

EDC DA wins appeal in cop-grand jury case

By Kathryn Reed

A court decision handed down Tuesday in El Dorado County District Attorney Vern Pierson's favor could have reverberations throughout the state.

The 3rd District Court of Appeal, which rarely publishes public opinions, on Jan. 10 said the California Legislature overstepped its bounds when in 2015 it enacted a law prohibiting grand juries from investigating police shootings.

The court ruled the Legislature would have to change the Constitution; that simply creating the law was not enough, nor did it have the legal power to do so.

"Every day peace officers put their lives on the line for all us. However, sometimes they make mistakes and sometimes they commit criminal misconduct up to murder. The public is entitled to a comprehensive, professional, and transparent investigation of any use of force, particularly one including the loss of life. Unfortunately, the legislature was misled by fake news – hands up don't shoot – and restricted our ability to conduct those investigations," Pierson told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Missing in the Superior and Appellate court hearings have been the Legislature and Attorney General's Office. It was the AG who told lawmakers what they were doing was legal.

A grand jury gives the prosecutor great latitude to control a case because only their side is presented, and only what they want divulged comes out. Many people actually believe grand juries are actually skewed toward protecting the officer and not providing true transparency.

Pierson has a vested interest in the law because he is tasked with deciding whether to prosecute South Lake Tahoe police Officer Josh Klinge in the June 15, 2015, fatal shooting of 22-year-old Kris Jackson of Sacramento. Klinge said he thought Jackson had a gun when he fired the single bullet into his chest as the suspect was escaping through a window at the Tahoe Hacienda Motel on Lake Tahoe Boulevard. Klinge has been on paid administrative leave all this time.

On Feb. 1, 2016, Pierson issued subpoenas to Police Chief Brian Uhler, Klinge and four other officers. The grand jury sessions were to begin a month later.

South Lake Tahoe Police Officers' Association and Police Supervisors' Association filed motions to quash the subpoenas and dismiss the grand jury. The city of South Lake Tahoe then became a party of interest.

"Both the chief and myself could not tell police officers to act contrary to state law," City Attorney Tom Watson told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We support our officer because we believe our officer will be vindicated whether in criminal or civil court."

El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Jim Wagoner did not find the legislation unconstitutional.

Pierson challenged that decision and prevailed Tuesday.

The police association has 60 days to decide if it wants to take this to the state Supreme Court.

Tahoe Queen turned into scrap pile



The Tahoe Queen on Jan. 9 is being torn apart. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

By Kathryn Reed

The Tahoe Queen is no more.

The paddle-wheeler that sustained extensive fire damage in August was dismantled on Jan. 9.

The engines were salvaged because they were new – part of the remodel that was occurring when the fire engulfed the vessel. Welders and painters had been working in the same area which

sparked the blaze.

While the Queen's home port was Ski Run Marina, it had been docked at Zephyr Cove for a while because of the low lake level. That is where the fire occurred. The boat had remained in the water there until a few days ago when it was brought ashore.

Aramark which operated the Queen and still runs the M.S. Dixie II would only confirm that the damage was too great to salvage the boat.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency issues permits for these vessels and the U.S. Coast Guard regulates them. It is unknown if Aramark will try to launch another boat or if the permit might be transferred to another company.

It's also unknown what will become of the hull. Those can be repurposed as a barge or have a new boat built on it.

Video by Carolyn E. Wright:

<https://www.laketahoenews.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/MAH00894.mp4>

Crystal Bay avalanche watch; Sierra roads treacherous



Snow is the word of the day in Lake Tahoe and will be through Thursday. Photo/Susan Wood

Updated 11:33pm:

Lake Tahoe Community College will be closed Wednesday.

Liberty Utilities was able to do some switching and get part of South Lake Tahoe out of the dark. About 1,726 customers on the lake side of Highway 50 in the Al Tahoe neighborhood are still without power.

Updated 10:34pm:

The North Tahoe Event Center shelter in Kings Beach is closed because of a power outage. Officials are encouraging people seek shelter a hotel or casino.

Incline Village schools will be closed Wednesday.

Another avalanche in the 1800 block of Alpine Meadows Road has

closed that area.

