

Falling tree kills Tahoe City driver near Squaw

The first fatality of the wicked storms that have thrashed the Lake Tahoe area occurred Thursday night.

A 43-year-old Tahoe City woman was killed when a tree fell onto the Subaru she was driving. She was headed south on Highway 89 near Squaw Valley at about 6:30pm Jan. 12. No one else was in the vehicle.

The tree struck two vehicles; the first was a Cadillac Escalade – no one was injured, the second was the Subaru.

Not long after the first tree fell another one tumbled onto a Tesla. The driver was standing outside the vehicle and was not hurt.

All the vehicles were headed south, and were just north of Squaw, in traffic that was crawling.

The highway between Squaw and Truckee reopened about 8:50pm. “We need to make sure the hill is stable,” CHP Officer Peter Mann told *Lake Tahoe News*.

This was the third tree to fall in this area in 36 hours. The one on Wednesday was about 100-feet tall and closed the roadway for about an hour.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Expect traffic issues in Tahoe for long weekend

Caltrans is alerting motorists traveling this weekend in the Sierra foothills, mountain areas or over the Donner or Echo summits to be prepared for winter driving conditions, especially at the higher elevations and in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Motorists should also expect delays caused by increased traffic because of the holiday weekend.

Very cold overnight temperatures will freeze any melted snow, including on roadways. Motorists are encouraged to slow down and use extra caution on bridges, ramps, shaded areas and after sunset.

Additionally, while heavily traveled roadways may be free of snow, other roads will still be snow-covered and chain restrictions may be in force. Motorists are required to carry chains even if driving a four- or all-wheel drive vehicle with mud and snow rated tires.

Motorists may be held intermittently for avalanche control. Highway 89 over Emerald Bay is currently closed due to avalanche hazards.

Nevada casinos earn 1st

profit since 2008

By Associated Press

Stateline casinos helped contribute to 2016 being the first time since the 2008 fiscal year that Nevada casinos showed net income instead of a loss.

The Gaming Control Board released the figures Wednesday.

The South Shore reported a 5.1 percent increase year-over-year to \$375 million. In 2015 the Stateline casinos had a net loss of \$150.8 million.

But it wasn't due to gambling winnings, which in Stateline were down \$2.1 million.

The report highlighted a continuing trend – revenues tilting away from tables and slot machines toward restaurants, retail, entertainment and rooms.

This “other” income is helping Tahoe tremendously. Also contributing the local increase is the addition of the Hard Rock Lake Tahoe.

The state says room rentals and fees helped resorts generate income of almost \$1 billion from total revenues of \$25.2 billion in the year ended June 30.

That compared with a net loss of almost \$662 million on revenues of \$24.6 billion a year earlier.

Board analyst Michael Lawton says the bottom line is that casinos across the state recorded net income for the first time since fiscal 2008.

– Lake Tahoe News contributed to this report.

South Shore chamber hires CEO from Mammoth

Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce's new CEO starts Feb. 6.



Craig Schmidt

Craig Schmidt has been leading the Mammoth chamber since September 2014.

His background is being the chief executive officer of chambers in tourist areas. Prior to Mammoth he was in Morro Bay, Healdsburg and Hood River.

Schmidt is a graduate of the Institute of Organizational Management at the University of Colorado and the Economic Development Institute at the University of Oklahoma. He also has a bachelor's degree in geology and environmental science from the University of Toledo.

Steve Teshara has been running the organization since B Gorman left in mid-2016.

Placer County sheriff announces retirement

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

Placer County Sheriff Ed Bonner announced Wednesday that he will retire next month after 22 years in the post.

In a video posted on the Sheriff's Office's Facebook page, Bonner, 65, cited health reasons for his decision to leave office effective Feb. 24.

"My doctors and I have huddled up and they say, 'You know what, son? You need to get rid of a little bit of stress in life to be healthier,'" Bonner said in the video.

[Read the whole story](#)

Snow removal ongoing; more weather next week



Crews will continue today to remove snow from roads in the basin. Photo/Provided

Update 5:34pm:

While a winter storm warning remains in effect for the Tahoe area until 10 tonight, the forecast for next week is for another atmospheric storm to hit the region. It is expected to arrive Tuesday night and last through Wednesday.

Forecasters are saying it will not be as strong as the storms that just pummeled the region.

In the mean time, things should start to dry out – at least in terms of what is falling out of the sky.

