Drought could lead to record wildfire season

By Mark Koba, CNBC

Three years of severe drought have made plenty of misery for California and other Western states. Now to make matters worse, the extremely dry conditions are creating the potential for a devastating fire season.

“All the pieces are in place for a really bad season of wildfires,” said Malcolm North, a research ecologist with the U.S. Forest Service. “We’re likely to set a record for fires this year.”

The drought has hit hard in states like Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas and especially California, where the snowpack in the Sierra Nevada is at 12 percent of the annual average. Snowpack in the Cascades in Washington and Oregon is also below normal.

That has dried out the trees, shrubs and grasses that end up fueling the fires.

Read the whole story

Prescribed fires planned throughout basin

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews may continue prescribed fire operations in several areas around Lake Tahoe beginning Feb. 24.

Prescribed fire activity may take place on Spooner Summit, off Bunker Drive near Tahoe City, on Highway 89 near Tahoma, and in the Luther Pass Campground off of Highway 89. Crews may continue operations through the weekend if weather, staffing, and conditions permit. 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.

To receive prescribed fire notifications, send an email to pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.

Placerville officals crack down on illegal camps

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

In what Placerville police characterized as an outreach operation, officers accompanied by mental health and community resource representatives removed 14 illegal camps throughout the city.

The Wednesday morning operation focused on known areas of illegal camping and resulted in the removal of camps along Broadway, Placerville Drive, Ray Lawyer Drive and along the El

Dorado Trail from Mosquito Road to Schnell School, according to a Police Department news release.

After weeks of extra patrols during which officers advised illegal campers of the need to comply with state and local laws, police and city crews partnered with mental health representatives and members of the Community Resource Center, and returned to the areas frequented by campers. The purpose of the operation, officials said, was to remove illegal camps and to connect those individuals in crisis and wanting help with available services.

Read the whole story

CHP, NHP unable to stop speeding vehicle

Saturday at 8:42am Nevada Highway Patrol troopers were called to stop a vehicle driving at a high speeds from Mono County.

After a routine traffic stop Feb. 22, Mono County officers were interviewing the driver outside his 2013 Hyundai Sonata, with California plates 6VRP791. Passenger Geoffry Guess, 26, from Idaho got into the driver’s seat and sped off. Guess entered Nevada going more than 100 mph. Attempts to stop the vehicle were unsuccessful.

The vehicle was last seen northbound on Interstate 580 north of Bowers Mansion.

Guess is known to resist police officers and is considered to be armed and dangerous.

Anyone who may have seen this vehicle, or who has information,

should call (775) 687.0400.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Nev. slot players able to use prepaid cards

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

Gamblers will soon be able to use prepaid access cards to play slot machines in Nevada, a technological advancement that has some critics concerned that easier access to cash in a casino would broaden problem gambling.

The Nevada Gaming Commission on Thursday approved amendments to two regulations that would allow the use of prepaid access instruments in conjunction with approved wagering accounts.

The amendments take effect immediately, and technical standards will be published soon to guide companies. The amended regulations enable state Gaming Control Board Chairman A.G. Burnett to administratively approve the use of equipment.

Read the whole story

CHP to go after aggressive

drivers

The California Highway Patrol will deploy additional officers on Highway 50 from South Lake Tahoe, Placerville, and Sacramento offices March 14-16 in effort to reduce the number of fatal and injury traffic collisions attributed to aggressive driving, unsafe speed, unsafe passing, improper turning movements along with other moving violations.

The CHP is using a federally-funded grant titled Reduce Aggressive Driving Incidents and Tactically Enforce Speed (RADIATES) to pay for the extra patrol.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration defines aggressive driving as “when individuals commit a combination of moving traffic offenses so as to endanger other persons or property.”

Data from the CHP show that from January 2010 through May 2013 (the most recent figures available) there were 2,008 collisions as a result of various speed violations on Highway 50 from South Lake Tahoe west through south Sacramento. Those collisions resulted in five deaths and 968 injuries.

North Tahoe to honor outstanding community members

The 60th annual Community Awards Dinner where individuals are recognized for dedication to North Lake Tahoe through services in business, community development and volunteer work is March 27.

The dinner is at the Ritz-Carlton, Lake Tahoe starting at 6pm. The awards presentation begins shortly after the meal.

