

Mass exodus of young people from rural areas

By Leah Todd, High Country News

Across the West, more young people are moving out of rural communities than in. In every decade since 1980, most rural counties in the 11 Western states lost twentysomethings, without an influx of other young adults to make up for the loss, according to an analysis of U.S. Census Bureau migration data by the Bozeman-based Headwaters Economics.

A few managed to attract young people with the lure of some nearby metro area like Albuquerque or Denver, or a roaring tourism industry like Jackson Hole, Wyo., but the undeniable trend has been a slow march to cities, where, especially in the West, jobs and people are increasingly concentrated.

In New Mexico, all but two rural counties have lost far more twentysomethings than they've gained since 1990.

Read the whole story

SLT brewery to host ski movie premiere

Local Freshies is bringing the Lake Tahoe premiere of Transworld Snowboarding's film "Arcadia" to South Lake Brewing Company on Nov. 17.

Doors open at 6pm and the show starts at 7:30pm for this free all ages event.

This Pray for Snow Party is also a fundraiser for the Sierra Avalanche Center.

Local food truck High on Food will be serving gourmet popcorn as well as theater treats like nachos, hot dogs and more.

“Arcadia” documents snowboarders in a perpetual pursuit of paradise.

Road Beat: Kia Niro FE, less is more

By Larry Weitzman

About two months ago, I tested the Kia Niro Touring, the top of the line model of the Kia Niro family. I noticed in the specs, the lower trim line model returned better fuel economy, so I scheduled a bottom of the line model FE to see if that was true as there were no apparent spec differences between the two models except for a small weight difference of 168 pounds which shouldn't create the 6-9 mpg mileage differential the EPA test procedures says there is between the two models.

Other than weight, the only other apparent difference is wheel and tire size.



Specifications

Price \$23,785

Engine 1.6L direct injected
inline four cylinder 104 hp
@ 5,700 rpm

109 lb.-ft. of torque @
4,000 rpm

Electric Power system

Electric motor 43 hp

125 lb.-ft. of torque

Battery

Capacity 1.56 kWh

Maximum output 42 kW

Combined output 139 hp

195 lb.-ft. of torque

Transmission

Six-speed dual clutch
automatic manual

Configuration

Transverse front
engine/front wheel drive

Dimensions

Wheelbase 106.3 inches

Length 171.5 inches

Width 71.1 inches

Height 60.8 inches

Track (f/r) 61.6/62.2 inches

Ground clearance 6.3 inches

Fuel capacity 11.9 gallons

Luggage capacity, rear seats
up/down 19.4,54.5 cubic feet
Cabin volume 97.1 cubic feet
Steering lock to lock 2.85
turns

Turning circle 34.8 feet

Weight 3,106

GVWR 4,079

Payload 973 pounds

Tires 205/60X16

Performance

0-60 mph 7.93 seconds

50-70 mph 4.32 seconds

50-70mph uphill 7.47 seconds

Top speed Well into triple
digits

Fuel economy EPA rated
52/49/50 mpg city/highway
combined. Expect 48-50 mpg
in rural, suburban driving
and 56 mpg on the highway at
legal speeds.

But the drive train and other specs are essentially identical. So, what does the real world tell us about these minimal differences between these otherwise identical cars. In two words, a lot.

Kia Niro FE has identical looks and dimensions when compared to the Touring. It is a great looking ride as well and is sized like a small compact with a length of 172 inches on a long 106-inch wheelbase. It is wide at 71 inches and stands somewhat short 61 inches. Cabin volume is a large 97 cubic feet with nearly 20 cubes in the cargo bay.

Under the hood is the same 1.6L transverse mounted DOHC, 15 valve, direct injected four banger cranking out 104 hp at

5,700 rpm and 109 pounds of twist at 4,000 rpm combined with a 43 hp electric motor that also produces 125 pounds of twist. Because of maximum battery output and rpm differences the total output is 139 hp and 195 pounds of twist. The electric motor is sandwiched between the gas engine and the six-speed dual clutch tranny.

