

Mt. Rose ski resort for sale

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

The independently-owned Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe is officially up for sale.

Fritz Buser, majority owner of the Reno-area winter resort since 1971, "is looking to sell the resort," according to a statement issued late Saturday afternoon.

"From a business perspective, the timing is right with the 2014-15 season proving highly successful despite enduring the leanest snow season in the history of the mountain," the statement said. "In addition, the 2015-16 winter is currently on track to be one of the strongest in the last 10 years and prove exactly what the resort is capable of achieving in a typical or above average snow year."

Read the whole story

Upheaval reveals shift in Calif. wildlife policy

By Peter Fimrite, San Francisco Chronicle

The sudden resignation of the most adamant defender of hunting and fishing on the California Fish and Game Commission could put the finishing touches on a sweeping philosophical shift in the way the state views wildlife, sets rules for fishing and controls predators like mountain lions and wolves.

Commissioner Jim Kellogg retired in late December in

frustration over what he termed a lack of consideration for the sportsmen and women he represents. The resignation – combined with the unrelated recent departures of commission President Jack Baylis and Sonke Mastrup, the commission's executive director – sets the stage for Gov. Jerry Brown to appoint conservationists to the increasingly pivotal state board.

Such a move may, observers say, complete the transformation of the commission from an organization that advocates for fishing and hunting to one that safeguards endangered species, preserves habitat and protects California's top predators from slaughter.

Read the whole story

Casinos bankroll effort to preserve Nev. taxes

By Associated Press

LAS VEGAS – The vast majority of the money used to defend Gov. Brian Sandoval's new \$1.1 billion tax package is coming from major casinos.

An expert says that's likely because the governor's plan spreads the tax burden broadly across a range of businesses and doesn't single out the gambling industry.

The *Las Vegas Sun* reports that most of the \$242,000 donated to the Coalition for Nevada's Future in 2015 came from five gambling giants, according to reports filed earlier this month with the Nevada secretary of state.

Wynn Resorts, MGM Resorts International and Caesars Entertainment each gave \$38,000, while Station Casinos and Boyd Gaming contributed \$28,500 apiece. The South Point casino and Affinity Gaming donated \$4,750, and some casinos in Reno offered smaller amounts.

The coalition is funding attorneys who are trying to stop several efforts to repeal the tax.

Coalition lawyers won a court fight against a proposal backed by conservative activist Chuck Muth to repeal all three parts of the tax package.

But they lost a battle to stop a potential ballot measure, backed by Republican state Controller Ron Knecht, to repeal just the new Commerce Tax that affects large businesses. A judge cleared the way for supporters to gather the more than 55,000 signatures they'll need to qualify the petition for the November ballot.

Backers say taxing a range of businesses will help Nevada's revenue stream hold steady when individual industries are struggling.

"The precipitous decline in state revenues during the Great Recession was due in large part to the reliance on a very narrow tax base," said Nevada Resort Association President Virginia Valentine, whose group represents the state's largest casinos. "The Commerce Tax should reduce volatility while providing long-term growth, especially as the Nevada economy becomes more diverse."

Observers say the casinos also have a personal stake in the tax surviving a ballot challenge.

"If that gets gutted, the easiest fix would be to try to go for gaming again (for additional tax revenue)," UNLV political science professor David Damore told the newspaper. "For gaming, (the Commerce Tax) was a win because, yeah, their

taxes went up – but everyone else's taxes went up, too."

Suspects give up after nearly freezing to death



El Dorado County sheriff's search and rescue team members help save the lives of two suspects on Jan. 23.
Photo/Provided

Two Northern California men were apprehended Saturday morning after leading officers on a chase that nearly resulted in them freezing to death in a remote area of El Dorado County.

Tristen Crossland, 30, a parolee from Eureka, and Derek Dion, 32, a probationer from Hayfork who had four warrants for his arrest, were taken to a hospital for treatment before being turned over to state officials.

The pursuit started Jan. 22 when the two fled on foot after

being stopped by a California Department of Fish and Wildlife officer near Wrights Lake Road and Highway 50. El Dorado County sheriff's deputies and U.S. Forest Service officers joined the search for the men.

A firearm was allegedly dropped by one of the men and recovered by officers. Officers said they found illegal drugs in the suspects' vehicle.

The two men ran into the snowy canyon and crossed the river. A few hours later officers saw them cross the river again. An officer yelled, saying they were in danger of freezing and to give up, but the two ignored that advice.

Deputies said at 8:40 Friday night Crossland called 911 and reported he and Dion were somewhere across the river and were freezing to death and in fear of dying.

Search and rescue then got involved. The duo was found at 9:17am Jan. 23 suffering from severe hypothermia and probable frostbite.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Squaw-Alpine no longer selling bottled water

Bottled water will no longer be available at Squaw Valley or Alpine Meadows ski resorts.

Guests may buy reusable water bottles at the resorts and then use one of the new 20 water refill stations.

"This initiative aims to inspire guests to rethink their daily

habits by choosing reusable products over single-use items, while reducing the total amount of plastic waste generated by the resort each year. No other domestic ski resort has undertaken an initiative of this kind, but the hope is that other ski resorts will follow suit to propagate the message to winter enthusiasts to take care the environment and mountains they enjoy for recreation,” the resorts said in a statement.

The resorts estimate the initiative will keep 28,000 bottles from going into the trash each year.

