Drone launched to find man missing in Eldorado forest

By Julia Horowitz, AP

The California National Guard is using a drone to search Eldorado National Forest for a missing San Francisco teacher, marking the first time the Guard has used an unmanned aircraft for a search-and-rescue mission.

The drone will collect images in real time, allowing searchers on the ground to make faster, more informed decisions about where to concentrate their efforts, said Capt. Will Martin, a spokesman for the California Guard.

The Guard previously used the drone to support firefighting efforts in 2013 at Yosemite National Park.

“For the purpose of collecting imagery, it’s unrivaled,” Martin said of drone technology.

The search for Edward Kavanaugh, 45, has intensified in the 12 days since he went missing. Kavanaugh was last seen July 17 driving a motorcycle on a trail through El Dorado County, about three hours east of the San Francisco Bay Area. He was with another driver before cruising off on his own.

Kavanaugh is a popular veteran teacher who works for San Francisco Unified School District. Several staff members and students have gone to Eldorado National Forest to join the search efforts, SFUSD spokeswoman Gentle Blythe said.

Martin said the drone has yet to provide any new leads in Kavanaugh’s disappearance.

Officials have gathered more than 50 volunteers to help sweep El Dorado and neighboring counties by foot, car and helicopter.

Alleged car thief apprehended in Truckee

A routine traffic stop on Wednesday in Truckee ended with one person arrested on charges of possession of a stolen vehicle.

Seven people from two vehicles that were associated with each other were stopped in the area of the Bank of America on Donner Pass Road.

Erik Limon-Herrera, 26, was arrested July 29, while the passengers and occupants of the other vehicle, who were all relatives, were cleared and released at the scene.

Truckee officers are working with the California Highway Patrol in what has been a **string of stolen vehicles** in the area. Detectives believe there are other suspects involved in an earlier who have returned to the Bay Area. The other vehicles were stolen out of Reno and abandoned in the Truckee area.

Officers said several of the vehicles that were stolen had the keys in them.

— Lake Tahoe News staff report

How water scarcity shaped the

U.S.

By Stephen Grace

Water, when scarce, has split the nation into warring factions. But it has also united fractured regions. Water can both release the demons of war and stir the better angels of our nature.

We hear so much about California and the drought. But consider the whole West – and the Continental Divide, also known as the Great Divide. This spine of the continent splits North America – and the state of Colorado, where I live – into hydrological halves.

The snowy West Slope of the Great Divide boasts abundant rivers that flow to the Pacific Ocean. The East Slope, which drains to the Atlantic, is decidedly drier but is home to a thirsty agricultural sector and Front Range cities (including Denver and Colorado Springs) that support the vast majority of the state's population. To address this imbalance, Colorado diverts water from the West Slope of the Great Divide to the East Slope by means of a Rube Goldberg assemblage of dikes, dams, and pipes, including a tunnel that runs beneath the Rocky Mountains the exact length of a half marathon, 13.1 miles. The economic and ecological consequences of this water transfer from one side of the Divide to the other have provoked disputes throughout the state's history.

Droughts and disconnects between water sources and water needs are by no means exclusive to the western United States. Even in the water-rich Southeast, imbalances between population centers and water supplies have led to conflicts. In the 1980s, severe drought triggered a water dispute between Georgia, Alabama, and Florida when drought-depleted rivers couldn't satisfy competing needs for agricultural production, municipal use, hydroelectric generation, and environmental health. This tri-state dispute clogged courtrooms and triggered the involvement of the federal government.

Florida also faces water wars within its borders. According to a study by the Natural Resources Defense Council, Florida is one of 14 states at high risk of water shortages by midcentury. The Sunshine State is blessed with an abundance of freshwater in its rural north, but cities desperate for more supply crowd the south. This disparity has exposed chasms between competing economic and environmental interests. Transferring water over long distances in Florida could allow golf courses to remain green in the south while upsetting the balance of ecosystems in the north.

