Employers: More overtime could have downsides

By Yuki Noguchi, KQED-TV

The Labor Department is considering changing rules that define who qualifies for overtime pay and who does not, and businesses say it would have far-reaching consequences that may not be good for workers.

Currently, the rules say you have to make less than $23,660 a year to be eligible for overtime, but the Labor Department's proposal would more than double that required salary level to $50,440. That would mean an estimated 6 million more people would be eligible for overtime pay.

Worker advocates say the current rules open up millions of workers to abuse. Many earn relatively low salaries but are asked to work many extra hours without pay because they're exempt from overtime rules, says Vicki Shabo, vice president of the National Partnership for Women and Families. She says some research shows women, who would make up about 3.2 million of those workers, would especially benefit.

Read the whole story

Homicide suspected in West Slope fire deaths

By Sharon Bernstein, Reuters

Three bodies have been found in a burned West Slope vacation

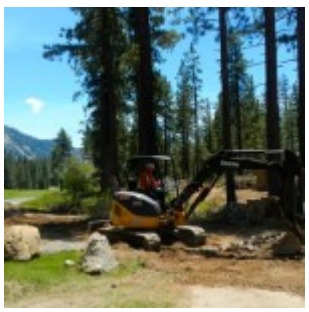
cabin owned by a family missing for 10 days, and the incident, initially thought to have been caused by wildfire, is being investigated as a homicide and arson, authorities said on Thursday.

The bodies have not been identified, but Adam Buchanan, who owns the cabin, was reported missing the same day the fire broke out, along with Molly McAfee and their 8-year-old son, Gavin, the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department said.

Firefighters were initially called to fight what was believed to be a wildfire near the family's cabin in Garden Valley on Sept. 13, El Dorado County Sheriff's Department spokesman Sergeant Todd Hammitt said on Thursday. They soon learned that the fire started at the residence, and realized it had been intentionally set, Hammitt said.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



· Edgewood Tahoe Resort officially breaks ground Oct. 1 at 11am in Stateline.

· High Fives Foundation raised $10,225 at the 7th annual Bocce Tournament at Truckee River Winery. The money goes toward supporting the dreams of mountain action sports athletes with injury prevention awareness, while also

providing resources and inspiration to those who have suffered life-altering injuries.

· Students in Douglas, Carson City, Clark, Washoe, Lyon and other counties are expected to participate in the International Walk to School Day on Oct. 7.

· The Douglas County Public Library introduces First Saturday of the Month Family Movies starting Oct. 3 with "ParaNorman" at 2pm in the library meeting room in Minden. Movie and popcorn are free.

Letter: A Brush With Kindness says thank you

To the community,

Habitat for Humanity, A Brush With Kindness in South Lake Tahoe, would like to thank the following companies who donated time and materials to our 2015 projects:

• Environmental Inspection and Construction, Inc.
• Lake Tahoe Glass
• Lowe's Home Improvement (they truly saved the day)
• Meeks Lumber & Hardware in Meyers
• South Tahoe Public Utility District
• Valspar Paint

Thanks to their support, A Brush With Kindness was able to provide qualified low-income homeowners in our community with much needed maintenance and repairs.

A Brush With Kindness in South Lake Tahoe provides exterior home improvements to qualified homeowners who cannot complete

the work themselves. Volunteer teams work to improve the condition of homes by completing necessary painting, yard work and minor exterior repairs. We are currently accepting applications for the 2016 summer projects. Interested homeowners that could meet income criteria can contact Norine Hegy at 530.544.2620 for more information and an application packet.

Pam Barrett, A Brush With Kindness

Not guilty plea in bear killing case

Gilbert Wetenkamp of South Lake Tahoe pleaded not guilty this morning to one misdemeanor count of unlawful taking of an animal.

He is accused of shooting a black bear to death on July 9.

The 2½-year-old bear was shot in the backside with buckshot from a shotgun. It was sprawled on its back at the base of a tree off Pioneer Trail near Minniconjou Drive in the unincorporated area of South Lake Tahoe.

On Sept. 25 the judge granted Wetenkamp representation by a public defender. His next court date is set for Oct. 23.

The maximum penalty if convicted is one year in jail and a $1,000 fine.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Caesars debt talks said to hit impasse

By Steven Church, BloombergBusiness

Caesars Entertainment Corp. is at a $2 billion impasse with creditors it hopes will help keep it from sliding into bankruptcy alongside its operating unit, two people familiar with the negotiations said.

The casino company and a committee of junior bondholders haven’t had substantive talks since last month, said the people, who requested anonymity because the negotiations are private. The bondholders are asking for about $2 billion more than Caesars has offered, according to a report by Bloomberg Intelligence analysts Philip Brendel and Julia Winters.

