

STPUD has enough water for next 3 decades

By Kathryn Reed

South Tahoe Public Utility District has enough water for the next 31 years.

This is according to a stress test the agency did in the groundwater basin below the 20,500-acre service area.

“With the demand from 2013, 2014 and 2015 averaging 6,173 acre-feet per year, we have over 31 years of water supply in storage,” STPUD General Manager Richard Solbrig told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The results mean the state removed the defined conservation percentage South Tahoe PUD was supposed to meet.

The State Water Resources Control Board asked water districts to conduct the test in order to assess the state’s overall water supply in the wake of four years of drought. Agencies passing the test will not face a state-mandated conservation standard through January 2017. Even so, officials are hoping districts would continue to not be wasteful.

That’s happening locally.

“Even though we are not under a defined conservation order, our customers have still reduced demand over the March through July period this year by 16 percent compared to 2013, the base year used by the SWRCB for conservation calculations,” Solbrig said.

This comes even though it has been a record dry summer for the entire Lake Tahoe Basin. The South Shore has also experienced record heat at times.

Of the 379 suppliers that submitted stress tests, 36 said they would face a supply shortage in 2019. Those districts will be required to meet a conservation standard equal to the shortage amount. Thirty-two suppliers did not submit stress tests. This means they will retain their March 2016 conservation standards through January 2017.

“Last year, with the lowest snowpack in 500 years after three terrible drought years, and less than impressive response to our earlier calls for conservation, we needed to step in and mandate specific conservation targets to prepare in case we had yet another record bad year in a row,” State Water Board Chair Felicia Marcus said in a statement.

The state is still refining water policies. Various entities are working on standards with the goal of improving water conservation and efficiency in the years ahead based on climate, population, and business types, rather than percentage reductions off a given baseline. The new standards would also likely include permanent prohibitions on wasteful water use, improved drought planning, and enhanced leak detection and repair requirements.

Still in place are the regulations that prohibit hosing down a sidewalk, overwatering a landscape to where water is running off the lawn, and requiring restaurants to not automatically serve water.

S. Lake Tahoe calls loop road initiative ‘vague’

A hearing in Placerville on Monday is the next step in a lawsuit brought by South Lake Tahoe City Council candidate

Jason Collin to get the loop road issue off November's ballot.

Named in the suit that was filed last month are the city, Bill Crawford, Bruce Grego, Laurel Ames and John Cefalu. Those four are the leaders of a movement that got the initiative on the Nov. 8 ballot. The ballot question seeks to prevent the City Council from making decisions about the loop road until a defined alternative is selected, and once it is selected for the voters to be able to weigh in on it.

The city's response to the suit that was filed in El Dorado County Superior Court says, "With respect to plaintiff and petitioner's central argument that the measure is invalid on its face and thus unsuitable for presentation to voters, the city does not oppose or contest such claim. Specifically, the city concurs with plaintiff and petitioner that the measure is invalid because: 1. Highway placement and construction is a matter of statewide concern; 2. The measure is vague and ambiguous, without providing specific definitions of 'approve' or 'support'; and 3. The measure fails to enact an actual ordinance as required."

All sides will have an opportunity to present their case on Aug. 22 before the judge. The judge is expected to make a decision soon so the ballot can be finalized.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Placer deputy better after suffering traumatic brain

injury

By Bill Lindelof, Sacramento Bee

A Placer County sheriff's deputy is doing better since his surgery to lessen brain swelling after suffering traumatic brain injury during a training exercise.

Deputy Austin Harper was on duty helping with police dog training July 27 when his head struck a steel support beam in a vacant commercial building.

Harper has been with the Sheriff's Office since December. He previously was a police officer in Truckee.

Read the whole story

Judge suggests Apollo, TPG pay into Caesars reorg

By Tracy Rucinski, Reuters

A U.S. judge last week suggested the casino operating unit of Caesars Entertainment Corp. ask its parent's private equity sponsors for money to fund a plan to exit its contentious \$18 billion bankruptcy.

Apollo Global Management LLC and TPG Capital Management LP formed the Caesars casino holding company in a 2008 buyout and the three groups are facing claims of fraud and asset stripping by creditors of the bankrupt unit.

Caesars, Apollo and TPG have denied the claims.

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

Read the whole story

Federal money to help improve earthquake alerts

UNR is one of six universities working with the U.S. Geological Survey to transition their ShakeAlert earthquake early warning system into a production system that would give communities at least limited time to take protective actions before severe shaking waves from an earthquake arrive.

