Reno sports gala canceled because of fire

Due to the dangerous circumstances and the declared state of emergency because of the fire in Reno, the Reno Tahoe Winter Games Coalition is postponing tonight’s inaugural International Sports Hall of Fame Gala.

The RTWCG anticipates having a new date for the event by mid-December.

Calif. Senate staff receive raises despite budget crisis

By Torey Van Oot, Sacramento Bee

California’s chronic budget problems haven’t stopped the state Senate from giving some of its own staff members a bump in pay, handing out raises averaging 7 percent to dozens of workers in recent months.

The Senate increased the pay of at least 169 employees — nearly one-fifth of the staff — during a three-month period ending October 31.

The raises affected staff members serving in many levels of Senate operations, including Capitol security technicians, printing specialists and district workers.

The changes also boosted the paychecks of some of the Capitol’s highest-paid aides. Nine chiefs of staff, including the top aide to Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg,

saw their six-figure salaries rise by as much as 10 percent.

At least 10 additional staff members are making more money because of changes to their job classifications, with promotions leading to salary increases of more than 25 percent in some cases.

Read the whole story

Bond sale to pay for capital improvements in Nevada

By Nevada News Bureau Staff

CARSON CITY – Nevada Treasurer Kate Marshall announced that her office completed a series of bond sales this week that will net the state a total face value of $149.4 million, with $32 million going for capital improvement projects and the remaining $117 million to be used for the refunding of existing state obligations.

“Nevada taxpayers saved $6.3 million as a result of a successful new marketing and investor outreach program,” Marshall said. “We personally met with potential investors, provided an ‘internet roadshow’ and developed a specific State of Nevada bond sale website to generate greater interest in the market for Nevada bonds.

“In addition, Nevada maintained its AA credit rating, which is critical during these trying economic times, as it saves the state and its taxpayers millions of dollars in borrowing costs,” she said. “In keeping the state’s AA credit rating, the rating agencies relied upon Nevada’s ‘strong and prudent

financial management’ as a key component for preserving our present credit rating.”

All three rating agencies – Fitch, Moody’s and Standard & Poor’s – kept Nevada’s credit outlook as “stable.”

In all, six bond series were included in the sale. The capital improvement project funding will be provided to state agencies for construction projects, including the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to fund safe drinking water projects. The savings achieved through the refundings will be used to increase the state’s bond reserves.

Home prices fall, sales increase

By Rick Daysog, Sacramento Bee

The number of single-family homes sold in the Sacramento region rose sharply in October, but prices continued to fall.

Market researcher DataQuick said Wednesday that 1,732 existing homes were sold in Sacramento County last month, a 19.6 percent increase from the same month of 2010.

Placer County saw its sales volume increase 31.1 percent to 498 while sales in El Dorado County rose 18.7 percent to 229. Yolo County resales increased 2.5 percent to 122.

“It’s not a bad October by Sacramento standards,” said Andrew LePage, DataQuick analyst. “The caveat is that two-thirds of the sales were distress sales.”

That point was reflected in the median prices, which were down

again in all four counties.

According to DataQuick, the median price for a single-family home in Sacramento County dropped 8.2 percent to $157,000, while the median in Placer County tumbled 12 percent to $252,000.

The median price for homes in El Dorado County was down 13.2 percent to $230,000 while Yolo County's median fell 14.6 percent to $194,750.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Attic thanks community for support

To the community,

On behalf of the Barton Memorial Hospital Auxiliary, I would like to thank the community for their support of the Attic. Your donations in 2011 made for another successful Attic Holiday Faire on Nov. 6 at St. Theresa Grace Hall.

We saved the "best of the best" treasures donated to the Attic throughout the year to be sold at this one-day-event.

We raised more than $12,000 for the expansion and renovation of Barton Community Clinic of which we hope to see break ground in 2012.

I would like to give a many thanks to the volunteers and their family members who helped at this wonderful annual event throughout our 35 years.

Cathy Vogelgesang, Attic Holiday Faire chair

CDC: Most smokers want to quit, but few do

By Jeannine Stein, Los Angeles Times

When it comes to quitting smoking, the lungs might be willing but the flesh is weak. A report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention finds that while about 69 percent of smokers last year wanted to quit, only about a tenth were able to do so.



The CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report used data from a large national survey from 2001 through 2010. Among the smokers surveyed most – 68.8 percent – wanted to quit for good in 2010, and 52.4 percent tried to quit in the previous year. Only 6.2 percent succeeded, however.

When broken down by race and ethnicity, 75.6 percent of blacks were interested in quitting, followed by 69.1 percent of whites and 61 percent of Latinos. Blacks also had the most attempts at quitting (59.1 percent), followed by whites (50.7 percent). But more whites were likely to quit smoking than blacks 12.6 percent versus 3.3 percent. The discrepancy, the report said, could be due to blacks' lower use of proven stop-smoking treatments as well as their higher use of menthol cigarettes, which may be linked with fewer successful quit attempts among blacks.

