

Scam artists impersonating law enforcement

In the last two weeks several El Dorado County residents have been the target of scam artists attempting to obtain money from them.

The scammers are not from the area and use Internet based phones, which allow them to select a local area code. The Scammers have been identifying themselves as local law enforcement. They tell people that they have missed jury duty and that a warrant has been issued for their arrest. The scammers tell the victim's if they don't pay, they will be arrested.

In most cases the scammer has told the victim the amount of the warrant was \$5,500.

There have been approximately 50 reports of this scam.

Anyone who has been the victim of this scam or has information that would assist in this investigation, is asked to call 530.642.4703.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Caesars another step closer to bankruptcy

By Travis Hoium, Motley Fool

It appears that Caesars Entertainment Corp. is finally heading

toward bankruptcy, an ending that has seemed imminent since the company's IPO in 2012. A judge ruled this week that lawsuits challenging the formation of Caesars Entertainment Operating Company and Caesars Growth Partners could move forward while the CEOC subsidiary is in bankruptcy protection.

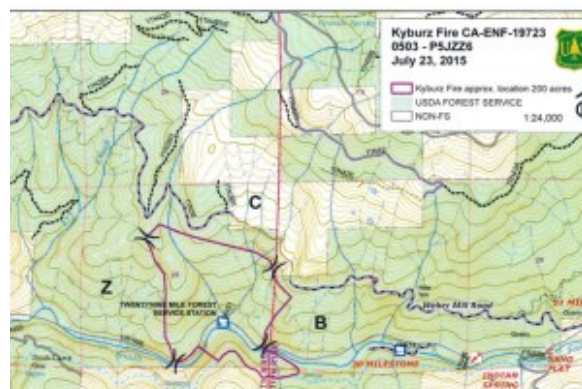
In essence, this means that Caesars won't be able to protect assets in Caesars Growth Partners from debt holders in CEOC, who argue that they have a claim to those assets. That should pull the entire company into bankruptcy proceedings, where shareholders will likely lose everything and debt holders will restructure or split up the company.

Caesars is the parent company of Harrah's Lake Tahoe and Harveys in Stateline.

In 2013, Caesars Entertainment and its private equity owners started to position the company for a potential bankruptcy filing, setting up the battle we see today.

Read the whole story

Hwy. 50 partially open through Kyburz Fire



The fire area is outlined in red near the bottom of the map.

Updated 9:25pm:

One lane of Highway 50 reopened Friday, with escorts alternating traffic in each direction. Motorists are being stopped in Meyers and Sly Park Road.

Mandatory evacuations have been lifted. A voluntary evacuation order is in place for Sand Flat campground east to Strawberry.

The fire is east of Whitehall on both sides of the American River.

Updated 3:05pm:

About 90 percent of Kyburz Fire is on the north side of the river burning in steep slopes below Weber Mill Road. The west side of the fire has burned into light fuels from the 2013 Kyburz Fire. PG&E powerlines have been de-energized between Whitehall and Kyburz.

Boats have been cleared off of Ice House Reservoir because they are interfering with helicopter water bucket operations. Camping and shoreline use is still allowed.

Highway 50 may open to controlled traffic later today. For current road information, click on the state icon on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News*.

About 400 people are fighting the fire.

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The Kyburz Fire burning in the American River canyon has charred 200 acres and is 30 percent contained.

Highway 50 remains closed because the fire is on both sides of

the road. Traffic is being stopped at Meyers and Sly Park Road.

Crews have made the most progress on the north side of the fire. More dead fuel is on the south side, which is causing several spot fires.

A tract of summer cabins remains threatened. Evacuations are in place from Whitehall to Sand Flat Campground. Voluntary evacuations are from Sand Flat to Strawberry. The Pollock Pines Community Center is being used as an evacuation center.

The fire started about 2pm July 23, with reports of the cause being that a vehicle's axle struck the pavement and sent out a spark.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Hard Rock pool closed; leaking 20,000 gals. per day

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Hard Rock's pool has been losing 20,000 gallons a day for about a month, but it wasn't until Thursday that hotel-casino authorities notified officials.

"They noticed an increase use in water in the pool in the last 30 days. They concluded it must be a leak," JoAnn Kittrell with the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Officials from her agency were at the property July 24 to begin an investigation that first started with mandating the

pool be closed until the problem is resolved. Hotel guests are without a pool-spa for an indefinite period. Chaise lounges and cabanas, though, were still on the deck.



Lake Tahoe Hard Rock's pool is closed until the source of the water is fixed.
Photo/LTN

Kittrell said it is too soon to know if the ground water and soil have been contaminated with chlorinated water to the point that remediation needs to be done. Whether the owners face a fine will be determined down the road.

The pool holds 200,000 gallons.

Edgewood Water Company supplies the water to Hard Rock. No one from there returned a call.

"They are going to dechlorinate and remove the water safely and legally," Kittrell said of the next steps.

There was no evidence Friday night that this had begun. The pool was full as was the hot tub. Both have ropes around them and signs saying they are closed.

"They aren't sure it is actually a leak, that is what they are investigating," Jen Eastwood, spokeswoman for the Hard Rock,

told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The front desk is telling callers there is a chemical imbalance in the pool.

“The pool itself is fine. They believe the issue is with the recycled pumping system – the plumbing that recycles the water that keeps it flowing,” Kittrell said. “They have sonar as a way to figure out where the leak is. They hope to do a minimal amount of excavation to reach it. The important thing is to stop any continued leaking into the soil there.”

When the Hard Rock opened in January summer pool parties were one of the things that were touted to set it apart from other Stateline casinos. The pool was installed when the hotel was first developed in the 1960s when it was known as Sahara Tahoe.

