How Hollywood changed the slot machine paradigm

By Dan Michalski, Vegas Inc.

Gov. Brian Sandoval was chairman of the Nevada Gaming Commission in January 2000 when the panel enacted a ban on slot machines with cartoon themes deemed appealing to minors.

Controversy over a slot machine built on the TV-MA-rated cartoon “South Park” had sparked then-presidential contender Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., to call on the Federal Trade Commission to investigate whether casino marketing practices were picking up where cigarette mascot Joe Camel left off, luring minors into a potentially addictive abyss.

Sandoval and the Nevada Gaming Commission jumped into action to preempt federal activity and reaffirm that Nevada knew best how to regulate the gaming industry, even as casinos proliferated nationwide.

Read the whole story

Truckee to declare emergency, more snow coming



Personal snowplows have been in overdrive and will continue to be needed through Thursday. Photo/Kim Wyatt

Updated 9:10pm:

It’s not over. A winter storm warning for Tahoe-Truckee is in effect until 10pm Thursday. Another 4 to 8 inches is expected at the lake, with more than a foot above 7,000 feet.

Liberty Utilities has approximately 6,500 locations still without power tonight.

“We cannot guarantee restoration times, however, we will continue to provide updates as they are available,” Liberty spokeswoman Kathy Carter said in a statement.

Truckee’s town council is meeting Jan. 12 at 5:45pm at the airport to declare a state of emergency.

As power is restored, the North Tahoe Public Utility District

is asking all customers to continue to limit water usage as much as possible through the duration of the power outage, even if the power is restored to your home. It is important to help keep flows down as other areas may still be running on generator power.

“District crews will continue to work around the clock to keep sewer flowing in the system and water to homes,” stated utility operations manager Ken Fischer.

The district operates 18 sewer pump stations that move the sewage along Highway 28 or out of low lying areas to, then up and over Dollar Hill. Generators are being used to pump down sewer stations, but they require fueling and maintenance and crews are stretched thin. In addition, sewer flows are already high due to inflow and infiltration of runoff into the sewer system via manholes and customer sewer clean outs.

While the risk of sewer overflows is the greatest concern, the district is also running the water system on temporary generator power to run the National Avenue Water Treatment Plan and pump water throughout the district.

With the continuing winter storms in the Lake Tahoe area and an avalanche near Truckee, the U.S. Postal Service has made the rare decision to suspend operations at select offices. A lack of power and access has necessitated the temporary closure of the following post offices:

- Carnelian Bay
- Homewood
- Incline Village
- Kings Beach
- Olympic Valley
- Tahoe City
- Tahoe Vista
- Truckee
- Tahoma.

Nevada Department of Transportation has signed emergency contracts to repair erosion and other flood-related roadway damage. The repairs follow tours of the damage taken by Governor Sandoval and local officials both before and after the flood.

Contractors on Wednesday started to make roadway shoulder repairs, repair flood damage and rebuild roadway drainage on Pyramid and Gerlach highways. Highway 446 running along the bottom of Pyramid Lake is closed. The road sustained the greatest flood damage of any state road, with many sections of roadway completely washed away and approximately 50-feet drop-offs created by erosion. Full damages have been assessed, and repairs anticipated to start in coming weeks. With a massive amount of earthwork needed to rebuild the roadway, no timeframe for reopening is established.

Kingsbury Grade remains closed between Tramway Drive and Foothill Drive on the Carson Valley side. There is no timeframe for reopening it.

Lingering damages are still being fully assessed as storm waters subside, and additional road repairs may be needed to state roads east of Reno and Carson City. Repairs are estimated to cost approximately $6.5 million with a large portion of costs going to reconstruction of Highway 446. Federal reimbursement is anticipated for much of the repairs.

The rain and snow fall has caused infrastructure problems in El Dorado County. There is a substantial amount of snow in Tahoe in the area and crews are working to address the continued situation.

The following is an update of road closures outside the basin:

- Fort Jim Road at Newtown Road – failing drainage structure.
- Kyburz Drive – mudslide/trees/debris blocking drainage. Will take several days to remove. Local access available

for residents.

- Hackamiller Road just past Garden Valley Road – washed out road.
- Weber Creek at Jurgens/Luneman – low water crossing flooded and unsafe for vehicle traffic.
- Cosumnes Mine Road at North Fork of Cosumnes River. Bridge approach failure. In addition, other sections of the road, not associated with the bridge, have experienced slope failure taking part of the road down the slope.
- Mormon Emigrant Trail at Sly Park Road – there are unsafe conditions on the road. Should reopen this weekend.

