

Editorial: Will Calif. ever pay off its debt?

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Sept. 27, 2017, Orange County Register.*

Last month, we questioned whether Congress would ever get serious about paying down the national debt. Now we pose a similar question of our state elected officials.

There have been some successes, like the adoption of some much-needed, albeit modest, pension reform measures in 2012, and nearly eliminating the “wall of debt,” as Gov. Jerry Brown described a number of short-term liabilities that once totaled nearly \$35 billion. But even these efforts have put only a small dent in the state’s total debt.

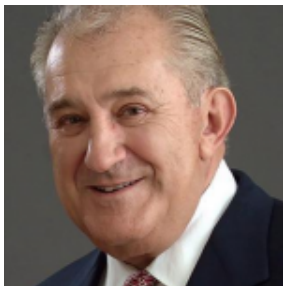
This point was crystallized by a new study from financial watchdog group Truth in Accounting, which just released its annual “Financial State of the States” report. The study found that “41 states do not have enough money to pay all of their bills, and, in total, the states have racked up over \$1.5 trillion dollars in unfunded state debt.”

Not surprisingly, the Golden State did not fare well in the analysis, ranking 43rd in terms of debt per taxpayer, and comprising one of nine states to earn an “F” grade.

Read the whole story

Don Carano, patriarch of N. Nev. gambling, winemaking empires, dies

By Chris Murray, Reno Gazette-Journal



Don Carano

Don Carano, one of the most influential figures in Reno's history who revolutionized the local gaming and resort industry; was a partner at one of the state's most powerful law firms; and built one of California's top-selling wineries, died Tuesday night at age 85.

A native of Reno, Carano was a star running back at Reno High School before he earned a degree from the University of San Francisco. After two years as a U.S. Army officer, Carano graduated with honors from USF's School of Law and was a member of the influential firm McDonald Carano Wilson.

A successful attorney, hotelier and restaurateur, Carano became a winery owner with his wife Rhonda in 1981 when he founded Ferrari-Carano Vineyards and Winery, located in Sonoma County's Dry Creek Valley.

Read the whole story

Road Beat: Mazda CX-5, again the class leader

By Larry Weitzman

Compact CUVs are one of the hottest selling segments in the market and the competition is stiff, real stiff. I understand the CX-5 is not the biggest selling CUV, brand T and H are followed by brand N and they are good CUVs.

Mazda is an outlier brand, the big Japanese manufacturers have referred to Mazda as “cowboys,” doing things a little different. But I like different. I own an RX-8 rotary with 112,000 miles on it and I love that car. It is a phenomenal ride in so many ways. And it was the Wankel rotary engine that originally separated Mazda from other brands. And that is a good thing.

The prior generation CX-5 was the top of its class with world class looks following the Mazda Kodo-Soul of Motion design ethos. With the new 2017 generation, while similar looking to the previous model, the new body is bolder, sharper and smoother all at the same time. You can see it in the more defined grille, the slimmer, sleeker headlights, shapelier flanks and a more attractive and proportional window line.

Every dimension has changed by as little as a tenth of an inch to about half an inch, demonstrating that the 2017 CX-5 is a new design. Wheelbase, length and width are 106 x 179 x 73 inches putting it in the category of a smaller compact CUV.

Powering the new CX-5 is a choice of one engine, Mazda's 2.5L SkyActiv DOHC, 16 valve, inline four, which has the ability to run in a more efficient Atkinson cycle when flank speed is not

called for. In its new iteration horsepower is up by three to 187 at 6,000 rpm and torque remains at 185 pounds at 4,000 rpm in this AWD model. With FWD, peak torque drops to a low 3,250 rpm. Redline is 6,500 rpm. All four wheels are driven all the time via a six speed extremely smooth torque converter auto cog-swapper. Adaptation of the Mazda low pressure turbo in the CX-9 as an option would be welcomed, especially operating at high altitudes.

