

Nevada leads nation in unauthorized immigrants

A report from the Pew Research Center shows the number of immigrants who are in Nevada illegally has dropped by about 20,000 people from 2009 to 2012.

But Nevada still has the largest share of unauthorized immigrants of any state. Pew reports that about 210,000 people, or 7.6 percent of Nevada residents, are in the country illegally.

The study released Tuesday also found that nearly 18 percent of Nevada students have at least one unauthorized immigrant parent.

Pew says the number of immigrants in the U.S. illegally has remained steady at 11.2 million from 2009 to 2012, but trends at the state level have shifted.

Fourteen states have seen declines in their unauthorized immigrant populations, largely due to fewer new arrivals from Mexico and more people returning to Mexico.

– *Associated Press*

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- The Sierra Solstice Celebration at Sierra-at-Tahoe includes Christmas tree lighting on the Plaza Deck on Dec. 20 at 4pm. Santa will visit the plaza from 1:30-4:30pm Dec. 21. On Christmas Day he will be shredding the slopes.
- The Nevada Chamber Music Festival is Dec. 26-31 in Reno.
- The 13th annual Tahoe Adventure Film Festival is Dec. 13 at MontBleu in Stateline.
- Heavenly Holidays is Dec. 20-31. The event features carolling, live music, magicians, jugglers, professional ice skaters, ice sculpting, photos with Santa and Heavenly mascot Ripperoo, and a parade at the Heavenly Village. A brightly lighted gondola will descend over the crowd New Year's Eve, with fireworks at 9pm.
- The Nevada Highway Patrol has received a \$15,758 grant from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to provide collision reconstruction training for 10 NHP troopers from Dec. 8-19.

Caesars loses 2nd lender; restructuring eyed

By Howard Stutz, Law Vegas Review-Journal

Caesars Entertainment Corp. is considering placing its largest operating division into a real estate investment trust as a way of dealing with its gaming industry-high debt, according to a filing Wednesday with the Securities and Exchange

Commission.

Caesars, which has been in talks with banks and lenders in an attempt to restructure its \$22.8 billion debt, said the real estate investment trust – commonly referred to as a REIT – was one option being discussed.

The company made the filing after one of the lenders broke off talks with Caesars on Oct. 29, the second lender to walk away from the table. Earlier last month, a New York hedge fund quit the discussions.

According to the SEC filing, Caesars would place Caesars Entertainment Operation Co. into the REIT. This would include its Stateline properties.

The REIT would own the hotel-casinos and Caesars would operate the properties.

Read the whole sotry

Roads-paths near STMS being scrutinized



Garrett Villanueva, right, marks his trail ideas as Ben Fish with Design Workshop looks on Nov. 19. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Reducing the width of travel lanes to create bike or multi-use paths around South Tahoe Middle School was a reoccurring theme during a workshop Wednesday night.

Statistics show from 2008-12 in a two-mile radius of STMS there have been 257 collisions, of which 23 involved pedestrians and 37 were cyclists. There were four fatalities, 21 involved severe injuries, 75 visible injuries and 155 complained of injuries.

Improving street crossings, and creating better bike paths and sidewalks could reduce those numbers, advocates believe.

Another problem is there are many gaps in the connections in and around the middle school. The goal is to fill those in and make what exists better.

Lake Tahoe Sustainability Collaborative was awarded a \$153,625 On Our Way grant from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency to

look at how bike and pedestrian connections around STMS could be improved. The Community Mobility Group, a subgroup of the collaborative, on Nov. 19 presented alternatives to the more than 20 people who attended the workshop.

The first workshop was in October.

It was pointed out how most roads adjacent to a school have signs altering drives to the facility. Not so for STMS on either Highway 50 or Al Tahoe Boulevard. And neither requires motorists to slow to 25 mph when students are present.

Signage is the minimum the group is proposing.

To figure out what improvements to make the group has conducted community, STMS parent and student surveys, and two workshops. Traffic studies and counts have been done. Stakeholders have been consulted.

The east-west connection through Bijou Community Park is an idea that came earlier from the public.

More than 20 poster boards were scattered about the STMS multipurpose room outlining statistics and possibilities. They delved into the intersections of Al Tahoe and Highway 50, Al Tahoe and Johnson Boulevard, Lyons and 50, and Rufus Allen Boulevard and 50.

Class 1 bike trails, cycle tracks, green painting and bike lanes are being looked into.

Organizers and those stakeholders will pick a preferred alternative from all the data that has been collected. It will then be 30 percent engineered – close to shovel ready so grants could be secured for implementation.

Some of the thoughts, ideas and concerns on Wednesday included:

- Putting a diagonal crosswalk at Lyons Avenue and Highway 50;

- Wondering if user trails will go away;
- Desiring select trees to be cut to allow more sun on paths;
- Elevating a trail through Bijou Meadow instead of paving it;
- A crosswalk on Al Tahoe Boulevard to get to the future bike park;
- Shared cart path for golfers-walkers-cyclists at Bijou Golf Course, and add signs.