Along with diverting rivers, pumping water from beneath the ground has supported the growth of cities in many parts of the country. It has also revolutionized agriculture, perhaps most notably on the High Plains. This rain-scarce region was transformed into one of the world's most bountiful breadbaskets by pumping from the Ogallala Aquifer, which stretches from Texas to South Dakota. The Ogallala, which accumulated over millennia as melting Ice Age glaciers soaked into the ground, is now being spent far faster than rain can replenish it. This liquid inheritance is in danger of running dry – and creating skirmishes both within states and across state borders.

Conflict, of course, commands attention. Some of the West's most iconic stories—from the novel "The Virginian" to the movie "Shane" to the Broadway musical "Oklahoma!" – center on conflicts over scarce water. In my first water book, "Dam Nation", I spun tense tales of water wars to keep readers, and myself, awake while unpacking complex issues. For instance, one of the West's most memorable water battles broke out in 1934 when Arizona's governor, vowing to stop California from completing a dam that was being built to divert water to Los Angeles, dispatched National Guard troops with machine guns to the Colorado River.

To say that water is a perennial cause of conflict is to state the obvious, but as I learned while researching “The Great Divide,” a forthcoming film and book about Colorado’s water issues, that’s not the whole story. What is less apparent, but arguably more significant, is that water scarcity has spurred far-reaching compromises throughout history. When fierce debate over the use of the Colorado River headwaters threatened to fracture the state of Colorado in 1937, a pact was forged to maintain peace across the Great Divide. While negotiating this historic agreement, neither the West Slope nor the East Slope got all the water it wanted. Each side achieved a modest victory, and compromise prevented conflict from escalating into chaos.

Prior to that momentous accord within Colorado, the 1922 Colorado River Compact united seven western states in a far-reaching agreement that negated the need for courtroom brawls. Some argue that the Colorado River Compact should be discarded and replaced with a new interstate agreement that reflects the economic, demographic, and environmental realities of the 21st-century American West. Regardless, over nine decades later, that compact continues to balance water use between states. This is not as exciting a story as the narrative of “Chinatown”, the film noir classic that shows ruthless power brokers in Los Angeles robbing a river from a rural valley. But as California’s epic drought exposes stark divides between north and south, between cities and agriculture, and between economic development and environmental sustainability, the proven ability of water agreements to bond fractured regions must not be forgotten.

In 2013, after six years of persistent effort to find common ground among competing parties in the state of Colorado, the Colorado River Cooperative Agreement was finalized. This pact created a framework for resolving disputes over the use of West Slope rivers by Denver Water, which supplies 1.3 million people in the city of Denver and its surrounding suburbs.

Furthering this cooperative process, Trout Unlimited, a nonprofit conservation organization, and the West Slope’s Grand County joined with Denver Water to craft a plan to heal the ecologically damaged Colorado River headwaters. Former adversaries will work together to improve the health of the watershed while allowing Denver Water to increase the amount of its diversions across the Great Divide during periods of high flow.

Water compromises are not the stuff of scintillating drama. But as we face a future of cities surging with growth in some of the continent’s driest regions, a food supply strained by drought, and ecosystems degraded by depleted aquifers and drained rivers, we must remember that cooperation, not conflict, is the best way to bridge our nation’s many water divides.

Stephen Grace is the author of “The Great Divide”, a companion book to “The Great Divide” film by Havey Productions, which will be published in August. He wrote this for Thinking L.A., a partnership of UCLA and Zócalo Public Square.

What Clinton’s renewable-energy proposal means for Nev.

By Conor Shine, Las Vegas Sun

The debate over renewable energy in Nevada has raged in the Legislature and at the Public Utilities Commission for over a year. Now, the issue could be taking center stage in the 2016 presidential campaign, following a recent proposal from Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton to install more than half a billion solar panels across the nation by 2021.

But as Nevada has seen, solar panels generate more than just electricity — they also produce political controversy.

Clinton’s plan, which also calls for generation of enough renewable energy to power every home in America by 2027, would require a 700 percent increase in solar energy production, in addition to significant increases in wind and geothermal energy.

Read the whole story

Redevelopment keeps redefining S. Lake Tahoe

Having the gondola at Heavenly go from the village to the mountain transformed the skiing and tourist experience on the South Shore. Photo/Heavenly Mountain Resort

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 Susan Wood

Resilience, humility, irony. This describes the state of redevelopment in South Lake Tahoe from the early days of Virginia Slims commercials to the mid-1980's burst of tourism to today's absence of California government in sanctioning the way to finance change.

