# Nevada ready to celebrate its statehood

It only takes four days to celebrate statehood in Nevada. The annual Carson City Nevada Day events will observe the 147th year since joining the union, with the theme, “Nevada’s Great Outdoors,” Oct. 27-30.

At any given moment on parade day along Carson Street, visitors will see the best of the state’s high school marching bands intermingled with hundreds of horses, led by boot-clad men with Old West chaps, flowing beards and a turn-of-the-century spirit. The ladies of the Wild West are clad in garb that range from Victorian conservative to saloon risqué. Food fare around Carson City is authentically cowboy, with cast-iron pots brimming with bean, bacon, chili and stew concoctions, cornbread and plenty of brews and sarsaparillas to wash it all down.

The parade is Oct. 29 from 10am-1pm.

For a complete list of Nevada Day events, go online.

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# Automation keeps controls at fingertips without being home

**By Dan Sheehan**

I finally hooked my home up to the Internet and I cannot stop smiling. As I sat at my desk on my Blackberry and was able to turn my heater on and off and control the temperature I smiled as I realized just a few of the possibilities such as cranking

the heat up as I sit on a chairlift in anticipation of heading home from a long day of Lake Tahoe skiing.




This is just the tip of the iceberg. There are so many uses for home automation and the possibilities are endless. You can control anything that is switched or plugged in, locks, garage doors, cameras, TVs and more. There are numerous ways to automate and control your home and each has its benefits, costs.

I am using Z-wave technology controlled by a Vera controller from MiCasa Verde. I have a client whose home I am remodeling right now in Alpine Meadows. They just bought the home last fall. Through the winter they found all the downfalls the home exhibited. Mainly, the home was just plain cold. They wanted the best heat you can get, so we tore out all the floors and are installing radiant floor heating. No matter what type of heat system you use to heat your home, nothing is instant. Radiant floor heating is probably the slowest way to heat a home, but also one of the most comfortable and cleanest to your personal environment. It can take a day to get a home up to a comfortable temperature when it has been sitting during the winter. So I am connecting the eight thermostats in the home to the internet using Z-wave technology and the Vera2 control system. The homeowners will be able to access this control system from their laptops or cell phones and control each of the thermostats.

The possibilities are endless. You can set all kinds of scenes/scenarios. I will probably start this client off with five “scenes” – 1) heading up to Tahoe 2) arriving 3) headed out to the mountain 4) back from skiing 5) nighttime 6) headed out of Tahoe.

Scene “1″ I will set it so that when they run the scene the temperature of their home will rise to a comfortable level so

that when they arrive it will be warm.

Scene “2″ they can “run” when driving to their home. With this scene the entry lights will go on, the front door will be unlocked, the hot water recirculating valve will start and maybe some music will come on.

Scene “3″ can be used to turn off the lights, lower the heat and lock the doors when everyone heads out to the mountain to go skiing.



Home automation makes a house run efficiently.

Scene “4″ can be a combination of Scene “1″ and Scene “2″ for when they are heading home so by the time they get there the place is warmed up.

Scene “5″ would shut the light down and lower the heat for each zone according to temperature preferences for sleeping for watch individual zone/room.

Scene “6″ could be set as a leaving town action where the heat is set to 48 degrees or whatever is a safe temp, lights are off and doors are locked.

I have another client who introduced the system to me. He has a second home here in Lake Tahoe that he rents out a lot. After getting the electric and gas bills he decided to do

something. He found the Vera system and now can turn off all the lights and heat when the renters have left.

I have a project where I am installing a roof ice-melt system to melt the snow on the perimeter of the roof edge and divert the water away in gutters. The system uses about 36 watts per foot so it is very expensive to operate. The system operates off a thermostat so it is on when it is cold even if it is not snowing. I am looking into hooking it up to the Vera controller so the client can turn it off from San Francisco when he knows it is cold but has not snowed recently. I could install moisture sensors, but they are unreliable and could render the system ineffective.

There are all types of systems used to automate your home and prices can vary greatly from system to system. My intention is not to compare the different systems. I do know that the system I am using is about as cost-effective as you can get for what you can do.

You will need the controller which retails for $238. This hooks up to your homes internet router and is accessible for free using the MiCasaVerde secure servers. I have a simple thermostat that cost $50. So to control your thermostat from the Internet it can cost less than $300. Then you can swap-out your light switches for Zwave switches (you literally just swap them out and those can run from $30-$200 each. Cameras from from $60 to $500. I am testing a few really decent cameras which you can control the tilt and pan, these are going for less than $100.

DS Construction is an authorized dealer and distributor for MiCasa Verde and Automated outlet. f you are interested in learning more, feel free to contact us.

*Lake Tahoe general contractor Dan Sheehan is the owner of DS Construction.  You may read more from his construction blog.*

# DA: Fallen Leaf Lake voter fraud a case of poor judgment

**By Jessie Marchesseau**

In January 2010, there were 158 registered voters in the Fallen Leaf Lake Community Services District. By August 2010, that number had grown to 461.

