

Bird in El Dorado County had West Nile virus

A Western Scrub Jay found earlier this month El Dorado Hills has tested positive for West Nile virus.

This is the first confirmed positive result this year in the county. There have been no human cases in 2014.

West Nile virus is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes pick up the virus when they feed on infected birds. The illness is not spread from person-to-person.

Most people infected with West Nile virus show no symptoms. However, some people may experience high fever, severe headache, tiredness and/or a stiff neck which may last several days to several weeks. The most serious cases of West Nile virus infection can lead to encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain, which can be fatal.

Report dead birds and tree squirrels to 877.968.2473.

Clear Creek Fire 75% contained

The Clear Creek Fire burning in the Carson Valley is 75 percent contained.

The acreage burned has been reduced to 187.

The fire started the evening of July 16 from lightning. While

homes were threatened in the Jacks Valley area, that is no longer the case.

Firefighters expect full containment by Saturday evening.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Border crisis reaching into Nevada

By Tovin Lapan, Las Vegas Sun

Every time the phone rings these days, Rosa Molina steels herself for a heart-wrenching story.

She has been taking far more calls than usual from immigrants, and many of them are sharing tales of abuse and violence. This week, she has already taken a call from a mother who says she paid a smuggler \$7,000 to escort her children from El Salvador to the United States, only to be contacted and asked for an additional \$5,000 if she ever wants to see her children again.

“The problem started last year, but nobody was paying attention,” said Molina, director of the citizenship and immigration program for the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada in Reno. She connects immigrants with pro bono attorneys, a high-demand service in the area.

The surge of immigrants, mostly children and families from Central America, only recently became fodder for newscasts but has been building for years. Apprehensions of unaccompanied children increased from 16,067 in fiscal year 2011 to 24,481 in FY 2012 and 38,833 in FY 2013, according to Customs and Border Patrol.

The numbers have spiked this year, with 57,525 picked up by Border Patrol in the first nine months of FY 2014. If the increased rate holds, the federal government estimates 90,000 children may arrive before the fiscal year ends Sept. 30.

Molina's phone was ringing at 10 times the normal rate last year, and she noticed a lot more calls pertaining to recently arrived children and families. Then the flood hit at the end of spring. The office received more than 120 calls in June alone – a 260 percent increase from normal traffic.

Nevada is not home to any of the government-contracted shelters or other facilities being used for the recently arrived immigrants, but it has not been untouched by the influx.

“Last year, we were seeing more kids traveling alone, mostly between 10 and 14 years old, that were being sent here by immigration authorities because they had family in the area,” Molina said. “Now, we are seeing a lot of women and children together, with the kids as young as 5 years old.”

Typically, the immigrants who show up in Northern Nevada and the Lake Tahoe area have been detained near the Mexican border by immigration authorities and released with a notice to appear in court for deportation proceedings. In Nevada, most end up staying with friends and family.

Read the whole story

Truckee spending money on

economic development

Truckee recently allocated more than \$2.5 million in for two economic development incentive programs: Economic Development Support Program and the Economic Development Fund Program.

These new programs are intended to help foster a healthy, year-round local economy by providing financial assistance for specific projects.

Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce was awarded a grant for two related projects. The first is to work with the lodging industry on the creation of a tourism Business improvement district. The grant will allow the chamber to work with a consultant for further education, outreach and consensus building among the lodging industry, then the necessary documents preparation and hearing process. It is anticipated this could take nine months.

The second related project for which the chamber was awarded a grant is for an integrated place-based marketing and brand campaign. The chamber led a collaborative economic development initiative, Truckee Tomorrow, which was a partnership with the chamber, the Truckee, Truckee Downtown Merchants Association and Nevada County. The group hired Ryan Sharp of the Center for Strategic Economic Research to work with the community to identify strategies for enhancing economic prosperity. Following several community meetings, the group overwhelmingly chose a place-based marketing and brand campaign strategy. The goal of the strategy is to:

- Brand Truckee – establish a brand position which will refine our current and future marketing (both tourism and economic development)
- Inform and educate – educate potential employees and businesses with key information for moving, relocation or starting a business in Truckee

- Diversify the economy – actively marketing Truckee will recruit tourism and non-tourism businesses that will help diversify the economic base and increase revenue

- Maximize marketing effectiveness – by using marketing channels that maximize reach, such as public relations, social media and internet, while using technology to measure performance and further optimize the marketing spend.

The chamber will be required to acquire matching private funding commitments prior to moving forward with the place-based marketing and brand campaign strategy.

**South Shore party scene to be
ramped up with Hard Rock
hotel-casino opening in
winter**



Hard Rock Lake Tahoe expects to open in the 2014-15 ski season.

By Kathryn Reed

Party central – that is what the former Horizon casino is about to be transformed into when it opens this winter as Hard Rock Lake Tahoe.

Don Marrandino, aka Big D to those who knew him when he oversaw Harrah's Lake Tahoe and Harveys from 2003-05, is going to run the property. He is headquartered out of the Las Vegas Hard Rock where he recently returned after having a stint in Atlantic City.

Lake Tahoe News in March was the first publication to reveal the Stateline property would be a Hard Rock Hotel.



Don Marrandino, who has worked at Lake Tahoe before, will be overseeing the Hard Rock. Photo/Kathryn Reed

“The Hard Rock is known for music and fun,” Marrandino said July 17 during the public announcement.

And Marrandino is known for his love of rock ‘n’ roll. He is a huge fan of Bruce Springsteen and Sammy Hagar.

What the music venue or restaurant scene will be like at the new hotel was not released – just that there will be plenty of both. Marrandino was with Caesars Entertainment when Toby Keith opened his I Love This Bar & Grill at Harrah’s Las Vegas. Keith’s closest restaurant to Tahoe is in Folsom. And Keith has played at Harveys Outdoor Concert Series more than once.

