

Bomb squad called to Lakeview Commons

A pressure cooker similar to what was used in the Boston Marathon bombing was blown up in South Lake Tahoe on Sunday night by the Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection Fire District bomb squad.

South Lake Tahoe police officers wasted no time in calling in the neighboring agency to take care of the suspicious device after what happened in Boston, where three people were killed and more than 260 were injured by homemade pressure cooker bombs.

The apparatus – which was actually a ricer cooker – was found at Lakeview Commons on June 30 after the Race the Lake of the Sky stand up paddleboard races concluded.



Tahoe Douglas Fire Department's bomb robot at Lakeview Commons on June 30.
Photo/Jonathan Moore

Eric Guevin with Tahoe Douglas Fire told *Lake Tahoe News* the cooker was found by a bear-proof garbage can, but it looked like it didn't fit – so people left it by the side.

He said the robot was sent in for recon, but it was not

possible to get an X-ray of the cooker. That is why it was decided to blow up the device on scene.

Food was all that was inside.

Knowing what happened 3,000 mile away, authorities decided to blow up the cooker onsite instead of taking it elsewhere.

Traffic on Highway 50 was diverted for about an hour. Pedestrians were also blocked from the area for their safety.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

19 firefighters die in Arizona wildland blaze

Publisher's note: *The Angora Peak crew from Lake Valley Fire Protection District is in Arizona on standby and the Lake Tahoe U.S. Forest Service crew is en route.*

By Jackee Coe and Laurie Merrill, Arizona Republic

Arizona State forestry officials confirmed Sunday night that 19 firefighters have died in the Yarnell Hill Fire that has ripped through half of the town, sent residents to Prescott for safety and given the state its biggest ever wildfire firefighter tragedy.

"It's a dark day," said Mike Reichling, Arizona State Forestry Division spokesman.

Reichling said the 19 firefighters were found in area that also had 19 fire shelters deployed. Some of those found were inside a shelter, which is typically used as a last resort to

withstand the fire as it blows over. Some of the crew members were found outside the shelters.



Homes burn near Yarnell,
Ariz., on June 30.

Photo/David

Kadlubowski/Arizona Republic

Officials said 18 of the deceased were members of the Prescott Hotshots team. It's unknown what fire crew the 19th firefighter was a member of. The firefighters are part of a team that is typically sent in first to help cutoff the fire, Reichling said.

"They were up there doing what they normally do," he said.

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, this is the worst loss of life of firefighters since 1933 when 25 died in a blaze in L.A's Griffith Park.

Reichling expects about half of the town's 500 homes to be decimated by the fire that is currently burning with zero containment and has grown well past 2,000 acres.

Mike Reichling, Arizona State Forestry Division spokesman, said the fire is quickly reaching "Type 1" status and that federal authorities will be brought in to help Monday morning. Reichling expects the manpower dedicated to the fire to reach about 400 people as federal help arrives.

Fire officials Sunday afternoon ordered the evacuation of

Yarnell and parts of Peeples Valley as a fast moving, lightning-caused fire that charred up to 2,000 acres reached Yarnell, Reichling said, Arizona State Forestry Division spokesman.

The wind-whipped blaze also prompted officials to shut 25 miles of State Route 89 between Congress and Kirkland, but residents of the hundreds of evacuated homes could still travel the estimated 30 miles to a shelter in Prescott, Reichling said.

The Yarnell Hill Fire, ignited at about 5:30pm Friday, was moving north and east at the rate of about half a mile per hour, fire officials said.

As about 250 firefighters fought to keep the blaze at bay Sunday, officials evacuated three subdivisions outside Yarnell, officials said.

Speaker of the House Andy Tobin, R-Paulden, was shaken Sunday evening during a brief interview with the *Arizona Republic*. He could not confirm details of the number of people injured, and said the Department of Safety was on its way to take him to the scene.

"I'm going to the scene, I'm going there," he said, adding he just spoke with his friend, Yavapai County Sheriff's Officer Scott Mascher. "The fire took an incredibly swift turn is all he (Mascher) said and he said it is very, very bad. Tonight, we need all of Arizona's prayers."

