Citizens for Fair Representation's case moves forward

On Aug. 25 U.S. District Judge Kimberly Mueller is expected to reconsider her own request for the chief magistrate to appoint a three-judge panel to hear Citizens for Fair Representation v. Secretary of State Alex Padilla.

Mueller had made this request earlier this month. Hours later the state's attorney filed a motion to reconsider that order.

Citizens for Fair Representation, which is made up of people behind the State of Jefferson movement that supports succession, filed the lawsuit against the state for lack of representation.

Mark Baird, one of the CFR spokespeople, said, "The case will ask important questions: Can one state senator properly represent 1 million people? Can one state assemblyman properly represent one-half million people?"

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Tesla wants to test self-driving semi-truck in Nev.

By Marc Vartabedian, Reuters

Tesla Inc. is developing a long-haul, electric semi-truck that can drive itself and move in "platoons" that automatically

follow a lead vehicle, and is getting closer to testing a prototype, according to an email discussion of potential road tests between the car company and the Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles, seen by Reuters.

Meanwhile, California officials are meeting with Tesla “to talk about Tesla’s efforts with autonomous trucks,” state DMV spokeswoman Jessica Gonzalez told Reuters.

The correspondence and meeting show that Tesla is putting self-driving technology into the electric truck it has said it plans to unveil in September, and is advancing toward real-life tests, potentially moving it forward in a highly competitive area of commercial transport also being pursued by Uber Technologies Inc. and Alphabet Inc’s Waymo.

Read the whole story

With bankruptcy nearly over, Caesars exec talks up growth

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Now that Caesars Entertainment Corp. is well on its way toward emerging from bankruptcy, company officials have affirmed significant growth plans are in the works.

Speaking Wednesday to members of the state Gaming Control Board in Carson City, President and CEO Mark Frissora said the new Caesars not only would be growing in Las Vegas, but at Lake Tahoe and Laughlin as well.

Caesars is the parent company of Harrah’s Lake Tahoe and

Harveys at Stateline.

The board voted unanimously to recommend approval of the registration of subsidiary companies and LLCs and the licensing and suitability of several corporate officers, executives and key employees.

Read the whole story

Graffiti a growing problem at Donner Summit

The natural granite beauty at Donner Summit is being marred by graffiti.

It used to be that vandals limited their damage to inside the train tunnels. Not so many more.

Local residents are working with the U.S. Forest Service to clean up the mess.

Preventing the problem from reoccurring will be the harder endeavor.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Workforce housing a priority

for Placer County

Placer County Board of Supervisors this week approved a comprehensive plan to address the growing lack of affordable and workforce housing.

In North Lake Tahoe as much as 65 percent of the housing stock is vacation homes, often occupied only seasonally. Since much of its local workforce is employed in the service industry, providing workforce housing is a requirement for new housing development in the region.

The one-year work plan includes actions to increase the supply of affordable housing in the near- and long-terms and further reduce the regulatory barriers to build housing.

Staff will inventory all recent or planned housing developments in the county to assess where each stands on meeting its affordable or workforce housing obligations.

The plan includes: creating more incentives to build affordable and workforce housing, changing regulations to make building easier, advocating for state and federal assistance and furthering partnerships for meeting regional housing needs, and creating a funding strategy to build more affordable housing.

Options include dedicating transient occupancy tax revenue to fund workforce housing, or possibly developing an in-lieu fee program as an alternative way for developers to satisfy their affordable housing obligations.

Several board members expressed reluctance to pursue a fee program right away, favoring regulatory changes and incentives as better first steps.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Nev. approves opening pot distribution rights

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – The Nevada Department of Taxation decided Thursday that there are an inadequate number of liquor distributors interested in transporting marijuana to Nevada's retail establishments, opening up the business to others.

The decision came after a telephone conference hearing bringing the industry, agency officials and the public up to date on whether the alcohol industry alone is sufficient to distribute pot to points of sale around the state.

Read the whole story

STPUD getting better grasp on all well use

By Kathryn Reed

Red dots fill a map; with most being located in Christmas Valley and near the state line. They represent the more than 600 private wells within South Tahoe Public Utility District's boundaries.

Most are at residences, while others are at campgrounds, a school, trailer parks and other commercial entities.