This flood of voter registrations was spurred by political turmoil in the area. However, such a significant increase in voters over such a short period of time does not go unnoticed. A voter fraud investigation was opened by the El Dorado County District Attorney's Office and the California Secretary of State's Office.



It's a new day for voters at Fallen Leaf Lake.
Photo/LTN file

Much of the political divide within the Fallen Leaf Lake CSD revolved around the replacement of longtime Fallen Leaf Lake store and marina operators John and Ruth Rich. Even though the board of directors voted unanimously to replace the Riches on two occasions, the community was sorely divided. In July 2010,

residents petitioned for a recall election to replace two of the board members. The recall election was approved, and voter registrations started pouring in.

When the small district whose voter registration numbers generally hover somewhere around 100 to 150 voters quickly jumped to more than 400, red flags went up at the El Dorado County Elections Department. The elections office alerted the Secretary of State's Office, which in turn alerted the El Dorado County District Attorney's Office.

An investigation was launched that lasted just more than a year and identified felony voter fraud. The determination was that many of the voters who voted in the August 2010 election were not legally eligible to vote in the Fallen Leaf Lake Community Services District. Some were ineligible because Fallen Leaf Lake is not their legal domicile, and some were registered to vote in more than one district.

On Sept. 19, 2011, District Attorney Vern Pierson issued a letter to every voter registered at the time of the August 2010 recall election outlining the department's decision in the matter.

The letter states, "This investigation revealed that improprieties had in fact occurred, and were criminally subject to prosecution as felony-grade offenses. Largely because the acts appear to have been precipitated by poor judgment, some misinformation which was circulating in the community, and a failure by some to accurately and fully appreciate the requirements of the pertinent law, this office has determined to decline prosecution at this time."

While the fraud findings do not negate the results of the election in question, the letter goes on to say that any similar future violations will be prosecuted.

Pierson said he declined to prosecute because he saw no malicious behavior on the part of the voters, and attributed

the fraud to negligence and misunderstanding of the law.

This type of issue comes up from time to time in areas with a lot of vacation homes, he told *Lake Tahoe News*. What it essentially boils down to is where a person's domicile, or primary residence, is. Voters are entitled to vote and hold office where they intend their domicile to be, and only in that place.

The El Dorado County Assessor's Office lists 289 land parcels in the Fallen Leaf Lake area, some of which are vacant land, commercial property and U.S. Forest Service cabins. The official list of voters from Aug. 10, 2010, lists some addresses as having five, six and seven voters registered at a single address.

With only about a dozen people living at Fallen Leaf Lake full time, this prompts the question that if only people who consider Fallen Leaf their primary residence can vote and hold office, would the entire district be run by that handful of people?

This quandary has left homeowners with the task of trying to figure out how to effectively and legally run their community. One idea being considered is allowing a set number of votes per parcel.

As for the election coming up in November, Fallen Leaf Lake CSD does not have anything slated for the ballot, but the registered voters will be receiving ballots for Measure R, Lake Tahoe Unified School District and Lake Tahoe Community College. The next scheduled election will be June 2012, leaving residents some time to find a solution.

In the meantime, however, the El Dorado County Elections Department has also issued a letter to Fallen Leaf Lake voters reminding them of registration regulations and the district attorney's decision on the matter, as well as providing instructions on how to remove themselves from the voter list.

As of Aug. 8, the number of registered voters in the Fallen Leaf Lake CSD was down to 267.

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# Appellate court ruling could affect dispensaries thoughout Calif.

**By John Hoeffel, Los Angeles Times**

In a decision that could upend the way California cities regulate medical marijuana, a state Court of Appeal has ruled that Long Beach's ordinance regulating dispensaries violates federal law.

The city held a lottery, issued permits to the winners and charged fees, which the three-judge panel said put it in the position of authorizing the distribution of marijuana in direct conflict with the federal Controlled Substances Act, which makes the possession and sale of the drug illegal. Marijuana use remains illegal under California law except for medical purposes.

The ruling, which was filed Tuesday, could require Long Beach and other cities, including Los Angeles, to rewrite their medical marijuana ordinances, a process that has been fraught with delay and chaos. Many cities that have long allowed dispensaries, such as San Francisco and Oakland, have permit-based ordinances that let officials decide who can sell the drug. Then they charge high fees and closely regulate them.

The decision by the 2nd District Court of Appeal in Los Angeles throws into doubt the legality of this approach.

**Read the whole story**

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# Feds escalate efforts to close pot dispensaries in California

**By John Hoeffel, Los Angeles Times**

Federal prosecutors are threatening to shut down medical marijuana dispensaries throughout California, sending letters that warn landlords to stop sales of the drug within 45 days or face the possibility that their property will be seized and they will be charged with a crime.

