Gas prices keep going up in South Tahoe, Nevada

By Kara LaPoint, Reno Gazette-Journal

Gasoline prices continue to inch up in Nevada, rising 4 cents statewide in AAA Nevada's monthly survey, which was released today.

Nevada's average price for a gallon of unleaded regular gasoline rose to $2.97 this month, which was 11 cents above the national average and the fourth highest average price in the continental U.S.

In Reno and Sparks, the average price rose to $3.16 per gallon – up 5 cents since July, according to the survey.

Prices rose 6 cents in Carson City and 17 cents in Elko since last month.

Read the whole story

California water bond delayed until 2012

By Queenie Wong, Sacramento Bee

State lawmakers on Monday sent Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger a measure to delay an $11.1 billion water bond from the Nov. 2 ballot until the November 2012 vote.

Schwarzenegger and supporters of the water bond asked weeks ago for the measure to be delayed because they're concerned

voters will reject it in the face of a $19 billion budget deficit and a struggling economy.

Supporters say the delay will help lawmakers eliminate any imperfections in the bond, called Proposition 18, which would fund programs for drought relief, groundwater protection, water recycling and water conservation.

“What greater opportunity would you have to improve it than to delay it for two years?” said Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento, addressing critics of the bond who wanted to kill it altogether.

Read the whole story

Douglas County tries to lure outdoor oriented businesses to area

By Rob Sabo, Northern Nevada Business Weekly

A team of six Douglas County economic development officials last week descended on a large outdoor and recreational trade show in Salt Lake City to pitch Douglas County as a great place to locate companies that manufacturer outdoors and leisure products.

The value of Douglas County’s scenic outdoors was identified as one of the county’s key benefits in a recent economic vitality action report. The team from Douglas County, the Northern Nevada Development Authority and Heavenly Mountain Resort found the Outdoor Retailer trade show in Salt Lake the perfect forum in which to tout the benefits of relocating

businesses to Douglas County.

Lisa Granahan, economic vitality manager, says the Outdoor Retailer expo is the world's largest sports industry trade show, with more than 1,000 brands represented and 21,000 attendees.

"This trade show in particular is very important to our efforts," Granahan says. "We saw it as our best opportunity to get a lot of these people in one place and reach out to them."

Read the whole story

Lake Tahoe looking to bring prosperity to basin

By Ed Fletcher, Sacramento Bee

Recently some 2,000 yoga enthusiasts made like warriors, formed trees and played eagle amid the pine-scented air, cool breezes and breathtaking beauty offered by Lake Tahoe.

By nightfall, the visitors to Squaw Valley Resort, from as far away as Canada and the Eastern Seaboard, grooved to pulsing beats from nationally known musical artists.



Barton

Hospital's bike fitting program run by Jason Collin is part of the prosperity plan via destination health care. Photo/Kathryn Reed

If the Tahoe Basin economy must shift – as a recently unveiled study suggests – from relying on gamblers to appealing to environmentally conscious tourists, events such as the Wanderlust Yoga & Music Festival are its future.

Read the whole story

Report: Carson City home market recovery looks good



By Venessa Wong, Bloomberg Businessweek

A housing market rebound seems tenuous following the expiration of the home buyer tax credit, and consumer confidence remains weak due to lackluster employment, but

David Stiff, chief economist at Fiserv, says the bottom is near. Home prices in the U.S. have declined 29.5 percent over the past four years, according to the Fiserv Case-Shiller Indexes. Stiff says prices should form a trough early next year, when median prices will be down an estimated 32.9 percent from the 2006 peak.

By early 2014, they will have climbed about 7.2 percent from 2010 levels, according to the indexes. Fiserv and Moody's Economy.com base the housing forecast on factors that include income growth, demographic trends, unemployment rates, foreclosure rates, and construction costs. Of 384 places surveyed, the Bremerton-Silverdale area in Washington State had the highest four-year growth forecast, with prices expected to increase 44.7 percent from 2010 to 2014. Other leading growth markets: Bend, Ore., where prices are expected to jump 33.6 percent by 2014, and Detroit, with a 33.1 percent forecast. Markets with the weakest projections: Miami and Naples in Florida and Atlantic City, N.J., where prices are expected to continue to fall over the next four years.

[Skipping ahead to No. 5]

5. Nevada

Biggest home price increase projected in 2014: Carson City metro

Forecast 4-year price increase: 31.6 percent

Current median price: $141,524*

Prices to reach trough in: 2011 Q2

Median family income: $63,100

Population: 55,180

By the second quarter of 2011, prices in the Carson City area are expected to have fallen 34.4 percent from peak levels,

according to the Fiserv and Moody's Economy.com. Recovery will depend on job creation, as the unemployment rate was 13.4 percent in June, according to the BLS. While expectations for near-term economic growth have diminished recently and competition for jobs is extremely high, opportunities exist, even in a declining labor market, according to Nevada's Employment, Training, & Rehabilitation Dept.

Index used to calculate historical home price changes: FHFA

* Source: John Burns Real Estate Consulting, April 2010

Read the whole story

Controversial West Slope animal shelter moves forward

By Kathryn Reed

It's possible the multi-million dollar animal shelter that has been in the works for a number of years on the West Slope will break ground this fall.

