

Heavenly strikes it rich with Silver Rush zipline



Rosemary Manning of South Lake Tahoe on her way across the East Peak Reservoir. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Hanging on and letting go at the same. Free, yet harnessed in. Remote wilderness, but modern safety features. For a brief moment the world seems to stand still, and yet it's whirring by at 40 mph.

Welcome to the world of ziplining. While there was a time when this swinging between the trees was a form of transportation, in today's world it's all about the adrenaline rush of flying in a relatively controlled manner from one platform to the next.

Heavenly Mountain Resort this month debuted the Silver Rush. And what a rush it is.



Leonardo Aguirre, a 2013 South Tahoe High grad on break from college, belays off a platform. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Progressively the five ziplines get longer, faster and more suspenseful. In all, it's more than 4,000 feet of soaring, with the last cable being 1,510-feet long.

Before starting off it's necessary to get geared-up. A harness and helmet are the basic pieces of equipment. Chandler and Magdelynn are constantly checking everyone's gear. It's easy for things to loosen up as the day goes on. Redundancy is built into the process. Safety is Heavenly's No. 1 concern.

Fun and exhilaration are what guests experience. Up to eight people can go on each tour, which includes two guides per trip.



Magdelynn ensures equipment is fastened securely.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

Our guides on July 7 added to the wonderful experience. Thorough and serious in their jobs, but fun and encouraging.

We meet near the Tamarack Lodge after taking the gondola up. From there we take the Easy Rider chairlift and walk to the gear shack. After another trek through the woods we come to the first tree with the platform about 20 feet in the air.

The U.S. Forest Service and the company that installed the apparatuses scouted out the location to determine which trees would be best. It's certified on an annual basis. Guides receive weeks of training.



Coming in for a landing is Leonardo Aguirre. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Holding onto what looks like a toddler-size handlebar, each of us is told to essentially sit – though there is only air to sit on – and cross our legs in front of us. For Rosemary and Leonardo it's their first time on a zipline. (They are both hooked and ready for more.) Screams of excitement echo through the pines.

By the third zipline the five of us are feeling pretty comfortable. Then you look at the fourth one. It's so much longer at 1,480 feet. On the other ones it was easy to enjoy the scenery, to look into the Carson Valley. This one, well, it has you realizing just how far off the ground you are and how long you are in the air. There is time to think about how little gear is involved to keep you suspended.

Smiles. Everyone had one as they landed. What an incredible rush.



Getting down requires trusting the guide when she says, “Just lean back.” Photo/Kathryn Reed

Next up it gets worse – in terms of thinking about consequences, and better – in terms of fun factor. Between the platforms is the East Peak Reservoir. This body of water is used during the winter for snowmaking. On Friday its purpose is to be a natural feature to add to the adrenaline searing through our bodies. It works. I don’t want to look straight down, but then I do – just briefly.

Trust in the gear and guides – it’s so necessary.

Beyond the ziplines, the Silver Rush requires climbing two

ladders, walking across a swinging rope-wood bridge, a few short jaunts through the woods, and belaying down from two platforms – one more than 40-feet high. These added features – plus the 4-wheel drive ride back to the start – make for an incredibly fun filled three hours.

It's an impressive amount of ground, um, air, we covered. The drop in elevation is most noticed taking the ride out from East Peak Lodge which is at 8,625 feet. The top of Easy Rider is 9,300 feet.

This isn't an excursion for everyone. Fear of heights could be a stumbling block. Some upper body strength is needed, especially to pull yourself onto the landing platform.



The sky bridge takes guests to the fourth zipline.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

Notes:

- Different packages are available and prices vary based on age. Details are **online**.
 - Age and weight restrictions apply.
 - Reservations are needed for Silver Rush.
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Reno dispensaries cash in on first week of pot sales

By Jenny Kane, Reno Gazette-Journal

The four Reno dispensaries licensed to sell recreational marijuana each raked in “hundreds of thousands of dollars” in the past four days from the state’s first legal recreational marijuana sales, according to Will Adler, executive director of the Sierra Cannabis Coalition.

The Nevada Department of Taxation will not release numbers for state revenue from recreational marijuana sales until late September, according to department spokeswoman Stephanie Klapstein, but industry leaders said sales were on par with expectations for the first week.

Nevada Dispensary Association Executive Director Riana Durrett “very roughly” estimated that Nevada made \$1 million from taxes between Saturday and Tuesday, and dispensaries as much as \$3 million.

