

Thermal cameras help SLT firefighters see better

By Colin Lygren, KOL0-TV

Saving lives during a fire: a new technology is helping fire captains see through the smoke and reach victims faster in South Lake Tahoe.

“Basically it provides a heat signature so we are able to see potentially a person, a body, heat from a fire behind a wall, that we normally would not be able to see just by looking at something,” said Capt. Kim George with the South Lake Tahoe Fire Department. “It is really helpful to now have these in our masks.”

The concept of thermal imaging is not new. It’s being used already, but what is different now is how it is being implemented. Attached to the side of the self-contained breathing apparatus is a tiny thermal camera. When firefighters suit up, their eyes align perfectly with a corresponding tiny screen.

[Read the whole story](#)

Slow death of capital punishment

By Rob Mieh, Las Vegas Sun

The recent spate of Arkansas executions, which included two on the same gurney, 3 1/2 hours apart – the first time in almost

17 years that any state has executed two inmates on the same day – has returned the death penalty to the forefront of national consciousness.

Waves of delays and activists' outcries continue as the use of capital punishment has sharply declined throughout the country. Polls indicate a shrinking majority of Americans prefers to preserve the option to extinguish those found guilty of the vilest crimes in civilized society.

In Nevada, the conundrum of capital punishment is rife with subplots, starting with last year's expensive refurbishment of a death chamber whose application is far-fetched, since drugs necessary for lethal injection aren't available.

Read the whole story

Expensive winter for Nevada highway department



Traffic on Highway 50 near Logan Creek remains one lane in each direction because of fallen boulders.
Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

It's been a costly winter for the Nevada Department of Transportation because of all the damage to roads, and the work isn't even done.

The emergency work for Kingsbury Grade totaled \$750,000. That was for the sinkhole that formed in December.

More work is being done on that stretch from the top of Daggett Summit to Foothill Road to prevent more slides.

In all, NDOT has awarded almost \$15 million in emergency contracts in 2017 through mid-April for highways in Northern Nevada.

Another \$205,000 was spent in Douglas County for highways 50 and 28. Highway 50 in the Logan Shoals area is still a mess, with one eastbound lane still covered with rocks.

NDOT has applied for funds from the Federal Highway Administration, of which to date it has qualified for more than \$3 million.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Brown unveils new state

budget proposal

By Katy Murphy, Bay Area News Group

SACRAMENTO – Gov. Jerry Brown on Thursday unveiled a revised \$124 billion general fund budget proposal that restored funding to child care subsidies and other social services, but does not include new money for key legislative priorities such as the Middle Class Scholarship or affordable housing.

The governor did not adjust the budget to reflect major uncertainties about federal health-care funding – a week after the U.S. House of Representatives heightened anxiety in California with its vote to repeal the Affordable Care Act and slash health care spending.

If the Affordable Care Act were repealed, Brown said, “What we’d have to do is ugly, and no one wants to take that up yet. So what we’re doing is we’re going to fight it as hard as we can so that doesn’t happen.”

Read the whole story

Short-term rentals changing ski towns

By Francis Xavier, Unofficial Networks

If you live in a mountain town deemed desirable for tourism you may have noticed a revolution in the housing market over the last few years....its called AirBnB. If you’re a second homeowner you love it. If you’re a struggling ski bum– it’s the bane of your existence.

The *Denver Post* did an excellent bit of reporting on the explosive trajectory of short-term vacation rentals in Colorado ski country and its effects on local communities. The boom in this newish type of rental has generated record amounts of income for homeowners and tax revenue for municipalities.

The negative result is that the same increased demand has driven long term lease rates upwards by an astronomical amount.

Read the whole story

Diagnosis – mental illness a serious issue in Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Suicide. It's on a lot of people's minds. And that's what worries those who want to prevent people from acting on those thoughts.

In a survey of South Tahoe Middle School students, 65 out of 509 youths have thought about suicide, while 45 out of 509 have tried to kill themselves in the last year. Of those, 55 percent were girls and 25 percent boys.

The others didn't put a gender. It could be they are trans or gender neutral or use some other way to identify. Nationally, for the LGBTQ community, the suicide related numbers are triple those of the mainstream youth population.

