Placer County to host class for businesses selling booze

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

As part of a grant from the state Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, deputies will offer Licensee Education on Alcohol and Drugs training on Oct. 2 from 2-5:30pm at the Tahoe City Public Utility District Office, 221 Fairway Drive, Tahoe City.

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.

Calif. marks warmest winter, spring on record

By Sharon Bernstein, Reuters

SACRAMENTO – California had its warmest winter and spring on record this year, leading to stresses on water resources and agriculture, as well as increased risk of wildfire in the most populous U.S. state, the National Weather Service said Monday.

In an overview of the nation's weather released on the agency's website, meteorologists said temperatures in

California were about 5 degrees Fahrenheit above normal during the first six months of 2014, and just over 1 degree hotter than the previous record.

“Despite short-term drought relief in the Central and Southern Plains, long-term drought conditions will continue to impact water resources and agriculture,” the report said. “Long-term and short-term drought conditions in the West will also increase wildfire risk.”

Read the whole story

Storms leave mounds of mud in Carson Valley

By Associated Press

Douglas County residents are digging out after flash flooding left up to 3 feet of mud and debris in some neighborhood streets south of Carson City over the weekend.

The Sierra storm that dumped more than an inch of rain in less than a half an hour also triggered the first tornado warning in the Reno area in six years. A series of funnel clouds were spotted Monday afternoon near Virginia City, near Interstate 80 east of Reno and northeast of Sparks, but none touched down and no serious damage was reported, the National Weather Service said.



Significant hail in South Lake Tahoe on July 18. Photo/LTN

Flooding closed several major roadways in the eastern Carson Valley on Sunday, including Fish Springs, East Valley and Johnson Lane.

“We never had a tornado. It has to touch down to be a tornado,” said Wendell Hohmann, a service meteorologist in Reno.

Carson City public works manager Darren Schulz said that although some roads were covered with mud, they didn’t appear to suffer infrastructure damage.

“There were a number of garages dealing with some water and mud, but I don’t know of any homes where it actually got into the home,” Schulz said. “For the vast majority, it ripped through their yards, tore out all their landscaping.”

Since early last week, monsoon-fueled thunderheads have swelled in the afternoon skies daily, bringing lightning, rain and hail throughout the region.

“We do get tornadoes here in Northern Nevada, but they’re not very common,” meteorologist Scott McGuire said. “The last time we issued a tornado warning was July 21, 2008.”

Heavy rain and hail the size of a half dollar was reported Monday evening in Palomino Valley north of Reno, and 0.21 inches of rain fell in less than 10 minutes to the east in

Lyon County.

On Sunday, the largest rainfall totals were 2.90 inches at Glenbrook, with Incline Village receiving more than 2 inches. In a little more than two hours, Incline Creek went from being basically dry to rising just below flood stage, McGuire said.

At Fish Springs in southern Douglas County, 1.35 inches of rain fell in 30 minutes, causing flash floods of the type that also hit the Johnson Lane and Indian Hills areas. Lightning strikes caused power outages affecting more than 12,000 customers in Douglas County.

“The rain would have been better if spread out over a couple of days as opposed to an inch in an hour,” Fire Chief Stacey Giomi said.

Marriott chain directing focus on millennials

By Alexandra Wolfe, Wall Street Journal

Bill Marriott, the 82-year-old chairman of Marriott International, the $19 billion hotel-management company, is done with flowered drapes and white tablecloths. In place of fusty bedspreads and fluffy carpets, he wants most of his 200 new luxury and lifestyle hotel projects to be filled with sleek flat-screen TVs, hardwood floors and hopping bars.

“We’ve got to be cool!” Marriott exclaims, sitting in one of the last bastions of the old Marriott aesthetic —- his office. Surrounded by oil paintings, old photographs and a model boat, his sprawling suite in his company’s headquarters in Bethesda,

Md., is exactly what the future of Marriott hotels will not look like. It will look instead like the hotel company's innovation lab a few floors below, where mock rooms are being built in a cavernous space to be tested among 20-somethings.

Later this summer, Marriott will launch its new hotel chain, Moxy Hotels, aimed at the millennial generation (roughly ages 18 to 33). In partnership with Inter Hospitality Holding, the hotels will feature small, low-cost rooms with grab-and-go food and the feel of a Silicon Valley startup.

"In four years, 60 percent of our business will be millennials," says Marriott, who adds with a laugh, "All of us old folks are moving on."

The future of Marriott Hotels will look like the hotel company's innovation lab, where mock rooms are being built in a cavernous space to be tested among twentsomethings.