Read the whole story

League to Save Lake Tahoe co-founder dies



Bill Evers

By Sam Whiting, San Francisco Chronicle

Bill Evers, a San Francisco attorney who co-founded the League to Save Lake Tahoe and served as head of the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Economic Development under George Moscone and Dianne Feinstein, has died.

Mr. Evers died June 28 at his home in Pacific Heights after a short illness. He was 90, and he had still been driving to work at his law office on Van Ness Avenue.

During a long and distinguished career, Mr. Evers switched between private practice and public service.

Mr. Evers was involved in the opening of the Alpine Meadows ski area, which opened in 1961, and Boreal Ridge, which opened in 1964.

[Read the whole story](#)

South Shore cops engage public in dialogue



South Shore law enforcement mingle with the public at Alpina Cafe. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Traffic issues was one of the dominating topics at the “coffee with a cop” event on the South Shore.

“We are actively trying to come up with solutions that will work,” CHP Lt. Cmdr. Terry Lowther told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We are looking at where we can legally close roadways to funnel traffic the right way. We are using helicopters to see where

the stoppage is.”

He is in charge of the Meyers office, which oversees a vast amount of state highways.

One issue is people are using phone applications for alternative routes. This makes neighborhood streets unpassable and residents angry.

The helicopter can alert the boots on the ground to issues not readily known, like problems in the American River Canyon on Highway 50 or something in the Emerald Bay area. Information signs can change to alert motorists.

Lowther was at Alpina Café last week dispensing this information. Others from the California Highway Patrol and El Dorado County Sheriff’s Office were also on hand.

“It humanizes us,” EDSO Detective Damian Frisby told *Lake Tahoe News* of events like this. He was explaining to people what the various agencies in the basin do and how they work together.

Ruth Loehr, the local CHP public information officer, said meeting people like these helps to build relationships between officers and the public. So often the only interaction people have with law enforcement is when they see lights in their rearview mirror or on some other bad day.

For Lucia Angel, she wanted to meet the officers because one day she would like to be among their ranks. The 10-year-old has designs on becoming an FBI agent. She wants to “investigate murders, robberies and things like that.”

She and Loehr are both fans of the TV show “FBI Files.” Lucia also watches “Forensic Files” and “Unsolved Mysteries.”

For Sue and Bill Krawetz, they were at Alpina just for coffee. They come up to Tahoe every so often from Sonoma County. They were appreciative of the outreach effort by the officers. They

engaged an officer in a conversation about homelessness in Tahoe because they haven't seen much, and then asked about the best places to go hiking.

These informal gatherings with cops occur throughout the country. The local CHP office is hoping to have five this year, three in the basin and two in Alpine County. The first Alpine County one was also last week.

Reno starting to look more like Silicon Valley

By Karen Weise, Bloomberg

"Are you with Tesla or Panasonic?" the waitress asks with a smile. It's morning in Reno, and it's natural to assume anyone eating breakfast among the rustic wood walls and Instagram-worthy succulents of the Whitney Peak Hotel would work at the mammoth Tesla Gigafactory, jointly run by the two tech companies. For transplants landing in Reno, the boutique hotel, formerly a casino, has become a common crash pad—albeit one wrapped by an outdoor rock-climbing wall.

Around 8:30am, the men arrive in waves. The Panasonic workers from Japan head for one buffet, with rice, pork, and miso soup; the Tesla crowd favors eggs. Soon they're gone, traveling by carpools and shuttles 20 miles east into the desert to the factory, where they'll make lithium ion batteries to power Tesla's electric cars.

Not long ago, Reno was a home foreclosure capital and fading casino town. "There was only one place to go, and that was up," says Mayor Hillary Schieve. Unemployment peaked at almost

14 percent in 2011, when Governor Brian Sandoval signed a law aiming to diversify the state's economy, recognizing that gambling alone can't sustain a workforce.

Read the whole story

Why are fire seasons longer? – People

By Maya L. Kapoor, High Country News

Over three months in 2016, the Soberanes fire burned 132,127 acres of Central California's coast, blazing through dry swaths of dense chaparral, mixed hardwood timber and redwoods. Costing \$260 million to suppress, it became the most expensive fire in the country's history.

And it wasn't caused by lightning, which is relatively scarce in that part of the country, but by an illegal campfire in Garrapata State Park.

Human-caused climate change has meant more, and bigger, wildfires throughout the country. But as astute pyrologist Bruce Springsteen once wrote, "You can't start a fire without a spark."

