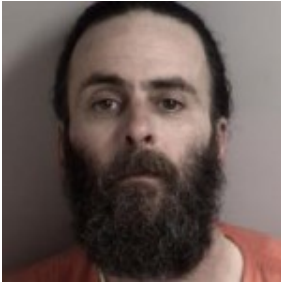


2 South Lake Tahoe restaurants burglarized



Shawn DeCosta

A South Lake Tahoe man suspected of burglarizing two local restaurants was arrested Tuesday.

Shawn DeCosta, 49, was taken into custody in connection with the Jan. 4 burglary at IHOP and is a suspect in the burglary at Blue Angel Café. A window was smashed at the pancake house, according to police Lt. Brian Williams.

Blue Angel was burglarized twice – Dec. 30 and Jan. 4. Each time the suspect got a couple hundred dollars, according to owner Jeff Cowen.

“The damage cost more than the take,” Cowen told *Lake Tahoe News*. He added that a person fitting DeCosta’s description was asked to leave the restaurant about a week before the first break-in.

DeCosta was identified from surveillance cameras at IHOP.

He may also be responsible for a burglary at Tahoe Hemp Co. in 2015, as well as being a suspect in recent incident where a teenage cyclist was jumped on the bike path near Wildwood Avenue.

Harder drugs, more medical calls at SnowGlobe



Rock Med officials at SnowGlobe at times asked law enforcement to leave the tent because patients didn't feel comfortable. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

By Kathryn Reed

More medical issues at SnowGlobe this year could be the result of concertgoers using harder drugs.

That was the message Russell Liles, detective with South Lake

El Dorado Narcotics Task Force, told the local drug coalition on Jan. 5.

Rock Med was in charge of all onsite medical issues for the three-day musical festival last month in South Lake Tahoe. The organization specializes in working at events like this. Exact numbers of how many people were treated have not been released.

The medical group also had personnel at the transit center in case anyone who got on a bus at the concert venue needed attention before going to their lodging establishment.

Barton Memorial Hospital handled the more serious cases, like drug overdoses. The emergency room saw 116 patients total from 7pm to 7am on the three nights of the music festival, of which one-third were estimated to be SnowGlobers.

"The majority of patients treated at Barton from SnowGlobe were due to weather exposure, alcohol use or substance use," Mindi Befu, Barton spokeswoman, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "There was an increase in SnowGlobe patients when the Rock Med tent onsite at the event was no longer available for service."

Molly – aka MDA and ecstasy – remains the drug of choice for this crowd. It makes people extremely thirsty. That's why lines are long to refill water bottles.

The amnesty box was nearly empty. This is where people can dump their illegal drugs without any questions being asked or threat of arrest.

"I think they are getting better at smuggling drugs in," Liles said.

People were using DMT (dimethyltryptamine), according to Liles. It is a psychedelic drug. He added this was the first year officers saw the hallucinogen ketamine (aka Special K). It's an animal tranquilizer that has effects similar to PCP

that is often used with ecstasy.

Officers noticed significantly less marijuana use this year compared to the past when it was almost like getting a contact high walking the grounds.

What alarmed Liles, though, was the number of minors cited for possession of alcohol – 104.

It's estimated 35,000 people attended the Dec. 29-31 event on the ball field at Lake Tahoe Community College.

Yosemite concessionaire wants \$44 mil. for trademarked park names

By Michael Doyle, McClatchy News Service

Yosemite National Park's former concessionaire surprised federal officials by quietly trademarking high-profile park names and then "grossly" overvaluing the intellectual property in an unjustified bid for millions of dollars, government lawyers contend in a new legal filing this week.

With an aggressive, 25-page lawsuit response that foreshadows more maneuvering to come, the Justice Department publicly asserts for the first time that the former Yosemite concessionaire proposed an "improper and wildly inflated" value for the trademarked park names.

The company, DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite Inc., demanded to be paid for the trademarks it valued at \$44 million. The National Park Service, by contrast, said the trademarks for

such park names as “The Ahwahnee” hotel were worth only \$1.63 million.

Read the whole story

CDC: E-cigarette ads reach 70% of 7-, 12-graders

By Brady Dennis, Washington Post

The ads have popped up everywhere in recent years, from TV commercials featuring celebrities to model-adorned magazine spreads to banners splashed across websites. E-cigarette marketing has become so ubiquitous that it now reaches more than two-thirds of U.S. middle and high school students, according to a report Tuesday – a development that some public health officials argue is prompting more teens to use the devices and threatening decades of progress in combating youth tobacco use.

