Funding OK’d for intersection along Hwy. 89

Californians will be driving on smoother roads, safer bridges, and enjoying the benefits of enhanced transit thanks to $334 million in funding allocated to 53 projects by the California Transportation Commission.

On project is just outside the Tahoe basin in Placer County. The intersection of Highway 89 and Alpine Meadows Road near Truckee will get a new traffic signal along with left and right turn lanes. This will cost $874,000.

The allocations include approximately $165 million to repair bumpy pavement, preserve roads that are in good condition from worsening, and upgrade bridges to make them safer and stronger.

USFS to pile burn in Tahoe basin

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews will continue prescribed fire operations in several locations around Lake Tahoe on March 24.

Operations may continue through the week and the weekend if weather, staffing, and conditions allow. Fuels management crews may carry out operations on Spooner Summit and in the Luther Pass Campground off of Highway 89. On the West Shore, operations may take place off of Tahoe Park Heights Drive in Ward Canyon, the west side of Highway 89 near Tahoma, and near

D.L. Bliss State Park.

Locations may vary due to changing conditions.

All prescribed fire projects are conducted in accordance with an approved prescribed fire burn plan. Burn plans describe specific conditions under which operations are conducted including the weather, number of personnel, opportunities to minimize smoke impacts, and available burn days. This information is used to decide when and where to burn.

Smoke from prescribed fire may continue for several days after the initial ignition.

Forest Service staff will post road signs around the areas affected by the prescribed fire, send email notifications, and update the local fire information line at 530.543.2600, No. 6. To receive prescribed fire notifications, send an email to pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.

Teens not always choosing cheap alcohol

By Maanvi Singh, NPR

For underage drinkers, it’s not always about the cheapest alcohol they can get their hands on. Many of them are brand conscious, researchers say, and they’re not drinking the same stuff as their parents.

Young drinkers do go for sweet malt beverages that mask the taste of alcohol with fruit flavors; 17 percent said they’d had a Smirnoff malt beverage, which comes in flavors like grape and frozen strawberry lemonade.

But it’s not only about cheap and sweet. Teenagers do favor budget beers like Keystone Light, and 28 percent of teen drinkers said they’d had a Bud Light in the past month. But they also drink pricey hard liquor like Jack Daniels whiskey and Grey Goose vodka.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Caltrans will be performing maintenance work on Highway 267 on March 25-26 between Truckee Airport and Brockway roads. Work will be from about 8:30am-3pm. Highway 267 will be closed to northbound traffic between the two intersections. Traffic will be routed onto Truckee Airport Road and Soaring Way.

• Homewood Mountain Resort will host three Farm to Peak dinners on the mountain overlooking Lake Tahoe. The dates are July 5, Aug. 9 and Aug. 30 and are limited to 120 guests.

• The Rubicon Trail 4-wheel drive trail is open again.

• Here are the Sierra and El Dorado-Tahoe roadwork schedules for Caltrans for this week.

• Tahoe Production House created this promotional video for South Lake Tahoe. According to City Manager Nancy Kerry, “Brandi [Brown] produced it for us for no cost for a variety of reasons, one of which was that she was hired for the air show last year and since it was canceled and she was unable to do any work for us – we had a $400 deposit we never got back and she agreed to produce this for us since we never got our

deposit back.”

Finding a solution for weeds

By Melinda Myers

Don’t let lawn weeds get the best of you. These opportunistic plants find a weak spot in the lawn, infiltrate and begin the take over your grass. Take back the lawn with proper care. Your lawn will not only be greener and healthier, but good for the environment.

The grass and thatch layer act as a natural filter, helping to keep pollutants out of our groundwater and dust out of our atmosphere. They also reduce erosion, decrease noise and help keep our homes and landscapes cooler in summer. And a healthy lawn is the best defense against weeds.

Start by identifying the unwanted lawn invaders. Use them as a guide to improve your lawn’s health and beauty. Weeds appear and spread when the growing conditions are better for them than the grass. Correct the problem to reduce the weeds and improve the health of your lawn. Killing the weeds without fixing the underlying cause is only a temporary solution. Unless the cause is eliminated the weed problem will return.

Here are a few of the more common weeds, the cause and possible solutions for managing them out of the lawn.

High populations and a variety of weeds mean you need to adjust your overall lawn care practices. Mow high and often, removing no more than one-third the total height of the grass at one time. Leave the clippings on the lawn in order to return water, nutrients and organic matter to the soil. This

along with proper fertilization using an organic nitrogen slow release fertilizer with non leaching phosphorous can greatly reduce weeds.

Knotweed and plantains often found growing next to walks and drives or other high traffic areas can also be found in lawns growing on heavy poorly prepared soils. These weeds thrive in compacted soil where lawn grasses fail. Reduce soil compaction and improve your lawn’s health with core aeration. Aerate lawns when actively growing in spring or fall. Or replace grass in high traffic areas with permeable pavers or stepping stones to eliminate the cause.

