Heavenly Mountain’s zipline propels riders toward Lake Tahoe at speeds up to 55 mph



Heidi Wiemokly flies down the Blue Streak at Heavenly Mountain Resort. Photo/Trish McGraw

By Kathryn Reed

Zipping through the air at speeds up to 55 mph, legs dangling 160 feet above the ground and Lake Tahoe getting closer by the second.

Aptly named the Blue Streak, Heavenly’s zipline is about whisking thrill-seekers down 3,300 feet in about one minute. Whether it’s the blue sky – or more gray as the case was on Friday – or the varying shades of blue from the lake – the views are stunning.



This is the view from the top of the Blue Streak zipline. Photo/Kathryn Reed

From the launching pad it looks like the endpoint is Round Hill. On the ride down it appears the landing point is the lake itself.

Two people may go at once on separate cables. The heavier rider tends to finish first. It’s not uncommon to get a little spin action going, but it’s impossible to turn the seat all the way around.

It’s hard not to smile, even with a cold wind blowing. But if the wind is sustained at 25 mph or more, the operations cease immediately. Safety will take precedence over fun.

Redundancy is built into the harness system, as well as at the end to stop riders. This ride has a much smoother, less jarring finish than the previous zipline.

Everyone wears a helmet and harness, sunglasses are a good idea.

The only drawback is that it feels so controlled that the adrenaline rush is not sustained for the entire ride – at least according to a couple *LTN* riders.



Two people ride at a time – heading toward the gondola building and Tamarack Lodge. Photo/Trish McGraw

The ride opens today for the rest of the winter season – which ends April 20. (The zipline will be open Memorial Day weekend.)

This is one of Heavenly Mountain Resort's attractions to lure the non-skier to the mountain, give riders something more to do and make it a year-round destination. It's possible mountain biking and a gravity fed ride through the woods will be added in 2015 and available for use the following summer.

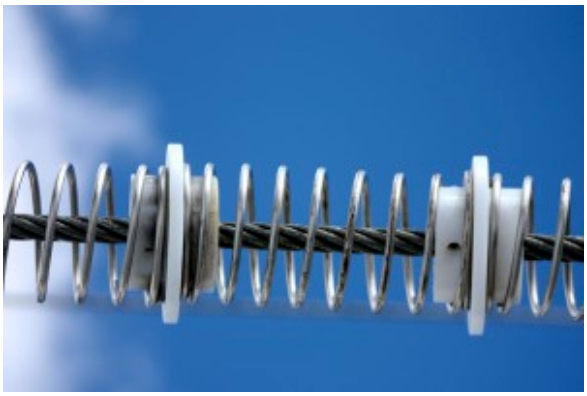
"Part of the reason why we are expanding is to give a full-day summer experience," explained Matt Eaton, senior manager of activities. "There's nothing like it on this end of the Sierra."

Blue Streak is the larger of two ziplines that will be open every day when the summer season begins June 13. (The smaller zipline needs a little more work before it opens.) For now Blue Streak will operate from 10am-3pm Friday-Monday. It costs $40 per ride, plus $45 to ride the gondola. Pricing for the summer has not been established.

It starts to the west of the top of Tamarack chairlift, the same spot the former zipline was located. It ends above the

terminus for the gondola.

“It’s been completely re-engineered, especially the retrieval process. And we’ve increased training for staff,” Sally Gunter, spokeswoman for Heavenly, told *Lake Tahoe News*.



Spring coils help stop people after a 3,300-foot ride. Photo/Trish McGraw

In September a lawsuit from the 2009 death involving the old zipline was settled. A newlywed who was on the Tamarack chair with his bride fell to his death when a rope from the zipline, which is 100 yards away, got entangled with the chairlift.

For the past five months the U.S. Forest Service, OSHA and the manufacturers have been inspecting the new zipline. Staff has been undergoing rigorous training.

Today anyone who is not pregnant, is at least 42-inches tall and weighs between 75 and 275 pounds may step into a harness, get hooked into the chair and be whisked down the mountain on the South Shore’s only zipline.

Editorial: Calif. deserves reliable water conveyance

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the March 30, 2014, Sacramento Bee.***

Last week's rain notwithstanding, the drought should act to concentrate Californians on water and how to create a reliable water system.

Instead, it is spawning isolated proposals with little attention to cost and who would pay.

In one direction, Gov. Jerry Brown favors a new "conveyance" with his proposed twin tunnels project. The capital cost of the two 40-foot-diameter, 30-mile-long tunnels around or under the Delta is estimated to total $19.9 billion in 2012 dollars. Borne by whom? People benefiting from the project, the water contractors south of the Delta? The comment period on this proposal ends on June 13.

In another direction, Reps. John Garamendi, D-Walnut Grove, and Doug LaMalfa, R-Richvale, favor an emphasis on storage. They propose congressional authorization of a new Sites offstream reservoir to store water pumped from the Sacramento River in Colusa County. This would require flooding the Antelope Valley and constructing two dams up to 310 feet high and nine smaller saddle dams.

