Nevada food stamp program swamped with applicants

By Kara LaPoint, Reno Gazette-Journal

In June of this year, 14,601 Nevada residents applied for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, which are more commonly known as food stamps.

Of those applications, nearly 90 percent were processed within 30 days as required by the federal government.

But last year, more applicants were left waiting, especially in Reno, where roughly 68 percent of applications were processed on time in November and December.

With record SNAP participation nationwide, Nevada is not the only state struggling with timely processing, says the United States Department of Agriculture, the organization that facilitates the program. The most recent processing rates available showed state timeliness ranging from 74.16 to 97.97 percent, but those figures are from fiscal year 2008.

Read the whole story

Rash of Truckee burglaries ends with 3 arrests

Three Truckee residents were arrested related to a string of burglaries this week.

On Aug. 16 at about 5:30am, an in-progress residential

burglary was reported in the Sierra Meadows subdivision of Truckee. Officers responded and arrested two suspects after a short foot pursuit.

A third person was identified through investigation as being involved and was later arrested. A fourth subject fled the area on foot and is actively being sought.

Investigation revealed that the same suspects were involved in numerous auto burglaries throughout Truckee overnight.

Arrested were Rogelio Espinoza, 23, of Truckee on charges of residential burglary, conspiracy, and auto burglary; and Luis Gonzales, 18, of Truckee on charges of residential burglary and conspiracy.

In addition, a juvenile was arrested and booked at Juvenile Hall on charges of residential burglary and possession of drug paraphernalia. Another juvenile is still outstanding.

Anyone with information concerning this case should call (530) 550.2323.

K’s Kitchen: Sampling the Sierra at home

By Kathryn Reed

Sampling the Sierra is something I like to do on a regular basis. With the various farmers’ markets in the region and the abundance of regional wine, there really is no reason not to eat locally.



It can even be done in the winter. This takes a little more work, especially if canning is involved. I remember my parents used to can tomatoes that Mom would then use in sauces and other dishes later in the year; cucumbers that became dill pickles; peaches that have prohibited me from ever buying a can at the grocery store. I have wonderful memories of picking produce with Mom from farms in Brentwood – where some of the veggies for the Tuesday South Tahoe market come from.

Although I have never canned anything, I have cooked tomatoes down in a crock pot and then frozen them to use later. I often whip up batches of pesto to pull out of the freezer all winter. And frozen fruit is great for smoothies.

Right now, though, it's all about eating summer's bounty while it is fresh. One of my favorite summer dinners is barbecued veggies, rice pilaf (from scratch) and a bottle of white wine (shared, of course).

I seldom create the same marinade twice because I don't usually follow a recipe. Below is a concoction I came up with last weekend. One key is to make sure the vegetables (same goes for meat and fish) are able to absorb the sauce for several hours. This makes the end product all that much more tasty.

I usually chop veggies into bite size pieces or smaller, put them in a glass 9×13 dish, then pour the marinade over the veggies and let chill for the better part of the day. We use a grate that goes on the grill. It's like stir frying on the barbie.

Something to pay attention to, especially when cooking for others, is the color of the food. In other words, don't use all green vegetables. Presentation is the first step to appetizing food.

Then think about how long each vegetable takes to cook. Carrots are rather hard and will take longer. You might want to parboil them before tossing them with the rest of the veggies in the marinade.

There is no wrong combination of vegetables. It’s all a matter of what you like.

Being a vegetarian, I think this works as an entrée. Many of you may find the veggies a great side dish. Leftovers, if there are any, work great heated up, used in a bean concoction for nachos, wrapped in tortillas, and mixed in with scrambled eggs. The marinade you choose will play a role in how to use the veggies for leftovers.

If you don’t want to cook for yourself, consider going to Sample the Sierra on Aug. 21 on Ski Run Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe.



Our early Sample the Sierra at home last Sunday included veggies from Tuesday’s South Lake Tahoe farmers’ market, plus mushrooms that were in the fridge; a bottle of Sierra Vista Viognier we had bought at the winery the weekend before; and a peach (more farmers’ market) and blueberry cobbler with vanilla ice cream. Not a bad way to refuel after a 12-mile hike.

Marinade

1 bunch basil, chopped

5 cloves garlic, minced

¼ C olive oil

1/8 C dark balsamic vinegar

1 T Dijon mustard

1 T hot chili oil

Mix all of the ingredients together. Pour over 9×13 dish filled half full with chopped veggies. Coat all vegetables. Cover and refrigerate for several hours. Stir occasionally (if you are home). Cook over medium heat on grill.

Annual forest stewardship day on Sept. 11

Volunteer for the 13th annual Tahoe Forest Stewardship Day on Sept. 11 at North Tahoe Regional Park.

