

Extended fire season puts California on alert

By Haya El Nasser, Aljazeera America

The climate change debate currently pits the bulk of the scientific community against holdouts who don't believe rising temperatures are the result of human activity. But in California, a state suffering from a historic drought, why the phenomenon is happening is less important than the simple fact that it is.

Forecasters and fire agencies have tossed aside their normal fire calendar – mid-May to mid-October – and now prepare for what some call a new normal of a greatly extended fire season. They are hiring extra staff and issuing more warnings. Some local officials have warned that fire season in some parts of California has basically become a year-round phenomenon.

The National Weather Service has been issuing an unprecedented number of fire forecasts and alerts in the thick of the usually-wet season, months earlier than normal. Its forecast offices have kicked into fire-season mode well ahead of schedule.

The Sacramento office, which issues fire forecasts for interior Northern California, decided last week to up its daily seven-day forecasts to twice a day, and its National Fire Danger Rating System, which measures the seriousness of fire conditions, is going out earlier.

Read the whole story

Airbnb wants to be a travel agent

By Elizabeth Dwoskin, Wall Street Journal

Airbnb wants to be a travel agent.

People who opened the apartment-sharing company's mobile app in San Francisco on Thursday found something new: recommendations for rentals around Lake Tahoe and other nearby getaways.

Surabhi Gupta, an Airbnb software engineer, said the feature is part of an effort by the six-year-old company to play a bigger role in "discovery" – helping people plan vacations and find new destinations. She spoke at a conference at Airbnb's San Francisco headquarters Thursday.

Read the whole story

Republicans back Brown's rainy day fund concept

By Chris Megerian, Los Angeles Times

SACRAMENTO – Gov. Jerry Brown has Democrats and Republicans on board with the broad outlines of his plan for stockpiling some cash and paying off debt.

But as the special legislative session Brown called on the issue opened Thursday, it was clear that, as lawmakers like to say, the devil could be in the details.

Republicans, whose votes the Democratic governor needs to place his measure on the fall ballot, want tighter controls on the reserve fund than the governor has proposed. One senator said there might be a loophole in the plan that could help Brown fund the state's troubled bullet train network – a project most Republicans oppose.

On the other side of the aisle, Senate leader Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento, has publicly balked at Brown's insistence that lawmakers act on his proposal now rather than later this year. Democrats also could hold out for the restoration of more healthcare and social service funds cut during the recession.

Read the whole story

Technology helping combat human trafficking

By Timothy Ballard

Nonprofit organizations, law enforcement agencies worldwide and even private industries are increasingly researching and funding technological innovations to disrupt and stem the global epidemic of human trafficking.

Worldwide, 2.4 million people are human trafficking victims at any given time, according to a 2012 United Nations report. Eighty percent of them are children and women sold into sexual slavery.

These technological innovations allow us to attack the problem

from many angles, from raising awareness and decreasing tolerance to actually identifying and locating traffickers and their customers.

We have partnered with numerous companies so we have cutting-edge software tools, some of which we're providing free of charge to governments in developing countries, as well as domestic agencies.

O.U.R. was created Jan. 1 under the auspices of North American Child Rescue Association. As of early April, its volunteer Jump Team members had rescued 35 children in child trafficking stings in Nicaragua, Haiti and other locations not disclosed because of ongoing operations. O.U.R.'s efforts this year have already resulted in more than a dozen arrests.

Here are some of the tools currently used, or planned for use, by the O.U.R:

- Child Protection System software: Developed specifically to help locate and capture child predators, the software pinpoints on a world map, in real time, whenever child rape videos are shared. Operators can monitor the frequency of sharing, identify certain types of files on the computers to identify those actually abusing the children, and zoom in to pinpoint the location. The software was developed by the late Hank Asher, a software entrepreneur and board member of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. O.U.R. is working to distribute it cost free to governments that do not have this or similar software. This is one of the most important products and services that our organization delivers.

