

Covered California to cap price on drugs

By April Dembosky, NPR

In recent years, expensive specialty medicines used to treat cancer and chronic illnesses have forced some very ill Americans to choose between getting proper treatment and paying their rent.

To ease the financial burden, the California agency that governs the state's Obamacare plans issued landmark rules Thursday that will put a lid on the amount anyone enrolled in one of those plans can be charged each month for high-end medicine.

The agency says its rules, set to take effect in 2016, "strike a balance between ensuring Covered California consumers can afford the medication they need to treat chronic and life-threatening conditions while keeping premiums affordable for all."

Read the whole story

Author to talk about characters of the Comstock

John Mackay and William Sharon were the wealthiest of the men to emerge from Nevada's Comstock Lode. They were also the most influential.

Mackay, who rose from poverty, was the hero of Virginia City,

respected by its miners and mine owners, idolized by its children. Sharon, the brains behind the “Bank Crowd,” was generally perceived as a villain: when Sharon ran for the U.S. Senate, Nevada’s leading newspaper, the *Territorial Enterprise*, characterized him as a “hyena.”

Michael Makley will talk about how these two Comstock kings battled each other, amassed their fortunes, and how they used their wealth on May 30 at 10am as part of the Ferris Family Speaker Series at the Dangberg Ranch in Minden.

Makley is the author of seven books on Western history.

This is a free outdoor event. The park is located at 1450 Highway 88, one-quarter mile north of the Carson Valley Veterinary Hospital. Visitors are encouraged to bring a lawn chair or use one of the park’s chairs. Dogs are not permitted in the park.

Calif. lawmakers grapple with gas tax hike

By Jessica Calefati, Bay Area News Group

SACRAMENTO – Since taking office in 2011, Gov. Jerry Brown has helped to resolve some of California’s toughest fiscal challenges – mainly huge structural deficits and old, forgotten debts.

But this year he appears ready to take on Mission Impossible – getting Democrats and Republicans to agree to increase the state’s gas tax to fix California’s crumbling roads and bridges.

Hiking the gas tax has always been politically risky, especially in a state where cars are still king and that -gave birth to the anti-tax revolution in the late '70s.

But hell might be about to freeze over: For the first time in decades, even anti-tax Republicans are open to raising prices at the pump to start cutting into the state's \$59 billion backlog of roadway maintenance.

Brown had telegraphed his intention to take up the issue in his January inaugural address when he asked Democrats and Republicans to do the "impossible" and craft an agreement to improve transportation infrastructure.

Read the whole story

Food, beverage firms wake up to water risks

By Sandra Postel, National Geographic

Earlier this month, Starbucks announced that it would stop sourcing and producing its bottled water brand, Ethos Water, in California and shift production from the Golden State to Pennsylvania.

In explaining its decision, the beverage maker cited "the serious drought conditions and necessary water conservation efforts."

With California in its fourth year of a historic drought, Starbucks has been called out for tapping springs in severely drought-stricken Placer County, which last month declared a water-shortage emergency.

The company faced not only the risk that its water supply might shrink, but that its reputation could be badly tarnished if it did not act.

Starbucks is by no means alone. Drought and water stress are affecting the decisions and bottom lines of a growing number of companies.

Read the whole story

ABC newsman Woodruff to give talk

Award-winning television journalist Bob Woodruff will give a talk on the North Shore on June 6.

Woodruff is widely known as a past co-anchor of ABC News' broadcast "World News Tonight". In 2006, while reporting on U.S. and Iraqi security forces for ABC, he was critically wounded by a roadside bomb. The traumatic brain injury nearly killed him.

His recovery inspired his family to do one thing: Give injured heroes access to the high level of support and resources they deserve, for as long as they need it. In 2006, the Bob Woodruff Foundation – Helping heroes on the homefront was founded. More than \$25 million for 110 programs nationwide have been funded.

