

Panel recommends cholesterol screenings for children

By Shari Roan, Los Angeles Times

As Americans – including even young children – continue to get fatter, their risk for heart disease is climbing too. So a panel of experts now is recommending that all kids have their cholesterol checked at least once between ages 9 and 11 and again between 17 and 21.

Although children typically don't have heart attacks and strokes, evidence has been mounting for years that the roots of those diseases begin early in life, and the rising rates of obesity have only fueled the risk.

That means doctors should start looking for signs of future heart disease in all kids, said the authors of a report sponsored by the federal government that is the first comprehensive guide on heart risk management in children.

Such guidelines already exist to address heart disease risk in adults, but until now there has been none outlining what works best for children.

Developed by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute and endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the guidelines were welcomed by heart specialists and pediatricians, who said they were long overdue.

"It's a major step forward," said Dr. Alan Lewis, a pediatric cardiologist at Children's Hospital Los Angeles who was not involved in crafting the report.

The guidelines were several years in the making, said panel chairman Dr. Stephen R. Daniels, pediatrician-in-chief at Children's Hospital Colorado. Its recommendations, published

Friday in the journal *Pediatrics*, are based on studies on all aspects of childhood risk factors for heart disease, carefully graded on the strength of the evidence, he said. Earlier guidelines for child heart health focused on solitary risk factors, such as high blood pressure or weight.

“Heart disease is the No. 1 cause of death in our society,” Daniels added. “We know the process that leads to those deaths begins in childhood. We also know that people who are able to maintain a low risk through childhood and early adulthood have a lower risk.

“If they can reach age 50 with low-risk status, they are very unlikely to have heart disease. That is the payoff here,” he said.

The report was developed to address the predicted upswing in heart disease rates caused by the obesity epidemic, said Dr. Elaine M. Urbina, director of preventive cardiology at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center, who was a member of the panel.

About one-third of American children are overweight or obese, nearly triple the rate in 1963, according to the American Heart Assn. Approximately 17 percent of kids ages 2 to 19 – 12.5 million – are obese.

Read the whole story

Gaming lawyer doubtful of legal online poker anytime

Soon

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

A prominent gaming attorney said he doesn't expect an online poker bill to be passed anytime soon, even though the demand is present, states are clamoring for tax revenue and sufficient technological safeguards would be in place to prevent underage players from gambling.

I. Nelson Rose, a distinguished senior professor at the Whittier Law School in Costa Mesa, Calif., said he's pessimistic about the passage of legislation because federal lawmakers this session have demonstrated they can't come to an agreement on any significant legislation.

Rose was a speaker Thursday at a two-day conference on online gaming law at Aria. Many of Southern Nevada's leading gaming attorneys are attending the conference, which features scholars, regulators and legal experts on topics ranging from the prospects of passage of online gaming legislation to the obstacles European online gaming companies will have partnering in ventures in the United States if and when Internet gambling is approved.

Rose said there are many potential pathways for the legalization of online gaming, and he listed six states that have the lead in exploiting online poker once approved.

In addition to Nevada, which is expected to approve online gaming regulations and standards next month, Rose named New Jersey, Iowa, California, Florida and Massachusetts as having the inside track. New Jersey and Iowa already have regulatory regimes in place, and the other three states have large populations or strong gaming cultures.

Other states that could exploit online poker, if approved, include Washington, Oregon, Arizona, Nebraska, Oklahoma,

Louisiana, Mississippi, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania and Connecticut. Most of those states have either strong tribal gaming centers or active commercial gaming.

Read the whole story

Avalanche death in Utah first of the season

By Justin Keppler, Ski Channel

It is with great remorse and sadness we report Jamie Pierre was killed by an avalanche in Utah on Sunday.

The legendary skier, cliff hucker and notoriously wild spirited Pierre was taken over a cliff in an avalanche triggered while riding with a friend at Snowbird Mountain Resort in Utah.

The Salt Lake Tribune reported that Pierre triggered the avalanche while snowboarding with a friend near the South Chute area around 3:15 pm Sunday afternoon. The area they were riding would have technically been considered within the bounds of the resort had it been open. While his friend was unharmed, Pierre's injuries from his fall proved fatal and was dead by the time officials arrived on the scene.

The mountains around Snowbird, Utah have been getting pounded with snow this season and have accumulated 14 inches of fresh snowfall in the past 48 hours alone. The mountain is not officially open yet, which means there hasn't been any avalanche control done on the resort slopes. Between early season conditions and the recent accumulation, the resulting

snowpack became extremely dangerous.