As the city this year celebrates its 50 years in business, the look and feel of this mountain town next to the largest alpine lake in North America reflects a state of flux in the last half century.

A hint of early, unofficial redevelopment came about in the 1960s upon Squaw Valley bringing the Winter Olympics to Lake Tahoe. The South Shore city accommodated the perceived influx of visitors by building rows of motels along the major thoroughfare, Highway 50. Right or wrong, the infrastructure in many respects stayed planted for decades.

Before ceasing to exist three years ago as a result of the 2011 Budget Act, state redevelopment agencies had been around since 1943 as a mechanism for growth for cities. But most at that time relied on federal funding. It wasn't until 1952 that cities got into the swing of using the state's money to fund such ventures – eight years before the Games arrived in the Tahoe area. Talks were even under way in July 1966 of building a convention center on Happy Homestead property, a proposal that never materialized, albeit how easy it seemed to build back then.

In the early '60s, building required an 8½ x 11 site plan and power permit. Now, reams of paper and a bankroll are necessary for construction on most projects.

Then in the mid-1980s, a group of moving and shaking city officials realized that to compete, ironically with places like Vail for tourism dollars, South Lake Tahoe would need to reinvent itself. When the city's planning department saw "what was coming" as community matriarch and former city Councilwoman Del Laine pointed out, efforts were under way by officials to get on the improvement track.

"We realized we could improve on what we had," Laine told *Lake Tahoe News.*

There were meetings and more meetings in 1987, some as far away as the League to Save Lake Tahoe’s home base in San Francisco. Along with the lake’s regulatory watchdog Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, the League’s environmental advocacy leaders were at least curious about what redevelopment could do for the city on both sides of the town from north to south.

Today, current projects are still in the works from the Y’s just approved Tahoe Valley Area Plan to the Stateline area’s constantly evolving condominium hotel-retail project where a convention center was once planned on 11 acres bordering Cedar, Stateline and Friday avenues, and Highway 50.

At this time, the notion of the environment and economy working in harmony was what kept the redevelopment wheel in motion.

“South Tahoe would have been in the same shape as other failed tourism communities,” former City Attorney Dennis Crabb said, while also listing Seaside near Monterey and Jackson in the Gold Country as other examples.

A pretty lake wouldn’t have been enough to maintain a pristine environment and an economy full of potential. With McDonald’s on Lake Tahoe Boulevard flooding every year because of a lack of storm drainage infrastructure and motel owners seeking more business to sustain them, citizens appeared eager for something to change.

“Motel owners were going to get bailed out, and that was salvation,” Crabb said, while also building a case for nearby retailers tacking onto the gravy train.

Steve Kenninger with KOAR, developers of Embassy Suites and what is now called Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel, and then South Lake Tahoe Mayor Neva Roberts in 1990. Photo/South Lake Tahoe

Nothing worth doing comes easy

After the city incorporated in 1965 and the lake was legally divvied up by jurisdiction in 1970, the town was in desperate need of reinvention.

Kerry Miller, the city manager who arrived in June 1987, remembers redevelopment’s humble beginnings like they were yesterday.

“The Tahoe basin came off a three-year building moratorium, with the League’s legal challenge of TRPA, and we realized that as a result, the economy suffered and tourism suffered,” Miller said from his home in Folsom.

In days long before its flagship ski resort owned anything here, Vail continued to develop during the lake’s moratorium. The Colorado town’s achievements cut into ski area tourism, and Tahoe faced a visitation drought down the road that would make the recession from a few years ago look like happy days.

“It became likely Tahoe as a tourist destination would not be able to compete,” Miller told *Lake Tahoe News.*

City staff prepped some plans. An agreement was struck with the state Attorney General’s Office. Measure C, which passed in November 1988, put transient occupancy tax in city coffers – 10 percent across the town, 12 percent in project areas. And what a project area South Lake had, resembling an oversized barbell from one side of town to another. The South Tahoe Redevelopment Agency zone spans 173 acres from Herbert Avenue to Stateline Avenue. Later on, the zone leapfrogged to Harrison Avenue at midtown near El Dorado Beach and at the Y.

