Truckee commits to 100% renewable energy

Truckee became the 50th town in the United States to declare it would use 100 percent renewable energy.

The town council voted last week to use 100 percent clean electricity by 2030. The electeds also voted to have all sources of energy be renewables by 2050.

“Truckee’s commitment to 100 percent clean energy including electricity, heating, and transportation is good for our community and our planet. Our town is on the front lines of climate change and we understand how serious this is,” Truckee Mayor Morgan Goodwin said in a statement. “Reducing our emissions will create jobs and long-term economic sustainability as we uphold our responsibility as stewards of the environment.”

South Lake Tahoe made the commitment earlier this year to get its electricity from 100 percent renewables by 2032.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

STR looking at altering green waste collection



Green waste totes could replace cans full of yard debris. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

Specific bins for green waste may be coming to South Tahoe Refuse customers.

The garbage company, which operates on the South Shore in El Dorado and Douglas counties, conducted a pilot program this fall to see how customers liked the service.

About 125 households near Sierra House Elementary School were give a green 90-gallon garbage tote to use from Sept. 8-Oct 27. Only yard waste was to be deposited in the bin.

Decreasing injuries and lessening the cost at **Full Circle Compost** are the main reasons STR is contemplating the green waste can.

“Green waste is where we have the heaviest lifting,” Jeanne Lear with South Tahoe Refuse said. Bags or cans of waste can weigh 30 pounds.

The company’s workers’ comp bills went up 19.4 percent in the last year. Lowering that bill by having employees stay healthy would presumably be a positive outcome with the totes.

STR reps gave an update on the pilot program to the South Lake Tahoe Waste Management Authority board in November.

STR retrofitted a truck in order to be able to mechanically lift the totes. Doing so on all of the trucks for all types of waste is not being talked about. But the company is contemplating green waste collection via a provided tote as becoming the norm. A final decision has not been made, though.

How many trucks to retrofit and the cost to customers need to be analyzed.

During the pilot there was a 95 percent participation rate, with households using it 57 percent of the time. Eighty-five percent liked the convenience. Overall, 72 percent preferred the tote. Almost half still had extra bags of yard waste to be picked up. About a third said storing the tote in winter would be problematic.

STR takes most of its green waste to Full Circle Compost in Minden. The company charges STR a fee for contamination, which is mostly the bags people put the waste in. Using the totes would eliminate much of the contamination as long as people adhered to putting in only green waste. In the pilot program the contamination level was less than 1 percent.

Getting more green waste out of normal trash collection would also help keep it from going to the landfill. All garbage companies in California are required to recycle 50 percent of the waste they collect – known as the diversion rate. The goal per the state is 75 percent in 2020. STR is currently at about 64 percent.

What living on $100,000 a

year looks like

By Emma Bowman, NPR

A central question of debate leading up to the Senate's passage of a sweeping tax overhaul plan asked which Americans need a boost. Economists say the Republicans' selling point for previous iterations of their legislation, that the plan is designed to benefit the middle class, has a shaky foundation — that the rich are the big winners.

And the middle class is already struggling. The median household income is roughly $59,000 a year. But around the country, even six-figure salaries for some single-person households don't necessarily furnish financial security.

"People feel like they haven't been getting ahead for a long time," says Jim Tankersley, who covers taxes and the economy for the *New York Times.*

Read the whole story

Water floods SLT streets after hydrant struck



Water fills South Lake Tahoe streets Dec. 3 after a fire hydrant was struck. Photo/SLTFD

A car slid into a fire hydrant at Montreal and Moss avenues in South Lake Tahoe on Sunday afternoon.

There were no injuries in the Dec. 3 crash.

However, water ended up running down Moss to Pioneer Trail before South Lake Tahoe Public Utility District was able to turn off the water.

South Tahoe fire crews helped to clear the storm drains.

Roads in the region were slick with the overnight snow that fell on top of the rain-soaked streets. Temps kept the roads icy for the better part of the day, with the less traveled streets still potentially dangerous.

— Lake Tahoe News staff report

CVS, Aetna deal may reshape health industry

By Michael J. de la Merced and Reed Abelson, New York Times

CVS Health said on Sunday that it had agreed to buy Aetna for about $69 billion in a deal that would combine the drugstore giant with one of the biggest health insurers in the United States and has the potential to reshape the nation's health care industry.

