

Tahoe Bike Challenge begins with 2 organized rides

The Tahoe Bike Challenge kick-off – Ready, Set, Pedal – is June 1 from 4-6pm.

The party is at Pearl Izumi at the Y. There will be two rides. The 5-mile route partially goes through the Tahoe Keys and over to the bike trail on Eloise Avenue. The 10-miler is along Lake Tahoe Boulevard, up Ski Run Boulevard, down Pioneer Trail, then Al Tahoe Boulevard back to Lake Tahoe Boulevard.

Rides will begin and end at Pearl Izumi beginning at 4:30pm. Bike swag will be given to all attendees.

NV Energy hasn't paid IRS since 2000

By Kyle Roerink, Las Vegas Sun

NV Energy collected millions to pay federal income taxes since 2000 but hasn't sent the money to the Internal Revenue Service, according to documents filed by the company in the Nevada Public Utilities Commission.

The utility collected at least \$126 million worth of income tax payments from companies in that time. By law, NV Energy can hold the tax contributions for extended periods of time, but that practice has drawn questions about what the utility does with the funds and whether they benefit ratepayers. NV Energy says holding the money helps reduce rates, but critics contend that the utility does not clearly show how those costs

keep power bills from increasing.

The \$126 million comes from developers who pay the utility for extending the power grid to their housing developments, gaming properties or other projects requiring electricity. The utility charges those customers for the cost of the job and then also collects for taxes that the IRS levies for earnings on private projects.

Read the whole story

Nevada OKs paying for private school

By Trevon Milliard, Reno Gazette-Journal

Nevada parents will almost certainly have an unprecedented choice starting next school year, following the Legislature's final approval of Senate Bill 302 on Friday.

The choice: Parents can either keep their children in public school or pull them out and the state will hand them about \$5,000 per child to attend the private school of their choosing – including religious institutions – and pay for tutoring.

They could even opt for homeschooling.

Read the whole story

State allocates money for Truckee, Placerville projects

Truckee and Placerville are the beneficiaries of some of the nearly \$223 million the California Transportation Commission has allocated to 108 transportation projects.

Thirty-seven biking and pedestrian projects throughout the state will receive nearly \$10.3 million in allocations from the Active Transportation Program.

Projects include \$1.5 million for Truckee to add about 2,203 feet of pedestrian and bike trail, and a trailhead and parking at the Tahoe Donner subdivision for the Trout Creek Trail Phase 2 project.

The newly allocated funding also includes \$167.2 million from the State Highway Operation and Protection Program for 41 projects that will maintain and preserve the investment in the state highway system and its supporting infrastructure. These capital improvements consist of projects covering maintenance, pavement repair and rehabilitation, safety improvements and upgrades to bridges throughout the state.

The allocations also include \$2.2 million from Proposition 1B, a transportation bond approved by voters in 2006.

Among the projects is \$950,000 for construction of curb ramps and sidewalks and to add signal push buttons to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act standards at the intersection of Spring Street and Highway 50 in Placerville.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Target-date funds proving to be profitable

By Ben Steverman, Bloomberg Business

For a decade, a new kind of mutual fund has been taking over Americans' retirement portfolios.

The target-date fund is designed for people with no knowledge of investing. You pick the fund closest to the year you expect to retire—the Vanguard Target Retirement 2030, for example – and the fund does the rest. Containing a variety of stock and bond funds, the all-in-one funds gradually and automatically get less risky as retirement approaches.

There's now evidence that target-date funds may be working. They're giving investors solid returns, data from research firm Morningstar show. Just as importantly, they're boosting those returns by protecting investors from their worst instincts.

Read the whole story

Then and now: May brings mudslides, drought



Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval standing in what should be three feet of water, now dry Washoe Lake. Photo/Anne Knowles

May of 2015 and May of 1983 compare as total opposites.

In 2015, we're experiencing a record drought, Washoe Lake has dried up, and thousands of wells in California have gone dry.

By contrast, in 1983 we had four rain-prompted slides including massive mud hitting Washoe Lake and Squaw Valley. There was much flooding in the Carson Valley, with closed roads and submerged houses. Highway 395 was closed by pavement being completely washed out along the Walker River, Highway 50 was closed near Glenbrook, and South Lake Tahoe was almost totally isolated.

