Nevada eases up on fire restrictions

Fire restrictions on most public lands in Nevada have been lifted.

Campfire permits are still required in the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest.

Nevada came out of this fire season with little acreage burned, especially compared to California which is still burning in some places. Reports are that 42,000 ares were burned in the Silver State from 500 fires this year.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Nev. drought talks could bring legislative showdown

By Sandra Chereb, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – Everyone and every living thing needs water. The challenge in Nevada is how best to prepare and share when Mother Nature turns off the taps.

An unprecedented statewide discussion in late September about drought and water rights in Nevada could signal a looming showdown in the 2017 Legislature over water management.

The three-day drought summit and public workshops held around the state left some people nervous and others hopeful that Nevada can broker water solutions that meet the needs of

urbanites while sustaining rural economies, wildlife and the ecological health of a vast and diverse landscape.

Read the whole story

Opinion: The need for continual training

By Brian Uhler

Like many Americans, law enforcement folks have been deeply moved by the horrific images we have seen in Oregon. A certain feeling of helplessness has become the norm when we look at these events from the prevention perspective. We may ask questions like:

- "Why do people who would do such a thing have access to a gun?"
- "Why didn't people who knew the shooter do something to stop him before people died?"



Brian Uhler

Post-mortem, we dig into the answers for these questions and oftentimes see the breakdowns clearly. Family and friends may have "had an idea something bad would happen," but didn't feel like there was enough reason to say anything, sometimes adding

something like, “I thought he was just blowing-off steam like he does all the time ….” Medical professionals say they couldn’t say anything because of confidentiality requirements and the lack of any clear threat.

Perhaps, some meaningful changes will come from this latest event.

From a local perspective, law enforcement, medical responders, mental health professionals, and school officials have been proactive in providing the highest level of safety possible. We have promoted the concept of “see something – say something” among those who have contact with students and with those providing mental health support. This concept can certainly be expanded to the entire community.

Lake Tahoe Unified School District regularly undergoes lockdown procedures and has supported training for our region’s law enforcement and medical responders. In three such training exercises we practiced responding to and eliminating the threat followed by a quick medical triage and emergency transport process.

In Lake Tahoe, your police department, the FBI, El Dorado County Sheriff’s Department, and California Highway Patrol have all worked together to stay at the cutting edge of capacity. One such example included an FBI led table-top exercise where local agency leaders tested their capacity.

Just a few months ago, we had a “false alarm” shooting event at the Lake Tahoe Community College. During this event, college officials learned of the need to bolster internal control and communication infrastructure. I am pleased to report that the needed system changes are now in-place and undergoing testing to make sure college students can receive information quickly and respond properly.

Unfortunately, we have no choice but to train and prepare for the possibility in our own community. We are thankful our

region’s school and college officials take such matters seriously and have been unwavering in their support to the police and fire department’s need for training.

Brian Uhler is police chief for South Lake Tahoe.

EPA sets stricter standard for ozone

By Amy Harder, Wall Street Journal

WASHINGTON—Environmental regulators significantly lowered a national limit for a smog-causing pollutant Thursday, in an attempted compromise that left some businesses relieved and environmental and health leaders upset the initiative wasn’t stronger.

The Environmental Protection Agency set a limit of 70 parts per billion for ground-level ozone, which is created by emissions released into the air by manufacturing plants, utilities and vehicles, down from the current level of 75 parts per billion. In a draft released in 2014, the agency proposed a standard between 65 and 70 parts per billion.

Still, the move prompted criticism from business executives who didn’t want the EPA to change the limit at all, and from environmental and health groups that said it wasn’t tough enough.

Read the wholes story

Basinwide control burns to begin soon

The Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team, which includes numerous fire and land management agencies in the Lake Tahoe Basin, will begin fall prescribed fire operations as soon as weather conditions are favorable.

Each prescribed fire operation follows a burn plan that considers temperature, humidity, wind, moisture of the vegetation, and conditions for the dispersal of smoke. This information is used to decide when and where to burn.

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

To receive prescribed fire notifications, send an email topa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.

Fish and Wildlife conducting art contest

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is conducting an art contest to select the design for the state's 2015-16 upland game bird stamp. This year's stamp will feature the ring-necked pheasant.

The contest is open to all U.S. residents 18 years and over.

Entries will be accepted through Dec. 30. Artwork must include at least one ring-necked pheasant, preferably in a habitat or setting representative of California. Entries will be judged on originality, artistic composition, anatomical accuracy and suitability for reproduction as a stamp and a print.

The contest will be judged by a panel of experts in the fields of ornithology, conservation, art and printing. The winning artist will be selected during a public judging event, with the date and location to be announced later.

For contest information and entry forms, go **online**.

‘Foreigners in Their Own Land’ to be shown in SLT

“Foreigners in Their Own Land” will be show at Lake Tahoe Community College on Oct. 12 at 7pm.

Lake Tahoe Historical Society is bringing the film to South Lake Tahoe.

It will be shown at 7pm in the board room. It is free.

Albert Ponce, LTCC professor of history, political science, and ethnic studies, will lead a discussion about the film.

Tax increases likely in Douglas County's future



Douglas County wants to increase revenues so it can improve infrastructure. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

Douglas County commissioners will be faced with three tax related issues at a special meeting next week.

Sales and excise fuel taxes are likely to increase as well as the fee various utility companies pay. The county believes these tax increases will allow it to pursue state and federal dollars for projects – namely transportation – that require matching funds.