Updated 10:10pm:

Weather is getting more severe and lines are going out at a rapid rate, according to Liberty Utilities.

"We have lost a major line which feeds most communities along Highway 89 up through Loyalton and Portola. With I-80 closed, we have sent a crew on snowcat to the probably problem; they are expected to arrive on scene by 1am," spokeswoman Kathy Carter said in a statement.

Tahoe City is also experiencing outages with no restoration time estimated yet.

Some regions may experience flash outages that can be repaired quickly throughout the evening if accessible.

A tree branch that fell on a primary wire on Sundown Trail in the unincorporated area of El Dorado County has 2,316 customers in the dark. Crews are on site, but there is no estimated time when power will be restored.

Updated 8:50pm:

Garbage service in the basin may be slower or delayed throughout the basin because of unplowed roads.

Meyers is in the dark, as is a large swath of South Lake Tahoe. Liberty Utilities crews are on in the area trying to determine the cause.

Updated 7:45pm:

For people in custody who were supposed to go to court in South Lake Tahoe on Tuesday or Wednesday today or their cases will be heard on Thursday. All other cases will be rescheduled. Individuals who are represented by lawyers should contact that individual's office. Court users can may call

530.621.7414 ater 8am Wednesday.

With 126 inches of snow in the first 10 days of 2017, Squaw-Alpine is already at 181 percent of their January average. On Tuesday the resorts received 29 inches in about 12 hours. If conditions allow, both resorts will be open with a limited number of lifts.

Blizzard and flooding conditions are expected to continue through the night in the basin.

Northbound Highway 267 is closed at Kings Beach.

Highway 50 is closed from Meyers to Sly Park because of avalanche threat. The estimated time to open is 3am Wednesday.

Updated 4:20pm:

Residents in the Crystal Bay area are advised to stay indoors until further notice. Avalanches large enough to break trees and move cars have occurred in Crystal Bay under similar storm circumstances. This advisory may last for the next 24 hours, or longer, depending on how long the storm lasts. Road crews will not be plowing streets in the avalanche-danger area until further notice. Cornices along the ridge above Crystal Bay will be getting large enough to fall off their own weight and trigger long-running avalanches that could reach the homes below. Wind speeds and snowfall rates are increasing dramatically.

El Dorado County has declared a state of emergency due to damage to local infrastructure.

There is some structural damage to about a dozen houses that were hit by an avalanche Tuesday morning on Alpine Meadows Road, but no foundational issues have been found.

The road has been cleared and residents are allowed into the valley with ID, but are not allowed into the avalanche area, which is from 270 Alpine Meadows Road to the resort parking

lot.

Residents of the southwest Donner Lake area along Washoe Circle, Conifer Drive, and parts of South Shore Drive are advised that a high avalanche danger exists and they may want to evacuate. These conditions are expected to remain for the next few days.

“Even though there are many areas of heavy forest above these homes, avalanches can run into areas of mature forest,” Truckee fire personnel said in a statement.

A backcountry avalanche warning is in effect in the Truckee - Tahoe area. Travel in avalanche terrain, on or below slopes 30 degrees and steeper is not recommended.

Cannons have been going off most of the day; set off by highway departments and ski resorts to reduce the threat of avalanche. This has meant Highway 50 between Meyers and Placerville had been open intermittently. It is currently closed because of several snow slides.

Motorists are being advised to avoid the area of Alder Creek Road between Schussing and Wolfgang in Truckee because of minor flooding.

All roads in Douglas County are open except of Kingsbury Grade between Foothill Road and Tramway.

El Dorado County has closed the Cosumnes Mine Road bridge where it crosses the North Fork of the Cosumnes River. Water has washed away the soil from under the north bridge approach.

Lake Tahoe Unified will be closed on Wednesday, as will the courts in South Lake Tahoe. The court expects to be open Thursday. Check the **website** for updates.

Truckee's town council meeting has been moved to Jan. 12 at 6pm.

Liberty Utilities is still working on trying to restore power to people throughout the region.



Berms several feet high are being left on streets in Meyers. Photo/Kim Wyatt

Updated 2:10pm

More than a dozen houses were hit by an avalanche at 11:40 this morning on Alpine Meadows Road. No injuries have been reported.

