

Prescription drug abusers turn to heroin

By Lisa Girion, Los Angeles Times

Standing in the pulpit above Austin Klimusko's casket three years ago, his mother used his death to draw the connection between pills from a pharmacy and drugs from the street.

"When his prescriptions dried up, he turned to heroin," Susan Klimusko said in a frank eulogy meant as a warning to the young mourners at Simi Valley's Cornerstone Church.

Last week, the nation's top public health official used the bully pulpit to sound the same alarm. The prescription drug epidemic is stoking the nation's appetite for heroin with disastrous results, Dr. Tom Frieden, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, told reporters in a teleconference.

"We are priming people to addiction to heroin with overuse of prescription opiates, which are, after all, essentially the same chemical with the same impact on the brain," he said.

Read the whole story

Western diet contributes to malnutrition

By Leigh Weingus, Huffington Post

Seventy percent of the world's population is expected to live

in a city by 2050, according to a University Of Minnesota study. But with urbanization comes the spread of the Western diet – and that’s not a good thing.

Developing countries have generally relied on vegetables, fruits and legumes as their main food sources. But as these countries gain more access to more calorie-rich foods like red meat, salt, sugar and processed foods, malnourishment is paradoxically on the rise.

“People around the world, as incomes go up, choose more calories and meat in their diet,” study author David Tilman said, according to CNN. “We have a whole new group of people who are malnourished because they eat foods that are no good for them, that have no nutritional benefit.”

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USFS expanding firefighting capabilities

The U.S. Forest Service has a new firefighting tool in its arsenal.

Tanker 118 on July 10 started flying wildfire suppression missions from Sacramento.

The Forest Service began using air tankers to drop fire retardant in the 1950s. For the past 35 years, the agency has used air tankers contracted from private industry. The 2014 National Defense Authorization Act authorized the transfer of seven HC-130H aircraft from the Coast Guard to the Forest Service for use in wildfire suppression.

The first HC-130H, known as Tanker 118, is currently located at Forest Service Air Station McClellan in Sacramento, which will be its base of operations for the next two years.

Tanker 118 has been located at the Coast Guard Air Station Sacramento since mid-June while maintenance, installation and testing of the Modular Airborne Firefighting System unit and contractor pilot and maintenance crew training have been taking place

Tanker 118 will only fly wildfire suppression missions within 500 nautical miles from its base so it can return there each night for maintenance by contract crews and support from Coast Guard crews.

The Forest Service, Coast Guard, and Air Force have been working together to complete the significant amount of work that is needed on all seven HC-130H aircraft before they can begin flying wildfire suppression missions. These modifications include demilitarization; performing wing and airframe modifications; designing, contracting for, manufacturing and installing retardant tanks; and equipping them with radios, Aircraft Flight Following, and other equipment. The work is expected to be completed by 2019.

The Forest Service now has of 22 air tankers available full time for wildfire suppression this fire season. The agency also has the ability to activate up to eight military C-130s.

Slots remain important cog in

Nev. gaming

By J.D. Morris, Las Vegas Sun

Although Nevada casinos don't make nearly as much money from slots as they did before the recession hit, the machines are starting to make a comeback.

Slot revenue dropped sharply in 2008 and 2009, much like the rest of the state's gambling business, and still remains far below its peak from before the economic downturn. After a few years of more stable performance, however, recent financial indicators suggest that the situation is improving.

Through May of this year, statewide slot revenue increased 4.3 percent compared with 2014, according to Michael Lawton, senior research analyst for the state Gaming Control Board. On the Strip, which accounts for the bulk of Nevada's total gaming revenue, slot revenue is up 6.1 percent for the calendar year.

Read the whole story

Newspaper racks destroyed in S. Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Vandals have caused more than \$5,000 worth of damage to newspaper racks in South Lake Tahoe and Meyers.

The two culprits have been caught on video, though positive identification has yet to be made.

“Every three to five years this happens, but this is the biggest damage that has happened,” Steve Anderson, who owns South Tahoe Newspaper Agency, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “They have some type of bar they are using. They put it between the door and racks. It’s about 4-feet-long.”

