

Chance of normal snow-rain year grim

By Paul Rogers, Bay Area News Group

Hoping for a March Miracle to bail out California's dry winter? It's not likely.

A review of more than 100 years of rainfall records of major cities in California – including San Jose, Los Angeles, San Diego, Santa Rosa, Redding and Fresno – shows that none have ever finished the rainy season with normal rainfall totals after ending January with the amount of rain they've had so far this winter.

In Eureka, it's happened three times since 1885. In the rest of the cities, not once, even though their weather records also date back to the late 1800s.

In other words, California winters are like Olympic ski racers. Stumble at the beginning of the race, and it's very difficult to catch up by the end.

Read the whole story

Dental care – lessons for every grade level



Kim Pevenage shows Rosie Klym and Kash Hendrick how to properly brush. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Rotting teeth fill the screen. Some are black from nicotine; some are decaying from drug use. Gums that have never been brushed reveal teeth that have seen better days and likely can't be saved.

It was like a science project gone bad unfolding before the students' eyes. Only this was real life. The images were all things Kim Pevenage sees on the job as a dental hygienist.

Two minutes twice a day and flossing at night. That's the difference between healthy teeth and unhealthy teeth, she told Heather Hart's fifth-grade class at Sierra House Elementary School. And that flossing – it should occur before the brushing in order to loosen any particles between the teeth.

"If you saw what I saw all day, you'd floss every day," Pevenage told the students. She pointed out that healthy gums

don't bleed.



Students at Sierra House choose a toothbrush package.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

Kash Hendrick and Alex Budd were eager to demonstrate they are good brushers. A tablet that turns teeth purple where there is plaque would prove otherwise. Smiling, it was like the boys had eaten a carton of purple popsicles. Brushing removed the colored evidence.

"After seeing the purple, I'm going to brush better," Alex said.

Pevenage explains the importance of X-rays, how it gives dental professionals a better idea of what is going on in a person's mouth.

"I need to be able to see in between the teeth, and to see the bone that holds your teeth," she said. "Nicotine causes you to loose bone. Toxins in the nicotine eat away at the bone."



Heather Hart's class shows appreciation for Kim Pevenage, back center, for teaching them about dental care. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Each grade level receives a little different talk from Pevenage. The younger kids are shielded from the disturbing photos. High school kids can get an actual cleaning. All are given a pouch that has a tooth brush and small tube of paste.

Pevenage has been giving dental presentations in local schools since 2006 when her oldest daughter was in preschool at St. Theresa's. From there it grew into doing talks for both daughters' and each class of the respective grade level. In 2010, Pevenage started going into classrooms in Lake Tahoe Unified schools, with it growing from there.

Now she visits schools every other year, with the thought that this will better reinforce her message and the kids won't get burned out on the talk.

Pevenage does this all on her own time. Her full time job is working as a hygienist for dentist Nicole Gordon in South Lake Tahoe.

Grants from Lake Tahoe Educational Foundation and Barton Health have allowed her to purchase some of the props she uses to help demonstrate her message, as well the giveaways for the kids, and tools for Pevenage to use in the dental lab at South Tahoe High School.

Pevenage has been working with dentist April Westfall since 2016 to bring care to South Tahoe High School students at the dental lab on campus. It means students not having to miss school, getting care that they might not otherwise have gotten, with any further work being done at Westfall's office.

U.S. drought at worst level in nearly 4 years

By Doyle Rice, USA Today

The dry times are back.

Drought has returned with a vengeance across much of the United States, with the worst conditions across southern and western parts of the nation.

As of Thursday, 38.4 percent of the continental U.S. is in a drought, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. That is the highest percentage since the 40 percent recorded in May 2014.

Read the whole story

Future forest health needs fire to fight fire

By Debbie Arrington, Sacramento Bee

California's strides toward cleaner air can quickly go up in smoke during one big wildfire.

The constant threat of wildfire calls for a radical shift in attitudes toward forest management, not just to save homes and lives but the state's overall air and water quality. That conclusion spurred the state's Little Hoover Commission to recommend a coordinated effort to rethink how California cares for its forests.

"We see what happens when you don't manage forests," said commissioner Janna Sidley, who chaired the independent oversight agency's subcommittee. Its report, "Fire on the Mountain: Rethinking Forest Management in the Sierra Nevada," was released Monday.