“It’s still an unstable situation. There is still avalanche danger throughout the district and the basin,” Beth Kenna with North Tahoe Fire told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The extent of damage is being assessed.

Alpine and Squaw were closed today.

Sugar Bowl is closed because of the Interstate 80 being closed. The resort as of 1:45pm was reporting a 44-inch storm total so far, with 20 inches falling in the last 24 hours. There is not estimated time for I-80 to reopen.

Highway 50 has been closed on and off because of avalanche control.

Highway 267 is closed because of blizzard conditions.

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

In South Lake Tahoe, Heavenly was encouraging people to ski while at the same time the city of South Lake Tahoe – as well as every transportation authority, including the two states – were telling people not to travel. The city told non-essential workers they did not have to work on Tuesday. This essentially means the city is closed for business.

In the city and El Dorado County the plows are working the main streets and not the residential areas. This is more for public safety concerns. Residents should not expect to see a plow on Jan. 10 unless they are on a main route.

The Rubicon Trail is also closed due to hazardous conditions. Conditions will be reassessed on Friday.

Due to treacherous weather conditions, Liberty Utilities has closed its walk-in and call center offices in Tahoe Vista and South Lake Tahoe. With approximately 2,000 customers still without power, crews are trying to make repairs although they are hampered by unsafe conditions, including avalanche danger.

“With heavy snow comes roof snow shedding, which could trap anyone underneath it. Make sure you or any family members stay away from any potential roof shedding areas,” warns Truckee fire officials.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "A blizzard warning has been issued for the Sierra through Wednesday morning. Dangerous and potentially life threatening blizzard conditions are possible in the Sierra Mountains. Multiple feet of snowfall are expected. Strong winds will produce zero visibility in whiteout conditions along with high drifting snow. Do not attempt to travel as first responders may not be able to rescue you. Travel may already be impossible with several road closures due to heavy snow already being reported. Even a short walk could be deadly if you become disoriented. Avalanche danger will remain high through this storm."

The U.S. Forest Service office in South Lake Tahoe is closed Tuesday and Wednesday.

TART has canceled Truckee local service and night service for Tuesday.



This is Echo Summit on Jan. 10. Photo/Caltrans

Updated 7:55am:

The South Lake Tahoe branch of the El Dorado County Superior

Court will be closed is closed for Tuesday. Cases scheduled for today will be trailed until Wednesday, and there may have a delayed start time. Court users need to check the court **website** for further information and instructions.

Blizzard and avalanche warnings for the Sierra are in effect through Wednesday per the National Weather Service in Reno.

About 18 inches of snow have fallen on the South Shore in the last 24 hours, which is impacting travel. Several feet are in the forecast through Thursday.

School closures for Tuesday include: Lake Tahoe Unified, Lake Tahoe Community College, Douglas County schools at the lake, Jacks Valley is closed because of the Highway 395 flooding and buses being unable to transport students, Tahoe Truckee Unified, Incline Village schools,

Non-essential El Dorado County employees in the basin do not have to go to work.

Liberty Utilities rebuilt a major transmission line Monday that serves the West Shore. This brought power back to all but about 50 customers along Highway 89 between Squaw Valley and Truckee.

Mount Rose Highway is closed.

Avalanche control is going on Highway 50 in the Echo Summit area so traffic is being held.

High winds are likely to impact ski resorts. Tahoe Donner is closed today.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Nev. tax officials seek funds to create recreational pot rules

By Associated Press

Nevada tax officials are seeking a nearly \$900,000 loan to hire four officers to create regulations for the newly passed recreational marijuana law.

A state Department of Taxation request to tap funds from an Interim Finance Contingency Account will be considered Tuesday by the three-member state Board of Examiners, the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* reported.

Officials say the money would fund four tax officers through the June 30 end of the fiscal year, and would be repaid with proceeds from a 15 percent excise tax the law imposes on wholesale recreational marijuana sales.

If the request is approved by the panel – made up of Gov. Brian Sandoval, Attorney General Adam Laxalt and Secretary of State Barbara Cegavske – it will go to the legislative finance committee on Jan. 26.

Question 2 legalized recreational marijuana in amounts up to 1 ounce by adults 21 or older.

