

Weather impacts home sales in Tahoe-Truckee

The wicked winter is being blamed for the decline in home sales for the first quarter of 2017 in the Lake Tahoe-Truckee area.

The overall sales volume dipped 7 percent from a year ago. The drop was mainly affected by a 13 percent decrease in the sale of homes priced less than \$1 million, according to statistics from Chase International. The median home price remained steady with a 2 percent increase to \$529,000.

Homes sold for more than \$1 million were down 5 percent and overall units sold were down 6 percent. Incline Village saw the biggest decreases with a 52 percent fall in volume and 24 percent decline in units sold. Homes sold for more than \$1 million were down 23 percent. The median price of a home in Incline Village fell 8 percent to \$870,000.

Tahoe City saw a 28 percent jump in volume sold, primarily from a 14 percent rise in the median home price (\$611,000). The South Shore experienced a 67 percent increase in homes sold for more than \$1 million and the median home price was up 4 percent to \$412,000. The East Shore also saw an uptick in homes sold for more than \$1 million (25 percent), while homes selling for less than \$1 million dropped 31 percent. The median price of a home on the East Shore rose 26 percent to \$965,000.

Sales were down across the board in Truckee, with record-breaking snowfall and severe winter storms hampering buyers' searches. Volume and units sold were both down, 29 and 18 percent, respectively, while median home price rose 7 percent to \$709,000.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

2016-17 nears record for wettest winter in N. Calif.

By Nashelly Chavez, Sacramento Bee

The northern Sierra Nevada, which supplies water for much of the rest of California, is poised to surpass its wettest year in recorded history well before the rainy season comes to a close.

As of Saturday morning, the region had accumulated an average of 87.5 inches of water across eight northern Sierra stations since the beginning of the season on Oct. 1, according to data from the California Department of Water Resources.

Erick Kurth, a meteorologist for the National Weather Service, said rain and snow predicted for the upcoming week could help bring the extra water needed to exceed the 1982-1983 record. Areas throughout the Sierra mountains saw snowfall into Saturday afternoon. Rain is expected to shower the region again beginning Tuesday and last through Thursday.

The current record for the northern Sierra was established when the water year running from Oct. 1, 1982 through Sept. 30, 1983 saw a total of 88.5 inches.

Read the whole story

Road Beat: 2017 Acura MDX, another spectacular product



The Acura MDX handles extremely well in snow and ice.
Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

Honda and its luxury brand Acura are on a roll. My last three Honda/Acura Road Beats have all reported great new products out of the company that started with Soichiro Honda and his marvelous 50 cc Honda Cub that is still in production nearly 60 years after its introduction. With production exceeding 87 million units, it's making the little Honda, by far, the most produced motor vehicle in history. That's some ongoing heritage.

MDX introduced the third generation in 2014, with each successive generation growing by a couple of inches in length

and wheelbase, with this third iteration now firmly into a large midsize with a 111-inch wheelbase and a length of 196 inches. Width is a trimmer 77 inches (where most large SUVs are 79-80 inches). A benefit of its width is a super wide track of 66-inches front and rear.

Acura has done a rhinoplasty to the MDX nose and in its face lift for 2017 removed the “eagle beak” grille replaced by a mesh insert in its five-sided signature theme. The result is a cleaner appearance. When combined with the new window line and shape it gives the MDX a handsome shape. Maybe my only gripe is the oversized front emblem. It’s big.