According to wildfire research, the source of that spark is, more often than not, a person. What's more, due to these human-caused ignitions, the country's conflagrations have grown significantly larger and more frequent, while the overall fire season has tripled in length.

Read the whole story

Tahoe ukulelians string together fun and harmony

By Susan Wood

Julliard, it's not. But the American Legion Hall on Wednesday nights has become the main stage for South Shore ukulelians seeking fun, friendship and a unified front for an activity that has struck a chord with many aspiring musicians.

It's almost as if the 60-plus people gathered in Tahoe may strum their cares away in perfect harmony.

It's a good sign when a guest walks upstairs at the hall and recognizes the song being played by so many people thrown together like a giant band.

"Blueberry Hill" made the song list one recent Wednesday night, and the room full of tenor, soprano, concert and baritone strummers didn't disappoint.



Steve and Linda Kurek at a jam session at the American Legion.
Photo/Susan Wood

The songbook assembled by Bob and Diane Fannan, who co-founded the club with Jeff and Karen Miner four years ago, lists 306 songs.

"I've been playing for four years, and I can play everything in this book," Diane Fannan said, pointing to the fat book sitting on the table during the break while volunteers called out raffle winners. "Does anybody practice?" she asked.

A resounding "no" could be heard from some of the players walking by.

"It's a simple instrument. Every person who wouldn't believe in a million years they'd be playing an instrument can learn it," she said over the sound of the concert going on in the next room. Most players sit at long tables, with a handful of leaders taking the stage. In another room, 14 ukuleles line one table, with chips and snacks filling another.

“We have all levels of play here. And I’ve noticed my rhythm has gotten better (since playing ukulele),” Fannan told *Lake Tahoe News*.



Bob and Diane Fannan started the ukulele group in 2013.
Photo/Susan Wood

The Fannans attend ukulele meetups and events when they’re on vacation – whether in France, England or across the United States. They’ve even gone on a ukulele cruise.

It’s the social setting that most told *Lake Tahoe News* is the reason for the regular attendance – especially people who’d like to do more outreach in their community.

“We have found people going through a divorce or another tragedy making this the highlight of their week,” Fannan said, further noting about two-thirds of the group consist of

retired people.

Between each song, some of the South Shore ukulelians clap, others sigh, many rock and sway. But most of the players have smiles on their faces. It's hard not to with an instrument that made Hawaiian musician Israel "Iz" Kamakawiwo'ole famous with his sentimental blend of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow"/ "What a Wonderful World" released in 1993. It's popular at weddings and other special occasions.



Ukulele playing is a ritual on Wednesdays in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Susan Wood

Special is the ukulele – with four strings (G-C-E-A) caressed by four fingers playing three chords – C, F and G. The nuances in sound between the four types of ukuleles range in tone and with those who are drawn to them. The soprano is popular with children and those with smaller hands, while the concert version provides a classic tone. Tenor players seek a fuller

sound, while the deeper, richer baritones draw guitar players.

Typically, ukuleles resemble a small acoustic guitar and are generally made of wood, though variants have been composed of plastic. The most expensive ones are made of mahogany, but are traditionally constructed with acacia koa wood.

Steve Byrne of South Lake Tahoe, who showed up on his bicycle, plays guitar as well the ukulele. At times, he cradled his ukulele like a guitar, appearing quite serious while playing every song. He likes the unity and social setting of the ukulele group, which started at Mo's with nine people in the first few years before moving to Dart Liquor's loft, then Lake Tahoe Golf Course. The club mushroomed in attendance.

The club plays from 6-8pm, with some eager socialites strolling in at 5pm for drinks, chats or instruction during the happy hour – which turns out to be the whole time.



Not all ukuleles are the same.

Photo/Susan Wood

“What’s nice is to have a little instruction when you’ve

reached a threshold. There's no intimidation. Everybody here wants to have a good time," Byrne said.

Wannabes and beginners may receive lessons before the start time from the experienced players in the group, and the Fannans provide extra ukuleles for anyone who happens to show up. The club has seen 100 players appear in one night.

"This is a life changer for a lot of people," Bob Fannan said.

He further admitted to no marriages resulting yet from the club's outings, but some couples have met there. Other spouses use the evening to do something fun together that's a bit different from their regular routine.

Take Linda and Steve Kurek. She taught music for 38 years and said she enjoys the relaxing setting. The couple shared a songbook propped up near the wine glasses. He plays on occasion for the residents at the Barton Skilled Nursing Facility.

