

California 8th-graders the worst in U.S. in science

By Richard Perez-Pena, Washington Post

American eighth graders have made modest gains in national science testing, with Hispanic and black students narrowing the gap between them and their white and Asian peers, the federal government reported Thursday.

Students tested last year scored an average of 152 out of a possible 300, up from 150 in 2009, a small but statistically significant improvement. The latest results are based on a representative sampling of 122,000 students in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, part of the Department of Education's National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Hispanic students made the largest gain, to 137 from 132, while the average score for black students increased to 129 from 126. For whites, the average went to 163 from 162.

Among Asians, the average dropped from 160 to 159, and for American Indians, it rose to 141 from 137, but in both cases the changes were not judged statistically significant because of smaller sample sizes.

Looking at results by state, for public schools only, lagging states made some of the biggest improvements. South Carolina had the biggest increase, 6 points, to 149; Mississippi, the lowest-scoring state, rose 5 points, to 137.

The top-scoring state was North Dakota, at 164, followed by Vermont and Montana at 163. After Mississippi, the lowest averages were in Alabama and California, at 140.

Read the whole story

Thunder Valley Casino ready for online gaming

By Mark Anderson, Sacramento Business Journal

The United Auburn Indian Community, owners of Thunder Valley Casino, entered into a 10-year agreement with London-based Bwin.party Digital Entertainment PLC, the world's largest listed online gaming company.

The tribe doesn't feature online gaming of any kind, but it took the step to forge this partnership should California law be changed to allow online gaming, said Doug Elmets, spokesman for the tribe.

"Our belief is it that it is a matter of 'when' not 'if' online gaming becomes legal, and the UAIC wants to have a premiere partner when it comes to pass," Elmets said.

Read the whole story

Placer County's Tahoe area supe faces four challengers

By Ed Fletcher, Sacramento Bee

In Placer County's reshaped 5th District, conventional wisdom says Supervisor Jennifer Montgomery will eventually go up against either Mark Wright or a guy named Johnson in a

November runoff.



The question, under that scenario, is whether the runoff will feature engineer Mark Wright, businessman/investigator Jerry Johnson, county Planning Commissioner Richard Johnson or retired peace officer Gary Johnson.

To avoid a November runoff, one candidate would need to get 50 percent plus one vote in the June 5 election.

“With five candidates it (will be) very hard for anybody to get over 50 percent,” said Bill Halldin, a member of Placer County’s Republican Central Committee.

While the race is officially nonpartisan, GOP activists said they sought out someone to run against Montgomery, a Democrat. Officials said Wright was the first candidate to emerge and won the endorsement before any of the three Johnsons became candidates.

Halldin said any of the candidates – Montgomery included – would be hard-pressed to get more than 35 percent to 40 percent of the vote.

Montgomery has the power of incumbency, but since District 5 boundaries were expanded to include Auburn, her advantage is not as strong as it would have been had the district borders remained unchanged.

The sprawling district now runs from Auburn along Interstate 80 all the way to north Lake Tahoe.

Read the whole story

Veterans trade in guns for fire hoses

By Timothy Sandoval, Sacramento Bee

Traditionally, there has been a friendly rivalry between different branches of the military.

But it was more like cooperative teamwork Wednesday when more than 50 veterans from the Army, Navy, National Guard and Marines learned together how to prevent and extinguish wildfires at the California Conservation Corps' Placer Center in Auburn.

On the third day of a four-day training program, the vets learned how to lay down hose when they battle a fire, clean up after fires to ensure they will not reignite and use flares and other firefighting equipment.

"It's a good program because not only do you get to spend more time with veterans, you also get to spend more time with different types of veterans," said Jacob Delaney, 21, who served in the Iraq War. "All around you start to realize the different jobs and the different branches that everyone comes from, and their experiences will help you in the long run."

The four crews of veterans came from San Bernardino, San Diego, Placer County and South Lake Tahoe. They all arrived at the Placer Center on Friday and have been living in tents on the training area's lawn.

