

Nev. students denied diplomas get shot at redemption

By Meghin Delaney, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Former Nevada students who failed to earn a high school diploma because they couldn't pass the state's proficiency exam now have a shot at redemption.

In 2013, the state Legislature approved phasing out the proficiency exam graduation requirement in favor of four end-of-course tests. But before the end-of-course exam requirement went into effect, legislation removed that requirement in 2017.

That created a situation where students who didn't pass the proficiency exam were being held to a different standard than more recent students.

Read the whole story

DCSD receives state money for reading

Douglas County School District is getting \$655,182.08 from the state for a reading program.

The money is to be used this school year.

The Nevada Department of Education the month announced which districts would be sharing in the \$20.5 million for the Read by Grade 3 program.

The goal is to improve literacy for early primary students by giving them added reading programs starting in kindergarten.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Nev. agencies hide names, salaries of workers

By Arthur Kane, Las Vegas Review-Journal

The names and salaries of 349 state employees, including park rangers and game wardens, have not been made public to taxpayers who spent \$30.1 million last year in wages and benefits for those staffers.

State officials said the positions are sensitive and the names must be protected, but several workers voluntarily identify themselves and pose for photographs in news reports.

Open government advocates contend that names of public employees should only be withheld in rare instances, such as for undercover police officers.

Read the whole story

Douglas County established

affordable housing group

The inaugural meeting of Douglas County's housing task force will be Nov. 6. However, the meeting is closed to the public.

The Affordable Housing Task Force was created to develop quality affordable housing opportunities.

The initial goals include establishing:

- Current pricing for affordable housing in the area or areas where it will have been determined that any affordable housing to-be-developed or supported in connection with the Initiative would be best situated, and should be provided.
- A process by which Nevada Rural Housing Authority can and will assist Douglas County in its on-going efforts to transition qualified real estate owned assets into viable and reliable affordable housing initiatives.
- The availability and viability of specific undeveloped land sites, and/or existing improved property required to initially support Douglas County's affordable housing initiative in those defined areas.
- An initial and preliminary working list of realistically proposed housing development initiatives.

This list of potential affordable housing projects will be created utilizing specific guidelines that will need to be established.

Task force members include:

- Douglas County Community Development – Heather Ferris
- Douglas County Community Services – Karen Beckerbauer
- Community Leader Representing Housing – Rex

Massey

- Community Leaders representing the real estate industry – Dennis McDuffee (valley) and Torry Johnson (lake)
 - WAVE- Carl Schnock
 - Douglas County Business Council – Brandy Thomson
 - Douglas County District Attorney's Office – Mary Anne Martin.
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Nev. public pension plan lowers expectations

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

A state panel overseeing the \$38 billion Nevada public employee pension plan voted Thursday to lower its decades-old assumption about the return on its investments.

The change from a projected 8 percent return to 7.5 percent over the next several years could mean higher contribution rates from public employees and employers – from state workers to school teachers – to offset the lower expectations.

The vote from the board of the Public Employees' Retirement System was unanimous, although state Controller Ron Knecht recommended a much lower rate of return for the plan's investments of 5 percent. He also said the inflation rate should be lower as well, at 1.75 percent.

Fires spark underground power line discussions

By David R. Baker, San Francisco Chronicle

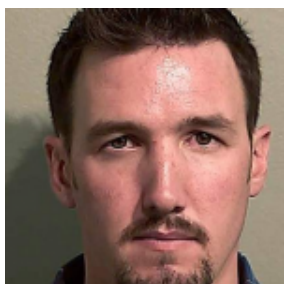
Underground power lines don't sway in the wind. Tree branches blown sideways by a gale can't hit them. They don't sit on wooden poles that can fall down.

They would, in other words, seem to be an ideal way to prevent wildfires in a place like California, which has a history of big blazes sparked by overhead power lines tangling with trees. Investigators are now trying to determine whether that combination triggered the wildfires that tore through the Wine Country this month.

Unfortunately, underground power lines are also very expensive.

[Read the whole story](#)

Truckee man accused of rape



James Russell
Ferrigno

A Truckee man was arrested Oct. 19 on rape charges.

According to police officers, James Russell Ferrigno, 31, spiked a woman's drink and then raped her.

She was renting a room from Ferrigno. She told police she suspected Ferrigno of putting a substance in her drink at night, which led her to set up a camera in the kitchen.

Ferrigno faces charges of rape of a drugged victim, rape of an unconscious victim, oral copulation of an unconscious victim, sodomy of a drugged victim and willfully poisoning food.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Keep orchids beautiful and blooming

By Melinda Myers

Lift your spirits, enliven your indoor décor or give the gift of beautiful blooming orchids. You'll enjoy these exotic blossoms for months with just minimal care – once you know what to do.

Start with a healthy flowering plant. The phalaenopsis or moth orchid is the most widely available and easiest to grow. It's similar to caring for an African violet. When you provide the proper growing conditions, maintenance is a breeze.

The challenge comes with less-than-ideal indoor growing

conditions of low light and dry air. Fortunately, there are a few things you can do to create a better environment for your orchid.



Orchids do best with 12 to 14 hours of sunlight and indoor light systems can help supplement the amount of light needed for the plants to thrive.

