

Nev. to test elementary school water for lead

In the wake of national issues involving lead in drinking water, the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection secured U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grant funding to begin a voluntary testing program for Nevada elementary schools.

The money will cover laboratory analytical costs to initiate drinking water sampling in all 408 Nevada public schools, including public charter schools, with a kindergarten or pre-K program.

If a water fountain or old culinary fixture is contributing lead to school drinking water, the grant also provides money for replacement of fixtures until the funds are depleted.

Gaming lobbyists happy with new IRS rules

By Thomas Moore, Las Vegas Sun

Gaming lobbyists claimed a “big win” Thursday after the IRS released new rules about how slot winnings should be reported.

“(The) final IRS regulation is a big win not only for gaming companies and millions of casino visitors, but also for state and local governments who would have received fewer gaming tax dollars,” American Gaming Association President and CEO Geoff Freeman said.

The rules, as they were proposed last year, would have meant significant changes for people winning slot jackpots. According to the AGA, the tax regulations would be very difficult and costly for casinos to apply.

Read the whole story

Sheriffs won't enforce Nevada gun law

By Mark Robison, Reno Gazette-Journal

The next steps for proponents of expanded gun background checks in Nevada are unclear after a legal opinion that for all intents blocks a voter-approved initiative set to go into effect Sunday.

What is clear is that the Background Check Act to require a federal database check of private party gun transfers will not be enforced. That's according to Nevada sheriffs.

The Douglas County Sheriff's Office reported receiving numerous inquiries about the ballot question. It put out a statement that it is "advising its citizens that they may proceed with private party firearm sells and transfers as they did prior to the passing of ballot question #1."

Read the whole story

WCSO taking signups for Citizen Corps

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office Citizen Corps is offering an emergency preparedness and response training academy beginning Jan. 19. The training is free and trainees are not required to become a Citizen Corps volunteer to participate.

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Academy provides residents with the information they need to help save lives and reduce trauma in the event of an emergency. CERT Academy training includes disaster preparedness, emergency medical techniques, fire safety, light search and rescue, disaster psychology, and terrorism awareness education.

The CERT Academy offers six training sessions over two consecutive weekends.

Academy dates are:

Jan. 19 6-9pm, Jan. 20 6-9pm and Jan. 21 8:30m-4pm.

Jan. 26 6-9pm, Jan. 27 6-9pm and Jan. 28 9am-4pm.

Training takes place at the Regional Public Safety Training Center located at 5190 Spectrum Blvd., Reno.

To sign up for training, call 775.325.6928 or email srhodes@washoecounty.us.

TOCCATA WinterFest event in early January

TOCCATA – Tahoe Symphony Orchestra & Chorus' 12th WinterFest kicks off with BRRRoque Masters.

Performances are Jan. 4, 7pm at St. Patrick's Episcopal Church-Incline Village; Jan. 6 at 7pm at St. Theresa Catholic Church-South Lake Tahoe; Jan. 7 at 3:30pm at Shepherd of the Sierra Lutheran-Carson City; and Jan. 8, 3:30pm at Good Shepard Lutheran Church-Reno.

Tickets are available **online**.

Feds' bird habitat plan isn't flying in Nevada

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

A proposal from the Obama administration to withdraw nearly 10 million acres of western land from future hard rock mining to protect the greater sage grouse landed with a thud in Nevada on Thursday.

That's because state and federal officials are lining up behind their own vision for protecting both the upland game bird and the lucrative mining industry that drives local economies in the state's rural counties.

"Today's announcement does nothing to protect the greater sage grouse," said Gov. Brian Sandoval. "But (it) does cripple the mining and exploration industry."

Read the whole story

Vetting casino games takes team of techies

By Thomas Moore, Las Vegas Sun

Jim Barbee stood in the Gaming Control Board's technical lab, a small utilitarian room filled with slot machines and video poker games blinking away, some with the doors open and their bill changers, video screens, slot reels and electronic guts on display.

