Nev. gaming panel urges new rules on e-sports

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Review-Journal

It won’t be long before people will be able to bet on teams competing against each other when they play video games.

Teams also will be able to bet against each other in a modified poker-style format in which the house will rake a percentage of the head-to-head bets.

But bettors will have to wait a little longer – maybe forever – before they will be able to play daily fantasy sports games in casinos.

Read the whole story

Tahoe ski season opens with flurry of excitement



Mount Rose is open for the 2016-17 ski season. Photo/Provided

By Steve Rubenstein, San Francisco Chronicle

SODA SPRINGS — A lot of people in wool beanies who hoped they weren't about to sprain, tweak or break anything too important showed up on Friday to give it another shot.

It was opening day of ski season at the Boreal Mountain Resort, and ski bunnies, male and female, were excited enough to hop up and down like the other variety of bunny.

"I like snow," said Caty Mieske, 4, of Sacramento. "It feels like ice cubes. I dreamed about it last night."

Caty got up before dawn to get ready. So did just about everyone else. The night before opening day is not something that ski junkies easily sleep through.

Mount Rose Ski Tahoe also opened Friday, giving skiers access to four beginner trails.

Read the whole story

Chain controls expected over Sierra passes

Caltrans is alerting motorists to expect winter driving conditions this weekend over Echo Summit and Donner Pass.

The National Weather Service expects about a foot of snow on Highway 50 and Interstate 80 beginning Saturday. The snow elevation is predicted to reach 5,400 feet on Interstate 80.

“While chain installers will most likely be present in the chain installation areas, they are not Caltrans employees who work specific hours. Should they not be present, motorists should be experienced in putting on and taking off their vehicle’s chains,” Caltrans warned in a press release.

Licensed chain installers can be identified by the three digit number on their bibs. Caltrans provides this number and bib only to those persons who have been licensed and trained to be a chain installer/remover by Caltrans.

Bijou park hindered by lack of master plan

By Kathryn Reed

Bijou Community Park needs help.

“There are a lot of things people would like to do and add to the park but there is no master plan,” Pete Fink told the South Lake Tahoe City Council on Nov. 15.

Fink is a member of the city’s Parks and Recreation Commission. That advisory board has become a more vocal and active group in the past couple of years. One of the main purposes of the commission is to identify needs in the community and bring them to the council’s attention.

Just like when **Commissioner Scott Valentine** spoke last month about bike trails, Fink also advocated for an expanded budget. This would be for more front line staff and maintenance, as well then allowing for the expansion of programs.

Fink said the parks in town are being loved to death, especially Bijou.



Bijou Bike Park has multiple courses for all ability levels. Photo/LTN

The city has talked about doing a master plan, but that is as far as it has gotten. It will likely be brought up again at the council's February strategic plan meeting.

With the passage of Measure P this month, the city will soon have more money for recreation. About 60 percent of the revenues will be used to pay back the bonds once those are issued. That means there will be "leftover" money that could be used for more immediate and routine needs that the commission identifies – as well as for a consultant to prepare the master plan.

A master plan would also help with conflicts that exist.

"The gate is open for the dog park, but the park is closed (in winter). Having the gate unlocked sends mixed messages. A

master plan can help with a solution," Fink said.

As the Greenway Bike Path continues to be built, it will tie into Bijou park. But what's on the books now would affect disc golf. A master plan would help plot where the various users would recreate.

The commission recommends:

· The council continue discussions with the California Tahoe Conservancy in regards to property exchanges so Bijou Community Park could expand.

· Installing a pedestrian-triggered crosswalk from the entrance of the park to the community ball fields on the other side of Al Tahoe Boulevard.

· Considering more concessionaires in the park.

· Having the park open in the winter – which would mean bathrooms, drinking fountains, snow play area and parking.

When a police officer is needed the incident at a park is often not the first priority. Fink suggested a park ranger of sorts to be dedicated to patrolling the various entities.

He broached the idea of altering the city's agreement with TAMBA so the cycling organization could hire a part-time person dedicated to working on the bike park at Bijou.

The nonprofit spent $18,000 on the park this summer, which included redoing the pump track so it's not as steep. Benches have been added along with a repair station. A new line was added on the slopestyle course. More features were put in on the loop route to help people build skills. The BMX hill is now asphalt.

City recreation areas also include Lakeview Commons, Regan Beach, Bonanza Park, Campground by the Lake, Bijou Golf Course and the recreation center.

Star Guide: Meteorite exhibit is rock solid



Dan Ruby, Fleischmann Planetarium director, at the meteorite exhibit. Photo/Tony Berendsen

By Tony Berendsen

There are only eight states that are less populated than Nevada, and only one with more public land. That adds up to a lot of open country to go hunting for meteorites: rocks that have fallen from space.

Unfortunately, there are a lot of rocks in Nevada, so finding

a space rock among the mix, even if you know what to look, can be very challenging. The good news is the Fleischmann Planetarium has a new exhibit strewn with meteorites you can walk through. The staff can help you test to see if your rock came from space.

I've always been fascinated by meteorites because of their origin. During a visit to the planetarium this month I talked to Dan Ruby, Fleischmann Planetarium director, about his passion for them, and learned of his interest in showcasing their fabulous collection to the public.

Ruby said, "Each meteorite we have in our collection has a story to tell, a story about our solar system and beyond."

He noted that meteorites are specimens from space that didn't require a spaceship to collect.

Ruby said, "In recent years the planetarium has encouraged the public to bring in meteorite candidates for a meteorite-meteor wrong test.

He also offered some advice to predetermine if a rock may be a meteorite:

1. Is it dark in color?

2. Is it compact and smooth-rounded with no holes, sharp edges, or veins of different material?

3. If irregular in shape does it have thumbprint-like indentations, or was it found amongst a field of similar specimens?

