Millions could hit the streets to trick-or-treat

Halloween, which dates back to Celtic rituals thousands of years ago, has long been associated with images of witches, ghosts and vampires. Over the years, Halloween customs have changed dramatically. Today, Halloween is celebrated many different ways, including wearing costumes, children trick-or-treating, carving pumpkins, and going to haunted houses and parties.

The estimated number of potential trick-or-treaters in 2011 – children age 5 to 14 – across the United States was 41 million, according to the Census Bureau. Of course, many other children – older than 14 and younger than 5 – also go trick-or-treating.

The value of pumpkins harvested from the top six pumpkin-producing states – Illinois, California, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Michigan in 2011 – was $113 million, according to the Agricultural Marketing Resource Center.

Some places around the country that may put you in the Halloween mood are: Transylvania County, N.C., Tombstone, Ariz., Pumpkin Center, N.C., Pumpkin Bend, Ark., Cape Fear, N.C., and Skull Creek, Neb.

Asian clams being suffocated

to protect Emerald Bay

By Kathryn Reed

Asian clams are expected to always be a reality in Lake Tahoe. But an $810,000, yearlong project is under way to keep them from taking over Emerald Bay.

With it estimated that 95 percent of the people who launch a boat at Lake Tahoe make their way to Emerald Bay, keeping that inlet as pristine as possible is not only good for the environment, but for tourism – aka the economy.



Brant Allen brings up a handful of Asian clams -- the ones he is helping get rid of at Emerald Bay. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Excretion from the clams creates algae blooms, which makes the nearshore, or beach area, unappealing to swim in, look at or paddle over. The bay has about 10 acres of nearshore.

These are not clams one eats – mostly because it would take too long to get a forkful. They are about 2 to 3 centimeters, with some 1-2 millimeters – like a grain of sand.

Another reason to eliminate the Asian clams is that they produce calcium – which Lake Tahoe doesn’t naturally have much

of. And calcium is needed for quagga mussels to survive and thrive. To date, that aquatic invasive specie has not turned up in Tahoe. It is the critter that has devastated Lake Mead in Southern Nevada.

Allison Gamble with the Tahoe Environmental Research Center said it will be impossible to ever eradicate the clams from Lake Tahoe, but controlling them and eliminating them from key locations are the goals.

The earliest recording of this invasive clam at Tahoe was 2002, but it took six years for them to be a problem. A year later, 2009, was when the Aquatic Invasive Species Program rolled out. This included boat inspections, which look for Asian clams. Most likely the clams arrived via a boat's bilge.

While scientists know the Asian clams are in Donner Lake, they were surprised when told by a photographer with the *Reno Gazette-Journa*l that she found some in the Truckee River. There is no monitoring program on the river.

Clam control

On Oct. 25 a team of divers began covering 5 acres at the mouth of Emerald Bay with a biomass material made of shredded aspen that is then covered with a rubber mat. The purpose is to smoother the clams. This is all being done in about 15-feet of water, with 25 feet being about the deepest.

Looking over a boat it's easy to see the black covering the sand. Crews should be done placing the mats by the end of November. During this time boats may still access Emerald Bay, but there could be a bit of a delay if divers are in the water.

Brant Allen with UC Davis is one of those divers. On Tuesday he described it as an "exhausting day of work." The mats that are rolled out by two divers weigh 300 pounds on land and not much less under water.

It takes about 30 minutes to unroll each mat. Two hundred thirty-eight mats need to be placed on the lake bottom. The project also includes 25 tons of rebar that cover 10 miles, and 17,000 rivets.

The goal is to suffocate the clams by extinguishing their oxygen supply. Scientists have access points to check the site on what will likely be a monthly basis until all of the material is removed a year from now.

They live just under the sand. When shells are visible, it means the clam is dead.

Other points of interest

Steve Chilton with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said, "AIS is the largest threat to the ecosystem."

Most of the clams are on the south end of the lake. Emerald Bay is the farthest point north and west they have been found.

"The economic impact of Emerald Bay to Lake Tahoe and the region cannot be overstated," Dan Shaw, environmental scientist with California State Parks said. The bay is state parks land.

About 1,000 boats a day come into the bay on peak summer days. Shaw told *Lake Tahoe News* a camera was set up this summer to record the speed of boats, but because so many come through the mouth it was impossible to gather that data.

