

Suspect tied to bust in EDC arrested in Nev.

By George Warren, KXTV

A Sacramento man taken into custody last week on drug charges faces a second arrest stemming from the same raid on a motel he owns in the Nevada desert.

Raghvendra “Raj” Singh, 52, posted \$50,000 bail early Thursday, 12 hours after being picked up at his midtown Sacramento fourplex on a felony fugitive warrant out of Mineral County, Nev.

On Tuesday, Handte said the district attorney was preparing a second arrest warrant based on the weight of the marijuana, which this week was determined by a scale at the Hawthorne Army Depot to be 144 pounds.

Singh faces a separate criminal investigation in Northern California after a drug task force raided two of his rural properties in El Dorado County on Sept. 5 and seized more than 100 marijuana plants.

Read the whole story

Journalists say White House secrecy has chilling effect

By Michael Tarm, AP

CHICAGO — Editors and reporters meeting in Chicago raised

concerns Wednesday about what they described as a lack of access and transparency undermining journalists' work, several blaming the current White House for setting standards for secrecy that are spreading nationwide.

Criticism of President Obama's administration on the issue of openness in government came on the last day of a three-day joint convention of the American Society of News Editors, the Associated Press Media Editors and the Associated Press Photo Managers.

"The White House push to limit access and reduce transparency has essentially served as the secrecy road map for all kinds of organizations – from local and state governments to universities and even sporting events," Brian Carovillano, AP managing editor for U.S. news, said during a panel discussion.

James Risen, a *New York Times* reporter who is facing potential jail time as he battles government efforts to force him to testify at the trial of a former CIA officer accused of leaking classified information, also spoke at the conference. Risen said intense pressure on reporters and their sources is having a chilling effect on newsgathering.

He spoke of scaring one source just by going to his home and knocking on the front door.

"He opened the door and he turned white," Risen said. "He marches me back through the kitchen (to a back exit) and said, 'Go out that way.'"

Risen added that the government appeared to be taking advantage of how the media industry is off balance amid the growing influence of online news sources and financial hardships. He asked if the government would have taken such a hard line when traditional media were on firmer footing decades ago.

"I kind of think the answer is no," he said. Media shouldn't

shrink before the challenge, Risen said, adding, "The only response ... is to do even more aggressive investigative reporting."

The AP's Washington chief of bureau, Sally Buzbee, said the Obama administration's efforts to control information extend even to agencies not directly involved in intelligence gathering. Some sources, she said, have reportedly been warned they could be fired for even talking to a reporter.

"Day-to-day intimidation of sources is also extremely chilling," she said.

Buzbee said she's frequently asked if the Obama administration, when it comes to transparency, is worse than the administration of President George W. Bush.

"Bush was not fantastic," she said. She added, "The (Obama) administration is significantly worse than previous administrations."

White House spokesman Eric Schultz said Obama is committed to transparency.

"Over the past six years, federal agencies have gone to great efforts to make government more transparent and more accessible than ever, to provide people with information that they can use in their daily lives, and to solicit public participation in government decision-making and thus tap the expertise that resides outside of government," Schultz said in a emailed statement.

Some speakers Wednesday also broached questions of reporters' safety after recent beheadings of journalists by Islamic militants.

John Daniszewski, an AP senior managing editor of international news, said organizations that threaten reporters today have more chaotic chains of command. As a result, he

said, militants might act on orders of an immediate commander rather than a government authority.

“While danger is nothing new ... there has been a shift,” he said.

Santiago Lyon, AP’s director of photography, added freelancers are also more prevalent in conflict zones. He said among the questions media groups must ask about freelancers they are considering relying on is, “Are they bona fide journalists ... rather than just thrill seekers?”

King Fire surges to nearly 30,000 acres



Pyro cumulus clouds from the King Fire taken from Taylor Creek on Sept. 17. Photo/Toogee Sielsch

Updated Sept. 17 7:05pm:

The King Fire burning northeast of Pollock Pines is at 27,930 acres and remains at 5 percent containment as of Wednesday

night.

It is burning in steep, rugged terrain at a rapid rate north.