- Google Glass: People wearing Google's new computer eyewear can, among many other things, shoot hands-free video and photos and share the recording. O.U.R. member Jesse Stay, founder of Commerce Futurists, is donating his Google Glass for O.U.R's next few missions so a team member can record the

rescues as they occur. One of the important benefits of social media is to bring the news to the world in real time. Google Glass enables us to provide a first-person view of our missions and share that with the world. We hope to do Google+ Hangouts and YouTube videos, which we will share with our social media audiences, allowing those who support us to be as much a part of this effort as we all are. O.U.R. hopes to eventually have deeper support from Google for this use.

- **Mobile Cause:** This fundraising and mobile marketing platform allows nonprofits to raise money and receive recurring donations through Mobile Pledging, which enables donors to donate when the impulse strikes them. It expands on “Text to Give,” the platform that was launched during the Haiti disaster and prompted mass donations in gifts of \$5 or \$10. Mobile Cause allows for donations of any size, and donors can share donations by posting to Facebook or Twitter from their phone. Nonprofits can also share their missions and effectiveness to prospective donors through messages and videos. Mobile Cause charges no transaction fees. Donors to O.U.R. can text: save to 41444 to give any amount using a credit or debit card.

Timothy Ballard is the founder and CEO of Operation Underground Railroad, a coalition of former CIA, U.S. special agents, Navy SEALs, Green Berets and a number of celebrities who are on a mission to abolish slavery, domestically and abroad.

Brady: ‘A leadership void

exists within the sheriff's office'



David Brady

Publisher's note: *Lake Tahoe News asked the three Douglas County sheriff's candidates a series of questions. The responses are running in the order they were received. All but one question is the same.*

Name: David James Brady

Age: 58

Occupation: President of Brady & Associates, a financial services firm.

Certified financial planner (1988)

What groups, nonprofits, other civic involvement are you part of outside of work?: Board of director: Carson Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Foundation for Douglas County, 1 Family 1 Restaurant, Suicide Prevention Network of Douglas County.

Member: Business Council of Douglas County, Minden Rotary International.

Education: Master of public administration USC 1981

Bachelor of science in Public Affairs USC 1977

Certified financial planner designation USC 1987

Public management certificate UNR 2006

Certified public official certificate UNR 2006

CA P.O.S.T basic, intermediate, and advanced certificate

NV P.O.S.T reserve certificate.

In Tahoe during the morning commute there are often multiple deputies out on Highway 50. How is enforcing speed the best use of limited resources?: Traffic enforcement is a vital element of public safety. High visibility patrol is a common deterrent to aggressive driving tactics and excessive speed. Targeted enforcement to reduce accidents in high frequency areas is proactive in nature and could save lives ultimately. Priority calls for service will always be handled accordingly.

When the South Shore is busy rental units often have so many vehicles they spillover onto the streets to create a problem for locals and pose a safety issue. Currently, nothing is being done about this issue. What do you think should be done to address this ongoing issue?: I am familiar with this issue, having responded to such calls for service as a reserve deputy sheriff. Following an initial response from the sheriff's department to address the immediate concern of safety, it should be the responsibility of the code enforcement officer to keep a log of such incidents, contact the rental owner and if the problems persists, revoke their permit.

Do you believe it's better for the head of a law enforcement agency to come from inside or outside the department? Why?: As a general rule, I believe having the head of a law enforcement agency come from inside the department is appropriate, given certain conditions. One of the critical roles of any chief executive is to identify and develop the leadership of tomorrow. If this role is not exercised by the head of the organization, a leadership void is created, and it then

becomes incumbent to reach outside the organization for talent.

A leadership void exists within the sheriff's office. For three decades, the sheriff has been selected from within the department, with the added benefit of not having any contested elections. After 20-plus years of the same administration, it is time for a fresh perspective, and a multi-dimensional approach to leadership of the organization. This election will provide the "best of both worlds" in that both Steve Orr and I have multiple career experiences in leadership roles within the county and with other public agency organizations.

