

Calif. retired teachers' account 63.7% funded

By Adam Ashton, Sacramento Bee

The pension fund for California teachers is about \$97 billion short of the assets it would need to pay all of the benefits it owes to its members today, according to a new valuation from the California State Teachers' Retirement System.

CalSTRS released the new accounting ahead of its monthly meeting, which is scheduled for next week.

The \$202 billion fund has about 63.7 percent of the assets it needs to pay the benefits it owes. That reflects a 4.8 percent decrease in CalSTRS' funded ratio from its most recent assessment.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- There will be a training April 11 from 4-6pm for Pipe Keepers, the citizen science program to address the threat of storm water pollution entering Lake Tahoe. League to Save Lake Tahoe staff will train people to survey local neighborhoods and collect storm water samples. Training is free. It will be at 2608 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

- Tickets are on sale **online** for Classical Tahoe, the July 28-Aug. 12 concert series in Incline Village.

- There will be a celebration of life for Tim Rowe on

April 9 at 1pm at the Carson City Community Center, 851 E William St. He was a longtime leader with the Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition, having served as president and vice president, in addition to many years on the board and as an advisory board member. A transportation planner for the Nevada Department of Transportation, Rowe was also a leader and member of other bicycle groups and community organizations.

- El Dorado County Air Quality Management District is seeking proposals from businesses to receive funding to install public electric vehicle chargers at their businesses. Go **online** for more info.

- The Douglas County Library in Minden is having an Easter egg scavenger hunt on April 8 from 2-3pm. Paper eggs will be hidden inside Easter themed books. Children will be given clues to the location of eggs.

Traffic to be rerouted at bottom of Spooner

Lane shifts will take place on Highway 50 near Spooner junction in south Carson City beginning April 2 as the Nevada Department of Transportation reconstructs the intersection to connect to the future Carson City Freeway.

Both directions of Highway 50 at the South Carson Street-Spooner junction will temporarily be reduced to one lane and shifted slightly to the south.

The southbound Carson Street to westbound Highway 50 sweeping right turn lane will be removed. Motorists will be able to make the turn by stopping at the traffic signal before

turning.

The temporary traffic configuration is anticipated to be in place through early May.

When construction is complete, a shorter southbound turn lane from South Carson Street to Highway 50 toward Lake Tahoe will replace the existing sweeping right turn lane.

Burning Man sells out in 35 minutes

By Jenny Kane, Reno Gazette-Journal

Surprise, surprise... Burning Man sold out quicker than the last air conditioner on a 114-degree summer day.

The rush for 30,000 tickets available during the main sale ended after about 35 minutes, before most people could say "Sparkle Pony." People waiting in the queue started seeing "unavailable" notices for both tickets and vehicle passes about 12:40pm March 29.

Burning Man, a giant pop-up art campout in the middle of Northern Nevada's Black Rock Desert, this year is scheduled for Aug. 27-Sept. 4. The theme this year is "Radical Ritual," one of the most common rituals during spring being the global frenzy over tickets.

Read the whole story

Sierra water content 183% of average



It wasn't that long ago that there was no water under the Tahoe Keys pier. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

The snow – it won't stop. For people living in the Sierra it's becoming the winter that won't end. For water users downstream, it means the spigot won't be turned off during the dry summer months.

Under snowy grey skies on Thursday the snow survey near Sierra-at-Tahoe revealed water content of 46.1 inches. This is 183 percent of the average of 25.2 inches for the Phillips Station location.

This was a dramatically different scenario compared to two years ago when **Gov. Jerry Brown** attended the reading and there was barren ground.

“This is an extremely good year from the snowpack standpoint,” Frank Gehrke, who does the snow surveys near Echo Summit for the state Department of Water Resources, said March 30. He said this year’s snowpack ranks in the upper quarter of historic snowpacks.

Even so, the governor’s emergency drought declaration is still in effect. There are parts of California that still have not fully recovered from the drought.

Statewide, the water equivalent is 45.8 inches or 164 percent of average for this date. This is the highest level since 2011.

Water content is what the depth of water would be if the entire snowpack melted instantaneously.

It’s normal for this final measurement of the season to be the deepest of the four that are taken throughout the winter. This was true this year – increasing from 6 inches to 28 to 43.5.

But that escalation was not found during the drought years, which severely impacted the municipalities and farms that depend on the runoff.

As the snow begins to melt, flooding may be the next problem – locally and downstream.

Outdoors firms in battle over public lands

By Stuart Leavenworth, McClatchy

Two generations ago, they were often written off as a bunch of

hippies making backpacks and climbing gear for niche markets. But in recent decades, companies such as Patagonia and REI have become consumer powerhouses and political players, increasingly eager to influence decisions over public lands.

A sign of that clout came this year, when the outdoor industry decided to pull its twice-yearly trade show from Salt Lake City, where it been based since 1996. The shows injected tens of millions of dollars into the Utah economy, but industry leaders decided to pull out after Gov. Gary Herbert and other Utah Republicans started lobbying President Trump to roll back the Bears Ears National Monument, a 1.35-million-acre conservation area in south Utah that Native Americans and environmentalists have championed for years.

