

Restaurants ditching no tipping

By NPR

In recent years, there's been a no-tipping movement within the restaurant industry.

The idea has been to rectify a basic pay unfairness to even out the pay between tipped and untipped employees. Dishwashers and cooks at the back of the house don't earn as much money as waiters because they don't get tips.

So, do away with tipping, raise menu prices a little bit, and pay everyone a higher wage.

But that experiment has failed at some restaurants. Joe's Crab Shack, the first large U.S. chain to implement a no-tip model, announced this month that it is moving away from the experiment, which only lasted three months.

Read the whole story

Crews to conduct controlled burns in basin

Weather permitting, Nevada Division of State Lands, Nevada Division of Forestry and U.S. Forest Service may conduct prescribed fire operations beginning May 23.

Operations may take place near Incline Village in the Rocky Point area along Tunnel Creek Road. On the South Shore

they may take place off Lake Tahoe Boulevard and Sawmill Road, off Panther Lane near the west end of Gardner Mountain and off Santa Claus Drive and West River Parkway near Christmas Valley.

To view a map with project locations and details, go **online**.

Residual smoke may be seen in locations where operations have taken place over the last several weeks.

Shining a light on Nevada's dark skies



Great Basin National Park during the 2015 Astronomy

Festival. Photo/Ryan Berendsen

By Tony Berendsen

I've often said Nevada has two great resources – rocks and stars. Anyone who has worked land in Nevada can attest to the abundance of rocks, and anyone that has strayed away from the meager city lights of most of Nevada has seen a multitude of stars in its night sky.

There is a great history of mining the rocks of our state. It's part of our culture and heritage. Nevada was built on the wealth of the ore rocks held for those who sought them. And all the time an unparalleled a wealth of stars and view into the cosmos lay above the land of Nevada receiving much less attention.

2016 heralds in a new era for our precious resource of star studded skies. Great Basin National Park has been designated a DSP (Dark Sky Park) by the IDA (International Dark-Sky Association). The designation ensures the pristine darkness of the park will be preserved for visitors of the park to enjoy, and for the health and well being of the animals calling the park home.

The IDA, founded in 1988, works to educate the public about outdoor lighting that does not obscure our view of the stars, and with public and private entities to designate areas of land as dark sky preserves. Great Basin National Park is the most recent of 34 parks (25 in the U.S.) to become a DSP.

I talked to John Barentine, program manager for the IDA, about the status and development of GBNP as a DSP.

“Great Basin started their application effort some time before my arrival at IDA in late 2013. Their case is typical, in that it was a stop-and-start effort that moved ahead when staff and/or volunteers were available to work on it, and otherwise it went dormant for different lengths of time. It's hard for

parks to sustain the application effort, given the resources involved," he said.

What level of designation did the park receive?

"Great Basin was certified as a gold-tier Dark Sky Park, indicating the highest level of natural darkness. To put that in context against our other designation tier levels (silver and bronze) Great Basin is certainly one of the darkest parks in our system, largely by virtue of its relative geographic isolation from big cities and the screening effect of topography that tends to block distant light sources like Las Vegas," Barentine said.

What type of astronomy or star gazing programs should visitors to the park expect?

"The park is really exemplary in this respect, putting on over 100 programs a year that are specific to astronomy and/or dark skies, including formal interpretive presentations, an annual Astronomy Festival each September, special events like full moon walks and meteor shower watch parties," Barentine said. "In addition to maintaining an active web and social media presence, they have also reached out to towns in the region to bring the park's night sky resource to the community. They really go above and beyond to uphold the adage that 'half the park is after dark' and offer visitors a significantly expanded experience that doesn't end at sunset and start at sunrise each day."

For more information about Nevada's new Dark Sky Park go to the Great Basin National Park's **website** or **International Dark-Sky Association**.

And of course, if you want to experience the DSP, take out your camping and hiking gear, binoculars, and telescope to spend a few days at the park. I guarantee you will not be disappointed.

Tony Berendsen, aka Tony the Star Guide, runs Tahoe Star Tours.

Placer County creates policy to stimulate development

Placer County said the reason it created an economic incentive program is to deal with the extraordinarily high costs of development, redevelopment and environmental improvements in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Another reason the Board of Supervisors approved the plan this month is to spark investment in private projects. In particular the elected would like more places for tourists to stay, especially considering no tourist accommodations have been built in North Lake Tahoe in more than 40 years.

The program will focus on Kings Beach and Tahoe City.

The county will be able to fund and acquire tourist accommodation units (TAUs) and bank them so they may be issued for projects meeting certain criteria.