Why do you want to be sheriff?: I was fortunate to know early in my life that I wanted to be a police officer. Upon graduating college, I served as a police officer in Redondo Beach as a patrolman, traffic officer and K9 officer. I quickly realized where my passion rested, and that I wanted to make a career in law enforcement. My vocation was to one day lead a public safety organization. To that end, I went back to college and obtained my master's in public administration from USC in 1981.

Family obligations brought me to Douglas County in 1985. While working as financial investigator for the Gaming Control Board, I obtained my certified financial planner designation and subsequently began a career in the financial services industry, serving police and fire associations throughout California and Nevada.

I never lost my passion for public safety, and served for 15 years as a reserve deputy sheriff in Douglas County. For the past 29 years, I have committed myself to public service, and have enjoyed multiple career experiences in leadership roles, all of which have been progressively responsible administrative and supervisory in nature.

We have seen a paradigm shift in local government finance in

the past eight years, and the challenge has been to “do more with less”. My extensive background in banking, finance, and financial planning, combined with my passion to serve in a law enforcement leadership role have prepared me to serve as your sheriff. I welcome the opportunity, and would bring a fresh perspective, vision and passion to the position.

Why should someone vote for you over someone else?: Voters should critically evaluate all candidates in terms of their education and experience to determine each individual’s credentials and potential to serve as their sheriff. My broad based background, advanced education, extensive work experience and training, in both the public and private sector make me uniquely qualified to serve as your sheriff. I will bring multiple career experiences in leadership roles to the position.

Previous positions have included president of the Douglas County School Board and vice chair of the Douglas County Commission. In the private sector, I was a board member and treasurer of the Greater Nevada Credit Union. For 27 years, I have been a small business owner, and currently am president of Brady & Associates, a financial services firm.

I have 25 years of street level experience, which includes eight years as a police officer in the city of Redondo Beach, two years as a financial investigator for the Nevada Gaming Control Board, and 15 years as a reserve deputy sheriff for DCSO.

As important, I am the only candidate who has developed a strategy and action plan for the department. I intend on conducting an operational audit to determine where the organization can be more efficient, and reduce the cost structure where appropriate. We will develop a strategic plan to identify the needs of both the department and the community. We will also seek national accreditation for the organization through the Commission on Accreditation For Law

Enforcement Agencies Inc. Such participation will improve service delivery, strengthen crime prevention efforts, and formalize essential management procedures.

Finally, I have announced that Steve Orr will join our management team as undersheriff following a successful election. Steve served in DCSO for 26 years and achieved the rank of captain prior to becoming the chief of police in Lewiston, Idaho, in 2008. I believe we will provide a "value added" proposition to the taxpayers and residents of Douglas County with our extensive leadership experience and operational expertise.

What is your stand on medical marijuana? What kind of enforcement issue would that present for the department?: The advent of medical marijuana dispensaries in Nevada is becoming a reality as a result of recent legislative laws. To the commission's credit, they voted unanimously for a 180-day moratorium while officials evaluate legal considerations and the impact on county financial resources. This issue is a work in progress, in which the scope of the enforcement challenges have yet to be clearly defined.

As sheriff, my role would be to enforce any ordinances established by the commission, as well as any Nevada Revised Statutes set by the state Legislature.

What do you believe is needed for a good relationship between the sheriff's department and county commissioners?: Regular communication between the sheriff and the County Commission is a critical element for a good working relationship. In my six years as a commissioner, I took the initiative to meet with other county officials including the DA, fire chief and department heads to discuss issues and keep the lines of communication open. During my tenure, communication between the sheriff and the board was limited. As sheriff, I would be proactive in maintaining positive relationships with the commission through ongoing and consistent communication.

