

American Fire restoration plans unveiled

By Barbara Barte Osborn, Sacramento Bee

NEVADA CITY — Tahoe National Forest Supervisor Tom Quinn approved a plan Tuesday for restoration of forest lands burned by last year's American Fire.

The fire, which started in August near Foresthill in Placer County, burned about 27,000 acres, including more than 22,000 acres on the Tahoe National Forest.

The Big Hope Fire Salvage and Restoration Project calls for tree planting on approximately 7,300 acres to speed regrowth and prevent soil erosion, salvage harvesting of about 3,440 acres and hazardous-tree reduction on 125 miles of roads and trails.

Read the whole story

Caesars closing Atlantic City casino

By Howard Stutz, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Caesars Entertainment Corp. said Friday it would close one of four casinos the Las Vegas-based company operates in Atlantic City, shutting down operations of the Showboat on Aug. 31.

The Showboat will be the second U.S. casino financially strapped Caesars has closed this year. Earlier this month, the

company closed Harrah's Tunica in northern Mississippi.

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

Caesars has a gaming industry-high \$23 billion in long-term debt.

In a statement, Caesars Entertainment Chairman Gary Loveman said the Atlantic City market has lost \$3 billion in revenue since 2006 because of competition from neighboring states.

Read the whole story

Online gaming revenue falls short

By Adrienne Lu, Stateline.org

State lawmakers who dream of dollar signs from legalized online gambling might want to pause for a moment to consider Delaware, Nevada and New Jersey.

Last year, the three states became the first in the country to legalize Internet gaming. But as New Jersey Treasurer Andrew Sidamon-Eristoff told state lawmakers earlier this year: "Clearly, the results so far have not met our expectations."

New Jersey officials initially predicted legal online gambling would boost state tax revenues by \$180 million in fiscal 2014. By the time Republican Gov. Chris Christie signed the budget last June, the figure had been revised downward to \$160 million.

By the end of May, one month shy of the fiscal year's end, the state had taken in just \$9.3 million in revenue from online gambling, according to the nonpartisan Office of Legislative Services. And with collections in April and May falling below those in March, online gambling isn't even trending upward. State officials have blamed the slow start on technology glitches and payment processing issues.

Nevada and Delaware, which have much smaller populations than New Jersey, also have collected only modest revenue from online gambling.

In Delaware, state officials had counted on \$7.5 million in additional tax revenue in fiscal year 2014. But because of a delayed rollout and one-time startup costs, Internet gaming made no net contributions to the state budget in fiscal 2014, state officials said. The startup costs included software design and data servers to host the gambling.

In Nevada, officials opted not to make revenue projections for the nascent industry – or to count on the money in its budget. The state, which legalized only interactive poker, generated about \$700,000 in tax revenue from about \$10.2 million in gaming wins from May 2013 through April of this year, according to Michael Lawton, a senior research analyst with the Nevada State Gaming Control Board.

"We just didn't feel that it would be wise to put out a number," Lawton said. "It was just too much unknown."

In March, Morgan Stanley chopped its market projection for the U.S. online gaming industry by 30 percent, from \$5 billion to \$3.5 billion by 2017, "to better reflect the insights we have gained following the first few months of operations" in Delaware, Nevada and New Jersey.

Read the whole story

Placer, El Dorado among healthiest counties for kids in U.S.

By Darrell Smith, Sacramento Bee

Local health officers have a common recipe for keeping their counties' children healthy: Make sure children and their parents have ready access to doctors. Provide prenatal care for young mothers. Educate families on healthy habits. Keep kids active and in school.

"One of the drivers of economic health is the physical and mental health of the community," said Robert Oldham, Placer County health officer. "Having an approach that looks at many different factors – getting more into the schools, environments that support physical activity, education – there's not one intervention that has an impact."

It's a blueprint that placed Placer, Yolo and El Dorado counties among America's 50 Healthiest Counties for Kids 2014-15, according to recently released rankings published in U.S. News and World Report. Placer County ranked 17th among the nation's top 50 counties; Yolo County placed 30th; El Dorado County was No. 43. All three – Placer (2); Yolo (5); and El Dorado (7) – finished in the top 10 among California's 58 counties.

Read the whole story

Nev. group pushes for marriage equality

By Yesenia Amaro, Las Vegas Review-Journal

There's a new group in Nevada, and its goal is to establish marriage equality in the state in 2016 or sooner.

Freedom Nevada, a nonprofit coalition, this month formed a statewide 20-member advisory committee that includes lawmakers, attorneys, religious organizations and equal opportunity organizations, among others.

