

Feinstein tries again with California water bill

By Michael Doyle, McClatchy Washington Bureau

Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein on Wednesday relaunched a big California water bill, in what might be cast as the triumph of hope over experience.

Unveiling her third proposal in the past two years for ways to divide California's water supply among many competing interests, Feinstein packaged her latest 184-page measure as a reasonable compromise that draws the best from past Capitol Hill efforts.

The bill introduced Wednesday largely tracks draft language Feinstein made public in January. It eases limits on water transfers south of the Delta, but does not mandate specific pumping levels. It authorizes \$1.3 billion for desalination, water recycling, storage and grants. It compels completion of feasibility studies for storage projects like Temperance Flat on the San Joaquin River.

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Obama proposes new approaches to Western water shortages

By Carolyn Lochhead, San Francisco Chronicle

WASHINGTON – Spurning dams for research in water technology, President Obama laid out a striking contrast Tuesday to the strategies adopted by California lawmakers in both parties on how to remedy Western water shortages.

In a final budget plan that was dead even before its arrival on Capitol Hill, the administration's vision of investing \$269 million in research on water desalination, recycling and efficiency will find little traction in the Republican-controlled Congress.

But it does lay out an alternative to the dams, water tunnels and other giant building projects that Gov. Jerry Brown, Democratic Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, and Central Valley House Republicans have embraced to varying degrees.

Read the whole story

Online business reviews topic of workshop

Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce is offering a workshop Feb. 23 titled How to Protect Your Brand and Your Bottom Line from Negative Buzz.

The goal of the workshop is to teach attendees how to protect the reputation of their businesses online. Workshop topics include why you should care about social review site ratings, why negative reviews are a huge opportunity for your business, how to craft and manage a winning presence on social media sites, proven strategies for responding to reviews— good and bad – and free tools and resources for monitoring what people

say about you online.

The workshop costs \$20 for chamber members and \$40 for non-members. It will be from 3-5pm at the chamber, 169 Highway 50, Stateline. For more information or to register, go **online**.

Being green at a ski resort isn't a simple process

By Patrick Doyle, Mountain

When Squaw Valley installed electric vehicle charging stations back in 2013, the resort ran into an immediate problem: The electricity it received from its provider, Liberty Utilities, was dirty, generated in part by the burning of Rocky Mountain coal at the North Valmy Generation Station, a hulking power plant in Northern Nevada. North Valmy, according to the Sierra Club, spews the equivalent of 2.5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year, a figure equal to the annual emissions of nearly half a million cars. It is the single largest greenhouse-gas emitter in the state of Nevada. Although well meaning, by choosing to power electric cars off that soiled wattage, Squaw would only be perpetuating climate change.*

Around this time, Chris Steinkamp, executive director of Protect Our Winters, reached out to Squaw CEO Andy Wirth. A California-based nonprofit started by pro snowboarder Jeremy Jones, POW has built powerful allies in the snowsports community by combating climate change, an enormous threat to the ski industry. After a handful of conversations on the best way to tackle the energy problem, POW and the Squaw executive team approached Liberty Utilities with a simple, yet powerful

argument: We are some of your largest customers—running ski lifts and resort operations, after all, takes a good chunk of power—but coal and climate change are killing our industry. Can you find a cleaner source of energy to use instead?

Liberty Utilities was surprisingly open to the conversation. Nudged along by the ski industry partners as well as the Sierra Club of California and Nevada, Liberty announced in April 2015 that it was ending its contract with North Valmy. What's more, Liberty proposed to build two solar plants near Hawthorne, Nevada, to boost its renewable portfolio.

Read the whole story

Driverless cars struggle in the snow

By Keith Naughton, BloombergNews

In Jokkmokk, a tiny hamlet just north of the Arctic Circle in Sweden, where temperatures can dip to 50 below, Volvo Cars' self-driving XC90 sport-utility vehicle met its match: frozen flakes that caked on radar sensors essential to reading the road. Suddenly, the SUV was blind.

"It's really difficult, especially when you have the snow smoke from the car in front," said Marcus Rothoff, director of Volvo's autonomous-driving program. "A bit of ice, you can manage. But when it starts building up, you just lose functionality."

After moving the sensors around to various spots on the front, Volvo engineers finally found a solution. Next year, when

Swedish drivers take their hands off the wheel of leased XC90s in the world's first public test of autonomous technology, the radar will be nestled behind the windshield, where wipers can clear the ice and snow.

[Read the whole story](#)

Report: Nev. scores poorly on tobacco measures

By Noah Glick, KUNR

Let's start with the negatives. Nevada got an F in tobacco taxes, cessation services and prevention funding.