If the commissioners cut your budget by 10 percent, what program or people would you cut? Please be specific.: To put the question in perspective, a 10 percent cut in the sheriff's department represents a reduction of \$1,500,000. First and foremost, I would critically evaluate the potential role of civilians serving in a law enforcement capacity. Not all positions within the organization need to be filled with "PERS paid or POST certified" deputies. In 2010, as a commissioner, during the budget process, I challenged the entire command staff of the department to examine the potential for cost savings, using this approach. It was ignored. The cost structure of the command staff is expensive and can be restructured to include a civilian management analyst with a subsequent reduction in cost to the taxpayer.

In 2008, I advocated for the county to embrace "Priority Based Budgeting" as an alternative to the standard "across the board" budget cuts typically employed during the budget development process. To the county manager's credit, the county has transitioned to PBB with great success.

I would evaluate those services provided within the fourth quartile rankings, and look to eliminate accordingly.

What is your relationship with businesses at Lake Tahoe that work with the sheriff's department on various events? If anything, what would you consider changing?: I would look to develop personal relationships with the businesses at Lake Tahoe, and make it a priority to be directly involved and visible within the Lake Tahoe community. I will create a personal presence and make this one of my priorities.

The sheriff's department has always refused to make the New Year's Eve celebration at Stateline a sanctioned or permitted event. The casinos have asked for this and have wanted to expand the festivities, but DCSO says no. Do you believe this is a good policy? Why or why not? And how would you address it?: In the 1990s, this issue was visited by DCSO and the

casinos. The casino representatives were not interested at that time due to concerns with the intoxicated 18-, 29-year-olds that populate the corridor during the celebration events. I am willing to revisit this issue, if that is the desire of the casinos. The responsibility of issuing special use permits is the role of the board of commissioners. Any issuance of a permit would require the applicants for the permit to pay the related costs of all related law enforcement expenses for the event. Currently, those costs are absorbed by the county.

You have said you want Steve Orr as your undersheriff. Orr was somewhat divisive when he was a captain for DCSO. How do you think he would fit into the institution now?: Rather than respond to undocumented comments, a factual review of the evidence regarding Steve Orr's performance puts a different light on his abilities, credibility and the positive aspect he will bring to the sheriff's office. An assessment of Steve's performance evaluations as chief of police in Lewiston, Idaho, for the past seven years reflect an average rating of 8.125, out of a possible rating of 9. Every year his summary evaluation ranking was "distinguished". He received a No. 9 in the following categories: Leadership ability, relationship with associates, and supervising others.

Moreover, the following comments were included in his evaluations:

2009 "He has gained the trust and support of management, co-workers and his department."

2010 "Steve continues to bring fresh approaches to Lewiston law enforcement due to his maturity and outside experience."

2011 "Your actions and behaviors embody pride, thoroughness, and high ethical standards which is then reflective of the entire department."

2012 "Your leadership of the department is exceptional."

2014 "Your emphasis on re-building trust within the department has been very successful. You have every right to be proud of this accomplishment."

Steve will strengthen the organization and enhance the operational cohesiveness.

Douglas County sheriff's deputies make less than South Lake Tahoe police officers and El Dorado County sheriff's deputies. Does this hamper efforts to recruit employees? Do you believe deputies should be paid more? Why or why not? If yes, how would you go about getting them more money?: Douglas County is in the process of conducting a salary and benefit survey for all employees to assess the state of employee salary and benefits relative to similar counties. This survey will provide baseline data from which we can determine if employees are being compensated fairly and equitably. Previously, as the chief negotiator for a police association, I worked from the premise that compensation and benefits for my membership should be in the upper quartile of those cities in the "comparison pool". The city mutually agreed with this position, and we worked collaboratively to achieve that goal. This became a multi-year endeavor and the framework for all future negotiations. Recruitment can be a function of compensation, and that is just reality. You will always have individuals choosing other agencies or leaving an organization for additional compensation, no matter the condition of the department. I would work closely with DCSPA to understand the issues relative to collective bargaining, and offer my insight, expertise and assistance where appropriate. Having sat on "both sides of the table" I can appreciate the challenges germane to negotiations.

