

California delays BPA warning rules

By Associated Press

California plans to delay state-required warnings on metal cans lined with the chemical BPA, arguing too-specific warnings could scare stores and shoppers in poor neighborhoods away from some of the only fruits and vegetables available – canned ones, officials said Thursday.

Instead, the state on May 11 will require stores to post general warnings at checkout counters about the dangers of BPA and note that some canned and bottled products being sold have liners with the toxic chemical.

The decision and rationale of the California Environmental Protection Agency are angering some community and public-health groups.

It's "ridiculous. It's paternalistic," said Martha Dina Arguello, executive director of Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles. "I just can't imagine that it's a better idea not to let us know what's in our food."

The warnings are coming on line in California under the state's Proposition 65, a measure approved by voters in 1986 that requires businesses to notify the public about high levels of chemicals in products or places.

California officials decided last year to add BPA, or bisphenol A, to the list of about 800 chemicals requiring Proposition 65 notices. Manufacturers use BPA in epoxy liners of some cans, bottles and jars.

Some studies have determined the chemical is an estrogen-like substance that at high levels could harm the female

reproductive system.

That 2015 decision by California is controversial. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration banned BPA from baby bottles and sippy cups in 2012, but it says the level of BPA that leeches into food is safe otherwise. The federal agency also is awaiting the results of more studies.

Ordinarily, the state would either require manufacturers to put those warnings on the cans, or make grocers post signs on canned-goods shelves specifically warning that “Brand X tomato sauce, Brand Y green beans” have the targeted chemical in the can, said Allan Hirsch, chief deputy director of the state EPA’s Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment.

For BPA, though, “we think that would be kind of chaotic,” the state official said. “Retailers might react ... by just pulling canned and bottled foods off their shelves entirely,” which would be bad news in neighborhoods without good grocery stores.

“We would want to make sure that people, especially in low-income communities, still have access to canned fruits and vegetables. That’s certainly better than not having access to them,” Hirsch said.

Hirsch also acknowledged hearing “some concern from retailers” about how the warning is going to work.

Kathleen Roberts, executive director of the can industry’s North American Metal Packaging Alliance, said Thursday that confusion “from these warning signs could further limit healthy choices, particularly for low-income families in inner-city neighborhoods and rural communities.”

Team gearing up to start Hwy. 89-Fanny Bridge work

Construction of the Highway 89 realignment and Fanny Bridge rebuild in Tahoe City are expected to start this summer, with completion slated for 2017.

Rerouting the highway and the roundabouts on either end will be built this year.

The new roundabout at the Tahoe City Y, the rebuild of Fanny Bridge and the creation of a complete street along what will be old Highway 89 or West Lake Boulevard are planned for construction in summer 2017.

Tahoe Transportation Department is the lead agency. Designs on the bridge are under way. Two gateway monumental design concepts are being reviewed.

Job totals trail pre-recession levels in Nev.

By Christopher S. Rugaber, AP

WASHINGTON — Ten U.S. states — Nevada among them — still have not regained all the jobs they lost in the Great Recession, even after six and a half years of recovery, while many more have seen only modest gains.

The figures help illustrate the uneven nature of the economic rebound since the Great Recession ended in June 2009. They also suggest why many Americans feel the improvement has

passed them by. Ongoing economic anxiety, despite some data suggesting the economy has recovered, is fueling much of the support for insurgent presidential candidates such as Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders.

Wyoming had 3 percent fewer jobs last month than it did in December 2007, when the recession began, the Labor Department said Friday. That is the biggest percentage decline among the states. Alabama's job total trails its pre-recession level by 2.7 percent, followed by New Mexico, where job totals are 2.6 percent lower.

Some larger states are also still behind. New Jersey has nearly 1 percent fewer jobs than it did at the end of 2007, and Missouri is just below its pre-recession level.

The other five are: Mississippi, Nevada, Maine, Connecticut, and West Virginia.