Highway 50 in the American River Canyon was opened Wednesday afternoon. However, it is one lane traffic from three miles east of Pollock Pines to Pollock Pines. Smoke is thick in the area.

No structures have been lost, but more than 2,000 residences are threatened along with more than 1,000 other buildings.

The mandatory closure to all residences south of Highway 50 between Fresh Pond and Riverton has been changed to a voluntary advisory. There are mandatory evacuations for Volcanoville, Quintette, Blodgett and Upper Ice House. As of late this afternoon more mandatory evacuations have been ordered for Crystal Basin: Granite Springs, Ice House Road (east side), Pickett Pen Road, Rubicon Trail, Windmiller Trail, Wrights Lake Road, including all Forest Service roads, trails, and access roads in the Crystal Basin recreation area between Ice House Road and Desolation Wilderness, north of the Highway 50 corridor.

"This afternoon the fire made a significant run to the northwest necessitating the mandatory evacuation order for Quintette and Volcanoville," CalFire said in a statement. "It became very active in the afternoon with spotting up to one half mile."

Rain is in the forecast for the next three days.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the Red Cross center.

There is still no cause for the blaze that started Sept. 13.

Pollock Pines Elementary School District will resume classes Sept. 18.

Two people have been injured, but a CalFire spokesperson did

not have the extent of the injuries nor did he know they were firefighters.

South Lake Tahoe, Lake Valley and the California Conservation Corps in Meyers have sent people to help fight the fire. They are among the more than 2,500 people fighting the fire, along with the resources of 11 helicopters, 245 engines, 43 dozers and 57 water tenders.

Smoke continues to be an issue in the Lake Tahoe Basin, Truckee, Carson City and Reno areas. El Dorado County Air Quality Management District and Health and Human Services Agency – Public Health Division has issued an advisory regarding air quality. Fine particles in smoke can cause health issues, especially for children, older people or those with respiratory problems.

“Driving from Auburn to Tahoe Tuesday afternoon, the smoke along I-80 became extremely thick and irritating to the eyes over Donner Summit and into Truckee,” Bill Kingman told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Visibility was brown air and only for a short distance. I likened it to Los Angeles on a good day. The smoke lessened slightly going over Highway 267 to Kings Beach, but you could not see the lake from the summit nor could you see across the lake at all.”

Here is a time lapse video of the King Fire smoke coming into the Tahoe basin. It was shot from UNR’s mountaintop camera at Heavenly’s Angel’s Roost.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Brown signs historic groundwater management legislation

By Melanie Mason, Los Angeles Times

Gov. Jerry Brown signed a trio of bills Tuesday establishing a framework for statewide regulation of California's underground water sources, marking the first time in the state's history that groundwater will be managed on a large scale.

"This is a big deal," Brown said at a signing ceremony in the Capitol. "It's been known about for decades that underground water has to be managed and regulated in some way."

Since the state's founding, water has been considered a property right; landowners have been able to pump as much water from the ground as they want. But increasing reliance on underground water, particularly during droughts, has led to more pumping from some basins than what is naturally being replaced.

Some areas already have begun managing their groundwater sources, but other key basins remain unregulated.

Read the whole story

Building gone, Lake Tahoe now visible



The Alta Mira building.
Photo/Bill Kingman



The building being razed
Sept. 15. Photo/Provided



The pile of debris.

Photo/Provided

The Alta Mira building on Highway 50 in South Lake Tahoe came down Sept. 15 in less than two hours.

The California Tahoe Conservancy bought the 0.55-acre property.

This area is the end point for what started as the 56-acre project. Beautification from this parcel to El Dorado Beach would complete the Lakeview Commons project. That will take more than \$4 million to complete. No money is in the bank to start it. (Lakeview Commons cost more than \$6 million.)

The remaining acreage in the bigger project is across the street and includes Campground by the Lake.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Illegal pot grows increasing problem in S. Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Inhale deeply in many South Lake Tahoe neighborhoods and the stench of skunk permeates the nostrils. But it isn't wildlife; it's marijuana being grown indoors.

