Billions in Medicaid funding at risk for Californians

By Anna Gorman, KQED-TV

California risks losing billions in health care dollars if the state and federal governments can’t agree on a plan to fund reforms of the Medicaid program, hospital officials and experts said.

Public hospitals throughout the state are counting on the $7.25 billion in state and federal funds to treat large numbers of low-income and uninsured patients. The plan, known as a Medicaid waiver, also would allow the state to continue improving the efficiency, safety and quality of its Medicaid program, called Medi-Cal.

About a third of all Californians are enrolled in Medi-Cal – 12.5 million people. The current waiver, which took effect in 2010, expires on Oct. 31, though the federal government can grant an extension while negotiations over the plan continue.

Read the whole story

S. Tahoe man faces insurance fraud charges

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

A South Lake Tahoe man has been arrested, accused of auto insurance fraud.

Braden Scott Leeds was arrested Monday by investigators with the El Dorado County District Attorney's Office after a nine-count felony complaint was filed with the El Dorado County Superior Court. The arrest was the culmination of a two-month investigation by California Bureau of Automotive Repair investigators, with assistance of investigators from the DA's Office.

Leeds reportedly moved to the South Lake Tahoe area from Texas after a July hail storm and set up shop at 2028 Fifth St., Suite 3, under the business name Disaster Management Group. Leeds allegedly engaged in a false-billing scheme, in which he was paid by insurance companies for new parts to be installed on hail-damaged vehicles but instead performed paint-less dent repair.

Read the whole story

Dismal revenues for Stateline casinos

Stateline's casinos were the big losers in September compared to the rest of Nevada.

While the state saw a 1.5 percent increase in gaming revenue last month compared to 2014, the South Shore clubs dropped 10.7 percent to $21.2 million.

The Gaming Control Board on Oct. 29 released the latest numbers. Statewide, casinos won $916.4 million last month compared to $902.6 in September 2014.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

El Dorado Savings' profits inch higher

El Dorado Savings Bank reported third quarter profits of $2.7 million, which represented a $34,172 increase compared to 2014.

"Earnings for the first nine months of 2015 totaled $8,533,749, compared to $8,606,106 in 2014," CEO George L. Cook Jr. said in a statement. "The continued strong performance of the investment and real estate loan portfolios contributed to the strong earnings in 2015."

El Dorado ended the quarter with $1.98 billion in total assets and savings deposits of $1.77 billion.

The bank operates 31 in California and four in Northern Nevada.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



· The National Forest Recreation Association recognized Don Lane, recreation and wilderness program manager for the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, as its 2015 Ranger of the Year.

· The annual free Valhalla Holiday Faire on the South Shore is Nov. 20 from 5:30-8:30pm, Nov. 21 from 10am-5pm and

Nov. 22 from 10am-4pm.

· Kevin Marshall, co-founder and president of Clear Capital, will give a talk Nov. 4 from 11:30am-12:30pm at Sierra Nevada College in Incline Village. Founded in 2001 in Truckee, Clear Capital delivers real estate valuations, data, analytics and technology solutions that set industry standards for accuracy, efficiency, and accountability.

· Caltrans is in the process of creating the inaugural California State Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. More info is **online**.

· Gov. Brian Sandoval has declared Nov. 1-7 Nevada Flood Awareness Week.

CTC busy buying property, building trails



The California Tahoe Conservancy is buying this parcel with the idea the building will be demolished. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

KINGS BEACH – Land acquisition, bike paths and public access projects dominated the most recent quarterly meeting of the California Tahoe Conservancy.

The old blue four-plex on the corner of Sawmill Road and Highway 50 in El Dorado County will be demolished in 2016 so the 1-acre parcel can be restored to a natural setting. It is deemed environmentally sensitive land.

The board agreed to spend $435,000 to make this happen. The bulk of the money is to buy the property. Escrow is expected to close at the end of the month. The development rights will be banked to be used in South Lake Tahoe or Meyers.

There was a question as to whether the sewer hook up had value. The answer was not today. It's also not a parcel State Parks would be interested in because that agency wants contiguous property. They own the land across Sawmill Road.

No one is living in the structure, and it has been in foreclosure for about a year.

For about 30 years starting in the 1920s this is where Ethel's Pie Shop was. It's how the rock climbing area got its name.

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Proposed Lakeview Lookout in South Lake Tahoe.

Rendering/Design Workshop

Funding is still being sought to transform the old Alta Mira site in South Lake Tahoe into something more than a wood-chipped parking lot. It has been renamed **Lakeview Lookout**.

Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe's membership voted not to spend the quarter million dollars it has in the bank on this project. CTC is hoping the city of South Lake Tahoe and Tahoe Fund will be partners. The board may discuss funding in more detail in December or early next year.

A cantilevered walkway and deck, as well as slope stabilization are proposed. The idea is to make it a complementary bookend to Lakeview Commons.

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The initial phase of the long-anticipated Greenway Trail is done. Eventually it will link Meyers and Stateline.

"It felt so good this summer to get some pavement on the ground after working on this for so long," CTC staff member Sue Rae Irelan told the board.

The first segment is 0.43 miles going from Herbert Avenue to Glenwood Way.

