Pumpkin-pie shortage looming because of rain

By Megan Durisin and Linly Lin, Bloomberg Business

Want a trading tip? Go long canned pumpkin.

That’s the advice from the owner of Libby’s, the largest U.S. producer, after record summer rains damaged this year’s pumpkin crop. Yields in Illinois, the center of American production, are down about 50 percent from 2014, according to Nestle SA, Libby’s parent company.

Libby’s, which ordinarily produces 80 percent of canned pumpkin in the U.S., will this year make enough to bake about 45 million 8-inch pumpkin pies, half of what it originally planned.

Read the whole story

Tips for buying safe Halloween costumes

We would like to encourage everyone buying costumes for Halloween to check the labels and make sure they are made of flame retardant materials.

Materials made of 100 percent polyester are best suited for Halloween costumes. These costume materials may be purchased at most local fabric stores. The use of commercial flame retardant sprays is not recommended.

Avoid Halloween costumes that are loose or baggy to prevent fabric from coming in contact with any open flames.

Children should carry flashlights or use battery operated lights. Jack-o-lanterns that have an open flame device should be placed off the ground so long or full costumes and young trick-or-treaters' hands cannot come in contact with the flames.

The use of masks which obstruct vision should be avoided. Costumes should incorporate reflective tape in their design so children can be easily seen at night.

Trick or treat while it's still light outside, and stay in your neighborhood, visiting only the homes you know.

Finally, always check your children's candy before allowing them to eat any of it.

Have a fun and safe Halloween.

– Sallie Ross-Filgo, South Lake Tahoe Fire Department

Nev. Democrats focus on regaining Assembly majority

By Ray Hagar, Reno Gazette-Journal

Democrats were shocked with the election results in 2014 when they lost the majority in the Nevada Assembly for the first time in nearly two decades.

Now they are developing their strategy to take back the majority and the power that comes with it in the 2016 general

election. Democrats hope to stop the first back-to-back Republican majorities in the lower house since the 1969 and 1971 sessions.

Democrats also hope to regain the majority in the state Senate after the Republicans' 2014 trifecta: Winning the governor's office and majorities in both houses of the Legislature.

Read the whole story

American River murkiness attributed to King Fire

By Gus Thomson, Auburn Journal

The American River in the canyon below Auburn was taking on an unfamiliar shade of mud on Wednesday.

While the north fork was keeping its clear blue hues, the middle fork was running murky – and mixing with the clearer water at the confluence to create a chocolate-brown flow under the Mountain Quarries Railroad Bridge and on to Folsom Lake.

Blame the 2014 King Fire, a Placer County Water Agency official said.

The fire scorched 97,000 acres of mountainous terrain, much of it in the American River and Rubicon River watershed. The water from that area eventually moves into the middle fork American River and down past Auburn.

Read the whole story

TDPUD provides help to Valley Fire utilities

The Truckee Donner Public Utility District joined efforts to help restore power to the Geysers geothermal power plant near Middletown and repair an electric distribution line destroyed by the Valley Fire.

TDPUD responded to an emergency request for help issued by the Northern California Power Agency, which owns a geothermal power plant in the area.

The Valley Fire, started on Sept. 12, swept through Lake, Napa and Sonoma counties, engulfing more than 76,000 acres and destroying nearly 2,000 buildings, leaving many residents homeless in its wake. The fire knocked out power poles, effluent pipeline, steam field pipes, conduits and control circuitry, pump stations, fiber optic lines and more, according to NCPA.

TDPUD has mutual-aid agreements with many utilities.

A TDPUD crew of five employees and equipment, along with numerous other utilities from around the state, aided NCPA in recovery efforts. The Truckee crew – working with other crews from Healdsburg, Palo Alto, Santa Clara, Lodi, Roseville, Redding, and Alameda – helped repair a 21KV distribution power line and rebuilding more than 50 power poles to restore electricity.

SLTFD: Time to test smoke detectors

If a fire broke out tonight while you were sleeping, would you wake up in time to escape? If you have working smoke detectors in your home, the answer is probably yes.

Smoke detectors provide early warning of a fire. Without smoke detectors to awaken you, the smoke could put you into a deeper sleep, and you might never get out.

So keep your smoke detectors working by testing them often and installing new batteries each year. Remember: Test your detectors today – it's sound advice.

– Sallie Ross-Filgo, South Lake Tahoe Fire Department

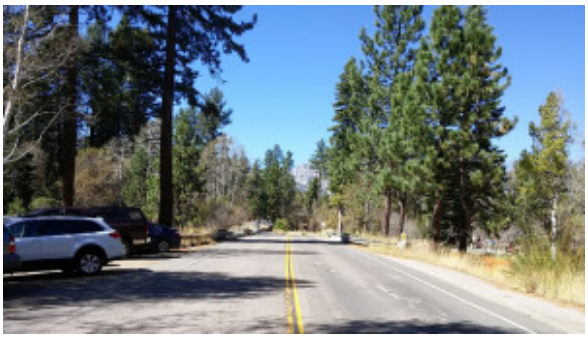
Then and now: Extreme weather in Tahoe

Weather in Tahoe is always a topic of conversation. It doesn't matter if it's a drought or mega-storm, it affects the way of life in the basin.