Tickets to the Squaw Valley Institute event are \$15 advance, students \$10, children 9 and under and SVI Members and US Military personnel admitted free. Advance ticket reservations

are recommended. Doors open at 5:30pm, the talk is at 6:30pm at the Olympic Village Lodge. A Q&A will follow the talk.

Concert to raise money to protect Tahoe forests

Rock the Ridge Concert is a fundraiser to protect Tahoe's ridgelines from development.

Peter Joseph Burtt and the King Tide, Sneaky Creatures, Flip the Record, Charles the 1st, Zebuel, and IJV will play at the North Tahoe Regional Park in Tahoe Vista on June 20 from 1-8pm.

There will also be a raffle, silent auction, food and beverages.

The \$15 tickets are available at the Grid and Central Market or online. Day of event tickets are \$20, while a family of four pays \$50.

Elder orphans a growing social issue

By Carina Storrs, CNN

Recently a 76-year-old man known as HB, whose health had been deteriorating, tried to take his own life and was admitted to

North Shore University Hospital on Long Island.

Doctors decided that HB would not be able to go back to living by himself because of his condition and complications while in the hospital. With his only family across the country and no social support in the area, the man was placed, possibly permanently, in a nursing home.

The experience of HB is not unusual. His story is a case study of the problem of “elder orphans.” These seniors are single or widowed; they have no children, at least in the area, and no support system. And they find themselves alone with no one to help care for them when they need it.

Although the problem of elder orphans has been known for a while, new research suggests just how bad it is. About 22 percent of Americans 65 years and older are in danger of becoming, or already are, in this situation. As of 2012, there were 43 million people over 65 in the U.S., up from 35 million in 2002.

Read the whole story

**7-year-old lands fish nearly
as big as her**



Circe Bailey with her massive mackinaw and Andrew Lubrano, the boat's captain. Photo/Provided

A fisher girl did on her first outing what some veterans have never done – catch a mackinaw weighing more than 15 pounds.

“I think she wanted to cry she was so exhausted,” Capt. Andrew Lubrano of Nor-Cal Charters told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Seven-year-old Circe Bailey had a single minnow on the other end of her line that was about 150 feet down in 300 feet of water when the fish bit on May 24.

The Carson City youngster was fishing for the first time with her dad, brother and sister. The excursion started at 6am. They were close to Ski Run Marina when the fish took hold.

Circe said the captain was giving her direction and her sister helped a bit with reeling it in. It took about two hours to land it.

There was nothing easy about getting that fish to cooperate. Just when it was near the surface Lubrano would try to net it. But this fish wasn't going to come aboard that easy. It dove and Circe kept hanging on.

“(It’s) one of the nicest fish I have seen working at Nor-Cal Charters,” Lubrano said. “There are fishing guides who have been on the lake for 20 years and have never caught a fish that good.”

About two hours after catching it, it was weighed – 15.1 pounds. Lubrano said fish lose about 10 percent of their muscle mass when they get in the boat, so the fish was closer to 17 pounds.

Usually the mackinaw pulled from Lake Tahoe are in the 3- to 5-pound category.

Fish tacos have been served now multiple nights in the Bailey household. Circe said they taste great.

– Kathryn Reed

Letter: Reasons to stop Fanny Bridge project

Publisher’s note: *This letter was originally sent to Ricardo Suarez, division director of Central Federal Lands Highway Division, regarding the Fanny Bridge Community Revitalization Project. It was then sent to Lake Tahoe News for publication.*

Dear Mr. Suarez,

I would like to thank the Central Federal Lands Highway

Division and your staff members Michael Davies and Matt Ambroziak for their involvement in the proposed SR89/Fanny Bridge Community Revitalization Project located in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Based on continuing concerns from residents and business owners with the direction and justification of the proposed project, I am requesting your involvement.

