Vacation rental fraud in Incline, Truckee

An Incline Village homeowner is reporting more than $75,000 in damage and stolen goods from a vacation renter.

Washoe County sheriff's deputies said the home had been rented for a number of days by a couple using a fraudulent credit card issued by a foreign country. When the rental company returned to the home on Friday afternoon, they discovered major damage to the residence as well as the theft of thousands of dollars worth of electronics and other valuables.

The rental company also reported that another expensive home in Truckee had been rented by a couple using a credit card from the same country.

On March 7 at about 11am, Truckee police officers went to the residence located in the 12000 block of Rainbow Road. The occupants in the residence refused to come out of the house for approximately one hour.

When the man finally exited the house he refused to speak to officers and refused to identify himself. He has been identified as Alexander Silviera, 29.

Inside the house was Haylay Brown, 21, of Oregon. Officers said she was also under the influence of heroin.

Both have been charged with possessing stolen property, theft, providing false identification to a peace officer, and being under the influence of heroin. More charges are pending in Washoe County.

Officers recovered approximately $3,500 in stolen property that was returned to the owner.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Feds sue Calif. over laws protecting immigrants

By Evan Halper, Los Angeles Times

The Trump administration, seeking to force a defiant California to cooperate with its agenda of stepped-up immigrant deportations, went to federal court Tuesday to invalidate three state laws – the administration's most direct challenge yet to the state's policies.

Administration officials say the three laws in question, all passed by the Legislature last year, blatantly obstruct federal immigration law and thus violate the Constitution's supremacy clause, which gives federal law precedence over state enactments.

The laws make it a crime for business owners to voluntarily help federal agents find and detain undocumented workers, prohibit local law enforcement from alerting immigration agents when detainees are released from custody, and create a state inspection program for federal immigration detention centers.

Read the whole story

Study: Snowpack drops over decades

By Gillian Flaccus, AP

PORTLAND — Scientists have found dramatically declining snowpack across the American West over the past six decades that will likely cause water shortages in the region that cannot be managed by building new reservoirs, according to a study published last week.

The study led by scientists from Oregon State University and the UCLA found drops in snow measurements at more than 90 percent of regional snow monitoring sites that have consistently tracked snow levels since 1955, said Philip Mote, director of the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute at Oregon State University.

Study authors also used modeling to show the average snowpack in the region dropped between 15 and 30 percent in a little more than a century, he said, and that modeling paralleled the actual findings based on existing measurements.

Read the whole story

EDC reschedules VHR meeting in Tahoe

The El Dorado County Board of Supervisors has rescheduled the special vacation home rental meeting for March 24.

It will be from 1-3pm in the multipurpose room at South Tahoe

Middle School.

Last week’s planned meeting had to be canceled because of weather and the meeting last month was shutdown because of overcrowding.

New Calif. drought regulations cause an uproar

By Tara Lohan, Water Deeply

Last month, California’s State Water Resources Control Board postponed a decision on the adoption of new statewide regulations meant to curb wasteful water practices. The regulations would make permanent some rules California enacted temporarily during the recent drought, which ended last year.

After several public comment periods this winter, water board staff tweaked the regulations to address concerns and recommendations from water users and other groups, but the postponement came after a large number of water agencies claimed the regulations are a violation of water rights.

“We believe using waste and unreasonable use as the tool to reach these conservation objectives is problematic and inconsistent with the law,” read a comment letter to the board signed by dozens of water agencies. “The regulation is defective because it has the effect – if not the purpose – of diminishing water rights by legislative means, without any process whatsoever.”

Read the whole story

Snow covered mailboxes a problem for carriers

Postal carriers in and around the Lake Tahoe area are having a hard time delivering mail because they can’t reach mailboxes.

Carriers were unable to deliver to approximately 500 addresses in the last week because side streets were impassable or mailboxes were inaccessible in Truckee, Incline Village, Crystal Village and South Lake Tahoe.

The U.S. Postal Service offers this advice:

- If you receive delivery of mail to a rural-type post mailbox, clear around the box to allow your carrier to drive up to the box, deposit mail and drive away.
- If your delivery is at a cluster box, work with your neighbors to clear around the front of the box and the back of the box where the carrier accesses the box to load.
- If your mail is delivered at your residence or business, keep the path to your mailbox or slot clear of snow and ice.

Nev. panel keeps barrier

between gaming, pot

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Review-Journal

If state gaming regulators follow the lead of Gov. Brian Sandoval's 12-member Gaming Policy Committee, the gaming industry and Nevada's new marijuana distributors will never share a business relationship.

The only time their paths may cross will be when marijuana companies stage conferences at resort convention centers and exhibition halls to bring business people together to talk shop. But the companies will be prohibited from bringing products to those exhibitions.

