

Class to train food preserver volunteers

University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) will be conducting a class in safe home food preservation for people wanting to train as a master food preserver volunteer.

These trained volunteers learn research-based information that is then shared through public classes, community events, and newsletters.

The training information meeting is Jan. 23, 10-11 am at the UCCE Office, 311 Fair Lane, Placerville. RSVP to rkcleveland@ucanr.edu or 530.621.5528.

Participants must be a resident of El Dorado County and available for 12 training sessions on Saturdays (9am-2pm), Feb. 27–May 21, 2016 (no class on March 26). The cost is \$105 (includes books and lab materials). Apply **online**.

Experts: Sandoval's texts to NV Energy should be public

By Scott Lucas, Las Vegas Sun

Gov. Brian Sandoval has weak legal and public policy grounds to defend his decision to withhold text messages between himself and the leadership of NV Energy, according to open government experts, if the examples in other states and cities were to be followed in Nevada.

Courts and attorneys general in at least 18 states have

addressed the issue, of which “decisions have overwhelmingly favored public access,” according to a paper written by Joey Senat, a professor who teaches media law at Oklahoma State University. As of 2014, the law in 15 states requires correspondence related to state business to be turned over in public records requests – even if that information is stored on private phones or computers.

“If you limit freedom of information laws to those communications that take place over government-owned channels, then you arbitrarily exclude communications – maybe even most communications – based on a meaningless distinction about which technology you used,” said Peter Scheer, the executive director of the First Amendment Coalition.

Read the whole story

9-month wait for concealed weapon permit in Placer

By Shirin Rajaei, CBS-13

Counties are facing backlogs for concealed weapons permits following recent attacks in San Bernardino and Paris.

While some counties seem to be doing better than others, the soonest interview appointment in Placer County is not for nearly nine months.

Once you complete an application online, you need to request an in-person interview with a sheriff’s deputy. A look at the Placer County sheriff’s website shows the earliest available

date is Aug. 30.

Read the whole story

Storms bring excitement to parched Calif.

By Christopher Weber and Janie Har, AP

The biggest storm to hit the slopes of the Sierra Nevada this season triggered cheers Friday from the snow-starved ski resorts of California and the businesses that surround them.

Elsewhere in the drought-stricken state, rain and wind gusts prompted high surf warnings and repeated cautions from highway patrol to slow down when driving.

Severe weather moved south from the Pacific Northwest, where fierce storms this week sent rivers bursting from their banks, spilled boulders and trees onto a major highway and spawned a rare tornado that snapped power poles and battered homes. But the storms had one positive effect – easing drought concerns after an unusually dry summer.

In Washington state, the latest report from the U.S. Drought Monitor on Thursday showed the area west of the Cascade Mountains is no longer in drought. Cities like Seattle, Everett and Tacoma implemented water shortage plans when unseasonably dry summer conditions left the region parched.

California also needs all the snow and rain it can get, given four years of drought that have dried up reservoirs and left trees parched. Even a wet winter is not expected to end the drought, but this week's stormy weather brought on by a

tropical atmospheric river is the kind Californians used to see before drought set in.

"This is the kind of storm we've been missing for the last four years of drought," said Doug Carlson, a spokesman with the California Department of Water Resources. "This is the kind of storm we would need a lot of to start digging our way out of the drought."

Higher snow peaks in the Sierra Nevada didn't hit 3 feet as projected, but there was still a foot or two of snow, enough to keep sledders, skiers and snowboards happy, National Weather Service meteorologist Dawn Johnson said Friday.

Lake Tahoe-area ski resorts, property managers and mom-and-pop retailers have been giddy to see snowy conditions this early in the season.

"It's full-on winter out here," said Jerry Bindel, general manager of Aston Lakeland Village vacation condominiums in South Lake Tahoe. "This is great news all the way around."

The National Weather Service issued a high-surf advisory for many coastal areas, with peak waves around 30 feet in places such as Santa Cruz, California.

To the south in Ventura County, surging waves inundated several low-lying streets along the coast as a very large Pacific swell hit Friday. Rough seas surged over the Ventura Pier during high tide, and seawater streamed through residential neighborhoods.

Mike Laan took a break from his job with the city of Ventura's tourism bureau to join hundreds of residents snapping photos of the huge waves.

"They're bigger than I've ever seen," Laan said. "When they're breaking, the waves are higher than the pier. The water is going all the way past the sand to the streets."

