Nev. bans unlicensed daily fantasy sports sites

By J.D. Morris, Las Vegas Sun

Nevada regulators on Oct. 15 banned providers of daily fantasy sports, a booming but controversial industry that many argue is akin to gambling, from operating in the state until and unless they are licensed to do so.

Gaming Control Board Chairman A.G. Burnett wrote in a public notice that he and his staff have concluded that daily fantasy sports constitutes gambling under state law. Operators must possess a sportsbook license in order to legally offer daily fantasy sports in Nevada, Burnett wrote, because the industry requires its customers to wager on how well individuals collectively perform in sporting events.

In response to the gaming board’s notice, FanDuel and DraftKings, the two leading daily fantasy sports providers, announced Thursday night that they are ceasing operations in Nevada while they consider their options moving forward.

Read the whole story

EDC gathering input on strategic plan



Few people turned out Oct. 15 to hear Laree Kiely from the Kiely Group talk about El Dorado County's future. Photo/Jessie Marchesseau

By Jessie Marchesseau

El Dorado County Supervisor Sue Novasel hosted a community meeting at South Lake Tahoe council chambers at the airport on Thursday evening as part of the process to develop a three-year strategic plan for El Dorado County. The focus of the meeting was to inform citizens about the planning process and to encourage participation in the countywide citizen engagement survey.

Excluding county employees and media, community attendance Oct. 15 amounted to less than a dozen.

Novasel explained to those present that the Board of Supervisors, along with county department heads, created a draft of the strategic plan outlining what they deemed to be important topics. Now they want to know what the community thinks is important. This is where the survey comes in.

"This survey is going to do a lot for me to try to understand what those top issues are," said Novasel.

The county has hired the Kiely Group to conduct the citizen engagement survey, which will be available to the public until Nov. 2. It asks questions like, "Do you use county government

services?” and “Which county services have the most impact on your quality of life and why?” It also asks for suggestions about each of the five areas of focus the county has identified for the plan: economic development, public safety, infrastructure, healthy community, and good county governance.

Laree Kiely of the Kiely Group reported that so far they have received about a thousand surveys, paper and online. While she did not reveal the results of the surveys, she did offer some demographic information about who has taken it thus far:

· 32 towns are represented

· 64 people from Lake Tahoe

· Majority of respondents are in the 50-65 age group

· 66 percent are women

· 29 percent are government employees (the survey was sent out to them first)

· 26 percent are retired

· 50 percent said they do not use county services.

Kiely said that last statistic confirms what she suspected is going in: a lot of people don’t even know what county government does. She pointed out that if they are simply driving on the roads, they are using county services.

“The really positive outcome, kind of the unintended consequence of this survey, is if they even read the questions of the survey, they will be more educated about what county government does, and that is a win all around,” she said.

At one point, attendees were asked to voice what their main concerns for the county are. Responses included the environment, public safety, Tahoe Paradise Park, happy and healthy residents, open space, adequate services for tourists,

public transit, and maintaining the status quo. A sign-up sheet was also passed around for anyone wanting to be in a future focus group.

Sherman Fox, training and organizational development specialist for El Dorado County, explained the process moving forward: once the surveys are completed and results are in, the data will be analyzed and focus groups formed to delve deeper into the most popular topics. The information will then be given to the goal-setting team who will determine if the county's original objectives need to be altered to coordinate with public concern. The intention, he said, is to have all this done and for the board to have a new three-year El Dorado County strategic plan ready by Christmas.

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Note:

· To participate in the survey, go **online**.

Tahoe musician inducted into R&B Hall of Fame



South Lake Tahoe musician Trey Stone on Oct. 4 is inducted into the R&B Hall of Fame. Photos/Lisa Quick

By Susan Wood

For all the focus on the blues and funk, South Lake Tahoe musician Trey Stone was inspired by a musician who may surprise most – Jimi Hendrix. The psychedelic rock and roll artist that made his claim to fame at the renowned Woodstock concert is known for becoming one with his guitar. Hendrix's "Little Wing" is one of Stone's favorite songs to play because "it's all about the electric guitar."

