

Flight originating in South Lake Tahoe ends in back of passenger car

By Bay City News

Three people were injured when a small plane crashed into the back of their car near Napa County Airport Sunday afternoon, according to the California Highway Patrol.

The Beechcraft A36 Bonanza lost engine power and crash landed on state Highway 29 near Airport Boulevard where it rear-ended a 2007 Infiniti around 12:35 p.m., CHP and Federal Aviation Administration officials said.

The driver of the Infiniti and the two passengers suffered minor injuries and were taken to Queen of the Valley Medical Center for treatment, CHP Officer John Short said. The two people in the white four-seater plane were uninjured, FAA Operations Officer Bruce Nelson said. The aircraft also knocked down a traffic signal pole, Short said. The CHP shut down that portion of Highway 29 for about 40 minutes after the crash.

The pilot, who flew from Lake Tahoe Airport in South Lake Tahoe, was planning to land at Napa County Airport before the power breakdown, Nelson said.

Read the whole story

San Jose man dies boating with friends at Lake Tahoe

By Bill Lindelof, Sacramento Bee

The name of a San Jose man who died from injuries suffered when he fell off a boat and was struck by the watercraft's propeller at Lake Tahoe has been released.

He was identified as 46-year-old Stephen Joseph Keller. Placer County Sheriff's Department spokeswoman Dena Erwin said five Bay Area men visiting the lake rented a boat and were attempting to dock at Chambers Landing on the West Shore about 4pm Saturday when the incident happened.

Keller died at the scene.

Erwin said the incident remains under investigation.

Officers find Douglas County teen who had been missing

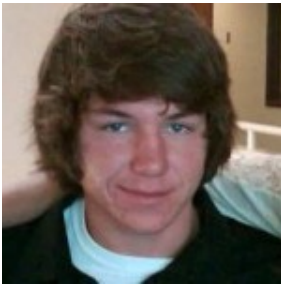
Updated Aug. 30 at 1:55pm:

Brian Ray Hearold was located hiding at a friend's house in Douglas County.

Investigators of the Douglas County Sheriff's Office are seeking the public's help in locating a missing/runaway juvenile.

On Aug. 17, 16-year-old Brian Ray Hearold was reported as a missing/runaway juvenile by his mother.

Hearold was last seen leaving his grandfather's house on Village Way ub Gardnerville. Hearold resides on Plymouth Drive in Indian Hills, in north Douglas County.



Brian Ray
Hearold

Hearold is known to frequent Lampe and James Lee Park skate parks in Douglas County. Hearold is described as: 16, approx 5-feet-5, approximately 145 pounds, blue eyes, medium-length brown hair, and gauged earlobes.

Anyone with information regarding the whereabouts of Brian Hearold is asked to call DCSO Investigator N. Chrzanowski at (775) 782.9907 or DCSO dispatch at (775) 782.5126.

Audit: Lax land oversight cost California millions

By Patrick McGreevy, Los Angeles Times

SACRAMENTO – For 17 years, giant Dow Chemical Co. leased state property near the Bay Area community of Pittsburg without paying any rent. A boating marina in nearby Crockett has paid

nothing for the government parcel it has used since 1989 – while subleasing the land to another firm. A Southern California Gas Co. pipeline runs through 48 acres of the Mojave Desert, but the utility did not pay a dime for five years.

Those businesses and dozens of others have benefited from officials' mismanagement of more than 4 million acres of public land, according to a state audit released Tuesday. The cost to taxpayers could easily be in the tens of millions of dollars, the auditors say, at a time when the state has been forcing teacher layoffs and cutting aid to the poor.

The State Lands Commission, made up of California's lieutenant governor, controller, finance director and a staff of dozens, has failed to perform the basic duties of any landlord – renewing expired leases, keeping rents at market level and evicting delinquent tenants – the study found.

The commission controls river and lake beds, tidelands along the coast and school property, land acquired from the federal government at statehood. But it “has not always managed its more than 4,000 leases in the state's best interest,” auditor Elaine Howle wrote to the Legislature, which solicited the report.

The agency didn't collect 22 years of back rent from Ship Ashore Resort, on the California coast just south of Oregon. It failed to raise rents on Red Wolf Lakeside Lodge at Lake Tahoe or on Atlanta-based Georgia-Pacific Gypsum LLC, which leases land on the San Joaquin River in Northern California. Auditors found more than \$8 million in lost revenue in the 158 leases they reviewed.

