

Old gadgets creating a wasteland

By Damon Beres, Huffington Post

Your iPhone isn't biodegradable.

Of course, you know that. But what you might not understand is the massive problem that electronic waste represents for our planet. A recent report from United Nations University in Japan declared that about 46 million tons of e-waste – discarded phones, computer screens, lamps, microwaves and so on – were produced in 2014 alone. That amount is only expected to rise in the coming years.

Many of these devices have toxic components. A lot of them could be recycled – but aren't. Instead, they're shipped to developing countries – sometimes illegally – where they end up in landfills, waterways or public spaces.

Since 2013, the jarring photographs of the BIT ROT Project have shined a light on the human price of electronic waste, showing civilians digging through potentially dangerous heaps or struggling to dispose the materials themselves.

[Read the whole story](#)

Former senator seeks
protection from bear

advocates

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

A former Nevada lawmaker who claims harassment by bear advocates at his Lake Tahoe home has filed a request for a protective order with Washoe County authorities.

William O'Donnell, who served as a Republican state senator representing Las Vegas from 1987 to 2001 and previously as a state assemblyman, filed a request Tuesday at the Incline Village Justice Court seeking an order for "protection against stalking, aggravated stalking or harassment" by members of the Bear League, including founder Ann Bryant.

O'Donnell contends members of the nonprofit bear advocacy group interfered with efforts by the Nevada Department of Wildlife to capture a bear that had damaged his Incline Village vacation home. It is the second such case to wind up in local courts in the past year involving claims that people seeking help from Nevada wildlife officials regarding problem-causing black bears were subjected to harassment by bear advocates.

Read the whole story

Judge: Abstinence-only curriculum is not sex ed

By Bob Egelko, San Francisco Chronicle

California's sex-education law prohibits school districts from indoctrinating students on the need to remain celibate before

marriage or teaching them that abstinence is the only safe way to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, a judge has ruled.

The decision by Fresno County Superior Court Judge Donald Black applies only to the 40,000-student Clovis Unified School District. But as the first ruling to interpret California's 11-year-old law on sex education and disease prevention, it should put schools on notice that "young people need complete, accurate health information required by law," said attorney Phyllida Burlingame of the American Civil Liberties Union, which took part in the suit.

"This is the first time that abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula have been found to be medically inaccurate," Burlingame said Monday.

Read the whole story

Ice House Road improvements may expand

Just as construction is about to begin on a 7.13 mile section of Ice House Road with a \$4.4 million grant awarded last year, El Dorado County Community Development Agency has received notice of a potential second grant award of \$6.75 million for phase two of the project.

The second grant would continue the work on Ice House Road for an additional 17.5 miles. Final grant scoping and approval of phase two is scheduled to take place this summer based on updated cost estimates.

The purpose of the Ice House Road Project is to improve and widen Ice House Road and provide safety enhancements including signing, striping and delineation. These grants are provided through the Federal Lands Access Program , which was established to improve transportation facilities that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are located within federal lands. The county will provide matching funds of approximately 11.5 percent, plus county staff oversight costs.

Ice House Road provides a connection for forest visitors to access the Rubicon Trail, Desolation Wilderness, Ice House Reservoir, Union Valley Reservoir, Loon Lake and various attractions within the Crystal Basin Recreation Area in the Eldorado National Forest.

Ice House Road Pavement Rehabilitation phase one will begin the first week of June, and will provide resurfacing, restoration, and rehabilitation to 7.13 miles of roadway from the junction of Wentworth Springs Road to the end of the pavement near Loon Lake. Traffic delays are expected, and will be limited to a 30-minute maximum for the duration of the project.

Brown's budget good news for education

By Jessica Calefati and Josh Richman, San Jose Mercury News

SACRAMENTO— Gov. Jerry Brown released a revised state budget proposal Thursday that sinks billions in better-than-expected tax revenues into California's public schools and some tax

relief for the state's poorest families. But it still didn't satisfy Democratic lawmakers who want to mend the state's shredded social safety net.

The budget also includes a deal with University of California President Janet Napolitano, who had demanded more than the \$120 million increase for her system in Brown's January budget to stave off 5 percent tuition hikes in each of the next five years.

Tuition will remain flat for the next two years, in exchange for the state paying down some of the university's long-term pension liabilities, Brown said.

The governor is also proposing creating a state Earned Income Tax Credit that's expected to help close to one million of the state's poorest working families. It will cost \$380 million the first year and provide credits of up to \$2,653 annually.

The state's public schools will receive the bulk of the rest under Proposition 98, the statewide ballot measure passed in 1988 that establishes a minimum annual funding level for K-12 schools and community colleges. And another chunk of change must be saved for a rainy day under a constitutional amendment voters approved in November.