There is plenty of snow that still needs to be moved. Snowplows in the greater Lake Tahoe area continue to work to clear the white stuff.

All South Lake Tahoe streets have been plowed at least once.

Snow removal crews will continue their 12-hour shifts with primary snow removal. It is estimated that the widening of streets and snow removal of bike paths will begin Saturday morning.

The city's pool dome suffered damage during the storm which has resulted in the pool closure. The pool may open after the weekend.

A **Go Fund Me** account has been set for the Sokolov family of South Lake Tahoe. On Jan. 10 a tree fell on their home in the middle of the night, pinning Jamie Sokolov who was shielding her daughter, Alyssa, from the falling tree. The longtime locals both work in town. They were quoted \$12,000 for the tree removal.

Thursday's weather forced UNR to close down the campus.

Sporadic outages continue for Liberty Utilities customers. The West Shore continues to be out of power between Tahoe City and Fallen Leaf Road. Restoration work will continue by working in two directions. This is a very dynamic situation and this can change as large trees continue to fall. Customers in neighborhoods with heavy damage should prepare to be out for multiple days. The goal is to energize up to Tahoe Pines by midnight.

The Rubicon Trail is open, but officials say, "Go prepared for weather and trail condition changes."

Mount Rose Highway is open.

Westbound Highway 88 at Picketts Junction is still closed, as is Highway 89 around Emerald Bay.



A plow clears snow Jan. 12 in the Bijou Pines area of South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Susan Wood

By Kathryn Reed

All the moisture from the fall and the start of this winter has dramatically improved the drought conditions in California and Nevada.

Even though 58 percent of California is still in a drought, only 2 percent is at the most critical stage. A year ago 98 percent of the state was in a drought. Most of El Dorado County is no longer considered in a drought, which includes the Lake Tahoe Basin. The same goes for Placer County.

Thirty-seven percent of Nevada remains in a drought. However, that does still include Douglas County. Even so, the conditions are tremendously better.

The storms have added 350 billion gallons of water to

California's biggest reservoirs. Lake Oroville, the state's second-largest reservoir, is 35 feet higher than it was on Jan. 1. This makes it at 74 percent of capacity, which is 117 percent of average for this date.

Shasta Lake is 81 percent full. It is the largest reservoir in California.

State officials are not declaring the five-year drought over. It's possible the spigot could be turned off. That's happened in previous winters where there has been a deluge and then nothing.



Thirteenth Street in South Lake Tahoe is a snowy mess on Jan. 12. Photo/Susan Wood

However, for the immediate future more moisture is on the way to this region.

A winter storm warning remains in effect for the greater Lake Tahoe area through 10pm Thursday. Eight inches of snow are expected above 5,000 feet.

The sun is expected to come out Friday, though highs through the weekend will only be in the 30s.

Rivers and streams will continue to run high for the next couple of days. The drying trend should help them to recede to non-threatening levels.

Douglas County schools at the lake are open today, but only the main bus stops are being serviced. Lake Tahoe Community College begins its new quarter today.

Lake Tahoe Unified is closed in order to let city crews plow the streets. Tahoe Truckee Unified and Sierra Nevada College are also closed on Thursday. All schools in Incline Village are closed through Friday. El Dorado County workers in the basin have another day off.

Travel along local streets and state highways could be slow and dangerous. Chain requirements and closures could change at any time. For up to date information for highways, click on the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News*.

The avalanche danger remains considerable, according the Sierra Avalanche Center.

Ski resorts are digging out from the big dump. Check the resort's website to make sure it is open before driving there.

A power outage is keeping Homewood Mountain Resort closed today. It has received 13 inches of snow in the last 24 hours.

Liberty Utilities and NV Energy crews have been working around the clock to try to restore power, with no estimated time when the remaining customers will have electricity.

Millennials in Nevada face long odds for earning more than their parents

By Matthew Crowley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Christel Marie San Diego came to the United States from the Philippines four years ago with her own American Dream. After graduating from college and reading books like “Think and Grow Rich” and “The Power of Habit,” she plans to own a business – and perhaps outearn her parents.

A study issued last year suggests outearning her parents may be difficult, especially in Nevada. Researchers at Stanford and Harvard universities and UC Berkeley, found millennials’ odds of outearning their parents has shrunk by about half nationwide over 40 years, and has shrunk the most in Nevada among all states.