The USGS is providing \$3.7 million to the universities to improve the ShakeAlert system's sensor and telemetry infrastructure across the West Coast.

UNR's seismic network covers Nevada and California along the Eastern Sierra and Death Valley

The Nevada Seismological Lab, a public service department at UNR, will initially focus on the California portion of its seismic monitoring system near Lake Tahoe and looks to expand the early warning system into Nevada, mostly surrounding the urban areas of Las Vegas, Reno and Carson City.

In addition to the university awards, the USGS has purchased about \$1.5 million in new sensor equipment, some of it destined for the Tahoe-Truckee corridor, to expand and improve the ShakeAlert system and awarded about \$250,000 in supplements to earlier agreements to three universities. These

efforts, as well as internal work that the USGS is conducting, are possible because of \$8.2 million in funding to the USGS Earthquake Hazards Program for ShakeAlert approved by Congress earlier this year.

Carson Fire 40% contained, not spreading

The Carson Fire burning near Markleeville is 40 percent contained.

The blaze started in the afternoon of Aug. 20 at the **Carson River Resort**, where out buildings were destroyed. The fire then spread into the Humboldt Toiyabe National Forest.

The fire has been kept to 50 acres. Ground resources on Sunday morning are in mop up mode. Crews will begin to be released this morning.

“It was burning in a combination of grass, brush and timber,” Erica Hupp, spokeswoman for the U.S. Forest Service, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Traffic is flowing in both directions of Highway 89 without controls. This fire was southeast of the 2015 Washington Fire.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

50-acre fire destroys Carson River Resort buildings



Firefighters work to keep flames from spreading to more buildings at the Carson River Resort. Photo/Jeff Cheetham

Three buildings and a mobile home were destroyed late Saturday afternoon at the Carson River Resort.

The fire started in an out building, spread to two others and then into wildland. Dubbed the Carson Fire, it has burned at least 50 acres.

"There is no containment at this time," Erica Hupp with the U.S. Forest Service told *Lake Tahoe News* at 8pm. "It is not moving very fast."

Monitor Pass was closed for a short while after the 3:25pm Aug. 20 fire started. Now Highway 89 is open to one-way controlled traffic right in front of the resort. The resort is

less than 3 miles south of Markleeville. Last year the Washington Fire burned in this general area.

The fire is burning in the Humboldt Toiyabe National Forest.

Three helicopters and ground crews are working to stop the spread.

“Where we believe it started was like a workshop where they would run repairs out of,” CHP Officer Chuck Brothers told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He was the second person on the scene of the fire and was responsible for evacuating the nearly dozen cabins and 30 trailers. Brothers said the dry terrain erupted quickly, the fire rapidly growing for 20 to 50 acres. But he also said crews attacked it fast.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

LT Airport makes upgrades for heavier aircraft

A portion of the ramp is being replaced at Lake Tahoe Airport.

This is to accommodate the changing types of aircraft using the South Lake Tahoe airport. More business jets and other large business aircraft are using the airport. The apron was originally designed for lighter aircraft.

During the busy season the entire apron at Lake Tahoe Airport is full of aircraft and the larger aircraft are parked on all sections of the apron. The last time the apron was upgraded was in 1984.

Funding for this project is from a \$1.4 million Federal Aviation Administration grant. Another \$50,000 was received from Caltrans.

The current phase will be done by the end of September, with the whole project wrapping up in two years.

‘Blob’ may help drought-stricken California

By Joshua Emerson Smith, San Diego Union Tribune

As a series of marine heat waves linked to climate change has thrown ocean ecosystems out of whack from Australia to the coast of California, a cooling trend called La Niña has given scientists hope that water temperatures could come back into balance.

But so far, the cooling weather pattern – predicted to follow as a result of last winter’s El Niño – remains squeezed by warmer ocean temperatures along a narrow stretch of Earth’s equator.

That might be good news for drought-stricken California because La Niña often brings bone-dry winters, when the state has its best chance for substantial rain and snowfall.

Read the whole story

Firm fails to return test scores for 200,000 Nev. students

By Trevon Milliard, Reno Gazette-Journal

For the second year running, Nevada is having major problems with the online standardized tests given to many public school students.

And the state is again threatening legal action against the company paid millions of dollars to administer the tests and return the scores.

Data Recognition Corporation won't give Nevada the individual scores for its 200,000 tested students, who completed their exams in spring 2016, and it won't say why.

Read the whole story