

Plane crash kills 2 in Amador County

By Associated Press

Two people are dead after a small plane crashed not far from an airport in the Sierra Nevada foothills.

Amador County Undersheriff James Wegner told the *Sacramento Bee* that a call was received shortly after noon Dec. 24 about a plane crash near Sutter Creek.

Deputies and fire crews found a single-engine plane with two victims at the scene. Their names were not immediately released pending notification of family.

Wegner said the crash was not far from Westover Field.

FAA spokesman Ian Gregor said preliminary information indicated a Cessna 172 went down along Shake Ridge Road.

Calif. DMV prepares for undocumented residents

By Nathan Rott, NPR

California residents who are living without documentation soon will be eligible to apply for driver's licenses, thanks to a new law that takes effect in the new year.

The state's Department of Motor Vehicles is expecting 1.6 million immigrants to apply in the first few years, and law enforcement, community groups and others are preparing for the

surge.

They're driving all over the state – in California's cities, in rural areas, commuting to work and school or just traveling. Like most people do – only in the shadows.

California isn't the first state to have this kind of law – Connecticut is implementing a similar one now, and a handful of other states already allow undocumented immigrants to apply for driver's licenses or card equivalents – but it's certainly the biggest. The expectation of 1.6 million new applicants has spurred the state's DMV to add 800 employees to help with the transition.

Read the whole story

Drones may cloud seed Sierra

By KPIX-TV

California communities suffering from extreme drought could soon get help from an unlikely source – unmanned aerial vehicles, a.k.a. drones.

For years, ground-based machines have injected tiny silver iodide particles into passing storm clouds – a process called cloud seeding. The process can squeeze about 10% more precipitation during a storm.

Meteorologist Jeff Tilley and his team at Nevada's Desert Research Institute in Reno are developing a first-of-its-kind drone to take the seeding process high in the sky.

Read the whole story

S. Tahoe, Truckee eateries robbed at gunpoint

An armed robber made off with an undisclosed sum of money from a KFC in South Lake Tahoe on Monday night, while Mellow Fellow restaurant in Truckee was robbed Dec. 20.

The man entered through the back door of KFC about 11:30pm Dec. 22 after the restaurant in the Ski Run Center had closed. Employees were cleaning up for the night.

The suspect displayed a handgun, began yelling orders at the employees and threatening to shoot them if they did not immediately comply, according to officers. He left through the same door he had entered.

The man had covered all of his skin so little is known about his identity other than he is about 5-feet-8-inches and 130 pounds.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the South Lake Tahoe Police Department at 530.542.6100 or Lake Tahoe Secret Witness at 530.541.6800.

In Truckee, the suspect walked in just after midnight to the Donner Pass Road establishment as bartenders were closing up. He brandished a handgun and left with cash.

That suspect is described as a black male adult, between 30- and 40-years-old, about 5-foot-8, wearing all dark clothing.

Anyone with info is asked to call Detective Lisa Madden at 530.550.2330 or lmadden@townoftruckee.com.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Access road to Martis Valley on path to private hands

By Ben van der Meer, Sacramento Business Journal

Residents of an enclave north of Lake Tahoe are getting their street back, and cutting off a cut-through to a neighboring community in the process.

Early next year, Placer County staff will have a presentation on making two streets: Mill Site Road and Cross Cut Road, private and for resident use only.

In turn, that will allow those property owners in the Retreat at Northstar to close a gate on Mill Site being used by people headed into the neighboring Martis Valley project.

[Read the whole story](#)

Reid's highs and lows as Senate majority leader

By Amber Phillips, Las Vegas Sun

To understand the pinnacle of Sen. Harry Reid's career, let's go back nine years, to Election Day 2006.

Senate Democrats were on the verge of taking control of the Senate for the first time since 2001. Reid, their leader,

watched election results anxiously with close aides and fellow senators from a suite in the Capitol Hill Hyatt. When one of their most endangered candidates, Claire McCaskill, won a hard-fought race in Missouri, Reid jumped off his chair and kissed the TV screen.

“I never thought we could do it,” he told the New York Times when the party cinched the majority.