In the late-1980s, all approvals were reached, movement was made to secure bond financing and the land assembly came together starting with Lake Tahoe Vacation Resort at Ski Run Boulevard.

“The citizens were involved during the entire planning process,” Miller said.

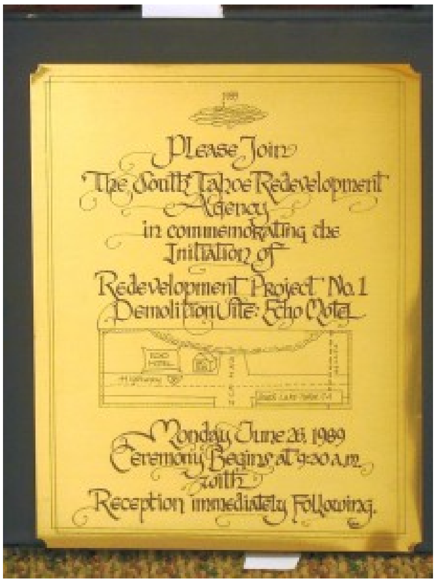
Sure, there were naysayers but “surprisingly not a lot,” the former city official added in a tone that seemed to almost surprise him.

“People had objections. There were people bemoaning the idea of change. But it was overwhelmingly positive. The town looked dated. Tahoe’s beauty ‘no matter what’ had a dated quality to attracting visitors,” he said.

Eminent domain – the government-sanctioned taking of property for improvements to alleviate blight, in its truest sense – represents the all-encompassing main objection to redevelopment. But bringing fair market value and a relocation plan to the table for the displaced seemed to ease the pain somewhat, and citizens were ready for a change, Miller recounted.

Improvements were being made, but then “a funny thing happened” as the city endorsed the KOAR company’s plans for what was Embassy Suites bordering Stateline. The Gulf War in 1990 literally dried up the financial markets. The post-war recession “fatally affected” redevelopment for three years, Miller went on to say.

After the economy started to recover and Embassy Vacation Resort opened at Ski Run in 1995, the movement paved the way for a concentrated effort to go into the Park Avenue Project on the other side of the street bordering Stateline.



Redevelopment in South Lake Tahoe began in earnest in the late 1980s.

The birth of Heavenly Village

The major redevelopment undertaking resulted in Heavenly Village with its two Marriott timeshare condominium properties, 120,000 square feet of retail run by Gary Casteel who at the time owned the Factory Stores at the Y, a city transit station and parking garage, and a $25 million gondola built by Heavenly Mountain Resort in 2002.

Project 1 didn’t come without hitches and glitches. It demonstrated a sign of ultimate, stubborn resilience from the private and public sectors – almost to a fault.

First, the city Redevelopment Agency siphoned off $7 million from the general fund to finish the 110,000-square-foot project – a watershed moment announced at a meeting in May 2003 when the council got a wakeup call on monitoring its accounting department. The tab was financed and refinanced, thus raising the debt service in 2006 to $112 million to be paid over three decades. The city even paid out $12 million in legal fees associated with the $250 million project flanked by the Grand Summit and Timber Lodge.

Redevelopment was a lot like gambling – one, which paid off ultimately when considering, delayed tax-revenue benefits. The property once assessed at $15 million when the plan was adopted in 1988 had increased more than 20 times on the El Dorado County tax rolls according to statistics from a decade ago. Its value mushroomed then at $346 million, up $100 million from when the complex was completed.

Moreover, Heavenly’s parent company at the time – American Skiing Co. experienced a dive in its value on the stock market to the point shares sold for less than $1. The plummet resulted in a delisting from the New York Stock Exchange. It was the beginning of the end. At one point, it was doubtful the gondola would even get built.

To the rescue, Vail Resorts ended up buying the town ski resort a few years later – and has since poured millions of dollars into capital improvement projects.

Yet another hurdle to overcome, parking turned out to be an albatross of an issue. The money-losing $6 million garage turned into $9 million for the city. Parking at the gondola turned into a debate and debacle for years. Visitors either clogged the side streets until the city implemented a two-hour limit in the surrounding area to urge motorists to park in the garage or parked at Harrah’s back lot or at what was the Crescent V shopping center next door. The latter resulted in aggressive parking monitors ticketing visitors or in some cases grabbing their arms.

