

State grant helps SLTPD increase enforcement

A \$95,519 grant from the California Alcoholic Beverage Control allowed the South Lake Tahoe Police Department in the last year to target alcohol related problems and problems at locations that serve alcohol.

The department was able to make additional officers available for events like SnowGlobe, Live at Lakeview and holiday weekends including the 4th of July, Labor Day, New Year's Eve, and Memorial Day.

Officers made 26 arrests and issued 96 citations while conducting operations with the grant money.

Arrests included: driving under the influence, drunk in public, resisting arrest, probation violation, stolen vehicle, assault with a deadly weapon and grand theft.

Citations included: fireworks, smoking, open container, minor in possession, fake ID, illegal camping, furnishing alcohol to minor, trespassing, possession of a controlled substance, and being on a scooter without a helmet.

Money was also use to educate businesses, servers, and schoolchildren.

"SLTPD was able to conduct a minor decoy and shoulder tap operations that would not have been possible without the grant," Officer Johnny Spaeth told *Lake Tahoe News*. "SLTPD conducted two 'bait bike' operations to reduce the theft of bicycles from locations that have alcohol licenses."

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Nev. may save millions with switch to state-based program

By Jessie Bekker, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Nevada's health insurance marketplace, the Silver State Health Insurance Exchange, is one step closer to transitioning onto a state-based operation.

A \$24.4 million, five-year contract with vendor GetInsured is set to save the state around \$6 million annually starting in 2020 compared to using the federal enrollment platform, Healthcare.gov.

The exchange board voted unanimously at a Thursday meeting to approve the step.

Read the whole story

No fences around major burns at Burning Man

By Associated Press

Officials with counterculture festival Burning Man say they won't install fences around major burns at this year's event in the northern Nevada desert, nearly a year after the death of a man who ran into flames of a towering wooden effigy.

However, the *Reno Gazette-Journal* reports that Burning Man officials said they will plan other security measures but not fencing for large-scale burns. They include more safety personnel and longer protective barriers of volunteers, said Burning Man spokesman Jim Graham. “There will be no fences at the large burns.”

Read the whole story

Candidates Morse, McClintock square off

By Sage Sauerbrey, Moonshine Ink

As the California 4th Congressional District campaign stretches into July, incumbent Tom McClintock and challenger Jessica Morse have yet to square off in a public debate. *Moonshine Ink* recently reached out to both candidates and they both agreed to a virtual debate using written responses. Each responded to a different selection of three of the six separate questions, and their answers were forwarded to the opposing candidate for rebuttal.

Q: California has, of late, run against the grain of the national trends. Its sanctuary state policies run counter to federal law, Kevin De León is pushing a single party healthcare system, and Governor Jerry Brown has repeatedly stood up to President Trump on climate change. Do you think California is ahead of, or behind the curve, and why?

McClintock: How are those policies working? California now has the highest effective poverty rate in the nation, the 13th highest violent crime rate, is 10th from the bottom in

education, has the seventh highest electricity prices, despite the highest income, sales, and gasoline taxes in the country. Compare that to our success in Washington in reducing the tax and regulatory burdens on Americans: unemployment is the lowest since 2000, consumer confidence the highest since 2004, with the economy expanding at more than twice the rate we averaged under Obama. Which direction we want to take as a nation is the fundamental choice before us in November.

Morse rebuttal: Tom McClintock is a career politician who has spent decades collecting a paycheck from California taxpayers, all the while choosing to lay blame and sow division rather than address any of the serious challenges facing our district. Rather than supporting measures to help our struggling families, Tom McClintock voted for a tax bill that raises taxes on the majority of families in our district, those making under \$100,000 per year. Rather than supporting our seniors, he wants to raise the retirement age and just voted to cut more than \$400 billion from Social Security and Medicare. Rather than making it easier for the next generation to have high paying local jobs, Tom McClintock cut funding for vocational training and proposes eliminating all financial aid for higher education. Tom McClintock has not passed a single piece of meaningful legislation during his decades in politics and is actually harming the people of our district by voting against our values and our pocketbooks. I'm sick of career politicians playing political games rather than coming up with solutions. That's why I will work with both parties to implement real solutions to the real problems facing our district.

Read the whole story

Ride-hailing could improve public transportation

By Daniel Sperling, Austin Brown and Mollie D'Agostino, *The Conversation*

Over the last half-decade, public transit ridership declined nationwide. The number of vehicle miles traveled in cars is rising, and traffic congestion is getting worse in many U.S. cities. At the same time, the century-old taxi industry is struggling, with many taxi companies going bankrupt.

Are ride-hailing companies such as Lyft and Uber to blame? What has been their impact and what should be done?

While ride-hailing threatens public transit, it is also key to its future success – but only with smart policies and the right price signals. As researchers working at the intersection of energy, the environment and public policy, we have been analyzing transportation trends for decades – and seeing remarkably little innovation. Now we are on the cusp of major transformations. We see ride-hailing through the framework laid out in Daniel Sperling's new book, "Three Revolutions: Steering Automated, Shared, and Electric Vehicles to a Better Future."

More travel, less mass transit

Let's start with the data. Public transit ridership dropped in 31 of 35 U.S. major metropolitan areas in 2017. It has declined by 3 percent since 2014, and 2017 was the lowest year of overall transit ridership since 2005.