Read the whole story

Expect substantial delays in Nevada because of roadwork

Motorists on Nevada highways can expect delays starting May 14.

On Highway 50 at Glenbrook to junction at Highway 28 the outside lane (east/north bound) will be worked on. A portable concrete barrier rail has been set off the open lane line approximately three feet to allow and accommodate bicyclists. This lane closure is expected to last for two months.

A contractor will be working on Highway 28 between Incline Village and Sand Harbor. Travel will be reduced to one lane in this area on weekdays for the next few weeks. Flaggers will be present.

On Highway 28 from Incline Village to Crystal Bay there will be work. Also a pipe crossing will be installed on Second Creek on Monday. This will require the street to be closed for the day. A detour will be in effect.

The gas line relocation work is continuing in the round-about area of highway 28 ad 431.

Stuffed animals at El Dorado County bar confiscated by game wardens

By Bill Lindelof, Sacramento Bee

State Fish and Game wardens on Tuesday confiscated a stuffed raptor and a wolverine from a Georgetown bar.

The mounted red-tailed hawk and the wolverine, sporting a hat and clenching a cigarette between its teeth, were on display at the Georgetown Hotel and Bar until wardens got a tip.

Wardens removed the species because having them dead or alive violates state fish and game code.

One code section states that there are nine mammals that are against the law to kill or possess for whatever reason, even if they are stuffed and no matter how old, said Andrew Hughan, Fish and Game spokesman.

Read the whole story

South Tahoe man admits killing his roommate

A plea agreement has a South Lake Tahoe man going to jail for one year on voluntary manslaughter charges.

Had Brad Macewan, 56, gone to trial in the death of his roommate and been found guilty of murder – the first charge

levied against him – he faced 25 years in prison. Instead, he pleaded on one count of felony voluntary manslaughter. This month he was sentenced to one year in jail and five years probation.

It is customary for defendants to be given a reduced sentence based on behavior and work time. Macewan will not be entitled to those credits.

Upon his release he will also have to abstain from all use and possession of alcohol, per the judge's order.

Macewan was roommates with Patrick Lee Rego, 52. In July 2011, Macewan called police before dawn saying Rego was not breathing and had sustained a head trauma.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Sides being taken in South Shore loop road project

By Kathryn Reed

Driving down Fern Road it's one of those typical South Lake Tahoe streets with a variety of housing options. Apartments are at the east end, various size single-family residences closer to Highway 50 – including a fairly decent size dwelling. Sprinklers are going, gardens starting to sprout. Kids toys are out and about.

It's a neighborhood.

If planners have their way, it will be a state highway.

From the cul de sac at Fern is a paved path to the corner of Highway 50 and Pioneer Trail. There sit a variety of businesses – liquor store, sushi restaurant, pizza and ski shop. Places locals go to as well as tourists.

The owners and operators are in a prime location. They wonder where an equal parcel with the same foot and vehicle traffic could be found in town if planners relocate them.

Across the highway is the Holiday Inn Express. Access to that hotel will be dramatically affected if the proposed loop road goes in.

There is already a loop road behind the four main Stateline casinos. But the bulk of traffic stays on the straight thoroughfare through the casino corridor.

Tahoe Transportation District is the lead agency plotting a course that would widen the route behind Harrah's Lake Tahoe and MontBleu because it would be a state highway. On the California side it will eliminate 88 dwellings where 245 people live. Thirteen businesses would be affected in some way. "Affected" was not defined at the May 11 TTD board meeting.



A house on one end of Fern Road.



Housing on the other end of Fern Road that would be wiped out if the Loop Road goes through.

Photos/Kathryn Reed

The route would in some ways follow the back way locals go to avoid the casino area.

Highway 50 through the tourist corridor would become a city street on both sides of the state line.

While an underpass and overpass were talked about in the planning stages of the would-be convention center to link that site with Heavenly Village, Caltrans approval was never secured. If the loop road project goes forward, then it would be South Lake Tahoe that would have the say regarding an underpass-overpass.