Specifications

Price \$44,050 (MDX FWD) to \$58,500 plus \$975 for the boat

Engine

3.5L SOHC, 24 valve, direct injected V-6 290 hp@ 6,200 rpm

267 lb.-ft. of torque @ 4,700 rpm

Transmission

Nine-Speed torque converter automatic

Configuration

Transverse mounted front engine/FWD/AWD

Dimensions

Wheelbase 111.0 inches

Length 196.2 inches

Width 77.2 inches

Height 67.4 inches

Ground clearance 7.3 inches

Track 66.3 inches

Weight 4,257 pounds

Weight Distribution (f/r)

57/43 percent

Fuel capacity 19.5 gallons

Passenger volume 132.7 cubic feet

Cargo volume behind third row seat 15.0 cubic feet

Wheels 20X8 inch alloys

Tires 245/50X20

Turning circle 38.7 feet

Performance

0-60 mph 5.65 seconds

50-70 mph 2.87 seconds

50-70 mph uphill (6-7 percent) 4.11 seconds

Top Speed Probably way too fast for me.

Fuel economy EPA rated at 19/26/22 mpg city/highway/combined.

Expect 22-23 mpg in rural country, suburban driving.

26-27 mpg on the highway at legal speeds.

In the engine bay is a revised 3.5L SOHC, 24 valve direct injected engine with all the wazoo bells and whistles, including multi-cylinder displacement and a drive by wire throttle system. Trick stuff that leads to prodigious power of

290 hp at 6,200 rpm and 267 pounds of twist at 4,700 rpm which means the MDX is pumping out about 240 hp at just 4,700 rpm. That's responsive mid-range power. Acura has added some more gears to its slick cog swapper, now totaling nine.

Performance is world class with this MDX 4,257 pound AWD knocking off 0-60 mph in a very zippy 5.65 seconds. MDX backs up that world class average with a 50-70 mph simulated passing run on a level highway of just 2.87 seconds coupled with the same passing run up a steep grade of just 4.11 seconds. This MDX can fly. Throttle response is perfect and linear with a telepathic gearbox almost reading your mind as to gear selection. Beautiful.

Now here is where it gets amazing. EPA rates the MDX at 19/26/22 mpg city/highway/combined with respect to fuel economy. MDX picks up an mpg in the city and combined cycle with the Advance Package's auto stop feature which shuts off the engine while sitting at a signal. It was unobtrusive as I seem to always forget to turn it off anyway. It always defaults to auto-stop every time you start the engine. When switched off by a button on the console, a yellow light in the gauge binnacle lets you know auto-stop is disabled. EPA numbers were fairly close to my test numbers. Overall the MDX did average 22-23 mpg in a mix of rural and suburban driving with almost no time spent cruising the Interstate. In two runs to Carson City and back from Placerville, the MDX averaged 26.6 mpg in both runs, with about half of the run driving aggressively. On the highway at 70 mph in a two-way run, the MDX also averaged 26.6 mpg. With its 19.5-gallon fuel tank that equates to a good 500 miles nonstop. Most human "tanks" won't hold out.

We are only warming up here as there is a lot more to talk about. First is the ride and drive quality. MDX is deafeningly quiet as is the smooth demeanor of its ride quality. With the nine-speed tranny and tall gear ratios, the inaudible engine spins just 1,700 rpm at 70 mph. The body and structure is

built like a tank, tight and strong. MDX is a unibody crossover and has state of the art suspension of MacPherson struts up front and a multilink system in the rear with big stab bars at both ends. Its integrated Dynamic System of comfort, normal and sport will slightly change the character of its ride and handling qualities, but sport is my preferred mode, while the ride is taut, it is still supple.

Sport mode also lends itself to extra sharp handling, but rest assured, handling is pretty sharp in comfort as well. Remember that wide track mentioned before? When you couple that with 20 x 8 inch alloys and super wide 245/50 series high performance all-season rubber, you get a capital S of the SUV that this MDX is. Grip is strong and steering is quick, estimated to be under three turns lock to lock and with the wide series 50 rubber turn in is very crisp and accuracy is true.



Plenty of room to haul people, toys and cargo.

One of my drives up Highway 50 was on a snowy day with snow and ice on the road. The MDX handled it perfectly with positive control and added confidence in the systems. It was truly amazing how well the Acura handled under these difficult conditions at speed. Lesser cars simply faded away. Turning circle is a decent 38.7 feet. Weight distribution is also

reasonably balanced at 57/43 percent, excellent for a chassis that was initially an FWD system with a transverse front mounted engine.

