

Barton website targets Spanish speakers

Barton Health is providing Spanish speakers access to health care info through a new website.

With approximately 25 percent of the people Barton services speaking Spanish, the South Lake Tahoe health organization needed a way to reach those people more effectively.

Smartling's Translation Management Platform and Global Delivery Network put the site together. Much of the material is the same that is on the English version of Barton's website.

"Launching this new website allows us to better serve our Spanish-speaking community," Tracy Young, the language access services coordinator at Barton Health, said in a press release. "This collaboration with Smartling will enable us to become a leader in health care language access to Spanish speakers."

Smartling's technology automatically collects and centrally stores text from the Barton Health website and then delivers an SEO-compatible multilingual experience directly to target audiences.

USFS thinning trees throughout South Shore

Thinning of trees for fuels reduction and forest health will continue next week on approximately 170 acres on the South

Shore.

Beginning July 28, thinning will take place off of North Upper Truckee Road near West San Bernardino Avenue, Pioneer Trail northwest of forest road 12N08 (Powerline), Pioneer Trail southwest of Columbine Trail and on some urban lots in the Tahoe Island Drive area near 15th Street. Thinning operations in these locations may vary over the next several weeks.

The Forest Service will close areas in some locations from 7am-6pm daily through Oct. 15 for public safety due to heavy equipment operation and falling trees. Hazards may be present even when operations have ceased for the day and the closure is not in effect. Individuals disregarding the closure may be cited, with subsequent fines and jail time.

The forest thinning is part of the South Shore Fuels Reduction and Healthy Forest Restoration Project, which will treat approximately 10,000 acres between Cascade Lake and Stateline.

Nev. needs Congress' OK to do anything with its land

By Amber Phillips, Las Vegas Sun

WASHINGTON – With one week to go before a five-week summer break, Nevada's lawmakers are doing what they can do to push through agendas they've been working on all year.

Rep. Mark Amodei claimed one of the delegation's first victories of the week when the House of Representatives passed the Northern Nevada Republican's bill signaling the end of a decade-old water dispute near Reno between the the Pyramid

Lake Paiute Tribe and a ranch that wants to expand.

The details are wonky, but it underscores the fact Nevadans need congressional approval to do pretty much anything with the state's land. The bill is expected to pass the Senate and become law.

Nevada's House delegation also teamed up with Florida lawmakers – two states with economies that rely heavily on tourism – to support a bill that passed the House to encourage tourism to America. The bill has the support of Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., so it may have a chance of actually becoming law.

Read the whole story

Cause of Deerfield Lodge fire still unknown

By Kathryn Reed

Investigators are still trying to determine the cause of the fire that has shuttered the Deerfield Lodge indefinitely and displaced three dozen visitors.

South Lake Tahoe Fire Chief Jeff Meston told *Lake Tahoe News*, "We know it started at the end of the hotel itself."

He said nothing has been found yet to conclusively say the July 23 blaze was accidental or arson. Meston added that investigators are waiting on results to help determine the cause.



Investigators have not determined the cause of the July 23 fire at Deerfield Lodge. Photo/Susan Wood

There was a transformer in the area that failed, but that was the result of power lines falling on it. Meston said the transformer was not the cause of the fire.

A person answering the phone at the Ski Run Boulevard boutique hotel said there is no date when it might reopen. People who live out of state own the Deerfield.

The back section is a total loss. The estimated damage is more than \$2 million.

The hotel guests spent the first night at Lakeside Inn. Since then some have gone home, while others are scattered about the South Shore. Some lost everything and only got out with a sheet wrapped around them. And some will need to replace airline tickets and passports to get home.

Local businesses that have helped include: Belfor Property Restoration, Freshies Restaurant, Hard Rock Café, KRLT, Lakeland Village, Lakeshore Lodge and Spa, Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, Stardust Lodge Lake Tahoe, and Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce. Anyone who can assist with clothing, lodging or other amenities should call 530.542.6016.

Workshop to focus on benefits of worms

A workshop called Vermicomposting: Worms + Kitchen Scraps = Gold will take place July 29 in Tahoe City.

