

Sierra, Northstar among resorts up for sale

By David Sharp, AP

PORTLAND, Maine — A real estate investment trust that's selling more than a dozen ski resorts from Maine to California won't meet its deadline of completing the transaction by year's end.

CNL Lifestyle Properties, which is based in Orlando, Fla., has sold its senior housing portfolio, a dozen marinas, four attractions, and the Mount Washington Hotel and Bretton Woods ski area in New Hampshire.

But it continues to seek buyers for 15 additional ski resorts — including Northstar and Sierra-at-Tahoe, remaining attractions and marinas, and says it will update shareholders in the first quarter of the new year.

The real estate investment trust “continues to evaluate strategic options for the remainder of its ski and mountain properties as it seeks to provide liquidity to its shareholders,” CNL Financial Group senior managing director Steve Rice said in a statement.

REITs are an investment vehicle for a variety of properties including hotels, office buildings and malls. The trust owns the property and makes money from leases and rent.

CNL Lifestyle Properties is trying to sell ski resorts including Sunday River and Sugarloaf in Maine, Loon Mountain and Mount Sunapee in New Hampshire, Okemo Mountain in Vermont, Crested Butte in Colorado, and Brighton in Utah.

Skiers won't see a big impact from the sale. Long-term leases will remain in place, so mountain operators will remain

unchanged once the property changes owners.

“CNL has had the profile for sale for a while, Booth Creek Report Properties owns the management contract with them. I work for Booth Creek and nothing will change for Sierra when and if the REIT sells. Northstar is owned by CNL as well, and Vail holds the management contract,” John Rice, general manager of Sierra, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Each ski property in their profile has continued to operate under their management contracts as they did prior to CNL purchasing the ownership. It is correct nothing will change with resorts like Sierra who are under long-term management contracts.”

CNL Lifestyle Properties was valued at as much as \$3 billion in 2012 with ownership of more than 100 water parks, ski resorts, marinas and senior housing developments. But the value has dropped in the aftermath of a real estate downturn.

The drought in the West hasn’t helped. CNL told shareholders that its ski holdings last season were “negatively impacted by adverse conditions,” particularly in California, which saw its third straight season of record-breaking drought.

The improving weather out west – which has seen snow this month – may set investors and potential buyers at ease, said Michael Krongel from Mirus Resort Capital in Burlington, Mass., who’s been involved in buying, selling and developing ski resorts for 45 years.

But investors don’t tend to get overly worried about a short-term trend, said Michael Berry of the National Ski Areas Association. “The industry has a pretty strong financial performance history when looked at over a 10-year period,” he said.

If CNL sells the remaining ski resorts as a package, then it would be the largest single ski resort transaction in the history of the sport. But it appears that CNL is willing to entertain breaking them apart, since Bretton Woods was sold

separately.

Lake Tahoe News contributed to this report.

Community colleges double number of transfer-to-CSU degrees

By Josh Dulaney, Long Beach Press Telegram

Community college students are earning specialized transfer degrees at a blistering pace.

The number of associate degrees for transfer nearly doubled in 2014-15 from the previous year, with 20,644 students earning the honor, according to figures released earlier this month by the Chancellor's Office of California Community Colleges.

The ADT program is a partnership between the state's 113 community colleges and the 23-campus California State University system.

Then-Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed legislation in 2010 to allow students to obtain the one-size-fits-all transfer degree for all CSU campuses.

Read the whole story

Stein Eriksen – 1927-2015



Stein Eriksen

By Emily Summers, Deer Valley

Stein Eriksen, the legendary alpine skier whose revolutionary technique and distinctive style made him a founder of modern skiing, passed away peacefully Dec. 27, 2015, at his home in Park City surrounded by family. He was 88.

As one of the most recognized names in the ski world, Stein Eriksen has been synonymous with skiing style and elegance for more than 60 years. The first alpine skier to win triple gold at a world championship, an Olympic Gold Medalist and ambassador and father of freestyle skiing, Stein Eriksen parlayed all that he knew and loved about the sport into an incredible career that spanned almost six decades and changed the face of alpine skiing worldwide.

The patriarch of elegant skiing, Eriksen successfully turned his passion for skiing into a lifetime career. His desire to develop an internationally-renowned luxury hotel, which now bears his name, is located mid-mountain at Deer Valley Resort, where he served as Director of Skiing for more than 35 years.

A native of Norway, Eriksen lived in the United States for the last six decades. Prior to joining Deer Valley Resort, he was involved in the development of the then Park City Ski Area, now Park City Mountain. Before Park City, Stein spent four years as director of skiing and ski school director at Snowmass, Colorado, and four years as ski school director at Sugarbush, Vermont. He also served as ski school director and owned his own sport shop in Aspen, Colorado. From 1956 to 1958, he was ski school director for Heavenly Mountain Resort, having previously served in the same position at Boyne Mountain, Mich., from 1954 to 1956.

