

California's new laws could change your life in 2018

By Alexei Koseff, Sacramento Bee

Every year, the California Legislature passes hundreds of bills, ranging from technical clarifications to funding proposals that keep the state running. How have they changed your world this time? Here are some of the new laws – the useful, the controversial, and the downright quirky – taking effect on Jan. 1, 2018.

Hiring

A prospective employer will no longer be able to decide how much money to offer you by asking what you made at your last job.

Elections

Get ready for a new era of voting in California: Senate Bill 450, which passed in 2016, does away with neighborhood polling places and replaces them with elections conducted primarily by mail.

Read the whole story

Disasters pound North America in 2017

By Seth Borenstein, AP

North America couldn't catch a break in 2017. Parts of the

United States were on fire, underwater or lashed by hurricane winds. Mexico shook with back-to-back earthquakes. The Caribbean got hit with a string of hurricanes.

The rest of the world, however, was spared more than usual from the drumbeat of natural catastrophes. Preliminary research shows there were fewer disasters and deaths this year than on average, but economic damages were much higher.

While overall disasters were down, they smacked big cities, which were more vulnerable because of increased development, said economist and geophysicist Chuck Watson of the consulting firm Enki Research.

Read the whole story

Diamond Peak – a gem of a ski resort



A snowboarder seems to ride right into Lake Tahoe from the slopes of Diamond Peak. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

By Kathryn Reed

INCLINE VILLAGE – Gorgeous. It was the word I kept saying. It was almost as though I had never seen Lake Tahoe.

The views from Diamond Peak are that good; they rival any view from any Tahoe resort. The superlatives are almost endless. Every 10 feet seemed like a Kodak moment.



A conveyor belt on Lakeview chairlift is a unique experience.
Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

And the resort – wow. This was my first time at this Incline Village ski area, same for Carolyn. We were both incredibly pleasantly surprised, impressed and eager to return when the entire mountain is open.

On the day after Christmas there was no waiting in line. Only once did we have to share a chairlift with others, and that was as the afternoon skiers started arriving.

Crystal Express chairlift delivers skiers to the top of the mountain at 8,540 feet. On the east side Washoe Lake dots the valley in what otherwise looks like the barren landscape of the Carson area. Doing a 180, Lake Tahoe's deep blue waters stretch out, as though skiers could plunge into its icy embrace.



With views this good, it's hard to want to eat inside at the Snowflake Lodge. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

A multitude of runs descend from the intermediate Crystal Ridge run. The only problem is they are roped off. The incredibly dry December means no Tahoe area resort is completely open. And so it is at Diamond Peak.

But once Mother Nature cooperates (which forecasts show could start later this week), these slopes should be covered in white stuff. Because they face north, it means they'll be in better shape than others as the season goes on.

The tree skiing, according to resort officials, is pretty phenomenal – when there is the snow.



Lake Tahoe from Crystal Ridge looking toward the runs off Lakeview lift. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

The runs that were open were in great condition. No complaints.

The busiest area was the beginner terrain. The bulk of the mountain, though, is blue and black runs.

A welcome feature was the free open air tram that shuttles people between the parking area and the base. It could have been a bit of a walk, especially in ski boots, without this assistance.

Diamond Peak's mantra is to be customer service driven. It certainly doesn't have a corporate feel to it. Residents in the Incline Village General Improvement District actually own the resort. They also get deals on passes and daily tickets.



Diamond Peak is owned by the homeowners in Incline Village.
Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

The Pike family from Granite Bay takes advantage of parents/in-laws owning a condo in the area.

“We love the views, it’s family friendly and everyone who works here is really nice,” Nell Pike tells *Lake Tahoe News*. She and her husband, Richard, are taking a break at the Snowflake Lodge with their four kids – ages 12, 10, 8 and 5.

For 8-year-old Robert, going fast is what he likes. He started skiing at 4 and last year transitioned to snowboarding. He boasted about how Diamond Peak was an easy place to switch sports.



Diamond Peak has all of its beginner terrain open. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

Most of the seating at this upper mountain lodge that is accessed from the Lakeview chairlift is outside. And with good reason. The views are stunning. On this Tuesday, with not a cloud in the sky and the sun beating down, it was definitely warm enough to sit there without a jacket.

Food is basic ski resort fare, with a couple vegetarian options.

It's easy to linger.

Laid back is a good way to describe Diamond Peak. It's unpretentious. It's welcoming.

Tahoe area temps break multiple records

By Lake Tahoe News

Shorts weather is going to continue for the next couple days in the greater Lake Tahoe area.

Record highs were broken several places on Dec. 29 and Dec. 30.

The National Weather Service in Reno reports:

South Lake Tahoe's high on Saturday was 58 degrees, breaking the high of 53 set in 1998. Glenbrook hit 56, the record was 53 degrees set in 1963; Daggett Pass was 51, old record set in 2000 was 47 degrees.

Records were also set on Friday:

South Lake Tahoe was 61, with the previous high of 56 set in 2011; Tahoe City was 60, old record was 55 from 1998; Truckee hit 63, previous record of 57 was from 1917; Glenbrook was 59, beating the 2008 record of 53.