San Francisco Chronicle and *Sacramento Bee* racks are being targeted. The South Lake company, which has been operating since 1961, also handles the *Reno Gazette-Journal*, *USA Today* and *Wall Street Journal* racks.

Anderson is collecting the money from the racks each night, so the reward hasn’t been much for the thieves.

But the loss has been big for Anderson in other ways. Each of the 13 boxes that have been destroyed costs about \$400. This type of box is no longer made so he will either have to refurbish old ones or take the sales of the papers into the businesses.

The vandals on Thursday and Friday hit racks at Ernie’s, Bert’s, Getaway Café, Tahoe Keys Liquor, Rite-Aid, Red Hut at Ski Run Boulevard, and Raley’s near Stateline.

Anderson said the two are driving a blue compact vehicle, and that they are middle-aged white men. The police are analyzing the video for a better description.

Anderson is offering a \$1,000 reward for information that leads to the arrest and conviction of the people responsible for the vandalism. Anyone with information, should call the South Lake Tahoe Police Department at 530.542.6100.

Caltrans to work on Hwy. 89 near Truckee

Caltrans will begin one-way traffic controls of up to one mile in length on Highway 89 starting July 13 a 5am.

This is a \$6 million resurfacing project.

The overlay project will begin at the Prosser Dam Road/Alder Drive roundabout just north of Interstate 80 in Truckee and continue for approximately 8 miles to the Sierra County line at Sage Hen Road. The project will cold plane existing pavement and overlay with hot-mix asphalt, remove and replace existing metal beam guardrailing, replace existing dikes and perform re-striping operations from 5am-7pm Monday through Thursday and from 5am-2pm on Fridays. Occasional nighttime work is possible.

It is anticipated that the work will be completed by late-September.

Senators unveil marijuana banking bill

By Aljazeera America

The Senate introduced a bipartisan bill on Thursday that would prevent criminal prosecution as well as liability and asset forfeiture for banks that do business with a state-sanctioned marijuana business.

Sen. Michael Bennet, a Democrat, and Sen. Cory Gardner, a

Republican, both of Colorado, announced the bill in a joint statement.

Last year, the Treasury Department said banks could serve the marijuana industry under certain conditions. Many banks call the guidelines too onerous, resulting in a marijuana industry that still relies heavily on cash. That reliance on cash rather than traditional banking methods has made marijuana dispensary operators robbery targets.

Read the whole story

Solar companies say NV Energy misled them

By Kyle Roerink, Las Vegas Sun

Less than two months after solar companies and NV Energy reached a compromise on a controversial energy policy, the two groups are rehashing their battle.

The Alliance for Solar Choice filed a petition with the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada on Wednesday, saying that it will soon hit a controversial cap that limits participation in a program called net metering. The alliance says it will hit the cap in six weeks because NV Energy, the state's largest power provider that monitors the use of rooftop solar, gave lawmakers and solar officials inaccurate information during the legislative session.

The alliance, which is a group of solar companies that includes SolarCity and Sunrun, filed the petition to question the veracity of the utility and ask the PUC to rule on the

matter.

Read the whole story

CVS quits U.S. Chamber over tobacco stance

By Yashaswini Swamynathan, Reuters

CVS Health Corp said it was withdrawing its membership from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce after media reports that the trade group was lobbying globally against anti-smoking laws.

The No. 2 U.S. drugstore chain said it was “surprised” to read recent reports on the chamber’s position on tobacco products outside the United States.

The *New York Times* reported last week that the chamber and its foreign affiliates were lobbying against anti-smoking laws such as restrictions on smoking in public places and bans on menthol and slim cigarettes, mainly in developing countries.

Read the whole story

Gun sales spike in June

By Aaron Smith, CNN

Background checks for gun sales spiked 11% in June compared to last year, making it the busiest June ever, according to the

FBI's background check data.

Last month the FBI conducted nearly 1.53 million background checks, which are required for all in-store purchases, but not for sales at gun shows or between individuals. That's the highest volume of checks in June since 1999, when the FBI started keeping track.

Gun background checks have climbed annually since 2003 with the exception of just three years, one of which was 2014, indicating a clear jump in gun sales.

Read the whole story