The pier was damaged by the battering surf and closed indefinitely. No serious damage was reported to homes, and the high tide receded by midmorning.

Just north of Ventura two surfers in their 20s were unhurt after being rescued from choppy waters at Mondos Beach.

A female surfer was pulled ashore by a passer-by, county fire Capt. Mike Lindbery said. Her male companion got stuck between breaking waves and onshore rocks and had to be pulled out by county rescue swimmers.

"Mondos usually has a good surf break, on good days," Lindbery said. "Today is not a good day."

Another storm is expected this weekend, which could bring another 2 feet of snow to parts of the Sierra.

The Southern California coast remains under a high surf advisory through Sunday, with unpredictable waves topping 10 feet.

Elsewhere, a brief but intense thunderstorm sent pedestrians scattering Friday in downtown Los Angeles, and hail furiously pelted nearby Highland Park. To the east, snow chains were required on a major route to ski resorts in the San Bernardino Mountains. Yet amid the bursts of wet weather, a small brush fire broke out near Pacific Coast Highway in Malibu.

Forecasters have said a strong El Nino weather system could drench California and other parts of the West in the coming months. However, Johnny Burg, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Seattle, said he didn't believe the latest Northwest storms were related to El Nino.

"We just had a jet stream pointed at us, and it brought successive storms," he said. "We don't see the effects (of El Nino) until the winter."

Free backcountry demo event at Alpine

The Lake Tahoe Backcountry Demo Event, North America's largest venue for all things alpine touring, telemark and splitboard, returns Jan. 2

Alpenglow Sports has partnered with Alpine Meadows Ski Resort for the 10th year. The event is from 9am to 3pm.

Participating vendors will include DPS, Dynafit, G3, Scarpa, NTN, Salomon, Scott, Marker, Volkl, Twenty-Two Designs, La Sportiva, Voile, Moment, Julbo, Fly Low, Jones Snowboards and more.

In addition to the opportunity to try more than 100 styles of skis, Alpenglow and Richard Bothwell of the Bay Area Adventure Club will also provide a free, informal avalanche companion rescue class. This clinic will include beacon searches, strategic shoveling, and probing and will begin at 1pm at the registration tent.

The event is free, but participants must possess a valid lift ticket or season pass purchased from Alpine Meadows or Squaw Valley, along with a driver's license and credit card for deposit.

Young U.S. freeskiers dominated Rev Tour

By USSA

COPPER MOUNTAIN, Colo. – U.S. rookie halfpipe team member Abigale Hansen (June Lake) dominated the first stop of the U.S. Revolution Tour at Copper Mountain on Thursday and Friday, winning both halfpipe events. Hansen led a strong contingency of up-and-coming U.S. freeskiers to kick off what looks to be a promising season for U.S. athletes

The first stop of the Rev Tour featured back-to-back halfpipe competitions under mostly sunny, Colorado skies. In addition to Hansen's wins, the American women scored a couple of podium finishes: Carly Margulies (Mammoth Lakes) finished third on Thursday and Zyre Austin (Glenwood Springs, Colo.) took second on Friday (she also took fourth on Thursday).

The American men also fared well, with Hunter Hess (Bend, Ore.) snagging a podium spot with a third-place finish on Friday.

The rest of the Americans in the field showed well, with strong showings in the final on both days: Paula Cooper (Vail), fifth on Thursday and sixth on Friday; Jeanee Crane-Mauzy (Park City), fifth on Friday; Joey Lang (Aspen), sixth on Thursday; Cameron Brodrick (Mammoth Lakes), sixth on Friday.

Next up for the Revolution Tour is the Mammoth Mountain stop Jan. 26-31.

Placer County looking to regulate medical pot

A comprehensive medical marijuana regulatory framework for the unincorporated areas of Placer County was adopted this week by the Board of Supervisors.

The board's decision allows county staff to work with the community to begin to define what the regulation should look like.

"What we discussed (Dec. 8) was putting in a placeholder legislation in January that would preserve our right of jurisdiction over what happens in Placer with regards to cultivation, land use, location, manufacturing – all of the components that come with medicinal marijuana use," said Supervisor Jack Duran. "And provide us the opportunity after January to then really put the meat on the bones in crafting an ordinance that suits our needs for passage later in the year."

To date, Placer County has not enacted any ordinances that regulate medicinal marijuana. Since county zoning ordinances prohibit activities that aren't expressly permitted, this has effectively banned medical marijuana in the county's unincorporated areas.

County staff advised the board that not regulating or banning medical marijuana will continue to put the county at risk of criminal activity and environmental damage.

