

Smoke from American Fire remains an issue

The American Fire grew to 1,750 acres overnight.

It continues to burn in a rugged area near Foresthill in the Tahoe National Forest. However, that town is not threatened.



A smoky sunrise near Auburn on Aug. 13. Photo/CalFire

Heavy smoke from the wildfire is expected to continue to fill the skies of Truckee, Reno and other areas. On Monday, Placer County issued an advisory about the bad air quality.

The fire is moving up and down the North Fork of the Middle Fork of the American River. While the fire is not affecting recreation on the river, people are advised to stay out of the area.

The cause of the fire, which started Aug. 10, is unknown.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Calif. making sure retailers pay taxes

Retailers from Lake Tahoe to the Bay Area, and from the coastal cities of Southern California to Lake Perris, are receiving letters from the California State Board of Equalization notifying them about upcoming visits from Statewide Compliance and Outreach Program teams.

SCOP visits are intended to educate retailers about properly reporting sales and use tax, increase compliance with tax laws, and maintain outreach efforts to assure taxpayers the state's tax system is fair and equal for all Californians.

Regionally, the BOE is mailing letters to business owners in the following ZIP codes: Auburn (95602 and 95604), Colfax (95713), Dutch Flat (95714), Emigrant Gap (95715), Foresthill (95631), Gold Run (95717), Kings Beach (96143), Meadow Vista (95722), Olympic Valley (96146), and Tahoe Vista (96148), and Weimar (95736).

Businesses found to be operating without a seller's permit are provided instructions on how to register with the BOE, as well as information about other necessary licenses. Home-based businesses are not visited.

The BOE has found that nearly 98 percent of the California businesses are operating with the correct permits. However, noncompliance contributes to more than \$2 billion in uncollected sales and use taxes that make up part of the state's "tax gap" – the difference between the amount of taxes owed and the amount paid, negatively impacting all state taxpayers.

Contractor ready to resume Chateau project

By Kathryn Reed

Before construction resumes at the hole in South Lake Tahoe, some deconstruction is going to occur.

Eight columns out of the nearly 100 that are in the ground need to be taken out because they don't meet current standards to withstand an earthquake. Two changes to California's building codes have occurred since the foundation for the Chateau project was poured a handful of years ago. The columns need to be bigger.

The demolition permit is expected to be issued today by the city to Tahoe Stateline Ventures.



A construction trailer is at the Chateau site, with a bevy of activity likely to begin next week. Photo/Susan Wood

Tahoe Stateline Ventures is the company created by Owens Financial to develop a section of what was to be a \$410

million hotel-retail-convention center in the city near the state line and across Highway 50 from Heavenly Village.

On Thursday, TSV will be before the South Tahoe Public Utility District board seeking approval of the contract to construct the water main.

All of the site work for construction of the 14-inch water main is slated to be done this building season.

Once the agreement is signed by STPUD, TSV officials will take that to the city in hopes a building permit is issued on Friday.

No contract is needed between the city and developer because this is now a completely private endeavor. Before the bankruptcy, when the entire 11-plus-acre site was to be developed, the agreement was the city would issue millions of dollars worth of bonds to pay for the convention center that it would ultimately own. The city was also going to own the open spaces.

Now the city doesn't have ownership to anything regarding this project.

"We've been working with the developers since fall 2012 to determine the best course of action to restart the project and are very pleased that Mr. (Bill) Owens is willing to invest millions to restart the project," City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Construction trailers are on site and preconstruction work – like cleaning up the area – has been occurring. Real construction could begin Monday.

SMC Contracting is the general contractor for what is now an \$11 million project on only part of the acreage. SMC was the lead the first time as well.

A temporary sidewalk along Highway 50 will be installed and

the foundation for the retail will go in this building season. Work will continue through the winter, with completion – including landscaping – coming about this time next year.

“The expectation is retailers will be able to initiate their tenant improvements in late spring. Then in late summer, early fall they could be open for business,” Lew Feldman, attorney for TSV, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

About a half dozen business are expected to move in.

No lease contracts have been signed and Feldman would not disclose any potential retailers. There is 19,000-square-feet of retail, which does not include the restaurant-night club. (By comparison, Heavenly Village has about 120,000-square-feet of retail.)

The corner of Highway 50 and Stateline Avenue was always intended to be a restaurant. McP’s is going to move there; which was also the original plan. The bi-level building will have one story below ground, one above ground. Outdoor seating, fire pits and a kitchen that would be capable of producing real meals are part of the plans.

1,200 acres burn in rugged area near Foresthill

Updated 8:10pm

The American Fire is estimated to have burned 1,200 acres.

Firefighters reported a moderate rate of spread Monday and are

making progress building direct containment lines.

Suppression efforts are focused mainly on the Deadwood Ridge and Last Chance sides of the fire. While firefighters are working to protect cultural resources from the fire and from suppression impacts, firefighter and public safety are the first priorities.

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The American Fire burning in the Tahoe National Forest has charred nearly 1,000 acres. Heavy smoke is making it difficult to obtain precise numbers.

The fire has crossed the North Fork of the Middle Fork of the American River and is burning toward the Last Chance area. Firefighters reported a moderate rate of spread with short uphill runs Sunday, and more of the same is expected today.

Smokejumpers are being used to reach the remote area.

The town of Foresthill is not in danger and there are no evacuations ordered.

