Seismologists hope to create Calif. earthquake forecasts

By Rong-Gong Lin II and Raoul Rañoa, Los Angeles Times

One day, next to the traffic map and weather forecast on your smartphone, seismologist Thomas H. Jordan envisions an app that you can check to see when the chances of a major earthquake in California rise.

Jordan, director of the Southern California Earthquake Center, is quick to make clear this is not an earthquake prediction. Predicting exactly when and where a catastrophic earthquake will strike next is impossible, scientists say.

But what scientists can do is pay close attention when moderate quakes strike in perilously sensitive spots – places right next to major faults such as the San Andreas.

Read the whole story

Esports conference fails to attract big casino operators

By Todd Prince, Las Vegas Review-Journal

If Strip casino operators are interested in attracting esports to their establishments, they didn't show it at the first Casino Esport Conference.

The conference in Las Vegas last week, aimed to bring people from the casino and esports industry into one room to explore

how casinos could integrate and monetize esport tournaments.

The two-day closed event featured eight panels to discussion such key issues as regulation, marketing and tournaments. Panelists included game makers, consultants, academics, gaming control board officials and lawyers. Missing from the panels and audience, which numbered about 175, was a big presence from Strip operators.

Read the whole story

Nevada motorists: License plates aren’t optional

By Art Marroquin, Las Vegas Review-Journal

License plates aren’t an optional decoration. They’re a requirement so that your vehicle legally can hit the road in Nevada and every other state.

Apparently, some motorists don’t realize that as several of you have sent emails or placed a call to the Road Warrior to complain about cars driving around town without their front or rear license plates.

There were even a couple of questions about the legality of plates that are obscured by plastic “protective” coverings.

Read the whole story

Heller sees changes to mortgage interest deduction in Trump's tax plan

By Ray Hagar, Nevada Newsmakers

Tax reform is anticipated to be the next big issue before Congress, and Sen. Dean Heller, R-Nev., should have a front row seat since he sits on the Senate Finance Committee and Senate Banking Committee.

The cherished mortgage-interest tax deduction will survive but with changes, Heller said on "Nevada Newsmakers" on Thursday.

"I'm hearing rumbling about it, but I don't think they are talking about the average family's deduction for mortgage interest," Heller said. "I think they are talking about, perhaps, they may cap it (mortgage-interest deduction) at $500,000, and they may cap it on second and third homes."

Read the whole story

Average gas price jumps after Harvey shuts refineries

By Associated Press

The average price of gasoline jumped in the past two weeks after Hurricane Harvey prompted the closure of refineries.

Industry analyst Trilby Lundberg said Sunday that it was the

biggest price hike recorded by the Lundberg Survey since 2011.

Read the whole story

Trial date set in case against Squaw Valley

By Kathryn Reed

A jury next year could decide if Placer County violated the state open meeting law and if there was a secret agreement with Squaw Valley Ski Holdings that involved the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

A Placer County judge last week ruled that there is enough evidence for the case to go forward. The trial is slated to start in March.

Sierra Watch filed the **lawsuit earlier this year** after the Board of Supervisors in November 2016 approved a large-scale development project that would transform the base area of the ski resort.

The lawsuit alleges county staff gave documents to the Board of Supervisors less than 72 hours before the public meeting that weren't simultaneously made available to the public. This would be a violation of the Brown Act.

The other allegation is that the county failed to give notice in the agenda for its November hearing that the Board of Supervisors would be considering the deal, detailed in those very same documents, to avoid litigation by the attorney general over impacts to Lake Tahoe as part of the proposed project's development agreement. This, too, would violate the

Brown Act.

If Sierra Watch prevails, Placer County could be required to rescind the November approvals and conduct a new public hearing on the proposed development.

(Squaw's parent company, Denver-based KSL Capital Partners, plans to spend $1 billion over 25 years to build more than 1,000 residential units, hotels, retail, restaurants and bars, and an indoor adventure center.)