Read the whole story

Crime free housing program marking successes

Gail Ryan has had plenty of reason to celebrate this fall. She became the second multifamily housing property in South Lake Tahoe to be fully certified in the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program.

The program was implemented locally Oct. 11, 2010. Tim Zehring, retired 22-year veteran of the Mesa Police Department, is the founder of the International Crime Free Association.

Zehring presented Melanie Arnold, Lake Tahoe Crime Free Program's volunteer coordinator, with the International Crime Free Association Manager of the Year award.

At the presentation in October, he said, "Melanie was told years ago that this program would never happen here in Lake Tahoe and now look where you are."

Seven properties in South Lake Tahoe and Douglas County have been fully certified in this free program, with several more working toward full certification.

For more information, email laketahoecrimefreeprograms@msn.com or go online.

Tahoe residents protest in mini occupy movement

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe residents may not protest by the hundreds or thousands like larger areas, but they were part of Friday's nationwide solidarity movement that is part of the larger Occupy Wall Street movement which started two months ago.

Horns honked and fists pumped from the vehicles that passed the approximately 20 people who were in front of Heavenly Village carrying signs that read: "Remove $$$ from politics", "Bail me out", "We are the 99%", and "End corporate personhood".



Michele Sterling at Occupy Lake Tahoe on Nov. 17.

Michele Sterling spent her lunch break showing her support.

"I feel it's time we stood up for ourselves. The disparity of income is growing more and more each year," Sterling, a bus driver with Lake Tahoe Unified School District, said.

This was the second demonstration of what organizer Tracy Africa hopes will be regular gatherings in South Lake Tahoe.

Last week's demonstration at Bank of America had about 16 supporters. The goal is to have a weekly event.

Occupy Tahoe is on Facebook. Notices of future meetings as well as demonstrations will be posted there as well as through Meet Up and Move On.

Heavenly Village was picked more for its location and being a high trafficked area, Africa said, than the fact it is anchored by two Marriott properties that are separated by Vail Resorts-owned Heavenly Gondola.

"If you come here, you should go to the local businesses," Africa said.

While corporate America is well represented at the village, as well as the casinos down the street that were in view of the demonstrators, corporate employees were lining up to enjoy the perk their employer was giving them. Heavenly employees could ski for three hours Nov. 17.



Demonstrators in South Lake Tahoe show their allegiance.

The irony seemed to go unnoticed by the protestors – that many of the 99 percent they are marching for would rather ski than walk along Highway 50 carrying a sign.

Africa said the Tahoe group supports the goals of Occupy Wall

Street:

- More jobs.
- More health care.
- Fix the political process.
- Remove corporations from the government.
- Reduce the political influence of the wealthy.
- Economic justice.
- Punish the criminals who caused the Wall Street crash.
- Greater regulation of the banks.
- Greater regulation of the market.
- Tax the wealthy and use the money for education.
- Free speech without fear of penalty.
- Stop making wars and focus on peace.

But some of those out on this bitingly cold and windy day believe so strongly about what is going that they drove from the North Shore to participate because they said the people on the other end of the lake have yet to organize.

Trudy Lesem and Gwen Rosser came down from Tahoe Vista for the Nov. 17 peaceful demonstration.



Gwen Fox-Tyson

came from Kings Beach to show her support. Photos/Kathryn Reed

“I feel the country is going in the wrong direction. Politicians are being bought by big corporations and money corrupts,” Lesem said. “Things must change if we are going to continue to be a thriving democracy.”

Rosser said, “People who are fed up with conditions need to make changes. I (wondered) for a long time – Where is all the anger?”

Frustration, more than anger, was the emotion expressed by those in South Tahoe during the noon-4pm event.

Gwyn Fox-Tyson of Kings Beach wants to get rid what she calls freeloaders as well as not having politicians in bed with big business.

“The American people can’t fulfill their dreams anymore,” Fox-Tyson said.

Tahoe Grizzlies open season with a roar

The **Tahoe Grizzlies Bantams (ages 13 and 14)** hosted the undefeated Santa Rosa Flyers last weekend in a back-to-back weekend series. The Grizzlies hadn’t played in a month and the rust showed early in Saturday’s contest.

After killing off a couple Flyer power plays, the Flyers struck for three goals in the span of 3 minutes and tallied a fourth with just more than three minutes to play in the first period.

The Grizzlies finally got their skates under them and A.J. Marino of South Lake Tahoe netted the first goal of the game. The Grizzlies played the Flyers even for the rest of the game. Then Marino closed the gap to 4-2 with his second goal early in the third period.

However, the game would end with the Grizzlies on the short end of the 4-2 score.

Sunday morning found the Grizzlies coming out flying. After a scoreless first period, Noah Paul of South Lake Tahoe gave the Grizzlies the lead with a wrist shot on the power play early in the second period. Paul struck again on a feed from Doug Knudsen with less than a minute to play in the period for a 2-0 Grizzlies lead. That was short lived as the Flyers' Christian Ott scored with just 26 seconds remaining.