"Through New Year's we are expecting to flirt with some record high temperatures," Evan LaGuardia, meteorologist with the Weather Service, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Through New Year's Day we should be 15 to 20 degrees above average."

The weather is expected to start changing by Thursday when the high pressure system starts to break down.

LaGuardia said at this point to expect light precipitation with the incoming front. Snow levels are expected to be above

7,500 feet.

Historical photos of Tahoe donated to Calif. Archives



Pictures of the South Shore are now part of the state archives. Photo/California State Archives

By Alyssa Pereira, San Francisco Chronicle

William and Grace McCarthy made a life of traveling across the sunny and sometimes snowy state of California.

William, an armament expert for the U.S. War Department, and his wife lived in San Francisco but traveled frequently to the corners of the state, taking in Yosemite vistas, the lush forests of Tahoe and Shasta, and the waterside views at Tenaya and Tioga lakes.

Photographing the natural beauty of the state seems to have

been a favored hobby for the couple in the early 1900s, as over 3,000 photos in newly digitized albums collected by the office of California's Secretary of State Alex Padilla reveal. The photos were donated to the California State Archives in 1996 by the couple's great-niece, Audrey Fullerton-Samora of Sacramento.

Read the whole story

Mystery propaganda emerges after SLT land sold

By Kathryn Reed

How Herbert Avenue will tie into the redevelopment project where Whole Foods 365 is being built just became a little murkier.

No longer is the commercial property on the corner of Herbert and Highway 50 locally owned.

Chutima Vasakarnpanich and Tavewat Youngunpipatkul of Palo Alto closed on the property Nov. 30. Mike McKeen was the seller.

McKeen had been **battling with the city** over ownership of Herbert Avenue.

"I did organize a good group of neighborhood support. We have since sold the property, couldn't commit to years of meetings," McKeen told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The leases on the two apartments in the back have been renewed by the new owners.

"It will continue at the moment as the way it is," Peggy Eichorn, who is managing the property for the couple, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "They like the mix of tenants and the town. It's investment property for them."

For now, that is the truth based on the fact they haven't submitted any plans to the city.

However, the day after the sale went through SouthLakeTahoeGroup.com was formed. That web address redirects people to a survey. The owner of the site is listed as private.

The survey questions are:

1. Would you be in favor of closing Herbert Ave at Bill Ave for through traffic? (Y/N)
2. Would you be in favor of putting in a stop light at Herbert Ave and Tahoe Blvd? (Y/N)
3. Would be [stet] in favor of rezoning the property from commercial and retail to high-density residential housing at the Bijou Marketplace site? (Y/N)
4. Would you be in favor of a mixed-use development that incorporated high-end retail shops below and housing above, at the Bijou Marketplace site? (Y/N)
5. If Whole Foods withdraws from the Bijou Marketplace, would you be in favor of a high-end restaurant taking its place? (Y/N)
6. The city of South Lake Tahoe has the ability to take over the homes and properties from private citizens abutting the Bijou Marketplace site. Are you in favor of the city utilizing Eminent Domain to take over these properties? (Y/N)
7. Do you feel that the City should take the decision

of whether to build the Bijou Marketplace into their own hands? (Y/N)

8. If Whole Foods withdraws from Bijou Marketplace, would you be in favor of any of these retail establishments taking its place: Top Golf, Total Wine, a Night Club, a Cigar Bar, a Marijuana Superstore, or high-end clothing retailers? (Y/N)

9. What businesses would you like to see at the Bijou Marketplace site? (Multiple Answers)

The backers of South Lake Tahoe Group have not come forward. They have sent material to neighbors encouraging them to take the survey. It talks about wanting to provide the city with high-end shopping, and to have the city take over the project through eminent domain.

City officials and Halferty Development, the company developing the site between Ski Run Boulevard and Herbert, both say they are not behind the South Lake Tahoe Group and don't know who is. Bijou Marketplace referenced in the survey is the name of the project.

The propaganda and even some of the questions are misleading. That's because the contract between Halferty, which owns the land being developed, and Whole Foods is described as iron clad by the developer. And while other tenants have been secured, the names of the businesses have not been released. There is still space available.

The city has no interest in regaining control of the property. It owned the Ski Run site for years, and basically in a pass-through had the land where the Knights Inn used to be. Plus, there are strict legal constraints when it comes to the use of eminent domain, which would not apply to this land. Even if it were legal, it would take a four-fifths vote of the City Council to allow it to happen.

Steve Teshara, who heads the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce, said no one with his organization is behind the survey group.

Lake Tahoe News emailed the South Lake Tahoe Group and received no response, so the intent of their busy work remains a mystery.

Nev. sports books suffer record loss after World Series

By Todd Dewey, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Nevada sports books lost a record \$11.4 million on baseball in November after bettors cashed on the Astros beating the Los Angeles Dodgers in Game 7 and on futures wagers on Houston to win the World Series.

