

35% containment in Topaz Fire as it moves toward Wellington

Updated May 24, 2012, 7:30pm:

The Topaz Ranch Estates Fire is burning west of Rickey Canyon in the Pinenut Mountain Range in Wellington..

The burn area is estimated to be approximately 7,500 acres, and the fire is estimated to be approximately 35 percent contained.

No additional structures have burned. The fire has had no active perimeter growth since 6pm.

Ground crews are holding the line in all divisions. The ground crews were supported by air in their efforts until approximately 2:30 pm, when prevailing winds became too strong for continued helicopter operations.

Updated May 24, 2012, 7:50am:

Firefighters working overnight on the Topaz blaze south of Gardnerville still have it 15 percent contained, however the total acreage burned has increased to 7,500.

Updated May 23, 2012, 9:25pm:

The Topaz Fire has grown to approximately 7,000 acres and is approximately 15 percent contained.

The fire continues to burn in the hills to the north and east of the Topaz Ranch Estates residential area.

No additional structures beyond the 19 that have burned are in immediate threat.

Air operations are suspended for the night, however ground crews will continue to work throughout the night expanding and

improving ground fire breaks.

The number of responding fire personnel has increased to approximately 575.

Updated: May 23, 2012, 11:20am:

The Topaz Fire has grown to 6,600 acres, without additional loss of structures.

"The preliminary investigation indicates that the fire was caused by a private residential open burn which exceeded the regulatory limitations and permit requirements, including the ignition of materials not allowed under the regulations," according to the Douglas County Sheriff's Office.

The mutual investigation is continuing with the Nevada State Fire Marshall, Douglas County Sheriff's Office and Bureau of Land Management.

Updated May 23, 2012, 10:30am:

The Topaz Fire south of Gardnerville is at 6,403 acres. It continues to burn in a northeast direction.

Evacuations are voluntary at this point. No roads are closed.

No injuries or deaths have been reported. However, 19 buildings, including two houses, have been lost.

There are still 120 residences and about 300 outbuildings that are threatened.

Full containment is expected by May 23. As of Wednesday morning the fire is 10 percent contained.

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Updated May 23, 2012, 8:05am:

Fire officials are reporting the Topaz Estates Fire being at 4,500 acres, with 10 percent containment.

No more structures burned overnight.

The fire is moving toward Smith Valley.

An air campaign will resume this morning in addition to the ongoing fight on the ground to control the blaze.

Updated May 22, 2012, 9:50pm:

It was originally believed seven house homes had been burned, however Douglas County sheriff's department just released revised numbers – two house and 17 outbuildings were destroyed.

The fire has grown to 4,400 acres.

It continues to move in a northeasterly direction, away from homes in the Topaz Ranch Estates residential area.

Fire crews are still working on containment.

Updated May 22, 2012, 8:50pm:

Fire crews are using bulldozers and hand crews to cut a fire break between the fire and the homes in the area along Sandstone Drive in the Topaz area of Douglas County.

U.S. Forest Service personnel and equipment from the Lake Tahoe Basin have been sent to the fire. Tahoe Douglas crews are also fighting the other.

Other Tahoe agencies are on alert in case more resources are needed.

The helicopter crews are obtaining water for their air drops from Topaz Lake, so boaters on the lake should stay out of the way.

Updated May 22, 2012, 8:15pm:

The Topaz Ranch Estates Fire has destroyed seven houses.

The 3,500 acre blaze south of Gardnerville is still raging out of control, but is not longer threatening homes, according to authorities.

Contact the American Red Cross at (775) 856.1000 for information about evacuations.

Updated May 22, 2012, 5:55pm:

According to the Sierra Front Interagency Dispatch Center, the Topaz Ranch Estates Fire has consumed 1,600 acres and is moving at a rapid pace to the northeast.

About 100 structures are threatened.

Evacuated residents can find shelter at the Topaz Ranch Estates Community Center (call 775.721.4697). Evacuated large animals can be taken to the Douglas County Fairgrounds in Gardnerville. Small pets to the animal shelter in Gardnerville.

A hiker who called 911 reporting that he was stranded by the fire has been evacuated by helicopter.

Updated May 22, 2012, 4:20pm:

The wildland fire in Topaz Ranch Estates has grown to 400 acres, with four houses destroyed and zero containment.