Read the whole story

New leader implements big changes to Calif. National Guard

By Charles Piller, Sacramento Bee

Adjutant General David S. Baldwin returned in April from a tour of duty in Afghanistan to lead the California National Guard – and inherited a force plagued by mismanagement and freighted with scandal.

Neglect had reduced Camp Roberts, a giant training site near San Luis Obispo, to decrepitude. An auditor had accused Guard members of skimming extra fire-duty pay. And a criminal inquiry had been launched into pilots who allegedly enriched themselves by violating safety rules. Baldwin's two immediate predecessors were under investigation for improper double dipping – two days' pay for a single day of work.

Dwarfing those problems, an estimated \$100 million in dubious or illegal payments to Army Guard members had been made from incentive funds meant to boost recruiting and retention of soldiers. That alleged fraud – like the other cases, exposed in recent *Bee* investigations – is the subject of a major criminal probe by four federal agencies, including the FBI and IRS.

"The problems were monumental," said Baldwin. He said they had to be tackled without neglecting the Guard's responsibilities to serve in overseas wars and respond to local emergencies.

To reform a culture that had "lost its focus on the value of selfless service," Baldwin dismissed past leaders and said he

installed others who have fought in today's wars and experienced their soldiers' sacrifices.

Baldwin also has moved aggressively to address the Guard's ethical lapses, particularly in the Recruiting and Retention Command. He's trying to recoup millions of dollars paid to Guard members improperly or illegally, and, under his command, three recruiting leaders were removed from their posts.

Brig. Gen. Charlotte L. Miller was ousted from the Guard altogether because, Baldwin said, "I had lost faith, trust and confidence in her abilities as a senior leader." Miller declined to comment.

Col. Diana L. Bodner and Lt. Col. Jodee A. Rowe were shifted into jobs with less responsibility. Each of them declined to comment, other than denying wrongdoing.

Baldwin also has tackled ongoing graft and extravagance that suggested a stubborn culture of impunity.

He removed Command Sgt. Maj. Bobby L. Rollins, a top assistant to Rowe, from full-time employment in the Guard for involvement in recent schemes that improperly rewarded recruiters with gift cards and Apple iPads – and for intimidating a subordinate who pushed back against the order, according to an official report obtained by the *Bee*.

Rollins did not respond to requests for comment.

Guard officials said four other officers involved in the iPad scam, whom they declined to name, were reprimanded, fired from their full-time jobs and removed from recruiting duties. On appeal, two were retained outside of recruiting.

Finally, Baldwin canceled an extravagant conference for recruiters and their families, planned at a Lake Tahoe resort, that Guard members likened to an extended party.

He voiced frustration that his crackdown has been delayed by

the need to cooperate with a slow-moving federal investigation, whose officials seized most of the incentive-fraud evidence. But Baldwin said he already knows enough to identify the genesis of the problems: “Incredible pressure that came from above” to increase Guard membership.

Read the whole story

Growing trend to turn wastewater into drinking water

By Chloe Stepney, Christian Science Monitor

This summer, Texas’ drought of the century is an uncomfortable reminder that often there just isn’t enough water to go around. But the 40 consecutive days of triple-digit temperatures and minuscule rainfall may also be boosting the case for a new freshwater source being developed in Big Spring, Texas, and surrounding cities.

With a waste-water-to-drinking-water treatment plant now under construction, Big Spring will soon join the growing list of cities that use recycled sewage water for drinking water – a practice that the squeamish call “toilet to tap.”

The trend is expanding as climbing temperatures and dry weather across the West force environmentalists, politicians, and citizens to find newer, better solutions to freshwater resources.

“It’s really a natural and cost-effective [solution] when you don’t have another resource available,” says David Sedlak,

professor of civil and environmental engineering and codirector of the Berkeley Water Center at the University of California, Berkeley. “We have to recognize that as the population of the country continues to move out into the West and as climate change continually reduces the water supply, these issues are going to become more and more important.”

The \$13 million Big Spring Water Reclamation Plant, due to open early next year, will pump 2 million gallons of water each day to Big Spring and three nearby cities – Stanton, Midland, and Odessa – using the waste water produced by area residents.

“The neat thing about it is that we’ll be able to use 100 percent of the water, 100 percent of the time,” says John Grant, general manager of Colorado River Municipal Water District, which serves Big Spring.

Mr. Grant, who began looking into alternative water supplies nearly 12 years ago, says public feedback runs the gamut from “There’s no way I’m going to drink this” to “Why haven’t y’all done this sooner?”