Read the whole story

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Chester

Chester is a 5-month-old puppy who is a handful. He is a big puppy, probably 40 pounds already, and he's going to be a big adult. Our best guess is that he's a mastiff-Fila Brasileiro mix.

Chester is very sweet and has all the typical puppy characteristics – lots of energy, loves to play, loves to see how sharp his teeth are, needs help with house training, etc. He will benefit from an owner who is experienced with larger dogs and who will take him to training classes as a puppy.

Chester is neutered, microchipped, tested for heart worm, and vaccinated. He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go **online**.

– Karen Kuentz

Caltrans gears up for more Highway 50 work

By Kathryn Reed

When Caltrans returns in 2017 to do the Y to Trout Creek project South Lake Tahoe officials do not want a repeat of what happened this summer.

“This project this summer caused so much disruption,” City Manager Nancy Kerry told Clark Peri.

Peri is the project manager for the Caltrans district that

encompasses the basin. He got an earful earlier this month about how unresponsive the contractor as well as his office was when it came to trying to get crews to better manage the project in terms of traffic, safety and flow.

Southwest Gas was working on this section to put in its infrastructure ahead of the transportation department doing its work. They will be back in 2016 to do more work.

Peri said things will improve at least in 2017. In large part this will be because Caltrans will have oversight of the contractors doing the work.

But he said if there is no daytime work the next project will take four years to complete instead of the scheduled three.



Work on Highway 50 in South Lake Tahoe will continue through at least 2019. Photo/LTN file

This next two-mile stretch of Highway 50 is designed to improve the road and water quality by repaving and adding drainage inlets.

Sidewalks will be 4 to 7½ feet wide, curb ramps will meet ADA requirements, the shoulder will be widened to a minimum of 6 feet to accommodate cyclists, and bus pullouts will be expanded.

What Councilman Tom Davis is frustrated about is that lighting is not part of the plans.

“Trout Creek to the Y is dark, especially in winter,” Davis lamented. “We need a complete, safe street.”

The funding source doesn’t allow for that amenity, Peri said. However, the city could pay for it.

Electrical conduits will be installed so lights could be added after the fact.

This will be a \$56.7 million project.

It will be broken up into three phases, with each phase taking a season. They are the Y to Winnemucca Avenue, Winnemucca to Sierra Boulevard, and Sierra to Trout Creek. From there the project is further broken down into four segments, each of which will take four to six weeks to complete.

Editorial: Every Student Succeeds Act a failure

Publisher’s note: *This editorial is from the Dec. 10, 2015, Los Angeles Times.*

Is anyone mourning the No Child Left Behind Act? Its clumsy regulations and harshly punitive measures against low-performing schools left many, many students behind and worsened education in multiple communities around the nation.

But the Every Student Succeeds Act, which President Obama signed into law this month to replace it, is even more of a lie. This measure doesn’t even pretend to create situations in

which large numbers of academically struggling students will succeed, let alone all or even most of them.

As satisfying as it is to see No Child Left Behind go away at long last – and even more to be rid of the Obama administration's clumsy waiver program for states seeking a way out of the law's requirements – this new act is a compromise that benefits pretty much everyone but the students most in need of improved schools.

Read the whole story

Lawsuits seek to abolish country's bail bond system

By Paul Elias, AP

SAN FRANCISCO – Crystal Patterson didn't have the cash or assets to post \$150,000 bail and get out of jail after her arrest for assault in October.

So Patterson, 39, promised to pay a bail bonds company \$15,000 plus interest to put up the \$150,000 bail for her, allowing to go home and care for her invalid grandmother.

The day after her release, the district attorney decided not to pursue charges. But Patterson still owes the bail bonds company. Criminal justice reformers and lawyers at a nonprofit Washington, D.C., legal clinic say that is unconstitutionally unfair.

The lawyers have filed a class action lawsuit on behalf of Patterson, Rianna Buffin and other jail inmates who argue that San Francisco and California's bail system unconstitutionally

treats poor and wealthy suspects differently.

Wealthy suspects can put up their houses or other valuable assets – or simply write a check – to post bail and stay out of jail until their cases are resolved. Poorer suspects aren't so lucky. Many remain behind bars or pay nonrefundable fees to bail bonds companies.

San Francisco public defender Chesa Boudin says some of his clients who can't afford to post bail plead guilty to minor charges for crimes they didn't commit so they can leave jail.

Boudin represented Buffin, 19, after her arrest for grand theft in October. Buffin couldn't afford to post the \$30,000 bail or pay a bond company a \$3,000 fee and so contemplated pleading guilty in exchange for a quick release from jail even though she says her only crime was being with the "wrong people at the wrong place at the wrong time."

