

Reno patient being monitored for signs of Ebola

By KRNV-TV

A traveler who visited one of the three West African nations experiencing an Ebola outbreak and returned to the United States and the Reno area, is being actively monitored by the Washoe County Health District for appearance of any symptoms of Ebola.

According to the Washoe County Health District, the individual was not involved in treating Ebola patients and did not have any known exposure with a person sick with Ebola.

The individual is cooperating with local health officials, and is being actively monitored according to CDC guidance for a 21-day period.

Read the whole story

Will GOP surge impact online poker?

By J.D. Morris, Las Vegas Sun

More than a year and a half after Nevada legalized online poker, the game still hasn't taken off here.

And Tuesday's election results don't offer much hope that Congress will help improve the situation.

Revenue from online poker has been notably sluggish since the

state started disclosing numbers in February. Experts say the game would be more popular – and lucrative – if Nevadans could legally gamble online with pools of players from other states.

Sen. Harry Reid has supported federal legalization of online poker. But now that he's losing his majority leader status amid the Republican takeover of Senate control, progress on the issue doesn't seem likely anytime soon.

Read the whole story

Law enforcement adjusting to Prop. 47

By Kathryn Reed

The passage of Proposition 47 has California law enforcement agencies having to deal in a new way with those who allegedly commit crimes.

The proposition says many crimes that were considered a felony are now a misdemeanor. It also means instead of being arrested, people will be cited. The citations are similar to getting a traffic ticket.

Some of the felonies that are now misdemeanors include:

- Commercial burglary (theft under \$950)
- Forgery and bad checks (under \$950 value)
- Theft of most firearms
- Theft of a vehicle (under \$950 value)

- Possession of stolen property (under \$950 value)
- Possession of heroin, cocaine, illegal prescriptions, concentrated cannabis, and methamphetamine.

“Clearly, more bad guys who are now locked up will be getting out. It’s estimated 10,000 statewide,” South Lake Tahoe Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*. “I’m not sure how all this will match with the Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act. I guess smarter people than me have thought this through. I hope they’re right. The voters have spoken so we will, of course, follow the new law.”

Officers have been given an advisory on adjustments to the law.

“The law will allow inmates sentenced under old laws to file a motion with the courts to get their current sentence modified. I imagine there will be a flood of these motions forthcoming,” El Dorado County sheriff’s Lt. Pete Van Arnum told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Lawsuit calls for quicker executions in Calif.

By Don Thompson, AP

SACRAMENTO – A victims’ rights organization sued California state officials on Thursday as it seeks to speed up executions that have been on hold since 2006.

Sacramento-based Criminal Justice Legal Foundation filed a petition in Sacramento County Superior Court asking a judge to order state corrections officials to adopt procedures for a

single-drug, barbiturate-only method of execution.

State policy calls for using a series of three drugs to put condemned inmates to death. The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation is drafting new lethal injection regulations after Gov. Jerry Brown said in April 2012 the state would switch to a single-drug injection.

However, department spokeswoman Deborah Hoffman said a nationwide shortage of execution drugs is slowing progress. She declined to comment on the lawsuit.

The foundation says the department is taking too long to adopt the new regulations. No executions can occur until the new rules are adopted.

It is asking the judge to order the state to adopt temporary regulations within 30 days and take immediate steps to adopt permanent regulations.

The foundation sought the court order on behalf of Kermit Alexander, whose mother, sister and two nephews were murdered in 1984, and Bradley Winchell, whose sister was raped and murdered in 1983, contending that as relatives of the victims they are affected by the continued delays.

Alexander and Winchell said in nearly identical letters to Corrections Secretary Jeffrey Beard in September that the murders of their relatives took place 30 years ago, yet there is "no end in sight" for the convicted killers solely because of the department's failure to adopt the new regulations.

Executions in California have also been halted by a series of legal challenges over the last eight years, most recently when a federal judge in Los Angeles ruled in July that carrying out the death penalty takes so long that it amounts to unconstitutional cruel and unusual punishment. Attorney General Kamala Harris is appealing that ruling.

The judge noted that more than 900 people have been sentenced to death in California since the current death penalty system was adopted 35 years ago. But only 13 have been executed, leaving most condemned inmates to die of natural causes before their executions are carried out.

U.S. water consumption declining

By Dale Rodebaugh, Durango (Colo.) Herald

The use of water, fresh and saline, in the United States in 2010 was the lowest in 45 years, a U.S. Geological Survey report says.

“The 45-year low shows the positive trends in conservation that stem from improvements in water-use technologies and management,” the report said.

In 2010, the latest data available, overall use of water, fresh and saline, was 365 billion gallons a day, the report said. This is a 13 percent reduction in use compared with a total of 410 billion gallons a day in 2005, which itself was the lowest annual use since before 1970.

Read the whole story

Gaines not fazed by insurance commissioner loss; plenty to do as Tahoe's state senator

By Kathryn Reed

Even though Ted Gaines will not be California's next insurance commissioner, he is happy with many of the outcomes from the Nov. 4 election – namely propositions 45 and 1.

Gaines' loss in the statewide race means he continues on as Lake Tahoe's state senator. District 1 encompasses a large swath of the northeast part of the state. His term is up in two years. He's not sure if he will run for another four-year stint in the Senate or go for a statewide office in 2018. He also knows his wife, Beth, who is in the Assembly, would one day like his Senate seat.

Running for insurance commissioner made sense because that is the business he came from before getting elected to the Assembly in 2006. His daughter and son-in-law now run the day-to-day operations of the business. But Gaines was running against the incumbent – Dave Jones. Jones won with 56.4 percent of the vote compared to Gaines' 43.6 percent.