About 14 Yarnell-area residents Sunday afternoon had arrived at the shelter at Yavapai College near Prescott, located about 30 miles from Yarnell, according to Brian Gomez, spokesman for the Red Cross Grand Canyon Chapter.

He said the power went out at the shelter due to monsoons but was restored.

More people were expected to need shelter as officials ordered still further evacuations, Gomez said. The Red Cross was poised to open a shelter at Wickenburg High School, he said.

Yavapai College was also used to house evacuees during the Doce Fire, which has been 96 percent contained, officials said.

The Yarnell Hill Fire was zero-percent contained Sunday, officials said.

Officials opened a shelter for livestock and large animals at Hidden Spring Ranch on Highways 89 in a part of Peeples Valley that as of Sunday was safe from the fire, officials said.

The Yarnell Hill Fire had burned 300 acres Sunday morning, had scorched about 1,000 acres Sunday afternoon, and had probably grown to 2,000 acres Sunday evening, Reichling said.

Fueled by chaparral and grass, the blaze was burning uphill on state land about 25 miles north of Wickenburg with 15-to 20-foot flames, he said.

The Yavapai County Sheriff's Office evacuated the Double Bar A Ranch and Model Creek areas, officials said. A reverse 911 call was sent and sheriff's deputies went door-to-door to alert residents.

The temperature warmed to 101 degrees Sunday afternoon and southwest winds were blowing up to 22 miles per hour, Reichling said.

The low humidity, type of fuel, topography and northwest direction of the wind was feeding the and pushing it up the hill toward the communities, Reichling said.

About 250 firefighters, including two Type 2 crews, three Type 1 crews, and four engines, were on the scene, Reichling said. Three Type 1 crews, seven helicopters, two air tankers, four single engine air tankers, and multiple engines and air

tankers were ordered.

There were expected to be about 400 firefighters arriving Sunday night and on Monday, Reichling said.

Firefighters were establishing structure protection in the Yarnell area and directly attacking the fire along its eastern flank.

A large animal shelter was set up at the Hidden Springs Ranch on Arizona 89 southwest of Hayes Ranch Road, he said. A shelter for people and small animals is being opened at Yavapai College at 1100 E. Sheldon in Prescott.

Fire crews across the state also were battling three other blazes, including firefighters in Prescott who continue to work to get the Doce Fire fully contained, authorities said.

Firefighters near the Mexican border were battling the 530-acre W-2 Fire that is burning in oak grassland and brush about seven miles west of Lochiel, east of Nogales and south of Sierra Vista, Coronado National Forest spokesman Gerry Perry said. A local rancher reported the fire about 3pm Saturday.

The fire likely is human caused as there has been no lightning in the area recently, but the exact cause still has not been determined, Perry said. No structures currently are threatened.

A total of 160 firefighters, including six hand crews, two helicopters dropping water, two engines, two single air tankers and a heavy air tanker, were battling the blaze, he said.

Fire crews had conducted burnouts along the western flank overnight Saturday to insure the fire would not grow from that side, Perry said. They will continue to build additional fire lines and supplemental burnouts in advance of the fire to try to prevent further growth.

Firefighters were battling the 25-acre Dean Peak Fire near about 10 miles southeast of Kingman, officials said. Two heavy air tankers and one Type 1 crew had been ordered.

The 6,767-acre Doce Fire burning seven miles northwest of Prescott in the Granite Mountain Wilderness was 96 percent contained Sunday morning, officials said. Road and trail closures in the area are still in effect.

The estimated cost to date for the Doce firefighting efforts is \$6,787,293, authorities said.

Sierra – an outdoor climate change lab

By Tracie Cone, AP

SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST – In parts of California's Sierra Nevada, marshy meadows are going dry, wildflowers are blooming earlier and glaciers are melting into ice fields.

Scientists also are predicting the optimal temperature zone for giant sequoias will rise hundreds and hundreds of feet, leaving trees at risk of dying over the next 100 years.

As indicators point toward a warming climate, scientists across 4 million acres of federally protected land are noting changes affecting everything from the massive trees that can grow to more than two-dozen feet across to the tiny, hamsterlike pika. But what the changes mean and whether humans should do anything to intervene are sources of disagreement among land managers.

“That’s the tricky part of the debate: If humans are causing

warming, does that obligate us under the laws of the National Park Service to try to counteract those effects?" said Nate Stephenson, a research ecologist with the U.S. Geological Survey.



