

Study: Few states preparing for climate change

By Neela Banerjee, Los Angeles Times

Fewer than half of American states are working to protect themselves from climate change, despite more detailed warnings from scientists that communities are already being damaged, according to a new online clearinghouse of states' efforts compiled by the Georgetown Climate Center.

Fourteen states have plans to prepare for the effects of climate change. California, New York and Maryland are among those that have made the greatest progress toward the dozens of goals their plans set forth, such as cutting statewide greenhouse gas emissions, improving infrastructure, securing water supplies, battling wildfires or coping with rising sea levels. Even those states have much work ahead of them, though.

Another eight states and the District of Columbia are devising similar plans, and some counties and towns have plans in place, too. But more than half of American states have not taken any steps to address the threats posed by climate change, leaving them vulnerable to predicted flooding, drought and wildfire, and leaving taxpayers on the hook for the cleanup.

The online tool is meant to give communities a way to track what their state is doing to adapt to climate change. Lawmakers and regulators could also use the tool to glean ideas from states that are further along.

Read the whole story

Fatal crash in Pollock Pines

By KXTV

A person was killed in a head-on crash in Pollock Pines Saturday afternoon.

The two vehicles crashed just after noon on Mormon Emigrant Trail, south of Sly Park Road, the California Highway Patrol said.

[Read the whole story](#)

Who's the meanest U.S. senator?

By Amber Phillips, Las Vegas Sun

Congress can be a lot like high school.

There are the popular kids (often the lawmakers in front of TV cameras), the hanger-oners (often the lobbyists trying to befriend said lawmakers) the nerds (often the policy-wonk staffers) and the misfits (often the journalists trying to keep up with it all).

So it's no surprise that Washington, D.C., is obsessed with rankings beyond poll numbers and money raised. There's the 50 Most Beautiful in Congress list produced every year by Capitol Hill newspaper, *The Hill*. Another Capitol Hill newspaper, *CQ*

Roll Call, also annually ranks the 50 richest members of Congress.

Nevada Democrat Harry Reid tops the charts for some of the most unflattering superlatives. In the 2014 ranking that came out this week, staffers ranked the Senate majority leader as “one of the two meanest senators,” “worst speaker” and “most partisan” in the Senate.

Read the whole story

CDC: Americans can expect to live longer

By Karen Kaplan, Los Angeles Times

Americans are living longer than ever before, government data show.

A typical toddler born in 2012 can expect to live 78.8 years – a new record, according to a report published Wednesday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That’s 36.5 days longer than in 2011.

Adults who were 65 in 2012 could expect to live an additional 19.3 years, on average, the report said. That’s also 36.5 days longer than in 2011.

These gains in life expectancy are the result of small but steady decreases in Americans’ age-adjusted death rate (a statistic that controls for the age distribution of the population as a whole).

Read the whole story

Lukins seeks 53.9% water rate increase

By Kathryn Reed

Paying for the more than 6,000 feet of lineal water line Lukins Brothers Water Company put in doesn't stop with the contractor's last bill.

The South Lake Tahoe company's liability insurance went up 60 percent because of those lines.

In the last two years Lukins has put in 6,000 lineal feet of 12-inch line, 450 feet of 6-inch line and 16 fire hydrants. This gives 40 percent of the 963 customers adequate fire protection.



Lukins has been upgrading its water line to meet fire suppression standards.
Photo/LTN file

Because there was a cost savings of \$200,000 the contractor will be back out in the spring to start on phase two. This is enough money for at least another 500 lineal feet of 12-inch

line and two more fire hydrants.

This \$2 million project is being paid for with a \$15 to \$25 surcharge that the 963 ratepayers started seeing on their bills this year. The California Public Utility Commission guarantees the loan will be repaid via the 20-year surcharge.

But bills may be even higher if the small private water company gets its way. It has asked the state PUC to raise rates by 53.9 percent, or \$283,546.19 a year.

