

# Unit of Caesars looking at bankruptcy

By Laura J. Keller, Bloomberg

Caesars Entertainment Corp. reached an agreement with key senior creditors on the outline of a debt restructuring plan that includes a prearranged bankruptcy for its largest unit as soon as January, according to two people with knowledge of the negotiations.

Under the plan being negotiated by first-lien bondholders including Paul Singer's Elliott Management Corp. and Pacific Investment Management Co., the casino company would put its Caesars Entertainment Operating Co. unit into Chapter 11 proceedings as soon as Jan. 14, said the people, who asked not to be identified because the discussions are private.

The proposal, which is the product of eight weeks of talks between the casino operator and its creditors, would help tame a \$22.9 billion debt burden taken on six years ago in one of the biggest leveraged buyouts ever. The company needs the support of the creditor group in order to impose a reorganization that may offer little recovery for lower-ranking creditors.

Caesars is the parent company of Harrah's Lake Tahoe and Harveys at Stateline.

**Read the whole story**

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# Public offers ideas for loop road



Mike McKeen wants more to be done at the state line area than officials have proposed. Photo/Kathryn Reed

**By Kathryn Reed**

Whether people want a loop road around the Stateline casinos or not isn't the question. The questions are what do they want it to look like and where should the roads go?

This isn't to say realigning Highway 50 on the South Shore is a done deal. It isn't by a long shot. Environmental documents still need to be finalized, then reviewed, revised and a final version released. Then there is the conundrum of financing what will be a multimillion-dollar project.

Wednesday night was a chance for people to reacquaint

themselves with the project that is being spearheaded by the Tahoe Transportation District. What the agency was looking for is public comment that can be incorporated into the environmental documents as the four alternatives, plus do nothing are studied.

Mike McKeen, who owns the property where Naked Fish and Powder House are located, has taken that invite to offer suggestions a step further than most. He hired an architect to draw up plans for how the area could look.

This has a lot to do with some of the proposals calling for his buildings to be wiped out as well as the Bottle Shop, which is owned by Kathay Lovell.

"Businesses would thrive more with a whole new gateway," McKeen told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He had copies of his plan available for anyone who wanted them.

His ideas somewhat complement what has become known as the triangle plan. It has the loop road starting near the vacant lots along Highway 50 before Pioneer Trail.

But what is different is McKeen proposes abandoning the current highway from that point to essentially today's intersection of 50 and Pioneer Trail. The highway, which becomes the loop road behind Harrah's and MontBleu, continues as proposed. Pioneer Trail, though, through this stretch becomes more of a pedestrian arcade.

McKeen envisions tearing down his buildings and replacing them with something more contemporary that would hold up over time.

The Bottle Shop is also proposed for demolition and rebuild under his plan.

Lovell told *Lake Tahoe News*, "I do like (Mike's) thought process on this. I like the idea of a gateway. I really like

the whole idea of the traffic flow there.”

And she likes the idea of keeping businesses and making the area more attractive. What she hasn’t seen are the numbers to know how everything pencils out.

Where there are old hotels McKeen proposes building affordable housing so the people who are displaced could still live in the neighborhood. He also wants a community center and parking to go on the other side of Pioneer Trail from his buildings.

Carl Hasty, executive director of TTD, said this kind of public input is exactly what the agency is looking for.

New to the official drawings is a proposed cycle track that is similar to one in Sparks. It calls for narrowing the vehicle lane to accommodate a bike lane. This segment would then possibly eventually tie into the Stateline-to-Stateline trail, Linear Park and the Greenway.

Curtis Fong, who puts on two major cycling events on the South Shore, told *Lake Tahoe News* the proposed changes to 50 would not affect his events. He also likes anything that makes roads more bike friendly. What he worries about is the proposed roundabout at Lake Parkway.

“I’m always concerned as a cyclist about the traffic circulars, especially a double lane,” Fong told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Brenda Knox of Meyers embraces the roundabout, saying they make traffic flow better and can be visually appealing.

Some people said they were there to take all the ideas in and hadn’t made a decision on the loop road, while others said it is imperative the area make progressive changes that will bring a visual and economic vitality to the area.

More than 70 people attended the Nov. 12 open house at Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel.

## Notes:

- More about the proposals may be found online. This website also allows people to make comments.
- The environmental documents are expected to be released in the first quarter of 2015.
- Advocates are promoting the loop road so the casino corridor can be more pedestrian-bike friendly, with the bulk of traffic going to the east around the casino corridor.

