Nevada lawmakers seek to sever ties with TRPA

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Characterizing the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency as a heavy-handed bureaucracy treading on property rights and overly influenced by California, Nevada lawmakers are seeking to pull the state from the organization.



Legislators from Southern Nevada, Washoe County and Douglas County are backing legislation to withdraw Nevada from the Tahoe Regional Planning Compact, ratified by Congress in 1969 as a needed step to protect an endangered Lake Tahoe.

Supporters insist a pullout is needed to allow long-stifled property improvements on Tahoe's Nevada side. Detractors say the bill stands to endanger a carefully engineered approach to regulating land use while protecting the environment.

SB 271 – the seventh attempt to distance Nevada from TRPA – is needed to rescue Tahoe's Nevada side from a stifling regulatory environment largely controlled by California interests, said the bill's primary sponsor, Sen. John Lee, D-North Las Vegas.

"The pendulum has swung so far it won't swing back," Lee said. "We no longer want to be told by California what we can and cannot do. The thrust of this is Nevada just wants to control Nevada."

The Legislation would create a new Nevada-based planning body, with members appointed by the governor, lieutenant governor, state forester, administrator of state lands, and Washoe, Douglas and Carson City counties.

Another member would represent the public.

The panel, Lee said, would likely work in coordination with a similar California-appointed commission but would give Nevada greater control over its own land use.

In its current structure, Lee said, TRPA is “stopping growth, stopping business, stopping everything.”

Read the whole story

Skier injured in avalanche at Mt. Rose

By Frank X. Mullen Jr., Reno Gazette-Journal

Early Tuesday, Bryce Henderson and Trent Marietta, two experienced back country skiers from Reno, followed nearly all the avalanche safety precautions when they set out for an area called Fireplug near the summit of Mt. Rose Highway.

But a wall of snow, 18 inches deep and 200 yards wide, broke loose, swept down the mountain and swallowed Marietta as Henderson watched helplessly.

“We did a pit test to check snow safety and went down separately. The first run was fine,” said Henderson, 22. “Trent went first on the second run. He did three turns and the snow just crowned on him.”

The avalanche caught Marietta in its grasp. He tumbled and rolled inside the snow wave. He tried to swim out of it, Henderson said. The moving shelf of loose snow approached trees. His backpack caught on a branch and when the snow

stopped moving Marietta was buried up to his waist.

After checking on his friend, Henderson went for help. Marietta had injuries to his chest and face and was brought by Careflight to Renown Regional Medical Center in Reno, where he remained under treatment late Tuesday. He was able to ski a short distance down to the helicopter after it landed.

Read the whole story

Body of skier found at Sugar Bowl

By Frank X. Mullen, Reno Gazette-Journal

The body of a California skier missing since Monday was found Tuesday on a run at the Sugar Bowl Ski Resort, according to the Placer County Sheriff's Department.

Deputies and Ski Patrol members had been searching late Monday and early Tuesday for John Hoffman, 58, of Oakland, who was reported missing by his wife at 10:30pm Monday.

Hoffman was an expert skier and often went to Lake Tahoe area ski resorts, deputies said.

Read the whole story

TRPA cancels March 23-24 meetings

Following unexpected challenges to board member attendance as well as the threat of hazardous road conditions, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency is rescheduling the March 23 hearing on Boulder Bay, as well as everything else on the agenda.

Calif. bill would raise fines for cockfighting

By Torey Van Oot, Sacramento Bee

The dozens of people gathered at a south Sacramento residence on Super Bowl Sunday weren't there to watch the football championship.

They were there, officials say, to watch two roosters battle to the death in an illegal cockfight.

That gathering was broken up by Sacramento County sheriff's deputies, who arrested six people on animal-cruelty charges. Less than two weeks later, El Dorado County Animal Services euthanized 250 birds uncovered in a bust of what officials say was a large cockfighting operation in Garden Valley.

Animal-protection advocates and law enforcement officials say California's relatively lax penalties for cockfighting have caused a noticeable uptick in the illegal activity, pointing to eight major busts in February alone.

Thirty-nine states and the District of Columbia classify

cockfighting or related crimes as felonies. Unlike in neighbor states Arizona, Nevada and Oregon, some cockfighting violations, including being a spectator at a fight, are misdemeanors here, while participation can be a felony on a second offense.

Read the whole story

Scariest earthquake may be yet to come – in California

By Simon Winchester, Newsweek

All of those broken bones in northern Japan, all of those broken lives and those broken homes prompt us to remember what in calmer times we are invariably minded to forget: the most stern and chilling of mantras, which holds, quite simply, that mankind inhabits this earth subject to geological consent—which can be withdrawn at any time.

For hundreds, maybe for thousands of people, this consent was withdrawn with shocking suddenness—all geological events are sudden, and all are unexpected if not necessarily entirely unanticipated—at 2:46 on this past clear, cool spring Friday afternoon. One moment all were going about their quotidian business—in offices, on trains, in rice fields, in stores, in schools, in warehouses, in shrines—and then the ground began to shake. At first, the shock was merely a much stronger and longer version of the temblors to which most Japanese are well accustomed. There came a stunned silence, as there always does. But then, the difference: a few minutes later a low rumble from the east, and in a horrifying replay of the Indian Ocean tragedy of just some six years before, the imagery of

which is still hauntingly in all the world’s mind, the coastal waters off the northern Honshu vanished, sucked mysteriously out to sea.