Looking down on Lake Aloha from the top of Ralston Peak. Photo/LTN file

"How do you adapt to a changing climate if you're a national park?" added Stephenson, who is 30 years into a study of trees in the largest wilderness in the continental U.S., Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park.

Since 1895, the average temperature across California has increased by 1.7 degrees, and experts say the most visible effects of that warming occur within the Sierra Nevada, where low temperatures are rising and precipitation increasingly falls as rain rather than snow. Some models show noncoastal California warming by 2.7 degrees between 2000 and 2050, one of many reasons President Obama pledged last week to use executive powers to cut carbon pollution.

The state's two largest rivers – the Sacramento and San Joaquin – originate in the Sierra. The range also is home to Lake Tahoe, the largest alpine lake in North America; Mount Whitney, the highest peak in the Lower 48; and the nation's only groves of giant sequoias, the largest living things on earth.

There are mounting concerns about the beloved sequoias, whose

sprawling, 10-foot-deep root systems make them especially vulnerable to drought and heat.

Because the trees exist only in such a small region, scientists are debating whether to irrigate the 65 groves in the southern Sierra to help them endure warmer temperatures. Otherwise they fear the trees could die. During the last warm, dry period 4,000 to 10,000 years ago, their numbers were greatly diminished, according to pollen evidence collected by researchers at Northern Arizona University.

“Whether we would water them certainly comes up on our climate change scenario planning,” said Koren Nydick, science coordinator at Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park. “They are a very unusual species because they’re also looked on as a social artifact.”

Stephenson says his decades of studying conifers in Sequoia National Forest have shown they are dying at twice their historic rate, partly because the climate is warmer and dryer. The giant sequoias grow much more slowly than conifers over many hundreds of years so changes have been tougher to recognize, though researchers suspect seedlings already may be having a harder time taking root.

“That’s always the million-dollar question,” said Stephenson, director of USGS’s Sierra Nevada Global Change Research Program. “We just don’t have a big enough sample size to know what’s going on with the giant sequoias, whereas we monitor thousands of pines and firs and have much more confidence.”

So far, the dozens of changes researchers have noted, in everything from earlier songbird fledging dates to greater wildfire intensity, may point to a warming climate. But it’s far from understood whether that would mean doom or adaptation for California’s ecological heart.

“I don’t want to say that because we’re seeing one thing, that’s how it will play out,” said Rob Klinger who is studying

alpine mammals for the USGS's Western Ecological Research Center. "The endgame of our study is determining whether there will be uniform change or will it be patchwork. If you look at evolutionary time scales, species have gone through these changes before, and they handle it."

As part of a doctorate project at UC Merced, Kaitlin Lubetkin for five summers has hiked the backcountry taking inventory of 350 subalpine meadows formed when glaciers retreated eons ago. The marshy ground acts as a reservoir that eases flooding after snow melts, and the stored water feeds streams during dry months and sustains wildlife such as the endangered willow flycatcher songbird and the Yosemite toad, which is being considered for threatened species status.

Over the past decade of warmer, drier conditions, however, pine trees have begun to take root, acting like straws to pull the moisture out of the meadows, Klinger and Lubetkin have observed.

"Pretty much right up to the tree line you're getting encroachment in every meadow," said Lubetkin.

In September, Hassan Basagic of the Glaciers of the American West Project will be hiking to 12,000 feet elevation to measure the Lyell Glacier in Yosemite National Park and monitor the changes he first began observing in the early 2000s. Scientists from Yosemite National Park and the University of Colorado recently noted that the glacier is no longer moving – and is melting – by using measurements they've made over the past four years, as well as some of Basagic's earlier work.

Basagic's used photos from the 1930s to show that in the early 2000s the rate at which the Sierra's glaciers were receding picked up.

"A lot of people call glaciers the 'canary in the coal mine.' They're an indicator that the alpine climate is changing,"

said Basagic, who monitors glacial changes for Portland State University research projects. "With that change, other things will change, like the plants and animals that depend on certain climatic conditions."

Already the American pika, a cold-loving rodent, is moving to higher elevations, and a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service report says, "Climate change is a potential threat to the long-term survival."