"Sierra Watch continues to mislead the courts, the public and spread untruths about the Village at Squaw Valley redevelopment project and the public process that led to its approval," Whit Manley, environmental attorney at Remy Moose Manley who is representing Squaw Valley Ski Holdings, said in a statement. "When this case goes to trial, Sierra Watch will be required to produce facts that would prove there was some sort of 'secret agreement' Placer County was a party to when it publicly noticed the Board of Supervisors' hearing agenda. To that we say: 'bring it on.' We're confident Sierra Watch's deliberate and calculated misstatement of facts will ultimately be exposed through the trial process."

Squaw Valley's contention is that the $440,000 it gave to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency was to protect Lake Tahoe's water quality; and that it did so voluntarily.

"It's sad to see a self-described environmental group use legal maneuvers to delay and ultimately try to take away close to $500,000 of voluntary funding that would be used to protect Lake Tahoe's pristine, clear waters," Manley said.

To that statement, Tom Mooers with Sierra Watch said if Squaw's intentions were so altruistic, write another check today.

"The issue of Tahoe's clarity deserves more than a backroom deal," Mooers said in a statement. "It deserves a fair

hearing. Placer County's approvals threaten everything we love about Tahoe. And they were in clear violation of state law."

Sierra Watch had filed a separate lawsuit seeking to overturn Placer County's approvals based on violations of the California Environmental Quality Act.

Work on Hwy. 89 on North Shore to cause delays

A section of Highway 89 from Squaw Valley to Truckee will be getting a new surface with grinding and paving work beginning Sunday night.

Motorists can expect delays of up to 20 minutes when the work starts tonight and goes around the clock until noon Friday. All the work is expected to be complete by the end of the construction season next month.

For real-time traffic, click on Caltrans' **QuickMap**.

Calif. homeless crisis expands to rural areas

By Kevin Fagan and Alison Graham, San Francisco Chronicle

California housing costs are spiraling so high that they are pushing the state's homelessness crisis into places it's never

been before – sparsely populated rural counties.

A *Chronicle* analysis of biennial homeless counts taken early this year across California shows the sharpest increases occurred not in San Francisco and other urban centers but in out-of-the-way places such as the thickly forested Sierra Nevada and the dusty flatlands and low hills of the northern Sacramento Valley.

Statewide, the *Chronicle*'s examination shows, homelessness rose by 15 percent from 2015 to this year. In heavily populated centers such as Los Angeles and the Bay Area, where tent cities have long been part of the landscape, even double-digit increases like that might not suggest that something has fundamentally changed. But in rural areas, the increases have come as a shock.

There is no year-round shelter in El Dorado County , and camps are multiplying on the edges of the county seat of Placerville.

Read the whole story

Nevada opposes being nuclear waste dump site

By Yvonne Gonzalez, Las Vegas Sun

Representatives in Congress are expected to take up a nuclear waste policy bill this fall that deals with issues tied to the Yucca Mountain project.

House Energy and Commerce Committee staffer Andy Zach was in Las Vegas on Thursday to present the congressional outlook on

nuclear waste policy and Yucca Mountain. Zach said resuming the licensing process for construction authorization for a Yucca Mountain repository is the most immediate priority.

The bill passed out of committee on a 49-4 vote.

Despite Nevada's official opposition, which is contrary to a group of rural counties that want the science heard through licensing, the bill has bipartisan support. More than 60 co-sponsors on the bill include Republicans and Democrats alike.

Read the whole story

Expect delays in Cave Rock starting Monday

For one week Highway 50 near Cave Rock will be reduced to one lane starting Sept. 11.

The Nevada Department of Transportation will be removing the wire mesh placed over the Cave Rock rockface.

"The wire mesh was placed over the rockface approximately three years ago as a temporary measure to help capture rockfall before reaching the roadway. The wire mesh was planned as a temporary, interim safety measure. With the tunnel extension constructed last year to reduce rockfall onto westbound travel lanes, the wire mesh is no longer needed and is being removed," Meg Ragonese with NDOT told *Lake Tahoe News.*

Traffic will be reduced to one lane in each direction around the clock through the end of the week.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report