Cold weather system leaves snow in Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

White is covering the peaks around the Lake Tahoe Basin, with Squaw Valley reporting snow at the base lodge. Other areas in the basin also reported snow at lake level.

The drive over Spooner Summit this morning was a little dicey in places. The rain that pounded the region much of Sunday and into Monday morning left ice pelts on the road with a dusting of snow on top. Although not enough snow was on the ground to remove, a plow was headed into the basin on Highway 50 from the Carson City side about 8am.



The Tiki Bar at Sierra-at-Tahoe on Oct. 25.
Photo/Provided

Diamond Peak in Incline reports a dusting. In contrast, Sierra-at-Tahoe on Highway 50 is calling this the first official snow of the season with top to bottom coverage.

Boreal Ski Resort off Interstate 80 strives to be the first to open each season. This year is no different. The goal is for lifts to be turning Oct. 29.

Power has been flickering on and off for the past few days with the wicked winds that blew through. Tree limbs are littering yards and roads. Pine needles are like a carpet on the asphalt. This all makes for slick roads.

Chains or snow tires are required on some of the mountain passes. Click on the road icon button on *Lake Tahoe News* to stay up to date on road conditions.

Reno has set a record for rain in October, which will only be higher with more moisture in the forecast. With 0.45 of an inch coming down Oct. 24, this brings the monthly total to 2.65 inches of rain. The previous record of 2.14 inches was set in 1945.

The forecast is for more wet stuff most of the week, with Wednesday being the best chance to be outdoors without getting wet. Dress warm – overnight lows in the basin will be in the 20s for much of the week, with highs in the 40s and 50s.

Veterans Day Musical Salute

A Veterans Day Musical Salute by the Lake Tahoe Unified School District Performing Arts Department will be Nov. 10 at 7pm at South Tahoe Middle School multipurpose room.

It is free.

It is a musical tribute to all veterans. Nearly 350 students in the sixth-12th grade bands, orchestras and choirs will perform an hourlong concert of patriotic music.

Pumpkin carving contest

Truckee River Winery is having a pumpkin carving contest Oct. 30 from noon-4pm.

There will be an adult and child division.

Pumpkins will be provided for contestants, and carvers can take their pumpkins home. We will also have candy and treats for kids and adults.

RSVP: Must call ahead so there is a pumpkin waiting for you. (530) 587.4626

Halloween for adults and kids at Truckee River Winery

Make Truckee River Winery a stop on your trick or treating route this year. Adults can enjoy a glass of wine, while kids munch on Halloween treats.

Time: 11am-7pm

Day: Oct. 31

Where: Tasting room, 11467 Brockway Road, Truckee.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Earlier this month South Lake Tahoe wrote a check for $2,546.78 to Community Animal Hospital for Duke, the South Lake Tahoe police dog, to pay for a crown on a tooth.

• In 1854, Hangtown (Placerville) was the third largest town in California behind Sacramento and San Francisco.

• Mammoth Mountain has converted some snowcats into food vending apparatuses that will roam the slopes and make it unnecessary to stop at the lodge.

• It’s time to plant native wildflower seeds, according to Tahoe Resource Conservation District. Free seeds at the office – 870 Emerald Bay Road, South Lake Tahoe.

• Find out about the foundation Heavenly Mountain Resort skier Sho Kashima is starting.

Head-to-post soccer injury raises safety questions

By Emerson Marcus, Reno Gazette-Journal

Kevin Rivera cut a four-inch gash in his head and sustained a concussion during a soccer game Sept. 18.

The McQueen senior only remembers going for the ball before slowly regaining consciousness as he was escorted to a

hospital by an ambulance.

“It was scary,” said Rivera, who will return to the soccer field Wednesday against Reed.

What makes Rivera’s injury different than most soccer injuries is his wasn’t caused by body-to-body contact or the turf – Rivera collided with the goal post.

Nevada’s high school soccer goal posts, unlike football goal posts and the edges of basketball backboards, aren’t padded.

“It’s a very isolated injury,” McQueen athletic director Eric Borja said. “But football posts have pads and maybe this is something soccer should look into for the future.”

