

Sierra Nevada snow a fraction of normal



An inversion this week over Lake Tahoe is keeping temps too warm to make snow. Photo/John Gomez

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

The last time California officials conducted their snow survey near Echo Summit, a month ago, the ground was practically barren.

This time there was snow. Just not a lot of it.

The Department of Water Resources' monthly snow survey at Phillips Station revealed a meager 13.6 inches of snow, or 14 percent of historical average. It was the latest evidence of a dry winter that has conjured up fears of another drought.

Opinion: State of Jefferson different from all the rest

By Terry Gherardi

The media blitz about New California has brought great attention and concern for many in our Jefferson counties, but perhaps even greater confusion for Californians, or, “here we go again,” as stated by many in the news media. This is in reference to the various movements or actions under way to separate or secede from California.

The only similarity between State of Jefferson and New California is both movements are looking to separate under Articled 4, Section 3 of the U.S. Constitution. What sets us apart from New California and others is that State of Jefferson and Citizens for Fair Representation is about representation.

Jan. 6, 2016 – The date when all 21 counties completed filing declarations/petitions with the secretary of state and Legislature, seeking equal/fair representation and/or to separate (not secede) from the state of California. This was followed by tens of thousands of emails, letters, phone calls, faxes and visits to legislative offices, by constituents, requesting their elected representatives author a Bill or Resolution to resolve the imbalance of representation; the worst of all 50 states. All requests went ignored.

May 8, 2017 – Citizens for Fair Representation filed a lawsuit

against Secretary of State Alex Padilla for lack of representation and dilution of vote. In September, the first hearing was held in the U.S. Federal District Court and CFR is currently awaiting the date to be scheduled for the second hearing.

Who are the rest and what is the difference?

State of New California: Still includes many counties of the greater Bay Area and Southern California who would still retain the majority seats in both chambers of their new state legislature, or same imbalance of representation. As far as the odds of the California state Legislature approving their separation from the state, on Jan. 25 in a New California website survey, Californian's were asked "would you support the State of New California?" 90 percent of 20,000, responded no.

Tim Draper's three-way state split: Petitions are currently being circulated for an initiative on the November ballot to split the state into three. One cannot split a state by just a vote of the people. It still has to be approved by the state Legislature and U.S. Congress. Stan Statham tried this in 1992, and a majority of the northern counties did in fact vote yes, as did the state Assembly, but it failed to pass in the state Senate.

Yes California, Calexit: Once again, circulating a second round of petitions for a ballot initiative to secede from the United States, forming its own country. If they gather the required number of signatures to place on the November, ballot and voters approve, this would have to be placed on another ballot on the next general election (2020). If voters were to approve, both the United States and California Constitutions would have to be amended.

John Cox, Neighborhood Legislation: Watch for this initiative on this year's election ballot. Because the state Assembly and

Senate districts have grown so large; one assembly member for every 500,000 and one senator for every million, the Cox initiative, divides each of those huge districts into 100 neighborhoods – each with its own representative. Those 100 representatives in each district will meet and select one of their number to go to Sacramento. The problem – there will still be just be 80 assembly members and 40 senators meeting and voting in the Capitol building. The one county of Los Angeles will still have 15 senators and we in the Northern rural area will still have only one senator representing 11 counties. Southern California and greater San Francisco Bay Area still rule.

Strong on Jefferson and representation

State of Jefferson and Citizens for Fair Representation: The largest movement and only movement in California, seeking equal/fair representation for all citizens, in all 58 counties of California and when successful, will also impact those citizens in about 30 other states. This resolve has been undertaken by a diverse number of plaintiffs, to include cities and counties, using the process allowed under our nations judicial system. As previously noted, the case is currently being heard in the U.S. Federal District Court, Eastern District, Sacramento Division, Judge Kimberly Mueller presiding.

Terry Gherardi is the public information officer for Citizens for Fair Representation dba State of Jefferson.

Why it costs so much to be

poor in the U.S.

By Karen Weese, Washington Post

Sirrea Monroe never expected her electricity to get shut off – she was only \$70 behind, and she planned to pay it off after her next paycheck. What happened next shocked her: “I called to get it turned back on, paid the \$70 with what was supposed to be my rent money, and then the lady says, ‘Great, thank you for your payment! Now I need \$250 for the ‘new customer’ deposit.’” Monroe, a convenience-store manager who has a child with special health needs, was in disbelief. “I’m like, ‘Look, I couldn’t afford \$70. Where am I going to get \$250?’ Now I’ll be more in the hole than I was before.”

Monroe had been a customer of the electric company for more than a decade, and the power had been off for less than an hour. It did not matter: She had to pay it. It took more than six months to pay off.

It has never been easy to be poor in America, but decisions made in company boardrooms about seemingly modest financial matters – about fees, fines, interest rates, minimum balances – make life far harder than it has to be for low-income families. This week, Bank of America announced its free, no-minimum-balance checking account, popular with many low-income customers, will require a \$1,500 minimum daily balance or \$250 in direct monthly deposit (totaling \$3,000 per year). If customers fall below that threshold, they will be forced to pay a monthly fee.

Read the whole story

Nev. gambling board investigates Wynn sex allegations

By Regina Garcia Cano, AP

LAS VEGAS — Casino mogul Steve Wynn is under investigation after sexual misconduct allegations were leveled against him, Nevada gambling regulators announced Tuesday.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported Friday that a number of women said they were harassed or assaulted by Wynn, and that one case led to a \$7.5 million settlement with a manicurist.

Wynn has vehemently denied the allegations, which he attributed to a campaign led by his ex-wife.

