

Presidential hopefuls may want to bet on casino industry

By J.D. Morris, Las Vegas Sun

Nevada is an important state for 2016 presidential candidates, and the casino lobby is trying to make sure its industry is considered important too.

Geoff Freeman, president of the American Gaming Association, recently sent a letter to candidates arguing that because Nevada is a key battleground state, presidential hopefuls need to recognize the contributions of the state's most dominant industry if they want to succeed here.

Freeman urged the presidential candidates to consult with people who understand gaming and to make appearances at gaming facilities.

Read the whole story

It's official: Latinos outnumber whites in Calif.

By Javier Panzar, Los Angeles Times

The demographers agreed: at some point in 2014, Latinos would pass whites as the largest ethnic group in California.

Determining when exactly that milestone would occur was more

of a tricky question. Counting people isn't like counting movie ticket receipts.

The official confirmation had to wait until new population figures were released by the Census Bureau this summer. The new tally, released in late June, shows that as of July 1, 2014, about 14.99 million Latinos live in California, edging out the 14.92 million whites in the state.

Read the whole story

S. Lake Tahoe wants out of ambulance business

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe Fire Department is on its way to returning to its primary focus – dealing with all things related to fire.

The City Council on Tuesday voted unanimously to make this happen. Lake Valley Fire is poised to be the provider of all ambulance services in El Dorado County on the South Shore.

The Cal-Tahoe Joint Powers Authority has been wrestling for some time with how to make the financials balance. One of the problems is the city and Lake Valley – the entities making up the JPA – entered a contract with the county to provide three ambulances and get reimbursed for the cost of two. The other issue is how inter facility transfers (IFTs) affect service and the bottom line.

The JPA is paid a flat fee for the IFTs. Depending on how far of a drive it is – could be the Bay Area – it's a losing proposition. It also means a depleted work force at the local

stations. There were 640 IFTs in 2014, with 2015 on target to be higher than that.

"Our resource will be here all the time and not off the hill," SLT Fire Chief Jeff Meston told *Lake Tahoe News* of the change. "We will have stability here."

His biggest desire is to have his charges focus on fires.

In 2000, before the city had ambulances, 12 people worked any given fire shift to handle the 2,000 annual calls. In 2001, the first year of city provided ambulance service, the on duty staff was at 14 for 2,200 calls. Today the staff is at 10, with 3,200 annual calls.

What will change is that a paramedic will be added to the engines at Stations 1 and 3, meaning three people will be on each rig. That unit is likely to be the first to arrive, with a Lake Valley staffed ambulance to follow. Lake Valley would staff two ambulances at Station 2 in the city.

The contract with the county necessitates a certain response time. Lake Valley Fire Chief Gareth Harris at the July 7 meeting said his people would meet the criteria of the contract. People are not expected to notice a change in the level of service.

The cost savings for Lake Valley comes from hiring emergency medical technicians for the ambulances instead of each one having two paramedics.

Between the two agencies there are 17 fire employees per shift. Employing EMTs will bring that number to 19.

Ultimately the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors will vote on the proposal. The JPA board will discuss the matter July 13. If all goes through, the city's representation on the board goes from two positions to one, with Lake Valley retaining two.

In other council action:

- City Attorney Tom Watson's rolling three-year contract was extended for another year. Changes to his compensation package are being worked on.
 - The Tahoe Prosperity Center will give another presentation on July 21 in an attempt to get the council to pony up \$10,000. The majority of the council wants to see the nonprofit's budget and have a better understanding of how the money would be spent.
 - Direction was given to start work on forming a recreation joint powers authority with Lake Tahoe Community College and Lake Tahoe Unified School District.
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Reasons behind California's high gas prices

By Los Angeles Times

Gasoline sold in California costs more than in the rest of the U.S. – sometimes dramatically so. That's because the Golden State's market is isolated from outside fuel suppliers that might moderate prices. The fuel market here is an economic island, and occasionally circumstances combine to make California's gasoline even pricier than on the actual island of Hawaii.

Here are some factors that affect California's pump prices:

California's tough environmental rules mandate that gasoline sold within the state be produced according to strict formulas that reduce pollution. But the gas is more expensive and

difficult to produce than dirtier fuel sold elsewhere. Few refineries outside the state are equipped to produce it.

What's more, the state gasoline formula changes twice a year, from a winter recipe to a summer blend designed to retard evaporation during warm-weather months. The summer blend is even more expensive and trickier to make, increasing the chance of refinery mishaps. In addition, refiners try to use up inventories of one type of fuel before the switch to the other type, increasing the risk of price volatility.

Read the whole story

5 arrested during Hwy. 50 DUI checkpoint

Four people were caught for allegedly driving drunk on July 4 in the DUI checkpoint on Spooner Summit.

The event had 2,021 vehicles pass through the checkpoint from approximately 2:30-8:15pm. There were 22 drivers that went to a secondary screening which found four people under the influence of alcohol and or drugs. Three were arrested on charges of driving under the influence of drugs and one for alcohol. Another person was arrested on an outstanding warrant.

