

Juvenile competency statute proposed for Nev.

By Yesenia Amaro, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Children in the juvenile justice system often face different competency issues than adults in the criminal system.

But Nevada currently lacks a statute to address competency issues among juveniles. Officials have used adult criminal procedures as a guide instead, said Susan Roske, an attorney with the Clark County juvenile public defender's office.

The juvenile competency issue is drawing attention nationwide because the reasons children are incompetent for the purposes of court proceedings often differ from those that arise in adult cases, she said on Thursday.

There are limited rules and procedures under the general provisions of juvenile justice in the state, she said. Roske and Jo Lee Wickes, the chief deputy district attorney who supervises the juvenile division in Washoe County, both led a juvenile competency subcommittee of the Commission on Statewide Juvenile Justice Reform. The commission recently finalized a proposed statute for juvenile competency.

Read the whole story

Calif. regains jobs lost in

recession

By Margot Roosevelt, Orange County Register

After a long, slow recovery, California last month finally regained all the jobs lost during the recession, powered by fast growth in the Bay Area and a steady hiring pace in Los Angeles, Orange County and the Inland Empire.

The state's unemployment rate, adjusted for seasonal changes, notched down to 7.4 percent from 7.6 percent last month and from 9 percent a year earlier, according to state employment officials.

National joblessness stood at 6.1 percent in June.

"Everybody is moving forward," said Robert Kleinhenz, an economist at the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp., a nonprofit research group.

But he called the monthly numbers from California "a bittersweet report," given that wages are barely keeping pace with inflation. "Until we see stronger gains in incomes, we won't see breakout spending on part of consumers ... to bring the economy forward."

Read the whole story

NBC's Lake Tahoe celebrity golf coverage a whirlwind of

controlled chaos off-camera



Producer Tom Randolph, center, controls NBC's coverage of the American Century Championship. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Watch the American Century Championship on television and it's like the coverage is choreographed. Watch it from the control room and one wonders how the end product is so smooth.

"Sunday it will be even more hectic. People will be screaming and yelling. But people say they know what they have to listen to," Gary Quinn, vice president of programming for NBC, told *Lake Tahoe News* as he watched Friday's tournament from the control trailer.

So many of these men and women have been working together for years that there is a rhythm even though to the outsider it looks and sounds a bit chaotic.

One wall is covered with video monitors and each monitor has more than one video feed.

Producer Tom Randolph is at the center of the action.



The camera on 18 provides aerial views.

“He is the storyteller,” explains Quinn. “The talent follows his direction.”

Randolph picks which camera will be shown to viewers, gives a bit of introduction to Bob Papa, who then tells viewers what they are seeing. It’s not exactly like “Broadcast News”, but witnessing the control room conjures up that movie.

The talent, as the broadcasters are called, have plenty of support staff as they deliver the telecast from hole 18.

Two people are walking the grounds. Interviews are being conducted at the end of some holes. Chad Pfeifer, the Iraqi war vet who has a prosthetic leg, talks about how nervous he is. He finished the day in first place.

Spotters on each hole report back to Assistant Producer Jeff Jastrow about what is going on, who is coming up and if the action is worth showing the world.

“There is constant contact with each hole,” Quinn says.

Electronic scoring keeps the control room up-to-date in real time.

A camera on hole 18 is like having a blimp in place as it provides aerial coverage. Hole 16 has a tower. Cameras are on each hole, though most are on the back nine. Concentrated coverage is on holes 17 (the party-boat scene) and 18.

One person is in contact with New York. She counts down when it's time to go to commercial as well as when they are live.

The technical director says when various promos for the key sponsors – American Century, Korbelt and Harrah's – need to be inserted into the coverage. A spot showing Harrah's hotel rooms and the casino floor pops up on the center screen.



NBC needs a compound of trailers to deliver three days of ACC coverage.

Rolling out of that segment Papa adlibs, talking about that night's Carrie Underwood concert at Harveys, before going into the golf action.

It takes 106 people and 22 cameras to deliver the nine hours of coverage during the three-day tournament at Edgewood Tahoe. It will be live from noon-3pm today and Sunday.

NBC hauls multiple trailers all over the country for its coverage of various sporting events. They are parked at the end of the driving range. Last week they were in Oklahoma last

for the U.S. Senior Open. They are the same ones used Sunday nights for NFL games.