Read the whole story

WCSO warning of phone scam

Phone scammers are calling Washoe County residents saying they are from the sheriff's department and that they want money. The scammer tells the person there is a warrant out for their arrest that includes a fine.

The scammer then tells the potential victim that their options are either to surrender themselves to the sheriff's office for arrest or pay a "reduced" payment. The scammer provides instruction on how the payment should be submitted, usually through an "eGift" cash card or similar payment to a specified account or name given by the caller.

While the sheriff’s department will call people to inform someone about a warrant, no one will ever ask for payment over the phone or offer to negotiate for reduced payment in lieu of arrest. Anyone with questions about a warrant may call the courts or local law enforcement.

Anyone who has been a victim of this scam, or who receives such a call, is encouraged to take down as much information as possible, such as a name and call back number, without giving any information away. Then contact the Washoe County Sheriff’s Office at 775.785.9276.

Toxic Alpine County sulfur mine settlement near

By Kathryn Reed

Ponds oozing toxic chemicals sitting in what looks like a wasteland. That is what the long defunct Leviathan Mine in Alpine County is today.

For decades the old sulfur mine has been in litigation. A settlement between Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board and ARCO should be signed any day.

It is such a nasty situation that in 2000 the federal government deemed it a Superfund site. It doesn’t get worse than that.

“The high sulfur content in the waste rocks and fractures at the 250-acre mine site turns snowmelt, rain and groundwater into sulfuric acid, which leaches contaminants from the native minerals such as arsenic, copper, nickel, zinc, chromium along

with aluminum and iron," the Environmental Protection Agency website says. "This acid mine drainage then flows into the creek system at a number of points, devastating aquatic life until the creeks join the East Fork of the Carson River, a much larger flow."



Leviathan holding ponds and treatment system used by the water board at the site. Photo/Lahontan Water Board

Millions of dollars have been spent to curtail the environmental damage from the mine that is six miles from Markleeville. Hundreds of millions of dollars is likely to be needed to create a system that will better treat the contaminants.

Today, ARCO and Lahontan have separate systems. The settlement would bring them all under Lahontan's purview. ARCO would pay 75 percent of the cost to construct a more robust treatment system, the state would pay the remainder. Operation and maintenance costs will be split 70-30, with taxpayers getting saddled with the lesser amount.

The litigation expense has been covered by an insurance policy the state had. But taxpayers have already been billed $25 million. The ongoing operation and maintenance could be $5 million a year total. Lahontan expects to be saddled with this chore forever.

While there are treatment systems in place, they are not

comprehensive. The settlement will address what gets done when and who pays for it.

A feasibility study will consider if the current diesel generators are the route to go or if bringing power to the site is better in the long run. Whether the area should be fenced is also a consideration.

Chuck Curtis, who has been overseeing the mine for Lahontan for years, told the board at the July 16 meeting, “Protecting human health and the environment are the bottom line.”

As a CERCLA site, there are certain parameters that must be followed. And there is also a certain amount of risk that is allowed. This site will presumably always be toxic, just not to the degree that it is today.

And even today it is better than what it was.

In 1999, there were no rainbow, brook or brown trout in Lower Leviathan Creek, according to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. In 2013, there were 72 rainbows, 521 brooks and zero browns.

In Bryant Creek in 1998, there were 64 rainbows, 16 brooks and zero browns. By 2013 the numbers were 728 rainbows, 528 brooks and 1,657 browns.

Anaconda Copper Mining Company used the mine from 1951-62. It was sold in 1963 to William Mann, who was Alpine County’s clerk, for $100.

Eventually officials discovered acid mine drainage was contaminating Leviathan Creek. There was no way Mann was going to be able to write the checks for the cleanup.

California stepped in in 1983 and bought the land. A lawsuit was filed against Atlantic Richfield Co. , which had bought Anaconda. A settlement of just more than $2 million allowed clean up to start.

But then the Washoe tribe asked the EPA to get involved because the pollutants were creating a thick layer of orange precipitate along the streambed that ended up in the East Fork of the Carson River.

The EPA went after ARCO, and in turn ARCO filed a suit against Lahontan. It is that second lawsuit that is near resolution and will ultimately lead to better clean up of Leviathan Mine.

Letter: How to stay connected during an emergency

To the community,

Thank you to everyone who kept in touch with us via social media Sunday during the extended power outage. Almost 15,000 of you saw our postings on Facebook. During the power outage the police department issued “Reverse 911” calls with updates on the situation. Unfortunately, the calls were not received on land lines which were connected to answering machines because of the power failure and were primarily received on cellular phones.

