

Caesars says default notice 'meritless'

By Associated Press

NEW YORK — Caesars Entertainment Corp., which is in the midst of trying to cut its debt, disclosed Monday that it received a default notice from one of its banks. But the casino operator said the notice was “meritless.”

In a Securities and Exchange Commission filing, Caesars said that it received a default notice Friday from UMB Bank related to its senior secured notes. The default notice was for its operating unit Caesars Entertainment Operating Co., which said it “does not believe that a default or an event of default has occurred.”

UMB did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Last month, Las Vegas-based Caesars said it was in discussions with its creditors in order to lower its \$24.2 billion of debt. The company has been trying to restructure its finances.

The company owns the Caesars, Harrah's, and Horseshoe brands.

South Tahoe unloading parking kiosks

South Lake Tahoe is trying to get rid of the 33 kiosks it purchased for the parking program that no longer exists.

Three of the apparatuses will go to the local K-9 association.

The organization plans to put them by the dog agility course in Bijou Community Park as a way to solicit donations. They will not be parking meters per se.

Tahoe Transportation District has expressed interest in possibly obtaining 20 of the kiosks. Those negotiations are on-going.

“A number of ideas have been looked at in addressing parking at Sand Harbor because the entrance booth at the entrance where the entrance fee is paid now can stack up traffic onto the highway. Parking kiosks can be used as an alternative to the booth, and is one idea for alleviating the traffic stacking,” Carl Hasty, executive director of TTD, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The kiosks are no longer needed by the city because voters in June decided the program should go away.

South Lake Tahoe may keep a few as backups for the ones on Bellamy Court and Transit Way that were not affected by the ballot measure.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

California Indian casinos embroiled in turmoil

By Scott Smith, AP

When it comes to controlling California's flashy Las Vegas-style casinos, the stakes are enormous for tribes who own the gambling operations that collectively generate billions of dollars a year to sustain Native Americans up and down the

state.

With this backdrop, several tribes in the past two years have fallen into nasty, sometimes violent, power struggles pitting factions and families against one another.

The most recent case, involving the Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians near Yosemite National Park, climaxed in an armed raid on Oct. 9 by one faction that caused gamblers to flee, leaving their chips on the table.

The National Indian Gaming Commission, which regulates Indian casinos, and a federal judge shut down the Chukchansi Gold Resort and Casino, citing safety concerns. Charges have been filed against 15 men – two tribal council members, the tribal police chief and a hired security team that included a former sheriff's deputy and onetime Marine, and a former Navy Seal.

Related

In this photo taken Thursday, Nov. 20, 2014, a sign is shown at the main entrance to the shuttered Chukchansi Gold Resort and Casino in Coarsegold, Calif. Federal officials closed the casino in October citing safety reasons when an armed faction of the Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians launched a raid, attempting to take control of the casino. Experts say historical factors and a recent influx of money, which provides income, jobs, housing and benefits to many tribal members, has helped spark internal friction among tribes.

In this photo taken Thursday, Nov. 20, 2014, a sign is shown at the main entrance to the shuttered Chukchansi Gold Resort and Casino in Coarsegold, Calif. Federal officials closed the casino in October citing safety reasons when an armed faction of the Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians launched a raid, attempting to take control of the casino. Experts say historical factors and a recent influx of money, which provides income, jobs, housing and benefits to many tribal members, has helped spark internal friction among tribes. |

Scott Smith AP Photo

The casino remains closed – with estimated losses in the millions each week – because rivals have yet to diffuse what U.S. District Judge J. Lawrence O’Neill of Fresno called an “explosive keg” of emotions.

“It’s a classic struggle over money and tribal rights and control for what everybody recognizes is a very lucrative enterprise,” said Denise Runge, a gambling industry researcher at Helena College University of Montana.

Congress passed the Indian Gaming Regulation Act in 1988, setting the stage for sovereign Native American governments to open full-blown casinos.

Indian casinos generated \$28 billion last year from 449 casino operations in 28 states, according to the National Indian Gaming Commission.