Safety is of course second to none with every safety acronym on board, especially with the Advance Package – including a heads-up braking warning. Lane departure warning, lane keep assist, road departure mitigation, adaptive cruise and more are all standard. MDX's strong huge disc brakes are over a foot in diameter with all the braking acronyms. MDX also has a full surround camera system giving the driver a 360-degree top view of its surroundings. Even in tight parking situations you should never put a scratch on its beautiful finish. Acura's beautiful headlights are excellent.

Now to another bright spot for the MDX, its comfortable and beautiful interior done in soft perforated leather with umpteen way power adjustable seats with memory. Nice. The IP gauge binnacle has the customary large tach and speedo separated by the trip computer-information center. That's all good. The center stack has two big info screens stacked on one another and that makes for complications as they are controlled by a kind of vertically operated center knob or mouser. There is a learning curve to successfully operate the system. It's not a touch screen, but it is still hard. Sometimes (most of the time) buttons and knobs are better and easier to use while being less distracting.

Second row seating is comfortable and copious, and while it looks less than inviting, the fold-down rear seats are good for two, even adults as long as they are not NFL linemen. Passenger volume is huge at 133 cubes and it will please the Home Depot/Lowe's lover. I easily carried a bunch of 8 foot 2 x 4s and 1 x 6s one with one second row seat remaining up right with plenty of room to spare. It can swallow a load.

Pricing for this MDX SH-AWD (SH for super handling which it does) starts at \$46,050. For the sake of brevity, SH is a

sophisticated torque vectoring system proprietary to Acura that was first developed about a dozen years ago. With the Advance Package, which has features that most buyers will want, (my tester had the Advance Package), it is \$56,500. The base SH-AWD MDX is well equipped, leather, etc. Perhaps the Technology version at \$50,460 will work for most buyers. Study the brochure as like the center stack, there is a lot to learn. Destination, i.e., the boat (luxury suite) from Japan is additional \$975. Acura MDX with the face lift (I'm being a bit superficial here) is a new favorite of mine.

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.

Tickets available for summer classical music fest

The sixth season of nationally celebrated classical music festival, Classical Tahoe, will be July 28 through Aug. 12.

The festival brings together nationally and internationally recognized musicians for three weeks of concert performances in Incline Village. Under the direction of Joel Revzen, the 10-concert series supports Tahoe's cultural growth, while bringing together an assembly of musicians from the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic and other orchestras throughout the world.

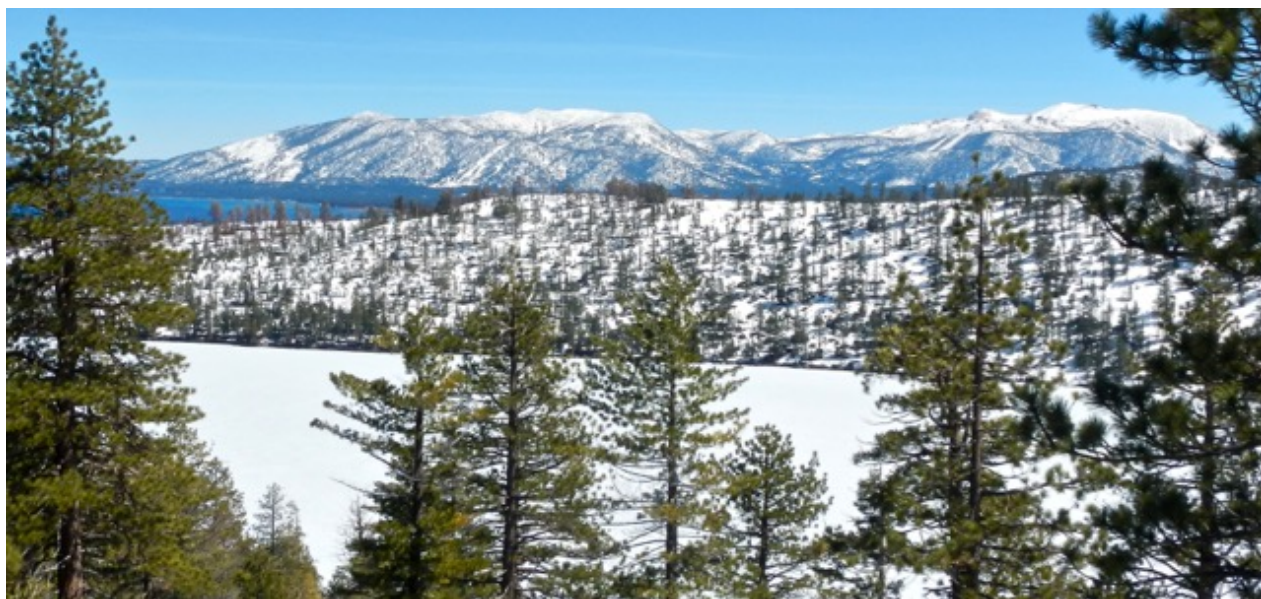
Guest soloists are traveling to Lake Tahoe from all over the globe: Cuban pianist Aldo López-Gavilán ignites Gershwin's