"He was my first concert," Stone recalled a show he attended in high school near San Bernardino. The experience prompted him to forget all about the trombone he played in school. Plus, the guitar worked better at getting the interest of girls.

Stone isn't just a Tahoe musician.

Earlier this month he was inducted into the R&B Hall of Fame next to the likes of notable rhythm and blues artists Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles, Martha Reeves, the Miracles and the Spinners.

Stone was honored for his work with the Fabulous Peps, a soul trio led by Joe Harris and other collaborators who inevitably would end up working together or recommending each other at other points in their careers. Call it six degrees, or rather six notes, of separation for those who put the music first in their lives.



Trey Stone’s honor as an R&B hall of famer.

To hear Stone tell it, his music world has been fulfilling and rewarding – despite moving away from the hip, busy Los Angeles scene for the small mountain town of South Lake Tahoe. After all, Lafayette Trey Stone, now 62, has learned to embrace this modest town with its roots embedded in entertainment. The lake fits the personality of Stone – a man of few words unless one puts a microphone in front of him.

“I’m very proud,” he said with that signature, calm-and-collected grin, while lounging on one recent warm fall afternoon at Alpina Café.

He wasn’t alone. Upon hearing the news of his honor, Stone called his mother.

“She was really happy,” he said in a matter-of-fact manner.

The magnitude of the honor hit him, prompting the longtime vocalist, keyboardist and guitarist of more than 30 years to reflect back on his career.

His high points are notable.

Stone met the king of the blues B.B. King long enough to share the name of his guitar “Shenene,” since King calls his “Lucille.” The two blues men shared moments that will last forever for Stone.

Career wise, Stone collaborated for years with the Undisputed Truth, which brought the haunting hit “Smiling Faces Sometimes.” Even more recognizable, the soul-funk artist who embraced the 1970s era was lead guitarist on “Car Wash” by Rose Royce. (Sitting still to that song would mean you may be 6 feet under.) He earned a Grammy nomination for Keith Washington’s romantic ballad “Kissing You.” He also played with smooth jazz performer George Clinton. More recently, he performed with the Reno Jazz Orchestra.

Stone toured for more than 40 shows with Tower of Power. The timeless jazz-funk, horn-induced mega band wrote the book on songs that tug at your “easy-to-fall-in-love-with” heart. Who can forget “So Very Hard to Go” or “Still a Young Man.”

“It’s a musician’s dream to play with Tower of Power. (It’s) like a people’s band, like a musician’s band,” Stone told *Lake Tahoe News.*

For fully dedicated blues, jazz-funk musicians like Stone the honor goes without saying to play with band members who invented genres.

“There are a bunch of groups that are true Motown, before

Motown (Records),” he said, referring to bands in the trenches unless swept up by record executive Berry Gordy. Think the Jackson 5 and Diana Ross.



Trey Stone, second from right, with other inductees into the hall of fame.

Stone, who grew up in Riverside, thinks of himself as a “musician who sings,” and one who composes as well. Thus, the reputation goes a long way in gaining respect for his dedication to the music itself, instead of worrying about how a certain behavior will play out in an artist’s star power quotient.

Like the difference between being a traveler versus a tourist – Stone is a diversified musician instead of a celebrity. He seems to excel at “sitting in” with groups like Blues Traveler – mixing and mingling.

When asked if he could play with any one artist, who would it be? Hands down, the answer was Prince.

“He’s from the James Brown school,” Stone said. Prince will often emulate Brown’s memorable dance moves on stage. Different generations who listen to the soulful beats don’t seem to miss a step at keeping the timeless tunes alive.