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# U.S. water usage lowest in decades

By Michael Muskal, Los Angeles Times

Americans recently passed a milestone when federal officials reported that water use across the nation had reached its lowest level in more than 45 years: good news for the environment, great news in times of drought and a major victory for conservation.

What was surprising in the U.S. Geological Survey report released last week was how little of the 13 percent decline in national water usage was due to the public cutting back.

In drought-stricken areas, such as California and other states across the West, consumers are used to frequent warnings about the need to save water. Dry public fountains, limits on lawn

watering and official requests for shorter showers have all been aimed at reducing water use at a time when reservoirs are shrinking and streams are running dry.

But it turns out that the public reduced water use by only about 5 percent from 2005 to 2010, the most recent period measured by the USGS.

**Read the whole story**

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## **Obama: No fast or slow lanes on Internet**

**By Todd Shields, Bloomberg**

President Obama called for the “strongest possible rules” to protect the open Internet, advocating stricter controls than a regulator he appointed and causing shares of Comcast Corp. and other broadband providers to drop.

“I am asking for an explicit ban on paid prioritization,” Obama said today in a statement, referring to so-called fast lanes for preferred Web traffic. His comments tilt the White House against positions advocated by broadband providers and Federal Communications Commission Chairman Tom Wheeler, who said the president’s vision has potential legal and policy pitfalls.

Companies led by Comcast, Verizon Communications Inc. and AT&T Inc. argue that only light regulation is needed to ensure providers don’t block or slow Web traffic, and they say strict rules would squelch investment. Public policy groups want tough regulations that guarantee all websites are treated

equally and can be accessed by people increasingly reliant on the Internet.

**Read the whole story**

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# Homeless have no shelter options in Tahoe



Wesley Shira and his dog Loci are sleeping outside in South Lake Tahoe until he finds a job to afford a roof over his head. Photo/Kathryn Reed

**By Kathryn Reed**

Wesley Shira had a bedroll, some other belongings and his dog to keep him warm last night. The expected low in South Lake Tahoe was 30 degrees.

He called it camping. Others would call it being homeless.

“In this town it’s really hard to come up with any kind of long-term solution for something like that,” El Dorado County sheriff’s Lt. Pete Van Arnum told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Over the years there have been numerous homeless people we have found deceased in the meadows.”

Members of Lake Tahoe Collaborative are looking to create a warming room in South Lake Tahoe that might be open six months a year at night when the temperatures drop below freezing.

The Collaborative is a group of leaders of mostly nonprofits and government social service departments who meet monthly to bring awareness to the needs of their respective populations and to help find solutions so efforts are not duplicated and resources not wasted.

The Collaborative’s subcommittee working on the warming room has gained traction with the Salvation Army, Del Oro Division, which represents this area. Nicole Zaborsky is talking to the folks off the hill this week about the proposal that has been submitted. The Collaborative is working with Barton Foundation on the proposal.

“They will see what they can assist with,” Zaborsky, who is on the subcommittee, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The main reason such a facility has not been started sooner on the South Shore is that no entity wants to be the lead agency, plus there is no one to foot the bill. But South Lake Tahoe isn’t alone; there is no shelter for the homeless anywhere in the basin.

Red Cross has said it can provide cots and emergency supplies if the Collaborative opens a warming room.

Leanne Wagoner, who is also on the subcommittee, foresees needing a place for about 20 people. She added it could be in the industrial area, and most likely not in a residential area. It will also need to be on a bus route.

The subcommittee is assessing whether a permanent bathroom or port-a-potty would be best. Should men and women be in the same room? What about kids? Pets? Security? People to supervise? Food?

All of those questions and more still need answers.

But for Shira and his dog Loci they wish the warming room were a reality.

"I don't have a place to stay. I really could use a place," the 32-year-old Shira told *Lake Tahoe News* as he stood Tuesday at the driveway entrance to Safeway holding a sign asking for work. "I have my ServSafe card. I can cook and handle food at any restaurant. But a lot of people don't want to give people like me a chance."

He has found work here before so he hitched a ride and returned.

It's not unusual for Tahoe's homeless to be transient. They think the area, especially being a 24-hour community, is rich with jobs. They don't know people call Lake Tahoe "poverty with a view".

Van Arnum said his department used to have money for bus passes to send people to a warmer climate. He said the county also in the past would hand out vouchers for hotel stays, but that resource has dried up.

