

Opinion: Chamber applauds disability bill

By Amber Llovet

State Sen. Richard D. Roth's, D-Riverside, bipartisan measure to protect California's small businesses and the disabled community has been approved by Gov. Jerry Brown. With the governor's signature on May 10, this new law has already taken effect.

"This is a major victory for all Californians," said Roth. "SB269 is a bipartisan, commonsense solution that will guarantee access for disabled Californians by providing small businesses with the tools and resources necessary to comply with state and federal disability access regulations. I am glad the governor agrees with the critical need for this reform, and I am proud to have delivered this victory for California's small businesses and disability community."

SB269 enjoyed widespread bipartisan support and did not receive a single "no" vote throughout the legislative process. It is a narrowly crafted provision to provide businesses with much needed disability access education, resources and training, and allows small businesses that have been proactive in identifying access issues a reasonable amount of time to fix any problems identified before a lawsuit arises. The bill seeks to incentivize businesses to proactively take steps to become accessible by providing them with 120 days from receipt of a Certified Access Specialist (CAsp) report to resolve any violations identified without being subject to statutory penalties or litigation costs.

"Tahoe Chamber has been working tirelessly on the ADA issue for many years in order to educate and protect our small businesses from costly and unnecessary litigation. We

supported a variation of this bill last year which failed and thus we were pleased to see Sen. Roth reintroduce it again this year and have supported it's journey through the legislative process this session. This is another great step in ensuring that the Tahoe business community thrives," said B Gorman, CEO of Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce.

Tahoe Chamber is a bi-state chamber with 650 members who operate businesses in both states. The chamber's Government Affairs Committee (GAC) monitors legislation in both Nevada and California to ensure we are representing our members and communicating new laws that impact business.

Amber Llovet is communications coordinator for Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce.

Demand for mental health care grows in Tahoe

Publisher's note: *This is one of several stories about mental health issues in the Lake Tahoe Basin that will be running through October.*

By Kathryn Reed

Mental health is a growing problem on the South Shore that is affecting all ages and has no socio-economic boundaries.

More people are committing suicide. Substance abuse is an issue, which exacerbates mental conditions.



These are some of the findings in Barton Health's latest Community Needs Assessment. Officials from the Tahoe healthcare conglomerate spoke to the South Lake Tahoe City Council this month – which is Mental Health Awareness Month. A

different foursome – three from Barton, one from NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Health) – gave a talk a few days earlier at Lake Tahoe Community College.

"We see worsening trends," Clint Purvance, CEO of Barton Health, said.

The top three priorities from the 2015 assessment are mental health, substance abuse and access to services. All are interrelated.

South Lake Tahoe has a higher rate of suicides compared to the state and national averages, as well as more drinkers and drug-induced deaths. The access to primary care physicians, though, is less than the state and national averages.

Barton is going after grants to help implement programs to help address these issues.

What worries Purvance is that there are so many outside factors contributing to one's mental health that are out of the immediate purview of Barton, such as homelessness among school-age youth and adults living in motels.

When Councilman Tom Davis asked Purvance to put a price on dealing with the issue on a communitywide basis, the answer was at least seven figures with no true number having been calculated.

For Barton, the next steps are to maintain and expand mental health services, spearhead community collaboration and

engagement to improve the care flow system, and to build awareness through education and prevention campaigns.

At the community talk Tracy Protell – psychiatrist at Barton; Betsy Glass, licensed clinical social worker at Barton Community Health Center; Kate Mosher, licensed clinical social worker with Sierra Child and Family Services; and Jeanne Nelson of NAMI El Dorado gave some insight about they see in the community, particularly regarding depression.

“The key is all levels are treatable. You really can get the brain back to a healthy state,” Protell said.

She said depression is often misdiagnosed in younger people as attitudinal behavior issues.

A clinical diagnosis of depression is when someone has five of the following nine symptoms for more than two weeks:

- Sadness/irritability
- Anhedonia
- Sleep disturbance
- Decreased energy
- Appetite disturbance
- Difficulty with concentration
- Excessive feelings of guilt-worthlessness
- Psychomotor agitation/retardation
- Suicidal thoughts.

The experts are proponents of starting with lifestyle changes – eating, sleeping, exercise, social interaction – before medication.

Therapy, though, is also a viable option for many people.

