

911 in EDC not the fastest way to reach dispatch

By Shirin Rajaei, CBS-13

In an emergency, your first instinct may be to dial 911, but the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office is asking residents to dial something longer for faster results.

In an emergency, time is your enemy and every second counts, but calling 911 with your cellphone in El Dorado County may not be your fastest option.

For dispatcher Courtney Barbot and her team, a busy day at the dispatch center may mean 650 emergency calls a day. Some of those calls come straight to them, but others may need to be transferred from another agency.

Read the whole story

Nevada side of Heavenly without power

A power outage in Nevada is affecting lift operations at Heavenly Mountain Resort.

NV Energy said an issue on Kingsbury Grade has 389 customers without power. There is no estimate of when the power will be restored.

"The guys are working on the line right now. I'm sure it was weather related, but I'm not sure what happened," Faye

Anderson with NV Energy told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The tram and Gunbarrel chairlift at the California base area are the only ways to access Heavenly this morning.

“We have a power challenge right now on the Nevada side,” Coop Cooper with Heavenly told *Lake Tahoe News*. The gondola is also affected by the outage.

All California lifts are operational Jan. 30 except Sky, which is on wind hold.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

BLM proposes rules for oil, methane emissions

By Jonathan Thompson, High Country News

On Jan. 22, as “Snowzilla” was about to hit Washington, D.C., and much of the East Coast, Secretary of Interior Sally Jewell announced much-anticipated rules on emissions from oil and gas production on Bureau of Land Management-administered leases. While the rules resemble those proposed by the Environmental Protection Agency last year, these are likely to have a bigger impact in the oil and gas fields of the West.

The EPA rules only affect new and modified facilities, while the BLM regulations also apply to the tens of thousands of existing oil and gas production facilities.

It may seem odd that a land management agency is regulating pollution. Technically, though, the rules are not aimed at reducing emissions, but at stopping the waste of natural gas,

which clearly falls under the BLM's mandate. Since natural gas is mostly methane, a particularly potent greenhouse gas, with health-damaging and ozone-producing volatile organic compounds mixed in, conserving the commodity also reduces pollution.

Read the whole story

Wounded Warrior Project spends lavishly on itself

By Dave Philipps, New York Times

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — In 2014, after 10 years of rapid growth, the Wounded Warrior Project flew its roughly 500 employees to Colorado Springs for an “all hands” meeting at the five-star Broadmoor hotel.

They were celebrating their biggest year yet: \$225 million raised and a work force that had nearly doubled. On the opening night, before three days of strategy sessions and team-building field trips, the staff gathered in the hotel courtyard. Suddenly, a spotlight focused on a 10-story bell tower where the chief executive, Steven Nardizzi, stepped off the edge and rappelled toward the cheering crowd.

That evening is emblematic of the polished and well-financed image cultivated by the Wounded Warrior Project, the country's largest and fastest-growing veterans charity.

Since its inception in 2003 as a basement operation handing out backpacks to wounded veterans, the charity has evolved into a fund-raising giant, taking in more than \$372 million in 2015 — largely through small donations from people over 65.

Read the whole story

Douglas County going with known interim manager

Douglas County commissioners on Feb. 4 are expected to enter a one-year agreement with Larry Werner for him to be interim county manager.

Werner, former Carson City manager, served as interim county manager in Douglas when Steve Mokrohisky left 2014. The county and Jim Nichols parted ways earlier this month, with Nichols receiving six months pay. Technically his last day is Jan. 29, but he turned in his keys two weeks ago.

Werner's contract call for him to make \$172,008 a year, with a car allowance of \$700 per month. He is expected to start March 7.

Until then Mimi Moss, Douglas County's community development director, is at the helm.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Nevada casinos win \$11 billion in 2015

By Associated Press

CARSON CITY – State officials say Nevada gambling revenue was up 1 percent in calendar year 2015 compared with 2014.

The Nevada Gaming Control Board said Friday that the state's casinos won \$11.1 billion last calendar year. Slot machines accounted for 63 percent of that.

Las Vegas Strip gambling revenue in 2015 fell less than 1 percent compared with 2014 and totaled about \$6.3 billion. Downtown Las Vegas casino revenue was up about 6 percent last year to \$542 million.

Reno casinos saw a gain of about 3 percent and won \$571 million last year.

Nevada gambling revenue has remained relatively flat since 2009, and hasn't rebounded to peak levels seen in 2007.

Resolution to senior center dispute in the works

By Kathryn Reed

A lease or outright ownership of the senior center. That's what South Lake Tahoe and El Dorado County officials are tasked with negotiating.

City Manager Nancy Kerry, all city councilmembers except JoAnn

Conner, and Ken Sands from the senior center attended this week's Board of Supervisors meeting in Placerville. The goal was to explain to the county electeds and staff the importance of changing how the senior center is operated.

The county since 1929 has owned the land in the middle of town that also houses the museum, art building and visitors center. The city leases the land and then handles who the tenants are.

