A candid discussion with Nevada's governor

By Steve Sebelius, Nevada Public Radio

Gov. Brian Sandoval is a fan of history. And why not? He's made a fair bit of it himself.

He was Nevada's first Hispanic statewide elected official when he won the race for attorney general in 2002. He was the first Hispanic governor when he was elected in 2010. And he was the first person in state history to defeat an incumbent of his own party in a primary when he ousted then-Gov. Jim Gibbons.

He was also the first Republican governor to decide – after the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act – to expand Medicaid in Nevada and establish a state-based health insurance exchange. His support of the program was a factor as national Republicans debated an ultimately unsuccessful effort to dismantle it. And he was the governor who oversaw the implementation of the first tax on business revenue in state history in the unlikely crucible of a Republican-dominated state Legislature in 2015.

Read the whole story

Overloaded power system fails on South Shore

Electricity is out on both sides of the state line on the South Shore.

A loud boom was heard and then reports of outages at Heavenly Village.

Liberty Utilities spokeswoman Kathy Carter said the problem is "due high loads causing equipment failure."

It may be nightfall before everything is back up and running.

She did not have an exact number of customers who were affected. NV Energy is reporting 413 customers in Douglas County are without power.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Father-daughter found safe at Pyramid Lake

By Kenzie Bales, KRNV-TV

A father and daughter have been found safe after they were reported missing on Sunday afternoon, according to Don Pelt, a spokesperson with the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe.

Pelt says the 40-year-old father and his 11-year-old daughter were reported missing shortly after 5pm on Sept. 3 when they did not return back to their family on shore after a Jet Ski ride.

Read the whole story

Wildfire outlook: Nev. risk high through Sept.

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

The western wildland fire season is reaching its peak and will head into decline by the end of the month, except in western Nevada around Reno and Carson City.

That’s according to the National Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook issued Friday by the National Interagency Fire Center.

The seasonal outlook forecasts the nation’s fire risk by region.

“Fire season will peak by mid-September as the fuels remain much drier than average and as existing precipitation trends continue,” the overall forecast stated. “By mid-September decreasing solar radiation received and longer nights will allow for fuel moistures to begin recovering.”

Read the whole story

Nev. PUC OKs rooftop solar policies

By Ben Botkin, Las Vegas Review-Journal

The Nevada Public Utilities Commission approved an order Friday that establishes net metering policies aimed at helping the rooftop solar industry grow.

The order, which is effective immediately, requires NV Energy to charge the same fees to customers regardless of whether they use solar. Solar users also get compensation for excess solar energy that they don't use through a credit on their bills.

The order follows the Legislature's passage this session of Assembly Bill 405, which was aimed at making rooftop solar financially viable. Solar energy advocates praised the commission's move.

Read the whole story

Calif. urges teachers to scrap 4th-grade mission project

By Diana Lambert, Sacramento Bee

Put away the Popsicle sticks, glue and sugar cubes. The fourth-grade mission project, a rite of passage for elementary students for decades, may be on its way out.

California's new history and social science framework, passed by the state Board of Education last year, recommends against the longtime tradition of building miniature replicas of the state's Spanish colonial missions, calling it insensitive. Thousands of Native Americans died from introduced diseases and were forced to labor at the missions, it notes.

Instead, it recommends that educators spend time teaching students about the impacts of the missions on the state's people and its natural environment.

Read the whole story

Why housing costs are so high in Calif.

By Ben Christopher and Matt Levin, CalMatters

Half the state's households struggle to afford the roof over their heads.

Homeownership—once a staple of the California dream—is at its lowest rate since World War II. Nearly 70 percent of poor Californians see the majority of their paychecks go immediately to escalating rents.

State lawmakers are debating a long-delayed housing package.

Just how hard is it to buy a home in California? Hard. Really hard. Both compared to how hard it is in other states, and how hard it was for previous generations of Californians to buy homes.

Read the whole story

Slinkard Fire on Hwy. 395 at 35% containment

The Slinkard Fire burning near Topaz has consumed 9,051 acres and is 35 percent contained.

Firefighters are hoping to have it fully contained in another week.

The blaze started early last week from a lightning strike.

Highway 395 is open, but is subject to closure depending on the fire's behavior.

No structures have burned.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

'Netflix tax' already a thing in some states

By Mike Snider, USA Today

Netflix – and tax?

Your monthly bill for Netflix, Amazon, Hulu and other streaming entertainment services could go up soon as states such as Illinois try to find ways to offset declining sales taxes and other revenue shortfalls. Chicago, Pennsylvania and Florida have already passed a so-called Netflix tax, and cities such as Pasadena have broached the issue.

These taxes can translate to additional fees of less than $1 each month to consumers. But over the months – and tacked onto multiple streaming subscriptions – they might add up to $50 or more each year.

Netflix, consumer tax groups and tech trade organizations have voiced their opposition to such taxes, warning they can be unfair and deter innovation. Some opponents have initiated

legal challenges, and at least one state has shelved plans after a court decision. But state and local governments aren’t likely to halt fresh efforts as falling pay-TV subscriptions and video rentals mean there’s less opportunity to tax cable bills or charge sales tax at the cash register.

Read the whole story

Slinkard Fire 20% contained, Hwy. 395 open

By KOLO-TV

Sierra Front says the Slinkard Fire is now estimated to be 7,881 acres, or 12.3 square miles, with 20 percent containment as of Saturday morning. The fire has burned into Nevada, to Highway 395, and crossed Highway 89 to the north.

Sierra Front Interagency Dispatch Center reports that Highway 395 is open, but warns it could close again.

Read the whole story