

Douglas County sewer board taking shape

A more diverse sewer board is about to represent Douglas County at the lake.

The Legislature at the county's urging abolished Douglas County Sewer District No. 1 effective Oct. 1. In its place is the Douglas County Lake Tahoe Sewer Authority.

Members include: county Commissioner Nancy McDermid, Wesley Rice from Round Hill water district, Darya Vogt representing Kingsbury Grade district and Grant Thompson from Tahoe-Douglas Sewer District. They will pick the last member from the Stateline business community.

The district in 2016 was accused by the Douglas County district attorney of violating open meeting and election laws.

The sewer district had been governed by three board members; two casino executives and a rep from Edgewood Companies.

In addition to the casinos and Edgewood properties, the sewer district has more than 5,000 residential connections on the South Shore.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets

in South Lake Tahoe



Zumba

Zumba is one of 10 adorable kittens at the shelter right now. They are all different colors – orange, gray, calico, tabby, black , white – you have your choice of your favorite color. Both males and females.

All are spayed/neutered, microchipped, tested for FIV, and vaccinated. They are at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet. For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go **online** or call the animal shelter. Vouchers are available there also; bring \$25 and a copy of a photo ID and a local utility bill.

– Karen Kuentz

Marijuana's future in SLT to be decided

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe's relationship with marijuana is about to be redefined.

The City Council has scheduled a special workshop for Aug. 29. Medicinal and recreational pot will be on the agenda.

"We need to vet out what we think best management practices are," City Attorney Tom Watson said. "There are potentially significant impacts."

The council briefly touched on the subject this month; which is when the workshop idea was agreed upon.

With the state's voters approving recreational use last fall, it is up to local jurisdictions to decide if they want to allow sales of the drug. State law dictates the use and growing of plants.

A big problem for cities and counties is that the state has not come up with all the parameters for legalization of this product. Edibles is one area that is slow to be resolved. Three state agencies are working on ironing out the details, with a draft likely this fall. Jan. 1 is still the start date for recreational marijuana to be allowed in California.

The council must have an ordinance in place by the end of the year regarding recreational marijuana. It could be an interim ordinance that would ban the sale, with a reconsideration of that ruling down the road.

El Dorado County has not taken a stance yet. Nevada started recreational sales on July 1. Douglas County has said it will not permit the recreational sale of pot. Incline Village may

see its first shop on Aug. 4.

California has taken action to align medicinal marijuana regulations with those of recreational.

“I’m a big supporter of medicinal marijuana. It does help,” Councilman Tom Davis said. “I’m not opposed to opening a second one. I do think competition is good.”

The medicinal marijuana ordinance limits those facilities to three. The city is down to one. For another shop to open it must have the council’s approval.

Opinion: Pull the plug on EV subsidies

By Larry Weitzman

California is a great place to live. Hundreds of miles of grand, majestic mountains and picturesque beaches sandwich a central valley that has proven to be the fruit and vegetable basket of the United States. When you couple that with about the best, most temperate and diverse climate in the world (it brought us Hollywood), it’s no wonder we are the most populous state in the union.



Larry Weitzman

But California has become known as the left coast, full of do-gooders thinking they know what's best for you and me. Our leftist Legislature recently passed a huge gasoline tax and extended the ridiculous cap and trade system (more taxes) until 2030 all to the detriment of everyone in the state as gasoline prices which were already the highest in the lower 48 states will even go higher. Right now, they are averaging about half a dollar higher than most other states and in some cases prices are a dollar a gallon more.

California will amass billions of dollars from these new tax revenues. Assemblyman Phil Ting, a 48-year-old Democrat who represents the 19th Assembly District which encompasses the western part of San Francisco and parts of San Mateo County and is a UC Berkeley, Harvard School of (big) Government alumni, has an idea how to give away at least \$3 billion of these new taxes. Need I say more. His idea has already passed the California Assembly and is now in the state Senate.

Section 1 of the bill makes several declarations, most of which are false including paragraph (m) which states, "Battery technology is improving faster than expected and electric vehicles are expected to reach cost parity with conventional alternatives in the mid-2020s." Battery technology or chemistry is basically the same as it was 10 years ago. Costs may have come down, but it remains to be seen how much further they will fall and recent studies have shown that the cost of batteries would have to fall by about 75 percent from today's prices to reach that goal of cost parity and that's not considering the other issues with batteries of range and refueling. Other battery prices have actually gone up whether they are conventional car batteries or Duracells.