Photo/Gardener's Supply Company

Keep in mind that most orchids are epiphytes. In nature they grow on other plants and obtain water and nutrients from the air, water and plant debris that accumulates in their environment. This is why they are grown in an orchid mix made of organic material such as peat, fir bark and perlite. This or a similar combination retains water while providing needed drainage.

Give your orchid a good soaking once a week. Pour off any excess water that collects in the saucer. Don't allow orchids to sit in water and don't water them too often. This can lead

to root rot and death of your plant.

Further improve the environment by increasing the humidity around the plant. Group them with other orchids and indoor plants. As one plant loses moisture, or “transpires,” the others will benefit from the increase in humidity. Plus, you’ll create a beautiful display while improving the growing conditions.

Alternatively, you can create humidity trays. Place pebbles in the saucer and the pot on top of the pebbles. Allow excess water to collect in the pebbles below the pot. As this evaporates it increases the humidity around your plant. This also eliminates the need to pour off the excess water that collects in the saucer.

For larger plant collections use rubber humidity plant tray grids. These save space by allowing you to place several plants on one tray. These are perfect for growing on tables or light stands.

Place your plant in a bright location. Orchids do best with 12 to 14 hours of sunlight. Unobstructed south- or east-facing windows are usually the best. Or give plants a boost with artificial lights. Newer full spectrum LED lights provide needed light while using less energy.

And there’s no reason to hide your orchid and light setup in the basement. Indoor grow light systems can be mounted on the wall or set on a table. Either way, your orchids will be in full view for all to enjoy.

Fertilize actively growing plants with an orchid fertilizer. Michigan State University developed a fertilizer that efficiently provides the nutrients orchids need. They have “Orchid Tap Water” and “Orchid Pure Water Fertilizer” formulations. Just follow label directions for best results.

Once the plants are done flowering, you can keep them growing

indoors. If you like a challenge, try reblooming. On phalaenopsis orchids, just cut back the flowering stem between the second or third node from the bottom. Or give the plant a rest and cut the flower stem back to the leaves. Continue to provide proper care and wait to see if you were successful.

You can also simply treat an orchid plant like a long-lasting bouquet. That way there's no guilt if you decide to toss it. And if the guilt is too much, just look for an avid gardener. There's always someone who would be happy to adopt and try to rebloom your non-flowering plant.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including "Small Space Gardening." She hosts The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything: Food Gardening For Everyone" DVD set and the nationally syndicated "Melinda's Garden Moment" TV and radio segments.

Exploring the healing power of nature

By Molly Hucklebridge Coolidge

Carol Bennis was recovering from joint replacement surgery when she was asked to go on a snowshoe hike under the full moon.

At the time, the 75-year-old had never hiked at night or even put on a pair of snowshoes. But when she heard her surgeon and other patients at a similar stage of recovery would be there, she decided to try something new and go.

So Bennis and 12 other patients joined Barton Health

clinicians and U.S. Forest Service rangers on a “wellness walk” through the snow, on a clear night in the forest. The rangers guided the hikers and explained the area’s natural history. Barton Health clinicians provided medical guidance and, where needed, support for the patients. Bennis loved it.



Nurse Khristy Gavigan with Carol Bennis, center, and Gustavo Yanez Nava with the USFS. Photo/Provided

“This opportunity enabled me to step out of my comfort zone, make new friends, and learn the history of the area,” she says. “I kept thinking, ‘Wow, I just had a knee replacement. Look at this; I can do this now.’ All my inhibitions were gone.”

Learning, connecting, healing

Bennis participated in one of the first Wellness Outings, Barton Health’s newest wellness program. While South Lake Tahoe is surrounded by public lands, orthopedic surgeon Steven Bannar of Barton Health’s Tahoe Center for Orthopedics, noticed many of his patients were nervous about going outside and incorporating physical activity in their recovery process. He and Khristy Gavigan, a registered nurse, saw an opportunity and partnered with the U.S. Forest Service’s Lake Tahoe Basin

Management Unit to provide a unique healing experience for their patients.

“Having Barton’s medical professionals on hand is key,” says Bannar. “It allows folks to gain the confidence they need to get out of their house, overcome isolation, and connect with others that are living with similar health issues.

“Bringing the Forest Service provides that interpretive piece to support the logistics, help identify the outings, and deliver a message about the connection between community wellness and ecosystem health.”

The health benefits of nature

Barton Health’s Wellness Outings aren’t just for people recovering from joint replacement. They’re also aimed toward people (and their families) with chronic diseases or behavioral health issues, as well as at-risk youth.

Research shows that time spent in nature lowers blood pressure, heart rate, and cortisol levels. It increases concentration, memory, and attention span. It’s even been shown to boost immunity. After her walk, Bennis saw both the physical and emotional health benefits.

“Public lands are special treasures. They’re not to be taken for granted but should be appreciated and respected – not only for their beauty, but for their power to heal,” she says. “The land is truly a gift that must be regifted to each generation.”

Molly Hucklebridge Coolidge works for Barton Health.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Princess

Princess is an 11-month-old Labrador-Border Collie mix. She loves other dogs and kids, but cannot go to a home with chickens or small pets. She is a sweet young dog who will enjoy getting lots of exercise and going to training classes.

Princess is spayed, microchipped, tested for heart worm, and vaccinated. She is 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.

– Karen Kuentz