Nut sedge is a common weed in wet or poorly drained soils. Improve the drainage to manage this weed. It may mean core aerating the lawn and topdressing with compost, regrading or the installation of a rain garden to capture, filter and drain excess water back into the ground.

Clover and black medic mean it’s time to get the soil tested and adjust fertilization. Both thrive when the lawn is starving. Clover was once included in lawn mixes because of its ability to capture nitrogen from the atmosphere and add it to the soil. If these weeds are present, boost the lawn’s diet starting this spring with a low nitrogen slow release fertilizer. It feeds slowly throughout the season, promoting slow steady growth that is more drought tolerant, disease resistant and better able to outcompete the weeds.

Creeping Charley, also known as ground ivy, violets, and plantains usually get their foothold in the shade and then infiltrate the rest of the lawn. Take back those shady spots by growing a more shade tolerant grass like the cool season grass fescue or warm season St. Augustine grass. Mow high and fertilize less, only 1 to 2 pounds of nitrogen per growing season, than the sunny areas of your lawn. Or replace the lawn with shade tolerant groundcovers. Adjust your overall care to reclaim and maintain the rest of the lawn.

Crabgrass and Goosegrass are common weeds that follow a hot dry summer. Mow high to shade the soil and prevent many of these annual grass weeds from sprouting. Corn gluten meal is an organic pre-emergent weed killer that can help reduce these and other weeds from sprouting. Apply in spring and fall applications to reduce weeds by as much as 80 percent in three years.

And, when mowing this year, consider an electric or push mower to manage your lawn in an even more eco-friendly manner.

Melinda Myers has more than 30 years of horticulture experience and has written more than 20 gardening books.

Nev. lands drone company, has 15 more prospects

By Laura Myers, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Gov. Brian Sandoval revealed Thursday that Nevada has signed its first contract with a drone industry company and that state officials are talking to 15 to 20 companies interesting in doing business or manufacturing unmanned aerial vehicles here.

Nevada is one of six states selected last year by the Federal Aviation Administration to develop test sites for drones. They are primarily used for military purposes but are ripe for commercial development.

Sandoval said Nevada officials have one signed contract with a "confidential company" and are meeting with FAA officials in New Jersey, with officials from the five other states in the

program. The governor said he wants companies to not just use Nevada as a drone test site but to build manufacturing facilities in the state, which has far more usable airspace than other states chosen by the FAA.

Read the whole story

Then and now: Movie theaters always changing

South shore's first two movie theaters, circa 1949, were at Stateline.



The original Lakeside Theater. Photo/Lake Tahoe Historical Society

One was the quonset-hut Lakeside Theater where the Park Tahoe Inn now stands, and opposite on Highway 50 was the original Tahoe Drive-In Theater behind Cecil's Market, which was always showing two features.

The drive-in moved to what became Glenwood Way in Bijou in the mid-1950s. A large new



Lakeside Theater in the 1990s. Photo/Bill Kingman

Lakeside Theater was built in 1963 at highways 50 and 89 near the South Tahoe Y. In the late 1970s, that single-screen theater was partitioned into four small auditoriums and screens.

For a period, it was a one-man show. Bob Retzer had acquired the Lakeside, and then he opened the single-screen Tahoe Cinema across the street. It was sandwiched in the corner between Kmart and Raley's in the South Y Center.



A 1996 ad in the Tahoe Daily Tribune for the six Wallace screens.

He also opened the tiny Stateline Cinema on Park Avenue facing Raley's. Additionally, in the 1970s and early 1980s,



CVS at the Y today. Photo/Bill Kingman

Retzer as concessionaire ran first-run films in the huge dinner-theater showroom of the Sahara-Tahoe/High Sierra where waiters served drinks and where Retzer greeted patrons nightly in his tuxedo. Customers sat in luxurious padded booths.

And finally, Retzer also operated the Tahoe Drive-In Theater which closed in 1984.

Wallace Theatres acquired the Retzer theaters, but ultimately closed them and moved into the eight new movie auditoriums which the Horizon at Stateline had created by sub-dividing its historic showroom.

The Lakeside building at the Y next to today's McDonald's was demolished in the late 1990s and a Office Depot opened on

that site. It was fairly short-lived. It was replaced by Long's Drugs, and now CVS. In the early 2000s, the new eight-screen Heavenly Village Cinema opened, which along with the Horizon's eight-plex, placed all South Shore movies back at Stateline.

However, as reported by *Lake Tahoe News* on March 4, the Horizon is changing management and their eight movie screens are closing at the end of March.



Entrance to the theater at Horizon. Photo/Bill Kingman

Historically, there also were theaters at Meeks Bay, Kings Beach, Brockway, and Tahoe City, all now gone. In the 1980s there was a twin-screen drive-in movie at the bottom of Spooner at Highway 395, about where Trader Joe's now stands.

– Bill Kingman

Becker Peak – short trek for big views



Frozen Echo Lakes from Becker Peak. Photo/Richard Matera

By Kathryn Reed

Crevasses and the refraction of light have Echo Lake looking like it is mirroring a sky filled with puffy cumulus clouds. It’s as though a pale blue marker has been used to draw circles on the white sheet of ice.