Stone can vouch for that in his personal life. He’s found himself in a 17-year, committed relationship with his greatest supporter, Lisa Quick, who doesn’t bat an eyelash at filling

in the blanks when the soft-spoken Stone gets shy. The family includes two cats, a dog and two teenage boys at home who don't hesitate at sharing their music prowess and likes with the patriarch Stone.

Family means more and more to Stone, who got a wakeup call to what's meaningful when he had a stroke in 2007. Quick found him and acted quickly.

"She saved my life," he said in a poignant tone.

Then there was the pivotal watershed moment in 1994 when he met his father for the first time. A fan saw his show and recognized Stone's name.

"He said: 'I know your father'," Stone recounted.

His father, who retired from the military, came to many of Stone's shows once they connected. He was the president of the For Love of Jazz club.

"He was really proud of me," a sentimental Stone said.

And the pride of Stone's accomplishment goes beyond family.

"He's so thrilled and honored about this," longtime collaborator John Shipley told *Lake Tahoe News*, while driving to the Atlantis Casino to perform with Stone.

Shipley worked with Stone in the band the Funk Brothers and has learned to love Stone's consistency and ability as a musician.

"He' somebody I enjoy being around and being a friend to," he said. "What's great about working with Trey is all the songs we do, I know."

Shipley, who teaches intro to keyboards, songwriting and audio recording as well as the history of rock and roll at Western Nevada College in Carson City, also enjoys how Stone never

appears to be in a bad mood, even if it’s obvious he is. He commends Stone for his resilience in staying true to making a living playing music.

“We used to be able to work at it every day,” he said, adding; “Now it’s weekend work.”

Stone’s ability to stay with the music as a line of work is a sheer testament to how highly regarded he is, Shipley pointed out.

“Getting his honor of being inducted into the hall of fame is another ‘thank you very much’,” he said. “He definitely earned that.”

FBI investigating fantasy sports companies

By Joe Drape and Jacqueline Williams, New York Times

The FBI has begun an inquiry into the practices of booming daily fantasy sports websites after players of the games and lawmakers made allegations of predatory tactics and questioned the use of inside information, according to fantasy players who said they had been contacted by investigators.

The FBI began contacting several prominent competitors in the contests, the players said, shortly after an employee of DraftKings, one of the two most prominent daily fantasy companies, admitted to inadvertently releasing data before lineups for the start of the third week of NFL games were locked in. The employee, a midlevel content manager, then won $350,000 at a rival site, though DraftKings said he did not

have an advantage.

The players said that they were interviewed by agents from the bureau's Boston office, who seemed to focus primarily on DraftKings, a Boston-based company. They also said that agents were examining whether the site encouraged and accepted deposits and bets from states where the contests are prohibited. The information under review includes a post by Jon Aguiar, an executive in charge of developing high-volume fantasy players, on a public thread informing players how to deposit funds and play in contests in states and countries where the games are prohibited.

Read the whole story

Legal brothels in Nevada on the wane



Brothels are less popular than they once were. Photo/Russell and Sydney Poore

By John M. Glionna and Javier Panzar, Los Angeles Times

When Lamar Odom was found unconscious Tuesday inside a Nevada brothel, he'd wandered far off the beaten path of adult entertainment culture, back into an analog version of an increasingly high-tech sex-play universe.

Like Wayne Newton and mobsters wielding tommy guns, the antics of the world's oldest profession smack of a bygone era in Nevada. Brothels are under siege, more and more considered outdated and distasteful – even in the only state to sanction prostitution.

Legalized in Nevada in 1971, these so-called pleasure dens, many believe, are on their last legs.

"These brothels are really a relic of the past. Even here in Nevada, they're relegated to what we call the cow counties," said Nevada state Sen. Richard S. "Tick" Segerblom. "The urban areas have an appetite to abolish them. And given the state's rapid urbanization, there's really little popular support left for these businesses."

