

Gun background checks headed to Nev. ballot

By Associated Press

LAS VEGAS – Proponents of gun owner background checks say they're submitting almost 250,000 signatures to Clark County election officials for a Nevada ballot measure to strengthen screening and reporting of weapon purchases.

Nevadans for Background Checks spokeswoman Kayla Keller says the organization will hand in on Wednesday well more than twice the approximately 102,000 signatures needed to qualify the initiative for the 2016 statewide ballot.

The group points to passage last week in Washington State of a measure making that state the seventh, plus the District of Columbia, to require universal background checks for all sales and transfers of firearms.

Nevada currently requires criminal and mental health background checks for gun buyers making purchases from licensed dealers, but not for purchases from private sellers or exhibitors at gun shows.

Unit of Caesars looking at bankruptcy

By Laura J. Keller, Bloomberg

Caesars Entertainment Corp. reached an agreement with key senior creditors on the outline of a debt restructuring plan

that includes a prearranged bankruptcy for its largest unit as soon as January, according to two people with knowledge of the negotiations.

Under the plan being negotiated by first-lien bondholders including Paul Singer's Elliott Management Corp. and Pacific Investment Management Co., the casino company would put its Caesars Entertainment Operating Co. unit into Chapter 11 proceedings as soon as Jan. 14, said the people, who asked not to be identified because the discussions are private.

The proposal, which is the product of eight weeks of talks between the casino operator and its creditors, would help tame a \$22.9 billion debt burden taken on six years ago in one of the biggest leveraged buyouts ever. The company needs the support of the creditor group in order to impose a reorganization that may offer little recovery for lower-ranking creditors.

Caesars is the parent company of Harrah's Lake Tahoe and Harveys at Stateline.

Read the whole story

Possible chemical spill in Truckee

Truckee police and fire units are at Joerger Drive for a possible chemical spill.

They are assessing the involved chemicals, but no evacuations have been ordered.

The road is expected to be closed until 11am Thursday.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Nevadans seek to legalize marijuana

By Associated Press

LAS VEGAS – Backers of a drive to legalize and tax marijuana in Nevada say they're turning in almost 200,000 signatures supporting their measure.

Democratic state Sen. Richard "Tick" Segerblom and Joe Brezny of the Nevada Cannabis Industry Association say they'll turn in petitions Wednesday morning at the Clark County Elections Department in North Las Vegas.

Tuesday was the deadline for collecting almost 102,000 signatures to qualify a ballot measure.

The marijuana initiative would go beyond legalizing medical use of pot.

It would require the 2015 state Legislature to consider legalizing marijuana altogether, or automatically put the question on the November 2016 ballot if state lawmakers fail to act.

Supporters say the Nevada measure would put Nevada with Colorado, Washington, Oregon, Alaska and the District of Columbia in lifting prohibitions on marijuana.

Public offers ideas for loop road



Mike McKeen wants more to be done at the state line area than officials have proposed. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Whether people want a loop road around the Stateline casinos or not isn't the question. The questions are what do they want it to look like and where should the roads go?

This isn't to say realigning Highway 50 on the South Shore is a done deal. It isn't by a long shot. Environmental documents still need to be finalized, then reviewed, revised and a final version released. Then there is the conundrum of financing

what will be a multimillion-dollar project.

Wednesday night was a chance for people to reacquaint themselves with the project that is being spearheaded by the Tahoe Transportation District. What the agency was looking for is public comment that can be incorporated into the environmental documents as the four alternatives, plus do nothing are studied.

Mike McKeen, who owns the property where Naked Fish and Powder House are located, has taken that invite to offer suggestions a step further than most. He hired an architect to draw up plans for how the area could look.

This has a lot to do with some of the proposals calling for his buildings to be wiped out as well as the Bottle Shop, which is owned by Kathay Lovell.

"Businesses would thrive more with a whole new gateway," McKeen told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He had copies of his plan available for anyone who wanted them.

His ideas somewhat complement what has become known as the triangle plan. It has the loop road starting near the vacant lots along Highway 50 before Pioneer Trail.

But what is different is McKeen proposes abandoning the current highway from that point to essentially today's intersection of 50 and Pioneer Trail. The highway, which becomes the loop road behind Harrah's and MontBleu, continues as proposed. Pioneer Trail, though, through this stretch becomes more of a pedestrian arcade.

McKeen envisions tearing down his buildings and replacing them with something more contemporary that would hold up over time.

The Bottle Shop is also proposed for demolition and rebuild under his plan.

Lovell told *Lake Tahoe News*, "I do like (Mike's) thought process on this. I like the idea of a gateway. I really like the whole idea of the traffic flow there."

And she likes the idea of keeping businesses and making the area more attractive. What she hasn't seen are the numbers to know how everything pencils out.

Where there are old hotels McKeen proposes building affordable housing so the people who are displaced could still live in the neighborhood. He also wants a community center and parking to go on the other side of Pioneer Trail from his buildings.

Carl Hasty, executive director of TTD, said this kind of public input is exactly what the agency is looking for.

