

Sewage spill contained near Upper Truckee River

South Tahoe Public Utility District last weekend experienced a sewage spill of nearly 2,500 gallons near Washoan Boulevard in El Dorado County.

It was coming from a manhole near Onnontioga Street.

“The blockage was caused by ‘biodegradeable’ toilet wipes hanging up on roots that intruded into the main sewer from unused sewer laterals. The roots were cut out, and a herbicide was added to the sewer to kill the roots in the service laterals,” South Tahoe PUD General Manager Richard Solbrig told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Crews cleaned the area and tested the small drainage channel leading into the meadow that connect to the Upper Truckee River for bacterial contamination.

“Since several points close to the spill site tested above the health department’s desired maximums, the area has been posted to avoid contact with water in the drainage channel,” Solbring said.

Testing will continue on a daily basis until levels are safe. Warning signs will remain in place until then.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Calif. commercial pot revenue projections fall short

By Brad Branan, Sacramento Bee

In the first two months of cannabis legalization, consumers bought an estimated \$339 million worth of marijuana products from retailers in California, 50 percent less than state projections, according to a leading analytics firm.

The state has estimated that retail cannabis sales for the year would be \$3.4 billion, or \$570 million every two months.

Read the whole story

Lake Tahoe real estate market starts year strong

Lake Tahoe's real estate market started 2018 with strong sales, seeing a 68 percent rise in homes sold for more than \$1 million. The median price of a home rose 25 percent to \$665,000. Homes sold for less than \$1 million were down 6 percent.

The figures are part of a quarterly report released by Lake Tahoe-based real estate agency Chase International. The numbers compare all MLS home sales from Jan. 1-March 31 to the same time quarter in 2017.

Incline Village saw the biggest jump in the sale of million-dollar homes with a 121 percent increase while the East Shore was the only area to see a jump (83 percent) in homes sold for

less than \$1 million. Incline also experienced a 29 percent increase in the median home price (\$1,120,000) while the East Shore was the only area to see a dip (11 percent) in price to \$830,000.

“Record low inventory around the lake is creating a seller’s market,” said Sue Lowe, corporate vice president for Chase. “The new tax laws and incentives in Nevada are fueling further interest and activity in those communities.”

The sale of condos priced over \$500,000 was up 37 percent around the lake, while those priced less than that were down 11 percent. The median price of condo was up 15 percent to \$430,000.

The median price of a home in Truckee dropped 1 percent to \$705,000. Homes sold for more than \$1 million were up 70 percent, while homes sold for less than \$1 million were down 5 percent. There was a 188 percent leap in the sale of Truckee condos priced above \$500,000, while those sold for less than that were down 33 percent.

SLT’s dysfunction stalls recreational marijuana

By Kathryn Reed

Recreational marijuana, while not extinguished in South Lake Tahoe, is having a hard time getting out of the starting gate.

At the March 27 City Council meeting Sergio Rudin with the law firm of Burke, Williams and Sorensen said he had all he needed to write an ordinance that would be ready for the council’s

review on April 17.

The issue was brought back two weeks sooner – and without an ordinance to dissect. Mayor Wendy David has asked for recreational marijuana to be on every agenda until the issue is resolved.

The council on April 3, with the absence of Brook Laine, talked in circles – again. In the end, they told Nira Doherty, attorney from the same law firm, not to bring back an ordinance. Instead, David said she would meet with Councilmember Jason Collin and acting City Manager Jeff Meston to get their questions answered.

For more than three hours last week Collin, David, Meston, Doherty, Police Chief Brian Uhler and planning director Kevin Fabino talked. A lot of questions were answered, but the council members are not completely sure where they stand on everything.

Collin appears to want information spoon fed to him. At the April 3 meeting he admitted, “I’m probably the least educated on this.” He later said, “This is not the biggest priority of my life. I am not going to do homework on my own.” Then he added that he has read some things about recreational marijuana.