I videotaped Tad Dunbar's evening news then. KOL0-TV 8 has graciously posted my 1983 recording here.

— *Bill Kingman*

Turf buyback sprouts endless possibilities

Publisher's note: *This is one in a random series of stories about what it's like to go through the South Tahoe Public Utility District turf buyback program.*

By Kathryn Reed

I'm exhausted and overwhelmed, and I haven't turned over one blade of grass. It's going to be a long summer, or two.

My front yard – the only place where there is grass – has never been much to look at. It became less functional years ago when a tree removal company parked a crane on it. It made croquet balls hop instead of roll. Then there was the summer I spread fertilizer, but didn't water it immediately.

Why would I want to keep watering a lawn I didn't like?

And with South Tahoe Public Utility District installing a water meter last summer, how much I pay to water that grass is about to change. Something had to be done.

I got myself on the waiting list for the turf buyback program last year and this year I am part of the program.



Donielle Morse, left,
and Lannette Rangel
with South Tahoe PUD
take turf measurements.
Photos/Kathryn Reed

Last week Donielle Morse and Lannette Rangel with STPUD came out to measure the turf – 804-square-feet; and have me sign a contract – I must keep the new stuff in for five years, plant native or low water consuming plants over 35 percent of the area, and use a better, low water use irrigation system. They told me other particulars to ensure I will qualify for the \$1,206 rebate check.

The buyback program is open to all South Tahoe PUD water customers. The most anyone will get is \$3,000. The equation is \$1.50 per square foot.

They took pictures and will do the same when I call for the final inspection.

I'm supposed to keep a list of all the plants I use, create a sketch of where things go and have stats about the irrigation system. (Hand watering is also an option.) I have a sprinkler system so it seems logical to convert it.

I ask about transplanting things from the back to the front.

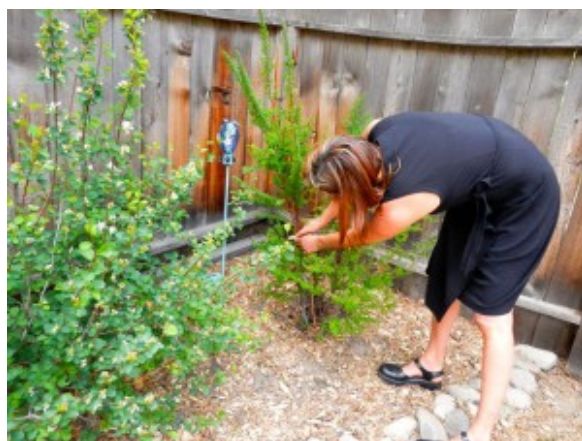
That's OK, but they suggest I ask the TRCD about how well specific vegetation does when moved.

That afternoon Jennifer Cressy with the Tahoe Resource Conservation District came out. The free consultation is part of the program. She gives me ideas about how to relocate some of the established plants I have and says others aren't transplantable.

"Talk nice to it the whole time," she says of the bushes I'm eyeing to move. She also says to make sure my shovel is sharpened. (I didn't bother to tell her I've never thought about sharpening a shovel before.)

She peruses the other things growing in the back and points out how the roses would be easy to transplant. Hmmm. I hadn't thought about that and suddenly see potential.

I already knew all sides of the house were going to be disturbed in this remake. It might get messier and more complicated, though, than I anticipated. It's a good thing I have two seasons to get the turf out and have the area revegetated.



Jennifer Cressy with Tahoe Resource Conservation District shows where to thin a bush before replanting it.

“One of the easier techniques is composting the lawn in place if you are doing it yourself,” Cressy tells me.

Cressy introduced me to the term sheet mulching. I have since read more about it. It seems like an easier alternative than what I thought I was going to have to do, which was haul away all of my grass. Some of the literature even says I won’t have to take all the grass out, but instead I could kill it by blocking out the sun.

With a sod cutter I’d need to be wary of tree roots.

Cressy offers simple tips – like when ordering soil amendment, get extra for future projects; have any deliveries be dumped onto a tarp so it’s easier to scoop it up at the end; plant shallow rooted vegetation near trees because the trees absorb so much water; pay attention to where snow is shoveled or dumped by the city so flexible bushes go there.