"The initial investigation reveals the fire may have been caused by a controlled burn from the previous day. Although the fire was extinguished on previous day, it is believed to have rekindled," Douglas County sheriff's Sgt. Jim Halsey said in a statement.

The fire is being fought from the air with water drops by helicopter and by ground with five strike teams.

Douglas County sheriff's mounted posse is on scene for large animal evacuations.

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At least two structures have burned to the ground in a fast moving fire in Douglas County.

Residents in the Topaz Ranch Estates area being evacuated.

Jill Catlow with East Fork Fire in Minden told *Lake Tahoe News* more than 200 acres have burned as of 3pm, with two or three structures – maybe more having been lost.

She said the winds are high. This is the second consecutive day the region has been a red flag warning.

The May 22 fire started a little before 2pm. The cause as of now is not known.

Area fire agencies are on the scene, with additional resources coming in from Mono County. Ground and air crews are helping to douse the fast moving flames.

This area is about 20 miles south of Gardnerville. People are being evacuated to the community center at Carter.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Indian gaming plays a role in

Silver Legacy's bankruptcy

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

The Silver Legacy was supposed to rejuvenate Reno's ailing casino market. Instead, it became one of the biggest victims to date of the Northern California Indian gaming. The mammoth 17-year-old casino filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy reorganization last week after a deal to restructure its \$142.8 million in debts fell apart.

The 37-story, 1,700-room resort will stay open. In a letter posted on the resort's website, chief executive Gary Carano promised "business as usual."

But the Northern Nevada market remains deeply troubled, and Reno gaming consultant Ken Adams said one of Reno's casinos could close. "Long term, there are too many casinos in the market," he said.

Read the whole story

TRPA Regional Plan update documents prompt questions

By Kathryn Reed

KINGS BEACH – As the public starts to sift through the thousands of pages of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Regional Plan update and the accompanying environmental documents, common questions are being asked.

Wednesday was the third of four sessions this week for people

to give comments and ask questions. The open houses on Monday and Tuesday – one on the North Shore and one on the South Shore – combined had more than 75 people asking questions and going to various information stations.



TRPA board members on May 23 discuss the Regional Plan.

Photo/LTN

At the May 23 Governing Board meeting in Kings Beach 12 people gave comments during the public hearing about the Regional Plan, while a handful were allowed to speak at the beginning of the meeting instead of waiting for the board to get to the agenda item.

Alex Leff, conservation director for Friends of the West Shore, is concerned about what he called the countless land use planning exemptions.

“The sheer amount of exemptions is poor planning,” Leff told the board.

Developing land designated for recreation has people concerned. Several believe this will create an urban feel in areas.

An example staff used where this would be allowed is putting condos or a hotel on a ski hill. The theory is this is better to keep people where they want to be instead of traveling to the slopes.

Arlo Stockham, TRPA regional planning coordinator, said, “It

can't change the character of the recreation area."

How development would not change the character was not explained by anyone at TRPA.

"This is how sprawl happens," Ann Nichols, a resident of the basin, told the board of putting commercial or residential structures in recreation areas.

Board member Nancy McDermid, who is also on the Douglas County Commission, envisions the change being beneficial because a trail currently cannot be built on land designated conservation. This means her county cannot turn the Pony Express Trail into a hiking trail in the Stateline area because the land it would go through is deemed conservation. She pointed out a skeet shooting range is allowed on conservation land.

Board member Clem Shute, though, said 90 areas in the basin would be affected by changing the rules, not just the land Edgewood Companies owns. For that reason he believes there is plenty of room for debate.

Nichols is also concerned about increasing the height limit to 197 feet.

TRPA wants that allowance for select areas, primarily the Stateline casino core where the buildings are already that tall. Until those structures comply with standards, they cannot be renovated. Grandfathering them in doesn't work, so the rules have to change to meet their current height. It's not like the building owners can lop off a few floors to come into compliance.

Another hot button issue has been what are called "bonus units" that people who have development rights in sensitive areas might be able to tap into so construction doesn't occur on those plots but would instead be in the town centers.

Stockham did not explain where that second, or bonus, parcel would come from.

Pat Davidson, with a contractors association in Truckee, praised staff for answering questions at the open house. However, she said her group would be submitting formal comments that pertain to the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements and air mitigation rules.

Dave McClure with the North Tahoe Citizens Action Committee and Steve Teshara with Tahoe Transportation District disagreed about whether California's SB375 is relevant when it comes to sustainable practices. McClure says it's not applicable to Tahoe, while Teshara says using it is the only way to meet green house gas emission requirements.

