

IGT remains part of Nev. after \$6.4 bil. merger

By Howard Stutz, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Slot machine giant International Game Technology is as much a part of Nevada as the Battle Born motto, bristlecone pine trees, sagebrush and Lake Tahoe.

The folks at the former GTECH Holdings understand this.

That's one reason why the Italian-based lottery company didn't abandon the Silver State after spending \$6.4 billion to acquire one of the casino industry's largest gambling equipment providers. GTECH even took on the IGT name when the merger was finalized in April.

Meanwhile, IGT is using its 1.2 million-square-foot Reno manufacturing facility as the central hub for its slot machine business.

Together, the executives are putting a Nevada face to the new IGT. Another tie to Nevada is the company's chairman, Phil Satre, a Reno resident who chaired the former IGT board and spent more than 20 years as CEO and chairman of Harrah's Entertainment.

Read the whole story

2 seriously hurt in sledding accident

By Associated Press

Two people sledding near the Mount Rose Highway have been hospitalized after crashing into a parked vehicle.

North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District says the incident happened about noon New Year's Eve in the Meadows area that is popular for sledding.

Two people were hurt in the crash and taken to Renown Medical Center in Reno. One person was airlifted and the other was taken by ambulance. Fire department spokesperson Tia Rancourt said their conditions weren't immediately available.

Missing woman found on roof at Edgewood



April Torres

Updated Dec. 31, 4:20pm:

At 3:30pm Thursday, April Torres was located on the roof of

the clubhouse at Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course.

She has been transported to Barton Memorial Hospital. Her medical condition is unknown. The investigation continues.

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Douglas County sheriff's deputies are looking for a woman who was last seen Dec. 31 at 3:30am at MontBleu in Stateline.

Officials say she is "believed to be endangered", but have not said why.

April Torres, 34, was was wearing red jogging pants with a white stripe on the side, and a gray ski jacket with a spider logo. She has a tattoo of a heart between her thumb and index finger on her right hand.

She on foot when her mother last saw her. She does not have a vehicle.

— *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Gaming regulators monitoring Adelson Review-Journal buy

By Howard Stutz, Las Vegas Review-Journal

State gaming regulators are monitoring the issues surrounding the purchase of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* by the family of Sheldon Adelson, the majority shareholder in casino giant Las

Vegas Sands Corp.

Gaming Control Board Chairman A.G. Burnett cites Nevada gaming regulations and the state's public policy covering gaming license holders in saying regulators have the right to look into the transaction.

The agency has previously questioned the outside investments of gaming license holders. On 2014, the Control Board ruled that gaming license holders couldn't become involved in the state's medical marijuana business because the drug remains illegal under federal law.

Read the whole story

Americans drinking themselves to death at record rates

By Christopher Ingraham, Washington Post

Alcohol is killing Americans at a rate not seen in at least 35 years, according to new federal data. Last year, more than 30,700 Americans died from alcohol-induced causes, including alcohol poisoning and cirrhosis, which is primarily caused by alcohol use.

In 2014, there were 9.6 deaths from these alcohol-induced causes per 100,000 people, an increase of 37 percent since 2002.

This tally of alcohol-induced fatalities excludes deaths from drunk driving, other accidents, and homicides committed under the influence of alcohol. If those numbers were included the annual toll of deaths directly or indirectly caused by alcohol

would be closer to 90,000, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Read the whole story

Software firms benefit from legalized pot industry

By Daniel Rothberg, Las Vegas Sun

Leaders of Nevada's emerging marijuana industry say there are few consumable substances watched more closely than the vegetation that goes into cannabis products.

Over the last decade, as nearly 25 states have authorized the use of marijuana in some form, several jurisdictions have imposed rules that require the substance be tracked from seed to sale. For regulators and sellers, it's a daunting process for a plant that often changes hands and takes on many forms before it becomes a final product – a joint, an edible, a topical cream, etc.

To ease data collection, states and marijuana establishments have turned to niche software providers who have made a business out of organizing data from harvest site to dispensary. Generally, the software works with a system of serial numbers, starting with each plant in a harvest getting one of its own. When the harvest batch is sent for extraction or made into an edible product, each byproduct gets another serial number – known as the child batch. As the plant goes through each stage of production – testing, cooking – it gets new serial numbers to track its process while retaining the old serial numbers to show where it's been. That data can be

translated to a barcode on the product.