In addition, county staff has been responding to calls regarding hundreds of downed trees, flooding, potholes, and small and large slides. The most significant slides have occurred along Salmon Falls Road, Rock Creek Road, Mosquito Road, Newtown Road, Forni Road, and Hassler Road.

Lake Tahoe Community College is planning to open at 8am Thursday. Campus roads and parking lots are clear, and power is on. President Kindred Murillo's farewell lunch is now Jan. 13 at noon. For info, call 530.541.4660, ext. 245.

The Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit Forest Supervisor's Office on College Drive in South Lake Tahoe will open Thursday at noon to the public. Staff will evaluate facilities around the basin during the day.

Squaw Valley is planning a delayed opening Thursday with limited terrain.



South Tahoe fire and Liberty Utilities crews work on downed power lines. Photo/Provided

Updated 2:15pm:

South Lake Tahoe officials are reporting dangerous conditions throughout town. The snow is a bit slushy now and people are not driving well.

Through town Highway 50 is one lane in each direction, with snow so high in the center it's hard to see oncoming traffic. Some drivers think they can cross the snow and are getting stuck.

"It's going to take us all day to push the snow back," City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News.* "The snowplow drivers will be out all day continuing to plow residential streets and widening streets. Berms are to be expected."

The North Tahoe Public Utility District, in cooperation with Placer County Office of Emergency Services, is opening the conference room at the district offices at 875 National Ave.

in Tahoe Vista as a warming station. Residents or visitors in need can come in, grab some coffee, warm up and charge their cell phone or other devices. The district building is operating on generator power.

The North Tahoe Public Utility District is asking all customers to limit water usage as much as possible through the duration of the power outage as utility crews work to keep sewage flowing along the North Shore.

IVGID administrative, public works offices, Diamond Peak, and the Incline Village Recreation Center are closed today, and will reopen Thursday at 8am.

The good news is the sun is out in some areas.

Interstate 80 is open. Highway 50 over Echo Summit is open with chain controls. Motorists may be held intermittently for avalanche control operations. Highway 89 over Emerald Bay is currently closed due to avalanche hazards.

Caltrans is reminding people they are required to carry chains even if driving a 4- or all-wheel drive vehicle with mud and snow rated tires.

Motorists using cable (ladder) chains may be turned around on Highway 267 at the Northstar and Kings Beach chain control checkpoints.



Spooner Summit on Wednesday afternoon is a mess. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

The Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City will be closed for approximately 10 days to clean up damage sustained during severe weather this week. The main museum took on some water, but exhibits and historic collections were not damaged.

Truckee Donner PUD is responding to power outages caused by the blizzard. TDPUD was experiencing a series of localized outages on Tuesday evening due to falling trees when TDPUD lost transmission power to the entire district and all customers lost power. Crews have been working all night and today to restore transmission power at which time TDPUD can begin to restore power to our customers.

The loss of NV Energy transmission power was caused by a large tree that feel near Coachland about 10pm on Tuesday night. NV Energy crews stared working on repairs about 2am on Wednesday and continue to effect repairs.

Once the main system power is restored, there will still be isolated outages due mostly to falling trees on TDPUD’s distribution system and on secondary power lines feeding individual homes.

Liberty Utilities’ walk in centers and customer service phone lines are closed Wednesday. About 20,000 customers without

power. All Liberty Utilities and NV Energy crews have worked together through the night.



Downed power lines in Incline Village because of toppled trees. Photo/Washoe County

As of 2pm power had been restored to a majority of customers in the Northstar, Squaw, Olympic Valley, Alpine Meadows, Glenshire, Martis Camp and Truckee areas. Liberty anticipates customers in Kings Beach, Tahoe City and Portola/Loyalton will also be restored today.

There are still challenges to restoring power from Emerald Bay to south of Homewood.

Heavenly is reporting 48 inches of snow in the last 24 hours, 108 inches in three days, and 12 feet in seven days. Northstar has 42 inches in 24 yours, 10 feet in seven days, while Kirkwood received 48 inches in the last 24 hours, 6 feet in two days and 11 feet in seven days.

Access to Pyramid Lake could take a while to restore. The road is totally washed out. The tribe is looking for **financial assistance**.

The Harlem Globetrotters 2017 World Tour stop in Reno that was scheduled for Jan. 12 at the Reno Events Center has been rescheduled for Jan. 17 at 7pm. All previously purchased tickets will be honored for the rescheduled game. Tickets are now on sale for the rescheduled show on Jan. 17.

Lake Tahoe Unified is going to be closed on Thursday.



South Lake Tahoe residents are dealing with large berms. Photo/Ernie Claudio

By Lake Tahoe News

Snow is continuing to effect schools, commerce and travel in the greater Lake Tahoe area.