Read the whole story

Panel begins creating uniform data reporting system

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY – It's hard to know how well Nevada's public school and college students are doing if there is no uniform and reliable data to view their performance over time.

Gov. Brian Sandoval is working to change that.

He issued an executive order Oct. 7 asking a state education panel to take the necessary steps to create a system to track students through their school years, following in the steps of other states as part of an overarching effort to reform education and improve student performance in Nevada.

That group, the P-16 Council, met last week to begin the process of creating a usable data system to track student performance from early childhood education through college.

The council was created to help coordinate education efforts in Nevada from preschool through post-secondary levels and has the authority to address the data information system for public school students.

In introductory remarks to the council, which includes lawmakers, educators, parents and business representatives, Sandoval said he wants Nevada to create a data system that will put it on a par with states that have successfully

accomplished the task, including Florida, Maine, Connecticut and Washington.

The information, including performance measures of educators, is critical to moving Nevada forward in student achievement, he said.

A new panel, called the Teachers and Leaders Council, was created as a result of legislation passed in the 2011 session, Sandoval said. It is charged with developing a statewide performance evaluation system for administrators and classroom teachers. Half of the evaluation must be based on student data, which is why the charge to the P-16 Council is so important, he said.

"This is a historical moment, this is really a crossroads in the state of Nevada and we have some great opportunities to really improve the delivery of education in this state," Sandoval said.

"There is going to be a huge challenge for all of you," he said. "You have all the resources of this administration to assist you."

State Sen. Barbara Cegavske, R-Las Vegas, elected chairwoman of the 11-member council, said she has been working for years to create a reliable data system for public education in Nevada. It has been frustrating though, to see the money spent on different systems that have failed to generate the necessary information, she said. Right now there is no collaboration or coordination between school districts or with higher education, Cegavske said.

"When you look at other states, Florida, when you look at what they are able to collect and the information they are able to provide, it is just incredible," she said. "It's so exciting. And that's where we need to be and we need to get there."

In a three-plus hour meeting, the council reviewed the current

status of data collection efforts, which started with a system called SMART, or Statewide Management of Automated Records Transfer, approved by the Nevada Legislature in 1995. After millions of dollars had been spent on developing the system, lawmakers in 2003 pulled the plug on the project.

The Nevada Department of Education beginning in 2007 developed a new system called SAIN, or System of Accountability Information for Nevada, with a \$6 million federal grant. It has longitudinal student data from 2005 to the present, including enrollment, attendance, discipline, course completion and graduation, among other data elements.

The SAIN system has nine of 10 essential data elements, the department said in its presentation, but many issues remain with the database, the council was told.

Erin Cranor, a member of the council representing elementary and secondary education, said Nevada should identify what has already been done in other states that can be used as a starting point.

The council will meet again Jan. 11. A first progress report is due to Sandoval by Feb. 1. It is to complete its work by Aug. 1, 2012.

Funding, details of S. Shore economic study come to light

By Kathryn Reed

While spending \$10,000 to help fund the economic impact analysis of the South Shore Vision is on Tuesday's City

Council agenda, City Attorney Patrick Enright told *Lake Tahoe News* he wants to delay the vote.

This is because no person or entity is stated on the agenda or the staff report in regards to who would receive the check. That's assuming the council votes to be part of the study and wants a check written. A vote could be taken to not fund the project.

Douglas County and Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority have each put in \$10,000 and the South Tahoe Association of Resorts is contributing \$5,000.



South Shore visionaries want to change the economic tide.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

The South Shore Vision Plan is an idea between public-private alliances to revamp Highway 50 from Ski Run Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe to Kahle Drive in Stateline. STAR paid \$50,000 for Design Workshop to put together a plan.

The next step is the economic impact analysis that is estimated to cost no more than \$35,000.

LTVA's board voted Nov. 10 to approve allocating its share, with Tom Davis, South Lake Tahoe's rep to the board, abstaining. His issue was with how the item was agendized and

that there was no staff report.

Neither board members nor the public would have known money was to be spent that day. In fact, the website as of Nov. 13 only had the Oct. 13 agenda listed.

LTVA board members in an unprofessional, childish banter said things like: "I don't even know what the Brown Act is." "We've always done it this way." "We've never had a staff report accompanying a request for funds." "We need legal advice."