Overall, Nevada had a 49.7 percent drop in social mobility over the study period, leading the nation. Alaska (49.4 percent drop), Michigan (47.6 percent drop), Washington state (46.1 percent drop), Indiana (45.9 percent drop), Illinois (45.5 percent drop), Idaho (45.3 percent drop) and North Dakota (45.2 percent drop) followed.

Robert Fluegge, a study co-author, said the data don’t specifically explain Nevada’s result; he said the state followed the national trend.

Read the whole story

Out-of-state hires sticking around Nevada

By Nicole Raz, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Hiring out-of-state workers is a risky business. Nevada, a state in which companies rely heavily on out-of-state hires, seems to know how to keep the people they bring in – at least for now.

“We’ve seen that in some of the national migration data that the number of people transferring into Nevada because of a job has increased steadily,” said Michael Stoll, a professor of public policy at UCLA. “Of course, in the short run those retention levels are going to be high. But part of job retention for states that attract increasingly higher-skilled workers is whether or not they have the private and public amenities to keep the high-skilled, highly educated workers.”

In 2016, about 40 percent of people who moved to Las Vegas surveyed by United Van Lines said they relocated for employment reasons, on par with Arizona, and lower than neighbors Washington, Oregon and Utah. At the same time, Nevada’s turnover rate, at 16.8 percent across industries, was lower than the region’s 18.4 percent average turnover rate, according to a 2016 Compdata Survey.

Read the whole story

BLM seeks input on wild horse management

The Bureau of Land Management wants the public to weigh in on its proposal to round up more than 500 horses in the Pine Nuts.

According to the federal agency, the wild horse population increases about 17 percent a year. About 600 are in the area now.

The BLM says it wants to remove the horses and inject them with infertility drugs because they negatively impact the Pine Nuts.

Comments will be taken until Jan. 22. The environmental documents are .

Truckee to declare emergency, more snow coming



Personal snowplows have been in overdrive and will continue to be needed through Thursday. Photo/Kim Wyatt

Updated 9:10pm:

It's not over. A winter storm warning for Tahoe-Truckee is in effect until 10pm Thursday. Another 4 to 8 inches is expected at the lake, with more than a foot above 7,000 feet.

Liberty Utilities has approximately 6,500 locations still without power tonight.

"We cannot guarantee restoration times, however, we will continue to provide updates as they are available," Liberty spokeswoman Kathy Carter said in a statement.

Truckee's town council is meeting Jan. 12 at 5:45pm at the airport to declare a state of emergency.

As power is restored, the North Tahoe Public Utility District

is asking all customers to continue to limit water usage as much as possible through the duration of the power outage, even if the power is restored to your home. It is important to help keep flows down as other areas may still be running on generator power.

“District crews will continue to work around the clock to keep sewer flowing in the system and water to homes,” stated utility operations manager Ken Fischer.

The district operates 18 sewer pump stations that move the sewage along Highway 28 or out of low lying areas to, then up and over Dollar Hill. Generators are being used to pump down sewer stations, but they require fueling and maintenance and crews are stretched thin. In addition, sewer flows are already high due to inflow and infiltration of runoff into the sewer system via manholes and customer sewer clean outs.

While the risk of sewer overflows is the greatest concern, the district is also running the water system on temporary generator power to run the National Avenue Water Treatment Plan and pump water throughout the district.

With the continuing winter storms in the Lake Tahoe area and an avalanche near Truckee, the U.S. Postal Service has made the rare decision to suspend operations at select offices. A lack of power and access has necessitated the temporary closure of the following post offices:

- Carnelian Bay
- Homewood
- Incline Village
- Kings Beach
- Olympic Valley
- Tahoe City
- Tahoe Vista
- Truckee
- Tahoma.

Nevada Department of Transportation has signed emergency contracts to repair erosion and other flood-related roadway damage. The repairs follow tours of the damage taken by Governor Sandoval and local officials both before and after the flood.

Contractors on Wednesday started to make roadway shoulder repairs, repair flood damage and rebuild roadway drainage on Pyramid and Gerlach highways. Highway 446 running along the bottom of Pyramid Lake is closed. The road sustained the greatest flood damage of any state road, with many sections of roadway completely washed away and approximately 50-foot drop-offs created by erosion. Full damages have been assessed, and repairs anticipated to start in coming weeks. With a massive amount of earthwork needed to rebuild the roadway, no timeframe for reopening is established.