About 65 Indian casinos in California took in one-quarter of those earnings at nearly \$7 billion. California outperformed the Las Vegas Strip, which drew \$6.5 billion last year, says a University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Center for Gaming Research report.

Experts say this influx of money, which provides, jobs, housing and benefits to many tribal members, has helped spark friction.

“All of a sudden, you’ve got a government with a lot of responsibility and a lot of clout that didn’t develop over decades like a lot of our other government institutions,” said Phil Hogen, former chair of the National Indian Gaming Commission.

Simmering tensions erupted last month at Chukchansi when a security team led by former tribal leader Tex McDonald stormed the casino. They were armed with firearms and stun guns and

detained security officers.

Madera County Sheriff's deputies intervened. Prosecutors filed charges, including kidnapping, false imprisonment and assault against the men. Most have been arrested or have surrendered. McDonald is in jail with bail set at \$2.4 million. His attorney did not respond to requests for comment.

Meanwhile, Chukchansi's financial losses are unclear because Indian casinos are not required to disclose earnings.

But its 1,800 slot machines could generate over \$130 million annually, not including table games, hotel stays, food and drink sales, estimated Cheryl Schmit, director of Stand Up for California, which pushes for gambling laws to be properly followed.

Chukchansi's turmoil isn't unique. Sheriff's deputies earlier this year headed off a standoff among armed and masked members of the Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians and their hired security forces. The confrontation at the Rolling Hills Casino, north of Sacramento, emerged in a struggle for control of the business and the tribe's assets, including a \$3 million jet, 162 ounces of gold and \$3,300 monthly payments to adult tribal members. One faction accused the other of launching a cyberattack.

In Oroville last year, a group at the Berry Creek Rancheria protesting their disenrollment barricaded themselves inside tribal headquarters next to the Gold Country Casino & Hotel. An 11-hour standoff ended when sheriff's deputies threw in a grenade and arrested 20 people.

Both Northern California casinos remained opened.

Tribal clashes are rooted in history, Schmit said. The U.S. government broke its promises to give Indians land, she said, and sanctioned tribal groups with members who were not affiliated. Schmit said the government sowed the seeds of

conflict and hasn't helped resolve modern disputes.

"Certainly, tribes in California have suffered generational trauma for it," Schmit said.

O'Neill, citing concern for the casino's out-of-work employees, expressed exasperation with the leadership vacuum of the Chukchansi tribe, the Indian Gaming Commission and his court, which has limited jurisdiction over tribal affairs.

The federal Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Indian Gaming Commission did not respond to requests seeking comment.

Tribal affairs attorney Gabriel Galanda said some lawyers are exploiting casinos to run up fees.

"It's all by design, lawyers and lobbyists taking advantage of a void of law and order in Indian country," said Galanda, who represented an ousted faction of the Paskenta tribe. "This is happening in too many places, too frequently. I guarantee you that Chukchansi is not the last of them."

Read more here:
<http://www.sacbee.com/news/business/article4064162.html#storylink=cpy>

1 person killed, 2 hurt in S. Tahoe car crash

A 21-year-old South Lake Tahoe woman was killed early Monday morning in a single-car accident on Pioneer Trail near April Drive.

She was a passenger in the front seat of a four-door sedan.

The 20-year-old female driver from South Lake Tahoe and 25-year-old male passenger from Sacramento were flown to Renown Medical Center in Reno with serious injuries. Names of those involved are not being released pending notification of next of kin.

“It looks like they were going at a very high rate of speed,” South Lake Tahoe Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*. “You can see several hundred feet of skid marks before the crash into the retaining wall.”

The vehicle was heading west, away from the casinos.

The 4:30am Nov. 24 accident closed Pioneer Trail for several hours. It is open now.

It is not known if alcohol was a factor. Uhler said long skid marks don't occur in frosty or icy conditions.

“It is extremely sad that some family will be grief-stricken this holiday,” Uhler. “It's a reminder for everyone to be extremely careful when driving and use a designated driver.”