The public-private, bi-state nature of the board makes things dicey. But it's not the only board that operates this way. The bankrupt-defunct South Tahoe Area Transit Authority was comprised of similar type representatives. TRPA as a bi-state agency goes by Nevada's open meeting laws because they are more restrictive. It helps that TRPA's executive director is a lawyer so she knows the law.

But LTVA hasn't addressed the issue as to which opening meeting laws it should abide by and is essentially operating in a void. No one on the LTVA board is an attorney and no legal counsel goes to the meetings. The board blatantly violated the Brown Act, California's open meeting law, at the Oct. 13 meeting.

LTVA was founded in 1986 by a joint powers agreement between South Lake Tahoe and Douglas County and operates as an independent 501(c)6.

After last week's meeting it was left that LTVA Executive Director Carol Chaplin would call their attorney for advice. Davis said he would talk to Enright. Enright told *Lake Tahoe News* he would be calling Chaplin this week.

Nancy McDermid, a Douglas County commissioner and LTVA board member, after last week's tourism board meeting said it was fine for the county to award the money to individuals.

Enright won't let the city do that based on legal grounds. He said he'd prefer the check go to LTVA.

The City Council's agenda line items don't always say a dollar amount, but the staff report will explain what the full action is. It's like knowing the consequences to ones vote.

That isn't the case with LTVA agendas.

New Business G on the Nov. 15 council agenda says: (g) Discussion and Possible Direction/Action Regarding Follow-up from the Joint Meeting of the City Council/Douglas County Board of Commissioners held on Friday, November 4, 2011 at Edgewood Tahoe. It is accompanied by the staff report. All of this is easily accessible by the public.

This compares to the LTVA's website which only lists an old agenda, no staff reports and no minutes from previous meetings.

The economic study

Mike Bradford, with Lakeside Inn and Casino, has been leading the project that started with Douglas County wanting a vision for the casino corridor/Lower Kingsbury Grade area. It has evolved from there.

Bradford said it was through the county's Economic Vitality Department that a request for proposal was put out to find someone to do the economic study.

A firm out of Las Vegas, one from Denver and SMG from South Lake Tahoe sent in their bids.

Bradford and Mitchell Mize, director of real estate for Edgewood Tahoe, are the two who reviewed the three bids. They alone picked Carl Ribauda with SMG to do the study.

(Lynda Ribauda, wife of Carl, is CFO for Edgewood Companies.)

Bradford, after he made his presentation to LTVA, told *Lake Tahoe News* the reason he and Mize picked SMG is that the “others were static projections with no ability to adjust the model.”

Ribaudo also spoke to the LTVA board. He said he came up with the study idea through years of work with real estate modeling.

He said the time consuming part will be getting the necessary information together to form a baseline model. Within the larger South Shore Vision study will be specifics that would apply directly to LTVA – the Destination Decision Model.

Knowing the number of rooms on the South Shore, then dividing visitors into potential categories like Bay Area, Southern California, out of state, international and knowing the percentage of each group that makes up the total; and putting in dollar amounts for what each group spends on a variety of elements from lodging to restaurants to food in stores to gaming to recreation will reveal the economic impact of the guests, along with the number of people employed to service them, the income of the those workers and the taxes that are generated.

With the SMG model, once the baseline is established, it becomes a “what if?” situation. What if guests increased their length of stay? What if they spent more money? What if occupancy increased? What if the visitor mix changed?

It’s that product that Ribaudo and company is bringing to the table. He said no destination this size is doing this type of economic forecasting.

Bradford, after the meeting, said, “I think on a micro level it happens all over the place, it’s not happening on a macro level.”

In other words, individual businesses have their own way to

budget and plan; but the region is not doing it collectively.

Through SMG's plan the LTVA will also be able to track its marketing dollars better and see if there is a return on investment.

The benefits to this plan were outlined in a PowerPoint:

- Understand the economic implications of marketing strategies
 - Create community cohesion with a unified economic goal
 - Facilitates more creative thinking on how to achieve economic goals
 - Ties the reason for tourism promotion to the end results of tourism promotion
 - (Ability to) consider alternative strategies
 - Manage your segments by revenue stream with different investment strategies.
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Reno sportscaster remembered as consummate professional

By Lenita Powers, Reno Gazette-Journal

JK Metzker, the sports director at KTVN Channel 2 News who died Sunday after a hit-and-run accident in Reno, was described by those close to him as a consummate professional on the job, but more importantly a great guy, devoted husband and father at all times.