In this workshop people will be taught how to create a simple and inexpensive worm bin, what to put in the bin, what to keep out, and how to keep your worms happy. The talk will also focus on the benefits of composting for the earth, landfills, and your garden.

The free event is from 5:30-6:30pm at the Tahoe City Field Station, 2400 Lake Forest Road.

5:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m.

Profits increase for El Dorado Savings

El Dorado Savings Bank reported second quarter profits of \$2,782,107, which represents a 28 percent increase compared to the Second Quarter of 2013.

Earnings for the first six months of 2014 totaled \$5,901,573, compared to \$3,836,217 in 2013.

“The higher rates on new loans and investments improved the bank’s profit margin while the strong performance of the loan portfolio allowed for a reduction in reserves for potential

losses during the first quarter of 2014,” CEO George L. Cook Jr. said in a statement.

El Dorado ended the quarter with \$1.86 billion in total assets and savings deposits of \$1.67 billion.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Drought is not just California's problem

By Katharine Mieszkowski, Center of Investigative Reporting

Gov. Jerry Brown has asked restaurants not to serve water unless diners ask for it. He's letting lawns at the state Capitol turn brown. Farmers in the Central Valley are getting just a trickle of the water they usually do. Conspicuous water wasters – commercial and residential – face fines of \$500 a day.

Even Lady Gaga is pleading with Californians to conserve.

All of California is in a state of emergency because of the prolonged drought, now in its third year. And it's more than just Californians who are feeling the impact – the state uses its scarce water to provide the nation with more food than any other state.

Here's a guide to what's causing the drought and what it means for all of us.

Drought is part of life in California.

In the last century, the state suffered seven multiyear

droughts.

This drought is particularly bad.

By this spring, California had experienced its driest three-year stretch since 1895.

San Francisco, Los Angeles, Sacramento and Fresno logged their driest year ever recorded in 2013.

California's climate varies tremendously, from temperate rainforests on the North Coast to the extreme aridity of Death Valley. Conditions now are so dry that all of the state is considered to be in a drought. More than 80 percent of the state is in extreme or exceptional drought, according to the United States Drought Monitor.

An extreme drought happens once every 20 to 50 years and wreaks havoc on crops. An exceptional drought, meanwhile, comes every 50 to 100 years, causing true water emergencies by draining reservoirs, streams and wells.

Blame the severity of the drought on the "Ridiculously Resilient Ridge."

That's the cheeky nickname for a high-pressure area – think of it as a mountain of air – that sat for months over the eastern Pacific Ocean. The name was coined by Daniel Swain, a doctoral student at Stanford University who writes the California Weather Blog.

The ridge sent storms that normally would hit California up over the Alaskan panhandle and the Yukon, leaving California unusually dry. The ridge extended from British Columbia down the coast of California, blocking storms from making their way to the Golden State.

The state saw low rainfall last winter and during the latter part of the previous winter, which has left the already thirsty state parched.

Aside from being ridiculously resilient, the ridge is also a bit of a mystery. Such high-pressure areas commonly develop in the winter, but they usually break down, allowing storms to get to California. Climatologists don't know why this ridge persisted so long.

Many farmers are getting walloped.

California farms, which guzzle 80 percent of the water used by humans in the state, are feeling the heat. Farmers in the dry Central Valley alone may stand to lose \$810 million this year from keeping their fields idle, according to the UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences. They'll also spend an extra \$453 million on pumping water out of the ground. The state likely will lose 17,100 agricultural jobs because of the drought.

California moves vast quantities of water around the state, but some of it just isn't available this year. The Central Valley Project usually sends water from the northern half of the state to the dry San Joaquin Valley. Many farmers who depend on it are getting none of that water this year.

The State Water Project, which is a significant source of water for 750,000 acres of farmland, is delivering 5 percent of the water that farmers have requested.

About 428,000 acres, or 5 percent of the irrigated cropland in the Central Valley, Central Coast and Southern California, won't be planted this year, researchers at UC Davis predict.

This has started to affect the price of fruits and vegetables in the United States.