Smoke is sitting in Truckee and Reno.

The cause of the fire that started in the late afternoon of Aug. 10 is still under investigation.

— *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Gays in Russia struggle for

acceptance

By David M. Herszenhorn, New York Times

MOSCOW – If this article were published in a newspaper based in Russia, it could be labeled 18+ – like an X-rated movie – and start with the following disclaimer: “This article contains information not suitable for readers younger than 18 years of age, according to Russian legislation.”

The police detained a man after an attack on a gay rights activist in St. Petersburg.

Such warnings, put on any articles that discuss homosexuality or gay rights, are the result of a law nominally aimed at “protecting” children by banning “propaganda on nontraditional sexual relationships” but widely understood as an effort to suppress homosexuality and Russia’s fledgling gay rights movement.

The law, signed by President Vladimir V. Putin in June, has ignited international condemnation and blindsided the Kremlin with the sort of toxic political controversy that officials had desperately hoped to avoid ahead of the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi. The last Olympics on Russian soil, in 1980, was marred by the boycott over the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

The furor includes a boycott of Russian vodka in gay bars throughout the West and some calls for a boycott of the Sochi Games altogether. Beyond putting organizers on the defensive, it has cast worldwide attention on the cruel circumstances in which most gay people live in modern Russia.

Read the whole story

Bay Area residents buying Tahoe-Truckee real estate

By Pete Carey, San Jose Mercury News

The Bay Area's economic recovery is sparking a surge of vacation home sales in the Lake Tahoe-Truckee mountain playground.

"Two or three years ago, nobody was buying houses, period," said Patience Lewis, a Coldwell Banker agent in the Tahoe-Truckee area. "Now it's like the floodgates have opened."

In the first half of the year, Bay Area buyers helped drive second-home sales in the region to their highest level since 2005, according to the real estate company DataQuick. About a third of the region's vacation-home buyers this year live in the Bay Area, a DataQuick analysis for this newspaper shows.

Fueled by tech's spreading wealth and lured by the region's pristine summer and winter beauty, the buyers range from families with young children snapping up condominiums in ski resorts at bargain prices to multimillionaires from Silicon Valley acquiring expensive lakefront estates.

Read the whole story

Pedestrian hit in Stateline ID'd, still in hospital

The pedestrian who was struck by multiple vehicles on Highway 50 in Stateline remained in critical condition at Renown Medical Center in Reno this morning.

Cody J. Dobson, 31, of Carson City was found Aug. 10 about 3:15am in the road near Lake Parkway by MontBleu casino.

“Alcohol does appear to be a contributing factor in this event as Dobson displayed signs of intoxication both at the scene and the hospital,” Nevada Highway Patrol Trooper Chuck Allen said in a press release.

A witness saw a full size blue Dodge pickup strike the downed pedestrian. The pickup may have a camper shell matching the color of the vehicle as well.

Anyone with information about the accident is asked to contact Trooper Doug Hildebrand at (775) 689.4623 or dhildebrand@dps.state.nv.us.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Wildfire burning in Tahoe

National Forest

Smoke from a forest fire burning in Placer County could be seen while driving on Highway 50 toward the basin and it is filling the sky in Reno.

As of 8:30 Sunday night about 800 acres had burned in the Tahoe National Forest. The American Fire is burning in the heavily forested area of Deadwood Ridge, about 17 miles northeast of Foresthill.

The cause is under investigation. It started about 4:50pm Aug. 10.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

OxyContin maker knows docs who overprescribe

By Scott Glover and Lisa Girion, Los Angeles Times

Over the last decade, the maker of the potent painkiller OxyContin has compiled a database of hundreds of doctors suspected of recklessly prescribing its pills to addicts and drug dealers, but has done little to alert law enforcement or medical authorities.

Despite its suspicions, Purdue Pharma continued to profit from prescriptions written by these physicians, many of whom were prolific prescribers of OxyContin. The company has sold more than \$27 billion worth of the drug since its introduction in 1996.

Purdue has promoted the idea that the country's epidemic of prescription drug deaths was fueled largely by pharmacy robberies, doctor-shopping patients and teens raiding home medicine cabinets. The database suggests that Purdue has long known that physicians also play a significant role in the crisis.

Purdue's database, which contains the names of more than 1,800 doctors, could provide leads for investigators at a time when they are increasingly looking at how reckless prescribing of painkillers contributes to addiction and death.

Purdue has said little about the list since it began identifying doctors in 2002.

Read the whole story

NV Energy board, stockholders score with Buffett's purchase

By Eli Segall, Las Vegas Sun

Warren Buffett's purchase of NV Energy will be a financial bonanza to the utility's stockholders, and the board of directors is no exception.

Filings with the Securities Exchange Commission show that each of the Las Vegas power company's 10 board members holds tens of thousands of shares in the utility and is poised to cash in big on Buffett. His MidAmerican Energy Holdings Co. reached a deal in late May to buy NV Energy for \$23.75 per share, or \$5.6 billion cash.

NV Energy President and CEO Michael Yackira, one of the

highest-paid executives in the Las Vegas Valley, will collect \$21.2 million from the buyout, far more than the other board members. He's followed by Chairman Philip Satre at \$2.7 million, former Station Casinos executive Glenn Christenson at \$2.5 million and Las Vegas attorney John O'Reilly at \$2 million, according to a filing last month with the SEC.

Read the whole story