

Mountain biker rescued from Mt. Rose Wilderness

A 72-year-old man who wrecked his mountain bike off a trail in the Mt. Rose Wilderness was rescued late Tuesday evening.

At approximately 9pm April 5, Washoe County sheriff's deputies received a call from the victim who said he had also become disoriented and lost. Volunteers with the sheriff's HASTY Team, Washoe County search and rescue, and specialized vehicle unit responded to a gravel road on Mt. Rose Highway approximately one mile east of Sunridge Drive and began a search of the area.

The subject was located within 30 minutes. Other than being cold, hungry and tired, it was determined that the subject was unharmed. Based on his age and the steepness of the terrain he needed assistance back to the trailhead. The safest route took approximately four hours.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Cars damaged, people not hurt in pile up



Inattentive driving is being blamed on this April 2 accident on Echo Summit.
Photo/CHP

An accident on Echo Summit became a literal pile up.

According to the California Highway Patrol, Ray Garcia, 48, of South Lake Tahoe was busy looking at one crash when he caused a three-vehicle collision. His Subaru went under one driven by Sharon Tryhane, 59, of Folsom. Her car in turn rammed a Mazda driven by Alexis Midon, 36, of San Francisco.

No one was injured in the April 2 accident on Highway 50 near Old Meyers Grade.

CHP officers said Garcia was speeding and not paying attention while driving.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Calif. braces for large

primary turnout

By Phil Willon, Los Angeles Times

California elections officials are anticipating a surge in voter turnout for the June 7 presidential primary election.

More than 600,000 Californians have registered to vote online or updated their registration in just the last three months, and county election agencies may be overwhelmed by the volume of people who show up, Secretary of State Alex Padilla warned Gov. Jerry Brown.

Voter registration application cards are in high demand statewide, he wrote in a letter Monday to the governor. Padilla also wrote that "one campaign" alone recently requested 200,000 registration forms to sign up voters, although he did not specify which candidate's campaign made it.

Read the whole story

NV Energy decreases rates for all customers

NV Energy, which provides electricity to people on the Nevada side of the Lake Tahoe Basin, lowers rates by more than 3 percent effective April 1.

The company said it did so mostly because fuel prices had dropped. This is the fourth rate decrease since July. It equates to a savings of approximately \$18 in those nine months for residential customers.

A typical bill is \$141.55 month for a family using 1,141 kilowatt hours. That bill will now drop to \$136.29.

“NV Energy remains committed to providing stable or even lower prices for our customers. As a matter of fact, residential customers’ bills are even lower today than they were five years ago,” Paul Caudill, NV Energy president and CEO, said in a statement.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

The next step in California’s drought

By Scott Smith, AP

Some residents of drought-stricken California who let their lawns turn brown and took shorter showers could soon get some relief, while others may continue to feel the pain. In the coming months, state officials will undertake a monumental task of rewriting conservation orders for a fifth year of drought.

The challenge for state regulators will be treating millions of residents fairly, unlike the El Nino storms that soaked Northern California with considerably more rain and snow this winter than the drier Southern California. Here are some things to know:

A year ago, Gov. Jerry Brown ordered more than 400 cities and water agencies throughout California to save water by 25 percent, compared to use in 2013. In the nine months ending in February, Californians came close, using 23.9 percent less

water. The standard was later relaxed, requiring them to use at least 20 percent less water, and now it is set to change again.

One possibility officials propose is taking a regional approach to water conservation. That may mean relaxing, or dropping, emergency drought orders for El Nino-soaked Northern Californians, where much of the wet weather hit and some reservoirs are spilling over the top. Strict rules for residents of drier Southern California may stay in place.

This winter's El Nino failed to erase four years of exceptional drought. It left a nearly average amount of rain and snow, not enough to help California recover from the previous four dry years. California's wet season typically ends around April 1, with shrinking chances of significantly more rain and snow.

The State Water Resources Control Board later this month will gather in Sacramento for a public workshop to consider the next steps for conservation. Officials say they'll take suggestions from the public and work out a plan in May. Changes will likely go into effect in June.

NDOT finishes Incline road improvements

The Nevada Department of Transportation has completed the installation of pedestrian and safety enhancements on Highway 28 in Incline Village.

The project relocated a crosswalk on the highway west of Village Boulevard so it is closer to an existing bus stop and

pedestrian crossing points. Pedestrian crossing warning signs equipped with rapid flashing beacons activated when pedestrians push the crossing button were added to crosswalks on either side of Village Boulevard. Street lighting and sidewalk ramps were also added, along with enhanced pedestrian crossing signs in advance of the crosswalks. Left turn lanes from Country Club Drive to Highway 28 were also installed with new traffic detection systems to help drivers most efficiently and safely get through the intersection.