"The first two things you learn when you work here are one, how to turn off the sound," Barbee said. "And the second, is to make sure you get your money out when you're done. If you leave it in, it's gone and goes to the office doughnut fund. We haven't had any doughnuts around here for a while."

Barbee is chief of the board's technical division, which has a number of roles when it comes to Nevada's gaming regulations. One of them is approving new games and modifications to existing casino games.

As part of that process, they have to examine the games and run them through their paces. Hence the room full of various slots and video games.

Read the whole story

Cinder the bear in hibernation

By Ann McCreary, Methow Valley News

Cinder, the black bear that was badly burned in the 2014 Carlton Complex Fire, spent her second year in forests north of Leavenworth, Wash., and is now denning up for the winter not far from the site where she was released in June 2015.

Cinder was rescued by WDFW officials in French Creek in August 2014, about two weeks after the Carlton Complex swept through the valley. The bear cub was emaciated and unable to walk on severely burned paws.

She spent months in treatment at Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care.

Read the whole story

NHP: Zero tolerance for driving high on pot

“Drive high, get a DUI” is the message the Nevada Highway Patrol wants drivers in Nevadans to remember as the use of recreational marijuana becomes legal Jan. 1 in the state.

The use of marijuana prior to or in the act of driving continues to be illegal and a serious crime.

If the officer, determines that the driver is under the influence of marijuana or other intoxicating substance, the

driver will be required to submit to a blood test.

Nevada law specifies that drivers with 2 nanograms of active THC implies DUI. However, no matter the level of THC, law enforcement officers will base arrests on observed impairment.

Currently Nevada law does not differentiate penalties for marijuana impaired driving from alcohol impaired driving. The penalties are the same regardless of the substance, or combination of substances.

New Year vision from Tahoe residents-agencies

Lake Tahoe News asked a variety of people and agencies in the Lake Tahoe Basin to talk about what their resolutions, so to speak, are for 2017. Here are the responses:

John Rice, general manager of Sierra-at-Tahoe: “We are hoping for another ‘normal’ winter of 450 plus inches of snow, followed by a nice wet spring to put water back in our lake, give our thirsty forest a drink and keep the bark beetles at bay. We would also like a minimum of 30 powder days in 2017 please! We don’t ask for much.”

Andy Wirth, president and CEO, Squaw Valley Ski Holdings LLC: “Professionally: A complete reboot and reestablishment of folks being civil, polite, courteous, gracious, cordial and respectful to each other and reverential of diverse opinions – globally, nationally, state-wide, regionally and locally. Personally: Lots of time spent on our horses with my daughter and a great outcome for her 4H steer project at the Nevada and then Placer County fairs!”

Brandi Ledbetter Brown, owner of Tahoe Production House in South Lake Tahoe: "I am looking forward to watching my new business laikastream.com launch, be involved in the community as much as I can with Tahoe Regional Young Professionals – big things are coming, and watch my daughter grow up in this beautiful place we call home. If you can make it in Tahoe, you can make it anywhere!"



Lake Tahoe in 2017



Jer ry Goodman, longtime South Lake Tahoe resident: "To see the reduction of vacation home rentals in our residential neighborhoods and lots more snow."

Suzanne Kingsbury, El Dorado County Superior Court judge: "In terms of a personal wish, it is that all of Tahoe's citizens – as well as my friends, coworkers and family – have a healthy and happy 2017. From the perspective of my agency, we hope for less repeat customers! And if I could get through the year without having any dental work, that would be a blessing. Sorry Dr. Gordon, but I prefer to see you outside your

office.”

Evon J. Yakar, rabbi Temple Bat Yam: “In 2017, I am looking forward to great ways to strengthen our Tahoe community through economic opportunities and social justice efforts. On a global scale, I am hopeful that our human values of equality and care for the Earth will be held in high regard.”

Duane Wallace, South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce president: “I’m hoping that the two chambers will find some common ground. I’m hoping that real progress will be made so that those who work here or grew up here will be able to afford to live here.”