Kingsbury Grade remains closed between Tramway Drive and Foothill Drive on the Carson Valley side. There is no timeframe for reopening it.

Lingering damages are still being fully assessed as storm waters subside, and additional road repairs may be needed to state roads east of Reno and Carson City. Repairs are estimated to cost approximately \$6.5 million with a large portion of costs going to reconstruction of Highway 446. Federal reimbursement is anticipated for much of the repairs.

The rain and snow fall has caused infrastructure problems in El Dorado County. There is a substantial amount of snow in Tahoe in the area and crews are working to address the continued situation.

The following is an update of road closures outside the basin:

- Fort Jim Road at Newtown Road – failing drainage structure.
- Kyburz Drive – mudslide/trees/debris blocking drainage. Will take several days to remove. Local access available

for residents.

- Hackamiller Road just past Garden Valley Road – washed out road.
- Weber Creek at Jurgens/Luneman – low water crossing flooded and unsafe for vehicle traffic.
- Cosumnes Mine Road at North Fork of Cosumnes River. Bridge approach failure. In addition, other sections of the road, not associated with the bridge, have experienced slope failure taking part of the road down the slope.
- Mormon Emigrant Trail at Sly Park Road – there are unsafe conditions on the road. Should reopen this weekend.

In addition, county staff has been responding to calls regarding hundreds of downed trees, flooding, potholes, and small and large slides. The most significant slides have occurred along Salmon Falls Road, Rock Creek Road, Mosquito Road, Newtown Road, Forni Road, and Hassler Road.

Lake Tahoe Community College is planning to open at 8am Thursday. Campus roads and parking lots are clear, and power is on. President Kindred Murillo's farewell lunch is now Jan. 13 at noon. For info, call 530.541.4660, ext. 245.

The Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit Forest Supervisor's Office on College Drive in South Lake Tahoe will open Thursday at noon to the public. Staff will evaluate facilities around the basin during the day.

Squaw Valley is planning a delayed opening Thursday with limited terrain.



South Tahoe fire and Liberty Utilities crews work on downed power lines. Photo/Provided

Updated 2:15pm:

South Lake Tahoe officials are reporting dangerous conditions throughout town. The snow is a bit slushy now and people are not driving well.

Through town Highway 50 is one lane in each direction, with snow so high in the center it's hard to see oncoming traffic. Some drivers think they can cross the snow and are getting stuck.

"It's going to take us all day to push the snow back," City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*. "The snowplow drivers will be out all day continuing to plow residential streets and widening streets. Berms are to be expected."

The North Tahoe Public Utility District, in cooperation with Placer County Office of Emergency Services, is opening the conference room at the district offices at 875 National Ave.

in Tahoe Vista as a warming station. Residents or visitors in need can come in, grab some coffee, warm up and charge their cell phone or other devices. The district building is operating on generator power.

The North Tahoe Public Utility District is asking all customers to limit water usage as much as possible through the duration of the power outage as utility crews work to keep sewage flowing along the North Shore.

IVGID administrative, public works offices, Diamond Peak, and the Incline Village Recreation Center are closed today, and will reopen Thursday at 8am.

The good news is the sun is out in some areas.

Interstate 80 is open. Highway 50 over Echo Summit is open with chain controls. Motorists may be held intermittently for avalanche control operations. Highway 89 over Emerald Bay is currently closed due to avalanche hazards.

Caltrans is reminding people they are required to carry chains even if driving a 4- or all-wheel drive vehicle with mud and snow rated tires.

Motorists using cable (ladder) chains may be turned around on Highway 267 at the Northstar and Kings Beach chain control checkpoints.



Spoooner Summit on Wednesday afternoon is a mess. Photo
Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

The Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City will be closed for approximately 10 days to clean up damage sustained during severe weather this week. The main museum took on some water, but exhibits and historic collections were not damaged.

Truckee Donner PUD is responding to power outages caused by the blizzard. TDPUD was experiencing a series of localized outages on Tuesday evening due to falling trees when TDPUD lost transmission power to the entire district and all customers lost power. Crews have been working all night and today to restore transmission power at which time TDPUD can begin to restore power to our customers.

The loss of NV Energy transmission power was caused by a large tree that fell near Coachland about 10pm on Tuesday night. NV Energy crews started working on repairs about 2am on Wednesday and continue to effect repairs.

