

DA's Office wants Meyers to serve time in jail

The El Dorado County District Attorney's office is challenging the court's decision regarding the former county schools chief's sentencing.



Jeremy Meyers

"As to the final 20 days, the court authorized electronic home detention. Our office is filing a motion to reconsider to the court in order for this time to be 'straight time' and not to allow the alternative sentencing," James Clinchard, deputy DA, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Jeremy Meyers was sentenced this spring to 110 days in jail for his second driving under the influence arrest. The ex-superintendent of the El Dorado County Office of Education admitted twice to drinking and driving in 2015 during the workday. He resigned last fall, but just this month was hired to be the **interim principal** at Golden Sierra Junior Senior High School on the West Slope.

As for time served, the court gave Meyers credit for 52 days for time spent at an alcohol treatment program. The court suspended 38 days, which according to Clinchard, is normal for people who are part of the DUI Court system. People in the DUI Court often get less time.

The standard sentence in California for a first DUI offense is

two days in jail, and 10 days for the second DUI.

For the first offense Meyers was sentenced to five days on home arrest.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Nev. receives federal help to study juvenile justice

By Associated Press

State officials are acknowledging they don't know whether Nevada's juvenile justice programs meet current standards, but say they expect that'll change with federal help for a sweeping review of how youthful offenders are treated.

Gov. Brian Sandoval and state Supreme Court Justice Nancy Saitta announced Tuesday that Nevada is the only state picked for technical assistance under the Justice Department's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

The goal is for the nonprofit, nonpartisan Council of State Governments Justice Center to conduct a review and make recommendations that the Nevada Legislature can take up next year.

The officials say Nevada lacks information about program costs, effectiveness and whether the state is meeting program and practice benchmarks.

The state has youth detention centers in Elko, Caliente and Mount Charleston outside Las Vegas.

Hard Rock withholding cash from contractors

By Kathryn Reed

Contractors who remodeled the hotel rooms at Hard Rock Lake Tahoe are owed \$1.7 million, but have been told they'll be lucky to see 50 cents on the dollar.

Now that Paragon Gaming out of Las Vegas is in control of the Stateline property, a game of wait-and-see has changed to hardball.

"We were waiting, sitting by being patient, believing that it would work itself out and we'd get paid," Chris Kersey, chief operating officer with CVC Hospitality, told *Lake Tahoe News*. His Florida-based firm was the general contractor doing the 540-room renovation. "We had to file liens and a lawsuit, and there are 20 subcontractors under us who have done the same."

CVC had a "pay when paid" contract with subs, meaning they get paid the day after CVC gets a check.

With Paragon essentially buying Neva One, the parent company of the Hard Rock, and the state Gaming Board giving them a waiver to not have to pay the debts off, the companies who did the work are left empty handed.

In the 18 months since the project has been finished, the general contractor has lost his license to do business in Nevada because he didn't pay his subcontractors. Subs have had to foreclose on their homes and there is at least one divorce linked to the financial quagmire.

"It's a bad situation for everyone. Some are smaller crews.

They all kept working for three months to finish the job and didn't get paid. We thought everyone was good for their word," Kersey said.

Brothers Jon and David Park out of the Carson Valley own Neva One. They spent \$60 million to renovate what was the dilapidated Horizon. They ran into trouble early on, and soon after the hotel-casino opened in January 2015 firms that did the remodel filed lawsuits and employees were leaving.

The lawsuits involving the **contractors who did the lobby and casino work** settled earlier this summer when Paragon came on board. It has not been disclosed if they were paid in full.



This bear and message are what great guests in their room at the Hard Rock. Photo/Denise Haerr

Paragon CEO Scott Menke did not return a phone call, and the Park brothers still are not talking to *Lake Tahoe News*.

Kersey told *LTN* that two weeks ago he spoke to Paragon officials who said they could accept between 50 and 70 cents on the dollar or go to court. Kersey wants to keep fighting as long as he can afford to.

“I told paragon to keep our money and pay the subs 100 percent,” Kersey said. “They said no, everyone is going to take a hair cut.”

While a lien on the property is one route, it doesn’t do any good until the property is sold. Odds are that won’t happen any time soon.

The \$1.7 million doesn’t include interest or the nearly \$40,000 in attorney fees that Kersey’s firm has racked up. Plus, CVC is contending with lawsuits filed by subs.