Shute said a group of Nevada and California stakeholders have been having informal meetings to try to work out details that had divided the Regional Plan committee. These meetings are not open to the public.

While there is a preferred alternative in the environmental impact statement – No. 3 – it is not something the board members all agree on; that is why more behind-the-scenes dialog is going on. Part of the discussions deal with Nevada Senate Bill 271.

SB271 was passed nearly a year ago by Nevada. It calls for changes in the TRPA Compact or the Silver State would withdraw.

Shute said the goal is the people in his group want consensus in July, and before the August environmental summit. At the 2011 summit it was essentially promised to Govs. Jerry Brown and Brian Sandoval that the TRPA would have a Regional Plan in place by the end of 2012.

This morning at 9:30 the Governing Board will resume the May 23 meeting at the Stateline office. This is another opportunity for people to comment on the documents related to the Regional Plan update. The last day to comment on the environmental impact statement is June 28.

Two workshops a month are likely to be put on in July-September. The topics will be ones that seem to be generating the most public interest.

Groups that want to meet with TRPA staff regarding the plan are welcome to set up a meeting. Executive Director Joanne Marchetta mentioned how the League to Save Lake Tahoe and the Nevada Conservation League have sat down with staff.

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Dates to know:

- May 24, 9:30am: TRPA Governing Board meeting public hearings, TRPA office, 128 Market St., Stateline.
- June 11, 9:30am: Advisory Planning Commission public hearings, TRPA office, 128 Market St., Stateline.
- June 27, 9:30am: TRPA Governing Board public hearings, North Tahoe Events Center, 8318 North Lake Blvd., Kings Beach.
- June 28, 9:30am: TRPA Governing Board public hearings, TRPA office, 128 Market St., Stateline.

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Other vital info:

The public comment period runs through June 28 for the environmental impact statements for the draft Regional Plan update and Regional Transportation Plan. Send comments to regionalplancomments@trpa.org or to mobility2035comments@trpa.org for the Regional Transportation

Plan.

All of the documents are on the TRPA website. Fact sheets that summarize the key elements are also on the website.

Comments on the Regional Plan (not the environmental documents) will be taken until the board votes in December.

Financial pact smooths path for Tahoe to host Olympics

By Susan Wood

With international and U.S. Olympic officials paving the ski trail this week for future bids in the States, organizers of a bi-state coalition to bring the 2022 Games to the Tahoe-Reno region solidified their dedication to the monumental effort.

It's early, and there's a lot to do. But great feats don't happen overnight – and resolution is always within reach to those who go for the gold. The International and U.S. Olympic committees agreeing on a revenue sharing plan in Quebec City after a two-year quagmire may serve as proof to that.



The Olympic flame may
be reignited in 2022
in Lake Tahoe.

Photo/LTN

The last time the United States hosted the Olympics was 2002 in Salt Lake City and before that 1996 in Atlanta. In the last decade, the nation was perceived to have been snubbed.

The two entities were debating over a 1996 pact in the level of sponsorship revenue and broadcasting rights. The IOC believed the U.S. share was excessive. In the end, the USOC would take a lesser percentage after 2012 and absorb \$20 million in Games costs, the *Washington Post* reported Wednesday.

Further details will be available next week, Lake Tahoe-Reno regional coalition Chief Executive Officer Jon Killoran, who was in Canada for the meetings, told *Lake Tahoe News*. He deferred comments to Squaw Valley-Alpine Meadows Chief Executive Officer Andy Wirth. Squaw was home to the 1960 Winter Games, an event made possible by the insurmountable persistence and vision of the late Squaw founder Alex Cushing.

Wirth, the interim chairman for the Lake Tahoe Winter Games Exploratory Committee, told *Lake Tahoe News* "any kind of progress" is a good thing for the ambitious effort.

“It’s a great day for the U.S. Olympic Committee and Olympic movement,” Wirth said.

“On one hand, it’s great news. On the other hand, we have a lot of work to do,” he said. “And regardless of this news, our effort really hasn’t changed.”

The introductory stages for Tahoe-Reno have included filling out a board of up to 25 members. The panel is currently 20 members – full of high-powered talent. Among the members are Nevada Lt. Gov. Brian Krolicki, former Squaw owner-executive Nancy Cushing, Vail Resorts co-President of Mountain Operations Blaise Carrig, Reno Tahoe International Airport chief Krys Bart and Olympian Daron Rahlves, one of the greatest men’s downhill racers of all time.