Julie Threewit teaches ukulele at Sierra House Elementary School and admits to having "the bug" of buying different ukuleles, a condition Bob Fannan refers to as "UAS" meaning ukulele acquisition syndrome.

Between 2010 and 2012, ukulele sales nationwide jumped from 581,000 to more than 1 million, according to the National Association of Music Merchants. Sales have climbed to \$89.8 million in 2015.

Ukulele enthusiasm has taken off in popularity in clubs all over. And this one's no different.

Aaron Lujano, who has worked for the Guitar Center in Reno for five years, told *Lake Tahoe News* over the phone that he's noticed a surge in ukulele sales at his store.

"I sell about five or six a day," Lujano said. "There are even high school classes here."

Even visiting relatives have gotten in on the act as a planned activity.

Mandy Kendall, who claims ukulele playing builds confidence, brought along her brother-in-law Paul Melia from England to the South Shore outing.

The duo raised the level of concentration and probably the callouses of their hands when the leaders threw in a contemporary number – Bruno Mars’ “Count On Me.”



Paul Melia and Mandy Kendall are regulars at ukulele night.
Photo/Susan Wood

The ukulele made its debut on the Arthur Godfrey Show of the 1960s, and Tiny Tim featured it with his 1968 hit “Tiptoe Through the Tulips.”

The instrument declined in popularity in the 1980s until a new

generation of musicians took it up in the next decade.

Marge Bornino, who at age 90, started playing the ukulele at 14 in her days hanging out at Venice Beach in Southern California.

“We went surfing and played ukulele. That’s what we did,” said Bornino, who plays despite suffering from a carpal tunnel injury.

To this day, Bornino also still strums the bass. Playing a ukulele takes her back to her younger days more than any other activity – back to the days of Bob Marley and the Beatles.

Rather fitting, Bornino was right at home with the last song of the night “Lady Madonna.”

July 4 revelers mar Tahoe beaches with trash



People seem to think the beaches of Tahoe are their personal trash can. Photo/League to Save Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Even though there is less actual beach in the basin, those using it keep leaving the same amount of trash.

For the past three years volunteers have picked up about 1,600 pounds of trash on July 5 – the day after the busiest day of the year for Tahoe beaches. This doesn't count the garbage actually left in trash cans.

"Once again, the most common trash items found were cigarette butts and other plastic pieces, which this year we separated and are shipping to a facility that can recycle unusual plastics to be reused in new products," Chris Carney with the League to Save Lake Tahoe told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The League started these cleanup efforts after a lawsuit was

filed in 2013 by a Marla Bay couple who were tired of the fireworks debris that kept floating on their property. The following year groups like the League to Save Lake Tahoe started organized beach cleanups.

Meyers resident Kenny Curtzwiler started rallying his staff in 1997 to clean the majority of El Dorado Beach, along with Regan Beach and the walkways surrounding Highway 50 in South Lake Tahoe.

Volunteers for the last few summers have been able to walk from Regan Beach to Timber Cove. Not so this year. A large stretch of it is under water.

Individuals and group participated. At Zephyr Shoals a group of Generation Green students were part of the mix.

In all, 316 volunteers scoured 5.64 miles of beach.

Sizing up Nevada's dismal education reputation

By Amelia Pak-Harvey, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Worst in the nation.

Or, at least, among the worst. That's the reputation of Nevada's K-12 public education system.

The label hangs over teachers who come to work here, over every test score – even over some students, who are keenly aware of the status of their public education system.

But we're the worst according to whom?

The answer is that Nevada lags in an array of studies.

Read the whole story

Lake Tahoe summer tourism heating up



The drive-up market continues to fuel tourism in Tahoe.
Photo/LTN

By Susan Wood

Just look around. After winter's peaks and valleys, visitors from the San Francisco Bay Area to the far reaches of the

planet appear on track to bask on Lake Tahoe's shores and mountains.

South Lake Tahoe transient occupancy tax collections shot up as early as April this year to \$744,565, amounting to almost a \$200,000 gain from the previous year in revenue from lodging establishments such as hotels, motels, vacation home rentals and the city-owned campground.

To date, April is the city's last reported month in tax receipts (excluding audit collections). Through 2017's banner, albeit hard-to-travel winter at times, January TOT was up by about \$100,000 compared to the prior year. Tax revenues dipped in February and increased again in March year-over-year.