California produces nearly half of the fruits, vegetables and nuts grown in the United States.

That means the drought already is starting to hit our pocketbooks as farmers idle land, driving up prices. The U.S.

Department of Agriculture predicts fruit prices may rise as much as 6 percent this year, while vegetables may go up as much as 3 percent nationwide.

For instance, the majority of the nation's lettuce is grown in California. Between April and May, prices for the leafy green went up 1.9 percent.

The popularity of almonds has only compounded the problem.

Some farmers in these areas have invested in lucrative crops that have to be watered year-round or they die.

In the past 20 years, nut trees, like almonds, have become more popular to plant because the crops are lucrative. In a dry year, a nut tree still needs water to survive, while an annual crop, like rice or tomatoes, could not be planted that year and the field left fallow.

Some farmers now are uprooting nut trees before they're past their prime because they don't have the water to keep them alive.

With water a scarcity, there's a drilling frenzy to scoop up groundwater, causing the ground to sink in the Central Valley.

In some areas of the state, the groundwater has become so overtaxed that the earth is literally sinking. Between 2008 and 2011, parts of the Central Valley subsided more than 2 feet, as this startling visualization by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory shows.

Groundwater is an important source of water for the state in wet years and dry years, accounting for about 40 percent of water used in normal years and up to 60 percent in drought years, according to the California Water Foundation.

Some 75 percent of Californians rely on groundwater for at least a portion of their drinking water. Yet, California lacks a comprehensive groundwater management plan, which all other

dry Western states already have.

Two bills in the Legislature right now seek to move the state toward local management of groundwater.

The drought is also causing fish evacuations and wildfires.

The ecologically important Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta also is feeling the drought.

In June, rainbow trout and steelhead trout had to be released from two hatcheries at a much younger age and smaller size than usual. The reason: Scientists predicted that by midsummer, the water in the hatcheries would be too warm for the fish to survive, because there is so little mountain runoff. Chinook salmon have been trucked to San Pablo Bay so they won't have to navigate parched rivers and streams on their way to the ocean.

Wildfire risk also is up statewide. This year, there had been 3,400 wildfires as of July 19, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. That's an increase of 36 percent over the five-year average.

In May, more than a dozen wildfires raged in San Diego County. The wildfire season there is usually in the fall following the hot, dry summer.

The state and federal governments have put hundreds of millions of dollars into aid.

In March, Brown signed drought relief legislation worth \$687 million. It included \$25.3 million for food and \$21 million for housing for those like farmworkers who are out of work thanks to fallow fields. In February, President Barack Obama announced the federal government would chip in \$183 million to the parched state.

When will the drought end?

When El Niño shows up, maybe.

That's when warm waters develop in the Pacific Ocean, which often bring wet winters to California. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration now puts the odds of El Niño at 80 percent.

But there's a big catch.

California needs a strong El Niño to reliably deliver that rain. Right now, it's shaping up to be weak or moderate.

In search of El Niño, meteorologists scrutinize current sea surface temperatures, air patterns and ocean currents around the globe, using computer models to analyze how all those factors interact.

They're trying to forecast what the sea surface temperature will be for a large expanse of ocean along the equator south of Hawaii, known as the east-central Equatorial Pacific. If that water is warmer than usual for a solid three-month stretch, it's El Niño – the warmer it is, the stronger the El Niño.

Get used to these droughts.

It's difficult to link any one weather event – like the current drought – to climate change.

Whatever happens this winter, it is highly likely that Californians can expect even more extreme droughts in the future, thanks to climate change.

Southern California will get drier, climate scientists predict. Northern California will get hotter. Some snow won't fall as snow anymore – it'd become rain. The snow that does fall will melt faster. That could shrink the Sierra Nevada spring snowpack by as much as 90 percent.

The loss of snow doesn't affect just the annual family

snowball fight. When the snowpack – often called California’s largest reservoir – melts in the spring, it is an essential source of water for farms and cities.

That means less water for all of us.

Man dies at Angora Lake

A 42-year-old man visiting Lake Tahoe died at Angora Lake on July 24.

The name of the man has not been released.

