

CHP beefing up presence during holidays

The California Highway Patrol is preparing for this heavily-traveled time of year by educating the motoring public about safety on the roadways.

As part of its upcoming maximum enforcement period the CHP is reminding travelers to buckle up, adhere to the posted speed limit, avoid distractions behind the wheel, and always designate a sober driver.

The enforcement effort begins Dec. 24 at 6pm. and continues through Dec. 28 at 11:59pm. During this all available officers will be out on the roadways for enhanced enforcement efforts and assisting motorists wherever needed.

An anti-DUI effort is aimed at eliminating drunken driving by educating Californians about the dangers of driving after consuming alcoholic beverages. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, more than 10,000 people are killed annually in the U.S. by drunken drivers.

During the 30 hours of last year's Christmas holiday enforcement, five people were killed in traffic collisions. Among those killed were two pedestrians, one motorcyclist, and two vehicle occupants who were not wearing seat belts. The CHP made 221 arrests for driving under the influence during the same 30-hour timeframe.

Holiday shopping season comes down to the wire

By Anne D’Innocenzio, Associated Press

NEW YORK — Despite an early start, sales data provided to the Associated Press shows that stores may once again have to rely on procrastinators to save the holiday shopping season.

Sales were up 1.8 percent from Nov. 1 through Monday compared with the same period a year ago, according to data tracker First Data Corp., which declined to provide sales figures.

The numbers are modest considering the National Retail Federation, the nation’s largest retail trade group, expects sales for the entire season — November and December — to rise 4.1 percent to \$616.9 billion.

The slow growth also comes at a time when retailers tried to do a number of things to jumpstart the season and encourage shoppers to spend. Some offered “holiday” discounts as early as Halloween instead of waiting until the day after Thanksgiving known as Black Friday. And more stores opened on Thanksgiving Day itself to offer people early enticements to spend.

But the incentives seem to have backfired. Shoppers took advantage of the earlier sales and hours, but that had the effect of syphoning away sales from Black Friday, which is typically the biggest sales day of the year.

“The numbers are lower than what people expected them to be so it will be interesting to see what happens in the final days of the holiday shopping season,” said Rishi Chhabra, First Data’s vice president of information and analytics.

As a result of the modest sales, retailers are making a big

final push to lure shoppers into stores. And they're employing tactics they've had to use since the recession.

Dennis May, CEO and president of Hhgregg Inc., said the consumer electronics chain, added a "buy more, save-more" sales event for the week that ended Saturday. And it's also extending the cutoff date for online shoppers who want to pick up their items in the store until noon Christmas Eve. Last year, the cutoff date was Dec. 23.

"I think the consumer is very savvy," he said. "They're not shopping with abandon. They're not throwing their budgets to the wind. "

Major retailers including Macy's and Toys R Us are offering marathon shopping hours. Kohl's, for instance, is opening its stores for 132 hours straight until 6 p.m. Christmas Eve. That compares with 108-hour stretch last year.

"Customers can rely on us around the clock for their last-minute gift-giving solutions," said Michelle Gass, Kohl's chief customer officer.

Despite the frenzy, retailers don't necessarily have to panic. There still are big potential spending days ahead, including this Saturday, which some industry watchers are saying could be the biggest shopping day of the year. In fact, the average holiday shopper had completed only 52.9 percent of their holiday shopping as of December 10, according to a survey of more than 6,165 shoppers conducted by the retail trade group.

But retailers also have to watch their bottom lines. Shoppers have become more accustomed to deals, and many aren't willing to pay regular price anymore.

Indeed, C. Britt Beemer, chairman of America's Research Group, said 60 percent of 1,000 shoppers polled last weekend said they were only buying deals this holiday season. That compares with 40 percent last year.

But all the discounts eat away profits. According to First Data, the number of transactions rose 1.8 percent, but the average transaction was flat at \$73.85, showing how heavy discounting can hurt the bottom line.

“I don’t think it’s great out there,” said Ron Friedman, head of the retail and consumer products group at accounting firm Marcum LLP who estimates that holiday sales will be up 2 percent from last year. “People are out in the stores and shopping, but they’re all looking for deals.

Indeed, some shoppers are hesitant to spend a lot, despite some recent good economic news. Average gas prices nationally have dropped and the unemployment rate is at a six-year low. But some shoppers still struggle with higher costs and stagnant wages.

“I have to still watch what I spend and make sure everything’s on sale,” said Teresa Conrad, 51, who was shopping recently at a suburban Indianapolis mall.

AP business writer Tom Murphy in Indianapolis contributed to this report.

Rock Tahoe Half Marathon coming to South Shore

A new race is coming to Lake Tahoe – the Rock Tahoe Half Marathon.

Epic Tahoe Adventures and Hard Rock Lake Tahoe are putting on the June 20 event.

