

Group wants Nevada pension data

By Associated Press

A conservative think tank wants a judge to force Nevada's Public Employees' Retirement System to release details about retiree payouts.

The Nevada Policy Research Institute filed a petition in Carson City court this week requesting the move. The group says the agency changed its record-keeping to hide information that's supposed to be public.

Officials from the system declined comment. No court date has been set for the group's petition.

NPRI maintains a website called Transparent Nevada that shows salary and benefit information for public employees.

The organization says it found PERS no longer lists its data by the retiree's name, but by a Social Security number that's confidential and not releasable. NPRI says PERS won't put the information in a more usable format, and is circumventing Nevada's public records law.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Snoopy

Snoopy is a handsome 8 month old Boxer mix who came to Tahoe from Contra Costa County to find his new home.

He has lots of energy. He needs a patient owner who will give him lots of exercise and will take him to training classes. He walks nicely on the leash and he knows sit.

Like most puppies, Snoopy still chews things and so needs to be in a crate when left home alone. He doesn't chase cats, but he does play too rough for most of them. A dog-savvy cat who kept him in line would help him understand how to play with cats.

Snoopy is neutered, microchipped, tested for heart worm, and vaccinated. He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530).573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go **online**.

– Karen Kuentz

EDC elected schools chief job subject of probe

By Kathryn Reed

Why El Dorado County has an elected superintendent of schools was the subject of a grand jury investigation this past year.

In the recently released report, the grand jury recommends: "The El Dorado County board of education should thoroughly examine the pros and cons of retaining an elected superintendent of schools and issue a report to the Board of Supervisors of their findings and recommendation."

Taking the issue to the voters would be the next step, according to the grand jury.

The investigation was initiated after then-Superintendent Jeremy Meyers was arrested on driving under the influence charges twice in 2015. He later resigned, though has **since been hired** to be a principal in a district in the county.

The California Constitution mandates each county have a superintendent of schools. Five districts have appointed leaders, while 53 – one being El Dorado County – elect the superintendent. This person is essentially a bridge between individual districts and the state. County offices of education also oversee federal programs like Head Start.

El Dorado County has a history of when a vacancy has been created, the board of education appoints a superintendent and then that person is elected in his or her own right. The grand jury could not find a contested election in the last 35 years.

"There has been a demonstrable lack of interest by anyone in

this county to step forward and challenge an incumbent. We can only speculate as to the reasons," the report says. "A candidate must reside in this county, possess at least a master's degree in an area of relevant study and have a valid California administrative credential. Further, this individual must be willing to finance a campaign and go through the rigors of an election challenging an incumbent."

Vicki Barber had the job from 1994-June 2013. She took over for Ken Lowry after he quit mid-term. Hers would be the only name on the ballot every four years.

Barber then quit one year before her last term was up.

Taking her place was Meyers, who previously had been the assistant superintendent of schools. He was elected in 2014 with no problem since he ran unopposed.

The grand jury pointed out how the board of education has little control over the superintendent because it is an elected position. The current board could not fire Meyers for his DUIs. Had he been an appointed superintendent, the board could have removed him. Options were a settlement agreement or recall. The former occurred because the latter could have cost the district \$300,000 for a special election.

The jurors tried to ascertain the advantages of an elected superintendent over an appointed one.

"There is scant evidence and fewer studies to provide guidance on this issue," the report states.

Some of the findings include:

- Perceived benefits of having an elected superintendent:
 - o The public may feel it has more control over the schools.
 - o An elected superintendent may be more responsive to the

citizen's needs.

- o Lower turnover.
- o Elected superintendents must reside within the county.
- o Generally, an elected official has considerably more independence and may not experience as much pressure from the unions, Legislature and hiring board.

. Perceived disadvantages of having an elected superintendent:

- o There is no performance review, goal setting or direction from an elected executive board.
- o Limits candidate pool to only those residing in EDC.
- o Qualified candidates may be dissuaded to pursue this position because of the need to launch and fund an election campaign.
- o Anyone with the required credentials may run for office. They may not be the most knowledgeable or have the highest skills. A less qualified candidate may prevail on name recognition or popularity.
- o As witnessed in our county, outright removal from office can only be done via recall with substantial public cost.

. Perceived benefits of having an appointed superintendent:

- o Board of Education would be allowed to recruit qualified candidates from all over the country.
- o Potential increase in administrative efficiency.
- o Having a professional rather than political superintendent.

- o The ability to discipline and/or remove a failing superintendent.

. Perceived disadvantages of having an appointed superintendent:

- o Higher turnover

- o Expense to COE for recruitment.

The Board of Supervisors has until Sept. 22 to respond to the grad jury report.

Opinion: Calif. public employee pensions a problem

By Kerry Jackson, Orange County Register

In January 2013, Gov. Jerry Brown bragged about the state's new commitment to fiscal responsibility. He talked about "living within our means and not spending what we don't have." A year later, in his State of the State address, Brown insisted that "fiscal discipline is not the enemy of our democracy but its fundamental predicate."

Yet here we are in the middle of 2016, and few states' fiscal health are worse than California's. The Mercatus Center's 2016 ranking of states by fiscal condition places the Golden State 44th overall, the same position it held last year.

