Metastatic breast cancer breakthrough highlights need for funding

By Amy Westervelt, KUNR

Iain Buxton has cured breast cancer – in mice. The doctor says his isn't the only team to have made such strides, but a lot of promising research is getting stuck in labs due to a lack of research funding.

"Not enough grants are funded. Seven out of a hundred about – that's Draconian. Because we're not talking about 93 of those grants coming from schlock scientists. Every one of them comes from a highly qualified place and person. So we're talking about the best of the best and we're not supporting them. This is a major problem."

Still, Buxton and his team, at the UNR Department of Pharmacology, believe they've cracked the code of metastasis.

The lab has patented its findings, and now it's just a matter of – you guessed it – funding.

Read the whole story

Breckenridge to tax lift tickets

By Associated Press

BRECKENRIDGE, Colo. – Breckenridge voters have approved Colorado's first local tax on ski lift tickets.

The city asked voters to approve a 4.5 percent sales tax on single-day and multiday Breckenridge Ski Resort tickets.

It's expected to generate $3.5 million a year for transit and parking improvements in the resort town.

The tax will be collected by Vail Resorts, which operates the Breckenridge resort. Vail Resorts originally opposed the tax but relented when season passes, multi-resort lift-tickets and summer activities were excluded.

Tahoe license plates worth 2 lift tickets

Plates for Powder offers individuals who purchase Lake Tahoe license plate in California or Nevada two free lift tickets to one of the Tahoe resorts participating in the program.

Plate sales and renewal fees generate proceeds that go directly to the California Tahoe Conservancy and Nevada Division of State Lands to fund hiking and biking trails and watershed restoration projects. The Tahoe Fund, a nonprofit dedicated to raising money for environmental improvement projects that support lake clarity, recreation and stewardship in the Tahoe Basin, is organizing the program on behalf of the public agencies.

The resorts participating in the promotion include Diamond Peak, Heavenly Mountain Resort, Homewood Mountain Resort, Kirkwood Mountain Resort, Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe, Northstar, Royal

Gorge Cross Country, Sierra-at-Tahoe, Squaw Valley, Alpine Meadows, Sugar Bowl, Tahoe Cross Country and Tahoe Donner.

Information on how to purchase a plate and redeem free tickets is available **online**.

Snowmaking won’t save Lake Tahoe ski resorts if the overnight temperatures keep rising



Snowmaking and Mother Nature are allowing Mt. Rose to be the first resort in the greater Lake Tahoe area to open this

season. Photo/Provided

By Anne Knowles

Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe kicks off the ski season today, optimistic this season will be a return to normal after a foot of snow fell Monday.

“El Niño typically bodes well for Mt. Rose. This is shaping up to be like ’97, a warm October followed by a successful snow year,” said Mike Pierce, head of marketing at the Nevada resort, referring to 1997 when the Truckee River overflowed and Reno was flooded. “We’re due to break the cycle.”

Pierce isn’t alone in thinking this way.

OpenSnow, a group of local weather forecasters, says there is a 60 to 70 percent chance of above average snowfall in California and Nevada this winter.

“I’m hopeful with El Niño. We got almost 12 inches (Tuesday), heavy base type snow that’s good to have this time of year,” Barrett Burghard, senior manager of snow services at Heavenly Mountain Resort, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Last year was the toughest season. But we’ve seen these cycles. Hopefully we’ll have three to four years of good moisture.”

Still, no one knows for sure. The National Weather Service’s Climate Prediction Center currently projects a 33 percent chance Lake Tahoe will have above average precipitation this winter, but it’s hard to know if most of it will be in the form rain or snow only at the highest elevations, 8,000 to 9,000 feet.

“There is little to suggest that a big El Niño causes more snow,” said **Kelly Redmond**, regional climatologist for the Western United States with the Desert Research Institute, at a recent Incline Village talk. “We tend to get more extreme events.”

At the same time, NWS says there is an even greater chance – 40 percent – temperatures in the basin will be above average. That creates problems not only for precipitation, but also for snowmaking, which the resorts have depended on to make it through the last few seasons.

Snowmaking is most productive and energy efficient, and costs less and consumes less water, the lower the temperature.

No one can control the temperature, which is key, but resorts have invested millions of dollars on more advanced snowmaking equipment in the last few years.



Squaw Valley's attention to snowmaking dramatically changed when KSL took over ownership. Photo/Provided

Squaw Valley, for example, has spent $8 million in the past five years to upgrade its equipment. The resort says it can operate up to 20 new snowmaking guns with the same amount of compressed air required by a single old gun and make nine times as much snow as it could 10 years ago.

On Tuesday, Squaw spent the day making snow, thanks to a big drop in the temperature. Plans are to open Nov. 25.