Join hundreds of volunteers to help restore forest ecosystems, alpine meadows, creeks and streams, and improve water quality.

Learn about forest and fire ecology, defensible space, wildlife, invasive species, and hydrology.

Volunteers and team leaders are needed.

To sign-up, contact Flavia Sordelet at (530) 541.5388 or email events@keeptahoeblue.org.

Reid treats media like Angle does

By Kathryn Reed

Is Harry Reid taking a page out of Sharron Angles' playbook?

It appeared so Tuesday at a soiree at a private home of a supporter of Reid's. After the annual environmental summit at Sand Harbor, some people were invited to gather at this house off Lakeshore Boulevard in Incline Village.

I had an email invite. I showed up. Though my name was not on the list, I was let in and given a nametag. I mingled a bit. Then as the hostess began to speak I sat upfront on the wet grass in my skirt so I could hear and see what was going on.



Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid at a "private" house party Aug. 17. Photo/Kathryn Reed

She said all the niceties that one would expect at a function like this.

But what was a bit different about this gathering is that it was not a fundraiser for the Senate majority leader who hails from Nevada. It was not just Democrats in the crowd. It was not just Nevadans. A whole lot of registered voters from California were there to hear what he had to say.

Then Charles Goldman, Mr. Lake Clarity, said a few words about how scary it would be for Lake Tahoe if Reid were not re-elected. Then he read a poignant poem he wrote about Tahoe.

Next up was the senator. He spoke for a bit and then took questions. It was unscripted. Questions ranged from what his opinions are about volunteer health care professionals needing malpractice insurance to how the Democrats are going to get organized and have a more coherent message like the Republicans do to what's going to be done about the U.S. Forest Service-biomass plants-fuels reduction.

As the questions started, a guy walked over and asked if I was with the media. I answered truthfully. He said he is one of Reid's press guy's and that this was not a media event. I said I wouldn't write about it.

I guess I lied. But I didn't mean to at the time. I did stop taking pictures and notes. It was just as well. I had someplace else to be.

Even though at the time I knew the First Amendment had my back, I chose not to cause a raucous. I commented to one person at the event as I left, "He needs the media more than we need him." It's pretty much the case for most electeds, but even more so in an election year.

It's been in the intervening hours that it has gnawed on me being told this was not a media event. Who do these politicians and wannabe politicians think they represent? Who is paying their salary? Who is paying their Cadillac health insurance? Who is paying their enviable retirement?

The homeowner didn’t ask me to leave. If she had, I would have been good with that. It’s her house. She has every right to say who is and is not allowed in.

Is Reid like Angle, who he faces on Nov. 2?

Angle has told Fox News, “We wanted (the media) to ask the questions we want to answer so that they report the news the way we want it reported.”

Why didn’t Reid want the media to report on this event? He didn’t say anything substantive at the summit at Sand Harbor. Were his people afraid he might actually say something newsworthy? Wow – isn’t substance and honesty what voters deserve?

His people haven’t always cloistered Reid. That’s why I was shocked to experience this. Plus, I was invited.

Reid should look at who is working in his offices. I called weeks ago to his Reno and Washington offices seeking information about the Aug. 17 environmental summit that he hosted. No word from any of his people until I was told to leave an event hosted by someone else.

When *Lake Tahoe News* reporter Susan Wood was working at the *Tahoe Daily Tribune* a few years ago she rode the Heavenly gondola with Reid and two others. Just the four of them. Now that is giving the media access. That was the time he called the last president a liar – yes, that was his four-letter word for George W. Bush.

Harry Reid – talk and listen to the voters. The media, all media, are your conduit to do that. Preaching to the converted at private house parties isn’t going to get you elected.

The same goes for all people running for election at every level. Like, love or hate the media, we are the Fourth Estate. We have rights. We will exercise them. We will demand access,

answers and the truth. You can tell it or we'll uncover it. You decide.

Kathryn Reed is publisher of Lake Tahoe News.

Day of paddling along Lake Tahoe Water Trail

Join the Lake Tahoe Water Trail for the Fall Paddle Day on Oct. 9 at 8:30am.

Paddle from Zephyr Cove Lodge with researchers at the forefront of protecting Lake Tahoe from aquatic invasive species. A barbecue will follow.

The cost is $30/person, $50/couple includes lunch (Members $25/person, $45/couple).

Kayak rental available on site.

Advance registration is required. Online registration begins Sept. 9 at www.laketahoewatertrail.org.

Economy woven into annual Tahoe environmental summit

By Kathryn Reed

INCLINE VILLAGE – No documents to sign. No grand announcement

of buckets of money coming to Lake Tahoe. No new threat to the lake.