Read the whole story

Tesla founder energized about firm's future



J.B. Straubel talks about Tesla’s plans in Northern Nevada and beyond. Photo/Mike Wolterbeek/UNR

By Linda Fine Conaboy

RENO – Although it’s nice to be able to drive 250 without an electronic fill-up, all good things come to an end, as do all electric charges. The question of where to get a charge has been nimbly addressed by Tesla with the invention of their supercharger units with a DC connection allowing for a quick charge (30 minutes) at a series of superchargers strategically located coast-to-coast.

There’s one in Truckee, and the company is adding charging stations daily to accommodate not only Teslas, but all electric vehicles.

J.B. Straubel, Tesla’s co-founder and chief technical officer, gave a talk Oct. 11 at UNR titled Building a Clean Energy Future: Tesla and Nevada.

He spoke about his passion for electric vehicles, an interest he developed when he rebuilt a discarded electric golf cart at age 14. He also spoke about his electric Porsche 944 that had a world electric vehicle racing record. His interest in electronics led him to Stanford University where he earned a bachelor's degree in energy systems engineering and a master's in energy engineering. He teaches an energy storage integration class at his alma mater.

As co-founder of Tesla, Straubel has overseen the technical and engineering design of the company's vehicles, including the Tesla Roadster, the Model S series and just-launched Model X. He said plans are in the works for another car, this one to be more affordable than other Teslas, with a price at about $35,000.

"We were not founded to build expensive cars," Straubel said. "Our mission is to build affordable cars." The company is working on what he called a first generation roadster, the Model lll, which will have a 200-mile range.

Still in his 30s, the dapper entrepreneur chronicled Tesla's meteoric rise from 2003 and a mere 15 employees to its current complement of 13,000.

"We had a new idea in 2004—performance electric cars. It took a lot of effort to change people's perceptions," he said. That new idea led to the Tesla Roadster, powered by what was becoming a new era in automobiles—the lithium-ion battery.



Tesla began production of the Model S in 2012. Photo/Linda Fine Conaboy

What the company needed next, he said, was a car that could compete with gasoline powered vehicles; thus the Model S series was born in 2012, built around a battery pack that literally rides on the floorboard of the car permitting a huge increase in cargo capacity and offering added safety because there's no motor in the front. In fact, the Model S carries the highest safety rating in the United States, Straubel said, receiving Motor Trend's car of the year award in 2013.

The new Model X rides on the same platform as the Model S, but it is an SUV with a range of 250 miles on a single charge, falcon-wing doors and a 5,000-pound towing capacity. While there was a display of cars in front of UNR's Crowley Student Union building where Straubel spoke, the Model X was unavailable for viewing.

He explained that in order to fulfill company ambitions and its enormous appetite for batteries –they consume 10 percent of all batteries produced – Tesla needed a more ready source as well as a supply line closer to home. Most batteries now come from Asia. By 2020, that battery appetite is expected to grow as Tesla expects to sell 500,000 cars within the next five-year period as well as battery packs for home and commercial use.

"We thought there must be a better way to build batteries, so the gigafactory came into being," Straubel said in reference to the huge production facility being constructed in Storey County in the Tahoe Reno Industrial Center east of Reno and Sparks. "We're making a $4.5 billion investment and will eventually employ 6,500 people full time, building batteries that are self-contained from an emissions point of view."

Straubel said the plant would be powered by renewable energy

sources. “It’s a net-zero energy factory.”

The main mission of the factory is to drive down costs of storage, Straubel said.

“The energy source must be sustainable to power an energy-sustainable car. The missing links are renewable and sustainable [energy]. The goal is to eliminate 100 percent of fossil fuel energy usage. Many say eliminating fossil fuels is an impossible goal. They said that about the Model S too,” Straubel said.

“Sustainable energy is this generation’s moon shot challenge,” he said, referencing the moon landing in 1969. “The sustainable energy race is a race against ourselves. We see the movement to sustainable energy as our biggest goal.”

The Northern Nevada facility is being built in phases as needed. He expects to see the first wave of employees move in in a few weeks.