Mt. Rose operates 25 SMI Snowmakers' PoleCat snow guns, Pierce said, which can cover up to 25 percent of its trails. A dozen are fixed; 13 are mobile and hook into hydrants throughout the

resort, which tap into an onsite well.

“We’ve been buying water rights for the last 20 years,” Pierce told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The snowmaking allowed the resort to operate from Nov. 8 to April 19 last season when it received just 167 inches of snow, about half the average.

Heavenly, owned by Vail Resorts, has invested heavily in an elaborate snowmaking operation that allows it to cover more than two-thirds of its 97 trails.

“The biggest change we’ve seen is energy efficiency,” said Heavenly’s Burghard, including more efficient guns and advanced compressor controllers.

This season Heavenly is testing a GPS-based depth sensor attached to PistenBully snowcat that may more precisely measure the snow.

“But as far as the temperatures go, there’s not a lot we can do,” Burghard said.

He said there are additives to aid snowmaking at higher temperatures, but Heavenly doesn’t use them.

“They’re not costly, but we’re in the Lake Tahoe watershed and we’re reluctant to use them,” Burghard said.

Heavenly buys its water for snowmaking from South Tahoe Public Utility District and Kingsbury Grade Improvement District.

Andrew Strain, vice president of planning and government affairs for Heavenly, suggested Nevada look at allowing the use of effluent for snowmaking at mountain resorts not on the lake. He said this during testimony at a state-sponsored drought summit in Carson City in September.

Snowbowl, a ski resort in Arizona, began making snow using

effluent in 2013.

The Nevada Department of Environmental Protection has a standing committee on water reuse which is in the early stages of looking at that possibility, according to JoAnn Kittrell, public information manager for the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

“It’s tricky for Tahoe. Even as a base, it may have too many nutrients,” Kittrell said. “It might have to be treated to drinking water levels. Then it becomes a question of being cost prohibitive.”

Opinion: Brown wrong to not sign drone bill

By Ted Gaines

Gov. Jerry Brown made a serious error vetoing my Senate Bill 168 and by doing so put emergency responders, property and the lives of Californians unnecessarily at risk.

SB168 tackled a new menace in California, unauthorized drones in emergency zones. Drones are amazing, and I want to see the industry flourish in California. I want to see hobbyists flying them and having fun, businesses using them to deliver packages, take photos or in any other creative ways we can’t even imagine. And I want to see public safety using them to help save lives and property. But they have no business flying in dangerous emergency areas and interfering with public safety.



Ted Gaines

My bill would have given civil immunity to emergency personnel who damaged a drone in the course of their duty. It would have also penalized that reckless drone use with up to six months of jail time, which is consistent with current law regarding interference, and increased the potential penalty for interfering up to $5,000.

Those penalties were already lower than what I wanted. I wanted something stronger that would send a clear message to anyone piloting a drone over a fire that their actions are contemptible and worthy of punishment. But I toned down the penalties to try to meet the governor in the middle, knowing that he is sensitive to creating new crimes in California.

Apparently, there is no halfway point with the governor on crime. While I appreciate a thoughtful discussion of our penal system, Brown’s veto of this important legislation shows a reflexive, anti-punishment strain that threatens every Californian who is fighting fires and responding to life-saving emergencies. Brown, the motive force behind the prison “realignment” that has pushed thousands of criminals back out on the street, has let his ideology again trump the needs of citizens around the state.

New technologies will lead to new crimes. Laws should adapt to the existing environment to provide the public safety that should be government’s highest priority. It is absurd to say the advent of the automobile, or the internet, or credit cards, or drones, will not lead to unforeseen situations that are unique and deserve unique laws to address them.

Wildfires have savaged our state this year. More than a thousand homes are now sad piles of ash and people around the state are just beginning to think about the painful task of rebuilding or relocating. But probably the most compelling image of the fire season was the terrified people on Interstate 15 running for their lives as the North Fire swept over that freeway and torched their vehicles as they fled.

Drones in the air caused the North Fire air tankers to abandon the scene and divert their flame-retardant loads away from the fire. By the time the drones exited and it was safe to resume their mission, 15 critical minutes had passed. The fire engulfed the cars. We are lucky that only vehicles were damaged, but next time, there might not be an exit route and we may be mourning a loss of life.

Despite his “no new crimes” mantra, Gov. Brown did sign one drone-related bill that expanded a penalty. The bill aimed to protect celebrities from paparazzi using drones to snap pictures of the stars. So, Brown will add new penalties to protect the Kardashians, but not firefighters or families living in wildfire areas.

To borrow from another governor, I want Brown to know that “I’ll be back.” I want to work with him for a solution next year when this problem will likely be far worse than it was this year, because this Christmas it’s expected that 1 million new drones will be sold as gifts. The operators need to understand all air safety laws and also use common sense when it comes to operating what can be dangerous toys. But if they ignore the law and expose everyone to direct and unnecessary risk, they should be punished. SB168 would have done just that.

