

Study: Number of Americans taking doubles in 10 years

By Don Melvin, CNN

A heck of a lot more Americans were taking up in 2012-13 than 10 years before – and not for medical reasons, either – according to a new study.

The percentage of American adults who had used marijuana within the last year was 9.5 percent, the study found. That compared to 4.1 percent in 2001-02.

The study – published this week in *Jama Psychiatry*, a monthly journal published by the American Medical Association – was sponsored by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. It was based on in-person interviews with more than 36,000 Americans over the age of 18.

[Read the whole story](#)

Armed robber hits Truckee pizza joint

A gunman robbed the Round Table Pizza in Truckee on Thursday night.

The robber, who brandished a black semiautomatic handgun at an employee, left with an undisclosed amount of cash.

The suspect entered the Donner Pass Road restaurant about 10pm Oct. 22 just before closing. The manager was totaling the

daily receipts and preparing the night deposit when the gunman approached him and demanded the money.

The suspect is described as an adult male, between 5-feet-8-inches and 5-feet-10-inches, wearing a black hooded sweat shirt and a skeleton mask that was described as having big black eyes.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Sgt. Danny Renfrow at 530.550.2339 or drenfrow@townoftruckee.com.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Strongest El Nino in decades may mess with everything

By Brian K. Sullivan, BloombergBusiness

It has choked Singapore with smoke, triggered Pacific typhoons and left Vietnamese coffee growers staring nervously at dwindling reservoirs. In Africa, cocoa farmers are blaming it for bad harvests, and in the Americas, it has Argentines bracing for lower milk production and Californians believing that rain is finally, mercifully on the way.

El Nino is back and in a big way.

Its effects are just beginning in much of the world – for the most part, it hasn't really reached North America – and yet it's already shaping up potentially as one of the three strongest El Nino patterns since record-keeping began in 1950. It will dominate weather's many twists and turns through the end of this year and well into next. And it's causing gyrations in everything from the price of Colombian coffee to

the fate of cold-water fish.

Read the whole story

Accused bear killer's court date pushed back

Gilbert Wetenkamp, the South Lake Tahoe man accused of killing a bear in July, was granted more time to present his case.

Wetenkamp's public defender on Oct. 23 requested the delay for further discovery. The next hearing is scheduled for Dec. 4 in El Dorado County Superior Court in South Lake Tahoe.

In September Wetenkamp pleaded not guilty one misdemeanor count of unlawful taking of an animal. He is accused of shooting a black bear to death on July 9.

The 2½-year-old bear was shot in the backside with buckshot from a shotgun.

The maximum penalty if convicted is one year in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Tests aimed to find cause of

well contamination

Soil and water samples will be taken next week on the South Shore in the **ongoing contamination case** of multiple wells.

It was summer 2014 when Tetrachloroethene (PCE) was discovered in two of Lukins Brothers wells along with some private wells in the area. Too much of it and the water is deemed undrinkable. PCE can cause eye, skin and respiratory problems on the low end, cancer on the more serious side.

Since the chemical was found Lukins has been getting some of its water from South Tahoe Public Utility District. The one well Lukins has provides most of its customers with water.

Funding from a state grant is paying for the \$125,000 worth of tests next week. It will include 20 borings and extracting eight samples from existing monitoring sites. It could take up to a month for the results.

"The goal is to determine the cause or the source of it," Jennifer Lukins, who runs the company, told *Lake Tahoe News*. The polluter is responsible for the cleanup costs.

The drought may be exacerbating a problem that has been known about since the 1990s. Two dry cleaners used to operate at the Y. PCE is a common byproduct of that process.

"We will evaluate what they are telling us. It will give us a better idea of the extent and magnitude of the contamination," Lauri Kemper, deputy executive officer with the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "It will give us information about what it will take to treat it and remove it."

Lukins will also use the information as it goes forward with building a treatment plant. The South Lake Tahoe water company is in the process of applying for grant money from the state

to build a \$1.4 million treatment plant. It will be a granulated, activated, carbon facility similar to what the Tahoe Keys uses to treat PCE in its wells. It's possible the plant would be operational next summer.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Ex-federal official: Dams are 'dinosaurs'



A barge-mounted excavator hammers away at Glines Canyon Dam in Washington, the largest dam removal in U.S. history.

Photo/Ben Knight

By Anne Knowles

MINDEN – Dams and other surface storage are “dinosaurs.”

That's according to Daniel P. Beard, the former commissioner of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the government agency

responsible for building and maintaining 475 dams across the country.

Beard spoke before and after a showing of the 90-minute documentary "Dam Nation" at the CVIC Hall here Oct. 21, hosted by University of Nevada Cooperative Extension and GreenACTnv, a local nonprofit promoting sustainable energy.



Dan Beard

"They are the least effective way to deal with today's problems," according to Beard. "What we need to do is stop wasting water and promote water conservation and reuse. It is the cheapest, easiest solution to our water problem."

