

Unemployment in region holds steady

Publisher's note: Nevada continued to register the highest unemployment rate among the states at 12.4 percent in June. California had the next highest rate, 11.8 percent. El Dorado County's unemployment rate last month was 12.1 percent compared to 12.7 percent a year ago as well as in May 2011. Placer County's June unemployment rate was 11.4 percent. It was 10.8 percent the prior month and 11.6 percent in June 2010.

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

The job market shook off the blahs in surprising fashion in California and Sacramento last month.

But in spite of a surge in hiring reported Friday, unemployment rates actually increased in June.

And it's unclear if the latest report from the Employment Development Department means the economy is truly gaining momentum – or if June was just another tease.

On the plus side, Sacramento's job market had a historic month: Payrolls grew by a resounding 13,500 jobs. That was the single best month since modern record keeping began 21 years ago, said EDD labor market consultant Justin Wehner.

Big job gains were reported in the restaurant, travel and entertainment industries, among others. Employers such as Thunder Valley Casino have put out help-wanted banners.

"It could be a sign we've finally joined the recovery," said economist Jeff Michael of the University of the Pacific. "Sacramento has just been the caboose on this thing."

Read the whole story

Taxable property values decline 3% in Placer County

By Loretta Kalb, Sacramento Bee

Placer County officials have finished calculating the 2011 value of taxable property in the county and found an average 3 percent decline in value compared with 2010.

The loss of \$1.6 billion in the county's assessment roll is a continuation of the downturn that started several years ago, the Placer County Assessor's Office reported Tuesday.

Assessed values are based largely on computer analyses of how property sales in an area affect property values.

At the real estate market's height in 2008, the county's assessment roll reached \$58 billion. By Jan. 1, however, it had fallen to \$51.5 billion, the Assessor's Office reported.

[Read the whole story](#)

El Dorado supes to have one more meeting about redistricting

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

Seemingly moved by complaints from El Dorado Hills and Cameron

Park residents, El Dorado County supervisors unanimously decided Tuesday to postpone a decision on a redistricting map under discussion.

However, they also limited further discussion in a way that will thwart the desires of the activists in the western part of the county.

“They may as well have just adopted the map,” said Rachel Michelin, who spoke representing a new organization, the El Dorado Citizens for Responsible Government, formed in response to the redistricting issue.

El Dorado Hills and Cameron Park residents – with about a third of the county’s total population – have lobbied to have redistricting give them two representatives who would be directly beholden to the suburban communities.

The current proposed map, however, has one supervisor representing most of El Dorado Hills, while other parts of El Dorado Hills and Cameron Park are split between districts dominated by rural populations.

Read the whole story

Fuel leak contaminates soil at Zephyr Cove Resort

By Kathryn Reed

The exact amount of unleaded gasoline leached into the soil at Zephyr Cove Resort may never be known, but officials say there is no threat to drinking water, Lake Tahoe or human health.

"The leak is in an underground storage tank," explained Vinson Guthreau with the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection. His agency is responsible for overseeing the clean up. "We don't focus on the amount (leaked), we focus on environmental clean up."



But he could not say what was being done in terms up clean up, only that the report expected next week will dictate what his agency will do. This, despite that the fact the leak was reported nearly a month ago.

Aramark let NDEP know about the leak June 27. According the Forest Service, soil samples were obtained July 18, with the results expected next week. The public had not been notified of the situation until today.

No on with NDEP, the U.S. Forest Service (which owns the land) or Aramark (which is the concessionaire running the resort) would quantify how small or large of an area was impacted by the leak because they say the tests will determine that. Guthreau said it was "not extensive" but would not elaborate further.

Drinking water at the resort has been tested and is not contaminated, officials said.

"We visibly observed an intermittent drip while replacing the fuel pumps," David Freireich with Aramark told *Lake Tahoe News*. "The fuel pump transfers fuel from the underground tank to the dispenser. We suspect the source of the release was where two pipes connect to one another. This connection has been repaired."

When asked if he could estimate how much fuel leaked out and for long it had been leaking, Freireich said, "We hope to learn more when we receive the results from the sample analysis."

But the reality is soil samples will not be able tell how much fuel leaked out of the pipes or for how long. Aramark would at least be able to get a good idea of the amount leaked by knowing how much the tanks hold and what has been used – the difference being the amount of leaked fuel.

The fuel in question is what rental boats and the M.S. Dixie II use.

Caltrans responsible for blasts in Meyers area

Reports this afternoon of explosives in Meyers followed by a cadre of sirens was not anything illegal or terrorist driven.