“Rhapsody in Blue,” Israeli violinist Itamar Zorman performs Jonathan Leshnoff’s “Violin Concerto,” and four award-winning soloists from the San Francisco Opera’s prestigious Adler Fellowship Program bring to life scenes from Mozart/Da Ponte operas.

Concerts begin at 7pm at the Festival Pavilion at Sierra Nevada College in Incline Village. Ticket prices are \$25, \$50, \$75 and \$100. Chamber music concerts are \$30. Season subscriptions available. Student tickets are offered at a 50 percent discount off regular ticket pricing.

For tickets and more information, go **online**.

Cascade Falls tricky to get to in the snow



A frozen Cascade Lake with Lake Tahoe in the distance.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

I made the right decision in not snowshoeing to Cascade Falls by myself. The conditions, at least a week ago, were sketchy in places.

The narrow, slick route had many people turning around – us included.

Originally AJ and I were going to go on a weekday. And while I would not have been alone, she doesn't know how to operate a phone to call for help. I know what this trail is like in dirt-granite-dry conditions; I wasn't sure what to expect with the winter-spring we've had.

So, the next day it was me, AJ and Sue. Starting off from the Bayview trailhead near Emerald Bay we had a choice to wear snowshoes or not. We opted to wear them thinking they would give us better traction when the trail narrowed.



Cascade Falls is bound to be even larger as the snow really melts.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

It's hard to know if that was the correct decision. One problem was the few barren patches were rocky and often involved manzanita. This was more challenging with snowshoes than the soft, super narrow trail.

We encountered three people who were wearing appropriate footwear (many people had tennis shoes) who made it to the falls. They said it was hard and long to get there.

This trail in summer is not long; it can be mildly hard with all the granite steps. (I was looking forward to avoiding that with the snow.)



Sue gingerly snowshoes over granite rocks.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

It finally got to the point where safety outweighed winter at the falls. We turned around. Still, it was a worthwhile trek on a gorgeous, spring day. Temps allowed for short sleeves.

Even if you don't make it to the falls, like us, the scenery is idyllic. Cascade Lake is starting to melt; the white icy-snow looking like frosting, and the edges a dark chocolate layer. (Maybe I was just hungry.)

It doesn't take long for the roar of the falls to ring through the air. And there were times we saw it in the distance.

With all of this snow, every waterfall will be plentiful for months to come. I'll be back.



It may be a while before the Bayview parking lot is accessible. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe take Highway 89 north toward Emerald Bay. Park near the Bayview trailhead. The parking lot is covered with snow, and therefore closed. The sign pointing to the falls at the far end of the parking is visible – you go left. Then follow the tracks. If there aren't any, you might not want to be breaking trail if you are unfamiliar with the area. You will be paralleling Cascade Lake – eventually.

