

Chamber honors South Shore businesses

Winners of the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce's 7th annual Blue Ribbon Awards have been revealed.

They are:

Experience award – Blue Sky Events

Honorable mention: Ciera Steak & Chop House

Tourism award – Tahoe Sport Fishing

Honorable mention: Getaway Reno/Tahoe

Geotourism award – Lake of the Sky Outfitters

Honorable mention: South Tahoe Stand Up Paddle

Entrepreneur award – Brandi Brown, Tahoe Production House

Honorable mention: Brian and Angela Luke, Artemis Mediterranean Grill

Customer service award – Bob Trim, Friday's Station

Honorable mention: Matt Smithermier, Eloise Automotive & Alignment

Public agency service – Eric Guevin, Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District

Honorable mention: Chris Stanley, South Tahoe Public Utility District

Large green business – Lake Tahoe Cruises | Zephyr Cove Resort

Honorable mention: Sierra-at-Tahoe

Wendell award for small green business – Connie's Clothesline

Honorable mention: Base Camp Pizza

Caesars to trim workforce by less than 1%

By Howard Stutz, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Casino giant Caesars Entertainment Corp., attempted to clarify planned cost-saving measures Thursday, saying it will reduce its 68,000-person workforce nationwide by less than 1 percent.

The company, which operates nearly 40 casinos in 14 U.S. states and the Canadian province of Ontario – including Harrah's Lake Tahoe and Harveys, is attempting to restructure its gaming industry-high \$22.8 billion debt.

The company has held private talks with its banks and lenders since September and is reportedly planning a prearranged bankruptcy filing for Caesars' largest unit as soon as January.

Caesars said this week it hopes to create an extra \$250 million to \$300 million in cash flow next year through various cost-savings measures.

In a statement Thursday, Caesars spokesman Gary Thompson said the company would eliminate jobs but the numbers would be small.

Read the whole story

Governors working on coping with drought



Govs. Jerry Brown, left, and Brian Sandoval are dealing with drought in their respective states. Photo/LTN file

By Associated Press

The governors of California and Nevada met Thursday at a forum aimed at coming up with the best ways to cope with the unprecedented drought affecting the Western U.S., now in its third year.

"I think the drought will test our imagination and our science, our technology and our political capacity to collaborate," California Gov. Jerry Brown, a Democrat, said in opening remarks.

Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval, chairman of the Western Governors' Association, initiated the yearlong series of meetings that include senior water, energy and agriculture policy leaders from government and the private sector. The meetings will lead to a report of best practices to be released next June.

This week's meeting in Sacramento is focused on how to manage the drought's effect on agriculture.

“These farmers ... they come to me and they feel really helpless. They don’t know what to do. And their livelihood is at stake,” said Sandoval, a Republican.

California voters last week approved a \$7.5 billion water bond measure that will allow the state to expand storage and develop water management plans.

Brown noted that the proposals for addressing California’s water problems will be controversial, including his contested \$25 billion plan to build twin tunnels underneath the Delta that would make it easier to pump water from the Sacramento River to Central Valley farms and Southern California cities.

In another contentious move, Brown recently signed into law the first regulations governing the use of California’s groundwater, bringing it in line with other states.

Brown said a recent flight over Northern California gave him a view of the hundreds of canals and tunnels that help the state move water. Brown’s father, former Gov. Pat Brown, built the State Water Project, an extensive system of reservoirs and canals that was considered an engineering marvel in its day but was built for a population of half the current 38 million.

“There are a lot of people who think somehow engineering water from point A to point B is somehow unnatural,” he said. “Well we long ago passed the unnatural in California.”

Census: Nearly 8 in 10 in U.S. have access to high-

speed Internet

An estimated 78.1 percent of people in U.S. households had a high-speed Internet connection last year, according to a report released Thursday from the U.S. Census Bureau. However, digital divides exist among the nation's metropolitan areas and demographic groups.

These statistics come from the American Community Survey, which collected data on this topic for the first time in 2013 and is the largest survey used to examine computer and Internet use in the U.S.

Although most Americans have access to computers and high-speed Internet, differences in high-speed Internet use were as large as 25 percentage points between certain age and race groups, while divides between specific income and educational attainment groups were as large as 45 percentage points.

Boulder, Colo., had one of the highest rates of high-speed Internet use at 96.9, while Laredo, Texas, had one of the lowest rates at 69.3 percent.

The report shows 75.2 percent of metropolitan area households reported high-speed Internet use, compared with 63.1 percent of nonmetropolitan households. In addition, 85.1 percent of metropolitan households reported owning a computer, compared with 76.5 percent of nonmetro households.

Some states, such as California, Florida and Washington, had a variety of high and low performing areas, often very near one another.

The most common household connection type was cable modem (42.8 percent), followed by mobile broadband (33.1 percent) and digital subscriber line (DSL) (21.2 percent).

About a quarter of all households had no paid Internet

subscription (25.6 percent).

Only 1 percent of all households reported connecting to the Internet using only a dial-up connection.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Nevada enforcing seat belt laws

Nevada's Joining Forces multi-county law enforcement program is launching its Click it or Ticket education effort alongside the nationwide effort to encourage motorists to strap on their seat belts.

Between now and Dec. 2, law enforcement officers will fan out across Nevada in search of motorists who are not buckled up.

Nevada statistics show that between 2007 and 2011, nearly a third (64 percent) of fatalities and serious injury crashes involving unbelted occupants occurred at night.

