Nevada bear hunt also an economic issue

By Ed Pearce, KOLO-TV

INCLINE VILLAGE – Residents and visitors to Lake Tahoe share the basin with the area's wildlife including what may be a majority of Nevada's entire population of 400 to 500 black bears.

Beginning Aug. 20 it will be legal to hunt them here.

That's welcome news to the small number of hunters who pressed wildlife officials for years for the opportunity, but it's hard to find anyone cheering in Incline Village on the lake's north shore.

"We have human-bear problems every year here in Incline Village," says Bill Hoffman,. the Executive Director of the local visitors bureau. "But we have a lot of bear lovers in this community who don't want to see these bears hurt or messed with in any way."

While much of the opposition comes from such sentiment or safety concerns, there are also worries the hunt is simply bad for business.

"People come to see our bears if they can, if they get lucky," says Hoffman. "It's something that's part of what we sell."

And selling to the tourist is what Incline and most of the lake is all about.

Tourism drives the Tahoe economy and outdoor recreation drives much of the tourism industry, but hunting has never been part of that equation.

Read the whole story

Great Gatsby Gala

Put on your Glad Rags for the Great Gatsby Gala on Aug. 13 at MontBleu in Stateline.

Attire is 1920s. Free Charleston lessons will be given.

Cocktails are at 6:30pm, dinner 7pm, dancing at 8pm. Dinner and dancing is $60; just dancing is$20.

Tickets are available at both Tahoe Youth & Family Services offices, 1021 Fremont Ave., South Lake Tahoe (530) 541.2445 or in Gardnerville at 1422 Mission St. (775) 782.4202. Tickets may also be purchased online. All proceeds go to Tahoe Youth & Family Services.

Singling out the best Tahoe-Reno concerts in the past 25 years

By Jason Kellner, Reno Gazette-Journal

In 25 years, the Reno-Tahoe area has seen thousands of concerts come and go, from the small casino showrooms to the large arenas. Lawlor Events Center, which opened in 1984, helped change Reno’s concert landscape, growing it from an oft-overlooked outpost, to a main stop for artists over the years ranging from Duran Duran to Pearl Jam. More venues, like the Reno Hilton Amphitheater and Reno Events Center continued

to pop up and grow the concert scene, while some listed here (Hilton Amphitheater included), are now gone.

So who put on the best concerts in the past 25 years? Ask 100 people, and you're sure to get 100 different answers. Instead, we polled nine people, all of them firmly entrenched in the area music scene in one way or another. We combined all of our suggestions, and dug through yellowed newspaper clips to unearth some forgotten gems to come up with this highly debatable list. We easily could have made the list twice as long and there still would have been great shows that didn't make the cut (sorry Feist, at Great Basin Brewing Co., 2006). And so now, we bring you the 25 most legendary concerts of the past 25 years.

Read the whole story

Lessons learned from California's recent drought

By Adam Kotin, California Climate & Agriculture Network

One thing can be said for certain about the 2007-2009 drought in California: it sure got a lot of attention. Both its natural severity and the complex set of political, economic, and social disputes yielded a drama of epic proportions that got people talking around the state and across the country.

But now that the dust has settled, the time has come to figure out what it all really meant, and how to prepare for when it happens again. Not surprisingly, the recent drought has enlivened the ages-old debate on water management in the state.

Two reports released in June, one from the Pacific Institute and one from the California Roundtable on Water and Food Supply, offer valuable insights and recommendations on how to reduce vulnerability and increase resiliency in the event of future droughts.

The Pacific Institute's report claims to provide "the most comprehensive and updated information on the impacts of the 2007-2009 drought." The authors crunched volumes of data on water and energy use, employment and poverty, crop insurance indemnities, precipitation, fisheries, and various other economic and political factors to guide their analysis.

Their overall conclusion is that while the drought certainly had some devastating impacts on agriculture, they were neither as severe nor as widespread as had been previously estimated. While the all-time high gross revenue for California farms was reached in the midst of the drought (in 2008), significant revenue declines were seen in some counties. The state's overall harvested acreage, which has diminished annually for at least decade, actually slowed its decline during the drought. Some growers adopted effective and sustainable coping strategies, while others relied too heavily on groundwater pumping, according to the Pacific Institute.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• There will be a book sale at the South Lake Tahoe library on Rufus Allen Boulevard on July 30. Doors open to Friends of the Library at 9am and to the general public at 10am. The sale ends at 3pm.

• Early registration is open for SMG's annual October tourism and marketing workshop on the South Shore.

• At the July 23 Coeur d'Alene Art Auction in Reno, Maynard Dixon's 1944 "Sculptured Sandstone" was purchased for $351,000 by a Lake Tahoe collector.

