

Caution urged because of avian bird influenza

Nevada Department of Agriculture officials are recommending bird owners in Nevada adopt extra healthy hygiene practices after avian bird influenza was found in Oregon and Washington.

While health risks to humans are low, the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is warning people to avoid contact with sick or dead poultry or wildlife.

Nevada State Veterinarian Michael Greenlee said the highly pathogenic H5 avian influenza virus has been found in birds in various parts of the world but has not been shown to cause any human infection.

If contact occurs, wash hands with soap and water, and change clothing before having any contact with healthy domestic poultry and birds.

Poultry and poultry products, including wild game birds, are safe to eat as long as proper handling and cooking guidelines are followed, Greenlee said.

Call USDA at 866.536.7593 if there is concern about sick or dying birds.

2 SnowGlobers found unconscious at Hard Rock



The low tonight at the SnowGlobe music festival is expected to be 1 degree. Photo Copyright 2014 Carolyn E. Wright

By Kathryn Reed

Two SnowGlobe attendees were found unconscious and suffering from hypothermia Tuesday night near a dumpster at Lake Tahoe Hard Rock.

"The security at Hard Rock did a great job knowing what was going on around the property. They found her by a dumpster and the kid had crawled up on one of the vehicles. Both were unconscious when they were found," Eric Guevin, spokesman for Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "They are very lucky to be alive. If they had not been found, for certain they would be demised."

He said they had been imbibing alcohol, drugs or both. They were taken to Barton Memorial Hospital.

Temperatures were in the teens most of Dec. 30, dropping below zero with the wind chill.

Guevin said when the two were revived they told paramedics

they had been at SnowGlobe, the three-day music festival at the ball fields adjacent to Lake Tahoe Community College in South Lake Tahoe. They also had the wristband all concertgoers must wear and were dressed as though they had been there, Guevin added.

They were found about 9pm.

(Earlier in the evening a Hard Rock security officer was taken to Barton for a non-work related medical emergency.)

Two years ago 19-year-old Alyssa Byrne of Petaluma died of hypothermia after leaving SnowGlobe. Her body was found in a snowbank off Pioneer Trail near Al Tahoe Boulevard.

Members of her family are at this year's three-day concert, which ends tonight. They are promoting the Always Buddy Program. The slogan is: "I promise to never let myself or anyone I love leave an unfamiliar place without a buddy system."

Guevin also stressed the importance of friends staying together and letting people know when you will be returning so if you are overdue, authorities can be notified.

South Lake Tahoe Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News* there have been minor violations involving drugs and alcohol at the concert, but nothing significant.

Concert promoters went from a staff of 70 security officers to more than 100 this year. Part of the reason is to be better prepared for any situation, but also because more people are attending. The first year about 9,000 people showed up each night, while this year the projection was for 15,000 attendees each of the three nights.

The city received two noise complaints the first night and four the next. The loud thumping of the bass is the problem.

One person near the venue told *Lake Tahoe News*, "The sustained

noise/bass just wears on you. If I had this noise issue with a neighbor, I could contact the police and have the noise level reduced.”

South Lake Tahoe City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News* the decibel level is within the range of what the contract calls for.

Lack of snow has the sound traveling farther and the wind also carries it.

The city has made a concerted effort to make sure people are dressing appropriately. In years past lots of flesh could be seen, while this year people are more bundled up to handle the bitter cold. Lodging properties have been diligently telling concertgoers to dress for the elements.

“Start warm, stay warm” is the message on electronic signs that have been strategically placed in town.

This year’s event is over at 1am Jan. 1, with fireworks being the finale.

2 people hurt in crash on West Shore



A person is airlifted to Renown Medical Center on Dec. 31. Photo/Dave Zaski

Two people were injured Wednesday morning in a single-vehicle accident on the West Shore.

Icy roads are an issue at different areas of the basin, especially where it is shady. The Dec. 31 accident occurred on Highway 89 near Michael Street.

