

Gaming revenue drops dramatically in Stateline

While the statewide gaming win was slightly down in October, revenue fell dramatically in Stateline.

The Nevada Gaming Control Board on Wednesday said casinos across the state collected \$954 million, which is down 2.6 percent from October 2012.

On the South Shore gaming revenue fell 23 percent to \$12 million from the previous year.

Reno casino revenue dropped 1 percent to \$43 million.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Nevada bear hunt total at 14

By AP

Hunters have killed 14 black bears in Nevada so far this year.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife says six have been killed west of Highway 395 since the season began Sept. 15.

The agency this year excluded the Lake Tahoe Basin and along popular hiking trails on Mount Rose Summit from the hunt area after complaints from residents.

Wildlife commissioners set a quota of 20 bears for 2013. The season ends Dec. 31 unless 20 bears are killed before then.

Ten bears have been male, with the largest weighing about 500 pounds.

Five have been killed in the Pine Nut Mountains.

This is the third year Nevada has allowed the hunting of black bears. Wildlife commissioners have said they will review the bear hunt after this season.

Forest Plan attempts to bring balance to basin

By Kathryn Reed

People have plenty of ideas how the 150,000 acres in the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit of the U.S. Forest Service should be managed. The agency received about 18,500 comments on the environmental document for the Forest Plan.

While wilderness areas and snowmobiling were some of the more contentious issues during public hearings, they did not dominate the comments. No new wilderness areas have been added. The Forest Service wants to find a way for snowmobilers and non-motorized recreationists to play outdoors without annoying each other.



Rabe Meadow in Stateline is a small part of what the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit oversees. Photo/LTN

Jeff Marsolais, deputy forest supervisor, said the key with the plan is to bring balance to the various needs of the people using the forest, as well as the animals and plants that call it home.

“One thing holds true, there are folks on both sides of pretty much all of the issues. It gets back to balance,” Marsolais said. Some want more aggressive management for wildfire protection, others want less intrusive approaches; some want less recreation, others want more.

Some of the comments pointed out science the Forest Service was not using. Marsolais said his team listened and more science is part of the document.

The Forest Plan is the guiding document for the local Forest Service office for the next 15 years. Comments are being accepted on the final environmental impact statement until Jan. 21.

The previous Forest Plan had 21 management areas; this one has four. This will make things more efficient with less needless redundancy.

The Stanford Rock Backcountry Area, which is approximately 3,800 acres between Blackwood and Ward canyons, has been

added.

“People who go to those special places want a little bit more solitude and not necessarily have it be wilderness,” Marsolais told *Lake Tahoe News*.

One thing the public will notice is an increase of 5 percent of the land being designated for recreation. This could mean various things – a few more parking spaces or developed campsites.

“Just because the plan authorizes it doesn’t mean we will do it,” Marsolais said.

This plan is not about projects. It’s more of a big-picture planning document that outlines allowable uses.

This Forest Plan is long overdue. Work on it started in the early 2000s. Twice the Forest Service was sued – in 2005 and 2008. This meant starting over to come up with a planning tool that would not be litigated. That happened in 2012.

New to this document compared to others is how climate change could affect the forest lands.

“This Forest Plan considers the effect of changing climate and establishes standards and guides for species management and vegetation management,” Marsolais said. “This plan creates a space for us to be more adaptable to use new science or assessments for how to do projects on the ground.”

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Notes:

- The Forest Service will have two webinars to explain the final plan, highlight changes from the draft and outline the remainder of the plan revision process. The first will be Dec. 9 from 5-6pm. The second will be Jan. 14 from 2-3pm. The webinars will feature a brief presentation, followed by a

question and answer period, and they will be archived on the LTBMU website for later viewing.

- The plan, final EIS, draft record of decision and webinar info is online.
 - CDs or print copies are available at 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe or by calling (530) 543.2694.
 - A record of decision could be signed in the spring, at which time the document takes effect.
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Vehicle accident injures driver; cuts power in Bijou

Power is out in the Bijou area of South Lake Tahoe because a vehicle rammed a pole on Fairway Avenue this evening.