A long-term vision of the group is to either improve the current Trout Creek Highway 50 underpass or build a new underpass to the south.

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Notes:

- More info about the Lake Tahoe Sustainability Collaborative Community Mobility group may be found online.

Letter: Finding solutions to dog poop

To the community,

I recently authored a theory that dog waste is contaminating Lake Tahoe. The following is my response to those of you who participated in the dialogue.

Thank you is the first thing I want to say. Thank you to *Lake Tahoe News* for the opportunity to make my point and the venue to do so. Thank you to the community members who replied

because I know it's not always easy to share thoughts on such a sensitive topic; at least I know it isn't easy for me. Lastly, thank you to those of you who pick up after your pets because I believe you are the people who are making a difference in Lake Tahoe.

The large variety of responses indicates to me that some of you hold this issue close to your heart, while others of you hold it close to a nerve.

Community suggested recommendations:

Drainage outlet filters and treatment areas: I could not agree more. While it may not be possible to capture all the fine sediment and nutrients from our storm water drainage system, I do think it possible to capture most of them. If we design it well, and it works, then other cities, states, countries may adopt the concept and in that way we could be changing the world for the better.

Enforcement: Should be a last resort measure. It is my opinion that we already have enough compliance officers who think that they are saving Lake Tahoe by issuing fines and citations. While it may be a sweet job, often it goes to their head in the worst way possible.

More bag stations and disposal containers: Yes! It seems reasonable to think that if our cities and counties can require residences to provide bear-proof containers for every property, then it stands to reason that the residents demand a bag station and waste container for every beach, bike trail and trailhead.

Additional solutions may be to provide small **areawide dog park facilities** for each neighborhood that would contain and treat the waste. Such facilities could also be incorporated to collect, contain and treat area-wide storm water run-off thereby reducing the pollutants of both major contributors.

Pack it in, pack it out. While most all locals have adopted this as their creed, what I fail to understand is why that philosophy does not apply to their dog waste? What harm could be caused by picking it up and disposing of it properly.

My rebuttal to reader's comments:

Tahoeadvocate wrote: *Way more than any dog or cat and their habitat is on or close to the lake where most dogs and cats don't defecate near the lake.*

This is both true and false. It is true that not all dogs live near the lake, while it is false to think that the waste of dogs that do not live near the lake isn't making it to Lake Tahoe. It was my unfortunate experience while cleaning a street gutter of snow and ice that it also contained frozen dog waste, lots of it. It was at that moment that I made the mental calculation of how much waste was along every street of every neighborhood in Lake Tahoe, frozen waves of feces just waiting to be released and flushed down our storm water drainage system.

Justice wrote: *This should be regulated and bear bags required and then deer bags and then squirrel and beavers and for fish. This waste issue is the real cause of something somewhere this is real and really bizarre and laughable.*

Before we can push the discourse forward it has to be understood that the theory I presented is about imported nutrients as the cause for the imbalance of our ecosystem, i.e. nutrients brought in by truck, and not the nutrients which have grown here naturally. A bear need not bag its waste if he forages his food from the forest, which is not always the case. Our bears, coyotes, birds, squirrels, etc., feed upon our daily trash. Trash that contains nutrients from out of the area (brought in by truck) and there lies the steaming hot problem.

Cranky Gerald wrote: *If we all just did our part, instead of*

complaining about others we'd be halfway home.

And was, in my opinion, the most intelligent response of all.

Bob wrote: *I bet now that all the dogs keep the birds scared off the water is cleaner.*

And was, in my opinion, the least intelligent response of all.

Bob also wrote: *This article is not based in science and is per speculation.*

Which is true, and I'd like to add to that I am also not a scientist either. However, I don't need science to tell me that smoking causes lung cancer, or that greenhouse gases causes global warming. Not long ago everybody thought the world was flat ... well, except for one guy ... who do you think was right?

But Bob does bring up a valid point. Where is the evidence? We've scrutinized sediment and banned two-stroke engines all in an effort to make change for the better. There has to be a scientist out there somewhere who has already made a study on the subject, and if there isn't one, shouldn't we crowd fund one? Perhaps a "feces thesis" from a college graduate, and then have the results published on *Lake Tahoe News*.

Then we'd know if my theory is full of crap.

Mark Allione, dog owner

Skip Black Friday to get

better deals

By Shelly Banjo, Wall Street Journal

When it comes to holiday shopping, it pays to track what retailers do, not what they say.

For all the hype, Black Friday isn't the day to find the best deals, according to new data from Adobe Systems Inc., which has collected information on one trillion visits to 4,500 retailing websites since 2008.

Instead, retailers' biggest price cuts last year came on the Monday before Thanksgiving, and shoppers who bought items on Thanksgiving Day snapped up the season's lowest prices, according to Adobe.

The weeks before the Black Friday weekend offered better deals than the weeks leading up to Christmas.

What's more, those who shopped on Black Friday were more likely to find items out of stock.