In the FE tested here there is a big improvement in performance over the Touring model with 0-60 mph arriving in just 7.93 seconds. Passing times were also much improved with 50-70 mph times on the level and up a steep grade in 4.32 and 7.47 seconds, respectively. Those times reflect more than a 1 second improvement in all performance parameters except for the level pass which recorded an improvement of over eight-tenths of a second. Those are significant differences. And this performance improvement could easily be felt on your backside as this FE was quite lively and fun with good pulling power and midrange even when pure electric. When making passes at altitude on Highway 50, this little Kia was surprisingly quick. Touring performance numbers were 9.22/5.14/9.65 seconds, respectively.

Along with this performance improvement comes a fuel economy improvement in about the numbers reflected in the EPA testing which shows numbers of 52/49/50 mpg city/highway/combined as opposed to the touring numbers of 46/40/43 mpg. In actual testing the FE at a constant 70 mph returned 56.2 mpg in a two-way run. In a 219-mile trip to Carson City via Highway 50 the FE averaged 51.1 mpg with the return trip to Placerville averaged 61.3 mpg. Overall fuel economy was about 49 mpg. These numbers are a 6 mpg over the Touring model. I have no explanation.

Fully independent suspension remains the bill of fare with wheel and tire size being the only difference as the FE get 16-inch alloys shod with taller 205/60 series rubber instead of higher performance 225/45 tires on the Touring model. All other mechanicals stay the same, including the quick 2.85

turns lock to lock steering. But here's the thing, the FE still handles great and with the less sporty tires it is a bit more playful, easily rotating in the turns and powering it out of tight corners. When pushing the FE to its limits, it telegraphs what it's going to do well in advance so counter measures can be taken. It's kind of fun, no it is fun and playful, too and I am talking about a 50-mpg hybrid.

When pure electric the Niro is eerily silent and it runs pure electric to well over 60 mph. And even with the gas engine running it is quiet and long trips would be quite acceptable. It absorbs bumps well. There is not much not to like. Tire, wind and road noise levels are excellent.

Safety of course is second to none. Sure, this is an entry level model without lane keep assist and blind spot warning, but it has all the acronyms such as ABS, VSM, ESC and a backup camera. Remember safety starts and ends with the driver, good judgment and driving ahead to anticipate problems along with a good scan rate.

Inside are durable cloth seats that are extremely comfortable. While there is no power, they are easily adjustable and they are good for an easy six hours without much fatigue. Good support in all the right places. Rear seating has copious room and provides reasonable comfort. The cargo area can hold 55 cubes behind the front seat making it dangerous when going to Home Depot.

Instrumentation is complete sans a tach. It doesn't do what the Ioniq does when going into sport mode and display a tach. But the trip computer is easy to use and has all the info, especially giving you your most recent trip info, mpg, etc. The center stack is also well done. And while it does have a touch screen, it also has buttons and knobs for all functions. There are plenty of storage cubbies.

If I were to buy a hybrid, the Niro FE would be my ride.

Performance is top of the class, fuel economy is near the best, the drive is excellent and the price seals the deal at \$22,890 plus \$895 for the boat ride from Hwaseong, South Korea, making the Monroney total \$23,785. It is the best hybrid deal out there.

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.

Hockey in SLT to benefit Wine Country victims

The Santa Rosa Flyers, the amateur youth hockey teams based at Snoopy's Ice in Santa Rosa, will be in South Lake Tahoe this weekend for games against South Tahoe Amateur Hockey Association's Tahoe Grizzlies.

Thirteen families from the Santa Rosa hockey organization lost their homes in the recent wildfires.

To help support the families, STAHA, the South Lake Tahoe Icemen, and the Tahoe Ice Arena are running a fundraiser for the **GoFundMe account** that was started by a Santa Rosa hockey mom to provide interim support to these families.

The Tahoe ice arena and Icemen are donating all proceeds from the rink operations during this weekend's games to the fund. This includes ticket sales, pizza, beer, soda, snacks, and Icemen swag purchases. In addition, STAHA is taking cash donations during its games this weekend for the fund.

The WSHL Tahoe Icemen host the Bellingham Blazers in a three-game series this weekend: Oct. 20, 21, at 7pm and Sunday at 2:30pm. Tickets are \$6.