To pay for the project, California Water Board allocated $458,220 and $352,000 came from the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act. The latter source of funding will be exhausted in 2014, so where money will come from for future projects is an unknown.

ngg_shortcode_0_placeholder (Click on photos to enlarge.)

Raley’s employees delay strike; talks back on

By Kelly Johnson, Sacramento Business Journal

Raley’s Inc. and union officials have agreed to return to the bargaining table, acceding to a federal mediator’s request.

The renewed efforts to reach an agreement stall a possible strike at Raley’s – at least until Sunday. The West Sacramento-based grocery chain has never been struck.

Representatives of Raleys and the United Food and Commercial Workers 8-Golden State and UFCW Local 5 will meet Thursday afternoon to try to agree on a contract. Raley’s and the union have been struggling to come up with an agreement for more than a year.

“As a sign of goodwill, Raley’s will delay the implementation of its last and final offer for 48 hours,” a Raley’s spokesman said. “This extension will end on Saturday at midnight and, if no agreement is reached, the proposed contract will be implemented at that time.”

Raley’s agreed to extend the current contract through Saturday.

“Perhaps the real possibility of a strike will compel Raley’s to change course and finally begin negotiating in earnest for a settlement addressing the needs of everyone – both the company and union members,” said Jacques Loveall, president of UFCW 8-Golden State, in an online message to union members.

The union “is prepared to negotiate non-stop so long as a contract extension is in place. If a settlement has not been

achieved by midnight Saturday and no further extension is agreed upon, a strike could begin on Sunday morning," he said.

In a negotiations update earlier today, Raley's CEO Michael Teel told employees that Raley's has made its case for contract concessions to the union. Last December, he said, Raley's gave the union a list of 40 stores that were losing between $500,000 and $2 million a year. A month ago Raley's again shared with the union that it is "losing millions of dollars a year."

Letter: No votes on Props. 30 and 38 are bad for Californians

To the community,

California schools are in trouble. For the past four years, the state has been cutting and "deferring" payments to school districts, requiring the local school districts to operate with fewer and fewer funds. Schools all over California have cut expenses by every means possible to keep their doors open.

Lake Tahoe Unified School District alone, a small district when compared to other California communities, has experienced nearly $4 million in state cuts, but has managed to protect most of its programs and small class sizes by reducing costs in every "non-teaching" department.

The superintendent, for example, also fills the roles of assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, Human Resources director, and principal of the magnet school.

Many California schools have already been forced to increase class size, reduce the number of days of teaching, and cut sports and arts programs.

The state's newest school budget calls for another $1.6 million cut to South Lake Tahoe if Proposition 30 fails … a cut that the district can no longer absorb without drastic consequences. To make ends meet, the district may have to reduce the school year by 12 class days in addition to cuts in other areas. We cannot let this happen.

Propositions 30 and 38 have been put before the voters to stop these continued budget cuts and restore funding to schools. Neither proposition replaces the funds that have already been cut. Both are designed to stop the bleeding. These two propositions address the increased taxes in different ways.

Prop. 30 imposes a four-year statewide one-quarter cent sales tax increase plus an additional income tax on individual earnings above $250,000. Prop. 38 imposes a 12-year income tax increase for all persons earning more than $7,316 per year … basically, everyone paying income tax.

Each of these propositions will generate about $6 billion annually for schools K-12. Prop. 30 also generates additional funding for community and state colleges, and funding for fire and police protection. Prop. 38 adds a provision for early childhood development, but does not provide funding for colleges or fire and police safety.

Hopefully, as least one of the propositions will pass, and if both pass, the proposition with the greatest vote will take effect. But, having both measures on the ballot has the potential of splitting the "yes" vote and allowing the "no" vote to beat down both measures.

If you agree that we cannot allow any more cuts to education, then I urge you to vote "yes" on both propositions, and do not vote against either. An alternative is to vote "yes" on the

proposition you prefer, and simply not vote on the other. But most important is that you do not mark a “not” on either proposal.

There are many voters who automatically vote “no” on any tax measure and will vote “no” on both propositions. We cannot afford to split the “yes” vote between the two propositions. If the majority of voters support education, but split the vote between the two propositions, the “no” voters will win and our children and future generations will lose.