Aside from the obvious boost in the average daily rate lodging charges, the stats also coincide with rooms rented at 47,012 in April. That's almost 10,000 more rooms booked this year compared to last – not bad for the tail end of a winter that lingered longer than expected with snow falling in June at lake level.

And that's only half the story. The last few years show a strong July and August for rooms rented, with the last known significant decrease for these summer months being in 2012.

There are reasons for these upward trends, according to tourism officials.

With apologies to those who experience it, the stifling heat in another areas brings people to Tahoe's pleasant paradise, which often hovers in the mid-70s to 80s, yet hit 90 degrees in June's recent heatwave. The inland Bay Area has joined Sacramento in topping 100 degrees – prompting many people to seek refuge at the lake, no matter how cold.



Visitors to Tahoe can find a variety of outdoor activities. Photo/LTN

“We’re looking at a strong summer. June was good in both occupancy and rates,” Lakeland Village General Manager Jerry Bindel said. “We see a direct correlation with the heat (sending people here).”

The longtime South Lake Tahoe Lodging Association member viewed recent reports and found that occupancy is up between 8 and 10 percent in June from 2016 for most members.

Bindel points to a big, Tahoe specific factor beyond the heat. There has been a surge among international visitors who have placed Lake Tahoe on their list of preferred destinations such as San Francisco, Napa, Yosemite, Las Vegas and the California coast.

Plus, there has been a rebirth of sorts, especially on the South Shore.

You've heard "location, location, location" in respect to real estate. With South Lake Tahoe tourism, it's "infrastructure, infrastructure, infrastructure."

"In the last half decade, we've had a renaissance of the South Shore. We think the town looks better and presents better than we've ever seen it. The face lift continues to help us raise the level of experience," Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority Executive Director Carol Chaplin told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Chaplin has noticed booking windows are longer – meaning fewer last-minute reservations and spending overall appears up. And like Bindel, Chaplin embraces the increased international traveler interest because "they spend more days and typically spend more (money)."

The Bay Area market still represents the cash cow for this area, with San Diego contributing to the strong showing.

Phone calls to North Lake Tahoe Resort Association were unreturned.

Plus, the possibility of a record year in bookings and tax receipts involving auxiliary industries such as activities and retail could be in Lake Tahoe's future, according to national trends.

After all, AAA reports an anticipated record number of U.S. travelers ventured beyond their homes by 50 miles or more over the Fourth of July holiday.

It was estimated a total of 44.2 million people took to the roads, skies, rails and waterways to celebrate the holiday – an almost 3 percent increase of 1.25 million travelers over last year. That would be the most traveled Independence Day weekend since the Auto Club has been counting.

A combined strong employment, rising incomes, higher consumer confidence and low gas prices bode well for the travel

industry.



Brand USA films in Lake Tahoe to create promotional material for potential Chinese visitors. Photo/Brand USA

The numbers are soaring

The main aviation hub for Lake Tahoe tourism continues to climb in seat capacity over the last few years – with 2016 registering 4.6 million seats taken coming in and out of Reno-Tahoe International Airport. That’s about half a million more than 2014, with 2017 expected to hit a 5 million mark, airport spokesman Brian Kulpin highlighted in a recent report.

“Our load factors are strong,” he told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Kulpin also mentioned air service fares coming out of Orange County, Oakland, Long Beach, Atlanta, Dallas, San Jose and Chicago as contributing to the region’s boost in air traffic.

Passengers are not necessarily originating from these cities, as shown by tourism officials' repeatedly turning their attention to the lucrative international travel market.

International travelers spent \$20.8 billion on travel to and within the United States in April, a more than 3 percent increase from the previous year, the U.S. National Travel and Tourism Office reported.

And from January to April, international tourist spending totaled \$83.4 billion – a 2.5 percent increase from last year. The surge – a record first four months of the year – averaged out to nearly \$700 million per day.

The market seems to counteract an AP poll indicating that fewer Americans, 43 percent, plan to take a long term summer vacation because of the largest factor – money. The percentage goes up among those making less than \$50,000 a year.

Still, markets that cater to visitors seeking a unique and improved experience made out.

“The West is such an international draw. If you look at Europe, it doesn't have as many open spaces. There's more public land and more open spaces (here),” said Anna Madison, chief strategist for Brand USA.