AWD models adds about 128 pounds to the CX-5. My performance numbers suffered slightly from my last CX-5 test, which was an FWD unit. Zero to 60 mph arrived in 8.35 seconds or marginally slower than my prior CX-5 FWD test from 2015. Passing times were also marginally slower as 50-70 mph arrive in 4.47 and 7.99 seconds respectively in a level and uphill 50-70 mph passing simulation. The weight difference should not account for this so I have no explanation. However, the performance of the new CX-5 is still very good. It feels very responsive.



Specifications

Price \$24,985 to about \$34,380

Engine

2.5L inline four 16 valve, DOHC 187 hp @
6,000 rpm

185 ft-lb of torque @ 4,000 rpm

Transmission

Six speed torque converter automatic

Configuration

Transverse front engine/ FWD/AWD

Dimensions

Wheelbase 106.2 inches

Length 179.1 inches

Width 72.5 inches

Height 65.3 inches

Track (f/r) 62.8/62.8 inches

Ground clearance 7.6 inches

Weight 3,655 pounds

GVWR 4,643 pounds

Steering lock to lock 2.7 turns

Turning circle (wall to wall) 38.7 feet

Wheels 19X7 inch alloys

Tires 225/55X19

Cargo capacity (second row up/down)

30.9/56.6 cubic feet

Fuel capacity 15.3 gallons

Co-efficient of drag 0.33

Performance

0-60 mph 8.35 seconds

50-70 mph 4.47 seconds

50-70 mph uphill 7.99 seconds

Top speed (mfg) 127 mph

Fuel economy EPA rated 23/29/26 mpg city/highway/combined. Expect 25-26 mpg in rural country driving. 33 mpg on a level highway at legal speeds.

Photo/Larry Weitzman

Fuel economy is EPA rated at 23/29/26 mpg city/highway/combined. Highway mileage actually improved with a two-way run at 70 mph averaging 33.7 mpg and overall about 26 mpg. In a round trip to Carson City the CX-5 averaged 28.5 mpg in aggressive driving with full throttle passing in all of

the 20 or so passing zones on Highway 50. More normal applications of the go pedal may have improved that number by an mpg or two.

While the new CX-5 may share similar dimensions to the prior generation, its structure and build quality is significantly improved. Of course, suspension is state of the art four-wheel independent with one of the best electric power steering racks and 19 x 7 inch alloys shod with wide 225/55 series rubber all add up to precise, benign handling, handling of a good sports sedan (like a Mazda 6), safe, accurate and secure with great grip. CX-5 will straighten out the best pretzels easily. It maintains a flat attitude when pushed hard and understeer is mild. And the stiffer construction and chassis just add to the equation of making CX-5 top of the class in drivability.

And the ride is smoother, more refined and quieter and that's with the engine spinning a moderate 2,350 rpm at 70 mph. The engine only becomes slightly intrusive at high rpms during a full tilt boogie. But it's the new ride quality that really stands out, certainly best in class and then some controlling pitch motions perfectly while absorbing road punishment like a world class heavyweight champion. There is no wind, engine and tire noise except as noted above.

Then there is the new, highly refined, gorgeous interior. It falls in the category of a near luxury car. Soft touch and leather abounds. Seats are sublime and in the GT with the Premium Package (a bargain at \$1,830) you get heated rear seats, heated steering wheel, a slick heads up display, power passenger seat and even windshield wiper deicers.

Instrumentation is all business with all the proper precision like instrumentation, complete trip meter and that superb heads up display. Dash is of course soft touch. The only negative is the radio/nav system and the mini-mouse. After a few weeks, I can use it with decent proficiency, but it still

requires too many steps. It is flat out too complicated. It as if they are trying to outdo the infotainment system in a BMW. Maybe they have succeeded in that goal, too.

Safety is another high spot for the CX-5. Standard LED headlights are fabulous and all the acronyms are standard plus automatic braking. Adding to that safety factor is Mazda's exemplary handling. Nearly 1-foot four-wheel disc brakes are powerful.