Now the coalition wants to organize an environmental standards committee to handle some of the biggest concerns surrounding the Reno-Tahoe bid. Denver and Salt Lake City are also vying for the 2022 Games, with Bozeman, Mont., joining the quest.

“This could be the most intriguing part – to have an environmentally sensitive Games,” Wirth proposed.

One board member would lead the to-be-formed environmental committee, which is described by the Squaw head as one of “the most tangible things” the Games coalition has worked on.

The effort to bring the Games back to Tahoe started in 2001 with Reno sports commissioner Jim Vanden Heuvel, who died three years ago. The drive has enlisted the assistance of California Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom, state Sen. Ted Gaines, R-Roseville, and a San Francisco Bay Area sporting event group.

The USOC could decide to focus its attention on the 2024 Summer Olympic Games. Either way, a layer of tension has been lifted with the May 23 news.

“It’s good if we have an agreement because this has created

difficulties in the relations with USOC," Swiss IOC executive board member Denis Oswald said early Tuesday according to an ESPN report.

Funding shrinking for the growing special needs population

By Michelle Cottle, Newsweek

What could really save Hillary Toucey's life is a personal-care attendant to help with her 7-year-old son, Eli. Dark-haired, fair-skinned, and fragile, Eli suffers from a raft of health problems: cerebral palsy, celiac disease, epilepsy, asthma, and what his mom calls "pretty severe" autism.

His speech is "kind of garbled"; he has leg braces and a wheelchair; seizures render him incontinent at night; and he has acute sensory sensitivities. He cannot bear to touch Styrofoam or the paper wrappings on crayons. Loud music sends him into a panic. When his first-grade class took a field trip this Christmas to see The Cajun Nutcracker, "we lasted three minutes," says Toucey.

Eli is extremely attached to his mother. Toucey spends as much time with him as possible, but since her divorce, the 32-year-old Louisianan has been attending nursing school in the hopes of escaping her hand-to-mouth existence. When her husband left in November 2009 (two weeks before their 10th anniversary and four days after Toucey had surgery for a thyroid tumor), he took the car with him. Toucey isn't sure when she'll be able to afford another one.

Eli's seizures and social issues make it all but impossible to leave him with a random babysitter. "There's only a handful of people he can be with," says Toucey. Having one of the state's personal-care attendants (PCAs) come in for 30 hours a week would make a world of difference: the attendant could take him to therapy, help him practice life skills like brushing his teeth and showering, watch him while Toucey studied. Maybe then she could give more attention to her other kids: 11-year-old Jonah, himself diagnosed with Asperger's, who cries easily and doesn't have many friends; and Charlotte, "a perfectly healthy, wonderful, brilliant" 9-year-old who her mom fears will fall through the cracks. "I feel horrible," says Toucey. "I really have to carve out time for her." Toucey has been told that the PCA bureaucracy can take "forever," and she calls the agency constantly to make sure the process hasn't stalled. Taking care of the essentials is pretty much all she can handle these days. Says Toucey matter-of-factly, "I have no life."

Now and again, the spotlight falls on the challenges of raising special-needs children. In 2008 Sarah Palin captured public attention with her son Trig, who has Down syndrome. This election cycle, Rick Santorum did so with heartbreaking stories about 3-year-old Bella, who suffers from Trisomy 18. Dramatic parenting moments often take the spotlight: stories of diagnosis, acute health crises, surprise breakthroughs.

But for most parents, it's the day-to-day stuff that consumes them: the hours of therapy, the doctor visits, the financial

pressures, and the grinding anxiety that comes with it all. It is a rough, often isolating road. And one that promises to become even more challenging as our society enters a new, more complicated era of caregiving. That era is coming in part because many of the medical and social advances that have improved the lives of special-needs individuals have also increased the burden of caring for them. For instance, people with Down syndrome were once lucky to survive to age 30; today, the average lifespan is 55. This presents parents (and society more broadly) with the challenge of somehow providing for an adult child decades after their own deaths, a situation complicated by the fact that the Down population develops Alzheimer's at a rate of 100 percent, typically in their 40s or 50s.

Read the whole story

Officers on heightened alert for drunken drivers in S. Tahoe

The Avoid the 6 DUI Campaign will be deploying officers this holiday weekend at DUI/driver's license checkpoints and DUI saturation patrols throughout El Dorado County to arrest impaired drivers.

