

Truckee commits to 100% renewable energy

Truckee became the 50th town in the United States to declare it would use 100 percent renewable energy.

The town council voted last week to use 100 percent clean electricity by 2030. The electeds also voted to have all sources of energy be renewables by 2050.

“Truckee’s commitment to 100 percent clean energy including electricity, heating, and transportation is good for our community and our planet. Our town is on the front lines of climate change and we understand how serious this is,” Truckee Mayor Morgan Goodwin said in a statement. “Reducing our emissions will create jobs and long-term economic sustainability as we uphold our responsibility as stewards of the environment.”

South Lake Tahoe made the commitment earlier this year to get its electricity from 100 percent renewables by 2032.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Hera

Hera (shown here) and Athena are 16- and 15-year-old mother and daughter. They would like a home together, as they have always lived together. They came to the shelter when their owner became unable to care for them.

As older cats, it will probably take longer for them to be adopted, but they are beautiful, sweet cats who deserve a good home for the rest of their lives.

Hera and Athena are spayed, microchipped, tested for FIV, and vaccinated. They are at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes.

Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet. For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go **online**.

– Karen Kuentz

STR looking at altering green waste collection



Green waste totes could replace cans full of yard debris. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

Specific bins for green waste may be coming to South Tahoe Refuse customers.

The garbage company, which operates on the South Shore in El Dorado and Douglas counties, conducted a pilot program this fall to see how customers liked the service.

About 125 households near Sierra House Elementary School were given a green 90-gallon garbage tote to use from Sept. 8-Oct 27. Only yard waste was to be deposited in the bin.

Decreasing injuries and lessening the cost at **Full Circle Compost** are the main reasons STR is contemplating the green waste can.

“Green waste is where we have the heaviest lifting,” Jeanne Lear with South Tahoe Refuse said. Bags or cans of waste can weigh 30 pounds.

The company’s workers’ comp bills went up 19.4 percent in the

last year. Lowering that bill by having employees stay healthy would presumably be a positive outcome with the totes.

STR reps gave an update on the pilot program to the South Lake Tahoe Waste Management Authority board in November.

STR retrofitted a truck in order to be able to mechanically lift the totes. Doing so on all of the trucks for all types of waste is not being talked about. But the company is contemplating green waste collection via a provided tote as becoming the norm. A final decision has not been made, though.

How many trucks to retrofit and the cost to customers need to be analyzed.

During the pilot there was a 95 percent participation rate, with households using it 57 percent of the time. Eighty-five percent liked the convenience. Overall, 72 percent preferred the tote. Almost half still had extra bags of yard waste to be picked up. About a third said storing the tote in winter would be problematic.

STR takes most of its green waste to Full Circle Compost in Minden. The company charges STR a fee for contamination, which is mostly the bags people put the waste in. Using the totes would eliminate much of the contamination as long as people adhered to putting in only green waste. In the pilot program the contamination level was less than 1 percent.

Getting more green waste out of normal trash collection would also help keep it from going to the landfill. All garbage companies in California are required to recycle 50 percent of the waste they collect – known as the diversion rate. The goal per the state is 75 percent in 2020. STR is currently at about 64 percent.

Opinion: Why Americans love diners

By Richard J.S. Gutman

Driving north on Highway 95 through Connecticut, I noticed a billboard advertising a local diner. Its immense letters spelled out: “Vegan, Vegetarian, Gluten-Free and Diner Classics.” I knew a seismic shift had occurred when Blue Plate Specials—hands-down favorites for nearly a century, such as meat loaf, hot turkey sandwiches, and spaghetti and meatballs—were last on a list of diner offerings.

Over their long history, diners have been a subtle part of our built environment and also our inner landscapes. They are as familiar as the language we speak and the comfort food we eat. Everyone loves diners.

There really is no other building like a classic diner: long and low, sheathed in glass, gleaming stainless steel and colorful porcelain enamel; often ringed in neon and punctuated by a flashy, sometimes flashing, sign; going and glowing at all hours, day and night.

The first diners showed up 135 years ago when Walter Scott served affordable fast food out of his horse-drawn wagon in Providence, R.I. Patrons stood on the street to eat their lunches in the same manner as the customers of today’s ubiquitous food trucks. These eateries were constructed by wagon builders; gradually a specialized industry developed to mass produce diners.

These classic diners were factory-built, from the 1920s onward, and thus conformed to regular dimensions and

proportions in order to be moved—by rail, barge and truck—from where they were manufactured to where they would operate. As a result, diners have a generic similarity to one another. But, because they are mostly individually owned, and made by different manufacturers, they have distinct personalities, based upon the people on both sides of the counter.