But here is what the crux of the bill does. Federal EV subsidies of a \$7,500 tax credit expire after 200,000 units of a model are produced by a phase out program cutting the tax credit in half for six months, to a quarter for an additional six months and then nothing. Tesla has claimed that the new

Model 3, which has started production, has over 380,000 orders, so many buyers will not get federal subsidies. Even its Model S is closing in on the phase out of subsidies.

Ting proposes in his bill to not only continue with those subsidies in the form of rebates which are direct payments to the EV purchaser (instead of a tax credit), but to increase the rebate to the extent to equalize the cost of an EV when compared to a similar conventional model. That could amount to rebates to each EV customer in the tens of thousands of dollars. For example, if a Tesla Model 3 costs \$50,000 with equipment and an equivalent Mazda 3 costs \$25,000, the purchaser of the Model 3 would get a check from the state in the amount of \$25,000. Considering that the average price of a Model S is about \$110,000 and an equivalent comparable luxury car is \$30,000 less than the state would pay to the Tesla buyer \$30,000. Tesla buyers currently have an average annual income according to a research firm of \$320,000. Talk about a transfer of wealth from the working poor to the rich, this takes the cake.

In another unintended consequence not thought of by the brilliant Mr. Ting of the Harvard School of (big) Government is that EV prices will go up. If the state is going to make up the difference, the manufacturers would be crazy not to increase its prices. Tesla is losing \$16,000 per car currently. Why not at least make up the difference so they can stay in business? GM sells its Chevy Bolt EV from anywhere from about \$35,000 to \$41,000 and they are losing money on every car. Now they can raise their price and stop the bleeding.

The bill also says that these incentives will help the state achieve the sales of 1.5 million EVs in California alone by 2025. At current sales rates, they might be lucky to achieve a third of that number. And GM recently reported some distressing news about Chevy Bolt sales. They are not. GM recently shut down the Bolt plant because inventories are now

at 111 days. And the Bolt is a real EV with a range of over 200 miles and performance that will send it to 60 mph from a standstill in under 8 seconds (Tesla Model 3 claims the same level of performance). And this is a car you can already buy for \$35,000 and get \$10,000 in federal and state tax credits right now. It remains to be seen just how many Tesla Model 3 customers there really are. The deposits are supposedly refundable.

A study done by UC Berkeley about 15 years ago said that for automobile drivers to give up their conventional car in place of an EV, it would take a payment to the customer of \$28,000 and be given the EV for free. That study might still be true as almost all Tesla buyers have another conventional motor vehicle.

Tesla stock has taken some hits recently. It loses money on every car it sells. AB1184 looks more like an attempted bailout of Tesla, than a bill to save the planet which it won't. The planet doesn't need saving; however, humans do from their stupidity and attempts to meddle in markets, economics and human nature.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.

KMS site may fall out of escrow

The future of the former Kingsbury Middle School site in Stateline is the topic of a special school board meeting on Monday.

Douglas County School District board members on July 24 at

4:30pm are meeting in Minden to discuss extending escrow.

Cave Rock resident Patrick Taylor wants to turn the 22-plus acre site into **affordable housing**.

The 2007-08 school year was the last time students were in the building. It's been vacant ever since.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

‘Trump slump’ in travel hasn’t materialized

By Beth J. Harpaz, Associated Press

Last winter, the U.S. tourism industry fretted that Trump administration policies might lead to a “Trump slump” in travel.

But those fears may have been premature. International arrivals and travel-related spending are up in 2017 compared with the same period in 2016. There might even be a “Trump bump,” says Roger Dow, CEO of the U.S. Travel Association, a nonprofit representing the travel industry.

A few months ago, Dow and others warned that President Trump’s anti-immigrant rhetoric and ban on travel from a handful of mostly Muslim countries could send an anti-tourism message.

Read the whole story

Comments sought on foothill yellow-legged frog

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife wants the public's input on a proposal to list the foothill yellow-legged frog as a threatened species.

The frog inhabits lower elevation creeks, streams and rivers throughout Sierra and other parts of the state. They can be found in a variety of habitat types such as chaparral, oak woodland, mixed coniferous forest, riparian sycamore and cottonwood forest, as well as wet meadows.