Barry Keil, South Lake Tahoe

Douglas County dispatch receives specialized training

The Douglas County 911 Emergency Services Department has completed 40 hours of enhanced specialized training and is now better prepared to take 911 calls regarding missing and/or sexually exploited children.

Douglas County 911 Emergency Services has recently become a NCMEC 911 Call Center Partner – the first agency in Nevada to do so.

Every year 800,000 children go missing in the United States. That’s more than 2,000 children per day. Calls about missing and sexually exploited children can become high profile events that have a devastating impact on the victim’s family, your community, and your call center.

Every 911 call center must have in place policies and training

to help ensure every missing and sexually exploited child is given the best chance to be found alive and unharmed.

Nevada governor backs legalizing online poker

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

A day after a prominent sports book director was arrested in connection with an alleged illegal offshore gambling ring, Gov. Brian Sandoval has sent a letter to federal lawmakers supporting a bill to legalize Internet poker.

Sandoval's letter, dated Oct. 25, is addressed to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, House Speaker John Boehner, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi. It outlines a case for a federal framework enabling states to regulate their own gaming industries in the online environment.

"While many states have long-standing proficiency in regulating brick-and-mortar gaming within their boundaries, the advent of Internet gaming has introduced a borderless element that state regulation alone cannot address," Sandoval's letter said.

Sandoval said he supports the efforts of Reid and Arizona Sen. Jon Kyl, who have worked on legislation to legalize Internet poker.

Nevada is among several states that have approved legislation and regulations addressing in-state online poker. Several

companies already have been licensed to offer online poker and are in various stages of developing systems to begin play as soon as early 2013.

Sandoval said the Reid-Kyl legislation not only would coordinate oversight of the industry but would offer consumer protections.

“A sensible federal approach would preserve state authority to ban gaming within its borders, protect minors from exposure to online gaming and protect legitimate consumers from illegal offshore operators,” Sandoval’s letter says. “The Reid-Kyl approach would accomplish these essential objectives while introducing strong consumer protections into a space where none currently exist.

“As governor of a state that jealously guards its primacy in the regulation of gaming, I am pleased the proposal maintains state authority to regulate online poker operators built upon a basic federal foundation of common-sense regulatory principles. The basic tenets are similar to those Nevada’s gold-standard regulatory structure is built upon: prohibition on self-regulation, baseline requirements for licensees and protections against monopolies in the market.”

How not to starve when the power goes out

Publisher’s notes: ***These tips are good for people who face any threat to being without power – which happens each winter in the Tahoe area.***

By NPR

Before you brave the rain, wind and inevitable lines at the already depleted grocery store today in the mid-Atlantic region, take a deep breath.

If you're a moderately good grocery shopper, you probably already have the food you need on hand to make it through the next few days if (when) we lose power due to Hurricane Sandy. (If not, best to find a shelter near you.) But you do need to take extra precautions that what you're preparing is safe.

Here are some tips we've picked up preparing for power outages over the years, and from around the web:

1. While you still have power, take stock of what you have in the freezer and the fridge. Use up leftovers and perishables like meat, eggs and dairy first, and decide which items you can't bear to lose, like those fancy frozen dumplings you've been saving, and cook them up for lunch or a snack right now. Blogger Jessica Berardi tells the *Washington Post* to fill up bags of water and stick them in the freezer to keep things extra cold or to double as ice packs once you have to move some items to a cooler.

2. Make a plan for using non-perishables like beans, tuna, pasta, cereal and canned fruit that leaves you with as few leftovers as possible – for example, one can of beans and a couple of cups of cooked rice will feed about three people for one meal.

3. Follow the comprehensive guidelines put out by foodsafety.gov for keeping things cold and safe once the power goes out. Biggest point – keep the fridge and freezer closed as much as possible to preserve food as long as possible. And, the rule of when in doubt, throw it out, definitely applies here.

4. Gather disposable plates, plasticware, cups, aluminum foil pans and a cooler to make meal clean up easier. A big psychological boost for the storm-stressed cook can be not

seeing those dirty dishes piled up in the sink.

5. Locate the matches and check that the propane tank is full on your gas grill. Obviously you can’t cook outdoors during the storm, but it’s possible that your power will be out long after the storm has passed, and you can use your grill to boil water and heat meals if you have an electric stove rendered useless by the power outage. Solar cooking might be an option once the sun comes out.