The different age groups of the Grizzlies play Santa Rosa on Oct. 21 at 1:15pm, 3pm and 4:45pm, and on Oct. 22 at 8:45am, 10:30am, and 12:15pm.

EDC ‘beeting’ a path to better roads

By Susan Wood

When it comes to clearing and cleaning up roads in El Dorado County, the lake’s new mantra could be “Keep Tahoe Red” in the winter and “Keep Tahoe ‘really’ Blue” in other seasons.

The county’s inventive punch behind road maintenance is twofold – a level of reasoning that could lead to keeping Tahoe in greenbacks.

The topic came up twice during the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors annual gathering in South Lake Tahoe on Oct. 17 – first at the county maintenance yard during an early morning tour and again later at the regular meeting in the city.

Come the (real) snowy season, county road crews plan to use an unconventional substance to de-ice and clear snow that requires less sand. Beet juice – that’s their solution.

During a snow conference in Iowa, the county learned about the vegetable-based liquid mix to blend with brine as an effective way to break down the cold enemy. In the long haul, it’s more cost-efficient.

And in the road construction season of summer, county storm water and planning gurus Russ Wigart and Brendan Ferry told the board they want to pave their way into lake clarity.



El Dorado County doesn't want it's old equipment to be detriment. Photo/Susan Wood

What might have been a no-go at Ferry's regulatory employer decades ago may just be the county's secret weapon in combating the lake's loss in clarity and crumbling roads over the years.

The two environmental giants joined by Lahontan Water Quality Control's Bob Larsen are making the hard case that fixing and keeping local streets up to par is an environmental argument because the debris from broken down roads more easily turns into sediment that seeps into the lake. And keep in mind, the sediment from asphalt is oil-based.

Beet juice is less corrosive and more environmentally friendly, county equipment superintendent Kent Taylor pointed out on the tour Tuesday. At the same time, beet juice

maintains its integrity at minus 15 degrees Fahrenheit. Brine without it works at 15 degrees above. The “ice-biting” soupy beet mix can act like Teflon on a pan.

Alongside Taylor on the tour, county highway superintendent Matt Moody pointed to a big drum filled with beet juice. The county bought 1,000 gallons for \$500 to try out the substance this year “and see how it works,” Moody said.

So, if you notice a reddish color in the snow, don’t call in a crime scene, the county warned.

As it is, a backbreaking winter like last year netted 100 calls a day into county road maintenance phone lines.

“We’re hoping not to have a winter like last year,” Moody said during the transportation yard tour.

The big picture in surviving the seasons means evaluating the roads, the budget, the material and the machines used to clear them of snow.

Keeping 11 aging graders (1982 to 2005) up to par can be a challenge for four mechanics. Each one costs at least \$30,000 in upkeep. They cost about \$400,000 new. That’s why El Dorado County is also examining whether leasing one from Washoe County for \$5,000 from November to March is worthwhile.

“They’re in as good a shape as they can be,” Taylor said, when asked about the health of its own graders that the 14 drivers use to plow snow.

If only one could say the same thing for county roads.

Crews are teaming up with visionary planners like Ferry and Wigart to experiment with different methods of protecting county roads as well as the lake.

It’s a win-win type of thinking that could turn a synergistic corner on the relationship between the lake’s environment and

economic value. Good roads equal a good image to the resident and the visitor. Endless, deep cracks on South Upper Truckee Road, huge pothole-infested streets in the Angora burn area and even the closing of Elks Club Drive for the winter because of a complete road breakdown could be a thing of the past.

And the county seems receptive to throwing its weight behind backing that goal.

County Chief Administrative Officer Don Ashton told Lake Tahoe News, after observing the Ferry-Wigart presentation, El Dorado's \$569 million budget allocates about \$6.5 million to road maintenance. About half of that is discretionary emergency funding special to this year.

Wigart and Ferry are proposing a new funding mechanism be found, suggesting perhaps a user fee, gas tax and water quality grant project or combination thereof that is multi-pronged.

Big and bold in the presentation is a shocking declaration – "Maintaining pavement is a BMP." The notion appears to run contrary to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's aversion toward material that purports blanket coverage.

But this is a new day and age, requiring a new line of thinking. If anything, TRPA's main mission is still lake clarity. The argument being made is keeping the county's 220 miles of roads paved and fixed is good for lake clarity.

