Brown critical of Nevada's gun laws

By David Siders, Sacramento Bee

LE BOURGET, France – Gov. Jerry Brown said Saturday that "wide open" gun laws in Nevada and Arizona are a "gigantic back door through which any terrorist can walk," while he was noncommittal on efforts to strengthen gun control measures in California.

Brown, arriving in France for climate talks after the mass shooting in San Bernardino this week, called the shooting a "terrorist attack." The guns used were purchased legally in California before being modified, authorities have said.

Asked if stricter gun control laws were warranted, as some activists have argued, the fourth-term Democrat replied, "California has some of the toughest gun control laws of any state. And Nevada and Arizona are wide open, so that's a gigantic back door through which any terrorist can walk."

Read the whole story

Heavenly plans to tweak ski experience for '16



Improvements are in the works to make it easier to get back to the Tamarack lift. Photo/LTN file

By Kathryn Reed

Changes to Heavenly Mountain Resort that are expected to be ready for the 2016-17 ski season are mostly based on what skiers have requested.

The resort wants to:

- Build a permanent 300-square-foot ticket sales kiosk adjacent to the Bear Cave Ski School near Tamarack Lodge;
- Relocate the Red Fir handle tow lift to the right side of the Easy Street Trail to reduce user conflicts;
- Install a nearly 300-foot magic carpet surface to primarily be used for ski school activities on the lower Easy Street Trail near the relocated Red Fir lift;
- Widen Tamarack Return Trail by about 125 feet on 1.3 acres;
- Limb and remove trees under the Blue Streak Zipline

to provide easier seasonal removal and installation of the lines.

“This is what guests have asked for,” Russ Pecoraro, spokesman for Heavenly, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We are constantly looking for ways to improve the experience.”

The U.S. Forest Service, whose land the projects would be built on, is asking the public to weigh in on the proposals.

“This proposal does not amend the master plan. The project is consistent with the vision described in Heavenly’s Master Development Plan,” Lisa Herron with the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit told *Lake Tahoe News*.

It’s possible as many as 200 trees will be removed. Pecoraro said widening California Trail will make it easier for riders to get back to Tamarack Express.

“With some of the teaching terrain up there we don’t have the lifts in the ideal places to access the terrain for beginners,” Pecoraro said.

The kiosk being built next to the Bear Cave Ski School would also be open in the summer to sell tickets for the ropes courses and other amenities available when there isn’t snow on the ground. It would replace the temporary structures that exist today.

Pecoraro, per company policy, would not reveal what the price tag is for these improvements.

The goal is to secure necessary permits this winter and begin work in the spring after the resort closes for the winter season. It is not anticipated that the construction will impact summer activities, Pecoraro said.

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Notes:

· The deadline to comment is Dec. 21.

· The proposal is available **online**.

· For more info, contact Matt Dickinson at the USFS at 530.543.2769.

Online tool tracks prescribed fires in basin

North Lake Tahoe and Tahoe Douglas fire protection districts, the Nevada Division of Forestry and the U.S. Forest Service will continue widespread prescribed fire operations beginning the week of Dec. 7.

Operations on the North Shore may take place on the west side of Incline Village and in Carnelian Bay. On the South Shore, off South Upper Truckee Road near Meyers, off Columbine Trail and Ski Run Boulevard near South Lake Tahoe, and on Kingsbury Grade. On the East Shore, off Logan Creek Drive, south of Glenbrook, on Spooner Summit, and north of Spooner Lake.

Operations may continue over the next several weeks as weather and conditions allow.

The Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team developed an **online mapping tool** the public may use to view the location and details of each prescribed fire project.

Smoke from prescribed fire operations is normal and may continue for several days after an ignition depending on the project size and environmental conditions.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



· The trial for Gilbert Wetenkamp, who is accused of killing a bear on the South Shore in July, is scheduled to start Jan. 8 in El Dorado County Superior Court.

· NCE, a civil and environmental engineering firm headquartered in Reno with regional offices located throughout California, received the PSMJ 2015 circle of excellence award.

· South Tahoe High School students Kylee Lyons, Jackson Kuzmik, Allee Zaccor, Georgillis Ortega and Ryan Newberger were accepted into the Western International Band Clinic Honor Band.

· Here are the El Dorado-Tahoe and Sierra roadwork schedules from Caltrans for next week.

· On Aug. 15, Carson City Deputy Sheriff Carl Howell was shot and killed while responding to a domestic violence call. On Dec. 8, the Nevada Department of Transportation will ceremonially dedicate the approximately nine-mile Carson City Freeway in the deputy’s name.

Know the rules before gifting

a drone

By Daniel Rothberg, Las Vegas Sun

It’s the season of drones, with experts estimating that shoppers will purchase as many as 400,000 small unmanned aerial vehicles during the 2015 holiday season.

In the past year, retail drones have become increasingly available to consumers. But if you’re thinking about buying one for a family member or friend – or maybe treating yourself to one – you should be aware of parameters and rules governing their use.

As Michael Huerta, director of the Federal Aviation Administration, recently wrote: “Pilots with little or no aviation experience will be at the controls of many of these aircraft. Many of these new aviators may not even be aware that their activities in our airspace could be dangerous to other aircraft – or that they are, in fact, pilots once they start flying their unmanned aircraft.”

Read the whole story

Criminal skiers cutting down trees in wilderness

By Heather Hansman, Outside

In late September, a hiker in New Mexico’s Santa Fe National Forest encountered a shocking sight: a several-hundred-yard swath of felled trees on a hillside in the Pecos Wilderness. Whoever did it leveled off hundreds of englemann spruce and

subalpine fir trees a few inches above the roots and left the cuttings on the ground—a clear indication that it wasn't the act of an illegal timber operation or someone looking for some free firewood.

