Nev. PUC OKs rooftop solar policies

By Ben Botkin, Las Vegas Review-Journal

The Nevada Public Utilities Commission approved an order Friday that establishes net metering policies aimed at helping the rooftop solar industry grow.

The order, which is effective immediately, requires NV Energy to charge the same fees to customers regardless of whether they use solar. Solar users also get compensation for excess solar energy that they don't use through a credit on their bills.

The order follows the Legislature's passage this session of Assembly Bill 405, which was aimed at making rooftop solar financially viable. Solar energy advocates praised the commission's move.

Read the whole story

Calif. urges teachers to scrap 4th-grade mission project

By Diana Lambert, Sacramento Bee

Put away the Popsicle sticks, glue and sugar cubes. The fourth-grade mission project, a rite of passage for elementary students for decades, may be on its way out.

California’s new history and social science framework, passed by the state Board of Education last year, recommends against the longtime tradition of building miniature replicas of the state’s Spanish colonial missions, calling it insensitive. Thousands of Native Americans died from introduced diseases and were forced to labor at the missions, it notes.

Instead, it recommends that educators spend time teaching students about the impacts of the missions on the state’s people and its natural environment.

Read the whole story

To Tahoe Eric Church is Mr. ‘Understood’



Eric Church delivers high-energy country to fans on Sept. 2 at Harveys. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Susan Wood

STATELINE – It was like a revival the minute southern country artist Eric Church hit the stage for the faithful who showed up and stood up in great numbers Saturday night for the last artist at the outdoor summer concert at Harveys this year.

Church, a singer and guitarist who represents a cross between southern rock and outlaw country, played the entertainer to the cowboy-hat-clad crowd. Many fans were enthralled, mouthing the words to most of the songs they all recognize from his high-energy, seven-piece band.

Among the fans were Amanda Horsman and Byron August, the latter who came in a Led Zeppelin shirt. They came up from the Sacramento area for the concert, which started later than usual by a half hour.

“We’ve seen a lot of people, but he really cares about his fans,” August said. He explained that he heard Church bought a record press so he could deliver the music to his fans before it was released to radio stations.

Church does nothing to shy away from the unconventional. His latest album released two years ago, “Mr. Misunderstood,” arrived in the mailboxes of his church choir members.

August understands that purist dedication to country music. He owns a record player.

Mitzi Olsen of Gardnerville, who danced most of the evening, also noted that she admires Church because he is “super country.”

“So many people play country songs. I feel like he’s still just country. He’s stayed true to his roots,” she said. Olsen first heard Church while she was vacationing in Utah and has remained loyal to the North Carolina artist who played Jimmy Buffet cover songs with a band while in high school.

He’s come a long way since then.

With his signature aviator glasses that protect his contact lenses from the heat of the lights, Church, 40, burst on the scene about a decade ago. He styled an image from his blue-collar demeanor and no-surrender type of passion that proves nothing comes easy – even to nice guys.

His southern outlaw country rock genre ran the gamut at the concert. The outlaw appeal of an award-winning artist with five albums under his belt came out with 2009’s “Smoke a Little Smoke,” written with his known cannabis advocacy in mind; and his No. 1 single from 2012, “Drink in My Hand” – which joins the mega hit “Springsteen” on his widely popular 2011 album “Chief.” “Cold One” from the 2014 “Outsiders” album also got the crowd jumping, yelling and raising their drinks.

“Doing OK?” he asked, holding up his own beverage. The crowd roared.

With a few fist pumps and lunges to the edge of the stage, Church often smiled and looked tickled by how engaged his audience was.



Fans show their love for Eric Church. Photo/Kathryn Reed

During “These Boots” from his 2006 “Sinners Like Me” album, some in the crowd threw their cowboy boots up on the stage. Church implied they’ve “saved his ass” a few times, even while holding up a red kiddie boot that appears too young to worry about such things.

Beyond the raucous image, Church demonstrated how quickly he can rotate from hard-driving electric guitar to acoustic with sentimental tunes that touch at heart strings.

His huge hit “Give Me Back My Hometown” shows his appreciation of his geographic roots complete with a “Pizza Hut,” and the crowd reciprocated. As many do, the first-timer to the area also mentioned how lucky Tahoe residents have it with the region’s stunning beauty.

And with love you baby “Like a Wrecking Ball,” he gave the audience a glimpse of what it’s like to come home from his on-the-road excursions.

A few women even made a banner to acknowledge their fan club-like appreciation of reckless love by recklessly trying to gain access to the stage. Security stopped them temporarily, but Church ended up signing the banner later in the show.

More of the sentimental that had the crowd swooning and swaying, Church launched into his new smash hit “Record Year” – with the crowd immediately recognizing it. At first, the song from “Mr. Misunderstood” is just that. But it’s really about how he dealt with the loss of a love.