Need some weed? South Lake Tahoe is your answer – especially for people with medical marijuana cards. Tahoe Wellness Cooperative, the only medicinal marijuana shop in the city since the other two were shutdown, has 19,000 members. (The whole city has 21,286 residents.) Cody Bass, who runs the dispensary, says 8,000 of them are locals. (This is more than

the number of registered voters.)

The city in 2011 made pot shops legal with an array of rules that had to be followed. An audit of TWC this summer showed the collective didn't provide the quantity of pot coming and going from the Highway 50 facility. This has Police Chief Brian Uhler concerned. For one, it's part of the ordinance that the amount of pot bought and sold must be provided to city officials when requested. Second, it means it is hard to discern where the pot is coming from – locally, imported, clients, other. Third, officials don't know if the outgoing pot is going to patients or being sold illegally.

Uhler gave a presentation to the South Lake Tahoe City Council on Sept. 16 that raised a number of questions.

"We don't know marijuana is not being diverted into illegal markets because there are not adequate records," Uhler said.

He said his main concern for getting a handle on the situation is for the health and safety of the community. Fire is of the utmost concern.

The blaze at the mobile home last week had an illegal marijuana grow inside.

However, Fire Chief Jeff Meston told *Lake Tahoe News*, "(The) fire was undetermined, so no conclusions if it was caused or not caused by the grow."

Still, illegal grows are problematic. Many have overloaded the electrical system, which leaves the system susceptible to fire.

"Marijuana grows are 24 times more likely to catch fire than a normal structure," Uhler said.

Thirteen grows have been found in the city this year. Gareth Harris, fire chief with Lake Valley, said in his jurisdiction 20 illegal grows have been found in 2014.

“We are just scratching the surface,” Uhler said.

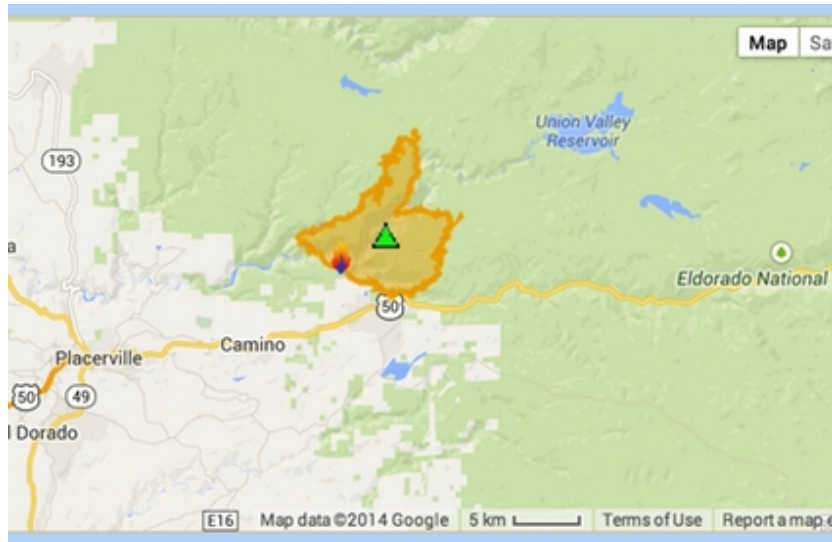
He estimates there are 300 illegal grows in the city. Only nine are legally permitted. Matt Underhill, commander for South Lake El Dorado Narcotics Enforcement Team, told the council there could be just as many illegal grow houses on the South Shore of El Dorado County.

He said SLEDNET receives between six and 12 complaints a week about suspected illegal grows. Investigating them all takes time and resources, which diverts agents from dealing with the more serious drugs in the community like heroin, meth and cocaine.

Uhler believes if the pot ordinance were tweaked a bit to take away the financial incentives for growers, that there may be fewer issues in town. He wants the dispensary to only be able to receive marijuana from permitted residential cultivators. He also wants to make sure people are then growing the limited amount allowed. This, he said in his PowerPoint, would cut off “illegal cultivators from their source of revenue.”

Later this fall the council will revisit the issue. Tuesday’s session was just information and not an action item.

