

Caesars unit resolves lender dispute

By Tracy Rucinski, Reuters

Caesars Entertainment Corp.'s bankrupt operating unit resolved a dispute with its lenders on Friday, paving the way for a consensual plan to push the casino group out of its \$18 billion Chapter 11.

In filings with the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Chicago, bank lenders said they had reached an agreement over their recovery terms and were withdrawing a threat to abandon a plan to end Caesars Entertainment Operating Co Inc's two-year bankruptcy.

Caesars is the parent company of Harrah's Lake Tahoe and Harveys.

Read the whole story

Markleeville men accused of illegally killing deer

By Kathryn Reed

Two Markleeville men face multiple charges related to illegally hunting deer in Alpine County.

"This is about as egregious as anything we deal with, second only to wildlife trafficking," Lt. Chris Stoots with California Department of Fish and Wildlife told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Ramsey Horse, 29, and William Berreman, 26, are accused of spotlighting, which is when hunters use a flashlight or the headlights to locate deer at night. This is where the phrase “a deer in headlights” comes from.

“They freeze, they are confused and they have lights shining in their eyes. They lock up and they are susceptible to being killed,” Stoots explained.

As nocturnal animals deer see extremely well at night – in the dark.

This is the time of year when deer rut and they find habitat out of the snow; a safe place to spend winter. It’s an easy shot because so many are in one spot and they have other things on their mind besides survival.

This investigation started in fall 2015 with reports of shots being fired at night. A warden set up surveillance cameras near Diamond Valley and Airport Roads, which led him to the suspects last week.

It is not known how many deer the men may have killed in this illegal fashion.

If found guilty, the two could face a \$1,000 fine and six months in jail for each of the four counts.

**Calif. forests failing to
regrow after intense**

wildfires

By Bob Berwyn, Inside Climate News

There are warning signs that some forests in the Western U.S. may have a hard time recovering from the large and intense wildfires that have become more common as the climate warms.

After studying 14 burned areas across 10 national forests in California, scientists from UC Davis and the U.S. Forest Service said recent fires have killed so many mature, seed-producing trees across such large areas that the forests can't re-seed themselves. And because of increasingly warm temperatures, burned areas are quickly overgrown by shrubs, which can prevent trees from taking root.

Historically, severe fires were uncommon in the forests covered by the study, largely made up of yellow pines and mixed conifers, but extended drought and heatwaves have exacerbated fire conditions across the West. The changing climate is also seen as a factor in recent wildfires in the Southeast, which is also mired in drought.

Read the whole story

Arrest made in travel company fraud case

A South Lake Tahoe woman is accused of operating a fraudulent travel business near Reno.

Washoe County Sheriff's Office received 71 complaints from victims of this business since the investigation began in

September 2015.

Vivian Saenz-Alvarado, 39, was arrested Dec. 7 and a week later transferred to the Washoe County Detention Facility on Dec. 14. She is charged with four counts of embezzlement, four counts of obtaining money under false pretense, and four counts of using a credit card of another without consent.

Vivian Saenz-Alvarado was the owner of Vysa Travel, a vacation travel company which operated in the Sun Valley area and unexpectedly closed in fall 2015. Numerous customers told detectives they prepaid for vacations through the company prior to the closing of Vysa Travel and the money was never refunded.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Nevada benefits from forgotten casino tickets

By Thomas Moore, Las Vegas Sun

Gamblers left more than \$35 million on casino floors in the past five years, money the state of Nevada was happy to come along and pick up. The cash came in the form of slot and video machine tickets that players either lost, forgot about or simply didn't bother to turn in.

With the days of coin-based slots long receded, these tickets are how slot and video poker players collect their winnings. Machine-dispensed tickets must be taken to either a kiosk – the industry name is a ticket-in, ticket-out machine – or the casino's cage and exchanged for cash.

According to Nevada gaming regulations, the tickets expire at a date the casino sets or 180 days, whichever is sooner. State government only gets a portion of what players abandon.

Read the whole story

Nev. population growth rate rebounded in 2016

By Henry Brean, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Call it the Great Basin boom.

Utah and Nevada ranked as the nation's two fastest-growing states over the past year, according to U.S. Census Bureau population estimates for 2016 released Tuesday.

Utah's population grew by just more than 2 percent while Nevada's added 1.95 percent from July 1, 2015, to July 1 of this year. That brought Nevada's population to 2.94 million, up 56,300 from the previous year, the bureau said.

At this rate, Nevada could welcome its 3 millionth resident in 2017.

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Phone scam targeting Washoe County residents

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office has received a number of reports this week from people saying they received phone calls from someone claiming to be from the department and stating that the potential victim has "law enforcement issues" which need to be taken care of.

Typically with these types of scams, the scammer provides instruction on how the payment should be submitted, usually through an "eGift" cash card, pre-paid credit card, or similar payment to a specified account or name given by the caller.

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office does not ask for payment over the phone or negotiate for payment in lieu of arrest. Anyone with questions about a law enforcement issue is asked

to call the sheriff's office or the appropriate local law enforcement agency before providing any information or making payments.

Anyone who has suffered a loss as a result of this type of scam should call WCSO at 775.328.3001, ext. 7.

Record number of travelers expected this season

More than 103 million Americans—the most on record—are expected to travel for the year-end holidays, according to AAA.

This represents a 1.5 percent increase, or 1.5 million more people traveling, compared with last year. This comes despite one fewer travel day this holiday season. The year-end holiday travel period is defined as Dec. 23 to Jan. 2.

The increase in holiday travel this year is being driven by additional consumer spending, a result of improvements in the labor market and rising wages. Additionally, low gas prices and increased consumer optimism will prompt more Americans than ever to set out on road trips, take to the skies, or board trains, buses and cruise ships to celebrate the holidays.

The vast majority of travelers—93.6 million people—will take a holiday road trip, an increase of 1.5 percent over last year. Air travel is expected to increase by 2.5 percent, with more than 6 million Americans flying to their holiday destinations. Travel by other modes of transportation, including cruises, trains and buses, will decrease slightly, to 3.5 million

travelers.

Graduation rate in Nev. improves slightly

By Associated Press

State officials say Nevada's public high school graduation rate is up almost 3 percentage points from the previous year.

The Nevada Department of Education says the graduation rate for the class of 2016 is 73.6 percent. That's up from 70.8 percent in 2015.

More than 1,000 more Nevada students graduated high school in 2016 compared with 2015.

English language learners were the group that showed the greatest improvement. Their graduation rate rose 10 percentage points, even though it remains one of the lowest among subgroups in the state at about 42.6 percent.

Nevada's graduation rate is one of the worst in the country and beat only New Mexico and the District of Columbia last year.

But state Superintendent Steve Canavero says Nevada is on track to become the fastest-improving state.