Snowboarder dies at Squaw Valley

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

Searchers on Friday found the body of a missing snowboarder at Squaw Valley.

Officials from Squaw Valley said searchers from Placer County Sheriff’s Office, Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue, and Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows found the body of the 42-year-old man at 10:10am March 2.

Read the whole story

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3 feet of snow at resorts; schools closed in Tahoe



Snowcat drivers at Kirkwood are working to

get the resort open. Photo/Provided

Updated 9:16am:

With more than a foot of snow being dumped at lake level overnight, it’s a snow day for schools.

Closed on March 2 are: Lake Tahoe Unified School District, Douglas County School District, Lake Tahoe Community College, Incline Village Schools and Tahoe Truckee Unified School District.

UNR classes are going as scheduled.

Nevada state offices are closed. TRPA is closed.

Court is in session in El Dorado County.

For current road conditions, click on the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News*.

Highway 50 over Echo Summit on Friday morning was closed because a Caltrans plow went over an embankment. The driver suffered moderate injuries.

Truckee officers are reporting multiple accidents, with wait times for tow trucks increasing.

A winter storm warning remains in effect for the Tahoe basin through 10am March 2. Snow is in the forecast through Saturday. Expect to see the sun on Sunday.

South Lake Tahoe firefighters overnight responded to multiple locations with trees down at Paradise/Wildwood and Armstrong. Trees fell onto power lines and structures.

Ski resorts are having to dig out, plus wind continues to be factor. Check with the individual resorts before making the trek to know what is open. As of 7am March 2 the 24-hour storm totals are: 36 inches at Kirkwood, 22 inches at Sierra-at-

Tahoe, and 32 inches at Squaw Valley.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

EDC works to curtail Tahoe residential traffic jams

By Kathryn Reed

Starting Sunday El Dorado County will be implementing a traffic diversion strategy with the goal of keeping non-residents on main streets as they head home instead of clogging the side roads.

About 70 people turned out for the Feb. 28 meeting in Meyers hosted by various officials from the county. Transportation, law enforcement and legal staff, along with Supervisor Sue Novasel were on hand to listen to concerns and explain what the future holds.

"We are trying to influence driving patterns," Rafael Martinez, El Dorado County transportation director, told *Lake Tahoe News.*

Barriers will be placed on Lake Tahoe Boulevard at Sawmill Road with signs on them directing people to turn so they end up back on Highway 50. This is to keep them out of the North Upper Truckee neighborhood.

People like to take the route through the neighborhood because it comes out west of the chain inspection and can be faster.

The problem, though, is those without chains or four-wheel drive are spinning out. Accidents are the norm. Add the

increase in vehicles and at times it’s like a parking lot with locals unable to get to where they need to go in a reasonable amount of time.

Martinez says the situation has gotten worse because more people are coming to the Tahoe basin and the advent of phone apps directing motorists around the highway congestion.

He said the county has tried to work with the app developers, but have gotten nowhere. Their stance is that it’s a public road so the public has a right to use it.

The barricade/sign approach is considered a pilot program. The plastic looking devices that are actually made out of wood and metal will be erected starting March 4 at 9am, and will remain up for about 24 hours. They will be out every Sunday for the rest of the winter season, and then on the Monday of Memorial Day weekend.

Between feedback from residents and staff that regularly works those hours (like snowplow drivers), the county will assess if the barricades are working, if something needs to be tweaked or if the program is scrapped.

Summer also brings the unwanted congestion to residential areas, so if this works, the county could continue it. There is also the possibility of trying something similar on Pioneer Trail because visitors are taking side streets there as well with often unpleasant outcomes for all involved.

Martinez said in other places he’s worked this method of influencing traffic has reduced the problem by 60 percent.

There isn’t anything to stop people from going around the barricade. This is good for locals needing to come and go. But it also means other drivers could do the same. Still, Martinez is confident this will improve the current situation.

Just closing roads is not an option because they are public

streets.

Study: Pedestrian deaths rose in states where pot is legal

By Neal E. Boudette, New York Times

Pedestrian deaths in traffic accidents have reached levels not seen in years, and a safety group has sought to explain why. It has identified several possible causes, like digital distractions and an increase in driving. Now it has added another: marijuana.

Over the first six months of 2017, pedestrian fatalities rose sharply from a year earlier in states that had legalized recreational marijuana, according to the Governors Highway Safety Association. In the rest of the country, such deaths declined.

