Nevada creates rules for self-driving vehicles

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY – Nevada took a bold step forward this week as lawmakers approved regulations allowing for the operation of self-driving vehicles on the state's roadways.

The first in the nation regulations were approved by the Legislative Commission, and could provide for economic development opportunities in Nevada.

"Nevada is the first state to embrace what is surely the future of automobiles," Department of Motor Vehicles Director Bruce Breslow said. "These regulations establish requirements companies must meet to test their vehicles on Nevada's public roadways as well as requirements for residents to legally operate them in the future."

In creating the regulations, the department partnered with Google, automobile manufacturers, testing professionals, insurance companies, universities and law enforcement all with a common vision of saving lives. Several other states currently have bills in front of their legislators that will follow Nevada into the future.

Google has developed a self-driving car and gave Gov. Brian Sandoval and other state officials rides in one of their vehicles in the capital in July 2011.

Nevada became the first state in the nation to legalize the use of driverless vehicles with legislation passed this past session.

"Our work doesn't stop here," Breslow said. "The department is currently developing licensing procedures for companies that

want to test their self-driving vehicles in Nevada. Nevada is proud to be the first state to embrace this emergent technology and the department looks forward to sustaining partnerships as the technology evolves."

Breslow said self-driving vehicles will be distinguished as "autonomous test vehicles" by the red license plate it will display. When the technology is ready for general public use, a green license plate will be displayed on vehicles registered with autonomous technology.

Sandoval went for a ride in Google's modified Toyota Prius from the capital city halfway through the Washoe Valley before returning to the Department of Motor Vehicles office where the car and a duplicate were on display.

"It's incredibly impressive," Sandoval said after the trip. "It accounts for all the safety issues. You have the ability to know who is front of you. You have a 360-degree consideration of everything around you. It even tells you when a crosswalk is coming up."

Talk about the Tahoe Rim Trail

What is the Tahoe Rim Trail?

A free trail talk on Feb. 22 from 11:45am-1pm will explain what this trail around Lake Tahoe is. Meet other trail enthusiasts and learn about trail building, hiking and youth programs, as well as educational opportunities.

Register online for the free event.

Explore Tahoe is at 4114 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe, near Embassy Suites.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Nativa is the perfect puppy for those who want a big, goofy, yet gentle pet. She is just 7 months old and about 50 pounds now. She will grow into those paws and that big head and probably end up between 80 and 85 pounds.



Our best guess is that she's a St. Bernard/Labrador mix. Nativa is house trained, loves to play with other dogs, and she didn't chase the cats that she met at the shelter. Her tail never stops wagging and she loves to give kisses.

Nativa is spayed, microchipped, and vaccinated. She is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats (including other puppies and kittens) who are waiting for their new homes.

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

Plumbers better than a blow torch for frozen pipes



With the onset of really cold weather, frozen water pipes are inevitable. Unfortunately, along with this problem, the fire department responds to an increase of structure fires caused by residents trying to quick-fix the problem.

Instead of using space heaters, torches, or other hot flame devices to thaw pipes, call a professional plumber to get the water flowing again. In the long run, it's much cheaper and effective than burning the house down around those frozen pipes.

– Sallie Ross-Filgo, South Lake Tahoe Fire Department

Nevada tourism officials trying to attract California, Arizona residents

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

The state will spend $2.8 million, most of it for television ads in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Phoenix, to attract

tourists to visit Nevada in the spring and summer months.

The Nevada Tourism Commission said Wednesday it would spend $1.7 million for a total 2,794 30-second spots to run on NBC, CBS, ABC and Fox networks in Los Angeles and San Francisco, on Comcast SportsNet in San Francisco and on CBS, ABC and Fox in Phoenix.

The campaign runs from April 16 through June 30.



Non-motorized sports are growing in popularity at Lake Tahoe. Photo/LTN file

The state plans to again run its “Clueless Tourist” spot, which depicts a kayaker in a wetsuit on the Las Vegas Strip before dissolving into a series of scenes from Nevada’s outdoors featuring hikers, mountain bikers, kayakers and skiers. The spots are meant to convey that, in addition to the Strip, the state is home to scores of outdoor recreation opportunities.

The spots broadly display the commission’s TravelNevada.com Internet site, encouraging viewers to obtain the state’s 120-page “Travel Nevada” travel and leisure guide.

The TV spots give the state additional bang for the buck, with tourism officials appearing on the “Better Arizona and Sonoran Living” television show in Phoenix and giving “Jeopardy” clues

about Nevada attractions.

The commission also is spending $1 million for Internet display ads on Google and Yahoo!, video on Yahoo! and search-engine marketing on Google, Yahoo! and Bing. The ad buy also includes $60,000 for mobile media, $60,000 for social media and $6,000 for print ads in *Nevada* magazine.

Read the whole story

Opinion: When will the United States elect a president who is worth celebrating?

Today we celebrate 44 men. It's Presidents' Day.

Not that long ago Abraham Lincoln and George Washington were honored separately on their February birthdays. Instead of squabbling over which, if any, presidents were worthy of having a federal holiday dedicated in their honor, one day – the third Monday of February – is set aside to recognize all of the presidents of the United States.

This being a presidential election year *Lake Tahoe News* believes it is more important than other years to pause and reflect about these men who some say are the most important leader in the world.



Mount Rushmore immortalizes four presidents. Are any others worthy of such recognition? Photo/LTN

What are the qualities we like in a leader?

