

Congress seeks to stop discrimination against resort towns

Erin Kelly, Gannett

WASHINGTON — When it comes to luring convention- and conference-goers this winter, sun-drenched resort towns may be too much fun for their own good.

Tourist officials say business groups have been avoiding popular tourist destinations in Arizona, southern California, Florida, Hawaii and Nevada out of fear it will look like they're having too good a time in the midst of a recession.

As a result, they're making the recession worse for the already-battered travel industry in cities such as Phoenix, Scottsdale and Tucson in Arizona, Palm Springs, Calif., Reno and Las Vegas in Nevada, and Orlando, Fla.

Read the whole story

113 Jackson Rancheria workers to ring in 2010 without a job

By David Bienick, KCRA-TV

JACKSON — Jackson Rancheria Casino and Hotel was issuing layoff notices Monday and Tuesday to 113 of its employees.

Jackson CEO Rich Hoffman told KCRA 3 Monday that the notices

would be effective immediately and would impact primarily middle management positions.

Read the whole story

\$1.1 billion Caltrans settlement won't help Tahoe sidewalks

By Kathryn Reed

The \$1.1 billion settlement to bring sidewalks along state highways in California will have no affect on the dilapidated or nonexistent walkways in Lake Tahoe.

“All of our new projects are compliant. The suit had to do with older facilities,” Caltrans spokesman Mark Dinger told *Lake Tahoe News*.



South Lake Tahoe is not a pedestrian-friendly town.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

This means the projects on the books for Tahoe already have sidewalks included in them to meet Americans with Disabilities Act criteria. None will be retrofitted because of the settlement, Dinger said.

In 2010, Highway 50 between Trout Creek and Ski Run Boulevard is slated to be upgraded. But when the rest of South Lake Tahoe will have sidewalks or other parts of the basin will get them remains a mystery.

Throughout many towns in California state highways are the main thoroughfares. Caltrans maintains 2,500 miles of sidewalks on state highways, which includes overpasses and underpasses.

Two disabled people filed the lawsuit in federal court in 2006. The settlement with Caltrans was reached this month. A federal judge will review the settlement in January, with final approval expected at an April hearing.

South Lake Tahoe officials were unaware of the settlement when reached for comment last week.

Study: Lakes warming faster than expected

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

Lake Tahoe, Clear Lake and four other large lakes in Northern California and Nevada are warming faster than the surrounding atmosphere, suggesting climate change may affect aquatic environments faster and sooner.

The findings are reported in a new study led by researchers at

NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena.



Lake Tahoe is one of several California-Nevada lakes that is warming.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

They used 18 years of temperature data from satellite sensors. It is believed to be the first time data have been dissected to reveal lake surface temperature over a period that long.

Read the whole story

New airport security not a big deal in Reno

Reno Gazette-Journal

New airport security measures caused by a suspected attempted bombing on an international flight to Detroit seem to have minimal impact at Reno-Tahoe International Airport, an airport spokeswoman said.

Because of increased security by the Transportation Security Administration, airport spokeswoman Trish Tucker recommended people get to the airport extra early.

“It wouldn’t be surprising if there’s more security as people are processed through security checkpoints,” Tucker said.

[Read the whole story](#)

Skilled nursing center open after Norovirus outbreak

By Kathryn Reed



Residents at Barton Memorial Hospital’s Skilled Nursing Facility were able to spend Christmas with family and friends. This is news because the center had been closed to visitors for about a week because of the Norovirus.

The South Lake Tahoe facility with more than 40 beds reopened on Christmas Eve.

“It was stressful for everybody,” hospital spokeswoman Denise Sloan said. “They didn’t have any visitors for at least a week.”

The angel tree had to be moved outside of the facility so people could come by to pick a name of a resident to buy a

Christmas gift for. Residents opened their gifts after lunch Christmas Day.

Norovirus is common this time of year among facilities with contained populations – like a skilled nursing center, jail or cruise ship. The virus is a gastrointestinal illness.

It was January 2007 that this skilled nursing facility was last on lockdown because of the Norovirus.

Facilities try to keep the general public out because the virus can be easily transmitted. At the Barton center all staff members were wearing masks, gloves, paper gowns and booties so they wouldn't spread the virus from one resident to the next.

The virus typically includes diarrhea, vomiting and stomach cramping. Additional symptoms can include low-grade fever, chills and headache. No specific treatment is available. People usually recover in three days or less.

Red Hawk Casino no burden to law enforcement

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

Red Hawk Casino opened a year ago on the Shingle Springs Rancheria amid dire predictions that it would produce gridlock on Highway 50 and cause crime to soar in El Dorado County.

But as the casino celebrated its first anniversary last week, law enforcement and emergency services officials gave the operation high marks, saying it has not unduly burdened their agencies but rather has resulted in the expected number of

calls for service.

“It’s pretty much in line with what I envisioned,” said Sgt. Joe Sherry with the California Highway Patrol’s Placerville office. “I thought there would have been more weekend traffic.”

Read the whole story

Attorney dispute in Garrido case not resolved

By Sam Stanton, Sacramento Bee

The dispute over who will represent Nancy Garrido in the Jaycee Lee Dugard kidnapping trial is not settled yet, with an appellate court agreeing Tuesday to extend its deadline for a final decision.

El Dorado Superior Court Judge Douglas Phimister had removed court-appointed attorney Gilbert Maines from representing her, apparently over claims that Maines had talked of writing a book on the case.

Read the whole story

Olivo appointed SLT city

treasurer

By Kathryn Reed

Only one person applied to be South Lake Tahoe's city treasurer – and he got the job this morning.

At a special City Council meeting Tuesday, it was a 5-0 vote to have David Olivo fill out the remainder of Steve Wysong's term. Wysong died earlier this month. The term expires in a year.

Olivo has strong ties to the council. He was Mayor Kathay Lovell's treasurer for her second campaign. Unbeknown to her colleagues Lovell asked the city attorney before the meeting if she should recuse herself from the vote. Patrick Enright said that wasn't necessary.

"He is very well qualified," Lovell said of Olivo.

Olivo has been a certified public accountant with Olivo, Zicko, Klover & Co. since 1978.

Flashing red near Y in SLT slowing traffic

Publisher's note: *The traffic light is working again. Updated as of 5:25pm Dec. 22.*

Caltrans workers are at the corner of Tahoe Keys Boulevard and Highway 50 in South Lake Tahoe this afternoon replacing a light pole that was taken out by a driver early Tuesday morning.

South Lake Tahoe police officers got the call about the downed pole at 2:55am but no report was taken. Lt. David Stevenson said a truck could have taken the corner and not known the pole was hit or it could have been a deliberate hit and run.



Cars are backed up on Highway 50 and Tahoe Keys Boulevard.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

For now the flashing red light is making travel slow at the Y end of town.

The pole that was on the Bear's Den side of the highway was not salvageable so Caltrans is replacing the entire standard.

Caltrans crews expect the signal to return to normal operation late this afternoon.