As a result, the city is asking the public to sign up with their cellular numbers.

To register to receive “Reverse 911” calls to either or both your home landline and your mobile phone line, go online. It is very easy to sign up and you are allowed to sign up two different phone numbers and two different email addresses along with your physical address.

The El Dorado County Alert Notification System has made it easy to register your chosen contact information through the systems Self Registration Portal. You can then receive notification on your cellular telephone via phone call or text, or at your email address. It’s up to you. To register your emergency contact information or just to find out more information about the system, go online.

Social media via Facebook, Twitter and Instagram proved to be the most effective way to inform the public of Sunday’s emergency situation. You can find the links to the city’s Facebook and Twitter accounts on our home page. Scroll to the bottom of the page, look on the right side.

Please feel free to share so we can keep even more community members connected during an emergency situation.

Thank you!

Tracy Franklin, public information officer for South Lake Tahoe

---

Permanent drug-disposal bin at SLTPD

There is now a permanent drug-disposal bin located in the lobby of the South Lake Tahoe Police Department.

South Tahoe Drug Free Coalition led the charge to make this a reality.

The bin is in a secure location for anyone in the community to properly dispose of unused, unwanted or expired prescription drugs. Liquids and “sharps” (needles, lancets, syringes and

IVs) cannot be dropped off. They may be disposed of in a puncture resistant container at South Tahoe Refuse's hazardous materials drop off.

Studies show that a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including from the home medicine cabinet, according to the coalition.

And water companies don't want them flushed, nor do garbage companies want them in the trash. Flushing and tossing pose health and environmental problems.

Unwanted prescription medications may be taken to the drug-disposal bin Monday–Friday, 9am-3pm. For after-hours drop offs there is a buzzer located outside the door. The department is at 1352 Johnson Blvd., South Lake Tahoe. For more info, call 530.542.6100.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• American Public Works Association-Nevada Chapter has recognized Tahoe Transportation District for the Nevada Stateline to Stateline Bikeway – South Demonstration Project and the Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals honored TTD for the Highway 28 Corridor Management Plan.

• Travel and food website Thrillist.com has dubbed Lake Tahoe one of America's 10 greatest party lakes.

• Mammoth Festival of Beers and Bluesapalooza is July 31-Aug. 3 in Mammoth Lakes.

• The Washoe County Sheriff's Office is commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Incline Village Substation from 11am-1pm July 26. The station is at 625 Mount Rose Highway.

• Q & D has moved the Kings Beach construction activities into the neighboring grid during July and August, with the plan to move back onto Highway 28 in September. The project's traffic cam is live and streaming on the home page.

Loan ensures Kirkwood will be on grid in Nov.



Kirkwood power house being built after the 2010 fire. Photo/Provided

By Kathryn Reed

Another federal loan will finalize Kirkwood's push to be on the grid by Nov. 1.

The remote enclave off Highway 88 that borders El Dorado, Alpine and Amador counties has had a problem keeping the lights on and lifts spinning. There are about 700 mostly part-

time residents in Kirkwood, with the ski resort being the main commercial entity.

The $8 million from the U.S. Department of Agriculture is in addition to the $50 million federal loan that was secured in 2012. The USDA is investing $263 million in projects in eight states to modernize electric systems. Kirkwood is the only California recipient of the cash.

Kirkwood Meadows Public Utility District, which in 2011 acquired Mountain Utilities, supplies the power to this resort area. KMPUD is separate from the ski resort, but supplies the electricity and water. The resort has been owned by Vail Resorts since February 2012.

Coop Cooper with the ski resort told *Lake Tahoe News* upgrading to the grid – "It's a great thing."

Michael Sharp, general manager of KMPUD, was not available for comment.

What KMPUD will soon have is a 34.5-kilovolt power line that ties into PG&E lines. Much of it goes through U.S. Forest Service land.

Kathy Hardy, then forest supervisor for Eldorado National Forest, signed the record of decision in March 2012 allowing the project to go forward.

The line ties into a PG&E source at Salt Springs Reservoir in Amador County, then goes above ground for 3.1 miles to Bear River Reservoir. The Bear River to Kirkwood line will be underground. Two substations are part of the plans.

A bit of irony, though, is when the entire South Shore of Lake Tahoe was without power on Sunday Kirkwood's lights were on.

Kirkwood had a powerhouse with six diesel generators that were sketchy at best. That facility burned to the ground New Year's Day 2010, leaving people in the dark and without power for a

couple days.

The powerhouse that was built after the fire will act as a backup once KMPUD is on the grid.