Sgt. Jeff Regan told *Lake Tahoe News* the pole was splintered and will have to be replaced.

Liberty Utilities did not have an estimated time of when the electricity will be back on Nov. 26.

The name of the South Lake Tahoe resident who had to be transported to Barton Memorial Hospital has not been released.

Regan said the accident is under investigate and that alcohol could be a contributing factor.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

SLT city attorney says no to paid parking foes

By Kathryn Reed

The group of South Lake Tahoe residents who want paid parking to go before the voters was handed a setback when the city attorney said he could not write a ballot title and summary.

“At this time the Tahoe4Tahoe committee is exploring their options for a legal challenge to the city’s rejection of our petition request and continue to believe that the voters of South Lake Tahoe deserve the opportunity to decide if they want paid parking on their city streets and public parks,” Peggy Bourland, spokeswoman for the group, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Paid parking has been a contentious issue since the city started talking about putting up kiosks a few years ago. The bulk of the meters was installed this past summer. While the city shows a financial profit, the naysayers are not going away.

Earlier this month Tahoe4Tahoe filed a notice of intent to circulate a petition that would ultimately result in the voters deciding June 3 whether the city’s paid parking program stays or goes.

One of the hurdles to get it on the ballot is for the city attorney to write the summary and title.

City Attorney Tom Watson wrote Bourland saying, “The text as drafted impairs essential government functions, including, but not limited to: the power of taxation, the police power to

control public streets and highways, fiscal management abilities, franchising authority and the legislative power to provide for the health and safety of the community. Additionally, because the initiative is multipart, it potentially violates the single subject rule.”

Bourland requested a meeting with the city attorney. He said no, saying he could not be an advocate for their group and instead recommended hiring private legal counsel.

Time is ticking for the group to meet the deadlines for the June ballot, however there will also be an election in November. But by November the parking program the group doesn't like will in all likelihood have had another summer to be in place.

The City Council after the first of the year is expected to revisit the parking program to potentially make changes and/or solidify what is in place.

Chinese visitors eager to buy Calif. products

By Karen E. Klein, Bloomberg

California's tourism businesses are cashing in on growth across the Pacific: China became the state's No. 1 overseas visitor market last year, overtaking the U.K. In 2012 an estimated 677,000 Chinese tourists spent almost \$2 billion in California, a 31 percent increase over 2011.

The numbers are on track to grow by double digits again this

year, according to hospitality industry group Visit California.

Almost half of all Chinese visitors to the U.S. go to California, the group says. While large hotels, brand-name retailers, and theme parks such as Disneyland and Universal Studios attract the cross-Pacific visitors, an increasing number of small, largely immigrant-owned businesses are also vying to sell tours, meals, and merchandise to Chinese tourists.

Take Therese Liu, a Taiwanese native who arrived in the U.S. as a student in 1993. After working in marketing and as a hospital interpreter, she started a shopping tour business in 2010 that uses the tag line “Dim Sum and Then Some.”

Liu is often called on to speak to retailers eager to capture the new tourists, who spend on average \$6,000 each while in the state. She tells them to stock iconic American-made brands, particularly watches, gold jewelry, health supplements, and red wine – along with suitcases to carry the purchases home.

Read the whole story

El Dorado County electeds to receive pay raise

It pays well to be an El Dorado County elected official and in 2015 it's going to be even more profitable.

The Board of Supervisors on Nov. 18 agreed to revise the salaries of seven elected officials. The changes are effective

with the terms beginning January 2015 or thereafter.

These will be new salaries:

Position	Total salary
District Attorney	\$184,431
Sheriff	\$177,975
Auditor-Controller	\$148,693
Treasurer/Tax Collector	\$145,540
Assessor	\$144,007
Recorder-Clerk	\$135,575
Surveyor	\$118,238

This pay chart lists current base salaries, future amount, actual compensation and comparison to other counties.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Black Friday not always the cheapest shopping day

By Tiffany Hsu, Los Angeles Times

As the hardiest of shoppers prepare for the annual Black Friday consumption frenzy, many are convinced it's their one shot at a great deal.

