

# Tahoe properties part of Caesars unit that is for sale

By Tracy Rucinski, Reuters

When a bankrupt operating unit of Caesars Entertainment went on the market in October, the package consisted of 38 casinos, including Harrah's Lake Tahoe and Harveys in Stateline. But those watching the sale have focused more on what isn't being offered.

Potential bidders for CEOC, a casino-operating unit of Caesars Entertainment would be wading into the middle of a costly and complicated bankruptcy, and they note that Caesars has left key assets – including a crucial piece of its big-data customer loyalty program – out of the package.

The offering comes at a time when consumer spending is rising, making regional gaming assets once again desirable.

Analysts and some junior creditors have suggested, however, that Caesars isn't serious about selling its CEOC operating unit and expressed doubt that the offering will attract any bidders.

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# Brown declares emergency for dying trees

By David Siders, Sacramento Bee

Lamenting “the worst epidemic of tree mortality” in the state’s modern history, Gov. Jerry Brown on Friday sought federal aid to remove dead trees from California forests and called for more controlled burns to reduce the risk of wildfire.

The declaration, including a controversial exemption from environmental reviews, comes amid California’s ongoing drought and a bark beetle infestation that has killed millions of trees weakened by lack of water.

Brown said the die-off exacerbates the risk of wildfires and the threat of erosion. He ordered state agencies to remove dead or dying trees from high-hazard areas and said his administration will work with federal authorities to expand controlled burns.

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## **Expert: Warm winter with rain for Tahoe**

**By Kathryn Reed**

INCLINE VILLAGE – El Nino is already here. Now it’s a matter of waiting to see what the ramifications of it will be to the greater Lake Tahoe area.

This particular El Nino is on target to be comparable to 1982-83 and 1997-98 – the biggest ones in the last 100 years.

This was some of the information Kelly Redmond, regional climatologist for the Western United States with the Desert Research Institute, shared with more than 150 people during a

lecture at the Tahoe Environmental Research Center in Incline Village on Oct. 29.

El Nino is the warming of the ocean waters. Everything else is a consequence of an El Nino. They tend to peak in the winter.

During El Ninos the jet stream drops south because the atmosphere reacts to the warming ocean. More moisture goes to Southern California, often leaving the Northwest dry. The Lake Tahoe-Reno area is often bypassed in normal El Nino years.

One thing that is different in the ocean now compared to the previous two large El Ninos are the two blobs sitting off the west coast of North America. Redmond said in his career he has not seen anything like this before. How they might affect El Nino is unknown.



El Nino is not a sure bet to  
create a banner snow year.  
Photo/LTN file

“There is little to suggest that a big El Nino causes more snow,” Redmond said. “We tend to get more extreme events.”

While moisture of any kind is welcome after four years of drought, if it comes in the form of rain, that could impact the local economy and water storage down stream. Tahoe is missing about a year’s worth of precipitation. That means it would take the equivalent of two year’s of wet stuff to make things normal.

Normal is a relative word for these parts. Redmond said this area has the most variable precipitation in the United States.

“It goes up and down tremendously,” he said while a chart depicting that fact was shown on the screen. “This is why you need reservoirs to balance things out.”

The models are also indicating this will be a warm winter, though not as warm as last year. This in turn will mean the snow line will be higher. More rain than snow is likely to be the end result.

“How the precipitation falls makes quite a bit of difference. Snow is free storage,” Redmond said. “There are  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to three Shasta dams worth of water just sitting there. It wasn’t there this year.”

Snow needs freezing overnight temperatures to keep its consistency. It needs a break from the melting sun. But that hasn’t been happening of late. The trend is that the overnight temps are steadily increasing. This is especially true in the spring.

Data from 1948-2015 for the months of October to March show the average freezing level in the basin being 8,700. Last winter it was 2,000 feet higher than that.

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## **U.S. bankruptcy lawyer faces fresh creditor attack over Caesars**

**By Tracy Rucinski and Tom Hals, Reuters**

Junior creditors of Caesars Entertainment launched a fresh attack against a top U.S. restructuring attorney, alleging that James Sprayregen of Kirkland & Ellis misled a judge and asking that the law firm be disqualified from parts of the casino group's bankruptcy case.