In 2015, there were more than 600 internships at Tesla and about one-third of them were converted to full-time employees. They’re launching a new internship especially for the gigafactory.

“We’re here to stay, we don’t want a workforce that’s imported from somewhere else,” he said. “And as many people as we can bring on board and recruit from the local community, it makes that tie even stronger.”

Park brothers fire Hard Rock

management team



Hundreds turned out for the January opening of Lake Tahoe Hard Rock; since then the crowds have been lackluster. Photo/LTN file

By Kathryn Reed

The Park brothers have fired the management team that was running Lake Tahoe Hard Rock.

Warner Hospitality, which 18 months ago was brought in to operate the remodeled-rebranded Horizon, has been a failure, **according to employees**. The Parks finally agreed.

No one from Warner, the fired firm based in Las Vegas, returned a call.

Brothers David and Jon Park, who own the Stateline hotel-casino, deferred comment to their PR team, the Bauserman Group based in Reno. However, they were not available.

Two veteran casino executives have taken over the management reins at Lake Tahoe Hard Rock. Rick Stevens is president and COO of the Navegante Group. The company provides managerial and development services to the gaming industry. Founder Larry J. Woolf is well known on the South Shore. In 1984 he took the failing Caesars Tahoe (now MontBleu) and in one year turned it into a profitable property.

Jim Roets most recently worked in Las Vegas in gaming operations and casino marketing, but is said to be "a long time Northern Nevada gaming consultant," according to a press release.

Together the two will be responsible for getting the Hard Rock onto solid ground after what has been a shaky start from its January opening. Besides disgruntled employees, the property still doesn't have a working pool and hasn't settled with the contractor who did the $60 million in renovations. Plus, there is the guest relations piece that needs improving.

The Parks say they intend to be more involved from here on out.

Poll: Growing majority calls drought 'extremely serious'

By Paul Rogers, San Jose Mercury News

After four years of relentless drought, more Californians are worried about water shortages than ever, despite El Niño conditions in the Pacific Ocean that are boosting hopes for a wet winter.

A Field Poll released Tuesday showed that 76 percent of registered California voters now call the state's water situation "extremely serious," up from 66 percent in May and 60 percent in April 2014.

During one of the state's other historic droughts, in 1977, when rainfall totals were similarly low, just 51 percent called the situation "extremely serious," although that drought only lasted two years.

Read the whole story

Experts: Wet winter would hurt Tahoe's clarity

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe's clarity will take a serious hit if El Nino materializes this winter.

That was the message delivered Tuesday night by a panel of stormwater experts.

Winter is coming – Is Lake Tahoe Ready? was the subject of the talk hosted by the League to Save Lake Tahoe on Oct. 13 at Lake Tahoe Community College. No, was the simple answer.

While predictions of a grand El Nino keep being reinforced by weather experts, the fact is the Lake Tahoe Basin is on the northern end of the weather system's path. Today the chance of a significant El Nino for this area is a little more than 30 percent.

It was also pointed out that El Ninos have meant extreme wet and extreme dry winters for Tahoe. Which it will be is not ascertainable by the experts' models.

"If we have a big year, we'll see the effects of that. That doesn't mean we won't recover," said Alan Heyvaert with the Desert Research Institute in Reno. "If we have a big rain year, we will see the lake degrade."

While public landowners throughout the basin have put in a billion dollars worth of stormwater systems in the last 15 years, they are for the most part designed for the 20-year storm. That means if something more extreme arrives, the systems may overflow, causing untreated water to reach Lake Tahoe. This in turn degrades the clarity.

For Russ Wigart, who heads El Dorado County's stormwater program, he is more concerned about the 100-year runoff than the 100-year storm.

Wigart and Jason Burke, stormwater manager for South Lake Tahoe, each went over the slew of systems in place to keep sediment from reaching this alpine lake. They agree more than 70 percent of the particles clouding the lake comes from the urban environment. Wigart at first said 90 percent of that 70 percent is from roads, with commercial properties the next largest contributor, then residential sites. Then he waffled and said there is no exact breakdown of what makes up the 70-plus percent.

