

Nev. may add Green Party candidate to ballot

By Jamie Munks, Las Vegas Review-Journal

A federal judge is considering a complaint by the Nevada Green Party seeking to force the secretary of state to accept supplemental signatures that would allow presidential candidate Jill Stein to appear on the ballot in November.

The Nevada Green Party in June submitted to Secretary of State Barbara Cegavske roughly 8,600 signatures for Stein to appear on the Nevada ballot. But some of the signatures were later deemed invalid, leaving the party short of the minimum requirement of 5,431 valid signatures by June 3.

The party filed an appeal seeking to have 3,000 signatures rechecked and collected an additional 1,200 signatures to gain ballot access, which Cegavske rejected.

Read the whole story

Guilty pleas in tax fraud case

Three people associated with a West Slope tax return preparation business have pleaded guilty to fraud charges.

Teresa Marty, 56, the owner of Placerville-based Advanced Financial Services, pleaded guilty Aug. 31 to conspiring to file false claims for refund and conspiring to defraud the Internal Revenue Service. On Aug. 24, Pamela Harris, Marty's

office manager, and Rebecca Bandera-Marty, a certified tax return preparer, pleaded guilty to one count of conspiring to file false claims.

Marty, Harris and Bandera-Marty were indicted in June 2013 along with two other co-defendants, Charles and Victoria Tingler. The Tingleers, who were clients, pleaded guilty to filing false claims in spring 2015. They will be sentenced in November.

Marty, Harris and Bandera-Marty admitted that they conspired to file false individual income tax returns claiming more than \$60 million in false federal income tax refunds. Marty and Harris recruited clients by falsely representing that the clients could legally receive sizable tax refunds by filing tax returns with IRS Forms 1099-OID. AFS prepared false Forms 1099-OID that reported an amount equal to the clients' debts as income and the same amount as income tax withheld, resulting in significant income tax refunds to which the clients were not entitled. The scheme included clients from 26 states.

Marty is scheduled to be sentenced Jan. 4. She faces a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison, a term of supervised release and monetary penalties. Bandera-Marty is scheduled to be sentenced Nov. 16, and Harris is scheduled to be sentenced Jan. 4. They each face a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison, a term of supervised release and monetary penalties.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

401(k)s wreaking havoc on retirement

By Ben Steverman, Bloomberg

The shift from pensions to 401(k) plans is making retirement inequality much worse—and education is what separates the haves from the have-nots, a new study has found.

College graduates have always been able to get better jobs. What's new in recent decades is that traditional pensions have all but vanished, replaced by 401(k)-style plans.

In 1980, 38 percent of private sector workers had a pension and 19 percent a 401(k). By last year, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, the numbers had more or less reversed—just 15 percent had a pension and 43 percent a 401(k).

The authors analyzed surveys linked to W-2 tax data to figure out how much Americans with varying levels of education were saving in their retirement accounts.

Read the whole story

Traffic deaths increase 7% in 2015

By Associated Press

Government officials say traffic fatalities rose 7.2 percent in 2015 compared to the previous year. That's the largest

single-year increase in a half century.

The final tally of 35,092 deaths released this week by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is 0.5 percent lower than the 7.7 percent estimated increase released in July. NHTSA said the final numbers are still the largest single-year increase since 1966. Officials attribute the rise to more drivers on the road.

The Obama administration responded to the latest numbers with a “call to action,” asking researchers, safety experts, data scientists and others to find new ways to prevent traffic deaths.

The National Safety Council has said that its preliminary estimates for the first six months of 2016 show the trend increasing, with fatalities up 9 percent.

Obama affirms climate change impact at Tahoe



Thousands attend the Tahoe Summit to hear President Obama speak. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – President Obama bridged the environmental and economic divide in a speech at Lake Tahoe on Wednesday that left no doubt that without addressing climate change, the land, water and social welfare of this basin and all areas will be left to wither in the wind.

Obama was speaking to thousands of people Aug. 31 at the 20th annual Lake Tahoe Environmental Summit at Harveys.

“Healthy and diverse lands and waters help up us build resiliency to climate change,” he said. “Economies like this one live or die by the health of our natural resources.”



