

NOAA: Calif. drought likely to last into summer

By Ed Joyce, Capital Public Radio

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said the drought that started in 2011 in California will linger into summer.

NOAA reports that after nearly four years of drought, the California water deficit can only be made up by “epic amounts of rain and snow” and that isn’t likely to happen.

NOAA said if warmer temperatures bring more rain than snow in the Sierra Nevada, areas that depend on melting snowpack in late spring and summer will be left wanting. NOAA report said the snowpack is currently 50 percent of normal.

Read the whole story

Calif. state workers hoarding vacation days

By Will Evans, Center for Investigative Reporting

Not many workers can rack up almost two years of paid vacation time.

Yet two California state officials have done just that and stand to cash out their vacation for hundreds of thousands of dollars when they quit or retire.

They are the top vacation hoarders in a state bureaucracy with

a lot of them. Tens of thousands of state employees have exceeded the official limit of 80 banked vacation days, leaving the state on the hook for hundreds of millions of dollars.

What are the names of the workers at the top of the list? The state Controller's Office, which collects the information and generally prides itself on transparency, wouldn't say.

Rick Chivaro, the controller's top lawyer, said he considered the information confidential, even though his office routinely discloses salaries of state workers by name.

It turns out that one of the two top vacation troves belongs to Chivaro himself. By June of last year, he had saved up 498 days of vacation, more than six times the limit. If he retired with that much time off, Chivaro could cash out \$317,000 – nearly two years of pay.

The Center for Investigative Reporting was able to identify a few of the state's biggest vacation misers by their pay rates and job titles, information provided by Chivaro in response to a public records request.

Chivaro actually is second on the list – the first is Bruce Wolfe, executive officer of the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board. As of June, Wolfe had 507 days of vacation stashed away.

"Wow. That's just wrong," said Joe Nation, professor of the practice of public policy at Stanford University. "Anyone on the inside or the outside (of government) knows that that's wrong."

Nation, a former state lawmaker and municipal water board president, said it's especially inappropriate for senior managers in salaried positions to "be able to take advantage of and abuse rules like this."

Wolfe and Chivaro lead a pack of more than 300 state employees who have amassed at least a full year of paid time off.

California's cap of 80 days –16 weeks – is among the more generous nationwide. And it's a cap that pops off easily.

Overall, more than 35,000 California state employees have gone over the limit – nearly 1 in 5 of those workers tracked by the controller's office.

The state's permissiveness is pricey. California owes those employees \$447 million more than it would if they had been held to the cap, according to CIR's analysis of vacation time and annual leave, an alternative benefit that combines vacation and sick time.

Workers across the country make do with a finite amount of vacation. Many companies, and some states, have use-it-or-lose-it policies that keep employees from carrying over endless amounts of vacation.

In New York, for example, state workers can't roll over more than 40 days and get paid out for up to 30 days if they quit or retire. At the stingy end of the spectrum, many employers don't let workers save any unused time off at all, according to a survey by the Society for Human Resource Management.

As for unlimited stockpiling of vacation, "I've never seen it in the private sector," said Bruce Elliott, manager of compensation and benefits for the Virginia-based organization. "It's crazy to do that if you don't expect a big expense."

But in California government, the problem has simmered for years, despite audits and media reports raising alarm about excess vacation time.

Chivaro didn't respond to calls and emails asking about his paid leave. He's worked for the state since 1972, and his "extreme commitment and service is widely respected,"

according to an agency spokesman.

Last month, then-Controller John Chiang's office provided a statement saying, "There is no more important value to the Controller than to make government more transparent and accountable." Chiang was sworn in last Monday as state treasurer.

Chivaro's decision to withhold names had nothing to do with his own vacation balance, the statement said.

"This is not a case of 'won't' but of 'can't,' " it said. The state attorney general's office, it said, determined that leave balances are personnel records that legally cannot be disclosed.

Betty Yee, sworn in last Monday as state controller, said that her hands were tied but that "if there is any ability to disclose this information, I would disclose it in a heartbeat."

The opportunity is there for the taking, said open government lawyer Terry Francke. State officials made a subjective interpretation of the law, he said, giving more weight to employee privacy than to public interest in vacation balances.

"I think that's of more public significance than just what (an employee's) standard salary is," he said.

