

Opinion: Backroom CalPERS deals

By Daniel Borenstein, Bay Area Media Group

Politics trumped prudent fiscal management when CalPERS, labor and Brown administration officials held a closed-door confab last month to set the pension system's key investment return rate.

The rate, which should be based on professional market forecasts, is the most critical determinant of how much state and local governments must contribute each year.

Gov. Jerry Brown

A lower rate means the pension system anticipates earning less on investments and consequently will need more from employer contributions. That, in turn, leaves less money for workers' salaries and benefits, which is why labor leaders push to keep the investment rate as high as possible.

Read the whole story

Friends are the antidote to loneliness for seniors

By Paula Span, New York Times

The circle shrinks. As the years pass, older people attend too many funerals. Friendships that sustained them for decades lapse when companions and confidants retire or move away or grow ill.

These days Sylvia Frank, who moved into an independent living residence in Lower Manhattan in 2014, can email or call one longtime friend in Florida. Another, in Queens, is slipping into dementia and will most likely exclaim, “I haven’t spoken to you in months!” when, in fact, they talked the day before.

But even at advanced ages, new relationships take root. Frank’s son kept telling her that a colleague’s cousin, Judy Sanderoff, was about to move into the same facility. They sought each other out.

Now, Frank, 91, and Sanderoff, 96, eat breakfast together almost daily; they have dinner, à deux or with other friends, many evenings. Sanderoff spent Thanksgiving with Frank’s family in Brooklyn.

Read the whole story

IVIGID to host open house in February

Incline Village General Improvement District board of trustees will be hosting an open house to allow the public to talk with their elected officials.

It will be Feb. 15 from 5-8pm at the Chateau, 955 Fairway Blvd., Incline Village.

This is an opportunity for the community to talk one-on-one with electeds in a casual setting.

IVGID Venues, North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District, Incline Village Community Hospital, and Washoe County Sheriff Department will also have reps at there.

RSVP to Misty Moga at mam@ivgid.org or 775.832.1360.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- South Lake Tahoe City Council members at the Jan. 17 meeting are expected to vote themselves a 5 percent raise effective immediately. This would mean they would make \$993.30 a month.
 - Cats in Placer County can be spayed or neutered for free through February because of a partnership between Placer County, Petco Foundation and Animal Spay & Neuter.
 - Lake Tahoe Community College has rescheduled auditions for the winter production of the play “Love/Sick” to Jan. 17 at 7pm in the college theater.
 - Douglas County Sheriff’s Office will be working with Lyon County Sheriff’s Office and Nevada Highway Patrol from Jan. 19-30 to focus on distracted drivers.
 - Douglas County Library in Minden will be closed Jan. 16 in observance of Martin Luther King Day.
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How to live the good life in a ski town

By Megan Michelson, Outside

Ski bumming is hardly a glamorous lifestyle. It means things like eating ramen for dinner, sleeping in your car, and taking an assortment of odd jobs. But the payoff can be worth it when you get an all-you-can-eat buffet of powder days. So how do you make life work in a ski town? We called some authentic ski bums to ask them how they've pulled it off.

There's a severe housing shortage in mountain towns right now, which means it can be tough to find affordable housing near ski hills. If you're working for a ski resort or another larger company, start by asking your employer (see the next tip on finding a job) if they offer workforce housing. Word of mouth rentals are likely your best bet: ask the coffee shop baristas and the ski tuners at your favorite shop, because they know everyone. For short-term solutions, look for caretaking gigs or ski leases, which are winter-only rentals.

"If you don't want to live in a van or a snow cave, and renting a room is too expensive, look into a ski lease," says Bevan Waite, 24, who lives in his van in Tahoe City, and works part-time for an architect and as an editor at SnowBrains.com. "People buy into a seasonal lease for a large house and split costs. Ski leases are often more popular with weekenders from the city but if you can weasel your way in as a full-time resident, you become the house caretaker and pay dirt cheap rent for living full-time in a fancy vacation house all winter long."

