

Why more community colleges offer free tuition

By Mike McPhate, New York Times

After President Obama announced a goal last year to make community college free for all Americans, no state has moved as aggressively as California.

In 2016, at least 20 programs offering support to incoming community college students were introduced in California, bringing the state's total to about 30, according to the federal Department of Education.

Critics of the move toward free community college have argued that the programs would strain public budgets and that aid should rather be narrowly targeted toward needy students.

California's 113 community colleges have become an increasingly attractive option for families looking for alternatives to the state's public universities, where academic competition has grown fierce and tuitions have tripled since 2000.

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Barton forced to rescind

campaign donation

While Barton Health wanted to support the Tahoe Chamber Independent Expenditure Committee, it has had to back pedal with its donation for legal reasons.

The political action committee is an arm of the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce. The entity financially supported candidates Brooke Laine and Jason Collin for South Lake Tahoe City Council. They went on to win the two seats earlier this month.

Collin is an employee of Barton Health.

According to Mindi Befu with Barton, the \$1,000 contribution was given before the health conglomerate knew who the IEC was going to support. The money, she said, was in support of the chamber's Tahoe Future 2020. Nonetheless, Barton as a non-for-profit group cannot make such a donation.

"As a 501(c)3, Barton Health is unable to contribute funds that support or oppose political candidates. When Barton administration was made aware of this event, we requested the donation be returned," Befu told *Lake Tahoe News*.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Winds whip control burn into small vegetation fire

A control burn in Truckee was quickly extinguished today after it became an actual vegetation fire.

The Nov. 19 fire was off Ski Slope Way in the Tahoe Donner subdivision. Winds spread it to about one-quarter of an acre before firefighters got it back under control.

Multiple fire vehicles are parked on Ski Slope Way between Teton Way and Herringbone Way.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Did money buy Calif. ballot measure contests?

By Taryn Luna, Sacramento Bee

California voters passed a measure on Election Day urging state politicians to use their authority to limit corporate and special interest spending in elections.

Then they sided with the campaign that raised the most money on the majority of statewide ballot measure contests.

Proposition 59 was advisory-only, aimed at overturning a Supreme Court decision in an effort to rein in outside spending. It carries little weight. Nonetheless, the vote demonstrates Californians' concern over the role of money in politics.

Read the whole story

258 pounds of pot confiscated in Truckee



Chase poses with his find in Truckee. Photo/Provided

More than 250 pounds of marijuana were seized this week in Truckee.

Placer County sheriff's K-9 Chase sniffed out the weed that was stored in a false floor of a trailer.

The California Highway Patrol has stopped the cargo trailer on Interstate 80 in Truckee and then requested the K-9.

Deputy Josh Buckley responded with Chase, who made a positive alert on the floor of the trailer. Officers found 258 pounds of marijuana in the floor.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Financial health of Nev.'s pension fund improves

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – The financial health of Nevada's public employee pension improved in fiscal year 2016, with the funded ratio increasing to 74.1 percent from 73.2 percent the prior year.

The actuarial valuation report for the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) was reviewed and approved Thursday by the seven-member board that oversees the plan. The report was prepared by Segal Consulting, an independent actuary contracted by PERS to do the analysis.

The report recommends no changes to the contribution rates for the plan, which are split 50-50 between employers and employees. The contribution rates are currently set at 28 percent for regular state employees and 40.5 percent for police and firefighters.

Read the whole story

Legal squabbles may doom lone SLT pot shop

By Kathryn Reed

"You have just hit us with a bomb."

That was the reaction of a care-giver when told Tahoe Wellness Cooperative will likely close next month.

The medical marijuana dispensary's permit expired in May. City officials have been working with Cody Bass, who operates the nonprofit, to get the business into compliance. The city finally said enough is enough and told Bass the company must cease operations Dec. 13 if it does not have a valid permit.

A condition of the two-year permit is for the collective to have written permission from the landlord to operate this type of business. That permission has been elusive.

Patty Olson owns the commercial strip in the Bijou Center where the collective is located. She was a pioneer here, having moved to the city in the 1950s before it was a city. Olson moved to Sparks a couple years ago.

The property is under the auspices of a family trust that is controlled by her son, Patrick. The family has run into some difficult financial times since she relinquished control of her finances. They almost lost the family house behind the center. This fall a local businessman came forward with funding so the house would not be foreclosed on. Patrick Olson still lives in the house.

