Report: Capt. fell from truck because of coat issue

Updated Sept. 14:

By Kathryn Reed

An internal investigation by Lake Valley Fire Protection District revealed the captain who fell out of a moving engine was taking off his coat and his gear got hung up on the door lever.

The firefighter, whose name has not been made public, had to be airlifted to a hospital after the Aug. 27 incident. While he was released a couple days later, he has not returned to work. He sustained a concussion, and injuries to his head, face and hands.

Lake Valley isn't saying if he isn't at work because of the injuries or if he was placed on leave.

The crew was on their way home after being at a vehicle accident near Strawberry that afternoon. The truck was going about 25 mph. The engineer who was driving was able to pull over about 54 yards from where the captain landed.

Fire Chief Tim Alameda would not answer questions. He merely said read the online report.

That report says, "Fire district personnel tested numerous scenarios related to how the passenger door opened. Based on a series of scene reconstructions, it is likely the movement of the fire captain in the seat resulted in the protective cargo pant covering to catch on the outer lip of the passenger door handle. This caused the handle to unlatch the passenger door, ejecting the fire captain."

The state has not made a finding yet. The Occupational Safety

and Health Administration has six months to each a ruling. “This is still an open investigation,” Jeanne-Mairie Duval with CalOSHA told *Lake Tahoe News.*

The Lake Valley report states the captain had taken his seat belt off. This violates local and state law. It must be fastened at all times when a fire truck is moving.

Because Alameda isn’t talking, it’s not known if the captain or either of the two other firefighters who were in the engine were disciplined. The captain had the most seniority of the three.

Calif.’s poverty rate remains nation’s highest

By Jim Miller, Sacramento Bee

One in five Californians lives in poverty, the highest rate in the country, according to new data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

The “Supplemental Poverty Measure,” factors in cost of living and shows a stubbornly high share of Golden State residents in poverty even as the national rate has dropped slightly.

Under the methodology, an estimated 20.4 percent of Californians lived below the poverty line in a three-year average of 2014, 2015 and 2016. That is virtually unchanged from the 20.6 percent average for 2013, 2014 and 2015, according to Tuesday’s release.

Read the whole story

Funnel cloud over Lake Tahoe

By KCRA-TV

A funnel cloud was spotted Wednesday over Lake Tahoe as a tornado warning expired, the National Weather Service said.

A severe thunderstorm produced a funnel cloud about 4:05pm Sept. 13 over Lake Tahoe.

Read the whole story

Proposed NV Energy rate increase raises concern

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Consumer advocates are concerned about a proposed rate filing from NV Energy because it would raise the fixed monthly service charge by 31 percent.

The request was added this month to a June rate filing with the Nevada Public Utilities Commission. The fixed monthly charge would increase for all residential non-solar customers from the $12.75 to $16.76.

“To be clear, NV Energy is asking for no additional revenue for its core operations,” the utility said in a statement. “As directed by a Public Utilities Commission of Nevada order issued last Friday, NV Energy is requesting in its general

rate review filing to change how costs are allocated amongst different customers due to the implementation of new private solar generation policies enacted in the most recent legislative session."

Read the whole story

State fines Kirkwood $750K in contamination case

By Susan Wood

Kirkwood Mountain Resort has agreed to pay more than $750,000 to settle a wetlands contamination case brought against the ski resort by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board and California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The water board found through a complaint in April 2016 that the ski resort used asphalt grindings "for dust mitigation" in its unpaved parking lots.

The approximately 3-inch petroleum-based grindings measuring up to 1,840 cubic yards collectively were spread into sensitive zones in the Timber Creek, Nordic Center and Red Cliffs areas – which could have jeopardized Kirkwood Creek. Although petroleum hydrocarbons were found in samples from the creek, no fish kills were reported in the agencies' inspections.

The following month after the complaint was filed the state issued a notice of violation to the "Heavenly Valley Limited Partnership dba Kirkwood Mountain Resort" for violating water codes. Kirkwood Creek, a tributary to Caples Creek, flows to

the South Fork of the American River upstream of Placerville.

The flows may affect the municipal water supply, along with hydropower generation, water recreation and wildlife habitat downstream.



The slope north of the cross country ski area parking lot covered with asphalt grindings blown
during snow removal operations in 2015-16. Photo/Provided

As recently as **last October**, parent company Vail Resorts may have been facing a $4.44 million fine in civil liabilities for a violation of the Federal Clean Water Act and the California Water Code. Ski resort staff worked last fall until winter hit to clean up the sensitive wetlands. Last season's phenomenal snowfall delayed further cleanup.

The penalty was reduced to $754,732 as a result of the ski resort's progress. There's more to do in five areas: Nordic

Center, Red Cliffs Lodge, Kirkwood Meadows Drive, chair 9's Timber Creek lot and Kirkwood Creek near Snowkirk's chair 1 – which awaits the Army Corps of Engineers to supervise that part of the work plan.