In the 1994 Tahoe City Community Plan the concept of a proposed bypass through the 64 acre recreational area in Tahoe City was first introduced. In 1994 the yearly traffic growth was approx. 2.5 percent with levels of service through the commercial core at a level "F". In 1994 there were no sidewalks and parking was random through the commercial core of Tahoe City. Cars would park wherever they could find room and would back up into lanes of moving traffic resulting in the low levels of service. Sidewalks and standardized parking in the commercial core of Tahoe City was completed in approximately 1998. In 1994 based on an anticipated continued traffic growth, the concept of a future bypass was justified. Being 21 years ago things have changed. Traffic has declined (1992-2010 reduction noted at 23-26 percent) with last year showing no growth or a minor growth of approximately 0.1 percent. Other changes that have occurred in the last 21 years have been toward the movement in providing alternative forms of transportation with the construction of a \$12 million transit center located next to Fanny Bridge. Based on these changes the justification for the proposed bypass 21 years ago has also changed.

In the 2002 Project Study Report the concept of a proposed bypass once again surfaced. At this time there were three alternatives which included a bypass through the 64 acre recreational area and a fourth alternative to widen or replace Fanny Bridge to better accommodate bicycles and pedestrians. Annual traffic growth rates over the last 10 years were again noted at 2.5 percent.

As a full-time resident of the Tahoe City Community my

involvement in the SR89/Fanny Bridge Community Revitalization project began in December 2011 when after reading the project description provided by the Tahoe Transportation District (TTD) and later the California Access Program Project Application in 2013. It was noted during my review of this information that the information provided to the Central Federal Lands Highway Division was falsified and did not represent the actual conditions of the project area.

On Nov. 10, 2014, I provided a letter to the Federal Lands Highway Division noting the false information provided by the TTD in the California Access Program Project Application. Since the time that this information was disclosed, representatives from the Central Federal Lands Highway Division have been more involved in the project and have made multiple visits to the project site. Projected traffic counts were also found to be inaccurate. The project is titled SR89/Fanny Bridge Community Revitalization Project. There is nothing at all about this project that will revitalize the community. The economic study misrepresented the actual impacts of the project. The final EIR was attempted to be voted on for approval by the TTD after four days of releasing the multi-hundred page document. The final EIR is also skewed to support an unjustified project. As a member of the Citizens Review Committee we were told we had no vote. It was apparent that the committee was being moved toward Alternative No. 1 by consultants hired by the TTD. Our Placer County supervisor also told us a year ago that the decision was already made toward Alternative No. 1. Businesses that will be bypassed have stated their concerns with comments from the design team of potential lost revenue. Homeowners who now back up to open space and a recreational area along Granlibakken Road now have to disclose that a new section of highway is planned below their property; causing a loss in their home value. The bike counts stated in the funding application were found to be taken at the bike trail bridge at 64 acres not on Fanny Bridge as stated. Fanny Bridge was found to not be structurally

deficient and ready to fall in the river as stated. The June 2014 Caltrans Bridge Report states that all of the major components of Fanny Bridge are structurally sound. The Caltrans Bridge Report notes an estimated project cost of \$672,000.00 for required repairs to Fanny Bridge. The TTD has stated that this minimal project cost is based off using unit costs from 1995. Caltrans is yet to confirm the truth to this statement.

All of the published information provided to the public in the newspaper right up until almost the close of the draft EIR period only showed the existing Fanny Bridge. It wasn't until a few members of the public requested that the public be shown elevations of the proposed height of the bypass bridge, roundabouts and elevated roadway through 64 acres. A special meeting was scheduled with simulation models provided in February of this year. It took three years after the project was restarted to show the public the real scope of the proposed project. The time period for comments on the draft EIR had to be extended to allow for public generated from that meeting. The TTD had no intention of truly showing the public the actual scope of this project until the Central Federal Lands Highway Division stepped in. Being involved in every aspect of this project for the last four years, I had no idea that both roundabouts and the roadway through 64 acres were elevated until I found this information in the hundreds of pages of the draft EIR. Imagine what the general public thought when all they saw were pictures of Fanny Bridge and a title stating that Fanny Bridge was going to be revitalized.