The Rock Tahoe Half Marathon starts at Spooner Summit and

drops more than 1,000 feet as it winds its way down Highway 50 along the East Shore of Lake Tahoe to a finish line directly in front of Hard Rock Lake Tahoe. The course will also take runners off the highway along the newly completed forest path from Round Hill Pines to Rabe Meadow.

Other weekend activities include a pre-race dinner on that Friday night, runners expo and athletes village, pool party for runners and their guests following the race, and awards for not only the top male and female age group finishers, but for “most ridiculous running outfit” and other fun categories.

Register .

Truckee plowing trails for first time

This winter Truckee will be plowing all trails that are owned or maintained by the town.

This new service is funded by voter approved Measure R.

Residents and visitors will be able to walk or ride throughout the winter on eight miles of paved trails, including the Legacy Trail, the Brockway Road Trail, all trails located along the exterior of the roundabouts and the trails connecting Donner Pass Road to the Alder Creek Middle School.

Jitloff 12th in GS, Ligety on podium

By USSA

ALTA BADIA, Italy – Ted Ligety (Park City,) had a phenomenal second run of giant slalom, skiing from seventh place to second in the Audi FIS Ski World Cup in Alta Badia. Tim Jitloff (Reno) took 12.

It was a rough track, with the men tackling nasty ruts and icy bumps. If the racers didn't stay on their line and on the outside ski, the course spit them out. But those types of courses are perfect for Ligety, who – after a disappointing seventh place on the first run – used his classic angles to shred the hill, coming down second run ahead of the field by over a second.

The only one who could beat Ligety was Marcel Hirscher of Austria. After winning both tech races in Are, Sweden, Hirscher of Austria was hungry for another victory. He took the Alta Badia win by almost a second and a half. Just off Ligety's pace by 0.03 seconds, Thomas Fanara of France was in third.

Brennan Rubie (Salt Lake City), Mark Engel (Truckee) and David Chodounsky (Crested Butte, Colo.) did not qualify for a second run.

Mancuso top U.S. woman in

super G

By USSA

VAL D'ISERE, France – Julia Mancuso (Squaw Valley) capped the speed weekend in Val d'Isere finishing sixth Dec. 21 in an Audi FIS Ski World Cup super G.

Austria's Elisabeth Goergl took the win, while Lindsey Vonn (Vail) saw her hopes of matching the all-time win record dashed when she crashed near the top of the course.

Four Americans cracked into the points.

Soft snow continued to be an issue over the weekend – ironically after so little had fallen in the weeks leading into the races.

Mancuso continued to ski consistently and was pleased with where she's heading.

"I decided to go with my instinct," she said. "It was a step in the right direction. I'm happy with my finish and I know where I can make up that half second."

Vonn skied well out of the start, but found herself caught short and went out, crashing but walking away relatively unscathed.

"I skied pretty well on the top section, but I hit some softer snow and lost a little elevation and couldn't make the gate," she said. "I'm still happy with today. I skied well and aggressively. The most important thing is my knees are good. I love being on the World Cup again and pushing myself every day. Today wasn't as good as yesterday, but I'm skiing well."

Her quest to match the record 62 women's World Cup wins held by Annemarie Moser-Proell will have to wait. Vonn earned No. 61 on Saturday.

In addition to Mancuso, Laureenne Ross (Bend, Ore.) was 13, Stacey Cook (Mammoth Mountain) 22nd and Jackie Wiles 30.

Ganong top U.S. skier in super G at 26th

By USSA

VAL GARDENA, Italy – On a snow-hungry super G course in Val Gardena resembling a luge track, the U.S. men on Dec. 20 could not rival the women's Val d'Isere results. Andrew Weibrecht (Lake Placid, N.Y.) was the top U.S. athlete in 19th place, while Ted Ligety (Park City) and Friday's downhill winner Steven Nyman (Sundance, Utah) did not finish.

Travis Ganong (Squaw Valley) rounded out the top 30, in 26.

Kjetil Jansrud of Norway took his third win of the season – nailing the line so many men missed, and beating the field by almost half a second. He earned another 100 World Cup points to grab the overall lead. Dominik Paris of Italy took second and Birds of Prey SG winner Hannes Reichelt of Austria was third.

It was a tough course, causing men to pinball over the famed camel bumps, before sending them directly into the gates after it. There, they were getting late, sending many off the course – including Ligety, who skied out on an icy spot near the finish.

To round out the field, Jared Goldberg (Holladay, Utah) took 38, Bryce Bennett (Squaw Valley) 41, Tommy Biesemeyer (Keene, N.Y.) 42, Tim Jitloff (Reno) 51 and Marco Sullivan (Squaw

Then and now: Horses give way to the auto



Van Sickle ranch at Stateline in 1901.
Photo/Private Collection

Horses were once a mainstay at Lake Tahoe. They were used for transportation and work.



Today horses are a rare sight at the lake.
Photo/Lake Tahoe Historical Society

Whereas motorized means prevail now, in the early 1900s horses

would haul wagonloads of hay to the Van Sickle barn at Stateline. Today the ranchland is the site of the Village Center – proving cars have replaced horses.