The budget is "definitely on the rebound" after years of being mired in red ink, Brown said Thursday, and is focused on "the fundamentals of what government is supposed to do, health and education."

Read the whole story

Concussions not just a concern for pro athletes

By Kathryn Reed

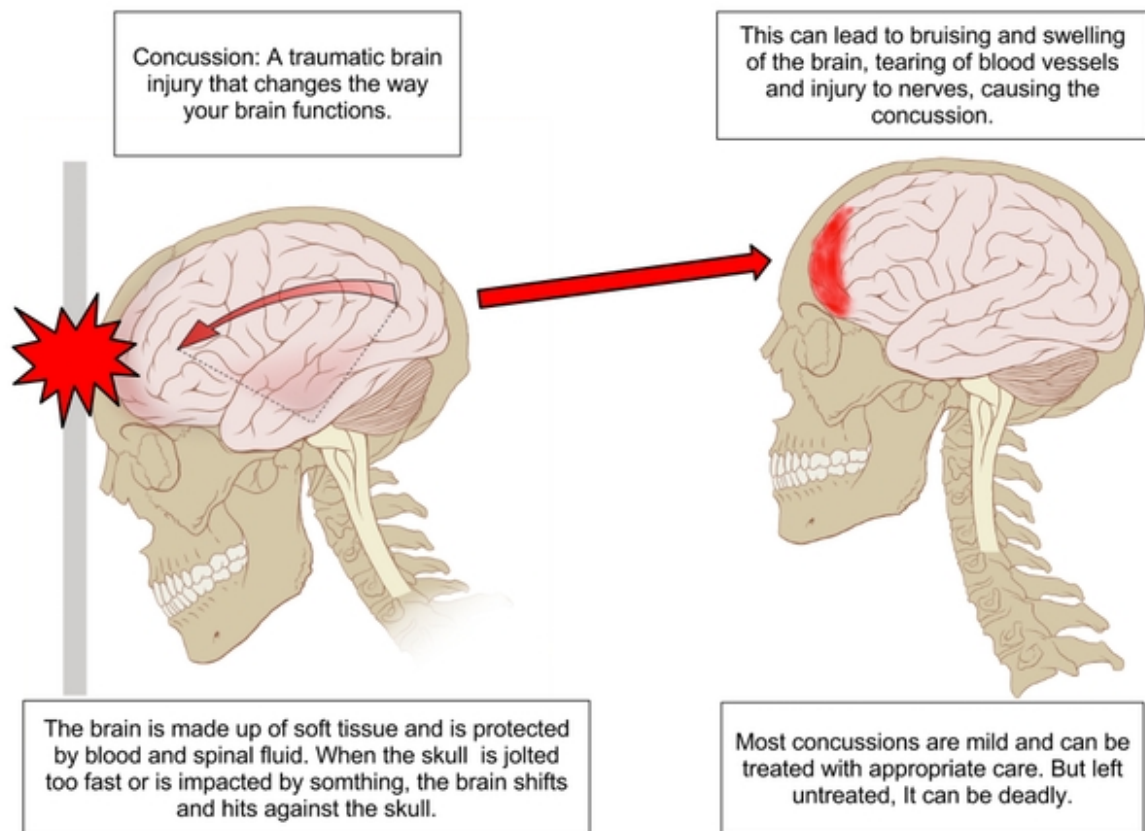
It's not just professional sports teams paying more attention to athletes with concussions. It's a big deal in the Tahoe-Truckee area, too.

One of the problems is there is no diagnostic tool for medical professionals to use to test if someone sustained a concussion or if they have fully recovered.

That is why South Shore athletes are being given a cognitive impact test prior to competing in order to get a baseline. Then medical experts can use that data to compare it to information ascertained after an injury has occurred.

"It shows how their brain is functioning at that moment," Chris Proctor, director of the Tahoe Center for Orthopedics, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "It's a computer test. It tests reactions, memory and goes through key factors."

Barton tests athletes at South Tahoe, Whittell and Douglas high schools.



Source: *Concussion mechanics.svg*

Football remains the sport with the most number of concussions for athletes Barton Health practitioners see. In winter, concussions are mostly from skiing and snowboarding. Throughout the United States it is women's soccer and field hockey players who receive the most concussions.

Proctor doesn't believe there are more concussions, but instead there is better awareness of the condition.

"We have the idea if a kid hits his head, we assume it is a concussion until we prove it's not," Proctor said.

He said a handful of years ago parents would shop around to get a medical clearance for their son or daughter. Knowledge of the potential lingering effects of concussions as well as Second Impact Syndrome (SIS) has parents putting their children's health before their athletic careers. It was SIS that killed South Lake Tahoe resident Ryan Shreve. Ryan Shreve Head Injury Awareness Foundation was created in the 1997 South

Tahoe High School graduate's name in hopes of limiting the number of deaths like his.