The stepped-up enforcement escalates the Obama administration's efforts to rein in the spread of pot stores, which accelerated after the attorney general announced in 2009 that federal prosecutors would not target people using medical marijuana in states that allow it.

"It's coming out of left field as far as we're concerned," said Joe Elford, the chief counsel for Americans for Safe Access, which advocates for medical marijuana use. "I really don't know what inspired this. It's a complete about-face from what [Obama] said when he was campaigning."

The initiative, spearheaded by the four U.S. attorneys in the state, will focus on dispensaries selected by the prosecutors, said a person familiar with the operation. He declined to say what criteria would be used to target dispensaries and asked not to be identified because the prosecutors are scheduled to make the official announcement at a news conference Friday

morning in Sacramento.

Landlords for some dispensaries have already received letters, including the owner of the building that houses the Marin Alliance for Medical Marijuana in Fairfax, Calif., the oldest dispensary in the country. “I assume the story you’re calling about is: Obama takes resources away from fighting terrorists and goes after old ladies with glaucoma,” said Greg Anton, a lawyer who represents the dispensary.

The letter to the Marin Alliance notes that the dispensary is within a prohibited distance of a park, raising the possibility that enforcement will zero in on stores within 1,000 feet of schools and playgrounds, a distance that can bring enhanced penalties for illegal drug sales. But letters received by dispensaries in San Diego make no mention of such prohibitions. “We’re trying to figure this out,” said Jessica C. McElfresh, who represents some dispensaries in the city. “I am surprised at the size of this. I am surprised by the vast amount of planning that has clearly gone into it.”

**Read the whole story**

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# Harvest Festival and Pumpkin Patch

The Tahoe City PUD Parks and Recreation Department’s annual Harvest Festival and Pumpkin Patch is Oct. 22 from 10am-2pm.

This family event is the wrap up to the Tahoe City Downtown Associations yearly Oktoberfest which is the backbone of the fall celebration in Tahoe City.

Although there isn’t much fall harvesting in the basin besides pine needles and firewood, Tahoe City likes to participate in a tradition that takes place worldwide.

The Harvest Festival and Pumpkin Patch is going into its fourth year at Rideout Community Center. Back for the second year is the “Pumpkin Seed.”

For more information, call (530) 583.3440, ext.14.

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# Hwys. 50 and 267 subject to delays

With fall returning to Tahoe, Caltrans construction projects are resuming as well.

Caltrans has issued an alert warning drivers Highway 50 in South Lake Tahoe can expect delays with lane closures in both directions between Trout Creek Bridge and Fremont Avenue. This work will be done from Oct. 7 at 7am through Oct. 8 at 7pm.

Motorists can expect one-way traffic controls on Highway 267 from Mount Watson Boulevard to Northstar Boulevard on Oct. 7-8 from 7am-7pm.

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# Philanthropy Day lunch

Barton Foundation’s Philanthropy Day lunch is Nov. 4 from noon-2pm at Riva Grill. Barton Health grants will be distributed. Cost of lunch is $25. RSVP by Oct. 31 to Natalie at (530) 543.5909 or nstetson@bartonhealth.org.

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# Carson City embraces its haunted past

Aberrations await and spirits will linger throughout the historic district of Carson City during the 19th annual Classic Ghost Walk on Oct. 22.

Madame Curry, one of the city’s founding ladies, joins a bevy of costumed actors and psychics who provide stories of mystery and intrigue accompany the highly popular theatrical walking tours through Victorian-era historic Carson City. During the guided tour guests will have the opportunity to explore inside various homes from the 1800s.

Tour guides will tell stories about the buildings and their owners of the 1800s Victorian-style homes while walking along the historic 2.5 mile Kit Carson Trail.

Tours begin near the Firkin & Fox Pub on 3rd and Curry streets and depart every half hour from 10am-2pm, rain or shine.

Tickets are $15 in advance and $20 at the door with children 4 and younger free. Tickets are available at the visitors center, 1900 South Carson St. or call (775) 687.7410.

# South Tahoe police explorers bring home hardware

South Lake Tahoe police explorers brought home eight trophies from the Central Coast Law Enforcement Explorer Competition in Paso Robles.

The explorer team of Joey Acker, Jose Silva,Allison Roberts, Hector Vasquez and Chelsie Tate last month competed in 15 events against approximately 600 explorers from all over California, Arizona and Nevada.

The South Lake Tahoe police explorers' awards:

* Crime Scene Investigation, first place

* Tug-a-War, second place



South Lake Tahoe police explorers placed in eight of 15 events in September. Photo/Provided

* Night Time Suspicious Person Investigation, third place

* Hazardous Response, third place

* Crisis Negotiations, fourth place

* Bicycle Cycle Course, fourth place

* Night Time Traffic Stop. fifth place

* Fifth Best Explorer Post overall (48 teams in competition).

Each explorer has hopes of obtaining a career in law enforcement. The opportunity to train and compete helps prepare them for the police academy.