Other states have notched very small gains that likely trail population growth. Illinois has 8,600 more jobs than it did in December 2007, a gain of just 0.1 percent. Arizona's job count is up just 9,200, or 0.3 percent. And Ohio has added 58,100 jobs, or 1.1 percent.

All those gains are far below the 4 percent increase in jobs nationwide from December 2007 through February 2016, according to government figures. Three-fifths of states have seen job gains below that national average.

Some areas have seen much greater hiring. Four states have recorded double-digit increases in their total payrolls, along with Washington, D.C.: North Dakota, Texas, Utah, and Colorado.

The oil and gas drilling boom has lifted North Dakota's job count by more than 20 percent, even though falling energy prices have caused significant layoffs in the past year.

Texas has also benefited from the energy boom, as well as greater high-tech hiring in cities like Austin. Utah and Colorado have also benefited from fast-growing information technology companies.

The data also shows how the decline in the unemployment rate in some states has exaggerated the improvement in their economies. The rate in Michigan, for example, fell to 4.8 percent last month, down from 5.9 percent a year ago and one-tenth of a point below the national average.

Yet Michigan's job count has increased just 1.6 percent since the recession began, less than half the nationwide gain.

Its unemployment rate has fallen in large part because many of those who lost jobs have since given up looking for work. When people stop job-hunting, they are no longer counted as unemployed.

Candidates gone but not forgotten on Calif. presidential primary ballot

By Phil Willon, Los Angeles Times

When California Republicans cast their votes in the June 7 primary, an election that could decide the GOP's presidential nominee, they'll probably be confronted by the ghosts of candidates past.

That means Republicans could still cast a vote for former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, former Hewlett-Packard chief

executive Carly Fiorina, former Virginia Gov. Jim Gilmore or Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, even though they all have ended their campaigns.

They're all on the state's presidential ballot alongside the Republicans still in the race: New York billionaire Donald Trump, Texas Sen. Ted Cruz and Ohio Gov. John Kasich.

Read the whole story

SLT youth dies in single-vehicle accident

A South Lake Tahoe teenager died early Saturday when the vehicle she was driving hit a tree on Highway 89 near Pope Beach.

Jillian Pruitt, 19, was the only occupant of the vehicle.

The accident occurred about 3:40am March 26.

According the California Highway Patrol, they turned the investigation over to the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department because it may not have been an accident.

Multiple calls were placed to EDSO and no one returned calls.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Groundwater law triggers aquifer-recharge experiments

By Emily Benson, Mercury News

WATSONVILLE — A historic 2014 law requiring water agencies across California to replenish the state's imperiled aquifers created a new problem: Many local officials just weren't sure how to do it.

But this winter's abundant rains are triggering a flood of experiments that have turned the state's agricultural regions into aquifer-recharge laboratories.

Farmers in Modesto inundated an almond orchard with the city's stormwater. Water managers in and around Fresno have more than 20 new groundwater recharge projects in the works. On the Central Coast, researchers in the Pajaro Valley are carefully designing percolation basins to capture rainfall before it gushes out into the Pacific.

For decades, water has been sucked from aquifers faster than nature can replenish it — and the drought has only intensified the thirst for groundwater. Scientists agree that it will be decades before a future governor can declare California's groundwater problems solved.

Read the whole story

Pedestrian hit in Meyers

A South Lake Tahoe man sustained serious injuries after being hit while walking on Highway 50 in Meyers.

Roberto Luna, 21, of San Francisco was arrested on felony hit and run charges.

Scott Murphy, 26, of South Lake Tahoe was walking east on 50 east of Apache Avenue when he was struck on March 26 at 9:45pm. He was taken to Renown Medical Center in Reno.

Luna's vehicle was found at Hard Rock; and he was located inside the Stateline casino.