"We're only spending about six percent of what the CDC recommends we spend to prevent youth from starting to smoke and help adults quit. Only North Dakota, only one state, received an A."

That's Frankie Vigil, executive director of the American Lung Association of Nevada. She says there is room for improvement, but Nevada is in line with much of the nation.

[Read the whole story](#)

Avalanche fatalities most

common in Jan., Feb.

By Megan Michelson, Outside

January and February are typically peak months for avalanches—more skiers, snowmobilers, and other winter enthusiasts die in slides during those months than any other time of the season. This year, we're already off to a chart-topping high with one of the most deadly Januaries on record.

Thirteen people died in avalanches in January across the western United States, the highest number for that month since 2008, when 19 people were killed during what was one of the deadliest winters in the past 65 years, according to a report issued by the Colorado Avalanche Information Center, which records avalanches across the country. There have been two fatal avalanches in February so far, including one that buried someone on a snowbike, or a dirt bike that's been outfitted with a ski up front and a snowmobile-like track in the back.

A big part of the problem has to do with lots of new El Niño snow sitting on top of what's called a "weak layer," or a type of buried snow that can collapse and trigger an avalanche. "A lot of our areas have two persistent weak layers that we're really concerned about," says Spencer Logan, a forecaster with the Colorado Avalanche Information Center.

Read the whole story

Public gets answers to loop

road questions

By Kathryn Reed

By August the Tahoe Transportation District expects to have the necessary approvals from the various entities to go forward with the loop road on the South Shore.

What is expected to be a \$75 million construction project would reroute Highway 50 at about Pioneer Trail on the east, go behind Harrah's-MontBleu and come out at a roundabout at Lake Parkway. The current highway then becomes a street to be maintained by South Lake Tahoe and Douglas County.

About 80 people attended a meeting Feb. 10 at South Tahoe Middle School, with just about that many questions asked of the three-member panel. Answering the questions were Carl Hasty, district manager of the Tahoe Transportation District; Russ Nygaard with TTD; and Mark Rayback, project engineer with Wood Rodgers.

Some of the questions from the public and the answers:

Q: *Where will the money come from to pay for the construction?*

A: Mostly the federal government. It is too soon know what percentage will come from any one source. No construction dollars have been secured. The project, per federal law, cannot begin until it is fully funded.

Q: *Where has the money to date come from?*

A: Primarily the federal government, with some from Nevada Public Lands. About \$3 million has been spent so far.

Q: *Will South Lake Tahoe taxpayers foot any of the bills?*

A: Not for the construction.

Q: *The millions of dollars the project is expected to cost –*

what will that buy? In other words, will it pay for all of the improvements presented in the pictures at the various meetings or will it just pay for land acquisition, relocation of residents/businesses, the highway and the overpass?

A: It pays for almost everything, including relocation of utilities if need be. There is some question as to whether **South Tahoe Public Utility District's \$10 million** price tag to do so was realistic. Landscaping – but not the maintenance of it – is covered, as is narrowing the current highway to one lane in each direction. It pays for the overpass, but not that maintenance. The structure will be Caltrans' obligation, while snow removal could fall to State Parks.

Q: *Why put in a roundabout instead of a light at the east side?*

A: There will be better movement and lower speeds, plus it allows for creative landscaping.

Q: *How much low-income housing will be built?*

A: It depends on the alternative that is selected. Between 65 and 200 deed restricted units could be built. Where they are built is still to be decided. It does not have to be at that end of town. Between 47 and 90 residents could be displaced. (The discrepancy between numbers was not explained.) Anyone over age 18 is eligible for relocation assistance. The federal Uniform Act is what TTD must follow in regards to relocation assistance. It is estimated to cost \$2 million for the relocation aspect of the project.

Q: *Will there be a left turn lane out of Tahoe Meadows?*

A: No, the project doesn't go that far west.

Q: *How many businesses will be impacted in South Lake Tahoe and Douglas County?*

A: Three to six in the city, zero in the county.

Q: What is the current assessed value of the properties that will be affected?

A: The appraisal has not been done.

Q: How does the project affect the tax base?

A: More taxes should be collected based on the property values being higher.

Q: Caltrans stats show traffic has declined in the state line area in the last two decades, so why do this project?

A: Counts at Echo Summit are up, so the vehicles are here; they are just finding other routes near state line like Pioneer Trail. (This project will not enhance Pioneer Trail.)

Q: Could Caltrans use eminent domain and bypass the wishes of South Lake Tahoe?

A: Yes.

Q: What are the environmental concerns?

A: Noise is likely No. 1. All of the TRPA thresholds like air and water quality, scenic; plus green house gases are big for California. Noise could be mitigated with a sound wall, using a special pavement, or with open space and berms.

