

Will Burning Man's extra \$3M go to the arts?

By Jenny Kane, Reno Gazette-Journal

Burning Man could pull in nearly \$3 million more in revenue this year, based on projected ticket sales.

And so far, the arts nonprofit is on track.

As controversial as Burning Man's new \$1,200 da Vinci tickets were, they did not have a difficult time of selling during Wednesday's sale.

The first 500 da Vinci tickets, a new tier of tickets that are three times the cost of the main tickets, were sold out as of Thursday morning, according to Burning Man spokeswoman Megan Miller. An additional 4,900 \$990 pre-sale tickets, which were \$800 last year, also were sold out by Thursday morning.

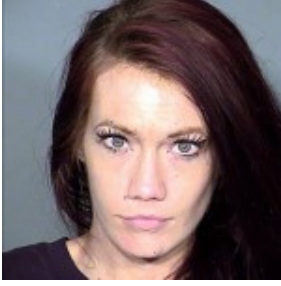
Read the whole story

Ex-Miss Nevada sentenced on drug charges

By Associated Press

A former Nevada beauty queen will not serve jail time for drug charges.

KVVU-TV in Las Vegas reports that Katherine Nicole Rees was sentenced to 12 to 32 months Friday, but the sentence was suspended.



Katherine Rees

Rees instead was put on probation not to exceed three years for four felony drug counts.

According to a criminal complaint, she is accused of selling methamphetamine in September 2014 and possessing more than 5 grams a month later.

The former Miss Nevada USA, who lost her title in 2006 after racy photos of her surfaced online, has faced several legal troubles.

She and her boyfriend were arrested last September when officers found drugs and drug paraphernalia during a traffic stop.

She pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor drug charge in 2012.

EDC detectives revisiting decades-old murders

By Kathryn Reed

Carol Andersen lived in Stateline, went to Whittell High School and hung out at Regan Beach. She is buried at Happy Homestead Cemetery.

What makes her story different from other people at the South Lake Tahoe graveyard is that she was murdered and the person responsible has never been caught. Her body was found alongside a road in the South Shore on July 1, 1979.

Hers is one of more than 60 cold cases the El Dorado County District Attorney's Office is reexamining.

"We don't forget murder victims in this county. It doesn't matter if it happened last week or 30 years ago, we have an obligation to do what we can to solve those cases," District Attorney Vern Pierson told *Lake Tahoe News*.

El Dorado has a higher number of cold cases compared to most counties its size and even compared to larger areas.

Andersen's case has been made into a webisode that is posted on the DA's Facebook page. About eight months ago the department started filming reenactments of cases in an attempt to remind people about the crime and try to trigger memories in order to garner new information.

The four-minute long films are paid for with Proposition 69 money that is collected from criminal penalties. A new one comes out each month.

Even though none of them has led to an arrest, leads are coming in on the various cases that have been profiled.

"Those are some of the toughest cases we have," Pierson said. "We've gotten good leads we are following up on. These cases take years. Tips are leading to a lot of other stuff. Every time we put one out we get a bunch of phone calls."

While DNA has been around for years, certain aspects of the technology have been refined which can provide new clues for investigators. Technology also is helpful with databases providing a wealth of information that is more immediate.

"Even back in 1991 when Jaycee Dugard was abducted some of

those databases were not available back then,” Pierson noted in reference to the youngster who was abducted from a bus stop in Meyers and was found alive in 2009.

All of this is an extension of the Cold Case Task Force that was formalized a few years ago with the DA’s Office, South Lake Tahoe Police Department and El Dorado County Sheriff’s Department. Investigators scour reams of paperwork and other evidence that has been collected.

Pierson credits their work with getting convictions in the **Richard Swanson** and **Joseph Michael Nissensohn** cases. Both were murder cases in South Lake Tahoe.

State senator representing Washoe County dies

By Seth A. Richardson, Reno Gazette-Journal

Nevada Senate Democrats announced the death of Sparks state Sen. Debbie Smith on Sunday. She was 60.



Debbie Smith

Smith was diagnosed with a brain tumor in 2015. She had successful surgery to remove the tumor at MD Anderson Cancer Clinic in Houston before returning for the final six weeks of

the session.

Senate Democrats said in a release that plans for a memorial service would be released in the coming days.

She remained active in the political realm even as she fought cancer, sitting on the committee that is drafting a 2016 ballot question on funding for building and maintenance projects for the Washoe County School District. She previously said she planned to return to the Legislature in 2017.

Read the whole story

LTN reporter earns national writing honor

The North American Travel Journalists Association has recognized *Lake Tahoe News* reporter Susan Wood for her excellent feature writing ability.



Lake Tahoe
News reporter
Susan Wood on
assignment.

Wood was a finalist in the Special Focus Travel Articles – Internet: Personality & Profiles category. This was for her

February 2015 piece on John Rice, general manager of Sierra-at-Tahoe.

“Susan’s ability to capture the essence of her subject makes her stories seem like they are part biography, part poetry and part history lesson,” Kathryn Reed, publisher of *LTN*, said. “Having this national travel writers group single her out is testament to her ability to make her stories come alive.”

North American Travel Journalists Association is one of the largest professional associations of travel writers, photographers and editors.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Boulder on Hwy. 50 to be removed Monday



This boulder fell on Highway 50 on the Nevada side of the South Shore on Feb. 20.
Photo/Bill Kingman

Updated: Feb. 21, 5:50pm:

A boulder described as “far bigger than my SUV” by a passer-by is blocking one of the westbound lanes of Highway 50 near Logan Shoals.