Two and a half years ago, the controller's office criticized the California Lottery Commission for failing to enforce the state vacation cap among its employees. Yet the controller's office employs 48 individuals with at least twice the maximum vacation days, the data shows. Seven of them, including its chief of human resources, had more vacation on the books than anyone at the Lottery Commission.

Yee, unlike her predecessor, granted an interview on the subject, saying she'd be aggressive in encouraging her staff

to reduce their paid time off and “guard taxpayer dollars.”

She defended those with high balances as “dedicated public servants” but said she’d like to see legislative action to make the state cap enforceable.

“There’s no teeth to it,” Yee said. “It really puts us in a bad place in order to have any impact in keeping these balances down.”

Agency leaders not enforcing cap

Back in 2000, the state auditor’s office chastised the Department of Corrections for shortsighted management of time off.

“By allowing its custody staff to accumulate large balances of holiday, vacation, and annual leave, the department is faced with a huge and rapidly growing liability that will become increasingly expensive to liquidate,” the audit said.

The manager responsible for that audit, Doug Cordiner, is now second in command at the auditor’s office. He’s personally accumulated 264 days of paid time off.

Asked about his own record, Cordiner referred questions to the agency’s spokeswoman, Margarita Fernández. She noted that Cordiner has served in state government for more than 35 years.

“While he makes every effort to use his accrued leave, he would need to be away for extended periods of time to reduce his balance,” Fernández wrote by email. “Given his responsibilities and the mission of our office, this isn’t feasible.”

Most state workers earn two to six weeks of vacation a year, depending on seniority, job type and which benefit they chose. State regulations allow exceptions to the 16-week limit for emergencies and long stretches of critical work in

“extenuating circumstances.”

The heads of state agencies are responsible for enforcing the cap, said Pat McConahay, spokeswoman for the state human resources department.

But that doesn't mean they actually do.

“Mostly, the departments we talked with just said it's impossible,” said Marianne O'Malley, managing principal analyst with the Legislative Analyst's Office, which released a report on the issue in 2013.

Many state workers can't leave their posts because they're under pressure to get their jobs done, she said. Some departments, she added, operate 24-hour-a-day facilities like prisons and don't have enough extra staff to fill in for employees on leave.

Unpaid furloughs, imposed during tight budgets from 2009 to mid-2013, made the problem worse. Workers banked more vacation because they used furloughs for time off, the analyst's report found.

A strict use-it-or-lose-it policy would require legislation and probably would have to be negotiated with public employee unions, O'Malley said.

Correctional officers pushed in the opposite direction, obtaining a contract in 2011 that allows them to carry over as much vacation as they want. The corrections department has more employees over 80 days than any other state agency, though none of those employees are in the top 10 vacation balances.

Failing to enforce the limit presents another problem: California hasn't set aside money to pay for all the unused vacation when employees cash out, O'Malley said. And those costs rise over time – an employee who starts earning vacation

at an entry-level wage, for example, can cash out later at a much higher salary, increased through years of promotions.

Last year, the state offered to buy back two and a half days of vacation from certain state workers. It was a start, but it barely made a dent in the large stashes of leave.

Tension over high time-off balances

Wolfe, 60, the water board official with the largest vacation cache, has worked for the state for more than 37 years and thinks he'll retire within the next few years. He wrote by email that his board is aware of his high balance but "is not pushing me to use more leave than I currently do."

Wolfe seemed concerned about the cash value of his stockpile – \$262,000 as of June – but not because he thought it was inappropriate.

"If it's getting that high," he wrote, "I'll definitely need to figure out how I can reduce my balance given the tax bite I'll take on the payout."

At the California Energy Commission, two staff members rank among the top 10 for leave balances statewide, each with more than 400 days. Executive Director Robert Oglesby wouldn't divulge his employees' vacation tallies by name, citing his staff's privacy. He also declined to be interviewed.

Oglesby's own balance, however, is easily identified by his title. He had amassed 309 days of vacation as of June, nearly four times the state limit. He noted in a written statement that his balance, currently worth \$159,000, accumulated during 24 consecutive years in state service.

The bloated balances in his department resulted not just from furloughs and hiring freezes, but also because dedicated employees work hard to meet deadlines, Oglesby said in a statement.

Mary Khoshmashrab remembers flagging the high balances soon after Oglesby hired her in 2013 to be the commission's top auditor, leading a new audit and investigation unit, she said. She brought the problem to commission leadership but she said they weren't interested.

