

Caucus prep: Clinton, Sanders answer 6 Nev. questions

By Reno Gazette-Journal

The *Reno Gazette-Journal* reached out to all of the presidential candidates, Republican and Democrat, for their responses to six questions of special interest to Nevada voters.

Informed by reader feedback, we asked them about immigration, drought, renewable energy, marijuana, online gaming and federal lands management. Below are the email responses from Democratic hopefuls Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton, given in alphabetical order.

The Democratic caucus in Nevada is Feb. 20.

Read the whole story

How feds use land in Nevada

By Caitlin Lilly, Las Vegas Review-Journal

In the wake of the Oregon standoff that resulted in the death of LaVoy Finicum and the arrest of Cliven Bundy and his two sons, *Time* Labs examined how much land the federal government actually owns throughout the United States.

Not only does the federal government own 28 percent of all U.S. land, according to *Time*, but a large chunk of their ownership is in Nevada, where 84.9 percent of the state's land is owned by the government.

Many Nevadans are aware of the statistic, but do you know how the land is used?

Read the whole story

Chamber to delve into S. Tahoe business issues

Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce's 4th annual Community Breakfast is Feb. 25.

Chamber officials will recap accomplishments from 2015 and give insight into how organizational goals have changed since receiving feedback from the member survey. The survey found that respondents believed the top three challenges facing business in South Lake Tahoe are employment/labor force issues, profitability and growth, and the economy.

The free event is at Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel from 8:30-10am.

Space is limited. RSVP to 775.588.1728.

States weigh rules for new kind of slot machine

By Philip Marcelo, AP

BOSTON — It's like "Guitar Hero" that pays you back, if you're any good.

At least, that's the pitch gambling regulators across the country are hearing as they consider whether to allow casinos to offer slot machines that mimic video and arcade games in an effort to attract younger gamblers.

The latest is Massachusetts, where the state Gaming Commission released draft regulations governing the new machines on Thursday.

Marcus Prater, executive director of the Association of Gaming Equipment Manufacturers, a Nevada-based industry trade group, says so-called "skill-based" slot machines are meant to appeal to millennials who tend to skip over traditional machines because they see them as old-fashioned.

"This is something totally new," he said. "Players have never had the option, in any market in the world, to influence the outcome of the game."

But anti-gambling activists say the machines have the potential be more addictive than their predecessors because they blur the line between children's games and wagering.

"They're trying to find new ways to get people hooked on gambling," says Les Bernal, national director of the Massachusetts-based Stop Predatory Gambling. "It's an incredibly predatory business for that reason."

What the industry considers "skill-based" slot machines runs the gamut.

Some manufacturers have unveiled machines giving gamblers the option of playing classic video games like "Space Invaders" and "Pac Man" as a sort of bonus round to earn more betting credits in between typical slot machine play.

Others are toying with gambling versions of arcade games like pinball and video game console products like "Guitar Hero." Still others are developing casino gambling versions of popular smartphone games like "Angry Birds" and "Words with Friends."

Keith Whyte, executive director of the D.C.-based National Council on Problem Gambling, is also concerned treating and preventing gambling addiction will become more challenging, a problem he suggests states will need to address if they permit the new games.

"There are a lot of smart people who get themselves into trouble as they believe they can beat the game," he says.

Christopher Moyer, spokesman for the American Gaming Association, says there's no evidence to suggest such games would be more addictive than current machines.

Prater says it's too soon to pass judgment. The new machines are still in development and haven't hit casino floors.

But that hasn't stopped states from considering how to regulate them. So far, two states – Nevada and New Jersey – have laws and regulations in place.

Pennsylvania lawmakers are also considering legislation allowing them, while policymakers in New York, Maryland and other states have discussed the issue.

Massachusetts' 2011 casino law already included a provision allowing for skill-based machines, so only regulations are needed.

Thursday's proposed rules are modeled after Nevada's, allowing

for gambling machines that determine outcome not just based solely on chance but also on the skill, or a combination of both.

Todd Grossman, the Massachusetts Gaming Commission's deputy general counsel, said the proposed regulations are broadly written so as not to create an "artificial barrier" to gambling manufacturers trying to test out new concepts. "We're moving into uncharted territory, to a degree," he said.

Wynn, MGM and Penn National Gaming – Massachusetts's three licensed casino operators – say they're reserving comment until they've had a chance to carefully review the eight-page proposal.

David Schwartz, director of the Center for Gaming Research at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, says the evolution of slot machines is necessary as the amount casinos collect from them has generally not kept up pace with table games.

But Alan Woinski, president of Gaming USA Corp., a New Jersey-based gambling consultancy, predicts the latest generation of gambling machines is still at least a year away.