The USGS's Klinger, however, said pikas might be more resilient than the wildlife service predicts. "It doesn't hibernate and it has dealt with expanding and contracting snow packs and changing temperatures – and yet it persists," Klinger said.

If the trends continue, some species are expected to adapt by finding more hospitable environments, scientists say. One potential place is Devil's Postpile National Monument in the Eastern Sierra, where 40 data collection devices are showing that temperature inversions caused by atmospheric pressure are filling the region of steep canyons with colder air.

Scientists are studying whether other areas with similar features might serve as refuges for some species. They're looking at establishing seed banks in the 800-acre park where several climatic regions overlap and more than 400 plants, 100 birds and 35 animals coexist.

"We have an incredible living laboratory to understand what's happening with this cold air pool," said monument Superintendent Deanna Dulen. "We're really trying to get a good baseline of knowledge so we can look at the changes over time. We have the potential to be a refuge, but also to be a place of increased vulnerability. There's so much to learn."

Lake Tahoe sweltering in record heat

By Kathryn Reed

California, Nevada, Arizona and Utah are sizzling, with record temps breaking all over the place – including the Lake Tahoe area.

And the mercury is going to continue to climb for a couple more days. A heat advisory remains in effect until Wednesday at 10pm for much of Western Nevada.



Truckee River outside Tahoe City on June 29 is full of rafters . Photo/Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe broke records Friday and Saturday. Both days it was 89 degrees. The old record was 87 for both days, set in 2010 and 1972, respectively.

Truckee broke a record June 28 by five degrees; the new record is 94, the old from 2010 was 89. On June 29, Truckee tied the 2010 record of 88.

“Right by the shore there in Tahoe City it’s getting numbers

in the mid-80s, but the records are in the upper 80s. Mainly it looks like inland away from lake is getting records,” Shane Snyder, meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Reno told *Lake Tahoe News* on Sunday.

He said more records are likely to fall today.

“That will get destroyed,” Snyder said of the June 30 87-degree record for Truckee.

South Lake Tahoe’s record for June 30 is 88, and the forecast is for closer to 90.

To the south and east of the Lake Tahoe Basin there is a chance of isolated thunderstorms today. Those will be moving into Tahoe on Monday and Tuesday.

While Las Vegas, Phoenix and Death Valley are always hot this time of year, they are redefining what hot means. It was 115 in Vegas on Saturday, when normal is about 103. The one death from the heat wave was reported in Vegas. A man in his 80s was found dead inside his home that did not have air conditioning.

Barton Memorial Hospital treated one person for dehydration on Saturday.

Death can occur when body temps hit 106 to 107 degrees.



Leaving pets and children in vehicles can also have deadly consequences. A Bay Area woman was arrested last week on animal cruelty charges for allegedly leaving her dog, which died, inside a parked vehicle.

While beaches in the basin have been full and rafters are flocking to the Truckee River, the water temp is still chilly – especially farther out in the lake and a foot below the surface. This is why jumping into the water without a life jacket can pose a risk of hypothermia.

Sunscreen should be reapplied, and reapplied again – on adults and kids on all exposed skin. Drink plenty of water. Alcohol and heat can be a bad combo.

South Lake Tahoe police officers have been interacting with a greater number of people lately.

“The people we were contacting seemed to be drinking a little more than usual. They required being arrested instead of a move along thing,” Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*. On the day shift Saturday, there were eight arrests and last night there were five. This is higher than usual. Most were for alcohol and domestic violence related issues.

Uhler expects officers to continue to be busy as people living where temps are in the triple digits continue to flock to the basin, which just adds to the number of people in town.

Nevada regulators keep eye on Macau casino action

By Christopher Palmeri, Bloomberg

The use of outside VIP room operators by casino companies in Macau limits their ability to prevent money-laundering and other illegal activities, one of Nevada's top regulators said.

"Criminal transactions are widely alleged to take place just out of the direct purview of the casino," A.G. Burnett, chairman of the Nevada State Gaming Control Board, said in testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission in Washington yesterday.

Enlarge image Nevada Regulator Says Macau VIP Rooms Make Compliance Harder

VIP room operators run gambling parlors for high-rollers within larger casinos and provide credit as well as organize trips for mainland gamblers to Macau. The Chinese city, the world's largest gambling hub with \$38 billion in revenue last year, gets most of its revenue from Chinese high-stake bettors. Burnett didn't name any individual operators.