"People have a fundamental right to form families," said Bishop Dan T. Edwards with the Episcopal Diocese of Nevada, which has taken "heat" for its position of this issue. "This is a matter of civil rights when it comes to state law."

Those on the committee will lay the groundwork to rally state voters to say "yes" in 2016 to a ballot measure allowing all couples, including same-sex couples, to have the freedom to marry.

The effort is modeled on similar work that has proved successful in states such as Maryland, Maine and Washington, where voters approved same-sex marriage ballot measures, organizers said.

In 2013, the Nevada Legislature approved Senate Joint Resolution 13 to amend the state's constitution to recognize all marriages, regardless of gender. The legislation would need to be approved by lawmakers again during the 2015 legislative session before going to the voters in 2016.

Read the whole story

State money to help roads in Placer, Nevada counties

Placer and Nevada counties are benefiting from the \$510 million the California Transportation Commission released this week.

The money will be spent on 83 transportation projects in the state.

Here are some of the significant projects:

- Placer County: \$4.9 million to rehabilitate 12.6 miles of Highway 267 from the Nevada County line to Brockway Summit.
 - Nevada County: \$4.4 million to build a pedestrian/bicycle undercrossing at the Donner Creek underpass in Truckee.
 - Nevada County: \$3.1 million to Truckee to widen the Union Pacific Railroad grade separation at the "Mousehole" on Highway 89.
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Poll: Californians financially better off

By Josh Richman, San Jose Mercury News

For the first time in seven years, more California voters say they're financially better off compared to the previous year than not, a Field Poll finds.

Forty-four percent of the state's registered voters are feeling they're doing better now than a year ago, while 28 percent say they're worse off and 28 percent say there's no change, the poll found. But the level of optimism on this and other questions differ dramatically, depending on where the voters live and how much money they make.

Nowhere is the outlook sunnier than in the Bay Area, where those who say California is having good economic times are tied with those who say we're in bad times, at 35 percent each. This probably is the result of who lives and works in the Bay Area: Democrats and more affluent people are far likelier to say we're having good times, according to the poll.

But the rest of the state is also feeling somewhat better.

Read the whole story

38 pounds of pot confiscated in Truckee

Truckee police officers seized approximately 38 pounds of processed marijuana from a traffic stop on Interstate 80 on June 26.

At approximately 8:15pm a California Highway Patrol officer conducted a traffic stop on a grey Dodge Charger on eastbound Interstate 80 near the central Truckee off ramp. An officer observed several indicators of possible narcotics trafficking.

Truckee K-9 Trax and his handler responded. Several cardboard boxes and two large plastic storage containers had 31 heat sealed plastic packages of processed marijuana, according to officials. The estimated street value is more than \$100,000.

The driver, Eric Draffen, 52, of New York was arrested on three felony counts of narcotics trafficking, possession, and possession for sales.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Police enforce rules at Live at Lakeview

South Lake Tahoe police officers were clearly visible at the first Live at Lakeview concert on June 26.

“Last night, we issued several citations for mostly smoking and drinking offenses,” Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Our intent is to make clear the desire to keep

the Live at Lakeview event family friendly. Last year, we were not as enforcement oriented as we could have been in hopes of voluntary compliance. It was clear that this was a mistake as people took advantage and harmed the event atmosphere.”

Cigarette and pot smoking have been a growing concern at the concerts, which are now in their third year. Smoking of any kind is not permitted at the city owned facility.

The City Council last year at the end of the concert season had directed the police department to have a greater presence at the venue.

“We will continue the pressure to keep people from breaking the law at this event throughout the summer,” Uhler added.

The free concerts are every Thursday from 4:30-8:30pm through Aug. 28.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

May was a good month of Nev. casinos

It might have helped Northern Nevada casinos to have a local horse in the Kentucky Derby and Preakness in May. Gaming revenue was up in Stateline, Reno and the entire state last month compared to the prior year.

One of the owners of California Chrome, the winner of those two races, works in Gardnerville and lives in Topaz Lake. Sports books were busy because of this.

The Nevada Gaming Control Board on Friday released May’s

gaming revenue numbers.

At Stateline, casinos brought in \$17 million – an increase of 8 percent compared to May 2013. Reno revenue was \$52 million – an increase of 4 percent. Nevada as a whole collected \$970 million for an 8.11 percent increase.

The three online poker websites in the state saw an 8.8 percent increase in revenue from April to \$862,000.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*