In December 2016, the Center for Biological Diversity submitted a petition to the California Fish and Game Commission to formally list the frog as threatened under the California Endangered Species Act. The listing petition described a variety of threats to the survival of frogs in California. These include direct and indirect impacts associated with dams, water diversions and development, invasive species, disease, climate change and other activities such as marijuana cultivation, timber harvest, mining, recreation, road building and urbanization.

The Commission followed CDFW's recommendation and voted June 21 to advance the species to candidacy. The commission published findings of this decision on July 7, triggering a 12-month period during which CDFW will conduct a status review to inform the commission's decision on whether to list the species.

Comments may be submitted by email to wildlifemgt@wildlife.ca.gov.

Health care thrusts Sandoval into national spotlight

By Ben Botkin, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – Brian Sandoval is having a good year.

Nevada's Republican governor has seen his national profile grow in prominence, highlighted by his role influencing Sen. Dean Heller on the health care debate, and his new role as chairman of the National Governors Association.

Last month, Sandoval became part of the national conversation on health care when Heller, a Republican, declared he would not support a bill to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act.

The announcement showed how influential Sandoval can be on a fellow Republican and propelled Nevada's chief executive onto a bigger stage.

[Read the whole story](#)

Star Guide: Our place in the galaxy



Time to look up at the sky to see what else is out there.
Photo/Ryan Berendsen

By Tony Berendsen

"The contemplation of celestial things will make a man both speak and think more sublimely and magnificently when he descends to human affairs." – Cicero (106BC-43BC)

Our view of the cosmos is hidden by the light scattering of the sun during the daylight hours causing the illusion of a blue sky ceiling. Sunset is the beginning of the transparency of our magic window view into space. We live on the edge of space and can safely lookout into it protected by invisible magnetic fields and transparent gasses. We are so close to the cosmos we can touch it with our minds.

During the month of August find a comfortable dark spot outside on a moonless night with a view of the southern horizon to watch the sun relinquish its grasp on the day and replaced by the dark quiet vision of the stars. A couple bright stars in the south will become visible on the horizon

as the sky darkens: a reddish colored star, and a little to the left, a yellowish wandering star.

The reddish star is Antares, the heart of the Scorpion, over 500 light years away. Its volume would swallow the orbit of the Earth and Mars if placed where our star the sun is, and it will end its life someday as a brilliant supernova bright enough to be seen during the day.

The yellowish wandering star really isn't a star at all, it's the planet Saturn at 880 million miles away. Even a small telescope will resolve its round disk and beautiful rings. It is the second largest planet in our solar system and revolves around the sun every 29 years.

Stay in your comfortable spot for a while, try to keep the phone and pad a bay, to watch and wait as the hazy band of the Milky Way begins to show up just below Saturn.

Saturn is just above and to the right of the dark center band of the Milky Way and its galactic center. The darkness is caused by thousands of light years of gas between us and the galactic center obscuring our view of it over 25,000 light years away.

Through the eyes of astronomical instruments imaging in the infrared, X-ray, and radio wavelengths we have seen the center of our galaxy. We have watched stars orbit near a gigantic black hole that marks the center we orbit around every 250 million years.

Lean back in your chair and look up to follow the Milky Way to the north. Notice it surrounds us and has wrapped its hazy band upon us for we are inside of our galaxy in-between a couple of its gigantic spiral arms.

Our place in the galaxy is a small place, an oasis for our kind of life, orbiting around a star that will supply us with light and energy for billions of years to come. Our technology

has helped us understand where we are within the Milky Way and with that little bit of knowledge, a bright star and a planet in the evening sky to point the way, we can see where we are with our naked eyes.

Tony Berendsen runs Tahoe Star Tours. He may be reached at 775.232.0844 or tony@tahoestartours.com.

Shareholders meetings key to Caesars leaving bankruptcy

By Richard N. Velotta Las Vegas Review-Journal

Shareholders of two Caesars Entertainment operating companies will gather Tuesday at Caesars Palace for a pair of meetings that are expected to be brief but are critical to the resort giant's emergence from Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection after 2½ years.

Stock owners for Caesars Entertainment Corp. and Caesars Acquisition Co. and their representatives are scheduled to vote on a merger proposal that would make Caesars Acquisition the emerging company.

A Caesars spokesman said he expects the meetings to last less than 30 minutes between them, but the merger approval is a critical step toward the conclusion of the sometimes heated proceedings that began Jan. 15, 2015, when the company went to U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Chicago to request the reorganization of its finances.

Caesars is the parent company of Harrah's Lake Tahoe and Harveys in Stateline.

Read the whole story