Patty Olson told *Lake Tahoe News* she has been advised by her attorney, Bruce Grego, to not talk about what is going on.

"I'm not privileged to give you any information," the 91-year-old Olson told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Grego also is not talking.

The trust also owns the cabin that houses the tattoo shop.

Bass and the Olson family are involved in several lawsuits.

In March, Bass told *Lake Tahoe News* he was buying the property where the collective is as well as the Olson family home. He has sued the family for breach of contract. Those close to the case told *Lake Tahoe News* that the option to buy expired.

The Olsons have filed suit trying to evict Bass, contending that he is arrears in rent by at least six months.

Bass could not be reached for comment.

A settlement conference is scheduled for Nov. 29 regarding the eviction and a trial is set to start in February for the breach of contract lawsuit.

Waiting in the wings for the lawsuits to settle is a well-known South Lake Tahoe businessman who owns other property in the Bijou area. *LTN* sources said the sale of the Olson property is contingent on Bass not being there.

What isn't known is why the Olsons prefer selling to the unnamed businessman over Bass. However, it is well-known that city officials have wanted TWC to close and are working with the businessman.

With TWC being the last place to get medicinal marijuana in South Lake Tahoe, if it closes, it would create a void in the lives of those who need the product.

"The patient that I am caregiver for has been going to the collective since it opened. I go weekly to get this person's medicine and it has allowed this person to have a better appetite, and dramatically cut back on pain medication," Rosemary Manning told *Lake Tahoe News*. She is the one who said news of the closure hit her like a bomb.

Recreational marijuana is not likely an option because that will be a while before California actually allows it even though voters approved the use earlier this month. Going to Nevada will be an option she and the patient will look into.

The original moratorium in South Lake Tahoe on three pot clubs was approved in November 2009. Bass' is the last one in existence. Part of the ordinance that was later passed said the dispensaries were only allowed to operate at the address

of their original permit. That means that even if Tahoe Wellness Cooperative wanted to move, it would require the council rewriting the ordinance.

Marijuana is going to be a big part of the Dec. 13 council agenda – the same day as TWC's deadline to come into compliance or lock its doors. Police Chief Brian Uhler is scheduled to give a presentation about Proposition 64, the recreation marijuana initiative that voters OK'd this month. The city probably has to change its ordinance in regards to growing marijuana.

Sandoval: Nev. will fight Yucca nuclear waste project

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Gov. Brian Sandoval said he isn't going to abandon his longstanding opposition to creation of a high-level nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain, whether or not President-elect Donald Trump or Congress renew efforts to entomb radioactive materials at the site 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas.

Sandoval said Monday he has not yet had a conversation with Trump and does not know his position on Yucca Mountain.

"It won't change my position on Yucca Mountain," Sandoval said. "As far as I am concerned the state will continue to aggressively oppose the siting of storage of high-level nuclear waste there."

Read the whole story

USFS: 102 million dead California trees

By Matt Stevens, Los Angeles Times

The number of dead trees in California's drought-stricken forests has risen dramatically to more than 102 million in what officials described as an unparalleled ecological event that heightens the danger of massive wildfires and damaging erosion.

Officials said they were alarmed by the increase in dead trees, which they estimated to have risen by 36 million since the government's last survey in May. The U.S. Forest Service, which performs aerial surveys of forest land, said in a study released Friday that 62 million tree died this year alone.

"The scale of die-off in California is unprecedented in our modern history," said Randy Moore, the forester for the region of the U.S. Forest Service that includes California. Trees are dying "at a rate much quicker than we thought."

[Read the whole story](#)

Prohibition of pot use in Nev. casinos likely to

continue

By Thomas Moore, Las Vegas Sun

Even after Question 2's passage last week, casinos will likely avoid dealing with the marijuana industry and continue to prohibit guests from using pot on their properties, if the discussions of Nevada's gaming regulators Thursday are any indication.

Both the Nevada Gaming Control Board and Gaming Commission heard testimony and talked about the question that allows adults to legally possess up to one ounce of marijuana, or one-eighth ounce of concentrated marijuana, starting next year.

The issue was listed only as a discussion item on the agenda, so the commission did not vote or make a formal recommendation.

Read the whole story