Thanksjibbin’ rail jam at Squaw

Squaw Valley is giving skiers and snowboarders something to be thankful for Thanksgiving weekend. Nov. 27 is the Thanksjibbin’ rail jam.

The base mountain location means lift tickets are not necessary to watch or enter this rail competition.

Judges will be dishing out cash prizes as well as Thanksgiving treats including butterball turkeys, smoked hams and Cornish game hens for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. Pumpkin pies will be handed out as seen fit for style, creative tricks and best outfit.

Squaw Valley Terrain Park Director JP Martin recommends skiers and riders dig out their retro outfits and polish off their old school tricks. Outfits and style will be rewarded.

Thanksjibbin’ is an open entry, jam style competition with four classes: men’s and women’s ski and snowboard. Registration is 3-4pm and the competition starts at 5pm. The competition entry fee is $10 and helmets are mandatory.

Athletes under 18 years must have a parent or guardian sign a liability release form. For more details see squaw.com.

Winter weather warning issued

for Lake Tahoe

Lake Tahoe residents awoke to rain Sunday morning. And it’s just going to get worse as the day goes on.

The National Weather Service in Reno has issued a winter weather advisory above 7,000 feet from 10 am to 10pm Sunday.

Expect snow accumulations of 5 to 10 inches above 7,000 feet, with accumulations up to 18 inches possible above 8,000 feet. At the 6,000 to 7,000 foot level rain will change to snow early this evening with snow accumulations up to 4 inches.



Rusty may want to think twice about swimming in Fallen Leaf Lake as the weather changes. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Winds will be from the south to southwest at 15 to 25mph, with gusts to 40mph in the lower elevations. Sierra ridge will experience gusts up to 85mph.

The Weather Service says to not be surprised if Caltrans and NDOT put up chain controls this afternoon for the passes – Donner, Echo, Spooner, Carson, Mount Rose and Daggett.

It’s possible Monitor and Ebbetts passes could close this evening.

Road conditions may be accessed by hitting the state icons on the Home page of *Lake Tahoe News*.

– Kathryn Reed

Did you fall back an hour?

Check your clock. You might be able to go back to bed for another hour.



Today is the return to standard time – when clocks are set back an hour.

Part of Highway 50 to be named after fallen patrolman

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

A portion of Highway 50 near Ponderosa Road in El Dorado County will be renamed to honor the life and service of a California Highway Patrol officer who was run down and killed in the area while trying to stop a fleeing driver.

The CHP will hold a memorial freeway dedication ceremony Monday honoring Officer Douglas “Scott” Russell. It will begin at 11am at Green Valley Community Church, 3500 Missouri Flat Road, Placerville.

On July 31, 2007, Russell was attempting to stop a driver who was leading law enforcement officers in a dangerous pursuit through the Shingle Springs area.

Read the whole story

Nev. in top 10, Calif. bottom 10 for business tax climate

By Kara Lapoint, Reno Gazette-Journal

The Tax Foundation, a nonprofit and nonpartisan tax-research group in Washington, D.C., has released its latest edition of the State Business Tax Climate Index, which ranks the tax systems of the 50 states.

Nevada came in at No. 4, which means the state had the fourth-best tax climate on the first day of the 2011 fiscal year, or July 1, 2010.

South Dakota’s tax system was ranked first, making it the most welcoming to economic activity, and was followed by Alaska and Wyoming at second and third.

Florida, Montana, New Hampshire, Delaware, Utah and Indiana rounded out the top 10, after Nevada.

The 10 states ranked to have the least hospitable business tax climates are (41st to 50th): North Carolina, Rhode Island,

Minnesota, Maryland, Iowa, Ohio, Connecticut, New Jersey, California and New York.

Read the whole story

Nevada creating plan to save rangeland

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Millions of acres are charred by wildfire. Millions more covered by invading grass. Elsewhere, pinyon-juniper trees are creeping downhill, overrunning a landscape that should be dominated by sagebrush.

Nevada's rangeland, simply put, is in trouble.

"We've got some pretty big problems on the range," said Lee Turner, a habitat specialist with the Nevada Department of Wildlife.

Turner is heading up a new state program to restore Nevada's range, crucial to ranchers and as habitat for wildlife.

Born as part of the "war on cheatgrass" declared in 2007 by Gov. Jim Gibbons and the governors of Utah, Idaho and Wyoming, the Nevada Partners for Conservation and Development program is designed to build on plans already developed by federal land managers and to achieve large-scale restoration of both public and privately owned range.

"There are a lot of planning efforts out there," Turner said. "We're a group that's going to put projects on the ground."

Read the whole story

Collaboration lessens threat of fire

By Michael Kay, Union Democrat

There was a time when the forests of northeastern Calaveras County fed communities. Now they threaten to destroy them.

Decades without thinning and wrongheaded national anti-fire policies have left a tinderbox of thickly grown trees and heavy brush, according to many experts.

It is so bad in some areas that fire officials say if a fire started within the forest it would be too dangerous to leave the road to fight it.

