

Feds penalize Reno hospitals

By Bill Theobald, Reno Gazette-Journal

WASHINGTON — Six Reno-area hospitals are among 20 Nevada hospitals that will lose some federal funding this year because too many of their elderly Medicare patients were readmitted within 30 days of being discharged.

This is the third year for the penalty program, which was created as part of the Affordable Care Act with the intent of spurring hospitals to pay more attention to what happens to patients after they leave. That's leading some hospitals around the country to create more active plans for patients once they leave the hospital, such as requiring a follow up with a medical professional.

Meanwhile, hospitals can financially benefit from patients returning for more care. Roughly 2 million patients return a year, costing Medicare about \$26 billion. Of that total, officials estimate \$17 billion goes for readmissions that could have been avoided.

To help curb that practice, Medicare is fining a record number of hospitals this year — 2,610 — by withholding a percentage of their reimbursements for treating Medicare patients.

[Read the whole story](#)

Pedestrian killed in South

Lake Tahoe

A man attempting to cross Ski Run Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe was killed Friday night.

The name of the 44-year-old victim is not being released pending notification of family.

A South Lake Tahoe police officer told *Lake Tahoe News* the Stateline resident was walking from between two parked cars near Larch Avenue into the traffic lane on Feb. 13 about 6:30pm when a vehicle hit him. The driver of the vehicle does not appear to have been intoxicated nor was foul play involved.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Truckee officers enforcing liquor laws

Most businesses in Truckee passed the test when it came to whether they would sell alcohol to a minor.

Truckee police officers on Feb. 12 conducted a minor decoy program with 17-year-olds.

“Our goal is to stop the accessibility of alcohol to minors and hopefully to greatly reduce underage drinking. It is not to trick establishments into serving minors who look close to 21,” Sgt. Bob Womack said in a statement.

One of the five restaurants sold alcohol to a minor. The server received a citation and the establishment was referred

to ABC for administrative action against their alcoholic beverage license.

All stores asked for ID.

Another education program provided by Truckee PD is Licensee Education on Alcohol and Drugs program. Officers host trainings for bartenders, one-day licensees, and establishment owners about how to properly check IDs, serve alcohol, and deal with issues that often arise in licensed establishments.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Lake Tahoe temps keep setting record highs



Just enough snow is being made at Stateline for a snowmobile oval and tiny sledding hill. Photo/LTN

It's shorts weather in Lake Tahoe and it's going to stay that way through the weekend.

South Lake Tahoe hit a record high on Feb. 12 and Feb. 13, and is likely to do so Valentine's Day.

The mercury soared to 61 on Thursday, with the old record being 58 set just last year. On Friday it was even hotter. The high was 65, breaking the 2011 record of 57 degrees. The Feb. 14 record high of 56 set in 1996 is likely to be broken because the forecast is for 62 degrees.

"It's going to be warm this whole weekend. There is a high pressure over the West Coast that is bringing very warm temperatures and light winds," Alex Hoon, meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Reno, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He said nothing big is on the horizon in terms of moisture – just more of the same. The temperatures will drop a bit, getting into the 50s. But normally the highs are in the 40s this time of year in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Ligety wins GS, Jitloff 9th

By USSA

With only a few days left in the 2015 FIS Alpine World Ski Championships, spring-like temperatures and a slick, fast course made for a men's giant slalom to remember. When it was all said and done, Ted Ligety (Park City) won the event in historic and thrilling fashion in front of the home crowd on Feb. 13. Rounding out the giant slalom podium were Austria's Marcel Hirscher and France's Alexis Pinturault in second and third, respectively.

The GS at the World Championships is known as the most technical of all the disciplines, and this year's event was rife with drama. Prior to Friday morning's first run, experts were calling this a three-man race. Giant slalom is Ligety's specialty and he has dominated it for more than half a decade, but Hirscher and Pinturault had joined Ligety as odds-on favorites to compete for the GS gold medal.

The level of skiing was off-the-charts throughout the second runs of giant slalom, including great runs by Americans Tim Jitloff (Reno), David Chodousky (Crested Butte, Colo.), Brennan Rubie (Salt Lake City), and Tommy Ford (Bend, Ore.).

All of the U.S. men finished in the top 30. Jitloff broke into the top 10 with a ninth place result. Ford, who had to sit out the entire 2014 Olympic season to recover from a freeskiing crash in 2013, took 19. Rubie was 26, his second ever World Cup-level finish, and Chodounsky was 29.

Despite Ligety's indisputable supremacy in giant slalom for years, Hirscher came into the World Championships hot and ranked No. 1 in the World Cup standings – having won four GS races this year to Ligety's one victory. And after first run, Hirscher was sitting pretty, having laid down a first-place gem that gave the remaining 100 skiers a time to shoot for.

Ligety, or America's "Mr. GS," wore bib No. 6, and finished 0.24 off Hirscher's time with a more cautious first run. He railed turns up high, but got stuck on a low line towards the bottom of the run, scrubbing speed. But Ligety went into the second run in the afternoon with Hirscher in his sights.

