

Gondola to link Squaw Valley-Alpine Meadows

By Kathryn Reed

After years of talking about linking Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows, the talk is over and the doing is about to begin.

Plans are expected to be submitted to the U.S. Forest Service and Placer County this summer. It's too soon to predict construction and completion dates.

"There are currently no plans being contemplated to allow skiing or other non-skiing activities along the lift route or on the White Wolf terrain. The existing ski areas of Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows will not be affected by gondola construction," Michael Radlick, spokesman for the ski resorts, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

It will likely take $13\frac{1}{2}$ minutes to travel the two miles in what will be eight-person cars. Up to 1,400 skiers will be able to be transported per hour. It's anticipated this will be for winter use only.



This shows the route

of the gondola.
Graphic/Provided

The gondola will connect the base of the two resorts via a detachable gondola that will go over KT-22 peak. Officials said the goal is to minimize the footprint and scenic impacts to the nearby Granite Chief Wilderness Area.

KSL Capital Partners bought Squaw in November 2010. JMA Ventures bought Alpine in 2007. Squaw Valley Ski Holdings Inc. was created in September 2011 to operate both resorts.

It was announced today that Squaw Valley Ski Holdings reached an agreement with the owner of the private land located between Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows to build the gondola.

“The base-to-base gondola will offer our guests the ability to easily explore and experience the unique attributes of these two mountains via a brand new aerial connection, while simultaneously reducing vehicle traffic between them,” Andy Wirth, CEO of Squaw Valley Ski Holdings, said in a statement.

Troy Caldwell owns the private land known as White Wolf.

Bill proposes citizen commission set Nev. officials' pay

By Sandra Chereb, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – Talking about salary and whether you deserve a

raise is uncomfortable, especially if forced to vote in public to increase your take from taxpayers.

Some Nevada lawmakers want to change that with a constitutional amendment creating an appointed citizen commission to evaluate and set salaries for legislators, constitutional officers and judges.

Assembly Joint Resolution 10, which has been approved unanimously by the Assembly Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections, now moves to the Assembly floor.

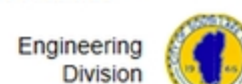
The measure, introduced by Assemblywoman Victoria Dooling, R-Henderson, and four Southern Nevada Republican co-sponsors, also would allow lawmakers to receive a salary for every day worked by repealing a constitutional provision that limits pay to 60 days – only half of the 120-day sessions held every two years.

Read the whole story

Tahoe roadwork to severely impact drive time



CITY OF SOUTH LAKE TAHOE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS 2015 PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY (AS OF 3-31-15)



By Kathryn Reed

Extra time. It's something motorists will need more of this summer because of all the road related work occurring in the Lake Tahoe Basin this summer.

With the weather being unseasonably dry, the work is already beginning. Some of the work is on state highways, other is on municipal streets, bike paths are being put in, utilities changed and water meters installed.

In South Lake Tahoe, nearly all the main thoroughfares will be affected, which means normal shortcuts are not going to save any time.

Southwest Gas starting in mid-May is expected to begin relocating its infrastructure from the Y to Al Tahoe Boulevard. It will then go up Al Tahoe Boulevard to the first entrance for Lake Tahoe Community College. This will take two years.

This needs to be done before Caltrans comes in in 2017. The state will repave that 2-mile stretch, put in curb and gutter. It will essentially look like other areas of town where Caltrans has upgraded the roadway; but it won't have streetlights. The Caltrans job when it starts will take three years to complete.

Lane closures will be the norm all summer.

The other utility project is Liberty Utilities will be putting its lines underground on Pioneer Trail from Golden Bear to the city limits. This mean lane closures on Pioneer Trail.

Compounding that area will be El Dorado County's repaving project on Black Bart, Martin and Barbara avenues.

Then the city will be working on Sierra Boulevard most of the summer, with the start date being early May on the \$4.5 million project. There will be curbs and gutters on the side that drains into the meadow. This is mostly a water quality project that will tie into the Caltrans project that is coming in 2017.

"In Sierra Tract there are not many places in the road to put big storm drain pipes. That is what is supposed to be put in first before the roads, not last," Jim Marino, assistant public works director, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "There will be a lot of detours, road closures and definite impact to that residential area."

The most noticeable and impactful project may be through Camp Richardson. Caltrans will be working on a \$25 million project on Highway 89 from the Y to Cascade Lake. This will take at least two years, if not three.

