Recycled water may ease Calif. drought worries

By Hudson Sangree, Sacramento Bee

At two treatment plants in El Dorado Hills, millions of gallons of brown wastewater pour in every week, and millions of gallons of clean water pour out through purple pipes that irrigate the lawns of 4,000 homes.

Proponents call it water recycling. Critics call it “toilet-to-tap.” But as the drought has taken hold in California, opposition to the idea has been drying up, and recycled water is winning acceptance. It’s expected to be a significant source of landscaping and drinking water for many Californians in years to come.

Today, taxpayer money is flowing toward recycled water programs. As part of recent drought relief measures, the state allocated $200 million in grants to jump-start those efforts and slashed interest rates on $800 million more in loans.

In October, Gov. Jerry Brown signed a bill that requires state health and water officials to report by September 2016 on the feasibility of developing uniform standards for recycling wastewater for “direct potable reuse.” That means purified wastewater would flow straight to household faucets.

Read the whole story

U.N. panel: Climate change adjustments must be fast

By Nell Greenfieldboyce, NPR

A new report from the United Nations' panel on climate change says major action is needed, and fast, if policymakers want to limit global warming to acceptable levels.

There's an international target to control climate change: keeping the global temperature rise to just 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels – that's 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change now says it's technically possible to meet that goal. But doing so will require rapid, large-scale shifts in energy production and use.

Greenhouse gas emissions will have to drop 40 to 70 percent by 2050 – and then drop even more, to nearly zero by the end of this century – the report says.

The trouble is, emissions have actually been increasing. The panel notes that emissions grew more quickly between 2000 and 2010 than in each of the previous three decades.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Time to be earthquake prepared

By Sam Rohn

With April recognized as national Earthquake Preparedness Month, Liberty Utilities would like to remind customers about steps they can take to ensure their safety during a natural disaster such as an earthquake.

While most of Liberty Utilities' service territory does not typically experience the magnitude of earthquakes recently seen in Southern California, it is always best to be prepared for any type of natural disaster.

Just like customers should do with their own families, Liberty prepares for potential disasters by having a plan and practicing it with our employees as well as first-responders and others in our community.

Liberty Utilities offers the following safety tips to help customers develop a disaster preparedness plan:

Before:

- Have an emergency plan and conduct drills with your family and childcare providers.
- Know how and when to turn off electricity, water and gas at the main switch or valve.
- Have an emergency supply kit that includes water, food, a first aid kit, blankets, a supply of needed medications, a portable radio, flashlights, a battery powered mobile phone charger, fresh batteries and a crescent or adjustable pipe-type wrench for turning off gas and water mains if necessary.
- Securely anchor water heaters, heavy appliances and heavy furniture that could topple.
- Keep flammable liquids away from water heaters, furnaces, stoves and other potential ignition sources.
- Know the safe spots in each room, like under a sturdy desk or table. Remember to stay away from windows, mirrors and heavy objects that can topple over.
- Plan evacuation routes from home, work, school and other

places you frequent.

During:

- If you are indoors, stay inside. Get under a sturdy desk or table.
- If you are outdoors, get into the open, away from buildings, trees, walls and power lines. Be alert for falling debris.
- If you are driving, pull to the side of the road and stop. Do not park under overpasses, power lines, light posts, trees or signs. Stay in your car until the earthquake is over.

After:

- Check for injuries and ensure that everyone is safe.
- If the power goes out, unplug major appliances to prevent possible damage when the power is turned back on. Keep a light on to let you know when power is restored.
- During a power outage, use battery-operated flashlights instead of candles due to the risk of fire. If you must use candles, keep them away from drapes, lamp shades and small children and never leave them unattended.
- Treat all downed power lines as if they are energized and extremely dangerous. Keep yourself and others away from them. Call 911, and then notify Liberty Utilities at 800.782.2506.
- If you smell or hear escaping gas, get everyone outside to a safe location away from the building and upwind where you can no longer smell natural gas. Once outside, use your phone to call 911 and your gas company (Southwest Gas at 877.860.6020 or PG&E at 800.743.5000).
- If you smell or hear gas escaping, and are able to do so safely, shut off the gas at the main gas service shutoff valve using a suitable tool like a 12 to 15 inch adjustable pipe or crescent-type wrench. The valve is

normally located near your gas meter. Do not shut off the valve unless you smell or hear gas escaping.

Once you shut-off the gas, do not turn it back on. If the gas service shutoff valve is closed, contact your gas company or another qualified professional to perform a safety inspection before the gas service is restored and the appliance pilots are lit.

If you suspect a gas leak, do not use electrical switches, appliances or telephones, because sparks can ignite gas from broken lines. Do not check for a gas leak with a match or an open flame.For more safety and readiness information, visit Liberty Utilities' website.

Sam Rohn is Liberty's manager of environmental, health, safety and security.

Tahoe Nearshore Dippers being formed

Friends of the West Shore is organizing a volunteer program for residents and visitors called Tahoe Nearshore Dippers.

The program provides a different way to spend some time on the beach this summer. It will involve collecting information that will help monitor the water clarity of near shore areas.

Tahoe Nearshore Dippers will help collect information for Lake Tahoe using an easy and fun method to take measurements, and on your schedule.

To learn more or to sign up, go online.

Food fraud a growing concern for U.S. consumers

By Jennifer Schlesinger and Sheila Dharmarajan, CNBC

From meatballs made with horse to fake extra virgin olive oil and salmonella in peanuts, food fraud has been grabbing national headlines. And, according to experts, the problem is only increasing with rising food costs and more widespread importation of food.

