

Boomers, stock market boost vacation home market

By Marilyn Much, Investor's Business Daily

Vacation-home demand has been on a steady climb as a strong stock market, low interest rates and tempting deals have prompted high-end households to spend more freely on second residences and summer getaways.

The push comes as more high-net-worth buyers have opted to put some of the earnings they've gained from a rising stock market into second homes in spots that support a more leisure lifestyle.

Contributing to the increased demand are baby boomers home shopping for a place to vacation now, and retire to later.

Real estate brokers in resort locales from Massachusetts' Cape Cod to Nevada's Lake Tahoe report brisk second-home buying activity during the year's first quarter.

Read the whole story

Placer County working on Tahoe parking plan

Placer County will have a public workshop May 11 to discuss the results of a recently-completed parking study of the Kings Beach and Tahoe City business districts.

The meeting will be from 5:30-7pm at the Tahoe City Public

Utility District offices, 221 Fairway Drive in Tahoe City.

The goal of the workshop is to provide an overview of existing parking capacity and utilization, the results of a review of the county's current parking standards and requirements, and an examination of potential parking programs such as an in-lieu fee parking program. An in-lieu program would allow developers to meet some or all of their parking requirements by paying fees, rather than providing parking on-site. Fee revenue would be used by the county for public parking.

In the study, LSC Transportation Consultants Inc. developed recommendations to help the county and area stakeholders formulate a comprehensive plan that best meets the parking and mobility needs of Kings Beach and Tahoe City.

Placer County sees the study as the first step toward developing a plan that:

- Provides easier and more convenient access to parking
- Better supports shopping districts
- Reduces greenhouse gas emissions caused by cars circling for parking spaces.

The parking study document is online.

El Dorado Savings' quarterly profits decline

El Dorado Savings Bank reported first quarter profits of \$2,991,623, which represented a 4 percent decrease compared to the same time a year ago.

"The decline in earnings is the result of the drop in interest

rates that began late in 2014,” CEO George Cook Jr. said in a statement. “While loan volume has increased, the lower rates on new loans and investments caused a reduction in the bank’s profit margin.”

El Dorado ended the quarter with \$1.93 billion in total assets and savings deposits of \$1.72 billion.

The Placerville-based bank operates 35 branches, 32 in California and three in Northern Nevada.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Nev. employment headed toward pre-recession levels

By Andrea Domanick, Las Vegas Sun

Nevada’s jobs outlook continues to point up, with employment expected to return to pre-recession levels by mid-2016, Nevada’s Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation reported Friday.

Job growth is expected to climb by 45,000 jobs in 2015, 52,000 jobs in 2016 and approach 60,000 jobs in 2017, surpassing peak levels last seen in 2007.

Employment peaked in 2007 at 1.28 million jobs; as of third quarter 2014, the state is at 1.20 million jobs.

Read the whole story

5 arrests in EDC counterfeit credit card ring

By Cathy Lockeclocke, Sacramento Bee

Five Bay Area residents have been arrested in El Dorado County, accused of being part of a counterfeit credit card ring.

Sheriff's deputies responded to Red Hawk Casino in Shingle Springs about 1pm Thursday regarding a report of fraudulent use of a credit card. Casino security personnel reported that a man and woman in the casino attempted to use forged or stolen credit cards to obtain cash.

Deputies learned that the man had left, but security employees identified him as Edmundo Gomez Ruiz, who was last seen accompanied by another man in a silver BMW, according to an El Dorado County Sheriff's Office news release.

[Read the whole story](#)

Human trafficking a problem in Lake Tahoe

By Linda Fine Conaboy

STATELINE — Not many people spend much time thinking about human sex trafficking. It's often a daunting and maybe even

intangible topic. Just exactly what is human sex trafficking?

Law enforcement focuses on the human aspect of the topic, identifying human trafficking as the primary vehicle, and defining it as the recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing or obtaining a person for compelled labor or commercial sex acts through force, fraud or coercion.

There can be commercial sex trafficking such as domestic servitude, agricultural farm laborers can be illegally obtained and there are other work environments where employees may be coerced illegally such as at hotels, sweatshops and even forestry jobs. Human trafficking is often described as modern day slavery and as such is an immensely underreported crime.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Michelle Rodriguez gave a talk April 29 to Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe at Harrah's Lake Tahoe. The federal prosecutor is well schooled in the topic of human sex trafficking. Her presentation was titled Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Minors: A Federal Perspective.



Michelle Rodriguez, assistant U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of California, says human trafficking is an issue in Lake Tahoe. Photo/Linda Fine Conaboy

When describing the role of the pimp in human sex trafficking, Rodriguez displayed a photo of a stereotypical person dressed in white fur from head to toe, puffing on a big cigar, and leering at the camera.

There's a new face for the pimp now, she said. He's usually a regular, run-of-the-mill person – and doesn't have to be male. The new pimp is typically younger, gang affiliated and may have a reliance on drugs and alcohol. And this person can have direct ties to the families of the girls with whom he or she becomes involved.

The astronomical use and acceptance of social media makes it easy for primarily young girls to be recruited into a life they would probably not choose had they been schooled in the perils that await them by logging onto some of the questionable sites constantly popping up. Even legitimate locations such as Facebook can hold danger for those who are young and easily led. In other words, anyone with access to a computer or a smart phone can be recruited. In the past, Rodriguez said, recruitment was normally by word-of-mouth – not anymore.