“The program is structured on the principle that redevelopment projects of a certain size and scale will produce an environmental and economic ripple effect creating additional investment,” the county said in a press release.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency made TAUs a commodity years ago as a way to curb growth. It worked. The problem is there is value to these units now so the free market is anything but free and redevelopment is stagnated because of the arbitrary value of a TAU.

EDC working on medical marijuana policy

Throughout the summer the El Dorado County Medical Marijuana Advisory Committee will be meeting to discuss different topics regarding medical marijuana.

The following are the dates and topics of the meetings:

- June 20, 1-3pm – Cultivation (e.g. indoor, outdoor, and larger grows)
- June 27, 1-pm – Dispensaries, transportation and manufacturing
- Aug. 8, 1-3pm – Taxation
- Aug. 22, 1-3pm – Compliance (e.g. issues with administering possible policies)
- Aug. 29, 1-3 pm – Recreational use

Each meeting will take place in the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors meeting room at 330 Fair Lane, Building A, Placerville.

The committee is comprised of two members of the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors. The committee members will be collecting information at each of the meetings from different stakeholder groups, members of the public and county departments.

Members of stakeholder groups that would like to speak at one of the meetings are requested to email the county at medicalmarijuanacommittee@edcgov.us. There will also be time available at each meeting for public comment.

Therapy reading dogs to be at Douglas library

During the summer, a Reading Paws therapy dog will be available at the Douglas County Public Library every Thursday from June 2-Aug. 11 between 10:30am and noon. Reading with animals can help children feel calm, gain confidence, and become strong readers.

Children of all ages and reading levels are invited to read with a registered therapy dog and the dog's handler. Each child will spend 15 minutes with a dog.

Time slots are available on a first come, first serve basis.

Parental permission is required. Permission forms are available at the library. This program is offered in partnership with READING Paws, a local affiliate of Intermountain Therapy Animals.

The Douglas County Public Library is located at 1625 Library Lane in Minden. For more info, call 775.782.9841.

California voter registration soaring

By Matthew Artz, Bay Area News Group

Californians are registering to vote in breathtaking numbers

not seen since the Reagan Revolution, as the no-holds-barred presidential primary season and tech-based outreach efforts have roused more than 1 million people from their political slumber.

More than twice as many Californians registered this year than in the same four-month period in 2012, according to Political Data Inc., a Los Angeles County firm that tracks state voter trends. The new voters are trending young and Democratic – two groups more inspired by Bernie Sanders than Donald Trump.

“There is no precedent for this in California since 1980 in terms of the overall surge in voter registration,” said Paul Mitchell, the firm’s vice president. “The motivation to register is as much to vote against somebody as it is to vote for somebody.”

Read the whole story

Tree removal could affect hikers on North Shore

Liberty Utilities this month will begin removing trees via helicopter on lands north of Highway 267 from Brockway Summit to Kings Beach for the 650 electrical line upgrade project.

Trees will be removed from U.S. Forest Service land and private property. Public access to the area will be limited during this time for safety reasons.

The Tahoe Rim Trail will not be closed during the project, but periodic access to the TRT by escort during the helicopter operations will be required where the trail crosses Highway

267 and the project area on the north side of Brockway Summit. Trails and forest roads may experience temporary restrictions and hazards may be present even when operations have ended for the day.

The 650 line runs from Truckee to Kings Beach, parallel to Highway 267 for much of the alignment. Within the Lake Tahoe Basin, the project is primarily located on lands managed by the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and on private lands. Construction of the new power line to replace and upgrade the existing power line will take place throughout the summer and fall after the timber removal is complete.

Workshop for potential school board candidates

The El Dorado County School Boards Association and the El Dorado County Office of Education will host the Prospective School Board Member Workshop for those interested in running for election in November.

This free workshop will take place June 20.

El Dorado County Superintendent of Schools Ed Manansala and EDCOE attorney David Girard will conduct the workshop. The topics will include time commitment, the Brown Act, policy development, budget responsibilities, and the role school boards play in public education.

The filing period for the November election is July 18-Aug. 12.

Registration is at 5:30pm, the workshop from 6-7:30pm at 6767 Green Valley Road, Room B-2, Placerville. To register in advance, contact Janet Maruniak at 530.295.2217 or jmaruniak@edcoe.org.

SLT native recognized for writing ability

South Lake Tahoe native Ryan Row was honored at the annual L. Ron Hubbard Achievement awards for his "The Broad Sky Was Mine, And the Road" in the writers of the future contest.

The Lake Tahoe Community College alumnus was one of 12 writers to have his story published in the bestselling science fiction anthology series "L. Ron Hubbard Presents Writers of the Future Volume 32".

Ryan began his literary career by attempting to publish stories under the pen name Alan Wor, but now writes under his own name. He is studying creative writing at San Francisco State University.