Commission officials didn't closely monitor leave time, opening the possibility that staff could cheat by taking vacation off the books, Khoshmashrab said. She warned her bosses and planned a deeper audit but became incensed when they told her to drop the issue, she said.

The energy commission disputes her account. A statement provided by spokeswoman Lori Sinsley said that supervisors do review time sheets and that Khoshmashrab was not prevented from looking into it further.

"We recognize the importance of managing leave balances, but strive to balance staff leave with the need to accomplish our public service mission," the statement said.

It still bothers Khoshmashrab that officials are able to cash out vacation time at a much higher rate of pay than when they earned it.

"Isn't that misuse and abuse of public funds?" she said in an interview. "If we continue to do this, we're just pushing debt further and further out, and we're continuing to abuse the program."

Tensions built over this and many other concerns Khoshmashrab brought forward, she said, leading the agency to remove her from the post last year. She briefly returned to a previous position, but then decided to resign from state service after 18 years, she said. Commission officials said they would not discuss personnel issues.

Oglesby said his agency has encouraged employees to take time off. His personnel manager sent a memo last January reminding

supervisors of the 80-day cap. It said employees over the limit had to submit a plan to reduce their hours. The commission is in the process of checking to see whether those plans are in place.

Oglesby's boss is the energy commission's chairman, Robert Weisenmiller. Oglesby's vacation surplus "has been the subject of numerous conversations" between them, the commission's statement said. "At issue," it added, "is how he can manage his leave balance without compromising his ability to carry out his responsibilities."

6 Tahoe basin meadows slated for restoration



Meiss Meadow is targeted for restoration by the U.S. Forest Service. Photos/LTN file

By Kathryn Reed

Restoring the health of six meadows in the Lake Tahoe Basin is the goal of a project the U.S. Forest Service wants to undertake starting this summer.

The agency is seeking comments on the environmental documents through the first week of February. Two options are part of the environmental assessment – do nothing and the proposed work plan.

Between 2000-11 the agency studied 37 meadows, with six rising to the top of needing immediate help.

Those six are Baldwin Meadow, which is south of Baldwin Beach; Benwood Meadow, south of Adventure Mountain snow play area on Echo Summit; Freel Meadow north of Thompson Peak, which is north of Luther Pass near Grass Lake; Hellhole Meadow, which is north of Freel Meadow; Meiss Meadow is on the south end of Meiss Country, north of Highway 88; and Star Meadow, which north of Freel Peak and west of Star Lake.

Restoration efforts would include a combination of tree removal, prescribed fire, stream channel repair, planting of vegetation and rerouting trails.

When asked why the USFS believes it is necessary to intervene with Mother Nature, the agency responded, “The Forest Service and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency have identified meadow ecosystems as an important focus area for restoration efforts in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Past land use and recurring droughts have impaired the natural function and processes of many meadows in the basin. Fire suppression, grazing, stream incision, conifer encroachment, climate change and recreation and trails have combined to produce complex effects on meadow function, composition and structure.”

The proposal calls for removing trees from 228 acres and thinning another 359 acres – all by hand. Controlled burns

would occur on about 1,226 acres.



The corral in Meiss Meadow is on the repair list.

Stream channels, some of which are not named, will be worked on in every meadow area except Hell Hole Meadow. In total, about three miles of water will be affected. This includes planting willows on 22 acres.

Pacific Crest Trail hikers will be affected. The plan calls for 1.1 miles to be rerouted and 1.1 miles decommissioned.

"We are not sure when implementation will occur, therefore cannot identify how this will impact hikers next summer," Herron said.

The goal is to build the new section, then decommission the old trail.

"The Forest Service plans to minimize impacts to hikers during implementation by coordinating the trail reroute alignments with the Pacific Crest Trail and Tahoe Rim Trail associations and notifying them both regarding timing of project activities," Herron said. "We will work with both associations to alert trail users of planned work and potential impacts via their websites and social media."

Lodgepole pine that will be removed from Meiss Meadow will be used to repair the old corral. This will allow pack animals visiting the area the opportunity for daytime or overnight stays.

A price has not been determined for the work that is planned –

either by individual meadow or cumulative. A fraction of the millions that is needed will come from the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act. Other funding sources have not been determined. Money usually becomes available for projects like this once all the environmental documents are completed.

Work will take place as money becomes available. There is no time line for when the work will be completed.

“If additional work is needed in other meadows where long term plots have been established and continue to be monitored, additional projects may be proposed,” Herron said.

