Thousands of college hopefuls could leave California

By Vanessa Rancano, KQED

High school seniors across the state are waiting on news that will shape the rest of their lives.

This month they find out whether they are among the thousands being admitted to the University of California or California State University.

Both UCs and CSUs are struggling to find space for qualified residents at overcrowded campuses, and tens of thousands of eligible students will be turned away. If they leave the state for college, and don’t come back, it could be trouble for the state’s economy.

Read the whole story

When days and nights get too hot

By Aimee Cunningham, Science News

Some victims were found at home. An 84-year-old woman who’d spent over half her life in the same Sacramento apartment died near her front door, gripping her keys. A World War II veteran succumbed in his bedroom. Many died outside, including a hiker who perished on the Pacific Crest Trail, his water bottles empty.

The killer? Heat. Hundreds of others lost their lives when a stifling air mass settled on California in July 2006. And this repeat offender’s rap sheet stretches on. In Chicago, a multiday scorcher in July 1995 killed nearly 700. Elderly, black residents and people in homes without air conditioning were hardest hit. Europe’s 2003 heat wave left more than 70,000 dead, almost 20,000 of them in France. Many elderly Parisians baked to death in upper-floor apartments while younger residents who might have checked in on their neighbors were on August vacation. In 2010, Russia lost at least 10,000 residents to heat. India, in 2015, reported more than 2,500 heat-related deaths.

Year in and year out, heat claims lives.

Read the whole story

EDC vehicle thefts surge; statewide numbers drop

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

The number of vehicle thefts in California headed downward in 2017, following two years of increases.

El Dorado County saw a 17.5 percent increase, from 286 in 2016 to 336 in 2017, according to CHP statistics.

Sacramento and Placer County counties followed the statewide trend.

Read the whole story

Meston to resign as acting SLT city manager

Updated April 6, 5:30pm:

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe acting City Manager Jeff Meston has told the City Council that he wants to step down.

Meston's full-time job is fire chief of the city.

He has had the added responsibilities since Feb. 7. That is when the council put then City Manager Nancy Kerry on leave before eventually permanently separating ways for reasons that still have not been disclosed.



Jeff Meston

Meston sent a note to the council saying, "I am unable to complete my duties as the fire chief while working as the acting city manager. I respectfully request that we move ahead in the next 30 days to find and hire an interim city manager."

Mayor Wendy David was not immediately available for comment.

In Meston's letter he cited the structure of the fire department and how with him being pulled out to do city work

not related to his department it is taking a toll.

“We have several critical issues pending which include finalization of the Standards of Cover Document (council goal), hiring additional personnel, our communication system replacement plan as well as the lawsuit over the ladder truck. I am unable to complete my duties as the fire chief while working as the acting city manager,” Meston’s letter said.

The council also needs a city attorney because the firm acting as interim legal counsel has said they will no longer be performing those duties as of the end of summer.

The council last month had a brief conversation about what to do about the two leadership positions which it has control over. However, it is not clear what the five really want to do.

Meston had told the council he is trying to find a search firm to find a city manager.

The minutes from that meeting were on the April 4 council agenda. They were inaccurate regarding that conversation and had to be revised. The minutes fraudulently stated a motion, conversation and action that never occurred.

The council has not made any official decisions about what it wants to do with a city manager or city attorney. The resignation of Meston as acting city manager will now press their hands to do their job.

Pet waste a major pollutant outdoors and at home



Vancouver, B.C., uses humor to get people to pick up after pets. Photo/LTN

By Wes Siler, Outside

In the United States, pet dogs produce 21.2 billion pounds of poop each year. All that poop is polluting water sources, both in urban areas and the backcountry, largely because dog owners aren't doing a good enough job picking it up. Let's look at the reasons why dog poop has become such a problem, and examine what we can do about it.

Two reasons: There's too much of it and it's full of bacteria and parasites.

To study the issue, the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics tracked "canine defecation events" on Boulder, Colorado's Open Space and Mountain Parks lands for a little over a month last summer. Those 45,000 acres see 5.3 million

human visits each year, and many of those visitors bring their dogs along, resulting in 60,000 pounds of left-behind dog poop each year.

Read the whole story

Wet storm to drench Lake Tahoe Basin

The National Weather Service in Reno has issued a flood watch from April 6 at 5pm to April 8 at 5am for the greater Lake Tahoe area, as well as parts of the Carson Valley and Reno areas.

A strong atmospheric river will impact the Sierra. Significant precipitation will combine with high snow levels to bring an enhanced flooding potential for rivers, creeks, streams and urban areas.

Rain is expected to start Friday night and last into Saturday.

Snow levels will start at 9,000 feet, dropping to 7,000 feet on Saturday evening.

High temps are expected to be in the 40s and 50s in South Lake Tahoe, with most lows above freezing for the next several days.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Storms filling up Lake Tahoe, nears legal limit

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

It took a near-miracle but Lake Tahoe is once again holding enough water to supply Reno for as many as three years.

