

How attainable is the California Dream today?

By Matt Levin, CALMatters

California is an expensive state. The cost for housing, gas, electricity and other basics is often more than elsewhere in America. We have the nation's highest rates for poverty and income inequality. Meanwhile, government resources are stretched thin. But the news isn't all bad in the Golden State. We're safer than we used to be. And we're better educated. And much more diverse.

Here's a statistical glimpse of key trends in the state.

Housing

In 1960, average California renters saw about 20 percent of their income go to rent. That's up to nearly 37 percent now. The trend is even steeper for younger Californians, who are seeing nearly half their paychecks go to rent.

When rents are higher, it gets tougher for renters to save money for a down payment on a house. That, combined with rising single-family home prices and the end of easy mortgages, has sent California's rate of homeownership dipping.

Whose dream is this?

As recently as 1970, whites accounted for more than 70 percent of the population. That has changed dramatically. Driven by the tremendous growth of its Latino and Asian populations, California is now famously a "majority minority" state, where no ethnic group claims more than 50 percent of residents. The number of white Californians has actually dropped by about 2 million since 1990.

An increasingly diverse California, however, has not translated into an increasingly equal one. While the average Asian household has caught up to whites, both Latino and African American families make significantly less – with that gap only widening in the wake of the Great Recession of the late 2000s.

“The bulk of California’s workforce is going to be young Latinos now,” said Sonja Diaz, founding director of the UCLA Latino Policy & Politics Institute. “But Latinos still lag behind in a number of socioeconomic indicators, in terms of homeownership, income gains, educational attainment, access to health care, living wage jobs.”

California has always been a magnet for immigrants from around the world. While the rate has slowed in recent years, the state still has the largest concentration of foreign-born residents in the country.

But starting in the 1990s, California appears to have lost much of its lure to the rest of the U.S. Over the past two decades, California has lost 1.8 million more residents than it has gained from the rest of the country. And unlike in previous decades, that trend is persisting through good economic times.

Higher education

Clark Kerr, University of California president from 1958 to 1961, was the architect of the state’s 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education. Kerr envisioned a world-class public university system accessible to the top third of state high school students.

Partly due to Kerr’s ambitions, Californians are a lot more educated than they used to be. The percentage of Californians with a bachelor’s degree has nearly tripled since 1960, with particularly strong gains among women. Graduation rates at the University of California are some of the highest in recent

decades.

But adjusted for inflation, the cost of one year of a University of California education is seven times what it was in the mid-1960s. That's mostly because state support for the UC started dwindling in the early 2000s. At its peak, the state provided more than \$26,000 per student. It now provides about half that.

Taxes

California has a reputation as a high-tax state. Has that always been the case?

Depends on how much money you make and what type of tax you're talking about.

While the state has increasingly leaned on high earners to foot the cost of government over the past few decades, the median California household has actually seen its income tax bill drop.

Effective property taxes in California have dipped below the average in most other states since the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, which limits what local governments can collect as property values rise.

California now has one of the lowest effective property tax rates in the country.

But one regressive tax has increased significantly since the 1960s: the sales tax. In 1964, the state sales tax totaled 4 percent. That rose past 7 percent by the early 2000s.

The economy

The decline of manufacturing and the sharp exodus of blue-collar jobs with decent pay and good benefits are an economic narrative typically reserved for the Rust Belt. But in explaining the erosion of California's middle class, the

decline of manufacturing – particularly in the defense and aerospace industries that dominated Southern California during the Cold War – plays a central role.

“Silicon Valley does not provide those kind of big manufacturing jobs,” said Dan Mitchell, professor emeritus at the Anderson School of Management at UCLA. “There’s no equivalent of in aircraft assembly plant that you get from that. IT does provide high-paying, white-collar jobs, but certainly not as many and not in the same location.”

On the positive side, in good times California’s economy continues to outshine most of the U.S. In 13 of the past 20 years, the state’s annual economic growth has surpassed the national rate.

But California has always been a boom-and-bust state, and recessions play out worse here than elsewhere. The recession of the early 1990s, the dot-com bust at the turn of the century and the Great Recession all hit California harder than most of the rest of the country.

Identity of plane crash victim released

The pilot who died in the plane crash near the Minden airport on Feb. 19 has been identified as Stephen Filice, 64, of Minden.

Filice was flying back from Bakersfield when he had mechanical difficulty. He was unable to make it to the runway, crashing about one-half mile from the airport.

The wreckage of the twin engine Piper PA-34 Seneca was located in the vicinity of Hobo Hot Springs, west of Highway 395 and south of Plymouth Drive.

The incident is being investigated by the Federal Aviation Administration.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

McClintock rival stretching truth about her résumé

By Emily Cadei, Sacramento Bee

Managed half of America's foreign aid budget. Rewrote the U.S.-India defense strategy. Adviser to a four-star admiral.



