

Property taxes an issue for Nev. legislators

By Thomas Moore, Las Vegas Sun

CARSON CITY – Homeowners may not think about property taxes often, but Nevada's county and city government officials do. During this year's Legislature, they're busy asking state lawmakers to change the property tax abatement, or the cap, that limits how much larger your property tax bill can grow from one year to the next.

The cap, enacted in 2005, those officials say, has caused revenues from property taxes to stay at roughly the same levels they were before the recession even though – as the economy improves – the demand for services from local governments has grown.

As they testified before legislative committees, local government representatives listed services they said are suffering from flat revenues, chief among them education and public safety.

[Read the whole story](#)

Lake Tahoe Relay taking on a beach theme

The Lake Tahoe Relay crew is moving the start/finish to the beach.

The June 10 event will start at the Tahoe Beach Retreat in

South Lake Tahoe.

Lake Tahoe Relay is a relay race that consists of teams of seven, each running eight to 12 miles around Lake Tahoe.

This year there will be a single runner 72-mile ultra marathon and 2-runner teams' 72-mile relays. Each team member will run 36 miles, alternating legs as needed.

Registration is now open **online**. For more information, contact Sean at 530.545.0509 or runtahoe@outlook.com.

Study: Calif. worst state for first-time home buyer

By Alessandra Malito, Market Watch

California has beautiful beaches, plenty of sunshine and the Terminator for a former governor, but it doesn't have many homes for the first-time buyer.

In fact, the state is the toughest to break into for those looking to get their first homes, according to a report released Tuesday by personal finance site Bankrate.com, followed by Hawaii and New York.

California was ranked with low home affordability and availability and simply put, has not kept up with housing demand, despite the qualities it has to attract many to its coastal scene.

Read the whole story

No charge from CHP for helicopter rescues



CHP regularly uses its helicopter to help people in distress in the Tahoe region. Photo/EDSO

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

Q: In cases like the snowboarder who had to be rescued after he skied out of bounds at the Heavenly Mountain Ski Resort, is he charged for the cost of the CHP helicopter and those who risked their lives to rescue him?

George, Sacramento

A: Officer Matt Causie, a paramedic with the California Highway Patrol's Valley Division Air Operations, said some counties may charge for search and rescue operations, but the CHP does not bill the people it rescues.

The CHP's air operations, he said, are funded by motor vehicle fees and are intended to provide blanket coverage for counties that might not have their own air resources.

Read the whole story

Weekend of snow in the forecast

A winter storm watch is in effect for the greater Lake Tahoe area from Saturday afternoon through Sunday afternoon.

The National Weather Service in Reno is calling for 1 to 2 feet of snow above 7,000 feet, and 10-18 inches elsewhere. The bulk of the white stuff is expected Saturday night into Sunday morning.

It should be a quick, windy event.

The storm is expected to be cold, so that is good news when it comes to runoff – there shouldn't be much.

One might call it a normal winter storm. Full sun should be back Tuesday after lingering showers on Monday.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Ride-hailing drivers could bring cash to Nev.

By Sandra Chereb, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY — Ride-hailing companies would have to verify that their drivers have state business licenses under a bill introduced Tuesday in the Nevada Senate.

Senate bill 226, sponsored by the Committee on Commerce, Labor and Energy, would require transportation network companies such as Uber and Lyft to submit quarterly reports to the Nevada Transportation Authority.

Read the whole story

California likely to see more extreme flooding

By Lauren Sommer, KQED-TV

Californians are in shock that after five years of too little water, the problem now is too much.

All eyes in California have been on Oroville Dam, where a broken spillway forced major evacuations. But the damage from winter storms has gone beyond the dam in the northern part of the state. Downstream, rivers are running high and levees have been breaching.

But this shouldn't be a surprise, says Noah Diffenbaugh, a climate scientist at Stanford University. He says California

is likely to see more extreme flooding with climate change. And the reason is pretty simple. If it's warmer, storms produce more rain instead of snow.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Listen more than you talk

By Joe Mathews

What do we do now, Nelson Rising?

I pose that question not just because this is a confusing era. And not just because no living Californian is better than Nelson Rising—developer, lawyer, civic leader—at navigating our state's complexities.



