

Smoke filling basin; arsonist strikes again

Smoke is filling the skies in the basin, Truckee and Reno. Mostly it's from the prescribed fires in the Eldorado National Forest.

Firefighters in the surrounding area have also been working manmade and lightning caused fires.

The South Shore firebug continues to confound fire investigators. A fire on the north side of Lake Tahoe Airport burned about one-quarter of an acre on Oct. 12. The U.S. Forest Service is investigating.

The feds along with CalFire are trying to find the person responsible for starting the rash of fires that first began in late summer. Most have been on state or federal lands. No suspects have been identified.

On Oct. 11 a 50 foot x 50 foot swath of California Tahoe Conservancy land behind Motel 6 in South Lake Tahoe was charred.

The Salt Fire burning on the Amador Ranger District north of Salt Springs Reservoir in the Mokelumne Wilderness was detected Oct. 3. It is at about 20 acres. Lightning started the blaze. It poses little threat to the public, private property or surrounding infrastructure, and is being managed under a confine-contain fire suppression strategy. It is expected to grow up to 50-100 acres over the next few days.

The series of storms that are expected to arrive in the Tahoe area starting Thursday could be a mixed blessing for firefighters. Moisture is good, wind is not.

"With the dry fuels still on the ground we are urging caution

with any warming style fires in your yards. The winds will have the potential to push any embers into dry vegetation,” the Truckee Fire Department said in a statement. “Similar wind driven fire events were seen in Reno a few years ago burning numerous structures. There is still a burn ban in effect until significant moisture ends fire season per CalFire.”

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Outside groups influence Nevada Senate race

By William V. Theobald , Reno Gazette-Journal

WASHINGTON – The names on the ballot say the Nevada Senate race is between Republican Rep. Joe Heck and Democrat Catherine Cortez Masto, a former attorney general.

But the ads on TV screens across the state show the contest is in some ways more a battle between the likes of oil and chemical maker Charles Koch of Wichita, Kan., and media mogul Fred Eychaner of Chicago.

That’s because the two businessmen are among a small group of wealthy givers who fund committees that have no connection to the Nevada campaigns but produce ad after ad supporting or attacking the two candidates.

Read the whole story

Study: Megadrought nearly certain this century

By Deborah Sullivan Brennan, San Diego Union Tribune

The West is almost certain to experience a decades-long drought by the end of the century, if greenhouse emissions continue as usual, a new climate study concluded.

The chance that the Southwest will experience a megadrought – a dry period lasting 35 years or more – is between 70 and 99 percent by the end of the century, according to the study, published Wednesday in Science Advances, an online, open access academic journal.

“The kind of events that we were looking for, and the risk we were looking at, would be like extending the current California drought for another 30 years,” said Toby Ault, a climate scientist at Cornell University, who authored the paper with Justin Mankin, Benjamin Cook and Jason Smerdon of Columbia University.

Read the whole story

Geology and California subject of talk at LTCC

Lake Tahoe Community College Earth science instructor Scott Valentine will present How Geology Shaped California on Oct. 21.

Valentine will share the story of how earthquakes, volcanism, and geologic riches shaped the state and helped to create the world's sixth largest economy.

Valentine began his career in the Lake Tahoe Basin 16 years ago working as a restoration hydrologist for the U.S. Forest Service. He is now the head of the Earth Sciences Department at LTCC, where he teaches a wide range of classes. He also serves as a Parks and Recreation commissioner for South Lake Tahoe.

The free talk begins at 6pm in the Duke Theatre.

Winter to make appearance in Tahoe basin



The days are numbered to see the fall colors in Hope Valley. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The calendar says fall, but the forecast says winter.

According to the National Weather Service in Reno, "Rain totals will be between 3-5 inches for the Sierra from Thursday night through late Sunday."

Most of the moisture is expected between 6pm Thursday and 6am Friday, and Sunday afternoon to Monday morning.

Winds are going to be so strong that it could impact air travel. Sierra ridge wind gusts are likely to be more 100 mph, along with south to southwest winds 50 to 70 mph, according to the NWS.

"Halloween decorations and trash cans left outside will not remain where you left them," according to forecasters.

Heavy rain is initially expected. Snow will be at about 8,500 feet. On Sunday the snow level should fall, meaning it will impact travel on Sierra passes.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Blue Ribbon award nominees being sought

Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce is seeking nominations for the Blue Ribbon Awards.

This is a chance to recognize South Shore businesses and individuals who excel in working as one in an effort to improve the quality of life on the South Shore. The public is encouraged to **nominate** South Shore businesses or individuals that have made a positive and lasting impression on the

community.

The deadline is Oct. 17 at noon.

