

Fearing threat to Calif. emissions law, lawmakers plan a fight

By Sean Cockerham, McClatchy

The Trump administration could move at any time to revoke California's right to impose stricter auto emissions standards than the federal government does, and the state's senators are already mounting a fight.

Congressional sources are hearing conflicting information on whether and when the Environmental Protection Agency will revoke California's waiver.

Initially the EPA action appeared imminent, but now there is some uncertainty, in part because the action would set up a legal showdown with California that President Donald Trump could lose.

Read the whole story

Slide cuts access around Emerald Bay

As the snow shifts under the freeze-thaw climate of Lake Tahoe, slides are still possible. Such was the case on Highway 89 near Emerald Bay on Friday.

Caltrans has had to shut the highway for an indefinite amount of time to clear what is a 4 to 8-foot deep slide that cover

part of both travel lanes.

This section of highway has been closed for the better part of the winter because of avalanches. Where the snow has been cleared it is obvious trees have come down with the snow.

For current road conditions, click on the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News*.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Traffic dodging apps prompt cities to game the algorithms

By Elizabeth Weise, USA Today

Call it planners versus algorithms.

Smartphone apps like Waze, a godsend for some road warriors because they shave minutes and even hours off their commutes with their creative detours off main highways, are causing headaches for city planners.

Using crosswalks, wider sidewalks and traffic lights, these transportation engineers aim to make neighborhood traffic slow, safe, and friendly for pedestrians – not send frustrated commuters barreling down side roads.

But the GPS-enabled computer programs often don't know that, or care. Their creators, such as Waze (owned by Google), are sympathetic, to a degree. They may give cities tips on how to effectively game the program so a neighborhood detour doesn't seem that appealing. But at the end of the day, the purpose of the bots is to make use of all available road space, main

thoroughfare or country lane.

The upshot is mounting frustration from cities, which are trying to thwart computer systems that are savvier than ever.

Read the whole story

Fiber-optic cable now connects Nevada

By Nicole Raz, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Rural communities between Las Vegas and Reno have a better shot at boosting and attracting business.

Valley Communications Association of Pahrump, which is a member of the co-op Valley Electric Association, and Churchill County Communications finished 11 months of work at the end of January installing more than 450 miles of fiber-optic cable connecting Northern and Southern Nevada.

Switch funded the installation to connect its data centers in Las Vegas and Tahoe-Reno. It also made fiber available for Valley and Churchill to expand into rural areas.

Read the whole story

Whistler acquisition a bonus for Vail earnings

By Dan Caplinger, Motley Fool

Investors in ski-resort operator Vail Resorts wait longingly each year for the winter months to come around, because that's when the company makes most of its money. Even with a small operation in Australia, where winter comes during the Northern Hemisphere's summer months, Vail Resorts still relies on North America for the vast majority of its revenue and profit.

Coming into Friday's fiscal second-quarter financial report, Vail Resorts investors had high expectations for growth, thanks to the recent purchase of the Whistler Blackcomb resort in British Columbia. Vail's results were even stronger than most had anticipated, and that helped lead the company to reward shareholders with a big dividend boost.

Vail Resorts' fiscal second-quarter results were extremely favorable. The company reported revenue of \$725.2 million, which was up 21 percent from the year-ago period, topping investor expectations for 18 percent to 19 percent top-line growth.

Vail's net income grew even faster, climbing 27.5 percent to \$149.2 million, and that worked out to earnings of \$3.63 per share. That exceeded the consensus forecast among those following the stock by \$0.22 per share.

Read the whole story

Storm water goals being met in Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

The quality of roads in the basin and Lake Tahoe's clarity may be more closely tied together than previously believed.

That is the belief of El Dorado County officials.

On the day the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board voted to approve the next five-year Lake Tahoe municipal storm water permit for South Lake Tahoe, El Dorado County and Placer County, there was talk of looking at new ways to curb the sediment load.

"There is some new information we have showing roads contribute upward of 30 percent of the sediment into the Lake," Russ Wigart with El Dorado County told the state agency.

The county does a significant amount of in-house research. The plan is to study the relationship between the pavement index condition and runoff. The pavement index condition goes from 0-100, with 100 being the best. Tahoe's roads are anything but the best.

"Our roads this year were completely annihilated," Wigart said. Winter weather has made some still impassable.

The plan is to study different surfaces to see what might be best for Tahoe.

While this is actually the 25th anniversary of the Lake Tahoe storm water permit program, the current iteration with the credit system just completed its first five-year cycle, which also incorporated the total maximum daily load requirements.

The atmosphere at the March 9 meeting was 180 degrees different than in **December 2011**. At that meeting the hostility was palpable between the jurisdictions and Lahontan. All five El Dorado County supervisors stood at the podium to denounce the plans.

At Thursday's meeting the jurisdictions and Lahontan had praise for each other. While the jurisdictions still believe money will be an issue to accomplish the goals and that they are not easy measures to meet, they believe in the cause.

Despite the animosity at the start, all three locales met their goals. South Lake Tahoe needed 190 credits and achieved 209, El Dorado County needed 163 and hit 164, and Placer County needed 260 and earned 277. These credits equate to a 10 percent sediment reduction from the 2003-04 base year.

One credit is equal to 1.0×10 to the 16th fine sediment particles with a diameter smaller than 16 micrometers.