The blasts are from Caltrans. Workers blew up two duds left from winter avalanche control work.

They were detonated at 12:10pm and 12:20pm near the Flagpole area, according to Caltrans spokeswoman Deanna Shoopman.

Draft redistricting map puts Ted and Beth Gaines in quandary

By Jim Sanders, Sacramento Bee

'Til death do them part, sure, but nobody envisioned this.

Ted and Beth Gaines, the Legislature's only married couple, find themselves in an odd predicament from the latest draft maps by California's independent redistricting commission.

Beth's Assembly career apparently would benefit by her continuing to live in the couple's Roseville home, but Ted's Senate career could be in jeopardy unless he pulls up stakes and moves.

The two Republicans who represent Lake Tahoe are not talking because boundary lines could change before an Aug. 15 vote on final maps, but tentatively, Beth is targeted for a safe GOP seat and Ted should grab some Excedrin.

Specifically, Ted would be separated from most of the voters who elected him and placed in a Senate district dominated by GOP colleague Doug LaMalfa and stretching to Red Bluff.

Read the whole story

Tahoe enviro summit participants reaching out to public more

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., is hosting the 15th annual Lake Tahoe Summit on Aug. 16 from 9-11:30am at Homewood Mountain Resort.

The public is welcome to the free event.

For the first time since President Bill Clinton and Vice

President Al Gore hosted the inaugural summit in 1997, the governors of California and Nevada are expected to attend. Govs. Jerry Brown



Dianne
Feinstein

and Brian Sandoval are likely speakers, along with Sens. Feinstein, Harry Reid, D-Nev., and Dean Heller, R-Nev., other high ranking federal officials, and local residents.

The theme this year is Stewardship and Sustainability in Challenging Fiscal Times. In addition to presentations at the summit, organizers are planning family-oriented events such as a Lake Tahoe Basin youth art contest and interactive displays for children.

Upping vehicle tax may help pay Incline property owners

By Susan Voyles, Reno Gazette-Journal

Washoe County residents could pay an additional 1 percent tax to register their vehicles to help pay Incline Village property owners \$17 million as ordered by the Nevada Supreme Court and to help balance the county budget for years to come,

as proposed in a new study.

John Breternitz, commission chairman, on Tuesday told a review panel that the tax is one option commissioners will consider next week to pay tax refunds owed to 8,000 village residents for the 2006-07 tax year. The vehicle excise tax would generate \$8 million a year.

The Supreme Court ruled July 7 that former county treasurer Bill Berrum should have reduced their property taxes after the county board of equalization voted in February 2006 to roll back their property values to 2002-03 levels to comply with an earlier court case.

In a January 2006 ruling, the Carson District Court determined that former county assessor Robert McGowan's methods of appraising Tahoe views, beaches and other unique features were unconstitutional because they were not sanctioned by the state.

In February 2006, the state Supreme Court delayed enforcement of that district ruling calling for refunds while the case was being appealed. The Supreme Court also advised the county to follow the reasoning given by the district court judge, Bill Maddox.

The study by Management Partners, meanwhile, points to the vehicle excise tax as one means of balancing future budgets.

Read the whole story

Injunction sought to prevent

Angora logging

Removing the charred trees from the Angora burn area next week may not happen.



Earth Island Institute's John Muir Project and the Center for Biological Diversity on July 20 filed a request for an emergency injunction in the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco.

The conservation groups earlier this year had sued to stop the South Shore project, but lost in U.S. District Court earlier this month.

The U.S. Forest Service wants to get rid of the trees burned in the June 2007 fire that leveled 254 houses to prevent another catastrophic fire. The environmental groups say that work would destroy the habitat of the black-backed woodpecker.

— *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

S. Tahoe girl rescued from pool still hospitalized

Updated July 21 at 8:10am:

Amy Castillo remained in Renown Medical Center in Reno on Thursday morning. Reports are she did not sustain a spinal injury and there is no blood on the brain.

A 12-year-old South Lake Tahoe girl who lifeguards rescued from the bottom of the city pool Wednesday afternoon was flown from Barton Memorial Hospital to Renown Medical Center in Reno.



“Rec center staff told us afterward that she was using the diving board and hit her head when coming down, and then sank straight to the bottom of the pool,” according to a pool user who didn’t want to give her name. “She was down there for approximately 20 seconds, then the lifeguards dove in and got to her.”

Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News* Amy Castillo was unconscious at the bottom of the pool and aspirated water before being rescued.

A city official said the girl was conscious when taken to Barton. She was moved to Reno for “a higher level of care,” according to officials.

The pool was closed for two hours after the 2:30pm incident.

– Kathryn Reed