Read the whole story

Choosing the best shelter dog for your family

By Diane Pomerance

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) sponsors October as Adopt-a-Shelter-Dog Month to encourage Americans to turn their houses into homes by adopting a shelter dog. Each year, millions of dogs enter our nation’s shelters, yet of the almost 59 million owned dogs in this country, fewer than 20 percent are shelter adoptees.

I am an activist who has owned more than 40 shelter dogs, thinks it’s a shame more people don’t adopt from a shelter, because the most faithful, healthy and loving dogs are waiting there for new homes.

People sometimes don’t go to animal shelters to adopt a dog. They think, ‘I don’t want to inherit someone else’s problem,’ or they simply think all the dogs there are abused or hard to train, or that they won’t be able to find the breed that they want. All of those notions couldn’t be further from the truth.

In fact, up to nearly 60 percent of dogs in shelters are not strays, but pets whose families had to give them up because of a loss of income or a change in location. These are faithful, loving dogs who just need a home and some love.

The key is to know how to choose the right pet for your family. Here are tips to help families do just that:

* Breed – Check online about the different breeds, their temperament, health and physical characteristics. Find out all you can about the specific animal from shelter workers and volunteers.

* Lifestyle – Think about your lifestyle and personality in terms of the kind of dog that would be more compatible with your home and your living situation.

* Activity level – Assess the activity level and exercise requirements of the dog you are considering. Are you able to walk your dog several times a day and play with him?

* Age – Figure out what age of the animal is best suited to you and your family. Which is more compatible with your age and lifestyle? Do you want an active puppy that needs attention and training, a middle-aged dog with established behaviors, or an older, less active dog?

* Time – Do you have enough time for a quality relationship with a dog? Like children, they require attention, companionship, patience and interaction. They also require socialization and obedience training.

* Budget – Research the costs of not only adopting a pet

(adoption fee), but veterinary care, including spay/neuter, vaccinations, potential injuries or illness, regular checkups, toys, accessories, etc. Factor in costs of food, pet sitters or boarding while you're away. Keep in mind many pet shelters offer these services as part of the adoption fee, or at a discounted rate because many are not-for-profit organizations supported by private donations.

* Space – Do you have sufficient room for a dog to move, eat and sleep comfortably? Further, are you legally allowed to have a dog on the premises/in your community? If you rent, make sure you are legally allowed to have a pet.

* Shelter – Find out as much about the shelter from which you are adopting your pet as possible – what is its reputation? Is it a kill or no-kill shelter? What is the track record of the successful adoption of its dogs?

Adopting a shelter dog is a lifetime choice, as these pets will likely spend the rest of their lives with you, and it is not something that should be taken lightly. That being said, it is a positive choice, and one that will bring joy and love into your home and provide your family a loyal, caring companion.

Diane Pomerance has a doctorate in communications from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and is widely regarded as a pet expert. She has written seven books about animals.

Electricity supplier to

Calif. side of basin changing hands

By Kathryn Reed

In a few months, electric customers on the California side of the Lake Tahoe Basin will no longer be writing monthly checks to Sierra Pacific Power. Instead, it will be to CalPeco – short for California Pacific Electric Company.

California Pacific Electric Company is a newly formed company jointly owned by Algonquin Power Income Fund and Emera Inc.

All that is holding up the $123 million transaction is the Nevada Public Utility Commission. That entity meets in December.

On a 4-1 vote this month the South Lake Tahoe City Council agreed to swap names on the franchise agreement to reflect who will be supplying power to the area.

The California PUC approved the sale Oct. 14.

Representatives from NV Energy and CalPeco addressed the council last week to talk about what the 46,000 customers throughout the basin and from Portola to Markleeville can expect in the future.

The idea is nothing changes in terms of delivery of electricity. The new company will actually be buying its power from NV Energy for at least the first five years. CalPeco would like to develop alternative energy sources.

All Sierra Pacific employees have been offered jobs. More jobs will be available when CalPeco opens a service center in South Tahoe. California rebates often not available to Sierra Pacific costumers because their power came from Nevada should be a non-issue with CalPeco being a California utility.

Christopher Hilen with NV Energy and Bob Dodds with CalPeco said customers would not be burdened with a rate increase because of the sale.

“I don’t buy it,” was resident Tom Davis’ reaction.

Councilman Bruce Grego was thinking the same thing, as he was the lone vote against transferring title of the franchise, which expires in 2018.