What is lacking in the department right now in terms of personnel or equipment or other resources? How would you address those needs?: What is lacking within the department currently is a strategy to deliver public safety services in a smarter and more efficient manner. To that end, as part of our

action plan, we intend on conducting an operational audit to examine the departments' organizational structure and culture, compare the state of the department to industry standards and best practices, increase efficiency, identify workloads, and recommend appropriate staffing.

Further, we will develop a strategic plan to examine and identify the needs of the organization and the community, create a vision, engage in financial planning, and develop an approach to address the opportunities and goals established during the entire process.

What do you think is the biggest issue facing Douglas County Sheriff's Office and how do you plan to resolve it?: I think the biggest operational issue facing the Douglas County Sheriff's Office is poor morale. During my 15-year tenure as a reserve deputy, I have seen a deterioration in the mood and morale of the employees serving on the front lines. The great recession has presented challenging financial times, and staff is witnessing reductions in compensation due to salary cuts, and corresponding increased health care costs. Compounding the situation is that during this similar time frame, calls for service have increased by 33 percent, (12,131 call increase between 2008-12) placing unrealistic demands on a department with a static field force. Employees are overworked, unappreciated, and not respected. The chief operations officer's response concerning these conditions has been to reply, "Morale is not his problem". Clearly, a lack of insight and leadership. For the sheriff to support this type of response demonstrates an absence of leadership and vision on his part. The culture of the organization needs to change where employees are valued, respected and feel empowered. My first initiative would be to "lead by listening" wherein I would meet with all employees individually to hear of their concerns, ideas and how they feel they can best serve the organization, as well as the community. I would develop open lines of communication where open and constructive dialog is

encouraged and respected. This is an example of behavior that has a “high impact and low cost”. I have always believed that “those closest to the work should design it.” When employees have ownership of the ideas and plans to improve an organization, big things can happen.

While this does not address the financial conditions, I would work tirelessly to engage the board of commissioners to fulfill one of their budget directives for the 2014-15 budget which is to “Plan for future investments in employees”.

What is one do-over you would like to have in terms of a professional decision you have made?: I would have reconsidered my departure from the Nevada Gaming Control Board as a financial investigator. The work was interesting, challenging and fun.

Tell us something about yourself that people might not already know?: I am a twin, a kidney donor, and graduated magna cum laude from the University of Southern California.

Bear trap tampering case continues in Incline

A mother and daughter from Incline Village on April 23 admitted in court that they tampered with a bear trap. Cheryl Ann Morrison and her 35-year-old daughter, Season, contend they did so because state wildlife officials illegally set the traps.

According to the *Reno Gazette-Journal*, Judge Alan Tiras did not render a decision after the daylong hearing in Incline Justice Court, but instead wants more input from both

attorneys regarding the Oct. 9 incident.

Charges against the women include deliberately tripping a trailed culvert trap, obstructing or interfering with an officer of the Department of Wildlife and tampering with a vehicle.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Dems unable to find worthy candidate to challenge Sandoval

By Kyle Roerink, Las Vegas Sun

Democrats outnumber Republicans by 77,000 voters in Nevada, they control the state Legislature and they boast the most powerful member of the U.S. Senate.

But they're unabashed about their failure to find a viable candidate to challenge incumbent Republican Gov. Brian Sandoval.

"We couldn't find a candidate," Sen. Harry Reid, godfather of Nevada Democrats, said in an interview with the *Las Vegas Sun* this week.

That's a much different message than the Senate majority leader gave two months ago.

Read the whole story

Calif. Senate undergoes ethics training

By Laurel Rosenhall, Fresno Bee

Imagine this: A state senator is carrying a package of bills for a major corporation. The same company backs a foundation that plans to give the senator its national legislative achievement award. The award comes with \$25,000 cash.

What ethical or legal issues does the scenario raise?

That question was among several that California senators discussed Wednesday during special ethics training prompted by the unusual spate of problems to hit the Capitol in recent months.