• Calstar's 6th annual Flying 5K and Kids Fun Run is Aug. 27 at 8:30am. The 5K course starts on the runway, crosses a stream and goes off road onto trails. Click on the flyer for more information.

• Emerald Bay State Park offers a behind-the-scenes tour of Vikingsholm Castle and talk with longtime park historian Helen Smith, who frequented the property as a child, on July 28 from 6-8pm as part of their Conversations with History's program. Tickets are $40/person.

Opinion: LTCC Demonstration Garden takes learning outdoors

By Melonie Guttry

In 1984, a single individual envisioned the Lake Tahoe

Demonstration Garden, which is now a flourishing 7-acre garden showcasing attractive native and adapted plants, while using conservation techniques to address water quality concerns. The Lake Tahoe Demonstration Garden is located on the Lake Tahoe Community College property behind the G-Wing Garden Buildings near the Child Development Center.

This site was originally very disturbed by human activity, having served as a borrow pit for the construction of roads and later as a recreation area for off-road vehicles. Its bare compacted soils supported little vegetation and directly contributed sediment into Lake Tahoe via Trout Creek.

Construction began in the spring 1990 with a grand opening in 1991. Now it is a thriving, functional landscape where the community and visitors can enjoy and learn about Tahoe's unique environment.



Melonie Guttry

The garden continues to expand and make improvements through generous donations and agency partner collaboration. The garden's community partnership is designed to protect and preserve the Lake Tahoe Basin by showcasing landscapes to:

● Promote the use of water efficient native and adapted plants and gardening practices;

● Display native and adapted plants in an attractive natural setting;

● Demonstrate best management practices and other backyard

conservation practices

● Provide a public venue for inspiration and education.

The Tahoe Resource Conservation District in partnership with the UC Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners started the Green Thumb Gardening series in South Lake Tahoe in June 2010 at the Lake Tahoe Demonstration Garden. This educational series was developed to promote conservation landscaping techniques and inform homeowners and gardening enthusiast that gardening in Lake Tahoe is fun, beautiful and beneficial to our treasured natural environment. There is something for everyone in this year's line-up of informative classes. You are encouraged to bring your questions and to share your experience and knowledge. All presentations are outdoors in the beautiful garden setting and lively discussion between attendees and the presenters enrich the experience.

Running through the end of August, Green Thumb presentations will be at the UC Davis Field Station on Tuesdays and at the Lake Tahoe Demonstration Garden on Wednesdays from 5:30-6:45pm. This summer's topics will cover native vegetation, veggie gardening, native bees, sprinkler system check-ups, invasive weeds and much more. The Tahoe RCD will be participating every Tuesday and Wednesday evening. California Tahoe basin residents can stop by to sign you up for free technical assistance services, such as BMP, conservation landscaping and invasive weed evaluations. You will also have the opportunity to learn more about the Master Gardener Program and how you can become involved.

Green Thumb gardening at the Lake Tahoe Demonstration Garden is just one of many reasons to visit and enjoy the garden. If you haven't experienced the newest addition, the Ledbetter Terrace, you will be in for a treat. Wedding and event bookings are currently being scheduled at this unique outdoor Tahoe venue. To learn more or book your next event, go online. If you'd like to learn about sustainable landscaping practices

on your own schedule, visit the many informative garden demonstrations and ask the Tahoe RCD demonstration garden specialist to share their knowledge. The garden can always use a helping hand. If you are interested in volunteering for organized work events at the Demonstration Garden, please contact Jennifer Cressy at Tahoe RCD. You will be sure to leave not only with a sense of community and accomplishment, but you will also learn a thing or two about sustainable landscaping practices.

For a full schedule and topic descriptions go to our calendar online.

Melonie Guttry is executive director of the LTCC Foundation.

Harassing bicyclists outlawed in Los Angeles

By Kate Linthicum, Los Angeles Times

The Los Angeles City Council on Wednesday passed a pioneering new law intended to protect bicyclists from harassment by motorists.

The ordinance, which backers described as the toughest of its kind in the nation, makes it a crime for drivers to threaten cyclists verbally or physically, and allows victims of harassment to sue in civil court without waiting for the city to press criminal charges.

Its passage comes one day after a 63-year-old bicyclist was struck and killed by a car on a downtown street – an incident that bicycle advocates say underscores the dangers cyclists

face.

The new law is the latest bicycle-friendly measure to hit L.A., where an increasingly vocal community of activists has been calling for more protections.

Several of them showed up at City Hall on Wednesday to share stories of harassment; they described motorists who threw objects, shouted insults and tried to run them off the road.