Non-essential South Lake Tahoe El Dorado County, and Placer County workers in the basin have been told not to go to work for the second straight day. This means those offices are closed to the public as well.

School closures include: Lake Tahoe Unified, Douglas County at the lake, Incline Village, Lake Tahoe Community College, Tahoe Truckee Unified, and Sierra Nevada College.

Per the Sierra Avalanche Center, the warning is high for avalanches. People are being advised not to go into the backcountry. An avalanche warning has been issued for the Tahoe through 4am Thursday.

Nevada Energy and Liberty Utilities are dealing with multiple outages that are affecting pockets in and around the greater Lake Tahoe area. A large swath of Truckee is in the dark now. With roads either being closed, having black ice this morning, or not being plowed, their crews are having a hard time even reaching the problem to be able to solve it.

“The majority of customers along the North Shore, West Shore and continuing through Truckee to Portola are without power due to a mudslide and falling trees that have damaged all of the three energy sources to the region,” Kathy Carter with Liberty said.

People are warned not to touch downed power lines, but to call 911 instead.

The power outage has closed Squaw Valley, Alpine Meadows and Northstar on Jan. 11. Sugar Bowl is closed because of no access from Interstate 80. Tahoe Donner and Homewood are closed.

Squaw-Alpine reports receiving 5 feet of snow in the past 36 hours, for a storm total of nearly 9.5 feet this week. That’s more than 13.5 feet this month.

Truckee issued this advice on Wednesday, “Travel should be restricted to only essential needs. We can reach residents in the event of an emergency, however roadways may not have been fully plowed yet and vehicles getting stuck will impact our ability to respond to emergencies.” This is appropriate advice for all areas of the Tahoe basin as well.

Highway 50 over Echo Summit is open. No cannons have been going off this morning. However, that could change.

For up-to-date road information, click on the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News.*

Interstate 80 remains closed from Colfax to the Nevada state line. Highway 89 around Emerald Bay is closed. Westbound Highway 88 is closed at Picketts Junction. Highway 267 is restricted to 4-wheel drive vehicles only; vehicles with chains over Brockway Summit are not permitted. In Douglas County in the valley, Centerville Lane is closed because of flooding. Mount Rose Highway remains closed from Fairview to Douglas Fir. Kingsbury Grade is out of commission for a while because of sink hole on the Carson side; but access is available on the basin side.

Various businesses in the region have remained closed during the storms either because staff could not get to work, power has been out or they didn’t expect customers to be traveling. It is advised to call ahead for the next day to make sure the entity is open.

Snow is in the forecast for the basin through Thursday. The sun should come out Friday.

EDC DA wins appeal in cop-grand jury case

By Kathryn Reed

A court decision handed down Tuesday in El Dorado County District Attorney Vern Pierson's favor could have reverberations throughout the state.

The 3rd District Court of Appeal, which rarely publishes public opinions, on Jan. 10 said the California Legislature overstepped its bounds when in 2015 it enacted a law prohibiting grand juries from investigating police shootings.

The court ruled the Legislature would have to change the Constitution; that simply creating the law was not enough, nor did it have the legal power to do so.

"Every day peace officers put their lives on the line for all us. However, sometimes they make mistakes and sometimes they commit criminal misconduct up to murder. The public is entitled to a comprehensive, professional, and transparent investigation of any use of force, particularly one including the loss of life. Unfortunately, the legislature was misled by fake news – hands up don't shoot – and restricted our ability to conduct those investigations," Pierson told *Lake Tahoe News.*

Missing in the Superior and Appellate court hearings have been the Legislature and Attorney General's Office. It was the AG who told lawmakers what they were doing was legal.

A grand jury gives the prosecutor great latitude to control a case because only their side is presented, and only what they want divulged comes out. Many people actually believe grand juries are actually skewed toward protecting the officer and not providing true transparency.

Pierson has a vested interest in the law because he is tasked with deciding whether to prosecute South Lake Tahoe police Officer Josh Klinge in the June 15, 2015, fatal shooting of 22-year-old Kris Jackson of Sacramento. Klinge said he thought Jackson had a gun when he fired the single bullet into his chest as the suspect was escaping through a window at the Tahoe Hacienda Motel on Lake Tahoe Boulevard. Klinge has been on paid administrative leave all this time.

On Feb. 1, 2016, Pierson issued subpoenas to Police Chief Brian Uhler, Klinge and four other officers. The grand jury sessions were to begin a month later.

South Lake Tahoe Police Officers' Association and Police Supervisors' Association filed motions to quash the subpoenas and dismiss the grand jury. The city of South Lake Tahoe then became a party of interest.