The board is expected to take up the issue again in January.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- Joan deRyk Jones is now mayor of Truckee and Morgan Goodwin is vice mayor.

- **Registration** is open for the 2016 Death Ride.
 - Starting in June, Southwest Airlines is adding three daily flights between Reno and Oakland.
 - Here is the Caltrans El Dorado-Lake Tahoe roadwork schedule for the next week.
 - Tahoe Cross Country and Tahoe Cross Country Ski Education Association are looking for board members. Here is the application.
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Enrollment surge may mean Al Tahoe reopens

By Kathryn Reed

Enrollment in Lake Tahoe Unified School District is escalating to the point that officials are wondering if Al Tahoe Elementary School might need to be reopened.

The South Lake Tahoe school closed starting with the 2004-05 school year because of budget deficits and declining enrollment.

There are currently 3,988 students in the district, which is 100 more students than a year ago. The district had 4,544 students in September 2005. The numbers peaked in 1996-97 at 5,978 students.

The biggest growth continues to be at the high school. In 2014-15 there were 911 kids at South Tahoe High School and now there are 1,088.

"They like the career piece push," Superintendent Jim Tarwater said of why parents want to enroll their kids at STHS.

Between the \$64 million facilities bond approved by local voters and more than \$30 million in matching funds from the state, the district in the last few years has had a bit of a renaissance. The bulk of the money revamped STHS. With the buildings came a slew of programs.

South Tahoe Middle School has seen enrollment go from 745 students to 830.

The elementary schools are also seeing more students.

"It's why you never get rid of a school," Tarwater told *Lake Tahoe News*.

While the district has good enrollment numbers, it would like to see the attendance figures increase. Ninety-five percent is the goal. It's at about 93.7 percent.

The district loses \$60 a day per student when they are not in school.

Today the Al Tahoe site is used mostly by the Lake Tahoe Boys & Girls Club. Before it could be put back into service as an elementary school Tarwater said it needs a new boiler and flooring.

The state owes the district \$1.4 million for improvements made to STMS. When the reimbursement comes the district could use

it for Al Tahoe.

A state school bond is expected to be on the November 2016 ballot. That is where the state would get the money to pay back LTUSD.

Opinion: Police duties change with time

By Brian Uhler

As you might expect, once the city was incorporated in 1965, it took some time to create a police department. On July 1, 1967, the police department began providing police services to the city.

In 2017, we'll plan a small public 50th celebration at the police department. Our initial plans include hosting and honoring some of the department's original members. Over the years there have been many changes.



Brian Uhler

Some points of interest include:

- A police building was christened in 1973 and Chief Crow was quoted as saying the building would serve our needs

for between five and seven years. There were plans for expansion which were never realized. We are still in the same building.

- Police officer staffing levels grew from an initial compliment of 30 officers to a high of 55 in about 1988. We currently have 36 police officers.

Police personnel have certainly stepped-up enforcement for those who are illegally operating vacation home rentals (VHRs) in our community. With some of the latest efforts to manage VHRs in our neighborhoods, the police department was able to focus more attention on those who are operating without permits (and probably not paying transient occupancy tax-TOT).

While most people who own or operate VHRs are doing so properly, there are still those who are not obtaining permits and probably not paying taxes which help pay for important core city services for our entire community. For those who are operating a VHR “under the radar” or thinking of doing so in the future, get your permits and pay your taxes.

Penalties for operating without a VHR permit include:

- \$5,000 fine
- pay back taxes or get a lien on your property
- risk your ability to get a VHR permit in the future.

We have found 21 VHR violators in just the last month.

We hope that nobody would violate this law. Our efforts to make sure everyone knows the permit requirements included mailing a notice to every residential property owner in the entire city. Further, there have been numerous discussions at City Council meetings and a variety of news articles on the topic. Bottom line: excuses for not having a permit will probably not get you any leniencies. Game playing with flimsy excuses will also be easily debunked.

It is worth noting that it is not too terribly difficult to find those who are breaking the rules. Consider that VHRs normally advertise—we know where and we're checking. Further, neighbors who are fed up with the impacts of a VHR could report the existence of illegal operators. Once reported, our VHR enforcement officer will visit on a holiday or weekend and confirm a property is being used as a VHR. This will kick the sanctions into motion—simple message: you'd be far better off just getting your permit and paying your proper taxes. It's just the right thing to do.

Brian Uhler is police chief of South Lake Tahoe.