Fortunately, the district attorney declined to charge Buffin and she was released after being held for three days.

"My family was worried," said Ruffin, who lost her \$10.50 an hour baggage handler job at the Oakland International Airport after her arrest.

The lawsuit filed by the Equal Justice Under Law in San Francisco federal court in October seeks to abolish the cash bail system in the city, state – and the country. It's the ninth lawsuit the center has filed in seven states.

"The bail system in most states is a two-tiered system," said center founder Phil Telfeyan. "One for the wealthy and one for everyone else."

The center has settled four lawsuits, convincing smaller jails in states in the South to do away with cash bail requirements for most charges.

Telfeyan said a win in California could add momentum to the

center's goal to rid the country of the cash bail system, which the lawyers say is used by most county jails in all 50 states. The federal system usually allows non-violent suspects free without bail pending trial and denies bail to serious and violent suspects.

"The country watches what happens in California," said Telfeyan, a former Department of Justice attorney who founded the Washington organization in 2013 with a partner and the first-ever grant from the Harvard Law School Public Service Venture Fund in 2013.

Telfeyan said it's not his goal to put out of business the classic neon-advertising bail bonding industry, but conceded the business model would become obsolete if he convinces courts that the cash bail system is unconstitutional.

The industry didn't acknowledge Telfeyan's first lawsuits filed earlier this year.

But on Monday, lawyers for the California Bail Agents Association filed court papers seeking to formally oppose the San Francisco lawsuit. The association argues that government lawyers for San Francisco and the state are offering only "tepid" opposition to the California lawsuit.

San Francisco Sheriff Ross Mirkarimi argues that most jail inmates are awaiting resolution of minor, non-violent crimes and that letting them free while awaiting court hearings will save the city millions of dollars. Mirkarimi said non-violent suspects can be monitored electronically and with frequent visits from law enforcement officials to ensure they don't flee the area and attend all their court hearings.

In January, Telfeyan and his colleagues from Equal Justice Under Law will ask a judge to temporarily suspend San Francisco's cash bail system until the lawsuit is resolved. Telfeyan said a victory in San Francisco and the elimination of cash bail in the city will most likely lead to the

abolition of cash bail in all of the state's 58 counties.

Maggie Kreins, who is president of bail agents group, the says the longtime system of putting up money or an insurance-backed bail bond is better at getting people to show up in court and it saves the public costs of monitoring defendants or hunting down bail jumpers.

Kreins said that California's "bail schedule" could be reformed to lower bail amounts for minor crimes, but that scrapping the system completely would be a mistake.

"What is the incentive to go to court if you don't lose anything for failing to appear?" Kreins said.

Support for families dealing with mental illness

NAMI Family Support Group is a free, confidential and safe support group of families helping other families who live with mental health challenges by utilizing their collective lived experience and group wisdom.

The group meets the second Tuesday of each month from 6-7:30pm.

Participants will learn best practices for caring for a loved one who is living with mental illness. The meetings are led by family members of individuals living with mental illness.

This group encourages empathy, productive discussion and a sense of community.

Meetings are at the South Lake Tahoe Library, 1000 Rufus Allen

Blvd.

The 2016 dates are: Jan. 12, Feb. 9, March 8, April 12, May 10, June 14, July 12, Aug. 9, Sept. 13, Oct. 11, Nov. 8, and Dec. 13.

U.S. gives meat producers a pass on climate change emissions

By Nathan Halverson, Reveal

If the Paris climate pact is going to succeed at staving off climate change disaster, the 195 participating countries will need to achieve a difficult feat – trust.

Yet the U.S. government already is failing to implement its own rules on tracking emissions. It is not collecting emission reports from one of the country's largest sources of greenhouse gases: meat production.

In its latest appropriations bill passed earlier this month, Congress renewed a provision that prevents the Environmental Protection Agency from requiring emission reports from livestock producers. The move came only days after U.S. officials stressed to other governments the importance of accurate reporting at the Paris climate negotiations.

The U.S. government collects the reports from 41 other sectors, making the meat industry the only major source of greenhouse gases in the country excluded from filing annual reports.

Livestock producers, which include meat and dairy farming, account for about 15 percent of greenhouse gas emissions around the world. That's more than all the world's exhaust-belching cars, buses, boats and trains combined.

The EPA has called the emission reports "essential in guiding the steps we take to address the problem of climate change."

As a result of having inadequate information on livestock producers, the U.S. government is vastly underreporting its true greenhouse gas emissions, according to a growing consensus of American scientists.

In 2013, a team of researchers from Harvard University, Stanford University, the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and elsewhere worked together to collect air samples and analyze actual emissions near large livestock operations such as cattle feeding lots in California, Nebraska and Iowa. They found that greenhouse gas emissions from livestock were twice as bad as what the EPA estimated. Subsequent studies have found similar results.