The Food and Drug Administration says 15 percent of the U.S. food supply is imported and experts say food fraudsters are using the difficulty in tracing foreign imports to their advantage. The largest food fraud in U.S. history was when Chinese honey was shipped through other Asian nations to disguise its origins and evade import duties of $180 million, according to the Department of Justice.

The Department of Agriculture predicts food prices will rise between 2.5 and 3.5 percent this year. And while the consumer price index was up 0.1 percent in February, the food index rose more sharply, at 0.4 percent. The March consumer price index will be released on April 15.

Read the whole story

Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep transported to their historical range

By Bettina Boxall, Los Angeles Times

Bighorn sheep are skilled mountain climbers. But one group recently made it over the Sierra Nevada crest in record time.

As part of an ongoing effort to return endangered Sierra Nevada bighorns to more of their historical range, state and federal wildlife workers captured 14 of the animals in the Inyo National Forest and transported them by helicopter to the Big Arroyo area of Sequoia National Park on the range's west side.

The four rams and 10 ewes, all but one of which was pregnant, were moved in late March to a part of the Sierra that bighorns have not occupied for more than a century.

Read the whole story

Dieters move away from calorie counting

By CBS News

The calorie counting that has for decades defined dieting is giving way to other considerations, like the promise of more fiber or natural ingredients. That shift in focus is chipping away at the popularity of products like Diet Coke, Lean

Cuisine and Special K, which became weight-watching staples primarily by stripping calories from people's favorite foods.

Part of the problem is that "low-calorie" foods tend to make dieters feel deprived. Now, people want to lose weight while still feeling satisfied. And they want to do it without foods they consider overly processed.

It's not that people don't care about calories anymore. Nutrition experts still say weight loss comes down to burning more calories than you eat.

But dieters are sick of foods that provide only fleeting satisfaction and seem to leave them hungrier. The new thinking is that eating foods with more protein or fat will make dieters less likely to binge later, even if they're higher in calories.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Bijou Golf Course in South Lake Tahoe is open.

• Reno May Bob Cashell will be honored April 24 6pm for being an integral part of Boomtown's 50 years of success. Tickets for the celebration dinner are $125 – 775.345.8662.

• Debra Gauthier will be signing copies of her book "Bright Lights, Dark Places" on April 25 at 4pm and April 26 at noon

at South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center, 1180 Rufus Allen Blvd., and April 26 at 1pm at South Lake Tahoe Library, 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd.

• South Tahoe Public Utility District is having a workshop regarding water and sewer rate increases on April 17 from 6-8pm at 1275 Meadow Crest Drive, South Lake Tahoe.

• Truckee's planning commission and town council are having joint workshop April 17 from 6-8pm at council chambers. Topics include: General Plan vision and community values, Truckee's future, and resource planning and prioritizing.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Mister

Mister is a 2-year-old, 17-pound mix of probably several terriers. Our best guess is Cairn terrier and Jack Russell.

He is a very happy and bouncy boy who likes to play chase and snuggle. He loves to go, go, go whether that is on walks, in the car or on an adventure. We would not recommend him for a lazy household. He also loves kids – including kissing them on

the face.

Mister is neutered, microchipped, tested for heartworm, and vaccinated. He 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 or to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions 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

Veil removed from human trafficking issue in Tahoe

By Lesia Witkowsky

Human trafficking isn't something that just happens in other places. It's an issue in Lake Tahoe.

Dylan Sullivan spoke about human trafficking as it relates to South Lake Tahoe at the Soroptimist International Tahoe Sierra meeting April 10. She dispelled many misconceptions of human trafficking and stressed the importance of addressing the issue in El Dorado County.

"Because it's a painful thing to talk about we want to put our heads in the sand and pretend it's not happening," Sullivan

said. “But it’s happening in this town. We as a group need to say out loud, ‘We know this is happening and it’s unacceptable.’”



Dylan Sullivan talks about human trafficking on April 10. Photo/Lesia Witkowsky

Sullivan is a commissioner for El Dorado County Superior Court, where she hears family law, Child Protective Services, unlawful detainers, traffic, and restraining order cases.

She explained that runaway children are often the biggest victims of human trafficking in El Dorado County because of their vulnerability. They come from homes where they have either been sexually or physically assaulted, or both. Those children have a need for someone to care about them, and human traffickers try to fill that void similar to the way gangs recruit new members. According to Sullivan, the average age for runways involved in human trafficking is 12 to 14.

“We remember being 12, 13 and 14 and thinking that we understood everything in life. And we know 12-, 13- and 14-year-olds, and we look at them and see how innocent they are…. It is not acceptable for us to not get up and do something about a 12-year-old being prostituted,” Sullivan said.

She offered advice on how to improve the situation locally by explaining that when a community gets behind a child, that child has the means to become successful. Instead of treating

victims of human trafficking as criminals, they should be looked at as people who need the services of a dependency court and not the punishment of a delinquency court.

“I was an at-risk youth,” Sullivan said. “I was a child that had serious issues in my household and I knew at a very young age that I had to take personal responsibility to change my situation. I thought long and hard about how I knew that because I want to be able to follow it up and give it to kids that I see are in crisis.”

A missing person’s report along with a warrant should be filed when a runaway goes missing so when police pick him up, he will be treated like a dependent and not a delinquent. Sullivan said El Dorado County is leading the state in this issue.

Sullivan also listed a number of actions that individuals can take to help victims of human trafficking. These include being informed, being prepared to help and reporting any suspicious activity to legal authorities.

“It’s something that we all need to hear,” Susan Baker, a Soroptimist member and former head of Mt. Tallac High School said about Sullivan’s presentation. “This issue is alive and well in our community and it’s going to take our community to address this. It can’t be just law enforcement, or just CPS, or just the courts. As a community we have to really be aware.”