Trees have already been removed to accommodate 4-foot shoulders in the two-lane area.

The four-lane stretch will see curbs, gutters and sidewalks,

much like the middle of South Lake Tahoe.

While at the end of the day the road is designed to look better, the main thing is improved water quality by putting in drainage features so less sediment is reaching Lake Tahoe.

The contractor is set to begin work today. Significant traffic controls are slated to begin next week. Expect up to 20-minute delays just in this area.

Off-peak season work will be around-the-clock from Sunday at 10pm to Friday at 11am. During peak season it will be Sunday at 9pm to Monday at 7am, and Monday-Friday 7pm-7am.

"There is a proposal that our resident engineer has put forth to work during the day during the season in the four-lane section of town where the motels are," Steve Nelson with Caltrans told *Lake Tahoe News*. "The hotel owners are pushing for us to work during the day because of the disturbance to their guests. It has not been approved yet."

The concern about working during the day is that backups would be more severe.

With all of Caltrans' projects, it may take more than an extra hour to drive from South Lake Tahoe to Tahoe City.

The Vikingsholm to Meeks Bay project should be completed this year. Half of the 7-mile section was finished last year, with the other half on the books for this season.

Meeks Bay to Wilson Road in Tahoma is a separate 2-mile stretch that will take one summer to do.

From Homewood to the Ward Creek area near Sunnyside is another project.

Each Caltrans project could be a 20-minute delay. During peak season the Homewood/Sunnyside and Tahoma jobs will have around-the-clock work during the week.

Bike paths will be built in the county and city. The Sawmill path should be completed this summer. It will then provide a continuous link from Meyers to South Tahoe High School.

In South Lake Tahoe, the path from the site of the old Alta Mira building, at the end of Lakeview Commons, to Ski Run Boulevard will be repaved. It will be a class 1 trail – meaning off the road, and 10 feet of pavement.

The hope is that work will begin mid-summer, but the city still needs to acquire property and/or right-of-way before going out to bid.

Marino, with the city, said the money – mostly grants – is in hand for what could be a \$4 million project for three-quarters of a mile. That figure includes acquisitions and planning, not just building the trail.

Some property owners want compensation and won't just grant an easement because parking spots will be eliminated.

“Being adjacent to the highway there are grade issues and restructuring; acquisition at several those commercial properties is driving up the costs,” Marino said. Water quality improvements will also be part of the bike path.

Work is also continuing on Highway 28 in Kings Beach.

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Notes:

- April 21, 9am South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting will have a presentation about the Sierra Tract project.
- April 23, 6pm at Lake Tahoe Airport there will be a meeting hosted by the city, Caltrans and Southwest Gas to talk about the project along Highway 50.
- Here is Caltrans information.

Open government advocates fend off attacks at Nev. Legislature

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY — Four bills that critics said would hamper public access to government information either failed or were substantially weakened Friday on a Nevada legislative deadline for committee action on measures.

Three measures, one seeking fees for more complicated records searches and two others proposing to close off prison and retirement system records, failed outright.

“Legislators have done a good job of listening to our concerns about vague language and sweeping changes in bills about Nevada’s open-government statutes, although there are still attempts to chip away at the information available to the public,” said Barry Smith, executive director of the Nevada Press Association. “The supporters of these bills often argue they’re trying to cut costs. But in the long run, it’s public scrutiny that saves money.”

Read the whole story

Calif. heat destroys all previous records

By Tom Randall, Bloomberg

The California heat of the past 12 months is like nothing ever seen in records going back to 1895. The 12 months before that were similarly without precedent. And the 12 months before that? A freakishly hot year, too.

What's happening in California right now is shattering modern temperature measurements – as well as tree-ring records that stretch back more than 1,000 years. It's no longer just a record-hot month or a record-hot year that California faces.

It's a stack of broken records leading to the worst drought that's ever beset the Golden State.

Read the whole story

Reid touts Nevada as renewable energy leader

By Andrea Domanick, Las Vegas Sun

U.S. Sen. Harry Reid on Friday praised Nevada's role as a leader in renewable energy business development and called for bipartisan support toward continuing that progress in the future.

Speaking at a clean energy luncheon at the MGM Grand organized

by the Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance, Reid said he was proud of Nevada's role in both developing renewable energy resources and attracting new businesses to the state.