President Obama gets a good view of Jobs Sister on Marine One as he arrives at Lake Tahoe Airport. Photo/John Adamski

Obama was the keynote speaker at the summit hosted by Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev. Joining them on stage were Gov. Jerry Brown, California Democratic Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, and Janice Schneider, assistant secretary for Land and Minerals Management of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

"The challenge of conservation and battling climate change are linked," Obama said.

Taking a line from a Washoe elder, Obama said, "What happens to the land, happens to the people."



President Obama in his first trip to Lake Tahoe tries to cement his environmental legacy. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

Obama praised work being done in California by Brown to reduce carbon emissions, tackle climate change and increase reusable energy consumption.

Brown said today 25 percent of the state's energy comes from renewables, while that is expected to double by 2030.

Boxer, who has been absent for most of the summits since the inaugural one, said, "Yes, we are here to celebrate the progress, but we have more work to do."

With the warmest average surface temperature at Lake Tahoe recorded in 2015, the 2007 Angora Fire that destroyed 254 houses a reminder of what a wildfire can do, and California and Nevada being in a fifth year of drought, the need to protect the environment is evident. To do so takes money.



Sens. Harry Reid and Barbara Boxer have championed Lake

Tahoe during their tenure; both are retiring. Photo
Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

Since the first summit in 1997 that was launched by President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore, nearly \$2 billion has been spent in the basin on environmental projects. This has been a combination of federal, state, local and private money.

Even though the reauthorization of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act is wending its way through Congress, there is no guarantee it will pass. It is now part of the larger Water Resources Development Act. The LTRA has gone a few cycles without seeing the light of day. It would allocate more than \$400 million to the basin.

Still, there is other money flowing here.



Sharpshooters and Secret Service were the norm inside and outside Harveys. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

Schneider spoke of how earlier Wednesday close to \$30 million was awarded to eight projects. Most of that – \$25 million – is headed to Tahoe and the surrounding area for restoration, including fuels management. The North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District in Incline Village is getting money, so is the U.S. Forest Service, Tahoe Resource Conservation District and California Tahoe Conservancy.

Richard Solbrig, general manager of South Tahoe Public Utility District, told *Lake Tahoe News* that without the annual allocation of money in the federal budget to help with firefighting infrastructure, agencies like his and others in the basin would be in dire straights. While the funding requires the local districts to come up with a 50 percent match, it still lessens the local burden and gets projects done faster. Those federal dollars are paying for more than 100 fire hydrants to be put in the ground this year by South Tahoe PUD.



LTBMU Fire Chief Kit Bailey and Fallen Leaf Lake Fire Chief Gary Gerren at the summit. Photo/Kathryn Reed

While Kit Bailey, fire chief for Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, is appreciative of any money that comes to help thin the forest, that's not the agency's only issue. The U.S. Forest Service, which owns about 80 percent of the land in the basin, also needs facilities.

“We need a new fire station on the West Shore partly because the engines keep getting bigger and the buildings are aging, and more and more are deteriorating,” Bailey told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The Meeks Bay station is a converted gas station from the 1940s that then became an ice cream shop before it was turned into a firehouse. And the hot shot crew housed in Meyers also needs a better facility.

But seldom at these summits is money allocated for what might be considered a basic necessity – like a suitable, modern building.



Sen. Dianne Feinstein and Gov. Jerry Brown follow President Obama off the stage at Harveys. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

On Aug. 31 the Obama administration allocated the following funding:

- \$29.5 million dedicated for hazardous fuels reduction projects to improve forest health and protect life and property from the threat of catastrophic wildfires. The funding will be used on public and private lands to remove

standing dead and dying hazard trees along roads, in campgrounds, at administrative and communication sites, and in the wildland urban interface.

- The National Forest Foundation with the Forest Service and local partners announced it has raised more than \$4 million for forest health, sustainable recreation and creek restoration projects throughout the Truckee River Watershed.

- The Environmental Protection Agency is allocating more than \$230,000 in grant funding for infrastructure to manage and reduce stormwater runoff in the region.

- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is spending \$1 million for eight projects to prevent the spread of zebra and quagga mussels from nearby water bodies to Lake Tahoe.

Thousands without power in N. Nevada

Thousands of NV Energy customers in Douglas County and Carson City are without power.

