

EDC supe candidate spews hatred, bigotry

By Kathryn Reed

A business with the same SS logo used by the Nazis, posing with the Confederate flag and using it in another business, slamming gays and immigrants, saying there is no such thing as a transgender, and belonging to an outlaw motorcycle gang.

The above describes one of the candidates on the June 5 ballot for District 5 El Dorado County supervisor.

Kenny Curtzwiler is divisive for a lot of reasons. Often it's not about his dark side, but more his assertions about myriad topics of which he professes to be well-versed but is often ill informed. *Lake Tahoe News* had to stop publishing his comments years ago when South Tahoe Public Utility District was his pet target because it required a correction nearly every time he hit send.



There was a time when Curtzwiler's Facebook page was full of hate. Much of it has been scrubbed, but there are still inflammatory opinions there. It is his right to believe what he wants and to even write what he wants when it's opinion and not stated as fact. It is also the public's right to know as many facets of a candidate as

possible.

A Facebook post from Feb 3, 2017, says, "If the Black Panthers can have an exhibit celebrating their heritage in Oakland why can't the Confederates have an exhibit celebrating their heritage in South Lake Tahoe?? Don't get your panties in a bunch people, it's just a question?"



Ken Skibum Curtzwiler shared Patton Tank's American BadAss's post. 5 hrs · 🌐

The Magic Black Hat

The other day I needed to go to the emergency room. Not wanting to sit there for 4 hours, I put on my MAGIC BLACK HAT.

When I went into the E.R., I noticed that 3/4 of the people got up and left.

I guess they decided that they weren't that sick after all. The hat cut at least 3 hours off my waiting time.

Here is the hat.



It also works at the DMV. It saved me 5 hours there.

At the Laundromat, three minutes after entering, I had my choice of any machine, most still running.

But... don't try it at McDonald's. The whole crew got up and left

Another post (date unknown) Curtzwiler posted a Fox News link with the headline "Democratic Rep. Frederica Wilson: White House 'is full of white supremacists.'" Curtzwiler wrote: "Ok. I can live with that."

This is the same person who when unsuccessfully running for supervisor in 2014 defended having said, "Yes I do collect unemployment on your dime and enjoy every powder day and have absolutely no regrets or ashamed of what I do."

Curtzwiler works during the summer, then collects unemployment

in the winter to help fund his “ski bum” lifestyle. At the time he told *LTN* in defense of his actions, “My company is a corporation and I am an employee of the company. I receive a paycheck and pay into EDD.”

This philosophy is in conflict with other posts on Facebook where he told someone to give up their citizenship and become an immigrant so they’d get kickbacks from the government faster.



From the Brotherhood motorcycle gang’s Facebook page.

On May 23 Curtzwiler emailed *Lake Tahoe News* stating, “I understand there are some questions being raised about my affiliation with a certain club. Rather than go through third parties you can ask me and if I feel the question is relevant rather than looking for dirt I will answer it.”

He could only have been alerted to this fact from the South Lake Tahoe Police Department because that is the only entity this reporter called regarding Curtzwiler’s affiliation with the Brotherhood motorcycle group.

The Brotherhood on its Facebook pages calls itself part of the 1 percenters. This designation, according to Police Chief Brian Uhler, puts them in the same category as the Hells Angels. Uhler also called the Brotherhood a gang.

While the local cops have not had any issues with members of the Brotherhood for a few years, drugs and assaults are part

of their past.

Curtzwiler, according to Uhler, claims not to be part of the gang anymore. But with most gangs it's not possible to just walk away. In other words, once a member always a member even if you don't fly the colors.



Kenny Curtzwiler

Lake Tahoe News on May 27 emailed Curtzwiler a series of questions with the deadline being May 29. No response.

