

Many Nev. drivers to pay more for minimum liability coverage

By Art Marroquin, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Nevada drivers might want to double-check their insurance, because changes are coming in about two weeks.

The threshold for minimum liability coverage goes up July 1 under a law approved during last year's legislative session.

New minimums require motorists to carry \$25,000 per person for bodily injury, \$50,000 per accident, plus \$20,000 for property damage coverage per accident, officials with the Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles said.

[Read the whole story](#)

Scooters revving up excitement, potential danger



Helmets don't come with a scooter rental, but state law says they are to be worn. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Susan Wood

Is South Lake Tahoe providing a green light to the potential of dangerous road incidents or an innovative transportation alternative by allowing electric scooters in town?

This was the question on June 19 related to the green bikes and scooters dotting the city landscape, prompting the City Council to hear the pros and cons during a presentation at its regular meeting.

LimeBike, which calls its riders "juicers," first launched its computerized ride share program locally about a year ago with single speed bikes, then later with 3-speed versions and now has expanded into scooters. Last fall, it poured \$50 million in the venture.

In a year, 40 employees were hired locally and the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMTs) dropped – thus reducing the carbon emissions in a heavily populated tourist destination

during the peak summer months, LimeBike local Operations Manager Stephanie Sarradet told the council.

The assumption is if people weren't on a LimeBike, they would be in a car. Thus the VMT reduction.

Beyond economic and workforce benefits, Sarradet insisted the chief aim is assisting with lake clarity. Of course that is an uphill climb considering **2017 had the worst clarity reading** in the lake's history.

As Sarradet put it, the environmental mission helps in not turning Lake Tahoe "into a mud puddle."

However, the prevalence of these scooters has not gone unnoticed by council members, citizens – including a doctor, and the police department. Officers have issued three warnings to riders without helmets.

"They're buzzing around like hornets all over town," police Lt. David Stevenson told *Lake Tahoe News*. His vehicle code book was covered with Post-It notes to mark important points. "I've only seen one helmet, and it was (worn by) a 10-year-old."

California law requires a scooter rider obey the rules of the road, wear a helmet, have a driver's license, stay off the sidewalks and avoid lanes alongside thoroughfares such as Al Tahoe Boulevard with speed limits over 25mph.

Mayor Wendy David, who called the transit option "awesome," is also concerned with the lack of helmet use.

She was also the one **who in April** when it was announced scooters would be coming here held up a *San Francisco Chronicle* article showing the problems with them. The council at the time dismissed her concerns.



Andrew Aquino and Jack Kixmiller out for a joy ride to the beach on June 19. Photo/Susan Wood

The mode of transit is not without its detractors.

Resident Oliver Starr read a statement to the council that rattled off a list of complaints about LimeBikes and scooters ranging from their disposal, including all over his neighborhood, to how they're being ridden. Sometimes two people are riding them, possibly underage, moving against traffic and at night.

"It's only a matter of time before a tragedy occurs. Mark my words," he said.

While supporting the idea of smart, shared transportation options, Starr even submitted a formal complaint to the company upon a run-in with a driver looking for equipment in his neighborhood.

He suggested that since the city can stop shopping carts from leaving parking lots it should be able to “geo-fence” where the San Mateo company’s equipment is parked. LimeBikes and scooters cost \$1 to unlock through the computer app and are tracked through GPS. Bike rental prices are that much every half hour. For scooters, the price is 15 cents per minute.

Councilman Tom Davis strongly urged the company to facilitate education along with rentals. He also encouraged Lime to program the scooters to go slower. Lime scooters may travel at a maximum of 15mph.

“I see them racing down the street. There are dangerous situations. But I also see families out enjoying them,” said Davis, who pledged to ride one this weekend.

The councilman also asked Sarradet whether the scooter governs itself to go no faster than 15mph.

Sarradet answered yes.

But that claim was disputed by a couple of riders on Gardner Mountain that afternoon.

Jack Kixmiller and Andrew Aquino were zipping on side streets in the middle of the road with no helmets when pulled over by *Lake Tahoe News*.