When it comes to what to plant that is determined on a site-by-site case. I’m on an extremely high water table so that will make a difference in what I can plant compared to someone who is on a slope.

“Climate and native appropriate plants” are what we all should be shopping for.

Cressy throws out the idea of a raised vegetable bed near the door. She adds that edibles and plants that smell good should be near the walkways.

I’m on information overload. But she gets me thinking. Next step – put a design onto paper.

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Notes:

- Tahoe Resource Conservation District has a wealth of landscaping information online – not just for those taking out

turf.

- More information about South Tahoe PUD's turf buyback program is online. The website also has information about the current water restrictions.
- The Evans' Family Garden in the Angora burn area has examples of appropriate vegetation for the Lake Tahoe Basin.
- Here is a list of landscaping workshops for the do-it-yourself gardeners, landscapers and landscape managers.

Letter: El Dorado County seniors deserve better

Publisher's note: This letter was sent to the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors in advance of the June 1 budget hearing. The author is the former director of the county Human Services Department, worked for the county for 30 years and helped build all of the senior programs.

Dear members of the board:

Regarding Monday's budget discussion, I know you have much to consider. So, briefly:

If you follow all of the staff budget recommendations regarding Community Services Senior Programs, the county will effectively begin disassembling a vital senior continuum of care that took more than 40 years to build.

When Community Services stood as a separate department, its percentage of administrative costs ran about half what currently is being charged for administration by the Health and Human Services Agency. In other words, there are certainly better ways of doing business that would save county resources and save services for seniors.

Note that, while the recommended budget requests an appropriation of \$3.9 million for Health and Human Services Agency Administration, the actual amount proposed to be spent on administration appears to exceed \$8.1 million. A significant amount of what is being spent is being drawn out of Community Services.

Thousands of our county's seniors are depending on your continued support, as are their families, hundreds of volunteers and a very dedicated, hard working, capable, modestly-paid direct service staff who embody what public service should be about. The challenges faced by elders and their families are substantial and the services are critical to their well-being.

If you remember Moni Gilmore, please give seniors the support she would have asked from you. If you never met her, ask someone who knew her.

Thank you. I'll be glad to meet with you on any of the above points.

John Litwinovich, former EDC employee

Study: Preschoolers more likely to sit around than run

By KJ Dell'Antonia, New York Times

Parents feel as if their young children are constantly in motion. But research suggests that children in preschool have few opportunities for active play and are often sedentary.

To learn more about how preschoolers spend their day, University of Washington researchers monitored the activities of 98 children attending 10 preschools in Seattle.

The scientists spent an average of seven hours a day for at least four days at each school. They tracked the amount of time children were given for active play, and students were equipped with accelerometers – wearable devices that measure movement – as a way to gauge the children's level of physical activity during play time.

[Read the whole story](#)

UNR earthquake guru analyzes 'San Andreas'

By Mike Wolterbeek

The latest disaster movie, "San Andreas", has drawn considerable attention, especially when coupled with the real-life earthquake disaster that struck Nepal April 25 and the magnitude 4.8 gentle-reminder earthquake 100 miles north of Las Vegas that rattled homes and highways throughout the

valley on May 22.

“As a couple of our graduate students can attest, after recently riding out the magnitude 7.3 earthquake ‘aftershock’ in Katmandu, even with their poor building standards, destruction in Nepal looked nothing like that seen in San Andreas,” Graham Kent, director of UNR’s Nevada Seismological Laboratory, said. “Predictably, for a disaster movie, ‘San Andreas’ exaggerates for the audience which, as a seismologist, can be a good thing, as it wakes people up to the real-life dangers facing those along fault lines.”



Graham Kent

“San Andreas” doesn’t disappoint. With back-to-back disasters, starting in Nevada, the earthquake works its way from Southern Nevada’s Hoover Dam to Los Angeles then onto San Francisco.

Hollywood has decided to go “wall-to-wall” and depict a rupture of the entire San Andreas fault, which extends from near the Mexican border to almost Oregon. Kent notes that in reality this has not been seen before, and although nothing is ruled impossible, this is a highly unlikely scenario given the past records of both historic and paleo-earthquakes. And, based on this history, the magnitude would be closer to magnitude 8.3, not magnitude 9.6.