Per state requirements South Tahoe PUD is trying to get a firm understanding on how many are operational, exact locations and if people have any issues.

Ivo Bergsohn, a hydrogeologist with the district, is tasked with overseeing all of this. A survey with 19 questions is being sent out to the well owners this month to gather some basic data, see if they have questions, and let them know the district can help where appropriate.

“The information we gather will be used to help guide the groundwater management plan,” Bergsohn told *Lake Tahoe News.*



Ivo Bergsohn with STPUD is overseeing the groundwater program. Photo/Kathryn Reed

During the drought California thought it would be a good idea to start regulating groundwater. It was one of the last states to do so. With laws that were **passed in 2014**, different jurisdictions had to create groundwater management plans. STPUD is in charge of that mandate for much of the basin on

the South Shore, though El Dorado County has oversight in some areas.

Groundwater management pertains to the water level, storage, quality, land capability, and ensuring there are no adverse effects to surface water from pumping.

In 2016, per state mandate the district performed a stress test to determine how much water it had. At that time – which was before last year's record snowfall and at the height of the drought – there was enough water in the aquifer for 31 years.

This figure is based on the demand from 2013, 2014 and 2015 which averaged 6,173 acre-feet per year.

The district is not looking for new customers or even to tell people how to use their well or regulate the use in any way.

What employees can do is provide tips about maintenance, share how to properly disinfect a well and other related information.

"If we have a properly managed well, there is potentially one less conduit of contaminate into the aquifer," Bergsohn said.

People keep their wells for various reasons – for historical purposes, not wanting to pay a water bill, not wanting anything added to their water, and staying off the grid, so to speak.

STPUD was well ahead of the state in monitoring groundwater issues. It has been doing so since about 2000, three years after the gasoline additive MTBE (methyl tertiary butyl ether) was found in wells. The district won a multi-million-dollar lawsuit against several gas companies as a result of that contamination.

Contamination, though, remains the No. 1 threat to the district's water supply, according to Bergsohn. PCE

(tetrachloroethylene) is an issue today with wells in the Tahoe Keys and Lukins Brothers water districts being contaminated. STPUD is providing those two entities with water.

Arsenic is a naturally occurring contaminate, for which public districts regularly test.

SLT bird tests positive for West Nile virus

A bird in South Lake Tahoe has tested positive for West Nile virus.

The Stellar's jay was found on July 31.

West Nile virus activity has been reported in 28 California counties, including Placer County.

Last year, four West Nile virus positive birds were identified in El Dorado County on the western slope. One human case was reported.

West Nile virus can be transmitted to people through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes get the virus when they feed on infected birds. The illness is not spread from person-to-person. While most people infected with the virus show no symptoms, some may have high fever, severe headache, tiredness and/or a stiff neck that can last several days to several weeks. The most serious cases of West Nile virus infection can lead to encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain, which can be fatal.

Underwater robot measures Lake Tahoe climate change

By Vicki Gonzalez, KCRA-TV

UC Davis is using an underwater robot with the hopes of understanding how climate change is affecting Lake Tahoe.

Tahoe Environmental Research Center deployed the autonomous underwater vehicle earlier this month.

More commonly known as a glider, the autonomous vehicle will coast 150 meters under Lake Tahoe’s surface, going back-and-forth taking measurements.

The robot will continuously measure the lake’s temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll, among other data, broadcasting the information back to researchers.

Read the whole story

Incline burglary suspects being sought



These two people are wanted by WCSO. Photo/Provided

Washoe County sheriff's detectives are trying to identify two people suspected of burglarizing a home in Incline Village on April 27.

Sometime following the burglary the suspects attempted to use credit cards belonging to the victim at businesses in Crystal Bay and Reno.

One suspect is described as an adult male, approximately 6-feet tall, 190-210 pounds, with short, buzzed dark hair and a goatee. The other is an adult female, approximately 5-feet-6-inches, 180-200 pounds. with dark hair reaching to mid-back.

They drove a light-colored 1998 Dodge Durango with California license plate number 5EZC444. The current owner of the vehicle is not registered with the California Department of Motor Vehicles.

Anyone with information is asked to call 775.328.3320 or Secret Witness at 775.322.4900. Secret Witness has offered a $500 reward for information leading to the identification and arrest of the suspects.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report