Read the whole story

Calif. test scores tied to attendance, not proficiency

By Sharon Noguchi, San Jose Mercury News

For more than a decade, the release of federal scores indicating California public school students' progress – or lack of it – has incited alarm, anxiety and anguish among educators.

But when those marks were ever so quietly posted this month, barely anyone noticed. And it seemed few cared. For the first time in years, California schools met federal standards – but only because the yardstick had been replaced with an easier-to-meet measurement.

It's the sign that the federal No Child Left Behind law, an effort to hold schools accountable for students' failure to learn, has lost its muscle a year before it expires. That retreat enrages reformers like former state Sen. Gloria Romero of Los Angeles. "There is an effort to minimize, whitewash and scrub the file so that parents don't have information," she said. "If you can kill the data, you can't have the reform."

Read the whole story

Raley's grocery chain sets table for the future

By Mark Glover, Sacramento Bee

West Sacramento-based Raley's marked its 80th year with a flurry of moves that arguably made 2015 the busiest year in its history.

Significantly, the moves came during a year in which Raley's became president and CEO Michael Teel's company, literally.

In May, Jim and Joyce Raley Teel announced that they would transfer majority ownership to their 64-year-old son. With that, the grandson of founder Tom Raley assumed 92 percent ownership of the 12,000-employee company founded in 1935.

Foremost among the 2015 developments, Raley's announced growth plans after a prolonged period of standing pat.

Teel acknowledged that Raley's is positioning itself to better compete in a Northern California/Nevada marketplace that has become increasingly crowded over the past decade, with Safeway, discount grocers and Walmart Neighborhood Market stores cropping up and touting low prices.

Read the whole story

Water content of Sierra snow above average

By Kathryn Reed

PHILLIPS STATION – The Sierra snowpack is 400 percent better than it was a year ago.

The measurement taken today in the field near the road leading to Sierra-at-Tahoe has the snow depth at 54.7 inches and the water content 16.3 inches, making it 136 percent of average.

In December 2014 those numbers were 21.3 inches of snow, the equivalent of 4 inches of water and 33 percent of average.

“The problem we’ve had in the past years is it starts out OK and then it shuts off,” Frank Gehrke with the California Department of Water Resources said of the storms.



Frank Gehrke takes a reading on the water content on Dec. 30 near Sierra-at-Tahoe. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Dec. 30 was the first of five manual snow surveys for the season. And while it was encouraging that there was snow on the ground compared to April when it was a dry field that **Gov. Jerry Brown** walked through to highlight the dire drought conditions, there is no guarantee the snow will keep falling. It was so bad last spring that the May survey didn't even happen because it was bone dry.

This location near Echo Summit is doing better than the statewide average of 10.2 inches of water, or 105 percent of the Dec. 30 average.

Gehrke noted the light, powdery snow he was trudging through is fabulous for skiing, but it's not the kind of white stuff that interests hydrological officials. They want more Sierra cement, with more water than air in the snow.

When asked about the forecast, Gehrke in his usual pragmatic demeanor said, "Those are just predictions."

He noted that the full effect of the El Nino would be felt in the latter part of the winter.

The key for reservoir storage is for the moisture to come in the form of snow and not rain. This is so the spring runoff will fill those holding basins that provide drinking and irrigation water for municipalities and farmers throughout California. The snowpack in normal years supplies about 30 percent of California's water needs.

The main reservoirs after four years of drought are well below normal for this time of year. Lake Oroville has 1 million acre-feet, which is 29 percent of its 3.5 million acre-foot capacity and 47 percent of its historical average on Dec. 30. Last year it was at 62 percent average. Lake Shasta has 1.4 million acre-feet, 31 percent of its 4.55 million acre-foot capacity and 51 percent of its historical average. In December 2014 it was 41 percent of its total capacity and 66 percent of the Dec. 30 average.

Stateline casinos post gains for November

After months of declining revenue, the Stateline casinos posted a win of \$14.2 million in November, an increase of 17.3 percent compared to 2014.

Statewide the numbers were good, with a spike of 7.8 percent – from \$876.2 million in 2014 to \$944.3 million last month.

The Nevada Gaming Control Board released the figures Dec. 30.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report