When asked if the scooters run faster, Kixmiller said yes. Aquino’s reached 17mph.

How do you know?

“It says right here,” Kixmiller said, pointing to the computer gauge on the handlebar.

As it turns out, a company representative told them to wear helmets, but Kixmiller retorted: "We're locals, we're just going to the beach."

And there lies the challenge with enforcing the rules of the road with vehicles deemed as toys.

John Riddle warned the council a few times during the meeting about the "no helmet" quandary among riders who may feel invincible.

"As a doctor, even minor head traumas are a very serious injury," he told *LTN*.

Councilwoman Brooke Laine took the concern one step further by bringing up a scenario. She hypothetically mentioned a kid who flips over the scooter upon "hitting a pothole," placing the city at risk of being sued.

"I'm very concerned about the liability," she said.

Interim City Attorney Nira Doherty told Laine it was a pertinent scenario.

"Public agencies can be liable. Certain elements have to be met (though)," Doherty told *LTN*.

But the city would be exempt from litigation if the company and rider were found to be at fault, "even if dangerous conditions exist," she added.

More liability questions remain for those riding on U.S. Forest Service and California Tahoe Conservancy land. Representatives from those agencies did not respond to *LTN*'s questions.

At a minimum the equipment could be impounded, but that does nothing to penalize the rider using a motorized vehicle where it's not permitted.

Lime has paid for and pulled a business license, the finance department confirmed. That, though, is just for the city. The vehicles are in Douglas County too, but that jurisdiction does not have business licenses.

Sarradet pledged the company would focus on safety and launch an educational campaign designed to make riders more responsible. The League has a limited number of helmets for those who can't afford one. Lime also plans to ask other businesses associated with its 50 local partnerships to chip in per the mayor's request.

Otherwise, Marissa Fox of the League reminded naysayers and those with concerns that once Lime works out the kinks, it will be a win-win economically and environmentally for the community.

"There's no cost but to the user, and it is a benefit to the community," Fox said, adding if the council works with the company: "I think you'll find a receptive party."

A few Lime company employees joined Fox in support of the idea.

LimeBikes is available in 60 markets worldwide; at least 4 million trips have been logged by users. The transit alternative has environmentalists and ride-share advocates and even government officials seeing green.

Bikes versus buses

When the **Tahoe Transportation District** on the same day delivered a presentation lamenting a loss of revenue and decreased ridership that is likely to lead to fewer hours of bus service, the City Council seemed irritated the agency is not being innovative with transportation services.

Laine told TTD's George Fink that the agency appears to be "going in the wrong direction." In addition, the League is

also advocating a program involving smart mobility vans, as mentioned by Fox during the public comment period.

“The community is not designed for these big buses,” Laine said, adding she’s “concerned and disappointed,” finding the TTD’s bad-news report as “extremely alarming.”

Her response to the buses operating only 10 hours a day?

“You might as well not even offer it,” she said.

Councilman Austin Sass wants to see more connectivity by combining buses and bike routes.

Davis would still like to see a free transit system, a dream of elected officials for years.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- “No e-bike” stickers are being posted on U.S. Forest Service trails where motorized vehicles are prohibited.
- Sept. 1 is the 37th annual Kirkwood Volunteer Fire Department 5K/10K Run and the 18th annual Thin Air Chili Cook-Off.
- The Tahoe Mountain Bike Festival in Meyers in June 30-July 1. For more info, go **online**.
- Colorado-based Oskar Blues Brewery has donated \$5,000 to the League to Save Lake Tahoe. The company intends to provide its craft beers for volunteer events and other League activities.
- The South Lake Tahoe Library will host Wild Things Inc. on June 22. The free outdoor show starts at 2pm at 1000 Rufus

Allen Blvd. Wild Things Inc. will bring a mix of wild animals and share with children a message of conservation and appreciation for wild animals.

Placer County offers help to candidates

There will be over 175 positions available on various local city councils, school boards, parks, fire, water and utility districts in Placer County this November.

Placer County Elections Office is conducting free candidate workshops to take the mystery out of running for office.