Notes:

- The deadline to comment is Feb. 6.
- The draft environmental assessment is available online.
- For more information, contact Matt Dickinson at 530.543.2769 or mattdickinson@fs.fed.us.

Calif. targets pot farms polluting waterways

By Kathryn Reed

Chemicals – some of them banned substances in California – are flowing into streams, trees are being cut down without a permit, garbage is strewn about, human waste is not properly disposed of and the soil is so contaminated nothing may grow there again.

This is going on throughout California as people find out-of-

the-way places to grow marijuana for medical purposes, and drug cartels consolidate their operations so the product is grown closer to the user and doesn't require crossing international borders.

But now those marijuana growers have another watchdog – the California Water Board and the regional offices, including Lahontan based in South Lake Tahoe.



Illegal pot grows in California are causing the state to intervene.
Photo/Shasta County Sheriff's Office

"It is a serious statewide water quality problem – mostly on the north coast and Central Valley, but we do have illegal grows in our region," Lauri Kemper, assistant executive director of the Lahontan Regional Water Control Board, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Cris Carrigan with the state agency told the regional board Jan. 14 about the dangers of grows on private land, while Lahontan engineer Eric Taxer spoke about what is going on with public lands.

"All sites have water quality and water diversion issues," Carrigan said.

Growers are siphoning off water from streams for their crop.

Some of the diversions are more impactful to the environment than others. Part has to do with the material used for the diversion.

Of the grows they have come across, Carrigan said, at minimum all are degrading water quality by adding sediment to the system. But most are also adding pollutants.

"This heretofore was an unregulated activity. Law enforcement has not worked," Carrigan said.

He said the number of grows is five times greater than in 2010.

"These types of things don't have to happen. They need a business plan," Carrigan said of the growers. And they need a sustainable ecological plan.

The water board has the authority – and is now using it – to stop these growers from polluting waterways. They are getting warrants to access properties. Property owners, operators and contractors doing the work are all being targeted by the state.

Fines will be levied and abatement plans instituted. The problem the state may have after this pilot program runs out of money is sustaining the enforcement. The goal is fines that are collected will keep the program going.

These grows – whether for medicinal or illegal sales – are wreaking havoc on the environment, officials say. This includes the land, water, fisheries and wildlife habitat.

Not all grows are illegal. Some jurisdictions allow outdoor cultivation of medical marijuana. But they still might not be employing practices that are in accordance with the state Water Board.

Taxer has found illegal pot grows at elevations as high as 11,000 feet as well as in the barren desert.

"A lot of cartels or drug trafficking organizations seek out-of-the-way places for grows," he told the Lahontan board.

And because of their remoteness it is often hard for the agencies to cleanup and restore the site because of limited resources.

"Because of climate change there are more pot growers in our area," Taxer said.

The Sierra has water, while other locations are drying up.

Taxer showed a photo of a bust in Alpine County in August where 4,000 plants growing among the pines were seized.

Caesars bankruptcy won't affect day-to-day operations at its 2 Lake Tahoe casinos

By Howard Stutz, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Caesars Entertainment Corp. placed its largest operating division into bankruptcy Thursday, taking the initial steps to eliminate almost \$10 billion of debt and restructure the casino operator's troubled balance sheet.

The pre-packaged filing covering Caesars Entertainment Operating Co., has been agreed upon by 80 percent of the company's senior bondholders. It was filed in the U.S. Federal Bankruptcy Court in Chicago. The company hopes to emerge from bankruptcy later this year.

The iconic 4,250-room Caesars Palace is the only Las Vegas

property covered by the CEOC bankruptcy filing.

Company officials have said the bankruptcy filing and financial restructuring will not impact day-to-day operations of its hotels and casinos, its interactive gaming operations or the company-owned World Series of Poker. The reorganization will not disrupt Caesars' Total Rewards customer loyalty program, which has more than 45 million members.

The plan is to seek the court's approval to convert CEOC into a publicly-traded real estate investment trust. CEOC is the largest of Caesars' operating units and controls the flagship Caesars Palace, Caesars Atlantic City, Harrah's Reno and more than a dozen regional properties including Harrah's Lake Tahoe and Harveys in Stateline.

Read the whole story

Homeless count to include those not in shelters

By Kathryn Reed

Counting the number of people in shelters has been going on for years. This is the first year communities are required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to count the homeless who are not in a shelter.