"Conditions are great, and the course is in great shape. So, we'll see," said Ligety in between runs. "There are five guys within 24 hundredths of a second, so it'll be a tight one next run."

The second run began with temperatures hovering in the mid-40s. The warm weather made for a softer, more rip-able

track than the slick morning surface. With nine competitors within a second of Marcel Hirscher, the GS title was up for grabs.

The excitement amped up in Red Tail Stadium as soon as Ligety's start neared. And as it was a turnier course than the morning, it was a perfect course for him to shred. The pressure was on to perform in front of thousands of American fans in the finish stadium and lining the course.

Ligety stepped up and showed that he still is the best giant slalom skier in the world. The American skied fluidly through his second run. Railing turns on-edge, he milked speed out of every transition and put together a perfect run. As he crossed the finish line, Ligety's time was 1.23 seconds ahead of the field. The crowd went wild and Ligety pumped his fists, but four of the best GS skiers in the world were still to ski.

Pinturault followed Ligety down the course, skiing well but ending 0.88 slower than Ligety to take third place. Hirscher, the last skier to compete after his first run win, put together another solid attempt on his second run. But in the end, Ligety's time was 0.45 seconds faster than his Austrian rival and Ligety yelled in celebration, javelining his skis through the finish.

In winning the 2015 FIS Alpine World Ski Championships' giant slalom at Beaver Creek, Ligety earned his fifth consecutive GS win in a row on the fabled Birds of Prey terrain and became the first man ever to win three World Championships GS races in a row.

"It's hard to rank them, but this win is a little more emotional than some of the other ones just because this year has been a little more of a struggle," said Ligety, of his Birds of Prey domination. "To be able to come through and pull it off is awesome."

WyGant pleads not guilty to kiddie porn charges

Former South Lake Tahoe fire Capt. Mark WyGant pleaded not guilty Friday afternoon in U.S. District Court to charges related to child pornography.

The 44-year-old Chico resident faces six charges involving sexual exploitation and attempted sexual exploitation of minors.

Days after his Jan. 29 arrest he resigned from the department. A thumb drive with thousands of pictures of young girls as well as videos of them was discovered in a locker at the station where WyGant worked.

He remains in federal custody in Sacramento.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Still time to participate in Polar Bear Swim

Hundreds of people are expected to line the pier and deck at Gar Woods Grill & Pier on Feb. 28 to watch the annual Polar Bear Swim.

The event is part of the annual North Lake Tahoe SnowFest. Participants swim approximately 250 yards in 39-degree water.

Hot Tubs, complimentary appetizers and raffle prizes have been donated.

The swim is after the parade.

To sign up for the swim in Carnelian Bay, fill out this form.

Bill would allow winemaking throughout Nev.

By Ashley Cullins, KRNV-TV

It's currently illegal for commercial wineries to run in Washoe and Clark counties, but an Assembly bill could change that this session.

"There's already a small wine industry with Churchill Vineyards and Tahoe Ridge in the North and then there's some wineries in Pahrump," said Dennis Eckmeyer, president of the Nevada Wine Coalition. "You can not have a commercial winery in counties that have more than 100,000 residents."

Eckmeyer said it's time for the state to let all Nevada counties get in the game. He said the coalition is using eastern Washington as a model. There wine is an \$8-billion-dollar industry.

Keri Hellige of Whispering Vine Wine Co. said Nevada should give it a shot.

Read the whole story

Drought nothing compared to what may be coming

By Darryl Fears, Washington Post

The long and severe drought in the U.S. Southwest pales in comparison with what's coming: a "megadrought" that will grip that region and the central plains later this century and probably stay there for decades, a new study says.

Thirty-five years from now, if the current pace of climate change continues unabated, those areas of the country will experience a weather shift that will linger for as long as three decades, according to the study, released Thursday.

Researchers from NASA and Cornell and Columbia universities warned of major water shortages and conditions that dry out vegetation, which can lead to monster wildfires in southern Arizona and parts of California.

"We really need to start thinking in longer-term horizons about how we're going to manage it," said Toby R. Ault, an assistant professor in the department of Earth and atmospheric sciences at Cornell, one of the co-authors. "This is a slow-moving natural hazard that humans are used to dealing with and used to managing."

Megadroughts are sustained periods of sparse precipitation and significant loss of soil moisture that span generations, about 10 times as long as a normal three-year drought.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- A workshop Feb. 17 by the South Lake City Council regarding vacation rentals could affect those who use Airbnb. The meeting starts at 9am at Lake Tahoe Airport.
- Sierra Sotheby's International Realty purchased the Tahoe City, Truckee and Incline Village branches of Better Homes & Gardens.
- Brad Trexell, a former Opera Colorado and San Francisco Opera administrator, is now executive director for Lake Tahoe SummerFest, the classical music concert series in August.
- Live Violence Free in South Lake Tahoe is offering a parent-child program every Wednesday from 3:30-5:30pm. For more info, call Kate Mosher at 530.544.2118, ext. 7635.
- Royal Gorge is reopening Feb. 13.