"Anything out there so far is just from companies trying to be the first, but with a less than stellar project, or it's the major manufacturers taking their first crack at it," he said.

Yosemite trademark dispute takes new turns

By Michael Doyle, McClatchy Washington Bureau

Yosemite National Park's concessionaire executives met with

National Park Service officials on Dec. 8, 2014. On that, at least, they agree.

What happened next, though, remains in dispute, like so much else involving renewal of the park's lucrative concessions contract. Company executives say the park service "pressured" them to give up valuable intellectual property. Park service officials, in their latest court filing, deny it.

The conflicting recollections are becoming commonplace. From the courtroom to the California state Legislature, this multimillion-dollar conflict over Yosemite's intellectual property is heating up like an ugly divorce to a long marriage.

Incited by the Yosemite names controversy, state Assemblyman Kenneth Cooley, D-Rancho Cordova, and Assemblyman Adam Gray, D-Merced, on Thursday introduced legislation restricting the trademarking of names associated with state parks, which Cooley said was "intended to send a message" about national parks as well.

Read the whole story

Off-highway vehicle grants subject of open house

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit is hosting an open house Feb. 25 to provide information and seek public input on developing three preliminary applications for California's Off-Highway Vehicle Cooperative Funds grants.

Grants would provide for OHV education and information, law

enforcement patrols, resource and use monitoring, planning for winter travel management, and protection for natural and cultural resources in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The open house is from 5-7pm at the USFS office, 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe.

There will be no formal presentation. Staff members will be available to explain the proposals and answer questions.

For more information, go **online** or email Jacob Quinn at jmquinn@fs.fed.us.

Food bank needs help for Feb. 24 SLT distribution

The Food Bank of El Dorado County needs volunteers on Feb. 24 from 9:30-11:30am in South Lake Tahoe to help distribute food from the mobile food pantry.

Volunteers will assist in handing out food and signing people in. For more info, call 530.621.9950 or email volunteer@foodbankedc.org.

Food will be available from 10-11am at the American Legion Hall, 2748 Lake Tahoe Blvd. the Food Bank will provide one allocation per household. Recipients must live in El Dorado County and meet California Health and Social Services Agency Emergency Food Assistance Program income guidelines.

Open house designed to teach about prescribed fire

The Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team is partnering with sixth-graders at Tahoe Expedition Academy to put on a community open house about prescribed fire.

At the Feb. 24 open house, people may learn more about the role prescribed fire plays in improving forest health and reducing wildfire risk for Lake Tahoe communities.

Since 2008, agencies have reduced hazardous fuels on nearly 40,000 acres of land in the wildland urban interface where Lake Tahoe's forests and communities meet.

At the open house, people can meet and speak with fire managers in the Lake Tahoe Basin and learn how agencies decide when and where prescribed fire operations take place. People can also learn more about steps they can take on their own properties to reduce wildfire risk and improve public preparedness, such as creating defensible space and preparing an evacuation plan.

The open house will include stations for people to learn more about fire weather forecasting, smoke dispersal, fire behavior modeling, and how agencies test vegetation moisture before burning. Attendees can also see before and after photos of prescribed burns, maps of upcoming project locations, and sign up for prescribed fire notifications.

Sixth-graders at the Tahoe Expedition Academy are helping to host the open house and will share their knowledge about wildfire and prescribed fire operations. Shelly Robertson's sixth grade students spent several months learning about the

role wildfire plays in the Sierra Nevada ecosystem. They worked and trained with a U.S. Forest Service hotshot crew and local fire protection districts to learn about prescribed fire and the importance of defensible space and preparing for wildfire.

The event is from 5:30-7pm at North Tahoe Hebrew Congregation, 7000 Latone Ave., Tahoe Vista.

Class to discuss pests in the landscape, garden

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension and certified master gardeners have teamed up with Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space to offer Gardening in Nevada: The Bartley Ranch Series.

Classes are free and run 6-8pm every Tuesday through March 29, at Bartley Ranch Regional Park, 6000 Bartley Ranch Road in Reno.

The next three classes are:

- Feb. 23: Dealing with Pests in the Landscape and Garden.
- March 1: Training and Pruning Fruit Trees.
- March 8: Landscape Gardening for Wildlife.

For more information, call 775.784.4848 or email mastergardeners@unce.unr.edu.

Minor earthquake registers south of SLT

A tiny temblor shook the South Lake Tahoe region early Friday morning.

According to the Nevada Seismic Laboratory, a 1.14 earthquake struck 12.5 miles south of South Lake Tahoe at 1:09am Feb. 19.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report