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Controversial Nev. Assembly speaker steps down

By Kyle Roerink, Las Vegas Sun

After facing a firestorm of criticism for racist comments he made publicly, incoming Assembly Speaker Ira Hansen announced

that he would not lead the chamber during the upcoming legislative session.

After announcing to his legislative colleagues that he was stepping down, Hansen issued a news release Sunday saying the controversy surrounding him had been an “orchestrated attack.”

“The deliberate character assassination and the politics of personal destruction have totally distorted my views and record,” he said in the release. “Ultimately, this whole attack has very little to do with my views. The powers that be are planning a massive, more than \$1 billion, tax increase and I stood in the way as speaker. I have already served two terms as an assemblyman without any of these vicious attacks. It was only when I had risen to leadership that this smear campaign occurred. That is the real reason for this and it is vital the public understands that.”

Read the whole story

Washoe, USFS looking to improve Meeks Bay

By Kathryn Reed

Upgrading restaurant features, linking to the new bike trail, moving cabins, improving traffic patterns. These are some of the ideas the Washoe tribe has for improving Meeks Bay Resort.

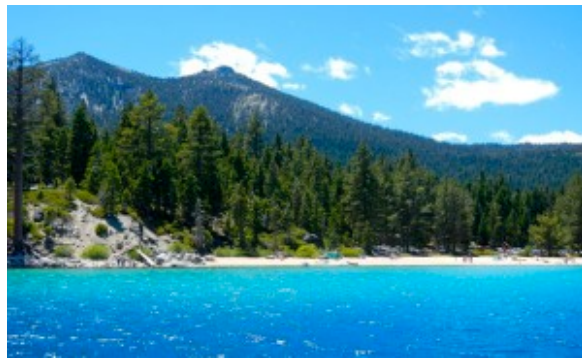
The tribe has operated the West Shore lakefront property under a special use permit from the U.S. Forest Service since 1999. It expires in 2019. But tribe officials are hoping for an extension.

Tonight the public is being asked to weigh in on what they would like to see at the resort. The resort provides day-use beach access, marina operations, cabins, and RV and tent camping.

Design Workshop is assisting the Washoe with coming up with ideas for what the improvements could look like.

Greg Weyland, business operations manager for the tribe, said they are looking at moving and upgrading the 1920s-era cabins.

"We would like to move them back and have more beach capacity," Weyland told *Lake Tahoe News*.



Meeks Bay Resort upgrades
are being talked about.
Photo/LTN file

The Washoe Indians have had a presence at Lake Tahoe for thousands of years and they want to keep it that way. Some of the possible changes include better telling their story to Meeks Bay guests.

With so many day users, an immediate need is to get rid of the port-a-potties and building more permanent restrooms, Weyland said.

The Wa She Shu Grill could use a walk-in cooler and freezer for added food storage.

"Our restaurant has become more popular. Sales increased quite

a bit in this last season," Weyland said. Being able to sell beer and wine at the restaurant is also a desire of the tribe's.

In 2016, the bike path that will end at the resort is expected to be built. It is a Tahoe Transportation District-Tahoe City Public Utility District project. The tribe would then like to have bike rentals and a possible bike valet. It's possible an older building on the premise could be used for this.

"The Forest Service is interested in having a facility that is self-supporting and provides a high quality recreation experience. Improving the visual character of the shoreline and updating water quality best management practices at the marina are of particular importance to the Forest Service," Cheva Gabor, USFS spokeswoman, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We will be working with the tribe on improving the financial sustainability of the resort, while at the same time providing for improved guest services and overall recreation experience."

After the open house tonight the tribe will take that information as well as data it has from surveys to come up with a proposal to be presented to the Forest Service. Environmental documents will then need to be prepared.

Any improvements will depend of funding availability, and most likely would not start until 2016.