Opinion: Calif. GOP continues its plunge into irrelevance

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

The decline of California's Republican Party, as underscored

by the most recent voter registration data, is a truly remarkable, even historic, phenomenon.



Dan Walters

Republicans dominated the state's politics for much of the 20th century – personified by Ronald Reagan – but began to fade as the century closed.

The new registration report shows Republicans declining to just 25.97 percent of the state's 19.4 million potential voters, 9 percentage points below the party's nearly 35 percent share in 2000.

Oddly, however, Democrats didn't gain. In fact, they've dropped about a half-point to 44.77 percent since 2000. The big increase came in voters without a party preference, from 14.36 percent in 2000 to 24.51 percent in 2017. By next year's general election, they may outnumber Republicans.

Read the whole story

New cloud types defined for first time in decades

By Sean Rossman, USA Today

The world's cloud authority, having not classified a new cloud in three decades, arose this month to name about a dozen new types, including a rolling, slalom-like form known to blanket the Iowa sky.

The asperitas cloud is among the stars of the World Meteorological Organization's scarcely published International Cloud Atlas. A new version of the atlas, last published in 1987, was unveiled on World Meteorological Day.

Adding asperitas to the atlas' about 100 cloud combinations was the work of the world-wide Cloud Appreciation Society.

Read the whole story

New food items on the menu at Aces ballpark

By Jim Krajewski, Reno Gazette-Journal

Baseball season is upon us and with it are some changes in food at the ballpark.

The Reno Aces have several new food items, as well as a new executive chef entrusted with making those meals.

Paul Valenzuela is in charge of the kitchen now at Greater Nevada Field. He moved to Reno from Phoenix in January and has more than 30 years of experience in stadium kitchens, 15 of those as executive chef.

Read the whole story

Letter: Chamber thankful for successful Business Expo

To the community,

The Go Local: Business Expo returned to the South Shore with huge success thanks to attendees, vendors, volunteers, and sponsors. Over 1,300 locals and visitors gathered inside the Harveys convention center March 31 as Tahoe Chamber member businesses showcased their latest programs, products, and services.

The night was highlighted with live entertainment from Heavenly Resort Mountain and The Loft lounge, vendor giveaways including a raffle of two cruisers bikes courtesy of South Shore Bikes, and tasty food and beverage samples from all the generous restaurant vendors.

Rounding out the evening was the announcement of best booth experience. Tahoe Chamber Ambassadors and volunteers surveyed over 90 booths to vote for this award, which represents best overall experience for attendees. After a close race, Barton Hospital was awarded the plaque. Barton Hospital's Rehabilitation and Sports Department showcased an AlterG anti-gravity treadmill, which helps patients to rehab from surgery or train through an injury.

Tahoe Chamber thanks those individuals and business owners who dedicated their time to this event to make it the best year yet. For a full photo recap of the EXPO visit facebook.com/tahoechamber. We look forward to seeing you next year.

Brittani Curtis, Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce

Traffic flowing again on Kingsbury Grade

Kingsbury Grade is open following repairs to an eroding roadside slope and extensive rockfall.

NDOT has been monitoring roadside slopes across the region, including a slope on Kingsbury Grade which had slid approximately 1 foot within a recent 24-hour period, posing the threat of bringing mud, rock and debris across the highway. Additionally, approximately four-foot diameter boulders fell from a nearby hill onto the roadway.

The highway was closed early Friday afternoon as NDOT and contractor Q&D Construction removed loose trees and earth from the slope to reduce rock and mud fall onto the highway. On Saturday, rockfall mitigation experts removed boulders perched on top of a separate roadside slope. The boulders had loosened during recent heavy precipitation.

Soil saturation and additional winter weather may lead to future road closures as repairs are made to other roadside slopes.