Here are the questions:

1. *When did you first join the Brotherhood motorcycle group and why?*
2. *What is your affiliation with them now?*
3. *This is a self-described 1% motorcycle gang. The police describe it as a gang. Comment?*
4. *On social media you have posed with a Confederate flag and have one of your Ski Bum logos as a Confederate flag. Why? What are you trying to say? Most people see this as a symbol of racism. Do you? Why or why not?*

5. *On social media you have supported white supremacists, the KKK and Nazis. Why?*
6. *Your former business Lake Tahoe Custom Cycles had a logo of two S's. The same logo as the Nazi Schutzstaffel, better known as the SS, of which the Gestapo was part of. Any comment?*
7. *On social media you have come out against gays and have said there is no such thing as a transgender. Why do you have hatred toward these people?*
8. *Why are you against immigrants?*
9. *How do you believe someone with such hatred toward so many groups of people will be able to represent those same people?*
10. *Why all the hatred?*

Curtzwiler in 2012 and 2017 applied for a concealed weapons permit with the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department. He was denied both times.

"Sorry, that information is not releasable," Lt. Bryan Golmitz told *Lake Tahoe News* when asked why Curtzwiler was not given the permit.

Amtrak: Injured passenger likely attempted suicide

By Sam Gross, Reno Gazette-Journal

Amtrak Chief of Police Neil Trugman said Tuesday at a press

conference that his department's investigation is indicating that 22-year-old Aaron Salazar attempted suicide by jumping from his moving train as it entered Truckee.

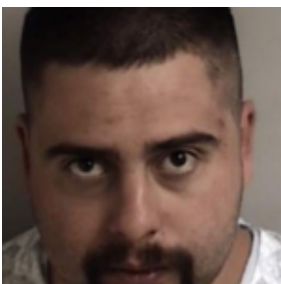
Salazar's family fiercely disagrees.

The Portland State University economics student was traveling on Amtrak's California Zephyr from Colorado to Oregon on May 15, but never made it to his destination. His family believes Salazar, a gay man, was attacked – the victim of a hate crime. But Amtrak police say nothing to suggest that has been found.

Read the whole story

Roommate fight ends with 1 in jail, 1 in hospital

A disagreement between two men who recently moved to South Lake Tahoe ended in a knife fight on Memorial Day.



Edmundo
Martinez

Edmundo Martinez, 45, was arrested on May 28 on assault with a deadly weapon charge.

The name of the 23-year-old victim has not been released.

According to police, he was in stable condition at Renown Medical Center in Reno after sustaining life threatening wounds.

The incident occurred at the Mark Twain Lodge on Park Avenue.

The two had moved here to work for a cleaning company at Harrah's-Harveys. While they were roommates at the hotel, they had not known each other before to coming to Tahoe.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Feds have long treated Nev. as a dumping ground

By Michael Green, The Conversation

Nevadans can be forgiven for thinking they are in an endless loop of “The Walking Dead” TV series. Their least favorite zombie federal project refuses to die.

In 2010, Congress had abandoned plans to turn Yucca Mountain, about 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas, into the nation's only federal dump for nuclear waste so radioactive it requires permanent isolation. And the House recently voted by a wide margin to resume these efforts.

Nevada's U.S. Sens. Dean Heller, a Republican, and Catherine Cortez Masto, a Democrat, have made their determination to block the latest Yucca proposal clear since the Trump administration first proposed resurrecting the project in early 2017.

While teaching and writing about the state's history for more

than 30 years, I have followed the Yucca Mountain fight from the beginning – as well as how Nevadans' views have evolved on all things nuclear. The project could well go forward, but I believe that it probably won't as long as there are political benefits to stopping it.

The roots of statewide resentment

Two-thirds of Nevadans oppose this plan, according to a 2017 poll. The state's experience with federal actions, including nuclear weapons and waste, may help explain the proposed repository's long-standing unpopularity.

When Nevada became a state in 1864, it had to cede all claims to federal land within its boundaries. This left the federal government owning more than 85 percent of the state, reducing its potential tax base, and angering ranchers who have chafed at federal controls and fees for grazing their livestock ever since.

In 1873, the U.S. adopted the gold standard, reducing the value of silver – large amounts of which came from Nevada, known as the "The Silver State." After the "Crime of '73," Nevadan state leaders dedicated themselves to restoring silver as an anchor of monetary policy, to no avail.

A series of boom-and-bust cycles ensued. Nevadans sought other means of prosperity, including some that other states shunned. In 1897, for example, Nevada hosted a world heavyweight boxing championship when other states refused.

