

# Calif. lawmakers travel to Australia for drought lessons

By Associated Press

California lawmakers are joining environmental, labor and business leaders on a trip to see how Australia managed its longest and most severe drought on record.

The nine-day visit that began Monday comes as California finishes its fourth year of drought. Australia endured a 12-year drought from 1997 to 2009.

Democratic Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de León of Los Angeles says California can learn how to adapt to what could be more frequent extreme weather due to climate change.

Assembly Minority Leader Kristin Olsen, a Republican from Modesto, is among the 11 lawmakers from both political parties on the trip.

Also attending is California Water Commission member Daniel Curtin.

The trip is organized and paid for by the California Foundation on the Environment and the Economy, a nonpartisan, nonprofit think-tank.

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## Suspect in drive-by shooting

# named



Sam Tovar

South Lake Tahoe police are looking for Sam Tovar, 32, in connection with a **drive-by shooting** last week.

Officers searched a mobile home park on Oct. 20, but did not locate the suspect.

Tovar – who also goes by Primo and David Angeles – is a suspect in the Oct. 14 shooting of a 19-year-old South Lake Tahoe man near Ski Run Boulevard and Highway 50. The victim was shot in the leg.

Anyone with information is asked to call the South Lake Tahoe Police Department at 530.542.6100 or Lake Tahoe Secret Witness at 530.541.6800.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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## Study: Western wildfires threaten water supplies

By Bill Theobald, USA Today

WASHINGTON – The risk of severe wildfires in the West also threatens the region's increasingly scarce water supply, a study finds.

The study, released Wednesday by the American Forest Foundation, highlights that wildfires are not just a public lands issue. Private and family lands also are at high risk, the study found, and much of that land is in critical watersheds.

"Unless we figure out how to treat all the lands ... we are all at risk," said Tom Martin, president and CEO of the foundation, noting that efforts to maintain healthy forests as a fire-prevention measure have focused mostly on public lands.

He said the foundation, which promotes stewardship by family forest owners, launched the study because it wanted to learn more about how the two biggest issues in the West right now – water shortages caused by extreme drought and the severe wildfire season – are related.

**Read the whole story**

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## **Placer County tries to spur tourist development**

Placer County this week took steps to make it easier for developers to build lodging for tourists.

The Board of Supervisors on Oct. 20 approved the North Lake Tahoe Town Centers Economic Development Incentive Program and Implementation Plan.

"The program seeks to build more certainty into the

development and permitting processes, reducing the risk to investors interested in projects in the North Tahoe communities,” the county said in a press release.

One of the big problems with development in the Lake Tahoe Basin is that the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency has thwarted a traditional free market as well as the ability of jurisdictions to put in normal zoning laws by creating commodities out of tourist accommodation units and commercial floor area.

South Lake Tahoe has plenty of TAUs, but not much CFA, while the opposite is true for Placer County. It is so bad Placer has been in the business of buying hotels in the city so it would have TAUs for developers.

TRPA is working on a **pilot program** to convert TAUs to CFA and vice versa. That was not brought up at this week’s meeting.

TRPA per the Regional Plan also wants to keep development – new or renovations – in town centers. For Placer County, this means Tahoe City and Kings Beach.

Tahoe City and Kings Beach do not have a wealth of choice for tourists to stay. To help spur development Placer County has incorporated the proposed Tahoe City Lodge into its environmental documents that are being created for the Tahoe Basin Area Plan.

The lodge is a 120-unit hotel on 3.1 acres that is being proposed to be built across from Commons Beach on Highway 28.

But there are other locations that want to benefit from the new program.

Alex Mourelatos of Mourelatos Lakeshore Resort in Tahoe Vista told supervisors the program should include smaller projects outside of town centers.

Under the program, Placer County would buy and bank tourist

accommodation units and make them available to developers who meet certain criteria. Initial funding to do this will come from capital and transient occupancy tax reserves and the county's general fund.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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# Public-land transfer proponents may have violated lobbying laws

By Joshua Zaffos, High Country News

The central organization that advocates for Western states to take over federal public lands, Utah state Rep. Ken Ivory's American Lands Council, is apparently running roughshod over state legislative rules.

The Colorado secretary of state announced last week that it has "reasonable grounds to believe" the ALC may have violated state lobbying and disclosure rules for failing to report political spending or to register as a lobbyist. The ALC, which leads the West-wide movement to transfer federal lands to states' control, emailed Colorado supporters this spring to build backing for a bill that would have created a county commissioner-led task force to study the benefits of public-lands transfer to the state of Colorado. (The Senate bill failed by one vote.) The ALC has ushered similar bills through nearly every Western state legislature, with varying success.