Pricing for the CX-5 starts at \$24,045 for the Sport FWD. Add \$1,300 for AWD. My top of the line tester AWD stickered for \$30,695 and \$1,830 for the Premium pack. My tester was painted in a deep Soul Red Crystal for an additional \$595 and when you add on the boat ride from Hiroshima, Japan (\$940) the sticker totals \$34,380 for the best in class compact SUV. It is the leader of the pack. And on top of that you get world class looks. Maybe the other manufacturers should learn how to ride horses and work cows, too.

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.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Julia Shipley's "The Academy of Hay" has been so popular that Bona Fide Books in Meyers is having a second printing. Buy a copy **online**.

- Douglas County Sheriff's Office honor guard team is having a haunted house during the weekends of Oct 13-14, 20-21, and 27-28 at the DC Fairgrounds. It will be open from

3-6pm for younger children, 6-10pm for those who like scary thrills. The cost is \$5 for those 17 and younger, \$10 adults and \$15 for an all-night pass.

- Tahoe Beach Retreat in South Lake Tahoe has a new restaurant – Sidelines Sports Pub.
 - Fire restrictions in the Tahoe National Forest were lifted Oct. 6.
 - Liberty Utilities has planned outages for this week: Oct. 9, 9am-4pm Squaw Valley area (Squaw Summit Road and Summer Place) to replace pad and transformer; Oct. 10, 8am-6pm Kings Beach area (Brockway Springs Road and Chipmunk) to replace vault, three pad mount transformers, rebuild primary riser, run underground cable; Oct. 11, 8:30am-4pm Squaw Valley area (Hidden Lake Loop) to replace transformer and pad.
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Vegas shooter draws attention to video poker

By Associated Press

Authorities trying to piece together the final days before Stephen Paddock unleashed his arsenal of powerful firearms on country music fans on the Las Vegas Strip have at least one potential trove of information: his gambling habits.

Nevada gambling regulators say they're sorting through documents for clues about him and his girlfriend, Marilou Danley. Those can include suspicious transaction or currency reports, as well as information from a player's rewards card, which the casinos use to track their gambling and offer perks.

Paddock's brother has described the gunman as a high-stakes video poker player who was routinely comped rooms, meals and drinks at casinos.

Read the whole story

Chamber seeks nominations for Blue Ribbon Awards

Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce is seeking nominations for the 10th annual Blue Ribbon Awards. This awards program recognizes businesses, organizations, and individuals for achievements, community contributions, and milestones.

The public may go **online** to nominate South Shore businesses, organizations or individuals that have made a positive and lasting impression on the community. The deadline to nominate is noon on Oct. 16.

The categories are:

- Geotourism Award – Sponsored by Bike the West – Providing an authentic Tahoe experience
- Tourism Award – Sponsored by Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority – Innovative program, promotion or product for visitors
- Experience Award – Sponsored by Marriott Grand Residence Club – Business providing compelling and captivating experiences
- Entrepreneur Award – Sponsored by Getaway Reno/Tahoe – An innovative individual who assumed the risk of starting a new business

- Customer Service (Business) Award – Sponsored by Heavenly and Kirkwood – An individual who consistently provides quality service
- Customer Service (Public Agency) Award – Quality service in the not so usual places (DMV, city, county, TRPA, etc.)
- Economic and Community Improvement Award – Sponsored by South Tahoe Refuse.

Nominees will be announced later in October and the winners will be announced on Nov. 9 during the 10th annual Blue Ribbon Awards ceremony at Harrah's Lake Tahoe.

Chase: Tahoe home sales steady in 3rd quarter

Statistics from Chase International show the number of homes sold in Lake Tahoe this summer was down 7 percent compared to a year ago.

The real estate firm's quarterly report has the median price of a home in Lake Tahoe rising 1 percent to \$580,000.

South Shore saw the biggest jump in the sale of million-dollar homes, up 24 percent, with the East Shore following at 6 percent. Incline Village had the largest increase in volume sold. It's also the most expensive area to purchase a home, with a median home price of \$1,069,000 (up 3 percent).

"Low supply levels are contributing to our strong market in the mid to lower ranges even though the market continues to be flat in the upper end," said Susan Lowe with Chase.