Beard said Californians have already saved more water since Gov. Jerry Brown ordered cutbacks in April than would be produced by two proposed multibillion dollar dam projects in the Sacramento Valley and San Joaquin River Gorge.

"California conservation has demonstrated there is tremendous slack in the system," Beard said.

He said we need to rethink the way water is priced in order to encourage conservation.

"We don't hesitate to spend \$3 for a half liter of water at the airport, yet somehow in our homes we expect we should get a lot of water and it should be cheap," he said.

Beard also cited Australia where a 12-year drought forced the country to change its water law.

"Our water laws are irrational, first in time and use it or lose," said Beard.

He said as a result water authorities such as the Southern Nevada Water Authority "circumvent" the law and buy up ranches and farms for the water rights.

SNWA spent \$79 million to buy seven ranches in Southern Nevada a decade ago with the eventual goal of using the ranches' groundwater to serve Las Vegas. The water authority grazes 11,000 sheep and cattle on the 960,000 acres.

Beard said he laughed when he read that the Nevada Legislature in the 2015 session could not pass a bill requiring vested water rights holders to prove their claims in an effort to inventory the state's water supply.

Beard, who served as commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation from 1993 to 1995, is the author of the recently published book "Deadbeat Dams," in which he calls for the elimination of the Bureau of Reclamation and the removal of the Glen Canyon Dam.

The Glen Canyon Dam was built by USBR in the 1960s on the Colorado River in northern Arizona to provide water to the growing southwest. The dam filled the canyon to create Lake Powell and has been widely opposed ever since.

Beard said about 1,100 of the nation's dams have been removed, mostly smaller ones. Larger dams cost millions to dismantle, such as Elwha Dam in Washington, the demolition of which is featured in the dam documentary.

Elwha Dam's removal cost \$350 million, said Beard.

Beard was the keynote speaker earlier Wednesday at a meeting of the Carson River Coalition in Carson City.

Laws force police to put guns back on the street

By Blake Ellis and Melanie Hicken, CNNMoney

Every year, police officers seize tens of thousands of rifles, shotguns, machine guns and other firearms from criminals across the country. While many agencies destroy these weapons, a growing number of police departments are selling them instead.

And it's not always by choice.

Since 2009, at least 11 states have passed laws that either encourage or require police departments to sell seized or recovered guns – with some banning police from destroying guns altogether, according to an exclusive CNNMoney analysis of state laws.

Behind this trend are powerful special interests like the National Rifle Association, which argues that the fear of these guns getting into the hands of criminals is “absurd” and part of an anti-gun agenda.

[Read the whole story](#)

'15 in commanding lead for

Earth's hottest year on record

By Jason Samenow, Washington Post

Planet Earth is on a high temperature record-breaking tear this year, which shows no sign of relenting. 2015 is, by far, on track to become the warmest year in recorded history.

NOAA reports this week the globally-averaged temperature for September 2015 was the warmest of all previous Septembers on record, dating back to 1880, and by an unprecedented margin of 0.19 degrees.

September is the fifth straight month of 2015 to set a record high. Seven of nine months this year have ranked as top warmest.

Read the whole story

Barton-SLT agree to land coverage deal

South Lake Tahoe is selling coverage to Barton Health for the Robert Maloff Center of Excellence.

The facility will be a two-story health and sports performance center just behind Barton Memorial Hospital near the emergency room, along with a three-story free standing garage. It is expected to open in 2017.

The city has nearly 200,000-square-feet of banked coverage

from the Upper Truckee River project. Because this is from sensitive land the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency sees it as more valuable so Barton actually needs to buy less coverage.

The health care agency is spending \$500,000 for 80,332 square feet of coverage from the city.

Barton was given a \$10 million donation by Lisa Maloff to build the center in her late husband's name.

The city per FAA regulations must spend the half million at the airport. This could be on renovations at the airport lobby, on a proposed events center east of the tower or wherever the council decides.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Tahoe remains above historic low level

By Paul Nelson, KTVN-TV

The water level at Lake Tahoe has slowly dropped, after four years of below-average winters. The lake's elevation is 1.13 feet below its natural rim of 6,223 feet above sea level.

"The Truckee River stopped flowing towards Reno about a year ago," Madonna Dunbar, Tahoe Water Supplier Association Executive Director said. "So, we've had some nice rain over the last couple of days. It might have brought it up a little bit but we are waiting for a big, wet winter."

The low lake level has changed the landscape along the shoreline, in some areas, including new plant growth like

wildflowers and grasses.

An average of 3.8 feet of water evaporates from Lake Tahoe, every year. October is typically has some of the highest evaporation in comparison to the water that drains into the lake. This month has been better than most Octobers, so far. While this has been an historic drought, the water level is still 1.6 feet higher than it's all-time low in 1992.

Read the whole story