Jessica Morse

These are some of the highlights of Jessica Morse's career that the 35-year-old Democrat likes to emphasize on the campaign trail. They are also some of the talking points that are drawing fire from critics, many of whom support a Democratic opponent in the race for California's 4th Congressional District, which is centered in Roseville. They accuse her of "taking credit for things that she did not do."

The truth is somewhere in between. A deep dive by The Sacramento Bee into Morse's background and America's foreign relations bureaucracy found that Morse, the front-runner among three Democrats bidding to unseat Republican Rep. Tom McClintock, built a serious and successful career within the military, State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Letter: There needs to be an answer for SnowGlobe

To the community,

This isn't easy to talk about. The backlash has been very hurtful and without compassion. I'm not against SnowGlobe, but the idea of having several festivals a year as things are now is just not something I can endure.

Thirty-plus years ago I had a bike accident and have dealt with nerve pain and migraines ever since. There are times when the pain is so severe I wonder if it will ever end. It's a really hopeless feeling. Sometimes I can't even lie down and put my head on a pillow because the pain is so intense—even though sleep is what I need most. This doesn't happen as often anymore because I've figured out what I need to do to avoid it. What I depend on most is my home. It's my sanctuary—the place I can go to hit the reset button when I feel the pain coming on. SnowGlobe takes that sanctuary away from me and actually sets off the chain of events that lead to severe pain.

It's the cacophony of disembodied bass sounds that does it. First they enter my home through its structure and then invade

my body through my feet and chest—buzzing and booming relentlessly. I can deal with it OK for the first couple hours, but then my heart starts beating faster and faster and the muscles in my shoulders and neck feel like they're in a vice. I do all the things that would normally help, but at some point I become exhausted and begin to lose the battle. Nine plus hours a day for three days is just too much. Inflammation begins, nerves are on fire ... and then the migraine sets in. I'm in my own private hell.

Nothing can take the pain away at that point and it doesn't end when SnowGlobe ends. The damage takes a couple weeks to repair. This impacts my business as a freelance designer during what is always a busy time for me. My brain just can't function optimally with that much pain and distraction—especially when troubleshooting code or strategizing for a client.

Sometimes the festival quiets for a little while and there's a respite, but that booming, thumping, and buzzing always comes back with a vengeance. If it can get quieter like that for a couple hours, why not for the entire time? I've reached out to SnowGlobe and offered to help figure this out, but there was no response. The city has offered me tickets to SnowGlobe and suggested I rent my house out during the festival. But we live in the real world. I have a business to run and my husband has a job. Time off in the tourist industry during the holidays is just not something we can count on—especially if we start having multiple festivals a year.

Love you Tahoe. Now let's fix this.

Kristen Schwartz, South Lake Tahoe

Monkees duo to make concert stop in Tahoe

By Andy Greene, *Rolling Stone*

The Monkees' Michael Nesmith and Micky Dolenz are hitting the road in June for their first-ever tour as a duo. They're calling the tour *The Monkees Present: The Mike and Micky Show* (as opposed to simply "The Monkees") because their fellow surviving bandmate Peter Tork is not participating. Though the set centers around the classic group's vast catalog, Nesmith and Dolenz plan to roll out deep cuts and rarities.

"It will be very different than a Monkees show," Nesmith told *Rolling Stone* in January. "I mean, it'll be Monkees music, but there's no pretense there about Micky and I being the Monkees. We're not. We're the remnants."

The duo will be at Harrah's Lake Tahoe on June 9.

[Read the whole story](#)

SnowGlobe chasm grows as dissenters organize

By Kathryn Reed

While a segment of the South Lake Tahoe community is rallying to silence SnowGlobe, the fact is the contract calls for another year of the three-day electronic music festival.

"Absent violations, they are holding the 2018 event," interim

City Attorney Nira Doherty told *Lake Tahoe News*.

SnowGlobe is expected to be on the March 6 agenda as requested by the council. It will likely only be discussion since the contract is already in place.

At the Feb. 6 meeting a **settlement regarding the field** was approved by the council without any discussion. Promoter Chad Donnelly was at the meeting, but did not speak.

There is little gray area regarding the festival. People love it or hate.

It is an economic force. Hoteliers, restaurants and other tourism related businesses say the South Shore is no longer always busy over New Year's Eve. In years without snow, like 2017 was at that time, having an event like SnowGlobe brings people to town. About 12,000 people attend each of the three nights.

Donnelly says since the festival started in 2011 it has had a \$50 million impact to the local community.

Then there are the people who are literally rattled by the bass for three days. This isn't a two- to three-hour concert like what takes place at Harveys in the summer. It's about nine hours for three days. The Stateline concerts have an earlier curfew. SnowGlobe goes to midnight or 1:30am depending on the day.