The problem is the county hasn't been investing any money into the facilities and has basically been an absentee landlord. The seniors feel at a loss because they have money to invest, but can't get the county's ear. The city, which has been doing upkeep, wants complete control.

The city has written checks totaling \$2.5 million in a 15-year period to maintain the facilities located there. It has taken in revenue of about \$300,000 in that time from weddings and other rental fees at the senior center.

Sands spoke Jan. 26 about how the seniors have money to invest. He gave the example of when the group attempted to put windows in, but the county stopped the process. Then there is the **well-documented** time a few years ago with the county against the seniors' better judgment put the mental health office in the same building. This was in an area of the building the seniors had paid for in an expansion.

Both sides have been talking for months, which some people, including Supervisor Shiva Frentzen, thought were the formal negotiations. Not the case.

The supervisors in closed session agreed to enter formal negotiations.

Supervisor Sue Novasel told *Lake Tahoe News* the negotiations will resolve: "How do we get to where we want to go?"

She added, "For the county we want to try to create

opportunities where we can go as county, whether it's transfer or sell or whatever. The details need to be hammered out."

Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*, "We either negotiate a new facility-use agreement for all properties or we negotiate a transfer of the assets to the city so the city can negotiate with the tenants for long-term improvements."

There is no time line when this will all be settled. The disagreement dates back to the 1990s.

Alkalinity of stormwater a concern on West Slope

Stormwater in the area of El Dorado Trail near the end of Stage Court in Placerville has tested for high levels of alkaline.

The county has placed a warning sign and temporary caution tape at the site. In addition, a temporary fence has been erected to deter the public from coming into contact with the water.

The water source in question is a seasonal drainage that flows northwest under the El Dorado Trail where it continues in a northerly direction. The tests that have produced pH levels between 12 and 12.8 are located in an overflow area adjacent to the drainage where there is ponding. Field measurements conducted farther down the drainage, approximately 200 feet downstream, have produced pH levels of about 7, which are within the normal range for stormwater runoff.

The source of the higher levels of alkaline in the ponding

area is currently being investigated.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Audit: Feds should shift firefighting burden in Calif.

By Michael Doyle, McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Forest Service apparently overpaid for fighting some of California’s biggest wildland fires and was saddled with too many of the toughest areas to work in, federal investigators now say.

Citing expenditures that “may have been questionable and unreasonable,” the Agriculture Department’s Office of Inspector General questioned more than \$4.5 million in administrative costs that the federal agency paid to local firefighting agencies within California.

“There was no assurance these costs were reasonable and accurate,” the investigators noted.

More broadly, investigators said an agreement with the state left the Forest Service shouldering an unequal share of areas where wildlands meet urban areas, the costliest to protect.

Read the whole story

Calif. adopts first energy standards for household LEDs

By Associated Press

SACRAMENTO – California on Wednesday became the first state to set energy efficiency standards for household LEDs and smaller track-lighting-style light bulbs – a move that could save consumers billions in utility bills and prompt lawmakers and manufacturers to adopt them nationwide.

The California Energy Commission approved new requirements for general purpose light-emitting diodes – the LEDs used in household lamps and chandeliers – and directional lamps that have a diameter of 2.25 inches or less. They often are used in track lighting by stores, hotels and museums.

In addition to being more energy efficient than halogen and incandescent bulbs, the bulbs sold in California beginning in January 2018 will have to meet certain color requirements and have minimum lifetimes: 10,000 hours – the equivalent of 10 years of household use – for the LEDs and 25,000 hours for the small-diameter directional lamps.

The commission said using lights that meet the new standards will save consumers more than \$4 billion in utility bills over 13 years, conserve enough electricity to power about 400,000 homes and reduce the amount of carbon dioxide emissions from power plants by about 10 million metric tons between 2017 and 2029.

There already are bulbs on the market that meet the new standards. But the LEDs cost more than their incandescent counterparts – even though they last up to 20 times as long – and consumers have been slow to adopt them.

In 2010, LEDs comprised only 1 percent of the 600 million

general-purpose light bulbs in California, according to commission figures. There were about 16 million of the small-diameter directional lamps.

The commission was ordered to come up with lighting standards under 2007 state legislation that called for reducing home lighting energy use by 50 percent and business use by 25 percent by 2018.

The standards were backed by the Sierra Club and other conservation groups. They were opposed by the National Electrical Manufacturers Association, which argued that they would raise the cost of LED bulbs and thus make it less likely that Californians would buy them to replace inefficient incandescents.

The commission disagreed.

"The standard will save consumers money compared to products that are already on the shelf," Commission Chair Robert B. Weisenmiller said in a statement. "The standard pushes the entire market toward more efficient products with higher quality. It will reduce the overall cost to consumers."

The standards were adopted after considering whether they were feasible and cost-efficient, commission spokeswoman Amber Beck said.

Because California is a huge market, it is likely that the federal government and manufacturers will adopt the new standards as they have with other consumer products, she said. "Manufacturers change their products to comply with California standards, and oftentimes they end up shipping to the entire United States," Beck said.