Two senators have been charged with corruption in separate FBI investigations and a third has been convicted of perjury for lying about where he lived when he ran for office. A fourth is fighting a judge's recommended order that he pay a fine for campaign money-laundering, and two high-profile Sacramento lobbying firms have paid record-setting fines for violating state lobbying laws.

"Money has a corrosive effect on politics and on legislatures and congresses throughout the land," Senate leader Darrell Steinberg said after the training. "But these are the rules."

The rules forbid a direct exchange of money for policy, as described in the example above and as alleged by federal authorities who claim that Democratic Senators Ron Calderon of Montebello and Leland Yee of San Francisco took bribes from undercover FBI agents seeking official actions from them in

the Capitol. Calderon and Yee have pleaded not guilty.

Read the whole story

S. Tahoe woman involved in Kingsbury Grade wreck

The two-vehicle accident that snarled traffic on Kingsbury Grade on Thursday involved drivers from South Lake Tahoe and Gardnerville.

Pamela Tracy, 67, of South Lake Tahoe crossed over the center line, striking a GMC driven by Cynthia Hendrickson, 59, of Gardnerville that was traveling west, according to Nevada Highway Patrol Trooper Daniel Lopez.

Both drivers were Care Flighted to Renown Medical Center in Reno with non-life threatening injuries.

The GMC was engulfed in flames after the accident.

"Drugs or alcohol is being considered to be a contributing factor," Lopez told *Lake Tahoe News*.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Greene leaving LTCC for

college presidency

By Kathryn Reed

Sometimes it takes just one application. That was the case for Tom Greene.

It means Lake Tahoe Community College's vice president of Academic Affairs and Student Services is leaving. This summer he becomes president of American River College in Sacramento.



Tom Greene is leaving LTCC to be president of American River College. Photo/LTN file

"I didn't send out a bunch of applications. This is the only one I sent out in California. I did because I know it's a good fit and I worked in that district before," Greene told *Lake Tahoe News*. "I know it's a good college. It's a real opportunity where the institution can invest in teaching and learning for students."

Greene was hired in 2010 by LTCC from Sacramento City College where he had been associate vice president of Enrollment and Student Services. This was his second stint at LTCC. Previously he had been a counselor.

He doesn't plan to make any dramatic changes at the get-go.

"It comes down to me to create the best conditions so that others can exercise their passion and talent. It's more about removing barriers than building anything," Greene said.

He will be going from one of the smallest community colleges in the state to one of the largest. American River College has 30,000 students. But Sac City was large, too, so he knows what he is getting into.

"At a smaller college you are forced to get involved with many things and into the granular detail," Greene said. "At a larger college there are so many more layers. The people at a small college are the heart of the institution. My heart is still in Tahoe with the college and the people."

Another thing he'll miss is the outdoors – especially being able to mountain bike after work.

For the time being he will also be leaving his wife behind and returning to a commuter relationship. Suzanne Roberts is an English instructor at LTCC and intends to continue her position there through at least the next school year.

Before the couple married and Greene got the VP job at LTCC they did the Tahoe-Sac commute. It will resume again this summer. Greene does not have a definitive start date in Sacramento, but plans to leave LTCC in June.

"The college as a whole is very excited for Dr. Greene's accomplishment. He is a very talented and exceptional college professional. While the faculty, staff, board, and students are saddened by losing Tom, we know he will go on to lead American River College in a manner that is student focused," Kindred Murillo, president of LTCC, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Murillo said LTCC is working on a transition plan that should be in place by mid-May that will be for the short term and long term.

In addition to Greene's job at the college, he has been the chair of the board for the Tahoe Prosperity Center for the past 18 months.

He will give up those responsibilities knowing Heidi Hill Drum has been hired as the executive director, that a \$167,000 grant from the state Public Utilities Commission to fund a comprehensive assessment of broadband in the entire Lake Tahoe Basin is about to be awarded the TPC, and that the organization will be the leader in maintaining the commodities bank for tourist accommodation units and commercial floor area are in place.

Greene said the greatest outcome to date with the center is creating a model for how collaboration can work among those in the basin and beyond.