The law took effect Jan. 1, but officials say it could be a year before the drug is available for purchase through licensed dispensaries. Revenue from the excise tax is earmarked for the tax agency and local municipalities for administration and regulation, plus the state general

education fund. State and local sales taxes also apply.

The tax department is working with the governor's office on an executive order to develop a task force to provide guidance on issues related to legalization.

A public workshop is expected soon to look at temporary regulations to let the department begin issuing licenses while permanent regulations are drawn up for review by the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

Nevada provided a similar budget boost to start regulating medical marijuana dispensaries in 2014. Lawmakers allocated \$623,000 to the Division of Public and Behavioral Health, and the program brought in \$761,000 in tax revenue in the first fiscal year.

Region weathers first storm; snow comes next



Bill Avenue in South Lake Tahoe on Jan. 8 had to be closed because of flooding. Photo/Provided

Updated 2:10pm:

Since the first of the year Lake Tahoe has risen about 1 foot; that's 33.6 billion gallons of water.

Interstate 80 is open in both directions.

Highway 395 is closed in both directions from Stephanie to Cradlebaugh Bridge. Jacks Valley Road is open.

Multiple state roads in the greater Truckee Meadows and Carson Valley areas remain closed as the Nevada Department of Transportation clears and accesses flood-related damages. Road closures can change rapidly.

Here is what NDOT is working on:

- Some of the greatest flood damage to state roads occurred in the Pyramid Lake area, with extensive damage to highways 445, 446 and 447. An approximately 50-foot drop-off was created by erosion on Highway 446 along Pyramid Lake. Sections of state roads in the Pyramid

Lake area will continue to be closed indefinitely as repairs are made.

- At Kingsbury Grade all of the new roadway surface and much of the new earth that was placed down to fill the previous erosion remained intact. However, with the overwhelming amount of precipitation, additional erosion occurred in the area, particularly to drainage areas. With snow and winter weather forecast, NDOT will do all possible to repair the road efficiently and quickly, but no timeframe is yet set.
- Both directions of Interstate 80 west of Keystone Avenue of downtown Reno has extensive potholing.
- Genoa and Muller lanes in the Minden/Carson Valley area remain closed. The entire length of Genoa Lane between Highway 395 and Foothill Road is closed. The western section of Muller Lane is closed between Highway 395 and Foothill Road. Both roads experienced roadway shoulder damage, but are anticipated to reopen within the next day or two. Residents with valid ID are allowed access on Muller and Genoa lanes.
- NDOT bridge inspectors have visually assessed state bridges susceptible to high levels of erosion in northwestern Nevada for any imminent bridge safety concerns. No immediate damages or imminent safety concerns were found.

Liberty Utilities says treacherous conditions have slowed the restoration progress in some areas. Service remains out for multiple customers between Tahoe City and Tahoma. Additional crews have been brought in and are onsite. Sporadic outages continue throughout the service territory due to falling trees and branches.

The National Weather Service in Reno has issued a high wind watch from Reno through Carson valley for the 24-hour period ending Tuesday night. Flooding is also still possible in those areas.

All Washoe County schools, including Incline Village schools, will be on a two-hour delay Tuesday.

<https://www.laketahoenews.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/video-1484000418.mp4>

Gary Kank sent this video to Lake Tahoe News. It was from his commute on Jan. 9 from South Lake Tahoe to Shingle Springs on Highway 50. It's the most water he's seen in 15 years.

Updated 9:33am

South Tahoe Public Utility at peak flow on Jan. 8 had 17.5 million gallons coming through its sewer lines. This is twice the pumping capacity over Luther Pass to the Carson Valley. This meant the emergency retention basins near the plant are in use.

Stormwater was getting into the pump stations at Fallen Leaf Lake those were pumped out so there would not be an overflow.

"A number of lift stations had all the pumps on full speed which almost never happens," Richard Solbrig, executive director of STPUD, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Hopefully, we escaped the worst of it. Snow is not as hard to deal with as rain on snow.

