Expert details consequences of climate change

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Despite a litany of information documenting how climate is changing and examples of its devastating impacts, one Nobel Peace Prize recipient remains optimistic.

“We still do have a choice. That is the very real reason for optimism,” Bill Collins told a group of more than 40 people Jan. 10 at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe.

Collins was the keynote speaker Friday for the three-day Operation Sierra Storm Meteorologist’s Conference. He is the lead author of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, heads the Climate Sciences Department at Berkeley Lab and teaches at Cal.



Climate change expert Bill Collins talks Jan. 10 at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe in Stateline. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Climate change is evident from 2012 being a record hot year in the United States, to Australia breaking 123 records in 90 days in 2012, to the world temperature increasing about three-

quarters of a degree centigrade since 1900, to the sea level rising 200 millimeters in the last 100 years.

Cities abutting major water bodies like San Francisco and Oakland are looking at how to handle the rising water. In the Maldives where the elevation is 1 meter above sea level Collins said people are experimenting with building artificial islands.

“Carbon dioxide is increasing from human activities,” Collins said.

In 1950 there were 270 parts per million, whereas in 2010 there were 400 parts per million in the atmosphere.

“Through isotopic analysis we know it is man-made. The source is fossil fuels,” Collins said.

That is what people have control over – the use of fossil fuels. What they don’t have power over are volcanoes and the sun, which are the two primary natural causes of climate change.

A potential irony is that as the Arctic ice melts, it will be easier to drill for oil there.

Forecasting models are split when it comes to whether the United States will see more precipitation or less because of the storm tracks. But what is known is what does fall from the sky is going to be in the form of more rain and less snow. This has significant consequences for places like California and Nevada that depend on snowpack for their reservoir storage and sustained water supply.

“It’s critically important to all of us. Water is irreplaceable. Fossil fuel is replaceable,” Collins said.

It is a warming Earth that alters moisture and rainfall.

“What was unusual will become the usual by the end of the 21st

century," Collins said. This is because of the change in the hydrological cycle.

Letter: Public agency lacking transparency

To the community,

On Thursday morning I read an article by Kathryn Reed in the *Lake Tahoe News* that stated there would be a meeting of the California Tahoe Conservancy (CTC) that morning at the Inn by the Lake.

I stopped by to attend the meeting. When I entered the meeting room I was approached by Ray Lacey, deputy director of the CTC. Mr. Lacey informed me that the meeting was not open to the public. Mr. Lacey indicated that they the CTC had already spoken with their attorney who advised them that the meeting would not be open to the public.

As far as I could see I was the only member of the public at the meeting. Even if the meeting wasn't open to the public, I wonder why I simply wasn't invited to stay. What made the CTC consult with their legal counsel about the public attending this meeting? The California Tahoe Conservancy is a public agency. Why would an interested member of the public be turned away?

Lou Pierini, South Lake Tahoe

Charges dropped against Douglas County judge

By AP

MINDEN – A criminal charge has been dropped against Douglas County District Judge Michael Gibbons in an August accident that killed a bicyclist.

The vehicular homicide charge was dropped in a civil agreement because the family of victim Joseph Longo of Gardnerville didn't want the judge prosecuted, attorneys for both sides said.

A justice of the peace signed an order approving the settlement Wednesday.

A criminal complaint filed last month alleged Gibbons failed to exercise due care when passing the 61-year-old bicyclist near Gardnerville.

According to the Nevada Highway Patrol, the judge was making a right turn when the rear of his vehicle struck the bike Aug. 20. Gibbons and the bicyclist were heading in the same direction, and Longo was not wearing a helmet.

The NHP investigation concluded Gibbons was at fault in the accident.

But Gibbons' attorneys, David Houston and Kenneth Lyon, said they recreated the accident twice, using a forensic engineer and a former NHP accident reconstruction specialist, and would have presented evidence that Gibbons wasn't to blame.

"We believe that this case is more properly resolved in a civil court because our accident reconstruction has shown that Judge Gibbons did not hit the bicyclist," Houston said.

Houston and Lyon issued a statement saying they were pleased the misdemeanor charge was dismissed.

“No one wants to be personally involved in litigation, especially a judge,” they said. “The judge will continue to work for improved traffic safety and particularly for the use of helmets in all appropriate sports. This tragic incident has affected many people, and the judge wants to make sure positive changes result.”

District Attorney Mark Jackson said he told Moapa Valley Justice of the Peace Lanny Waite that he didn’t agree with the settlement, but he didn’t have the authority to put that in writing. As district attorney, he was not party to the settlement conference, the results of which are sealed.

Waite issued a stay against further proceedings, and a Jan. 13 court date was vacated. Waite was assigned the case after East Fork Justice of the Peace Tom Perkins disqualified himself.

Gibbons on Monday filed for re-election to a fourth term.

No snow: Man-made snow creates winter fun

Publisher’s note: ***This is one of a series of blurbs about how the lack of winter is impacting businesses in the Lake Tahoe Basin. If you have an idea, please email info@LakeTahoeNews.net.***

The vacant lot next to MontBleu casino in Stateline has been turned into a multidimensional snow playground.

Edgewood Companies, which owns that parcel, has rented the

bulk of the land to John Shearer. Shearer also operates Tahoe Sport Fishing and has been in the snowmobile business for 10 years. He grew up a farmer, and said now he is in the snow farming business.