“It’s the Wild West out there when it comes to e-cigarette advertising,” said Tom Frieden, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which released the data. “It’s no coincidence that as the advertising has skyrocketed, the use of e-cigarettes has skyrocketed.”

CDC’s findings were drawn from the 2014 National Youth Tobacco Survey, which included a representative sample of more than 22,000 middle and high school students. Nearly 70 percent – an estimated 18.3 million students – reported having seen e-cigarette marketing in at least one setting that year.

Read the whole story

Nevada to help driverless car industry

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Review-Journal

The state will dedicate resources through the Governor's Office of Economic Development toward the autonomous car industry in a bid to become the nation's leader in the testing and development of vehicles that drive themselves.

At a workshop meeting of transportation regulators and car manufacturers Tuesday, Gov. Brian Sandoval announced that within a month, a center for autonomous vehicles would be created within his economic development office.

Sandoval said dedicating state resources for those vehicles would be a first in the United States.

The office would assist companies looking to test or build their vehicles in Nevada the same way that the state now helps companies with unmanned aerial vehicles.

Read the whole story

Hotel sells for hefty price in El Dorado Hills

By Mark Anderson, Sacramento Business Journal

In another sign that Sacramento's hospitality market is becoming more attractive to investors, a hotel in El Dorado Hills recently sold for a robust price.

A San Francisco investor purchased the Holiday Inn Express in the El Dorado Hills Town Center on Dec. 15 for \$14.4 million, or \$155,203 per room, and plans a major renovation.

The price reflects the hotel's strong performance since it opened in late 2005, said Justin Myers, a vice president for Irvine-based hotel brokerage firm Atlas Hospitality Group. The hotel, which was originally built for roughly \$12 million, had been run by McDermid Management Co. of Colorado. The Colorado company is run by Charlie McDermid who with his wife at the time, Douglas County Commissioner Nancy McDermid, used to own the South Lake Tahoe Holiday Inn Express.

[Read the whole story](#)

Historic agreement allows for water storage



In March 2015 there was no water flowing from Lake Tahoe to the Truckee River, which contributed to the need to change water agreements. Photo/LTN file

By Anne Knowles

RENO – The Truckee River Operating Agreement is a done deal.

Parties to the landmark water compact, which went into effect Dec. 1 after nearly three decades of negotiations and work, took time out Tuesday to celebrate.

“From a drought perspective, this is a game changer,” Leo Drozdoff, director of the Nevada Department of Conservation & Natural Resource, said Jan. 5. “It provides certainty in uncertain times.”

The agreement allows upstream users such as Truckee Meadows Water Authority to store water they are entitled to rather than release it from reservoirs if it weren’t immediately needed, and receive a credit to use the water when it is needed.

“We’ve never been able to store water in the winter before,” John Erwin, director of natural resources planning and

management at TMWA, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Since Dec. 1, when TROA took effect, TMWA has been able to store 2,700 acre-feet of water. Overall, TMWA expects to triple its storage, helping the municipal water purveyor to handle drought and continue to allow the Truckee Meadows to grow.

California, too, can start storing water rather than diverting it once the Water Resources Board agrees to a reporting framework, probably in a month or so, David Willoughby, engineer with the Watershed Assessment Section of California Department of Water Resources, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The agreement also allows for those credits to be used or exchanged in multiple reservoirs.

"It allows storage by different entities in different spaces. Before it went down the river," Willoughby said.

The flexibility should also help downstream users.

"Regimented release didn't always match up to the needs downstream," Arthur Hinojosa, division of integrated regional water management of California DWR, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Needs are not always consumptive. This is better for the fish and for recreation."

That includes the endangered Cui-ui and the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout, vital to the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe and its fishery.

Before TROA, the federal water master was required by court decrees to release water from reservoirs year-round in order to maintain river flows.

Now, the water master and a group of signatories will meet monthly to discuss and schedule variable releases.

The committee – which consists of the federal water master and

a representative from California and Nevada, TMWA, Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation – has been meeting for years in what Chad Blanchard, the water master, called mock TROA.

The group has also been using mock data because the ongoing drought has meant there's no water to wrangle over. So they've used made up data that lets them simulate real negotiations.