Caesars Entertainment is the parent company of Harrah’ Lake Tahoe and Harveys.

Read the whole story

Aquatic pesticides may be used in Lake Tahoe



Chemicals may be one way to rid Lake Tahoe of milfoil. Photo/LTN file

The federal government has OK'd the potential use of aquatic pesticides at Lake Tahoe.

The decision affects the entire Lahontan Regional Water Board jurisdiction, which is a large swath of California running from the north to south.

The Lahontan board of directors in December 2011 had sought the amendment to the Basin Plan so these chemicals could be used in isolated instances. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's decision does not automatically give the green light to any and all applications, but instead the ruling approved Lahontan's processes. The regional board will approve any use on a case-by-case situation.

"The amendment included specific criteria and requirements for individuals to meet to be considered for an exemption," Lauri Kemper, Lahontan assistant executive officer, told *Lake Tahoe News.*

Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association wants to apply chemicals in the lagoons to rid the waterways of invasive weeds. Without this month's EPA decision, those plans could never have happened. The South Lake Tahoe homeowners group will still have to apply for a permit with Lahontan.

Exemptions are also likely to be granted to vector control to rid areas of mosquitoes. While these applications already occur, they have historically violated Lahontan's rules.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

'Crossing' to bridge retail with outdoor fun



The Crossing at Tahoe Valley is designed to be a destination at the Y in South Lake Tahoe.

By Kathryn Reed

By this time next year the outdated Factory Stores at the Y in South Lake Tahoe is expected to have been converted into the modern Crossing at Tahoe Valley.

Sutter Capital Group based in Sacramento in January expected to infuse $1 million into the parcel at the corner of highways 50 and 89. Now the project is a multi-million dollar undertaking, though an exact dollar figure is not being

disclosed.

“We need to reposition the center for a more active lifestyle,” Burke Fathy, general manager of the ownership group, told *Lake Tahoe News.*

It will still be a retail center – with the option for current tenants to stay – with the addition of two restaurants and a 10,000-square-foot storefront that will be built to suit whoever moves in. The latter will be at the end of the building where Mikasa was, opposite where Big 5 is.

This additional commercial floor area and coverage will come from taking out about 4,000 square feet where the two wings meet.



This is a proposed new building that will be built to the tenant’s specifications.

The goal is to get a mix of tenants. With less than half the center now rented, there is plenty of room for other businesses.

A Sacramento general contractor has been hired. Fathy said local subcontractors would be part of the mix. The permitting process will take place this fall-winter, with ground anticipated to be broken starting in May.

The area being opened up is designed to welcome people who are on the path behind the center, be it on foot or bike. A

gathering spot will be developed with seating and fire pits that will be shared by the eateries. Fathy has met with some local establishments, but no decision has been made as to what dining entities will move in.

This area will also tie into the greenway the city is creating through the Tahoe Valley Area Plan that was adopted earlier this year.

(It was at the city's urging the owners incorporate Tahoe Valley into the center's name, while "crossing" came from the intersection of the two highways.)

At the Sept. 17 California Tahoe Conservancy board meeting there was talk of connecting 3.5 acres belonging to the state to this project. The land sits between Tahoe Valley Pharmacy and the Factory Stores.

CTC has been talking to the city, and the city to Sutter Capital Group.

"We are confident we can come up with a design that combines open space with other amenities," CTC Executive Director Patrick Wright told his board. "It is more preferable than vacant land."

Fathy at first said he would not comment on the CTC parcel, then added, "It is not happening at this time. We are just concerned with what we've got."

The entire façade will be overhauled so it is eye-catching, Fathy said. This will be done by using wood, Corten (rusted steel) and stone. The flow of the center will be improved.

"It will be a significant rebirth of the center," he said. "We want it to be a community entity."

Opinion: The eternal birthday present



Water skiing became a summer ritual at age 6.

By Kathryn Reed

My parents gave me a gift at an early age that I continue to enjoy today – the love of sport.

I don't know if they knew they were doing that at the time, but I thank them for it. They are why I ski (we learned together – they were 40, I was 10), they are why I play tennis (mom enrolled me in a community program at about 10), they are why I love the water (I was called a fish as a kid), and they are why I embrace the outdoors (so many family camping trips).

My earliest memories of sports center around the water – swimming and skiing. At 4 I was a fairly proficient swimmer. I went on to compete in AAU swimming, making it to Far West Championships on a relay team. At 6 I was on water skis. Not long thereafter I asked if I could try a slalom ski. Mom said

not until I was good at going over the wake on both sides. I demonstrated that that day. Mom acquiesced. I learned to beach start like she did. However, I never was able to drop back into the water without getting my hair wet as she would do.



