

Partial recount of Nev. ballots confirms results

By Sandra Chereb, Las Vegas Review-Journal

A limited recount of presidential ballots cast in Nevada confirmed the results of the Nov. 8 election and eliminated the possibility of a statewide recount, the secretary of state's office said Thursday.

The partial recount in 92 precincts, requested and paid for by independent candidate Roque "Rocky" De La Fuente, "yielded no change in the number of votes cast for him," said Secretary of State Barbara Cegavske.

De La Fuente, who came in dead last in the presidential race in Nevada, said he requested the recount because he was concerned about the integrity of the vote.

Read the whole story

Vail Resorts posts quarterly net loss

Vail Resorts quarterly earnings report released today was worse than what analysts had predicted, but were not too surprising for the time of year. A slow start to the season is partially being blamed on the warm weather in November.

The net loss for the Broomfield, Colo.-based company was \$62.6 million for the first fiscal quarter of 2017 compared to a net loss of \$59.6 million in the same period in the prior year.

“Our first fiscal quarter historically operates at a loss given that our North American mountain resorts are not open for ski operations during the period. The quarter’s results are primarily driven by our summer activities, dining, retail/rental and lodging operations, administrative expenses and winter operating results from Perisher, (Australia),” CEO Rob Katz said in a Dec. 9 statement. “We were pleased with our results in the quarter, with strong summer visitation at our U.S. mountain resorts driving increased revenue and profitability with the official launch of Epic Discovery at Vail and Heavenly and continued strong summer results at Breckenridge and Park City.”

Season pass sales are surging. Through Dec. 4 they are up 16 percent for the number sold, which equates to a 20 percent increase in revenue compared to last ski season.

The ski behemoth bought Whistler in Canada this year. While that resort is not part of this season’s Epic Pass, it is expected to be for the 2017-18 season.

Vail owns Heavenly, Kirkwood and Northstar in the Lake Tahoe area.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Nev. lawmaker wants review of letter opposing online gaming

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Review-Journal

WASHINGTON — Nevada Rep. Dina Titus has sent a letter to Vice President-elect Mike Pence and the presidential transition

team asking it to carefully review the online gaming industry before reaching a conclusion on a letter opposing online gaming sent last month by 10 attorneys general.

In a letter dated Dec. 6, Titus, D-Nev., said the letter signed by the 10 AGs, including Nevada's Adam Laxalt, "contains several inaccuracies and unfair allegations."

On Nov. 17, the 10 Republican AGs asked Pence to work toward the restoration of the Interstate Wire Act, a move that could lead to a ban on online poker and other Internet gaming.

Read the whole story

Feds give Tahoe \$6.8 million to thin forests

By Kathryn Reed

Red dominates large segments of a map of Lake Tahoe. This signifies "wildfire ignition risk" zones.

These are areas most susceptible for a catastrophic wildfire because of the dense vegetation.

The California Tahoe Conservancy on Thursday accepted a \$6.8 million grant to treat between 1,200 and 1,800 acres in the wildland urban interface. This the acreage that abuts where people are living and poses the greatest threat to communities.

The money comes from the Bureau of Land Management via the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act.

While the CTC will be the overseer of the money, the land to be thinned includes multiple property owners, with the CTC lots accounting for 30 percent of the total.

“The next step is to work with the grant partners to start prioritization,” Milan Yeates with the CTC told the state board at its Dec. 8 meeting in South Lake Tahoe.

The work is expected to be done in the next six years. First, though, officials will decide for sure what gets treated. Preliminary mapping has already occurred.

“Prioritization of treatment areas will consider a range of topics including environmental review, terrain accessibility, slope and cost estimates,” the staff report says.

A concrete plan is necessary because this funding doesn’t cover the cost to treat all of the 3,000 acres that have been identified as needing to be thinned.

The plan is to treat the areas with the highest threat first. On the South Shore acreage near Stateline is being looked at. Some of this is where an arsonist set multiple fires this summer. (That person has never been caught and the investigation is ongoing.)

Almost all of Sugar Pine Point State Park is covered in red on the map Yeates showed – signifying its vulnerability. The Kings Beach-Highway 267 corridor is another problem area.

Patrick Wright, executive director of the CTC, pointed out in his report how a healthy, thinned forest can withstand a fire better than an overgrown, crowded stand of trees. This fall’s Emerald Fire along Highway 89 is an example of this because part of the burn had been treated.

