Survey: 1 in 10 young adults have been homeless in past year

By Moriah Balingit, Washington Post

Hemmed in by low wages, pricey rental markets and family instability, more young people are crashing on couches of friends or acquaintances, sleeping in cars or turning to the streets, a new study has found.

Researchers with Chapin Hall, a youth policy center at the University of Chicago, surveyed in 2016 and 2017 more than 26,000 young people and their families across the country to gauge how many of them had been homeless during some period of the previous year.

Their results were alarming: One in 10 people ages 18 to 25 had experienced homelessness. For adolescents, the number was 1 in 30. They concluded that nearly 3.5 million young adults and 660,000 adolescents had been homeless within the previous year.

Read the whole story

Nevada has two races in national spotlight

By Colton Lochhead, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Nevada is sure to see plenty of national attention as this

year’s election cycle ramps up.

Politico recently rated the Silver State’s 2018 battles for U.S. Senate and governor as races to watch.

Sen. Dean Heller’s re-election bid, which features a primary challenge from businessman Danny Tarkanian and a strong Democratic candidate in freshman Rep. Jacky Rosen, ranked as Politico’s top Senate race to watch.

Politico also ranked Nevada’s race to replace term-limited Gov. Brian Sandoval fifth in its Top 10 governor’s races to watch in 2018.

Read the whole story

DCSO going after distracted drivers

Law enforcement agencies throughout Nevada are joining forces now through Jan. 22 to go after distracted driers.

Douglas County Sheriff’s Office will be working diligently to urge motorists to keep their eyes on the road and put away cell phone or other items that cause distractions.

Distracted driving is any activity that diverts attention from driving, including talking or texting on your phone, eating and drinking, talking to people in your vehicle, adjusting the stereo, entertainment or navigation system, or anything that takes your attention away from the task of safe driving.

Joining forces enforcement is paid for by the Nevada Department of Public Safety, Office of Traffic Safety.

Nev.’s first female senator shares her progress, priorities

By Yvonne Gonzalez, Las Vegas Sun

Twenty-six palm-sized portraits of Nevada’s U.S. senators hang on a wall here. The most recent portrait is not another man in a no-nonsense tie, but a pearl-wearing Latina whose election in 2016 made state history.

As the state’s first female senator and the chamber’s first Hispanic woman, Catherine Cortez Masto replaced former Sen. Harry Reid, a Democrat who in more than 30 years in office became one of the most powerful politicians in state history. He led the Senate majority and endorsed Cortez Masto immediately after she announced her candidacy.

Whether she could fill Reid’s shoes, she says, is a question she has had to answer often.

Read the whole story

Fires prompt bill to improve emergency alert system

By Joaquin Palomino, San Francisco Chronicle

North Bay lawmakers have introduced a bill to bolster the ability of emergency officials to contact residents who may be in harm's way – a topic that has been scrutinized since last year's devastating wildfires.

The legislation, introduced by multiple lawmakers, including state Sen. Mike McGuire, D-Healdsburg, would create uniform statewide emergency notification protocols. It also would require all counties to develop and adopt guidelines for using Wireless Emergency Alerts, a federally administered system that can send Amber Alert-style messages to cell phones in a disaster area.

As the *Chronicle* and others have reported, many North Bay residents said they received no official warning and were blindsided by the rapidly spreading flames that sparked in multiple counties in October.

Some experts said that statewide systems can be useful for regional or large-scale disasters, but in smaller incidents notification decisions are often better left to local leaders.

Read the whole story

South Lake Tahoe pot shop

willingly closes doors after being denied for-profit status by state



People wanting Tahoe Wellness Cooperative to remain open picket outside the center on Jan. 7. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

Tahoe Wellness Cooperative shut its doors on Jan. 7, but the medicinal marijuana shop hopes to reopen tonight or Tuesday morning.

There is a discrepancy as to why exactly the doors were closed because neither the state nor the city of South Lake Tahoe directed the business to do so.

“He decided to close on his own free will,” City Manager Nancy

Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News* of TWC owner Cody Bass.

As California started its foray into recreational marijuana on Jan. 1, it also meant changes for existing medicinal marijuana establishments. New businesses and those changing their status must have a permit from the state Bureau of Cannabis Control. Those permits are temporary until June at which time the state will be assessing what is working and what isn't.

The South Lake Tahoe shop said it had its license in hand before 2018 arrived.

However, a letter dated Jan. 5 from the state agency to Bass says, "After review of your application and supporting documentation your application is denied because you do not qualify for a temporary license at this time. You have not been authorized by the local jurisdiction to conduct the commercial cannabis activity for which you have applied."

The "commercial" aspect is what is the stumbling block. This puts TWC under a different classification from how it has operated for the last seven years as a nonprofit. It would still only be a medicinal dispensary because the city has a temporary moratorium on recreational sales.