These were some of the sobering facts that came out of the annual mental health forum organized by Barton Health. More

than 50 people attended the May 9 gathering at South Tahoe High School. There were representatives from health care, law enforcement, businesses, nonprofits, social services, the general public and education.

A 2016 South Tahoe School graduate said it's great that those in the know gather to talk about the services available and what they are finding in their sphere of influence, but what really needs to happen for this information to get to the people who need it. She has had mental health issues and recently received treatment in the Bay Area. She wishes while she were in school, she had known about many of the services that are available here.

She is now a peer counselor with NAMI – the National Alliance on Mental Health. The local NAMI chapter headed by Jeanne and Alan Nelson continues to expand its offerings.

What Jeanne Nelson shared with the group is that dealing with mental illness can be a lifelong issue – for the person and their loved ones.

Help is available and recovery is possible.

What was stressed is that mental illness comes in a variety of forms, none of which should be brushed aside. Depression is the most common issue and will likely affect everyone at some point.

It's only been in the last few years that locally a greater emphasis has been placed on mental health. Part of this is the result of a 2012 community needs assessment by Barton Health that revealed the South Shore was lacking in mental health services. Since that time the pendulum has started to swing in the other direction. (*Lake Tahoe News* did a multi-part series on mental health in 2016, with the stories accessible from the Home Page under Special Projects.)

Being able to openly talk about mental health as easily as one

would talk about cancer or a heart attack or any physical ailment is a goal. Erasing the stigma; that's what needs to happen so people will treat mental health with the same seriousness and reverence accorded physical issues.

A multitude of events is going in May in recognition of this being Mental Health Awareness Month. More information is **online**.

Court: California water info can remain secret

By Michael Doyle, McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Crucial details about the location and depth of certain California water wells can be kept secret, and out of the hands of an environmental group, a top federal appeals court ruled May 9.

Although targeting a specific request for California information, the ruling by what's sometimes called the nation's second-highest court could shape at least a few of the other Freedom of Information Act requests nationwide. More than 700,000 FOIA requests were filed in Fiscal 2014, and the question of what can be denied recurs often.

Tuesday's unanimous decision lumped water wells with those drilled for oil and gas production. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit said that the water well information fits under a long-standing exemption to FOIA. The decision thwarted AquAlliance, the Chico-based group that sought the information.

LTUSD to address '13 Reasons Why' with parents

The Netflix series "13 Reasons Why" is generating a lot of buzz among the education community.

Lake Tahoe Unified School District Superintendent Jim Tarwater on May 9 sent a letter to all middle school and high school families.

"Please consider the age and developmental stage of your student before allowing them to watch the show. We do not recommend that students with a history of suicidal thoughts, depression or mental health concerns watch '13 Reasons Why.' If you do allow your child to watch this series, we recommend you watch it with them and discuss it afterward," the letter states.

This Netflix original is based on a novel where a 17-year-old girl kills herself. She leaves 13 audiotapes behind explaining her death. It's graphic.

LTUSD on May 30 from 6-8pm at South Tahoe Middle School is convening a panel to discuss counter measures to the TV show. It is being called 300 Reasons Why Not. This is for parents.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Sandoval's name floated as possible FBI director

By Ricardo Torres-Cortez, Las Vegas Sun

Gov. Brian Sandoval was named in an NBC News blog as a potential candidate to head the FBI after Director James Comey was ousted Tuesday.

Sandoval was one of three options the blog writers said would swiftly move through congressional confirmation due to being picks "without reproach," journalists Chuck Todd, Mark Murray and Carrie Dann wrote.

It wasn't immediately clear how they reached their conclusion or if it's mere speculation.

[Read the whole story](#)

2017 was wettest April for the U.S. in 60 years

By Greg Porter, Washington Post

"April showers bring May flowers" took on a whole new meaning this year: The United States just experienced its second-wettest April on record. Average precipitation across the Lower 48 was 3.43 inches. In other words, if you spread all of the rain and snow out across the continental United States, each location would have received nearly 3½ inches. That is a lot of water.

This record is second only to April 1957 and nearly a full inch more than the average April rainfall in the 20th century.

Above-normal precipitation has been an ongoing trend for the West Coast. In Seattle, a record 45.9 inches of rain have fallen since October. Meanwhile, Northern California officially had its wettest winter on record with several strong winter storms pushing the state's water reservoirs to near-full capacity.

Read the whole story