

Conglomerate that includes Squaw has a name – Alterra

The parent company of Squaw Valley, Alpine Meadows, Mammoth Mountain and nine other ski resorts finally has a name – Alterra Mountain Company.

This is the blending of affiliates of KSL Capital Partners and Henry Crown and Company.

Alterra is a fusion of the words altitude and terrain/terra.

In the coming months the company will announce season pass products that will provide access to all of its existing mountains, plus additional benefits.

Alterra Mountain Company is headquartered in Denver. The resorts it owns include: Squaw Valley, Alpine Meadows, Mammoth Mountain, June Mountain and Big Bear Mountain Resort in California; Steamboat and Winter Park in Colorado; Stratton in Vermont; Snowshoe in West Virginia; Tremblant in Quebec, Blue Mountain in Ontario; Deer Valley in Utah; and CMH Heli-Skiing & Summer Adventures in British Columbia.

Dogs go missing after car crashes

By Elizabeth Olveda, KTVN-TV

Two dogs have gone missing after separate car accidents over the past couple of weeks. It serves as an unfortunate reminder that pets should be safely secured when riding in a car.

When it comes to pets, it's always better to be proactive rather than reactive. Microchipping your pet is the most important first step for ensuring their safety.

On Jan. 9 a pup went missing after a car crash on Lake Tahoe Boulevard. South Lake Tahoe Fire Rescue says they searched the area, but were unable to find the dog, a chihuahua in a pink sweater.

Read the whole story

Douglas County beefing up emergency alert system

Douglas County Emergency Management has received Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approval and credentials to access the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS).

The IPAWS system is said to be a major improvement in public alerting and warning capabilities. The Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) program does not require any sign-up or registration, it's already active on smartphones. This enables local emergency officials to send warning messages to those either directly or potential directly impacted by an incident, such as wildland fire, flood or missing children through Amber Alerts.

These warning messages are only used for major events and not routine messaging.

In addition to the IPAWS, Douglas County also provides alerts through a reverse 911 system. People need to register their

cell phones **online** to receive these alerts.

2017 a record wet, hot year in Reno

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

Last year was the wettest on record in Reno and among the warmest.

The 13.73 inches of precipitation at the Reno-Tahoe International Airport during the 2017 calendar year surpassed the prior record of 13.23 in 1983.

The mean average temperature of 56.1 made it the fifth-hottest on record and nearly one degree above the 10-year average.

Read the whole story

Brown's final budget stashes billions in reserve

By Adam Ashton, Sacramento Bee

In his 16th and final year as governor, Jerry Brown is using a surplus to stash away billions of dollars in reserves that would help his successor weather a recession while boosting

some of his signature programs.

He's proposed a \$190.3 billion spending plan on Wednesday that accelerates funding for his 2013 education law and uses new gas tax revenue to fund \$4.6 billion in new transportation projects.

The centerpiece of his plan, though, is a \$5 billion jolt to the state's so-called rainy day fund, which he championed with a 2014 ballot initiative to steady California's boom and bust finances.

Read the whole story

Flu season gripping South Shore

By Vicki McKenna

Influenza, or flu, activity has increased significantly over the recent weeks in the South Lake Tahoe area. The majority of influenza cases this year have been typed as A(H3N2), a particularly nasty strain of the flu that has been associated with more hospitalizations and complications.

Do yourself, your family and your community a favor by recognizing flu symptoms and avoid spreading it.



Vicki McKenna

Influenza is characterized by the abrupt onset of fever, muscle aches, sore throat, and a nonproductive cough. Unlike the common cold, flu symptoms like fever and headache come on quickly. Each individual may experience symptoms differently.

Your best defense against influenza is getting a flu shot. Not only does this prevent the flu, it shortens how long you suffer from symptoms if you do get sick. There are plenty of vaccines available in the Tahoe basin at local pharmacies, and it is not too late in the season to get a flu shot.