One year of tennis at San Francisco State University.

I have such wonderful memories of ski trips to Lake Tahoe while growing up in the Bay Area. There were three families who annually stayed at a house in Squaw Valley – right on the slopes. (No wonder I think vacation home rentals are normal.) And so many weekends were also spent at Northstar – pre-village and overdevelopment.

Then there was tennis. Mrs. Lackey toughened me up. She taught us to aim for our opponent and if we felt sick, vomit off the court, and then keep playing. I'm not saying those are the best things to learn, but they've stuck with me. It might be why a year or two ago I continued playing in a USTA match despite a groin pull – quitting didn't cross my mind even though losing was inevitable. It might be why in college when I tweaked my Achilles' I was OK with the trainer taping it and still playing. All the injury did was get me out of running up the hill every practice. Not playing wasn't an option I ever considered.



Carolyn Wright, Kae Reed, Donna Rockwood at World Team Tennis in Citrus Heights in July.

Mom had me playing in junior leagues, which led to four years of high school varsity tennis and a year in college. I've played competitively on and off as an adult; currently I'm on two USTA (United States Tennis Association) teams out of Zephyr Cove Tennis Club.

As a kid, these experiences were about family, friends, being outdoors, and just playing. It's the same today – having fun with friends on the court, the slopes and trails.

Who knows if I would have embraced these activities if it weren't for my parents.



Angelique Kerber, eventual winner of the Bank of the West tournament at Stanford in August, lunges for a forehand. This is a tournament the reporter first went to years ago with her parents. Photo/Carolyn E. Wright/Copyright

Today, as I mark the half century milestone, I can't thank my parents enough for introducing me to so many sports – some of which I continue to participate in, some that I was never going to excel at (gymnastics), and others that I tend to spectate more than play (baseball). All of them, though, hold a special memory.

And I thank them for taking me to see professional sports – mostly tennis, a little baseball and football, the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles; as well as watching them on TV.

All of it fueled my desire to be an athlete and a sports fan.

What a present – the lifelong gift of sport.

TRPA recognizes projects helping environment

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency this week announced and recognized award recipients for its annual Best in the Basin program.

This is the 25th year for the Best in the Basin program. TRPA created the program to recognize and showcase projects that demonstrate exceptional planning, design, and compatibility with Lake Tahoe's environment and communities.

Winners are:

Environmental Improvement Program/Public Project Category:

· **Bijou Erosion Control Project:** South Lake Tahoe and multiple partner agencies created this area-wide stormwater system to capture, treat, and infiltrate urban runoff from the 42-acre Bijou Commercial Core.

· **Harrison Avenue Streetscape Improvement Project:** South Lake Tahoe and private property owners completed this comprehensive project to overhaul Harrison and Riverside avenues with improved roadways, sidewalks, bike trails, parking, landscaping, and street lighting.

· **Highway 50 Water Quality Improvement Project:** Caltrans upgraded nearly two miles of highway between Lake Tahoe Airport and the Y intersection in South Lake Tahoe.

· **Lake Tahoe Boulevard Enhancement Project**: El Dorado County and partner agencies built 1.7-miles of Class 1 bike path along the west side of Lake Tahoe Boulevard from Viking Road to Sawmill Road.

· **Highway 207/Kingsbury Grade Reconstruction Project:** Nevada Department of Transportation overhauled this highway

corridor to reduce erosion, improve water quality, and install wider road shoulders for bicyclists.

Water Quality Improvement Category:

· **Kingswood 500 Tank/120 Booster Pump Demolition and Griff Creek Restoration Project:** North Tahoe Public Utility District removed an aging 500,000 gallon water tank, booster pump station, and access road from a stream environment zone on Griff Creek and restored the floodplain and native vegetation.

· **Smith BMP Retrofit Project:** Basile management practice and property owner James Smith improved a compacted dirt driveway and parking area at this lakefront home in Tahoma.

Building and General Construction Category:

· **SUP Tahoe – South Shore Bikes Project:** David Goldman Environmental Architecture and property owners Jessica Howitt and Brandon Miller remodeled a blighted and abandoned Chinese restaurant on Highway 89 into an attractive new home for this recreation business and its bike and stand up paddleboard shops.

Defensible Space/Forest Health Category:

· **Incline Pines Homeowners Association Defensible Space Project:** Homeowners in this Incline Village neighborhood partnered with Rockwood Tree Service and Defensible Space Specialists and the North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District to create defensible space through the entire neighborhood.

Sustainability/Community Benefit Category

· **Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation Community House Project:** Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation, Placer County, and many community partners overhauled a blighted and abandoned hotel in Kings Beach into a Community House for

social services previously scattered around the North Shore.