"Las Vegas is becoming known as the best place in America for innovative businesses and renewable energy development," Reid said, listing Tesla, Switch, Google, Apple and solar "hall of famers" SolarCity and SolarReserve among the companies that have chosen to do business in Nevada. "These companies are creating real jobs and putting Nevada on the map as a technology and renewable energy leader."

Read the whole story

Nevadans face longer wait for medical pot

By Eric Hartley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Nevadans might not be able to buy marijuana in legal dispensaries until summer – or later – as a legal tangle continues over pesticide rules.

The delay means continued frustration for patients and lost money for businesses that once hoped to begin selling medical pot in January.

It could be months until workable pesticide limits are in place – and even longer before the first significant marijuana crops are ready.

The problem centers on a Nevada regulation that says marijuana tested in state-licensed labs must meet the "most stringent acceptable standard for an approved pesticide chemical residue

in any food item” under federal rules.

Read the whole story

Toll lanes would fund Tahoe projects in Nev.

By Associated Press

CARSON CITY – Nevada lawmakers are reviewing a bill allowing for separate toll lanes to be built on Interstate 11.

Republican Assemblyman Jim Wheeler presented AB 450 on Thursday to the Assembly Transportation Committee.

Wheeler said the bill would allow partnerships between public and private organizations to build toll lanes on I-11 to alleviate traffic and raise money for other transportation projects. He said money raised from the tolls would help fund a separate project helping to rebuild highways on the Nevada side of Lake Tahoe.

Wheeler said the bill wasn't intended to limit lanes on I-11 but to create separate so-called “hot lanes” on the interstate usable through a fee.

The proposed interstate would connect Las Vegas and Phoenix and would eventually create an interstate linking the U.S. to Canada and Mexico.

Solar industry squares off with Warren Buffett, NV Energy

By Kyle Roerink, Las Vegas Sun

One of Warren Buffett's senior vice presidents at Berkshire Hathaway Energy – NV Energy's parent company – warned of the dangers of rooftop solar at an energy conference in July. His message was clear: Rooftop solar programs cut into utility profits.

Nine months later, Nevada's burgeoning rooftop solar industry, 6,000 jobs and carbon-free energy production are facing a roadblock.

The impasse is part of a nationwide battle between solar and power companies that's been fought in public utility commissions, legislatures and courtrooms. In Nevada, there is a debate about utility rates for residential solar producers, pushes for new legislation and questions about the expansion of an industry into territory traditionally dominated by what the solar industry calls NV Energy's regulated monopoly.

At stake is the small share of the utility marketplace that the rooftop solar industry has won thanks to a policy known as net metering.

Read the whole story

Reno wants to be Silicon Valley's back office

By James Nash, Bloomberg

Reno, Nevada, a town that built an economy on quickie divorces, is mapping out the second act of its American life.

Faded casinos are being reborn as condominium towers. Discarded cardboard and wood – even junked cars – are being fashioned into gigantic pieces of art for the annual Burning Man festival in the nearby desert. The mayor governs the city of 233,000 with the aid of a kidney donated by her sister.

Few cities needed a second chance as much as Reno. By January 2011 unemployment was 13.9 percent, and two-thirds of homes sold that year were short sales or foreclosures. The malaise contained the seeds of the rebirth: The newly unemployed snapped up dirt-cheap real estate, spawning an artist-entrepreneur economy.

“A lot of people like us lost their jobs and started asking, ‘Now what the hell am I going to do?,’” said Eric Raydon. His answer was to go into business with two brothers buying and rebuilding properties in a gentrifying area known as Midtown. “We saw opportunities here.”

As downtowns across the U.S. revive, Reno is among cities that have a tougher task to reinvent themselves. Detroit, the largest U.S. city to go bankrupt, is repopulating downtown towers with companies such as Quicken Loans Inc., which moved from the suburbs in 2010. Atlantic City, N.J., battered by Superstorm Sandy and the closure of several of its casinos, wants to diversify beyond gambling and rebrand itself as a university community.

Reno is rebounding. Unemployment dropped by 1.5 percentage

points in February from a year earlier, to 7 percent, according to U.S. Labor Department data. Nationally, joblessness fell by 1.2 percentage points in the period, to 5.8 percent. City sales-tax receipts are projected to rise 7.9 percent in 2015 toward the 2008 peak.

Read the whole story