That’s after a dismal start to winter during which snowpack in the Lake Tahoe basin was just 25 percent of the median peak on March 1.

“We will expect to be brim-full at both Boca and Stampede, just like last year,” said Dave Wathen, chief deputy water master in Reno. “If we have a full Tahoe that typically gets us through three dry years.”

During a snow survey on Monday at Slide Mountain, Wathen said Lake Tahoe is within about a foot of its legal storage limit with more rain and snow on the way.

Read the whole story

Police: No foul play in woman’s death in SLT



Pamela Suwinsky

It took South Lake Tahoe police officers a year to determine that the drowning death of a Sacramento woman was just that – a drowning.

Pamela Suwinsky, 62, was reported missing by her ex-husband on April 3, 2017. Her body was recovered six days later by the El Dorado County dive team in the Upper Truckee River.

Suwinsky and her husband had been staying at the Motel 6 on Highway 50 in South Lake Tahoe when she left on foot without her dog, purse, cell phone or car. She had her ID and credit cards with her.

According to the police department, they "initiated a full homicide investigation into her death." In the end, it was determined no crime was committed.

The El Dorado County coroner has ruled her death as an accidental drowning.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

EDC-SLT not rushing to solve

56-acre conflict



Twenty El Dorado County families bought this area in the 1920s for $7,500 from D.L. Bliss. Ever since they leased it to South Lake Tahoe the two government bodies have been squabbling. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

It will be 12 years ago this fall that four design teams vied for the opportunity to develop what is known as the 56-acre parcel in South Lake Tahoe. The future of much of that land is still undetermined because the city and county are not on the same page.

The county owns about 41 of those acres, which is home to El Dorado Beach (Lakeview Commons), Campground by the Lake, Tahoe Art League, South Lake Tahoe Senior Center, Lake Tahoe Museum, and Lake Tahoe Visitors Center.

The city owns about 15 acres in the area, which is where the rec center, ice rink and heavy equipment yard are located.

A lease was entered in 1968 giving the city the right to use about 38.8 acres in this central location of South Lake Tahoe. The county retained 1 acre for the library.

A revision to the lease was made in 1972. That agreement expires on June 30, 2023. It in part says the purpose is to "provide recreational, social, and cultural facilities on the property located in such a manner as to enhance the natural beauty of the property."

Through the years changes have been made and documents added to the file, especially as Lakeview Commons was developed. That was a $6.5 million investment by the California Tahoe Conservancy.



Here are some of the provisions in the lease:

· The city is responsible for all financing, maintenance, and development of all facilities to be constructed or placed on the property.

· The city is responsible to maintain the entire leased area at no cost to the county.

· The responsibility and authority for the management and control of the leased premises and all the structures thereon is vested solely in the City, provided there is no breach of the lease.
· If the city fails or refuses to carry out the lease provisions, the city shall nevertheless remain obligated to pay for maintenance of facilities and improvements while the lease is in effect.
· Either the city or the county may terminate the lease if the other party fails to remedy a default of the lease terms and conditions within 90 days of receiving written notice of the default.
· If the city brings legal action to obtain title to the leased property, the county may terminate the lease.
· Upon termination of the lease for any reason including at the end of the 55-year term, the ownership of all improvements constructed or placed on the property vest in the county.
· The city assumes all risk of personal injury and property damage in connection with city occupation of the lease property, and indemnifies the county against related claims and liabilities.
· The city agrees to pay for all utilities and services provided to the leased premises.

· The city agrees to provide free water service from the well located on the lease premises to the mosquito abatement facilities.
· The city shall not assign lease or sublease without county's approval.
· The prevailing party in any legal action shall receive reasonable attorney's fee.

A study commissioned and paid for by South Lake Tahoe and El Dorado County was prepared by Foothill Associates. While portions have done since late last year, it is not expected to before the City Council until May 1.

Acting City Manager Jeff Meston only recently obtained copies of the report. "I believe that staff will take direction from City Council, and then do what they wish. It is pretty clear to us this is a council decision/direction issue."

El Dorado County CAO Don Ashton told *Lake Tahoe News*, "At this time there are no plans for a formal discussion with the Board of Supervisors since the city is responsible for the management and maintenance of the property for at least the next five years, and longer for Lakeview Commons."

Lake Tahoe News also asked Ashton: *Does county staff agree with the preferred recommendation of the city operating the facilities with a long term lease from the county? Why or why not? Would the county consider selling the property to the city? Why or why not? At what price? Would the county consider being a partner in developing the land in ways that were proposed in the charrette that was done a decade or so ago? If the city were to want to develop the site in some manner, what would the city (other than presumably footing the bill) need to do? In other words, what "permission" would the county need to give for future development? Where will vector control be*

relocated and when? Does the county expect to contribute to any of the maintenance needs prior to entering another lease with the city – assuming one is agreed to? What will the county do if the city says it doesn't want anything to do with the 56 acres or even select areas? What if the city only wants responsibility for part of the area – say the campground and Lakeview Commons?

Ashton's response was: "(Those) questions are speculative and hypothetical in nature so I'm unable to answer."

