there is a sense of calmness – no yelling, no whiny kids, no sense of distress.

It's hard to know Mark Reeves is the boss. He looks like one

of the guys, maybe a tad older than the average worker. He's sliding skis across the waxer, then snagging poles for people. Later he has a screwdriver in his hand as he adjusts bindings and then makes sure they release properly.

"My favorite part is still adjusting ski bindings because you get to talk to them. You are helping them to have fun," Reeves told *Lake Tahoe News* as he took a quick break from the floor.

He has been working for Sierra since 1989 – always in the rental shop. Only now the 52-year-old is the boss. He oversees about 50 employees between the ski, snowboard and repair shops.

"It's really important to the employees that you are working next to them and not just sitting in your office all day doing paperwork. That's the last place I want to be," Reeves said.

What has kept Reeves at the job all these years is that it isn't a desk job, it's physical. Much of the day is spent on his feet – sometimes 12 hours a day, six days a week. The interaction with customers is what is most fun, and meeting people from all over the world.

While some businesses in the basin say it's hard to retain good employees, Reeves said that isn't a problem at Sierra.

"It's up to you to train and teach employees. If they don't understand guest services, you have to train them," Reeves said. "It's more the culture of the company, than the pool of people."

He also only had good things to say about his bosses.

Reeves' only complaint is that he knows plenty of people who don't work at a ski resort who get in more days on the mountain than he does.

Looking at the number of people lined up, this is going to be another non-ski day for Reeves.

And while it appears to be a jumbled mess, there is sense of organization to the process. It's all about the flow, Reeves said. It's also about keeping it cool in the rental shop because people are dressed for the outdoors. This little trick helps calm any potentially frayed nerves. The idea is to get people in and out as fast as possible, but the reality is that it takes time to rent boots, skis and poles, and then pay for them.



Mark Reeves is all about being a hand's on boss at Sierra-at-Tahoe. Photo/Kathryn Reed

It's not just first-timers or newbies to the sport who are in the shop. Sierra has a program where skiers and snowboarders (snowboard rentals are in a different location) may rent basic, performance or demo gear for the season. It means not having to schlep equipment from home to the resort every day, and it allows people to try different skis.

This is one of the biggest changes Reeves has seen during his tenure. "Fewer people have their own equipment these days than in the past."

There are all mountain skis, ones for carving and those designed for powder. Snowboards also have become specialized.

Demo and high performance skis turn over every year. The basic skis are replaced about every three years; it all depends on their use.

"They got destroyed last year. There were rocks everywhere," Reeves said. The 2014-15 season was sketchy at best at most Tahoe area resorts, with Sierra having its earliest closing date on record.

"A lot of stuff ends up in the repair shop. We are constantly tuning and filling," Reeves said.

It's already time to figure out what the inventory will be for next ski season. Two weeks ago Reeves was at a trade show in Mammoth riding equipment. On March 3 he will be at a Reno trade show making the final decision about what gets purchased for the 2015-16 season. During the summer the manufacturers create the product.

Before the resort opens in late fall Reeves is getting the equipment ready.

"Every binding has to be tested. It takes up to two months to do that," Reeves said of the 1,500 pairs of skis. The heel and toe are checked multiple times. (They are routinely tested during the season, too.)

While it's all about having fun for the customers, for those working in the rental and repair shops at Sierra, safety comes first.

Letter: Novasel needs to be questioned

To the community,

As you may have heard by now, El Dorado County Supervisor Sue Novasel, cannot vote on, nor participate in planning for, the new Meyers Area Plan as well as the rezoning of the land in Placerville that will be used for the new county courthouse as the Briggs Family Trust owns the land and it is financed through Sue's husband's company.



Kenny
Curtzwiler

First, we respect Sue. She's a hard-working woman who clearly cares for her community. However, with the county's and FPPC legal opinion that she cannot participate due to a conflict of interest, our community of Meyers has been left without an elected vote on the plan or any participation. She cannot vote or discuss the plan with the Board of Supervisors or discuss anything with staff. This is unsettling, to say the least. Worse yet, there is a second Fair Political Practices Commission investigation currently going on due to the 29 items on Form 700 Statement of Economic Interests that Sue left off of the original Form 700 that all candidates are required to fill out prior to being elected. Form 700 provides necessary information to the public about an official's personal financial interests to ensure that officials are

making decisions in the best interest of the public and not enhancing their personal finances. There is also the matter of trying to change over 77 deeds of trust with the Briggs Family Trust at the recorder's office right after the election in order to be able to vote on the courthouse rezoning.

Also in the works is the transferring of responsibility of the senior center and 56 acre campground facilities that are currently run by the county over to the city.

During the entire campaign for District V supervisor all of the candidates stressed the point of waiting and putting on hold the Meyers Area Plan until we got a new supervisor that could represent us properly as Ms. [Norma] Santiago was termed out. No one wanted to have the decision placed in the hands of Placerville without the residents' involvement. All of the candidates also stated they would be the voice of Meyers and represent us as a full time supervisor for District V. This came after many community volunteers have spent years trying to slow the fast-moving TRPA and El Dorado County train down so that the Meyers community has the chance – through a transparent, inclusive, and clear process – to help develop the plan for our own future that is based on the desires of area residents, not TRPA nor special land speculator's interests and certainly not to be left in the hands of Placerville.

No community members ever wanted to stop the Meyers plan, as we know we need to grow and enhance our community. We just wanted to be involved in the decisions. We had high hopes that our new supervisor could help ensure the kind of process our community deserves. Now, we have an appointed supervisor from another district who comes from downtown Placerville, not Meyers and is involved with an election and does not have time for us. With no participation in the Meyers plan and now soon to be no responsibility with other county items located in South Lake Tahoe, what exactly are we getting from our elected supervisor?

I realize there is more to a supervisor's position than just what we see here in South Lake Tahoe, but our main concern is with us and our lack of representation and decision-making at the county level with local concerns. I urge everyone to get both sides of the story on what is exactly happening with us and what we can do. There is currently a recall on Sue that is going on that was started with the recall of all the supervisors and I encourage that you go **online** and get the information on why and how this is happening. I also encourage you to contact Sue Novasel and get her side of what is happening, as well as an explanation as to why she failed to bring up all the conflicts of interest during the election. Ask specific questions and get specific answers about our lack of representation for Meyers. There is a lot of misinformation and false accusations being put out by representatives of the City Council about members of our community and guest columnists with the *Tribune* who are writing about the ramifications for those who get involved with the recall and they need to be put to rest.

Kenny Curtzwiler, Meyers

Study: People who use Airbnb don't go back to hotels

By Riley McDermid, San Francisco Business Times

A survey conducted by Goldman Sachs has found that only 40 percent of consumers polled were likely to return to hotels after using San Francisco-based Airbnb or other "peer-to-peer" services.

That compared to 79 percent of travelers who hadn't used the

service, who said they were likely to prefer formal lodging, Bloomberg reports.

“If people have stayed in peer-to-peer lodging [P2P] in the last five years, the likelihood that they prefer traditional hotels is halved (79 percent vs. 40 percent),” said the survey.

Read the whole story

Supreme Court OKs Calif.’s use of ‘unclaimed’ cash

By David G. Savage, Los Angeles Times

California’s system of seizing and spending “unclaimed” cash from banks, mutual funds and defunct businesses has survived a Supreme Court challenge.

The state says it is now holding \$8 billion in lost assets. And from this fund, it takes about \$450 million a year to add to the state budget.

After considering an appeal for four months, the justices said Monday they would not hear a long-running lawsuit that contends the state does not do enough to notify the rightful owners before seizing their assets.

Read the whole story