The Memorial Day weekend is the first holiday travel period of the summer season and this, coupled with many college and high school graduations, will see friends and families gathering to celebrate, often with alcohol. Law enforcement is reminding everyone to make plans now for those weekend trips and celebrations to use a designated driver to avert arrest or

worse, a deadly drunken driving tragedy.

The enforcement blitz begins Friday night with DUI saturation patrols in South Lake Tahoe and Placerville. Saturday night officers from the AVOID Coalition will be conducting a DUI/driver's license checkpoint in South Lake Tahoe.

More local DUI saturation patrols will be out on Sunday nights in South Lake Tahoe. The California Highway Patrol is deploying all available officers Memorial Day weekend onto freeways and county roads in their jurisdiction.

Law enforcement regionwide are asking for everyone's support this holiday weekend and all summer:

- Arrange rides home for your friends, family, co-workers and yourself before the drinking begins
- Those hosting celebrations and servers must limit drinks to your guests or patrons. Don't serve more than one or two over several hours.
- Identify and provide free non-alcoholic drinks to the designated driver
- Cut back on the amount of drinks you plan to bring to the party – and provide plenty of food.
- If you see dangerous driving, report drunken drivers – call 911.

Funding for the Avoid DUI Campaign is through a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Victim from S. Tahoe bar fight remains hospitalized

Update: May 23, 2012, 9:50am:

South Lake Tahoe police this morning let *Lake Tahoe News* know the patron in the weekend bar fight is still alive.

Officers are not releasing exact medical conditions per federal law pertaining to medical confidentiality.

The name of the person has also not been released, nor have more details about the fight been disclosed, nor whether arrests are pending.

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Two people were severely injured in a bar fight early Sunday morning.

When South Lake Tahoe police officers arrived at Mo's Place at 12:36am May 20 they said they were told owner Mo Patel had been knocked unconscious by a customer who had been asked to leave. Patrons took things into their own hands, according to officers, and pummeled the unruly patron so badly that he was not breathing nor did he have a pulse when paramedics arrived.

Paramedics revived him. However, officers would not release that person's name. They did say he is still hospitalized as of Monday afternoon.

A woman answering the phone at Mo's on May 21 said Patel is not expected in for at least a week.

A lieutenant with the police department said details of the episode, how many people were involved and conditions of the victims are not being released. All that is known is both men were taken to Barton Memorial Hospital with "serious"

injuries. The video from the brawl has also not been released. At this time there have been no arrests.

– Kathryn Reed

California missing out on green manufacturing jobs

By Anne Gonzales, Sacramento Bee

When solar technology company SMA America was looking for a place to put its headquarters, Rocklin was a logical choice. California, after all, represents more than 40 percent of the national market for solar installations.

When it came to choosing a place to manufacture its solar and wind inverters, however, the firm went to Denver.

“Denver offered a good mix of affordable buildings, access to skilled labor, a convenient distribution infrastructure and an overall attractive and supportive business climate,” said Jurgen Krehnke, president and general manager of SMA America.

California leads the nation in encouraging renewable energy. Taxpayers and electricity customers dish out more than half a billion dollars a year to subsidize green power, spurring thousands of jobs in research, sales, design and installation.

But the state is missing out on a richer vein of jobs in green manufacturing, as companies go out of state or leave the country in search of lower costs and government incentives.

The state boasts the highest number of green technology patents, 450 registered between 2007 and 2009, according to a recent state Senate report. California captured 57 percent of the \$4.9 billion in venture capital funding invested in clean technology nationwide in 2011.

Read the whole story

Bleak budget news for LTUSD; busing upsets parents

By Kathryn Reed

Saying no to the governor's tax plan on the November ballot will mean a \$1.6 million hit to Lake Tahoe Unified School District.

Because of union contracts layoffs at that point aren't an option even if the school board wanted to entertain that idea.

What Gov. Jerry Brown has told districts is in addition to cutting the school year by the already allowed five days, 15 more for a total of 20 are allowed to be wiped off the calendar.



Fewer Lake Tahoe Unified school buses will be on the roads in the 2012-13 school year. Photo/LTN file

To make ends meet in the worst case scenario, LTUSD would need to cut the 2012-13 school year by 12 days to absorb the cash flow gap from the state.

"They haven't give us any other choice," Superintendent Jim Tarwater told *Lake Tahoe News* during a break at the May 22 board meeting.