Something needed to give. City officials got creative, offering deals for parking in the garage, validation agreements with retailers and a turning of the cheek from the major casino in what was happening in its back lot.

Concrete and rebar constituted “the hole” for years until Owens Financial consolidated the properties and began incrementally developing the site. Photo/LTN file

The other side of the coin

Parking could still be an issue as one looks at the current Project 3 across the highway. Talk about evolution. The changing of management hands alone resembles a cross between a card game and a chess tournament. Harveys casino, then

Marriott, then Lake Tahoe Development Co. – the latter run by a small, local development duo – was once in line to build the city's largest proposed project once estimated at $410 million.

Upon breaking ground in 2007, the triangular-shaped project area on the lake side now called the Chateau Project where McP's Tap Room serves as an anchor was supposed to house a major hotel and 200,000-square-foot convention center. The city was due to own the monstrous facility according to the ever-changing Owner Participation Agreement between the city and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

One challenge after another ensued.

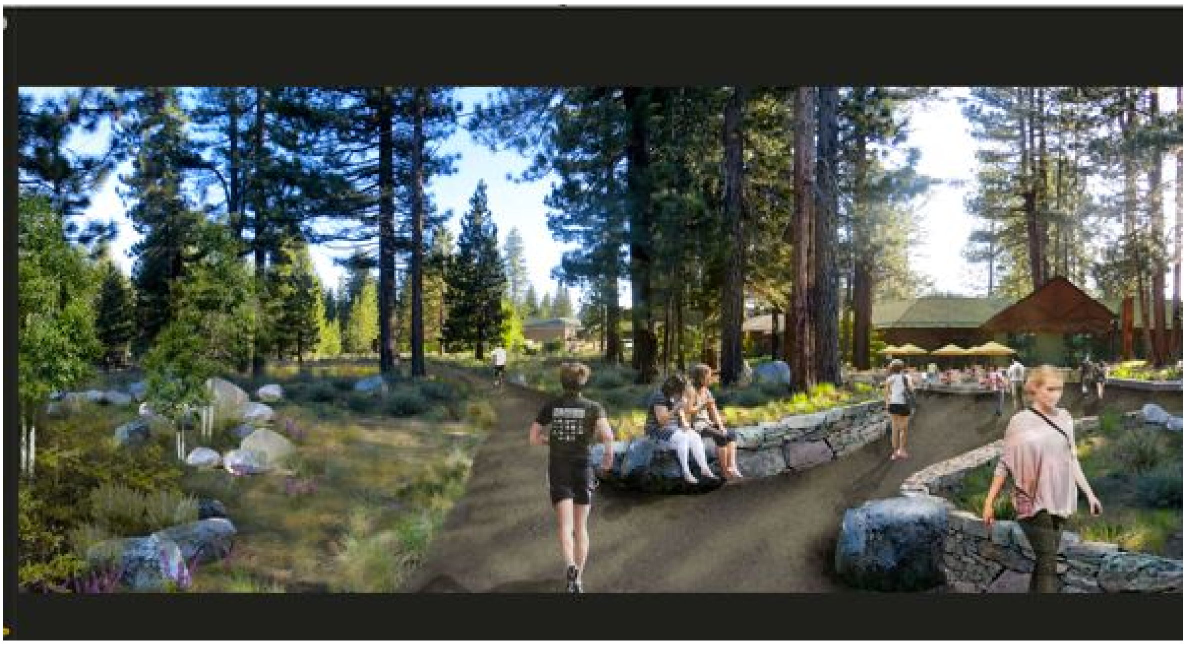
Displaced and bought-out business operators kept the city in and out of court through the years. Legal fees mounted, with some business owners having better results than others.

At least Jim Hickey, owner of the former Union 76 gas station, came out ahead of the game.

"I thought everything was fair in the long run. I wished it would've happened a little faster, but I know the project was big. It took several months to close the deal," Hickey, now an Internet marketer, told *Lake Tahoe News.*

All in all, there was the harsh reality that convention centers went out of style, a warning Charlie McDermid from Holiday Inn Express warned the city about when he waved a hotel-trend magazine at a heated City Council meeting years ago. Financing for the evolving hotel-condominium idea dried up.