As of 3:30am, customers from Emerald Bay through and including Tahoma have power. All other West Shore customers remain without power with estimated restoration time at 5pm Monday. NV Energy crews are assisting Liberty crews in addition to the contracted crews called in three days ago. There are two power lines that have been affected by mudslides and downed trees, and two of NV Energy sources that supply Liberty were affected by mudslides. Road closures are hampering efforts to get supplies and crews to needed locations.

In Douglas County damage assessment teams have been deployed to determine the impact of the storm and necessary clean-up.

Officials are being advised the West Fork of the Carson River is expected to recede below the banks. There was a crest in the east fork last night and is now below flood stage. Last night's evacuees are expected to return home later in the day.



Manhole covers are under water and Trout Creek is 15 feet into some properties in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Lisa Huard

By Kathryn Reed

The Upper Truckee River through South Lake Tahoe and Meyers for the most part stayed within its banks, allowing South Shore residents and officials to breathe a sigh of relief.

The hope is that the water level will recede a bit before the next system arrives.

"There were no major incidents of any kind," City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Many of the investments we've made over the last 10 years such as the Bijou erosion control project and others performed exceptionally well."

Minor flooding occurred at Denny's restaurant, at school sites, Knights Inn hotel and residences. The worst road flooding was in the state streets area where the drainage is nonexistent and there is a high water table.

Placer County said it received 4 inches of rain in 24 hours.



Liberty Utilities crews work at all hours to restore power. Photo/Provided

Liberty Utilities is reporting outages in El Dorado and Placer counties, with no details available.

Problems throughout the region remain. Kingsbury Grade is

closed again because of a sink hole in the same area where the road was repaired last week. There is no estimated time when it will be open. People can still drive from Highway 50 to Tramway.

Caltrans is still working to clear the mudslide on Interstate 80 that has traffic halted from Colfax to the Nevada state line. The eastbound lanes are open.

Highway 89 around Emerald Bay is closed.

Truckee has measurable water on some roads. Water has gone down along Glenshire Drive near Trout Creek, however there is still standing water along Donner Pass Road at Donner Lake.

Public safety and transportation officials are urging people not to travel on any roads in the region unless they have to.

Most schools in and around the basin are closed on Jan. 9 – including Lake Tahoe Unified, Douglas County at the lake, Incline Village, Tahoe-Truckee Unified, Lake Tahoe Community College, and Sierra Nevada College.

Ski resorts are assessing whether they will open on Monday. Most were shuttered on Sunday. Northstar, Squaw and Alpine are closed.

The Truckee River in Reno-Sparks is starting to rise again and could crest in Sparks at about noon today. There have been no flood related injuries, but rescues have occurred in the Reno area.



Northstar and other ski resorts will be closed Jan. 9.
Photo/Provided

While the rain has changed to snow for much of Tahoe-Truckee, another significant system is barreling down on the region. It should be here this evening and last through Thursday. A winter storm warning is in effect for the Tahoe basin through Thursday at 4am.

For detailed road information, click on the state icons on the home page *Lake Tahoe News*.

Another 6 to 8 feet of snow is expected above 7,000 feet, with 2 to 5 feet at lake level, according to the National Weather Service in Reno.

By Friday it is expected to be mostly sunny.

The U.S. Postal Service said it had trouble last week delivering mail in South Lake Tahoe, Truckee and Incline Village and the same may be true this week because of road conditions.

Lahontan trying to cope with climate change

By Kathryn Reed

It's not a matter of whether climate change exists; the discussion now is what is going to be done about it – not to stop it, but in terms of how to live with it.

That is exactly what the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board's directors are going to discuss at this week's meeting. The board and staff are working on climate change adaptation strategies.

Specifically, the outcome of a climate change survey is on the Jan. 11 agenda. Because the survey closed on Dec. 31, an in depth analysis of all the responses will not occur at this meeting. (The meeting is in Apple Valley.) However, staff has been able to consolidate the more than 400 ideas into about two dozen potential adaptation concepts or actions.

The survey was open to the public and agencies.

"The biggest take home message is there is strong support for the board to take action to protect our recharge areas, to help out with addressing stormwater and infrastructure," Scott Ferguson, supervising engineer with Lahontan, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Where we saw differentiations was how to do it."

All nine regional water boards are looking at climate change and coming up with ideas for their particular area.