That decision and the state's declining population prompted the *Chicago Tribune* to suggest revoking Nevada's statehood. Similar calls cropped up over Nevada's permissive divorce and gambling laws.

A magnet for federal projects

Tourism, however, became central to Nevada's economy. So did

federal projects, like Hoover Dam, which enabled Southern Nevada to obtain most of the water it needs to survive.

World War II and the Cold War prompted numerous federal projects that benefited southern Nevada. A wartime gunnery school evolved into Nellis Air Force Base, and a magnesium plant led to the founding of the city of Henderson.

In 1951, seeking a cheaper domestic location for nuclear tests and research, the Atomic Energy Commission chose part of Nellis. Until 1963, the Nevada Test Site was the scene of about 100 aboveground atomic tests, with more than 800 additional underground tests to follow until nuclear testing ceased in 1992.

When aboveground testing began, Nevada cashed in. The governor welcomed the chance to see the desert "blooming with atoms." Las Vegas marketed the mushroom cloud as a tourist attraction, as well as an atomic hairdo and cocktail. Atomic Energy Commission pamphlets and videos declared the tests to be harmless to those living nearby.

Distrusting government

After learning more about the health dangers associated with nuclear fallout, Nevadans began to trust the government less. Repeated leaks and safety issues at the nation's first low-level nuclear waste dump, opened in 1962 in Beatty, eventually led to its closure in 1992.

Distant nuclear incidents also stoked concerns. The nation's worst nuclear accident to date at the Three Mile Island plant in Pennsylvania, as well as the Soviet Union's Chernobyl meltdown, rang alarm bells.

Separately, some rural Nevadans came to resent federal regulations overall, especially after the federal government increased the Bureau of Land Management's regulatory powers in the mid-1970s. Their Sagebrush Rebellion sought state control

over almost all federal lands within Nevada's borders and spread throughout the rural West.

The 'Screw Nevada' bill

As nuclear testing waned, the federal government scrambled to find somewhere to stow the spent fuel from nuclear power plants that had piled up in 39 states. In 1982, Congress approved a plan for the consideration of sites in Washington, Texas and Nevada.

But five years later, without getting conclusive findings based on those studies, lawmakers voted to consider only one site – Yucca Mountain, about 20 miles west of the dump for less-radioactive nuclear waste in Beatty. The state's leaders and pundits protested this "Screw Nevada" bill, which they ascribed to the state's lack of political clout.

Around that time, Nevada created a new state agency to deal with nuclear issues and a state commission charged with warding off nuclear waste. A bevy of new state laws made it harder for federal officials and private contractors to obtain and pay for licenses needed for work on Yucca Mountain, and the state filed numerous lawsuits.

Sena. Harry Reid, a Democrat first elected in 1986, crusaded against the measure. So did his Nevada colleagues in Congress.

To make their case, Nevadans pointed out the safety risks in moving nuclear waste along highways and railroads to their state, and how terrorists might take advantage of that opportunity. They cheered when a "West Wing" episode zeroed in on these dangers.

Reid eventually moved up through Senate ranks as one of the nation's most powerful lawmakers, serving as the majority and minority leader. When former President Barack Obama took office and had to depend on Reid's help, he ended funding for Yucca Mountain.

What to expect this time

Obama and Reid are no longer calling any shots, and Nevada's congressional delegation is more junior than it's been in decades. The overwhelming bipartisan vote in the House suggests that Democrats may be less interested in protecting Nevada than they were when Reid had so much power in the Senate.

But Heller is up for re-election this year, and his is one of the few Republican Senate seats that Democrats feel confident that they can win in the 2018 mid-terms.

If Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell decides that enabling Heller to claim that he saved Nevada from hosting the nation's nuclear waste will help re-elect him, protecting the GOP's slim majority, I think Yucca Mountain will be dead again. At least for the moment.

Michael Green is an associate professor of history at UNLV.

What to do about ticks and mosquitoes

By Joyce Sakamoto and Shelley Whitehead, The Conversation

Cases of vector-borne disease have more than doubled in the U.S. since 2004, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently reported, with mosquitoes and ticks bearing most of the blame.