No, it was most likely perpetrated by backcountry skiers looking to set up a ski run in time for winter.

Felling trees in a national wilderness area violates the Wilderness Act and is a federal misdemeanor. Wilderness areas are the most highly protected federal land: development is prohibited in an effort to keep them as natural as possible.

Whoever is responsible for the cutting, if caught, could face six months in jail or up to $6,000 in fines, depending on the extent of the damage, which investigators are calculating now.

The Pecos incident wasn't an isolated case of so-called glading, which involves cutting down trees to carve out enough space for makeshift ski runs. As backcountry use is increasing—the Snowsports Industry Association says sales of backcountry gear like touring-compatible ski boots and accessories were up 12 percent from 2013 to 2014—land managers are trying to find ways to encourage recreation while still regulating illegal use.

Read the whole story

Editorial: End the gun epidemic in America

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the Dec. 4 New York Times.***

All decent people feel sorrow and righteous fury about the latest slaughter of innocents, in California. Law enforcement and intelligence agencies are searching for motivations, including the vital question of how the murderers might have been connected to international terrorism. That is right and proper.

But motives do not matter to the dead in California, nor did they in Colorado, Oregon, South Carolina, Virginia, Connecticut and far too many other places. The attention and anger of Americans should also be directed at the elected leaders whose job is to keep us safe but who place a higher premium on the money and political power of an industry dedicated to profiting from the unfettered spread of ever more powerful firearms.

Read the whole story

Cops to be out in force looking for DUI offenders

South Lake Tahoe Police Department is one of many law enforcement agencies across the U.S. that is planning to actively search for and arrest drunken drivers from Dec. 18 to Jan. 3.

As part of the national Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over enforcement campaign period police, sheriff's departments and the CHP will be deploying DUI checkpoints and DUI saturation patrols during that time. South Lake Tahoe officers will be conducting a DUI checkpoint on Dec. 21 from 6-pm toDec. 22 at 2am, in addition to having nine roving DUI saturation patrols starting Dec. 5. The DUI saturation patrols will be operating

from 7pm-2am.

In 2013, 10,076 people were killed in crashes involving a drunken driver, according to officers. In December 2013, there were 733 people killed in crashes involving at least one driver or motorcycle operator with a blood alcohol concentration of 0.08 or higher. Twenty-three of those deaths occurred on Christmas Day. California had 98 deaths and another 1,852 injured in alcohol involved collisions in December 2013.

South Lake Tahoe officer suggest these tips to stay safe:

· Plan a safe way to get home before you attend the party. Alcohol impairs judgment, as well as reaction time. If you're impaired you're more likely to choose to drive drunk.

· Designate a sober driver; take public transportation, a car service, or a call a sober friend of family member to get home.

· Walking while impaired can be just as dangerous as drunken driving. Designate a sober friend to walk you home.

· If you see someone you think is about to drive while impaired, take his or her keys and help the person get home safely.

Poll: Calif. voters not yet jazzed about tax extensions

By Christopher Cadelago, Sacramento Bee

With Californians staring down the prospect of a crowded

ballot next fall, a poll finds 61 percent of likely voters believe there are too many propositions.

At the same time, about the same percentage say they are satisfied with the way the initiative process is working, according to Public Policy Institute of California survey released late Tuesday.

PPIC asked about the importance of four ballot measures that all could go before voters. Some 55 percent of likely voters view a state bond measure to pay for school and community college facilities as very important, and 49 percent consider a statewide initiative raising the minimum wage as critical.

Read the whole story

U.S. men score World Cup points in Colorado

By USSA

BEAVER CREEK, Colo. – Andrew Weibrecht (Lake Placid, N.Y.) reminded ski racing fans that he is still a threat in downhill, tying for fifth place after starting 34 at the Birds of Prey downhill. Travis Ganong (Squaw Valley) and Steven Nyman (Sundance, Utah) both grabbed top-15 spots, taking 12 and 15, respectively.

The Norwegians, better known as the Attacking Vikings, were unstoppable during Friday’s downhill with Aksel Lund Svindal taking his third win in as many speed events. His teammate Kjetil Jansrud was just behind him in second with Guillermo Fayed of France in third.

“I think his wax technician crushed it,” said Ganong of Svindal’s run. “He was six- to eight-tenths ahead on the top flat which is unheard of. Steve Nyman is the best starter and glider in the world and he got beat by three-tenths on the top.”

Overshadowed by the top 30 having finished, the crowd seemed to forget about Weibrecht. He had been on course for 30 seconds before the camera at Beaver Creek panned back to his run on the jumbotron. When he came down in fifth, he pumped his chest, stoked about the result—his best World Cup downhill finish.

“That run felt good. I was definitely hanging it out. A couple of times, I didn’t know if I gave away too much or risked a little too much, but I guess it was right in there,” said Weibrecht after his run. “I skied the way I wanted to all the way down.”

Bryce Bennett (Squaw Valley) also attacked from the back, skiing from bib 53 to take his first World Cup points by finishing 29.

“I haven’t scored World Cup points yet and that has been something I’ve wanted to do—almost too much,” said Bennett. “I had a few mistakes, but I just put everything into it. It was good to get a reward.”

Jared Goldberg (Holladay, Utah) was just out of the points, finishing 31st. Marco Sullivan (Squaw Valley) did not finish.