“David Park said the agreement with Paragon was to satisfy all the liens. That is not what they are doing,” Kersey said. “That property is just making millions on the backs of people who are not getting paid. They are completely booked.”

Report: Lots of absent kids, fewer school suspensions

By Jennifer C. Kerr, AP

Government numbers offer a mixed snapshot of progress for the nation’s schoolchildren – with worrisome figures on how many students miss school, stubborn disparities on discipline, but encouraging strides in cutting the overall number of suspensions.

The Education Department report found 6.5 million students nationwide were chronically absent in the 2013-14 school year. That’s more than one out of every 10 students missing at least three full weeks of school. It’s the first time the department has collected student absenteeism data.

On a positive note, the survey found a significant drop in school suspensions for K-12 students, down nearly 20 percent from the previous reporting period. But, the report also suggests sharp disparities between how black and white students are disciplined in school as well as the types of advanced coursework offered in high school to black and Latino children.

“A systemic failure to educate some groups of children as well as others tears at the moral fabric of the nation,” Education Secretary John B. King Jr., said in a phone call with reporters. “What sets the U.S. apart from any other country is the idea that opportunity is universal. These data show that we still fall far short of that ideal.

“One of the very worrying data points is that 13 percent of all students are chronically absent,” King said in an interview with The AP. “Even the best teacher can’t be successful with a student who’s not in school.”

The rates were higher for high school students. More than 3 million were chronically absent – nearly one in five high school students.

The department defines chronically absent as missing 15 or more days during the school year, increasing their chances of falling behind and dropping out of school.

Black and Latino high school students had about the same rate of absenteeism, 22 percent and 20 percent, respectively. Rates for white students were not provided in the initial release of numbers from the department’s Civil Rights Data Collection.

The Obama administration began a program last fall, called Every Student, Every Day, It partners with states and local groups in 30 communities around the country to identify mentors to help students who have been chronically absent get back on track.

Across the country, 2.8 million K-12 students received one or more out-of-school suspensions. That's a nearly 20 percent drop from the number reported two years ago.

"A 20 percent reduction, overall, in suspensions is breathtaking," said Catherine E. Lhamon, assistant secretary for civil rights. That's a "tremendous testament to our educators' commitment to making sure the students are in school and can learn."

Black preschool children are 3.6 times as likely to get one or more out-of-school suspensions as their white counterparts, the report said. Black children represent 19 percent of preschoolers, yet they account for 47 percent of pre-school kids getting one or more suspensions. The comparison to white students: they make up 41 percent of preschoolers, but represent only 28 percent of pre-school children receiving one or more suspensions.

"These disparities beg for more districts to follow the lead of places like Baltimore and Chicago, which are dramatically limiting the use of suspensions in early grades," Lhamon said.

The report also found that 1.6 million students attend a school with a sworn law enforcement officer, but not a school counselor.

Nationwide, almost half of high schools offered classes in calculus, and more than three-quarters offered Algebra II. But black and Latino students didn't have the same access to high-level math and science as other students.

According to the report, 33 percent of high schools with substantial black and Latino enrollment offered calculus. That compares to 56 percent of high schools with low numbers black

and Latino children that offered calculus. Similar gaps were seen for physics, chemistry and Algebra II.

Inequities were seen in Advanced Placement courses, too. While black and Latino students made up 38 percent of students in schools that offer AP courses, only 29 percent of them were enrolled in at least one AP course.

Associated Press writer Mark S. Smith contributed to this report.

West Nile activity increasing in Placer County

Fourteen mosquito samples in Placer County tested positive for West Nile virus on July 13, bringing the count to 26 positive samples this year. Three dead birds have also tested positive.

The county is responding with aerial treatments in the agricultural areas in the western county and ground-based treatments to target smaller areas in the following days. The goal is that adult treatments, combined with a proactive approach to controlling immature mosquitoes can stem the spread of West Nile to other areas in Placer County.

The public is being asked to report dead birds, standing water, or other mosquito issues to the county.

“This increase of activity is not unexpected. With temperatures high enough for mosquitoes to thrive, but not high enough to keep people indoors, we must remind folks that West Nile virus is still a threat and that precautions need

to be taken to reduce risk for exposure,” Joel Buettner, general manager of the Placer Mosquito and Vector Control District, said in a press release.