It was the largest baseball loss ever suffered in a month by the state's sports books, according to Michael Lawton, the Nevada Gaming Control Board's senior research analyst.

The books' previous record baseball loss was \$6.2 million in November 1999, when bettors cashed their winning tickets on the New York Yankees following their World Series sweep of the Atlanta Braves.

Read the whole story

Parking problems plague Stateline area



Congestion getting into and out of the Heavenly Village parking garage on Dec. 28. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Parking is a growing problem on the South Shore.

Those in the tourism industry want more people here. Those in the regulatory business want people out of their individual cars so they limit the number of parking spots that can be built. Private businesses only want people parking there who are frequenting their business.

The problem is exacerbated during peak holiday periods like the Christmas-New Year's weeks.

Anyone who has been in the Stateline area in the last week is

likely to have a story about congestion and parking.

Here is one of those stories:

"With company in town for Christmas we went down to Basecamp Pizza; it was the Saturday before Christmas in the early afternoon. I discovered the parking garage is way too small in many areas," one South Lake Tahoe resident told Lake Tahoe News. "We had to wait on the street to get into the garage. There was a handwritten sign taped over the rates sign that said due to holiday rates would be double. So instead of \$7.50/hour fee, it would be \$15/hour. Once inside the garage it was near impossible to negotiate around due to so many vehicles inside. If a car is coming toward you, there isn't enough room for both cars. One car has to wait. After about 15 minutes trying to go up to find a parking spot my husband told me to get out and go save us a table. He continued up into the garage to find a spot. Turns out the garage was full. It would seem the garage should have an attendant or two, especially on holidays, and their system should know when the space limits have been met to not allow additional vehicles in. Ultimately, he made it out of the maze and went over to Harrah's and parked easily, which is what he wanted to do in the first place. I won't be using the garage in the future. It's unfortunate when it was built someone didn't think through the amount of people congested into the Heavenly Village area with the gondola, restaurants, entertainment, etc."

Several years ago the South Lake Tahoe City Council set a rate schedule for the parking garage at Heavenly Village that increases the fee during holiday times. This year rates are doubled from Dec. 22-Jan. 1. The July 4 week is another time rates spike.

Even the \$5 after 5pm rate is now \$10.

"By having higher prices we hope people carpool in and there are less vehicles in the area," Police Chief Brian Uhler told

Lake Tahoe News.

Uhler admits the design of the garage is flawed in that it does not accommodate large SUVs well, and the exit lane on the left makes it near impossible for cars to keep going up the structure.

“That’s partly why we staff it during holidays. If it stacks up and causes difficulties, we have a person there who can get people through more quickly,” Uhler said.

With Heavenly Village now being a destination for locals and visitors, the parking garage is being used more. This is a good thing for the city, which has about seven more years until the debt on the garage is paid off. Once those bonds are paid, it will mean more money for the city’s General Fund.

Adding to the chaos is **Harrah’s Lake Tahoe** no longer lets skiers park in its lot. This change took effect earlier this month. This was to provide more parking for casino patrons.

“What I can tell you is that our guests have access to free parking at our Cal base lodge, Stage Coach, and Boulder base facilities. We additionally offer a free offsite parking option for our guests at the Hard Rock Lake Tahoe,” Kevin Cooper with Heavenly Mountain Resort told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Once our guests have parked at their hotel or rental property, they have access to five free shuttle routes accessing all four of our base areas.”

Driving around the area in the late afternoon on Dec. 28 it was a mess. Delivery trucks on Bellamy Court added to the congestion. Vehicles were parked on Montreal Avenue despite the no parking signs. People seemed to be going in circles in search of spot.

The city has parking meters on Bellamy and Transit Way. The old Crescent V Center is just for their customers. With Van Sickle Bi-State Park parking off-limits this time of year,

people wanting to play there are also searching for parking.

Parking – paid or free – is definitely in short supply, and public transit is not a viable option here. For now, it means patience or stay away from the Stateline area.

Tahoe snowpack third-lightest since 1981

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

What a difference a year makes.

The winter of 2017-18 is off to a slow start in the Sierra Nevada, a stark contrast from the record-busting snow totals last year.

The contrast from last year is particularly evident in the Lake Tahoe Basin where winter is off to its third-driest start since 1980-81.

Snow survey results posted Thursday show the basin is at 30 percent of normal for the date, compared to 67 percent on the same date last year.

Read the whole story

Tahoe ski resorts: Keep your weed at home

By Jenny Kane, Reno Gazette-Journal

Ski resorts in Nevada and California say that they are plenty prepared for stoners on the slopes because, frankly, it's not a new problem.

"It really shouldn't change much of anything. Legalizing marijuana is not an invitation to come to the ski resort and smoke marijuana," said Michael Reitzell, spokesman for California Ski Industry Association. "For some reason, people think outdoors sports are different than other sports. Would you smoke pot and play basketball or any other sport where you could really injure yourself if you weren't sharp?

"You can take breaks, you can hang out, and maybe it has something to do with après-ski. It can wait."

[Read the whole story](#)