The Highway 89 bridge and Taylor Creek as viewed this month from the adjacent bicycle-pedestrian crossing. Photo/Bill Kingman

The infrastructure is not built to sustain every possible scenario – like a Godzilla El Nino – which some have forecast for this winter.



Approaching the bridge from Camp Richardson on dry, fall day. Photo/Bill Kingman

While Highway 89 at times around Emerald Bay closes because of avalanche danger, rain has also been an issue on this road near Camp Richardson.



Approaching the bridge from Camp Richardson in October 1964. Water from heavy rain and Taylor Creek washed over the bridge. Three saw-horses block the road. Photo/Bill Kingman

– Bill Kingman

Calif. voters to be automatically registered at DMV

By Juliet Williams, AP

SACRAMENTO – Gov. Jerry Brown has approved legislation to make California the second state in the nation to begin automatically registering eligible voters when they obtain or renew their driver's licenses.

AB1461 by Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez, D-San Diego, aims to boost California's voter rolls by registering visitors to the Department of Motor Vehicles and was among dozens of bills

that Brown announced Saturday he had signed.

It follows Oregon's move earlier this year to adopt the nation's first automatic voter registration law.

The legislation backed by Democratic Secretary of State Alex Padilla calls for data collected by the DMV to be provided to the secretary of state's office, which would verify a resident's legal eligibility to vote before registering them. Drivers would have the option to opt out or cancel their voter registration at any time.

The legislation was among a package of election and voter bills that Brown signed, including AB 44 by Assemblyman Kevin Mullin, D-South San Francisco, which allows the governor to order a state-funded, manual recount of any statewide ballot measure or elected office in which the margin of victory is extremely small.

Padilla praised the signing of the automatic registration bill.

"Citizens should not be required to opt-in to their fundamental right to vote," he said in a statement. "We do not have to opt-in to other rights, such as free speech or due process. The right to vote should be no different."

Lawmakers approved the so-called motor voter law this summer and have held events around the state encouraging Brown to sign it. They say it could add millions of newly registered voters to California's voter rolls, improving a lackluster registration system that has led to some of the lowest participation rates in the country.

Some Republican lawmakers say voters shouldn't be forced to sign up. They warn that automatic registration could lead to voter fraud if people who are not eligible are accidentally registered.

Critics have also argued that merely increasing voter registration will not make Californians more engaged in the political process or interested in voting.

Brown Saturday also announced other bill signings:

- SB707 bans concealed weapons from California schools and universities. It drew renewed attention after a recent massacre at an Oregon community college.
- SB27 gives California the toughest limits in the nation on the use of antibiotics in livestock.

The governor also vetoed nine bills sponsored by fellow Democrats that would have created new tax credits or expanded existing tax credits.

Brown said the state's budget is still facing financial uncertainties, and the tax credits would make balancing the state's budget even more difficult.

Letter: Bijou thankful for successful walk-a-thon



Kindergarten teacher Izzy Evans reacts to getting a bucket of water dumped on her. Photo/Kathy Haven

To the community,

Bijou Community School PTA would like to thank all the people involved who made our walk-a-thon a phenomenal success this year. Bijou students raised over $28,000 with the help of their parents and their friends and our community.

These funds will go to pay for field trips, water bottle refilling stations, playground equipment, after school clubs, student enrichment in and out of the classroom, and classroom supplies. Most amazing though, was that over 150 of the 600 students at Bijou raised $50 or more, and more than three-fourths of the students contributed in some form or fashion.

Bijou PTA would like to extend a special thank you to Thrans for their donation of balloons to our event, and Ed McClain for being a great emcee and disc jockey. Also, a big thank you to Mike Keck for creating the most amazing dump tank to soak our teachers with.

Lastly, Bijou PTA would sincerely like to thank the teachers and our principal, Cindy Martinez, who once again stepped up

to make the best walk-a-thon prize yet. Ms. Martinez and eight teachers were doused with 5 gallons of water each to the extreme joy of 600 children because they raised over $20,000.

Thank you everyone! I am proud to be part of Bijou community school where everyone contributes something to make our school a little bit better each year.

Kathy Haven, Bijou Community School PTA

Calif. bill requires search warrants on electronic data

By Bob Egelko, San Francisco Chronicle

Gov. Jerry Brown signed legislation Thursday that will require police in California to obtain a warrant from a judge before searching any electronic communications, including emails, text messages, GPS data and other location information.

Brown’s approval of SB178 by Sen. Mark Leno, D-San Francisco, followed the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling last year that required officers to get a warrant before searching the contents of cell phones seized from people they arrest.

The new bill, effective in January, goes further by requiring warrants to obtain individuals’ electronic data from online hosts like Google and also covers cell-phone tracking information and data stored on other digital devices such as laptops.

Read the whole story