However, there is an extensive wait list for psychiatric and psychotherapy through Barton. The good news is new patients are prioritized, with the most severe cases rising to the top.

A third psychiatrist is coming on board with Barton this summer, which should help.

Money can also be a deterrent for people when it comes to seeking care.

NAMI offers some free group therapy sessions and has a wealth of information. El Dorado County operates a 24-hour crisis line. A therapist will meet patients at Barton Hospital's emergency room.

Editorial: Time for Sanders to be honest

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the May 18, 2016, Washington Post.*

Tension in the Democratic presidential race exploded in Nevada last weekend. Supporters of Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt. shouted, cursed and threw chairs during a state party convention in which they failed to force rules changes they wanted.

Even though they were attempting to get more delegates than the caucus results in the state suggested they deserved, they attacked the process as unfair. The state party chair subsequently received death threats against her and her family.

Mr. Sanders responded with self-righteousness and hypocrisy.

He released a statement in which he listed a series of procedural complaints about the Nevada convention, attacked the Democratic Party for not being inclusive enough and warned that “millions of Americans are outraged” and that “the political world is changing.” He offered a throwaway line, three paragraphs down, condemning his supporters’ hooliganism in a statement that mostly justified it.

Read the whole story

Zika’s coming, and there’s not enough money for another health emergency

By Noam N. Levey, Los Angeles Times

Less than two years after the Ebola epidemic set off a scramble for money to contain that deadly virus, state and local health officials around the country are rushing to prepare for Zika outbreaks this spring and summer.

But after years of declining funds, many are coming up short.

Government investment in public health has been declining for years. So too has the nation’s public health workforce, which is almost 20 percent smaller than it was in 2008, according to health authorities.

Now, with the second threat of a major disease outbreak in three years, America’s public health agencies – and the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – are again begging for aid.

Read the whole story

Transportation tax measures headed to Nov. ballot

By Tony Bizjak, Sacramento Bee

It's looking like the November ballot will be a big one for transportation in California.

A dozen counties, including Sacramento and Placer, are planning to put sales tax measures on the ballot, asking voters to chip in billions of dollars to help fix rutted roads and relieve at least some of the state's growing post-recession congestion.

Counties and cities used to rely almost completely on federal and state funds, mainly through gas pump taxes. But those governments have been suffering their own gridlock, of the political sort, for years as transportation funding sources falter.

In Placer County, transportation officials voted unanimously two weeks ago to pitch an initiative that would raise \$1.6 billion over 30 years to help pay for road improvements, again via a half-cent sales tax increase. Advocates are visiting local city councils over the next few weeks, asking for support.

Read the whole story

Cheap gas good news for tourism industry

By Scott Mayerowitz, AP

Grab your sunglasses, a giant cup of coffee and prepare to hit the highway: 2016 is shaping up to be the summer of the road trip.

Cheap fuel prices have left many American families flush with spare cash, which they now plan to spend on vacations. And with summertime gas prices predicted to be the lowest in 13 years, the travel industry is looking forward to a blockbuster July and August.

"We're pretty excited," says Steve Joyce, CEO of Choice Hotels, which includes Comfort Inn and Econo Lodge. "Last year was a record summer for us. We're going to be a lot stronger this year."

The hotel chain is seeing an increase in bookings. And low gas prices throughout the winter means that Americans had cheaper commutes and more disposable income.

"That's a raise in our guys' pockets which means they are going to take another trip," Joyce says.

The job market is also giving Americans a reason to take a vacation: The economy created about 2.4 million jobs between last Memorial Day and the end of April.

Initial data for the Memorial Day holiday weekend, the start of the travel season, is already signaling a strong summer for the tourism industry.

Enterprise Rent-A-Car is seeing a 44 percent spike in reservations for the holiday weekend compared to last year.

And AAA, one of the nation's largest travel agencies and a car lobbying group, is predicting 38 million people will travel for the holiday, the most since 2005. That's 700,000 or 1.9 percent more travelers than last year.

The overwhelming majority of Memorial Day travelers – 89 percent – plan to go by car. That's the highest percent of drivers since AAA began tracking holiday travel in 2000.

"The great American road trip is officially back thanks to low gas prices," says Marshall Doney, CEO of AAA.

The average price for a gallon of gas is expected to be \$2.24 by July and \$2.20 in August, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Adjusted for inflation, that would be the lowest summer prices since 2003.