Construction on the nearly \$300,000 project began Sept. 8.

EDC revs up discord with SLT over ambulances

By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday ratcheted up the turmoil with South Lake Tahoe.

The supes in closed session discussed what to do about ambulance service on the South Shore. In California it is a county's responsibility to provide that level of medical care.

Interim County Counsel Michael Ciccozzi reported out of closed session on April 5 that the supervisors unanimously authorized retention of outside counsel, and the initiation of litigation against the Cal-Tahoe JPA and South Lake Tahoe if it becomes necessary.

Supervisor Sue Novasel, who represents the basin, was not available for comment.

South Lake Tahoe and Lake Valley fire departments formed a joint powers authority to bid on the ambulance contract. While the JPA was awarded the latest contract in 2011, for the past two years there has been much discontent. Even so, the city reps on the JPA – Wendy David and Tom Davis – last year voted to extend the contract to 2019 when it could have expired this year.

The agencies are disgruntled about the compensation from the county, and now the **city wants out** of the ambulance business.. Lake Valley would like to run it, but can't afford to.

Discord between the two departments – mainly the electeds – has escalated because South Tahoe pulled firefighters off the ambulances in favor of only medical personnel. Lake Valley believes a firefighter-paramedic is the better course for ambulance staffing.

Nothing came of the special JPA board meeting last week. April 11 is the next regular meeting.

The normal first step would be for the JPA, which is comprised of two elected officials from each jurisdiction, to come to consensus, and then for the county to get involved.

“What are they litigating is my first question,” Jeff Meston, SLT fire chief, said when *Lake Tahoe News* informed him of the supervisors' vote. “I'm confused because they are not directly involved at this point.”

Mayor David said the threat of a lawsuit makes a complicated situation even dicier.

Dave Huber, Lake Valley's longtime rep on the JPA board, was not available for comment.

Body found in road near Truckee

A woman's body was found Monday morning near Interstate 80 in the Truckee area.

Nevada County sheriff's detectives are treating the death as suspicious because of the trauma to her body.

The body was found April 4 about 6:20am under the interstate overpass at Farad.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Poverty rates jump among Calif. seniors

By Claudia Buck and Phillip Reese, Sacramento Bee

The older you are, the poorer you get.

For a growing number of California seniors living on the edges of poverty, that's the uncomfortable reality.

In the Sacramento region, the number of residents 65 and older living at or below the federal poverty line – \$11,400 for a single individual – roughly doubled from 2005 to 2014, according to a Sacramento Bee review of U.S. census data. That means 28,000 seniors, or 9 percent of the region's elderly population, are officially considered poor.

Statewide, the number of impoverished residents age 65 and older increased by 85 percent, to roughly 520,000, between

1999 and 2014, more than double the rate of population growth among the elderly.

Poverty among seniors is not new, but has been exacerbated in recent years by a cyclone of factors, especially in California.

Read the whole story

Cops targeting distracted drivers

Distracted driving is such an important safety issue that April is recognized as National Distracted Driving Awareness Month.

In California, law enforcement officials are joining the Office of Traffic Safety, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and the National Transportation Safety Board to focus on education as well as enforcement. The purpose of the campaign is to raise awareness about the dangers of distracted driving in an attempt to change behavior and save lives, not just in April but also year-round.

South Lake Tahoe Police Department will join statewide enforcement campaigns on April 7 and April 20 when all agencies will be especially vigilant for distracted drivers. Although the purpose of the campaign is not to write as many citations as possible, sometimes citations are necessary for drivers to understand the importance of focusing on their driving.

Distracted driving continues to be a problem, especially as

the use of Smartphones increase. Although such crashes are often difficult to prove, California had at least 84 fatal distracted driving collisions in 2013, 85 in 2014 and 67 in 2015, with the actual number of cases likely higher. The number of injury collisions for the same three-year period shows an increase: 10,078 in 2013; 10,463 in 2014, and 11,023 in 2015. NHTSA data for 2014 show nationwide, 3,179 people died in distracted driving collisions, which is 10 percent of all crash fatalities. An additional 431,000 people, or 18 percent, were injured in motor vehicle collisions involving distracted drivers.

Distracted driving is any activity that could divert a person's attention away from the primary task of driving. These types of distractions include:

- Texting
- Using a cellphone or smartphone
- Eating and drinking
- Talking to passengers
- Grooming
- Reading, including maps
- Using a navigation system
- Watching a video
- Adjusting a radio, CD player, or MP3 player.