

Supreme Court deadlocks on union fees for Calif. teachers

By Bob Egelko, San Francisco Chronicle

The U.S. Supreme Court gave public employee unions and their Democratic allies a political and financial reprieve Tuesday when it deadlocked over a challenge by nonunion teachers in California to their collective-bargaining fees, a case that probably would have rewritten the nation's labor laws but for the death of conservative Justice Antonin Scalia.

The reprieve may prove temporary, however, if a Republican is elected president in November and appoints Scalia's successor. The case underscores the importance of this year's election for a court that appears to be closely divided on crucial issues, including restrictions on abortion, insurance coverage for contraception, and immigration.

Instead of a 5-4 ruling declaring that compulsory union fees violate nonunion members' free-speech rights, the court issued a one-sentence order Tuesday announcing the 4-4 vote that left intact a 1977 decision – by a then-unanimous court – allowing public-sector unions to charge nonmembers for the costs of representing them at the bargaining table.

Read the whole story

Scammers posing as WCSO sheriff

Phone scammers are posing as Washoe County Sheriff Chuck Allen to fraudulently obtain money from people.

After identifying themselves as the sheriff, the scammer tells the person they are in some sort of arrears with the legal system and that their options are either to surrender themselves to the sheriff's office for arrest or make a payment to adjudicate the situation.

Typically with these types of scams, the scammer then provides instruction on how the payment should be submitted, usually through an "eGift" cash card, pre-paid credit card, or similar payment to a specified account or name given by the caller.

These scam artists use pre-paid phones and many times are not even in the jurisdiction where the crime occurred, making their apprehension difficult.

Although the Washoe County Sheriff's Office will sometimes make calls to inform someone about a warrant, the sheriff's office will not ask for payment over the phone or negotiate for payment in lieu of arrest.

Anyone who has suffered a loss as a result of this scam is encouraged to contact the Washoe County Sheriff's Office at 775. 328.3001, ext. 7.

Nev. minimum wage to remain stagnant

By Associated Press

State officials say Nevada's minimum wage will stay flat for the fiscal year that starts July 1.

The Office of the Labor Commissioner announced the rates Friday after conducting an annual review. A 2006 minimum wage amendment in the Nevada Constitution requires rates be recalculated based on increases in the federal minimum wage and the cost of living.

Nevada's minimum wage is \$8.25 an hour, or \$7.25 an hour if the employer offers qualified health benefits.

Rules and rates for overtime also remain unchanged.

Efforts to raise Nevada's minimum wage through the Legislature failed in 2015, and supporters of a proposed ballot measure to raise the rate recently withdrew their petition.

Lawmakers in neighboring California approved a measure this week that will raise the minimum wage to \$15 by 2022.

Nevada mine now a Superfund site

By Jason Hildago, Reno Gazette-Journal

Nevada "cautiously" agreed on Tuesday with efforts by the Environmental Protection Agency to include an abandoned copper

mine near the town of Yerington on its priority list of contaminated sites.

Gov. Brian Sandoval announced the decision in a letter to the EPA, allowing the agency to include the Anaconda copper mine to the National Priority List of contaminated sites without opposition from the state.

The agreement, however, was contingent on several assurances that Nevada is requiring from the EPA. These include ensuring an alternative remedy if the EPA is unable to secure federal funding for the site as well as a solid timetable for the work that must be done. The state also wants the Nevada Department of Environmental Protection to take the lead on the project given its expertise in mine reclamation projects. NDEP is specifically looking at the Arimetco portion of the site, which is not covered by the work being paid for by former Anaconda site owner Atlantic Richfield Co.

Read the whole story

Study: Calif. moving toward more extreme weather

By Laurel Hamers, Mercury News

STANFORD — Stanford researchers who studied trends in the atmospheric circulation patterns that affect California's rainfall have found that conditions linked to the hot, dry weather during our latest drought have become more frequent in recent decades, according to research published Friday.

That means that while this year's El Niño-driven storms may

have brought temporary relief to the Golden State's parched soil and depleted reservoirs, Californians can expect more frequent droughts in the decades to come, according to the study published by Science Advances.

It's a finding obscured by focusing solely on the state's precipitation, which has remained mostly steady over time. That's because even with an increased chance of drought, the weather patterns that trigger exceptionally wet weather are persisting. In short, California is trending toward more extreme weather, bringing new challenges for managing our water supply.

Read the whole story

Publicly owned Kings Beach parcel for sale

The former Swiss Mart property in Kings Beach is on the market.

This 0.3-acre parcel on Highway 28 is owned by the successor agency in Placer County, the entity that took over when the state made jurisdictions disband redevelopment agencies.

The property consists of two lots, with one of the parcels having an easement for the Kings Beach gateway monument.

The property is a remediated former gas station. Underground storage tanks and structures have been removed, environmental assessment and remediation performed and regulatory closure received.

The minimum bid for this property is \$540,000. Guided site

visits are scheduled for April 6 at 1pm and April 21 at 10am.

The Swiss Mart property is one of four Placer County properties in Kings Beach that will be offered for sale in the coming months by either a sealed bid or a competitive request-for-information process. All four properties are being offered separately, though it may be possible for a developer to combine two or more properties into a single related or compatible project.

Ski bus catches fire on way to Tahoe

A bus full of college students on their way to ski at Lake Tahoe caught fire this morning.

About 40 University of San Francisco students were on board when flames erupted. No one was injured.

Caltrans officials said the bus was destroyed.

This occurred on Interstate 80 near Rainbow about 9am April 2.

The occupants were taken to the Caltrans maintenance yard at Kingvale where they waited for a replacement bus. The name of the bus company has not been released.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Tahoe National Forest bats win out over miners

By Michael Doyle, Sacramento Bee

A gate meant to protect bats using a mine shaft in Tahoe National Forest also impedes the miners who have staked a claim on the site.

But now, capping a dispute that has spanned multiple courts and encompassed everything from the Fifth Amendment to federal bat-protection efforts, a judge has dismissed a \$50 million lawsuit by two Northern California men who said the gate prevents them from accessing the mine.

"The installation of the bat gates has not deprived (the men) of the ability to develop their claims," U.S. Court of Federal Claims Judge Elaine D. Kaplan concluded, adding the men "may still develop their valid mining claims any way they see fit provided they comply with applicable government regulations."

California's bats, this case made clear, have friends in high places.

[Read the whole story](#)

EDC teen latest person to

overdose on fentanyl



Counterfeit hydrocodone pills
are being laced with fentanyl.
Photo/El Dorado County
Sheriff's Office

By Claudia Buck and Samm Caiola, Sacramento Bee

The potent painkiller fentanyl widened its reach Thursday, as a new overdose case appeared and law enforcement officials confirmed the fentanyl-related death of an 18-year-old El Dorado Hills resident.

The March 28 death of George Berry, whose cause of death previously was listed as undetermined, now is linked to the recent rash of overdoses by pills or tablets containing fentanyl, according to the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office.

Also Thursday, the UC Davis Medical Center reported that another patient is suffering from a fentanyl-related overdose – the center's 17th case – according to a hospital spokeswoman.

Read the whole story

Report: Nev. worst for 'real unemployment'

By Mark Robison, Reno Gazette-Journal

Nevada ranks No. 1 in the United States for "labor underutilization" in 2015, with 13.9 percent of the population unemployed, underemployed or who wants to work but have given up.

Some call it the "real unemployment rate."

That compares with an overall "U-6" unemployment rate last year in the United States of 10.4 percent, according to data released March 31 by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Read the whole story