The rumbling continued, people then began to spy a ragged white line on the horizon, and, with unimaginable ferocity, the line became visible as a wall of waves sweeping back inshore at immense speed and at great height. Just seconds later and these Pacific Ocean waters hit the Japanese seawalls, surmounted them with careless ease, and began to claw across the land beyond in what would become a dispassionate and detached orgy of utter destruction.

We all now know, and have for 50 years, that geography is the ultimate reason behind the disaster. Japan is at the junction of a web of tectonic-plate boundaries that make it more peculiarly vulnerable to ground-shaking episodes than almost anywhere else—and it is a measure of Japanese engineering ingenuity, of social cohesion, of the ready acceptance of authority and the imposition of necessary discipline that allows so many to survive these all-too-frequent displays of tectonic power.

But geography is not the only factor in this particular and acutely dreadful event. Topography played an especially tragic role in the story, too—for it is an axiom known to all those who dwell by high-tsunami-risk coastlines that when the sea sucks back, you run: you run inland and, if at all possible, you run uphill. But in this corner of northeast Japan, with its wide plains of rice meadows and ideal factory sites and conveniently flat airport locations, there may well be a great deal of inland—but there is almost no uphill.

Read the whole story

White stuff in the forecast through the weekend

A winter storm warning is in effect from 11 this evening through 8pm Wednesday. A winter storm watch is in effect from Thursday morning through Friday morning.

The National Weather Service in Reno is saying to be prepared for 1 to 2 feet above 7,000 feet, with up to a foot below that elevation.



Not exactly a bike friendly South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Avalanche dangers will increase.

Roads should be nasty, with warnings already being issued that the commute in Reno and Carson City on Wednesday morning will be slick and icy.

Snow is in the forecast through Saturday.

The highs will be in the 30s and lows in the 20s in the Lake Tahoe Basin for the rest of the week.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Ski report: Powder stash patrol



Hit the slopes today before the next storm rolls in.

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

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3 Truckee residents die in S. California plane crash

Publisher's note: ***It has been confirmed the three people who died in the plane crash were Truckee airport board trustee Katie Morrison and her children – 6-year-old Wyatt and 5-year-old Hannah. Services will be March 24 in the afternoon at the Martis Camp Family Barn in Truckee.***

By Salvador Hernandez, Orange County Register

BARSTOW – A woman and two children were killed in a fiery plane crash on Sunday near a San Bernardino County airport, authorities said.

The single-engine Cessna 210 departed from John Wayne Airport and was headed to Henderson Executive Airport in Las Vegas

when it crashed, said Ian Gregor, a Federal Aviation Administration spokesman.

Investigators with the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board investigate the wreckage of a Cessna 210 that crashed Sunday. A woman and her two children were killed in the crash. The plane took off from John Wayne airport and crashed near the Barstow-Dagget Airport.

The woman is believed to be Katie Morrison, a Truckee resident who is licensed as a private pilot. Officials have not identified who was aboard the plane. Her husband, Jim Morrison, confirmed his wife and two children, Wyatt and Hanna, were killed in the crash, according to Fox 40 News in Sacramento.

Coroner officials have not yet positively identified the bodies of those aboard the plane; they were described as a woman, a male child and a female child.

“The coroner’s office is having to conduct extensive scientific means to identify the bodies,” said Arden Wiltshire, a San Bernardino Sheriff’s Department spokeswoman.

Read the whole story

South Tahoe creating community fiscal committee

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe wants the public’s help when it comes to money matters.

The City Council this month agreed to create a Fiscal Sustainability Committee. Councilmembers Claire Fortier and Bruce Grego were not at the March 15 meeting.

“In these economic and fiscally challenging times many local governments are seeking to increase public engagement in fiscal matters,” the staff report says. “This approach not only benefits local government by better utilizing the expertise of its citizens, and increasing the diversity of ideas, but also improves the overall transparency in areas such as budgeting and financial management.”

The goal is six or eight people from the community will be appointed to the committee at the April 19 meeting.

In the past the council has had a budget committee made up of the mayor and mayor pro tem. That committee will be blended into the larger community committee. Hal Cole and Claire Fortier will represent the council.

City Manager Tony O’Rourke and Finance Director Christine Vuletich will represent city staff.

Councilman Tom Davis said this would be a good bridge. He mentioned Alice Jones, who works for the Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association and ran for council last fall, as a potential committee member. (TKPOA is a separate entity from the rental agency Davis is affiliated with.)

No criteria have been set for applicants. Nor do they have to reside in the city. The council will make the appointments, with a majority of three councilmembers having to approve each person.

Meetings will be subject to California’s open meeting laws, so they will all be open to the public. The plan is the committee

would meet at least eight times a year. Issues likely to be addressed include: operating budget development, capital improvement program budget development, long-term financial planning, investment management, debt issuance, pension and health plans, enterprise funds, revenue enhancement and diversification, financial reporting and independent audits, and internal controls.

Applications for the committee may be obtained at city offices at the Lake Tahoe Airport or by calling (530) 542.6004. The deadline to apply is April 12 at 5pm.