Protect yourself using common sense measures – wash your hands frequently. If you suspect you have influenza, stay home. Get a diagnosis to confirm if you do have the flu by seeing your care provider immediately, or contact Barton Urgent Care at 775.589.8900.

If you do have influenza, antiviral drugs are available and work best when started within 48 hours of illness onset. Remember, healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning the day before symptoms develop and up to seven days after becoming sick.

Vicki McKenna is the infection preventionist at Barton Health.

Nevada to review casino response plans

By Jeff German, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Nevada officials have embarked on a broad campaign to improve oversight of casino emergency response plans in the wake of failings exposed in a Review-Journal investigation.

“We recognize there’s a shortcoming here, and we’ve got an aggressive plan to fix it going forward,” said Caleb Cage, chief of the Nevada Division of Emergency Management.

The Review-Journal reported last month that state officials had been lax in forcing casinos across Nevada to comply with a 2003 law that requires resorts to file emergency plans.

[Read the whole story](#)

El Dorado County VHR issue getting political

By Kathryn Reed

A bit of political gamesmanship appears to be overshadowing the vacation home rental debate in El Dorado County.

Jan. 9 was the last agenda Supervisor Shiva Frentzen got to set as chair of the board because the annual reorganization occurred that day. (Supervisor Mike Ranalli is now chair and Supervisor Sue Novasel is vice chair.)

Frentzen put an urgency ordinance calling for a moratorium on

VHRs in the unincorporated area of the Lake Tahoe Basin on the agenda.

Novasel said until she read her packet prior to Tuesday's meeting she had no knowledge the item was going to be on the Jan. 9 agenda.

This is significant because Novasel is the rep from the basin, and she along with Ranalli are the subcommittee dealing with VHRs.

"We didn't see it coming," Novasel said of the agenda item.

Frentzen told *Lake Tahoe News*, "The residents of South Lake Tahoe have been reaching out to my office to share their overwhelming concerns about VHRs in their neighborhoods. The BOS had a **meeting in South Lake Tahoe in October** and has formed a sub-committee to address this issue. The residents continue to voice their concerns with safety and quality of life in their communities that is caused by VHRs in the established residential neighborhoods."

What Novasel doesn't understand is why the subcommittee was not allowed to do its job before a vote was taken by the board.

Frentzen's item, which required a super majority to pass, failed 3-1. She was the only yes vote.

Supervisor Brian Veerkamp proposed a motion to not adopt the urgency ordinance. That passed 3-1, again with Frentzen in the minority.

The reason all five members weren't voting is that Novasel had to recuse herself. That is because an anonymous complaint was filed with the Fair Political Practices Commission against her. The person alleged a conflict of interest with Novasel's husband potentially issuing loans to VHR owners and therefore the supervisor would financially benefit from keeping the

short-term rentals.

A letter dated Jan. 3 from the FPPC to Novasel states, "After review of the complaint and additional information obtained, staff found that the complaint contained insufficient evidence of a conflict of interest violation of the Act; therefore, the Enforcement Division will not open an investigation into this matter."

However, the division suggested she get a ruling from the FPPC's Legal Division. She is awaiting their answer, which should be forthcoming this month.

It is because of the lingering uncertainty with the FPPC that Novasel opted to recuse herself Tuesday from the VHR discussion and vote.

It also means her status on the subcommittee is tenuous. And that is why instead of the subcommittee having a gathering in Tahoe on Feb. 1 to discuss VHRs, it will be the entire board. (That meeting is at 6pm at Lake Tahoe Airport.)

"I don't believe I have a conflict of interest. We don't own a VHR. We don't do direct service (with them)," Novasel said of her husband's business, which she is not involved in. She equated it to a bank employee having a conflict if their institution gave a loan to the VHR owner – and that has never been deemed a conflict.

She pointed out that in a tourism-based economy many people have secondary ties to VHRs (snow removal, cleaners, etc.), which would make it difficult for anyone from this area to be elected without that potential dilemma.