Last week the California Transportation Commission allocated $2 million to a consortium on the South Shore for trails. Part of this will be used to continue the Greenway through the Bijou Meadow, connecting to Al Tahoe Boulevard, and from Lake Tahoe Community College to Sierra Tract.

Most likely at the March board meeting there will be a land swap item on the agenda involving the CTC, the city and Lake Tahoe Community College. This will also involve a modification to the design plans for the path.

"We are trying to make a more direct connection to the Martin-

Barbara intersection," Irelan said.

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The Upper Truckee Marsh's final EIR/EIS should be out in December. Photo/LTN file

The final environmental documents for the Upper Truckee River and Marsh project should be before the board in December. Construction could begin in 2018. Environmental and recreation improvements on both sides of the river are planned.

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Talks are still under way for CTC to not have a role in Van Sickle Bi-state Park. CTC stepped in when California State Parks couldn't put money into the upkeep of the South Shore park.

"Ultimately the goal is to have Nevada manage it on both sides," Wright said. He added there is still work to be done involving both states to make this a reality.

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The Conservancy owns 3.5 acres or six "asset lands parcels" between Tahoe Valley Pharmacy and the Factory Stores at the Y.

“The city would like the back parcel to be part of the green belt,” Aimee Rutledge of the CTC told the board.

The Tahoe Valley Area Plan calls for a green belt in this area. Rutledge also said staff envisions the **Factory Store owners** wanting those parcels, but the owners told *Lake Tahoe News* they have enough on their plate.

When there is a buyer the board will take a vote on it.

Executive Director Patrick Wright explained that new legislation allows the board to know what the future use of the property will be before agreeing to sell it.

“This give us leverage to shape the future of this property,” Wright said.

This is a completely different process from past CTC parcels that went to the highest bidder. One of the parcels was the old drive-in on Glenwood Avenue that has since had what is called a single-family residence built on it even though it looks like a mini hotel. It was built specifically to be a vacation home rental.

Opinion: Colleges will pay for stifling diversity of ideology

By Patrick Everson, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Colleges and universities are supposed to be marketplaces of ideas, but that’s less and less true today. While higher

education systems champion diversity of race, ethnicity and sexual identity, they're completely unconcerned with diversity of ideology.

Nothing highlighted that better than a story last week from The Cornell Daily Sun, an independent, student-run newspaper serving the Cornell University community.

Phoebe Keller and Emily Friedman reported that more than 96 percent of Cornell faculty donations to political candidates over the past four years went to Democrats. Out of 323 donors, only 15 gave to conservative causes, contributing about $16,000, while nearly $574,000 flowed to Democrats.

Read the whole story

Police in schools: Why are they there?

By Greg Botelho and Ralph Ellis, CNN

Tens of thousands of them patrol American schools every day. They are law enforcers. They are mediators. They are educators.

This week, a school resource officer in Columbia, South Carolina, was captured on a video that's been replayed across the nation. The video shows him forcefully yanking down a 16-year-old female student, then flinging her across the floor before her arrest. The student allegedly refused to leave her desk.

Richland County sheriff's Deputy Ben Fields has been fired.

About 43 percent of all U.S. public schools – including 63 percent of middle and 64 percent of high schools – had such officers on their grounds during the 2013-14 school year, the National Center for Education Statistics noted in May. This includes more than 46,000 full-time and 36,000 part-time officers.

School resource officers, or SROs, supervise lunchrooms, coach sports, promote drug and alcohol awareness and become confidants to teens who might have never thought they'd befriend a police officer. SROs may build relationships at a key time in many young people's lives.

Read the whole story

Blustery, cold, snowy weather in forecast



Snow is falling Oct. 28 at the higher elevations of Lake Tahoe. Photo/National Weather Service

Lake Tahoe's first winter storm of the season is expected to

arrive this weekend.

Winds will be gusting at about 50 mph in valleys and 100 mph along mountain tops ahead of a strong cold front Sunday, according to the National Weather Service in Reno.

Rain and snow showers will move into the region Sunday into Monday, with accumulating snow likely in the Sierra. Snow levels will start between 7,500 and 9,000 feet on Sunday, falling to about 5,000 feet by Monday.

Overnight lows will be in the 20s starting tonight. The high temp for next Monday and Tuesday may not reach 40 degrees.

Hard Rock owners, contractor to resume mediation

Resolution could not be found Oct. 28 between the owners of Lake Tahoe Hard Rock and SMC Contracting, the firm that did the bulk of the $60 million renovation of the old Horizon hotel-casino.

A court hearing in Minden on Wednesday was a continuation of the legal dispute between the two parties. Mediation this summer did not work. Still, the judge sent both sides back to the negotiation table. The next round of mediation is to begin Nov. 16.

At issue is the contractor believes it is owed about $9 million, while Neva One – the company formed by brothers Jon and David Park to be the title owner of the Stateline property – says the cost overruns were not approved.

Since this original lawsuit was filed last spring the Parks

have fired and sued the management company, Warner Hospitality, which had been overseeing the remodel and then the day-to-day operations since it opened Jan. 28.

If a settlement is not reached next month, a court hearing is scheduled for mid-December. Neither side returned phone calls.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report