With no performance bond in place for the city, L.T. Development Co. led by Randy Lane and John Sherpa consequently filed for bankruptcy. Rebar and concrete marked what was affectionately referred to in town by locals as "the hole in the ground" – much to the embarrassing dismay of the city.



The Tahoe Valley Area Plan has passed the regulatory hurdles and now awaits investors to transform the area along with the city which intends to create a green belt.

It's a new game in town

But current City Manager Nancy Kerry, an idea activator, was not going to let this blemish lie unattended on her watch.

Even as the state pulled its support for redevelopment a few years ago, staff and L.T. Development Co. negotiated with Tahoe Stateline Ventures, a subsidiary of Owens Financial, for it to buy the parcels in the project area and with tweaked plans go forth with a scaled down version of what was to happen across from Harveys.

The 32-unit condominium project, absent a traditional hotel now, is now proposed with a pool, 19,477-square-feet of retail space (a third of its original size), streetscape improvements and public fire pits.

A little modesty never hurt anyone.

Owens Financial chief Bill Owens describes his undaunted dedication in three words: "Location, location, location."

What keeps him interested sounds almost in line with what the founding fathers and mothers of redevelopment had in mind.

“I believe South Lake Tahoe has been maligned in public perception because of the older properties not being redeveloped. A lot of (business operators) don’t want to bother. We need this. You can walk to gaming, walk to the lake, walk to a ski resort. There are very few places on Earth you could do that,” he told *Lake Tahoe News*, adding working with the city has been “a pleasure.”

One could say he’s a visionary like Kerry.

He doesn’t wince at challenges. And between planning staff’s early caution led by Jim Marino about parking and sometimes dangerous pedestrian movement across the highway, there could be more issues. A Heavenly employee was hit by a motorist crossing the street in that area about a decade ago, severely injuring her.

There are the other considerations.

Owens would prefer not to have to deal with the slopes of the roofs as dictated by TRPA guidelines issued in 2007 for the project now estimated to cost almost half as much.

“(The roof slope) makes it more expensive to build, but it’s not something I can’t live with,” he told *Lake Tahoe News.*

But that’s all in a day’s work to people on his side like Joe Stewart of SMC Contracting. The contractor is a tour de force for building in the redevelopment area, namely the Park Avenue project, so he knows the drill.

It’s a good thing. Between a changing proposal, shrinking competitive market, nagging recession and no redevelopment agencies in 400 communities up and down the state, this isn’t easy.

“Heavenly Village was built with redevelopment funds. This one has zero public funds. In some cases, it makes the project go slower. I think the redevelopment agency was a huge benefit across the street. We should be lucky it's built," Stewart told *Lake Tahoe News.* "I feel like Bill Owens certainly stepped up and did something no one else would do."

In August, Stewart expects the groundbreaking of the second phase.

All this is music to the ears when it comes to the last of the "redevelopment" oriented projects for civic-minded Paul Bruso, who has owned and operated Ernie's Coffee Shop for decades.

Bruso was one of the early pioneering citizens to spearhead a plan for a remodeling of the Y where his restaurant he's retiring from sits.

The Tahoe Valley Area Plan has undergone its own jerks and grinds as it makes its way into the future. It's come to the forefront with issues over building height, project area and former Councilman Ted Long's apparent push to spearhead taking over the plan from the citizen's group years ago, elevating the debate.

But when all was said and done minus Long's sarcastic "thank-you-very-much, we'll-take-it-from-here" attitude, Bruso said he's pleased with how the plan is materializing.

One thing he would like to see is better lighting.

"People who visit want to get out of their cars and walk. We want them to feel safe," he said.

Overall, it's "a good plan," according to the restaurateur.

"It's like (the city has) been thorough in what people want. They took all the necessary steps," he said. "The whole idea is this town is going through a beautification process. Unfortunately, the Y is the tail of the dog."

Nev. largely controlled by federal agencies

By Conor Shine, Las Vegas Sun

If you were to amass all of the federally owned land in Nevada, the 10 smallest states in America, plus Guam, would fit inside.