At times, the country artist marveled by his fans’ enthusiasm.

“You know, I’ve played this song countless times, but I’m not sure if anything is better than this right here,” he said, stopping to admire the crowd. He stood there with two American flags handed to him, draped around his neck as he played his mega hit “Springsteen” about a love affair.

Upon ripping into “Holdin’ My Own,” Church touched his heart to say goodbye on his last song running long past 10pm. But he returned for an encore of “Like Jesus Does” – an acoustic number about lasting love.

“This is the greatest thing music does. It freezes this moment in time. We haven’t played for a while, so this moment is frozen for me. The way you stepped in to sing. I want to say you’re the greatest,” he told the crowd with a bow.

Church plays again Sunday evening to wrap up the Harveys Outdoor Summer Concert Series.

Nevada has money to give away for trails

The Nevada Division of State Parks has $1.2 million available for trails projects.

State and local government agencies, as well as tribes, special districts, and private groups may apply for the grants.

The application and details about it are available **online**.

N. Nevada football game concussions on the rise

By Jim Krajewski, Reno Gazette-Journal

If a concussion can happen to one of the most talented, highly recruited football players to come out of Northern Nevada, it can happen to anyone.

Brandon Kaho, who has offers to play college football at more than 20 major college programs, had to sit out a game last season after suffering a concussion.

Player safety in high school athletics has become a high priority in recent years, especially as concussions have become a topic of national discussion spurred by some players in the NFL suffering debilitating effects.

Concussions sustained in high school football practices dropped sharply from 2015 to 2016 – coaches have curtailed the

amount of hitting players take during practice, for example. But there was a slight increase in concussions reported during games over that same time frame.

Read the whole story

Why housing costs are so high in Calif.

By Ben Christopher and Matt Levin, CalMatters

Half the state's households struggle to afford the roof over their heads.

Homeownership—once a staple of the California dream—is at its lowest rate since World War II. Nearly 70 percent of poor Californians see the majority of their paychecks go immediately to escalating rents.

State lawmakers are debating a long-delayed housing package.

Just how hard is it to buy a home in California? Hard. Really hard. Both compared to how hard it is in other states, and how hard it was for previous generations of Californians to buy homes.

Read the whole story

Support group for survivors of suicide

A survivors of suicide loss support group meets the fourth Thursday of each month from 6-7pm.

Community members who have lost a loved one to suicide are encouraged to attend this monthly support group.

It is not uncommon in this unexpected struggle to feel unable to just survive let alone move forward.

The gathering is at the Barton Public Relations Office, 2092 Lake Tahoe Blvd., Suite 400, South Lake Tahoe.

Applications available for SLT roads commission

South Lake Tahoe is looking for five to seven people to be on the Roads Management Authority Commission.

This panel will recommend to the City Council how to spend the money generated by Measure C. Measure C will be on the Nov. 7 ballot. If approved, it would increase of the city's sales tax by one-half of 1 percent. The money would only be used for city streets.

The commission will exist for the length of the measure – 15 years – with the start date being Jan. 1. Each member will serve four years, with no term limits. The initial commission will consist of three people appointed to a four-year term and the balance of the commission appointed for a two-year term in

order to stagger the terms.

The City Council will appoint all members.

Any resident of South Lake Tahoe who is eligible to vote may apply. Applications are due at 5pm Oct 3. They are available **online** under City Clerk-Boards and Commissions.

Slinkard Fire on Hwy. 395 at 35% containment

The Slinkard Fire burning near Topaz has consumed 9,051 acres and is 35 percent contained.

Firefighters are hoping to have it fully contained in another week.

The blaze started early last week from a lightning strike.

Highway 395 is open, but is subject to closure depending on the fire's behavior.

No structures have burned.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

American pika disappears from

large area of Sierra

By Tim Stephens, UC Santa Cruz

The American pika, a small mammal adapted to high altitudes and cold temperatures, has died out from a 64-square-mile span of habitat in California's northern Sierra Nevada mountains, and the cause appears to be climate change, according to a study published Aug. 30 in PLOS One.

Researchers surveyed pika habitat throughout the North Lake Tahoe area and found that pikas had disappeared from an area that stretches from near Tahoe City to Truckee, more than 10 miles away, and includes Mount Pluto. This local extinction is the largest area of pika extinction yet reported for the modern era.

"The loss of pikas from this large area of otherwise suitable habitat echoes prehistoric range collapses that happened when temperatures increased after the last ice age," said lead author Joseph Stewart, a doctoral candidate at UC Santa Cruz. "This time, however, we're seeing the effects of climate change unfold on a scale of decades as opposed to millennia."

Read the whole story