Jones Day, the junior bondholders' law firm, asked the court to reconsider a May order that allowed the bankrupt unit of Caesars Entertainment Corp to hire Kirkland, led by Sprayregen.

The dispute between two of the best-known law firms in corporate restructuring adds another layer of feuding to Caesars' \$18 billion bankruptcy, which involves the biggest U.S. private equity and hedge fund firms.

**Read the whole story**

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## **Calif. cuts water use 26%; 4 communities earn fines**

**By Kurtis Alexander, San Francisco Chronicle**

Californians slashed their water use 26 percent in September, meeting Gov. Jerry Brown's goal of a 25 percent reduction for the fourth straight month even as the specter of complacency rises with forecasts of drenching El Niño rains, according to state data released Friday.

But state water officials, rather than relishing in modest progress, toughened their stand against those getting in the way of even greater savings.

The State Water Resources Control Board announced for the

first time that it was slapping fines on four urban water suppliers that haven't conserved as much as they should. The Southern California cities of Beverly Hills, Indio and Redlands, as well as the Coachella Valley Water District, face penalties of \$61,000 apiece, officials said.

**Read the whole story**

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## **Ex-con arrested in S. Lake Tahoe shooting**

A 23-year-old ex-felon was arrested Thursday in connection to a shooting incident in South Lake Tahoe the night before.

Jahem Barton, 23, of South Lake Tahoe was arrested Oct. 29 on charges of an ex-felon in possession of firearm ammunition and resisting arrest.

On Oct. 28 several rounds were fired into a vehicle parked in front of a residence in the 800 block of Emerald Bay Road. There are no reports of any injuries.

Barton was tracked down the night of Oct. 29 near Grocery Outlet on Highway 50. The road was closed as officers apprehended the suspect.

The investigation is ongoing.

*– Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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# Online sales set to soar 11% this holiday season

By Ananya Bhattacharya, CNN Money

This Thanksgiving, bargains will be at your fingertips – literally.

For the first time, the majority of holiday shoppers will turn to their mobile phones to browse online retail sites this shopping season, according to Adobe's new holiday shopping forecast. Mobile will account for almost a third of online sales.

Total online sales are projected to be up 11 percent since last year, totaling \$83 billion, Adobe predicted. Cyber Monday is set to rake in a record \$3 billion this year.

**Read the whole story**

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## CVS burned by tobacco ban

By Chris Isidore, CNN Money

Sales at CVS were once again burned by the chain decision not to sell cigarettes.

CVS Caremark reported that its general merchandise sales fell in the most recent quarter mainly as a result of its decision to pull cigarettes and other tobacco products from its shelves. due to their negative impact on health.

This was the fifth straight quarter that CVS took a hit to

merchandise sales.

Still, total sales improved, climbing 10 percent, or \$3.6 billion, thanks to a jump in spending on prescription drugs. But those drug sales face their own headwinds as several generic brands have hit the market in the last year.

**Read the whole story**

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# **Mental health advocates request scrutiny of health insurance mega mergers**

**By Carolyn Y. Johnson, Washington Post**

Advocates are asking regulators to carefully scrutinize two massive health insurance mergers to make sure they won't harm some of the most vulnerable people in the health care system: mentally ill people, who already struggle to get access to treatment in many places.

The proposed mergers would turn the top five insurers in the country into the top three, combining Aetna with Humana and Cigna with Anthem. The billion dollar deals will have uncertain effects on consumers, which have been a point of debate. Some argue that larger insurers will be able to take advantage of economies of scale to negotiate better prices with hospitals, while others worry that bigger companies will drive up premiums for consumers and reduce choice, particularly in certain geographic areas.

What gets easily left out of that conversation – and many conversations about health care – is mental health. Although

the Affordable Care Act put in place a parity requirement that care for depression or schizophrenia be covered, advocates worry about inequalities that could be exacerbated as insurers grow larger and face less competition.