Lake Tahoe lost about one-third of its clarity between 1968 and 2000.

"Paving could be the largest BMP we have," Wigart said. Best management practices are erosion control measures enforced lakewide.

In their board presentation, Wigart and Ferry listed culprits such as roadside soil accounting for 43 percent of the

pollution source. A breakdown of particles from asphalt was also dominant at 31 percent. Abrasive sand was third at 16 percent. Heavy equipment also contributes to the rough surfaces. The study was completed during a period of low winter moisture.

"We destroy our roads in winter," Wigart told the board, equating the breakdown of the road to a Jenga puzzle.

The presentation got the supervisors thinking.

"We need to capitalize on the car," Supervisor John Hidahl said.

Most were in agreement that the funding source would need to be multi-dimensional, involving road condition and storm water drainage in order to receive more grant money.

"We've got to start with the basics. You can have the best roads in the world, but it won't make a difference if they don't drain," Supervisor Brian Veerkamp said.

In other action, the board:

- Unanimously approved the sheriff's Office of Emergency Services recommendation that a local state of emergency continues in the county due to severe storms from last winter.

- Considered in a 5-0 vote a \$5,000 request from the Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition to support the Lake Tahoe Bikeways map and its overall efforts.

Opinion: Questioning EDC attorney's logic

By Larry Weitzman

Governments waste money and lots of it. The government employees who spend it many times don't care, it's not their money (it's other people's money, or OPM). And making matters worse most government employees are almost totally insulated and immune from any outside action for what the government employee does. And they are non-elected. The Board of Supervisors are supposed to be our oversight. Good luck with that.



Larry Weitzman

What I am about to describe is perhaps a microcosm of a wasteful government action, the kind that goes completely unnoticed, but in this case, it did get noticed. The amount wasted was just \$23,000, not even a drop in the bucket when compared to El Dorado County's over quarter of a billion-dollar General Fund budget. Not even pocket change, but it could have fixed a lot of potholes, a whole neighborhood's worth.

Here's what happened. We have heard a lot about Senior Legal who sees on average 2,000 over 60-year-old clients a year. To qualify for Senior Legal, a person has to be 60 years of age. Senior Legal attorneys make that crystal clear to anyone seeking their services, if you are not 60 years old you cannot

be a client. Pretty simple rules and this column is not about that particular rule, but that's the rule.

A family dispute arose for a gentleman who was about 80 years of age and he sought the help of Senior Legal attorneys. The Senior Legal attorney represented only the gentleman and not his daughter who was under the age of 60 who attended the meeting with her father. Senior Legal helped negotiate a settlement for this gentleman that involved the younger under 60-year-old daughter, papers were signed and the matter resolved. A third-party attorney eventually finished the deal and prepared the papers which were signed.

After the resolution, the daughter evidently had second thoughts and complained that the Senior Legal attorney had a conflict of interest with her (claiming to represent both her and her father) even though it was made clear that no such relationship between her and the Senior Legal attorney did exist as she by Senior Legal rules could not be represented by senior legal. In fact, the resolution wasn't performed by the Senior Legal attorney but a third-party attorney who also negotiated for the elderly gentleman.

Even though Senior Legal ended up having nothing to do with the final resolution, neither representing the ineligible daughter or the elderly gentleman, the daughter filed a conflict of interest complaint against the Senior Legal attorney. Because the Senior Legal attorney didn't and couldn't represent her, there could be no conflict of interest. Perhaps a letter should have been sent to the woman/daughter stating why and how there could be no conflict of interest. But that didn't stop someone in the County Counsel's office from hiring expensive, high priced San Francisco lawyers. There were two of them who came to the county who had a meeting with the particular Senior Legal attorney, a meeting that lasted about an hour. Travel time to and from EDC must have been six additional hours and what was done beyond the meeting related to this non-issue is unknown,

but this is a pretty simple matter that should have been handled in-house. Was there something else going on by hiring these attorneys? Maybe someone in the county was trying to feather their nest for future employment. By the way, nothing came of the “investigation.”