The 17,700-square-foot facility would consolidate the multiple locations El Dorado County Animal Services Authority currently occupies. It would also mean no longer needing to pay $145,000 to lease space for large animals.

The shelter has been a bit controversial – with the latest attack coming from the grand jury. The 2010 report that came out this summer questions the Board of Supervisors' logic in 2006 to purchase the 10 acres between Shingle Springs and El

Dorado when only 7.5 acres are useable; why the seller wasn't asked to help with improvements – like the $1.5 million needed to put in a road to the location, drainage and other basics that will ultimately help the neighbors at no cost to them; and how the purchase got approved when the seller was a friend of a supervisor.

Despite the grand jury's findings, the county in July went forward with asking staff to come up with bid documents. The board could be asked to approve the bid package in September. The infrastructure improvements would be the first phase, with the building likely being under construction next summer, with a move-in date of 2012.

"I think the county itself has done everything in its power to find the right location for the shelter," said Henry Brzezinski, who runs Animal Services Authority. He oversees the Meyers location, too. What happens on the West Slope won't affect operations in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

This is Brzezinski's second stint with the agency. When he worked for the county from 2003-08 he spent about 1.5 years helping to find a spot for the shelter.

"We have an excellent architect who has designed numerous shelters around the country so he knows what is needed," Brzezinski said.

Right now adoptable cats are in cages in the front lobby. A facility in Latrobe houses livestock. The administration office is about a half mile from the main shelter. A special use permit is required because it is not zoned for an animal shelter.

The new facility will have everything in one spot. It will be designed to accommodate adoptions, the nearly 100 volunteers associated with the facility, housing for animals that are quarantined, animals that may be involved in a lawsuit or criminal case.

“Sheltering in general is almost like having a medical hospital. You have to have proper control. You have to have separate zonew for upper respiratory issues like kennel cough,” Brzezinski said. “Even though you have to have secure closures, they have to be comfortable for animals for the long term.”

Supervisors in May 2009 put $6 million into the capital improvement budget for the facility.

At a time when the county continues to reduce services and eliminate jobs, some question why it is spending the money now on something like this.

“Technically, yes, they could spend all that money for ongoing operations, but that is not something our office would advise they do because if you use it to fill an ongoing budget hole, it helps fill the hole in the budget year, but then the hole re-emerges the next rear. And then you don’t have anything to build anything with,” said Mike Applegarth, senior administrative analyst for El Dorado County.

Another reason to start this year is contractors are scrambling for work – making bids on projects lower than years past, plus it provides jobs.

Former supporters change stance on term limits

By Mike Zapler, San Jose Mercury News

The strictest term limits in the nation, enacted 20 years ago to end the “stench of greed and vote-selling” in Sacramento,

have instead made California's government so dysfunctional, many who once backed the reform say, that they now regret pushing for it.

"Of all the mistakes I've made in public life, the one I regret most is advocating for term limits for the Legislature," said Rep. Tom McClintock, R-Granite Bay, a leading conservative figure in California who was one of a small number of incumbent legislators who backed the term limits measure two decades ago. "It has harmed the institution badly."

Whether most Californians agree will be tested by a measure that qualified for the 2012 ballot last week. It would change term limits – currently six years in the Assembly and eight years in the Senate – to 12 years total in either chamber or both.

Read the whole story

Reno attracting second-home buyers

By Larry Olmsted, USA Today

Reno calls itself "The Biggest Little City in the World." That's meant to say it's a small town with big-city amenities. But the reality is that its casinos, shops, restaurants and nightlife play second fiddle to the main attraction surrounding the city: the great outdoors.

"Outdoor recreation is huge here because we have so much sunshine. People love being outside," says real estate agent

Carrie Sieben of LL Realty. “Reno is the gateway to all of the many activities of northern Nevada and bordering California, yet it is very inexpensive.”

One of Reno’s biggest appeals is nearby Lake Tahoe. But luxury houses in Reno sell for the same as or less than small condos near the water’s edge. Single-family houses in golf communities start under $200,000. “Around Reno, you can buy a nice condo in the mid-$100,000s,” Sieben says.

Many second-home buyers find that giving up immediate access to pricey Lake Tahoe for an hour-long drive there is worth Reno’s reasonable prices, its big-city amenities and access to skiing, golf and other outdoor sports. Access is excellent via the Reno airport.

Read the whole story

Help for El Dorado, Alpine, Placer small businesses

By Darrell Smith, Sacramento Bee

An estimated 22,000 businesses call Placer, El Dorado and tiny Alpine counties home.

For much of its existence, the Auburn-based Golden Sierra Workforce Investment Board has focused on matching workers with those businesses, building a pipeline between potential employee and entrepreneur.

The federally funded investment board works with local businesses and business groups to provide job training, placement and other employment-related services.

But firms in these mostly rural counties are struggling under the weight of a sluggish economy. As unemployment in the region soared, Golden Sierra has shifted its focus, said Executive Director Jason Buckingham.

Read the whole story

V&T train detrailment closes Highway 342 near Gold Hill

By Reno Gazette-Journal

Highway 342 near Gold Hill remains closed this morning after a V & T train derailment on Sunday night.

The road will remain closed until at least 9 a.m. Monday while crews work to get the train back on the rails, Nevada Highway Patrol spokesman Chuck Allen said.

Read the whole story