“Our forests, once our friends, have become the most scary thing out here,” said Calaveras County Supervisor Steve Wilensky, who represents the area in question.

The situation has spurred a massive coalition of public, private and nonprofit groups to form a partnership several fire industry veterans call “unique” and “unprecedented.” The goal is to make the forests safe again.

So far, crews have cleared some 70 acres in the West Point area.

Fire breaks – areas where fire will be at least delayed, if not stopped – are in place for the first time in decades.

Read the whole story

Mt. Rose ski resort installs wind turbine

By Kara Lapoint, Reno Gazette-Journal

Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe installed its first Windspire vertical wind turbine Wednesday on the north side of its Winters Creek Lodge, and will install two more today.

The Windspire renewable energy sources will use wind power to provide electricity, offsetting a portion of the new lodge's electrical costs. The electricity will be funneled back into the region's power grid and will also qualify Mt. Rose for rebates.

Spokesperson Kayla Anderson said the wind turbines should cover lighting costs for Winters Creek Lodge during the upcoming season.

Anderson said the wind turbines function optimally with winds at 26 miles per hour, and that they'll stop spinning when winds hit about 34 mph. The structures are designed to withstand gusts up to 160 mph. The average wind speed at Mt. Rose's Slide Bowl is 14 mph.

Read the whole story

Mountain bikers join forces to have a voice in Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Free ride, downhill, cross country, or something else – the mountain bike community is becoming one and a force to be reckoned with.

At a two-hour meeting Nov. 5 at the South Lake Tahoe Parks and Recreation Complex, more than 60 cyclists packed the room to express their desire to unite in an effort to have an influence on what is going on in the Lake Tahoe Basin and beyond.

The gathering came out of the three-day conference put on by the International Mountain Bicycling Association in early October. Since then folks from IMBA have been working in the area. They put on a trail building workshop at Kirkwood Oct. 15-17.



Becky Bell talks about the early days of TAMBA. Photo/Kathryn Reed

On Friday several IMBA representatives spoke at the meeting led by John Drum, a longtime South Shore cyclist. So did

Garrett Villanueva with the U.S. Forest Service.

“What’s lacking is a common voice from the mountain bike community,” Villanueva told the group. Villanueva is the top trail builder for the federal agency. So revered is he that he regularly helps other states and international locales with trail building.

Villanueva organized five trail building days this past summer. No one showed up for three of them.

He wants to bring out an expert to help design a pump track on Corral Trail on the South Shore and bring the Gunmount-Tahoe Mountain trail up to standard – but he needs input from a collective voice of users.

Villanueva said every great cycling destination has a strong bike community.

That’s not the case with Tahoe. It is neither a topnotch mountain bike area, nor does it have the people behind it.

The Whistlers of the world didn’t becom3 cycling meccas solely because city leaders voted for it, but instead they are a reality because the users convinced the powers that be to build the trails, bike parks, pump tracks, and other features.

Villanueva is hoping that same grassroots force will spin out of Friday’s gathering. Based on the enthusiasm in the room Lake Tahoe is ready to rock the mountain bike world.

The assembled group that spanned multiple generations, included both sexes – though mostly guys, had reps from Truckee, North Shore and mostly South Shore, and included a gamut of user groups in the end agreed to resurrect Tahoe Area Mountain Bicycling Association to be the umbrella under which to operate.

Becky Bell, a leader in TAMBA from the get-go with husband Gary, spoke Nov. 5 a bit about the history of the bike club,

the work involved and desire to breath new life into it.

The group that met two days ago and anyone else interested in mountain biking is invited to gather Dec. 15 at 6pm at Blue Angel café in South Lake Tahoe to work on some nuts and bolts issues about how TAMBA will run. Four board members exist. The bylaws mandate they choose board members.

There was talk of having chapters within TAMBA to represent the various areas like North Shore, South Shore, Truckee, Reno, Carson City and Kirkwood. From there, it could be broken down into specialties like downhill, cross country and free ride.

A group of twentysomethings in the back of the room is eager to get dirty and build trails. These meetings aren't what they want to be involved in. But process is something the others tried to tell them needs to happen before the shovels come out.

Burning Man permit up for renewal

By Reno Gazette-Journal

The Bureau of Land Management is seeking public input as it evaluates a proposal from Black Rock City LLC to renew its special recreation permit to hold the Burning Man festival for the 2011-2015 period.

The festival is held annually on public lands in Pershing County, Nev. in the Black Rock Desert approximately 10 miles northeast of the community of Gerlach, Nev. The festival has

been held since 1990 and has been permitted by the BLM since 1992.

According to the BLM, the operations associated with the event occupy about 4,400 acres of public land for a seven week period starting with fencing the site perimeter the second week of August and concluding in late September with the final site cleanup. The major activities are confined to several weeks in late August and early September associated with final setup, the actual event and the initial phases of cleanup. During this period, Black Rock City becomes one of the largest cities in Nevada, with approximately 50,000 participants.

Read the whole story