Nevada 3rd most popular state for movers

By Jason Hidalgo, Reno Gazette-Journal

Nevada is moving up as a popular destination for folks looking to, well, make a move.

The Silver State ranked among the top places in the nation that posted a higher rate of people moving in versus people moving out last year, according to separate reports from two moving companies.

In one of the studies, Washoe County posted a higher rate of inbound relocations than the state as a whole. Reno-Sparks is also outpacing the nation for its influx of younger people moving into the area in the last decade, according to an analysis from UNR.

Read the whole story

Dogs go missing after car crashes

By Elizabeth Olveda, KTVN-TV

Two dogs have gone missing after separate car accidents over the past couple of weeks. It serves as an unfortunate reminder that pets should be safely secured when riding in a car.

When it comes to pets, it’s always better to be proactive rather than reactive. Microchipping your pet is the most

important first step for ensuring their safety.

On Jan. 9 a pup went missing after a car crash on Lake Tahoe Boulevard. South Lake Tahoe Fire Rescue says they searched the area, but were unable to find the dog, a chihuahua in a pink sweater.

Read the whole story

Douglas County beefing up emergency alert system

Douglas County Emergency Management has received Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approval and credentials to access the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS).

The IPAWS system is said to be a major improvement in public alerting and warning capabilities. The Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) program does not require any sign-up or registration, it’s already active on smartphones. This enables local emergency officials to send warning messages to those either directly or potential directly impacted by an incident, such as wildland fire, flood or missing children through Amber Alerts.

These warning messages are only used for major events and not routine messaging.

In addition to the IPAWS, Douglas County also provides alerts through a reverse 911 system. People need to register their cell phones **online** to receive these alerts.

2017 a record wet, hot year in Reno

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

Last year was the wettest on record in Reno and among the warmest.

The 13.73 inches of precipitation at the Reno-Tahoe International Airport during the 2017 calendar year surpassed the prior record of 13.23 in 1983.

The mean average temperature of 56.1 made it the fifth-hottest on record and nearly one degree above the 10-year average.

Read the whole story

Brown’s final budget stashes billions in reserve

By Adam Ashton, Sacramento Bee

In his 16th and final year as governor, Jerry Brown is using a surplus to stash away billions of dollars in reserves that would help his successor weather a recession while boosting some of his signature programs.

He’s proposed a $190.3 billion spending plan on Wednesday that accelerates funding for his 2013 education law and uses new

gas tax revenue to fund $4.6 billion in new transportation projects.

The centerpiece of his plan, though, is a $5 billion jolt to the state’s so-called rainy day fund, which he championed with a 2014 ballot initiative to steady California’s boom and bust finances.

Read the whole story

Nevada to review casino response plans

By Jeff German, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Nevada officials have embarked on a broad campaign to improve oversight of casino emergency response plans in the wake of failings exposed in a Review-Journal investigation.

“We recognize there’s a shortcoming here, and we’ve got an aggressive plan to fix it going forward,” said Caleb Cage, chief of the Nevada Division of Emergency Management.

The Review-Journal reported last month that state officials had been lax in forcing casinos across Nevada to comply with a 2003 law that requires resorts to file emergency plans.

Read the whole story

El Dorado County VHR issue getting political

By Kathryn Reed

A bit of political gamesmanship appears to be overshadowing the vacation home rental debate in El Dorado County.

Jan. 9 was the last agenda Supervisor Shiva Frentzen got to set as chair of the board because the annual reorganization occurred that day. (Supervisor Mike Ranalli is now chair and Supervisor Sue Novasel is vice chair.)

Frentzen put an urgency ordinance calling for a moratorium on VHRs in the unincorporated area of the Lake Tahoe Basin on the agenda.

Novasel said until she read her packet prior to Tuesday's meeting she had no knowledge the item was going to be on the Jan. 9 agenda.

This is significant because Novasel is the rep from the basin, and she along with Ranalli are the subcommittee dealing with VHRs.

"We didn't see it coming," Novasel said of the agenda item.

Frentzen told *Lake Tahoe News*, "The residents of South Lake Tahoe have been reaching out to my office to share their overwhelming concerns about VHRs in their neighborhoods. The BOS had a **meeting in South Lake Tahoe in October** and has formed a sub-committee to address this issue. The residents continue to voice their concerns with safety and quality of life in their communities that is caused by VHRs in the established residential neighborhoods."

What Novasel doesn't understand is why the subcommittee was not allowed to do its job before a vote was taken by the

board.

Frentzen's item, which required a super majority to pass, failed 3-1. She was the only yes vote.

