

Hwy. 50 reopened after boulder lands in travel lane

By Bill Lindelof, Sacramento Bee

A huge boulder that was blocking westbound Highway 50 in the mountains has been cleared from the roadway without dynamiting.

About 5am today the huge rock fell onto the single westbound lane of Highway 50 east of Twin Bridges.

A California Highway Patrol officer initially said that road crews will have to dynamite around daybreak to break up the boulder in small enough pieces for removal to get it off the pavement. However, the roadway has now been cleared, according to the CHP.

Dynamiting of the rock along the shoulder is expected to occur later today.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Mia is a beautiful Lynx point Siamese, just more than 2 years old, with spectacular blue eyes.



She has been at the shelter since early December, and would love to go home. Mia is friendly and affectionate.

Mia is spayed, microchipped, and vaccinated. She 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 online to see photos and description 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

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- Suzanne Roberts will be giving a reading at Sierra Nevada College in the Environmental Sciences Building (TCES 139) at 7pm April 13. It is free, and there will be complimentary wine and appetizers. She will be putting on a travel writing workshop on April 14 from 9-noon for \$50. For more information, email

robertss@ltcc.edu.

- Want to see a tourism ad campaign that works? Check out what Colorado is doing.

- This year's deadline to file taxes is April 17.
 - Advocates of a 2022 Tahoe-Reno Winter Olympics finally figured out having one committee working on the endeavor is better than California and Nevada having separate organizations; so as of last week there is a combined group going after the Games.
 - Sugar Bowl will be open daily through at least April 15, with either daily or Friday-Sunday operations continuing until April 29 based on snow, terrain and weather conditions.
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Opinion: United approach to Tahoe-Reno Games the correct decision

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the April 7, 2012, Reno Gazette-Journal.*

Thursday's agreement between the lieutenant governors of Nevada and California to join forces offers our best hope to lure the Winter Olympics back to Reno-Tahoe, which last played host to the world's winter athletes in 1960.

Nevada's Brian Krolicki and California's Gavin Newsom announced the merger of the two state committees that have been looking into the possibility of bidding for the event, most likely for 2022.

Because of an ongoing dispute between the U.S. Olympic Committee and the International Olympic Committee over the

distribution of money from the sale of TV rights, it's yet to be determined whether the U.S. will vie for the games in 2022. Negotiations are continuing, and the USOC is expected to make a decision in 2013.

If the decision is to go for it, it is critical that Reno-Tahoe be prepared with the strongest possible bid. Developing a winning bid would be difficult for Reno and the Lake Tahoe ski resorts. With the help of California, however, we would be a strong competitor the other communities expected to bid, Denver, Salt Lake City and maybe even Bozeman, Mont.

Working together, we could, in fact, win.

Read the whole story

Minden airport becoming a sports aviation center

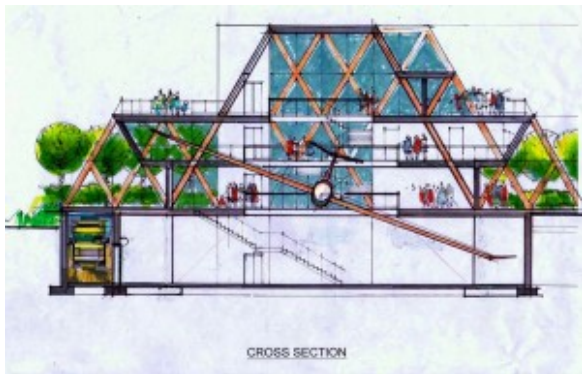
By Anne Knowles

When Douglas County developed a plan to revitalize its economy, it's no wonder planners looked to the Minden-Tahoe Airport, which already brings an estimated \$30 million into the region annually.

"The airport is one of the major economic engines in the community," said Linda Mae Draper-Hivert, a member of the Minden-Tahoe Airport Advisory Committee and economic vitality champion for Sports Aviation.

Draper-Hivert and a team of seven are working to capitalize on the airport and the region's well-known soaring conditions – the Sierra Wave, caused by the mountain range, helps gliders

soar higher – to boost tourism and add jobs.



A rendering of what the museum may look like.

Sports Aviation is one of 12 components of the county's 2-year-old economic vitality plan, which also includes efforts to rejuvenate the South Shore and the downtowns of Gardnerville and Genoa as well as build an extensive network of hiking trails throughout the county.

The airport team's goals include building a flying museum and learning center on the east side on the airport as well as hosting a series of aviation events designed to draw visitors from all over the world.

"It's a big, big project," said Draper-Hivert, a pilot who has been operating at the airport since 1979.

To accomplish it, the nonprofit Sports Aviation Foundation was established four months ago, and \$5,000 has been raised so far to pay a grants writer to procure grants for funding much of the work.

The group has already launched the Aviation Roundup Air Show & Fly-in, an event first held last August and scheduled this year on June 30 and July 1 at the airport. Last year's event, said Draper-Hivert, had something for everyone, including aerobatic performances, glider rides and exhibits such as the Zoo, a display of planes – named the Beaver, Mustang, Bronco

and Husky – for children to view and explore.