In December, for the first time, the group used real data, Blanchard told *Lake Tahoe News*.

In the end, the water master is the arbiter who will determine water releases, especially in the case of any minor conflict of interests. If a conflict gets more complicated, Blanchard said TROA stipulates a special hearing prosecutor to settle disputes.

"It is emotional," Mark Foree, general manager of Truckee Meadows Water Authority, said as he looked around the packed room at the Siena Hotel, and added some of the people involved in the agreement had essentially spent their careers on it.

"It was a surreal moment when they reported to us this is done," said Vinton Hawley, tribal chairman, Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe. "I said it let's give it a week and let it set in. Somebody may oppose it."

TMWA and the tribe are two of five major signatories to TROA, an agreement designed to manage allocations among Truckee's users and hopefully end more than a century of court battles over what is considered the country's most litigated river.

TROA has 15 signatories: the five major parties which form the release scheduling group and 10 others – the Carson-Truckee Water Conservancy District, Washoe County Water Conservation District, the cities of Reno, Sparks and Fernley, Washoe County, Sierra Valley Mutual Water Co., Truckee-Donner Public Utility District, Placer County Water Agency and North Tahoe

Public Utility District.

The Truckee-Carson Irrigation District, which manages the Newlands project in Northern Nevada, is not a signatory and TMWA's Foree said TCID in the next few weeks will drop its litigation opposing TROA, removing what the signatories hope is the agreement's final hurdle.

Reno-Tahoe market to get UberSKI service

By Jason Hidalgo, Reno Gazette-Journal

Uber is doubling down on the area after its recent Tahoe launch by offering passengers an additional service option.

The ridesharing company announced that its UberSKI service is now available to customers in the region, making Reno-Tahoe only the second area in the nation to have the option available.

UberSki allows passengers to request an UberX car – the designation for the company's low-cost vehicle option – but with all wheel drive and a ski rack for transporting skis and snowboards. Using the service will add a \$5 base fee to a customer's fare.

Read the whole story

Calif. misses water-saving mark for 2nd month

By Scott Smith, AP

Residents of drought-stricken California used 20 percent less water in November, falling short of the governor's 25 percent conservation mandate for a second straight month, officials reported Tuesday.

Despite missing the mandate, California remains on course to beat its long-term goal through February, said Felicia Marcus, chair of the State Water Resources Control Board.

Residents have saved a combined 26 percent since the cutbacks began in June, she said at a meeting in Sacramento.

The tally came as a series of much-anticipated El Nino storms began to drench the state and boost the already high snowpack.

Officials had expected less water saving during the winter, when residents reduce landscape irrigation, Marcus said.

Still, the latest numbers reflect considerable savings over past years, Marcus said, adding that residents understand it's too early to declare an end to the four-year drought.

Most strikingly, average monthly water use declined from 87 gallons for each person in October to 75 gallons in November, hitting the lowest level since the curtailments began, officials reported.

"Californians are clearly thinking twice before turning on the tap," Marcus said in a statement.

Gov. Jerry Brown ordered the 25 percent cutbacks in June compared to the same period in 2013, the year before he declared a drought emergency.

Conservation efforts hit a setback in October, when Californians missed the mandated target, posting 22 percent in savings.

Regulators renewed their appeal for conservation, even with the coming storms and as a recent Sierra Nevada snowpack survey showing water content was well above normal for this time of year.

“We’re in such a deep hole,” Marcus said. “We need to have a lot of water in storage and snow in the mountains to let us relax at all.”

EDC Office of Ed picks leader from within



Ed Manansala

Ed Manansala was sworn in Jan. 5 as the superintendent of El Dorado County Office of Education.

Most recently he had been the deputy superintendent of educational services for the district, a position he has had since June 2013. Prior to his work at EDCOE, he served as interim chief of staff at Sacramento City School District, superintendent of St. Hope Public Schools, and principal of

Sacramento Charter High School.

The board conducted interviews in public on Monday. All of the candidates interviewed live outside the county. The agency was granted a one-year waiver to allow the new superintendent to live outside the jurisdiction.

Manansala will fill out the term of Jeremy Meyers, which expires in 2018. Meyers resigned with more than six month's pay late last year after being arrested twice on driving under the influence charges in a five-month span. Manansala will be making \$196,837 a year, with an expense allowance of \$7,600.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*