Tickets for the evening are $85 per person and may be purchased online.

The deadline to nominate individuals and business organizations is March 3. Businesses may also nominate employees and volunteers of the year.

For more information, call (530) 581.8764 or email Ginger Karl at ginger@gotahoenorth.com.

‘Sweet Talk’ burlesque show leaves a sour taste

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Techno meets burlesque with a side of Cirque du Soliel. It’s not a good combination.

“Sweet Talk: A Delicious Electro-Cirque Kiss” misses on nearly every mark.

The redeeming aspect of the 70-minute show at MontBleu is that the athleticism is near Olympic caliber. This is because of the acrobatics. The strength of the woman performing the acts is to be admired.



Acrobatics are the redeeming part of “Sweet Talk” at MontBleu. Photo/Kathryn Reed

She did a pole dance of a different kind that proved agility and strength as she contorted her body into various positions. Then a ladder was suspended from the stage at an angle that allowed the performer to do a dance of sorts in a provocative manner.

South Lake Tahoe resident Angela Smith choreographed the aerial acts.

The two men in the show also put their muscles to use in ways that drew appreciative applause.

But the show is not sexy. The dancing is amateurish. The costumes are uninspiring. The singing is fair.

Burlesque shows can work; Jubilee is still a hit in Las Vegas. Folies Bergere had to call it quits in 2009 after 50 years. But both of those shows were choreographed in a classic showgirl tradition, with excellent dancers, multiple costume changes and a true show that captivated the audience.

And while Lake Tahoe is not Las Vegas on so many levels, there was a time when Stateline was known for topnotch entertainment. Now it’s hit or miss.

“Sweet Talk” at MontBleu is a definite miss.

Even though techno is popular, it doesn’t cross many

generational lines. That’s a problem.

Shows like this should be fun and upbeat. Instead, the two of us were bored. The people in front of us didn’t find much to applaud. Our tablemates had a look as though they wished the show would end soon.

One of the more disturbing numbers was when the six women came out in black garb that covered their legs, arms, hands and face, while the skimpy clothes were electric neon. It was as though instead of “black face” they did “black body”.

What the point of bringing a male audience member onto stage was is still a mystery. That dance number didn’t work.

DJ Viola Lala Mia is near the back of the stage for most of the show on what looks like scaffolding. At the end of the show she puts on a fire eating shtick.

While it’s great to see a long-running show try to make it here, this just isn’t a show that should have made it to the stage.

Jessica Broyles, who owns Champagne Productions, created the show. The former Gardnerville resident now lives in Los Angeles.

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Notes:

• “Sweet Talk: A Delicious Electro-Cirque Kiss” is at MontBleu Fridays and Saturdays through April 5. Tickets are $20, plus tax and fees. For more info, call 888.829.7630.

• The show is dark March 8 and March 28.

• The show is 70 minutes.

Editorial: Nev. needs to address mental health

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the Feb. 16, 2014, Las Vegas Sun.***

A federal judge last week dismissed a lawsuit alleging that Nevada dumped mental health patients on other states.

The lawsuit came after a string of damning news stories about Nevada's mental health system, and it says officials at the Rawson-Neal Psychiatric Hospital in Las Vegas regularly discharged patients with one-way bus tickets out of Nevada.

For Nevada, it was a technical win, but it is hardly a victory.

Read the whole story

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3 powerful women in Nev. gaming tell their stories

By Jane Ann Morrison, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Three powerful women who carved out roles in Nevada's gaming industry as it moved away from gambling halls to megaresorts shared their stories at the Mob Museum on Wednesday, riveting an audience with their substance and humor.

Patricia Becker, the first and so far the only woman appointed to the Gaming Control Board, described how she was dubbed “Pretty Patty” by a writer when she was appointed 20 years ago, yet casino owners were fearful she would be too tough on them.

Jan Jones Blackhurst, who came to Las Vegas to boost her family’s grocery store sales, became the first female mayor of Las Vegas in 1991 and is vice president of communications and government relations at Caesars Entertainment Corp.

Elaine Wynn moved to Las Vegas in 1967 as a wife and mother and created the “Wynn lifestyle” with her ex-husband at The Mirage, Treasure Island, Bellagio, Wynn Las Vegas, Encore and Wynn Macau.

Read the whole story