During the entire month of July law enforcement agencies all across Nevada will be increasing the number of officers on the roads in a continued effort to curb driving under the influences of alcohol and or drugs.

SLT motorcycle passenger dies

A 21-year-old South Lake Tahoe woman has died from injuries sustained in a motorcycle collision Sunday night.

The woman was a passenger on the motorcycle. Names of the three people involved in the accident are not being released pending notification of family.

The woman died at Renown Medical Center in Reno.

The man driving a Nissan pickup was turning left onto Modesto Avenue from Highway 50 about 8:30pm July 5 when he struck a motorcycle going west on the highway.

The motorcycle driver sustained minor injuries. Both people on the motorcycle were wearing helmets. The truck driver was not injured, but the vehicle was severely damaged.

According to South Lake Tahoe police Lt. Brian Williams, both drivers have been cooperative with authorities. He told *Lake Tahoe News* alcohol and drugs are not believed to be a factor.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Drought changing how agencies do business

By Coral Davenport, New York Times

FOLSOM – Drew Lessard stood on top of Folsom Dam and gazed at

the Sierra Nevada, which in late spring usually gushes enough melting snow into the reservoir to provide water for a million people. But the mountains were bare, and the snowpack to date remains the lowest on measured record.

“If there’s no snowpack, there’s no water,” said Mr. Lessard, a regional manager for the Bureau of Reclamation, the federal agency that built and operates a vast network of 476 dams, 348 reservoirs and 8,116 miles of aqueducts across the Western United States.

For nearly a century, that network has captured water as it flows down from the region’s snowcapped mountains and moves to the farms, cities and suburbs that were built in the desert. But as the snow disappears, experts say the Bureau of Reclamation – created in 1902 by President Theodore Roosevelt to wrest control of water in the arid West – must completely rebuild a 20th-century infrastructure so that it can efficiently conserve and distribute water in a 21st-century warming world.

For most of the 1900s, the bureau’s system – which grew into the largest wholesale water utility in the country – worked. But the West of the 21st century is not the West of Roosevelt. There are now millions more people who want water, but there is far less of it. The science of climate change shows that in the future, there will be less still.

Read the whole story

1,600 lbs. of trash collected

from Tahoe beaches



Garbage at Zephyr Shoals on July 4. Photo/LTN

Nearly 300 volunteers on July 5 picked up 1,600 pounds of trash, including 5,266 pieces of plastic such as caps, bottles, utensils, and straws.

During the League to Save Lake Tahoe's post-Independence Day cleanup, volunteers and staff catalogued debris collected from more than 4.5 miles of Tahoe's shoreline, finding, for example 4,053 cigarette butts.

Each year, more than a quarter million visitors converge on Lake Tahoe for July 4.

League volunteers and staff and their partners cleaned up the shoreline along nine of Tahoe's beaches: Kiva/Taylor Beach, Tallac Historic Site, Regan Beach, El Dorado Beach, Timber Cove, Nevada Beach, Zephyr Shoals, Kings Beach, and Commons Beach.

Suspect accused of spitting on EDC deputy

An El Dorado County was arrested on Fourth of July for allegedly assaulting a sheriff's deputy among other charges.

The deputy, whose name has not been released, heard what sounded like fireworks near the El Dorado Hills branch of the El Dorado County Library at 11pm July 4. The deputy located several people lighting and shooting off illegal fireworks from the back of a house in the 3800 block of Tilden Drive.

At the bottom of the driveway near the house, the deputy and security officer were confronted by 29 year-old Evan Lyons of Orangevale. Deputies said, Lyons was instantly confrontational, appeared angry, and was quite intoxicated. Lyons was uncooperative, became increasingly agitated and was verbally assaultive. People inside the house started to emerge and two dogs were released.

When an additional deputy arrived, Lyons was taken into custody. During the arrest and placement into the patrol car, Lyons was resistive. Once in the car, deputies said Lyons spit through the cage into the driver's compartment and that on the way to the jail, Lyons continuously yelled using profanity and made racial slurs. He also allegedly threatened the deputy, spit on him and said he wanted all cops to die. The suspect also reportedly threatened to find the deputy's family and described how he'd do them harm.

Lyons was booked at the El Dorado County Jail on charges of public intoxication, resisting arrest, and battery on a peace officer.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Report: 33% of Nevadans live in distressed communities

By Sandra Chereb, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – On paper and with high-profile projects rising from the Nevada desert, the state's economic recovery is in full swing. The jobless rate is down and companies are moving to the region, all good news for a state hit hard by the Great Recession.

But a new analysis being released today shows many communities in the Silver State are still struggling and have a long way to go in the cycle of economic rebirth.

Economic Innovation Group, a Washington bipartisan policy group, found that 33 percent of Nevada's population lives in economically distressed communities, the highest percentage in the nation.

Georgia, South Carolina and Mississippi followed, each with 25 percent of their populations living in economically distressed communities. At the other end of the spectrum were states like Wyoming, North Dakota, Vermont, Iowa and Idaho, with distressed populations of 1 percent or less.

Read the whole story