King Fire growing, Highway 50 closed



The King Fire is outlined in orange.
Photo/CalFire/Google Maps

Updated Sept. 16 11:45pm:

Several new evacuation orders were issued Sept. 16 for people in the path of the King Fire.

Evacuations are now in effect for the Crystal Basin: Highway 50 east of Fresh Pond to Ice House, north on Icehouse to Wentworth Springs, west to just above Quintette to include all campgrounds and businesses.

Voluntary evacuations have been issued for residences south of Highway 50 between Fresh Pond and Riverton, as well as Valconoville. There are 1,632 residences threatened.

The King Fire outside of Pollock Pines as of Tuesday night had burned 12,870 acres, with 5 percent containment. It is burning east, northeast at a rapid rate of speed. Agencies from throughout Northern California are working the fire, including crews from South Lake Tahoe and Lake Valley.

Highway 50 is closed in both directions from Sly Park to Fresh Pond.

The cause of the fire that started Sept. 13 is under investigation.

Smoke from the blaze has reduced traffic along Highway 50 to one lane for several miles. Smoke continues to be a factor in the Lake Tahoe Basin and Truckee, so much so that education officials are monitoring particulate levels to make sure students are safe.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Camino is also the evacuation center for people and small animals.

Pollock Pines Elementary School District will remain closed Wednesday.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

World hunger on the decline

By Rudy Ruitenberg, Bloomberg

World hunger fell in the past four years, with about 805 million people estimated to be chronically underfed in the 2012-14 period from 841 million in 2008-10, the UN's Food & Agriculture Organization said.

About one-in-nine people still go hungry, with insufficient food for a healthy and active life, from one-in-eight in 2008-10, it said. A goal set in 2000 of reducing the proportion of undernourished people in the world by half in 2015 "is within reach," according to the report.

Strong economic growth in Asia as well as Africa is raising living conditions there, the United Nations' Rome-based agency wrote in a report today. Seven of the 10 fastest-growing economies in the world are in Africa, the FAO wrote.

Read the whole story

Lake Valley Fire's ISO rating drops

Lake Valley Fire Protection District has earned a better rating from the Insurance Services Office. As of this month the district has an ISO Public Protection Classification of 2 in areas with fire hydrants and 2Y for rural portions of the fire district without fire hydrants.

"Basically, the district demonstrated to an ISO representative that we strategically operate to National Fire Protection Association standards," Leona Allen, spokeswoman for Lake Valley, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "The rating is good for three years, and, yes, – folks should contact their insurance companies to advise them of the change."

Lake Valley has been working diligently during the last few years to reduce the rating from a 5 to a 2. The district is one of 750 fire departments in the country to receive this designation.

The change could bring a reduction in fire insurance rates for all properties within Lake Valley's boundaries.

The Insurance Services Office Inc., better known as ISO, is a company that serves insurance companies by evaluating communities all over the country and assigning a risk classification ranging from the lowest risk being 1 to the highest being a 10. They rate communities based on three criteria: The fire department's capabilities, the firefighting water supply, and the emergency communications capability.

S. Tahoe council defers city manager review

The South Lake Tahoe City Council on Tuesday continued the review of City Manager Nancy Kerry to the Oct. 1 special meeting.

At that meeting the 2014-15 budget will be voted on, as will contracts with multiple employee groups.



Nancy Kerry

"She wants employees to come first," Mayor Hal Cole told *Lake Tahoe News* after the Sept. 16 meeting.

"Least and last" is Kerry's approach when it comes to any adjustments to her contract. In other words, she wants as many of the employee contracts to be finalized before the council offers her a raise.

In the past, Kerry turned down the one time 2 percent increase that was like a bonus for all staff. She also said no to what should have been an automatic 5 percent step increase.

She is also the first city manager in decades who has not taken a car allowance.

"We are going to offer her a package that includes some

additional compensation," Cole said.

Details will be released once the council votes on it next month.

The other key item discussed in closed session on Sept. 16 involved the property the city owns at the corner of Ski Run Boulevard and Highway 50. Cole and Councilwoman Brooke Laine will be meeting with each of the entities who submitted a letter of intent to develop the site. They are going to develop a format be able ferret out the best proposal.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*