

Free IHOP pancakes raises money for children's hospitals

For the seventh consecutive year, IHOP restaurants nationwide will offer each guest a free short stack of its famous buttermilk pancakes on National Pancake Day in an effort to raise awareness and funds for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals.

For every short stack of buttermilk pancakes served on National Pancake Day – Feb. 28, IHOP guests are invited to make a voluntary donation to Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. Donations made at the IHOP in South Lake Tahoe will benefit the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals' program at UC Davis Children's Hospital.

IHOP hopes to raise \$2.7 million this year, with a goal to bring the total amount of funds raised to more than \$10 million.

To find a local IHOP or to donate, go online.

The promotion that Tuesday goes from 7am-10pm.

Since the inception of National Pancake Day in 2006, IHOP has raised nearly \$8 million and given away more than 14 million pancakes to support charities in the communities in which it operates.

Opinion: Governor's tax ideas are bad for California

By Ted Gaines

This month marks Presidents Day, and as we celebrate Lincoln's birthday it's timely that we look at the tax farce troubling his home state of Illinois. Last year, in a move that must have left legislative Democrats dizzy with admiration and envy, the Illinois Legislature jacked personal income tax rates up by 67 percent and corporate tax rates up by nearly 50 percent.

Despite assurances that were made when the taxes were passed, the legislature still has not closed their budget gap, and they won't until they get the political will to control their spending.



Ted Gaines

Let Illinois be a lesson to everyone who believes in the magical powers of tax increases. They do not occur in a vacuum. Unless governments have the discipline to rein in spending – which California certainly does not – tax increases just enable more extravagant spending plans and takes money away from the working families who have earned it.

California's problem is not that the people are taxed too little, but that the government spends too much. We have to examine every possible avenue for saving money so that we can

keep providing core government services, such as education and public safety, at a price we can afford.

For example, why does California have a full-time Legislature? Texas and more than 40 other states do just fine with part-time legislatures that meet far less often than California's and where the legislators make far less than we make every year.

Besides the savings, it's a good idea to get legislators away from the Capitol cocoon more often and out in the real world, living and working under the rules they pass in Sacramento. I own a business and I'm constantly frustrated by the maze of regulations that grows and changes with every legislative session. I know how hard California makes it for businesses to succeed.

In my business I can't just keep spending and spending and then force my clients to pay more and more to cover my spending. When times are tight, I have to cut back, find ways to save money, provide the same services more efficiently.

Government should be taking that same approach, when unemployment is eleven percent and state government is running multibillion dollar deficits. Now is not the time to be growing government.

But, incredibly, Gov. Jerry Brown's budget plan spends \$6 billion more in 2012-13 than in 2011-12.

And to pay for it, Brown and the Democrats want to pass the bill along to their customers. The governor is pushing for a five-year, \$35 billion tax increase. Sales taxes and income taxes will go up during those five years, costing families precious dollars that they could use for groceries, vacations, school clothes and thousands of other necessities that are already hard to afford in our high-cost, highly regulated state.

Let's take a private-sector approach before we shake down taxpayers any further. How about putting a stop to the \$100 billion-plus high speed rail plan that will soak up billions of dollars a year for decades? How about allowing schools to contract with the private sector to provide services like transportation or food service?

I oppose Brown's call for higher taxes. State tax rates went down last year, but state tax revenues are growing and are expected to continue growing for the next several years. This indicates that our economy – slowly and precariously – is moving forward. Let's not kill that momentum by larding on even higher, unnecessary taxes.

Ted Gaines is the state senator representing the 1st Senate District, which includes all or parts of Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Lassen, Modoc, Mono, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento and Sierra counties.

Nevada makes sale or possession of 'bath salts' a felony

By Ed Vogel, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – Nevada legislators unanimously approved a regulation Wednesday that makes it felony to sell or possess methamphetamine-like synthetic drugs sold in some head shops and convenience stores as “bath salts.”

Without any debate, members of the Legislative Commission made permanent a regulation adopted by the Board of Pharmacy last

month to outlaw substances that have led to at least two deaths in Nevada and caused dozens of residents to seek medical attention.

The regulation does not prohibit the sale or use of legitimate bath salts or lotions or soaps designed to provide soothing baths, but bans chemical substances that are used to get high but are referred to by users as bath salts.

They are sold under such names as Vanilla Sky, Purple Wave and White Lightning.

Read the whole story

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Note: These drugs are an increasing problem in South Lake Tahoe as reported on *Lake Tahoe News* on Nov. 17, 2011.

South Lake Tahoe becoming a mecca for heroin users

Publisher's note: *This is the first of two stories about heroin use on the South Shore.*

By Jessie Marchesseau

South Lake Tahoe has seen its first heroin-related death for 2012, and if 2011 is any indication, it will not be the last.

The victim, a 31-year-old female, was found in a South Lake Tahoe hotel room on Feb. 2, and was transported to Barton Memorial Hospital where she later died. She showed evidence of being a long-term drug user and had a history of drug-related

charges. Toxicology reports are still pending, but El Dorado County sheriff's Lt. Les Lovell and Detective Matt Harwood, coroner investigator for South Lake Tahoe, say it is an obvious heroin overdose.



**South
Lake
Tahoe has
a higher
per
capita
populatio
n of
heroin
users
than some
major
cities.**

**— Rich
Barna,
Tahoe
Turning
Point**

executive director

Just four days later, another opiate-related death occurred, this one, an overdose of prescription pain medication.