Read the whole story

Extreme skier to talk on North Shore

Chris Davenport, extreme skier of international fame, will be sharing his experiences Dec. 18 as part of the Alpenglow Sports' Winter Film Series.

Davenport's show Lessons from the Mountains: The Art of Risk

Management will discuss the important aspects of risk management as he takes the audience up and down the world's highest peak, 29,029-foot Mt. Everest.

The event is Dec. 18 at 7pm at the Olympic Village Lodge in Squaw Valley.

The winter film series is designed to inspire, motivate and educate. The event runs November through March and showcases five famous athletes. All shows are free and raffle prizes from sponsors are sold to raise funds for local nonprofit organizations. The Sierra Avalanche Center, Lake Tahoe's local avalanche forecasting agency, is the beneficiary for Davenport's show.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- Tahoe Best Friends in South Lake Tahoe has added a grooming spa for dogs.

- Lilliput Children's Services provides support to people who are raising a child because the birth parents can't. For more info, call 530.314.5998.

- Kirkwood Mountain Resort is not opening this weekend. "We need a little assistance from Mother Nature before we can open," Coop Cooper told *Lake Tahoe News*. The inversion caused temps to rise.

- Cold Water Brewery and Grill in South Lake Tahoe will

officially open Nov. 21 at 5pm with dinner service, their signature craft beer (brewed on site) and a full service bar.

- Are you a subscriber to *Lake Tahoe News*? If not, here is the paid subscriber form. Contributions keep *LTN* freelancers employed and diverse news being delivered online seven days a week. Plus, subscribers quality for specials – with the last being tickets to a Giants game.

Ticket scofflaws owe Calif. \$10.2 billion

By Teri Sforz, Orange County Register

In the next year, about 20 percent of drivers will be convicted of speeding, rolling through stop signs or failing to stop at red lights, while another 8 percent will likely get off with a warning, and many more will be ticketed for parking illegally, having expired tags or some other bit of minor motor malfeasance.

Drivers will pay millions in fines and those millions may mingle in a kitty with fines and restitution paid by criminals. But California's courts and counties are doing a spotty job of collecting this money, and the Legislative Analyst's Office isn't even sure it's being counted correctly.

California's crooks and scofflaws – including drivers who haven't paid off tickets – owe, according to the LAO, \$10.2 billion in court-ordered fines and fees.

The more sobering news, perhaps, is not necessarily that officials have collected only a fraction of the total – a

comparably wee \$1.8 billion – but that it’s hard to know precisely how much they’ve collected, due to “incomplete and inconsistent reporting ... minimal data ... miscalculation of performance measures ... and a lack of evaluation,” the LAO said.

Read the whole story

S. Tahoe beach brouhaha not resolved

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe officials and operators of the Beach Retreat & Lodge agreed to sit down to figure out solutions to what has become a contentious issue regarding access to the beach.

This centrally located lakefront hotel has changed general managers multiple times since Urbana Realty Advisors became owners a few years ago. But Brandon Reed (no relation to this reporter) told *Lake Tahoe News* he is here to stay and wants to build relationships.

He was put on the hot seat Nov. 18 during the South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting.

Issues include when the public has access to the beach, to what areas, and if the 18 public parking spaces really are available.

Councilwoman Brooke Laine shared her experience this summer of being told by hotel staff there was no parking by the pier

only to make her way back there to find out they were lying. She said antics like that are fueling distrust. She had been honest by telling the worker she was not a guest of the hotel.

Reed said when the construction is done in the coming months on the conference center that parking will be easy to come by. The city would like stenciled markings to indicate the spots are public. That is still up in the air.

Reed added, "We have no intention of disputing that the public has access to the beach."

The problem is for years many people believed this whole stretch of sand was public. In reality it is a private beach with public access. All of that is based on a 1980's court decision. And the public agency with control is the State Lands Commission.

The city wants better signage to explain to the public where they are allowed to go and when.

Leniency during the Fourth of July and Labor Day fireworks was also requested. This is because part of the beach is off limits to the public after dark.

In return, Reed wants people to be respectful when weddings are going on.

The public, though, doesn't want the prime part of the beach cordoned off all day for a one-hour event.

Peggy Bourland submitted 900 signatures on a petition to allow the public the right to access the beach.

It was pointed out how the city picks up trash from the beach, and how U.S. Bank and Deb Howard and Co. have adopted it for cleanup after fireworks shows.

City Attorney Tom Watson during his presentation said the point of the dialog was "to reduce disputes rather than

exacerbate them.”

What the two sides come up with, and how the public and hotel treat each other will determine if Watson’s wishes come true.

In other news:

- Scott Blasser, president of the South Lake Tahoe Firefighters Association, told the council one-third of the department is looking for a new job because their compensation is not adequate. However, the department just agreed to a 9 percent raise over three years, and was the only department to get a 2 percent raise under the former city manager because they signed the agreement first.
- Outgoing Councilwoman Brooke Laine thanked her colleagues, staff and the public for their support these last two years.