

# Nevadans to vote on breaking up energy monopoly

By Michelle Rindels, AP

A proposed ballot measure called the Energy Choice Initiative aims to deregulate electrical service in Nevada, opening up the market to providers other than NV Energy – the sole provider in most parts of the state. Here are things to know about Question 3:

How does it work?

If the measure passes this year and again in 2018, it will amend the Nevada Constitution to add the right for customers to choose their energy provider and to produce their own power to sell to others. It directs the Nevada Legislature to pass laws authorizing an open, competitive electricity market by mid-2023.

A “yes” vote supports the changes to the Constitution; a “no” vote keeps the Constitution the same.

**Read the whole story**

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# Science of wildfires and tree-killing beetles

By Tara Lohan, KQED-TV

So far this year 4,636 wildfires in California have burned more than 200,000 acres. That’s more fires than this time last

year and more fires than the five-year average. In fact, in the last few decades, the number of large fires are on the rise across the Western United States and the length of the fire season continues to expand.

There are some areas, particularly in parts of the southern Sierra Nevada, where up to 85 percent of the large trees are dead or dying.

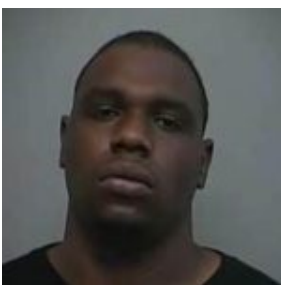
One of the biggest reasons for this is warming temperatures, which are impacting snowpack and ushering in an earlier spring. California has an added challenge of dealing with a five-year drought. The drought and climate change have allowed bark beetles to get the upper hand in swathes of forest in the Sierra Nevada, creating what ecologists call “pulses” of tree mortality. To the average person it looks like a lot of red needles on dead trees.

**Read the whole story**

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## **Cops link Fairfield man to SLT robbery-murder**

A suspect was arrested today who police believe was involved in the January robbery that resulted in the death of an Amador County man.



Andrew Adams

Andrew Adams, 25, was taken into custody in Fairfield on Sept. 15 on robbery charges.

On Jan. 30 Dennis Wright, 40, was gunned down in the parking lot of the Beverly Lodge in South Lake Tahoe during a drug deal turned robbery/murder.

Other arrests in this case include:

- Tevarez Lopez, 33 – charged with murder
- Domenic Randolph, 22 – charged with murder
- Tristan Batten, 18 – charged with murder
- Harvest Davidson, 20 – charged with murder
- Vanessa Muzio, 18 – charged with accessory to murder.
- Dion Jermaine Vaccaro, 24 – charged with murder.

Arrests of additional outstanding suspects may follow.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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# TRPA-created commodities impact development

By Kathryn Reed

As the economy continues to improve in South Lake Tahoe, it means people want to build – it's happening at both ends of town as well as in mid-town at Harrison Avenue.

But what most of these developers need is commercial floor area, or CFA. This is a commodity created by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency as a way to control growth. It worked – to a point.

The problem today is that instead of a free market and zoning dictating development, it is money – as in who has a bank account big enough to pay for CFA. The other problem is the city has a loose policy as to how CFA is divvied out, and no firm price.

City staff said the going rate for CFA is \$30 per square foot.

Plus, it's not like there is an unlimited supply of CFA.



Additional commercial floor area was acquired at Harrison Avenue to create a rooftop dining area. Photo/LTN

Jurisdictions have received CFA allocations from TRPA for various reasons that are then earmarked for specific area/community plans. TRPA has since stopped awarding CFA. The city has some banked CFA from trades, sales and development projects.

And while the TRPA recognizes the CFA and tourist accommodation unit commodities are impacting progress, that bi-state regulatory board doesn't anticipate changing the current structure for at least a couple years.

The city's criteria for CFA allocations in part include:

- The project being in an adopted area or community plan;
- The project must be mixed use;
- Distressed properties being remodeled or removed;
- There must be an economic benefit to the community.

Before the August council meeting the city had 57,596 square feet of CFA. With what was approved last month and what is being requested this month, the council will be down to 36,671 square feet if all get green-lighted.

Two applicants came before the City Council last month asking for CFA, and more are expected to do so next week when the electeds meet.