On Sunday, Reno Police arrested Ryan Joseph Rhea, 23, of

Sparks in connection with the accident. Officials said alcohol appears to be a factor in the case, which is still under investigation.

Rhea was booked into Washoe County Jail on one felony count of hit-and-run causing death. Additional charges may be filed pending the results of blood tests.

The accident occurred Saturday at 11:50 p.m. on North Virginia Street near Mackay Stadium after the end of the Nevada-Hawaii football game.

Metzker, 41, was not covering the game, but had gone to see it as a fan with some friends.

Read the whole story

El Dorado, Placer foreclosure numbers on the rise

By Rick Daysog, Sacramento Bee

New foreclosure filings in the Sacramento area continued to surge in October as lenders worked to reduce their backlog of distressed properties.

Irvine-based RealtyTrac said 2,628 foreclosure starts were filed in the capital region last month, a 14.4 percent increase from the previous month.

The new foreclosures – or notice of default filings – translate into one filing for every 176 homes in the four-county Sacramento region, which was the seventh highest rate in California, RealtyTrac said.

"The October foreclosure numbers continue to show strong signs that foreclosure activity is coming out of the rain delay we've been in for the past year as lenders corrected foreclosure paperwork and processing problems," said James Saccacio, chief executive officer of RealtyTrac.

Read the whole story

Burning Man 2012 tickets to be doled out via lottery

By Brian Duggan, Reno Gazette-Journal

After selling out of tickets for the first time in its 26-year history this year, Burning Man organizers have decided to start a lottery system instead of selling tickets on a first-come, first-serve basis.

The news was announced Friday in the organization's newsletter, known as the Jack Rabbit Speaks. Black Rock City, home to the annual Burning Man event in the Black Rock Desert about two hours north of Reno, is regulated by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, which imposes a population cap of 50,000 people, on average, over the course of the eight-day event.

The peak population this year surpassed 54,000 people. Meanwhile, Burning Man organizers are still trying to get a new BLM permit approved that would allow the population cap to increase to 55,000 in 2012 and reach 70,000 by 2016.

Burning Man 2012 runs from Aug. 27 through Sept. 3.

Read the whole story

U.S. reaching out to foreign travel market

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

Seeking to change travel trends of fewer foreigners visiting the United States, a public-private partnership launched Brand USA today, the nation's first tourism marketing campaign.

Led by Las Vegas resort executive Stephen Cloobek, the Corporation for Travel Promotion unveiled the campaign on a world stage with an event at London's British Academy of Film and Television Arts and a press conference at the four-day World Travel Market at London's ExCeL convention center.

The campaign is important to Las Vegas because the city wants to attract more international visitors.

Las Vegas is one of the U.S.'s most desired destinations for foreign visitors, not only because of its reputation as a world-class entertainment and gaming destination but because of its proximity to Grand Canyon National Park.

The Brand USA launch is the first step in developing a marketing and advertising campaign designed to convince foreign travelers to visit the United States. The first ads are expected to be aired in the spring.

The United States has been one of the few industrialized nations without a coordinated international tourism marketing message. In the past 10 years, the world travel market increased by 60 million people, yet visitation to the United States was flat. Experts estimate the United States lost a potential global market share of 78 million visitors over 10

years, at an estimated value of \$606 billion in spending.

The number of visitors from the United States' largest overseas market, Great Britain, has declined since a record 4.7 million visited in 2000.

The competition is fierce from other countries marketing their attractions, led by Mexico, which annually spends \$173.8 million advertising the country. Other tourism budgets include Great Britain, \$160 million; Australia, \$107.6 million; and Turkey, \$98.6 million.

Read the whole story

California revenues down \$1.5 billion – midyear cuts loom

By Kevin Yamamura, Sacramento Bee

California has fallen \$1.5 billion behind in revenue through the first four months of the fiscal year, state Controller John Chiang said Thursday, amplifying fears the state will impose deeper budget cuts this winter.

For October, Chiang said, California was \$810.5 million behind what was expected, or 16.3 percent. Notably, the state missed its personal income tax estimate by \$451 million, or 12.9 percent, which the Franchise Tax Board attributed to lower withholdings and estimated tax payments.

The state also faced spending pressures through the first four months of the year. Chiang reported that California spent \$1.7 billion more than budget writers expected.

Under the budget deal Gov. Jerry Brown signed in June, the state will automatically cut a variety of programs depending on how deep budget analysts determine the revenue shortfall will be.

Read the whole story