"Funding will come from multiple sources. A majority of the funds will come through the Granger-Thye fee offset program. This program allows the permittee to conduct work and maintenance onsite in lieu of their fee to the government for the special use permit," Gabor said. "Additionally, money may come from other funding sources, such as through partnerships for water quality funding. We generally cannot compete for funding sources until after environmental documentation (NEPA) is complete."

Notes:

- Open house is Nov. 24 from 5-7pm, U.S. Forest Service office at 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe.
 - Meeks Bay Resort is online.
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Appellate court to hear Washoe State Park case

Oral arguments concerning the lawsuit involving Washoe Meadows State Park will be heard Nov. 25 in the 1st District Court of Appeal in San Francisco.

"We continue to fight to protect Washoe Meadows State Park and ensure that the appointed officials who are entrusted with the care of our state parks will act with accountability and transparency and comply with California's environmental laws," Lynne Paulson, with Friends of Washoe Meadows State Park, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

State Parks is appealing a lower court's decision that said the agency could not move the golf course without a supporting mitigation plan or CEQA findings.

Cyndie Walke with State Parks is out of town and not available for comment.

A second lawsuit relating to the South Shore park is still pending.

At issue is reconfiguring Lake Tahoe Golf Course, changing the

boundaries of the state park and the state recreation area, and what the environmental and economic impacts would be. The lawsuit was first filed in 2011.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Growing evidence global warming driving crazy winters

By Chris Mooney, Washington Post

It may be the timeliest – and most troubling – idea in climate science.

Back in 2012, two researchers with a particular interest in the Arctic, Rutgers' Jennifer Francis and the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Stephen Vavrus, published a paper called "Evidence linking Arctic amplification to extreme weather in mid-latitudes." In it, they suggested that the fact that the Arctic is warming so rapidly is leading to an unexpected but profound effect on the weather where the vast majority of us live – a change that, if their theory is correct, may have something to do with the extreme winter weather the U.S. has seen lately.

In their paper, Francis and Vavrus suggested that a rapidly warming Arctic should interfere with the jet stream, the river of air high above us that flows eastward around the northern hemisphere and brings with it our weather. Sometimes, the jet stream flows relatively directly from west to east; but other times, it takes long, wavy loops, as in the image above.

And according to Francis and Vavrus, Arctic warming should

make the jet stream more wavy and loopy on average – some have called it “drunk” – with dramatic weather consequences.

Read the whole story

Gas prices make Thanksgiving driving appealing

By Lynn Doan, Bloomberg

With gasoline prices sinking to under \$3 per gallon, Americans traveling by car this holiday season will have plenty of company on the road.

Drivers will make up about 89.5 percent of holiday travelers this year, a gain of 0.1 percentage point from 2013, while air passengers will drop by the same amount to 7.5, forecasts prepared by Englewood, Colorado-based IHS Inc. show. A 0.1 point increase may not seem like a lot, but based on last year's estimate that 39.6 million people traveled by car for Thanksgiving, that would roughly equate to at least another 40,000 people piling onto America's highways.

The car-over-plane travel choice is made easier by the fact that airfares aren't coming down like gasoline pump prices are. While the plunge in oil has driven down wholesale jet fuel prices 17 percent since August, almost matching the 18 percent drop in retail gasoline, airfares have risen 3.4 percent over that time, data compiled by industry groups show.

Read the whole story

Part-time jobs put millions in poverty or close to it

By Patrick Gillespie, CNNMoney

NEW YORK — Seven million Americans are stuck in part-time jobs.

They are unable to get full-time work and the benefits and stability that come with it. It's a constant struggle for these families and a worrying sign for America's recovery.

Overall U.S. unemployment has fallen steeply in the past year (from 7.2 percent in October 2013 to 5.8 percent in October 2014), but too many people can only find part-time positions.

The number of people working part-time involuntarily is more than 50 percent higher than when the recession began.

There was a similar spike in part-time workers in prior recessions, but it dropped quickly. That's not happening this time around. In fact, some states have seen an increase during the recovery in people languishing in part-time jobs who want something more.

Read the whole story