The state is below average in cash needed to cover short-term liabilities – it ranks 47th – and total debt has hit \$118.17 billion, says the report. California ranks 46th in long-run solvency, meaning it's woefully short on "assets available to

cushion the state from potential shocks or long-term fiscal risks.”

Read the whole story

The weird origins of going to the beach

By Ana Swanson, Washington Post

Like the steam engine, the tin-can telephone and the first vaccine, the modern American beach holiday was actually invented in Britain.

A beach vacation might seem like the most natural thing in the world – to head to the shore, play in the waves and splay your limbs out on the sand. But people didn’t always consider the beach a place primarily for relaxation and entertainment. After all, the beach can be cold, hot, sandy, wet, dismal and/or uncomfortable. And then there’s the whole prospect of drowning in the sea.

Like so many things, the beach vacation actually rose to popularity in Britain around the turn of the 19th century and spread through the world from there. (This isn’t to say people avoided the beach entirely before then, but vacationing at the beach wasn’t a cultural phenomenon.) Its origins were tied up with how industrialization was remaking Britain at the time, as well as in popular contemporary medical theories that now sound bizarre.

Read the whole story

Bay Area woman drowns near Kyburz

A San Francisco woman died Saturday in a rafting accident on the South Fork of the American River in the Kyburz area.

Elaine Yi Mau, 32, was found submerged in a section of heavy rapids at 4:45pm July 9, about 35 minutes after she was reported missing, according to authorities. She had been on an inner tube with several people out of the China Flat Campground area.

The incident is under investigation by the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office. At this time it has not been determined if the victim was wearing a life jacket.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

New clues sought in '82 deaths of casino workers

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

The El Dorado County District Attorney's Office is seeking new information in the 1982 deaths of two Stateline casino employees whose bodies were found in the south fork of the American River several months after they disappeared from their home.

Julie Schossow and Marilyn Putt were close friends and both worked as blackjack dealers at Harrah's Lake Tahoe where they were closely associated with other casino employees, according to a District Attorney's Office news release. They were together when they disappeared from their home around midnight Jan. 12 or the early hours of Jan. 13, 1982.

Investigators believe both were kidnapped and held captive for approximately three months somewhere between South Lake Tahoe and Placerville.

Read the whole story

Pot backers hope Calif. vote pressures Congress to ease laws

By Sean Cockerham, McClatchy News Service

When Lynette Davies, co-operator of the Canna Care medical marijuana dispensary in Sacramento, pays her California taxes she needs to haul a bag with \$20,000 in cash to the state tax office.

"That's really unsafe for me, and it's unsafe for my employees to have this cash in the store," said Davies, whose business is legal under state law as a result of California's 1996 vote on the use of medical marijuana. "All because the banks that want to bank with us can't."

Marijuana advocates are counting on Californians to vote to legalize recreational weed this fall, bringing pressure on Congress to end anti-pot policies that include federal

obstruction of banks doing business with the industry. California is nearly six times larger than any other state that has legalized pot for recreational use, and its potential cannabis market has been estimated at nearly \$7 billion.

Read the whole story

TOCCATA to perform Mozart in the Mountains

TOCCATA – Tahoe Symphony Orchestra and Chorus – will continue its 21-concert Summer MusicFest with a new series entitled Mozart in the Mountains.

The first concert is Aug. 7, 4pm at St. Patrick's Episcopal Church in Incline Village (341 Village Blvd.). It opens with Mozart's "Violin Concerto No. 5" in A major performed by soloist Alex Eisenberg. Selections from Mozart's "happiest" Mass, "Coronation Mass KV 317", will be performed with soloists Becky Earl and Anne Davidson, soprano, Brad Perry, tenor, and Chris Nelson, baritone, as well as Mozart's "Laudate Dominum" from the "Vespers KV339". Closing the concert will be Miyuki Otani, performing Mozart's "Piano Concerto No. 17" in G major.

Other concerts in the series will be presented on Aug. 10, 7pm at Shepherd of the Sierra Lutheran Church in Carson City (3680 Highway 395 South), Aug. 12, 7pm at St. Theresa Catholic Church in South Lake Tahoe (1041 Lyons Ave.), and Aug. 14, 4pm at South Reno United Methodist Church (200 De Spain Lane).

Maestro James Rawie will conduct all performances.

Tickets are available at the door or **online**. General admission is \$25 adults and \$20 for seniors. Youth/students under age 24 with valid ID are \$5 for seating 10 minutes prior to concert time, and under 18 enter free. Preferred seating is \$35 and \$15 for youth/students.

TDPUD sourcing electric power without fossil fuels

The Truckee Donner Public Utility District has a new clean, cost-effective source of electricity for its customers.

The Veyo Heat Recovery Project in southwestern Utah converts heat from an existing natural gas pipeline into electricity to provide reliable, safe, and cost-effective electricity.

The \$22.3 million project was constructed by the Utah Associated Municipal Power Systems, of which TDPUD is one of seven members. The project has a capacity to generate 7.8 megawatts.

“This project requires no fossil fuels or water and takes waste heat that would be vented to the atmosphere and converts it to carbon free electricity,” said Stephen Hollabaugh, TDPUD electric utility and assistant general manager, said in a statement. “This power is also reliable and base load; unlike intermittent resources like wind or solar that can be unpredictable and complex to manage.”