"Both the chief and myself could not tell police officers to act contrary to state law," City Attorney Tom Watson told *Lake Tahoe News.* "We support our officer because we believe our officer will be vindicated whether in criminal or civil court."

El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Jim Wagoner did not find the legislation unconstitutional.

Pierson challenged that decision and prevailed Tuesday.

The police association has 60 days to decide if it wants to take this to the state Supreme Court.

Tahoe Queen turned into scrap pile



The Tahoe Queen on Jan. 9 is being torn apart. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

By Kathryn Reed

The Tahoe Queen is no more.

The paddle-wheeler that sustained extensive fire damage in August was dismantled on Jan. 9.

The engines were salvaged because they were new – part of the remodel that was occurring when the fire engulfed the vessel. Welders and painters had been working in the same area which

sparked the blaze.

While the Queen's home port was Ski Run Marina, it had been docked at Zephyr Cove for a while because of the low lake level. That is where the fire occurred. The boat had remained in the water there until a few days ago when it was brought ashore.

Aramark which operated the Queen and still runs the M.S. Dixie II would only confirm that the damage was too great to salvage the boat.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency issues permits for these vessels and the U.S. Coast Guard regulates them. It is unknown if Aramark will try to launch another boat or if the permit might be transferred to another company.

It's also unknown what will become of the hull. Those can be repurposed as a barge or have a new boat built on it.

Video by Carolyn E. Wright:

https://www.laketahoenews.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/MAH00894.mp4

Crystal Bay avalanche watch; Sierra roads treacherous



Snow is the word of the day in Lake Tahoe and will be through Thursday. Photo/Susan Wood

Updated 11:33pm:

Lake Tahoe Community College will be closed Wednesday.

Liberty Utilities was able to do some switching and get part of South Lake Tahoe out of the dark. About 1,726 customers on the lake side of Highway 50 in the Al Tahoe neighborhood are still without power.

Updated 10:34pm:

The North Tahoe Event Center shelter in Kings Beach is closed because of a power outage. Officials are encouraging people seek shelter a hotel or casino.

Incline Village schools will be closed Wednesday.

Another avalanche in the 1800 block of Alpine Meadows Road has

closed that area.

Updated 10:10pm:

Weather is getting more severe and lines are going out at a rapid rate, according to Liberty Utilities.

“We have lost a major line which feeds most communities along Highway 89 up through Loyalton and Portola. With I-80 closed, we have sent a crew on snowcat to the probably problem; they are expected to arrive on scene by 1am,” spokeswoman Kathy Carter said in a statement.

Tahoe City is also experiencing outages with no restoration time estimated yet.

Some regions may experience flash outages that can be repaired quickly throughout the evening if accessible.

A tree branch that fell on a primary wire on Sundown Trail in the unincorporated area of El Dorado County has 2,316 customers in the dark. Crews are on site, but there is no estimated time when power will be restored.

Updated 8:50pm:

Garbage service in the basin may be slower or delayed throughout the basin because of unplowed roads.

Meyers is in the dark, as is a large swath of South Lake Tahoe. Liberty Utilities crews are on in the area trying to determine the cause.

Updated 7:45pm:

For people in custody who were supposed to go to court in South Lake Tahoe on Tuesday or Wednesday today or their cases will be heard on Thursday. All other cases will be rescheduled. Individuals who are represented by lawyers should contact that individual’s office. Court users can may call

530.621.7414 ater 8am Wednesday.

With 126 inches of snow in the first 10 days of 2017, Squaw-Alpine is already at 181 percent of their January average. On Tuesday the resorts received 29 inches in about 12 hours. If conditions allow, both resorts will be open with a limited number of lifts.

Blizzard and flooding conditions are expected to continue through the night in the basin.

Northbound Highway 267 is closed at Kings Beach.

Highway 50 is closed from Meyers to Sly Park because of avalanche threat. The estimated time to open is 3am Wednesday.

Updated 4:20pm:

Residents in the Crystal Bay area are advised to stay indoors until further notice. Avalanches large enough to break trees and move cars have occurred in Crystal Bay under similar storm circumstances. This advisory may last for the next 24 hours, or longer, depending on how long the storm lasts. Road crews will not be plowing streets in the avalanche-danger area until further notice. Cornices along the ridge above Crystal Bay will be getting large enough to fall off their own weight and trigger long-running avalanches that could reach the homes below. Wind speeds and snowfall rates are increasing dramatically.

El Dorado County has declared a state of emergency due to damage to local infrastructure.

There is some structural damage to about a dozen houses that were hit by an avalanche Tuesday morning on Alpine Meadows Road, but no foundational issues have been found.

The road has been cleared and residents are allowed into the valley with ID, but are not allowed into the avalanche area, which is from 270 Alpine Meadows Road to the resort parking

lot.

