Snippets about Lake Tahoe

· Snowmobilers plan to gather July 23 from 6-8pm at the Flight Deck at Lake Tahoe Airport to discuss proposed changes to accessibility in the Eldorado National Forest.

· Thomas Martinez is the newest deputy of Douglas County Sheriff's Department.

· It's time for athletes age 50 and older to sign up for the Reno-Tahoe Senior Summer Games, which are Aug. 17-Sept. 1. For more info, go **online**.

· Mountain Area Preservation is hosting the 10th annual Sierra Forage Dinner, a fundraiser in support the group's mission to "preserve the Truckee-Tahoe region's mountain character and natural environment for present and future generations." The event is at Stella Restaurant on Aug. 10 from 5:30-9:30pm. The $175 tickets are available **online**.

· The South Lake Tahoe City Council on July 17 decided not to put a cannabis tax on the November ballot.

Road Beat: 2018 Lexus NX300h a pleasure to drive



The 2018 Lexus NX300h is going to put a smile on your face. Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

It seems for almost every Toyota, there is a Lexus. With the Lexus NX300h that impression might have some merit. The new NX series, originally introduced for the 2015 model year has some relationship with the Toyota RAV4 (which happens to be the biggest selling compact SUV), sharing some structure, wheelbase and a few internal components. But NX's body, most of its suspension components and the engines are either completely unique or only bear a small resemblance.

Of course, there is absolutely no resemblance in the looks department. NX is sleek and edgy, with its familiar Lexus trademark grille. From the side, the front end stands out, having and almost "nose cone" look. Stand back and check it out. Those edgy character lines add a clever sharpness and purpose making the NX a standout looker. Only the prominent grille detracts, but only slightly as its headlight assemblies

make up for what the grille overpowers.

Size wise, the NX is a compact SUV sharing wheelbase with its distant cousin the RAV4 at 105 inches while stretching out to 182 inches. Part of its muscle cones from its broad shoulders with a beam of 74 inches. Track is a wide 62 inches front and rear.

Powering up the NX300h is a 2.5L Atkinson cycle inline DOHC 16 valve four pumping out 154 hp at 5,700 rpm and 152 pounds of twist at 4,400 rpm. In addition are three motor generators, one acting as an engine starter and generator for both the main systems and the nickel metal hydride battery energy cell. There are two other motor/generators, one with a max hp of 141 hp driving the front wheels and a second, a 67 hp unit m/g driving the rear wheels. But the reality is that the battery's max output is 40 hp which means total output from all sources is 194 hp. The engine drives the front wheels via a CVT.



Specifications

Price $34,480 to about $45,000 plus $925 for destination

Engine

2.5L DOHC 16 Valve inline four 154 hp @ 5,700 rpm

152 lb-ft of torque @ 4,400 rpm

Permanent magnet electric

motor (2)
Nickel Metal hydride battery output 67 hp
Maximum combined output 194 hp

Transmission

CVT

Configuration

Transverse front engine/ FWD/AWD
Dimensions carpeted floor mats were free. AWD will add $1,590.

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Maximum combined output 194 hp
Transmission
CVT
Configuration
Transverse front engine/ FWD/AWD

Dimensions

Wheelbase 104.7 inches
Length 182.3 inches
Width 73.6 inches

Height 64.8 inches
Track (f/r) 62.2/62.2 inches
Ground Clearance 6.9 inches
Weight (fwd/awd) 4,055/4,180 pounds
GVWR (fwd/awd) 5,090/5,200 pounds
Tow capacity 1,500 pounds
Fuel Capacity 14.8 gallons
Cargo capacity (second row up/down) 16.8/53.7 cubic feet
Wheels (std/opt) 17X7/18X7.5 inches
Tires (std/opt) 225/65X17; 225/60X18
Steering lock to lock 2.68 turns
Turning circle 37.4 feet
Co-efficient of drag 0.34
Performance
0-60 mph 7.56 seconds
50-70 mph 4.12 seconds
50-70 mph uphill 6.46 seconds
Fuel economy EPA rated 35/31/33 mpg city/highway/combined.
Expect 35 mpg on the highway at legal speeds and 31 mpg in suburban driving.