CareFlight landed at Tahoe City Golf Course to transport one person to Renown Medical Center in Reno, while the other victim was taken to Tahoe Forest Hospital.

Names of the injured have not been released.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Nevadans not known for their volunteerism

By Associated Press

A report shows Nevada ranks near the bottom for volunteer service in the nation.

The report from the Corporation for National and Community Service, released last week, ranks Nevada's volunteer rate 49th among the 50 states and Washington, D.C.

It shows that 20.3 percent of Nevada residents volunteered in 2013 compared with the national average of 25.4 percent.

Nevada only ranks ahead of New York and Louisiana.

For the ninth straight year, Utah topped the list as 44.6 percent of its residents volunteered in 2013.

Las Vegas ranks 47th among 51 large cities at 18.9 percent, while Reno ranks 67th among 75 mid-size cities at 21.6 percent.

The report is based on information from a monthly survey of 60,000 households done by the U.S. Census Bureau.

CHP struggles to recruit minority officers

By Jon Ortiz, Sacramento Bee

Glancing at the 458 candidates who recently showed up for the California Highway Patrol's applicant screening on a recent blustery morning, one wouldn't think the department has a diversity problem.

The group that had gathered in the gym at the CHP's West Sacramento academy came from the Sacramento region and

mirrored its multi-hued ethnic palette. Brown and black. Yellow and white. No color stood out.

Yet if the history holds true, the tiny fraction of hopefuls who pass that physical fitness testing, survive a background check and manage to graduate from the CHP's academy a year or so from now will swear an oath to take a job that pays \$6,225 to \$7,720 per month to start. Most of the graduates will be white.

While the CHP is trying to make inroads, it remains far less diverse than the state it patrols. Nearly 7 in 10 officers are white, compared to 4 in 10 Californians.

Read the whole story

Caltrans driver rescues missing man in Truckee

Robert Fish, a seasonal Caltrans equipment operator working out of Truckee, was plowing Interstate 80 on Christmas about 9pm when he noticed a man trying to wave down traffic near the eastbound Hirschdale Road off-ramp.



Robert Fish

James Mengel, 77, of Citrus Heights said he had been involved

in a hit-and-run accident and his truck would not run. Fish noticed Mengel's speech was very quiet and that he seemed disoriented. Fish recognized this as possible signs of Alzheimer's, which he was familiar with after caring for his step-father who had the disease.

Fish had Mengel get in his snowplow to warm up because he wasn't wearing a jacket.

After a CHP officer arrived, it was determined that Mengel had been reported missing out of the Sacramento area and that a Silver Alert, used by the CHP for an unexplained or suspicious disappearance of an older person, had been issued for him more than a day earlier.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Gas prices to rise in Calif. in 2015

By Josh Richman, San Jose Mercury News

After months of seeing gas prices sink ever lower, Californians will ring in 2015 by paying more at the pump as a result of the state's landmark greenhouse-gas emissions law.

But how much more we'll pay, and whether it's worth it, remains bitterly debated among oil companies, some state lawmakers and environmentalists.

Starting Thursday, gasoline and diesel producers will be subject to the state's cap-and-trade system, forcing them

either to supply lower-carbon fuels – which are more expensive to produce – or to buy pollution permits for the greenhouse gases created when the fuel is burned. In the short term, at least, that will mean higher prices at the pump.

Opposition groups backed by the oil industry have claimed prices will rise 16 to 76 cents per gallon, although that's admittedly based on an underlying price of about \$4 per gallon – far higher than recent prices. A UC Berkeley energy and economics expert says the increase will be more like 9 or 10 cents per gallon, which supporters say isn't so high a price to pay for the environmental good it will do.

Read the whole story

South Shore gaming numbers down in Nov.

It depends on what end of the lake you are on if the gaming revenue numbers are good or bad news.