Controller or treasurer are also on Gaines' radar because he has always been interested in financial issues.



State Sen. Ted Gaines, R-Rocklin, is contemplating his options. Photo/LTN file

For now, though, he will be focusing on issues relevant to his district and the state as a whole.

He brought Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de León, D-Los Angeles, to Tahoe about a month ago to explain the environmental and economic issues affecting the basin.

"We went out on the lake and looked at milfoil, found out what is happening with Asian clams and talked about how those issues need to be addressed," Gaines told *Lake Tahoe News*.

While he doesn't have any specific pieces of legislation he plans to introduce, he is looking at how to create more jobs in the state that pay a decent wage.

"I would like to see us provide some relief of burden for small business owners so they can hire people," Gaines said. "Studies show 80 percent of job creation comes from small businesses. We need to look at regulatory reforms; specifically how they impact business."

He is concerned with county jails being overcrowded and inmates being released prematurely. Redding, which is in his district, is encountering what Gaines calls a “dramatic” increase in crime committed from criminals who are getting an early release. Gaines would like to create a revenue stream so sheriffs have the option to transfer people to facilities in or out of state that have room for the inmates.

Proposition 45 would have given the state insurance commissioner veto power when it came to rate increases for individual and small-business health insurance policies. Gaines was against this measure, with much of his campaign wrapped around it.

The \$7.5 billion water bond was another issue Gaines supported.

“It will take a lot of time to get water storage built, but at least we have the means of funding it. It will help us in the long run,” Gaines said.

As a skier who has a second home in Truckee, Gaines has seen what the natural snowpack has been like the last three winters.

“I’m hoping for an awesome season that dumps lots of fresh powder,” Gaines said. “Looking at the ‘Farmers Almanac’ it says normal precipitation for the Pacific. I hope that is in the form of snow in the Sierra Nevada.

“So much of the economy is driven by that. I pray the snow falls at the right time and we can break through the drought.”

Felon arrested by CHP in S. Tahoe

A Nevada County woman was arrested Nov. 4 on several felony charges.

The incident started at 2:55am Tuesday when two California Highway Patrol officers spotted a vehicle on Lake Tahoe Boulevard near Third Street in South Lake Tahoe that matched the description of a stolen vehicle from earlier in the shift.

Officers made a U-turn to overtake the vehicle, but the driver made an abrupt turn onto southbound Third Street. Officers said she made several turns in an attempt to evade them. Then the suspect stopped suddenly in the Matterhorn Hotel parking lot.

The driver, Sarah Elizabeth Downey, was on felony probation out of Nevada County. Officers searched the vehicle and said they found a loaded handgun and drug paraphernalia in the passenger compartment. She was arrested and booked into the local jail.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Sass overtakes Swanson in SLT council race

With several hundred votes still to be counted, the South Lake Tahoe City Council race is a bit of a see-saw.

Newcomer Austin Sass has taken over incumbent Angela Swanson

in the latest update.

Three seats are up.

Here are the current numbers:

Wendy David – 1,624

Tom Davis – 1,365

Austin Sass – 1,237

Angela Swanson – 1,215

Brooke Laine – 1,185

Matt Palacio – 1,132

Bruce Grego – 1,070.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Study: Retreating snow line will worsen droughts

By Andy Coghlan, New Scientist

The Golden State is baking. After months of drought in California the long-term forecast is ... more drought.

Rising global temperatures will turn much of the snow that currently replenishes the state's reservoirs to rain, according to modelling studies by Dan Cayan at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in San Diego. Unlike snow, which melts each spring and recharges California's reservoirs, rain evaporates and soaks into the ground – it dwindles away, he

says.

Cayan says the Sierra Nevada snowpack could be a third smaller in 2050 than it has been in recent years, and two-thirds smaller by 2100. The snowpack isn't the only source of fresh water in California, but Cayan says it would be "more of a challenge" to manage water as rainfall rather than snow. He presented his findings at the Bay-Delta Science Conference in Sacramento last week.

Cayan's findings emerged as California's Department of Water Resources launched its latest strategic plan to manage the state's water. The future is one of never-ending restraint in water use. "The goals of the plan are to make conservation a way of life," says a department statement.

Read the whole story

Clean Tahoe dealing with bears in trash

Clean Tahoe has responded to a record-breaking number of animal-in-trash incidents in the past month.

In the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30 the South Shore nonprofit cleaned and issued courtesy notices for 265 animal-in-trash incidents, and issued warning notices to more than 200 additional animal-in-trash incidents. In the last year 603 yards of litter and debris were picked up. That's more than six football fields of trash.

In addition to general roadside litter, field crew responded to 153 illegal dumping incidents and picked up:

- 112 pieces of large furniture
- 131 pieces of small furniture
- 121 mattresses
- 256 TVs/computer monitors
- 36 tires
- 24 appliances.

During the September river cleanup 1,366 pounds of trash and recyclables were collected. Items included:

- Cigarette butts: 3,691
- Beverage bottles (glass and plastic): 274
- Food wrappers (candy, chips, etc.): 950
- Bottle caps (plastic and metal): 1,006
- Plastic bags: 244
- Straws: 195
- Take-out containers: 101
- Plastic lids: 178
- Cups and plates: 211
- Balloons: 53
- Pieces of construction material: 75
- Tobacco wrappers/packaging: 81.

Volunteers also found part of car bumper, kitchen appliances, a dining room chair, rebar, a degraded buoy weight, and other large items.

Call 530.544.4210 if neighbors are leaving trash out or fill out this form. Field crews will clean the mess and provide educational materials for the property owner about securing their trash appropriately. Repeat offenders will be referred to the proper code enforcement agency.