NDOT calling attention to crews working on the roads

National Work Zone Awareness Week is April 23-27.

“There was one death and close to 700 work zone crashes in active Nevada work zones last year,” NDOT Director Susan Martinovich said in a press release. “Each driver truly needs to give their undivided attention while driving, particularly through road work zones.That means driving slowly and safely.”



Work is going on now on Highway 28 on the East Shore, with Highway 50 in South Tahoe to be dug up starting in May. Photo/LTN

Throughout the year, NDOT and partners work to keep drivers and road workers safe, using protective barriers, warning signs, lower speed limits, lane closures and flaggers in certain work zones. Construction work is also scheduled during nighttime and off-peak hours.

While work zone driving fatalities across the U.S. have steadily declined from a high of 1,186 in 2002, vehicle

drivers and passengers comprise up to 90 percent of national work zone deaths. The last NDOT highway employee to lose his life while working in a work zone was Frank Fuentes, who was killed in 1995 by a drunken driver in Las Vegas.

National Work Zone Awareness Week is sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration.

Placer County supes to meet in Lake Tahoe

The Placer County Board of Supervisors meets three times each year in the Lake Tahoe area, with April 23-24 being the next time.

Items on the agenda include:

Considering approval of an amendment to an agreement between the county and Tahoe Truckee Disposal Co., and Placer County Eastern Regional Sanitary Landfill.

Community Development Resource Agency will present the board with an update on the status of the Placer County Biomass Program and Cabin Creek Biomass Facility Project.

A request by Public Works staff to approve purchase agreements for two parcels as part of the Kings Beach Commercial Core Improvement Project.

The meetings will be held at the North Tahoe Events Center, 8318 North Lake Blvd., Kings Beach. Monday’s meeting will begin at 2pm and Tuesday’s meeting is scheduled to start at

9am.

The full agenda is online.

Homeowners keep renovations simple, budget-friendly

By Wendy Koch, USA Today

Glitzy is out and comfy is in as Americans take a simpler approach to home renovation.

With real estate values still in the doldrums, people are seeing their houses less as investments and more as, well, homes. Since they're staying put, they're taking on targeted – rather than extreme – makeovers aimed at livability.

Home remodeling is expected to pick up and post solid growth in the second half of this year, making 2012 the strongest year since 2006, according to a report Thursday by the remodeling futures program at Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies. Driving the market will be midsize kitchen and bath projects, maintenance work and energy-efficiency upgrades.

In fact, unlike a few years ago, Americans are now spending more on remodeling than on new construction, says Stephen Melman of the National Association of Home Builders. He says they're moving less now than at any time since World War II, so they're thinking less about the resale value of a remodel.

"They do it, because they want to. That's a major change in

the psychology," he says.

Read the whole story

Female riders to show off during Miss Superpark at Squaw

Starting on Monday, the eighth installment of Miss Superpark is coming to Squaw Valley.

More than 50 of the world's top female riders are making the trip to North Lake Tahoe. Gretchen Bleiler, Erin Comstock, Jenny Jones, Jamie Anderson, Kimmy Fasani, Enni Rukajärvi, Jess Kimura, Kelly Clark and many more are getting ready to open up a new chapter in women's snowboarding.

As noted by Grind Networks, "Miss Superpark is dedicated to showcase the world's best female riders on the world's best terrain created by the world's best park building teams."

The features for Miss Superpark were built by Squaw Valley's terrain park crew,led by industry veteran Jessica Richitelli – one of the only female terrain park managers in the nation – in conjunction with Snow Park Technologies.

Miss Superpark is the most highly acclaimed women's specific event in the snowboard industry.

Spectators can check out the action at Squaw April 23-26. The best viewing will be off of Squaw Valley's Siberia and Gold Coast chairlifts.

Expanded Cabo Wabo to open before Hagar arrives in town

By Allen Pierleoni, Sacramento Bee

Get ready, fans of Sammy “Red Rocker” Hagar. The soft opening of his expanded Cabo Wabo Cantina at Harveys in Stateline is set for April 27, with food and drink specials and live music by local bands. Hagar originally opened the restaurant-bar-music venue in 2004, amid – shall we say – much festivity.

What can fans look for in the revamped cantina? For starters, an expanded menu, more seating, raised ceilings and a stage that will be twice as big as the original. At the bar, Hagar’s signature Cabo Wabo blue-agave tequila will be joined by his new brand, Sammy’s Beach Bar rum.

