

Why these Californians voted red

By Paige St. John, Los Angeles Times

On a cattle ranch three bridges past a giant lone poplar tree on this isolated northeastern edge of California, Jeffrey Hemphill for once feels part of something larger.

He and his Lassen County neighbors cast 73 percent of their ballots, the strongest vote in the state, to elect Donald Trump for president.

They voted against the rest of California on almost every other ballot issue too, rejecting increased gun regulation, a plastic bag ban, tax hikes, prison parole and the recreational use of marijuana, all seen locally as urban impositions on the rural soul.

Lassen County had the strongest vote in the state to elect Donald Trump for president. It was one of about a dozen other counties in the state that remained solidly red.

Read the whole story

Nev. helps develop defense systems against drones

By Nicole Raz, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Nevada drone experts have finished a Federal Aviation

Administration operation in Denver to develop the counter unmanned systems industry, which is the development of defense systems against drone threats.

“Right now airports do not have a radar that can effectively detect small drones (weighing less than 55 pounds),” said Chris Walach, director of the FAA-designated Nevada Unmanned Aviation Test Site. “When a bird gets sucked into an airliner engine, you have an engine failure. If a bird can produce that type of damage to an airline engine, you can imagine what an unmanned aircraft could do.”

The FAA chose Nevada to lead the operation to test different detection technologies that air traffic control could use to detect unmanned aircraft. Flight teams worked Sunday to Friday flying multiple aircraft at once with different frequencies with the goal of confusing various radar technologies.

Read the whole story

Study shows vulnerability of quake on San Andreas fault



The San Andreas fault in California.

By Rong-Gong Lin II, Los Angeles Times

A sobering new report on California's seismic vulnerabilities said that up to 3.5 million homes could be damaged if an 8.0 earthquake ruptured on the San Andreas fault.

The new estimate, from the data firm CoreLogic, is based on a theoretical rupture of the entire San Andreas fault, which passes through Los Angeles County and the San Francisco Bay Area and spans more than 800 miles, from the Pacific Ocean south of Eureka to Imperial County near the Mexican border.

Scientists now say it is possible – although not likely – that the northern and southern sections of the San Andreas fault can rupture simultaneously.

The cost of reconstruction could be greater than \$289 billion.

Read the whole story

Couple says they fell for VHR scam in Tahoe

By ALi Wolf, Fox 40

It looked like the ideal place to spend Thanksgiving: a four bedroom home with a hot tub, steps away from Lake Tahoe.

Bob Busser and his wife were excited to spend four nights in a South Lake Tahoe rental, but when they pulled up Tuesday night.

“There’s nobody there, we called the number,” said Busser.

It didn’t take long for them to realize they had been scammed.

Read the whole story

Calif. weather changes affect power supply

By Lisa Meadows, CBS-13

California has set big goals for switching over to green energy within the next decade. The difference with these energy source, they depend on the weather. Water (hydro energy), wind (wind turbines), and sun (solar energy) are the key components to generating renewable energy. In California, lawmakers have set high standards for how green we want to be in the next 10 to 20 years. The goal is to have switched over 33 percent of the state to renewable energy sources by 2020 and half of the state by 2030.

Since all three are affected by the weather, that means high stakes weather forecasting for the California Independent Systems Operator. This government group manages the state’s power grid. Steven Greenlee of Cal ISO says, “We have to make sure that the grid is ready to deliver all of those megawatts that the utilities need to meet these goals.”

Read the whole story

Nevada DMV might automatically register voters

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – An initiative petition that would make it easier to register to vote could reach the Nevada Legislature next year after more than 125,000 signatures were turned in to county clerks for verification.

The Automatic Voter Registration Initiative would amend state law to require the Department of Motor Vehicles to transmit information to the Secretary of State's Office to register people to vote or update their information. People could opt out of the program. Right now, people can register to vote at the DMV, but they have to "opt in."

County clerks have until Dec. 1 to verify the signatures.

Read the whole story

Power out for small segment of North Shore

Update: Power has been restored.

More than 100 Liberty Utilities customers on the North Shore are without power.

A downed power line caused the outage. It is across Highway 89 near Cabin Creek Road.