In Truckee, the median price of a home rose 7 percent to

\$670,000, while volume and overall units were down 11 and 8 percent, respectively.

Condominium sales around the lake remained strong with a 37 percent jump in volume sold. The median price of a condominium in Lake Tahoe is up 11 percent to \$395,000.

Fire escape plans need to be practiced

By Lynne Tolmachoff

Did you know that only one-third of Americans have created and practiced a home fire escape plan? Almost three-quarters of Americans have an escape plan; however, less than half ever practice it?

With these statistics, it's time to stop being complacent and get the ball rolling in creating a home escape plan for you and your family and more importantly practicing it.

The second week in October (8-14) marks Fire Prevention Week and this year's theme is Every Second Counts – Plan 2 Ways Out! Take time now to create an escape plan with your family and practice that plan twice a year. Knowing what to do and where to go can save precious seconds, helping you and your family escape safely without tragedy.

Our goal is to make sure our residents are safe from fires, whether inside the home or outside. Fire Prevention Week is one opportunity to initiate awareness of how to protect you and your family from harm's way and to give you the tools you need to maintain a safe home and yard.

Fire Prevention Week has been observed on the Sunday through Saturday period in which Oct. 9 falls, in commemoration of the Great Chicago Fire, which began Oct. 8, 1871. The horrific fire killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures and burned more than 2,000 acres. Each year's theme is to reinforce the importance of fire prevention.

Crafting your plan for escaping a home fire is easy to do:

- Draw a map of your home. With all the members of your household, visit each room and identify two ways out.
- Show all doors and windows on your drawing and mark the path to the outside from each exit.
- Practice your plan during the day and at night to ensure that you and your family can get out safely at any time.
- Make sure to teach your children how to escape on their own, in case you can't help them.
- Have a plan for the elderly as it may take more time to get them out safely.
- Let everyone know to close the doors behind you as you leave – this may slow the spread of smoke, heat, and fire.
- Once you get outside, stay outside. Never go back inside for anything.
- Call 911 from outside and make sure your address is easy to see from the road.

If you happen to be caught in a wildfire, knowing two ways out is critical to getting out safely. **Create a wildfire evacuation Plan that includes:**

- A designated emergency meeting location outside the fire or hazard area. This is essential to determine who has safely evacuated from the affected area.
- Several escape routes from your home and community. Practice these often so everyone in your family is familiar in case of emergency.

- Have an evacuation plan for pets and large animals such as horses and other livestock.
- Designate an out-of-area friend or relative as a point of contact to act as a single source of communication among family members in case of separation (cell and internet systems can be overloaded or limited during a disaster).

Lynne Tolmachoff is CalFire's chief of public education.

Story behind wilderness taco stop in the Sierra

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

Alison Blair stopped in her tracks.

The 54-year-old backpacker needed a moment to process the scene.

A group of people with backpacking stoves, dishes and condiments carefully arranged on a tree stump asked Blair if she would like a made-to-order taco and cold beer.

The strange part was that it was happening at Purple Lake on the John Muir Trail, more than 10 miles over rugged terrain from the nearest trailhead.

It's a temporary taco and beer oasis that's materialized on the John Muir Trail six times since 2014 only

to disappear within a few hours of each appearance.

Read the whole story

Large-scale forest thinning project in Incline

Thinning of trees to remove excess vegetation that can feed wildfires and improve forest health has resumed on National Forest lands above Incline Village.

Mechanical cut-to-length tree removal is taking place in Unit 36 off Highway 431. Thinning operations are expected to continue throughout fall until winter weather sets in for the season.

A harvester cuts the tree down, remove the limbs and cut the tree into sections in the cutting area. The Forest Service recommends that the public avoid this area due to the hazards posed by heavy equipment and falling trees. Hazards may be present even when operations have ceased for the day.

This forest thinning is part of the Incline Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Healthy Forest Restoration Project, which aims to treat nearly 4,000 acres on North Shore to reduce the risk of severe wildfire, improve forest health, and provide defensible space to neighboring communities.