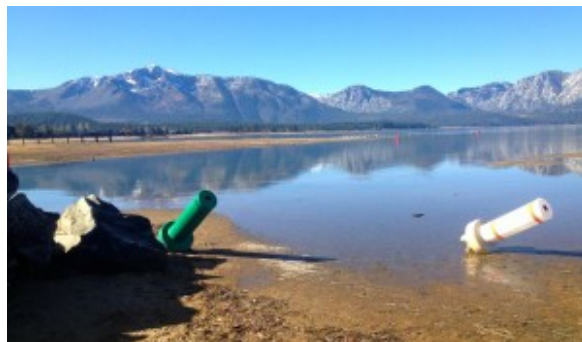
On the South Shore the win was down 30.36 percent for November compared to 2013, while on the North Shore there was a gain of 22.14 percent.

The Nevada Gaming Control Board released the figures Dec. 30.

Statewide the numbers were flat, with a slight increase of 0.04 percent for a take of \$876.3 million.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Boat channel at Keys narrowing as lake drops



Navigational buoys at the
mouth of the Tahoe Keys main
channel on Nov. 25.
Photo/LTN

Getting boats in and out of the Tahoe Keys is not getting any better as winter progresses.

Buoys for navigation and speed limits at the main channel are sitting to the side, in muck because the water level is so low.

If the lake level rises – especially in any significant way, it won't be until the spring from runoff.

It remains to be seen if boaters who use the South Lake Tahoe waterway will get any help in regards to dredging. The marina owners are responsible for the main channel and the homeowners for the other inlet.

“(Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association) has a permit from

Lahontan to dredge the homeowner's channel in the lake. We have recently heard from their consultant that they will be submitting a request to amend the permit. We do not have anything in writing regarding this request to amend the permit," Lauri Kemper, assistant executive officer with Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We do not have a complete application from the Tahoe Keys Marina for dredging."

The U.S. Coast Guard station in Tahoe City said it would not issue a hazardous navigation warning because the marina is privately owned.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Sierra snowpack at 33% of average



Shasta Lake is well below normal for this time of year. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Even though the snowpack was increasing as it was being measured Tuesday morning near the entrance of Sierra-at-Tahoe,

it will need to keep falling the rest of the winter to significantly ease the impact of California's drought.

The Dec. 30 reading was the first manual measurement of the season. Frank Gehrke with the Department of Water Resources found 21.3 inches of snow at Phillips Station, with a water equivalency of 4 inches. This is 33 percent of average.

Even so, it's an improvement over last year at this time when the measurement was at a record low of 20 percent of average, which was the same reading in 2012.

Water content at this location is normally 12 inches for this time of year.

Phillips had its lowest early-January water content reading of 0.1 inch in 2012, in a snow depth of 0.6 inches. On Jan. 3, 2014, Phillips had 2.3 inches of water content in 9.3 inches of snow. Besides that reading and the similar one in 2012, the driest January readings at Phillips were in 1987 (0.9 inches of snowpack water content), 1981 (2 inches), 1976 (2.7 inches) and 2000 (3 inches). Records at Phillips go back 50 years.

"Although this year's survey shows a deeper snowpack than last year, California needs much more rain and snow than we've experienced over the past two years to end the drought in 2015," Mark Cowin, director of the Department of Water Resources, said in a statement.

If the snow doesn't come, this would be the fourth consecutive drought year.

While December rains in much of the state have been above normal, the snowfall has not kept pace. And on the South Shore there has been even less compared to the North Shore-Truckee region or even Kirkwood. Part of the problem is the storms, until now, have been relatively warm.

Without a large accumulation of snowpack, the reservoirs

downstream are apt to remain low. The Sierra snowpack supplies about one-third of the water needed by residents, agriculture and industry.

Lake Oroville in Butte County, the State Water Project's principal reservoir, is at 38 percent of its 3.5 million acre-foot capacity (61 percent of its historical average for the date), while Shasta Lake north of Redding, California's and the federal Central Valley Project's largest reservoir, is at 41 percent of its 4.5 million acre-feet capacity (66 percent of average for the date).