This means people living on the street or in their cars or some other substandard setting.

The count will occur Jan. 30 throughout the United States.

Cheyenne Lane with Tahoe Youth & Family Services is leading

the charge on the South Shore.

Questions people will be asked include, but are not limited to:

- Where will you sleep tonight?
- Have you been homeless more than four times in the last three years?
- Why are you homeless?
- Have you been in the military?
- What is your income?
- Do you have children?
- What services could have prevented you from becoming homeless?

Volunteers will be looking for homeless people behind Safeway, Raley's at the Y, Harrah's near Van Sickle Bi-State Park, Meek's, Kmart, at the old Ace Hardware, South Lake Tahoe Library, churches, campgrounds, underpasses, transit centers and on buses.

There is no homeless shelter in the Lake Tahoe Basin. People on the South Shore are still trying to open a warming room in South Lake Tahoe. A shelter usually is permanent and has an array of services, while a warming room is more temporary – opening when overnight temps get to a certain level. They may not even have cots.

A meeting about the warming room this week proved advocates are still uncertain exactly what type of facility the area needs or what they are capable of providing.

A commitment from the Salvation Army, Del Oro Division still needs to be put in writing. From there the local advocates will know what type of funding may be forthcoming.

Research unearthed that many homeless who have vehicles spend the night at the KOA campground in South Lake Tahoe. It has rest rooms and laundry facilities, and heaters can be placed in vehicles for warmth through the night. A commercial real estate agent has been contacted about possible properties that could be turned into a warming room. Temporary trailered showers like those used at Burning Man are a possibility.

Finding out what the local homeless population wants is another desire. Not everyone wants off the street. And some won't leave their belongs – be it in a vehicle or shopping cart.

S. Tahoe photographer capturing historic climb

By Jeff Jardine, Modesto Bee

To suggest Corey Rich of South Lake Tahoe has a bird's-eye view of the historic climb going on in Yosemite National Park might be an understatement.

Our fine feathered friends haven't ventured nearly as close to the climbers as Rich, who began his career at the *Modesto Bee* as an intern in 1996.

Two days after Christmas, 36-year-old Tommy Caldwell of Colorado and 30-year-old Kevin Jorgeson of Santa Rosa began their ascent of El Capitan's Dawn Wall in a 3,000-foot free climb, using only their hands, feet and safety ropes.

Experts will tell you these gents are making perhaps the world's most difficult free climb because of the smoothness of

the mountain's face on the route they've chosen.

And there is Rich, 39, right with them capturing their efforts – their daily successes, struggles, failures and victory – but most of all, their will to conquer the Dawn Wall. This is his love as well, a life's dream being fulfilled. He joined the climb Jan. 3, just 48 hours removed from a trip to South America, using the ropes that dangled to the valley floor to catch up with them already well into their climb.

Just about everyone involved, from the climbers themselves to Rich to others shooting from the ground, has been posting on their Facebook pages (search for his at Corey Rich or Corey Rich Productions).

Read the whole story

Caesars bankruptcy filing expected this week

By Matt Jarzemsky, Peg Brickley and Kate O'Keefe, Wall Street Journal

Caesars Entertainment Corp. 's largest unit is preparing to file for bankruptcy protection as soon as Thursday, the final gambit of a yearslong attempt to salvage a soured buyout.

Caesars Entertainment Operating Co.'s Chapter 11 filing would launch the final stage of Apollo Global Management LLC's effort to save some of its \$1.7 billion investment in the company, which it took private in 2008 with fellow buyout firm TPG.

Caesars is the parent company of Harrah's Lake Tahoe and

Harveys in Stateline.

Read the whole story

WHS striving to provide students more options

By Kathryn Reed

ZEPHYR COVE – Dreaming big, with an eye toward reality. That has been the focus of a committee tasked with coming up with ideas to make Whittell High School more than it is today.

There was a time when it looked like the two remaining Douglas County School District schools at Lake Tahoe would be merged into one K-12. This committee has determined that is not fiscally doable or responsible, nor would it be good for the students.

On top of that, the district is going through an enrollment upswing after years of decline. That is something committee members at their final meeting on Monday acknowledged and want to stress to the board – staffing concerns are going to need to be addressed to handle the student population boom that is going to start next school year. The current sixth-grade class at Zephyr Cove Elementary is 38 students.

