Propane issue leads Placer County to issue public safety declaration

Placer County Executive Officer Thomas Miller on Thursday signed an order declaring the presence of propane leaks beneath significant snowpack at numerous sites a threat to public safety. This order encompasses not only the Serene Lakes subdivision area near Donner Summit, but other eastern Placer County communities.

The order authorizes the director of Environmental Health to notify landowners to abate leaking propane systems expeditiously. The notices, which started going out April 14 to individual property owners, seek the owner's cooperation with the abatement.

Abatement options and deadlines to respond will be identified in the notice and will be based on the county's assessment of the level of safety risk posed by that particular owner's propane tank system leak. Should the property owner not respond to the notice, or choose not to proceed to abate in accordance with the notice, the CEO's order authorizes the county to gain entry onto the property to abate the leak first through owner permission, and if that fails, through the court.

If the county must abate the leak, the county will seek reimbursement from the property owner of all costs of abatement at a later date and possibly lien the property.

The Board of Supervisors on April 11 ratified a proclamation of local emergency.

A voluntary evacuation order is in place for the Serene Lakes community and will remain in place until further notice.

Placer County Sheriff's Office will maintain a presence in the Serene Lakes for the duration of the evacuation.

An extraordinary snowfall this season has left propane tanks buried under dozens of feet of snow. The tremendous weight of the snow has caused the plumbing – valves, regulators and piping – that connects the supply tanks to the houses to break and leak. Leaking propane is believed responsible for an explosion on April 8 that demolished an unoccupied three-story cabin in Serene Lakes. That blast sent debris flying hundreds of feet.

Additionally, there have been more than two dozen homes in the development that have been affected by leaking propane.

A reprieve for water users in Western states

By Felicity Barringer, New York Times

Not quite five months ago, on Nov. 27, the level of Lake Mead, the massive federal reservoir that serves faucets and fields in Nevada, Arizona and California, hit an all-time low level of 1,081.85 feet above sea level. Seven feet lower, and the first water shortage ever would have been declared in the river's lower basin.

An unusually wet winter, however, has given the basin a reprieve, and policy makers think they will have enough water to keep promises to every user from Mexico to Las Vegas to San Diego, while still filling Lake Mead to a level 30 feet or more above the shortage line of 1,075 feet this year. Rains began strongly in late December and continued with enough

oomph through the winter to leave the snow pack in the mountains above the river 120 percent higher than normal.

So the Interior Department announced this week that it would follow its original plan and deliver 40 percent more water than usual from Lake Powell, the Utah reservoir that is 357 miles upstream and about 2,500 feet uphill from Lake Mead. With users in Los Angeles, Las Vegas and the agricultural valleys of California and Arizona expected to take a little less than normal for 2011, most of the excess of more than three million acre-feet will stay in Lake Mead, the lower of the two massive Colorado River reservoirs that have enabled the rapid growth of Phoenix, Las Vegas and southern California.

Problem solved? Not exactly. At least, not for the long term.

Read the whole story

High water levels delay fish stocking in Nevada

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

All that water rushing from the mountains has state biologists putting fish-stocking plans for Northern Nevada rivers on hold.

Most years, the Nevada Department of Wildlife is planting trout in the rivers as early as March. Not this year.

March storms kept river levels high, and as a plentiful mountain snowpack begins to melt, they will rise higher, turning churning rapids muddy.

On Tuesday, the Truckee River at Farad was flowing at 1,150 cubic feet per second. Flows are expected to remain steady for the next couple days as temperatures cool, then begin to rise again as the days warm.

Runoff “should really start to climb” in early May, probably peaking late in the month, said Dave Wathen, a hydrologist with the federal water master’s office.

Read the whole story

Wiz Khalifa at MontBleu

What do black and yellow and bleu have in common? Billboard’s Top 100 hit “Black and Yellow” will be performed by Pittsburgh hip hopper Wiz Khalifa at MontBleu casino in Stateline on June 21.

Khalifa has been selling out stadiums across the country following the release of Rolling Papers, his freshman album. It debuted at No. 2 on the Billboard “Top 200 Albums,” second only to Britney Spears’ recent release, and was at No. 1 on Billboard’s “Top R&B/Hip Hop Albums” and “Top Rap Albums.” His two most recent singles, “No Sleep” and “Roll Up” are currently No. 17 and No. 28, respectively, on Billboard’s Hot 100.

Born Cameron Thomaz, Wiz Khalifa began recording and producing records in his father’s Oklahoma studio at the age of 12. When he moved Pittsburgh as a teen, Khalifa laid down the groundwork to begin a solo career by recording music in a local studio, I.D. Labs. Khalifa stood out among the studio’s regulars, bringing him to the attention of Benjy Grinberg, a former executive assistant to L.A. Reid at Arista Records, who

had started up a new independent label, Rostrum Records, and signed Khalifa.

Tickets are $39.50 plus taxes and fees. Doors open at 8pm and the show starts at 9pm.

LTCC vice president submits resignation

By Kathryn Reed

Sue Niehoff, vice president of Business Services at Lake Tahoe Community College, submitted her resignation Thursday.

Niehoff has been the subject of several board meetings this calendar year.

She was not immediately available for comment Friday.



Sue Niehoff

Board President Fritz Wenck told *Lake Tahoe News* that at the April 26 meeting his group is expected to accept her resignation. He said her resignation is effective June 30.

"We are in the process of hiring a new superintendent/president. We may put in some sort of interim

structure and let him come on board to make the final decision (about that position),” Wenck said.

The South Lake Tahoe college is expected to make a decision on the next president in May.

Interim President Steve Maradian did not want to speak to Niehoff’s resignation even though he is her supervisor.

“I’m not sure why this is such big news … why someone can’t come and go,” Maradian said.

His contention is the bigger news is the college is not laying off large numbers of people, unlike what is happening elsewhere in state.

Maradian did say the item in closed session on the April 12 agenda that involved a personnel issue was not related to Niehoff. No action was taken on that item.

Ski Run Easter events

Ski Run neighborhood businesses are sponsoring an Easter egg hunt for kids.

Events will include pictures with the Easter bunny with kids and/or animals, animal owner look alike contest and a cake walk.

The event is April 23 from 11am-2pm on Ski Run Boulevard at Larch Avenue in South Lake Tahoe. The egg hunt starts at 11:15am.

Kirkwood Mountain Classic

Kirkwood Mountain Classic at the Kirkwood Ski Area/Bike Park is July 23.

This cross country race is part of the Sierra Cup Mountain Bike Series.

All proceeds from this event go to TAMBA.

The race will also include a Le Mans start Super-D race in the afternoon.

Mountain bike meeting

TAMBA meeting April 27 at 6:30pm at Las Panchitas, 8345 North Lake Blvd., Kings Beach.

Ski report: Counting down the days left



Celebrate on the slopes that tax day isn’t until April 18 this year. Somehow you must be able to write-off your ski day.

Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Graffiti mars rocks overlooking Emerald Bay

My brother and I went to Emerald Bay to say hi and remember my mother.

We found this. (See full photo below.) We were disgusted to find that someone graffitied the rocks facing Highway 50 and Eagle Falls.



The rocks overlooking Emerald Bay. Photo/Jerrad Lopez

My brother and I were born and raised here and have never seen

such disrespect to this town. My parents were married in the courtyard and we will do anything it takes to get that off and not painted white like they do everything else.

— *Evan Gordon*

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