The categories are:

- Geotourism Award – Providing an authentic Tahoe experience
- Tourism Award – Innovative program, promotion or product for our visitors
- Experience Award – Business providing compelling and captivating experiences
- Entrepreneur Award – An innovative individual who assumed the risk of starting a new business
- Customer Service (Business) Award – An individual who consistently provides quality service
- Customer Service (Public Agency) Award – Quality service in the not so usual places
- Wendell Award for Green Business or Program – Business that is minimizing impact on the environment

Businesses and individuals are not required to be chamber members to be nominated or to win.

Nominees will be announced later in October and the winners will be announced Nov. 10 during at the Blue Ribbon Awards ceremony at Hard Rock.

Hiking minorities good for

makers of outdoorsy gear

By Hugo Martin, Los Angeles Times

Recalling the childhood fun she had at summer camp, Ciji McBride has decided to go back to the outdoors.

The 41-year-old African American beauty consultant from Baldwin Hills recently joined the Sierra Club, began taking day hikes in the Santa Monica Mountains and is planning a camping trip to Yosemite National Park next summer.

“As a kid, I always liked being in the outdoors, and as I approached my mid-30s and 40s, I said, ‘What are some of the things I like to do,’ ” she said. “You can go to bars and movies, and that’s all great, but we live in a state with great weather.”

McBride’s renewed interest in hiking and camping reflects the growing percentage of minorities spending time in the great outdoors, a significant shift for a demographic long underrepresented among campers and hikers in the U.S even as the nation’s population becomes more diverse. The development holds the promise of a potentially lucrative new market for state and national parks as well as makers of outdoorsy equipment and clothing.

Read the whole story

Letter: Again Placer County

supervisors?

To the community,

Tuesday morning we attended the hearing inconveniently held in Auburn and it was clear that the [Placer County] Board of Supervisors were going to approve the Martis Valley West project (760 homes and 6.6 acres of commercial on the ridge above Tahoe/Truckee) no matter what.

The first clue was how relaxed and jovial Kurt Kreig and Blake Riva, the developers aka Mountainside Partners, were. Jennifer Montgomery again, was the lone vote against it, but this time she didn't even bother making an initial motion to deny. On Oct. 3, although it's too little too late, the Trust For Public Land and Truckee Donner Land Trust pulled out of the deal to buy the east parcel for a mere \$15M because the project is so contentious, and still the supervisors approved this lousy trade.

As the final blow, Placer County planner Stacy Wydra told the supervisors the public could use the land even though the project report (FEIR) clearly states the owner doesn't have to allow it.

What a Christmas present for SPI (Sierra Pacific Industries) from Placer County. SPI gets to develop our ridgeline for big bucks and log the east parcel while the public maybe gets to use the east parcel if SPI thinks it's OK. You are wondering who will enforce this? So are we. Stay tuned as our buddies at Placer County haven't bothered with those important details.

Ann Nichols, North Tahoe Preservation Alliance

Strong summer home sales in Tahoe basin

Sales volume around the lake was up 20 percent and the median price of a home increased 12 percent to \$540,000 for the third quarter.

In recent years, Tahoe City and the East Shore have been more susceptible to variances, however both saw increases in volume (6 and 28 percent, respectively) with significant jumps in homes selling for more than \$1 million (20 and 33 percent), according to Chase International. The median price of a home in Tahoe City rose 5 percent to \$580,000, while on the East Shore it rose 6 percent to \$1.18 million.

Homes selling for more than \$1 million had the largest impact on sales, with every region on the lake seeing substantial increases, the largest being on the South Shore (62 percent) and Incline Village (55 percent). The only two stats to see any declines were homes selling less for less than \$1 million in Tahoe City (down 4 percent) and Incline Village (down 1 percent).

South Lake Tahoe saw the largest increase in median and average home prices, up 13 and 14 percent to \$405,000 and \$496,984, respectively. The area is still the least expensive place to buy a home. The highest median home price remains in Incline Village, where the price jumped 11 percent to \$1.039 million.

The median price of a home in Truckee rose 13 percent to \$624,750. Homes selling for more than \$1 million was up 111 percent while homes selling for less than a million was up 11 percent. Overall volume sold in Truckee was up 61 percent.

Revisiting Taste of Paris at Harrah's food-wine event

The seventh annual South Lake Tahoe Food and Wine Festival includes dining and tasting experiences, plus discussions and presentations by celebrated food, wine and spirits experts.

The Oct. 21-23 event is at Harrah's and Harveys Lake Tahoe.

The Grand Market Expo features dishes from Harrah's, Harveys and other Caesars Entertainment properties' best restaurants, plus top-shelf spirits and wines of Napa Valley and beyond.

The President's Dinner that Saturday features special guest Violet Grgich at Harveys 19 Kitchen. This dinner celebrates 40 years of the Taste of Paris where wine from Napa beat the best wines in the world. Grgich is the daughter of Mike Grgich, who made the wine that won Best Wine in the World at the Paris tasting.

For more information, event prices and to purchase tickets, go **online**. With the exception of The Lovin' Spoonful concert and the Farewell Champagne Brunch, patrons must be at least 21.