New to the official drawings is a proposed cycle track that is similar to one in Sparks. It calls for narrowing the vehicle lane to accommodate a bike lane. This segment would then possibly eventually tie into the Stateline-to-Stateline trail, Linear Park and the Greenway.

Curtis Fong, who puts on two major cycling events on the South Shore, told *Lake Tahoe News* the proposed changes to 50 would not affect his events. He also likes anything that makes roads more bike friendly. What he worries about is the proposed roundabout at Lake Parkway.

"I'm always concerned as a cyclist about the traffic circulars, especially a double lane," Fong told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Brenda Knox of Meyers embraces the roundabout, saying they make traffic flow better and can be visually appealing.

Some people said they were there to take all the ideas in and hadn't made a decision on the loop road, while others said it is imperative the area make progressive changes that will bring a visual and economic vitality to the area.

More than 70 people attended the Nov. 12 open house at Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel.

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Notes:

- More about the proposals may be found online. This website also allows people to make comments.
- The environmental documents are expected to be released in the first quarter of 2015.
- Advocates are promoting the loop road so the casino corridor can be more pedestrian-bike friendly, with the bulk of traffic going to the east around the casino corridor.

CHP chief wants more mental health training for officers

By Jon Ortiz, Sacramento Bee

Joe Farrow had it right Wednesday morning when he said, "Everybody in this room knows we have an issue to work on. A big issue."

The CHP commissioner uttered those words before kicking off a five-hour meeting to talk about mental-health training for police. More than 100 experts and advocates, lawmakers and legislative staff, public health officials, family members and police officers from around the state gathered at the patrol's North Sacramento headquarters.

It's not a coincidence that Farrow wants CHP to take the lead. Last July, a motorist shot video of CHP Officer Daniel Andrew straddling 51-year-old Marlene Pinnock on the ground and repeatedly striking her. The pictures of a young white officer beating a mentally confused African American grandmother grabbed national attention.

Farrow shuttled back and forth from Sacramento to Southern California to make amends with local politicians and civil-rights activists. He didn't hide his embarrassment. He apologized. He promised to investigate. He vowed to change how his officers deal with the mentally ill.

Read the whole story

New election totals don't change SLT races

El Dorado County Elections Department on Nov. 12 released new numbers from the Nov. 4 election.

This is not the final count. Provisional ballots have not been counted.

Here are the numbers for South Lake Tahoe City Council, with the top three being elected:

Wendy David – 1,676 votes

Tom Davis – 1,409

Austin Sass – 1,284

Angela Swanson – 1,248

Brooke Laine – 1,211

Matt Palacio – 1,175

Bruce Grego – 1,096.

In the Lake Tahoe Community College trustee race Michelle Sweeney is 53 votes ahead of Bob Grant.

If a candidate asks for a recount and the vote does not change, the candidate must pay for the recount.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

U.S. water usage lowest in decades

By Michael Muskal, Los Angeles Times

Americans recently passed a milestone when federal officials reported that water use across the nation had reached its lowest level in more than 45 years: good news for the environment, great news in times of drought and a major victory for conservation.

What was surprising in the U.S. Geological Survey report released last week was how little of the 13 percent decline in national water usage was due to the public cutting back.

In drought-stricken areas, such as California and other states across the West, consumers are used to frequent warnings about the need to save water. Dry public fountains, limits on lawn watering and official requests for shorter showers have all been aimed at reducing water use at a time when reservoirs are

shrinking and streams are running dry.

But it turns out that the public reduced water use by only about 5 percent from 2005 to 2010, the most recent period measured by the USGS.

Read the whole story

3 accused of Truckee residential burglaries

Arrest warrants have been issued for three people believed to be connected to a string of burglaries in Truckee dating to 2013.

In late 2013 and into the early 2014, Truckee experienced an increase in residential burglaries.

Evidence was submitted to the state Department of Justice in Sacramento for additional forensic analysis. All burglaries were linked by DNA collected inside each crime scene. Subsequently arrest warrants were issued for the following people:

- Darren Michael Hoffman from Truckee surrendered himself to the Nevada County Sheriff's Office in October. Officers said his DNA was linked to a residential burglary in Truckee and also later to a burglary involving a firearm which was recovered in another crime.
- Carlos Kyle Woodbridge from Citrus Heights was arrested in Sacramento in October on burglary charges.
- Nathan Eugene Sprague-Sullivan from Orangevale

was arrested in Sacramento in October on burglary charges.

Officers continue to investigate these burglaries to try and recover property and identify any other suspects.

Anyone with information is asked to call 530.550.2323.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Kitchen fire damages Meyers house

An electrical fire caused damage to house in Meyers on Nov. 9.

Firefighters responded to the Nottaway residence about 3:30pm Sunday.

“It was later determined that the fire started in the kitchen and was accidental/electrical in nature,” Leona Allen, spokeswoman for Lake Valley Fire Department, told Lake Tahoe News. “The loss value is still being investigated.”

No one was home when the fire started.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*