Calif. kids' economic health is ranked near last in U.S.

By Jill Tucker, San Francisco Chronicle

California was just one Mississippi away from dead last in a new national ranking of the economic well-being of children, an indicator of poverty and financial instability of families.

Despite a reinvigorated economy, millions of California families are still digging out from the 2008 recession, with wages for many failing to keep up with the cost of living, according to the 2015 Kids Count report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation released Tuesday.

Across the state, 23 percent of children were living in

poverty in 2013, the most recent data available, compared with 18 percent in 2008. In Mississippi, which ranked 50th among the states, 34 percent of children were living in poverty at last count. New Mexico came in just above California, at 48th, in economic well-being of children.

Read the whole story

Experts growing optimistic about El Niño

By Haley Branson-Potts and Rong-gong Lin II, Los Angeles Times

It's the middle of the summer, but it felt a bit like winter in the Sierra this week as a storm dumped 4 inches of hail on Interstate 80 around Donner Summit.

There was so much pea-sized ice that the California Highway Patrol on Tuesday halted traffic and called out snowplows – known as the “Sierra Snowfighters” – for help.

“It looked just like snow, a blanket of snow across all the lanes,” said Caltrans snowplower John Wheeler. “It was really weird.”

The hail storm was just the latest strange weather to hit the Sierra Nevada, influenced by the weather-changing phenomenon El Niño. For months, climate scientists have said El Niño is likely to bring more rain to Southern California this winter.

But here's the big question in a state enduring four years of severe drought: How far north will El Niño's influence roam?

The El Niño hitting the mountains of the north is critical

because California's vast waterworks rely on rain and snow from the Sierra to supply farms and cities. By contrast, much of the rain that falls in Southern California ends up in the ocean.

Read the whole story

Caltrans halts Hwy. 88 work to ease Hwy. 50 closure congestion

Pressure from South Lake Tahoe officials worked in getting Caltrans to stop construction on Highway 88 over the Carson Pass today.

This is the route state highway officials had told people to use to get to and from the South Shore with Highway 50 being closed because of the Kyburz Fire.

The paving project stopped at about 2pm July 24. However, by that time there was already a four-hour delay, according to Caltrans.

"There are an OMG number of cars stacked up with no bathrooms, no knowledge of the delay and no cell service. I'd say I passed 4,000," South Lake Tahoe resident Duane Wallace told *Lake Tahoe News* at about 2:10pm.

It was city officials who worked to get Caltrans to stop the project.

City Manager Nancy Kerry said it was everyone working together that got the job stopped. She told *Lake Tahoe News* it could be

devastating for the region if people are not able to easily get to and from the area.

Highway 80 is an option. Work on Highway 89 ended at 10am Friday.

Highway 50 is closed between Meyers and Sly Park Road. It's possible it will open to one lane metered traffic later today.

Click on the state icon at the top of *Lake Tahoe News'* home page for up-to-date information from Caltrans.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Calif. Supreme Court won't budge on water rates

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

In a setback to California water regulators' conservation efforts, the state Supreme Court has kept intact a ruling that makes it harder for municipalities to impose tiered pricing to discourage heavy water use.

The state's high court upheld a closely watched ruling involving the Orange County city of San Juan Capistrano, rejecting pleas from California water regulators. Gov. Jerry Brown, who has ordered a 25 percent cutback in urban water use, had said the ruling represents a potential "straitjacket" for regulators.

In April, the 4th District Court of Appeal struck down a water-pricing system used by San Juan Capistrano that charged customers considerably more per-gallon for heavier water use.

The court said the structure violated Proposition 218, a 1996 statewide ballot measure that said municipalities can't charge fees that exceed the cost of providing a service.

Read the whole story

SLT, EDC to work on unresolved land issues

South Lake Tahoe and El Dorado County officials are expected to get together soon to work on resolving issues pertaining to county-owned properties and facilities in the city.

Up for discussions are Lakeview Commons, Campground by the Lake, and buildings that house the senior center, museum, art building and the visitors' center. El Dorado County owns the land and provides programs, while the city oversees operations and maintenance of the buildings.

The county's ad hoc committee is made up of Supervisors Sue Novasel and Ron Mikulaco, with Supervisor Brian Veerkamp as the alternate.

Novasel said she expects the ad hoc committee to report back to the Board of Supervisors at the special Tahoe meeting on Aug. 31.

However, the city isn't even discussing the formation of an ad hoc committee until the council's Aug. 4 meeting.

"We are very pleased the county has established an ad hoc committee to work with city on these issues. We've discussed

these topics with Supervisor Novasel since she was elected and discussed the need to resolve the city-county agreement for the 56-acre property and look forward to finding the right solution for the benefit of the many community members who utilize these properties,” City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Legalization of pot in Calif. would be a process

By Joe Garofoli, San Francisco Chronicle

Even if California voters legalize cannabis in 2016, it will take “many years” of patience to figure out how to tax and regulate a multibillion-dollar industry that’s forever been largely underground.

That’s the cautionary conclusion of a thorough examination of what it will take to legalize marijuana in the state, led by Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom and a panel of academic and law enforcement experts.

“Legalization of marijuana would not be an event that happens in one election,” they wrote in the 93-page Blue Ribbon Commission on Marijuana Policy report released Wednesday. “Rather, it would be a process that unfolds over many years requiring sustained attention to implementation. That process of legalization and regulation will be dynamic.”

The report offers 58 policy suggestions on the myriad questions raised by legalization – from how and when to tax

cannabis to how to determine when users are driving under the influence.

Read the whole story