Mosquitoes, long spreaders of malaria and yellow fever, have more recently spread dengue, Zika and Chikungunya viruses, and caused epidemic outbreaks, mainly in U.S. territories. The

insects are also largely responsible for making West Nile virus endemic in the continental U.S.

Ticks, which are not insects but parasitic arthropods, actually cause more disease in the U.S. than mosquitoes do, accounting for 76.51 percent of total U.S. vector-borne disease cases. These include Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever and newer diseases as well.

Why the uptick in vector-borne disease, and more importantly, how can we protect ourselves from potentially serious diseases? As researchers of these types of diseases, we have some answers.

Blood: The high cost of living

Both mosquitoes and ticks transmit disease-causing pathogens through bites.

Only the female mosquito takes a blood meal to make eggs, but almost all life stages of ticks need blood to survive.

Although mosquitoes were first demonstrated to have the ability to transmit diseases in 1889, mosquitoes have been transmitting diseases for far longer. Written records as early as 2700 B.C. suggest malaria plagued humans in China.

The first suspected dengue outbreak occurred in the early 1600s, but it took three centuries for the first three mosquito-borne diseases – malaria, dengue and yellow fever – to invade the Americas. Yet, in the past two decades alone, we've experienced a wave of three more mosquito-borne diseases – West Nile, Chikungunya and Zika viruses. This marked increase in disease spread is due to several factors, including advances in air and water travel and warming temperatures.

The high cost of international travel and trade

The international tire trade has made *Aedes albopictus*, the

Asian tiger mosquito, a global traveler. This mosquito gains passage on cargo ships and gets unlimited access to man-made containers, which it needs for breeding, in the thousands of tires on board these ships. Rainwater collecting in the tires are ideal breeding sites. Even though it is not a major vector of dengue, Chikungunya and Zika viruses, this invasive species is still especially dangerous. It is able to outcompete most other mosquito species that live in similar habitats.

We humans serve as hosts for many vector-borne diseases, and our own movement can aid transmission. We can hop on a plane and be in a different country within hours. Diseases once quarantined to other regions of the globe can now be easily transported within an infected human. Some people don't even realize they are sick. Researchers have estimated that up to 80 percent of individuals infected with Zika virus are symptomless. Yet, if the right vector feeds on a symptomless but infected person, transmission can still occur.

Increased climate fluctuations, largely due to human activity, can also affect how vector-borne diseases spread. Warmer climates may allow mosquitoes to survive in areas previously too cold to support them.

Predicting the outcome of warming on overall vector populations can be difficult. If, for example, summer in the deep Southeast becomes too hot and dry for mosquito development, peaks in transmission and mosquito numbers could shift to the fall. Higher temperatures may shorten the time it takes for pathogens to develop within mosquitoes, so mosquitoes may become infectious faster and transmit pathogens sooner.

Tick-borne diseases

Five percent of 900 tick species are known to transmit disease-causing microorganisms. Because 38 percent of all tick species have been known to bite humans, researchers will

likely find more tick-borne diseases. Since 2004, there have been nine new vector-borne diseases described in the U.S., and seven of these are tick-transmitted, including the two potentially fatal Bourbon and Heartland viruses.

Most, or 82 percent of tick-borne disease cases, are Lyme disease, which is caused by the bacteria *Borrelia burgdorferi*, and transmitted by the blacklegged, or deer, tick. Cases of Lyme, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, babesiosis, anaplasmosis and ehrlichiosis have increased two-and-a-half to six-and-a-half fold.

Tick-borne diseases may be rising due to global travel, animal transport, habitat fragmentation and changing climate. Climate change is correlated with range expansion of several important tick species. Ticks previously limited by cold winters are now becoming established farther north. In response to the arrival of Lyme disease to Canadian soil, the Public Health Agency of Canada responded with a Federal Framework on Lyme Disease focused on disease surveillance, education and awareness, and best practices for control, prevention and treatment of Lyme disease.

What can you do?

To lower your risk of transmission from mosquitoes:

- Check backyards for anything that could hold water and empty such vessels. This includes children's toys, bird baths, empty soda cans and flower pots.
- Use mosquito repellents that are EPA approved. Avoid natural repellents that haven't been verified for their effectiveness.