The third period was a tight, hard checking contest until Flyers Shawn Pabros equalized the score on the power play midway through the period. That's the way the game ended.

But the Grizzlies are a confident team having played even with the first place Flyers for five out of six periods during the weekend.

Pee Wees (ages 11-13)

The Pee Wees came out of the gate at their home opener last weekend with decisive wins against the San Francisco Saber Cats. On Nov. 12 they won 11-3 with multiple players scoring. Mickey Sullivan, No. 17 of South Lake Tahoe, earned a hat trick with three goals in this first game. On Sunday morning the Grizzlies triumphed again, winning 7 -3. Edward Parkhill, No. 17 of Incline Village, had three assists in this powerful

team performance.

Squirts (ages 9-10)

The Grizzly Squirts came out of the gate fast Saturday against the Cupertino Cougars. Tahoe quickly scored four goals in the first two periods. It wasn't until the third period that the Cougars finally got on the board with one goal. It was too little, too late and they couldn't mount a rally against the Grizzlies.

Quinn Proctor, No. 2 from South Lake Tahoe and a first-year Squirt, earned his first two goals of the season, and had two assists for four points. Kevin Lehmann, No. 5, and Jaxon Kennedy, No. 3, both from South Lake Tahoe and second year Squirts, had two goals apiece, and Tucker Cannon, No. 7, from South Lake Tahoe and also a second-year Squirt, had one goal to bring the final score to 7-1, Grizzlies win.

On Sunday, Cannon again lead the Grizzlies to another win against the Cupertino Cougars with his first hat trick (three goals scored in one game). Cannon scored one goal in each period. First-year Squirt Zachary Calderon, No. 21 from South Lake Tahoe, added two goals, and Proctor, Kevin Lehmann, No. 5, each contributed one goal. Johnny Ilvento, No. 11 and from South Lake Tahoe, added a goal and two assists to bring the final score to 8-2, Grizzlies win.

Report identifies ways for Nevada to diversify economy

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY – A report outlining how Nevada can grow and diversify its economy says much more could be done now in the areas of health and medical services, and that clean energy and aerospace/defense are emerging sectors that could bring skilled jobs to the state.

The report, a joint effort by the Brookings Institution and the Stanford Research Institute, now known as SRI International, was presented this week to Gov. Brian Sandoval and the other members of the Board of Economic Development, a new panel created with bipartisan support from the 2011 Legislature.

It identifies seven economic sectors, some already in existence such as gaming and tourism, and some emerging such as clean energy, where Nevada should focus its efforts.

Sandoval has made job creation his top priority as governor, and said the report should help the state direct its economic diversification efforts in more targeted ways. In an interview in September, Sandoval said Nevada can't take a "shotgun" approach to economic development, but instead must focus on those areas that can produce the desired result of economic diversification and job production.

Steve Hill, executive director of the Governor's Office on Economic Development, said the study is "meant to inform Nevadans, and inform our office, as we work to develop a state plan, a state plan we will now begin to work on."

"We obviously have a sense of urgency in the state right now," he said.

The report, titled "Unify/Regionalize/Diversify: An Economic Agenda for Nevada," notes that the state has lost nearly 170,000 jobs since the recession began in December 2007. Nevada continues to have the highest unemployment rate in the nation.

An overview of the research was presented to the board by Bruce Katz, vice president of the Metropolitan Policy Program of the Brookings Institution.

“There is much work to do,” he said. “Fortunately we believe AB449, which you signed into law over the summer, sets the frame for a new kind of economic development operating system for the state. And what our report, our agenda, has tried to do, is help put you on a path to a different kind of economic growth.

“Obviously more innovative growth, more balanced growth so you’re not subject to the same volatility that you were during the recession, and growth that is more globally engaged, so you can take advantage of rising global demand, particularly in emerging nations,” Katz said.

Nevada in the past has lacked an overarching strategy for economic diversification, he said.

“Nevada doesn’t lack for assets and opportunities, but it needs to do a better job of aligning diverse efforts, supporting creative initiatives in the regions, and putting in place a platform of innovation efforts, global outreach, and workforce upgrading on which regional clusters and sectors can grow,” said Mark Muro, a senior fellow at the Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings and the lead author of the report. “That’s why we are calling this agenda “Unify/Regionalize/Diversify.”

The health and medical services sector was identified as underperforming in Nevada. Nationally this sector has a 9 percent share of employment, but represents only 5.9 percent of employment in Nevada.

Emerging industries Nevada should focus on are business information technology ecosystems, clean energy, logistics and operations and aerospace and defense, the report says.

The report also highlights ways Nevada can capitalize on its existing core industries of tourism, gaming and employment and mining, materials and manufacturing.

Southern Nevada, for example, is the global hub of the gaming industry, and it has the potential to develop in the areas of online gaming, among other opportunities, the report says.

Sandoval last week announced he will be convening the Gaming Policy Committee as part of an effort to preserve Nevada’s leadership role in gaming given the changing technology, including the potential of online gaming.