Read the whole story

South Lake Tahoe pot rules blowing in the wind

By Kathryn Reed

Marijuana – it seems to be the high point of so many South Lake Tahoe City Council meetings. Tuesday shouldn't be any different.

The morning will start with the electeds meeting in closed session to discuss the lawsuit with Tahoe Wellness Collective. Last month there was no reportable action when it was on the agenda.

At issue is the medical marijuana dispensary's permit to operate. By court order it is able to. If owner Cody Bass buys the building at the Bijou Center, that could make the issue go away. There is no hearing date for the writ.

Since the first of the year Bass has had trouble stocking the shelves with medicine based on how the state changed its regulations and the city saying TWC is not operating with a valid permit. Multiple patients last month gave the council an earful about how what seems to be a personal vendetta against Bass is hurting local residents.

But **Bass changed his designation** with the state, which has prevented him from being able to get product. Much of the disruption in his business is his own doing despite his desire to place blame on the city.

The next closest dispensary is in **Incline Village**.

At the Jan. 23 meeting the council extended the urgency moratorium on recreational marijuana. The original 45-day urgency ordinance was OK'd Dec. 12. Last month it was extended by 10 months and 15 days, as the law allows. It is possible for the council to revoke the ordinance before then, likely replacing it with rules to allow recreational marijuana and more medical dispensaries.

There was consensus at that meeting to bring back an amendment on Feb. 6 that would allow development agreements to go forward. However, it's not a done deal until a vote is taken. Councilman Austin Sass was the force behind this, with Councilman Tom Davis saying he was against it.

Development agreements could allow entities to open a pot shop

before an ordinance is in place. It's also possible they would have to alter their business practices to comply with any ordinance that might be forthcoming.

On the Feb. 6 agenda is the urgency ordinance, not just an amendment. The change has to do with the development agreement.

Interim City Attorney Nira Doherty, who calls herself an expert in California cannabis law, refused to answer *Lake Tahoe News'* questions.

Those questions included:

- Why does the urgency ordinance for pot look like it's coming back as the whole ordinance and not just an amendment as was discussed at the last council meeting?
- If it's all new, what is new? How does this affect the time line?
- Is this even legal?

Davis along with Councilwoman Brooke Laine have been working with a 15-member group of community members to come up with a framework for a recreational marijuana ordinance. Their last meeting was last month.

This Cannabis Subcommittee at Tuesday's council meeting will update the rest of the council about its work. It will be informational only, with no vote to be taken. Future public workshops and action will be scheduled.

Big-air snowboarding to make Olympic debut

By John Jeremiah Sullivan, New York Times

The history of snowboarding dates to 1938 in Yosemite National Park. A slight young man named Robert Trumbull, a Honolulu newspaper editor who wrote a weather column under the byline Sol Pluvius (Rainy Sun), was on vacation. Chicago-born, Trumbull had seen plenty of snow, and he had been surfing. That was the all-important crossing of the wires. “Yesterday Sol showed the natives a new trick,” reported The Honolulu Advertiser, “snow-surfing, or as Sol called it, ‘snurfing.’ ” He coined the word.

That may all be sports trivia, but it’s about to become important trivia, because soon, in this very winter of 2018 – 80 years after Trumbull’s breakthrough – will occur the Olympic debut of a sport known as “big-air snowboarding,” which is the snurfing equivalent of big-wave surfing.

It is best described as the most beautiful, insane, stupid, dangerous, death-wishing, insane and beautiful sport ever perpetrated on innocent spectators.