The reality of being on any elected body is that everything on the agenda is supposed to be a priority because the electeds are doing the public’s work and their job is to do what the public asks. The public is asking for a recreational marijuana ordinance. The electeds are the ones who set policy, not staff, so they must come up with the substance of the ordinance.

Part of the delay is that recreational marijuana is new to California. And while other states have legalized it, each state has its own rules. And being in Tahoe, the city has to deal with constraints imposed by the Tahoe Regional Planning

Agency.

The uncooperative working relationship among the five electeds is also impacting the process. They also all don't seem to trust staff. This is bogging down the process.

Then the council is being told by one attorney that an ordinance can be written, while a different person sitting in that chair at the next meeting says more information is needed.

Complicating matters is city staff is not in agreement and let their differences be known for all to hear at the last council meeting. Doherty and Fabino are in disagreement about zoning laws, especially when it comes to micro businesses. This just adds to the confusion for the council when it comes to being able to make a decision, and for the public to trust the process and future decisions.

Micro businesses are a hiccup in the process that still needs to be addressed, and in large part will dictate how any ordinance is written. While the community working group recommended not starting with micro businesses on Day 1, members said revisiting the issue in a year or so would make sense.

Councilman Austin Sass has advocated for them since the get-go, saying this is a better route for South Lake Tahoe and the individual businesses. It means the businesses would be able have multiple licenses bundled into one, and essentially be self-contained. One example is that they could grow, distribute and sell the product.

Recreational marijuana will be back on the April 14 agenda. The ultimate goal is to have an ordinance that will stand up in court. It remains to be seen when an actual ordinance will be forthcoming.

Primary care doctors an 'increasingly endangered species'

By David Ryder, New York Times

Is the doctor in?

In this new medical age of urgent care centers and retail clinics, that's not a simple question. Nor does it have a simple answer, as primary care doctors become increasingly scarce.

"You call the doctor's office to book an appointment," said Matt Feit, a 45-year-old screenwriter in Los Angeles who visited an urgent care center eight times last year. "They're only open Monday through Friday from these hours to those hours, and, generally, they're not the hours I'm free or I have to take time off from my job.

"I can go just about anytime to urgent care," he continued, "and my copay is exactly the same as if I went to my primary doctor."

That's one reason big players like CVS Health, the drugstore chain, and most recently Walmart, the giant retailer, are eyeing deals with Aetna and Humana, respectively, to use their stores to deliver medical care.

Read the whole story

Groups debate if Calif. has gone too far on crime reform

By Don Thompson, AP

Crime survivors and law enforcement leaders on Monday criticized a legal system they said has gone too far in reversing get-tough-on-crime policies of past decades as they stood before hundreds of photographs of crime victims as part of their annual Capitol rally.

They urged voters to support a ballot initiative that would roll back portions of measures passed in 2014 and 2016 that critics say impede investigations and free violent offenders too soon.

On the opposite side, a reform group wants to further scale back what was once the nation's toughest law targeting repeat offenders.

Domestic violence survivor Jennifer Adkins said her attacker was sentenced to 12 years in prison in 2015 on charges of assault with a deadly weapon, making terrorist threats, causing injury and assaulting a police officer. Under recent legal changes his sentence was reduced to three years and he is due for release next year, she said.

"I fear for my life," she said.

El Dorado County Sheriff John D'Agostini said stories like hers show recent changes "have exacerbated that revolving door."

Read the whole story

National test data show Nevada students still lagging

By Sam Gross, Reno Gazette-Journal

Newly released national testing data show Nevada still has work to do to get its students on par with the rest of the United States, but the results do reveal some bright spots.

Results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, a national test administered by an arm of the U.S. Department of Education, shows that Nevada is still trailing the national averages in math and reading.

Read the whole story

Study: Nevada struggles to close gender pay gap

By Yvonne Gonzalez, Las Vegas Sun

Women in Nevada earn an average of 81 cents for every dollar made by men, according to an analysis published Monday by the American Association of University Women.