With this being an election year, at the county level Novasel and Ranalli's seats are up. Both intend to run again. Painting one or both of them in a bad light regarding VHRs could taint people before the entire board even votes. Ranalli's district covers Apple Hill, which has its own rental issues.

“Because it was anonymous I have no idea who filed the complaint. It is political season and issues will come up that perhaps would not be an issue until it is political season,” Novasel told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Filing the complaint could be an attempt to discredit Novasel’s ability to represent the Meyers area in particular. She was disqualified from voting on the Meyers Area Plan because of owning property in the plan area.

Novasel wants the subcommittee process to have a chance to work; which means gathering more input from the public and working with staff. It’s likely the tax collector will no longer have oversight of the issue and instead it will be code enforcement dealing with violations. There is also talk of bringing in a company like **Host Compliance**, which South Lake Tahoe recently did, to go after unpermitted properties and help with other issues.

The county only has VHR regulations in the basin. That is another task of the subcommittee – to make recommendations for the rest of the county.

Opinion: Understanding dieting

By Traci Mann and A. Janet Tomiyama

Diets do not work.

The scientific evidence is clear as can be that cutting calories simply doesn’t lead to long-term weight loss or health gains.

We suspect most dieters have realized this by now too. And yet, here they are again, setting the same weight loss goal this year that they set last year.

The only people who don't seem to appreciate this are people who have never dieted. It's particularly hard for them to believe because it doesn't square with their own eating experiences.

Take Nicky, for instance. She eats sensibly much of the time, with some junk food here and there, but it doesn't really seem to affect her weight. She's not a dieter. She is Naturally Thin Nicky, and it's not surprising that she believes what she sees with her own eyes and feels in her own body. Nevertheless, Nicky has it wrong.

We are researchers who have been studying why diets fail for a long time. We have seen that diet failure is the norm. We have also studied the stigma that heavy people face, and witnessed the blame game that happens when dieters can't keep the weight off. From a scientific perspective, we understand that dieting sets up an unfair fight. But many Nickys we've encountered – on the street, in the audience when we give talks, and even fellow scientists – get confused when we say dieting doesn't work, because it doesn't square with their own observations.

An unfair fight

Nicky thinks she's thin because of the way she eats, but actually, genetics play a huge role in making her thin. Nicky gets all the credit though, because people see the way she eats and they can't see her genes.

Many heavy people wouldn't be lean like Nicky even if they ate the same foods in the same quantities. Their bodies are able to run on fewer calories than Nicky's, which sounds like a good thing (and would be great if you found yourself in a famine).

However, it actually means that after eating the same foods and using that energy to run the systems of their body, they have more calories left over to store as fat than Nicky does. So to actually lose weight, they have to eat less food than Nicky. And then, once they've been dieting a while, their metabolism changes so that they need to eat even less than that to keep losing weight.

It's not just Nicky's genetically given metabolism that makes her think dieting must work. Nicky, as a non-dieter, finds it really easy to ignore that bowl of Hershey's Kisses on her co-worker's desk. But for dieters, it's like those Kisses are jumping up and down saying "Eat me!" Dieting causes neurological changes that make you more likely to notice food than before dieting, and once you notice it, these changes make it hard to stop thinking about it. Nicky might forget those chocolates are there, but dieters won't.

In fact, dieters like them even more than before. This is because other diet-induced neurological changes make food not only taste better, but also cause food to give a bigger rush of the reward hormone dopamine. That's the same hormone that is released when addicts use their drug of choice. Nicky doesn't get that kind of rush from food.

And besides, Nicky is full from lunch. Here again, dieters face an uphill battle because dieting has also changed their hormones. Their levels of the so-called satiety hormone leptin go down, which means that now it takes even more food than before to make them feel full. They felt hungry on their diets all along, but now feel even hungrier than before. Even Nicky's regular non-diet lunch wouldn't make dieters full at this point.

Where's your willpower?

People see Nicky and are impressed with her great self-control, or willpower. But should it really be considered

self-control to avoid eating a food when you aren't hungry? Is it self-control when you avoid eating a food because you don't notice it, like it or receive a rush of reward from it?