He regularly talks with the Tahoe Area Coordinating Council for the Disabled and the National Alliance on Mental Illness about what more can be done for the homeless in the area. Working with local churches is one option, but it is not consistent.

"A lot of times people end up in town destitute with kids and it's heartbreaking," Van Arnum said. "We don't have the funding and facilities in Tahoe for that."

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# South Tahoe remembers veterans



Curt Emerie with the South Lake Tahoe American Legion speaks Nov. 11.  
Photo/Kathryn Reed

A hush fell over the crowd as each speaker expressed the importance of Veterans Day.

Nearly 90 people attended the South Lake Tahoe ceremony at the American Legion.

Patty Smith, whose son died in the Iraq war, spoke of how she took freedoms for granted before Timmy died. She apologized for having done so.

Mayor Hal Cole spoke of the sacrifices his 92-year-old father made fighting in World War II. He talked about his friends who went to Vietnam. Those who came back were forever changed, while many returned in a flag covered casket.

Veterans Day marks the end of World War I on Nov. 11, 1918. At the time it was called the war to end all wars.

# Coalition challenges judges in Nev. gay marriage case

By Adam Liptak, New York Times

WASHINGTON – When a three-judge panel of the federal appeals court in California struck down bans last month on same-sex marriage in Idaho and Nevada, it was no surprise. The panel included two of the court's leading liberals.

A group opposing same-sex marriage said the composition of the panel was also no coincidence. In an unusual accusation in a recent court filing, the group said the two judges served on a disproportionate number of cases involving gay rights.

The odds of this were 441 to 1, according to a brief filed by the group, the Coalition for the Protection of Marriage. It asked the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit to rehear the Nevada case "to cure the appearance that the assignment of this case to this particular three-judge panel was not the result of a random or otherwise neutral selection process."

Peter Renn, a lawyer with Lambda Legal, which represents the plaintiffs in the Nevada case, said, "This conspiracy theory is more believable as the plot to a John Grisham novel than a credible legal argument substantiated by evidence."

**Read the whole story**

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# Book honors Nevadans who died serving country

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – A book documenting every Nevadan who gave his or her life while serving in the U.S Armed Forces was unveiled Monday by Gov. Brian Sandoval.

Sandoval, joined by representatives of Nevada's Gold Star Families, the Nevada Military Support Alliance and the Nevada National Guard, unveiled the Nevada Fallen Heroes Book at a ceremony at the Veteran's Memorial on the state Capitol grounds.

The book contains over 800 names of men and women who died in service to their country dating back to the Civil War and Nevada's statehood.

**Read the whole story**

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# Poll: Calif. ready for Feinstein, Boxer to retire

By Aaron Blake, Washington Post

Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, both California Democrats, are two of the most well-liked senators in one of the safest states in the country for their party.

And their constituents would prefer that they be replaced.

A new poll from USC shows that although Feinstein and Boxer have image ratings that are much more positive than negative (by double digits), about six in 10 Californians (59 percent) would prefer that they not seek reelection. Just three in 10 (29 percent) say they should run again.

Nearly half of Californians – 48 percent – say they “strongly” want new people to run. Even among Democrats, 44 percent say it’s time for new blood, while 43 percent say the two senators should seek re-election.

**Read the whole story**

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## **Is snowboarding dying?**

**By Joe Lindsey, Men’s Journal**

When sporting goods giant Nike quietly announced it was dropping snowboarding, it seemed like yet more confirmation of the sport’s downward trend that got so much press last year. After all, participation peaked a decade ago, and has declined 31 percent since, according to figures from the National Sporting Goods Association.

So is snowboarding, credited with reviving snowsports in the 20th century, cooked for the 21st?

Industry sources understandably claim the concerns are overblown. Snowboard icon Jake Burton spoke to that feeling last month in an interview with action-sports industry website Shop-Eat-Surf, saying, “A lot of haters jumped on it as an opportunity to take a shot at snowboarding and I think a lot of it was really misguided.”

Pro boarder Jeremy Jones of Truckee agrees, but also admits boarders have to face the numbers. "There's no denying that there are fewer boarders out there than there used to be; that's the reality of the sport," says Jones, who is also founder of Jones Snowboards. The question then is what's driving the decline and whether it will continue.

Snowboarding faces several obstacles. It's almost impossible to learn the sport without falling a bunch, which isn't true of skiing. And for various reasons – including equipment availability and basic physical development skills like balance – most resorts' lesson programs start as young as three years old for skiing but only five or older for snowboarding.

### **Read the whole story**

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