To prevent tick bites:

One sure way to prevent tick bites is to avoid suitable habitats for ticks, but this isn't always possible. Large-scale habitat control or acaricide (tick-killing) treatment of

wildlife, though possible, can be difficult or not cost-effective for homeowners. The best preventative measures are:

- Use CDC-recommended repellents such as DEET or picaridin.
- Shower and do a thorough tick check.

Tick checks are absolutely crucial. People usually follow this routine after going outdoors, but sometimes forget. And, they often avoid places that ticks love, such as between your legs. Hard-to-reach areas are prime real estate for blood-feeding parasites that don't want to be dislodged, so make sure to check: the hairline (especially on children), torso, belly button and groin. If necessary, get assistance or a mirror and a bright light.

If you find an embedded tick, correctly dislodge it with fine-tipped tweezers, grasping the part closest to the skin and pulling straight up. Do not burn, squeeze, twist or smother the tick, since this may cause it to regurgitate. Gross-out alert: Any pathogens they have in their saliva can then be dumped into the bite site.

After removal, keep the tick for identification; different species transmit different pathogens. Finally, see a doctor after finding an embedded tick or if you think you have been bitten. In addition to getting medical attention, your data will be added to the national list of reported tick-borne diseases.

The CDC has several pages dedicated to vector-borne disease control and prevention. Local state health departments, general practitioners and veterinarians will also have recommendations for prevention, treatment and vector control. Talk to your veterinarian about repellents or agents that will kill mites called acaricides for pets, since some can be toxic to cats.

Joyce Sakamoto is an assistant research professor of

entomology at Pennsylvania State University. Shelley Whitehead is a doctoral candidate of entomology at Pennsylvania State University.

Calif. lawmakers take on plastic pollution

By Rosanna Xia, Los Angeles Times

It took years of activist campaigns to turn the plastic bag into a villain, and hard-fought legislation to reduce its presence in oceans and waterways. Now, environmentalists and lawmakers are deploying similar tactics against a new generation of plastic pollutants.

There are drinking straws, which as a viral video shows can get stuck in a sea turtle's nose. The hundreds of thousands of bottle caps that wind up on beaches. And the microfibers that wash off polyester clothes, making their way into the ocean, the stomachs of marine life and ultimately our seafood.

Each is the subject of statewide legislation under debate in Sacramento, as California again considers new environmental law that's at once pioneering and controversial.

Read the whole story

Public's help necessary to keep Lake Tahoe blue



Sudeep Chandra, Darcie Goodman Collins, and Alan Heyvaert talk about Lake Tahoe issues. Photo/Linda Fine Conaboy

By Linda Fine Conaboy

RENO – Citizen scientist—maybe you're familiar with these two words. You may have even read about them in *Lake Tahoe News*. Maybe you are a citizen scientist.

At any rate, a citizen scientist is an individual who voluntarily contributes his or her time, effort, and resources toward scientific research in collaboration with professional scientists. They can work alone, but don't necessarily have a formal science background.

Turns out that this cadre of citizens is becoming more and more important to the health of Lake Tahoe as efforts heat up

to protect the lake from the harsh reality of climate change, increasing amounts of sediment making its way in the lake and just plain old human disregard for nature.

Because there are not enough classically trained scientists available to continually monitor the lake's health, citizen scientists are becoming the eyes and ears on the lake, reporting their findings regularly.

In an attempt to shed some light on Tahoe's declining health and the increasing importance of citizen scientists, representatives from Reno's Desert Research Institute, The League to Save Lake Tahoe and UNR teamed up to present an overview of the current state of Lake Tahoe at a seminar last week hosted by DRI and the Discovery in Reno with support from Patagonia Outlet Reno.

Alan Heyvaert, director of the Center for Watersheds and Environmental Sustainability at DRI, reminded the substantial crowd gathered at Patagonia in Reno that Lake Tahoe is 95 feet below the base of Carson City. It's a small watershed, he said, and stays clear because it's so small—the only lake clearer is Crater Lake in Oregon. It would take 650 years to refill it if it were drained.

Heyvaert described the Secchi disk, a plate-like object suspended into the water and used to determine the lake's clarity. He said monthly measurements prove that over the years, Lake Tahoe is losing its brilliance, which, he said, is caused mainly by suspended sediments floating in the water.