The United States is underreporting its total greenhouse gas emissions to the United Nations by about 4 percent per year as a result of bad livestock data – nearly equivalent to the entire emissions of Spain, according to the 2013 study.

The EPA's ban on collecting reports from the U.S. livestock industry, which is the second-largest in the world behind only China, goes back several years.

In 2008, Congress instructed the EPA to draft regulation requiring the country's largest greenhouse gas emitters to file annual reports. The following year, the EPA finalized those regulations, requiring dozens of industries – including large-scale livestock producers – to report their emissions.

But the EPA never received a single report from meat

producers. In 2010, when the first reports were to be collected, Congress attached a provision to the EPA's budget. It prohibited the agency from spending money to collect emission reports on livestock producers – specifically the greenhouse gases emitted from some of the 335 million tons of manure produced each year.

Monitoring and curbing greenhouse gases from livestock is considered vital to stopping global warming, according to scientists.

A recent report published in the Environmental Law Reporter cited several studies showing that forecasted growth in worldwide agricultural emissions alone – unless curbed – will push global temperatures past the tipping point.

“Global demand for livestock products is projected to grow 70 percent, if not double, by 2050,” wrote Debra Donahue, law professor at the University of Wyoming College of Law. “Plainly, neither the United States nor the earth can continue on this track, yet this is precisely our course.”

Decomposing manure is one source of livestock emissions. Technology exists to capture the methane and turn it into electricity, although it is rarely used in the United States. The other major source of emissions are the cows themselves, which belch and fart methane. Scientists also have developed methods for reducing methane emissions from the cows, such as changing their diets. But there is little incentive for large-scale farms to adopt these practices in the U.S.

Under current regulation, there are even disincentives. If a livestock operator were to capture the methane, turning it into electricity or another form of energy, it would then fall under climate change regulations. By doing nothing and simply allowing the methane pollution to escape into the atmosphere, livestock operators do not have to deal with the EPA greenhouse gas rules.

Methane is 72 times more potent than carbon dioxide when it comes to trapping heat and increasing global temperatures. But it stays in the air for a far shorter period of time – it mostly disperses within 12 years.

Scientists say changing our food system will have a quicker impact on stopping climate change than altering our fossil fuel habits.

But politicians and even environmental groups are afraid to talk about it because they fear a backlash from the meat-loving public, according to a 2014 report by Chatham House, a London-based think tank. The report found governments such as the United States were doing little about the problem and that “recognition of the livestock sector as a significant contributor to climate change is markedly low.”

Sometimes, it’s even hostile. In 2013, the head of the EPA, Gina McCarthy, testified to the U.S. House Committee on Science, Space and Technology. Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Kent., wanted assurances that regulators would not monitor livestock.

Massie: *There is one other issue that affects rural America that just has us scratching our heads. I hope it is an urban legend. Is anybody in the EPA really looking at regulating cow flatulence?*

McCarthy: *Not that I am aware of.*

Massie: *(He then asks more broadly about methane emissions from cattle.) Can you assure us today that you are not investigating that?*

McCarthy: *I am not looking at that.*

Massie: *Nobody in the EPA is?*

McCarthy: *Not that I am aware of.*

U.S. politicians seem concerned about voter backlash if they

appear critical of U.S. eating preferences. Americans eat more meat per capita than any other nation.

However, for meat producers, the cost to better monitor emissions appears to be insignificant, at least according to the country's largest pork producer. WH Group, a Hong Kong-based company that owns about 1 in 4 American pigs, wrote an 1,100-page prospectus to investors that included a tidbit about how it has never filed a greenhouse gas report to the EPA because of the annual intervention by U.S. lawmakers.

Yet the company's report said the cost to disclose emissions to the EPA likely would be negligible to the company's bottom line.

It is not expected that such costs would have a material adverse effect on our hog production operations in the U.S.

Big companies like Smithfield Foods, which is owned by WH Group, could implement monitoring technology, and it would cover much of the emissions from U.S. livestock. The largest 2 percent of all livestock farms now produce more than 40 percent of all animals, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

But for now, as a result of congressional action, the world is left guessing about American cow farts, even as U.S. officials demand accuracy from other nations. If the 194 other participants to the Paris climate pact think that stinks, who can blame them?

Rich, white and refusing

vaccinations

By Nicholas Bakalar, New York Times

The people most likely to refuse to have their children vaccinated tend to be white, well-educated and affluent, researchers report.

A study published in the January issue of the American Journal of Public Health used California state government data on “personal belief exemptions,” or opting out of vaccinations for nonmedical reasons. From 2007 to 2013, the rate of vaccine refusal for personal belief doubled, to 3.06 percent.

Read the whole story