Todd Offenbacher, founder of Tahoe Adventure Film Festival: “My new year’s resolution is to make Tahoe better through more community events and activities that connect us and our guest (visitors) to the outdoors. I want to see more rock climbing, mountain trails, bike paths, exploration, and adventures for everyone. Plus, we need more parking for this recreation in Tahoe.”

Tim Alameda, Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District chief: “1. Biggest and best Firefighters Ball ever – held on March 10, 2017 at Edgewood

2. Only free range organic eggs at this year’s Easter Egg hunt at Tahoe Paradise Park

3. A celebration of remembrance for the 10-year anniversary of the Angora Fire – June 24, 2007

4. Please, no illegal fireworks during the 4th of July ... how about for the whole summer

5. Sept. 11 – Never Forget

6. Oct. 13 – Anniversary of Chief Alameda’s first year at Lake Valley Fire and the anniversary of the Emerald Fire

7. Thanksgiving – do not try the fried turkey routine in

your garage

8. Lake Valley Fire's Christmas Engine makes its rounds. See you then, here comes 2018!

9. Everyone have a safe and fun 2017 and hike Mt. Tallac, at least once!"

Ellie Waller, Tahoe Vista resident and local activist: "Tahoe specific: Real agency – local jurisdictions as well as TRPA – transparency with more clarity in code of ordinance, goals and policies and not subjective interpretation that is tailored to an outcome. Actual public participation: Example, the environmental groups and members of the public that consistently come to meetings are not necessarily represented by the League to Save Lake Tahoe's views when it comes to compromise with developers."

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board staff: "1. Working collaboratively with stakeholders to adapt to climate change by creating more resilient watersheds, conserving and recycling water and protecting infrastructure from flooding.

2. Continuing to support Caltrans and local government efforts to reduce stormwater pollutants from entering Lake Tahoe through stormwater treatment and road sweeping.

3. Ensuring clean surface and groundwater is available to all users, including disadvantaged communities.

4. Supporting private-public partnerships in tackling aquatic invasive species and near shore water quality concerns. The Lake Tahoe marina association is setting the example in working with Lahontan, Tahoe Resource Conservation District, League to Save Lake Tahoe and TRPA to tackle these issues.

Nevada Department of Transportation staff: "As 2016 ends, preliminary data tragically shows approximately 32 deaths on

Nevada roads. In 2017, the Nevada Department of Transportation and partners will continue work to save lives on Nevada roads, from enhanced enforcement of traffic laws to roadway improvements such as the shared use path and safety enhancements under construction on Highway 28 near Incline Village. With the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reporting that approximately 94 percent of traffic deaths are the result of driver behavior, the top wish for the new year is for lives saved thanks to continued safety efforts and everyone on the road being safer and more attentive.”

Clint Purvance, CEO and president Barton Health: “My hope is to find additional and innovative ways to meet the health and wellness needs of our community. Barton oncology will begin seeing patients as a member of UC Davis’ Cancer Care Network, work will finish on the expanded Women’s Health Suite at Medical Imaging, and the Robert Maloff Center of Excellence will open and begin serving our community and patients. We are taking big steps in 2017 toward our commitment to our community’s health, and wellness will continue to be top of mind as we shape our future.”

Molly Hucklebridge Coolidge, South Lake Tahoe resident: “In 2017, I want to prioritize spending time with positive, genuine, and loving people. I also hope to be considered a strong advocate for peace on our planet and for preservation of our natural surroundings.”

Jeff Marsolais, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit forest supervisor: “Beyond hoping for a happy and healthy 2017 for all, looking forward, I’d like to continue to expand the collaborative efforts between agencies, partners, communities, and interested citizens to tackle the challenges of the basin like improving forest resiliency and providing for sustainable recreation. I am hopeful we can do so while engaging our local and visiting public, involving and inspiring our youth, and visioning for a future we will be proud to say we had a small

part in shaping.”