[Read the whole story](#)

Overcrowding cancels EDC supes' VHR meeting



Hundreds of people came out for the Feb. 1 El Dorado County Board of Supervisors meeting. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Thursday night's El Dorado County Board of Supervisors' meeting in South Lake Tahoe was canceled because the venue was too small to accommodate all the people who turned out.

The meeting was in the South Lake Tahoe City Council chambers at Lake Tahoe Airport. Fire officials said there were too many people in the room. In addition to that, the county had no way of operating the city's audio/visual equipment so the screen in the lobby could not be turned on for the overflow crowd to watch the proceedings.

The lone item on the Feb. 1 agenda was vacation home rentals.

The meeting will most likely be rescheduled at a facility owned by Lake Tahoe Unified School District, which can house more people. Per state law the date has to be disclosed a minimum of 72 hours before it would start.

Originally just the supervisors' ad hoc committee made up of Sue Novasel and Mike Ranalli was to convene. It became a full

board meeting when an anonymous complaint was filed against Novasel alleging she had a conflict of interest when it came to VHRs because of her husband's business.

It was determined this week by the Fair Political Practices Commission that Novasel has no conflict. This means she can participate in all discussions and votes pertaining to VHRs, whether it's at the county level or the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, of which she is a board member.

This also means when the meeting is rescheduled it's possible the county will choose for it to revert back to a meeting of the ad hoc committee and not the entire board. The board usually only meets once a year in Tahoe, and that is in August.

Prior to being told the meeting was canceled people had the opportunity to place dots on boards indicating what they like and don't like about the short-term rentals.

Under problems the choices were:

- Unfamiliar people in the neighborhood
- Strain on law enforcement
- Decrease in property values
- Parking
- Noise
- Unpermitted/unregulated units
- Loss of long-term residents
- Decrease in long-term housing/increase in rents
- Safety, such as wildland fires.

The choices for benefits of VHRS included:

- Increase in transient occupancy tax
- Encourages maintenance, upkeep of property
- Local jobs
- Increase in property values
- Supplemental income
- Expands tourism market.

This is a **link to the Feb. 1 agenda item**, with supporting material. It is likely to look the same whenever the meeting actually happens.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- SnowGlobe organizers want people to take this **survey**. Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce took a survey about the impact of SnowGlobe. Here are the **results**.
- South Lake Tahoe AAUW will host Carl Hasty from the Tahoe Transportation District on Feb. 10. He will be discussing basin transit issues. The free talk will be at 10:30am in the Aspen Room of Lake Tahoe Community College.
- Carson Valley Inn has some well-known country music stars booked for this summer. Granger Smith will be returning June 16. Two weeks later Clint Black will command the stage in TJ's Corral on June 29. Trace Adkins will be in the house on July 14.
- February is I Love Reading month at the South Lake Tahoe Library. Register and **log reading online** to win a prize after seven hours of reading. Open to all ages. Sponsored by

Friends of the Library.

• The husband and wife indie folk-rock duo known as You Knew Me When will be at South Lake Brewing in South Lake Tahoe on Feb. 2, 6:30pm. No Cover.

Scholarships available for avalanche safety courses

The women of the Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows ski patrol have created scholarships for avalanche safety education through the Sierra Avalanche Center.

The calendar proceeds, which exceeded \$20,000, will support community scholarships and patrol educational development for multiple years.

Applications for the scholarships are open now on the **Sierra Avalanche Center website** and available for Level 1 Avalanche Courses (separate courses for women and teens/young adults), Pro Level 1 Course and an Instructor Training Course. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and courses will be taught throughout the 2018 winter.

The calendar, which was shot over the 2015-16 season, showcased the 13 female patrollers from the Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows ski patrol teams and featured photography by Keoki Flagg.

Trifecta moon event over Lake Tahoe



Photo/John Gomez

South Shore resident John Gomez captured the lunar trifecta this week in a series of photos.



Photo/John Gomez

He shot them from the top of Kingsbury Grade.



Photo/John Gomez

The Jan. 31 full moon was the second of the month, making it a blue moon. It was also a supermoon, meaning it was at its closest point to the Earth. Then there was a total lunar eclipse, known as a blood moon.



Photo/John Gomez

The next time all three will happen at once again will be in 2037. The previous occurrence was in 1982.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Nev. sports books win record \$248.7M in 2017

By Todd Dewey, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Nevada sports books won a record \$248.7 million in 2017, a hold of 5.1 percent from a record betting handle of \$4.8

billion, according to a year-end report released Wednesday by the Gaming Control Board.

The win eclipsed the previous record set in 2015 by almost \$17 million. The handle increased for the eighth consecutive year. It has climbed from \$2.5 billion wagered in 2009 to \$3.4 billion in 2012 to \$4.2 billion in 2015 to almost \$5 billion last year.

Read the whole story

Squaw-Alpine working to use 100% renewable energy

Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows is partnering with Liberty Utilities so the ski resorts can be powered by 100 percent clean, renewable energy sources. This could be achieved as early as December.

Twenty-five percent of Liberty Utilities' current power mix includes renewables. It intends to develop and deploy a project or series of projects to achieve procurement of renewables equal to 100 percent of the electricity use of Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows as well as other customers with 100 percent renewable electricity goals.

"We take accountability for our company's contribution to CO₂, hence our longstanding and unyielding internal focus on reducing our overall footprint," said Andy Wirth, president and COO of Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows, said in a statement. "We're glad to finally advance on this key, strategic level changeover to 100 percent renewable-sourced energy."

With this change, Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows will reduce its total annual carbon footprint, including fuels and other sources unrelated to the power grid, from 13,078 metric tons to an estimated 6,682 metric tons – a 49 percent reduction which is equivalent to the emissions generated by the annual electric use of 959 homes.