Once the main system power is restored, there will still be isolated outages due mostly to falling trees on TDPUD's distribution system and on secondary power lines feeding individual homes.

Liberty Utilities' walk in centers and customer service phone lines are closed Wednesday. About 20,000 customers without

power. All Liberty Utilities and NV Energy crews have worked together through the night.



Downed power lines in Incline Village because of toppled trees. Photo/Washoe County

As of 2pm power had been restored to a majority of customers in the Northstar, Squaw, Olympic Valley, Alpine Meadows, Glenshire, Martis Camp and Truckee areas. Liberty anticipates customers in Kings Beach, Tahoe City and Portola/Loyalton will also be restored today.

There are still challenges to restoring power from Emerald Bay to south of Homewood.

Heavenly is reporting 48 inches of snow in the last 24 hours, 108 inches in three days, and 12 feet in seven days. Northstar has 42 inches in 24 yours, 10 feet in seven days, while Kirkwood received 48 inches in the last 24 hours, 6 feet in two days and 11 feet in seven days.

Access to Pyramid Lake could take a while to restore. The road is totally washed out. The tribe is looking for **financial assistance**.

The Harlem Globetrotters 2017 World Tour stop in Reno that was scheduled for Jan. 12 at the Reno Events Center has been rescheduled for Jan. 17 at 7pm. All previously purchased tickets will be honored for the rescheduled game. Tickets are now on sale for the rescheduled show on Jan. 17.

Lake Tahoe Unified is going to be closed on Thursday.



South Lake Tahoe residents are dealing with large berms.
Photo/Ernie Claudio

By Lake Tahoe News

Snow is continuing to effect schools, commerce and travel in the greater Lake Tahoe area.

Non-essential South Lake Tahoe El Dorado County, and Placer County workers in the basin have been told not to go to work for the second straight day. This means those offices are closed to the public as well.

School closures include: Lake Tahoe Unified, Douglas County at the lake, Incline Village, Lake Tahoe Community College, Tahoe Truckee Unified, and Sierra Nevada College.

Per the Sierra Avalanche Center, the warning is high for avalanches. People are being advised not to go into the backcountry. An avalanche warning has been issued for the Tahoe through 4am Thursday.

Nevada Energy and Liberty Utilities are dealing with multiple outages that are affecting pockets in and around the greater Lake Tahoe area. A large swath of Truckee is in the dark now. With roads either being closed, having black ice this morning, or not being plowed, their crews are having a hard time even reaching the problem to be able to solve it.

"The majority of customers along the North Shore, West Shore and continuing through Truckee to Portola are without power due to a mudslide and falling trees that have damaged all of the three energy sources to the region," Kathy Carter with Liberty said.

People are warned not to touch downed power lines, but to call 911 instead.

The power outage has closed Squaw Valley, Alpine Meadows and Northstar on Jan. 11. Sugar Bowl is closed because of no access from Interstate 80. Tahoe Donner and Homewood are closed.

Squaw-Alpine reports receiving 5 feet of snow in the past 36 hours, for a storm total of nearly 9.5 feet this week. That's more than 13.5 feet this month.

Truckee issued this advice on Wednesday, "Travel should be restricted to only essential needs. We can reach residents in the event of an emergency, however roadways may not have been fully plowed yet and vehicles getting stuck will impact our ability to respond to emergencies." This is appropriate advice for all areas of the Tahoe basin as well.

Highway 50 over Echo Summit is open. No cannons have been going off this morning. However, that could change.

For up-to-date road information, click on the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News*.

Interstate 80 remains closed from Colfax to the Nevada state line. Highway 89 around Emerald Bay is closed. Westbound Highway 88 is closed at Picketts Junction. Highway 267 is restricted to 4-wheel drive vehicles only; vehicles with chains over Brockway Summit are not permitted. In Douglas County in the valley, Centerville Lane is closed because of flooding. Mount Rose Highway remains closed from Fairview to Douglas Fir. Kingsbury Grade is out of commission for a while because of sink hole on the Carson side; but access is available on the basin side.

Various businesses in the region have remained closed during the storms either because staff could not get to work, power has been out or they didn't expect customers to be traveling. It is advised to call ahead for the next day to make sure the entity is open.

Snow is in the forecast for the basin through Thursday. The sun should come out Friday.