Prospective candidates and their supporters are encouraged to attend. The workshops will explain many of the details involved in running for public office including campaign financial disclosure filing, campaigning techniques and working with the media.

Guest speakers will include a successful candidate, a campaign consultant, member of the media, Placer County Clerk-Recorder-Registrar of Voters Ryan Ronco and elections staff.

Candidate workshop details:

- Tahoe City – June 29, 6pm, Tahoe Administrative Center, 775 North Lake Blvd.
- Roseville – July 9, 6pm, City Council Chambers, 311 Vernon St.
- Lincoln – July 16, 6pm, City Council Chambers, 600 6th St.
- Auburn – July 21, 10am, Finance Administration Building,

2956 Richardson Drive.

Candidate filing for the November election will open July 16 and close at 5pm on Aug. 10.

Agencies use every tool to face threat of fire

By Sage Sauerbrey, Moonshine Ink

“Forest fires happen because of decades of decisions that are made beforehand,” says forest ecologist Malcom North of a long line of mistakes in forest management stretching more than 100 years into the past.

These unintentional blunders have compounded with climate change and natural forest processes throughout the years to create the most dangerous fire conditions in Tahoe’s human history, leaving us struggling to play catch-up.

The toolboxes possessed by public agencies to prevent wildfire are unique in that they include not just a bevy of modern treatment methods, but also extensive access to the most current data, state funding and grants, as well as interagency cooperation and some unusual creative partnerships. Will these new efforts be enough to keep up with the looming threat of a catastrophic wildfire in Tahoe?

Read the whole story

Swimmer to recount historic day on Lake Tahoe

Erline Christopherson, the first woman to swim the length of Lake Tahoe, will be back in the area on July 18 to talk about that memorable day.

She was 16 when she accomplished this feat. She will share her memories of that record-setting day in 1962 with historic videos, photos and stories.

The free talk will be at the South Lake Tahoe Library on Rufus Allen Boulevard at 6pm.

Five years ago Christopherson gave a talk in South Lake Tahoe, and at that time the Lake Tahoe Museum had an exhibit about her.

Tahoe Pride Art Show on South Shore

The 2018 Tahoe Pride Art Show, *Love is a National Treasure*, shines light on the diversity of the community.

The opening is June 30 from 2 to 8pm at Benko Art Gallery, 3979 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe. The exhibit runs through July 8.

Work from Tahoe artists Scott Forrest, Shelley Zentner, Red Stickman, Catherine Schoen, Hayden Tencher, and emerging

artists from South Tahoe High School will be on display. Local musician Hailie Hay will be performing new music. This event is free and open to the public.

A portion of the proceeds from this event will go to Live Violence Free. Live Violence Free is committed to promoting a violence free community through education and advocacy to address domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and basic needs.

Calif. climate-related disasters impacting home insurance

By Molly Peterson, KQED-TV

Insurers can calculate how likely your home is to burn down in a wildfire, or flood in a high tide, and for some time now they've been using climate science to shape those estimates.

KQED science reporter Molly Peterson spoke with state Insurance Commissioner Dave Jones. He told her the growing risk of climate-related disasters is already hitting the insurance market.

"We've seen about a 15 percent increase in nonrenewals. Now, that doesn't mean that those 15 percent can't find any insurance. But the company they did have decided it was too risky to write insurance for them and decided not to renew them," Jones said.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Don't separate families at the border

By Laura Bush

On Sunday, a day we as a nation set aside to honor fathers and the bonds of family, I was among the millions of Americans who watched images of children who have been torn from their parents.

In the six weeks between April 19 and May 31, the Department of Homeland Security has sent nearly 2,000 children to mass detention centers or foster care. More than 100 of these children are younger than 4 years old. The reason for these separations is a zero-tolerance policy for their parents, who are accused of illegally crossing our borders.

I live in a border state. I appreciate the need to enforce and protect our international boundaries, but this zero-tolerance policy is cruel. It is immoral. And it breaks my heart.