The group wrapped up its work – for now – on Jan. 12. Facilitator Nancy McMillan will be putting the ideas into a working document in the next week. There will be a special workshop Feb. 19 at 4pm for the committee to present its ideas to the board. The location has yet to be determined, but it will be at the lake.

The committee came about because last spring the school board started taking programs away from the Zephyr Cove school. Parents filled meetings, expressed their concerns, sought equity compared to valley schools and desired a voice in the process.

The committee became that voice.



Whittell High School Principal Crespín Esquivel, from left, makes a point Jan. 12 while ZCES Principal Nancy Cauley, DCSD employee Rommy Cronin, and school board member Ross Chichester listen.

Working on a memorandum of understanding with Lake Tahoe Unified School District so students can cross the state line to go to school in each state is a suggestion. The desire is to make it feasible to pick and choose classes or to be a full time student in the other state. As it is now, Nevada students can go to the California school, but not the reverse.

Working on dual credits with area community colleges is a goal, but some of that will be up to state lawmakers in Nevada and California.

Committee members know not everything can happen at once, so

some recommendations include more study of an idea or putting it on the back burner until money is not an obstacle. But having things on the public record will give the concerns validation and put it in the archives for future reference.

The committee wants Douglas County School District board members to offer online classes – aka e-learning. But the district needs to file an application with the state to allow this to happen. And depending on what is offered and when, it could affect the district financially based on not being reimbursed by the state.

Then there was the discussion of using the word “empowerment” versus “autonomous”. The former is now more closely associated with underperforming schools, which WHS is not. (The middle school is considered a five star school – the top honor, while the high school last year was recognized by *U.S. News and World Report* as 80th best high school in the nation.)

Seeking a little more autonomy is desirable.

While Whittell is a 7-12 school, it is operated more like two schools within one building. This continues to present challenges the committee wants addressed.

A mentoring/intern program could provide youngsters with an opportunity to get hands-on experience that a traditional classroom cannot offer. Intensive intersessions would allow more in depth study of a topic.

Today the dean is also the athletic director. A dean and vice principal have different duties and limitations. Changing titles may get Whittell more of what it wants/needs.

Principal Crespin Esquivel and ZCES Principal Nancy Cauley agreed they could easily share an instructional coach.

The complete list of recommendations and priorities will be presented next month to the board. At that time it's expected

the board will direct staff to work on what it sees as doable for the 2015-16 school year. The public will also have an opportunity to weigh in at the February meeting.

Parvo outbreak forces SLT dog park closure

By Kathryn Reed

A rash of parvo cases in South Lake Tahoe has forced the city to shutdown the dog park for the next 10 days.

The Lake Tahoe Humane Society has reported 11 cases of the potentially fatal virus in the last 10 days.

“The fatality rate is huge if it goes untreated – almost 100 percent,” Niki Congero, executive director of the South Shore humane society, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “The earlier someone catches it, the better chance the dog has to survive.”

The initial signs are lethargy, diarrhea – including blood in it, loss of appetite, then vomiting.

“It is like the worst kind of stomach flu,” Congero said.

Because the incubation period is seven to 10 days, that is why the dog park will be off limits that long. The city will thoroughly clean everything to ensure the transfer of the virus is not possible. One of the dogs with parvo had been at the dog park on Al Tahoe Boulevard.

It is easy for dogs to transfer the virus to one another. Usually it is through feces, just by sniffing it and getting a little on their nose, or stepping in it.

"You could go to one house, get a dog hair, go to another house and the dog hair comes off and that dog could get it," Congero said in describing the ease with which parvovirus spreads.

"If everyone picked up their poop, this problem would not exist."

It can spread to the coyote population, too. It is not, however, transmittable to cats or people.

Treatment includes fluids and antibiotics.

But Congero stresses it's a lot cheaper to spend money to vaccinate dogs. Puppies should get a series of shots starting at 8 weeks, then again at 1 year, which is good for three years. Adult dogs need to keep up with the vaccinations just like other preventative care.

At boarding facilities in the area they all make sure a dog's vaccinations are up-to-date before they are allowed in. Parvo, distemper and rabies are the big three for doggie day care centers.

"Anyone that comes in with any sickness, we turn them back away," Paige Rice, owner of Tahoe Best Friends, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

People suspecting their dog has parvo should immediately call their vet. Do not go in with the dog because the vet will want to take precautions so other animals are not put in harm's way.