There has been much talk about pollution and climate change, but very little about water quality and climate change. The latter is the direction Lahontan wants the conversation to go.

Stormwater, flood plains and infrastructure are the main topics.

People used to only look at stormwater as something to get rid of. Now people are trying to figure out how to better capture it and reuse it. This is particularly prudent thinking in areas prone to droughts.

“How do we retain it and how do we manage it so we are not altering existing surface water?” Ferguson said. The answers are still being sought.

With the snowpack expected to decrease in the Sierra it means more rain will be falling. Lahontan would like that water to get into the ground.

“We need to be restoring wetlands; they act as a sponge to hold water and release water later in the year,” Ferguson said.

Regarding infrastructure, some industrial facilities and wastewater treatment locations are vulnerable to extreme flooding. Lahontan plans to do a threat analysis to determine how to protect areas.

“We are looking for a lot of coordination with our partners out there as we move forward with how best to be better prepared. We recognize everyone has limited resources,” Ferguson said.

Lahontan’s jurisdiction covers a large swath of eastern California, stretching to Southern California. Lake Tahoe and Truckee are just a small part of the territory. Whether there are different rules for various locales remains to be seen.

After staff does a thorough analysis of the survey the results are expected to be released in the spring, with public workshops in June, and the draft climate change adaptation strategy presented to the board in September.

“We will probably look to identify some particular actions that have been rising to the top, and offer another opportunity for input from partners, the water board and interested parties,” Ferguson said.

Future of EDC courthouse being decided

By Ben van der Meer, Sacramento Business Journal

Placerville is taking feedback about reuse options for the El Dorado County courthouse in the city’s downtown.

On the city’s website and in utility bills, a survey lists several options, including a visual/performing arts center, public market, hotel and college campus extension. There are 11 choices, including one for those taking the survey to suggest their own ideas.

Placerville City Manager Cleve Morris said the survey results will be part of an ongoing study by a blue ribbon committee to figure out the best use.

[Read the whole story](#)

Court upholds Calif. pension

credit buying law

By Bob Egelko, San Francisco Chronicle

A state appeals court has upheld a 2013 California law that eliminated a pension benefit for hundreds of thousands of state and local government employees in an effort to reduce the pension system's mounting deficits.

The lawmakers' action in eliminating the right of public employees to buy additional retirement credits was "wholly reasonable" and did not violate any binding promises made to the employees, the First District Court of Appeal in San Francisco said Friday.

A lawyer for a firefighters union that challenged the law said it would probably seek review by the state Supreme Court, which has already agreed to consider another case cutting back on public pensions.

Read the whole story

SLT evacuations possible; mudslides on 50, 80

Updated 9:30pm:

The 2,700 Liberty Utilities customers in the Heavenly to Al Tahoe areas who were without power have lights again. A blown breaker at the South Tahoe substation caused the outage.

In Douglas County, Waterloo is closed from Highway 395 to Tires Plus due to flooding. People going to the Community Center should use 756-Centerville and turn east on Waterloo. Kingslane Court in Gardnerville is now under a voluntary evacuation to the Douglas County Community Center.

Highway 395 from Lee Vining to the Nevada state line and Highway 182 from Bridgeport to Nevada are closed due to flooding and rockslide.

Updated: 7:30pm:

Douglas County schools at the lake will be closed on Monday.

"Only essential employees are to report to work if it is safe. Essential include me, directors, principals, VPs, head secretaries, head custodians and maintenance staff," DCSD Superintendent Teri White told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Lake Tahoe Community College, which was to start a new quarter on Jan. 9, will be closed.

Mudslides and road closures are hampering Liberty Utilities' efforts to restore power. The estimated restoration time for customers from Meeks Bay to Tahoe City has been extended to midnight. Customers south of Homewood should plan on being out of power beyond midnight due to falling trees and mudslides; there is no estimated restoration time for this area. Customers with damage to service wire feeding their home should plan on being out for 24-48 hours.

Evacuations are in order for the 49 mobile homes of older section of the Aspen Mobile Home Park on 1380 Centerville Lane in the Carson Valley. Douglas County will provide transportation for those who may need it. Dresslerville Lane from Highway 88 to the Ranchos is closed.