The data was released to coincide with Equal Pay Day on April 10, which marks how far into the new year women have to keep working on average to match what men earned in 2017. Nevada ranks 22nd in the country, with Utah taking last place at 70

cents on the dollar.

“It’s only decreased a nickel in the past 20 years,” association CEO Kim Churches said of the pay gap. “That type of bottleneck and lack of progress means that we’re on the current trajectory for more than 100 years.”

Read the whole story

SnowGlobe working to curtail unwanted noise

By Kathryn Reed

It may be impossible to ever completely satisfy those who are against SnowGlobe.

Even though the promoter of the three-day music festival has agreed to shorten the hours, eliminate a day of sound checks, cover the entire ball field with a protective material, use an independent sound engineer and other concessions, opponents want more.

“Most of our issues are not with SnowGlobe; they are with policy and planning,” Scott Ramirez told the South Lake Tahoe City Council.



The 2018 SnowGlobe contract includes:

- Vendors/sponsors will agree to preapproved tent/structure specifications. Non-compliance will result in a fine of \$1,000 per violation.
- Seven (instead of six) California Highway Patrol officers will be used to patrol Al Tahoe Boulevard.
- A site plan for Bijou Community Park must be submitted, including citing activities for that site; as well as listing location for off-site box office.
- Putting in writing the fire department can cancel the fireworks.
- The field, pending weather, will be ready for use by June 1.
- Music will end at 10pm on Dec. 29 and Dec. 30, and at 12:45am Jan. 1.

- Speakers and subwoofers will be placed according to a sound engineer so as to create the least disturbance for residential areas.
- Sound checks will start after 11am on festival days, and will be from 11am-8pm on Dec. 28.
- South Lake Tahoe Drug Coalition will receive a free booth.
- Removing snow before the entire field is covered with a product that is the same material the San Francisco Giants and 49ers use.
- Per the existing contract the city is paying up to \$35,000 for promotional materials, and \$15,000 for transportation and garbage. Another \$75,000 is provided in kind services/labor. SnowGlobe will put up at \$250,000 bond in case the field needs replacing/repairs.

He is part of the No Globe Alliance. This is a group of South Lake Tahoe residents who are fed up with the bass that has rocked their homes since the festival started in 2011. While they contend they don't want to shut down the festival, they want more. They want enforcement. They want fines. They want their concerns to be heard as loudly as the noise they complain about.

The problem is there are no guarantees that what will be implemented for this December's event will do enough to satisfy those who are upset.

Nonetheless, the three-day festival that features electronic dance music will be back this year.

Chad Donnelly, the promoter of SnowGlobe, has a lot riding on his plans to mitigate the sound disturbance. He wants a long-term contract with the city and this is the last year of the existing deal. The number of complaints and what the field looks like will be key factors the council will consider in the future.

While noise has been an issue since the first year, every year seems to have come with some other negative component – a death, remnants of the festival left for months because of snow, and a field needing to be replaced. The latter is being taken care of now so it will be ready to be used in the summer.

And while the naysayers are a vocal ensemble each time SnowGlobe is on a council agenda, as was the case last week, there is an equally passionate group that supports the festival. Those people see it from the economic point-of-view.

It's no longer a given that South Shore hotels will be full on New Year's Eve. The lack of snow is a constant worry. Plus, SnowGlobe brings guests who usually stay a minimum of three nights because most of the nearly 20,000 attendees attend each night.

At last week's meeting the council, with member Brooke Laine absent, agreed to tighten a few rules that staff recommended. Also incorporated into the amended agreement were aspects of the deal worked out between the promoter and "no globers."

Online ads from unlicensed pot shops roil Calif. market

By Michael R. Blood, AP

Weedmaps is a go-to website for people looking to find a marijuana shop. With a few clicks on a cellphone, customers can find virtually any type of cannabis product, along with the fastest route to the place selling it and ratings from other consumers to help them decide what to buy.

But legal and illegal operators advertise next to each other, and licensed operators in California say that's put them at a disadvantage in a cutthroat marketplace.

[Read the whole story](#)