As the number of cyclists on L.A. streets has swelled – local census data from 2008 show that about 13,000 commute to work on bikes, a 48 percent increase over the last eight years – so too have conflicts between motorists and bicyclists. Some motorists have accused cyclists of flouting traffic laws, while cyclists have complained that they are treated like second-class citizens.

Read the whole story

Disabled rights legislation 21-years-old

Today marks the 21st anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which guarantees equal opportunity for people with disabilities in public accommodations, commercial facilities, employment, transportation, state and local government services and telecommunications.

According to the Census Bureau, 36 million people have a disability. They represent 12 percent of the civilian noninstitutionalized population.

By age: 5 percent of children 5 to 17 have disabilities, 10 percent of people 18 to 64, and 37 percent of adults 65 and older have disabilities, according to the 2009 American Community Survey.

More women – 12.3 percent – have a disability, compared to men at 11.6 percent.

West Virginia has the highest percentage of disabled people at 18.8 percent, while Utah has the fewest at 8.9 percent

Disabilities cover many things. For 10.2 million people it is an issue with hearing. Vision is a problem for 6.5 million people.

Website sheds light on pay-benefits of Nev. public workers

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY – Anyone with an interest in what Nevada's state and local government employees make in salary and benefits can review the 2010 data that has been posted this month by a Nevada think tank.

The searchable database at Transparent Nevada does not yet contain all the local government salary information because not all cities and counties have responded, said Victor Joecks, communications director for the Nevada Policy Research Institute.

But most of the major cities and counties, as well as the

state colleges and universities and the state of Nevada, have provided the data as requested.

The Clark County School District provided its data as well, although NPRI is still waiting on the Clark County information, Joecks said.

“We will continue with some of the places that haven’t sent us the data; we’ll continue following up and looking at that data as the year goes on,” Joecks said.

The data can be searched by name, occupation or in order of highest pay. Salaries and benefits, when provided, are listed separately, along with a column showing total compensation.

Joecks said some jurisdictions only provide base pay amounts, even though benefitscan be as much as 40 percent or more of a public employee’s salary.

A search of the site shows that many of the top paid public officials in Nevada work for the Nevada System of Higher Education, including UNR head football coach Chris Ault, who earned nearly $527,000 in compensation in 2010.

In some other cases salaries were inflated because employees were retiring and received unused sick leave and vacation pay.

One example is Joseph Forti, who took a buyout last year and retired as North Las Vegas chief of police. His 2010 salary is listed at just less than $76,000, but total compensation is listed at $733,000. His compensation in 2010 included $333,000 in sick leave pay, $43,000 in annual leave and nearly $231,000 in a category called “Premium, Certification, Bonus and Other.”

Pay for firefighters, which has been a hot button issue in Southern Nevada, is included in the database as well, but only for North Las Vegas and Henderson so far. The data does show benefits make up a big part of a fire fighter’s pay.

More than 30 North Las Vegas firefighters earned in excess of $140,000 a year in pay and benefits, according to the information provided by city officials and posted on the site.

“It’s just kind of incredible all the ways that government employees get paid,” Joecks said. “It’s not just about their salary, it’s not just about their benefits, it’s not just about their salary, benefits and retirement. All of a sudden you’re getting $200,000 when you retire and that’s something that doesn’t happen in the private sector.”

Rim to Reno trail work begins in August

The 2011 Rim to Reno trail season kickoff has been postponed until Aug. 6 due to heavy snow in the project area.

The Tahoe Rim Trail Association seeks volunteers construct trail at the first workday of the year at 9am Aug. 6 at the Mt. Rose Trailhead near the summit of the Mt. Rose Highway.

In October 2010, representatives from the Tahoe Rim Trail Association, U.S. Forest Service-Carson Ranger District, Great Basin Institute and Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space joined volunteers in breaking ground on the trail that connects the existing Tahoe Rim Trail to Reno.

The Tahoe Rim Trail circles the mountain ridges above Lake Tahoe, through the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest’s Mount Rose Wilderness. The Rim to Reno project will build trail segments connecting the existing trails and creating a new system that includes loop trails along with the connector trail to Reno.

Workdays will run on Thursdays and Saturdays (9am to 4pm) for the rest of the summer. Volunteers of all skill levels and physical abilities are welcome and encouraged to participate – no prior experience necessary. To join a volunteer work crew, register online or contact Max at (775) 298.0239 or trails@tahoerimtrail.org.

Volunteers should bring lunch and water, wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, boots, work gloves, and bring sunscreen, bug spray, and a backpack. The Tahoe Rim Trail Association will provide hard hats, trail building tools and expert crew leaders.