I. Nelson Rose, a professor at Whittier Law School in Costa Mesa testified that Chinese government limits on money transfers from the mainland to Macau, at 20,000 yuan or \$3,150, create a market for VIP room operators to lend money to gamblers.

"The structure of the casino system in Macau effectively allows people to use the casinos to circumvent these capital controls," William Reinsch, chairman of the commission, said in his opening remarks.

The commission was created by the U.S. Congress in 2000 to report to legislators on trade and economic issues between the two countries, according to its website.

Spokesmen for Las Vegas Sands Corp., MGM Resorts International and Wynn Resorts Ltd., the three Las Vegas-based companies with operations in Macau, declined to comment on the hearing.

Director Manuel Neves at Macau's Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau, the city's regulatory body, didn't return two phone calls seeking comment.

Fill up now; gas prices in Calif. go up July 1

By Mallory Hoff, KCRA-TV

The pain at the pump is about to get worse for Californians – specifically, on July 1.

On Monday, motorists will pay an additional 3.5 cents a gallon – and it's not because of the cost of fuel, but rather, a tax increase.

"Happy Fourth of July," motorcyclist Kevin Shallenberger said Thursday.

The increase comes after the state Board of Equalization voted to increase the excise gas tax, which will total 39.5 cents per gallon.

"Legislation that was passed in 2010 mandated that the excise tax be adjusted up and the sales tax adjusted down, to keep it revenue-neutral so that there wouldn't be an impact overall in the amount of tax drivers pay at the pump," said Venus Stromberg, a spokeswoman for the state Board Of Equalization.

The board said the money will go back into the roads.

"The excise tax dollars that you pay to the state when you buy a gallon of gasoline go back to the state to fund highway and transportation projects," Stromberg said.

But the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association president said motorists may not be getting what they pay for.

“They drive down I-5 and they still see those pot holes,” said Jon Coupal, president of the association. “We’re paying very, very high gas taxes and not seeing that money diverted into the things that motorists use. It’s a serious reflection of the inability of California to govern itself.”

The situation will leave some with a financial dilemma.

“It’s hard to plan long trips or anything because it’s too much,” driver Judy Smith said.

LTCC graduates ready for next stage of life



Lake Tahoe Community
College's class of 2013.
Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Make every day matter. That was the message Lake Tahoe Community College English instructor Suzanne Roberts delivered

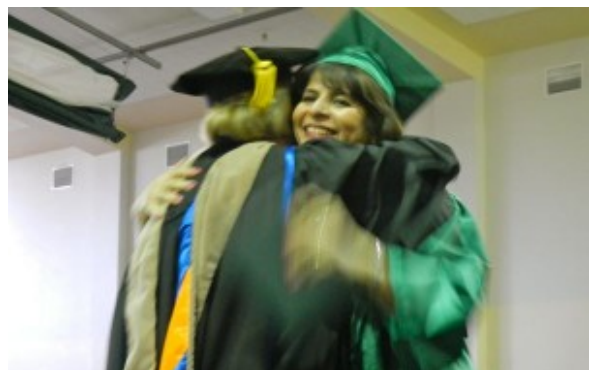
to the graduates as she struck a balance between joy and sorrow during the June 28 commencement address.

The evening was a bit of remembrance for three former college employees who died this spring – Kathy “Ms. B” Bluethman, Sue Huff and Carl Young, acknowledgement to the two main former presidents at the school – Jim Duke and Guy Lease, acknowledging Bob and Tammy Hassett as distinguished alumni, and a sendoff to the 140 students who earned their associates of arts degree.



LTCC President Kindred Murillo congratulates Raina Patrocinio.

LTCC has a rich tradition of being the top small college in the state when it comes to the number of students who transfer to one of the UC colleges. Cal is always a popular choice, as is UC Davis.



Georgillis Ortega receives a congratulatory hug from President Kindred Murillo.

Chris Sidell is one of the LTCC grads who will go to Davis, where he will study viticulture.

Many of the students are the first in their families to earn a college degree.

College President Kindred Murillo spoke of the confidence she has in this group of young people.