This will increase the average flat rate residential bill by \$19.43 per month, so the quarterly bill becomes \$167.52.

"It focuses on your operating expenses," Jen Lukins, who runs the company, said of the rate increase. "No one is paying less for power, gas, fuel or insurance than they did 10 years ago."

She said the CPUC looks at several years of data to determine what it deems to be reasonable ratepayer costs.

"The cost of producing water is going up; the cost to comply with state regulations is going up," Lukins said.

She said there are only so many places the company can cut back.

Some of the money raised would go to replacing the 1982 truck that doesn't have a heater and is barely running.

The last increase of this nature was in 2009. Lukins had asked for a 66.7 percent increase and was granted 36.03 percent. Before that rates went up in 2000.

Lukins said she would prefer more gradual increases, but how the state handles the requests it would be impossible to do so annually or every couple years.

"If we don't get it, it means budget cuts, operating on a tighter budget, less improvements to the water system, not

installing meters, continuing with old equipment and not being able to make upgrades,” Lukins said. “We are not trying to be extravagant.”

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Notes:

- There will be a meeting before the CPUC about the rate increase on Oct. 27 at 6pm at Lake Tahoe Airport.
 - Protests to the rate increase are due Oct. 23. They must be sent to the CPUC at water_division@cpuc.ca.gov and to Lukins Water Co. at 2031 West Way, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150.
 - A copy of Lukins’ filing with the CPUC is available for review at the company’s office on West Way. The request was filed in June.
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Lukins’ wells contaminated, using STPUD water

By Kathryn Reed

Most of the water Lukins Brothers Water Company customers are using is coming from South Tahoe Public Utility District.

This is because two of the three active wells the South Lake Tahoe private water company operates are contaminated with Tetrachloroethylene, also known as PCE. The wells show 16 parts per billion and 43 parts per billion. The maximum contaminant level is 5 parts per billion.

The state Division of Drinking Water mandates regular testing

of water for a variety of potential contaminants. The day it came back high the state was notified, the wells were shut down and the intertie with STPUD was opened. This was July 11. However, it was not until Sept. 30 that the state told Lukins to let its customers know what is going on. Legally, the water company could not disclose the information until being told to do so by the state.

Jen Lukins, who runs the water company, said there was no threat to customers because three months ago when the water came back with a high PCE reading the company took steps to ensure other water was coming out of taps.

"Everyone is receiving safe, potable drinking water that meets all drinking water standards," Lukins told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Those wells will be shut down until a treatment is found or Lukins drills a new well. An engineering firm is trying to determine what the best solution is for Lukins. Then we'll work with the state to get the funding."

Two private wells near the Y off Highway 89 are also contaminated with PCE.

"One challenge is we don't have some obvious source," Lauri Kemper with Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Cleanup cannot take place until the location is identified. Once that is done the property owners will be tasked with cleaning it up.

Lahontan applied for a \$69,000 grant from the state's cleanup and abatement account. Sometime this fall a series of hydropunches will be performed to determine the location of the contaminant. The drilling equipment punches holes in the soil, takes samples and tries to pinpoint where the PCE is originating.

Then the groundwater, soil or both will be treated.

Kemper said most likely this PCE outbreak is not from the Laundromat at the Y. There is still an open case involving that facility from when it had a self-serve dry cleaning machine that leaked in the 1970s. A similar machine was at the site of what is about to be BevMo, but that case was closed.

Kemper said the drought could be contributing to why PCE is making itself known because of how wells draw water.

“We hope we find the source of the contaminant fast before more of the aquifer becomes contaminated,” Lukins said.

In other water contamination news:

- Lahontan officials continue to monitor what Tahoe Tom’s gas station is doing regarding cleaning up MTBE leaking from its site into the ground water and contaminating the water at Mark Twain Hotel. The station is supposed to be paying for the bottled water being used by the South Lake Tahoe hotel, but it isn’t. Kemper said the station is racking up penalties. The water board will be meeting with station owners at the end of the month.