One of the beauties of this hybrid system is that the rear wheels are only powered by the electric motor, so there is no drive shaft or other mechanical connection from the front engine creating simplicity and saving weight.

Performance is virtually identical to my last go round with the NX300h right after its initial introduction. It knocks of 0-60 mph in a satisfying 7.56 seconds and a level 50-70 mph simulated pass takes just 4.12 seconds and the same run up a 6-7 percent grade requires 6.46 seconds, all times from a high-performance SUV. The throttle is very responsive and mid-range is strong. Interestingly Lexus in its press materials lists 0-60 mph at 9.1 seconds. Maybe they need to recalibrate their stop watch as it runs a bit slow or maybe they were towing its maximum allowable load of 1,500 pounds.

Fuel economy benefits from its hybrid powertrain are demonstrable, having an EPA rating of 33/30/31 mpg city/highway/combined. However, the NX does a bit better with a highway mileage of 34.5 in actual testing at 70 mph. The engine spins a low 1,800 rpm at that speed. Overall the NX averaged about 29 mpg in country, rural driving where there is little stopping and brake regen. It will run pure electric under very light throttle at speeds below 45 mph. In a 200-mile round trip from Placerville to Carson City over Echo Summit the NX averaged 32.4 mpg in very aggressive driving. That is a 3-5 mpg improvement over its conventional counterpart with more performance. Fuel capacity is only 14.8 gallons a little over a gallon less then its conventional counterpart. Bigger would be better.

NX is sporty as is the handling. It has all the ingredients, state of the art suspension, including double wishbones in the rear. Steering is a quick electric power rack at 2.68 turns lock to lock. Its 18 x 7.5-inch alloys are shod with 225/60 series rubber allow for a reasonably quick turn in. It’s only debilitating number is its considerable mass of 4,180 pounds making it more difficult to change directions. But it does change directions with agility quite well when pushed in the twisties and you will enjoy driving the NX when the road begins to bend.

Because it’s a hybrid it should be smooth and quiet and adding

very to both adjectives. It will run as an EV for up to a couple of miles at speeds below 45 mph with a feather foot. Ride quality is on the firmer side, but it certainly won't cause additional bathroom breaks. It handles bumps and other road imperfections like a Lexus.

Safety is basically as good as the operator, but Lexus has installed every safety system one can think of. All the acronyms are present. The lane keep assist was to me a bit intrusive, so I turned it off, but NX hybrid is a very nice drive with strong brakes and excellent headlights.

Inside is a superb quality Lexus interior of leather, soft touch and switchgear, including an electronic tach when using the sport driving mode, switchable on the console. But also, on the console is the touchpad radio controls which need to go away. It is most difficult to operate and distracting.

Price of admission for this near luxo CUV/SUV begins at a reasonable $38,335 plus $995 for the boat from Miyawaka, Fukuoka, Japan. Options including the $4,700 Luxury Package is a worthy addition as are the Triple-Beam LED headlights with AFS (meaning they turn with the vehicle) adds another $1,515 and the NAV system is another $1,800. Other options brought the total Monroney to $49,770. You will want most of the options on my tester so figure a price approaching $50 large.

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.

Caltrans to work on Hwy. 89 near Truckee

Paving operations will impact sections of Highway 89 in Truckee next week.

Crews are scheduled to work on Highway 89 at the Deerfield Drive intersection on Monday and on Highway 89 from the roundabouts to Prosser Dam Road from Tuesday to Thurdsay. Operating hours will be from 6am-6pm.

Motorists should expect one-way traffic controls with delays up to 20 minutes.

Weather or unexpected events can postpone or prolong construction activity.

Placer County to discuss local housing project

The proposed purchase of three parcels at Dollar Hill by Placer County could provide an opportunity that accelerates solutions for local housing needs and includes rental units and homes for purchase.

The location of the property, near town centers, grocery stores, parks, transit and schools make it ideally suited for local achievable housing. It will only be for local housing.

Placer County Board of Supervisors is scheduled to have its first public discussion on the potential purchase next week. It is known as the Nahas project. The meeting is July 24, 9am

at North Tahoe Events Center in Kings Beach. This item is expected to be heard at 9:35am.