4. Is it heavy for its size?

5. Does it have a flaky crust?

If the answer is "no" to 1 through 3 its' not a meteorite, and if you said "yes" to all, then maybe you should bring it to

the planetarium for some testing at the planetarium’s Science Station.

Ruby walked me through the collection of meteorites in the exhibit hall, which are beautifully placed on pedestals capped with transparent cylinders allowing 360 viewing. Meteorites are arranged by type in a beautiful array around the massive 1-ton Quinn Canyon meteorite. You can even take one home, at least in a virtual way. Each meteorite in the collection is being 3D scanned.

The planetarium has an intern working on a project to scan all of the meteorites in the collection and to make the scans available so they can be 3D printed by the public. The scanning process has just begun, but Ruby did provide me with a scan which I printed.

Last but not least, during my visit to the planetarium I talked to student employees Apryl Witherspoon and Alexis Romero about Saturday and Sundays at the Science Station. They do free science demonstrations ranging from electrical conductivity to polymers. The Science Station is located on the main floor just outside of the Exhibit Hall and is also used to test rocks for meteorite.

The **Fleischmann Planetarium** is located on the UNR campus next to the Lawlor Events Center on Virginia Street. You don’t need to have a meteorite sample to stop by the planetarium. But, please do bring your fascination for science and astronomy. While you are there, why not take in a show or purchase a Christmas telescope for a loved one or maybe yourself.

Tony Berendsen runs Tahoe Star Tours. He may be reached at 775. 232.0844 or tony@tahoestartours.com.

Consortium to address West Shore forest health

The Lake Tahoe West Restoration Partnership's inaugural meeting is Nov. 30 from 10am-3pm at the 89 Bar Conference Room in the North Lodge at Homewood Mountain Resort.

The goal of Lake Tahoe West, a new interagency initiative of the California Tahoe Conservancy, U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, California State Parks, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team, and National Forest Foundation, is to restore the resiliency of forests and watersheds on the West Shore.

This first meeting will focus on learning about each other's backgrounds and interests, reviewing the initial findings from a stakeholder assessment, reviewing a draft charter and proposed project boundary, and reviewing the initiative's overall timeline. Stakeholders represent a range of interests in the west shore's forests and watersheds, including air quality, biomass, business, tourism and resorts, conservation, cultural resources, fire protection, forest products and contracting, homeowners and private landowners, land management, public utilities, recreation, regulation, transportation and access, and water resources.

RSVP by Nov. 24, 2016, is requested (not required) to help ensure sufficient seating and copies of materials. Lunch is not provided.

For more information, go **online**.

If Raiders move, bets likely to remain at sports books

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Review-Journal

The chairman of the Nevada Gaming Commission says Raiders games aren't likely to come off the state's betting boards if the NFL franchise moves from Oakland to Las Vegas – even if the league asks for a wagering prohibition on the team.

If the Oakland Raiders take up residence in Las Vegas, the team or the National Football League could request to have games removed from wagering in the state's sports books.

The state's Regulation 22 provides the means for games to be taken off the board, but Tony Alamo, chairman of the Nevada Gaming Commission, doesn't see that ever happening.

Read the whole story

Fire cameras detected 30 blazes in Tahoe basin

This fire season cameras on mountaintops in the basin provided either fire discovery, early intelligence and/or situational awareness for more than 30 wildfires in Lake Tahoe.

Another 50 fires were detected in the region.

AlertTahoe is a mountaintop fire camera system started by UNR and now supported by the Tahoe Prosperity Center.

The system is designed, built and maintained by the UNR's

Seismological Laboratory. It features 15 cameras that circle Lake Tahoe and stretches north of Truckee, south to Carson City, west toward Placerville, and out into the Northern Nevada Great Basin mountain ranges, where another eight cameras are operated in conjunction with the Bureau of Land Management.

Another seven HD cameras will go live in and around the Lake Tahoe Basin before next fire season thanks to fundraising spearheaded by the Tahoe Prosperity Center. Zephyr Cove, Alpine Meadows, Martis Peak, Mt. Rose and Bald Mountain are some of the future locations.

“There was about a fourfold increase over the number of fires monitored from last year, due mostly to more cameras as well as increased fire activity near the South Shore area of Lake Tahoe,” Graham Kent, director of the seismological lab, said in a press release.

The cameras are used by wildland firefighting agencies for quicker, more efficient responses. Traditionally, fire managers would send planes to spot and monitor fires, which takes time and resources.

Underpass for Incline bike trail completed

Significant progress was made this building season on what will be a 3-plus mile bike path from the south end of Incline Village to Sand Harbor State Park.

The project is part of the larger Stateline-to-Stateline path.

The north section will take three seasons to complete and also includes stormwater improvements.

This year an underpass was built beneath Highway 28 to bring the upcoming shared use path from the east to west side of the road near the Flume Trail. Work also began on the three parking areas located near the Ponderosa Ranch and Tunnel Creek Café. This year's efforts also included the relocation of a sewer pipe near Hidden Beach.

The next phases will also include enhanced roadside drainage inlets, sediment filtration systems and erosion control.

West Shore connector trail finished

What a difference one mile makes.

The Homewood bike trail connection is done. And while it is not very long, what it does is link sections to make a more contiguous route along the West Shore.

A consortium came together for funding purposes. It is now up to the Tahoe City Public Utility District to maintain the trail as part of its 20 miles of trails.

The new segment goes from Cherry Street to Homewood Mountain Resort. It ends at Sugar Pine Point State Park. One day the path will connect to Meeks Bay.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report