Residents of the southwest Donner Lake area along Washoe Circle, Conifer Drive, and parts of South Shore Drive are advised that a high avalanche danger exists and they may want to evacuate. These conditions are expected to remain for the next few days.

“Even though there are many areas of heavy forest above these homes, avalanches can run into areas of mature forest,” Truckee fire personnel said in a statement.

A backcountry avalanche warning is in effect in the Truckee - Tahoe area. Travel in avalanche terrain, on or below slopes 30 degrees and steeper is not recommended.

Cannons have been going off most of the day; set off by highway departments and ski resorts to reduce the threat of avalanche. This has meant Highway 50 between Meyers and Placerville had been open intermittently. It is currently closed because of several snow slides.

Motorists are being advised to avoid the area of Alder Creek Road between Schussing and Wolfgang in Truckee because of minor flooding.

All roads in Douglas County are open except of Kingsbury Grade between Foothill Road and Tramway.

El Dorado County has closed the Cosumnes Mine Road bridge where it crosses the North Fork of the Cosumnes River. Water has washed away the soil from under the north bridge approach.

Lake Tahoe Unified will be closed on Wednesday, as will the courts in South Lake Tahoe. The court expects to be open Thursday. Check the **website** for updates.

Truckee’s town council meeting has been moved to Jan. 12 at 6pm.

Liberty Utilities is still working on trying to restore power to people throughout the region.



Berms several feet high are being left on streets in Meyers. Photo/Kim Wyatt

Updated 2:10pm

More than a dozen houses were hit by an avalanche at 11:40 this morning on Alpine Meadows Road. No injuries have been reported.

“It’s still an unstable situation. There is still avalanche danger throughout the district and the basin,” Beth Kenna with North Tahoe Fire told *Lake Tahoe News.*

The extent of damage is being assessed.

Alpine and Squaw were closed today.

Sugar Bowl is closed because of the Interstate 80 being closed. The resort as of 1:45pm was reporting a 44-inch storm total so far, with 20 inches falling in the last 24 hours. There is not estimated time for I-80 to reopen.

Highway 50 has been closed on and off because of avalanche control.

Highway 267 is closed because of blizzard conditions.

For current road conditions, click on the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News.*

In South Lake Tahoe, Heavenly was encouraging people to ski while at the same time the city of South Lake Tahoe – as well as every transportation authority, including the two states – were telling people not to travel. The city told non-essential workers they did not have to work on Tuesday. This essentially means the city is closed for business.

In the city and El Dorado County the plows are working the main streets and not the residential areas. This is more for public safety concerns. Residents should not expect to see a plow on Jan. 10 unless they are on a main route.

The Rubicon Trail is also closed due to hazardous conditions. Conditions will be reassessed on Friday.

Due to treacherous weather conditions, Liberty Utilities has closed its walk-in and call center offices in Tahoe Vista and South Lake Tahoe. With approximately 2,000 customers still without power, crews are trying to make repairs although they are hampered by unsafe conditions, including avalanche danger.

“With heavy snow comes roof snow shedding, which could trap anyone underneath it. Make sure you or any family members stay away from any potential roof shedding areas,” warns Truckee fire officials.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, “A blizzard warning has been issued for the Sierra through Wednesday morning. Dangerous and potentially life threatening blizzard conditions are possible in the Sierra Mountains. Multiple feet of snowfall are expected. Strong winds will produce zero visibility in whiteout conditions along with high drifting snow. Do not attempt to travel as first responders may not be able to rescue you. Travel may already be impossible with several road closures due to heavy snow already being reported. Even a short walk could be deadly if you become disoriented. Avalanche danger will remain high through this storm.”

The U.S. Forest Service office in South Lake Tahoe is closed Tuesday and Wednesday.

TART has canceled Truckee local service and night service for Tuesday.



This is Echo Summit on Jan. 10. Photo/Caltrans

Updated 7:55am:

The South Lake Tahoe branch of the El Dorado County Superior

Court will be closed is closed for Tuesday. Cases scheduled for today will be trailed until Wednesday, and there may have a delayed start time. Court users need to check the court **website** for further information and instructions.

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Blizzard and avalanche warnings for the Sierra are in effect through Wednesday per the National Weather Service in Reno.

About 18 inches of snow have fallen on the South Shore in the last 24 hours, which is impacting travel. Several feet are in the forecast through Thursday.

School closures for Tuesday include: Lake Tahoe Unified, Lake Tahoe Community College, Douglas County schools at the lake, Jacks Valley is closed because of the Highway 395 flooding and buses being unable to transport students, Tahoe Truckee Unified, Incline Village schools,

Non-essential El Dorado County employees in the basin do not have to go to work.