Water reuse plants are not new, and municipalities in states from California to Florida have them.

Read the whole story

**Facts and figures about
education in the United**

States

Another school year means many things.

Back-to-school shopping meant \$7.4 billion being spent at clothing stores in August. 2010. Only in November and December were sales significantly higher. Similarly, sales at bookstores in August 2010 totaled \$2.2 billion, an amount approached in 2010 only by sales in January, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

The number of children and adults enrolled in school throughout the country in October 2009 – from nursery school to college – was 77 million. They comprised 27 percent of the entire population age 3 and older.

Seventy-four percent of children ages 3-6 were enrolled in kindergarten all day as of October 2009.

The projected number of students to be enrolled in U.S. elementary through high schools this fall is 55.5 million. About 11 percent of them will be in private schools.

Of all those enrolled, 43 percent belonged to a minority population as of October 2009.

Eighty percent of students ages 12 to 17 were academically on-track in 2006, up 8 percentage points from 1998. The odds of being on-track were 48 percent higher for these students if they were in a gifted class and 34 percent higher if they had never been suspended or expelled from school.

In 2009, there were 11.2 million school age children (ages 5 to 17) who spoke a language other than English at home; 8 million of these children spoke Spanish at home.

The average number of children participating each month in the National School Lunch Program in 2009 was 31.1 million.

In 2009, there were 7.2 million teachers in the United States. Almost 3 million taught at the elementary and middle school level. The remainder included those teaching at the postsecondary, secondary, preschool, kindergarten levels, special education and other teachers or instructors.

Average annual salary of public school teachers in California as of the 2007-2008 school year – the highest of any state – was \$65,800. Teachers in South Dakota received the lowest pay – \$36,700. The national average was \$52,800. High school principals earned \$99,365 annually in 2008-09.

Energy program helps Nevada homeowners see green

By Ben Miller, Reno Gazette-Journal

Homeowners in the Reno area have begun to retrofit their houses for energy efficiency through a Nevada State Office of Energy rebate program.

The program, which is called the Nevada Home Energy Fitness Campaign, offers rebates of \$1,000 for homeowners who have improved their energy efficiency by at least 20 percent, said David Gibson, community services director for Envirolution, the nonprofit coordinating the rebates.

The Nevada State Office of Energy (NSOE) received a \$5 million grant for the Nevada Home Energy Fitness Campaign. The goal is to retrofit at least 5 percent, or 50,000, of all single-family homes in Nevada by 2021.

Once upgrades have been made, participants will receive a

second assessment to ensure the 20 percent energy efficiency upgrades have been achieved, and then will receive a \$1,000 rebate on their initial investment of at least \$2,000.

About a dozen homeowners have taken advantage of the program so far, Gibson said.

“If you’re cutting your energy usage by 20 percent, you’re cutting your energy bill by 20 percent or more,” Gibson said. “The savings can really add up.”

Read the whole story

When property values rise, expect tax bills to increase faster

By Loretta Kalb, Sacramento Bee

Hundreds of thousands of Sacramento-area residents have experienced one upside of falling real estate prices: lower property taxes.

When the market recovers, however, their tax bills could rise much faster than they fell.

That’s because the normal limits on tax increases established by Proposition 13 no longer apply as long as a property’s assessment remains below its maximum taxable value, generally its last sales price plus annual inflation.

In good times, Proposition 13 allows the assessed value of a property to rise by no more than 2 percent a year – even

though the actual market value may have gone up much more. There are no such limits on properties worth less than taxable value.

How much could taxes rise?

That's not a question people are in hurry to ask. Home prices in the region are about 50 percent below the peak of 2006, and most resales in the Sacramento market are bank-owned or short sales. Recovery still seems out of reach.

Read the whole story

Donner Summit visitors center to close after Labor Day

By Barbara Barte Osborn, Sacramento Bee

The U.S. Forest Service's only Donner Summit-area visitor center, Big Bend, will permanently close its doors Sept. 5, following the Labor Day weekend.

Part of the visitor's center roof collapsed in March under the weight of last winter's heavy snowfall and because of the extent of the damage, it will not be reopened, said Ann Westling, public affairs officer for the Tahoe National Forest.

Instead, construction of a new fire station is planned to begin on the site this fall or early winter, Westling said.

"Previously, we applied for and received funds to build a new fire station at the site," she said. "The old fire station was built in the '30s and is not functional and too small for

current fire equipment.”

Read the whole story