Mexican forest labor probe stretches into EDC

By Denny Walsh and Sam Stanton, Sacramento Bee

For the 30 or 40 Mexican laborers looking for work, the pitch seemed too good to be true.

They would receive temporary work visas to get into the United States, then be driven to Northern California forests to trim trees at \$16.47 an hour.

The jobs would include rent-free accommodations in trailers at the work sites, where they would be protected from the elements and fed during their 40-hour workweeks. They then would be transported back to Mexico after nine months of tree trimming.

The alleged, 2-year-old agreement between the workers in Hidalgo, Mexico, and an Oakley, Idaho, firm called Pure Forest LLP is outlined in federal court documents filed in Sacramento and unsealed Tuesday.

The documents — search warrant affidavits compiled by investigators from the departments of Homeland Security and Labor — reveal a criminal probe unearthing evidence that the men allegedly ended up as virtual prisoners in forests north of Sacramento, where authorities contend they were forced to work seven days a week, sleep in tents on the ground, subsist on rotten food for which they were charged as much as \$120 a

week, and left to drink tainted water from a nearby creek.

When the workers complained about conditions, foremen for Pure Forest, who were allegedly armed with pistols, “threatened to shoot workers in the head and leave them in the woods if they did not work harder,” according to one affidavit filed in federal court in February and unsealed this week.

Lawyers for the owners of Pure Forest sharply dispute the allegations, saying they are untrue, came from “a few disgruntled former employees” and ballooned into a federal probe in which the company is cooperating.

Authorities have executed search warrants for a residence in Garden Valley in El Dorado County and a Yahoo email account tied to Pure Forest. The documents indicate that investigators are looking into possible violations of federal laws against forced labor, trafficking via fraud, mail fraud, wire fraud, and fraudulent foreign labor contracting.

At a campsite in El Dorado County, the affidavit says workers recalled that they were working for Owen Wadsworth, who provided little food for them.

“Due to a lack of food, the workers went fishing in a nearby river, but Owen Wadsworth advised them that they could get fined for fishing without a license,” according to the affidavit.

The Wadsworths’ attorneys contend such claims are fantasy.

Read the whole story

Border crisis reaching into Nevada

By Tovin Lapan, Las Vegas Sun

Every time the phone rings these days, Rosa Molina steels herself for a heart-wrenching story.

She has been taking far more calls than usual from immigrants, and many of them are sharing tales of abuse and violence. This week, she has already taken a call from a mother who says she paid a smuggler \$7,000 to escort her children from El Salvador to the United States, only to be contacted and asked for an additional \$5,000 if she ever wants to see her children again.

“The problem started last year, but nobody was paying attention,” said Molina, director of the citizenship and immigration program for the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada in Reno. She connects immigrants with pro bono attorneys, a high-demand service in the area.

The surge of immigrants, mostly children and families from Central America, only recently became fodder for newscasts but has been building for years. Apprehensions of unaccompanied children increased from 16,067 in fiscal year 2011 to 24,481 in FY 2012 and 38,833 in FY 2013, according to Customs and Border Patrol.

The numbers have spiked this year, with 57,525 picked up by Border Patrol in the first nine months of FY 2014. If the increased rate holds, the federal government estimates 90,000 children may arrive before the fiscal year ends Sept. 30.

Molina’s phone was ringing at 10 times the normal rate last year, and she noticed a lot more calls pertaining to recently arrived children and families. Then the flood hit at the end of spring. The office received more than 120 calls in June

alone – a 260 percent increase from normal traffic.

Nevada is not home to any of the government-contracted shelters or other facilities being used for the recently arrived immigrants, but it has not been untouched by the influx.

“Last year, we were seeing more kids traveling alone, mostly between 10 and 14 years old, that were being sent here by immigration authorities because they had family in the area,” Molina said. “Now, we are seeing a lot of women and children together, with the kids as young as 5 years old.”

Typically, the immigrants who show up in Northern Nevada and the Lake Tahoe area have been detained near the Mexican border by immigration authorities and released with a notice to appear in court for deportation proceedings. In Nevada, most end up staying with friends and family.

Read the whole story

**South Shore party scene to be
ramped up with Hard Rock
hotel-casino opening in
winter**



Hard Rock Lake Tahoe expects to open in the 2014-15 ski season.