An autopsy is pending to determine the exact cause of death.

He had been at the South Shore lake with friends. When they didn’t see him above water they went searching for him.

Eric Hildinger, who runs the resort, told *Lake Tahoe News* it took about 20 minutes before the victim was found at the bottom of the lake in about 10 to 15 feet of water.

CPR was given until paramedics arrived. He died at Barton Memorial Hospital.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Nevada gaming win up – but not at Stateline

Northern Nevada was not much help in June when it came to gaming revenue.

While statewide revenues were up 14 percent compared to the previous year, they were down in Stateline and Reno.

The state Gaming Control Board today released June's numbers that show the state brought in \$907 million. Stateline casinos were down 2 percent, with \$12 million in revenues and Reno revenues were down 3 percent to \$48 million, compared to 2013.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Drought impacting Tahoe's forest health



A moth is causing pine needles in Meyers to turn

orange. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – The tiny moths that are turning a large swath of the South Shore orange are out mating so there will presumably be more organisms to wreak havoc.

The needle miner is a micro moth that lives about a year, but can do tremendous harm in its short lifespan. They live in the needles of pine trees.

Soon they will lay eggs on the current growth of green needles. If they continue to populate, their work will turn up in a year.

They have taken over about a 40-acre area near Pioneer Trail and Highway 50 in Meyers. The exact acreage will be noted in September when the U.S. Forest Service takes its annual aerial photographs of the Lake Tahoe Basin.



Forest pathologist Martin MacKenzie shows needles from 2011, top, 2012, 2013 and 2014. The moth has not landed

on the 2014 needles –
yet.

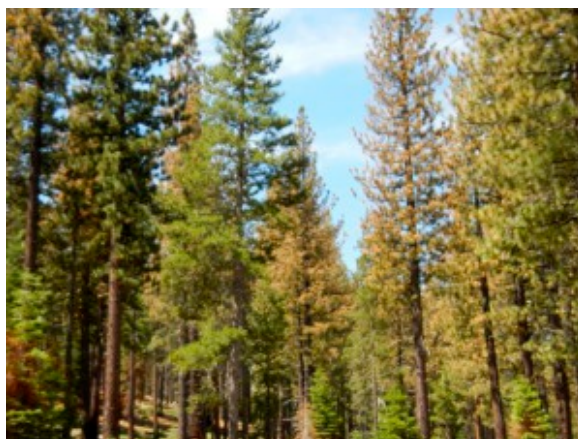
“They are native and have been here all along,” Martin MacKenzie, a forest pathologist, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “They are species specific. This one is so little-known it doesn’t have a name.”

MacKenzie works out of the Stanislaus National Forest, but was in the basin last week surveying the local damage caused by the needle miner to the Jeffery pines.

Taking a small branch off an infected tree, MacKenzie surveys the growth rings. Removing needles from each section it’s easy to see the increased damage that has been done by the moth since 2011.

It’s not until every needle is red that the tree is dead.

The needle miners that attack lodgepoles are more common. The only Jeffery stands the needle miners are known to have infested are the ones in Meyers, the Al Tahoe neighborhood of South Lake Tahoe, and eight miles along Highway 395 in the Inyo National Forest.



In some places the forest is
more orange than green.

“I think the recent climate phenomenon has allowed this moth

to get out of whack," MacKenzie said.

The moths' natural predator is a wasp. What happened to the wasp is a mystery. The wasp will lay its egg on the caterpillar and eat inside out so a moth never comes to life. That process is what is missing.

"The natural balance is out of control," MacKenzie said.

While MacKenzie and Rita Mustatia, forester with the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, don't believe the moth will kill the trees, prolonged destruction of the branches combined with the drought could weaken the trees. For now, though, it is more of an aesthetic issue. The trees look like they are dying.

That is one reason why Forest Service officials don't want people running to a tree service to have them felled. Odds are the trees will survive.

Mustatia points to thinning tree stands as one way to help the longevity of the pines. Trees grow faster with more sunlight and when they don't have to compete for water. A healthier tree is going to withstand the ravages of the moth for a longer period of time.