The Nevada Highway Patrol told *Lake Tahoe News* the rock will not be able to be moved until at least Monday. It may take until Tuesday to clear it. It is 6-feet high and 9-feet wide.

It fell into the No. 2 lane about 6:20pm Feb. 20. That lane remains closed.

NHP said it caused a non-injury accident.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Nevada the national foreclosure leader

By Eli Segall, Las Vegas Sun

Nevada’s housing market started the year on a familiar note, with one of the highest foreclosure rates in the country.

One in every 603 homes statewide received a foreclosure-related filing in January, up 30 percent from December and about 1.5 percent from January 2015, RealtyTrac reported Feb. 19.

Nevada, which last year posted the fourth-highest foreclosure rate in the country, was No. 2 in January.

Read the whole story

Nevadans put up big bucks for political races

By Adelaide Chen, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Nevada's top political donors so far this election cycle for presidential and congressional campaigns, PACs and Super PACs are the co-founder of a data center, the former head of Reebok and a casino magnate.

Super PACs, which operate independently of the candidate's own campaigns, are not subject to the federal contribution limits that regular political action committees have, but they are required to disclose their donors, according to the Federal Election Commission.

George Macricostas, CEO and executive chairman of RagingWire Data Centers, made America's Liberty the most funded Super PAC in Nevada in 2015, donating more than \$2.1 million indirectly to Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., who dropped out of the presidential race on Feb. 3. Reached by phone, Macricostas' father confirmed that his son lives full time in Incline Village.

[Read the whole story](#)

SLT man arrested in valley on

battery charges

A South Lake Tahoe man was arrested after allegedly roughing up some Douglas County sheriff's deputies in Minden.

The incident started Feb. 15 at the Sierra Motel in the valley where Michael Adrian Lindauer, 31, was staying the night. He and the clerk got in an argument over \$20.

Deputies arrived, struggled with Lindauer and tasered him a few times until he could be handcuffed. He faces multiple charges of battery. Deputies received scratches and bruises, with one sustaining an injury to the leg.

Deputies said they recovered a large bag of marijuana from Lindauer's truck.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Calif. backs off easing standard for inmate firefighters

By Don Thompson, AP

SACRAMENTO – California's new corrections chief is backing off a plan to lower standards for inmate firefighters, focusing instead on persuading county sheriffs to send more jail prisoners to the state program.

Scott Kernan, who took over last month as secretary of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, said in an

interview with the Associated Press that he expects California will have enough inmate firefighters for this year's fire season despite a dwindling pool of candidates from state prisons.

The state is using more inmates with violent or serious criminal histories because recent laws have sent less serious offenders to county jails instead of state prisons, he said. Kernan hopes to use more of those local prisoners to fill the gap.

He's dropping, at least for now, a proposal by former secretary Jeffrey Beard that would have let inmates participate if they have up to seven years to serve on their sentences, an increase from the current five-year limit. Kernan said an analysis showed that changing the limit wouldn't have produced a significant increase in the number of qualified inmates.

Officials previously said they expected to ease the standard ahead of this year's fire season, but controversy erupted in October after Beard sought to expand the number of inmates who could qualify despite having violent histories. Officials first denied, then acknowledged that they have long used inmates with violent pasts in the nation's largest and oldest inmate firefighter program. Beard quickly withdrew his proposal.

Kernan defended the use of those inmates as vital to a program that last year provided nearly 1 of 5 state, federal and local firefighters battling major blazes.

About 40 percent of the roughly 3,700 inmate firefighters committed violent crimes including 59 manslaughters, more than 500 assaults or batteries, and more than 1,000 robberies, the department said in November.

Lowering standards could have added inmates with more incentive to misbehave or escape, Stanford Criminal Justice

Center co-director Robert Weisberg said. But Kernan noted that inmates are reviewed to see if they are dangerous before they are sent to live in the unfenced fire camps or dispatched to fight fires without supervision from correctional officers.

"If you don't change the rules of the prison, (the alternative) is to get them from county jails because that's where a lot of inmates have shifted now," Weisberg said.

Expanding inmates' eligibility would have been a calculated risk, said UC Berkeley, law Professor Frank Zimring, who has studied California prisons for more than 30 years. He warned that recruiting in jails may be tougher because many prisoners there have shorter sentences and may have active drug or mental health problems.

Weisberg and Zimring said they believe the program is worth the public safety risk.

Inmates must be physically fit and complete firefighting classes. Arsonists, kidnappers, sex offenders, gang affiliates and those serving life sentences for murder and other crimes are excluded.

Kernan said the state will have enough firefighters this year without changing its standards partly because the department has agreements with 12 county sheriffs, with four more in progress. They supply about 6 percent of the firefighters in the program, or 242 firefighters.

Counties pay the state for taking jail prisoners, generally \$81 a day during training, then \$10 a day after they are certified. Los Angeles County trains its own inmates.

Sheriffs initially said they couldn't afford the program when the department proposed charging counties a higher rate after jail prisoners were trained.

California State Sheriffs' Association spokesman Cory Salzillo

said more sheriffs seem to be interested after the state dropped its daily rate two years ago. State finance officials said that is enough to cover county inmates' food, clothing and pay so the state doesn't lose money.

"I know that the sheriffs have challenges with their budget as well, but I think as we expand to the county level, I think it's going to be able to keep our fire camp population at a right, reasonable level," Kernan said.