

California teacher shortage worsens

By Jill Tucker, San Francisco Chronicle

The teacher shortage across California is getting worse, hitting urban districts hardest, but pinching even rural and suburban schools as well, according to a survey released last week.

As a result, students are seeing a revolving cast of substitutes, canceled courses and less qualified teachers in their classrooms, according to district officials who were surveyed.

Across the state, 75 percent of districts reported a shortage of teachers this school year, including 80 percent of urban districts and 69 percent of schools in the suburbs, according to the poll conducted by the California School Boards Association and the Learning Policy Institute, an education research nonprofit.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- The Ignite Winter White Pop-Up Party at Hard Rock Lake Tahoe is Dec. 10 starting at 10pm inside the Graceland Ballroom. Tickets are \$10. Women get in free until midnight. Must be 21 to attend.

- South Lake Tahoe Fire Rescue will be hosting a blood drive Dec. 20 from 9am-1pm at Station No. 3 at 2101 Lake Tahoe

Blvd. To schedule an appointment, contact Kim George at 530.307.9596.

- Intero Real Estate Services of Gardnerville presented a check for \$8,200 to the Incredible Kids Fund. This program provides youth with gym membership scholarships to use at the Douglas County Community Center in Gardnerville, and the Kahle Community Center in Stateline.

- El Dorado County is hosting a meeting in Grizzly Flats to discuss planned tree mortality operations in the area. The meeting is Dec. 15 at 6:30pm at Walt Tyler Elementary School, 6801 Tyler Drive, Grizzly Flats.

- Alpenglow Sports in Tahoe City is having a Holiday Open House on Dec. 15 from 4-8pm to benefit Ty Whisler, a local 10-year-old fighting brain cancer. There will be a festive holiday atmosphere with eggnog, gift wrapping, and holiday cheer. Twenty percent of all sales will go to the Whisler family.

Forecast: Chilling La Nina should be here all winter

By Brian K. Sullivan, Bloomberg

A La Nina that threatens to push cold temperatures across the northern U.S. and extend drought conditions in the south will probably remain in the Pacific deep into the winter, fading away by spring, according to U.S. forecasters.

The weather phenomenon – defined by a cooling of the equatorial Pacific Ocean's surface that touches off a change

in atmosphere patterns – will probably bring colder and wetter conditions to the northern stretches of the U.S. and warmer, drier conditions to the south, the U.S. Climate Prediction Center said in a report Thursday.

The consensus from U.S. forecasters “favors the continuation of weak La Nina conditions through” February, the center’s report shows.

Read the whole story

Nevada has money for trail projects

The Nevada Division of State Parks administers grant funds from the Federal Highway Administration’s Recreational Trails Program (RTP). Approximately \$1.2 million in funding is available for the 2017 fiscal year.

Applications are due by Feb. 3 and are available **online**.

The program funds motorized and non-motorized recreational trail projects for federal, state, and local governments, American tribes, special government districts and private individuals and organizations.

For further information or questions, contact Janice Keillor at 775.684.2787 or jkeillor@parks.nv.gov.

Vacation rental scams targeting SLT properties

The South Lake Tahoe Police Department is warning potential vacation home renters of an ongoing scam on Craigslist.

These listings may include pictures and a lengthy description of a real house. Unsuspecting vacationers are paying in advance, usually by check or Western Union wire. The supposed landlord takes receipt of the money and when the victim shows up to the vacation rental, they find that the home is occupied by a permanent resident or that there are other renters in the home.

Other techniques being used are asking unsuspecting renters to deposit money directly into a bank account and then that bank account is closed out. People are also being asked to buy gift cards and provide the card numbers to the scammers.

In an effort to avoid being scammed while renting a vacation home:

- Use a credit card. Never use bank wires, certified checks, Western Union, or any other service where the money is gone forever immediately after you send it.
- Obtain full contact info and verify it by using Google search or the like. If dealing with a person, ask for references, especially full work contact info, and verify that contact info.
- If they always have to call you back, be suspicious. When they call, ask for a phone number where you can immediately call them back. If they don't pick up the phone, watch out. Be aware that many scammers use message services.
- If you are a victim of a vacation rental scam, contact the South Lake Tahoe Police Department at 530.542.6100.

Lego contest at Douglas County libraries

The Douglas County Public Library will be having a Winter Lego Building Challenge from Dec. 17 to Jan. 3.

Children, teens, and adults are invited to build an original Lego brick structure to enter in the contest. This year's theme is Building Dreams. Children who want to use the library's bricks can come to the Minden or Zephyr Cove library on Dec. 17 from 2-3pm to build their entries.

The rules and entry forms can be found at the library or on the library's Youth Services webpage.

Each participant is allowed one entry. Creations will be entered in one of six categories based on the builder's age, or families can enter together. All participants under the age of 4 must use DUPLO bricks.