The goal, said Draper-Hivert, is to emulate the Oshkosh Air Venture, a 60-year-old event that attracts half a million visitors and infuses \$180 million into the Wisconsin economy.

“There’s nothing quite like that on the West Coast,” she said.

Another event, the U.S. Open Class Nationals, an annual gliding competition that hasn’t been hosted in Minden since 1997, is June 10-21 at the airport. In March, SoaringNV, a gliding business located at the airport, sponsored a Wave Camp, a weeklong clinic to learn how to fly the Sierra Wave.

Draper-Hivert said plans are to build facilities at the airport to better accommodate future events, including an RV park and tie downs for participants.

The biggest piece of the Sports Aviation project is what Draper-Hivert called the Aviation Heritage Museum and Challenger Learning Center. Renderings of the museum were drawn up by Eissmann-Pence Architects in Minden, an in-kind donation of \$30,000.

The museum will house aviation displays and informational kiosks while the Challenger Learning Center will join a network of 47 such centers around the world. The nonprofit learning centers were established by the families of the astronauts lost during the last flight of the Challenger space shuttle in 1986.

The centers provide simulators and mock-ups of mission control and an orbiting space station. An inflatable dome owned by the Challenger Learning Center of Northern Nevada, planned in Sparks, has already traveled to Douglas County schools. Draper-Hivert said it features 13 programs for kids including trips to the moon, under the sea and on the Titanic, all as 3D projections inside the dome.

Draper-Hivert said the county hopes to build and open the museum and learning center by 2016 or 2018.

The other members of the Sports Aviation team led by Draper-Hivert are Terry Lalonde, Mike Bradford, Ed Hayes, Laurie Harden, Rick Walters, Bobbi Thompson and Chris Johnson.

‘Helicopter parents’ keep a leash on their kids

By Claudia Buck, Sacramento Bee

At a Sacramento job fair last fall, the polished, well-dressed woman went from booth to booth, recruiter to recruiter, passing out résumés, asking about job openings. Not for herself, however. For her son.

“‘He just graduated. He has a degree. He’s sharp. He doesn’t know what he wants to do, but I think he’d be good at HR (human resources),’ ” recalls Preet Kuar, a Manpower company recruiter who spoke with the mom.

For baby boomer parents, who have diligently – some would say obsessively – followed their children from diapers to diplomas, that encounter was perhaps the next logical phase of so-called “helicopter parenting.”

Clearly, parental hovering doesn’t end at college graduation but continues well into the job hunt. According to a recent survey of more than 3,000 employers by the Collegiate Employment Research Institute, or CERI, based at Michigan State University, about a third – 31 percent – of companies

report that parents are more involved in their son's or daughter's career search than prior to the recession.

Mom and dad are chatting up their kids' credentials with company officials, pestering college career staff, handing out their kids' résumés at career fairs, even showing up at job interviews.

"It's happening quite a bit, actually," said Kuar, executive recruiter with Manpower's Gold River office. "We see a lot more parent involvement," everything from setting up job counseling appointments to forwarding their kid's résumé.

Read the whole story

AFL-CIO wants business tax on Nevada ballot

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY — State AFL-CIO leader Danny Thompson said his labor group is moving forward with a broad-based business profits tax ballot measure to raise money for education.

Thompson, interviewed on the Nevada NewsMakers television program this week, said the proposal will go forward as a petition to amend state law, which would first be considered by the Legislature in 2013. If the Legislature did not approve the measure within 40 days, it would go to the voters in 2014.

Thompson said the tax, which would be assessed on net business profits in excess of \$500,000 at a rate of 2 percent, has been projected by some analysts to bring in about \$1 billion a year to the state general fund. The money would go to fund public

and higher education.

Supporters of the proposal would have until Nov. 13 to gather 72,352 signatures from registered voters, which Thompson said is more than enough time to ensure they would be successful. The measure has not yet been filed with the Secretary of State's office because a final legal review is still under way, he said.

In a subsequent telephone interview, Thompson said there is no question that the proposal will be challenged in court so it is important to make sure it can withstand such a review.

"We qualified the minimum wage initiative in a period of a couple of months," Thompson said. "And so we just want to make sure everything is correct. Because you still have to get over a court challenge, which inevitably we know will be coming."

Thompson, executive secretary-treasurer of the Nevada State AFL-CIO, said too many of Nevada's students are failing in large part because of inadequate funding. A better educated workforce is needed to diversify the state's economy as well, he said.

In anticipation of such a tax proposal, Las Vegas businessman Monte Miller has filed two ballot measures, one seeking to give the Legislature the authority to raise the mining tax, and a second that would increase the gaming tax on the state's largest casinos.

He has called Thompson's proposal, based on a Texas margin tax, "a destructive, terribly complex tax."

Gov. Brian Sandoval has said he opposes the various ballot measures, arguing tax discussions belong at the Legislature. Partly in response to the different proposed ballot measures, Sandoval last month said he would extend a collection of taxes set to expire on June 30, 2013, into the next two-year budget to avoid any further cuts to public education.