Supervisor Brian Veerkamp proposed a motion to not adopt the urgency ordinance. That passed 3-1, again with Frentzen in the minority.

The reason all five members weren't voting is that Novasel had to recuse herself. That is because an anonymous complaint was filed with the Fair Political Practices Commission against her. The person alleged a conflict of interest with Novasel's husband potentially issuing loans to VHR owners and therefore the supervisor would financially benefit from keeping the short-term rentals.

A letter dated Jan. 3 from the FPPC to Novasel states, "After review of the complaint and additional information obtained, staff found that the complaint contained insufficient evidence of a conflict of interest violation of the Act; therefore, the Enforcement Division will not open an investigation into this matter."

However, the division suggested she get a ruling from the FPPC's Legal Division. She is awaiting their answer, which should be forthcoming this month.

It is because of the lingering uncertainty with the FPPC that Novasel opted to recuse herself Tuesday from the VHR discussion and vote.

It also means her status on the subcommittee is tenuous. And that is why instead of the subcommittee having a gathering in Tahoe on Feb. 1 to discuss VHRs, it will be the entire board. (That meeting is at 6pm at Lake Tahoe Airport.)

"I don't believe I have a conflict of interest. We don't own a VHR. We don't do direct service (with them)," Novasel said of

her husband's business, which she is not involved in. She equated it to a bank employee having a conflict if their institution gave a loan to the VHR owner – and that has never been deemed a conflict.

She pointed out that in a tourism-based economy many people have secondary ties to VHRs (snow removal, cleaners, etc.), which would make it difficult for anyone from this area to be elected without that potential dilemma.

With this being an election year, at the county level Novasel and Ranalli's seats are up. Both intend to run again. Painting one or both of them in a bad light regarding VHRs could taint people before the entire board even votes. Ranalli's district covers Apple Hill, which has its own rental issues.

"Because it was anonymous I have no idea who filed the complaint. It is political season and issues will come up that perhaps would not be an issue until it is political season," Novasel told *Lake Tahoe News.*

Filing the complaint could be an attempt to discredit Novasel's ability to represent the Meyers area in particular. She was disqualified from voting on the Meyers Area Plan because of owning property in the plan area.

Novasel wants the subcommittee process to have a chance to work; which means gathering more input from the public and working with staff. It's likely the tax collector will no longer have oversight of the issue and instead it will be code enforcement dealing with violations. There is also talk of bringing in a company like **Host Compliance**, which South Lake Tahoe recently did, to go after unpermitted properties and help with other issues.

The county only has VHR regulations in the basin. That is another task of the subcommittee – to make recommendations for the rest of the county.

2017 was costliest year ever in U.S. for weather

By Kurtis Alexander, San Francisco Chronicle

Last year’s devastating floods and fires in California combined with hurricanes and other natural disasters to wreak unprecedented financial damage on the United States, the federal government reported Monday.

The nation endured 16 weather and climate events that inflicted $1 billion or more apiece in damage in 2017, tying 2011 for the most 10-digit calamities in a year and setting an annual total-cost record of $306 billion, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The natural disasters resulted in 362 deaths.

Read the whole story

Nev. lawmakers urge Congress to change marijuana laws

By Gary Martin, Las Vegas Review-Journal

WASHINGTON — Nevada lawmakers said Tuesday that Congress must address federal marijuana laws following a decision by the Trump administration to lower the barrier on federal prosecutions in states that have decriminalized use for

medical and recreational purposes.

Rep. Dina Titus, D-Nev., and Rep. Mark Amodei, R-Nev., are working on legislation filed by Republicans and Democrats to amend the Controlled Substances Act and allow marijuana to be made available for medical research and use, and another bill allowing states to regulate marijuana as they do alcohol.

Read the whole story

EDC wants input on broadband upgrades

El Dorado County is having public meetings Jan. 17 in Placerville and Jan. 18 in South Lake Tahoe to gather input for broadband planning and improvement.

The county is working with consulting firm NEO Connect to conduct a broadband feasibility study to evaluate current broadband resources and identify options for improving connectivity and expanding broadband across the County.

Meetings will focus on the needs of five audiences: business and professional; public safety; schools and libraries; healthcare; and the general public.

The meeting schedules are the same at both locations:

Business and professional – 9-10am
Public safety – 10:30-11:30am
Schools and libraries – 1-2pm
Healthcare – 2:30-3:30pm
General public – 5:30-6:45pm.

The Tahoe meeting will be at Tahoe Mountain Lab at 3079 Harrison Ave., South Lake Tahoe, and the Placerville meetings at board chambers at 330 Fair Lane.