Made up of 1,200 companies, the Outdoor Industry Association is based in Boulder, Colo., with an outreach office in Washington, D.C. The group estimates that consumers spend about \$120 billion on outdoor recreation products each year, ranging from apparel to tents, bicycles and camping gear.

Read the whole story

Suspect arrested in South Lake Tahoe stabbing

Joshua Ingraham, 45, of South Lake Tahoe faces attempted murder charges in the stabbing that occurred March 24 at the South Y Transit Center.



Joshua
Ingraham

The altercation started with a fist fight between Ingraham and a 26-year-old male South Lake Tahoe resident, according to police officers. A 48-year-old South Lake Tahoe man tried to intervene.

Ingraham allegedly pulled out a large hunting knife and stabbed the 48-year-old in the shoulder area. The victim was transported to Barton Memorial Hospital with life threatening injuries. He was in stable condition as of March 29.

A fourth person, a 46-year-old South Lake Tahoe man, helped the younger man prevent the suspect from fleeing.

The two men who stopped Ingraham were treated and released from Barton with non-life threatening injuries.

Anyone with information related to this case is asked to call SLTPD at 530.542.6100.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

S. Tahoe man found beaten,

tied up at home

Updated 1:53pm:

A 43-year-old South Lake Tahoe man was found tied up, gagged and beaten in his residence on Spruce Street. A significant amount of blood was inside the apartment.

A co-worker found him the night of March 29. The colleague had gone to the dwelling because the man had not been at work since Monday.

According to officers, the victim had been tied up for at least 20 hours.

“There is no evidence that there is any threat to the citizens of South Lake Tahoe and it is believed that the victim knows who committed this crime,” police said in a statement.

The man’s 2000 Subaru Legacy Outback station wagon is missing. It is blue and grey, California license plate 7WFM387.

No arrests have been made and further details have not been released.

The victim as of Thursday morning was in stable condition at Renown Medical Center in Reno.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

El Dorado County judge

resigns

By Lake Tahoe News

El Dorado County Superior Court is officially down a judge with the resignation of Nelson Brooks.



Nelson Brooks

In February the Brooks family issued this statement to *Lake Tahoe News*, “Judge Brooks suffered a cardiovascular event last summer. He has not been medically cleared to work at this time and the family greatly appreciates all the caring concern that has been expressed by the public regarding this unfortunate event.”

The resignation was announced March 29.

Brooks was first appointed to the bench by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2009, and was elected a year later to a six-year term with more than 75 percent of the vote. He was re-elected in a bitter battle in June 2016. He had 58.53 percent of the votes, while his opponent Roland Thiemann had 41.16 percent. The race garnered statewide scrutiny because it is almost unheard of for a sitting judge’s colleagues to support a challenger.

Brooks’ leave from the bench started in August. He had been collecting his full paycheck – \$189,041 – until this week.

He presided over the family law, civil, and juvenile divisions. Most recently he was in Placerville’s criminal

pretrial department.

Gov. Jerry Brown could appoint someone to fill out the remainder of Brooks' term or it could remain vacant until the next election.

For now, the court will continue to use the Assigned Judges Program through the Judicial Council. These are visiting retired judges.

Road Beat: Kia Forte just keeps getting better



The Kia Forte will impress those wanting a compact or compact plus. Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

Kia is the nation's newest major upstart brand, being in the United States for 24 years with a market share increase in every year since their inauspicious beginning in 1993. Sales for 2016 exceeded 647,000 units, besting another fast-growing upstart, Subaru, which like Kia, manufactures a large portion of their production in the United States.

In the case of the Forte, the assembly plant is neither in the United States nor Korea, but Pesqueria, Mexico, and most powertrain components are also manufactured there as well. While it may not be a favorite ride of our new President Trump, it is one of my new favorite rides and a new contender for the title of best compact car.

First is the new taut Kia body, obviously, a design shepherded by Kia's CEO and head designer, Peter Schreyer. The body panels are pulled tight from its signature Kia grille rearward. It uses a gorgeous coupe-like window line terminating with a small Hofmeister "kink." It also uses a smooth dip along the lower front of the window line for a bit of character. Because the windshield is so sloped, it is probably longer than it is wide. Check it out and you will find it simply huge as it adds to the Kia's taut design. The only other detail is a lower body mild "V" sculpt. Headlights and taillights are oversized and slick. It all adds up to a simple great looking body which challenges for the looks title in compact cars, now vying with the Honda Civic and Mazda 3 in that category.



Specifications

Price \$22,000 to about \$26,500

Engine

2.0L DOHC, 16 valve direct injected inline four cylinder 164 hp @ 6,200 rpm
151 lbs.-ft. of torque @ 4,000 rpm

Transmission

Six speed torque converter automatic

Configuration

Transverse front engine/front wheel drive

Dimensions

Wheelbase 106.3 inches

Length 179.5 inches

Width 70.1 inches

Height 56.3 inches

Ground Clearance 5.3 inches

Track (f/r) 61.3/61.8 inches

Cabin volume 96.2 cubic feet

Trunk volume 14.9 cubic feet

Fuel capacity 13.2 gallons

Steering lock to lock 2.96 turns

Turning circle 34.8 feet

Wheels 17X7 inch alloys

Tires 215/45X17

Weight 2,908/3,029 pounds

Performance

0-60 mph 7.17 seconds

50-70mph 4.07 seconds

50-70 mph uphill 6.14
seconds

Top speed way beyond sanity

Fuel economy EPA rated at
25/33/28 mpg

city/highway/combined.