Greg Boeger reflects on grape growing and winemaking

By Mike Dunne, Sacramento Bee

Just east of Placerville, where narrow and windy Carson Road starts to scale Apple Hill, a vista not of orchards but of vineyards suddenly opens to the north.

It’s a landscape that could have been painted by Grandma Moses, or maybe Thomas Kinkade, all light, color and order — rows of lush vines rippling across the hills, a scattering of weathered outbuildings, a few equally old pear trees, a brook coursing through it all.

This is the home of Boeger Winery, which for 46 years has been a model of industry and imagination, creating vintage after vintage of wines notable for their lucidity and equilibrium.

Read the whole story

Chamber execs weigh in on

SnowGlobe

By Kathryn Reed

SnowGlobe can be a divisive topic even in the heat of summer. For those who are bothered by the electronic music festival, their angst never really goes away.

Tami Wallace of the South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce and Steve Teshara with Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce flanked South Lake Tahoe Mayor Wendy David during her monthly "conversation" at the senior center on Wednesday. The purpose of the gatherings is for members of the community to ask questions about any topic, though usually there is a theme to start with.

The chamber presidents couldn't escape having to weigh in on SnowGlobe.

"We are in support of SnowGlobe to an extent," Wallace told the group. "We think it is absolutely in the wrong venue." She said she's tried to find a location other than the ball fields, but has been unable to.

Teshara said his chamber supports the event, but recognizes the impacts it has. He is hoping the changes made by the promoter for this year will bring significant improvements to those who are bothered by the noise.

One attendee at the July 18 conversation asked if the chambers could sponsor a gathering for business owners who have been bothered by SnowGlobe. So often all that is reported is how businesses support SnowGlobe and see it as a positive.

The woman who spoke talked about how she does everything she can to prohibit concert-goers from renting her vacation rentals, saying SnowGlobers are bad for business. She said there are enough families wanting to come to the South Shore

at New Year’s that the music festival is not needed any more.

Others pointed out how the event has made Stateline less of big deal; and that it’s easier on public safety resources.

In responding to a question about why the casinos don’t do something interesting on New Year’s Eve for the crowds, Teshara said the reasoning is that so many who spill out into the highway at the bewitching hour are underage. The casinos don’t have any desire to attract more young people.

Vacation home rentals and the beach at Beach Retreat/Timber Cove were other topics.

Opinion: California needs Lonzo, not LeBron

By Joe Mathews

Go home to Ohio, LeBron James.

Yes, I’m happy to see the world’s greatest basketball player join my favorite team, the Los Angeles Lakers.

But as a Californian, I fear LeBron is the last thing our state needs.



Joe Mathews

His arrival is a high-profile symptom of one of our state's big problems: California favors older, proven, and wealthy outsiders over our younger, poorer and homegrown compatriots.

Comparing LeBron to his youngest new teammate, guard Lonzo Ball, demonstrates the problem.

Lebron, 33, just received a $154 million, four-year contract to leave the Cleveland Cavaliers and revive a losing Lakers squad. As a free agent mercenary, he has company here. A Stanford study shows that, despite our high taxes, the Golden State attracts more millionaires than it loses. The trend holds even among those who are merely upper-middle-class. People who move to California are better educated (the state has seen net gains in graduate degree holders) and have more income ($110,000 annually on average) than most Californians. And they need that money to afford our expensive housing.

But California has been struggling to develop and retain younger, less educated people like Lonzo Ball, a 20-year-old L.A. native who grew up in the Inland Empire. California has seen a big net outflow of its younger people—especially those who make less than $55,000 a year, don't have college degrees (like Lonzo, who attended UCLA for just one year), or want to start families—to states like Texas and Arizona.

Lonzo himself may be on his way out the door; the sports media are reporting that he could be traded for older, proven players whom LeBron prefers as teammates.

Such a trade would make sense in 2018, when LeBron is far superior to Lonzo. But in the long term, LeBron's value to Lakers could be less than Lonzo's. LeBron, at age 33, is old for a pro athlete, and he is likely to be injured and in decline, if not retired, by the time his contract expires in 2022. In contrast, if Lonzo realizes his potential to be a future star, he could win games for the Lakers into the 2030s.