In August, the council voted 3-2 to sell 600 square feet of CFA to Tom Haen at \$20 a square foot. Councilmembers Tom Davis and JoAnn Conner were in the minority. Davis argued that it should be free. Councilmember Hal Cole reminded him that he twice voted to charge for CFA, and said reversing policy now would set a bad precedent.

Haen needs the CFA for a project on Industrial Avenue, which he is trying to bring into compliance.

"There is nothing in the policy in any form to provide CFA or any commodity for free," City Attorney Tom Watson said. "The practice of this council for the last two years is to charge for CFA."

The other request in August was from Mike McKeen and John

Cefalu, who are partners in a project at Harrison Avenue.

“Now you are changing the rules on us. That is unfair and unreasonable,” Cefalu told the council before the vote.

After some heated discussion, the council unanimously agreed to give the men the 970 square feet of CFA.

Ultimately the council made its decision based on Cole agreeing with Cefalu’s recollection that the CFA ended up in the Bijou-Al Tahoe Area Plan from TRPA as an incentive for redevelopment.

Redevelopment is exactly what this project is. Cefalu and McKeen are demolishing the better part of a building that used to house a bagel shop and standup paddle rental.

“We want to use the upstairs deck. That needs CFA,” Cefalu told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The goal is to be done by Christmas, with a handful of tenants occupying the structure.

“The upstairs will probably be office or light commercial; something that doesn’t require a lot of parking,” Cefalu said.

He wouldn’t say what the bottom area will be, but sources have told *Lake Tahoe News* a brewery is likely.

As for the other uses for CFA, on Sept. 20 three mixed-use projects spearheaded by Steve Leman and Clint Purvance are expected to be on the council agenda. A project on 4th Street needs 5,366 square feet of CFA, South Avenue needs 6,161 square feet, and Emerald Bay 7,828 square feet.

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# Suspects caught in Douglas child abduction case



Dason Valdez

The suspects accused of abducting two Douglas County children have been found.

Dason Valdez, 29, and Krystle Reid, 27, were located by Carson City sheriff's deputies just after midnight today. An anonymous tip led to their whereabouts.

Valdez was arrested Sept. 15 on a Carson City warrant. Reid was released at the scene. Charges for both are pending in Douglas County.

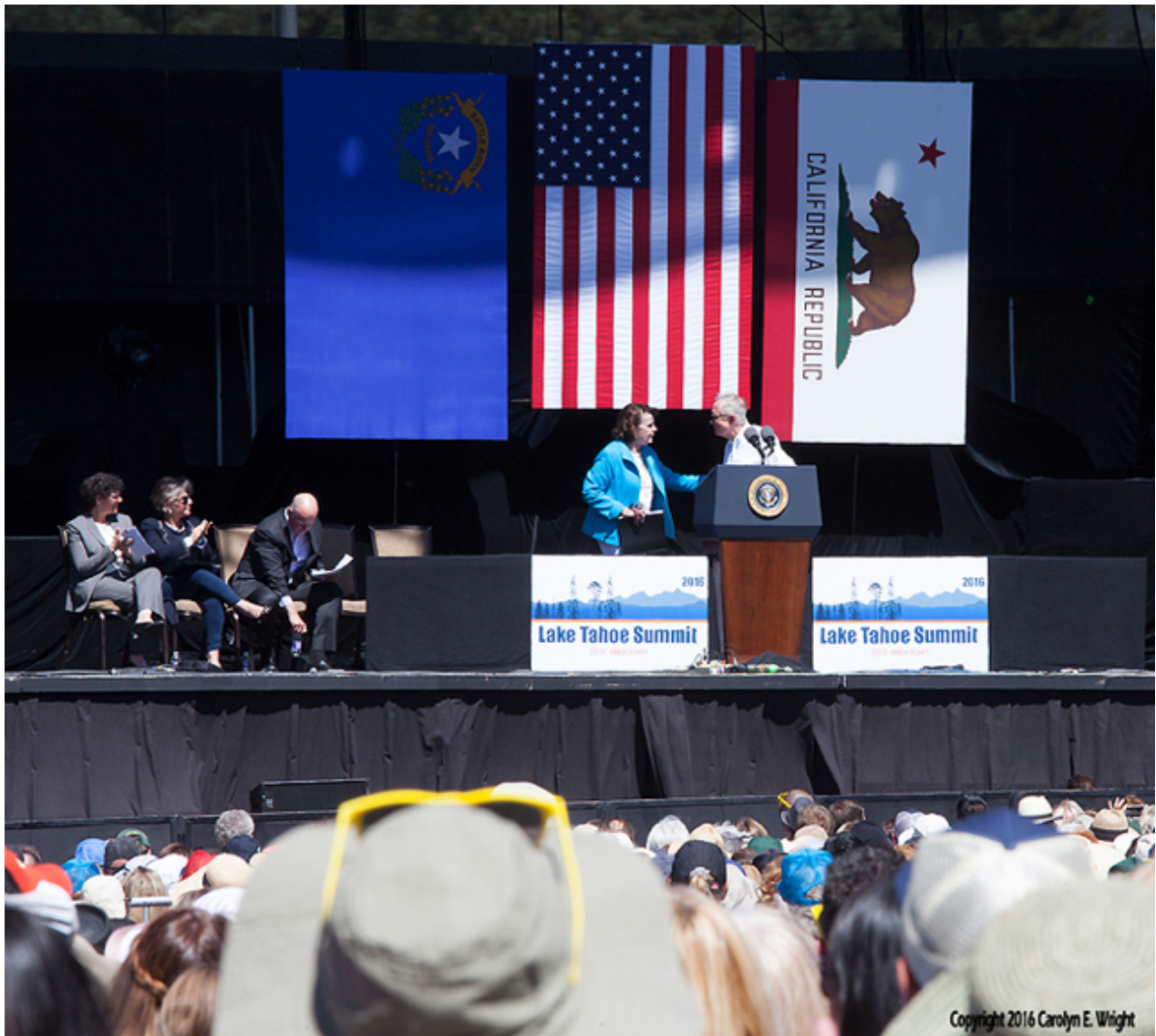
According to Douglas County sheriff's deputies, Valdez entered his parent's residence in northern Douglas County just after 5pm Sept. 12, and physically removed his two children after committing domestic battery on his mother.