When I started on this project four years ago all of the proposed build alternatives included a bypass through 64 acres. It was based on my involvement that the proposed alternative with replacing the existing Y with a roundabout was drafted. From the very beginning the design team did all they could to discard this alternative. I was first told the roundabout would not fit within the area of the Y. Then I was

told the roundabout would not meet the project goals and objectives. The TTD rejected the roundabout for these reasons. With a continued request from myself and other members of the community the roundabout alternative (6A) stayed in; however, the design team did not work toward a successful design. I have worked diligently with the design team to come up with a comparison to the bypass which is buildable. The current proposed roundabout under Option No. 2 at the wye intersection resulted from a phone call and request by the Central Federal Lands Highway Division to the design team to remove the signalized intersection. Interesting how it would not work under my request.

In reviewing Appendix G of the final EIR there are many factors noted that currently exist that impact the traffic flow at Fanny Bridge and the wye which are not related to the actual volume of traffic. Noted are the random seven mid-block uncontrolled pedestrian crossings known to occur in the study area likely would result in lower average travel speeds and levels of service. Drivers on northbound SR89 react to the presence of large amounts of pedestrian and bicycle traffic adjacent to their travel lane by slowing down significantly. This lower travel speed reduces the vehicular capacity of northbound 89. Also, vehicular traffic is frequently required to stop at a pedestrian crossing signal at the south end of the bridge where significant pedestrian and bicycle traffic crosses SR89. This causes further reduction in SR 89 travel capacity at the south end of Fanny Bridge. These influences reduce the capacity of Fanny Bridge below that of the SR 89 roadway, so the bridge is effectively the limiting factor in the capacity of this segment of SR89. With Mackinaw Street and parking access on both sides of SR89 by the Dam Café this creates the potential for a variety of unexpected and uncontrolled traffic movements. Such as vehicles backing toward oncoming traffic. This lack of driver expectancy results in further slowing down/stopping of vehicular traffic which leads to decrease capacity on SR89 at the north end of

the bridge. There are two areas where three lanes of traffic merge into one lane of traffic within 200 feet, which also results in confusion and congestion on the north side of Fanny Bridge. Driver behavior is noted when drivers often force their way into slow-moving through traffic streams on SR89, or drivers on SR89 courteously wave side street drivers ahead of them. This situation wherein side street traffic gains "priority" over major street traffic as a result of driver yielding behavior is one of the factors in further reducing the traffic capacity of SR89 through the wye intersection area during peak saturated demand conditions. Unfamiliar drivers visiting the area for recreation generally react to the observed conditions by traveling at a slower speed. Traffic conditions at peak times on SR28 east exceed capacity. Lack of capacity on SR28 through Tahoe City and the uncontrolled intersection of Grove St. contribute to the long queues on northbound SR89 in the vicinity of Fanny Bridge and the existing Y intersection.

Also noted in Appendix G, "However, a calibration to match real world conditions was not performed as part of this analysis. Calibrating simulation models is a time-intensive effort that involves multiple data collection efforts across all modes of travel. For instance, the pedestrian/bicyclist activity at the Fanny Bridge signal crossing and other mid-block pedestrian crossings on eastbound SR28 between the existing Y and Grove Street would have to be counted and entered as model inputs."

In summary of Appendix G – There is a large list of items that effect the traffic flow at Fanny Bridge and the Y that need to be corrected. None of which are corrected under the proposed. These corrections should be addressed or accepted as is and their results reviewed prior to moving forward with the proposed bypass.

TRPA notes that a level of service E is "targeted". Further noted is "the level of service may be exceeded when provisions

for multi-modal amenities and/or services such as transit, bicycling and walking facilities are adequate to provide mobility for users at a level that is proportional to the project-generated traffic in relation to overall traffic conditions on affected roadways." The area around Fanny Bridge has safe bicycle and walking facilities. The existing transit center was constructed as a "park and ride" facility to minimize traffic congestion during peak times. The transit center is far from being used to capacity. Constructing an additional section of highway has been shown to further minimize the possibility of getting motorists to use alternative forms of transportation.