Anyone could resist the food under those circumstances. And even though Nicky doesn't really need willpower in this situation, if she did need it, it would function quite well because she's not dieting. On top of everything else, dieting disrupts cognition, especially executive function, which is the process that helps with self-control. So dieters have less willpower right when they need more willpower. And non-dieters have plenty, even though they don't need any.

And of course, even if Nicky were to eat those tempting foods, her metabolism would burn up more of those calories than a dieter's metabolism.

So Nicky is mistakenly being given credit for succeeding at a job that is not only easy for her, but easier than the job dieters face.

The cruel irony is that after someone has been dieting for some time, changes happen that make it hard to succeed at dieting in the long run. It is physically possible, and a small minority of dieters do manage to keep weight off for several years. But not without a demoralizing and all-encompassing battle with their physiology the entire time.

A woman shopping in the produce department of a grocery store. People who are overweight often must learn to like healthy foods. UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, CC BY-SA It's easy to see why dieters usually regain the weight they lose on their New Year's resolution diet, and we have the following suggestions for when that happens: If you are a Nicky, remember the self-denial these dieters have subjected themselves to and how little they were eating while you treated yourself to decadent desserts. Be impressed with their efforts, and grateful that you don't have to attempt it.

If you are a dieter, remind yourself that you aren't weak, but that you were in an unfair fight that very few win. Change your focus to improving your health with exercise (which doesn't require weight loss), and resolve to choose a different New Year's resolution next year.

Traci Mann is a professor of psychology at the University of Minnesota and A. Janet Tomiyama is an associate professor of psychology at UCLA.

Bowman qualifies for finals at Snowmass

By Courtney Harkins, U.S. Ski and Snowboard

Battling rough weather in the latter half of the day, the Toyota U.S. Grand Prix freeski halfpipe and snowboard slopestyle qualifiers went off at Aspen's Snowmass Mountain in Colorado with 15 Americans qualifying for Friday's finals.

The women's freeski halfpipe went off without a hitch, with Olympic gold medalist Maddie Bowman (Meyers) celebrating her 24th birthday by leading the Americans in second place. Brita Sigourney (Carmel) was third and Olympic silver medalist Devin Logan (West Dover, Vt.) fourth. Carly Margulies (Mammoth Lakes) also made it into finals in eighth place with a solid second run.

But thick fog rolled in and heavy snow started during men's training. After delays throughout run one and before run two, the Americans stacked six skiers into the 10 spots. Aaron Blunck (Crested Butte, Colo.) led the U.S. Freeski Team men with an enormous 93.66-point first run and local boy Alex

Ferreira (Aspen, Colo.) won his heat. Both chose to not take a second run due to conditions and high first-run scores. Also taking spots in Friday's finals were Olympic gold medalist David Wise (Reno), Birk Irving (Winter Park, Colo.), Taylor Seaton (Avon, Colo.) and Olympic silver medalist Gus Kenworthy (Telluride, Colo.).

The women were able to get their snowboard qualifiers off cleanly, with Jessika Jenson (Rigby, Idaho) snagging the top spot and Ty Walker (Stowe, Vt.) also making finals. Jules Marino (Westport, Conn.) and Hailey Langland (San Clemente, CA) did not qualify.

The men squeaked in their first run of slopestyle qualifiers, but the increasing darkness and snow stopped a second run from happening. Three U.S. men qualified: Red Gerard (Silverthorne, CO), Ryan Stassel (Anchorage) and Chandler Hunt (Park City, Utah).

Friday's snowboard slopestyle and freeski halfpipe finals count as an Olympic qualifier. Bowman has met objective criteria for the U.S. Olympic Team with two podiums and would confirm her nomination with a first or second place at Snowmass. Already qualified for the U.S. Olympic snowboard slopestyle team are Jamie Anderson (Meyers) and Chris Corning (Silverthorne). Neither Anderson nor Corning are in attendance at Snowmass.