

Salt Lake making play for another Winter Games

By Lisa Riley Roche, Deseret News

Salt Lake City is already “ticking all the boxes” for another successful Winter Games bid, according to the head of a leading international Olympic publication.

“They’re doing all the right things,” said Ed Hula, founder and editor of the Atlanta-based “Around the Rings,” especially involving state and local government leaders in the newly formed Olympic Exploratory Committee.

The USOC has until March 31, 2018, to decide whether to advance an American city for 2026 or 2030.

A new bid process approved in July by the IOC for the 2026 Winter Games now allows for a full year of discussions with both national Olympic committees like the USOC and potential bid cities.

Denver and the Reno-Tahoe area have expressed interest in bidding for the Winter Games.

Read the whole story

Plenty of snow on mountaintop as Heavenly opens



Winter has definitely arrived at Heavenly as evidenced Nov. 17 by the snow at the top of Tamarack chair looking down. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Opening day at Heavenly Mountain Resort was delayed a few hours, but that didn't seem to bother the hundreds of people who were making tracks Friday for the first time this season.

It did make for a bit of a long day for those who arrived at 6:30am to ensure they'd be first in line.

Roy Lambert of Gardnerville, Michael Brown of Stateline and Kouri Penn of South Lake Tahoe had the lock on the front row. There's about 15 in their posse. They consider themselves the first chair club. They've been at it for more than a dozen years.

It's the rush, being with friends and beating the crowds that has them wanting that first gondola carriage of the season.



Roy Lambert, from left, Michael Brown and Kouri Penn are ready for the first gondola car of the season at Heavenly on Nov. 17. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The day started late because Tamarack chair needed to be deiced. It was the only lift running, which is normal for the start of the season.

The snow, though, was awesome. As one man from Carson City said, it was like January snow.

On the mountain it's like a frosty winter wonderland where the trees are wrapped in a thick layer of snow.

Snow is being made as well, which will speed up the process for more terrain to be opened. Expect Dipper to be the next lift to spin.

For Art Bonfert of Auburn, he's been to opening day the last four years – a treat since retiring.

"The skiing is never good, but it's just the fact you can be here," Bonfert told *Lake Tahoe News*. This is his 49th year to ski Heavenly. Last year he got in 75 days, this year he's hoping for 100.



It was hard to smell the fresh mountain air in the Tamarack line on Nov. 17. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Jesse Sopoaga of Monterey has been hearing his buddy's stories about snowboarding and knew it was time to share in the fun. He rented equipment at home, pulled the appropriate clothing together, stayed over Thursday and was ready hours before the gondola was open. He paid \$109 for the experience.

His friend Jeff Oda of Pinole has an Epic Tahoe pass. Tahoe is his place to unwind from the stresses of the Bay Area. This, though, was his first opening day.

It seemed to be a bit of a party atmosphere in the Tamarack lift line with all the smoking – cigarettes, pot, vaping – and the alcohol being consumed. Even though the resort has signs not to partake in those activities in line, staff wasn't doing anything about it. It was hard to miss the smell and not see the big puffs of smoke.

Perhaps once more terrain opens it won't be such a nuisance to those not consuming.

Northstar was supposed to open Nov. 17 as well, but the storm brought more rain than snow to the Truckee resort. It is now slated to open Nov. 23.

Squaw Valley opened Nov. 17, Mount Rose is open, Mammoth is open, Kirkwood is set to open Nov. 22, and other resorts are waiting on Mother Nature to help cover the slopes with white stuff. Another storm system is expected to reach Tahoe starting Sunday night. It is best to check the website of each ski resort to see if it is open as well as how much terrain is skiable.

Sand bags available in Placer County

Placer County has a slew of locations where residents may get sand bags.

Here are locations in the greater Lake Tahoe area:

- North Tahoe Fire: Station 53, 5425 West Lake Blvd., Homewood
- North Tahoe Fire Station 52, 288 North Shore Blvd.

- (Intersection of highways 267 and 28), Kings Beach
- Northstar Community Services District Corp Yard, 50 Trimont Lane (off Northstar Boulevard)
 - Old Squaw Valley Fire Station, 1810 Squaw Valley Road (at west end of valley, near lifts)
 - Department of Public Works Corp Yard, 2501 North Lake Blvd. (Burton Creek), Tahoe City'
 - Truckee Fire Station 92, 11473 Donner Pass Road
 - Truckee Corp Yard, 10969 Stevens Lane.
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NDOT prepares for winter conditions in N. Nevada

Nevada Department of Transportation has been prepping since August to be ready for winter, which arriving this week.

NDOT begins annual winter preparations by readying more than 80 snowplows and other pieces of snow and ice equipment.