The diner interior is all business, where form follows function—"as utilitarian as a machinist's bench." The customer can see the short order cook reach into the icebox, work the griddle, and deliver the food in an astonishingly short amount of time. The back bar of the diner, beneath the glass-fronted changeable letter menu boards, is a tour-de-force of stainless steel or colorful tile, with a line of work stations filled with grills, steam tables, sandwich boards, coffee urns, multi-mixers, drink dispensers and display cases.

The "counter culture" inside diners is a reflection of their wide appeal. Commentators have long fixated on this, describing how this spirit manifests itself.

A 1932 article in *World's Work* depicted the all-inclusive range of patrons:

"The lunch wagon is the most democratic, and therefore the most American of all eating places. Actors, milkmen, chauffeurs, debutantes, nymphes du pave, young men-about-town, teamsters, students, streetcar motormen, messenger boys, policemen, white wings, businessmen—all these and more rub elbows at its counter."

Five years later, there was a one-page story in the *Literary Digest*:

"If you joined diner devotees at a quick 'cup o' java,' you'd find, if it were daytime, that you were rubbing shoulders mostly with horny-handed men in denim. If it were before dawn, you might be rubbing shoulders with men in tails, homeward bound from a night of revelry." (I love the fact that in 1937

there were people described as “diner devotees.”)

Just as important as the diners’ look and feel is their chow: Always affordable, it has continuously adapted to fit the public’s desires. The norm is home-style cooking, breakfast anytime, and food that is real, local and sustainable.

C. Oakley Ells in 1932 supplied his diner in Lackawanna County, Pa., with fresh eggs, milk and vegetables from his own Ells’ Sunnyside Farms, a stone’s throw down the road. In 2017, Champ’s Diner, in Woonsocket, R.I., identifies on their menu the name of the local farm that provides their eggs.

In San Diego, Ray and Herb Boggs operated the Airway Diner. Their July 1942 menu included an avocado cocktail appetizer (35 cents), a natural since San Diego County was the source of most avocados in the country. You wouldn’t find that on a diner on the East Coast at that time. The seafood of the day was grilled Catalina swordfish (85 cents), caught off nearby Santa Catalina Island.

Today the Silver Diner is a locally owned and operated chain of 14 units that set out in 1989 to create a diner for the 21st century. They have continually tweaked their offerings to serve the food that people want to eat. In 2006, Silver Diner was the first chain in the Washington, D.C., area to completely remove trans fats from their menus. Now they feature local farms that supply all-natural, antibiotic- and hormone-free meats and provide non-GMO produce in season.

I’ve studied the world of diners for more than 45 years, beginning when these classic stainless-steel eateries were believed to be a dying breed. But, to paraphrase the supposed Mark Twain quote: “The report of their demise is premature.”

Every year there are articles and TV news magazine stories that proclaim either the death or the rebirth of the diner. I admit I once believed that diners might go extinct. One of my earliest articles was “Diners are declining, but great ones

remain," published in the *Boston Globe*, in 1974. Truth be told, more than half of the diners I profiled in that story have been demolished.

But the other half have survived. What accounts for their longevity?

In 1975, the National Trust for Historic Preservation included a session on diners and gas stations in its yearly meeting. The *Christian Science Monitor* noted the tension in the discussion with "Roadside architecture: is it treasure or trash?"

By the 1980s, the Henry Ford Museum, in Dearborn, Mich., was restoring Lamy's Diner, a 1946 streamliner, built by the Worcester Lunch Car Company. This became the first of many diners to be installed as icons of our culture in museums. Also notable, vintage diners were resurrected, and new old-style diners—like the Silver Diner—began a comeback.

This was largely fueled by baby boomers seeking the comfort and nostalgia of their youth. The diner was put on a pedestal as an exemplar of what's good about America: mom-and-pop businesses; fresh, home-style food at a good value; and an individual experience that contrasted with the cookie-cutter fast food chains.

Now, the diner is clearly safe and here to stay. With great regularity, my Facebook feed will advise me of "The 21 Best Diners in America," according to the *Huffington Post*; "The Top 12 New England Diners," says *Boston* magazine; "13 Picture-Perfect LA Diners You've Never Heard Of," proclaims *EaterLA.com* (and of which, I might add, none is an actual diner); and "These Are the Cutest Diners In Every State," in the eyes of *Country Living*.

Social media keeps diners in the headlines, in our stream of consciousness, and constantly reminds us why we love these places. There's a magical something in that word that conjures

up a place where you feel at home, can have a great meal for a good price, and walk away satisfied and with a smile on your face.