Crews do not have an estimated time when the lights will come

back on.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

U.S. home sales strongest in nearly a decade

By Josh Boak, AP

WASHINGTON — Americans bought homes in October at the fastest pace in nearly decade, helped out by low mortgage rates that have since started to climb following the presidential election of Donald Trump.

The National Association of Realtors said Tuesday that sales of existing homes rose 2 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 5.6 million. Sales reached their strongest pace since February 2007, a sign that the market is still healing from the collapsing prices and foreclosures that ignited the 2008 financial crisis.

A stable job market and historically cheap borrowing costs have spurred demand from homebuyers this year. But sales growth has been tempered somewhat by accelerating prices and a shortage of properties on the market. Sales gains could possibly slow in the coming months as rising mortgage rates are making home loans more expensive.

“Clearly, the market continues to underestimate just how much demand for homes is out there, even in the face of tight inventory and rising existing home prices that are now the highest on record,” said Svenja Gudell, chief economist at the real estate firm Zillow.

Falling mortgage rates helped boost sales for much of the year, but rates surged following this month's presidential election. The increase means that yearly debt payments for a median-priced home would increase by more than \$500 on average for people attempting to buy homes in November and December.

Investors expect the federal budget deficit to rise in a Trump administration, causing the yield on 10-year U.S. Treasury notes to reach roughly 2.3 percent.

The rising interest rates trickled into the housing market. The average 30-year, fixed-rate mortgage climbed to nearly 4 percent from less than 3.5 percent at the end of October. Few housing experts say that higher rates at this stage will fully disrupt sales, although it might cause some existing homeowners to stay in place rather than upgrade to new homes and costlier mortgages. The impact of higher rates could be offset if wages accelerate strongly during a Trump administration, giving Americans higher incomes.

Still, the supply crunch of the past year shows little sign of reversing itself.

Sales listings have fallen 4.3 percent over the past year to 2.02 million homes. The shortage has pushed up the median sales price of existing homes 6 percent from a year ago to \$232,200.

The low mortgage rates aided buyers with solid credit, although tighter lending standards appears to have hurt potential sales.

An analysis released this week by the Urban Institute, a Washington-based think tank, found that there could have been an additional 1.1 million mortgages issued in 2015 if traditional lending practices had been in place that put less emphasis on stronger credit scores above 700.

The tighter credit standards have helped foster a housing

market that prefers cash buyers and investors who may be more likely to rent homes to tenants than live in them.

Family of deputy who drowned sues Tahoe SUP shop

By Nate Gartrell, Bay Area News Group

The family of an off-duty Contra Costa sheriff's deputy who drowned last year has sued a South Lake Tahoe paddleboard company as part of a push for increased regulations in the boating industry.

The family of Deputy Carlos Diamond Francies last week sued South Tahoe Standup Paddle, alleging the company's employees failed to warn Francies and his friends of hazardous weather before renting them kayaks. The suit also alleges that Standup Paddle's employees waited a half hour before attempting to rescue Francies' sister, who was struggling to stay afloat in the lake.

In addition to the suit, Francies' mother, Beverly Fisher, says she plans to push for new safety laws in the boat rental industry. The suit alleges that there were severe weather warnings – including a red flag warning issued by the National Weather Service – that should have alerted Standup Paddle to the potential dangers that day.

Read the whole story

Suspect in SLT food tampering case arrested

A 43-year-old South Lake Tahoe man has been arrested in connection with tampering with food at two local establishments.



Harry Dally

Harry Dally was arrested Nov. 22 after officers searched his residence.

“The search warrant service revealed items of interest related to this investigation. The SLTPD now has an indication of what the contaminating substance may be,” officers said in a press release.

The chemical is not being released pending laboratory analysis and questioning of Dally.

While police are confident Dally is responsible for approximately four incidents at the Hot Wok Chinese Food restaurant in the Raley’s near Stateline, they are still waiting for surveillance footage from Baja Fresh. That restaurant is in the same shopping center. The crimes occurred from Nov. 8-19.

The contamination at Baja Fresh from the salsa bar sent a 12-year-old to the hospital.

Evidence and similarities at the two eateries make detectives

believe the same person is responsible for the food contamination. However, Dally has only been charged in the Raley's case. He faces one felony.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*