Read the whole story

LTVA fireworks legal fees top $32,000

As of April 4, Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority had spent $32,769.80 to defend the fireworks lawsuit.

"… the LTVA executive committee decided to retain Feldman, McLaughlin, Thiel, LLP, specifically partners Lew Feldman and Kara Thiel. The firm's experience in environmental matters specific to Lake Tahoe, its expertise and record of success were key factors," Pat Ronan, chairman of LTVA board of directors, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Feldman's extensive knowledge and background in Tahoe area environmental issues, and Thiel's experience on staff at Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency were determining factors for the committee."

The executive committee is made up of board members Ronan, Jerry Bindel and John Koster.

More legal fees will be incurred until the suit is completely finished.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Motorcycle driver dies from injuries

The second person involved in a motorcycle accident on March 22 has died.

Andrey L. Gallegos, 20, of Sparks died at Renown Medical

Center in Reno. He was driving the motorcycle in Carson City when it collided with a vehicle.

Audrey G. Rugamas, 21, of South Lake Tahoe was also killed in the crash.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

S. Lake Tahoe woman missing, husband arrested



Camilyn Kay Price-Miller

Updated: April 4 8:05pm

A 47-year-old South Lake Tahoe woman has been missing for several days and her husband is in jail on an attempted murder warrant.

Camilyn Kay Price-Miller was reported missing April 3 by her husband, however her daughter in Kitsap County, Wash., had already reported her missing to her local sheriff's department on March 31.

South Lake Tahoe police officers arrested Jeffrey Miller, 44, on April 4 on the attempted murder warrant out of Nevada

County. According to officials, in November he tried to beat his wife to death.

It wasn't long after that that the couple moved into an apartment in South Lake Tahoe near the state line.

"There is some information we are holding close to the vest. We are searching all areas of town for her Toyota 4Runner," police Lt. Brian Williams told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We don't know if she is alive. We are working diligently to find that out. We believe there could be foul play in this."

Miller has not been charged with any crime in South Lake Tahoe. He is being held in the local jail until he is arraigned Monday and could be sent back to Nevada County. His dog was taken into custody by animal control.

Price-Miller's SUV is dark in color with California license plate of 5ADM509. It has two stickers affixed to the rear bumper. One reads "Keep Tahoe Blue" and the other "Keep Tahoe Kind". Affixed to the rear window is a sticker that displays the letters "LT".

Anyone with information should call 530.542.6100.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Yelp at center of free-speech case

By Angus Loten, Wall Street Journal

A closely watched Internet free-speech case is headed to the Virginia Supreme Court this month, with many businesses that

live and die by online reviews rooting for the owner of a small, suburban carpet cleaner.

In early 2012, Joe Hadeed, owner of Hadeed Carpet Cleaning Inc., arrived at his office atop a 70,000-square-foot warehouse in Springfield, Va., to discover a critique posted on Yelp. “Lots of hype, a mediocre cleaning and a hassle at the end. Don’t go with Joe!” wrote a “Mike M.” A few days later, another review, by “M.P.” popped up: “I will never use them again and advise others to proceed with caution!” it said.

Over the next several weeks, a string of similarly harsh reviews replaced more-favorable comments “as if someone had flipped a switch,” said the 47-year-old Hadeed, in an interview last month at his offices, where trucks drop off carpets to be washed, rinsed and dried.

Following the rash of negative Yelp reviews, business sank 30 percent in 2012, Hadeed says. Last year, Hadeed cleaned just 20,000 carpets, down from 29,000 in 2011. Revenue fell to $9.5 million from $12 million in 2011. Hadeed said the business has let 80 workers go and sold six trucks, reducing its fleet to 54.

The Federal Trade Commission has received more than 2,046 complaints filed about Yelp from 2008 through March 4, according to data reviewed by the Wall Street Journal, following a Freedom of Information Act request. Yelp shares fell 5.7 percent in Wednesday trading, after the tally was posted on FTC.gov.

Read the whole story

Moms to be pampered for a day in S. Tahoe

Barton Health's third annual Mom's Morning Out is May 3.

Women of all ages – mothers, grandmothers, daughters, and sisters – are may attend this free event. Yoga and fitness classes start at 8:15am. Coffee and brunch from Blue Angel Cafe will be served. Other complimentary activities include wellness booths put together by local businesses, health presentations, and a Zen room with acupuncture, facials, and massage services.

Wellness booths and pampering are from 9-11:30am.

Mom's Morning Out will take place at Lake Tahoe Community College. The event is free and no reservation is required. All attendees must be at least 12.

For more info, call 530.543.5537.

El Dorado County targeting welfare fraud

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

The El Dorado County Health and Human Services Agency reports that a team effort with the District Attorney's Office to combat welfare fraud resulted in the referral of more than 200 cases and recovery of more than $340,000 last year.