Many conservative Nevadans view the federal government's presence – it owns about 85 percent of the state – as an overreach, an argument that motivated the Sagebrush Rebellion in the 1970s and '80s and the Cliven Bundy standoff in 2014. Liberal opponents, however, point out the federal government provides many services, such as wildfire protection, that the state couldn't afford if it managed the land.

The debate was rekindled this month when President Obama designated 700,000 acres in southeastern Nevada as the Basin and Range National Monument, fulfilling a longtime goal of ally Sen. Harry Reid.

Read the whole story

Wyoming wind could save California water

By Mead Gruver, AP

CHEYENNE — California regulators could achieve savings in water use, electricity rates and greenhouse emissions by turning to Wyoming wind power to help offset the natural ups and downs of wind and solar power in their state, according to a University of Wyoming report released Monday.

The reason: Wyoming's wind patterns tend to be opposite of those in California.

The wind in Wyoming tends to blow more during the winter and afternoon. California tends to be windier during the summer and at night, according to the report for the Wyoming Infrastructure Authority by Jonathan Naughton of the university's Wind Energy Research Center.

That the wind doesn't blow all the time and the sun doesn't shine at night or on cloudy days are two of the biggest shortcomings of those renewable energy sources. But spreading renewable power out across the grid can make renewable energy generally more viable.

Chances are, if the wind isn't blowing in one region, it's gusty somewhere else.

The study compared wind patterns at California wind farms to those at sites with wind potential in Wyoming, including an approximately 1,000-turbine wind farm in south-central Wyoming that the Denver-based Anschutz Corp. plans to build to export electricity to California.

Naughton said using Wyoming wind could help California save water: as much as 1.2 billion gallons a year as California relied less on power plants fueled by nuclear energy and fossil fuels.

Hard Rock pool seepage less than first reported

Lake Tahoe Hard Rock’s pool could not immediately be drained to deal with the leak because the water in it is a reserve source in case of a fire.

Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District on July 28 gave the authorization for the pool to be emptied.

“We have a plan in place we can hook into to grab water from nearby water sources,” Eric Guevin with the fire department told *Lake Tahoe News.*

The investigation involving the leak at the Stateline property has revealed the loss of water is closer to 5,000 gallons per day instead of the originally reported 20,000 gallons.

Nevada Division of Environmental Protection workers were on site Tuesday. On Wednesday a contractor will use sonar with the goal of pinpointing the source of the leak.

JoAnn Kittrell with the state agency said it could take some time to know if there are any environmental issues pertaining to the pool water seeping into the groundwater.

Jen Eastwood, spokeswoman for the hotel-casino, told *Lake Tahoe News* there is no time line for when the pool and hot tub will reopen. The 200,000 gallon pool has been **closed since July 24.**

The leak needs to be identified and then officials will determine how to fix it.

— *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Drug prices soar, prompting calls for justification

By Andrew Pollack, New York Times

As complaints grow about exorbitant drug prices, pharmaceutical companies are coming under pressure to disclose the development costs and profits of those medicines and the rationale for charging what they do.

So-called pharmaceutical cost transparency bills have been introduced in at least six state legislatures in the last year, aiming to make drug companies justify their prices, which are often attributed to high research and development costs.

"If a prescription drug demands an outrageous price tag, the public, insurers and federal, state and local governments should have access to the information that supposedly justifies the cost," says the preamble of a bill introduced in the New York State Senate in May.

Read the whole story

Breckenridge, Vail battling over proposed lift ticket tax

By Jason Blevins, Denver Post

Breckenridge voters will decide on a lift-ticket tax to cover for parking and transit upgrades after the town and Vail Resorts failed to reach an agreement on funding.

Town leaders wanted the resort operator to support a town-wide transit plan that includes a parking garage, pedestrian access, road improvements and employee parking lots. That plan carries an annual operating budget of $4 million to $6 million. Vail Resorts said it was only willing to cover the majority of the cost of a new parking structure — either on its own land near the gondola or at the downtown F-Lot.

The impasse led Breckenridge to say on Monday that it will ask voters to approve an “admissions tax” — similar to the 4 percent parking and transit tax the Town of Vail charges on lift ticket sales — to fund the transit plan.

Read the whole story