Even so, the bulk of the infrastructure being put in is to treat what is flowing off the roads. This is done through stormwater basins, sweeping the streets – particularly after brine or decomposed granite (a traction substance) has been applied in winter.

It wasn't until the late 1990s that people started to realize roads are conduits for bringing gunk to the lake. It has been in the last handful of years since the Lahontan Regional Water

Quality Control Board put in the total maximum daily load mandate that jurisdictions, state departments of transportation and others started to make road runoff such a priority.

Even to this day no one knows how many outfalls there are into Lake Tahoe. Heyvaert said there are 170 that have been documented. Pipes carrying the dirtiest water are getting filtration systems first.

Sierra's slopes cleared of debris, ready for snow



Crushed empties no longer litter the slopes of Sierra-at-Tahoe. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

TWIN BRIDGES – It might behoove skiers and snowboarders to adopt the hikers' mantras of "leave not trace" and "pack it in, pack it out".

More than a ton of trash (2,047.6 pounds to be exact) was removed from the slopes of Sierra-at-Tahoe on Sunday. This was the ninth year the ski resort near Echo Summit put a call out to people to rid the woods of debris. A record number – more than 400 – showed up.



James Gasper of Camino, who has been picking up trash at Sierra every year, says the beginner slopes have the most garbage.

It was a family event on Oct. 11 for the Atchisons of Roseville. Sierra is where they regularly ski.

"It's paying it forward to Tahoe," is how Sierra Atchison put it. She was there with her husband, Anthony, and their kids Sidney, 14, and A.J., 10.

"I love this mountain. I want to give back for everything they

do for us," Charlie Plamondon told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The senior at El Dorado High School was with a bunch of his ski-snowboard teammates picking up trash. Sierra is where they train and race.



A lift ticket more than 20-years-old – based on it saying the resort's original name – was found under the West Bowl lift.

John Rice, the resort's general manager, said the cleanup day started as a way for young riders to see what the mountain looks like this time of year when empties are tossed from a chairlift. He told *Lake Tahoe News* this event really hits home and gets people to think twice.

Still, empty beer cans were the dominant items scattered under West Bowl chairlift. Bottles – some intact, some shattered – also littered the slopes.

People had a choice to do an easy, moderate or more advanced route – with West Bowl being the advanced. Everyone rode up Nob Hill chairlift and then dispersed from there.

One guy said it takes six pairs of eyes on any given area to make sure it is pristine. It's easy to miss tiny scraps of paper and plastic do-dads whose purpose only the owner knows.



More than 2,000 pounds of trash were carted off the slopes.

Rylan Thomas, who is out from Roanoke, Va., working for the U.S. Forest Service, hauled in the most garbage for one person, at least by weight. On Dogwood he found a cog for a ski lift. It weighed 95 pounds. He rigged a system with ropes, his belt and PVC pipe to drag it halfway down the mountain.

Two of the nastiest items were a tampon applicator and underwear.

More common debris included parts of bindings and ski poles.

Skis and snowboards that were lost are now recovered. If they aren’t claimed, they go the finder.



Kyle Smaine, who rides for Sierra, chills in the chair he found.

A couple oldies but goodies were a Sierra Ski Ranch lift ticket – the name of the resort prior to 1996. A Northstar-at-Tahoe name badge from a guy from Brazil was located. Sierra and Northstar were sister resorts until five years ago this month.

Kyle Smaine, who in January won his first World Championships in halfpipe as a skier for Sierra, appropriately spent the day in the terrain park off Bashful. Instead of flying through the features like he might do in winter, he helped remove some unwanted ones – in particular an Adirondack chair that had seen better days.

Now the resort is waiting for Mother Nature to cover the slopes with white stuff in hopes of having a full ski season.