“I believe we will see a rate increase because it’s a little company that will buy power from Sierra Pacific. I think staff should do more review,” Grego said.

Although the state PUC is the overseer of all rate increases, hikes are not allowed based on an acquisition like this. Utilities may ask for an increase every three years.

Scientist reveals intricacies of cloud seeding in Sierra

By Stephen Ward

INCLINE VILLAGE – Using a propane flame to shoot silver iodide into the sky with a unit that resembles a prison watchtower with a trash barrel aimed at the sky attached to the top is how the Desert Research Institute is helping Mother Nature produce more moisture.

Ground tactic cloud seeding is the only type of seeding being done by DRI this year.



Arlen Huggins

Arlen Huggins addressed his area of study with a swiftness that marginalized the nearly 23 years of research he has devoted to the project. And with each slide projected on the screen underpinning the complex procedure he was presenting, Huggins offered observers a detailed look at cloud seeding – a method local scientists use to augment rain and snowfall in Lake Tahoe.

The lecture last week at the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences on the campus of Sierra Nevada College before roughly 50 began with an array of definitions for words meant to bridge the gap between the scientist and the public's disparate lexicons. Words like cloud drops, or small water spheres, and the ice nuclei silver iodide were among the highlighted expressions.

From there, Huggins briefed the crowd on the history of cloud seeding, with its genesis being in the late 1940s with studies conducted by scientists Vincent Schaefer and Bernard Vonnegut, the older brother of the popular American novelist.

"Cloud seeding helps enhance rainfall during the growing season, as well as reduce the damaging effects of hail," he said. "It also has the capability to increase runoff in the spring for power generation, and has potential for increasing water supply."

Although no studies have been conducted, Huggins said there are no health effects to cloud seeding.

"It would be a concern if the mass were a lot," he said. "But

we’re nowhere close to EPA levels.”



Cloud seeding in the Sierra brings more moisture to the area. Photo/Provided

Not everyone was convinced cloud seeding is an effective process. Steven McQuinn of Incline Village believes DRI might have ulterior motives.

“I didn’t get a sense of any conclusive evidence,” he said. “The nature of their statistical studies … doesn’t achieve proof of cause and effect. There could be other motivations, such as a water manager under pressure. Moreover, I feel there’s more evidence for climate change. Compared to (climate change), cloud seeding evidence is negligible.”

The effectiveness of cloud seeding has been measured by instrumented aircrafts with probes on the wings that count the ice crystals and plume in a cloud. In addition, DRI uses radars and its own process of snow sampling, where they push snowfall through a cheese grater-like apparatus, collect it and examine it in a lab.

The silver iodide particles rise into the clouds at minus 5 degrees Celsius, causing cloud moisture to freeze and create ice crystals. This process takes about 20 to 30 minutes. Once the ice crystals grow big enough, they fall as snow.

The entire process is done through a generator that took nearly a decade to get. Each generator costs about $30,000 to build, between $40,000 to $50,000 to run for a year.

Loren Rupp, a 10-year Incline Village resident and graduate student at Sierra Nevada College, received answers to the questions he brought with him to the meeting.

“I came here with two questions: effectiveness and how it’s measured,” he said. “I see how they gather their results through blind and parallel studies.”

Airplanes have also been used in the past for cloud seeding by flying over clouds and dispersing silver iodide through nozzles attached to the wings of planes. This was done by the DRI west of Lake Tahoe for most of the past decade before losing state funding because of the sagging economy.

DRI conducts the majority of its cloud seeding research with the help of Truckee Meadows and Southern Nevada Water authorities.

Walk designed to gather info on S. Tahoe businesses

The South Shore Business Walk is Nov. 4 from 7:30am–2pm. The day will begin with brief training at South Lake Tahoe offices at Lake Tahoe Airport.

Then teams of walkers will visit various parts of the community. Participants will be looking to gain valuable feedback on what organizations like about doing business on the South Shore, as well as ideas for improvement.

No money to do the work for the organizations. Lunch will be provided to all walkers.

To register, call Kennedy Cullen at (916) 319.4277.

The walk is a joint effort between the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce, South Lake Tahoe, El Dorado County, Lake Tahoe Community College and Sacramento Metro Chamber.