Lumber being hauled in the early 1900s. Photo/Lake Tahoe Historical Society

Horses also hauled cut timber, food and supplies for backcountry excursions , and passengers on the dirt trail to Fallen Leaf Lake



Pack horses allowed for extended travel in remote areas. Photo/Lake Tahoe Historical Society

Of course, there were people who just enjoyed horseback riding.



A stagecoach at Fallen Leaf Lake.
Photo/Lake Tahoe Historical Society

– *Bill Kingman*



The U.S. Forest Service hauls Christmas trees out of the forest. Photo/Tahoe National Forest

Bridges add beauty, recreation to cities



The old and new Bay Bridge linking Oakland and San Francisco. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Bridges aren't just about getting people from point A to point B, they can be an architectural wonder – no matter when they were built.

This is true for two iconic bridges in the United States. The new San Francisco Bay Bridge, while it will always take a backseat to the Golden Gate Bridge, is more aesthetically pleasing than what was there. The Brooklyn Bridge, built in 1883, remains a visual beauty.

I had the opportunity to walk across both bridges this year. Doing so provides a more intimate experience with the

structures compared to driving.



The foot path adjacent to the new section of the Bay Bridge.

Replacing the Bay Bridge became necessary after the 1989 earthquake saw the upper deck collapse onto the lower deck. But it has been one boondoggle after the next. Even to this day there are questions about how safe bolts are, as well as if and when the bike-pedestrian lane will be extended to Yerba Buena Island.

It's an out-and-back trek of about 7 miles depending on where one starts. This is the first time people have been able to walk on the eastern span of the Bay Bridge.

The only thing that could have made it better is if the path were on the other side – where the Golden Gate is.

While you are parallel to traffic, the vehicles seem far enough away to feel safe. And it was not nearly as loud as any of us expected.

Markings on the path indicate a separation of walkers and cyclists, which helps avoid unpleasant collisions. There is a lane in each direction for two-wheelers; one lane of the 15.5-

foot wide path is for pedestrians.

In order to continue the non-motorized path the old bridge has to be removed – which is happening.



The Brooklyn Bridge was built in the 1800s.

When the Brooklyn Bridge was built it was the longest suspension bridge.

We opted to take the subway to Brooklyn and then walk into Manhattan. According to the New York Department of Transportation, 4,000 pedestrians and 3,100 bicyclists cross the Brooklyn Bridge every day.

It is 4-miles long.

What is great about this old bridge is the wooden walking path is above where the vehicles are. You don't even know cars and trucks are whizzing by below you. Maybe it's because the skyline is so mesmerizing. At one point the Statue of Liberty is the focal point.

While the United States has an infrastructure problem, these bridges are testaments to why keeping up with maintenance is critical. These are not just tourist attractions, but means of transport for commuters and others.



New York City's skyline from
the Brooklyn Bridge.

According to the 2013 Report Card for America's Infrastructure, "Over 200 million trips are taken daily across deficient bridges in the nation's 102 largest metropolitan regions. In total, one in nine of the nation's bridges are rated as structurally deficient, while the average age of the nation's 607,380 bridges is currently 42 years. The Federal Highway Administration estimates that to eliminate the nation's bridge deficient backlog by 2028, we would need to invest \$20.5 billion annually, while only \$12.8 billion is being spent currently. The challenge for federal, state, and local governments is to increase bridge investments by \$8 billion annually to address the identified \$76 billion in needs for deficient bridges across the United States."

Letter: Vail Resorts continues B&B support

To the community,

With the funds provided by Vail Resort's EpicPromise Grant Program, Heavenly and Kirkwood resorts sponsored their 12 Bread & Broth Adopt A Day of Nourishment for 2014 on Dec. 8.

Attending the evening as sponsor crew volunteers were team

members from Heavenly Mountain Resort's Ski and Ride School. Volunteering at her second B&B dinner was Leslie Amato, day care center manager, who "loves volunteering and finds it to be a wonderful experience."

It was the first time volunteering for the rest of the Ski and Ride School members Amy Rice, office manager; Michelle Peterlin, assistant day care manager; Rachel Georgieva, training manager; and Jack Pippin, general manager.

"We all feel very fortunate to work for a company like Vail Resorts, that so strongly promotes giving back to the community," was the collective response from the team of their role in helping the B&B volunteers serve those who enjoyed the night's dinner.

Taking the opportunity to help folks in need is a wonderful way to give back and change lives. According to the letter sent to EpicPromise recipients, "Heavenly and Kirkwood mountain resorts are committed to working with non-profits who make a positive impact for those who call the South Lake Tahoe area home."

Bread & Broth would like to thank Vail Resorts for their generous contribution to our program and the dedication of their employees in volunteering at Heavenly/Kirkwood sponsorship evenings.

For more B&B information, go online or find us on Facebook.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth