

# Domestic abuse higher in Nev. than national average

By Camalot Todd, Las Vegas Sun

Every 9 seconds a woman in America is beaten or assaulted.

Nevada consistently ranks high in deaths related to domestic violence. In 2016, there were at least 24, according to the Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence. The year before, 43 victims lost their lives.

Those numbers are alarming even without contrast. Roughly 44 percent of women and 33 percent of men living in the state experienced some form of violence at the hands of an intimate partner, according to the most recent National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey. The national rate for women is about 1 in 4, and for men it's 1 out of every 9.

**Read the whole story**

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## Woman injured rock climbing on South Shore

By Sacramento Bee

What started as a fun Memorial Day weekend rock-climbing outing in the Sierra took a scary turn for a couple and their dog on Sunday that ended in a helicopter rescue.

As the trio began climbing the base of Luther Rock just south of Lake Tahoe, the man, identified only as John, gave the dog

a boost onto a ledge, but it began sliding toward the edge, the California Highway Patrol reported in a news release. The woman, Michelle Powell, 27, tried to push the dog back, in the process losing balance and falling backward.

**[Read the whole story](#)**

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## Cloud seeding may increase near Lake Tahoe



Cloud seeding would ideally increase water flowing over Slab Creek Dam. Photo/SMUD

**By Joann Eisenbrandt**

Cloud seeding over the upper portion of the American River watershed from Fresh Pond to Twin Bridges in El Dorado County may be expanding next winter.

Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) is having a public meeting in Strawberry on June 1 to discuss its plans to increase the cloud seeding area of its Upper American River Project (UARP) from 190 square miles to approximately 400 square miles for the 2017-18 wet season. The expanded cloud seeding area would include small portions of Placer, Amador and Alpine counties, but the majority would take place in El Dorado County over mainly U.S. Forest Service land.

Not everyone supports cloud seeding. Questions have been posed regarding the safety of the silver iodide used in the process, its effects on plant life and especially on fish and aquatic wildlife in affected areas. Others dispute whether cloud seeding really enhances snowfall at all. Some believe it takes away needed snow or rainfall from areas downwind of the seeded area.

### **Not a new idea**

SMUD began cloud seeding in El Dorado County in 1968. The goal of the Upper American River Project is to augment snowfall and subsequent snow melt. The increased spring flows of water into its system of storage reservoirs and hydroelectric power plants would meet the electric power needs of the Sacramento area's growing population. SMUD estimates its cloud seeding efforts have increased snowfall in this targeted area by an average of 3 to 10 percent.

Last winter, SMUD actually ceased its cloud seeding operations mid-winter due to the record snowfall produced by Mother Nature. But as the recent drought years have shown, that's not always the case. SMUD believes cloud seeding is of value in wet and dry years.

The project does not require state or local permits or approvals, but it does require the preparation of an environmental document under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to analyze any potential environmental impacts. This document, a mitigated negative declaration, has been prepared. The 30-day public review period ends on June 16. During this time, comments from public agencies and individuals are gathered and then included into the final document which is then voted on by the SMUD board of directors. Thursday's meeting in Strawberry is part of this process of gathering public input.



Recreation opportunities are offered at SMUD reservoirs like Loon Lake. Photo/SMUD

### **How cloud seeding works**

Cloud seeding goes back to the 1940s after a discovery by the

General Electric laboratories in Schenectady, N.Y., about how snowflakes form. As Dudley McFadden, principal civil engineer at SMUD, explains, "When a cold winter storm is actively producing snow which is falling to the ground, some of the moisture in the cloud remains in liquid form, even way up in the sky where it is below freezing. So, instead of turning into snowflakes and dropping to the ground, the moisture stays in the cloud ... ice crystals require a tiny solid particle to attach to in order to start forming a snowflake. Every snowflake you would find on the ground has microscopic particles which formed a base for the water to freeze into the snowflake."

Once all the natural microscopic particles in the cloud have been used up, there is still enough moisture in the cloud to form more snowflakes. That's where silver iodide comes in. Microscopic particles of silver iodide inserted into the clouds give the remaining sub-freezing moisture in the cloud something to adhere to and create additional snowflakes.

### **The Upper American River Project**

Why is SMUD generating power for Sacramento residents through a project situated mainly in El Dorado County? "The hydropower project is partly on federal land, owned by all Americans and not by residents of a particular city or county," McFadden told *Lake Tahoe News*. The economy of El Dorado County is interconnected with Sacramento, and the rest of California and Northern Nevada. We are all interdependent and work together on our American River watershed to provide food, housing, and quality of life for everyone living here."

SMUD has an entire system of reservoirs and hydroelectric plants in El Dorado County's Upper American River watershed. It received permission in 1957 from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to build this system with a 50-year license. A second 50-year license was granted in 2014. The expanded cloud seeding project will focus on the

watersheds of Ice House, Union Valley and Loon Lake reservoirs, the South Fork American River watershed that drains to Slab Creek Reservoir and their associated hydropower facilities. The cloud seeding “season” runs from November 15, 2017, through April 15, 2018.

When SMUD began establishing this power generation system, most of El Dorado County was open land. As McFadden explains, “SMUD and the capital city wanted to grow and recognized the water resources available in the mountains. It had the money and the ambition. It is federal land, national forest land.”

Basically, they got there first.

The hydropower generated by the UARP (Upper American River Project) provides from 15 to 20 percent of the energy supplied by SMUD to its customers. It generates clean power and helps them avoid using “peaker plants” during high usage peak summer periods in the middle of the day. These are power-generation plants that stand ready to be used as needed, but are operated by natural gas which is as McFadden terms it, “the negative side of the emissions spectrum.”

Public benefits are mandated under SMUD’s FERC license. Their system provides boating and other recreation opportunities on Sierra Nevada lakes as well as whitewater rafting in Coloma. As part of the current license, SMUD will set aside 30,000 acre-feet of water and hold it in storage in their Union Valley Reservoir to be released for customers in El Dorado Irrigation District’s service area during drought conditions.

Here is a map of the project area.

### **The mechanics of cloud seeding**

Silver iodide is dissolved in a flammable solution or combined with other flammable solids to produce “seeding flares” which are then burned. They release microscopic silver iodide aerosol streams into the atmosphere. These “silver iodide ice

nuclei” then fuse at below-freezing temperatures with the moisture in the clouds. SMUD dispenses these silver iodide nuclei either with remotely controlled or mobile ground-based units, or from aircraft. SMUD usually does cloud seeding for about 10 storms in an average winter. Storms to seed are selected based on wind direction, wind speed and cloud characteristics, including how much precipitation they are predicted to produce. There are controls built in to avoid cloud seeding during major storm events or when there are avalanche warnings. Cloud seeding already in progress can be stopped quickly if needed.

### **Does it work?**

SMUD estimates that cloud seeding will increase snowfall by an average of 3 to 10 percent. Opponents of cloud seeding dispute that. McFadden admits, “We can’t directly prove it.” There is no way to say how much snowfall seeded clouds would have produced on their own. McFadden added that SMUD believes numerous tests in the field and in lab settings across the country prove that it does.

Critics point to the dangers of messing with Mother Nature’s balance in the atmosphere between evaporation and precipitation. Cloud seeding in one area, they say, may lead to a decrease in rainfall or snowfall in areas downwind of the seeded area. This would increase the chance of drought conditions and high fire danger in such areas. SMUD disagrees, stating, “Although cloud seeding increases the amount of precipitation in the target area, it has not been found to reduce naturally occurring precipitation in downwind area. Clouds continually regenerate and release only a portion of their moisture in rainfall or snowfall.”

### **Is it safe?**

SMUD believes cloud seeding is safe. McFadden explained that silver iodide is insoluble in water and is not bio-reactive if

ingested by aquatic wildlife or by humans. He compared it to a microscopic grain of sand which just passes through an organism but does not react with it or form any other potentially harmful compounds. There are a number of endangered or protected species in the cloud seeding target area. There is no danger to fish or wildlife, SMUD's environmental document concludes, because silver iodide's small accumulations in soil or vegetation would not be above natural background levels.

Not everyone agrees. Concerns expressed by Texas rancher, Johnny Micou, in an article for ranches.org back in 2003, is representative of the concerns heard from many over silver iodide's safety both then and now. "To effectively monitor the levels of silver toxicity, at the very minimum, water samples should be taken on a monthly basis from every dam, creek ... and other water capture places in the respective district while cloud seeding is being conducted. Also, soil samples should be taken. If private land or public health is compromised, then the program should be held liable ... the question is not that is cloud seeding harmful, but how harmful."

Excessive exposure to chemical compounds of silver by humans can produce a condition called argyria—a grayish-blue discoloration of the skin. Whether or not the amount of silver iodide dispersed during cumulative seasons of cloud seeding can produce such levels or is toxic to humans and wildlife, remains in dispute. An April 11, 2016, article by Christian Cristiano in Los Angeles City Watch, expresses the general unease of cloud seeding opponents. "In spite of claims that the long-term effects of this procedure are said to be harmless," he says, "it still feels like we are something of test subjects in the area of cloud seeding."

The SMUD board of directors will consider approval of the environmental document for expanded Upper American River Project at its Sept. 21, 2017, meeting in Sacramento. More information on the June 1 meeting in Strawberry, on the

overall project or on how to submit comments is available from SMUD by contacting Jerry Park at 916.732.7406 or [jerry.park@smud.org](mailto:jerry.park@smud.org).

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# Hidden horror of school sex assaults

**By Robin McDowell, Reese Dunklin, Emily Schmall and Justin Pritchard, AP**

BRUNSWICK, Maine — Chaz Wing was 12 when they came after him. The classmates who tormented him were children, too, entering the age of pimples and cracking voices.

Eventually, he swore under oath, the boys raped him and left him bleeding, the culmination of a year of harassment. Though Chaz repeatedly told teachers and administrators about insults and physical attacks, he didn't report being sexually assaulted until a year later, launching a long legal fight over whether his school had done enough to protect him.

Chaz's saga is more than a tale of escalating bullying. Across the U.S., thousands of students have been sexually assaulted, by other students, in high schools, junior highs and even elementary schools — a hidden horror educators have long been warned not to ignore.

Relying on state education records, supplemented by federal crime data, a yearlong investigation by the *Associated Press* uncovered roughly 17,000 official reports of sex assaults by students over a four-year period, from fall 2011 to spring 2015.

**Read the whole story**

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# **Nevada bans discredited 'conversion therapy'**

**By Christine Hauser, New York Times**

At least nine states now ban "conversion therapy" for minors, a discredited method meant to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity, after Nevada and Connecticut this month joined others in prohibiting the practice.

Gov. Brian Sandoval of Nevada this month signed Senate Bill 201, making it illegal for any licensed medical or mental health care professional to provide sexual orientation or gender conversion therapy to anyone under 18 years of age, a statement from his office said.

"Conversion therapy has been disavowed by medical experts and is considered a non-effective method of treatment that can cause harm to an adolescent," Sandoval said. "This law will help protect some of our state's most vulnerable youth."

**Read the whole story**

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# **Bridge could have changed**

# Tahoe forever

**By Tony Bizjak, Sacramento Bee**

Lake Tahoe's Emerald Bay is perhaps the most spectacular nook in one of the world's beautiful alpine basins. But it can be an elusive nook. This winter, avalanches closed the highway above the bay for weeks, severing the loop road around the lake.

What if the highway didn't have to make that tight-rope walk across the steep mountainside behind the bay? What if it simply ran straight and low along the lake shore instead, like it does elsewhere in the basin? Of course, that would mean a bridge across the mouth of Emerald Bay.

The idea seems heresy, like putting braces on the Mona Lisa.

It almost happened.

**Read the whole story**

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## Luxury development near Tahoe sold out

**By Ben van der Meer, Sacramento Business Journal**

Eleven years after sales began, a rare single-family home project near Lake Tahoe has completely sold out.

Developers announced this month the last original property sales for Martis Camp, a 671-home project on 2,100 acres south of Truckee and north of the Northstar ski resort.

Read the whole story

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## Woman survives boat prop injury; cyclist hurt

South Tahoe firefighters were busy on Sunday with non-fire calls.

A 22-year-old woman was hit by a boat prop on the South Shore. She was brought to Lighthouse Shores in the Tahoe Keys on the afternoon of May 28. South Lake Tahoe's police boat was first on the scene. South Tahoe fire paramedics arrived and then took her to Barton Memorial Hospital. A 9-year-old visiting South Lake Tahoe was hit by a vehicle at Martin and Fountain avenues. He broke his wrist and is missing a few teeth.— *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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## Caltrans adopts statewide bike-pedestrian plan

By Alexa Renee, KXTV

California is officially moving toward an active transportation system.

Caltrans announced Tuesday the decision to adopt the first statewide bicycle and pedestrian plan, *Toward an Active California*.

The Golden State has seen a double increase in active transportation over the last decade, according to Caltrans.

Now the state is working to further encourage Californians to hop on a bike or put on their walking shoes to get around on a daily basis.

**[Read the whole story](#)**

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## **Vandals keep defacing Tahoe with bad graffiti**

**By Laura Anthony, KGO-TV**

Lake Tahoe residents are fighting back against those who would desecrate the beautiful landscape.

It's a war against graffiti that's increasingly popping up in places known for natural beauty.

A team of volunteers, brushes in hand, have spent many hours scrubbing rocks at Lake Tahoe, natural scenery that's been defaced by vandals.

**[Read the whole story](#)**