An evacuation center is now open at 1300 Waterloo Lane, Gardnerville.

North Tahoe Event Center in Kings Beach is an evacuation center.

Mount Rose Highway is closed in both directions because of a mudslide.



A sump pump works to remove water Jan. 8 from a flooded driveway in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Susan Wood

Updated 6:30pm:

South Lake Tahoe officials are evaluating whether the state streets and potentially the Tahoe Keys area will have to be evacuated because the Upper Truckee River keeps rising.

City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News* the flow is starting to slow down a bit. "We hope that means it is freezing at higher elevations."

The river is within 6 inches of flood stage. It is already

causing minor flooding in the city limits and in Meyers.

"We are deploying resources into those areas now to evaluate conditions and evacuation at this point is precautionary; not required," Kerry said in a statement.

An evacuation center has been set up at South Tahoe High School.

Lake Tahoe Unified School District has canceled classes for Monday. UNR has also canceled classes.

The fire damaged Tahoe Queen has been pulled out of the water at Zephyr Cove and is now on the beach.

Interstate 80 near Truckee is closed because of a mudslide. Pyramid Highway southbound is closed because of flooding between Eagle Canyon and Dolores. A mudslide is blocking Highway 50 west of Kyburz.

The Truckee River in the Reno area is at 15.86 feet. Should it reach the forecast 21.2 feet, it would surpass its crest of 20.04 feet on Dec. 31, 2005.



The California Tahoe Conservancy lots by the Knights Inn in South Lake Tahoe are flooded. Photo/Hal Cole

Updated 4:30pm:

South Lake Tahoe officials have opened the airport up as the command post for the office of emergency services because of widespread flooding in town.

Most of the problem areas are in the state streets and Tahoe Keys area. Colorado Street is flooded, with water crossing Tahoe Keys Boulevard, going through houses and covering parts of Jeffery Street. The city reports severe flooding near the Knights Inn on Highway 50.

“The drainage system is at capacity and is pushing the flow into the streets,” City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*. “That melting snow is bringing in additional water.”

Lake Tahoe Unified School District is still assessing whether

schools will be open Monday.

"We are watching the (Upper) Truckee River near the bridge. If it floods, that will split the district," Superintendent Jim Tarwater told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Water has been coming into the multipurpose room at South Tahoe Middle School. A pump has been placed there to get rid of the water. Water also came into the district office, but is now being diverted. There has also been flooding in the parking lots at Al Tahoe and Tahoe Valley elementary schools. A few leaks in buildings have also been reported.

The hesitation in calling off school is that the storms behind this one could mean even more days off.



Trout Creek behind the houses on
El Dorado Street in South Lake

Tahoe looks more like a river on
Jan. 8 and it keeps expanding,
including into back yards.
Photo/Lisa Huard

Reports are that the Sawmill Road-Lake Tahoe Boulevard area has 2 feet of standing water. Sawmill is closed now.

At least 3 feet of water is being let out of Lake Tallac in the Tahoe Keys.

The Pope marsh area is already a lake.

The flood watch for the basin is in effect through 4am Jan. 12.

There is minor localized flooding, but no major flooding in Truckee. Public works continues to work to clear snow filled drainage ditches. The Truckee River in Truckee has hit flood stage, according to officials there.. Old Highway 40 (Donner Pass Road) from South Shore Drive to Sugar Bowl is closed. There is a large amount of water across the roadway and concerns for undermining of the roadway.

The Truckee River has hit flood stage in Sparks.

Road closures in Douglas County in the Carson Valley include: Nye Drive, Centerville between Highway 88 and Foothill, and the dirt road alongside Power Dam.

People are being advised to stay away from Muller, Mottsville, Genoa Lane, Power Dam area, Foothill between Jacks Valley and Genoa, and East Valley near Powerline Road.

Snow is falling between the 8,000 and 10,000 foot levels.

Numerous wet deep slab avalanches occurred either Saturday night or Sunday morning in the Carson Pass area, according to the Sierra Avalanche Center. The avalanche warning has been extended to Jan. 12 at 4am.

Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley will remain closed on Monday.