No Globe Alliance is organizing to get rid of the event or move it from the community ball field on Al Tahoe Boulevard.

This group of local residents in a position paper stated, "This event has unfairly displaced local residents, invaded our homes with noise, closed access to whole neighborhoods, exposed our forests to unnecessary and dangerous potential for fire and attracted visitors who do not reflect the family friendly Lake Tahoe we want to be."

Donnelly put together a SnowGlobe summary that he has circulated among the business community, and which city staff has been privy to. *Lake Tahoe News* sent each of the electeds a copy of the document and asked for thoughts about SnowGlobe 2018. None of the five responded.

LTN asked Donnelly if there is a point when he might say enough is enough based on the struggles he has had here. No answer. However, his summary states he still wants a long-term contract.

While the city and Donnelly have a contract that covers 2018, there are out clauses.

“Paragraph XXIV ... allows either party to cancel the contract with five days’ notice by setting forth the specific violations of the special event agreement, temporary activity permit or facility use permit. The terminating party has to give the other party the chance to meet and correct violations before the termination is effective,” Doherty explained.

While the town may be divided about SnowGlobe, attendees want more. Pre-sales for 2018 are sold-out.

Opinion: Saving winter is about more than snow

By Jeremy Jones, New York Times

Ever since I took my first turns on a snowy golf course on Cape Cod, my life has revolved and evolved around snow. As a professional snowboarder, I’ve ridden the steepest mountains in the world and spent weeks outside on foot-powered

expeditions. Today I live in Truckee where I share my love of mountains with my wife and children. When we watch the Olympics, it still makes me joyous, but these days I also feel a little wistful.

As the world celebrates the achievements of athletes gliding over, down and across snow, I've been reflecting on what I see in the mountains and for the future of these very Games. And for good reason. A team of researchers led by scientists at the University of Waterloo has found that if global emissions of greenhouse gases are not significantly reduced, only eight of the 21 cities that have hosted the Winter Olympics will be cold enough to reliably do so again by the end of this century.

Closer to home, the snowpack in the Sierra is at just 14 percent of the historical average. I never imagined I would see this in the middle of February.

Read the whole story

Drone deliveries might be good for the environment

By Constantine and Joshua Stolaroff, The Conversation

There are more than 1 million drones registered in the U.S. Most of them belong to people flying them for fun, but a growing number are used commercially. Companies including Amazon, UPS, Google and DHL are already exploring ways to deliver packages with drones instead of trucks. Our new research has measured how that shift would change how the U.S. uses energy, and the resulting environmental effects.

We found that in some cases using electric-powered drones rather than diesel-powered trucks or vans could reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. But in other cases, using trucks – especially electric-powered ones – would be more efficient and cleaner.

The U.S. electricity sector has been rapidly transitioning to generating power with fewer greenhouse gas emissions. But transportation is still largely powered by fuels made from oil and is now the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. About one-quarter of transportation emissions, the equivalent of 415 million metric tons of carbon dioxide, comes from medium- and heavy-duty trucks, the kinds of vehicles that deliver freight to warehouses, businesses and consumers' homes.

Reducing the need for trucking by delivering some packages with electric drones could save fuel, and potentially carbon emissions. We modeled how much energy drone delivery would use, and how it would be different from the ways packages are delivered now.

Finding a drone's energy use

First, our team – led from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, and including researchers from Carnegie Mellon University, SRI International and the University of Colorado–Boulder – measured the energy use of quadcopter and octocopter-style drones carrying different payloads. The amount of energy a drone uses depends on how heavy the drone itself is, its batteries and whatever packages it's carrying – as well as other factors, including how fast it's moving and wind conditions.

For the purposes of making an overall estimate, we settled on a quadcopter drone capable of delivering a 1.1 pound package and an octocopter drone capable of delivering a 17.6 pound package, each with a range of about 2.5 miles. We considered a

range of battery technologies and fuels, but focused on lithium-based batteries for our base case, because that's what powers most current electric drones.

Comparing emissions

Even though it's fighting gravity to stay aloft, an electric drone uses much less energy per mile than a heavy steel delivery truck burning diesel fuel. But a delivery truck or van can carry many packages at once, so the energy needs and environmental effects need to be allocated per package.

Different delivery vehicles can run on diesel, natural gas, electricity or gasoline, each with various energy and emissions characteristics. We also included the environmental effects of making these fuels and of making electric vehicle batteries. The energy needed to turn crude oil into diesel fuel can add another 20 percent or more of greenhouse gases to the amount generated when the fuel is burned. And while battery manufacturing is improving, making batteries still generates carbon dioxide.