The tap water at Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows is supplied by three sources. Squaw Valley Public Service District supplies the water at the base of Squaw Valley, and was recognized as the Best Tasting Water in California at the 2015 California Rural Water Association Expo. Alpine Springs County Water District supplies the water at Alpine Meadows and Elevation 8200’ Water Company, operated by Squaw Valley, serves the Squaw Valley upper mountain facilities, and was recognized as the Best Tasting Water in California at the 2011 California Rural Water Association Expo.

Massive cut in Calif. transit project funding

By Patrick McGreevy, Los Angeles Times

Faced with plummeting gasoline tax revenue, state transportation officials have announced plans to cut funding for road and transit projects by \$754 million over the next five years, the greatest reduction in two decades.

The 38 percent decrease was approved by the California Transportation Commission on Thursday, the same day Gov. Jerry Brown used his State of the State address to call on the Legislature to end the gridlock in negotiations over new taxes and fees for transportation projects.

“What this means is that almost every county in California that relies on this source of funding for projects that improve traffic and air quality will have to cut or delay projects indefinitely,” said Lucy Dunn, chairwoman of the commission.

Read the whole story

Nev. officials push for statewide college registration

By Siobhan McAndrew, Reno Gazette-Journal

Nevada higher education officials voted Friday to move forward on creating a common registration system for the state’s seven public colleges.

The Nevada System of Higher Education, the governing body over the state’s public schools including UNR and Truckee Meadows Community College, want students from its campuses able to access classes at other institutions.

This means students enrolled at TMCC or UNR may soon be able to log on to a registration portal and see where classes including online are offered at other schools. It does not mean the system would have a common application system.

Father of missing skier wonders if better technology could have helped rescue effort

By Richard Chang, Sacramento Bee

A day after the search for his missing son was called off at Sugar Bowl Ski Resort, Mike May put on his skis and headed back up the hill.

May and a few family members huddled together Wednesday amid cold temperatures to “celebrate Carson and the place where he loved so much – the mountains and the ski slopes,” Mike May said during an interview Thursday at his Davis home.

Carson May, a 23-year-old Sugar Bowl ski instructor, disappeared Jan. 14. An exhaustive search spanning several days turned up few clues, and Placer County authorities canceled the operation Tuesday because it was unlikely Carson would be found alive.

May, 62, wonders whether better technology could have helped rescuers precisely locate his son. Authorities pinged Carson’s cell phone, but that provided only a general area of where he may have been located. May said the Find My Phone app could have given searchers a GPS coordinate. However, he said, existing privacy laws make it difficult to gain access to that information from the cellular companies unless the app was

previously enabled.

Read the whole story

Feinstein water plan would fund recycling, desalination and storage

By Sarah D. Wire, Los Angeles Times

California's congressional delegation continued to wrangle over how to respond to the Golden State's water crisis Thursday when Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif. , released what she called a "discussion draft" of proposed legislation.

Feinstein said in a statement that the bill addresses long-term and short-term water concerns.

"In my 23 years in the Senate, this has been the most difficult bill to put together. The maxim that whiskey's for drinking and water's for fighting is alive and well in California," she said.

The bill does not mandate how much water should be pumped from the Central Valley Project or the State Water Project, which move water from Northern California to farms and cities to the south. Those decisions would be left in the hands of state and federal officials.

Read the whole story

\$13/hour Nevada wage plan moves forward

By Associated Press

CARSON CITY – Supporters of a proposal to gradually raise Nevada's hourly minimum wage to \$13 are clear to start gathering the thousands of signatures needed to get the measure on the November ballot.

Carson City District Judge James Wilson sided with supports of hiking the minimum wage on Wednesday and ruled that the petition language doesn't need to be changed. The measure is backed by a group called the Committee to Raise the Minimum Wage in Nevada.

Opponents included Las Vegas and Reno-Sparks chambers of commerce, who sought to disqualify the petition on technical points. They argued that the petition language doesn't explain the harsh consequences in store for businesses that violate the wage rule, even by accident.

Opposition lawyer Kevin Benson told the newspaper he's not sure yet whether his clients will appeal the judge's ruling to the Nevada Supreme Court.

Nevada's minimum wage is \$8.25 an hour, or \$7.25 if an employer offers health insurance. The measure would raise the rate to \$9.25 in late 2018, then increase it by 75 cents each year until it reaches \$13 in 2024.

The measure proposes that all subsequent minimum wage hikes in Nevada be tied to growth in the federal rate or to a cost-of-living index. It would also remove the lower-tier minimum wage

rate for employers who offer insurance, and it would cut out a measure that exempts teenagers from minimum wage rules if they're working for nonprofits on a short-term basis.

Backers must gather more than 55,000 signatures to put the proposal on November's ballot.

Officers on the ballot measure committee include the Rev. Neal Anderson of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Northern Nevada, who said in November that the measure was about lifting families from poverty, bringing wages in line with increasing costs and affirming human dignity.

Opponents of raising the minimum wage say it would hurt entry-level workers, whose jobs would be replaced by automation and whose employers would go out of business.

The proposal is more modest than the \$15 an hour sought by fast food workers who have been staging strikes in Las Vegas and elsewhere. It comes after a bill that would have raised the state's minimum wage to \$9 died at the end of this spring's legislative session, and after a proposed constitutional amendment raising the wage to \$15 made even less progress.