Expect 33 mpg in moderate
suburban driving and 40 mpg
on a level highway at legal
speeds.

Size-wise it's pure compact with dimensions of 180 x 70 x 56 inches (length, width, height) on a 106-inch wheelbase.

My EX tester came with a standard 2.0L direct injected, DOHC, 16 valve inline four that pumps out 164 hp at 6,200 rpm (160 hp with the SULEV version) and a stout 151 pounds of twist at 4,000 rpm. Kia also makes an Atkinson cycle version of this engine which uses multipoint fuel injection that achieves 147 hp at 6,200 rpm and a lesser 132 pounds of twist at 4,500 rpm. It improves fuel economy a bit. More on that later. Coupled to a six-speed auto torque converter cog swapper, this Forte is a high-performance automobile demonstrating its moxie with a 0-60 mph average time of 7.17 seconds. Passing times back up the 0-60 mph time as no fluke in a 50-70 mph simulated pass requiring just 4.07 seconds and the same run up a steep grade only slowing that time by two seconds to 6.14 seconds.

Throttle response is very strong; so much so that this little Kia is fun to drive. Most compacts can't share that attribute. It will surprise most drivers. Fuel economy while rated by the EPA at 25/33/28 mpg city/highway/combined is much better than

expected. At a constant 70 mph two-way run on a level highway the Kia averaged 40.4 mpg. In a round trip from Placerville to Carson City the Kia averaged 37 mpg and in a suburban/urban drive to Roseville the Forte averaged 33.7 mpg in moderate to heavier traffic. Overall it should average well over 30 mpg. Considering its level of performance, that is excellent fuel economy. During the 67-mile test run flogging which included over 20 full throttle applications of four to seven seconds, the Forte averaged 28.8 mpg.

With the Atkinson cycle engine EPA ratings go up by about four mpg and it should return at least a couple of more mpg in the same driving. I hope to test one soon to experiences the differences, if any.

Handling is small car smart, perhaps even a little smarter. Suspension is like most other compacts, with MacPherson struts up front and a semi-independent coupled torsion beam system in the rear. Steering is by a reasonably quick electric power rack that is three turns lock to lock and a tight turning circle of just under 35 feet. Adding to the mix are 17 x 7 inch alloys and serious 215/45 series rubber on a car that tips the scales at between 2,908 to 3,029 pounds depending on equipment.

Needless to say, steering is accurate, the attitude is flat, turn in is crisp and there is great grip, even in the rain. It makes driving even more fun (see comment above) while doing an accelerated tango in the twisties. I'll bet they race these things.

Ride quality is good with a compliant ride over the rough stuff. Where the Kia shines is in the level of quiet or the lack of road, wind and engine noise even with the engine spinning 2,300 rpm at 70 mph. With the hp it has, I would like to see another gear dropping that number to 2,000 rpm for better fuel economy. Might pick up a couple of extra mpgs. Considering its small car 13.2-gallon fuel tank (it seems many

small cars have the same fuel capacity. They must share vendors.), a couple of more gallons would improve the ownership experience. Who likes going to the gas station?

Standard safety equipment for this top of the line Forte EX includes all the acronyms, TCS, ABS, VSM, etc., plus at least six airbags. My tester had the \$4,480 Premium package which added the NAV system, emergency braking, Lane departure warning and lane keep assist, rear traffic alert and more. It also included HID lights which were very good on low beam and good on high (halogen). More distance would have been nice, but they do improve your safety at night.

Inside is a standard perforated leather interior. I found the seats comfortable for two-hour stints. A passenger found them a little too firm, but after about an hour in the saddle, he realized that they were more comfortable than he realized, especially after some bolster adjustment. The back seat should be good for two comfortably and three in a pinch (pun intended).

Instrumentation is complete by today's standards, with a big tach and speedo plus a fuel and temp gauge divided by a center info display/trip computer, all tastefully done. The center stack has everything you need and is easy to use. No three-unit college course required. The balance of the interior is done with high quality materials and finishes.

What's the damage? Base price for this top of the line EX is \$21,200, plus \$850 for the train from Mexico. Are there trains that run to and from Mexico? The standard equipment list is long including full power and leather. The aforementioned Premium package which was described above adds \$4,480 to the bill bringing the total damage to \$26,540, which is actually less than most other loaded up compact cars which the Forte actually isn't. By virtue of its 14.9 cubic foot trunk and 96 cubic foot interior puts it in the EPA mid-size category. But the Premium package adds a sunroof which reduces the cabin

interior volume to 95 cubic feet missing the mid-size category by one tenth of a cubic foot. If you are thinking compact or compact plus, Kia Forte should be on your short list.

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.