Triathlon expected to impact traffic in Tahoe

Expect delays throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin this weekend as competitors in the Lake Tahoe Triathlon take to the road.

There are four events scheduled – a sprint course Aug. 23; and Olympic, half and duathlon courses Aug. 24. All events start from Sugar Pine Point State Park and all will use Highway 89 for the cycling portion. Runners will also be crossing Highway 89 back and forth from the Ron Beaudry Trail in the park but will not be running along the highway.

Highway 89 will not be closed during the events, but CHP officers will be conducting traffic control at several locations along the courses, including several turnaround spots for the cyclists. Those turnaround locations are just north of Sequoia Avenue in Sunnyside (Sunday only), just north of the lakeside entrance to Sugar Pine State Park, just south of 3 Ring Road in Rubicon Bay (Saturday only) and just north of Baldwin Beach Road near Camp Richardson.

Cyclists should be off the highway by 9am Saturday during the sprint triathlon and by 12:30pm Sunday during the half, which features a 56-mile bike ride, the longest of the events, and is the only race where cyclists will ride north of the state park along Highway 89.

State OKs road projects in El Dorado, Nevada counties

El Dorado and Nevada counties this week were allocated millions of dollars from the California Transportation Commission for road projects.

In total, 148 projects in the state will receive more than $430 million.

Last year, Gov. Jerry Brown signed legislation creating the Active Transportation Program. The new program replaced a patchwork of small grant programs with a comprehensive program.

Here are some of the significant regional projects that received allocations:

· El Dorado County: $7.8 million for a water-quality improvement project on Highway 89 from Cascade Road to north of Eagle Falls on the South Shore.

· El Dorado County: $4.1 million for a water-quality improvement project on Highway 89 from Meeks Creek Bridge to Wilson Avenue near Tahoma.

· El Dorado County: $6.7 million to rehabilitate 22 lane miles of Highway 49 from Coloma to Cool near Placerville.

· Nevada County: $4.5 million to replace failed gutter and drains on Interstate 80 at the Kingvale undercrossing to west of the Soda Springs overcrossing near Kingvale.

· Nevada County: $5 million to rehabilitate 22 lane miles of Highway 89 from the Nevada County line to the Sierra County line in and near Truckee.

174 applications for 76 medical pot dispensaries

By Cy Ryan, Las Vegas Sun

CARSON CITY – A total of 174 applications were submitted by Monday's deadline to operate 76 medical marijuana dispensaries in Nevada, the state Division of Public and Behavioral Health reported.

Of those, 140 came from Clark County, where the law allows 40 dispensaries. Those submitting applications for licenses had to pay a $5,000 non-refundable fee.

The division said it received another 263 applications for licenses for marijuana cultivation facilities, production facilities and testing labs.

Read the whole story

Soft drink makers thirst for new sweetener

By Karen Robinson-Jacobs, Dallas Morning News

Steps from the lobby of the Dr Pepper Snapple Group headquarters, a row of inauspicious Rubbermaid bins holds the crystallized future of the nation's third largest soft drink player.

The tubs contain sugar, the artificial sweetener aspartame and similar snowflake-like substances.

Like its competitors Coke and Pepsi, Plano-based Dr Pepper is deep in the hunt for a new sweetener that can replace existing artificial sweeteners. It has to taste like sugar yet be lower in calories. And it has to be natural.

The stakes are high. The Big Three soda makers lead an industry that’s rounding out a decade of declining sales.

As regular sodas, and now diets, lose their fizz, soft drink makers are spending increasing amounts of time and energy looking for ways to sweeten the pot.

Read the whole story

Women’s conference in Kings Beach

Rayona Sharpnack will be the keynote speaker at the inaugural Women as Change Makers: Leading and Thriving in the 21st Century conference in October.

Zawadisha, a Tahoe-based global women’s empowerment organization, is putting on the Oct. 3 event.

Sharpnack is the CEO of the Institute for Women’s Leadership. She has facilitated women’s leadership trainings for Fortune 500 companies such as Microsoft, Charles Schwab, and Hewlett Packard. She has also spoken about her trademarked approach to audiences at Harvard University, Stanford University School of Business, and UC Berkeley’s Hass School of Business.

“Women as Change Makers will bring together some of the most passionate, driven, and successful women in the Reno/Tahoe/Truckee area,” Sharpnack said in a statement. “It will create opportunities and provide resources for women to develop a deeper understanding of how to create breakthrough change with our money, time, and talent. The conversations we generate will change the way women think about their leadership, and enable them to scale their passion and skills beyond what they could have imagined, while simultaneously reconnecting with their inner needs.”

In addition to Sharpnack, the event will feature some of the most accomplished women entrepreneurs in the region as facilitators and speakers. Discussion topics will include Developing Transformational Leadership: Strategies To Enrich the Personal and Professional, and Creating Balance Through Health and Wellness.