“We are not making a definitive, cause-and-effect link to marijuana,” said Richard Retting, a traffic safety engineer at Sam Schwartz Consulting who was the author of the study. The data “is a marker for concern,” he added. “It may be a canary in a coal mine, an early indicator to address.”

Read the whole story

Californians struggling to pay rising water rates

By Alastair Bland, Water Deeply

California has been blessed with the distinction of being home to some of the richest and the poorest income-earning Americans, according to a 2015 report by the Social Science Research Council. This stark division of wealth between the extravagantly rich and the destitute is displayed vividly in how the state's residents consume water. On the one hand, some estate owners have been publicly shamed for watering their lawns during extreme drought with thousands of gallons per day – sometimes five or 10 times the average household rate. While other Californians live in communities where there isn't enough water or the water isn't safe to drink.

But it's not just access to water that's a problem, it's also the cost. Many California residents, in both small towns and big cities, are struggling to keep up with the rising price of water. The State Water Resources Control Board has been tasked with coming up with a plan to tackle affordability, but it's been slow going.

Read the whole story

Olympian Wise to return to Reno on Friday

By Reno Gazette-Journal

David Wise is finally back in his hometown Friday, and

everyone’s invited.

The 27-year-old Wooster High alum won his second Olympic gold medal last week during the PyeongChang Olympic Games.

Wise is expected to land at the Reno-Tahoe International Airport about 7pm March 2.

Read the whole story

Work on Hwy. 89 project in Tahoe City continuing



What the Y roundabout in Tahoe City could look like.

Work is expected to resume this month on the Highway 89/Fanny Bridge project in Tahoe City.

If the weather cooperates, concrete for the bridge abutments will be poured. The new Truckee River Bridge is located just east of the Caltrans maintenance yard along Highway 89 heading into Tahoe City from Truckee.

The trout sculpture created by John Betts will soon be

dismantled. A site has not been selected to relocate it in the project area.

The entire project is scheduled to be completed by late fall this year.

Calif. fire officials request $100M to fix mutual-aid system



South Lake Tahoe Fire Chief Jeff Meston testifying Feb. 27 in Sacramento before legislators. Photo/Provided

By Melody Gutierrez, San Francisco Chronicle

SACRAMENTO — California fire officials asked lawmakers Tuesday for $100 million to improve the state's strained mutual-aid system, which is designed to quickly rally first responders in an emergency, such as the deadly fires that ravaged the North Bay last year.

At a legislative hearing in Sacramento, fire chiefs and emergency officials said wildfires across the state last year exposed shortcomings in the 60-year-old system.

“The system is a little too slow to react sometimes, and you are really starting to see it in these instances where a fire is moving so fast that you can’t keep up,” said Santa Rosa Fire Chief Tony Gossner, who battled one of the quickest moving and most destructive fires last year, the Tubbs Fire. “The system worked great in the ’50s, ’60s and ’70s. In today’s world, the last three or four years have shown it is too slow.”

Read the whole story

Storm cancels classes, meetings throughout Tahoe

Updated 2:27pm:

Lake Tahoe Unified, Tahoe Truckee Unified, Incline Village schools, Lake Tahoe Community College and Sierra Nevada College are closed today because of the blizzard warning issued by the National Weather Service in Reno.

For Douglas County schools at the lake, students on will be picked up at the main bus stops on March 1.

The California Tahoe Conservancy has canceled its Thursday meeting, the Waste Management JPA meeting on March 2 on the South Shore is canceled, and the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors meeting on vacation home rentals set for March 3 is canceled. The March 1 board of directors meeting of Tahoe

Paradise Recreation and Park District has been moved to March 8.

The retro film night on March 1 at Incline Village General Improvement District has been canceled.

The March 2 blood drive at the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center has been rescheduled for March 10.

The NWS has also issued an avalanche warning for the backcountry.

The blizzard warning is in effect through 4am March 2. The lake could see 1 to 3 feet of snow, with 2 to 5 feet above 7,000 feet.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Sandoval: ‘We can’t have students living in fear’

By Siobhan McAndrew, Reno Gazette-Journal

Gov. Brian Sandoval said he will bring together school superintendents across the state to talk about safety.

His announcement Tuesday comes after]Sandoval was at a meeting with the National Governors Association and President Trump on Monday.

He told the group that the issue of the day is school safety and public safety, and shared that he was the parent of a middle school student where there was a recent rumor of a

school threat.

Read the whole story