"Commercial designation means for-profit and that they could only do business with other licensed entities," Alex Traverso with the state Bureau of Cannabis Control told *Lake Tahoe News.*

Bass would not speak directly to *LTN.*

Had Bass not sought the commercial designation, he could have been operating as he always has. He did not need a temporary state license to continue what he had been doing.

The city had to tell the state if TWC had a permit to do business. It doesn't, but the city explained by court order the dispensary is allowed to operate.

(The city and Bass are in a legal dispute about the permit. While a court hearing is slated for next month, that could be a moot point because Bass is in escrow to buy the building near the Bijou Center – which means he'd be his own landlord and would permit the business to continue operating.)

"In order for a state license to be issued, the local government must also agree to permit the business, and the local government was not willing to permit the activity. So we couldn't license Tahoe Wellness," Traverso said.

On Sunday less than a dozen people were outside TWC protesting. They were placing blame for TWC's closure on everyone but TWC when in fact TWC chose to lock its doors.

The TWC employee who said the dispensary may soon reopen didn't explain why this could happen nor did the person elaborate if TWC would stick with being a nonprofit.

This means for now **NuLeaf in Incline Village** is the only place to get marijuana legally in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Lake Tahoe Airport on path to being self-sufficient

By Kathryn Reed

Like most things in the basin, even Lake Tahoe Airport is seasonal. Sixty-eight percent of the landings are between May and October.

This was just one of the many statistics that was part of a workshop last month conducted by airport manager Mark Gibbs for the South Lake Tahoe City Council.

On the conservative side, the airport is bringing about 50,000 people to the area annually. The annual impact on the economy is more than $1.27 million.

In 2015, there were 23,595 aircraft operations.

Gibbs' goal is to decrease the airport's impact on the city's General Fund, which today is a little more than a quarter million dollars each year. He told the council his focus in on economic vitality.

"We need to recognize and promote that fact," Gibbs said.

One way to do that is through events and leasing of airport facilities.

In 2017, the Marines were in town for 10 days. Beyond using the airport – refueling being a biggie – it meant 35 hotel rooms, dining and rental cars for the flyboys.

This year there will be a weeklong gay pilots fly-in event that is expected to attract more than 100 people.

Solar generation may be brought to the airport. This would save the city thousands of dollars each year in electric bills.

The airport has 11 tenants who pay rent. Hertz is going to resume a limited car rental business at the airport.

Individuals who rent hangars account for 36 percent of the airport's revenues. Building more is possible.

Gibbs would also like to develop an aviation repair and maintenance facility.

A potential income source is developing the land the city owns around the airport. This would be a long-term revenue stream. While a music venue was talked about going there, the limited acreage silenced that idea.

“The whole South Shore has a storage shortage,” Gibbs said. It’s not that he wants the city to get into the storage business, but it would be possible to lease the land to someone who wants it for that purpose. This could be for boats/RVs or household items.

Gibbs shared that the Minden airport’s largest revenue source is storage rental.

While the airport is able to rely on the Federal Aviation Administration to pay for the bulk of runway paving, the feds don’t pay a dime when it comes to vegetation management even when safety is the overriding reason to do anything. And this is going to be a big issue for the airport in the coming years.

Trees are a safety issue for planes landing and taking off. Gibbs would like to create an annual airport timber harvest plan. The annual tree harvest ended in the 1990s because of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and League to Save Lake Tahoe’s lawsuit against the airport.

While the airport has seen many changes through the years, it isn’t going to close. As Gibbs pointed out, the feds have listed it as one of the 100 most important airports in the country. It’s a resource for military training, firefighting and is a life line to the outside world if roads into the basin were to be inaccessible.

“This airport is very important to the economy and to the nation,” Gibbs said.

Could medical marijuana be at risk following crackdown by Sessions?

By Andrew Selsky, AP

When U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions green-lighted federal prosecutions of marijuana lawbreakers, the vast majority of U.S. states that allow some form of medical marijuana were unexpectedly placed at risk of a crackdown and are warily watching developments.

Forty-six states – including Sessions' home state of Alabama – have legalized some form of medical marijuana in recent years, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Eight of those states also allow recreational marijuana.

Among the guidance that Sessions rescinded was the so-called Ogden Memorandum of 2009 that instructed federal prosecutors not to pursue cases against medical marijuana patients and distributors who complied with state laws.

Read the whole story

Rain, snow in the forecast at lake level



A driver had to be extricated Jan. 7 after sliding off Pioneer Trail in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/SLTFD

The National Weather Service in Reno has issued a winter storm watch for the greater Lake Tahoe area from 7pm Jan. 8 to 4pm Jan. 9.

Predictions are for snow accumulation of 12-18 inches above 7,500 feet, 2 feet along the Sierra crest. At lake level a couple inches are possible.