Tuesday's annual environmental summit was more of an update on what is going on than anything else. The economy was a last-minute add as a topic, which was embraced by some of the speakers.



Hundreds gather for the 14th annual environmental summit Aug. 17 at Sand Harbor. Photos/Kathryn Reed

David Hayes, Department of Interior deputy secretary, talked about the importance recreation has on the U.S. economy. It accounts for 6.5 million jobs, generates $49 billion annually in tax revenue, and $289 billion in retail sales.

"It's an important industry. It's a way to bring economic development to rural areas," Hayes said.

Recreation was evident on this bluebird day, as beach-goers frolicked along the shore and in the water at Sand Harbor. The historic Thunderbird woody sat offshore during the summit.

Sen. John Ensign, R-Nev., sported a bandage on his right arm – a mountain bike misadventure along the Tahoe Rim Trail during

his multi-day visit to the area with his family.

What would also help the Lake Tahoe economy and the environment is for Congress to reauthorize the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act. With it being an election year, action on the plan that would bring $415 million to the region in an eight-year period may not occur until after Nov. 2, if at all.

It was the inaugural summit in 1997 with then President Bill Clinton that spurred the federal funding for Lake Tahoe. The original act passed in 2000 brought $424 million to Tahoe in 10 years.

All told, $1.5 billion has been spent on environment improvement projects in Lake Tahoe since the first summit.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., spoke to the nearly 300 people on Aug. 17 about how the Travel Promotion Act passed by Congress earlier this year will help Tahoe. He said it will create 6,000 jobs for Nevada and a half million nationwide. The idea is people outside the country will be told about the virtues of Lake Tahoe and be enticed to re-create here.

As always, lake clarity was a substantive part of the summit. Invasive species and forest fuel reduction were also touched on. El Dorado County Supervisor Norma Santiago and consultant Trish Kelly rehashed the previous day's meeting about the Prosperity Plan.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif, spoke about a meeting she hosted for 50 locals on Monday who provided her with a slew of reports – mostly about lake clarity, some about the thousands of acres treated for fuels management.

At the summit she said, "Twenty-five percent of these beautiful forests around us are dead and dying, therefore it's primed for a catastrophic fire."

She illustrated how the Asian clams invading Lake Tahoe could extend 3.5 miles if laid end-to-end.

In these trying economic times, Feinstein and others pointed to the need to tap into the private sector even more. She praised Steve Teshara with Sustainable Community Advocates and Andrew Strain at Heavenly Mountain Resort for their efforts. She also acknowledged Art Chapman who runs JMA Ventures.

The constant theme for the day was Tahoe is an international treasure that needs protecting.

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Mild wildfire season has officials hoping it lasts

By Steve Timko, Reno Gazette-Journal

In the past few years, fires have threatened homes along the western Sierra front by mid-August. Or, smoke has drifted over from California wildfires and filled Reno's skies, maybe even hurting air quality.



Knock on wood.

So far, that hasn't happened much. And, western Nevada fire crews like the way it's going and want to keep it up.

U.S. Bureau of Land Management spokesman Mark Struble said almost no crews specially trained to battle fires threatening homes are deployed anywhere in the West.

“This is the time of the year when we’re usually scrambling to get crews from anywhere,” Struble said.

“The season’s not over. We’re still in the middle of it. We’ve been lucky so far,” said Joe Durousseau, operations chief for the Reno Fire Department. “We don’t get a fire unless we get a start. If we don’t get any starts, we’ll be in good shape.”

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Read the whole story

Where is California’s overdue budget?

By Sacramento Bee

We’re more than 40 days into the state government’s new fiscal year. Democrats and Republicans still can’t agree on how to close the state’s estimated $19 billion deficit.

It wasn’t until recently, in fact, that Assembly and Senate legislative leaders settled on a detailed plan that has the support of both Democratic caucuses.

GOP legislative leaders and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger continue to push for the governor’s May proposal, though Republican lawmakers aren’t entirely on board.

The Republican governor says he thinks Democrats and Republicans are only about $4 billion apart in their negotiations. That is closer than anyone else is willing to suggest, but there are significant areas of agreement.

Read the whole story

Flume Trail bike race

The Great Tahoe Flume Race is sanctioned by USA Cycling and is the final race in the Nevada Cup State Championship Series, a four-race points series that will determine the Nevada State Mountain Bike Champion, which carries a $1,000 prize.

The Reno Wheelman are putting on the Sept. 12 9am event.

The race is 18 miles, with a 3,100-foot elevation gain.

Proceeds go toward the volunteer backcountry patrol in the Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park.

To register, visit bikereg.com.