Liberty Utilities rebuilt a major transmission line Monday that serves the West Shore. This brought power back to all but about 50 customers along Highway 89 between Squaw Valley and Truckee.

Mount Rose Highway is closed.

Avalanche control is going on Highway 50 in the Echo Summit area so traffic is being held.

High winds are likely to impact ski resorts. Tahoe Donner is closed today.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Sno-parks provide gateway to winter fun

By Kathryn Reed

Parking can be a difficult thing to find in the winter for those who want to play outdoors. That is why there are sno-parks throughout California.

The 19 sites, six of which are in the greater Lake Tahoe area, are regularly cleared of snow. The catch is that a permit is required to park there. It costs $5/day or $25/season, with a season being Nov. 1-May 30. Access is on a first-come, first-serve basis.

The fine is $94.50 for parking at a sno-park without a permit.

California State Parks manages the program with cooperation from the U.S. Forest Service, California Highway Patrol and the vendors selling the passes. No one from State Parks was available to explain when the program started or if the money is used for things other than snow removal.

Lake of the Sky Outfitters sold a record number of passes last winter – almost 300. Most years they sell between 160 and 250 permits. Weather is the main factor when it comes to sales.



The South Lake Tahoe store, which will be closing Jan. 31, gets to retain a little bit of the cash, but most of the money is sent to the state.

"Mostly for us it was a convenience for our customers," store owner Peter Hussmann told *Lake Tahoe News.* People interested in snow play areas were the main purchasers of passes.

The Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit's main office in South Lake Tahoe is another popular place to get passes. Staff field a ton of calls about what the parks really are. Those on the other end of the line are hoping it's a real park. The reality is these locations are nothing more than a parking lot at a trailhead. Some have porta-potties, but that's it. There are no concessionaires renting toys or selling food, often no trash bins.

Overnight camping in vehicles used to be permitted, but is no longer allowed at any of the sno-parks. Tent camping is also prohibited as are fires in the parking lots.

Backcountry skiers, snowshoers and snowmobilers are the primary permit seekers at Sorensen's Resort.

"We have been going through them like water right now," Kel Gennert of Sorensen's told *Lake Tahoe News*. Thousands of dollars' worth, she added. It's been a mix of day and season passes. "We do it as a courtesy for Alpine County Chamber of Commerce. They make a little bit of money on it."

Because Sorensen's doesn't make a penny, the Hope Valley resort only accepts cash or checks for the permits.

“When people say what kind of park is it, we tell them it’s access to backcountry, that it is a safe place to park,” Gennert said.

Sorensen’s also has a brochure to hand people that has a map of where the sno-parks are and the rules. It’s been so busy they are temporarily out of them.

Oregon and Idaho have similar programs, with the three states having a reciprocal agreement.

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Notes:

· For more information about California sno-parks, including locations, go **online**.

Gold Country vintners pick up where prospectors left off

By Mike Dunne, Sacramento Bee

Not all the prospectors lured to the hills and hollows around John Sutter’s sawmill at Coloma in El Dorado County had as much luck finding gold as James W. Marshall.

For that matter, not even Marshall made much of a fortune in digging for color. His celebrity rests largely on his happenstance discovery of small flakes of gold in the tailrace of Sutter’s mill, which he was helping build in 1848, touching off the Gold Rush.

With only sporadic success beyond that, Marshall and many

other argonauts began to exploit Coloma's rich soils, agreeable climate and abundant water to cultivate other sources of revenue, namely flowers, vegetables, fruit and wine. They were so successful that Coloma Valley, aka Coloma Basin, came to be recognized more for its agricultural bounty than its gold. "Coloma is literally a pomological garden," waxed Placerville's Mountain Democrat in 1858, according to Eric Costa's 2010 history of winemaking in El Dorado County, "Gold and Wine."

Read the whole story

Region weathers first storm; snow comes next



Bill Avenue in South Lake Tahoe on Jan. 8 had to be closed

because of flooding. Photo/Provided

Updated 2:10pm:

Since the first of the year Lake Tahoe has risen about 1 foot; that’s 33.6 billion gallons of water.

Interstate 80 is open in both directions.

Highway 395 is closed in both directions from Stephanie to Cradlebaugh Bridge. Jacks Valley Road is open.

Multiple state roads in the greater Truckee Meadows and Carson Valley areas remain closed as the Nevada Department of Transportation clears and accesses flood-related damages. Road closures can change rapidly.