In meeting with the staff of Sen. Dianne Feinstein and reviewing the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act, it is noted that forest management activities should be conducted that help achieve and maintain the environmental threshold carrying capacities established by the TRPA, unless the attainment of such benefits would excessively increase the project's cost in relation to the additional benefits gained. While this project is not a forest management project, one would believe the same cost and environmental concerns would apply. Under Alternative No. 1 the only positive is the shorter travel distance of approximately 200 yards for the vehicles on SR89 traveling from Squaw to the west shore. The negatives are added pavement through a forested recreational area, added pavement in an SEZ area, removal of over 400 trees, financial impacts to businesses and homeowners, noise and light pollution closer to homes, scenic impacts of a multi-lane bridge over the river, scenic impacts of the raised roundabouts and highway, relocation of the high pressure sewer line, added road sand becoming air born and impacting lake clarity at a cost of \$33 million. A reconfigured Y intersection at a minimal cost with minimal environmental impacts, no added road sand, no added pavement, no financial impact to the businesses or homeowners, provides for an incentive for use of the existing transit system. Based on information established by the Lake Tahoe

Restoration Act, the proposed project under Alternative No. 1 is unjustified based on the benefits gained by constructing the proposed bypass through a forested recreational area at a cost of \$33 million with major disturbance to the irreplaceable environment for traffic that may exist 5 percent of the year. There is nowhere in the state of California that does not experience some form of "congestion" during peak times especially for only 5 percent of the year.

The only agencies which support this project are: Caltrans who will be getting a new section of highway and entry with a refurbished maintenance yard at no cost. Homewood Resort who is required to mitigate traffic to their proposed \$500 million resort through the Fanny Bridge area which supports why Placer County is offering funding for the bypass project and the willingness to take over the annual maintenance on Old 89 and Fanny Bridge. Placer County will be collecting transient occupancy tax on the proposed Homewood Resort which will far outweigh their upfront and annual expenses. The Homewood Resort also requires the construction of a waste water treatment plant which brings a financial interest to the Tahoe City PUD. The PUD will be collecting water and sewer fees from the Homewood Resort as well as TOT dollars from the county to maintain the bike trails in the area. The only justification for the proposed bypass is to support the construction of the Homewood Resort at the expense of federal and county taxpayers.

There is a lot more development needed before we reach a successful project that benefits our environment, community and businesses. Let's take that time. I am proposing addressing the intersection of Grove Street by installing a signal and working on the seven uncontrolled pedestrian crosswalks through Tahoe City before moving forward with a project that involves the large impact to Tahoe's irreplaceable environment, our business community and homeowners with a bypass.

I request your support in having the design team work with the TRPA, Bureau of Reclamation and Caltrans to comply with the guidelines and the cost vs benefit direction noted in the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act for a project that does not include a bypass. In summary there is a lot more to this proposed project than your agency expected based on the title of a "community revitalization". Having the lead project manager for the TTD just recently resign may also be a red flag to the justification of this proposed project.

Sincerely,

Jim Sajdak, resident; Carl Cox, business owner; Larry Boehm, homeowner

Nev. teachers may be reimbursed for supplies

By Associated Press

Nevada senators have approved a bill that would reimburse teachers who buy classroom supplies with their own money.

The Nevada Senate voted unanimously Monday to approve SB133, which is sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Michael Roberson and other Republicans. It would allow teachers a reimbursement of up to \$250 per year if they request money for qualified classroom expenses.

The bill calls for \$5 million in state money for the program over the next two years. The measure now moves to the Assembly.

Lawmakers still need to approve a tax plan to provide money for the school supply program and other new spending items proposed this session.