The children were returned that night unharmed to their grandparents, who have custody of them.

*– Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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# Senate approves Lake Tahoe Restoration Act



Sens. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., and Harry Reid, D-Nev., are staunch backers of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

The U.S. Senate today approved a measure that would bring \$415 million to the Lake Tahoe Basin.

On a 94-3 vote the \$4.8 billion Water Resources Development Act was approved. Dissenting on Sept. 15 were Sens. Mike Lee,

R-Utah, Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., and Ben Sasse, R-Neb.

Wrapped into this bill is the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act. The money for Tahoe will be allocated over 10 years for forest fuels management, environmental and watershed restoration, stormwater management and other projects.

“The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act highlights our commitment to protecting this unique ecosystem and the economy that depends upon the lake’s clarity. Its passage is an important step, but it is meaningless unless Republicans are willing to step up and get it through the House of Representatives and onto the president’s desk,” Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., said in a statement. “Last month, at my invitation, President Obama visited Lake Tahoe for the very first time to speak at the 20th anniversary of the Lake Tahoe Summit. At that event the federal government, the states of Nevada and California, local businesses, residents and philanthropists all rededicated ourselves to the work of protecting this unique and wonderful lake. As the entire world saw last month, the beauty of Lake Tahoe is unparalleled. We must do everything we can to keep it that way.”

The initial LTRA was passed following the inaugural environmental summit that President Bill Clinton launched in 1997.

The next step is for the House of Representatives to take up the legislation.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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# Colo. deputy-STHS grad involved in shooting

By Mitchell Byars, Boulder Camera

The suspect in a shootout along U.S. 287 east of Niwot with a Boulder County deputy is currently under investigation for attempted murder but remains in "critical, grave condition."



Teri Rosegard  
Javes

The Boulder County Sheriff's Office identified the suspect as Adrian Joseph Shaffer, 37, of Boulder. Shaffer, who is receiving medical treatment, is facing possible charges of attempted first-degree murder and other charges should he survive.

The Boulder County Sheriff's Office today also identified the deputy involved in the shootout as Teri Rosegard Javes, a 19-year veteran of the department. She is a graduate of South Tahoe High School.

Javes was placed on paid administrative leave following Saturday's shooting.

**Read the whole story**

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# Cancer the leading cause of death in Calif.