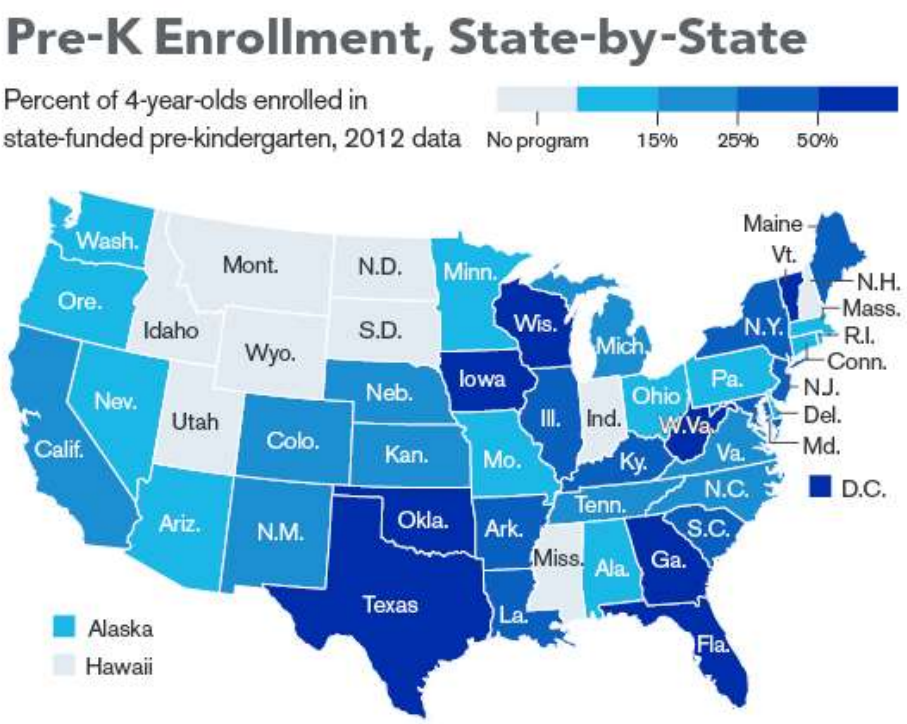
"We take fraud seriously," Patty Moley, program manager of

income maintenance and employment services, said in a written statement. “Our job is to make sure that people who need and qualify for benefits receive them. But it is also our responsibility to look for false information and potential fraud situations.”

Suspected fraud cases are referred to the District Attorney’s Office to be investigated. Investigators go to the client’s home and/or employer to verify information and collect any needed documents. The information is reviewed and, if warranted, the fraud case is formally prosecuted, officials said.

Read the whole story

Push for pre-K in most states



Source: *National Institute for Early Education Research*

By William Selway, Bloomberg

Bill de Blasio won the mayoralty of New York City in part on a politically popular promise to expand access to pre-kindergarten for 4-year-olds. In doing so, the 21st-century liberal embraced a 20th-century ideal: Fifty years ago, President Lyndon Johnson created Head Start, a national program to provide education to young children, wagering that it would boost their chances of later academic and economic success. For two years running, President Obama has put proposals in his budget for "universal" pre-kindergarten for moderate-income as well as low-income children. The prospect of more kids heading to pre-K has re-opened debates over whether early exposure to school really makes a long-term difference.

In New York, Gov. Andrew Cuomo struck a deal to give New York City $300 million to expand pre-K starting in September, although without the tax increase on wealthy residents de Blasio sought to pay for it.

But across the U.S., preschool has taken a big hit from strapped budgets since the 2008 financial crisis. In 2012, state spending on preschool dropped 10 percent, the biggest decline ever. As a result of the across-the-board spending reductions, Head Start lost $400 million last year, the deepest cuts since the program's creation. About 57,000 poor children were turned away during the current school year.

Obama's call in 2013 to raise cigarette taxes to pump about $75 billion into preschool over 10 years went nowhere in the face of Republican opposition. This year, Obama added a new argument, focusing on early education's potential to offset

America’s growing income gap. As a separate debate rages over proposals to revamp U.S. schools, some educators point to a connection between preschool attendance and the scores on international tests that have raised fears about America’s future competitiveness.

Read the whole story

U.N.: Climate change impact is widespread

By Alexander Martin, Wall Street Journal

TOKYO –G lobal warming is having an impact on human and natural systems worldwide, scientists warned in a report Monday, calling for swift action to mitigate the impact of greenhouse gas emissions on the planet.

The report, released by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, is the second portion of a four-part report, and follows the September release of the first portion, which focused on scientific evidence for global warming.

“What happens in terms of impact of climate change in different parts of the world will be determined to a large extent [by how much] we are prepared and able to mitigate the emissions of greenhouse gasses,” IPCC Chairman Rajendra K. Pachauri said.

The report said that besides an increase in global average temperature, climate change was having a widespread impact on

everything from water resources to food production and weather patterns.

Read the whole story