Water is accumulating in the Carson Valley, with several roads closed on Jan. 8 because of flooding. Photo/Suzy Allione

Updated 1pm:

Lake Tahoe Boulevard between Sawmill Road and Tahoe Mountain Road in the unincorporated area of El Dorado County is closed because of flooding. Sawmill is also closed.

“It was starting to flood before this storm,” El Dorado County sheriff’s Lt. Matt Underhill told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The meadow at Sawmill is prone to flooding.

The Nevada Highway Patrol told *Lake Tahoe News* there is a boulder on Highway 50 near Lakeview that the Nevada Department of Transportation will be removing.

The right lane westbound lane of Interstate 80 near Floriston is closed due to mudflows and falling rock.

It has been raining heavily all day in the basin. Residents

near the Tahoe Keys in South Lake Tahoe are reporting more than a half a foot of water under houses. There is flooding in the state streets.

The wind has been strong at times, with a 159 mph gust registered at Squaw Valley at 8,700 feet at 9am.

Liberty Utilities has outages in Tahoe City, Truckee, West Shore and the Interstate 80 corridor because of multiple power lines that have tripped. From Meeks Bay Avenue to the greater Tahoe City region is without power as a result of fallen trees that have downed three strands of wire. Highway 89 is reduced to one lane so crews can safely make repairs. Estimated restoration is at 9pm Sunday.

“Additional problems are expected as wind/rain continue to increase. We have re-opened our emergency operations center and called all crews in who will patrol the lines looking for problems,” spokeswoman Kathy Carter said in a statement.

Upper Truckee River in South Lake was at 8.4 inches as of 12:30pm, crest is at 10 feet.

There has been some flooding in Soda Springs around Old Highway 40 in the Truckee area.

All Washoe County schools will be closed Monday, including those in Incline Village. Lake Tahoe Community College will make decision about classes at 6am Jan. 9.

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A sump pump works to remove water Jan. 8 from a flooded driveway in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Susan Wood

Updated 9:40am:

The Sierra Avalanche Center is telling people not to go into the backcountry now.

“Natural and human triggered avalanches are certain today due to the significant amount of rain and snow expected below 9,300 feet and heavy, wet snow loading above 9,000 feet. Large, deep, destructive wet slab, deep slab and wind slab avalanches will occur (Sunday) as well as loose wet avalanches. Avalanches could run farther than expected and involve almost the entire snowpack,” the agency’s website says.

An avalanche warning is in effect for the backcountry through at least 7am Monday.

Northstar, Kirkwood, Mt. Rose, Sierra-at-Tahoe, Heavenly, Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows are closed Sunday. Before heading to any resort, check their website for conditions.



Sand is still available in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Susan Wood

The National Weather Service in Reno's flood watch for the Lake Tahoe Basin remains in effect through Monday afternoon.

The Upper Truckee River is starting to crest in locations on the South Shore. The river is taking in about 6 inches an hour, authorities told *Lake Tahoe News*.

"A combination of intense rain on saturated soils and melting snow will lead to excessive runoff. Flooding along the Truckee River, Carson River including the east and west forks, creeks, streams, urban areas, and farmland is likely," the Weather Service said. "Travel could be very difficult with some roads covered by water and impacted by rock and mud slides."

The National Weather Service in Sacramento has issued a flood

warning for small streams in El Dorado, Placer and Alpine counties through 6am Tuesday.

Liberty Utilities is working to get power to 100 customers in Placer County.

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

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Warming vehicle in cold harms engine

By Jay Bennett, Popular Mechanics

In the thick of winter, the common wisdom is that when you are gearing up to take your truck out in the cold and snow, you should step outside, start up your engine, and let it idle to warm up. But contrary to popular belief, this does not prolong the life of your engine; in fact, it decreases it by stripping oil away from the engine's cylinders and pistons.

In a nutshell, an internal combustion engine works by using pistons to compress a mixture of air and vaporized fuel within a cylinder. The compressed mixture is then ignited to create a combustion event—a little controlled explosion that powers the engine.

When your engine is cold, the gasoline is less likely to evaporate and create the correct ratio of air and vaporized fuel for combustion. Engines with electronic fuel injection

have sensors that compensate for the cold by pumping more gasoline into the mixture. The engine continues to run rich in this way until it heats up to about 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

Read the whole story