The notice of possible violations followed an April complaint from Colorado Ethics Watch, a nonprofit watchdog group.

## Armed robber takes cash from Kings Beach eatery

An undisclosed amount of cash was stolen last week from the Char Pit restaurant in Kings Beach.

Employees told Placer County sheriff's deputies that a man entered the unlocked rear door of the restaurant about 9pm Oct. 16, which was after hours, displayed a handgun and demanded money. He fled on foot.

The suspect was wearing a "Scream" Halloween-type mask during the armed robbery.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the Placer County Sheriff's Office at 530.581.6320. Anyone wishing to remain anonymous and be eligible for a cash reward of up to \$1,000 for information leading to an arrest should contact Placer County Crime Stoppers at 800.923.8191.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

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## Study: Get mammograms based

# on menopause status, not age

By Claudia Buck, Sacramento Bee

For years, women were advised to get their annual mammogram starting at age 40, an effort to detect breast cancer before it turned deadly. But that guideline became contentious with the medical community divided on what age – and how often – women should get their breast checks done. Some recommended that women over age 50 scale back to once-every-two-year mammograms.

Tuesday, a new UC Davis study says women should get annual mammograms based on their menopausal status, not their age. Its research is folded into new American Cancer Society breast cancer screening guidelines, expected to be released today. Previously, the society recommended yearly mammograms for all women over age 40.

“We found menopausal status was a much better predictor of who benefits from screenings,” said Diana Miglioretti, a biostatistics professor with the UC Davis Department of Public Health Sciences, who conducted the research project, which looked at mammogram results from more than 15,000 U.S. women.

**[Read the whole story](#)**

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# Feds to regulate recreational drones

By Craig Whitlock, Washington Post

Federal regulators said Monday that they will require

recreational drone users to register their aircraft with the government for the first time in an attempt to track rogue flying robots that are increasingly posing a threat to aviation safety.

The decision to compel drone owners to register their aircraft represents a policy shift by the Obama administration and a tacit admission by the Federal Aviation Administration that it has been unable to safely integrate the popular remote-controlled planes into the national airspace.

U.S. officials said they still need to sort out the basic details of the registration system – which they hope to set up within two months – but concluded that they had to take swift action to cope with a surge in sales of inexpensive, simple-to-fly drones that are interfering with regular air traffic.

**Read the whole story**

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## **Garbage truck catches fire in S. Lake Tahoe**



A garbage truck on Oct. 20 caught fire at the South Tahoe Refuse yard. Photo/Kathryn Reed

**By Kathryn Reed**

A fire Tuesday at South Tahoe Refuse destroyed the cab and possibly more of one of the garbage trucks.

“To be isolated to that truck is amazing,” John Marchini, who runs the South Lake Tahoe garbage company, said.

The fire was reported about 6:30pm Oct. 20. It had been parked in the truck bay after picking up trash earlier in the day. The doors to the building were closed at the time the fire started.

The sprinkler system worked efficiently, which kept the fire to the truck. Other vehicles and the building were not damaged.

“It could be the regeneration system, or could have been trash that accumulated or could be an electrical short,” Fire Chief Jeff Meston told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He estimated the damage at being \$100,000. Meston said the hydraulics were damaged and maybe the engine. A rig had to be used to pull the truck out of the building.

New, these types of vehicles cost several hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The motor is behind the cab and in between the box where the trash is put. The motor area as well as the cab was totally blackened.

Marchini was told by fire officials the blaze did not start in the cab. He is hoping the bulk of the vehicle will be salvageable. It will be taken to the mechanical shop Wednesday morning.

With this truck out of service, it will not impact trash collection. The rest of the fleet will be on the streets at 5am for commercial service and 7am for residential.

Marchini told *Lake Tahoe News* fires have been rare at STR.

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## **EDC horse diagnosed with West Nile**

A horse in El Dorado County has West Nile virus. The horse, from the Greenwood area on the West Slope, is expected to recover.

Horses can get WNV when they are bitten by a mosquito that has the virus. Horses cannot give the virus to people or other animals.

Vaccination for WNV is recommended as a core standard of care

for all horses in North America. Vaccination generally protects the horse for one year. There is no WNV vaccine for humans or other domestic animals; however, llamas and alpacas may benefit from the horse vaccine.

There are no known human cases this year of West Nile in El Dorado County; four birds have tested positive.