The bill for this “non-issue” totaled \$23,000. And word has it that county counsel wants to bill it to Senior Legal, which will further hurt seniors. This is an excellent example of how government works. Should this have happened? Absolutely not. But there is something else.

Who is ultimately responsible for authorizing this \$23,000 boondoggle? That’s right, county counsel, who by the way was running Human Resources at the time via a deputy county counsel. We have a single person who heads county counsel and that is where the buck stops, all \$23,000 of them. At least that’s what Harry S Truman would have said.

Earlier in the week when I wrote this piece, EDC had a “good governance” meeting involving most every high-priced county official putting on a feel-good, dog and pony show on how EDC is going to reform (yeah, sure) and have good governance. But this kind of thing will continue to go on. What we need is an investigation of county counsel. The only way to stop this is a new county counsel. Additionally, our own CAO, Don Ashton, had nothing to do with this but perhaps expenditures like this should be within his purview. Here is an example of a check and balance that would lead to better governance. What is else is needed for good governance is absolute honesty, complete transparency and pristine ethics.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.

Second bird in EDC has West Nile virus

A second bird this year has tested positive for West Nile virus in El Dorado County.

An acorn woodpecker in the Garden Valley had the virus.

West Nile virus activity in dead birds has been reported in 38 California counties, with a total of 463 dead birds, including neighboring Sacramento (86 birds) and Placer (three birds) counties.

Confirmation of the West Nile virus positive bird means the virus is circulating between birds and mosquitoes and there is heightened risk of infection in humans.

Last year, four West Nile virus positive birds were identified in El Dorado County on the West Slope and one human case reported. For 2017, no human cases of West Nile virus have been reported for El Dorado County.

West Nile virus can be transmitted to people through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes get the virus when they feed on infected birds. The illness is not spread from person-to-person.

—Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

• The nonprofit Tahoe Figure Skating is sponsoring a Halloween event. There will be \$5 skating in costumes (skate

rentals included), and an exhibition by local skaters on Oct. 28 from 2:15-6:15pm at the South Lake Tahoe Ice Arena.

- Dave Brady has announced his candidacy for sheriff of Douglas County.

- NAMI El Dorado County is hosting an information gathering hour specifically to provide perspective to the county about areas of opportunity to improve services and support. It will be Nov. 2 from 1:30-2:30pm in the Aspen Room at Lake Tahoe Community College.

- Integrity Locksmith in South Lake Tahoe is accepting donations for Wine Country victims. Items can be dropped off at 2331 Lake Tahoe Blvd. from 9 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday.

- Placer County Board of Supervisors will meet Oct. 23 in Tahoe. They will hear an update on the county's efforts to ensure short-term lodging providers are collecting their fair share of guest lodging tax, and consider a policy on the investment of those funds and approval of several local projects that would be funded with revenue from them.

Nev. commits \$1M to fight opioid epidemic

By Ben Botkin, Las Vegas Review-Journal

The state's Interim Finance Committee on Oct. 19 approved more than \$1 million in expenditures for a five-point opioid initiative to fight abuse of prescription painkillers in Nevada.

The initiative from Attorney General Adam Laxalt's office was unanimously approved by the legislative panel. It includes money for everything from incinerators for disposing of drugs to education and treatment programs.

"On average, one Nevadan dies per day from drug overdose, and opioid-related overdoses have become the lead cause of death in America," Laxalt said in a statement. He added that the initiative "creates an opportunity to face the epidemic that touches our families, friends and loved ones, and to promote prevention in Nevada."

Read the whole story

3-day food and wine event at Harrah's

The eighth annual South Lake Tahoe Food and Wine Festival will be at Harrah's Lake Tahoe Oct. 27-29.

Events for this year's festival include dining and tasting experiences, plus a performance by trumpeter extraordinaire Chris Botti.

Food and wine are the biggest stars and a spectacular Grand Market Expo – featuring dishes from Harrah's, Harveys and other Caesars Entertainment properties' best restaurants, plus top-shelf spirits and wines of Napa Valley and beyond – highlights the weekend.

Activities begin Oct. 27 with a Whiskey Tasting at Cliché Lounge on the 16th floor of Harrah's hotel.

For more information, event prices and to purchase tickets, go

online.