"As surrounding communities such as Carson City invest in their future, we need to plan for Douglas County's future as well. It is imperative we ensure the safety of our residents for generations to come, while maintaining a financially stable, highly livable community for all of us to enjoy," Jim Nichols, county manager, said in regards to why the hikes are

necessary.

Commissioners can make the decision Oct. 5 without going to the voters. This is because Nevada statutes allow county commissioners to impose some of these taxes. The sales tax is proposed to go from 7.1 percent to 7.35 percent. That rate would exist indefinitely or until commissioners vote for a different percentage.



Douglas County Manager Jim Nichols believes increased taxes will keep the county solvent.

Projections are this will bring in $1.5 million to county coffers. The additional sales tax revenue would be earmarked for street and highway construction, and maintenance, as well as pedestrian amenities that would include trails.

“The proposed new sales tax will be treated similar to our PALS tax, it is a separate tax component in our property tax rate. What the county receives will be based on the actual collections in the county. The other component of the sales taxes we receive, and the biggest, is consolidated at the state level and then distributed. Douglas County is called a receiving county, which means we receive more from the state

than we contribute of the consolidated funds," Nichols explained.

Sales tax represents about 21 percent of this year's general fund revenues.

Douglas County voters in 2018 will be asked to approve an additional one-half percent sales tax increase.

"The voters are being asked to consider a 0.5 percent increase to aid in addressing some of the connectivity projects identified for implementation. This tax increase would be in lieu of the 2.5 percent utility operator fee increase," Nichols told *Lake Tahoe News*. Per Nevada statutes this particular tax has to go to voters.

It's estimated to bring in $3 million per year. Some of that money could go toward public transit, whereas the first sales tax increase cannot be used for that per state law.

The 2.5 percent fee on utility operators is also on Monday's agenda. The surcharge will be 0.5 percent on natural gas, 2.5 percent on electricity and 2.5 percent on telecommunications. These utility operators are already paying a 2.5 percent tax to the county.

"It is important to note that this fee increase would only go into effect if the proposed 0.5 percent sales tax is not approved by the voters (in 2018). If the utility operator fee increase is enacted, it could be used to leverage additional funds for regional transit and various transportation construction projects," Nichols said. The county expects the utility fee to generate $1.6 million per year.

The utility fee does not alter the franchise agreements the county has with the various entities.

Currently, the county has 4 cents per gallon excise tax on fuel that was implemented by commissioners in 2001. What is on

next week’s agenda is an additional 5 cents gas tax. The projected $900,000 it would generate is designated for road maintenance and to leverage funds for transportation construction projects.

While the state of Nevada prides itself on being tax friendly, counties are being faced with less revenue flowing from Carson City to their coffers and therefore need a way to pay the bills.

“Douglas County has an opportunity to address many of the transportation issues in the county, some of which are safety hazards to our children, bicyclists, pedestrians and drivers. In addition we can implement many of the projects identified in our Master Plan, Transportation Plan, the Valley Vision, South Shore Vision and other related documents. We can do this by leveraging grant funds if we have a match to make us competitive,” Nichols said. “We can also achieve full funding for regional road maintenance. We would be joining many of our surrounding communities that already have these and higher taxes in place and yet they are still considered tax friendly.”

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Notes:

· The meeting is Oct. 5 at 1pm at the Douglas County Historic Courthouse, 1616 8th St., Minden.

Letter: Appreciation for

successful run

To the community,

Hundreds of students, parents, families and community members participated and thoroughly enjoyed the inaugural Run for the Gold 1K/2K/5K race, which provided the opportunity for first- to eighth-grade students to experience a professionally time chipped race on Sept. 26. The event was an enormous success and the Boys and Girls Club Western Slope will greatly benefit from the generosity of donors and sponsors.

Sponsors included Wells Fargo Bank, Jim & Maureen Carter, El Dorado Community Health Centers, Girard & Edwards, Palos Verdes Properties, Serrano Associates, American Recovery Services; PK Willis Company, Sam Smith, Tom & Andrea Howard, Cold Springs Dental, Carnahan Electric Ltd, James Whipple, Michael & Nannette Lubinski, Placer Title Company and Riebes Auto Parts.

Union Mine High School welcomed the event, while their facility and maintenance staff were instrumental to the event’s success. Garden Valley Fire Department provided medical and safety support. Sundance Stitch, Arnolds for Awards and Under the Sun Events went above and beyond our vendor requests. In addition, many participating parents and families gave generously to the cause.

Finally, we would like to thank the dozens of volunteers who donated their Saturday and brought this concept to life. This event would not have happened without your selfless support.

We look forward to making this race an annual community celebration.

Dina Gentry, El Dorado County Office of Education communications director

Why the U.S. is No. 1 in mass shootings

By Melissa Healy, Los Angeles Times

The United States is, by a long shot, the global leader in mass shootings, claiming just 5 percent of the global population but an outsized share — 31 percent — of the world's mass shooters since 1966, a new study finds.

The Philippines, Russia, Yemen and France — all countries that can claim a substantial share of the 291 documented mass shootings between 1966 and 2012 — collectively didn't even come close to the United States.

And what makes the United States such a fertile incubator for mass shooters? A comprehensive analysis of the perpetrators, their motives and the national contexts for their actions suggests that several factors have conspired to create in the United States a potent medium for fostering large-scale murder.

Those factors include a chronic and widespread gap between Americans' expectations for themselves and their actual achievement, Americans' adulation of fame, and the extent of gun ownership in the United States.

Read the whole story