Read the whole story

Sandoval to Congress: States

need say in health care

By Sandra Chereb, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – Gov. Brian Sandoval on Friday said overtures by Republican leadership in the House of Representatives seeking input from states on the Affordable Care Act was a “positive consultation process” that he hopes continues as Congress considers repealing the law.

Sandoval was the first Republican governor in the nation to expand Medicaid eligibility as allowed under President Obama’s signature health care law. With Republican President-elect Donald Trump about to take the reins of the nation and Republicans in control of both the Senate and House, GOP members in Congress have made it a priority to repeal the law, creating angst for many who have received health coverage under its provisions given the uncertainty of what will replace it.

In a response to a letter from House Republican leadership, Sandoval said states are “integral players” in the conversation “and the decisions that are made going forward will have a profound impact on our citizens’ lives and the health care providers who serve them.”

Read the whole story

Power slowly coming on; ski traffic horrendous



The cold temps are keeping snow in the trees around Tahoe. Photo/Denise Haerr

Updated 9:30pm:

Although access to the power line that feeds the Floriston-Portola area presented a significant challenge, Liberty Utilities was able to restore power about 5:30pm Saturday.

Most of the Tahoma area has been restored, with the rest of the West Shore expected to be back online in 24 hours or so.

The Tahoe Pines and River Road regions continue to be a challenge and may require additional time.

The South Shore has approximately 20 customers still without power mostly in the Seminole Court and Celio Ranch areas. Crews continue to re-energize individual homes throughout the region.

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Liberty Utilities crews continue to work on the South Shore where less than 50 customers are currently in the dark. It could be Monday though before power is restored.

The greater West Shore region is still expected to be back

online in the next 24-48 hours. The Tahoe Pines and River Road regions are going to be out for several days.

Additional crews have been mobilized to work on restoration throughout all regions.

Two trees have gone through the line in the Russell Valley area between Truckee and Portola. Restorations is expected Sunday at about 5pm.

Crews are assessing Floriston and depending on damage it could be restored by Saturday evening.

Tahoe Donner PUD have reduced customers without power from 1,700 to just more than 100.

Patience is needed to get around the roads in Tahoe, especially near ski resorts. This is likely to be true all weekend.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

USFS to lead tours at Heavenly ski resort

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit's ski with a ranger at Heavenly Mountain Resort program begins Jan. 20. Tours begin at the top of the gondola every Monday and Friday at 1pm.

The tours last approximately one hour. The end April 7.

Participants must be intermediate level skiers/boarders or

above and provide their own lift ticket. No reservations are required. Attendance is on a first-come first-served basis. Meet at the top of the Heavenly gondola.

This conservation education program offers the public an opportunity to learn about the mission and role of the Forest Service in ski area management, to improve public understanding of natural resource processes and issues, and to promote environmental literacy and stewardship. Programs are led by U.S. Forest Service staff and volunteers.

For more information, contact Reanna Suela at 530.543.2789 or rsuela@fs.fed.us.

Report slams hidden fees in travel industry

By Hugo Martin, Los Angeles Times

In the final report before the end of his term in office, President Obama's National Economic Council lashed out against "hidden fees" charged by airlines, hotels and other businesses.

The council, made up of various department and agency heads within Obama's administration, said fees that are not readily disclosed make it hard for consumers to pick the lowest price in airfares, hotel rates and other services.

"When pricing is unclear, it threatens the competitive process by which consumers make decisions," the report said.

Read the whole story

Local shoppers rewarded by South Shore chamber

Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce's Go Local & Win campaign had 53 participating businesses, which included local restaurants, retailers, and recreation.

Residents participated in the campaign by earning stickers, for every \$25 spent during the holiday shopping season. The chamber received more than 80 completed passports representing almost \$24,000 dollars spent locally.

The grand prize winners were Stephanie Moynihan winner of \$125, Chelsey Shilaikis winner of \$250, and Cathy Vogelgesang winner of \$500.