The proposed settlement signed off by the water board last week is due to become final in 30 days following a public comment period.

Water board Assistant Executive Officer Andrew Altevogt told *Lake Tahoe News* comments would be taken into account when the settlement becomes final.

"They've done most of the work required," Altevogt said of the administrative order signed off a few weeks ago by Kirkwood General Manager Doug Pierini, who came on board a few months after the complaint was made.

"I don't think they knowingly spread this stuff around (the streambed)," Altevogt said, adding it was the first time he had encountered a ski resort subject to this type of violation. Kirkwood has pledged to continue to work closely with the agencies involved to "remediate impacts to the environment" as well as conduct ongoing site assessments of the areas affected.

"Notably, third party test samplings that the agencies asked us to conduct did not demonstrate any impact on the surrounding groundwater," Kirkwood said in a statement issued through spokesman Kevin Cooper.

"Kirkwood Mountain Resort takes seriously our role in responsibly stewarding the environment and the public land in which we are entrusted. We have already altered our snow removal procedures and will seek opportunities for our employees and contractors to learn from this," the statement reads.

The contamination case, which in one area was referred to as

“a black snow field,” has served as a black eye to Vail Resorts – a giant in the ski industry.

Audit: Calif. schools not prepared for gun violence

By Jim Miller, Sacramento Bee

Despite the risk posed to students and staff, many California schools fail to include active shooter scenarios in state-required safety plans, according to a new audit.

Schools and colleges were the second-most common location for shooting incidents from 2000 to 2015. California law, though, does not mandate that school safety plans address the issue, such as by creating procedures for lockdowns or evacuations.

Last week’s report by the Bureau of State Audits highlighted lax oversight of plan preparation by state and local officials. In some cases, the audit found, schools repeatedly filed the same plans year after year while some submitted none at all.

Read the whole story

NDOT close to resolving

stormwater runoff violations

By Art Marroquin, Las Vegas Review-Journal

The Nevada Department of Transportation is abiding by the terms of a federal consent decree aimed at resolving stormwater runoff violations, with only one unfulfilled requirement that must be met by the end of this year, officials said Monday.

A comprehensive stormwater management plan must be completed by Dec. 31 in order to fully comply with a settlement reached last year with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, said David Gaskin, head of NDOT's Stormwater Management Program.

EPA spokeswoman Margot Perez-Sullivan confirmed Monday that NDOT "fully complied" with the consent decree and the two agencies are working together to fulfill the final stipulation.

Read the whole story

Multiple accidents bring I-80 to standstill



Wrecks litter Interstate 80 on Sept. 12. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

Motorists going west on Interstate 80 this afternoon in the Sierra are not moving because of multiple accidents.

Hail and heavy rain have caused numerous vehicles to spin out, including a big-rig that jackknifed at Cisco Grove at about 1pm Sept. 12.

Westbound I-80 is closed at Rainbow because of a crash. Crews are hoping it will be reopened just after 3pm.

According the California Highway Patrol, the hail storm in the Gold Run area led to the collisions. It is not known if there is just property damage or when the entire stretch of highway will be open.

Thunderstorms are in the forecast for this area as well as the entire Tahoe-Truckee region for the rest of Tuesday.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Lawsuit challenges sale of Nev. oil and gas leases

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Two environmental groups on Monday filed a lawsuit challenging the Bureau of Land Management's June sale of oil and gas leases in Northern Nevada.

On June 14, the BLM offered nearly 200,000 acres of public lands in Nevada's Battle Mountain district for fossil fuel development, including hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking.

The lawsuit filed in Las Vegas by the Center for Biological Diversity and the Sierra Club argues the BLM failed to consider the potential consequences of oil drilling in the area, from contamination of critical desert water sources to emission of climate-altering greenhouse gases.

Read the whole story

Why the West is burning this season

By Wes Siler, Outdoor

Hurricanes, earthquakes, and nuclear war, oh my. And don't forget to add a near-record wildfire season to that list of disasters. According to the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, there are 137 large wildfires currently raging across the American West, burning a total of 7.8 million acres.

That’s not yet as bad as 2015, which saw 8.4 million acres burned, but it’s only September and this is already the third worst year for wildfires in the last decade. It’s already way ahead of the previous 10-year annual average of 5.4 million acres burned.

You’ve seen the apocalyptic images from the Columbia River Gorge, Glacier National Park, and the Los Angeles Suburbs, but those fires are only a small part of the overall picture. Currently there are 13 active wildfires in Washington, 26 in Oregon, 23 in Idaho, 46 in Montana, and 38 in California.

Read the whole story