Hard Rock applies for gaming license at Stateline

By J.D. Morris, Las Vegas Sun

The company that operates Las Vegas’ Hard Rock Hotel & Casino this week earned initial approval from state gaming regulators to reopen a shuttered Lake Tahoe casino under the same brand.

Warner Gaming is transforming the former Horizon casino, which closed earlier this year, into a new Hard Rock property in

Stateline. The state Gaming Control Board recommended Warner for approval to run the casino, a decision that will now head to the Gaming Commission for final consideration.

William Warner, the company's chief executive, told the gaming board at its meeting in Carson City that the \$60 million renovation should be completed in January.

Read the whole story

The business of same-sex marriage in Nevada

By Conor Shine, Las Vegas Sun

Same-sex marriage is on its way to Nevada and with it could come millions of dollars in new spending for the state's economy.

Weddings are already a \$2.3 billion industry in Las Vegas, according to the Wedding Report. That number stands to grow even larger with thousands of in-state same-sex couples ready to marry and even more looking to travel to the "Marriage Capital of the World" to tie the knot.

A June report from the Williams Institute at UC Los Angeles laid out the potential economic impact from legalizing same-sex marriage in Nevada.

Read the whole story

Lake Valley makes pitch to hike fire tax



Lack of property tax revenue from the Angora burn area is impacting Lake Valley Fire.
Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – Lake Valley Fire Protection District does not have enough money to do all of the things it wants to do. That is why a parcel tax is on the Nov. 4 ballot.

Members of the district, which for the most part includes the incorporated area of El Dorado County in the basin, have been paying \$20 a year since 1986. The problem is Measure M never increased based on inflation. It brings in \$150,000 a year.

Measure H, which will be before voters, would replace Measure M with a \$120 fee that would be tied to the consumer price index. This means it could go up each year, though not by more than 3 percent any given year. It is projected to bring in \$1 million.

“Things will change,” Fire Chief Gareth Harris told *Lake Tahoe News* when asked what happens if the measure fails. “We’d have to eliminate the fuels program.”

About 25 people turned out for a meeting Oct. 8 regarding the

measure, though most were firefighters or on Lake Valley's board.

Firefighter Martin Goldberg went over where the money would go. He explained how state and federal funds have dried up so another resource needs to be found. Measure H is the district's answer.



Firefighter Martin Goldberg, left, with some of the members of the Angora Peak Fire Crew.

The money would not go to raises, even though firefighters have not received a raise in eight years. The salaries it would fund are those of the members of the Angora Peak Fire Crew. Many of them just spent two weeks on the King Fire. They were paraded before the audience and introduced.

This group is responsible for the free chipping service the district provides, thinning on district parcels and pile burning.

Parcel tax money would also go toward aging facilities and equipment.

It would go on indefinitely. Goldberg said if other funding sources come forward, then property owners would be given a reprieve with Measure H. Possible sources are if Lake Tahoe Restoration Act is reauthorized and if State Responsibility Area funds are released.

"I feel like we are asking what we need to maintain the program," Goldberg told the group.

Lake Valley is not receiving any of the \$152.33 the state is collecting from residents for being in a State Responsibility Area. It does, however, intend to apply for a chunk of the \$10 million that will soon be made available statewide.

Another hit to Lake Valley's income is the diminished property tax collected from the Angora burn area. This is because about 100 of the 254 houses that were reduced to ash in June 2007 have never been rebuilt.

"They are off the tax roll except for the land value," Harris said. "That is a significant issue."

To pass, Measure H requires two-thirds of the voters on Nov. 4 to approve it.

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Notes:

- More info is available online.

Missing Douglas County teen found safe



Mia Swenson

Updated Oct. 10 11:145am:

Douglas County sheriff's deputies have found a Gardnerville teen who went missing Oct. 3.

Mia Swenson, 16, is safe and has been reunited with her family.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report