From our vantage point atop Becker Peak and then walking along the ridge, Echo Lake is mesmerizing.



Kae, AJ the dog, Richard, Carol, Stan, Sandy, Sue, Corine, Donna and Craig almost to the top.

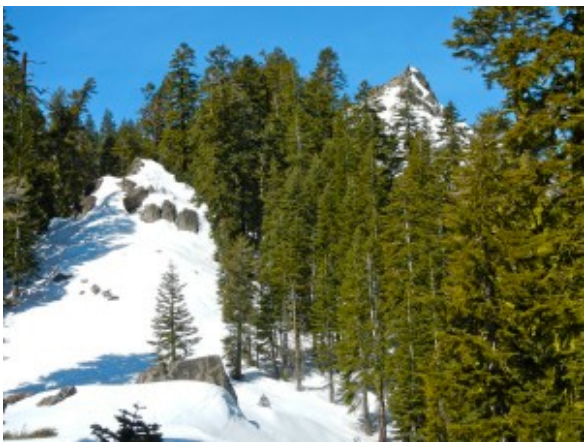
Nine of us spent last Sunday snowshoeing to the top of Becker Peak – elevation 8,391 feet.

Snowshoeing this year has required seeking out higher elevations because it's only dirt at lake level. And while some were in shorts and others in short sleeves, the snowshoes were definitely needed. Snow even covers the road leading into Echo Lake.

A late morning start was ideal so the snow had some give to it. Almost everyone used poles, which was good on the steeper sections – for the ascent and decline.

The worst part, at least in terms of exertion, is turning off the road and heading straight up to the ridge. We made the left directly across from the Berkeley Camp and by a few no parking signs.

Some in the group advised that it's better to start a little farther up the road during hiking season to avoid what is bushy terrain without snow.



Becker Peak
Photo/Kathryn Reed

There’s plenty of snow now so those bushes are not visible.

If the route up does not take your breath away, the views on top of the ridge are bound to. Flag Pole, Angora Peak, Dicks Peak, the back of Mount Tallac, Jakes Peak, the Angora burn area and Lake Tahoe all spill forth in an array of winter beauty.

And while it would be possible to call it a day at this point in terms of scenic beauty, the views only get better.

Even though Craig was correct to say the hard part was over, there is still some climbing to do.

I have to say I was glad to be with people who had done this trek before. Even though other snowshoers had laid down a trail before us, their route was a bit sketchy at times. Some said there was no way to get lost, but I’m also of the belief there is a first for everything.



Carol, Donna, Corine and Craig snowshoeing through the wilderness. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Not too much farther and we see the slopes of Sierra-at-Tahoe on our left and a frozen Echo Lake to our right.

We get to what could be another stopping point where there is an incredible expansive view of Echo Lake. We pause long enough for photos before making the final ascent up to Becker Peak.

The peak itself is a pile of large rocks. Off come the snowshoes so we can scramble to the top. Even AJ the dog is able to make it up to the top. We sit there a bit, having a bite to eat, taking in the views and putting layers back on to ward off the nippy wind.



AJ with a frozen Echo Lake in the background and Lake Tahoe in the distance. Photo/Kathryn Reed

It’s 360-degrees of pure Sierra serenity.

Skiers are along the edge of Echo Lake. Talking Mountain from this vantage point looks like it would be easy to reach.

We climbed about 1,000 feet to get to this point. It's about 4.5 miles round trip. We chose a lower route back that provided more views of Echo Lake and Lake Tahoe.

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Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe, take Highway 50 west over Echo Summit. Turn right on Johnson Pass Road. Parking is to the right.

A sno-park pass is required from Nov. 1-May 30. They may be obtained online.

Opinion: Calif.'s middle class disappearing

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

California's economy is recovering from its worst recession since the Great Depression – no doubt about that.

But its recovery is very slow, very geographically and socioeconomically uneven, and exacerbates the decline of a once-vibrant middle class and the evolution of a distinctly two-tiered society.

Sure, there is plenty of opportunity for those with the educations, creativity or technical skills that the post-industrial economy rewards handsomely and their success spawns

demands for low-skill, low-pay service workers.

But what about the middle class? What about aerospace craftsmen, automobile assemblers, petrochemical plant operators, movie industry technicians and myriad other well-paying occupations that accompanied California's rise as a major economic power in the 20th century?

Read the whole story

Placer County offering class to alcohol licensees

Placer County Sheriff's Office is offering free educational training to businesses that have licenses to sell alcohol.

As part of a grant from California's Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, deputies will offering LEAD (Licensee Education on Alcohol and Drugs) training on April 29 at the Auburn Justice Center Community Room, 2929 Richardson Drive, Auburn. The class is from 2-5:3pm.

The LEAD Program is a free, voluntary prevention and education program for retail licensees, their employees, and applicants. The curriculum is designed for licensees, managers, and employees.

To reserve a space, contact Lynn Harrison at 916.652.2419 or lharriso@placer.ca.gov.