Here is what NDOT is working on:

- Some of the greatest flood damage to state roads occurred in the Pyramid Lake area, with extensive damage to highways 445, 446 and 447. An approximately 50-feet drop-off was created by erosion on Highway 446 along Pyramid Lake. Sections of state roads in the Pyramid Lake area will continue to be closed indefinitely as repairs are made.
- At Kingsbury Grade all of the new roadway surface and much of the new earth that was placed down to fill the previous erosion remained intact. However, with the overwhelming amount of precipitation, additional erosion occurred in the area, particularly to drainage areas. With snow and winter weather forecast, NDOT will do all possible to repair the road efficiently and quickly, but no timeframe is yet set.
- Both directions of Interstate 80 west of Keystone Avenue of downtown Reno has extensive potholing.
- Genoa and Muller lanes in the Minden/Carson Valley area remain closed. The entire length of Genoa Lane between Highway 395 and Foothill Road is closed. The western

section of Muller Lane is closed between Highway 395 and Foothill Road. Both roads experienced roadway shoulder damage, but are anticipated to reopen within the next day or two. Residents will valid ID are allowed access on Muller and Genoa lanes.

- NDOT bridge inspectors have visually assessed state bridges susceptible to high levels of erosion in northwestern Nevada for any imminent bridge safety concerns. No immediate damages or imminent safety concerns were found.

Liberty Utilities says treacherous conditions have slowed the restoration progress in some areas. Service remains out for multiple customers between Tahoe City and Tahoma. Additional crews have been brought in and are onsite. Sporadic outages continue throughout the service territory due to falling trees and branches.

The National Weather Service in Reno has issued a high wind watch from Reno through Carson valley for the 24-hour period ending Tuesday night. Flooding is also still possible in those areas.

All Washoe County schools, including Incline Village schools, will be on a two-hour delay Tuesday.

https://www.laketahoenews.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/video-1484000418.mp4
Gary Kank sent this video to Lake Tahoe News. It was from his commute on Jan. 9 from South Lake Tahoe to Shingle Springs on Highway 50. It's the most water he's seen in 15 years.

Updated 9:33am

South Tahoe Public Utility at peak flow on Jan. 8 had 17.5 million gallons coming through its sewer lines. This is twice the pumping capacity over Luther Pass to the Carson Valley. This meant the emergency retention basins near the plant are

in use.

Stormwater was getting into the pump stations at Fallen Leaf Lake those were pumped out so there would not be an overflow.

“A number of lift stations had all the pumps on full speed which almost never happens,” Richard Solbrig, executive director of STPUD, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Hopefully, we escaped the worst of it. Snow is not as hard to deal with as rain on snow.

As of 3:30am, customers from Emerald Bay through and including Tahoma have power. All other West Shore customers remain without power with estimated restoration time at 5pm Monday. NV Energy crews are assisting Liberty crews in addition to the contracted crews called in three days ago. There are two power lines that have been affected by mudslides and downed trees, and two of NV Energy sources that supply Liberty were affected by mudslides. Road closures are hampering efforts to get supplies and crews to needed locations.

In Douglas County damage assessment teams have been deployed to determine the impact of the storm and necessary clean-up. Officials are being advised the West Fork of the Carson River is expected to recede below the banks. There was a crest in the east fork last night and is now below flood stage. Last night’s evacuees are expected to return home later in the day.



Manhole covers are under water and Trout Creek is 15 feet into some properties in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Lisa Huard

By Kathryn Reed

The Upper Truckee River through South Lake Tahoe and Meyers for the most part stayed within its banks, allowing South Shore residents and officials to breathe a sigh of relief.

The hope is that the water level will recede a bit before the next system arrives.

“There were no major incidents of any kind,” City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Many of the investments we’ve made over the last 10 years such as the Bijou erosion control project and others performed exceptionally well.”

Minor flooding occurred at Denny’s restaurant, at school sites, Knights Inn hotel and residences. The worst road flooding was in the state streets area where the drainage is nonexistent and there is a high water table.

Placer County said it received 4 inches of rain in 24 hours.



Liberty Utilities crews work at all hours to restore power. Photo/Provided

Liberty Utilities is reporting outages in El Dorado and Placer counties, with no details available.

Problems throughout the region remain. Kingsbury Grade is closed again because of a sink hole in the same area where the road was repaired last week. There is no estimated time when it will be open. People can still drive from Highway 50 to Tramway.

Caltrans is still working to clear the mudslide on Interstate 80 that has traffic halted from Colfax to the Nevada state line. The eastbound lanes are open.

Highway 89 around Emerald Bay is closed.

Truckee has measurable water on some roads. Water has gone down along Glenshire Drive near Trout Creek, however there is still standing water along Donner Pass Road at Donner Lake.

Public safety and transportation officials are urging people not to travel on any roads in the region unless they have to.

