

Nev. team will capture eclipse from 100,000 feet in air



The view from 100,000 feet, part of NASA's eclipse live-streaming project. Photo/NASA

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

A group of Nevada researchers plans to take solar eclipse viewing to new heights.

They're launching a balloon outfitted with cameras to the edge of space just as the eclipse shadow rolls over eastern Oregon and Idaho.

The idea is to capture unique images from the first total solar eclipse viewable from the contiguous United States since 1979.

Read the whole story

Artists sought for Calif. bird stamp contest

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is conducting an art contest to select the design for the state's 2017-18 upland game bird stamp.

The contest is open to all U.S. residents ages 18 and over. Entries will be accepted from Oct. 30 through Nov.15.

This year's stamp will feature the Wilson's snipe (*Gallinago delicata*), a game bird.

Entries must include at least one Wilson's snipe, preferably in a setting representative of its natural habitat in California. Entries will be judged on originality, artistic composition, anatomical accuracy and suitability for reproduction as a stamp and a print.

The contest will be judged by a panel of experts in the fields of ornithology, conservation, art and printing. The winning artist will be selected during a public judging event, with the date and location to be announced.

The money generated from stamp sales must be spent on upland game bird-related conservation projects, education, hunting opportunities and outreach.

For contest information and entry forms, go **online**.

Warning for those driving during the eclipse

Nevada Department of Transportation officials are reminding motorists to drive safely as an eclipse darkens Nevada skies on Aug. 21.

In Northern Nevada, the sun will be as much as 90 percent eclipsed during mid-morning hours of Aug. 21.

Approximately 200 million people, nearly two-thirds of the country's population, live within a day's drive of the path of the full solar eclipse, according to the Federal Highway Administration.

While Nevada is not in the path of the total eclipse, neighboring states will be. The federal agency is warning drivers of potential increased traffic as viewers travel to states directly impacted by the eclipse.

Expect potential traffic changes as people travel to eclipse viewing areas:

- Do not pull over to the side of the highway to view the eclipse as that could pose a great danger to you and other motorists.
 - Do not try to take pictures or video of the eclipse while driving.
 - Do not look directly at the eclipse without proper eyewear.
 - Allow plenty of time to reach your destination.
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Crusade under way to pass SLT sales tax for roads

By Kathryn Reed

When South Lake Tahoe was incorporated in 1965 many of the roads were still dirt. The engineering at the time called for asphalt to be laid on top of the dirt. That's not how things are done today, especially in an environment with a freeze-thaw cycle like Tahoe.

Bad roads to begin with and no plan to deal with maintaining them has led to the city to have streets that some say resemble Third World countries.

Advocates to raise money for South Lake Tahoe's roads via increasing the sales tax are making their rounds to various groups.

Many at the Progress for Tahoe meeting on Aug. 16 admitted it was like preaching to the choir.

Leon Malmed, who is one of the main leaders behind the city's efforts of Measure C, led the discussion, with council members Austin Sass and Wendy David adding additional facts. Attendees offered advice on how to spread the message and what to say to the naysayers.

The question on the November ballot asks to raise the sales tax from 7.75 percent to 8.25 percent. It will require two-thirds of the voters to say yes. This equates to an additional 50 cents on every \$100 spent. Locals are expected to be impacted by \$25 to \$50 a year, according to Malmed.

While there is no definitive proof, Measure C advocates say about 75 percent of sales tax dollars collected in the city are from tourists. The biggest contributor to those dollars

are restaurants, with Ted Kennedy's three restaurants at Heavenly Village collectively being the No. 1 generator of sales tax in South Lake Tahoe.



Palmira Avenue between Reno and Carson avenues is rated 4 out of 100. It's the worst rated road in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/LTN

The \$2.5 million that is expected to be raised annually could only be spent on roads. Where appropriate, this will also include curbs, gutters and bike lanes. A bike lane is on the street, not a separated trail. It essentially requires a line of white paint and the lane is created.

David pointed to how Al Tahoe Boulevard was rebuilt nearly a decade ago. It was reconstructed as a road should be and still is in good condition. That is the type of work these new dollars would go toward – not patches and pothole repair –

true road construction.

Measure C is designed to sunset after 15 years. This would give taxpayers an opportunity to assess if the money is being well spent.

Two ways the city wants to ensure transparency is with a roads management authority and a roads oversight committee. The latter is just like what Lake Tahoe Unified School District and Lake Tahoe Community College created for measures G and F, respectively. It's community members analyzing the books after the fact to make sure the money was spent as the agencies said it would be. It's an audit of sorts.

The roads management authority, which the council approved at its Aug. 15 meeting, is more akin to the Planning Commission. The main difference is that all decisions will go before the council. In essence the RMA is the one deciding what gets done first. City staff will give input and be at those public meetings. The RMA will consist of members of the public appointed by the council. The council, though, will have the ability to overrule what the RMA recommends.

The plan is for these roads groups to be formed before the voters even weigh in. This is so the RMA in particular can be working this winter – if the measure passes – to start prioritizing projects.