But "that's not even close to the truth," said Matthew Ong, senior retail analyst at online personal finance company NerdWallet Inc.

Bargain hunters can – and, in some cases, should – avoid the Black Friday weekend crush, several experts said.

Many characterize the shopping bonanza as an expertly marketed ploy to capitalize on shoppers' fear of missing out. By dangling a small batch of irresistible savings, stores land hordes of hopeful shoppers all scheming to score the retail version of Willy Wonka's golden ticket.

Yet only a tiny percentage of customers end up with the most desirable deals. The rest, unwilling to leave empty-handed, walk away with lesser bargains arranged appealingly nearby.

Read the whole story

Out-of-control fire puts Nutting under spotlight

By CBS-13

SOMERSET -- There is more potential trouble for an El Dorado County supervisor who's already facing several felony charges. Fire investigators are now looking into how the fire started last week on Ray Nutting's property and burned out of control.

The blaze broke out Friday afternoon on land owned by Nutting, which is near Somerset. CalFire says extreme winds, with gusts up to 60 mph, helped spread the flames approximately 5 acres. And it took them four hours to get it under control.

In March, Nutting gave us a tour of his timber ranch and showed us how he used thousands of dollars in taxpayer money to reduce the threat of fires by burning off debris.

“The more we do this in the forest, the less catastrophic fires we have,” said Nutting.

But that kind of work is the suspected cause of the Nov. 22 fire. Nutting tells CBS13 he burned off several debris piles during a rainstorm early last week and blames Friday’s strong winds for re-igniting them.

El Dorado County DA Investigator Dave Stevenson says that’s no excuse.

Read the whole story

STR clamps down on types of garbage cans

By Kathryn Reed

Garbage removal on the South Shore isn’t like a lot of other places. Depending on the customer this is a good or bad thing.

This fall South Tahoe Refuse sent postcards to people saying, “Do not purchase totes.” These are the receptacles that have handles that attach to a garbage truck and are then mechanically lifted and emptied.

STR doesn’t have these types of trucks. Instead, human power is used to lift the can into the truck.



A South Tahoe Refuse customer is miffed about the company's policy on tote cans and even more perturbed his can is knocked over after being emptied.
Photo/Provided

"They are high strength molded plastic designed specifically to be used with hydraulic systems," John Marchini with South Tahoe Refuse told *Lake Tahoe News* of the totes. "Our biggest concern is that we do not want to subject our coworkers to lift these totes."

The totes are usually larger because jurisdictions that allow them don't have workers lifting them, plus customers are often limited to one can, though usually there are separate recycling and yard waste cans.

"Lifting sometimes heavy trash containers is a job description, not a basis for a campaign to downgrade the town's trash containers," one customer told *Lake Tahoe News*.

"What sticks in my craw is that this thing is a monopoly, that trash pick up is mandatory and that I'd like to see the town cleaned up and standardized trash containers with attached lids would go a long way. So it is especially annoying when I do more than my part and buy a nice wheeled container, like every other civilized town, and they actually try to forbid me from doing something so simple," a 24-year resident told *Lake*

Tahoe News. He is feeling put upon by STR, his tote trash can knocked over after it's emptied and denied blue recycling bags, so he doesn't want his name used for fear of serious retribution.

STR says it has come up with a compromise for people who want to use the tote cans. If garbage is in bags that can be lifted out and thrown into the truck, the garbagemen will service that container.

Totes, though, are not the typical 32- or 45-gallon can. Like other cans, some are designed to be animal resistant.

In general, cans should not be more than 50 pounds, and bags no more than 30 pounds.

The South Lake Tahoe-base company has no intention of changing its vehicles to accommodate the totes that are so widely used every place else. One reason is more jurisdictions are requiring bear boxes. Totes don't fit in bear boxes.

El Dorado County requires anyone building a new home or doing a remodel to put in a bear box.

If STR were to go to hydraulic trucks that could lift totes, the bear box issue would require some sort of hybrid system. And company officials say one day that is possible.

The thinking behind sending the postcard was also to let commercial customers know totes are not acceptable.