By Kathryn Reed

Party central – that is what the former Horizon casino is about to be transformed into when it opens this winter as Hard Rock Lake Tahoe.

Don Marrandino, aka Big D to those who knew him when he oversaw Harrah's Lake Tahoe and Harveys from 2003-05, is going to run the property. He is headquartered out of the Las Vegas Hard Rock where he recently returned after having a stint in Atlantic City.

Lake Tahoe News in March was the first publication to reveal the Stateline property would be a Hard Rock Hotel.



Don Marrandino, who has worked at Lake Tahoe before, will be overseeing the Hard Rock. Photo/Kathryn Reed

“The Hard Rock is known for music and fun,” Marrandino said July 17 during the public announcement.

And Marrandino is known for his love of rock ‘n’ roll. He is a huge fan of Bruce Springsteen and Sammy Hagar.

What the music venue or restaurant scene will be like at the new hotel was not released – just that there will be plenty of both. Marrandino was with Caesars Entertainment when Toby Keith opened his I Love This Bar & Grill at Harrah’s Las Vegas. Keith’s closest restaurant to Tahoe is in Folsom. And Keith has played at Harveys Outdoor Concert Series more than once.

Hagar has his Cabo Wabo at Harveys. Plus, there is a Hard Rock Restaurant at Harveys.

Hard Rock restaurants and hotels are separate companies that no longer have anything to do with each other. The restaurant is essentially a concessionaire of the hotel.

Marrandino told *Lake Tahoe News* he doesn’t see a problem with the restaurant next door, saying the hotel’s marketing will be so different no one will be confused.

Marrandino also promised to create the area’s largest outdoor pool party. Entertainment will be poolside, too, just like in Vegas.

Anyone familiar with the Las Vegas Hard Rock knows the property is all about partying – from the Rehab pool to the 4,500-seat Joint music venue.

When the Tahoe property first opened in 1965 as Del Webb’s

Sahara-Tahoe, Elvis Presley, Phyllis Diller and the Osmond Brothers would play there. It was like having a Las Vegas style hotel-casino in Lake Tahoe.

It may return to that same glory.

MontBleu's showroom is the largest on the South Shore with seating for 1,400. A larger capacity indoor venue has long been talked about within the community.



The Horizon closed earlier this year after having been neglected for years.

Photo/LTN

Brothers Jon and David Park are infusing nearly \$60 million to revamp the property from top to bottom. All 539 rooms are being remodeled, with the goal of creating a four-star hotel. The 25,000-square-feet of gaming will include slots and table games.

The Park family split their holdings last fall, with the brothers getting the Horizon. The brothers formed Neva One LLC. They promised not to be absentee property owners. After all, the Park family has been part of the Tahoe-Carson Valley fabric since the 1800s.

(MontBleu, which is across the street from the Horizon, is an Edgewood Companies property. The lease with Tropicana

Entertainment out of Las Vegas expires in 2028.)

Warner Hospitality, which owns or manages 10 casino properties in Southern Nevada, Iowa, New Mexico, California and Washington, will operate the hotel. Warner owns the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino that will open this summer in Sioux City, Iowa, and manages Hard Rock Las Vegas.

The promise is for the Tahoe Hard Rock to open during the 2014-15 ski season.

Heavenly Mountain Resort wants a part of the Hard Rock action.

John Wagon, who heads the ski resort's marketing department, repeatedly said, the Hard Rock is "a game changer."

"It elevates the entire region," Wagon said. "They have the same target audience. It couldn't be a better fit for Heavenly."

That audience is young, likes to drink and likes to party. Heavenly was trying to showcase its young attitude with the Heavenly Angels (young women not dressed in much wearing platform shoes on the mountain handing out Champagne) during the announcement, which was at the resort's gondola midstation.

There's a small storefront near the gondola in Heavenly Village that is a preview center for Hard Rock Lake Tahoe.

Judge's ruling on Calif.

death penalty stuns experts

By Maura Dolan and Victoria Kim, Los Angeles Times

A federal judge's ruling that California's death penalty is unconstitutional was described by legal experts Wednesday as stunning and unprecedented.

The ruling by U.S. District Judge Cormac J. Carney found that decades-long delays and uncertainty about whether condemned inmates will ever be executed violate the constitution's ban on cruel or unusual punishment.