"We have lost a large amount of the clearness because of sediment," he said, saying that this sediment consists of fine particles from roads and urban areas that wash continually into the lake. Measurements of the near shore prove that there is far less clear water on the South Shore in the vicinity of Tahoe Keys than at other parts of the lake.

According to Heyvaert, Mark Twain, in his novel "Roughing It,"

written in 1870, estimated the lake's clarity close to 100 feet; today, it's less than 70. "Mark Twain actually gauged the details of the lake's size and depth very closely," Heyvaert said, giving a nod to Twain as perhaps the first citizen scientist. "He was a riverboat captain, this probably helped him gauge the measurements."

He also spoke about the Pipe Keepers program, the League to Save Lake Tahoe's project launched as a way for citizens to monitor 34 of the roughly 300 pipes continually spilling their contents into Tahoe's waters. "Pipe Keepers monitor and report on a particular pipe, collect samples and collect weather data," Heyvaert said.

Pipe Keepers are trained by the League to collect, among other data, stormwater samples from pipes located throughout the Tahoe basin. According to the League to Save Lake Tahoe's website, unchecked 20th century development paved over much of Tahoe's marshes and wetlands, which acted as natural pollution filters. Now, when rain hits the roads and parking lots, it washes off fine sediment pollution, which is drained into the Tahoe's waters via a series of pipes funneling directly in the lake.

Sudeep Chandra is the director of the Global Water Center at UNR, and as such heads up a team addressing the multi-faceted and complex issues facing, as he says, one of the most precious resources, water.

Chandra is also deeply concerned about the nutrients cascading into the lake as well as the non-native species which are now quite happy within their Lake Tahoe habitat, eating the food designated for the lake's original inhabitants.

"Even slight changes in clarity can alter big habitats," he said. "There is now almost no plant growth in the very deep bottom of the lake—only 4.5 acres of plants left. These plants feed the 10 species of invertebrates living at the bottom."

Chandra said crayfish (a non-native species) are in abundance in Lake Tahoe. "Crayfish are cattle grazers," he said. "They are eating the plants."

In addition to non-native crayfish, many other species have been introduced over the years for one reason or another. These introductions have resulted in the demise of native Lahontan cutthroat trout.

"In the last 20-25 years, most of the invasive species of fish and plants live and swim in the near shore—like bluegill bass and Eurasian watermilfoil. There are even goldfish, and in 2014, a freshwater skate was sighted," he said.

The League to Save Lake Tahoe was ably represented by Darcie Goodman Collins, its executive director.

"Citizen scientists are one of the best ways to monitor Lake Tahoe," she said. "Tahoe has 20 million visitors annually, but does not even have the protections offered to national parks."

Collins said the enormous amount of traffic within the basin contributes to a loss of clarity in the lake. Besides pipes feeding it pollutants, climate change makes the lake's waters warm and then becomes hospitable to invasive species.

The good news is, according to Collins, marshlands are being restored, especially in the Upper Truckee Meadows, and there are efforts to mitigate reliance on cars—think Lime Bikes. Presidential visits bring much needed money into the coffers.

Collins touted the importance of citizen scientists. "If you've participated in a beach clean-up, you're a citizen scientist," she said, adding that trash is a huge problem at Tahoe. "More than 16,000 pounds of trash has been accumulated since we started collecting data."

Consider that along with hundreds of thousands of plastic bottles, more than 60,000 cigarette butts have been accounted

for. "The Lake Tahoe shoreline is under assault," she said, introducing the League's Eyes on the Lake program that requests people protect the lake while they play at the lake and then report their findings.

In addition, Collins described Watershed Watchers where civilians can adopt a watershed, monitoring it over time.

It is evident that the assault on the lake is not being taken lightly by these three entities. Anyone interested in any of these programs, should contact the League to Save Lake Tahoe at 530.541.5388 or info@keptahoebblue.org.

Improving school climate key to violence prevention

By F. Chris Curran, The Conversation

School shootings like the one that took place in Santa Fe, Texas, on May 18 are often followed by calls for enhanced security measures.

But Santa Fe High School already had many of these security measures in place.