Most schools in and around the basin are closed on Jan. 9 – including Lake Tahoe Unified, Douglas County at the lake, Incline Village, Tahoe-Truckee Unified, Lake Tahoe Community College, and Sierra Nevada College.

Ski resorts are assessing whether they will open on Monday. Most were shuttered on Sunday. Northstar, Squaw and Alpine are closed.

The Truckee River in Reno-Sparks is starting to rise again and could crest in Sparks at about noon today. There have been no flood related injuries, but rescues have occurred in the Reno area.



Northstar and other ski resorts will be closed Jan. 9. Photo/Provided

While the rain has changed to snow for much of Tahoe-Truckee, another significant system is barreling down on the region. It should be here this evening and last through Thursday. A winter storm warning is in effect for the Tahoe basin through Thursday at 4am.

For detailed road information, click on the state icons on the home page *Lake Tahoe News.*

Another 6 to 8 feet of snow is expected above 7,000 feet, with 2 to 5 feet at lake level, according to the National Weather Service in Reno.

By Friday it is expected to be mostly sunny.

The U.S. Postal Service said it had trouble last week delivering mail in South Lake Tahoe, Truckee and Incline Village and the same may be true this week because of road conditions.

Lahontan trying to cope with climate change

By Kathryn Reed

It's not a matter of whether climate change exists; the discussion now is what is going to be done about it – not to stop it, but in terms of how to live with it.

That is exactly what the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board's directors are going to discuss at this week's meeting. The board and staff are working on climate change adaptation strategies.

Specifically, the outcome of a climate change survey is on the Jan. 11 agenda. Because the survey closed on Dec. 31, an in depth analysis of all the responses will not occur at this meeting. (The meeting is in Apple Valley.) However, staff has been able to consolidate the more than 400 ideas into about two dozen potential adaptation concepts or actions.

The survey was open to the public and agencies.

"The biggest take home message is there is strong support for the board to take action to protect our recharge areas, to help out with addressing stormwater and infrastructure," Scott Ferguson, supervising engineer with Lahontan, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Where we saw differentiations was how to do it."

All nine regional water boards are looking at climate change and coming up with ideas for their particular area.

There has been much talk about pollution and climate change, but very little about water quality and climate change. The latter is the direction Lahontan wants the conversation to go.

Stormwater, flood plains and infrastructure are the main topics.

People used to only look at stormwater as something to get rid of. Now people are trying to figure out how to better capture it and reuse it. This is particularly prudent thinking in areas prone to droughts.

“How do we retain it and how do we manage it so we are not altering existing surface water?” Ferguson said. The answers are still being sought.

With the snowpack expected to decrease in the Sierra it means more rain will be falling. Lahontan would like that water to get into the ground.

“We need to be restoring wetlands; they act as a sponge to hold water and release water later in the year,” Ferguson said.

Regarding infrastructure, some industrial facilities and wastewater treatment locations are vulnerable to extreme flooding. Lahontan plans to do a threat analysis to determine how to protect areas.

“We are looking for a lot of coordination with our partners out there as we move forward with how best to be better prepared. We recognize everyone has limited resources,” Ferguson said.

Lahontan’s jurisdiction covers a large swath of eastern California, stretching to Southern California. Lake Tahoe and Truckee are just a small part of the territory. Whether there are different rules for various locales remains to be seen.

After staff does a thorough analysis of the survey the results are expected to be released in the spring, with public workshops in June, and the draft climate change adaptation strategy presented to the board in September.

“We will probably look to identify some particular actions that have been rising to the top, and offer another opportunity for input from partners, the water board and interested parties,” Ferguson said.

Steadman revolutionized orthopedic medicine

By John Meyer, Denver Post

VAIL— When a teen-aged Richard Steadman answered the phone one fateful weekend morning in 1955 at his family’s home in Sherman, Texas, the voice at the other end of the line was that of Paul “Bear” Bryant, calling with a scholarship offer to play football for him at Texas A&M. Steadman planned on going to Harvard until Bryant called with what he thought a better offer.

Bryant would go to win 323 games, including six national titles at Alabama. Steadman would go on to revolutionize orthopedics and sports medicine. Six decades later Steadman still tells the story of Bryant’s recruiting pitch with a sense of awe.

Today the walls at the Steadman Clinic in Vail are lined with framed jerseys of athletes Steadman got back on the field including NFL stars Dan Marino and Bruce Smith and hockey legend Mario Lemieux. He fixed tennis great Martina Navratilova and pop singer Rod Stewart.

In the early days of his orthopedic practice in South Lake Tahoe, Steadman had an intuition that putting a reconstructed knee in a cast for eight weeks was the wrong thing to do, even

though it was the common practice.

Read the whole story