Put aside party affiliation. Put aside gender. Put aside race. Put aside religion. Now answer that question.

It’s time for a frank discussion about what leadership means. It’s time to set priorities for this country. How are we supposed to pick a person to lead us if collectively we don’t know where we want to be led?

Is picking the lesser of two evils really the choice we should be left with? In a country of millions are the people vying for the Republican nomination and the current president really the best either party can come up with?

How can we have hope when the powers that be rely on individuals and the “wisdom” of those who have led us into this oblivion? How can we believe in candidates who can’t figure out what they stand for, equate homosexuality to bestiality or think cheating on a dying wife can be explained away?

Simply put, being president is a job. We, the people, are the bosses of the president. But instead it feels more like they

are the boss of us – telling us what we need and want. Until the people take control, tell the president, Congress and other people in power what we want, we will be taken on a ride we may not want to be on.

We are the bosses of all politicians. One way to evaluate them is how we vote. But why wait every two, four or six years for that to happen. Performance evaluations are the norm in most lines of work. They should be told what is working and what isn't. But we have to tell them, not them telling us.

We all have choices. We can sit back and complain. We can point fingers. We can say one person alone cannot make a difference.

Or, we can make our opinions known, we can take responsibility, and we can be a voice for the change we want in our communities, our states, and our country.

While it will always make sense to have one day to collectively celebrate the presidents of the United States, *Lake Tahoe News* would like to think all who have held and will hold that office would be worthy of having their individual day to be recognized. Maybe in 2017 after the 2016 election we can start on that path.

Online voter registration to begin in Nevada this spring

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY – For the first time, Washoe County voters will be

able to register and make changes to their current voter registration online.

Beginning in mid-April, the Washoe County Registrar of Voters office, working in collaboration with the Nevada Secretary of State's office, will make the switch to Nevada Online Voter Access; allowing citizens to go directly online and register to vote or update their current information.

During a presentation to the Washoe County Board of Commissioners on Tuesday, Registrar Dan Burk said the switch over to NOVA registration will not only be easier for citizens, but also cost effective, and will ensure the integrity and security of voter registration, requiring a match for the last four digits of the Social Security number as well as the Nevada DMV identification before the online process can be completed.

"Although voters will still have the same cut-off date to register, the good thing is now, instead of going to the DMV, Registrar's office, or picking up paperwork and sending in back to us, citizens will soon be able to do this online," Burk said. "It's a huge leap forward."

Voters using the online system will also be able to confirm that they are registered and be able to download their sample ballot by going online and selecting the "Am I Registered?" button on the webpage. The list of districts, as well as a map of each precinct is also available through the "Precincts and Districts" box.

The initial funding for NOVA registration in Washoe County was paid for by $86,000 in federal funding provided through the Help America Vote Act.

Washoe and Clark will be the first two counties in the state offering online voter registration, but the system will soon be expanded to all counties in Nevada. Currently, there are more than 215,200 registered voters in Washoe County's 643

precincts. With a total population of approximately 420,000, Washoe County, with a 67 percent registration base is substantially higher than most jurisdictions in the United States.

“Online voter registration has the potential to have direct savings to the taxpayers,” Burk said. “In the future, it will allow us to hire fewer temporary workers to input all of the data, since people will be registering themselves online.”

Meeting to discuss Joerger Ranch plan in Truckee

The Truckee Planning Commission and Town Council is having a joint workshop and introduction regarding the Joerger Ranch Specific Plan.

That is area at the four corners of Highway 267 and Brockway Road/Soaring Way.

Public comment is welcome at the Feb. 22 6-8pm workshop at the town hall, 10183 Truckee Airport Road.

Future of S. Tahoe bookstore to be discussed

Lake Tahoe Books and Art was conceived as a pop-up store designed to service our community for the winter holiday season. It is not yet altogether clear how long it will be able to renew its month-to-month lease options.

With the goal of exploring what it would take to develop a more permanent community bookstore on the South Shore, there will a meeting Feb. 22 from 5-6:30pm to gather input about such an endeavor. It will be at the store in the Village Center, next to Sports Ltd. in South Lake Tahoe.

For more information, call (530) 600.2020 or (530) 542.3245.

Service clubs connecting students to business community

For the third year in a row, local businesses and schools, in cooperation with service clubs have partnered with the Rotary Club of Truckee to answer an unmet need in the Truckee community: connecting high school students with a broad range of local and regional resources for their lives after high school.

On March 30, the North Tahoe Conference Center at Kings Beach will host 380 high school juniors for a daylong Resource Fair. Students will hear keynote speaker Isabelle Rodriguez and roam

10 stations which the aim to provide valuable information that students need as they enter their senior year. Topics will focus on popular themes such as job trends, service and vocational opportunities, financial aid and career assessment. Sierra College and Sierra Nevada College representatives will also be present to answer questions about career training and educational degree options.

Truckee, Tahoe City and Incline Village Rotary groups, as well as Soroptimist, Optimist and Lions clubs are sponsoring the event. The clubs have partnered with TTSUD and Incline Village High School to provide bus transportation for more than 380 juniors from four area high schools and other private academic institutions. HeyChef of Truckee and the Truckee Police Department is providing a barbecue lunch for the students, and several local businesses have donated raffle prizes.

To donate time or financial assistance, contact any of the local service organizations or the Resource Fair committee members. Amye Cole of the Rotary Club of Truckee may be reached at amyecole@yahoo.com.