Read the whole story

Tax reform a hurdle in fixing Nev.’s affordable housing

shortage

By Michael Scott Davidson, Las Vegas Review-Journal

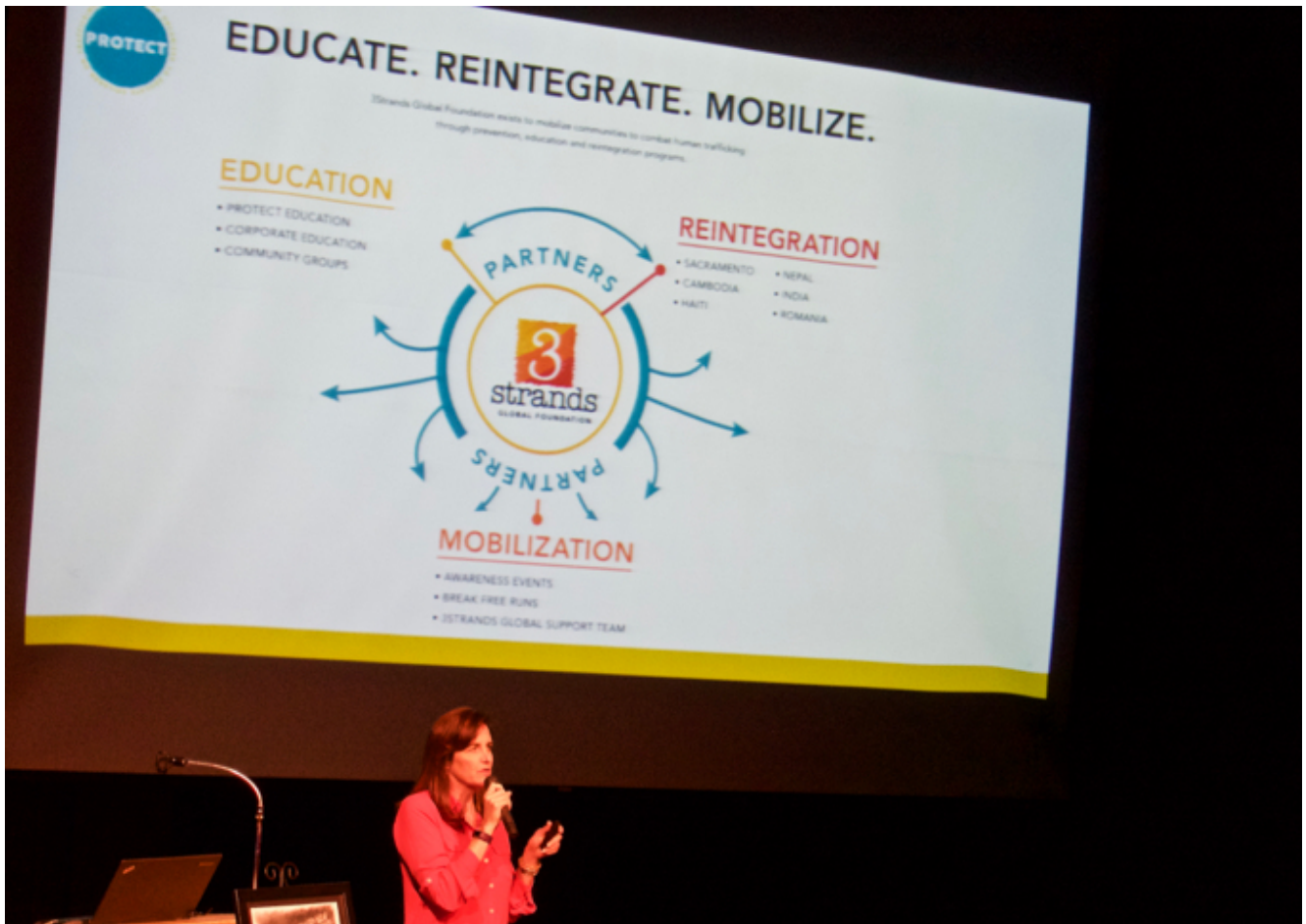
As Nevada grapples with a massive shortage of affordable housing, state officials fear federal tax reform has stymied a long-standing funding resource.

Since 1986 the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program has allowed private investors to reduce their federal tax liability if they help pay for the creation or rehabilitation of affordable rental housing. Last year the program financed nearly 1,150 homes and apartments in Nevada and capped their rents for at least 30 years.

“It’s by far the single-biggest program across the country to generate affordable housing units,” Nevada Housing Division Chief Financial Officer Michael Holliday said.

Read the whole story

Human trafficking now a topic in schools



Ashlie Bryant, co-founder and president of 3Strands, talks about human trafficking. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

While human trafficking – better known as forced prostitution – has been a subject of several talks in South Lake Tahoe, the extent of the problem locally has not been well documented.

During a presentation last week someone asked how prevalent the problem is in South Lake Tahoe.

The answer: “We don’t have the data.” South Shore law enforcement along with the FBI, which has a local office, is “trying to create it.”

Those working to combat the problem are also working to change the vocabulary. Instead of pimp, trafficker or exploiter is issued. Instead of john, it’s buyer. Instead of prostitute, it’s exploited victim.