California's fight over water persists

By Michael Doyle, McClatchy News Service

California Republicans are spreading out their bets in their annual effort to steer more water to the state's farmers.

In the absence of negotiations, such tactics matter most right now.

Framed by a hearing Tuesday, the GOP-controlled House of Representatives will vote this week on whether to retain farmer-friendly California water provisions in an Interior Department funding bill for the fiscal year that begins in October. Whether this vehicle succeeds where others have failed will probably be known only after the November elections.

“We’ve got to start working together to help our farmers, and our fish,” said the canal authority’s general manager, Jeffrey P. Sutton, adding that “in this California drought, everyone has suffered.”

Read the whole story

Fire in Pine Nuts contained to 15 acres

Updated 11:35pm:

A brush fire consumed about 15 acres in the Pine Nuts east of Gardnerville on Wednesday. As of late that evening it was mostly contained.

Crews will continue to reinforce the line around the fire throughout the evening, and the incident will be re-evaluated Thursday.

East Fork Fire Protection District responded to the wildland fire at about noon July 13. The fire was near the Ruby Mine area. The majority of the fire appears to be on private property.

The fire was determined to be accidentally human caused. The investigation is still on going.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Voters want to recall Alpine County schools chief

Alpine County residents are trying to recall the

superintendent of schools.

The petition to do so has been filed with the county's elections department.



Patrick
Traynor

Patrick Traynor took the helm of Alpine County Office of Education/Alpine County Unified School District in July 2013. He was then elected to the position in November 2014, running unopposed. Prior to being hired to work in the Markleeville-based office, he was director of the Assessment Development and Administration Division with the state Department of Education.

The petition says, "He continues to make decision that are not in the best interest of the students and stakeholders despite feedback regarding his decisions, especially in the areas of meaningful learning experiences over excessive standardized testing."

The district has one school – Diamond Valley. After eighth grade students usually choose between Douglas and South Tahoe high schools.

"Alpine County voters should know that many/most/all of the reasons given for a recall, all of which I disagree with, were not actions or decisions I made as county superintendent," Traynor said in a statement to *LTN*. "All/many/most were made as the school district superintendent, a position appointed by the Alpine County School District board of trustees and from

which I cannot be recalled. The reasons all refer to personnel decisions and student issues from which I am prohibited from commenting on by law.”

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Pew study proves LTN is the place to advertise

Alternatives for where to place advertising dollars seem to grow every day. The one constant is that those choices are digital.

Lake Tahoe News is also a constant, having been the only daily news source for the Lake Tahoe Basin since September 2009. Our readership numbers continue to grow inside and outside the basin. With readers in nearly 3,000 cities and 100 countries, it proves *Lake Tahoe News* is the news source for visitors and second homeowners – not just locals.

The Pew Research Center recently released data from two nationwide surveys that said nearly 60 percent of people reading news do so online, while only 26 percent read print publications. Online readership keeps growing, while print keeps dropping.

It makes sense to spend your limited advertising dollars where the readers are – online.

Here are other stats from the Pew study to prove local online advertising is the way to reach current and future customers:

- 81 percent of adults get at least some of their news from websites, mobile apps or social networking services.

- 7 in 10 adults follow national and local news “somewhat or very closely.”
- 72 percent of people get news via mobile devices, compared to 54 percent in 2013.
- 7 in 10 people age 18-29 prefer mobile devices for news.

It's time to stop worrying about where to advertise and advertise with *Lake Tahoe News*, Tahoe's only source for daily news. Email us at info@LakeTahoeNews.net with “Want to Advertise” in the subject line and we'll start the process of driving more customers to your business.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff*

West Shore road work now at night

Construction work on Highway 89 on the West Shore is now on an overnight schedule.

Work is from 6pm-6am during week and from 10pm Sunday to 6am Monday. 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. shift during the week and 10 p.m. Sunday to 6 a.m. Monday. This schedule is expected to continue until Aug. 15. After that, work will resume during the day. The project will be completed next year.

Work is currently ongoing between Ward Creek and Sugar Pine Road on the south end and from Pine Avenue to Cathedral Drive on the north end.

The multi-year, \$70.1 million project from Tahoma to just north of Granlibakken Road in Tahoe City is upgrading

stormwater drainage and treatment systems, adding curb and gutter, resurfacing and realigning the road, adding left-turn pockets and widening the shoulders on an eight-mile stretch of the highway.