Q: How will the fire departments be impacted?

A: They won't be.

Q: Will the public have a say in the design?

A: Yes.

Q: Why will there be a light behind Harrah's and will this slow down traffic?

A: Future projections are that traffic flows warrant a light there; it will not impede flow.

Q: *Why not make the entire casino corridor open only to pedestrians?*

A: The city and county still could, but that suggestion never rose to the level to be studied in the environmental documents.

Q: *Why not use Heavenly Way or go behind Harveys-Hard Rock?*

A: Both are not feasible when it comes to design and rights-of-way, number of driveways, and because of existing stormwater detention basins.

Q: *Why not take the project to the voters?*

A: Not TTD's decision; it would be highly unusual.

Q: *Can the project go forward without South Lake Tahoe's approval?*

A: No.

Q: *What about a tunnel?*

A: It was looked at and is not feasible.

Q: *What about snow removal?*

A: It will likely be pushed farther west into a middle lane and then disposed of as it is today.

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Notes:

- The videotape of Wednesday's meeting will be edited and then made available on the **TTD's website** in what representatives hope will be no more than a week.

- The environmental impact report will be released this quarter; with people having 60 days to comment on it. The final document will be out the second quarter of the year.

· Agencies needing to sign off on either the environmental documents, permits, rights-of-way, and/or transfer of road ownership include: Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Advisory Planning Commission and Governing Board, Tahoe Transportation District board, South Lake Tahoe City Council, Douglas County Commission, Federal Highway Administration, Caltrans and Nevada Department of Transportation.

Opinion: Takela, the true tale of the name

To the community,

How did Takela Drive in the city of South Lake Tahoe get its name? Only three people have the answer, and they aren't descendants of the Indian named Takela who sunbathed on Bijou's beach during the 1800s. He's dead, and dead men, especially mythical ones, tell no tales. But I can. I ain't dead yet, nor are the other two who give witness to this mundane bit of Tahoe lore. Put that Indian and other apocrypha aside. Here's the real deal.

A damnable property developer in the late 1950s had the outrageous idea of building a South Shore Safeway. The local press argued that there goes the neighborhood, but there wasn't any neighborhood. So, this developer, my father, proposed "progress" to the El Dorado County Planning Commission. The project lacked street names. Dad turned to child labor. "For every name the Planning Commission approves, you get a dollar." I took the challenge. Where does an

unimaginative kid get ideas? From his limited world, of course. Mine was where I lived and the family power boat.

Here then is the answer. Takela was our boat's name and our pronunciation is in your margarita, tequila. My sister, a private woman of few words, decodes for you: "Ta-Tav; Ke-Kevin; La-Laurie." My boat savvy brother tells us that this "was an old, old way of naming boats, but not real popular ... not a big thing." His recent email from San Rafael, goes on to say "people generally think that its pronunciation is tec-lell-ah and led to the assumption that it is an Indian name because the Washoe Indians made their way over the mountain to summer at South Tahoe from the Carson Valley. The most popular area they chose was from Bijou southward." My brother signed his deposition, Chief Know It All.

Is there any additional evidence for the family connection to Takela and thus credibility for this striking revelation? We find it not far away by way of the winter address of family Mactavish during that period. Continue motoring to the end of Takela Drive from Lake Tahoe Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe. Note the Safeway as you pass, and after a short distance, what's the street you meet? Remember, I wasn't very imaginative. We lived on Treehaven Drive, but in San Rafael

Puzzle solved, witnesses deposed, story's end, although a sunbathing Indian might be more colorful for credulous tourists. A new tale might dissuade anyone from changing the street's name due to its prosaic origin. I offer to spin that tall one with the translation of Takela as Chief Know It All, sunbathing woman of few words.

I earned \$9 that year for street naming, the following year \$5. The shortfall in earnings reflecting a growing interest in word-smithing in the back seat of the family car at the drive-in theatre down the road from Takela Drive. You know, experimenting with more advanced language tasks to expand the limitations of my world.

Noodles: The ultimate global comfort food

By April Fulton, National Geographic

Who really invented noodles? Italians, Arabs, and the Chinese all claim to be the first to divide dough into bits and boil the pieces in water. Noodles of many shapes and lengths have been a part of global cuisines for at least 2,000 years, when but scientists found a 4,000-year-old noodle in China a few years back, it pretty much gave China the win.

Still noodles take many forms and are made from a wide variety of grains like millet, wheat, and rice. They are thrown into soups, fried in woks, or coated with olive oil, tomato sauce, or cheese. They are tossed with beans or vegetables or leftover meats to make a quick meal. Noodles are a blank canvas for infinite flavor combinations.

Making and stretching them by hand is a thing of beauty to watch.

Read the whole story