The Jan. 30 get together at Lake Tahoe Community College was put on by PATH – Partners Against Trafficking of Humans. This is a group that was created in 2014 out of Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe.

Predators lurk wherever kids hang out – near schools, ski slopes, malls. Victims don't fit a profile. They come from all socio-economic backgrounds, and every race. While mostly it's girls who are targeted, boys are not immune from being exploited.

A couple of videos were shown with the survivors telling their stories how the nightmare began. Often it's a slightly older man who befriends them and they become a couple. One made \$85 a night in tips as a waitress. The guy said he had a way she would make 10 times that amount in a night. He had her work in a strip club. She was convinced he was good for her, that she was making money for their future.

It leads to her having sex for money. Sometimes she is sold to others.

Often it starts with this guy being so sweet, buying her things, making her feel special, being affectionate and saying he loves her.

It can be hard to get out. Threats are made – such as telling family and friends what she has been doing. Physical abuse may have started.

Much of the evening was a presentation by members of 3Strands Global Foundation, which was created in 2010 after a 17-year-old West Slope girl was trafficked for eight days. Their goal is to rid the world of human trafficking. They want to disrupt the economy of this business.

One way of doing this is through Assembly Bill 1227 that was signed last year by Gov. Jerry Brown and took effect Jan. 1. It is known as the Human Trafficking Prevention and Education

Act.

According to Ashlie Bryant, co-founder and president of 3Strands, the bill requires all California schools to provide curriculum about human trafficking to fifth-, seventh- ninth-, and 11th-graders. Younger students learn about boundaries; older kids are taught to recognize tactics.

An audience member asked if the curriculum was in Lake Tahoe Unified School District classrooms. No, was the answer. The 3Strands reps said they've gotten push back locally.

"The board's perspective is that we always have to investigate curriculum options before the district brings the information before our students. Although the process may seem cumbersome to the outside eyes, the board wants any information – especially topics that are as difficult as human trafficking – to be fully checked out. We are dealing with children and want to provide the most accurate and appropriately delivered message," LTUSD board President Barbara Bannar told *Lake Tahoe News*. "I did check with (Superintendent) Jim Tarwater and he stated that there was no push back on this topic."

The district said there was a community meeting two years ago to talk to parents and students about the dangers of human trafficking, which 3Strands attended, as well as law enforcement. 3Strands officials have conducted presentations for freshmen at South Tahoe High School each of the last two years and plan to do so again this spring.

One issue with the state law is that it is an unfunded mandate – meaning there is no money to implement it. Plus, there is always the issue that when something is added to the school day, something has to be taken away.

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Notes:

Statistics from 3Strands website:

- There are nearly 2 million children worldwide exploited in the global sex trade; each year, as many as 100,000-300,000 American children are at risk of being trafficked for commercial sex in the United States.
 - The average age of a trafficking victim in the United States is 11-14.
 - There are approximately 20 million victims held in modern slavery globally.
 - Human trafficking is a \$150 billion global industry, annually. In the U.S. alone, a \$9.8 billion industry.
 - All 50 states in the U.S., and 167 countries have reported incidents of human trafficking.
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Calif. cities: Pension costs 'unsustainable'

By Adam Ashton, Sacramento Bee

Most California cities expect their spending on public employee pensions to climb by at least 50 percent over the next seven years, restricting their ability to fund basic services like public safety and parks, according to a study their lobbying organization released on Thursday.

The report escalates the League of California Cities' appeal for more flexibility in negotiating pension obligations. Almost all of California's cities belong to the \$360 billion California Public Employees' Retirement System, and some

cities over the past year have raised increasingly loud complaints that fee hikes from the pension fund are “crowding out” other spending priorities.

The new report warns that pension costs are becoming “unsustainable.”

Read the whole story

Nearly half of California is back in a drought

By Kurtis Alexander, San Francisco Chronicle

The T-shirt-wearing temperatures and lack of winter rain have combined to push nearly half of California into all-too-familiar territory: a state of drought.

Less than a year after Gov. Jerry Brown declared an end to one of the worst droughts in California history, a consortium of nationwide water experts reported Thursday that 44 percent of the state is again experiencing at least moderate drought conditions.

The plight is worst in Southern California, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

Read the whole story