By Karen Kaplan, Los Angeles Times

Cancer has surpassed heart disease as the leading cause of death in California and 21 other states, according to a report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

That total is in stark contrast to the situation at the start of this century, when only two states – Alaska and Minnesota – lost more people to cancer than heart disease.

And it's a huge departure from the situation in the 1950s, when the number of heart disease deaths was  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times bigger than the number of cancer fatalities.

**[Read the whole story](#)**

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# Setbacks aside, Nev. a leader in solar installations

By Daniel Rothberg, Las Vegas Sun

Despite a sharp decrease in applications for new rooftop solar projects, Nevada remains among the top five states for the deployment of solar resources. When Nevada was compared to other states, it ranked fifth for solar installations during the first half of 2016, a trade group said in a study released

Monday.

One reason for the result: large-scale solar projects. According to the study from GTM Research and the Solar Energy Industries Association, Nevada continues to break ground on large-scale projects, even as sales for rooftop solar systems in the state remain a fraction of what they were during 2015.

As of June, about 81 megawatts of large-scale solar resources had been installed in Nevada (for reference, one megawatt can power about 600 homes). Several projects became operational at the end of 2015, including a solar operation at Nellis Air Force Base and one near Tonopah. NV Energy began construction on two additional large-scale projects this summer, both expected to operate next year.

**Read the whole story**

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## **Mega-development in Martis Valley approved**

**By Kathryn Reed**

KINGS BEACH – A 6.6-acre ridgeline parcel bordering the Lake Tahoe Basin is going to one day have 760 units built on it.

In approving the project on a 4-1 vote Tuesday, the Placer County Board of Supervisors did not take the recommendation of the **Planning Commission**, which in July denied the project on a 5-2 vote. Supervisor Jennifer Montgomery was the dissenting vote Sept. 13 on the multiple issues related to the project.

Mountainside Partners of Truckee, the developer, and landowner Sierra Pacific Industries have been working on this project

for at least 10 years. Build out is expected to take 20 years.

Known as Martis Valley West, the project has been controversial because it takes undeveloped land in Truckee that borders Lake Tahoe and turns it into a subdivision for second homeowners. The proponents have said they expect 20 percent or less full-time occupancy.

Montgomery voted no because she said the project goes against all the policies the county has been adopting, which call for any new project to be next to existing development. She was also disappointed that the original plan to connect the project to Northstar ski resort has been scrapped.

She was not alone in her opposition. Of the 60 people who spoke, 43 were against the project, 16 for it and one didn't take a side. Hundreds of people filled the North Tahoe Events Center for the all-day meeting that ended at 5:30pm – it started at 9:45am.

"A vote today for this project would be a vote against Lake Tahoe," Shannon Eckmeyer with the League to Save Lake Tahoe told the supervisors.

While the project is completely outside of the basin, it was acknowledged that it will impact the region at least in terms of traffic. Those vehicles in turn affect air quality and lake clarity.

Traffic congestion on Highway 267 is already problematic. People worry this project will make it even worse. And if the area needs to evacuate, residents wonder how that will happen without the loss of life if the roads are clogged and options to escape are limited.

Transportation consultant Gordon Shaw said the increase in time to get places because of the new residences would be negligible. What might help speed the flow is if Caltrans makes this a four-lane highway, which is on the books – but

without funding or a timetable.

Opponents don't believe enough study was done on the cumulative effects of projects already approved. Proponents say there was plenty of review.

While the threat of a lawsuit was broached, it was acknowledged making decisions based on potential litigation is no way to run a county. County counsel has said the environmental document is sound and is not worried that the Attorney General's Office said otherwise. This was the same stance when the AG weighed in on the Squaw Valley plan and the county did the opposite of what the state's top lawyer said.

Placer supes believe the environmental gains will trump any flaws in the plans. They opted to trust staff and what's in the environmental document.

The community plan allows for 1,360 units, nothing allocated for conservation and no recreation trails. The developer's proposed 760 units – with another 600 being permanently retired, 6,376 acres preserved and 40 acres of trails are what sold the electeds.

The proponents in the last few months also agreed to up their workforce housing contribution. Originally they wanted to pay a mitigation fee. They conceded to build 47 units on the property. This would represent the midpoint between the minimum and maximum number of people working there. They also agreed to pay for another five units at \$117,000 each as an additional mitigation fee. Placer County could use that money for housing elsewhere.