She pointed out that boys can also become victims, although fewer males than females are victims of human sex traffickers. Why? Because prime recruitment time happens when girls seem to be rebelling, discovering their sexuality or have a bad life at home. Not that boys don't have a problem, Rodriguez said, but girls more so. Those who feel underappreciated with no strong parental role model or guidance tend to be the most vulnerable.

Pimps are always looking for a fresh face, she said. They can find them, besides via social media, at bus stops or shelters, through others, in the mall or even at school.

Other offenses falling under this genre include engaging in pornography and/or circulating photos of it. Receipt,

distribution and possession of child pornography is a crime. There is a lot of this type of activity at South Lake Tahoe, Rodriguez said.

“It’s a fiendish activity,” she said. “It’s a compulsion and some people are wired that way. They can’t stop themselves.

“But it is still a crime. There is a very graphic law that describes this. Sometimes a person will move into a home, but with designs on a specific family member. When these cases are being prosecuted, even the sexual act must be proven.”

Additionally, when a sex trafficker is finally apprehended, it’s a laborious process to establish a case and to prosecute them. It then becomes the role of the prosecutor to identify the elements of the specific violation and to present the facts to establish each element.

The Lake Tahoe Basin has a human sex trafficking problem. People come here looking for minors, Rodriguez said.

“It’s an ongoing problem and we all have to be vigilant for it. South Lake Tahoe is not immune from the same social ills and criminal activities that other communities face. They may appear to be rarer here, but it’s not that they’re not here,” Rodriguez said. “People have sexual interests and some are not healthy and are criminal. South Lake Tahoe is not insulated, it would be absurd to think that it is. So being vigilant is no less a concern in South Lake Tahoe than in other communities.”

Some of the signs that a person may be at risk or being held against her will include:

- Evidence of being controlled
- Visible signs of physical abuse
- Recently from a foreign country

- Non-English speaking
- Transient residency
- No engagement with the community
- Afraid to talk
- Runs away.

Signs a person may be a victim of sex trafficking:

- Tattoos reflective of a pimp
- Advertising on websites
- Older boyfriend (or girlfriend)
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Unusual gifts.

After Rodriguez's talk, there was a round-table discussion about human trafficking in South Lake Tahoe.

The group identified several key needs. They include:

- A need for more foster homes
- Emergency placement sites
- Specialized treatment
- More public information on this issue
- What can be done when a problem is detected
- A need for children aging out of foster care
- Prevention and awareness of online solicitation

"I would like the coalition to meet within two weeks to decide where we want to go with this. We need to get our feet on the

ground and do something. We're not clear yet what it is, but at least we're headed in the right direction," Cindy Archer, Soroptimist president, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Rim Fire's alleged igniter will not face charges

By Kurtis Alexander, Fresno Bee

Federal prosecutors said Friday that they intend to drop charges against the bow hunter accused of starting the devastating Rim Fire that burned through Yosemite two years ago and convulsed into the largest wildfire in Sierra history.

In a motion to dismiss the case, U.S. Attorney Benjamin Wagner said the two witnesses who needed to show that Keith Emerald, 33, of Columbia ignited the blaze by making an illegal campfire had died.

One person who spoke with Emerald shortly after Emerald was rescued from the fast-moving fire via helicopter died in a workplace accident in February, according to prosecutors. The second witness, the helicopter pilot, died last month of cardiac arrest, prosecutors said.

Read the whole story

Nev. schools won't be rated this year

By Trevon Milliard, Reno Gazette-Journal

Nevada schools will not be issued star ratings this year under the state's system to hold schools accountable for their performances.

No such evaluations will be made for schools' performances this year. Instead, school ratings from 2013-14 will be rolled over for the 2014-15 school year.

The Nevada State Board of Education unanimously granted the reprieve on Thursday as problems plague the state's standardized tests, which were done online for the first time this year. These annual tests – given in third through eighth grade – were previously done with paper and pencil.

The board already considered waiving school ratings this year because of the state's transition to online tests based on the new Common Core academic standards. But the testing snafu only gave more reason.

Read the whole story

Zephyr Cove woman hurt in car crash

A Zephyr Cove woman was injured Friday morning in a single-vehicle accident.

Jean Marie Michael, 76, was driving east on Highway 50 near Cave Rock when the accident occurred.

She was transported to Barton Memorial Hospital with minor injuries.

The tunnel was closed for a short time May 1 while crews cleared the roadway.

The Nevada Highway Patrol is still investigating why the vehicle left the road.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Drought making California's air quality worse

By Joseph Serna, Los Angeles Times

Despite increasingly aggressive clean air and fuel standards, years of drought are taking a toll on California's air quality, the American Lung Association says in a new report.

The portion of California's Central Valley from Fresno to Madera was the most polluted region in the nation on any given day in 2013 with microscopic particulates, or soot, thanks in large part to the changing climate and drought, according to an annual report on air quality released Wednesday by the American Lung Association.

"Continuing drought and heat may have increased dust, grass fires and wildfires" that have hurt the Central Valley's air quality in short-term particle pollution, the report stated. "The impact of climate change is particularly apparent in the

West, where the heat and drought create situations ripe for episodes of high-particle days.”

Read the whole story