The diner of the future will continue to change subtly and dramatically simultaneously: an American trait that makes it “feel the same” while ever accommodating the evolving tastes of its customers.

Richard J.S. Gutman is the foremost authority on the history and architecture of the diner. He has written three books on the subject.

What living on \$100,000 a year looks like

By Emma Bowman, NPR

A central question of debate leading up to the Senate’s passage of a sweeping tax overhaul plan asked which Americans need a boost. Economists say the Republicans’ selling point for previous iterations of their legislation, that the plan is designed to benefit the middle class, has a shaky foundation – that the rich are the big winners.

And the middle class is already struggling. The median household income is roughly \$59,000 a year. But around the country, even six-figure salaries for some single-person households don’t necessarily furnish financial security.

“People feel like they haven’t been getting ahead for a long time,” says Jim Tankersley, who covers taxes and the economy for the *New York Times*.

Read the whole story

Supermoon: The biggest full moon of 2017



The Dec. 3 supermoon is the only one of 2017.
Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

By Trevor Nace, Forbes

Tonight, skywatchers will be treated to the only supermoon (scientific name: perigee syzygy) in 2017. If you step outside you'll notice the Moon is especially large and bright, which

is because the moon is at its closest distance to Earth.

The perigee moon (prerequisite for a supermoon) exists because as the moon orbits the Earth it does so in an oval or elliptical shape, meaning sometimes the moon is closer to the Earth and other times it's farther. For a supermoon to exist, there must both be a full moon as well as a perigee moon, hence why the moon tonight will look especially close, full, and bright.

This is your opportunity in 2017 to see a supermoon. The most recent supermoon was around a year ago on Nov. 14, 2016.

Read the whole story

Water floods SLT streets after hydrant struck



Water fills South Lake Tahoe streets Dec. 3 after a fire hydrant was struck.

Photo/SLTFD

A car slid into a fire hydrant at Montreal and Moss avenues in South Lake Tahoe on Sunday afternoon.

There were no injuries in the Dec. 3 crash.

However, water ended up running down Moss to Pioneer Trail before South Lake Tahoe Public Utility District was able to turn off the water.

South Tahoe fire crews helped to clear the storm drains.

Roads in the region were slick with the overnight snow that fell on top of the rain-soaked streets. Temps kept the roads icy for the better part of the day, with the less traveled streets still potentially dangerous.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

CVS, Aetna deal may reshape health industry

By Michael J. de la Merced and Reed Abelson, New York Times

CVS Health said on Sunday that it had agreed to buy Aetna for about \$69 billion in a deal that would combine the drugstore giant with one of the biggest health insurers in the United States and has the potential to reshape the nation's health care industry.

The transaction, one of the largest of the year, reflects the increasingly blurred lines between the traditionally separate spheres of a rapidly changing industry and represents an

effort to make both companies more appealing to consumers as health care that was once delivered in a doctor's office more often reaches consumers over the phone, at a retail clinic or via an app.

The merger could position the combined entity as a formidable figure in a changing health care landscape where many of the players are trying to lower the high cost of care.

Read the whole story

Calif. may not be biggest threat to Nev. marijuana market

By Colton Lochhead Las Vegas Review-Journal

California is set to join the legal weed party Jan. 1 when recreational sales become official in the Golden State.

The state was one of four, including Nevada, that voted in 2016 to legalize the recreational use of marijuana. With sales projected to top \$5 billion once the market gets up and running, California's cannabis corner is expected to be by far the nation's largest.

Nevada's fledgling market got off to such a hot start this summer by selling more than \$85 million in recreational marijuana during the first three months of legal sales.

But having a big competitor nearby shouldn't be a problem.

Read the whole story

Mock bear boxes to be outlawed by STR



This construction bin on Gardner Mountain no longer closes all the way. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

Construction boxes are about to be banned by South Tahoe Refuse.

“I think South Tahoe Refuse should stop servicing these. They are not a proper garbage container,” Tom Bruen, attorney for the South Lake Tahoe Basin Waste Management Authority, said. “Otherwise they will proliferate, and they are not bear boxes.”

The containers are a couple feet tall. A kitchen can might fit inside, but not the standard 32-gallon trash container. A big problem is people are throwing trash in them without bagging it first. And being low to the ground allows them to easily be

buried in the snow.

Animals can get into them, and are even able to move them because they are not secure. This compares to bear boxes that are cemented into place.

John Tillman with STR said about 100 are in the company's service area, with many being in Nevada. He says they are a growing problem.

The waste management authority board said STR should send letters to customers using these devices to say they are not allowed and will not be serviced.