Those who choose to fly this summer will have plenty of company too. The lobbying group for most U.S. carriers, Airlines for America, is predicting that 231.1 million passengers will fly in June, July and August. That's a 3.8-percent increase over last summer's record numbers.

Airlines have added more flights and are using larger planes, leading to the most number of seats in the sky since 2008. That, along with low fuel prices, has led to a 4-percent drop in domestic airfares so far this year, according to the airline lobbying group.

The airlines have a message for fliers: Get to the airport early. Long lines at Transportation Security Administration checkpoints have plagued thousands of travelers this spring, causing many of them to miss flights. The situation is expected to get worse in the summer with an average of 2.5 million passengers a day flying.

Last year, 19 of the 25 busiest days for the TSA occurred during the summer. The top five busiest were: July 31, July 2, June 26, May 22 (right before Memorial Day) and July 24.

San Francisco International Airport is already advising fliers that all parking lots are expected to be at or near capacity during peak summer days.

U.S. theme parks are predicting 376 million visitors this year, up 3 percent from last year.

The National Park Service saw a record 307 million visitors last year and expects to match that high level of attendance this year. The bulk of visitors at the 411 parks, recreation areas and national memorials come during the summer months.

That's great news for Geoff Ballotti, CEO of Wyndham Hotel Group. Half of his company's Travelodge properties are within 25 miles of a national park.

"We believe it's going to be a hot summer for us," Ballotti says.

Renowned Tahoe scientist to give talk

UC Davis limnologist Charles Goldman will be telling five decades' worth of stories and history of research at Lake Tahoe next month, as well as delving into the challenges ahead.

The talk is June 21 at Sierra Nevada College.

Register **online**. Cost is \$5.

The program will begin at 6pm, with refreshments and no-host bar from 5:30-6pm at 291 Country Club Drive in Incline Village.

Seating is open at 5:30pm to guests who have pre-registered, open seating starts at 5:50pm.

Free physicals for South Shore athletes

South Shore student athletes are eligible for a free sports physical on May 25 at the South Tahoe High School Blue Gym.

The pre-participation physical includes vital signs, orthopedic evaluations, and medical screenings. Sports athletes from the Tahoe area can participate.

The sports physicals start at 5:30pm with the approximate schedule as follows:

- 5:30pm: South Tahoe high and middle school athletes
- 6pm: Pop Warner and Lake Tahoe Community College soccer athletes
- 6:30pm: Whittell High School athletes

All students should wear appropriate gym attire and bring their completed medical history forms. Forms may be picked up in each school's front office or through the student's Pop Warner football coach. All forms must be complete and signed by a parent or guardian.

This sports physical day is provided by physicians and medical staff from Barton Health and Barton's Tahoe Center for Orthopedics. No reservation is required. For more information,

call 530.543.5615.

Casino industry working to curb money laundering

By J.D. Morris, Las Vegas Sun

Casinos in Nevada and beyond continue to put a lot of emphasis on how to combat money laundering – enough, at least, to fill a ballroom every year.

About 400 people gathered at the South Point on Tuesday for the latest installment of the Bank Secrecy Act conference, an annual gathering of industry lawyers and others. Presented by the gaming law section of the State Bar of Nevada, the conference generally relates to what casinos are and should be doing to prevent their businesses from being used to disguise the flow of illegal money.

The issue has made big headlines over the last year or so, as the government hit Caesars Palace and the former ownership of the Nugget casino in Sparks with big fines regarding weakness in their anti-money laundering efforts. Also, a recently announced state fine against Las Vegas Sands Corp. stemmed in part from millions of dollars it agreed to pay years earlier to conclude a money-laundering investigation.

And as proof that the industry is paying attention to making improvements in anti-money laundering, the American Gaming Association in 2014 released a set of best practices in that area that were updated last year.

Read the whole story

UCD ready to train Tahoe docents

Docents are needed at the UC Davis science education centers in Incline Village and Tahoe City.

Training includes all docent program materials, guest speakers from UC Davis, UNR, DRI, research vessel time on the lake, and a social happy hour. Volunteers will learn general Lake Tahoe information, environmental issues, geology, history of research, state of the lake, ecology and food web facts.

The training is June 21, 23 and 25.

For more information, go **online**. Sign up by contacting Evan Portier at efportier@ucdavis.edu or call 775.881.7560, ext. 7474.