No marijuana smoking lounges at resort properties; no landlord-tenant relationships for the sale, cultivation or distribution of marijuana; no financing deals benefiting either a gaming company or a pot provider.

Read the whole story

Mayor blows it with special closed session meeting

By Kathryn Reed

The South Lake Tahoe City Council on Tuesday again demonstrated its dysfunction.

Mayor Wendy David on Monday scheduled a special closed session meeting for March 6 at 5pm.

Only the mayor or a majority of the council may schedule such a meeting. David admitted she called the meeting. She did not elaborate.

The agenda said pending litigation. It's not known what suddenly became so urgent; not even all the other council members knew.

"I'm uncomfortable with the special meeting coming up at 5 o'clock that was agendized yesterday," Councilwoman Brooke Laine said Tuesday before the council was supposed to go into closed session for other reasons. Because she believed that special closed session was not agendized correctly she said she would not be attending that meeting.

Councilman Tom Davis as well acknowledged he had concerns about having this scheduled meeting.

Interim City Attorney Nira Doherty admitted it was not agendized correctly. Government Code mandates such notices be published on the governing body's website, Doherty said. That didn't happen. It was the city clerk's job to make that happen.

The city routinely sends out meeting notices electronically. *Lake Tahoe News* never received the notice about the meeting in question. This begs the question about transparency, with the mayor seeming to be the leader of city secrets.

David said the meeting would be rescheduled. When is unknown. Same with why it is even warranted. Same with why the media isn't being notified of all meetings.

Nevada continues to deny public records requests

By Michael Scott Davidson, Las Vegas Review-Journal

The state of Nevada refuses to divulge how much it has paid former employees for their unused sick and vacation leave.

Since October, the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* has sought comprehensive information documenting how much money individual employees received when they retired, resigned or were fired. The request, if fulfilled in its entirety, would encompass employees spanning from department executives to rank-and-file workers such as DMV clerks.

The *Review-Journal* is seeking the records to better understand which former public employees financially benefit the most from policies that allow them to accrue and then collect hundreds of hours of unused time off.

Read the whole story

Kerry resigns as S. Lake Tahoe city manager

By Kathryn Reed

It's official – Nancy Kerry is no longer city manager of South Lake Tahoe.

"We've accepted the resignation of Nancy Kerry effective immediately," Mayor Wendy David said after emerging from about

a 30-minute closed session meeting on March 6 at 6:05pm.



Nancy Kerry

Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*, “I’ve really enjoyed the 10 gratifying years in the city tackling unique and complex issues. I’m really proud of what we accomplished as a team.”

Asked why she resigned, Kerry would only say, “With all due respect, I am committed to leaving the city on the highest road possible. The city and I came to a respectful agreement.”

It was a somber mood in council chambers when it was opened to the public. Council members Tom Davis and Jason Collin ducked out of the meeting via the side door, not staying for the announcement.

No one would talk to *Lake Tahoe News*, the only media outlet who was there for the announcement, so it is not known what the vote was – unanimous or divided.

David and acting City Manager Jeff Meston retired to his office at City Hall. He retains that title. It will be up to the council to decide how to go forward with replacing Kerry on a permanent basis.

Kerry’s departure has been clouded in speculation for more than a month. It started with the illegal hiring last fall of someone to study the culture of the city, which turned into an illegal review of Kerry.

Then she was placed on leave a month ago. On Tuesday it all came to an end. Still, though, the public is left wondering

what really happened.

The settlement calls for Kerry to receive her nine month's severance ($176,321) which her contract stipulated if she were let go without cause. She is also owed 339 hours of vacation leave and 520 hours of sick leave.

Had Kerry truly left on her own volition, this payment would never have occurred. Had there been actual cause for the separation in employment, Kerry would not have received any of this money either.

In some ways, the taxpayers are getting off cheap because Kerry could have sued the city on several allegations. Just the protracted litigation would have been costly.

The settlement states that Kerry cannot file "any claim against [the] city based on, or related to acts or events taking place on or before the effective date of this agreement. Employee understand that by making the above waivers and releases she has forever surrendered every claim, complaint, allegation of misconduct or cause of action of any kind or nature, whether known or unknown, suspected or unsuspected, at the time of the effective date of this agreement."

The council as a whole and individually are the city manager's boss. That means the city manager is covered by labor laws like any other employee. So if one of the councilmen called a city manager "mommy" or made comments about clothes, weight or other appearance issues, the city manager would be able to sue for harassment or hostile work environment at a minimum.

Those accusations told to this reporter by community members/city staff will now not see the light of day and the people responsible not held accountable.