Pop Warner in Marin County is part of a three-year pilot program that has sensors on kids' helmets that alerts adults the player may have sustained a concussion.

The fear of concussions is being attributed to a 10 percent drop in Pop Warner participation nationwide between 2010 and 2012, according to ESPN.

Because there is no neurologist on staff at Barton Memorial Hospital, the orthopedists are handling concussions. With the hospital recently becoming a trauma center, the emergency room and orthopedic specialists are working together more closely so all concussion patients – athletes or others – are receiving the same care.

At the Institute for Rural Health Research, a subsidiary of Tahoe Forest Hospital, scientists are trying to develop a device to diagnose concussions. In 2014, the Gene Upshaw Memorial Fund donated \$180,557 to this cause. The memorial fund has donated a total of \$323,544 specifically for traumatic brain injury research at the Truckee facility.

(Upshaw was a National Football League hall of famer and former NFL Players Association executive director who died of pancreatic cancer in 2008 at Tahoe Forest Hospital. Upshaw's wife, Terri, and sons Justin and Daniel established the fund because of the care he received at the hospital.)

Researchers there have been working for a few years to create a low cost, compact, portable unit that will be able to determine injury severity within 10 minutes.

Reid renews push to ban online gaming

By Amber Phillips, Las Vegas Sun

WASHINGTON – Sen. Harry Reid is receptive of Sheldon Adelson's push to ban all forms of online gambling, including poker.

Reid said in an interview Monday that if he isn't able to get an exemption for poker from a proposed ban of online gaming making its way through Congress, he would consider supporting a full online gaming ban.

"Unless we can get something done with poker, I'm going to look closely – I haven't made up my mind – but I'm going to look closely into banning it totally," Reid said. "I'm going to take a hard look at it. It would be something I would certainly consider strongly."

Read the whole story

State makes it difficult to cut ties with NV Energy

By Kyle Roerink, Las Vegas Sun

CARSON CITY – In an opinion expected to be widely disputed by both consumer groups and advocates of competitive energy marketplaces, the Nevada Public Utilities Commission's legal staff has ruled that a major digital technology company must pay \$27 million to cut its ties with NV Energy and produce its own power.

The legal staff's ruling sets the stage for debate about consumer choice and the interpretation of a 14-year-old law that the company, Switch, is referencing in hopes of removing itself as an NV Energy customer. The PUC's legal opinion could foreshadow a decision that regulators will formally announce in June, and could be an indication that it will be difficult for Switch and other companies to unplug from NV Energy. In interpreting the law, the regulators' legal staff in essence said the opt-out provision should be ignored now because market conditions have changed since it was enacted.

The PUC opinion is the latest in a six-month battle for Switch, which applied in November with the PUC for the ability to create and purchase power without NV Energy. The Las Vegas-based company provides data storage to an array of Fortune 1000 clients, including Google, Sony and eBay, through a high-bandwidth fiber optic network connected to at least four dozen major Internet providers.

Read the whole story

Youngster accused of starting fires in Truckee

A juvenile is in police custody after allegedly starting a series of fires in Truckee.

Truckee and CalFire firefighters responded to and quickly extinguished a series of what they said were intentionally set fires in the vegetation behind homes in the Tahoe Donner subdivision on May 13.

"This is a reminder of the importance of talking to your

children about fire safety and the dangers of playing with matches and other ignition devices,” Truckee officials said in a statement.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Separate gun incidents put schools, Barton on lockdown

Lake Tahoe Community College and South Tahoe Middle School were on lockdown briefly Wednesday afternoon because someone reported hearing shots being fired in the meadow by the college.

“Within about 30 minutes we had sufficiently searched the area to realize there was no imminent threat to anyone so the all clear was given,” Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We never did find a person with a firearm or discover what actually happened.”

The school lockdowns were precautionary and are ultimately the decision of the school sites. College President Kindred Murillo told *Lake Tahoe News* the school was secure within five minutes of being notified of the potential threat.

Someone called dispatch at 2:34pm May 13 saying they heard two shots fired. Officers who responded and talked to others in the vicinity were told four shots were fired.

“We will continue to follow up if we get anymore leads,” Uhler said.

The meadow is decent size and sound in the basin travels in ways that where someone heard something might not be where it

originated from.

In a separate incident after the schools reopened, there was a report of a man walking down Winnemucca Avenue with a rifle. This caused Barton Memorial Hospital to go on lockdown for a short time. The all clear was given about 5:15pm.

Officers never found anyone roaming the streets with a gun.

“In the second case we had a few people who witnessed the incident,” Uhler said.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report