Hagar has his Cabo Wabo at Harveys. Plus, there is a Hard Rock Restaurant at Harveys.

Hard Rock restaurants and hotels are separate companies that no longer have anything to do with each other. The restaurant is essentially a concessionaire of the hotel.

Marrandino told *Lake Tahoe News* he doesn’t see a problem with the restaurant next door, saying the hotel’s marketing will be so different no one will be confused.

Marrandino also promised to create the area’s largest outdoor pool party. Entertainment will be poolside, too, just like in Vegas.

Anyone familiar with the Las Vegas Hard Rock knows the property is all about partying – from the Rehab pool to the 4,500-seat Joint music venue.

When the Tahoe property first opened in 1965 as Del Webb’s

Sahara-Tahoe, Elvis Presley, Phyllis Diller and the Osmond Brothers would play there. It was like having a Las Vegas style hotel-casino in Lake Tahoe.

It may return to that same glory.

MontBleu's showroom is the largest on the South Shore with seating for 1,400. A larger capacity indoor venue has long been talked about within the community.



The Horizon closed earlier this year after having been neglected for years.

Photo/LTN

Brothers Jon and David Park are infusing nearly \$60 million to revamp the property from top to bottom. All 539 rooms are being remodeled, with the goal of creating a four-star hotel. The 25,000-square-feet of gaming will include slots and table games.

The Park family split their holdings last fall, with the brothers getting the Horizon. The brothers formed Neva One LLC. They promised not to be absentee property owners. After all, the Park family has been part of the Tahoe-Carson Valley fabric since the 1800s.

(MontBleu, which is across the street from the Horizon, is an Edgewood Companies property. The lease with Tropicana

Entertainment out of Las Vegas expires in 2028.)

Warner Hospitality, which owns or manages 10 casino properties in Southern Nevada, Iowa, New Mexico, California and Washington, will operate the hotel. Warner owns the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino that will open this summer in Sioux City, Iowa, and manages Hard Rock Las Vegas.

The promise is for the Tahoe Hard Rock to open during the 2014-15 ski season.

Heavenly Mountain Resort wants a part of the Hard Rock action.

John Wagon, who heads the ski resort's marketing department, repeatedly said, the Hard Rock is "a game changer."

"It elevates the entire region," Wagon said. "They have the same target audience. It couldn't be a better fit for Heavenly."

That audience is young, likes to drink and likes to party. Heavenly was trying to showcase its young attitude with the Heavenly Angels (young women not dressed in much wearing platform shoes on the mountain handing out Champagne) during the announcement, which was at the resort's gondola midstation.

There's a small storefront near the gondola in Heavenly Village that is a preview center for Hard Rock Lake Tahoe.

Judge's ruling on Calif.

death penalty stuns experts

By Maura Dolan and Victoria Kim, Los Angeles Times

A federal judge's ruling that California's death penalty is unconstitutional was described by legal experts Wednesday as stunning and unprecedented.

The ruling by U.S. District Judge Cormac J. Carney found that decades-long delays and uncertainty about whether condemned inmates will ever be executed violate the constitution's ban on cruel or unusual punishment.

Carney issued his ruling in a decision that overturned the death sentence of Ernest Dewayne Jones, a Los Angeles man sentenced to die for the 1992 rape and murder of Julia Miller, his girlfriend's mother.

In overturning Jones' death sentence, Carney noted that the inmate faced "complete uncertainty as to when, or even whether" he would be executed.

He pointed out that more than 900 people have been sentenced to death in California since 1978 but only 13 have been executed.

Read the whole story

Fire damages Incline restaurant

La Casona Restaurant in Incline Village sustained minor damage from a fire on July 16.

The blaze started about 7:50pm.

North Lake Tahoe firefighters are still investigating the cause.

Monitoring and mop up are occurring today.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Carson Valley fire at 300 acres



The Clear Fire started July 16 after 6pm. Photo/Valerie Smith

The Clear Creek Fire burning in the sagebrush above the Carson Valley grew to 300 acres overnight. It is 25 percent contained.

About 40 residences along Jacks Valley Road in the Clear Creek subdivision are on voluntary evacuation. Clear Creek Road is closed from Lower Clear Creek to Clubhouse Road to all but homeowners.

The fire started July 16 by lightning. The spread on the eastern flank is slowing, while the western edge is still active, according to officials.

The U.S. Forest Service is the lead agency. Area crews, including Tahoe Douglas firefighters, have been assisting. An air assault will resume this morning.

Officials are worried about the threat of more lightning strikes later today.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Smoke in Truckee from fire north of Reno

Smoke was drifting into Truckee on Wednesday from the Evans Fire.

It is burning near Hallelujah Junction on Highway 395, north of Reno.

It had burned more than 700 acres as of 6pm July 16.

Lightning strikes Carson Valley hillside



Lightning on July 16 ignited a brush fire in Jacks Valley. Photo/Valerie Smith

Updated 9:40pm

A fire is burning out of control in the Jacks Valley area of the Carson Valley.

As of 9 Wednesday night it had burned approximately 150 acres.

“A subdivision is threatened,” Capt. Troy Valenzuela with East Fork Fire told *Lake Tahoe News*. Some residents in the Clear Creek neighborhood were on voluntary evacuation.

Known at the Clear Creek Fire, it is mostly moving in a south to southwest direction. Road closures at this time are Jacks Valley Road at Highway 395 and Genoa Lakes Golf Course.

Air resources were used until dark. Hand crews will work through the night.

Several people saw the lightning strike the dry hillside just after 6pm July 16, including firefighters with East Fork. Lightning had been prevalent throughout much of the early evening. More is forecast for the next couple days.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*