Approximately 40,000 cubic yards of salt and sand has been stockpiled in the area, ready to be spread for increased traction and safety. The sand is combined with salt and wetted with brine to create more dense sand that keeps roads ice-free at lower temperatures and will not as easily bounce off roadway surfaces. NDOT sand trucks calibrate the amount of salt and sand, spreading the mixture on roadways with extreme precision and efficiency.

The brine is a water solution of 23 percent salt that is produce in-house.

During major winter storms, crews work in 12-hour shifts, rotating personnel to provide 24 hour-a-day snow removal.

Officials report more than 2,000 crashes occur statewide every year due to unsafe driving in snow, ice and other wet conditions, such as driving too fast for conditions, following too closely, or failing to maintain a lane and overcorrecting.

Skiers spending fewer days on the slopes

By Kathryn Reed

TRUCKEE – Money isn't keeping people off the ski slopes. It's that they have so many more options when it comes to how to spend their time.

That is something ski resort officials are trying to wrap their heads around.

Michael Reitzell, president of the California Ski Industry Association, said that while millennials are now the largest segment of skiers/snowboarders on the slopes, they are not participating as many days as baby boomers do. Baby boomers average 10 days a season on the mountain, while millennials are there half as many.

Nadia Guerriero, vice president and general manager of Northstar, talked about how people are looking for unique experiences. The runs themselves during a normal day are not always enough to keep people's attention anymore.

Daily Champagne, opportunities for first tracks, special groomed runs – these are some of the ways Northstar is trying to add to the experience.

Reitzell and Guerriero were joined by Dave Rathbun from Sugar

Bowl-Royal Gorge, and Casey Blann with Squaw Valley-Alpine Meadows, as the guest speakers at the Truckee Chamber of Commerce breakfast on Nov. 14.

Reitzell threw out the following stats from 2016-17:

- 7 million skier visits in California/Nevada; (In 2015-16 there were 7.3 million and 4.4 million in 2015-16.)
- 42 percent of visits were from season passholders
- 6 unscheduled closed days, which was double from the prior season
- snowboarding is up from 34.2 percent to 34.7 percent
- nationally, there were 54.7 skier visits, up 3.7 percent from 2015-16.

People waiting to have children and having fewer of them are contributing factors to a decline in young people learning the sport.

Guerriero said one trend is “the shift toward time being more scarce than money.”

To combat that sentiment, she said Northstar is “encouraging guests to come midweek for an easy, stress free experience.” This way people will have more time to actually ski because it’s less crowded.

Rathbun said Sugar Bowl is doing what it can to make the experience at the resort off Interstate 80 more pleasant this season. Simply adding more snow removal equipment to plow the road and parking lot will go a long way. The 795 inches the resort received last winter at times made it near impossible for skiers to get to the resort, let alone park once they got there.

Sugar Bowl tends to rely on day skiers from the Sacramento

area. They aren't taking public transit even if it were available.

Making the start of their day stress free is one of the ways to improve guest services.

Squaw Valley also recognizes it has a traffic issue, in particular on Highway 89 and then the road leading to the resort. Blann said a pilot program will start this season where a shuttle bus will have an exclusive lane. He said the resort is working with Placer County to improve the traffic quagmire.

Squaw also had a parking issue last season; to the point a snow melting mechanism was leased to get rid of the white stuff in the parking lot, and snow was also trucked out.

An issue that crosses generational lines is that people want to be connected on the slopes.

Sugar Bowl is working with Verizon to put in a transponder at one of the lodges. Reception at Alpine is near non-existent. They, too, are talking to Verizon. AT&T has talked about putting in a tower at Ward Peak. Northstar is in good shape, but is still looking to put in mono poles places.

Squaw and Northstar open Friday, with Sugar Bowl yet to set a date.

Wise working on original tricks for '18 Olympics

Publisher's note: *This is one of a series of stories about Lake Tahoe area athletes who hope to compete in the 2018*

Olympics in South Korea.

By Kathryn Reed

PARK CITY, Utah – “I want to do something no one else is doing. It is more important to be a pioneer than to do a flawlessly executed run. I look at what is not being done.”

David Wise’s philosophy has paid off in gold.

The Reno native was on top of the podium at the Sochi Olympic Games in 2014 for halfpipe skiing. He won gold at the X Games the last three seasons. In February, he hopes to add to his Olympic medal collection.

“I have some brand new things that have never been done. I hope to accomplish them in the Olympics,” Wise said.

His approach to tricks has evolved through the years. He used to dream something up and immediately go try it. Injuries have a way of refining how one does something. Wise said now he is more calculated.

Now a new trick may take him a couple years to perfect.