This permit that was just approved mandates another 15 percent reduction.

According to Lahontan's staff report, "To achieve the transparency standard, estimated fine sediment particle, phosphorus, and nitrogen loads must be reduced by 65 percent, 35 percent, and 10 percent, respectively. Given the magnitude of the needed load reductions and the current available understanding of load reduction options, achieving the load reductions needed to meet the transparency standard is expected to take 65 years. A 20-year interim transparency goal, known as the Clarity Challenge, requires basinwide pollutant load reductions to be achieved within 15 years, followed by five years of monitoring to confirm that 24 meters of Secchi depth transparency has been reached. Implementation efforts must reduce basinwide fine sediment particle, phosphorus, and nitrogen loads by 32 percent, 14 percent, and 4 percent, respectively, to achieve this goal."

SLT teen tries to kill self to avoid arrest

Updated March 14:

By Kathryn Reed

A South Lake Tahoe teen is lucky to be alive after he stabbed himself multiple times Thursday.

When officers went to his residence on San Jose Avenue just before 1pm March 9 to serve a no bail arrest warrant the 16-year-old started stabbing his chest several times, according to law enforcement.

Based on the amount of bleeding and that he was vomiting blood, paramedics requested an air ambulance. However, doctors at Barton Memorial Hospital said not so fast, bring him here first because the trauma team was ready.

He was whisked to Barton with a sheriff's escort.

Barton was able to save his life.

Because of his age his name is not being released. It is also not known what the warrant was for.

Authorities were still at the residence hours after the incident. Assisting with the investigation are investigators from the El Dorado County District Attorney's Office and California Highway Patrol.

Future of Tahoe RadioShack unknown in bankruptcy

By Mike Snider, USA Today

Electronics retailer RadioShack has filed for its second bankruptcy in two years and will close about 200 of its remaining 1,500 stores.

The Fort Worth, Tex.-based company previously filed for bankruptcy in 2015, which resulted in about 2,400 store closings. Subsequently, General Wireless, a joint venture of hedge fund Standard General and Sprint, acquired the chain and ran 1,700 stores.

In a Chapter 11 petition filed Wednesday in the U.S Bankruptcy Court in Delaware, General Wireless stated it planned to close 187 stores by March 13 and close about another 365 stores, or transfer their ownership to Sprint.

Company officials would not tell Lake Tahoe News if the South Lake Tahoe store will close.

Read the whole story

Caesars wins OK to leave Nevada Power

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY — Caesars Entertainment Corp. won approval from state utility regulators Wednesday to to leave as a retail

customer of Nevada Power Co. and purchase its own power supplies on the wholesale market.

The Public Utility Commission voted unanimously to approve an agreement reached by Caesars, PUC staff and other interested parties to exit the utility for the purposes of acquiring its own supply of electricity. The utility's parent company, NV Energy, took no position on the request.

Caesars will also exit from Sierra Pacific, NV Energy's Northern Nevada utility company. Caesars will pay \$3.5 million in exit fees to cover its Northern Nevada properties, including the two it owns in Stateline.

Read the whole story

STHS probationary accreditation appeal denied

Updated 10:30am

By Kathryn Reed

With South Tahoe High School losing its appeal regarding probationary accreditation, it likely means the school will have a new principal in the fall.

Last spring the Western Association of Schools and Colleges put the school on a two-year probationary status. Evaluators cited several deficiencies, including not implementing enough sections of Common Core.

Lake Tahoe Unified School District didn't agree with much of the report so an appeal was made. Three WASC members came back

last fall – two newbies, one from the original team. This time they met with the superintendent, something that was supposed to happen the first time.

Their decision to deny **the appeal** came last month. *Lake Tahoe News* requested a copy of the letter from the district office, but has yet to receive it.

Sources tell *Lake Tahoe News* the response from WASC did not delve into specifics this time. While the evaluation team looks at hard data, members also do a series of interviews. They try to get a feel for the atmosphere on the campus. They care about a lot more than athletics, which some people believe has been a growing priority at STHS to the detriment of academics.

STHS is effectively completing the first of two years of probationary accreditation. The school is accredited and this will not impact graduating seniors.

The WASC team will return in spring 2018 to begin a brand new evaluation process.

In previous evaluations STHS has received a six-year accreditation.

The process is time consuming. Internally, it will begin next school. What remains to be seen is who will be principal.

All LTUSD principals have a year-to-year contract. Unlike other staff members, principals do not have to be notified by March 15 that they will not have a job in the fall. However, LTUSD historically has listed principal positions on April 1.

STHS Principal Chad Houck deferred comment to Superintendent Jim Tarwater. Tarwater is not available because he is recovering from leg surgery, an injury sustained skiing. Only board member Bonnie Turnbull responded to *LTN*. She said to speak to board President Barbara Bannar.

At the Feb. 14 school board meeting teachers and parents spoke highly of Houck. They said he has been telling people he won't be back as principal because he doesn't get paid enough. He makes more than \$100,000 a year.

Contractually, if the district were to ask him to step down, Houck would not have to be offered a teaching position because he did not start here as a teacher. If the board accepts his resignation, which some people have said could be on the March 14 agenda, Houck will be looking for a new job and the district for a new principal. Houck started at STHS in August 2014.

The board is expected to be updated on the accreditation issue at the March 14 or March 28 meeting – the agendas are not out yet.