Ultimately it will be up to the elected bodies on how to go forward.

South Lake Tahoe Mayor Wendy David told *LTN*, "I have not digested and read in detail enough yet to comment on the recommendations."

El Dorado County Supervisor Sue Novasel was on the community committee back in 2006. She did not respond to *Lake Tahoe News'* inquiry asking what she thought of the study and its recommendations.

The city doesn't want to invest in the property if it won't have control over it for a long period of time, and the county doesn't want to part with what is prime real estate. The city as the renter believes the county as landlord ought to be paying more of the upkeep.

Until the two government bodies find a resolution the approach is more like putting a Band-Aid on problems instead of a whole knee replacement. That scenario isn't working well, especially at someplace like Campground by the Lake that needs to have the restrooms/showers replaced at an estimated cost of $600,000.

"As indicated in the report the county needs to maintain ownership of the acreage in order to be compliant with our General Plan requirements," Ashton said.

Of course general plans can be changed if elected have the will to do so.

The consultants recommend the city continue as the lessee and managing the facilities as one unit so the income could be moved around as needed. Changes to the subleases are also suggested to include regular and deferred maintenance agreements, utilities, annual repairs, and a five-year budget.

The report states, "… the success of this approach will require a commitment on the part of all parties to provide oversight, expense and revenue tracking, and record keeping in accordance with their respective roles. Annual updates to the operating budget and CIP should be made, and periodic facility assessments conducted to ensure preventive maintenance is being done and to identify upcoming major maintenance projects."

MLK's vision matters today for the millions in U.S. living in poverty

By Joshua F.J. Inwood, The Conversation

On April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, while fighting for a 10-cent wage increase for garbage workers. These efforts by King were part of a broader and more sustained initiative known as the Poor People's Campaign.

King was working to broaden the scope of the civil rights movement to include poverty and the end of the war in Vietnam.

King and his leadership team planned to bring thousands of poor people to Washington, D.C., where they would camp out on the National Mall until Congress passed legislation to eradicate poverty.

King was convinced that for the civil rights movement to achieve its goals, poverty needed to become a central focus of the movement. He believed the poor could lead a movement that would revolutionize society and end poverty. As King noted, "The only real revolutionary, people say, is a man who has nothing to lose. There are millions of poor people in this country who have little, or nothing to lose."

With over 43 million people living in poverty in the United States today, King's ideas still hold much power.

The Poor People's Campaign

In the last three years of his life and ministry King had grown frustrated with the slow pace of reform and the lack of funding for anti-poverty programs. In 1966, for example, King moved to Chicago and lived in an urban slum to bring attention to the plight of the urban poor in northern cities. His experiences in the South had convinced him that elimination of poverty was important to winning the long-term battle for civil and social rights.

It was also at this time that King began to think about leading a march to Washington, D.C., to end poverty. King explained the campaign saying,:

"Then we poor people will move on Washington, determined to stay there until the legislative and executive branches of the government take serious and adequate action on jobs and income."

King was assassinated before he could lead the campaign. And while the effort continued, the campaign could not meet King's goals of poverty elimination, universal access to health care

and education, and a guaranteed income that would keep people out of poverty.

Why it matters today

At a time when millions in the U.S. are poor and disenfranchised, the Poor People's Campaign remains as relevant for the U.S. as it was 50 years ago. Consider the evidence:

- At least 1.5 million households in the United States with about 3 million children are surviving on cash incomes of no more than $2 per day.
- A 2017 United Nations report found infant mortality rates in the U.S. to be the highest in the developed world. Children alone comprised 32.6 percent of all people in poverty.
- The World Income Database found that the U.S. has the highest rate of inequality among all Western countries.

Making this situation worse, many of the welfare and poverty elimination programs have been cut back or eliminated. A recent *Washington Post* investigation found that extreme poverty has nearly doubled since major welfare reform efforts in the 1990s under then-President Bill Clinton.

How can King's ideas help today?

At the core of King's anti-poverty message were two key ideas. The first was a guarantee that the federal government would provide every able-bodied American with a job. The second was for the federal government to provide a national basic income that would ensure a minimum concrete sum of money for every American regardless of their employment status.

In his 1967 speech at Stanford University, King argued that the time had come to "guarantee an annual minimum – and livable – income for every American family." The idea was to ensure every U.S. citizen would be able to live above the

poverty line. King was assassinated before he could present a fully developed policy proposal.

Currently, several Nordic nations, most notably Finland, are considering such a proposal. Two economists, Debraj Ray and Kelle Moene have argued that a universal income has the potential to boost GDP and productivity. The premise is that if you give people who currently lack means more money to spend, they will contribute to the economy through increased consumption of goods and services.

On the anniversary of King’s death, as Americans ponder the unfinished work of the Poor People’s Campaign, I believe a guaranteed national income is one idea that needs to be examined.

Joshua F.J. Inwood is an associate professor of geography and senior research associate in the Rock Ethics Institute, Pennsylvania State University.