Another advantage to having an RMA is that the state requires jurisdictions to have one to qualify for funding from the recently passed gas tax. Malmed said the city is expected to receive \$134,000 the first year from the gas tax and then \$300,000/year.

At Wednesday's meeting it was noted that so many grants require matching dollars. Measure C would qualify as the city's portion of those roads dollars from other outlets.

The city also intends to work with utility companies which are

doing work that tears up local roads. Southwest Gas in the next 10 years intends to replace all of its underground lines in South Lake Tahoe. The city plans to coordinate efforts so the road is torn up once and fixed to a higher level than what the utility would have been required to do.

The other added bonus is that with a dedicated source of money it means contracts can be long term. This will add to job creation in the area and trickle down spending. This work will be done by outside contractors – not city staff. All projects valued at more than \$70,000 must go out for bid. The local employees will still be doing the pothole repairs, storm drain and other summer work.

Opinion: Nevada proves renewable energy is reliable

By Jason Geddes, Reno Gazette-Journal

As every Nevadan knows, our state sees a lot of sunshine. What is news to some, however, is how we've increasingly used that natural resource to our advantage by adding significant amounts of solar power to the state's energy mix.

And with recent cost declines – 85 percent since 2009 – solar is now frequently generating cost savings, in addition to helping make our state's electricity production cleaner.

That's why I was surprised to read a few months ago that the U.S. Department of Energy was commencing a study on whether or not the recent shift away from traditional baseload power sources (such as coal) to more renewable energy threatened the reliability of our nation's electricity grid. However, a draft

of the study reported on last month confirmed exactly what I've seen in my own experience tracking renewable energy for Nevada: no issues with reliability.

Read the whole story

Nev. judge clears way for expanded pot distribution

By Scott Sonner, AP

A judge cleared the way Thursday for Nevada to allow more businesses to move marijuana from growers to stores in an effort to keep up with overwhelming demand since recreational pot sales began last month.

Carson City District Judge James Russell lifted an order blocking regulators from issuing pot distribution licenses to anyone other than alcohol wholesalers. Nevada's voter-approved law is unique among pot states in providing liquor wholesalers exclusive rights to distribute marijuana unless they could not keep up with demand.

Russell said after an hourlong hearing that there is overwhelming evidence alcohol wholesalers don't have the capability to meet the needs of dozens of recreational pot dispensaries from Las Vegas to Reno.

Read the whole story

Int'l travelers to U.S. increase after dip in 2016

By Beth J. Harpaz, AP

International arrivals to the U.S. increased 2 percent in January 2017 compared with January 2016, the U.S. Department of Commerce announced Wednesday.

The 5.6 million international visitors who arrived this past January represented the first monthly increase in inbound international visits to the U.S. since June 2016, the agency said in a release in Washington, D.C.

The Department of Commerce also issued its final report on the 2016 calendar year last week, counting a total of 75.6 million international visitors to the U.S. last year. That 2016 figure represented a decrease of 2 percent compared to the 77.5 million non-resident international travelers who arrived in 2015. Those visitors collectively spent \$244.7 billion here in 2016, a 1 percent decrease in spending over 2015.

Read the whole story

Reno airline capacity still trails pre-recession levels

By Richard N. Velotta Las Vegas Review-Journal

Airline seat capacity has grown at Reno-Tahoe International Airport over the past 2½ years, but it still hasn't reached levels prior to the Great Recession, the Nevada Commission on

Tourism was told Wednesday.

About 5 million seats are flown into the airport serving Reno on nine airlines from 23 destinations, thanks in part to marketing efforts by the Regional Air Service Corp., which receives funding from the commission. In 2008, capacity at the airport that is key to Northern Nevada's rural tourism economy, was 6.5 million seats.

By comparison, capacity at McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas is about 28.3 million seats a year.

Read the whole story

Douglas library issues warning about eclipse glasses

The eclipse glasses the Douglas County library handed out are being recalled.

The vendor informed the library administration on Aug. 17 that it had "not received confirmation from the supplier of your order that they sourced the item from a recommended manufacturer. We recommend that you do not use this product to view the sun or the eclipse."

The library advises people to discard the eclipse glasses received at the Library.

Five hundred glasses had been distributed.

Regular sunglasses are not enough to shield damaging rays that could result in blindness.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- The League to Save Lake Tahoe is hosting a beach cleanup day on Sept. 4 from 8:30am-noon. RSVP **online**.
- AAUW-South Lake Tahoe branch general meeting will be Sept. 9 at 10:30am in the Aspen Room at Lake Tahoe Community College. Tech Trek scholarship campers will be presenting on their camp experience. Guests are welcome and light refreshments will be provided.
- Truckee's TIP Printing and Graphics is celebrating 40 years in business. There will be a celebration Aug. 24, 5-7pm at 12177 Business Park Drive.
- The Loft's winemaker dinner hosted by Michael David has been changed to Aug. 30 at 6:30pm. Go **online** to buy tickets.
- Rep. Tom McClintock, R-Garden Grove, is having a town hall meeting Aug. 24, 6pm at the Foresthill High School gymnasium.