Nevada’s senior senator would go on to serve for eight years as Senate majority leader. In that role, he decided which bills went to the floor and when, controlled a sometimes fractious party and played a key part in high-level negotiations with two presidents, guiding our nation’s policy on everything from national debt to immigration. All while keeping a watchful eye on his home state.

But now Reid must step aside. After a disastrous midterm election for Democrats, Reid will hand over control of the Senate to Republicans when Congress comes back in January.

Read the whole story

Fallen Leaf Lake enhancing fire fleet

Fallen Leaf Lake will be better equipped next year to deal with any fires that may occur in this South Shore enclave.

A federal grant for \$372,000 will allow the fire department to buy a pumper engine to replace an old engine. It will be in service in 2015.

With \$250,000 from El Dorado County supervisors, the

department is acquiring a fire boat that will be ready next summer.

These two recent grants, along with additional grants of \$103,00 from CalFire, El Dorado County and FEMA over the past three years, brings to a total of \$725,000 applied for and received by the Fallen Leaf Lake Community Services District.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Judge: Concentrated cannabis qualifies as medical pot

By Denny Walsh, Sacramento Bee

A state appellate court in Sacramento has ruled that “concentrated cannabis” qualifies as marijuana for purposes of medical use.

A unanimous three-justice panel of the 3rd District Court of Appeal disagreed this week with an earlier ruling by El Dorado Superior Court Judge James R. Wagoner and reversed the judge’s decision that a medical marijuana patient violated probation by possessing concentrated cannabis.

Sean Patrick Mulcrevy of Cameron Park was charged in 2013 with unlawful possession of concentrated cannabis, a misdemeanor, and was alleged to have violated his probation because of his failure “to obey all laws.”

Wagoner reviewed the existing legal authority indicating that concentrated cannabis is covered by California’s Compassionate

Use Act, or CUA, the 1996 voter initiative approving medical use of marijuana with a doctor's recommendation. But Wagoner rejected the authority as "unsound" and ruled that "the (CUA) does not apply to concentrated cannabis" because the act does not define marijuana, refer to concentrated cannabis or incorporate statutory definitions of either term.

Read the whole story

Caesars Entertainment to buy affiliate

By Associated Press

NEW YORK — Caesars Entertainment, parent company of Harrah's Lake Tahoe and Harveys at Stateline, will buy an affiliate as it tries to smooth the reorganization of a struggling division and balance its debt load.

The Las Vegas company will take Caesar's Acquisition in an all-stock deal, giving its shareholders an approximately 62 percent in the combined company.

Shares jumped 24 percent heavy trading before the opening bell Monday.

Chairman and CEO Gary Loveman says the maneuver will result in a simpler and more straightforward corporate structure.

Caesars Entertainment Operating Co. received a default notice earlier this month, although it disagreed that a default had occurred. Last month, Caesars said it was in discussions with

its creditors to lower its \$24.2 billion in debt.

Caesar's Entertainment Operating Co. will file for bankruptcy as part of the deal announced Monday.

The new company will have \$1.7 billion in cash and operate its casinos in addition properties like Planet Hollywood and online gambling.

Shares of Caesars Entertainment Operating Co. rose \$3.21 to \$16.70 in premarket trading.

Pot to be focal point of Nev. Legislature

By Ray Hagar, Reno Gazette-Journal

Even though the growing and selling of medical marijuana was approved by the 2013 Legislature, the cannabis plant will remain a point of contention and debate at the 2015 Nevada Legislature, lawmakers said.

"I personally think it will (be a big issue)," said state Sen Richard "Tick" Segerblom, D-Las Vegas. "The press will cover it because it is a sexy issue. But the fact is, there are a lot of things we need to do about it."

Lawmakers are expected to debate legalizing recreational use of marijuana and propose a study on the issues surrounding DUIs, employment drug testing and how it relates to Nevada's medical marijuana law.

Another bill will seek the legalization of hemp, a cannabis plant that only has traces of the ingredient that gets you

high. But hemp takes about half the water needed to grow a rural Nevada favorite – alfalfa – and can be used in various ways such as clothing, oils, carpeting, auto parts, ropes and biofuels.

Another bill would allow the transfer of medical marijuana licenses to be transferred between people. Now, if the licensee dies or the license is revoked, the license goes back to the state.

Read the whole story