Fire doesn’t burn as hot in a healthy forest, is less likely to crown, and in its wake leave trees still standing.

Libraries become unexpected sites of hate crimes

By Christopher Mele, New York Times

One of seven books about Islam or the Quran that were recently defaced at a public library in Evanston, Ill.

A librarian at the public library in Evanston, Ill., was recently preparing for a program titled “The Quran: Is It a ‘Good Book’?”

She gathered books to display for attendees and discovered that inside the cover of one, “The Koran for Dummies,” someone had written “lies cover to cover,” drawn a swastika and made a disparaging remark about the Prophet Muhammad.

The authorities say there has been a spate of hate crimes targeting libraries, their books or patrons – offenses officials said they had rarely seen before. These crimes coincide with a recent report by the FBI that attacks against American Muslims surged last year.

Read the whole story

California teacher shortage worsens

By Jill Tucker, San Francisco Chronicle

The teacher shortage across California is getting worse, hitting urban districts hardest, but pinching even rural and suburban schools as well, according to a survey released last week.

As a result, students are seeing a revolving cast of substitutes, canceled courses and less qualified teachers in their classrooms, according to district officials who were surveyed.

Across the state, 75 percent of districts reported a shortage of teachers this school year, including 80 percent of urban districts and 69 percent of schools in the suburbs, according to the poll conducted by the California School Boards Association and the Learning Policy Institute, an education research nonprofit.

Read the whole story

Nev. looks to alternative programs for teachers to earn license

By Amelia Pak-Harvey, Las Vegas Review-Journal

New programs that provide an alternative route to a teaching license by blending online coursework with classroom training could help Nevada address its teacher shortage.

The state Department of Education's Commission on Professional Standards in Education approved three more alternative programs in October, bringing the total to 19 programs created since 2014.

Alternative programs offer a different route to a teaching license than the typical college classroom setting. Participants can hold a conditional teaching license, completing the necessary online coursework while still spending time with students.

Read the whole story

Revenue projection leaves Sandoval with work to do

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – The size of the next state budget became clearer Tuesday when financial experts projected Nevada will collect \$541 million more in tax revenue over the next two years than it did during the last budget cycle.

The Economic Forum projects the state will collect \$7.9 billion in general fund tax revenue in fiscal 2017-18, a 7 percent increase over the current \$7.3 billion budget approved in 2015. The projection will be used to pass a balanced budget, as required by state law.

While the projected revenue is greater, it is still \$300 million to \$600 million less than the total budget requests state departments submitted to Gov. Brian Sandoval in October.

Read the whole story

Fire ruins South Lake Tahoe apartment



Flames shoot out from a South Lake Tahoe apartment on Dec. 7.
Photo/Provided

By Kathryn Reed

A fire at a South Lake Tahoe apartment complex this afternoon displaced at least one person.

Flames were shooting from the bottom middle dwelling of the six-unit complex when firefighters arrived.

“We were able to stop it within 10 minutes,” Battalion Chief Jim Drennan told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Investigators are on scene trying to determine the cause of the 12:45pm Dec. 7 blaze.

The apartments are on 10th Street across from the Cantina restaurant, at the corner of James Avenue.

The occupant of the apartment escaped without injuries. Red

Cross arrived to help provide assistance because he was not able to grab any belongings and was only wearing his robe.

A city building inspector will determine if the other units are habitable. Two of the upper units sustained damage.

This was the second structure fire in the city limits on Wednesday. Earlier in the day firefighters responded to an oil fire on South Shore Drive. They were able to contain it to the kitchen.

Caesars unit's bankruptcy deal in jeopardy

By Tracy Rucinski, Reuters

The bank lenders of Caesars Entertainment Corp.'s operating unit said they might walk away from a plan to bring the casino unit out of its \$18 billion bankruptcy, potentially sending a high-stakes reorganization plan into disarray.

The committee of bank lenders, which includes Blackstone Group LP's GSO Capital Partners, has yet to resolve a dispute over the terms of their recovery, their lawyer Kristopher Hansen said at a hearing in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Chicago on Tuesday.

Hansen said the lenders would inform the court on the status of a deal by Dec. 14, a month before a scheduled confirmation trial in Caesars Entertainment Operating Co Inc's long-running bankruptcy case.

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

Read the whole story