For instance, the high school had a school resource officer who responded to the attack. The school also had security cameras in place and had recently conducted active shooting training and drills.

As the nation searches for ways to prevent school violence, the focus must be as much on school climate and culture as it is on school security. I make this argument as an educational researcher who studies school safety.

Calls for beefed up security

Many of the security measures in place at Santa Fe High School were called for in the wake of the Feb. 14 school shooting in Parkland, Fla. For instance, several states have passed legislation to increase law enforcement presence at schools. The federal government expanded funding to support the use of security measures such as metal detectors as well as training for threat identification and emergency response.

Beyond the school walls, there have been broader calls for gun control. It is notable that the weapons used in the attack are reported to have been owned legally by the father of the shooter and were not the type targeted by most gun control proposals.

One area that often gets overlooked in the aftermath of these tragedies is school culture. News reports indicate the shooter was reportedly bullied by other students and coaching staff. School officials, however, dispute this account.

An examination of the school culture at Santa Fe High School could prove as important as a review of the school security measures that were in place and the extent to which they were followed.

Why school climate matters

Research has consistently shown that positive school climate is a strong predictor of school safety. When students have healthy peer relationships, teachers they trust, and school policies that they perceive as fair, they are more likely to feel safe in the school and less likely to misbehave.

Building a sense of community among students and adults in schools may reduce the risk of school violence.

Some advocates have called for a return to greater use of exclusionary discipline practices like suspension.

Given the importance of supportive school climates for student safety, it is important to consider how the use of security measures and discipline practices that are meant to enhance safety might actually decrease it.

Unintended consequences of security

The use of visible security measures have been linked to lower measures of school safety. Likewise, the research on the use of law enforcement in schools is at best mixed.

Prior work suggests that school resource officers can improve some measures of safety but can also result in more student arrests. They may also contribute to the use of more punitive school disciplinary environments.

Research on school discipline suggests that suspending students from school can weaken students' ties to the school community. When such exclusion is perceived as unfair, as might be the case when arising from an overly prescriptive zero tolerance policy, the damage to school connectedness may be even more pronounced.

The need for a balanced approach

As policymakers and school leaders respond to the most recent school tragedy in Santa Fe, they should be mindful of the full implications of their choices for enhancing safety. The use of security measures like law enforcement may deter or minimize the damage of a school shooting, but their use must be balanced with approaches that enhance community within schools.

Luckily, there are promising approaches that schools can take to building trust and community among stakeholders.

The presence of school counselors and partnerships with community organizations can help ensure that students have a trusted adult in the building and access to necessary mental

health supports when needed. Restorative justice practices have shown promise as an alternative to suspension. Such practices focus on the rebuilding of trust among the student and school community instead of excluding the student from school. Other anti-bullying efforts may also be considered as part of such an approach.

No student should have to fear for his or her life at school. Taking a multifaceted approach – one that balances security with community building – may help ensure that tragedies such as the one that unfolded in Santa Fe are fewer and further between.

F. Chris Curran is an assistant professor of public policy at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

Mammoth concerned as geothermal plant expands

By Matt Weiser, Water Deeply

The town of Mammoth Lakes is generally known for two things: epic skiing in winter, thanks to the very high elevation of its ski mountain; and volcanic activity, because the mountain is a simmering volcano. It's normal to hike or ski around Mammoth and smell the sulfurous gases venting from gurgling magma deep under the mountain.

That magma is also a rich source of geothermal power. Ormat Technologies based in Reno has been tapping that power source for three decades. Now it wants to double its energy output to 60 megawatts by drilling more geothermal wells.

Not so fast, says the Mammoth Community Water District. The agency is concerned that Ormat's proposal to drill as many as 16 new geothermal wells could cause boiling hot geothermal fluids to mix with the town's groundwater wells.

Read the whole story

Nev. casino companies, suppliers have promising outlook

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Executives in boardrooms across the gaming industry had to be smiling when first-quarter results began rolling in. Shareholders, too.

The final earnings reports for the three months that ended March 31 were filed with regulators last week.

The reports revealed that casino companies and their suppliers got off to good starts in 2018, and that the outlook for the rest of the year is promising.

The reasons?

The economy is cruising along.

Read the whole story