

Misdemeanor charges filed against journalists in Tesla altercation

By Anjeanette Damon, Reno Gazette-Journal

The Storey County district attorney has decided to forgo felony charges against a *Reno Gazette-Journal* photographer, opting instead to charge him with two misdemeanor counts of battery and one count of trespassing in the wake of an altercation earlier this month between the photographer and two Tesla security guards, according to court documents this week.

The district attorney also filed a misdemeanor charge of trespassing against *RGJ* reporter Jason Hidalgo, who was with photographer Andy Barron when the incident took place outside Tesla's battery gigafactory east of Reno.

Barron's lawyer, John Arrascada, said Barron intends to plead not guilty to the charges. Hidalgo declined to comment.

[Read the whole story](#)

CHP trying to improve bike, pedestrian safety

The California Highway Patrol has received a federal grant to improve the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists throughout California.

California has seen an increase in the number of traffic-related pedestrian and bicyclist collisions. The most recent data from the CHP reveals 752 pedestrians and 164 bicyclists were killed in collisions statewide in 2013, a 6.6 percent increase in pedestrian fatalities and a 10.6 percent increase in bicyclist fatalities from the previous year.

The California Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety Enforcement and Education Project III grant runs from Oct. 1 through Sept. 30, 2016. During this campaign, CHP officers will use pedestrian and bicyclist collision information to enhance enforcement and public education campaigns. Funding for this program is provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The CHP's enforcement efforts will include California's 3-Feet for Safety law, which requires drivers to keep a minimum distance of three feet between any part of a motor vehicle and a bicycle.

The CHP's educational efforts will include presentations that promote safe pedestrian, bicyclist, and motorist behavior; bike rodeos; and distributing pedestrian and bicycle safety materials.

Nevada's wealthiest take private school money

By Trevon Milliard, Reno Gazette-Journal

The state's offer to families was \$5,000 per child.

The promise: Nevada's poor families would be afforded a new choice – private school.

But only 7 percent of students applying for the money live in areas reporting low household income, while nearly a third of takers reside in the state's richest ZIP codes where median household incomes exceed \$75,000 at the least.

A vast majority of applicants – 80 percent – live in neighborhoods where median household incomes outpace the state median of \$51,000, according to the *Reno Gazette-Journal's* analysis of information released about the 3,000 students seeking public money for private school.

A little more than half of Nevada's public school students are low income, according to the Nevada Department of Education, but only 20 percent of program applicants identify as low income, according to the State Treasurer's Office overseeing the program.

Read the whole story

EPA funds Calif., Nev. native tribe water projects



Pyramid Lake Paiute members conduct a bio assessment of streams around Pyramid Lake earlier this year. Photo/EPA

By Ed Joyce, Capital Public Radio

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced more than \$30 million in funding to native tribes in California and Nevada.

The announcement came at the 23rd Annual Regional Tribal Conference on Tuesday in Reno.

The funds provided to Nevada tribes will pay for water quality and other environmental projects. The Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe was awarded \$35,000 to reduce nitrogen loading on the Truckee River through a constructed wetlands project.

The EPA says half of federally-recognized U.S. tribes are concentrated in California, Nevada and Arizona.

Read the whole story

Southwest Gas rates may be going up

By Kyle Roerink, Las Vegas Sun

On Nov. 17, the state Public Utilities Commission will hear testimony on whether Nevadans will see heftier bills from Southwest Gas. The commission will rule on a request made by the company in June to raise rates by an aggregate of \$29.4 million, which it said was necessary to compensate for decreased demand stemming from warmer-than-expected weather.

As a regulated monopoly, the company could ask the PUC to raise rates to collect revenues it planned to earn but didn't receive. This year's request followed a \$7.4 million rate hike the PUC approved three years ago after reviewing the company's investments, operations costs and expected sales based on historical weather patterns.

If approved as requested, the new rates would amount to a 6.3 percent increase in Northern Nevada and a 5.6 percent increase in Southern Nevada. Southwest also provides gas to the California side of the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Read the whole story

Bear hit by car expected to recover

By Associated Press

WASHOE VALLEY – Officials say a female bear was struck by a

car in Interstate 580 in Washoe Valley but is expected to recover from its injuries.

A driver was exiting the highway on Tuesday when the car hit a bear. Officials say the bear suffered some road rash and swelling, but should be fine.

Members of the Nevada Highway Patrol, Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District and Nevada Department of Wildlife responded to move the bear to safety.

The sow was traveling with two cubs. All three bears were sedated and wildlife officials say they expect to release them into the wild on Thursday after tagging the cubs.

Troopers say no charges will be filed against the driver, who was not injured.

Billions in Medicaid funding at risk for Californians

By Anna Gorman, KQED-TV

California risks losing billions in health care dollars if the state and federal governments can't agree on a plan to fund reforms of the Medicaid program, hospital officials and experts said.

Public hospitals throughout the state are counting on the \$7.25 billion in state and federal funds to treat large numbers of low-income and uninsured patients. The plan, known as a Medicaid waiver, also would allow the state to continue improving the efficiency, safety and quality of its Medicaid program, called Medi-Cal.

About a third of all Californians are enrolled in Medi-Cal – 12.5 million people. The current waiver, which took effect in 2010, expires on Oct. 31, though the federal government can grant an extension while negotiations over the plan continue.

[Read the whole story](#)

S. Tahoe man faces insurance fraud charges

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

A South Lake Tahoe man has been arrested, accused of auto insurance fraud.

Braden Scott Leeds was arrested Monday by investigators with the El Dorado County District Attorney's Office after a nine-count felony complaint was filed with the El Dorado County Superior Court. The arrest was the culmination of a two-month investigation by California Bureau of Automotive Repair investigators, with assistance of investigators from the DA's Office.

Leeds reportedly moved to the South Lake Tahoe area from Texas after a July hail storm and set up shop at 2028 Fifth St., Suite 3, under the business name Disaster Management Group. Leeds allegedly engaged in a false-billing scheme, in which he was paid by insurance companies for new parts to be installed on hail-damaged vehicles but instead performed paint-less dent repair.

[Read the whole story](#)

Dismal revenues for Stateline casinos

Stateline's casinos were the big losers in September compared to the rest of Nevada.

While the state saw a 1.5 percent increase in gaming revenue last month compared to 2014, the South Shore clubs dropped 10.7 percent to \$21.2 million.

The Gaming Control Board on Oct. 29 released the latest numbers. Statewide, casinos won \$916.4 million last month compared to \$902.6 in September 2014.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

El Dorado Savings' profits inch higher

El Dorado Savings Bank reported third quarter profits of \$2.7 million, which represented a \$34,172 increase compared to 2014.

"Earnings for the first nine months of 2015 totaled \$8,533,749, compared to \$8,606,106 in 2014," CEO George L. Cook Jr. said in a statement. "The continued strong performance of the investment and real estate loan portfolios contributed to the strong earnings in 2015."

El Dorado ended the quarter with \$1.98 billion in total assets and savings deposits of \$1.77 billion.

The bank operates 31 in California and four in Northern Nevada.