[Read the whole story](#)

Ketchup is more than a condiment

By Amy Bentley

Ketchup is arguably the United States' most ubiquitous

condiment. Ninety-seven percent of Americans have a ketchup bottle in the fridge, usually Heinz, and we buy about 10 billion ounces of the red stuff annually—almost three bottles per person per year. We purportedly spend more money on salsa, but in terms of sheer volume ketchup comes out on top.

Bright red in color, tangy, sweet, salty, and replete with a “meaty,” tomato-ey umami hit, ketchup provides accents of color and flavoring, as well as a smell and texture that is familiar and comforting. It’s the perfect complement to the American diet: contrasting with salty and fatty flavors while enhancing the sweet notes in our most popular foods. And while we think of it as “merely” a condiment on what we’re really eating, it has helped to revolutionize the way food is grown, processed, and regulated.

We slather ketchup on French fries, hamburgers, and hot dogs (though ketchup with the latter is, for many, anathema). We pour it on eggs, mac and cheese, breaded and fried clam strips, and chicken fingers. We use it as an ingredient in sauces and casseroles. Back in the 1980s, politicians and activists even debated its questionable status as a vegetable in school lunches, though in later decades ketchup’s distant cousin salsa made the cut, as did tomato sauce on pizza.

Ketchup is an exemplar of New World-style industrialized food, its distinctive sweet-and-tangy flavor borne of the rigors of mass production. Quintessentially American, ketchup is seamlessly standardized and mass-produced—qualities, along with cleanliness and low cost, that Americans have traditionally valued in their food, often at the expense of taste. Shelf stability, in essence, created what we call “American flavor.”

Ketchup was not invented in the United States. It began as a fermented fish sauce—sans tomatoes—in early China. British sailors bought the sauce, called *ke-tsiap* or *ke-tchup* by 17th-century Chinese and Indonesian traders, to provide relief from

the dry and mundane hardtack and salt pork they ate aboard ship. Over the next couple of centuries, ketchup spread throughout the British Empire, traveling around the world with the navy. When they returned home to England, sailors and others sought to reproduce ketchup to liven up standard, stodgy meat-and-potato dishes or stewed fish, or to add flavor to gravies and broths. Recipe writers and small manufacturers experimented to recreate the complex flavors of the sauce, substituting nuts, mushrooms, or shallots for the fish. Most cookbooks of the early 19th century included a few recipes for various kinds of ketchup.

But ketchup became truly American once it was wed with the tomato and bottled industrially. While an early ketchup recipe with tomatoes appeared in Britain in 1817, calling for “a gallon of fine, red, and full ripe tomatas [sic],” and also anchovies, shallots, salt, and a variety of spices, it was Americans who really invented tomato ketchup.

The American tomato, with its origins in what is now Mexico and South America, was introduced to Europeans and North Americans by the Spanish conquistadors, and by the 19th century had become a ubiquitous garden plant. (Earlier it had been considered unhealthy and even poisonous.) Tomatoes became the base of many a sauce or stew, and before long were bottled as concentrated, fermented ketchups, preserved with vinegar and spices much the same way housewives would make a mushroom ketchup.

But as historian Andrew Smith notes, tomato ketchup became wildly popular, its use spreading rapidly to all regions of the United States. American meals during the 19th century, much like the British diet of the time, consisted of stews, soups, rough cuts of meat, vegetables and fruits when in season, and bread, bread, and more bread. Tomato ketchup’s flavor and color literally spiced up some rather monotonous protein and grain combinations.

U.S. manufacturers began mass-producing tomato ketchup in the late 19th century—and that processing shaped the condiment's particular flavor profile. Early bottled ketchups fermented or spoiled relatively quickly, but industrial producers found that adding extra vinegar helped preserve them. Over time, they added more and more vinegar, and then they started adding sugar, too, to balance the vinegar's sourness. Ketchup became more sweet and more sour than it originally had been. Americans became acclimated to this particular flavor profile of commercial ketchup—which was different from the ketchups produced by home cooks. It was thicker in texture, made with more sugar, and had a brighter, more pleasing red color (thanks to additives and preserving methods) than homemade. Industrialized ketchup began influencing other American foods. As U.S. cities grew, so did the number of diners, hamburger joints, and chicken shacks—purveyors of often greasy meals that paired very well with tomato ketchup.