Power is expected to be restored at 6pm Aug. 31. The outage in Carson was first reported about 3:30pm.

A tent flew into a line in Carson City, according to a utility spokeswoman.

In Douglas there are 1,152 customers affected, and 7,276 in Carson.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

FDA regs could damage Nev.'s vapor industry

By Valerie Miller, Las Vegas Sun

As 5 o'clock rolls around, people are trickling into Charles Ploski's Henderson business. A father and his grown son, a new dad and a married couple all shop and stay awhile, maybe grabbing a soda while they chat with Ploski. This warm interaction could be at a coffeehouse or neighborhood pub, but it's Friday night at a vape shop.

They enter Ploski's Vapor Cave with devices in hand, seeking "vape juice" – nicotine liquid in flavors such as vanilla, cotton candy and tobacco. The average age of his customers is 40-45, but they come as young as 18 and as old as 78.

Ploski, who serves on the board of the Nevada Vaping Association, says the industry is "dealing with a lot of bad publicity."

E-cigarette and vaping regulations announced by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in May took effect Aug. 8, forbidding any new products from entering the market.

Read the whole story

DC commissioners slow to work on water issues

By Kathryn Reed

Douglas County commissioners, while they say they want water districts to consolidate, are gun shy to take a step in that direction even though staff this month asked them to do so.

At their meeting in Stateline the electeds were presented with the option to financially separate the Cave Rock and Uppaway Estates water systems for accounting, budgeting and rate setting purposes. The unanimous vote was to table that idea indefinitely.

Part of the hesitation was not wanting to throw a wrinkle into the **lawsuit** filed last spring by a water district at Lake Tahoe against the county. But that argument didn't hold up after the district attorney weighed in.

"Whatever you do today will not hurt the lawsuit or our defense," DA Doug Ritchie told the commissioners. "This is only a policy issue."



Douglas County commissioners discuss water issues.

The water systems in question are owned by Douglas County. However, through the years the county has paired some together for accounting reasons and others for operational purposes. It has resulted in an efficient, inequitable situation.

In 2010 the county embarked on a path to consolidate all of the water systems. Then it was decided to keep the lake and valley separate. Ultimately when it came time to vote a couple years ago on the lake consolidation the electeds back-pedaled and said no.

While the consensus this month was still a desire to consolidate the systems, how to do so was not broached.

Commissioners Greg Lynn and Barry Penzel said they would like to develop a time line for consolidation, but one was not discussed that day.

“As an overall policy goal the ideal solution in the end is a single utility,” Lynn said.

Carl Ruschmeyer, public works director, said, “The challenge anytime you consolidate is you are going to have some winners and some losers at some level.”

Commissioners went back and forth at the meeting trying to decide how to go forward.

“I don’t like the fact that we would be doing this with the lawsuit going on,” Commissioner Nancy McDermid said. “Anything the board does today or has done in the past is subject to the court’s opinion on that.”

Still, earlier at the meeting she said people need to understand to get to the long-term goal of consolidation, there may be short term pain – and that maybe doing what staff asked for would be a good idea.

The county is in the process of coming up with preliminary engineering reports on the water systems. These could help

with decisions down the road pertaining to consolidation.

West Nile virus found in EDC bird

A dead bird found near Placerville has tested positive for West Nile virus, the first this year.

The bird, a Western Scrub Jay, was found Aug. 23. There have been no reported cases of human infection with West Nile virus this year in El Dorado County.

As of Aug. 26, West Nile virus activity has been reported in 36 California counties. Statewide more than 1,000 birds have tested positive for West Nile virus, 78 people have been infected with the virus and two people have died.

West Nile virus can be transmitted to people through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes get the virus when they feed on infected birds. The illness is not spread from person-to-person.

July – cha-ching for South

Shore casinos

The American Century Championship is often a boon for Stateline casinos. This year was no different.

The win was up 20.03 percent in July compared to 2015, at nearly \$28 million, according to the Nevada Gaming Control Board. This was the largest percentage gain in the state.

Five weekends and the Fourth of July helped the entire state have a good month. The win was up 10 percent, hitting the \$1 billion mark.

North Lake Tahoe casinos were relatively flat, posting a decline of less than 2 percent.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*