6. Make it fun for the family. School’s closed. Send the kids on a treasure hunt through your cookbooks to track down recipes for what you can make from the items you’ve got. They might even try something new in the spirit of adventure.

Jackson Rancheria celebrates remodel

By KCRA-TV

After five years of construction, Jackson Rancheria is unveiling its remodeled hotel and expanded casino.

The $80 million project includes a refurbished hotel, five new restaurants and 35,000-square-foot gaming area.

“It has certainly been a much-anticipated process and we appreciate the patience of our loyal guests and employees,” said Jackson Rancheria CEO Rich Hoffman. “Jackson Rancheria has grown tremendously over the years and our most recent renovations reflect that growth.”

To celebrate the completion of the project, Jackson Rancheria is hosting a ceremonial opening Oct. 30.

The event will feature dancers and drummers from the Jackson Rancheria Band of Miwuk Indians, owners and operators of the casino.

The public, month-long grand opening begins Friday.

Coroner: Teen hunter froze to death

By Dana M. Nichols, Stockton Record

SAN ANDREAS – A 14-year-old Angels Camp boy found dead in a remote mountain area last week apparently succumbed to exposure, the Calaveras County Coroner said Monday.

Taylor Dustin froze to death after he and his uncle, Devin Smith of Douglas Flat, got lost during a hunting trip in Alpine County, officials said.

Smith, 40, survived, but suffered from hypothermia.

Calaveras County coroner Kevin Raggio arranged an autopsy on behalf of Alpine County. The initial results of the autopsy indicate it was the cold the killed Dustin, although results won't be official until some other lab tests are completed in a month, Raggio said.

The Alpine County Sheriff's Department said in a written statement that it got a 911 call at 5:30pm Oct. 21 indicating that two hunters who had left their Hermit Valley camp site that morning had not returned as expected.

Search and rescue teams from Alpine and Calaveras counties responded even as weather conditions deteriorated. The Alpine County Sheriff's Department reported that 18 inches of snow fell over the next two days as searchers looked for Dustin and Smith.

Calaveras County Search and Rescue President Greg Jacobus referred questions about the search to law enforcement agencies.

But Jacobus did say conditions were difficult.

"The weather just closed in very quickly and made this very very dangerous," he said.

The Alpine County Sheriff's Department said it was almost two days later, at 3pm Oct. 23, that searchers found Smith in the Stevenot Camp area of the Mokelumne Wilderness, several miles from Hermit Valley.

Smith was suffering from severe hypothermia and was transported by air ambulance to a hospital. Searchers found Dustin's body nearby about 6pm that day.

Raggio said that relatives of Dustin and Smith have been declining media interview requests.

ADA attorney questioned in court

By George Warren, News10/KXTV

The quadriplegic attorney who has sued more than 2,100 businesses over disabled access refuses to answer allegations

that he never personally visited many of them.

Four former legal assistants who have filed a sexual harassment and wrongful termination lawsuit against Scott Johnson claim they were sent into most of the businesses Johnson sued while he waited outside in his van.

Johnson has not returned phone calls or emails since the story broke in early October, but News10 caught up to him Monday outside the federal courthouse as he arrived for a status conference on one of his active cases.

“My legal counsel has instructed me not to provide any comments,” Johnson said in response to multiple questions about the drive-by allegations.

In an earlier interview with News10, the ex-employees expressed remorse for their role in preparing what they now consider fraudulent lawsuits under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

“I felt I had no other choice,” said Jenna Doeuk, who worked for Johnson for more than five years before being fired this summer.

Micaela Lucas, who said she was forced out of her job two months after Doeuk was fired, broke down when she spoke about going into businesses to look for possible violations.

“I felt horrible, but I had to,” Lucas said, wiping away tears.

Roseville attorney Jordan Peters, who represents Johnson’s four ex-employees, said lawyers for more than 50 businesses that were targeted by Johnson are waiting to interview the women to determine whether their clients were victims of drive-by lawsuits.

“They’re going back to cases where he’s already settled and they want to argue fraud,” Peters said. “They want the

settlement overturned and they want their attorney fees.”

On average, Johnson had filed one ADA lawsuit every day of the week during the first eight months of the year.

He has not filed a single new case since the story of his ex-employee whistleblowers broke in early October.