The conference is from 8:30am-6pm at the North Tahoe Event Center in Kings Beach. Tickets may be purchased .

More people expected to travel Labor Day weekend

AAA Travel projects 34.7 million Americans will journey 50 miles or more from home during the Labor Day holiday weekend, the highest volume for the holiday since 2008 and a 1.3 percent increase from 2013.

Nearly 86 percent of travelers (29.7 million) will celebrate the holiday with a final road trip before summer comes to a close. The Labor Day holiday travel period is defined as Aug. 28-Sept. 1.

Most U.S. consumers are paying the lowest gas prices for early August since 2010. AAA expects gas prices to have little impact on the number of people traveling for Labor Day, though lower prices could help make travel more affordable. Barring a major development, such as a Gulf Coast hurricane, prices are likely to remain relatively low leading up to the holiday weekend compared to recent years. The current price of gas is $3.44 compared to $3.59 on Labor Day last year.

According to AAA's Leisure Travel Index, hotel rates for AAA Three Diamond lodgings are expected to increase 6 percent from one year ago with travelers spending an average of $171 per night compared to $161 last year. The average hotel rate for AAA Two Diamond hotels has risen 9 percent with an average cost of $125 per night.

Weekend daily car rental rates will average $51, the same as last year. Airfares have risen 2 percent, with the average round-trip, discounted fare for the top 40 U.S. routes costing $219, up from $214 last year.

Mass casualty training drill to test Tahoe crews

By Kathryn Reed

The Angora Fire of 2007 taught South Lake Tahoe officials a lot of things. But much of what needed to be improved was not implemented until this year. And those changes are about to be tested.

On Monday, a C130 airplane from the National Guard will be on the tarmac as though it crashed at Lake Tahoe Airport with

more than 40 people on board. Injured passengers will be taken to Barton Memorial Hospital; others will be readied to be airlifted to regional trauma centers, though not actually flown. First responders from Reno and Sacramento have been invited to participate.

Aug. 25 is designed to be the largest drill South Lake Tahoe fire and police have had in years. Neighboring agencies will also be participating, including Barton. The recreation center will be the Red Cross center, just as it was during Angora.



South Lake Tahoe Fire Chief Jeff Meston talks about preparations for the Aug. 25 drill. Photos/Kathryn Reed

But it’s not just the normal emergency crews that will be deployed. Other city staff members are integral to the process to make sure everything works. Planning, logistics, finance and operations are the main components. Per city code, the city manager is the incident commander, however it’s the fire chief who is in charge of the local Office of Emergency Services. The planning department will lead planning, logistics falls to parks and recreation, finance is finance, and operations involves police, fire and public works.

“We really had to reinvent the emergency operations plan,”

Fire Chief Jeff Meston told *Lake Tahoe News*.

That is one reason he was hired by City Manager Nancy Kerry – for his experience in such matters.

“My concern was since Angora the city hasn’t had any ongoing training since that major event,” Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*. “I hope this becomes a regular part of the city’s role and responsibility.”

Communication at the start of the Angora Fire was atrocious. Part of the training has addressed that component. This also includes what is supposed to be better information getting to the media so they in turn can relay it to the public.

Evacuating the area during Angora proved to be another challenge, especially on that Tuesday when the fire jumped Highway 89 and Tahoe Keys residents were told to evacuate. The city, under Kerry’s direction, ordered evacuation signs that can be installed where needed. She plans in the coming months to work neighborhood by neighborhood to acquaint people with how best to leave their home depending on where the emergency is.

Meston revamped the training manual. It details who is to do what, and who the alternates are in case that person isn’t available. He made sure everything conforms to current county, state and federal requirements. If it doesn’t, there is the potential threat of state and federal dollars being withheld.

Part of the City Council chambers has been reconfigured with modernized technology.

Emergency power supply for cell phones is in place. Vests for those in charge have been bought.

Every city employee has gone through training. There is a phone tree as well as a plan to call in people who are not working at that hour. The paperwork process was simplified.

Forms that need to be filled out have been put on computers to simplify the process.

All of the upgrades cost the city less than $5,000.

In the event the airport were to be off limits as the emergency center, the city has two other locales designated in town.

Meston said every disaster – no matter where it happens – provides first responders with lessons.

“We also learned from San Francisco,” he said of the 2013 Asiana crash at SFO. “One of the important things is we try not to run over people. That is not good.”



Fire Capt. Mark WyGant with Legos built the Lake Tahoe Airport crash scene to scale.

The drill

It will be determined that day if air space at Lake Tahoe Airport is off-limits.

The drill will involve many of the six helicopters that are within a 30-minute flight from South Lake Tahoe coming in, as well as fixed-wing aircraft. All that air support is necessary because Barton’s trauma capabilities are limited and many air

ambulances can take two people at the most.