Opinion: Farewell, fair Senate

Publisher's note: *This column is from the Dec. 8, 2016, New York Times.*

By Harry Reid

In my time in the Senate, I've served with 281 senators. I've rarely given advice unless asked. But since I am leaving the Senate floor for the final time, I have a few things to say.

To Republicans, I say recognize the difference between campaigning and governing, and beware of knee-jerk opposition to the accomplishments of the Obama era.

Despite the fact that your nominee lost the popular vote by nearly three million votes, your leaders have announced their intention to repeal the Affordable Care Act early in the next Congress, with no replacement. This is a dramatic misreading of your mandate. It will lead you into a quagmire that will cause pain for millions of Americans and bedevil you for the next four years.

To Democrats, I say it has never been more important to stand up for the things we believe in. We are entering a new Gilded Age. Next year, a billionaire president who just settled a fraud suit for \$25 million over his business exploits will be pushing tax cuts for the top 1 percent, supposedly in the name of populism.

Read the whole story

Douglas library makes it easy for book clubs

Douglas County Public Library is helping book clubs.

Book Group in a Bag includes 10 copies of a selected book. Some kits also come with book reviews and discussion

questions.

A list of titles is available at the Minden Library and can be found through the library's **online catalog**. Book Group in a Bag kits can be borrowed for six weeks at a time. Check out a kit, distribute the books to your book group, and read together.

The Minden Library is located at 1625 Library Lane.

For more information, call 775.782.9841.

Safety tips for driving in winter weather

As rain, freezing rain and snow is forecast in Northern Nevada, the Nevada Department of Transportation and Nevada Highway Patrol are providing winter driving reminders to help motorists drive more safely.

On average, more than 2,000 crashes occur statewide every year due to unsafe driving in snow, ice and other wet conditions, such as driving too fast for conditions, following too closely, or failing to maintain a lane and overcorrecting.

In winter weather, motorists are reminded to drive slowly for conditions and leave space between their vehicle and others. Wearing a seat belt and focusing on the road are other important driving tips for any type of weather.

Winter driving tips:

- Only travel in winter weather when necessary, leave enough time to safely reach your destination and plan your route to

help avoid snowy/icy areas and steep hills.

- Before driving, check weather and road conditions by dialing 511 or clicking on the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News*.
- Share your travel itinerary so others know when to expect you.
- Remove snow and ice from all vehicle windows, mirrors, lights, turn signals and license plates.
- Buckle up.
- Turn on headlights to see and be seen.
- Turn off cruise control.
- Avoid quick starts, stops and fast turns. Accelerate, brake and steer smoothly and gradually.
- Reduce speed. Speed limits are based on normal road and weather conditions, not winter road conditions.
- Do not slam on brakes. Apply steady pressure on ABS-equipped vehicles and pump the brakes if necessary on non-ABS vehicles.
- Always comply with all posted chain requirements.
- If your vehicle has snow tires, install and use them between Oct. 1 and April 30.
- Keep additional distance from other vehicles.
- Watch carefully for snow removal equipment.
- Do not pass without good distance and sight clearance.
- Use extra caution on bridges, ramps, overpasses and shaded areas- they may freeze first.

- Maintain a high fuel level.
- If vehicle begins to skid, steer in direction of slide and slowly remove foot from accelerator.
- Be aware of black ice.
- If parked or stuck in snow, leave window slightly cracked for ventilation and make sure vehicle exhaust system is clear of snow.

Check before you go:

- Wipers
 - Tires-tread
 - Brakes
 - Lights
 - Battery
 - Radiator
 - Belts-hoses
 - Exhaust-fuel-ignition system
 - Heater-defroster
 - Thermostat
 - Vehicle fluid levels
 - Full gasoline tank.
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Basic rules for snowplow safety

South Lake Tahoe has issued the following safety tips and information regarding snow removal safety:

- City snow plows are deployed when an average of 3 inches of snow have accumulated on the ground citywide.
- Snowplows have the right of way on streets and vehicles left unattended in the streets are subject to citation and/or tow. The city right-of-way extends beyond the edge of the pavement to the property line, generally 5 to 10 feet beyond the edge of the pavement.
- The primary purpose of snow removal is to clear snow from streets for emergency vehicles, school buses, hospital entry, refuse trucks and all vehicle traffic.
- Keep all trash containers behind the berm, on your property. Improper placement of trash containers can result in damaged containers and/or snow removal equipment.
- When shoveling snow from your driveway, shovel to the right as you face the street. This way, the plow will move the snow further down the road, rather than move the shoveled snow back into your driveway.
- Keep children indoors while snow removal operations are under way.
- Don't watch snow removal operations from the edge of the road. Keep a safe distance (40 feet) when driving/standing behind snow removal equipment.
- The maximum speed when chain controls are in effect is 25 mph.