If necessary, that decision would come after the Nov. 6 election when classes are under way.

CF0 Deb Yates presented the board and a room full of people the district's budget update based on what the governor proposed in his May revise last week.

"I'm absolutely flabbergasted people keep holding their positions when they keep missing the numbers," Yates said of state employees.

The state budget deficit is \$15.7 billion, up from \$9.2 billion.

She was in Sacramento on Monday with colleagues getting briefed on what the governor and Legislature intend to do when it comes to funding K-12.

"There is a lot of confusion in how the numbers are rolled out. They are not funding us," Yates said.

Now on the table is the "weighted student formula" which creates four categories of funding based on grade level instead of the current scenario where districts are given the same amount of money for each student.

"I don't know how they think it costs less to educate K-6 than others," Yates said.

The categories are K-3 (\$5,466 per average daily attendance), 4-6 (\$4,934), 7-8 (\$5,081), and 9-12 (\$5,887).

She said based on that formula, LTUSD would lose an additional \$200,000.

What brought the masses out Tuesday night was the threat to transportation. Nine people – parents, students, drivers – spoke about the need to ensure students are safe and that the environment is a consideration if more cars were put on the streets.

Parent Alice Jones said with not having all of the Plan C transportation documents on the district's website, it created a lack of transparency. The deleted bus stop document was not available until the morning of the meeting, thus not giving people ample time to review it. She asked for the board to table the vote until the public had time to go over the ideas.

The board didn't seem to care about transparency based on the fact not one of them made reference to when the plan was available to the public.

At the end of public comment, board President Wendy David said, "We have no intention of not getting your child to school safely on a bus, but we have a fiduciary responsibility to keep the schools open."

Plan C (A and B were presented at the May 1 meeting) calls for

eliminating 39 bus stops compared to 86 in other scenarios. Two buses instead of one would be used to get Bijou students home. Gone would be the potential for a 75-minute ride, and instead it would be closer to 50 minutes.

The long walks to bus stops are mostly eliminated. Stops in the Tahoe Keys, Al Tahoe and Sierra Tract neighborhoods have been restored.

It is likely to be more crowded on buses because routes have been eliminated.

The district now runs 12 full-size buses that can seat 84 and four smaller buses with a capacity of 20. The smaller buses are used for special education students. Starting in the fall there will be 10 full size buses and two smaller ones.

The board requested the transportation department give another presentation after the first month of school to report on how the changes are working.

In other action:

- Board member Sue Novasel asked for a future agenda be targeted to discussing school district owned ball fields and how Title IX may be related to them.

**Utah may provide California
with answers to 4-day**

workweek

By Jon Ortiz, Sacramento Bee

As Gov. Jerry Brown and labor unions negotiate to put state workers on a four-day, 38-hour workweek to cut payroll costs, they could learn a lot by looking east – to Utah.

The Beehive State's workforce went to a "four-tens" week in 2008. Then-Gov. Jon Huntsman, a Republican, launched the program aiming to save \$3 million annually in state operating costs by shutting down on Fridays.

The savings didn't materialize. Lawmakers ended the program last year over the objections of Huntsman's successor, GOP Gov. Gary Herbert.

In between, agencies didn't live up to promises they made to track the Working 4 Utah program. A state audit of the compressed workweek's impact paints a portrait of government struggling to hold itself accountable, groping to measure how the policy affected the productivity of 17,000 state employees.

"Very few departments tracked that," said Tim Osterstock of the Legislative Auditor General's Office, which issued a 2010 report on the program.

California's proposal differs somewhat from Utah's because it is designed to save money by cutting hours. Still, its experiment offers lessons for this state about the intersection of workplace policy and human behavior.

Utah employees, who hadn't received raises in several years, resisted the change at first but eventually embraced it, said Todd Sutton, employee representative with the the Utah Public Employees' Association. The amount of leave employees took fell 4 percent during the program's first year.

Nearly 60 percent of Utah state employees told auditors they strongly agreed with the statement, "The nature of my work lends itself to a productive 10-hour day." Eight in 10 said they preferred the four 10-hour days per week. Only 10 percent said the compressed schedule made child care more difficult.

"Day care centers and businesses adjusted," Sutton said. "Nearly everybody did."

Still, about 4,000 Utah workers didn't switch to the new schedule because their jobs wouldn't allow it.

Read the whole story