Nationwide, if vehicle occupants ages 5 and older wore their seat belts, some 3,031 lives could have been saved in 2012., according to the NHP.

USFS to sell Christmas tree

permits

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit will begin the sale of Christmas tree permits on Nov. 24.

Permits cost \$10 each (cash or check only, no credit cards), with a limit of two permits per family. Permits must be purchased in person, are not transferable and are sold on a first-come, first-served basis.

Permit holders may choose from a variety of pine, fir or cedar in designated cutting areas. Permits are available for purchase until Dec. 19, but permits usually sell out before then.

The last day to cut a tree is Dec. 25.

Permits will be sold in two locations (both offices will be closed on Thanksgiving Day):

- Forest Supervisor's office, 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe, Monday through Friday from 8am-4:30pm. For more information, call 530.543.2694.

- Incline Village Forest Service office, 855 Alder Ave., Incline Village, Wednesday through Friday from 8am-4:30pm. For more information, call 775.8310914. During winter weather driving conditions, call the Incline office to make sure it's open.

Maps to designated cutting areas are provided at the time of purchase. Permit holders should follow permit guidelines for responsible collection, including respecting private property by not trespassing when entering or leaving National Forest cutting areas. Observe seasonal road closures and be prepared to walk in to the cutting area to find a tree. No off-road travel is allowed.

Million dollar fire truck back in the shop

By Kathryn Reed

The last time anyone saw the South Lake Tahoe Fire Department's ladder truck it was on a flatbed headed east on Highway 50.

This specialized piece of equipment that cost the city more than \$1 million has never seen one day of service since it arrived in town at the beginning of this year.

It is in Reno having the power take off assembly repaired. This connects the engine to the ladder. It disintegrated while an outside trainer was in town to show the troops how to use the rig.

This is the second time since the city took possession of the nearly 48-foot truck that something serious has gone wrong. The first was when a driver for the manufacturer drove it from Louisiana to Tahoe in six-wheel drive for part of the trip.

That took a while to fix because the part had to be manufactured outside the United States. The differential had to be rebuilt.



South Lake Tahoe's ladder truck has not been operational since arriving in February. Photo/Provided

It will be a few more weeks before the ladder truck returns from Reno. When does it will be tested to make sure everything is working, and then training will resume.

While the parts that are failing are under warranty and new warranties are issued when they are fixed, the city is not satisfied with this being enough.

"We as a city have gone after the manufacturer trying to get some money back," Fire Chief Jeff Meston told *Lake Tahoe News*. The City Attorneys Office is handling that aspect of the matter.

Meston said the state Lemon Law does is not a factor because it is not the same part that keeps failing.

The need for the ladder truck comes into play for tall buildings and those that are set back a ways.

"You don't want a fire truck right on top of a building in case it would collapse," Meston said.

To get the original Chateau project approved the city needed a working ladder truck.

The old ladder truck was so decrepit it was taken out of service in 2012.

The city has been relying on Tahoe Douglas for its ladder truck.

South Lake Tahoe's truck does not have a tank, pump or hose bed. Adding them would have made the apparatus too heavy to be driven on California roads. Meston said it is common at larger fire departments for there to be separate engine and truck

companies.

Besides the cost of the truck, the city also remodeled Station 2 across from South Tahoe Middle School so the truck will fit there. In the winter it will most likely be stored at Lake Tahoe Airport. The goal is to not have equipment sitting outside during the winter.

Editorial: Drought making Calif. more like Ariz.

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Oct. 13, 2014, Arizona Republic.*

For many years, California has stared at the prospect of long-running drought and effectively sniffed with contempt.

In the minds of many urban Californians, drought may be a burden and an annoyance, but hardly a threat to the coastal lifestyle.

Yes, the consequences of long-term drought, like urban brushfires and a decimated Central Valley farm industry, may be a concern. But the elaborate and enormous water-delivery network serving Southern California – including the state's "first in line" status for Colorado River water – would assure that water in the cities always could be had at a price.

That attitude seems to be changing. California drought researchers have concluded the state may be in the grip not just of "drought," but of a mega-drought. The environmental conditions that gave birth to the most populous state in the

Union may have constituted a 150-year, wetter-than-normal anomaly. California now may be looking at its genuinely normal condition, which is far more arid.

Read the whole story

‘Airbnb for dogs’ gets \$25 mil. in funding

By Melvin Backman, CNN Money

It’s not quite Pets.com, with its beloved sock-puppet. But it’s close.

DogVacay, which connects dog owners and pet sitters, recently announced a \$25 million round of funding.

Founded in 2012, the company says it has 20,000 registered sitters and surpassed 1 million bookings last month. The company has raised \$47 million including this round. It declined to disclose its revenue.

The company is sometimes described as “Airbnb for dogs,” because it lets dog owners avoid kennels the way the Airbnb lets tourists skip hotels. But CEO and founder Aaron Hirschhorn pushes back against that description.

DogVacay lets pet owners hire sitters that will either care for animals at the owner’s home or at the sitter’s.

Read the whole story

Gas prices continue to decline

Gas prices keep going down – and it's not just in Lake Tahoe.

AAA says the average price nationwide of \$2.93 is the lowest since 2010 and that this is the longest consecutive decline in six years. Prices have been dropping for the last 46 days.

Prices in California have dropped by 40 cents. However, it does not have the cheapest fuel. That designation goes to South Carolina at \$2.67. The most expensive is in Hawaii at \$3.99.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*