Ted Gaines, R-El Dorado, represents the California side of the Lake Tahoe Basin in the state Senate.

Incumbents win TPRID election

The four incumbents running for the Tahoe Paradise Resort Improvement District board are staying.

Voters on Nov. 3 made that decision. What changes is the seats they actually have.

The terms of Judy Clot and Pete Nelligan were expiring. Those are for four-year terms. The other two seats expire Dec. 1, 2017. Joe Cardinale and Victor Babbitt were in those seats.

Running for the full term seats were Babbitt, Clot, Brandie Jordan-Griffith and Diane Verwoest. Babbitt (298 votes, 40.2 percent) and Judy Clot (291, 29.55 percent) were the top vote getters for the full term seat. Verwoest (175, 23.62 percent) and Jordan-Griffith (49, 6.61 percent) were unsuccessful in their bid.

Cardinale, Nelligan, Jan Roman-Gonzales and Frank Jones were vying for the seat that expires in a year. Nelligan (266, 33.29 percent) and Cardinale (240, 30.04 percent) soundly beat their opponents Jones (152, 19.02 percent) and Roman-Gonzales (141, 17.65 percent.)

An El Dorado County supervisor is the fifth member. This is usually the person representing District 5. In this case it is Sue Novasel.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Startups cash in on pot for canines

By Kevin Schultz, San Francisco Chronicle

Suzanne Kisting’s burly 10-year-old, 120-pound St. Bernard, Moose, hobbled down the 40 stairs of her former San Francisco apartment every morning, crippled by pain from severe arthritis.

Kisting tried everything she could to ease it, buying expensive prescriptions drugs and taking him for acupuncture treatments.

But none of it worked the way she hoped.

Then she caught word of a possible new treatment: medical pot.

It’s a controversial approach to treating pain in animals that has drawn criticism from everyone from the ASPCA to the Food and Drug Administration to the American Veterinary Medical Association.

In California, medicinal marijuana is legal, but the dosing of pets still lands in a gray area.

Read the whole story

Veterans Day ceremony planned for SLT

The American Legion Post 795 of South Lake Tahoe will be honoring all veterans, active and retired on Veterans Day.

The ceremony will take place at 11am Nov. 11 at the American Legion Hall, 2748 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

Formerly Armistice Day, Nov. 11 commemorates the anniversary of the peace agreement that ended World War I in 1918.

Happy Homestead (1261 Johnson Blvd.) is the final resting place to more than 560 veterans. Volunteers are needed to help our local veteran's group place American flags at their grave sites in the morning on Veterans Day. Volunteers are asked to meet at the cemetery at 8 that morning.

For more information, contact Lisa Herron at 530.542.2747 or lisannherron@gmail.com.

Severe obesity a billion dollar taxpayer issue

By Soumya Karlamangla, Los Angeles Times

We know obesity increases your risk of having high blood pressure, getting diabetes and being diagnosed with certain cancers. Now it turns out it can also increase costs for your state government.

A study published Monday in the journal Health Affairs found

that medical care associated with severe obesity cost state-run health programs $8 billion in 2013. California's program for the poor, known as Medi-Cal, took the biggest hit, spending $1.3 billion that year on severe obesity-related care.

Though the obesity epidemic in America has garnered a lot of attention, there hasn't been enough focus on severe obesity, which has much bigger health risks and associated costs, said Michael Long, study author and assistant professor of prevention and community health at the Milken Institute School of Public Health atGeorge Washington University.

Read the whole story

Betty Duke – 1925-2015



Betty Duke

Longtime South Lake Tahoe resident Mary E. "Betty" Duke died Oct. 29, 2015. She was 90.

Betty was born on Feb. 27, 1925, in Monroe, La., to Albert and Clara Olsen.

Betty was an active volunteer with many organizations. She

enjoyed reading, traveling, playing piano and accordion, dancing, and the outdoors, but especially anything involving her family.

She is survived by her husband of 64 years Jim Duke; children Laurie (Chris) Sheppard, Scott Duke, Shelley Bailey, Mark (Shannon) Duke; five grandchildren, Crystal, Charlie, Hannah, Emily and Sam; three great-grandchildren, Juan, Anthony, and Alani; sisters Elaine (Harold) Crane and Alberta Sehnert; and numerous cousins, nieces and nephews.

A celebration of life will be Nov. 8 at 1pm at Lake Tahoe Community Presbyterian Church in South Lake Tahoe.

Donations may be made to the Betty Duke Scholarship Fund – AOPI Foundation (for deserving young women at UNR); mail to Birdie Hanson, 2940 Santa Inez Drive, Minden, NV 89423.