Carney issued his ruling in a decision that overturned the death sentence of Ernest Dewayne Jones, a Los Angeles man sentenced to die for the 1992 rape and murder of Julia Miller, his girlfriend's mother.

In overturning Jones' death sentence, Carney noted that the inmate faced "complete uncertainty as to when, or even whether" he would be executed.

He pointed out that more than 900 people have been sentenced to death in California since 1978 but only 13 have been executed.

Read the whole story

Drought proves challenging for Edgewood Tahoe



Edgewood Tahoe has been rethinking how it uses water.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Susan Wood

STATELINE – It's 7am Monday and there's as much bustling around as a New York City subway station. But this is Edgewood Tahoe – home of the 25th American Century Championship golf tournament.

Work crews are not only busy preparing the grounds for the South Shore's premier event of the summer, but golfers are getting in their tee times before some of the biggest names in athletic sports and entertainment take over.

Dan Zelhofer, who jokes by calling himself a "golf club relocation engineer," whizzes up to the clubhouse with a list of 200 golfers wanting to take on the course. A normal day would be 130 people.

Unbeknownst to the golfers, a crew of up to 30 people has been out for hours to get the grounds in order – trimming, mowing, troubleshooting and checking the irrigation system in one of the West's worst drought years.

It's a challenge to the man who's ultimately responsible for showcasing the 30-acre golf course.

"He's probably one of the most important people at Edgewood now," Zelhofer said of his colleague, Superintendent Brad Wunderlich.



The drought is challenging the golf course's grounds crew. Photo/Kathryn Reed

But Wunderlich welcomes the challenge. He's a pro himself at what he does.

"Broken pipe" could be heard on his radio as he rode the cart around the course. He is very calm and trusts his crew knows what to do while he gives their suggestion the green light.

It's Wunderlich's second year working the ACC golf tourney, but he's had much practice honing his craft to be on top of his game. The 33-year-old, who started at a golf course in St. Louis at age 15, majored in landscaping and horticulture at Colorado State University. He worked the Reno-Tahoe Open at Montreux in Reno for 11 years. The difference between that tournament and the ACC lies in the skill level of the players.

"On the PGA, they're more focused on the green areas," he said. "These guys (here) could hit it anywhere."

It's all in good fun. And the fans appreciate it – no matter what they have seen over the 24 years at Edgewood from the celebrities. One year, NBA great Charles Barkley laid down on the grass. On another, 49ers wide receiver Jerry Rice threw a football to the boaters anchored at the beach. And yet in another year, actor Kevin Costner failed to “remove the mechanism” and lost his focus as his ball rolled way under the rope and almost onto the walkway.

No matter where the ball lands, Wunderlich will be ready. Not even big-event pressure or hotel construction or Mother Nature could trip him up.

“It's definitely been an eventful summer,” Wunderlich told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Beyond a milestone year for the championship, the drought has made Wunderlich think outside the box to keep the grounds up and presentable while being responsible with water. The foundation of this effort started in 2010 when Edgewood completed a \$2 million overhaul of its 40-year-old irrigation system. The equipment and tools are kept in a 12,000-square-foot facility tucked in the trees behind the course.

“We do everything we can not to waste any water,” he said.

Crews are doing more hand irrigation, which saves more water than time.

In addition, watering has been halted in the native grass areas and other sections considered not critical to the course.

In normal years, the Edgewood Lake fed by Edgewood Creek usually is enough of a water source to rely on for irrigation. This is not a normal year.



Brad Wunderlich is responsible for making sure Edgewood Tahoe is in pristine condition no matter what Mother Nature does. Photo/Susan Wood

"It's pretty scary," Wunderlich said, as he surveyed the water level of the dam bridging the lake and the creek. The watermark shows the level a foot below normal.

The golf course is buying water from Edgewood Water Company every day in the amount of what some families live on in Tahoe per month. This is only the third time in the history of Edgewood that the golf course has been forced to do so, he added.

With the drought turning everything brown early, Edgewood was forced to turn on the irrigation system in January, months ahead of schedule.

"We don't want to do that," he said.

Water may stay in the line and therefore damage the pipes if they freeze.