According to the CHP, Luna was talking on the phone when the accident occurred. Officers said he was going 50 in a 40 mph zone.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Dual enrollment between LTCC-STHS grows

By Kathryn Reed

By the time students in the class of 2019 graduate from South Tahoe High School they may have earned 9½ units from Lake Tahoe Community College.

Even more are possible, and it's not just freshmen who are eligible.

The first block is available through the Get Focused, Stay Focused program that was introduced this year. It is a program designed to get students to think about their lives for the next 10 years. At each grade level it will be revised.

Three main questions are addressed:

- Who am I? – This is supposed to become a personal mission statement.
- What do I want in life? – Work, family, and standard of living are addressed.
- How do I get there? – Education, training and income level are part of the answer.

“It’s about self-discovery and making it happen,” Virginia Berry, LTCC dean of Career Tech Education, said.

She was part of group that gave the college and Lake Tahoe Unified School District boards an update on the program as well as what is going on with the broader dual-enrollment initiative. The two boards had a joint meeting on March 22.



Lake Tahoe Community College and Lake Tahoe Unified School District boards meet March 22. Photo/LTN

The Get Focused, Stay Focused program is expanding to adult education, foster youth, and tribal education in Douglas County.

“It’s highly researched based. When they finish they have an education plan online,” Bob Grant with LTUSD said. “Counselors can look at it and direct students toward certain classes.”

The first dual enrollment class being offered outside of Get Focused, Stay Focused is in the digital media arts sector.

Dual enrollment means STHS students are getting LTCC credit for a class they take at the high school. It means the curriculum at the high school is equivalent to the college's, and that LTCC students may take a similar class at their school.

The goal is to expand the dual enrollment offerings into culinary arts, sports medicine and dental hygiene. These are all disciplines both institutions currently offer.

The benefit to students is they will enter college with credits and therefore likely to be able to take more advanced classes from the get-go and then they can possibly graduate in four years. It also allows LTCC to count these students as though they were on campus, which helps the college to get state funding.

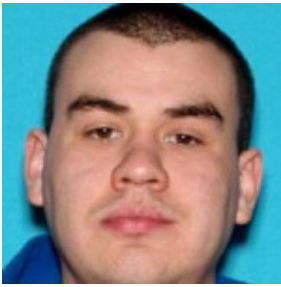
While dual enrollment is available where applicable to all STHS students, not all take advantage of the opportunity. In large part this has to do with LTCC having to ask residency questions and LTUSD does not.

"I'm impressed with the dual enrollment. It's doing the right thing for the kids," Barbara Bannar, LTUSD board president, said.

Truckee man accused of defacing cemetery

Truckee Police officers arrested a man they believe vandalized

the Truckee Cemetery District on March 26.



Samuel Soto

Graffiti was found on the gazebo area and several markers were defaced.

Samuel Soto, 25, is the suspect. Officers went to the last known address of Soto and were told by family members that he was not there. Officers said family members told them they had asked Soto to leave several days before due to his increasingly bizarre and unpredictable behavior.

Late Saturday night an officer near the cemetery saw Soto walking away from there. He attempted to talk to Soto, waiting for additional units due to Soto's prior behavior. As the officer was talking to him, Soto suddenly fled on foot, leading the officer on a foot chase. A responding officer located Soto as he was fleeing from the first officer and took him into custody.

Soto was medically cleared and booked into jail felony vandalism to a cemetery, criminal threats to his family, burglary to an occupied residence and resisting arrest. His bail was set at \$52,500.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Placer water officials want restrictions loosened

By Lemor Abrams, CBS-13

As reservoirs fill and begin to release more water, one Northern California water agency says the drought is over and wants water restrictions lifted.

Officials with the Placer County Water Agency say if they don't use all the water up north, it's just going to flow into the rivers in Sacramento and end up back in the ocean. They're asking the state to let them make the call on how they use their water.

Water officials will reconsider drought regulations in May at the end of the wet season.

Read the whole story