“Although criticism of ‘San Andreas’ from scientific circles is a certainty, as state seismologist for Nevada, with responsibility for monitoring Nevada and parts of Eastern California, I welcome this movie and hope it marks the beginning of a serious conversation regarding the real

consequences of a large earthquake in modern America,” Kent said. “Whatever the scientific flaws of ‘San Andreas’, and they are plenty, the consequences of a large urban earthquake with up to billions of dollars of damage and thousands of deaths remain unnerving.”

Of course, Hollywood paints a bigger-than-life picture, and plays with the truth in order to entertain.

“Nevertheless, the action scenes kept us riveted, my wife was on the edge of her seat,” Kent said. “It was a great movie.”

Kent has separated fact from fiction by outlining five truths about the depictions in San Andreas:

The Trigger: Can a large earthquake in Nevada trigger the San Andreas fault or knock down Hoover Dam like in the movie? Western Nevada and Eastern California occupy the Walker Lane that has some fault lines that are capable of up to about magnitude 7.5 quakes (just not near Hoover Dam). Larger Nevada earthquakes can trigger other regional earthquakes as happened, in reverse, in 1992 when the magnitude 7.3 Landers quake in eastern California likely triggered the magnitude 5.7 Little Skull Mountain earthquake north of Las Vegas about a day later. But the San Andreas Fault? Not likely.

The Tsunami: Will a towering earthquake-generated tsunami inundate California? Most of the San Andreas fault is landlocked and when it heads offshore, it occupies shallow waters. In the 1906 earthquake a less than a half-meter wave was generated. Strong shaking could trigger landslides offshore that could spawn a tsunami, which appears to have happened after an 1812 earthquake near Santa Barbara, which resulted in a tsunami wave several meters in height. In either case, not a towering mega-tsunami that inundates coastlines and upends a container ship into a bridge.

The Crevasse: Most large earthquakes with ground rupture have associated tension cracks that can, at times, get large enough

to place an arm into, a far cry from the chasm seen in “San Andreas”. The San Andreas fault will not swallow up cars, people or buildings.

East Coast Shakeup: Will the East Coast feel a West Coast earthquake as the movie ‘San Andreas’ portrays? The East Coast gets to sit out this event in terms of ground shaking from a large West Coast earthquake. But the “bill” from the next major San Andreas quake will shake up politicians as death tolls rise and damages estimated at \$200 billion or more from a real major earthquake begin to roll in.

Nothing Left Standing: Will California’s skyscrapers collapse? Ian Buckle, a civil engineering professor in the university’s College of Engineering, shakes large structures for a living with huge shake tables in the world renowned Earthquake Engineering Laboratory. “The tall modern buildings, like the 50-story buildings built of steel, should do quite well,” Buckle said. “They will give a scary ride, they’ll move a lot but they should not collapse.”

Here’s a prediction from Kent: most fatalities, injuries and damage with future U.S. earthquakes will be focused on unreinforced masonry (URMs) buildings and soft-story structures. A far cry from scenes in the movie where cities are leveled.

“As a seismologist and director of the Nevada Seismological Laboratory, and a fan of really good movies, my hope is Dwayne Johnson, the actor known as ‘The Rock’ delivers a good blockbuster hit that does not resemble Hollywood’s 2003 science fiction flop ‘The Core’ in any way, shape or form,” Kent said. “After watching the movie, I’d say it has great potential, but as a seismologist, I try to stay away from most predictions.”

While the movie stretches the truth to nearly the breaking point, it serves a purpose for seismologists wanting to

educate the public about the earthquake potential in their communities and how to prepare and respond in an earthquake.

“It was good to see the message of ‘drop, cover and hold-on,’ which we’ve been promoting for several years through the Great Shakeout, presented several times,” Kent said.

The Great ShakeOut is a national public earthquake drill that provides preparedness information and an opportunity to participate in the world’s largest earthquake drill. Kent spearheads the ShakeOut exercise in Nevada through the Great Nevada ShakeOut.

“We make a lot of headway in educating and preparing millions of people with the Great ShakeOut, but a movie like this can really help build awareness to earthquake hazards,” Kent said.

Mike Wolterbeek works for UNR.