Environmental gain is touted as a reason to do the loop road, but the reality is the project has always been about creating a better atmosphere for people walking in the area. So, better for tourists and the businesses that service tourists in the Stateline area.



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But with a road still dividing the casino properties, it won't be all that pedestrian friendly.

Gone, though, would be the through truck traffic.

This project is also tied to the South Shore Vision Plan – a public-private revitalization project that would overhaul the area from Ski Run Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe to Kahle Drive in Stateline.

Of the 13 members of the public who spoke, seven voiced support for the project, five were against and one asked questions.

Angie Watson, who owns apartments on Fern Road, said she wasn't surprised to hear her tenants liked the idea of a \$12,000 cash payment that has been talked about.

"I have a lot to lose," she told the TTD board during the meeting at Embassy Suites. "I don't understand how the loop road will bring business. Is it for the 2½ months we have good weather?"

Fern Road parallels the backside of the formerly named Crescent V Center. Nearby streets that would be affected are full of people who walk to work.

Shawn Kearney, owner of Tahoe Duck Tours, says she hears all the time from tourists about how pretty the area is, but the town looks like a dump.

“Relocating the highway is a chance to reinvent ourselves. It’s not wise to rest on our laurels,” Kearney said.

Few people disagree the South Shore as a whole is in need of upgrades to the way it looks. How that happens is the sticking point.

Inertia has partly set in because redevelopment projects like the loop road are talked about for decades so property owners don’t want to make a substantial investment if they don’t have the opportunity to get a return on that investment. Another reason is the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency has eliminated a true free market by making tourist accommodation units and commercial floor area commodities. TRPA has also been the spoke in the wheel of progress for converting dilapidated hotels into another use.

What the TTD board agreed to on Friday was to establish a citizen review committee and established a 30-day comment period for when the relocation plan is released. That is expected to be released to the public by the end of the month.

The South Lake Tahoe City Council is having a special meeting May 29 from 6-8pm at Lake Tahoe Airport to discuss the loop road. The city has eminent domain powers, which means it could take a private entity’s parcel for a project like this. However, a previous council on a 5-0 vote passed a resolution saying eminent domain cannot be used. That decision could be overturned if four council members agree to do so.

TTD staff said a series of meetings would be scheduled throughout the summer for people to learn more about specifics of the project, such as what happens from their meeting May 15 with the design consultants, and for staff to gather input from proponents and opponents.

Multi-state drug case ends with arrest, seizure of drugs-cash in El Dorado County

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

The El Dorado County Sheriff's Department announced one arrest and the seizure of more than \$236,000 in cash, assault weapons and marijuana plants in a drug trafficking case that extended to Florida, Virginia and North Carolina.

The Western El Dorado County Narcotics Enforcement Team began the drug trafficking investigation Friday and discovered that a suspect in North Carolina was under investigation by authorities in that state for sales of marijuana, according to a Sheriff's Office news release. Several other suspects in other states also were involved in the sales and distribution of marijuana that was being shipped from suspects in the El Dorado County area, officials said.

[Read the whole story](#)

Camp Concord to remain open on South Shore

By Matthias Gafni, Contra Costa Times

As the Concord City Council weighed options Tuesday night to address a \$3.5 million structural deficit, it sent a strong message to staff that saving \$300,000 by closing Camp Concord would not be considered.

The camp, near Lake Tahoe and created more than four decades ago to serve the city's youth, was a jewel for the community, all five council members said. They asked staff to find ways to save the camp and increase the occupancy rate, which has dwindled in recent years.

In addition to council support, numerous campers came to the meeting and voiced their concerns that the campground – which is owned by the federal government, but operated by the city of Concord – would be shuttered.

Staff had recommended ending operations and selling off its assets, such as the bath houses, cabins and other infrastructure at the site.

At the budget workshop, the council also discussed forcing school districts to shoulder the funding for five school resource officers patrolling campuses, potentially saving the city \$900,000.

No formal decisions will be made until June.