Then we calculated the amount of greenhouse gases emitted. Burning a gallon of diesel fuel emits about 10 kg of carbon dioxide, but emissions from electricity vary by region, depending on how it's generated. Some areas burn more coal and natural gas to generate power, while others have fewer fossil fuels and rely more on nuclear, hydropower, wind and solar power.

In general, electric power generation in the U.S. is getting cleaner over time. To show the range of energy needs and environmental effects, we paid particular attention to California, which has a low-carbon grid, and Missouri, which is in a carbon-intensive region.

Extra warehouses?

In addition, to serve drones with limited range, companies

would have to change how their delivery systems use energy. Drones could transport items in multiple legs, almost like the Pony Express or stagecoaches did with horses in the early days of the American West. Or, as Amazon is testing, smaller local warehouses could serve key delivery destinations within the drones' range.

We calculated that serving the city of San Francisco would require about four urban warehouses with drone bases. To cover the greater Bay Area would require dozens of new warehouses, each needing electricity and potentially natural gas to operate, just like other warehouses. We included this extra energy use in our estimates.

Small drone delivery can save emissions

Combining all the factors, we found that package delivery with small drones can be better for the environment than delivery with trucks. On average in the U.S., truck delivery of a package results in about 1 kg of greenhouse gas emissions. In California, drone delivery of a small package would result in about 0.42 kg of greenhouse gas emissions. That's a savings of 54 percent from the 0.92 kg of greenhouse gases associated with a package delivered by truck in that state. In carbon-intensive Missouri the improvement would be smaller – just a 23 percent reduction – but still better.

Small drones were better than any truck or van, whether powered by diesel fuel, gasoline, natural gas or even electricity.

Our findings about larger drones were less clear-cut. They were 9 percent better than diesel trucks when in California, but a lot worse when charged in Missouri. Because large drones need more kilowatt-hours to fly a mile, the carbon intensity of electricity really matters for large drones. Even in places where energy is typically generated from clean sources, it's probably better to deliver larger

packages with electric vans or electric trucks rather than large drones, because of the extra warehouse energy needed for drones.

But if you forgot that essential ingredient for tonight's dinner, our findings suggest it's much better to have the grocery store send it to you by drone rather than to take your car to the store and back.

Next steps for sustainability

Like any energy model, our estimates can change depending on the assumptions used. The amount of space needed to store packages for drones, and how much energy drones use, are important factors, as is the carbon footprint of the electricity used. In our paper, we explore how the results change under different assumptions.

For ground delivery vehicles, the best ways to improve efficiency involve increasing the number of packages delivered per mile or switching to electric delivery trucks or vans.

As more companies start using drones, package delivery will be one of their tasks. To maximize the potential environmental benefits, companies should focus on using smaller drones charged with low-carbon electricity to deliver light packages, and on limiting how much warehouse space is dedicated to serving delivery drones. Heavier packages are likely best suited for efficient, often electric, ground delivery vehicles. The biggest gains will come from improving warehouses' energy efficiency and, crucially, reducing the amount of electricity generated from carbon-intensive fuels. Now we just have to do something about the noise of all those propellers overhead.

Constantine Samaras is an assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering at Carnegie Mellon University and Joshua Stolaroff is an environmental scientist with the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

Leader wants more gains for Nev. college students

By Natalie Bruzda, Las Vegas Review-Journal

At a time when the state's colleges are inwardly focused on their own strategic growth, they're also being asked to look beyond Nevada's borders for ways to make gains in student success.

Under the direction of Chancellor Thom Reilly, all seven Nevada System of Higher Education schools selected two to three institutions outside the state with which to compare and contrast progress on metrics including graduation rates, retention rates and enrollment diversity.

"If we're just looking at ourselves in a vacuum, then we don't really have an opportunity to explore," said Margo Martin, acting president of the College of Southern Nevada.

[Read the whole story](#)

Bowman doesn't repeat, Alpine skier takes bronze



Maddie Bowman in the qualifying round in South Korea.
Photo/Brian Walker

Maddie Bowman will always be an Olympic gold medalist, but she was unable to add to her collection of hardware at this Winter Games.

Bowman, who grew up in Meyers and calls Sierra-at-Tahoe her home resort, was unable to land any of her three runs in halfpipe freestyle skiing. The event was Feb. 20 in South Korea – Feb. 19 Tahoe time.

After falling on her final run she laid in the bowl of the halfpipe in tears. Her mom, Sue Perpall, went up to make sure her daughter wasn't hurt beyond her pride being wounded. Bowman was hoping to defend her gold medal from 2014.

The U.S. did medal. Brita Sigourney who grew up in Carmel and trained at Alpine Meadows took home the bronze. In 2014, she finished sixth at the Sochi Games.

The gold went to Cassie Sharpe of Canada, while Marie Martinod of France earned silver.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*