He saw a need and filled it – something he has wanted to do for a few years. Shearer said he is inspired by what Heavenly Mountain Resort does with snowmaking and is doing his part to provide snow fun.

It costs about $1,000 a night in power to blow snow. He hopes to cut that in half later this month when he can tap into three-phase power. Right now he rents generators for $2,500 a month and uses 100 gallons of fuel a night.

During the summer Shearer paid for an underground pipe and high pressure pump to be installed to access the water for snowmaking.

Snowmobilers may go around in what is like a big racetrack.

Sledders have access to a mini hill that is built all of snow.

“Eventually I want four tubing lanes, smallest to biggest and different bumps in the middle,” Shearer told *Lake Tahoe News*.

While it’s mostly tourists playing there, Shearer hopes to one day attract locals, too.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Operation Sierra Storm

Bill Collins, climate change scientist and lead author of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, speaks Jan. 10 at Operation Sierra Storm at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe.

Mancuso laid back and focused on Sochi Games

By Grayson Schaffer, Outside

My plan to treat Julia Mancuso like an Olympic superstar is falling apart. I rented a red Porsche Cayman at LAX and made brunch reservations at the Ivy. But it’s already 10am, I have to get her to a photo shoot at noon, and she hasn’t showered after her morning beach workout of sprints, tuck jumps, and stutter steps. Fortunately, Mancuso’s throwing audibles and solving problems. She knows this great little organic non-GMO spot on Abbot Kinney. “I showered last night,” she says, both simplifying things and confirming the basic nature of her appeal.

Mancuso is the Olympic champion you’d want to drink a beer with. The 29-year-old Lake Tahoe native trains for skiing by surfing and paddleboarding, appears untroubled by minutiae, and then, like Big Papi, comes through when it matters. This pattern first emerged at the 2006 Turin Games when, as an obscure 21-year-old, Mancuso won gold in the giant slalom. She wasn’t quite a favorite at Vancouver, either, but she won two silver medals, making her the most decorated Olympian in U.S. Women’s Ski Team history.

Going into the Sochi Games, most of the chatter has focused on Mikaela Shiffrin, the 18-year-old American phenom, and Mancuso's training partner Lindsey Vonn, who reinjured her surgically repaired right knee in November. Maybe it's because of Mancuso's relaxed demeanor that observers continue to underestimate her. But to hear Mancuso tell it, the *laissez-faire* attitude isn't a strategy; it's all she knows.

Read the whole story

Nevada lacking doctors, nurses

By Andrew Doughman, Las Vegas Sun

The chronic shortage of doctors that afflicts Nevadans may grow worse, lawmakers were warned Wednesday.

A group of health care experts reviewed the state's longstanding deficiency in providing an adequate health care workforce for Nevada's residents at a legislative committee, providing fresh data showing that Nevada still ranks poorly among states for the number of doctors and nurses it counts among its population.

That shortage of doctors, nurses and other health care professionals isn't going away anytime soon, experts say. Instead, it could actually be getting worse.

The advent of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act mandates and provides subsidies for people to get health insurance, and with hundreds of thousands of Nevadans predicted to get insurance, there's even more pressure on the

health care system to have enough professionals to see patients like you.

Read the whole story

Ski helmet fit makes a difference

By Berne Broudy, Outside

Lots of things can go wrong when you're skiing. Face it, you're sliding fast down a slippery surface on narrow planks with sharp metal edges, surrounded by hazards such as trees and other skiers, who may or may not be in control of their actions. If you crash—whether you're hucking and jumping, speeding through moguls, or just trying to get through your run—you can reduce the risk of danger by wearing a helmet.

Ski helmets protect your head from impact. But in order to do that job, a helmet must be sized correctly, worn correctly, and certified to meet minimum safety standards.

"Helmets, like jeans or shoes, come in lots of shapes and sizes," says Lindsey Johnson, helmet category product manager at Smith. "Some are wide, some narrow. Find a brand that fits your head by visiting your local shop, and trying several until you find one that fits and feels good."

Read the whole story

CNN documentary features Reno plane crash survivor

By Elizabeth Landau, CNN

When Galaxy Airlines Flight 203 with 71 passengers and crew crashed shortly after takeoff from Reno in 1985, there was only one survivor: George Lamson Jr.

The CNN Films documentary “Sole Survivor,” features Lamson and others who’ve struggled after being the only survivors of large plane crashes.

The ordeal often includes a huge emotional burden. In the film, Lamson reaches out to fellow sole survivors, who open up about their complex feelings related to survivorship.

Disasters that take the lives of everyone involved except for one may leave a survivor feeling guilty for receiving the gift of continued life when no one else did.

Read the whole story

S. Tahoe to have special parking meeting

The South Lake Tahoe City Council has scheduled a special meeting for Jan. 13 at 7:30am at the Lake Tahoe Airport.

The lone agenda item is: discussion and possible direction regarding the city’s paid parking program.

On the city’s website there is no supporting documents for the

item, like a staff report.

The council will then meet the following day at 9am for its regular meeting.

Mayor Hal Cole requested the special meeting even though paid parking is set to be on the Feb. 18 agenda. He told *Lake Tahoe News* he wants to get support from his colleagues to have the parking issue heard Jan. 14. He wants the public to be able hear the issue sooner rather than later.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report