To be on top of the situation, Edgewood installed a weather station between holes 2 and 3 that measures wind speed, humidity and calculates how much water the grass uses. The station is called E.T., which stands for evapo transpiration in landscaping talk.

“We use all the tools we can,” Wunderlich said.

Edgewood also seeded more this year – flinging 4 tons instead of its usual 3 to sustain its three types of grasses. Ironically, the Kentucky bluegrass is more tolerant of winter – a major consideration for these challenging mountain courses.

“You know, we spend all summer getting the course perfect before winter comes,” he said of the continuous cycle.

The job also requires a bit of a chemist’s flair to keep a course perfect in the mountains. Pine cones, needles and debris fall out of the sky and affect the acidity of the grass. The crews apply soil conditioners as well to balance the pH levels. Think of a swimming pool on steroids.

The work has to be completed in front of eager golfers. It gets more intense during tournament week, which started Tuesday. (The actual tournament is Friday-Sunday.) Crews have been mowing every day instead of the usual every other day. In the last few weeks, some workers like Wunderlich come in at 5am and leave at 9:30pm. They call it the dark-to-dark shift.



Native grasses
surrounding the

course are no longer watered.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

The hard work seems to pay off.

“The grounds are fantastic,” Keith Mirchan said. The New Jersey man had just finished playing with his 12-year-old son, Rohan, who plays in a PGA junior league back home.

“They’re fast,” the young Mirchan piped in.

His father came to play Edgewood Tahoe last year and prefers the grounds this year – despite hearing of the monumental drought year.

“I think they’re better this year. You would not even notice,” he said.

It’s comments such as this one that have brought pride to Wunderlich’s efforts.

And, it’s not too shabby when your work environment faces Lake Tahoe on one side and rolling green knolls on another. Wunderlich admits to having his dream job.

What’s his favorite part?

“Every day is different. You can get tunnel vision in what you’re doing. But when I look out on that beauty – I love being here,” he said.

Edgewood Tahoe management hopes visitors who want to stay over and soak up the beauty will have the same thought – especially with a 159-room hotel going in at Tahoe’s best parking lot view. Groundbreaking could start as early as August on the anticipated Edgewood Lodge. It’s due to be open in May 2016.

After the celebrity golf tournament, construction crews are coming in with the help of golf course workers to rebuild

holes 8 and 9 on the far south side near Manzanita Street. A massive mound of dirt marks the prep for that effort. Wunderlich said hotel guests would use the same service road as those going to the clubhouse with a slight veering south.

Lobby seeks to expand wine sales in Nev.

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review Journal

CARSON CITY – A coalition of wine enthusiasts has formed to lobby the 2015 Legislature to allow production and sales of the fermented beverage in Clark and Washoe counties.

Nevada law now bans the selling of wine that is made “on premise” in counties with more than 100,000 residents.

The prohibition means wineries can operate now in only less populated Nevada jurisdictions. Nye, Douglas and Churchill counties have operating wineries.

The Nevada Wine Coalition will lobby the Legislature to remove the population limitation and allow wineries to make and sell wine on-site in a tasting room.

Reno resident Dennis Eckmeyer, president of the coalition, said wine is a \$36 billion industry in the United States and has seen growth every year for 21 years.

Read the whole story

Tahoe crawfish attracting international clientele

By Erin Breen, KTVN-TV

It is a beautifully calm day on Lake Tahoe as Ben Caldwell and his dad, Sonny, launch their boat from Cave Rock. They are headed for their first set of crawfish traps about 20 minutes away.

“This is the greatest cubicle anyone could ever work in,” says Ben with a smile. He and his dad sold an 18-foot boat to buy a 23-footer and joined forces with Fred Jackson and the Tahoe Lobster Company. “We love to fish and this is great.”



Tahoe Lobster Co. was the first to harvest invasive crawfish from Lake Tahoe .
Photo/LTN file

These days you'll find Jackson on the water less and less because more and more he's focusing on the marketing end of the business, which is paying off nicely.

“I love being out on the boats,” Jackson says. “But what I found was that I just didn't have the market for the crawfish we were catching. So I'm creating a bigger market.”

And that he has. Not only has he expanded the number of boats

on the water with two subcontracting boats like Caldwells, but he's opened a store front and warehouse in Minden. He's purchased a refrigerated truck and next week they'll make their first international shipment – to the U.K.

Read the whole story