Read the whole story

Sequoia planting project could create second old-growth

By Jim Gardner, San Francisco Business Times

If a giant coast redwood falls in the forest, there’s a good

chance Dave Milarch would hear it.

The beefy, Camel-smoking fourth-generation Michigan tree nurseryman is on a mission to clone the world's oldest, largest trees. He's now turned his attention to the gigantic Sequoias that dot northern California and southern Oregon, with hopes of reseeding a new generation of redwood forest.

Collecting tree DNA is not just a science project for Milarch, who has made presentations to a group of NASA scientists and, earlier this month, to opinion leaders at a TEDx event in Mountain View. Although his nonprofit, Archangel Ancient Tree Archive, has cloned 50 other species, the 300-foot-plus, 3,000-year-old coast redwoods are key, he said, to cleaning the air – and thus stopping many human diseases.

"These big trees trump anything, everything," he said.

Read the whole story

Loud boom heard in Tahoe may be related to meteor shower

By Kathryn Reed

A loud boom that was heard and felt Sunday about 8am could be related to the Lyrid meteor showers.

While folks at the National Weather Service in Reno said they did not feel or hear anything, they did see something.

"I can tell you that I was speaking to a co-worker and she saw a flash across the sky," meteorologist Mark Faucette told *Lake Tahoe News*. "If they are bright enough to see in the daytime,

they are slightly bigger than the usual meteor.”

But Faucette stressed that he is no expert in these matters and that it is pure speculation on his part that what people heard-felt was related to the Lyrids – which were to peak this morning.

No one at CalTech’s Jet Propulsion Lab – where they deal with matters that are outside the Earth’s atmosphere – was available for comment.

Police dispatch in South Lake Tahoe said their phone has been ringing off the hook from callers asking what the commotion was. They don’t know what the cause of the noise was.

Improvements to Rubicon 4-wheel drive route approved

Improvements to the Rubicon Four-Wheel-Drive Trail in the Eldorado National Forest can move forward now that the U.S. Forest Service has granted an easement to El Dorado County for the Rubicon Trail where it crosses National Forest lands.

The feds also authorized a number of road and recreational opportunity enhancements.

A bridge will be built, along with an elevated rock ford, numerous erosion control features, and five toilets.

“Protecting resources and providing recreational opportunities are high priorities for both the Forest Service and El Dorado County,” Forest Supervisor Kathy Hardy said in a statement.

Elegant Evening lives up to its name

STATELINE – With $55,000 in donations, the sold-out crowd at Saturday night's Elegant Evening had plenty of choices when it came to items to bid on.

Most offerings came in the form of silent auction items, though a few pricy things – like trips to the Caribbean and a full set of braces – went for thousands of dollars in the live auction.



Nearly 500 tickets were

sold for Soroptimist's April 21 Elegant Evening at Harrah's. Photo/LTN

This annual event put on by Soroptimist International Tahoe Sierra raises money that is then given back to the community. Issues affecting women and girls are the emphasis of this service club.

People were decked out in sorts of attire – none of which could be called mountain-wear or Tahoe casual.

This sit-down dinner was followed by a lively dance floor in the convention center of Harrah's Lake Tahoe.

– Kathryn Reed

Opinion: Time for people to stand their ground against NRA

By E.J. Dionne Jr., Washington Post

It's understandable if unfortunate that the controversy surrounding the killing of Trayvon Martin has polarized the country along both racial and ideological lines. But there is one issue that should not have any racial connotations: the

urgency of repealing “Stand Your Ground” laws.

And leave it to New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg to speak the blunt truth about why these laws are dangerous – and why the National Rifle Association keeps pushing them anyway.

“In reality,” Bloomberg said in a speech before the National Press Club last week, “the NRA’s leaders weren’t interested in public safety. They were interested in promoting a culture where people take the law into their own hands and face no consequences for it. Let’s call that by its real name: vigilantism.”

On guns, Bloomberg is strong and everyone else is feckless, to paraphrase the late columnist Murray Kempton writing about an earlier mayor.

OK, not exactly everyone else. Bloomberg’s partners in the group Mayors Against Illegal Guns – notably Boston’s Mayor Tom Menino, the organization’s co-chair – have filled the void left in state legislatures, Congress and the White House by moderates, liberals and many conservatives who ought to know better but are too petrified by the NRA to confront it. Mayors face the daily toll taken by gun laws dictated by gun lobbyists and are less easily intimidated.

Read the whole story