The United States destination marketing organization, which has been working on overdrive to spur and track visitation in U.S. markets since the nation has no government run department of tourism, wrapped up a recent tour of Tahoe to incorporate hot “draw” spots in the agency's videos. The customized videos filmed in partnership with the LTVA will be finalized in the coming weeks in Mandarin to speak to this international audience's specific point of view.

“The value is in the breadth of experience they can have in a single trip. It's vast in diversity,” Madison said of the Chinese market seeking an “all-in” excursion. Their travels

often involve a long trip including San Francisco, Napa, Yosemite and the California coast – with Lake Tahoe joining the mix as a hot travel commodity.

Madison admits boosting U.S. travel has been difficult at times when the dollar remains strong versus other currency. Add to that more restrictions on traveling abroad, and the agency has its work cut out for it. Still, Lake Tahoe – and other up-in-coming U.S. destinations in the West – is a huge draw if they know how to market.

This is something the Nevada Commission on Tourism knows all too well. The agency set the standard for wooing and appealing to the lucrative Asian market. The NCOT has long advocated attracting the international visitor because of its spending power.

“Tourism is the No. 1 industry in Nevada. It’s something we’re proud of; it’s serious business, not fun and games,” NCOT spokeswoman Bethany Drysdale told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The agency is keeping a close eye on practical issues for international travelers such as visa complications, given the current political climate.

“We’re doing everything we can to still welcome the visitor no matter what the Trump administration is putting out there in a message,” Drysdale said.

It helps that she has support of her ultimate boss – Republican Gov. Brian Sandoval, a longtime supporter of tourism in the state.

The NCOT-sponsored Governor Global Tourism Summit’s tagline is “Nevada Welcomes the World.”

Incline Village’s Crystal Bay Visitors Bureau is among a handful of grant recipients selected by the NCOT to receive \$10,000 to cover video production and other advertising costs

for promoting rural Nevada.



Most of the sand is spoken for on July 3 in Tahoe Vista.
Photo/Ellie Waller

Life here can be a beach

Summer versus winter may be the thing for Tahoe now.

“For mountain travel, in most cases, the focus is on summer still being discovered, and it’s more affordable,” Inntopia Business Intelligence spokesman Ralf Garrison told *Lake Tahoe News*. Garrison manages DestiMatrix tourism data for the company formerly known as the Mountain Travel Research Institute.

The DestiMatrix director used a sample of about 290 property management companies in 20 mountain destination communities representing 30,000 rooms across California, Nevada, Colorado, Oregon, Wyoming, Montana, Utah and Idaho.

Garrison made the case that summer is more affordable because of the “barrier to entry” factor in which a visitor must learn to ski or snowboard in winter. Perhaps that’s why one sees ski resorts expand into other areas. Summer travels often involve hiking and biking, which most people already know how to do.

“Tahoe as a summer destination is being discovered,” Garrison said. He’s referring to return visitors who may have not seen the new renovations and improvements.

“The Rocky Mountains not so much,” he added. Visitors still associate Colorado with ski, ski, ski. The company should know. It hails from Denver.

He expects a surge of visitors to Tahoe a little later in the summer given blocked hiking trails from the Sierra Nevada’s 60 feet of snowpack blanketing the mountains this winter.

“When you have a good winter with a lot of snow, it usually means summer starts slow,” Garrison said. “It’s almost too much of a good thing.”

Of the visitors venturing here early, there lies a heightened call for “urbanism.” People keep to lake level where they shop, walk, bike and conduct activities at a lower elevation.

So, retailers need to sharpen their marketing knives.

Garrison said DestiMatrix stats have also shown a propensity for potential visitors to book faster this year. May through October, reservations indicate a 1 percent growth and a possible 3 percent growth in revenue for the West.

And for tourist destinations like Lake Tahoe, gaining the visitor is Job 1.

Because of this, the South Shore has suspended its annual Labor Day fireworks show due to a survey of lodging properties believing it fails to drive overnight stays.

For one thing, most school districts send their students back much earlier. Then there's the cost and rising expenses to put on the fireworks show, which includes money involved in operations. The LTVA wants to replace the show with a different event.

In the meantime, activity-based purveyors such as Heavenly Mountain Resort continue to work on their own operations to bring in summer in grand style.

Spokesman Kevin Cooper said summer activities are shaping up at Heavenly and Kirkwood Mountain Resort despite the challenges that go into coming off a record snowfall winter.

"Mother Nature provided a solid week of above average temperatures, benefiting both teams at Heavenly and at Kirkwood," Cooper said recently.