**Read the whole story**

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## **Mayor's arrest brought SLT unwanted notoriety**



Tahoe Daily Tribune headlines in June 1989 were all about Operation Deep Snow. Photo/LTN

**Publisher's note: *This is one in a series of stories Lake Tahoe News will be running leading up to the 50th anniversary of South Lake Tahoe on Nov. 30.***



**By Kathryn Reed**

June 11, 1989, started out like any other Sunday in the basin – sunny, blue sky, uneventful. Before it was over South Lake Tahoe was making headlines internationally.

Mayor Terry Trupp, 46, his 24-year-old wife Kim (who at one time was his foster daughter), and 17 others were arrested that weekend on a slew of drug and money laundering charges. Many were South Shore residents. Even more were arrested down the road as the case unfolded.

The display of weaponry, cash and drugs at the South Lake Tahoe police station was impressive.

Stacks of one-hundred and thousand dollar bills were confiscated. Automobiles, motorcycles, jewelry, bank accounts, real estate, and gun cases – all seized – all believed to have been obtained by drug money.

Money was laundered using offshore banks, real estate and local businesses.

It was retired El Dorado County sheriff's Lt. Pete Van Arnum who put the handcuffs on Trupp. (He was working for South Lake Tahoe Police Department at the time.) Both Trupps were arrested at Lake Tahoe Airport where they had gone to pick up friends.

This is one of the biggest stories to happen in South Lake Tahoe in the last 50 years and is certainly the largest criminal act involving a member of the City Council.

Trupp was first elected in 1978 after serving several years as

executive officer of the Council for Logic. That was the group opposed to the formation of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. He was re-elected in 1982 and 1986. In 1984, he made an unsuccessful run for the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors.

His last day as a member of the council was July 31, 1989. He had submitted his letter of resignation earlier in the month, on the same day his one-year stint as mayor ended. This negated the recall drive that had been initiated.

Bruce Grego was appointed to fill Trupp's unexpired term.

Trupp initially faced 21 counts, including allegations of laundering \$845,000 in drug profits and bringing in 220 pounds of cocaine to Tahoe. He was looking at spending the rest of his life in prison if convicted.



Terry Trupp was in his third term on the South Lake Tahoe City Council when he was arrested on June 11, 1989. Photo/South Lake Tahoe

In August 1990 he pleaded guilty to two counts – conspiracy to launder money and unlawful use of communications for drug

deals. On Oct. 11, 1990, he was sentenced to nine years in federal prison.

An Associated Press story at the time said, "(Trupp) said he pleaded guilty because he could not prove it was the fear of death and not the money that motivated him. Trupp read a long, involved statement accusing federal agents of using patriotism, fear, death threats and sympathy for persecuted Jews in coercing him to sell cocaine and launder drug money in the Lake Tahoe resort."

Trupp was released before he served his full sentence. He later remarried and worked in sales.

He died Aug. 20, 2008, of a staph infection. He was 65 and living in Southern California at the time.

Kim Trupp pleaded guilty to money laundering, which earned her a 21-month prison sentence. She could have faced 10 years behind bars and a \$500,000 fine. She was Terry Trupp's fourth wife. Trupp and his third wife became foster parents to Kim Trupp when she was 14.

In court documents Terry Trupp bragged of laundering money for 20 years.

People in town often wondered where he got his money. While he lived in a modest ranch-style house on Glenwood Way, he did have a Maserati. He had a bit of a pompadour, wore flashy gold chains and unbuttoned shirts. The couple were members of the local Church of Latter-day Saints.

On his 1987 and 1988 financial disclosure forms Trupp reported no income. The 1989 form lists more than \$10,000 coming from consulting work for Heavenly Valley Resort Hotel, now the Tahoe Seasons Resort.

He was pro development and one of the leaders of the initial redevelopment efforts in South Lake Tahoe. Much of his

campaign money came from the Stateline casinos, some of which he was doing consulting work for while on the council.

At the height of the investigation there were two dozen Drug Enforcement Administration agents and 30 Federal Bureau of Investigation agents on the case. South Lake El Dorado Narcotics Enforcement Team had formed the previous October.

The FBI-DEA investigation, which included U.S. Customs, U.S. Treasury and local law enforcement, was known as Operation Deep Snow. The name for the 20-month investigation came from all the cocaine that was exchanging hands.