Looking at the sea of green gowns, one could see many clearly didn't fit the traditional student model just based on their age.

For Karen Jaimes, one of the student speakers, she is an example of someone who many would have said college would never be an option. Even she had those thoughts for seven years.

Jaimes became a mother when she was 14 years old. She thought her future would never involve college.



Graduates celebrate
June 28.

“Miss (Susan) Baker and Miss (Amy) Jackson inspired my dreams back into my life,” Jaimes said of the two longtime educators at Mt. Tallac High.

She credited the college’s flexibility in taking classes with allowing her to also be a full-time mom.

For Samantha Ramirez, her two young daughters also inspired her to keep going. She balanced being a mom, wife, working two jobs and being a full-time student.

As Roberts said, the evening was a commencement ceremony – a start, not an ending.

“The thing to remember is your life is now,” Roberts said. “Risk failure to chase your dreams. Go live your one wild and precious life.”

Firefighters test gel to suppress flames

By KOL0-TV

Is it the next breakthrough in firefighting? Makers of a polymer gel say so.

Thursday firefighters from Carson City and Lake Tahoe were intentionally setting fires to test out FireIce.

FireIce is a powder that becomes a gel when water is added, and the makers say it can help stop fires, and coat buildings to protect them.

“It’s basically like a sponge so what happens when you wet a

sponge it absorbs water,” Rob Rosovich of FireIce said.

Firefighters did a test that showed FireIce performed similarly to foam being used now. However, the product’s makers say it’s much better for the environment and is non-toxic.

While grants could help pay for the substance, Carson City Fire Chief Stacey Giomi says equipment would need to be modified to use it.

El Dorado County sheriff wants USFS to stand down

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

Complaints about the conduct of U.S. Forest Service law enforcement officers have led El Dorado County Sheriff John D’Agostini to suspend their authority to enforce state laws in the county effective next month.



John
D’Agostini

Sheriff’s spokesman Lt. Tim Becker said he could not elaborate on the specific complaints, saying that the sheriff was handling them as he would a personnel matter.

He said the sheriff had received multiple complaints from citizens regarding the actions of U.S. Forest Service law enforcement officers in El Dorado County.

[Click here to read the whole story](#)

Court: Gay marriages can resume in California

By Maura Dolan, New York Times

The U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals on Friday cleared the way for gay marriages to resume in California.

The court lifted its stay on an injunction which ordered state officials to stop enforcing Proposition 8. With the court's action, counties can now begin issuing same-sex marriage licenses.

A spokesman for the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals had originally said it would take the court at least 25 days to act after a Supreme Court ruling. Immediately afterward, Gov. Jerry Brown ordered his public health agency to advise the state's counties to "begin issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples in California as soon as the 9th Circuit confirms the stay is lifted."

Opponents of same-sex marriage have argued that Chief U.S. District Judge Vaughn Walker's 2010 decision overturning Proposition 8 applied only to the two same-sex couples who challenged the ballot measure. But their enthusiasm for going to court to try to narrow the effect of the decision appeared to wane in the hours after the decision.

With Brown and Attorney General Kamala Harris pledging to block Proposition 8 across California, the momentum for gay marriage was likely to hinder any further challenges.

California voters passed Proposition 8 in 2008, six months after the California Supreme Court ruled that gays had the right to wed. The state high court later ruled that the initiative was a valid state constitutional amendment but upheld the validity of an estimated 18,000 same-sex marriages that occurred before the election.

The Supreme Court ruled that ProtectMarriage, the sponsors of Proposition 8, lacked legal authority or standing to appeal Walker's ruling blocking the ballot initiative. The high court said Proposition 8's sponsors were not directly affected by Walker's ruling. Only state officials had the right to appeal, and they refused. That procedural decision wiped out the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals' 2-1 ruling against Proposition 8, leaving only Walker's decision in place and affecting only California.

County clerks who preside over marriages said they were ready for same-sex weddings. Marriage licenses already are gender-neutral, and clerks began receiving calls Wednesday from gay couples wanting to schedule appointments.

Harris called on the 9th Circuit on Wednesday to lift its hold on Walker's ruling immediately. The attorney general said she believed that the appeals court had the authority to act quickly.