The transaction, one of the largest of the year, reflects the increasingly blurred lines between the traditionally separate spheres of a rapidly changing industry and represents an effort to make both companies more appealing to consumers as health care that was once delivered in a doctor's office more often reaches consumers over the phone, at a retail clinic or via an app.

The merger could position the combined entity as a formidable figure in a changing health care landscape where many of the players are trying to lower the high cost of care.

Read the whole story

Calif. may not be biggest threat to Nev. marijuana market

By Colton Lochhead Las Vegas Review-Journal

California is set to join the legal weed party Jan. 1 when recreational sales become official in the Golden State.

The state was one of four, including Nevada, that voted in 2016 to legalize the recreational use of marijuana. With sales projected to top $5 billion once the market gets up and running, California's cannabis corner is expected to be by far the nation's largest.

Nevada's fledgling market got off to such a hot start this summer by selling more than $85 million in recreational marijuana during the first three months of legal sales.

But having a big competitor nearby shouldn't be a problem.

Read the whole story

Mock bear boxes to be outlawed by STR



This construction bin on Gardner Mountain no longer closes all the

way. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

Construction boxes are about to be banned by South Tahoe Refuse.

“I think South Tahoe Refuse should stop servicing these. They are not a proper garbage container,” Tom Bruen, attorney for the South Lake Tahoe Basin Waste Management Authority, said. “Otherwise they will proliferate, and they are not bear boxes.”

The containers are a couple feet tall. A kitchen can might fit inside, but not the standard 32-gallon trash container. A big problem is people are throwing trash in them without bagging it first. And being low to the ground allows them to easily be buried in the snow.

Animals can get into them, and are even able to move them because they are not secure. This compares to bear boxes that are cemented into place.

John Tillman with STR said about 100 are in the company’s service area, with many being in Nevada. He says they are a growing problem.

The waste management authority board said STR should send letters to customers using these devices to say they are not allowed and will not be serviced.

Calif. lawmakers push back on

White House with new wildfire request

By Emily Cadei, McClatchy

California's House members are joining across party lines to call for $4.4 billion for wildfire recovery from Congress, a unified statement that boosts the state's chances of securing much-needed funds to help rebuild after this fall's devastating fires.

The request is also a rebuke of the White House, which sent a $44 billion disaster aid request to Congress last month that made little mention of the state's fire victims. The Trump administration later clarified that its requests for money for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Small Business Administration would all apply to California's fire recovery, as well as Hurricanes Harvey and Irma.

Even so, the sums the White House outlined on Nov. 17 were far less than what states affected by these disasters said they need to rebuild. California Democratic Reps. Mike Thompson and Jared Huffman called the $44 billion request "anemic" even if applied just to hurricane recovery, and not nearly enough if wildfire needs were also included in the mix.

Read the whole story

Squaw Valley creates

nonprofit foundation

Squaw Valley Ski Holdings has created the nonprofit Squaw Valley Foundation.

The Squaw Valley Foundation will be responsible for the management and distribution of millions of dollars generated from the 1.5 percent project transfer fee related to the redevelopment of the Village at Squaw Valley.

It will be run by a seven-member board, which has yet to be picked. It will be comprised of a mix of local residents and business owners, second homeowners and a public service district appointee.

It is estimated that the fees from the village redevelopment could generate as much as $15 million in first-time real estate sales, and more than $2 million annually in re-sales.

CPUC rules utility can’t pass fire lawsuit costs onto customers

By Kevin Fixler, Santa Rosa Press Democrat

State regulators moved Thursday to deny a California utilities giant the ability to pass costs from a wildfire legal settlement onto its customers – a decision that could have broad implications for the fire-ravaged North Bay.

With its unanimous 5-0 vote, the California Public Utilities Commission rejected San Diego Gas & Electric’s request for

authority to hike rates to cover $379 million in uninsured damages it must pay stemming from three costly wildfires in 2007.

Ahead of the meeting, commission staff recommended against granting the petition that both Pacific Gas & Electric and Southern California Edison supported. Two of the agency’s administrative judges wrote a lengthy opinion outlining how they found the publicly-traded utility’s control and management of its facilities before the wildfires to be “imprudent” and “unreasonable.”

Read the whole story