Thompson said he has had no discussions with Miller about his business profits tax proposal, adding that Nevada has relied for far too long on gaming and mining to fund the state budget and public education.

Nevada will be the last state to recover from the recession because the state depends on discretionary income spent on the state's gaming industry, Thompson said.

"I don't know what it's going to look like if we continue down the road we are going," he said.

National Trails Day on South Shore involves trail building, guided hikes

The Tahoe Rim Trail Association is participating in the 20th annual American Hiking Society National Trails Day event on June 2.

Help the TRTA build trail at Van Sickle Bi-State Park near Stateline. Volunteers of all skill levels and physical abilities are welcome and encouraged to participate. No prior experience necessary.

The workday is from 9am-4pm

Volunteers will free lunch and are invited to the post-workday celebration at Explore Tahoe.

[Click here to register.](#)

For those who want a different trail experience, guided hikes

will be offered separate from the trail building at 10am and 1pm. Contact Jaime Souza at jaimes@tahoerimtrail.org for details.

Community college uses tiered tuition to balance budget

By Jennifer Medina, New York Times

SANTA MONICA – For years now, administrators at the community college here have been inundated with woeful tales from students unable to register for the courses they need. Classes they want for essential job training or to fulfill requirements to transfer to four-year universities fill up within hours. Hundreds of students resort to crying and begging to enroll in a class, lining up at the doors of instructors and academic counselors.

Now, though, Santa Monica College is about to try something novel. This summer it will offer some courses for a higher price, so that students who are eager to get into a particular class can do so if they pay more.

The plan may be the first of its kind in the country, college officials and other higher education experts say, and if the college succeeds in implementing it, many other community colleges are likely to follow. Since 2009, enrollment in California community colleges has fallen by 300,000 students, to 2.6 million, and many believe the difficulty of registering for classes is the most important deterrent.

For generations, community colleges have been seen as a social equalizer, providing a relatively inexpensive education for

poor students, immigrants and others without the skills, grades or money to attend a four-year institution.

So the two-tiered tuition structure being proposed here is raising eyebrows, and fundamental questions, about the role and obligations of community colleges. Will the policy essentially block some of the people it is designed to benefit? Many students believe the new policy – if the state does not block its implementation, which it could yet do – will unfairly exclude the poorest students and create a kind of upper and lower class of students.

Read the whole story

Salaries prove Nevada public employees can't cry poor

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY – Nearly 1,000 state and local government workers, many of them firefighters and police, make more than \$200,000 a year when all pay and benefits are counted, according to a 2011 pay analysis published by the Nevada Policy Research Institute.

The number of public employees earning \$200,000 or more could be even higher, but the conservative think tank said some government entities, including the cities of Reno and Henderson, the Washoe County School District and the state of Nevada, did not provide information on the cost of benefits.

There were 932 public employees who hit the \$200,000 mark in 2009, 1,174 in 2010 and 995 in the most recent data now

available at Transparent Nevada.

The top salary spot in Nevada is held by William Zamboni with the Nevada System of Higher Education's School of Medicine at \$1.3 million in 2011, although much of his earnings are the result of income from his medical practice.

Las Vegas Assistant Sheriff Michael McClary earned nearly \$545,000 in total compensation, according to the data provided to NPRI, while Chris Ault, football coach at the UNR earned \$521,000.

Andy Matthews, president of NPRI, said that giving the public and policymakers access to the salary information helps ensure that critical data needed to make spending decisions is available for review by everyone.

Taxpayers can use the data to determine on their own if government officials are being responsible with public money, he said.

Despite claims that government budgets are already stretched thin, the salary data suggests otherwise, Matthews said.

"There are still a lot of instances of overspending, and abnormally high government salaries at various levels of government here in our state, and this at a time when so many of us in the private sector are hurting, and Nevada's families and business owners and individuals are really struggling," he said. "I think it's really a reminder that we have a ways to go still in terms of reigning in excessive government spending."

A lot of the high salaries are at the local government level. Examples include a Clark County fire captain who brought in more than \$525,000 in total compensation in 2011 and a UNLV English professor who received more than \$326,000 in total compensation.

There are 145 Las Vegas police employees who earned more than \$200,000 last year, and another 59 police and correction officers in North Las Vegas who exceeded \$200,000 for the year.

A lot of the salaries need to be scrutinized, Matthews said.

"For example the base pay of the city clerk in North Las Vegas is more than \$145,000," he said. "Well, the base pay for Gov. (Bryan) Sandoval is just a little more than \$143,000."

Matthews said there is some good news in the 2011 data that suggests elected officials are responding to concerns about public salaries, particularly with firefighter salaries.

The number of firefighters earning more than \$200,000 declined in 2011 compared to 2010, he said. For example, the number of Clark County fire fighters in that salary level came down from 199 in 2010 to 140 in 2011.

"I would say these numbers are still too high but at least represents some steps in the right direction," Matthews said. "And I think that the fact that we at NPRI have started to publicize this information and make this known; I think that that certainly has played a role."