NV Energy: ‘Don’t worry about the solar’ during eclipse

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Go ahead, flip on that light switch Monday in the middle of the first total solar eclipse to come close to Nevada in 38 years.

Walk outside and check out the rare phenomenon of darkness during the day if you like.

The grid will be just fine. Even with 72 percent of the sun blocked in Southern Nevada for a brief period of time. And even with a dependence on solar energy that didn’t exist in 1979 during the last total eclipse in the contiguous United States.

At NV Energy, a lot of preparation has gone into analyzing the effects of the eclipse, which is expected to first make its presence felt on the grid at a few minutes past 9am, peak at about 10:20amand be gone by noon.

Read the whole story

Politicians blocking people on social media sparks debate

By Brady McCombs, Associated Press

An emerging debate about whether elected officials violate people’s free speech rights by blocking them on social media

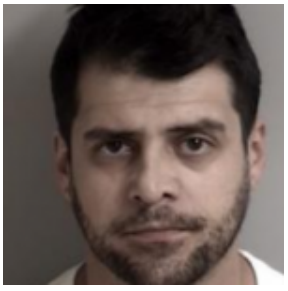
is spreading across the U.S. as groups sue or warn politicians to stop the practice.

The American Civil Liberties Union this week sued Maine Gov. Paul LePage and sent warning letters to Utah's congressional delegation. It followed recent lawsuits against the governors of Maryland and Kentucky and President Trump.

Trump's frequent and often unorthodox use of Twitter and allegations he blocks people with dissenting views has raised questions about what elected officials can and cannot do on their official social media pages.

Read the whole story

Prison sentence in felony hit-and-run DUI



Larry Guzman-Martinez

A South Lake Tahoe man was sentenced this week to spend more than four years in prison for injuring a bicyclist while driving intoxicated and then fleeing the scene.

Larry Guzman-Martinez, 33, pleaded no contest to the charges. He was sentenced Aug. 14 to four years, eight months in state

prison. His driver's license has been revoked and vehicle impounded.

On March 18 Guzman-Martinez struck a bicyclist after failing to stop at the intersection of Pioneer Trail and Midway Avenue. The cyclist was not seriously injured. Guzman-Martinez's blood alcohol was 0.24.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Billions in new spending for housing, water, parks and more could be on 2018 California ballot

By Liam Dillon, Los Angeles Times

Californians could vote on billions of dollars in new spending for low-income housing developments and water and parks improvements next year.

Gov. Jerry Brown and lawmakers are considering five proposals that would finance new homes for low-income residents, build parks in neighborhoods without them and restore rivers, streams and creeks among dozens of other projects. The Legislature is likely to decide how much money would be borrowed and where it would be spent before it adjourns for the year in mid-September – a debate that legislative leaders say is pressing.

Voters have long backed bond financing, which allows the state immediately to spend more money than is otherwise available

and pay back the debt with interest over time. Over the last four decades, California voters have approved $164 billion in bond spending while only rejecting $18 billion, according to the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office.

Read the whole story

TKPOA-Lahontan working on herbicide permit

Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association is progressing with its plans to test herbicides next summer to rid the lagoons of invasive weeds.

The application to the Lahontan Water Quality Control Board was just resubmitted. That agency will have ultimate say over whether this will be allowed.

"It was resubmitted just to reorganize materials to address Lahontan staff questions; no substantive changes to the proposal itself," Greyson Howard, spokesman for TKPOA, told *Lake Tahoe News.*

Curly leaf pondweed and Eurasian watermilfoil have taken over more than 90 percent of the 172-acre Tahoe Keys lagoon system. They have spread to other parts of the lake as well. This is usually done by boats.

The Keys wants to test nearly 14 acres with the chemical.

There is no date set when the Lahontan board will take up the matter. If Lahontan allows this, it will be the first time an herbicide has been permitted in the lake.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board is expected to hear an update on all of this on Aug. 23.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

6-year West Shore highway project finished

The 8-mile Highway 89 project along the West Shore that started in 2012 is finally done.

It started with Southwest Gas relocating gas lines that were in conflict with the new drainage systems to be built. That work was completed in 2014. Caltrans began drainage work in 2013 and started roadwork in 2014.

In addition to the drainage systems to filter storm water runoff, curbs and gutters were constructed, shoulder widths were increased, left-turn lanes were added and the highway was repaved and restriped.

The project cost Caltrans $62.2 million.

Study: Forests taking longer to recover from drought

By Emily Guerin, KPCC

Gov. Jerry Brown may have declared the drought emergency over

in April, but don’t tell that to California’s plants and trees. According to a study, not only do the effects of drought on the environment linger after it starts raining, but this “drought recovery” period is lasting longer than ever before, likely because of climate change.

Scientists with Woods Hole Research Center, University of Utah and other institutions found that trees often don’t return to their pre-drought growth rates – even after rain and snow return.

“Just because the rains come back doesn’t mean the ecosystem is functioning,” said lead author Christopher Schwalm with the Woods Hole Research Center in Massachusetts. His study was published in Nature on Aug. 10.

Read the whole story

Vehicle fire in brush closes Kingsbury Grade



A vehicle fire in the brush on Kingsbury Grade on Aug. 19 has the road closed. Photo/Cheva Gabor

Kingsbury Grade is closed in both directions because of a fire.

Multiple fire agencies are on the scene, including a large water tender that arrived just before 10:30am Aug. 19.

It is vehicle fire – most likely a truck – on the valley side of the Grade. The vehicle is not on the pavement; it is in the brush, which is the main reason so many resources are on the scene, including a hand crew.

The fire is about 2 miles east of the summit on the north side of the road just past the old Pony Express trail. Nevada Highway Patrol has no idea when the road will reopen.

According to the U.S. Forest Service, the wildland fire was kept to one-quarter acre.

Crews are assessing whether any diesel has leaked into the soil or if it’s spreading.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Violent crime in El Dorado County up 15%

By Jim Miller, Sacramento Bee

For the second year in a row, California saw an increase in violent crimes, according to new state figures, which also include the first detailed look at peace officers' use of force.

The Department of Justice's inaugural use of force report, required by recent state legislation, covers incidents that caused serious bodily injury or death. There were 782 such incidents in 2016, including 328 that involved the discharge of a firearm, according to the agency.

Most Sacramento-area counties had overall decreases in violent crime in 2016. Violent crime reported by 17 agencies in Sacramento County declined by 6.4 percent. Placer County had a 7.9 percent drop and Yolo County violent crime declined by 20.5 percent. El Dorado County had a 15.1 percent increase.

Read the whole story

West Nile virus found in Nevada horses

Three horses in Northern Nevada have tested positive for West Nile virus in the last two weeks. Not one was vaccinated.

Two horses were in Lyon County – one in Yerington and one in Dayton – and one horse was in Washoe County.

Nevada Department of Agriculture veterinarians say the best protection horse owners have is to vaccinate animals.

West Nile virus has been prevalent in Nevada since 2004. Residents can take precautions by eliminating mosquito-breeding sites around houses and barns, using insect repellents to fight the bite and keeping horses vaccinated.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report