At this point, I'll leave the basketball debate to sports

experts. But in the larger context of California's future, the Lonzos are indisputably more important than the LeBrons.

That's because so many more of us are Lonzos.

This Lonzo-ization of California represents a sea change. From the Gold Rush until 2010, we were mostly a state of LeBrons—people who migrated here from another state or country. As a state, we were like the Lakers, traditionally a franchise dependent on free agents from elsewhere, like Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Shaquille O'Neal.

But in this decade, after a steep fall in immigration from 1980s highs, we've become a state of Lonzos.

Now, more than 54 percent of Californians were born and raised here. Lonzo's rising generation of millennials is projected to be California's first generation that is majority homegrown.

With this shift, California needs to develop and educate its own future citizens, instead of relying on free agents from someplace else. In other words, we desperately need our Lonzos to succeed. And too many haven't. Some leave the state. Others contribute to our highest-in-the-nation poverty rate. Education levels have stagnated among California's young—a huge problem since today's youth will have to be more economically productive to support our aging population.

Yes, California's LeBrons help subsidize the Lonzos with their taxes. But the LeBrons also retard the growth of the young. Arriving LeBrons help run up the price of housing—LeBron himself has two homes in L.A.—making it harder for Lonzos to buy houses and start families.

The LeBrons of the world tend to be expensive—and less innovative, since younger people are responsible for most inventions. Even more important, California's Lonzos are far more loyal to the state; they are about three times more likely to stick around California and make their lives. When

LeBron tires of his new Hollywood friends Leo DiCaprio and Al Pacino, with whom he recently lunched, he can go back home to Ohio. But Lonzo's family—including a father who may be sabotaging his career (though that's another story)—is here.

The Lonzos' loyalty has real value to the Golden State—it will help California retain its labor force as baby boomers retire in greater numbers. Polls show that the Lonzos are far more supportive than the LeBrons of taxing themselves to make bigger public investments the state needs.

In this context, the Lakers, in signing LeBron, are sending the wrong message to their fans, and to all Californians. So cheer for the imported superstar if you like. But don't forget that our future depends on Lonzo.

Joe Mathews writes the Connecting California column for Zócalo Public Square.

Sports being added to Winter Olympics

Seven sports will be added to the 2022 Olympic Winter Games in Beijing.

Four of these sports are International Ski Federation (FIS) events that will be on show at the 2019 Snowboard, Freestyle and Freeski World Championships in Utah.

Those are: freestyle skiing, mixed team aerials; freeski big air, men's and women's; and in snowboard, team snowboardcross.

Rounding out the latest additions to the Olympic Winter Games is the freestyle skiing mixed team aerials event under the

lights at Deer Valley in February 2019. The 2019 World Championships will be the first time it will be included in the FIS World Championship program.

VHR issues on El Dorado County supes' agenda

The El Dorado County Board of Supervisors at the July 24 meeting at 2pm in Placerville is expected to vote on recommendations from the vacation home rental ad hoc committee.

Supervisors Sue Novasel and Mike Ranalli are the subcommittee members.

Here is a link to the agenda.

According to the county, approval of the concepts at this board meeting will provide staff the direction needed to work toward refining recommendations for changes to VHR policies and enforcement.

On July 26 the ad hoc committee will meet at the magnet school in Meyers at 5:30pm.

FAA: Pilot in fatal Truckee plane crash had expired medical certificate

By Jordan Cutler-Tietjen, Sacramento Bee

The pilot whose private plane crashed south of Truckee on Tuesday morning was flying with an expired medical certificate, according to multiple sources.

Flying without a medical certificate is an illegal violation of Federal Aviation Administration regulations, according to Ian Gregor, public affairs manager for the FAA's Pacific Division.

The accident killed the pilot, 67-year-old Kenneth Whitall-Scherfee of Carmichael, and one of his passengers, 55-year-old Peter Jackson of West Hollywood. The plane's only other passenger, whose identity has not been released, was being treated for critical injuries in a Reno-area hospital as of Thursday afternoon.

Read the whole story