“What I hope to do in PyeongChang I thought about in Russia. I’ve been chipping away at it,” Wise said.



David Wise is taking his family to South Korea for what could be his last Olympics. Photo/Kathryn Reed

He didn't get to the top of the free skiing world in a conventional manner. At age 12 he was in the top five in his age group in ski racing. But that wasn't what he was passionate about. He quit racing and wound up in the bottom five of moguls. His determination and skills, though, propelled him to this elite level.

While he grew up at Mount Rose Ski Resort, now he says he doesn't have a home resort. Today he mostly skis at Rose, Squaw Valley and Northstar when he is home. "I have a soft spot for Alpine. I know all the secret spots on a powder day," Wise told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Family is one of the driving factor's in this 27-year-old's career – parents, siblings, wife and children. However, being

an athlete takes a back seat to being a dad and husband. Still, skiing is his job. He's had to learn how to navigate sleep, travel, media, training and competing.

In Russia, he regretted that his daughter was not at the finish line; instead she was at home watching her dad on TV. And while technically he (and everyone else) has not qualified for the 2018 Games, the flights are booked for his wife, daughter and son. Wise admitted at the Team USA media conference this fall that this could very well be his last Olympics.

Growing up Wise's two sisters were always encouraging him to be who he wanted to be. The entire family is athletic. He credits his siblings for why he is not self-centered.

Wise is more complex than some of his peers. Being a family man sets him apart from some; his kids are 6 and 3. He's been a youth pastor, saying how faith is a big part of who he is. At one time he thought he'd become a pastor; that's on hold for now. He's written a children's book that he hopes will be available near the Olympics.

Sage grouse policy heading back to square one

By Scott Sonner, AP

Federal scientists and land managers who've been crafting strategies to protect a ground-dwelling bird's habitat across the American West for nearly two decades are going back to the drawing board under a new Trump administration edict to reassess existing plans condemned by ranchers, miners and

energy developers.

Federal officials are wrapping up a series of public meetings with three sessions starting Tuesday in Utah ahead of a Nov. 27 cutoff for comment on Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's order last month to consider revisions to land management amendments for the greater sage grouse that were adopted under the Obama administration.

Zinke says he wants to make sure the amendments don't harm local economies in 11 western states and allow the states to have maximum control over the efforts within their borders.

Read the whole story

Climate change could decrease sun's ability to disinfect lakes

By Mary L. Martialay, Phys.Org

Increasing organic runoff as a result of climate change may be reducing the penetration of pathogen-killing ultraviolet sunlight in inland lakes, rivers, and coastal waters, according to a study in the journal *Scientific Reports*. The findings, from a team including researchers at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, points to the potential for an increase in waterborne pathogens.

Scientists have already measured an increase in "browning" of the world's waters, a phenomenon caused by more organic matter washing in from the surrounding land. The study, led by Miami University in Ohio, analyzed water samples and used a model

based at the National Center for Atmospheric Research to quantify, for the first time, the impact of dissolved organic matter on the potential for UV radiation from the sun to kill pathogens in the water.

Not only does an increase in dissolved organic matter make it more difficult for sunlight to disinfect bodies of water, it also makes it more difficult for water treatment plants to work effectively, said lead author Craig Williamson, a Miami University ecologist.

Read the whole story

Snow back in the forecast for Tahoe basin

The National Weather Service in Reno has issued a winter storm watch for the greater Lake Tahoe area from 4pm Nov. 15 to 4am Nov. 17.

More than a foot of snow is possible at 7,000 feet or above.

“Accumulations below 7,000 feet are more uncertain and depend on how fast snow levels fall Thursday, but could reach 6 or more inches,” the Weather Service said.

Expect delays over mountain passes. For road conditions, click on the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News*.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Tahoe's second-generation skiers making their mark

By David Bunker, Tahoe Quarterly

This winter, if lucky, you might see Warren Miller skier and Truckee local Amie Engerbretson rocket off a cliff in Squaw Valley's Fingers named after her dad. Or you might catch 16-year-old Noah Gaffney dropping into a chute immortalized in "Squallywood" – the unofficial guidebook to Squaw Valley skiing penned by his father.

A generation has passed since a surge of skiers flocked to Tahoe's slopes in the 1980s, drawn by the siren song of Scot Schmidt films and photos, ski flicks like "Hot Dog...The Movie" and ski magazine shots of neon-clad "extreme" skiers pushing the outer edges of the sport.

Many of these Tahoe transplants put down permanent roots in the area, becoming icons and influencers in the ski world and raising sons and daughters on the same hallowed ski terrain that brought them West.

Now, their offspring are carving out their own place in the ski world.

Read the whole story