Joe Mathews

"What do we do now?" is the question that concludes the 1972 film "The Candidate," in which Robert Redford plays an idealistic U.S. Senate candidate corrupted by the political process. Rising, who ran the successful 1970 U.S. Senate campaign of John Tunney, was a producer on the film. When

Redford wins unexpectedly, he plaintively asks his campaign manager, "What do we do now?" The manager has no answer.

Fortunately, Rising, 75, has some reassuring answers about today's California. And if you don't know the name Nelson Rising, don't worry—that's the point.

Nelson Rising's story is about all the big things you can get done in California if you're willing to listen more than you talk, and don't much care about taking credit.

Rising has done more big things in California than can fit in a short column. You could start with downtown L.A.'s Library Tower, long the tallest building in the state (it will be soon be surpassed by the new Wilshire Grand Center). You could throw in Playa Vista (the heart of Silicon Beach), and add San Francisco's Mission Bay, the largest mixed-use development in that city's history.

But then you'd still be leaving out dozens of major developments like the mixed-use Santa Fe towers in San Diego and Orange County's planned community, Coto de Caza. "He is to blame for The Real Housewives of Orange County," says Rising's son Chris.

Beyond buildings, Rising managed the campaign of Tom Bradley, L.A.'s transformational mayor, and during a Northern California stint, chaired the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, and the Bay Area Council.

Rising's remarkable career stands as a rejoinder to the maddening conventional wisdom of today's California: that you can't do big things in our state because everything is too complicated, regulated and expensive. Any big project requires dealing with too many different constituencies, goes the argument. Who has time to talk with everyone, much less accommodate all the stakeholders?

Nelson Rising makes the time.

Rising says that if you're willing to talk with everybody and to accommodate every opponent, you can still accomplish great things. That's not conventional wisdom today, when civic contests are often about rallying one's base of supporters, while discouraging one's opponents. But he says Bradley, L.A.'s first African American mayor, succeeded because he went everywhere and engaged everyone, making even opponents comfortable.

"I enjoy communication, and the best part of communication is listening. Many people don't do that," says Rising. "I always start the conversation by asking, 'What's your concern? Why don't you want me to do this development? And if I can figure out a way to solve your concern, will you be supportive of it?'"

Such modesty suits the man, the polar opposite of the real estate developer in the White House. Rising's parents never attended college; he went from Glendale High to UCLA on scholarship. He's been married to the same woman for 53 years.

And he's succeeded by embracing conversation and complexity. He made the Library Tower happen by arranging a complicated swap of air rights between the project and L.A.'s Central Library. To win approval for the Playa Vista project, he visited Westchester homeowners in their living rooms to address anger about multi-unit housing in his plan.

In San Francisco's Mission Bay, Rising, then CEO of Catellus, took over a troubled development and satisfied local concerns with affordable housing and a 43-acre donation to UC San Francisco. The development was approved without opposition or environmental litigation. In thanks, San Francisco named a street in Mission Bay after the Los Angeles developer—Nelson Rising Lane.

Today, Rising, having flunked retirement, remains in business with his son. They are raising a social impact fund for

investments in buildings that produce less carbon and incorporate technology.

Rising still works in the historic Beaux Arts PacMutual complex that he restored and then sold in 2015. His firm has since purchased 433 S. Spring, an Art Deco building where Rising began his career as an O'Melveny lawyer. The firm is working in L.A., San Diego, and San Francisco, and eyeing Sacramento, where the Risings have been impressed with downtown's growth. He's bullish on California. "The state's economy is poised to keep exceeding the country," he says.

So what do we do now, California? We follow Rising's singular example: listen to each other—and recommit to doing big things that endure.

Joe Mathews writes the Connecting California column for Zócalo Public Square.

Vineyard managers optimistic weather not an issue

By Brian Freedman, Forbes

Unusual weather throughout much of the United States this winter has been the subject of speculation, consternation, and obsession across the country. Springlike heat in the Mid-Atlantic and flooding rains in the West have wreaked havoc across a wide range of industries. In the past two months, both the Napa River and the Russian River, the latter in Sonoma County, hit flood levels.