Triage tags will be placed on the California Conservation Corps members who will be made up as the plane crash victims. Some will go to Barton, others to the rec center. And while normally victims would not be transported to a shelter, some concessions need to be made for a drill.

Still, it would be the Red Cross' responsibility to reunite victims with families.

One thing Meston will be looking for in his men and women is how they deal with this being a hazardous materials situation. A downed plane will have fuel that is ready to explode.

The California Highway Patrol is expected to be filming the incident from the air. This will be one way to assess how well everyone did. A debriefing will occur afterward. The drill will also be evaluated by people not affiliated with any local agency.

Adding to the potential chaos of the event is that this will be the first day of school for Lake Tahoe Unified.

And while most city resources will be devoted to this event, if there is a real emergency, those calls will take precedence.

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Notes:

- The drill is Aug. 25 from 10am-12:30pm.
- The training takes place at Lake Tahoe Airport, Barton Memorial Hospital and South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center.
- To sign up for reverse 911 notifications in El Dorado County go online, then click on the image of the phone, cell phone and "@" symbol to fill out the form. Here is a link for Douglas County residents to sign up. South

Lake Tahoe residents may signup here for various alerts.

Editorial: Time to replace old water pipes

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the Aug. 20, 2014, Sacramento Bee.***

After decades of neglect, the bill is coming due – in the neighborhood of $70 billion in water system fixes needed statewide, according to one estimate.

The $7.5 billion water bond on the November ballot would provide some help. The bond includes four pots of money that could potentially be used to replace or repair old pipes: $510 million in competitive grants for regional water management projects; $260 million in grants for small community wastewater projects; $260 million in grants and loans for small community safe drinking water projects; and $100 million for water use efficiency and conservation.

This, however, is primarily the responsibility of local agencies, and the tab is largely going to be paid by their customers.

Even when aging pipes don't break, they exact a cost – the loss of treated water that leaks before making it to homes and businesses. Residents who are being urged, or ordered with the threat of fines, to conserve have a right to expect better.

No one knows exactly how much water is leaking because there's no requirement or standard reporting procedure for the state's

362 urban water suppliers. Based on audits voluntarily submitted to the state in 2010, the average loss was 10 percent, with a range of 5 percent to 30 percent.

Read the whole story

Recovery time critical after endurance event

By Amanda MacMillan, Outside

Hal Koerner, one of ultrarunning's best, once shared with us what University of Oregon track coach Bob Bowerman told athletes after a big win: "The next day, you just start again. Nobody cares what you did the day before." Certainly motivational stuff, but don't take it too literally.

Definitely take some time off, especially if this is your first ultramarathon, Ironman, or other type of extreme race. Your body needs time to recover, say the coaches we spoke with—but just as importantly, so does your mind.

"Physically we are seeking recovery on two levels—superficial soreness and deeper-level hormonal recovery," says Duncan Callahan, an Altra Running elite athlete and official coach for this year's Leadville Trail 100 (a race he's won twice). "Training for and competing in extreme long distance events is not normal and not very healthy either, and I encourage folks to look at the long term when it comes to their training and racing."

Callahan recommends his 100-mile racers take four to seven days off completely from running and training, but not from

physical activity altogether; he does suggest easy cycling (think biking to the store), walking (not extreme hiking), and floating, swimming, or jogging in the water. “I encourage folks to do what they can to promote movement in a gentle fashion,” he says. “This will help with circulation, blood sugar control, and any mental anxiety from taking time off from training.”

After this first few recovery days, he allows his clients to resume light jogging, but no more than every other day for 15 to 45 minutes. If you have another immediate goal on your calendar, he says, you can start training again at about the two-week mark, once you’re feeling 100 percent again.

Read the whole story

Signs announce arrival to Lake Tahoe Watershed



Drivers now know they are in the Lake Tahoe Watershed. Photo/Provided

Gateway signs along three Nevada highways leading into the

Lake Tahoe Basin have been installed to bring awareness to the watershed.

“The signs are meant to help remind the millions of people who visit Lake Tahoe each year that they are entering a special place and have a duty to help protect its famously clear waters and environment,” a Tahoe Regional Planning Agency spokesperson said in a press release.

The signs are near Daggett Summit on Kingsbury Grade, Spooner Summit on Highway 50 and on the Mount Rose Highway. The signs read, “Entering the Lake Tahoe Watershed – Help Protect It!”

Money from the signs came from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection as well as funding from the Lake Tahoe license plate program. At the start $12,000 was budgeted for each sign.

“The cost of the three gateway signs was actually about $35,000 each,” Tom Lotshaw, spokesman for TPRA, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The goal is to find funding to put signs on the California side, too.