

Winter still wreaking havoc on Tahoe power grid

By Kathryn Reed

Power outages are normal, but this hasn't been a normal summer.

Liberty Utilities is still dealing with the aftermath of last year's winter. Relying on NV Energy is also impacting customers.

Liberty provides electric service to the California side of the Lake Tahoe Basin, as well as to Truckee, Alpine County and other regional locations. Liberty has been doing so since 2011 when its parent company bought NV's California territory.

Normally the top four reasons for outages are:

- Car vs. pole accidents
- Weather, such as snow, wind, lightning, or trees falling on wires
- Critters (like squirrels) getting into equipment
- Equipment failure.

This summer has been different.

"Unfortunately, we're still feeling the impact of the extreme weather experienced this last winter which really stressed the infrastructure (poles, wires, transformers, etc.) with snow loads and lots and lots of water in equipment (such as underground vaults) that had never been exposed to that much water/snow before," Travis Johnson, Liberty's vice president of electric operations, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Many of these weak points aren't readily visible, so the crews can't

proactively go out and fix; they have to wait until a circuit goes out and then track the problem down.”

Liberty is also at the mercy of NV Energy. When something goes wrong across the state line, it can have a ripple effect. An example of this was on Aug. 28 when NV Energy’s Round Hill substation had a fire and cut the power to customers in Nevada and California. The substation is still out of service.

“Liberty has picked up additional load to help them continue to serve their customers until this substation can be repaired. Picking up this load causes greater circuit exposure to the elements because the lines are switched in a way that makes them longer – for example there is more opportunity to have a lightning strike or car v. pole – and being in fire mode means we have to send someone out to patrol the line before we can restore service,” Johnson said. “The same is true for NV Energy customers—carrying additional, temporary load for Liberty results in greater exposure for their customers.”

Johnson pointed out that while the companies are separate in so many ways, they are relying on a lot of the same old equipment. They have interties to send electricity between service areas. That’s why outages can affect both states at the same time.

Much like the agreements between the local water districts where they can help the other if need be, Liberty and NV have a similar mutual aid agreement.

Outages are usually short-lived. When it’s not fire season the lines automatically recharge. It’s still fire season, so when the energy stops flowing on a line crews have to go find it. It isn’t like there is some circuit board in some office pointing to where the problem is, or that a flick of switch can solve it. It takes manpower out in the field to resolve the problem.

U.N. aviation agency to call for global drone registry

By Allison Lampert, Reuters

The United Nations' aviation agency is backing the creation of a single global drone registry, as part of broader efforts to come up with common rules for flying and tracking unmanned aircraft.

While the International Civil Aviation Organization cannot impose regulations on countries, ICAO has proposed formation of the registry during a Montreal symposium this month to make data accessible in real time, said Stephen Creamer, director of ICAO's air navigation bureau.

The single registry would eschew multiple databases in favor of a one-stop-shop that would allow law enforcement to remotely identify and track unmanned aircraft, along with their operator and owner.

Read the whole story

Wildfire burning on West Slope 20% contained

Updated 9:47pm:

More than 120 acres have burned in a remote area of the West

Slope, with containment at 20 percent.

The fire started Sunday afternoon in Shingle Springs.

Called the French Fire because it is burning off French Creek Road, it is challenging firefighters because it is difficult to get to.

No structures as of the evening of Sept. 17 had been threatened.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Nevada Supreme Court to settle marijuana distribution fight

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – The legal saga of who can transport recreational marijuana to the state's pot shops continues, with the Nevada Supreme Court issuing a temporary injunction prohibiting the state Department of Taxation from licensing marijuana businesses as distributors.

The Supreme Court, in an order dated Thursday, denied a request by the Tax Department to reject the temporary injunction sought by alcohol distributors. The request for the injunction was filed by the Independent Alcohol Distributors of Nevada. The court also rejected the agency request to dismiss the case.

The court has ordered oral arguments in the dispute over who should be able to distribute recreational pot for Oct. 3 at the Boyd School of Law at UNLV.

[Read the whole story](#)

Nev. developing global renown for drone research

By Mick Akers, Las Vegas Sun

After the Federal Aviation Administration designated Nevada one of six unmanned aircraft (UAS) research sites in 2013, the state has been capitalizing on the rare opportunity and cultivating an international reputation in the drone industry.

“The (designation) ... provides a superhighway to jobs and businesses to develop,” said Chris Walach, director of the Nevada Institute of Autonomous Systems, speaking at the Nevada Economic Development Conference on Wednesday. “The question is what can we do together as a state to develop that superhighway?”

Nevada has been on the forefront on various drone breakthroughs.

[Read the whole story](#)

Kings Beach event center deal nearly done

North Tahoe Public Utility District board of directors will have a special meeting Sept. 18 at 5:30pm meeting at the North Tahoe Event Center in Kings Beach to consider the final draft for the lease agreement for the center.

The board intends to enter a partnership with Laulima Kings Beach Event Center LLC to operate and maintain the facility.

If the resolution is approved, the clock starts on a variety of required actions for the district and Laulima as outlined in the lease. Laulima's responsibilities include providing information to the district to verify financial ability within 60 days and submitting renovation design concepts within 30 days.

Decline in inmates hampers fire fight



Inmates were used on the Washington Fire near Markleeville in 2015. Photo/Carolyn E. Wright/Copyright 2017

By Lizzie Johnson, San Francisco Chronicle

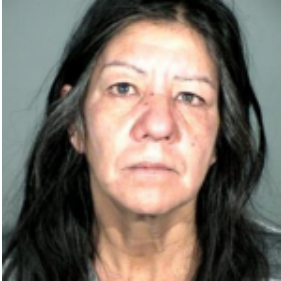
Thomas Rohl adjusted the 30-pound pack strapped to his back and hopped into a nearby fire rig. He was in a remote part of Solano County, on his way to help put out a grass fire smoldering a few miles to the west.

It's backbreaking, dangerous work. But it beats prison.

Rohl and minimum-security inmates like him are a firefighting force the state counts on every year when the hills dry up and the weather gets hot. But there's a problem: Thanks to changes that have redirected many low-risk offenders who used to crowd the state's lockups, California is heading into the height of this year's fire season with a reduced number of what one official called "the Marines" of wildfire fighters.

Read the whole story

Missing woman may be on South Shore



Sara Reyes

A woman with ties to South Lake Tahoe has been reported missing to Carson City sheriff's detectives.

Sara Reyes, 56, has been missing since at least Sept. 10.

Authorities say she is homeless and could be on the South Shore, or in Carson City or Reno.

Anyone with information is asked to call Detective Sal Acosta at 775.283.7855 or sacosta@carson.org, or Capt. Brian Humphrey at 775.283.7850.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Red Hawk Casino wins appeal in \$30M judgment

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

Red Hawk Casino hit a jackpot of its own Friday, fending off a \$30 million court judgment that once threatened its existence.

Nearly six years after a jury said Red Hawk's tribal owners owed millions to its former business partner, a state appeals court wiped the verdict off the books.

The 3rd District Court of Appeal ruled that the ex-partner's claims weren't valid because his contract with the tribe was never approved by the federal agency that oversees Indian casinos.

[Read the whole story](#)

Income goes up, poverty goes down in Nev. and U.S.

By Jessie Bekker, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Nevada's economy is getting healthier, according to 2016 U.S. Census Bureau data released Wednesday.

The state's median household income and poverty level are inching back to pre-recession levels, a five-year trend that mirrors national economic growth.

The median household income was \$55,180 in 2016, up from \$53,320 in 2015 and \$51,000 in 2010, after the 2008 stock market crash.

[Read the whole story](#)