In 2011, the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department recorded nine opiate-related deaths in South Lake Tahoe. That is a significant number for a city with a population of less than 25,000. In fact, Rich Barna, executive director at Tahoe Turning Point, an outpatient counseling and rehabilitation center, says South Lake Tahoe has a higher per capita population of heroin users than some major cities.

The reason for this is unclear. What is clear, however, is that there have been an alarming spike in heroin arrests and seizures in the South Lake Tahoe area during the last 12 months.

The South Lake El Dorado Narcotics Enforcement Team seized 239 grams of heroin in 2011. This is up from 6.2 grams in 2010 and 21.8 grams in 2009. That is more than a 1,000 percent increase in just two years.

Halfway through 2011, South Lake Tahoe was ranked the No. 1 location for heroin seizures in the Eastern California District. The final numbers for 2011 are not in yet.

"We are almost constantly filing cases for use, possession and sale of heroin," Hans Uthe, El Dorado County deputy district attorney in the South Tahoe office, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

While Barna believes it is not so much an increase in heroin usage as it is in people getting caught, Lovell and SLEDNET task force agent Brandon Auxier are convinced otherwise.

"What we see historically is we see drugs come and go," Lovell said, "... and heroin's one of those that comes and goes."

Lovell and Auxier attribute heroin's current popularity to a difficulty in obtaining OxyContin. Also called Hillbilly Heroin, OxyContin is a fairly common prescription painkiller. Both drugs are opiates, both are extremely addictive. But at \$25 for a single dose, heroin has a much more attractive price tag than OxyContin, which runs about \$80 per pill. Heroin is also much more accessible than the prescription drug.

Counselors at Tahoe Turning Point say switching from prescription painkillers to street drugs such as heroin is a common progression. This is why heroin users can be found at any age, from all walks of life and with varying backgrounds. It is also why authorities are seeing an increase in heroin use among teens. What starts with painkillers for a sports injury or from raiding mom and dad's medicine cabinet can progress to heroin usage.

But the transition from one drug to the other is not always easy.

"People don't realize how easy it is to overdose," Harwood said.

As a coroner investigator, Harwood said he has seen a definite increase in heroin- and opiate-related deaths compared to five or six years ago. And with two already on the books, 2012 is shaping up to be a killer year.

"It's unfortunate that we have so many people addicted to it," he said.

This increase in heroin usage brings with it an increase in people trying to kick the habit. Tahoe Turning Point has experienced an obvious increase in patients seeking treatment for heroin since last summer.

Note: On Feb. 18, *Lake Tahoe News* will share Josh's story;

from his heroin-induced downward spiral to his journey up the road to recovery.

Learn about how Russia and California are linked

A film about Fort Ross and the Russian-American Company will show Feb. 19 at 1:15pm at Explore Tahoe near the Heavenly Village in South Lake Tahoe. Fort Ross is on the Sonoma coast.

A presentation outlining issues at Lake Tahoe and Lake Baikal and how the Tahoe Baikal Institute, through international exchanges, is working to preserve both watersheds will begin at 1:45pm.

The event is free.

For more information, call (530) 542.4637.

Washoe County educator named U.S. superintendent of the

year

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY – Heath Morrison, superintendent of the Washoe County School District, on Thursday was named the 2012 National Superintendent of the Year by the American Association of School Administrators.

The announcement was made at the AASA national conference in Houston.



Heath Morrison

In announcing the selection, Daniel Domenech, AASA executive director, had high praise for Morrison.

“Despite the fact that Nevada’s once-booming economy has been in steep decline, Heath has led his community in the development of a districtwide five-year strategic plan to ensure that every child receives a high-quality education and graduates from high school ready for college or a career,” Domenech said. “Already, the district is seeing results. We can learn from his success.”

Morrison has been superintendent of the district since 2009. The district is the second largest school district in Nevada with approximately 63,000 students enrolled in 93 schools. Between 2009 and 2011, the district’s graduation rate jumped from 56 percent to 70 percent with increases in every student subgroup. The district also has achieved significant test

score gains and has narrowed the achievement gap in many subject areas.

As the 2012 National Superintendent of the Year honoree, Morrison is entitled to present a \$10,000 college scholarship to a student at the high school from which he graduated or to a student from a high school in his current district.

A national blue ribbon panel of educators, business leaders and government officials selected Morrison from four national finalists.

The national Superintendent of the Year finalists are measured against the following criteria:

- Leadership for learning – creativity in successfully meeting the needs of students in his or her school system.
- Communication – strength in personal and organizational communication.
- Professionalism – constant improvement of administrative knowledge and skills, while providing professional development opportunities and motivation to others on the education team.
- Community involvement – active participation in local community activities and an understanding of regional, national and international issues.

The American Association of School Administrators, founded in 1865, is the professional organization for more than 13,000 educational leaders in the U.S. and throughout the world.

Sugarland

Sugarland plays at the Harveys Outdoor Concert Series on Aug. 18 at 7pm.

Go online for tickets.

Brad Paisley

Brad Paisley with The Band Perry and Easton Corbin will be in Stateline on July 28 at 6:30pm as part of the Harveys Outdoor Concert Series.

Go online for ticket information.

Doobie Brothers-Chicago in Stateline

The Doobie Brothers and Chicago will share the ticket July 13 at 7pm at Harveys Outdoor Concert Series in Stateline.

Go online for more information.

Maroon 5 in Lake Tahoe

Maroon 5 will be at Harveys Outdoor Concert Series on July 21 at 7pm.

Tickets may be purchased online.