Food scientists at Pittsburgh-based H.J. Heinz Company eventually hit upon the perfect balance of sweet, salty, sour, and umami, creating a precisely calibrated product that was difficult for others to replicate—a “platonic ideal of ketchup,” as writer Malcolm Gladwell has noted. The Heinz Company displayed its wares at international expositions, spreading the gospel of ketchup throughout North America, the British Isles, and beyond.

On the strength of its just-right recipe, as well as its manufacturing reach and global aspirations, Heinz quickly became the leading American ketchup producer, selling 5 million bottles per year by the early 1900s.

In addition to its industrial recipes, Heinz also was instrumental in developing, perfecting, and promoting sanitary production methods, not only for its ketchup but for the dozens of products it manufactured. The company helped standardize bottle and can sterilization, insisted that workers abide by strict rules of cleanliness, and even pushed

for sanitary food processing legislation. Other big food processors followed Heinz's lead. The company made ketchup, and then ketchup influenced the way everything else was processed.

It might not be too far-fetched to argue that later in the century, after altering the way American food tasted and was regulated, ketchup also helped change the way it was grown. Innovations in tomato breeding and mechanical harvester technologies, driven in part by demand for the condiment, helped define modern industrial agriculture. In the 1960s UC Davis scientists developed a mechanical tomato harvester. Around the same time, plant geneticists perfected a tomato with a thick skin and round shape that could withstand machine harvesting and truck transport. This new tomato was arguably short on taste, but the perfect storm of breeding and harvesting technology from which it emerged allowed for a steady supply of tomatoes that kept bottlers and canners in business. Nearly all of the tomatoes produced for sauces and ketchup are products of this moment—as are many other fruits and vegetables produced in the U.S.

Early on, ketchup functioned as a great equalizer, with a “special and unprecedented ability to provide something for everyone.” Tomato ketchup became “entrenched as the primary and most popular of condimental sauces, its appeal to Americans deep and widespread,” wrote food historian Elizabeth Rozin, who called it the “Esperanto of cuisine.” Ketchup functioned as a class leveler. Regardless of income or education, Americans could drop into a roadside diner or barbeque joint. Affordable to most, a burger and fries spiked with ketchup was a democratic, delicious lowest common denominator meal. Today ketchup's appeal is in part because it embodies principles that Americans prize including consistency, value, and cleanliness. More over ketchup's use, noted Rozin, was shaped by foods and meals that are perceived as “American” in their preparation and presentation: think

hamburgers and fries, “ball park” foods, fast food in general.

The rest of the world, for better or worse, regards ketchup as emblematic of U.S. cuisine, too—and the condiment continues to shape food everywhere it goes. In Japan, people love a cuisine known as yoshoku, which they also sometimes call “Western Food.” Yoshoku restaurants use a lot of ketchup. They serve a dish called naporitan, made of cooked spaghetti that is rinsed in cold water, then stir-fried with vegetables in ketchup. Omu rice is an omelet lying over a mound of ketchup-flavored rice. The hambaagu is a Japanese version of a hamburger patty, usually served bunless. Swedes love “Depression spaghetti”—ketchup poured over pasta as a sauce, as many Americans did during the 1930s and probably still do.

Today we’re seeing the growth of artisanal ketchups that may eventually erode some of Heinz’s market share, part of the larger trend toward specialized products that feature organic ingredients, fewer artificial additives, or lower sugar levels. But industrial ketchup, with its bright red color, its vinegary and sweet flavor, and its thick texture that pairs perfectly with starches and proteins, will remain a beloved and ubiquitous condiment, influencing American eating—and increasingly, food and cooking in the rest of the world, too.

Amy Bentley teaches food history at New York University. She’s the author of “Inventing Baby Food: Taste, Health and the Industrialization of the American Diet.”