How, then, is this weather affecting the great wine regions of California? And what will the impact be for the 2017 vintage?

Fortunately, because of the natural cycles of vine growth and vineyard-management requirements, the floods don't seem to have caused too much damage to the vineyards themselves—at least, nothing that can't be fixed. “[Other] than physical damage to the trellising and needing to remove debris from vineyards which were flooded (including our own Westside Farms in the Russian River Valley),” there hasn't been any damage to the vineyards of Ramey Wine Cellars, David Ramey noted in an email.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Public health hurdles at the federal level

By Anne Foster

One of the priorities mentioned during Trump's election campaign, public health, is thus far missing from the “top issues” category of his government's new website.

Experts are stressing the importance of governmental support for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and its work with international institutions, to prevent the spread of illness in the United States. The CDC plays an important role in public health, detecting and responding to STDs and infectious diseases such as Ebola, fighting the proliferation of highly antibiotic-resistant bacteria, and working to lower chronic health issues such as obesity and heart disease. The agency is also in charge of battling serious issues caused by

substance abuse, especially prescription drug abuse, in an attempt to reduce the high rate of drug overdoses in the U.S.

Tom Frieden, former director of the CDC, recently told the press that the CDC lacks the funding or power to deal with imminent threats, with due rapidity, and that the establishment of an emergency fund for emergencies, is key. Legal authority to act quickly is also important, if serious threats such as Zika and Ebola, which know no borders, are to be addressed as and when they arise, so they can be nipped in the bud.

Frieden also noted that a repeal of the Affordable Care Act would place the Prevention and Public Health Fund, which takes up over 10 percent of the agency's budget, at risk. The Prevention and Public Health Fund has supported immunization programs, which could be eliminated if funding was no longer available.

Frieden recently handed over the reins of the CDC to Anne Schuchat, who was principal deputy director during his reign. It is not clear how long she will continue to hold the post, since she is currently acting head. What is clear is that whoever commands the CDC in the long-term, will have to make education and training a priority, so the agency can glean the most pressing issues both on a national and worldwide scale.

According to Frieden, keen diplomacy skills are also key if trust is to be built between countries. Most countries, he noted, would be reticent to admit they were facing the problem of superbugs, as bad press could result in a big drop in tourist figures. Therefore, great diplomacy would be needed in dealing with these countries.

The new CDC director will also need to stress the importance of funding global health initiatives. It is a myth to think that problems such as Ebola can be solved by closing borders. Rather, other countries are unlikely to share knowledge about

the health threats they are facing, unless a relationship of trust is established. The United States needs to be financially involved if it is to help these countries detect and quell serious health threats. Providing funds for research is also important. For instance, the link between Zika and microcephaly in babies has been discovered, yet there is much that is still to be learned about the long-term effects of this virus.

The administration will also need to develop plans for tackling HIV/AIDS. The CDC notes that around 1.2 million Americans are currently battling HIV. Thus far, Trump's platform on health care has not mentioned the issue. Vice President Mike Pence, meanwhile, was at the center of the largest HIV outbreak when he was governor of Indiana. The outbreak, which occurred in 2015, saw Pence initially refuse to lift the state's prohibition of needle exchange programs, which have been shown to significantly reduce the risk of spreading HIV. Pence has voiced his opposition to needle exchanges forming part of an anti-drug policy. During the outbreak, he did allow some of these programs to operate in Indiana, but some many argue that the response should have been quicker and more extensive.

Trump's choice for secretary of Health and Human Services, meanwhile, Tom Price, opposes the expansion of Medicaid, which aids many of those battling HIV and AIDS. As Global Health Access Project activist, Matt Kavanaugh states, "One of the most important things that happened with Medicaid expansion is that people were able to move off of ADAP and not just get HIV drugs but full [health] insurance."

The Trump government's health policy is still to be formulated, though it is hoped that it will uphold rather than destroy the national health safety net, and take a global view of major health concerns.

Anne Foster)is a freelance writer and mother. Prior to

parenthood she worked in the healthcare industry and now tries to combine her two passions for a more flexible lifestyle.