Rain is expected to start Sunday and be coming down the better part of Monday. By Thursday is should be mostly sunny.

Roads will be icy as the temps drop after the rain. There are already slick spots out there.

South Lake Tahoe firefighters on Sunday morning had to extricate a driver on Pioneer Trail. The driver was is stable conditions when transported to the hospital. The cause of the accident is under investigation.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Inequality in the U.S. is getting worse

By Jonathan J.B. Mijs, The Conversation

Inequality in America is on the rise. Income gains since the 1980s have been concentrated at the top. The top 10 percent today take home 30 percent of all income, and control over three-quarters of all wealth. We have returned to the level of income inequality that marked the Great Depression of the 1920s and 1930s.

Who gets what in America continues to be impacted by a person's race, gender and family resources. What's striking, however, is how little people seem to notice.

Evidence from the International Social Survey Programme suggests that people increasingly think their society is a meritocracy – that success in school and business simply reflects hard work and talent. This belief is held most dearly by Americans, but citizens across the world are growing more convinced.

The data show a surprising pattern: The more unequal a society, the less likely its citizens are to notice. Paradoxically, citizens in some of the most unequal countries think theirs is the paragon of meritocracy. How can we explain this phenomenon?

Origins of inequality beliefs

In my dissertation research, I explored the idea that people's beliefs originate in their childhood experiences.

My research suggests that people in more socioeconomically and racially diverse environments are more likely to appreciate how life outcomes are shaped by structural factors such as

race and wealth – that is, the ways in which a person's family wealth, gender or skin color may impact their chances of getting into college or finding employment.

However, increasing levels of income inequality and segregation mean that modern-day Americans are growing up in less economically diverse environments than in the 1970s. Consequently, people on either side of the income divide cannot see the breadth of the gap that separates their lives from those of others. As the gap grows wider, other people's lives are harder to view. Rising inequality prevents people from seeing its full extent.

I asked 300 respondents in an online survey to explain why a person graduates from college or drops out; what makes for success at work; what keeps a person out of trouble; and what may land a person in jail.

People typically explained these outcomes in terms of meritocratic factors: Being smart gets you into college, working hard earns you a promotion and being polite to the police may save you from a speeding ticket. In the words of one respondent, "I think people are mostly capable of getting what they want out of life. If they don't, they either didn't try hard enough or are too lazy, unmotivated or whatever."

But respondents were not blind to how structural factors can shape life outcomes. They recognized that some schools better prepare their students for college; that family contacts can help you get that good job or promotion; and that living in a poor neighborhood means you're on the police radar. As one person put it, "I think that in a lot of cases, outcomes are determined by privilege and race… or a lack thereof."

When I looked at respondents' explanations in light of their own background, I discovered a telling relationship: People who grew up in more socioeconomically or racially diverse environments were more likely, by about 20 percent, to explain

life outcomes in terms of structural factors. Conversely, people who grew up in homogeneously rich or white neighborhoods saw success in meritocratic terms.

Learning about inequality

To look more closely at how people learn about inequality, I studied a nationally representative sample of 14,000 students across 99 U.S. colleges. I asked students about racial inequality and meritocracy as freshmen, and then again in senior year. Would students grow more convinced about meritocracy over their college years, or did they come to understand inequality in structural terms?

About half of students held on to their original beliefs about inequality. Some 30 percent developed a structural understanding of inequality, while 20 percent came to see things more meritocratic. Their beliefs were shaped by three key factors: college setting, interactions with peers from different backgrounds, and their roommate in the dorms.

In racially homogeneous and exclusive college settings, students developed a more meritocratic view of inequality in the U.S.

Conversely, those who frequently interacted with students from another racial group became more concerned about racial and income inequality, and more critical of meritocracy. Students paired with a roommate of a different race also developed a better understanding of the structural sources of inequality.

Meritocracy, empathy and solidarity

My research suggests that how we see and explain inequality drives our empathy and solidarity with others. We feel for people who we understand are facing hardship by no fault of their own. We have less sympathy for those whose situation, we think, is caused by poor choices or a lack of effort.

As such, our beliefs about inequality are the starting point for our politics and our policy views on criminal justice, the welfare state and income redistribution.

If we want our young citizens to develop a better understanding of the world they live in, we need to create conditions for more interaction across socioeconomic and racial lines, at school, in college and in the neighborhoods where they grow up. We can do this by ensuring access to preschool for all income groups; stepping up the effort to desegregate public schools; and considering roommate assignment and other cost-free measures to increase diversity in college life.

It would take a major intervention to bring actual opportunities in line with the American Dream of social mobility. The next generation's choices will shape tomorrow's America. It is up to us, however, to decide what world this generation grows up in, and through what prism they come to see their society.

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