Meanwhile, total U.S. vehicle miles traveled, or VMT, has increased steadily since 2011. Most dramatically, Lyft, Uber and other ride-hailing companies have soared, from near zero trips in 2012 to about 2.6 billion in 2017. As of 2016, 250

million people globally used ride-hailing apps, including 15 percent of the U.S. public.

Parsing the impacts of ride-hailing

As ride-hailing has grown, so too has the number of researchers working to understand its impacts. Experts at UC Berkeley, UC Davis, the University of Colorado, the University of Michigan and Texas A&M University have all found that a significant fraction of ride-hailing customers would have traveled by transit, or opted against traveling at all, had ride-hailing been unavailable. This indicates that ride-hailing is displacing transit ridership and increasing vehicle miles traveled by cars.

Why is this happening? People are choosing ride-hailing because transit does not match the comfort and convenience offered by private vehicles, and taxis cannot offer the affordability and transparency of app-based ride-hailing. VMT is increasing as growing numbers of for-hire cars log “deadhead” miles driving to pick up passengers or returning from destinations. In New York City, unoccupied taxi and ride-hailing hours grew by 81 percent from 2013 to 2017.

But the net effects are highly region-dependent. Dense urban markets are responding differently than suburbs. In San Francisco, fully one-third of Lyft and Uber riders use ride-hailing in lieu of public transit. A survey in Denver found that 22 percent of respondents would have used transit had ride-hailing been unavailable. In contrast, researchers found that only 3 percent of Lyft and Uber riders in Austin switched to transit during a suspension of ride-hailing services.

Positive impacts too

While ride-hailing is pulling riders away from public transit in some places, it can also enhance transit ridership. The UC Berkeley survey found that 4 percent of Uber and Lyft customers ended their rides at transit stations, which

suggests that they were using ride-hailing to connect to transit. Our colleague Caroline Rodier has observed that multiple surveys show about 5 percent of respondents relying on ride-hailing to access transit, although Rodier concluded that the increased transit trips are offset by diversion of trips away from transit.

Local governments and agencies can work with ride-hailing services to enhance public transit instead of undermining it. For instance, ride-hailing can help smooth transportation demand shocks caused by temporary transit disruptions, such as closures of subway stations for maintenance.

What's more, while ride-hailing may increase car-based travel, this is not necessarily a bad thing. More mobility increases access to jobs, health care and education. And a significant percentage of ride-hailing trips occur late at night when congestion is not a big concern and transit options are not always available.

Indeed, its late-night popularity suggests that ride-hailing is removing some of the most dangerous type of vehicle miles. According to a UT Austin study of all 273 U.S. cities with a population of more than 100,000, ride-hailing services reduced fatal drunken driving crashes by 10 to 11 percent.

Ride-hailing also offers greater independence for elderly and disabled populations. The Center for American Progress observes that ride-hailing can help disadvantaged populations overcome geographic isolation and access jobs, education and health care services.

Complementing public transit

For transit agencies, ride-hailing services can be an attractive alternative to serving sparsely populated, low density areas with fixed routes and schedules. Private mobility companies and public transit agencies have launched nearly 50 pilot projects and partnerships to explore these

opportunities. Many agencies are subsidizing travel in ride-hailing vehicles to meet the needs of certain rider groups.

In San Clemente and Dublin, officials canceled fixed-route buses with the lowest ridership and provided discounts for people to travel in Lyft and Uber. Phoenix is discounting the price of ride-hailing trips to and from 500 city bus stops. Denver is offering free rides to suburban light rail stations.

Reducing solo travel

The number of innovative transit partnerships is growing rapidly, but the jury is still out on what types of partnerships can yield win-wins for communities, companies and transit agencies. An overarching goal should be to increase mobility – that is, passenger miles traveled – while reducing vehicle miles traveled.

This will only happen if ride-hailing services continue to shift toward multi-passenger services, such as Lyft Line and UberPool. Such a change will require policy frameworks that encourage shared rides and discourage single-passenger rides – starting with ride-hailing services, and eventually including travelers using their own vehicles.

Road pricing practices, in which drivers pay fees to travel in high-use areas, have reduced traffic and increased pooled rides and transit trips in London, Stockholm and Singapore. Importantly, Uber and Lyft embrace these strategies to expand pooling services and gain relief from stifling traffic congestion, just like the rest of us.

Pooling and road pricing will be especially critical with the coming vehicle automation revolution. If automated vehicles are individually owned, they will likely generate massive new vehicle use, since travel will no longer be seen as onerous. Occupants can sleep, eat, text, read and watch videos while their cars do the navigating. But if those automated vehicles are pooled, then vehicle use would be pushed in the opposite

direction, toward fewer vehicle miles traveled.

U.S. cities and transit operators have done little innovating in the past 50 years, and are ill-prepared for the changes ahead. They need to decipher what is happening, build partnerships and support price signals that encourage pooling. Acting to maximize the societal benefits of ride-hailing and other transportation revolutions will provide benefits now and into the future.

Daniel Sperling is a professor of civil and environmental engineering and founding director of Institute of Transportation Studies at UC Davis; Austin Brown is executive director at the Policy Institute for Energy, Environment, and the Economy at UC Davis; and Mollie D'Agostino is policy director, 3 Revolutions Future Mobility Program, Institute of Transportation Studies, UC Davis.

El Dorado County streamlining VHR process

Beginning this month, enforcement of El Dorado County's vacation home rental ordinance will be handled by the Department of Planning and Building. Compliance activities will become the responsibility of code enforcement. The treasure-tax collector will continue to issue VHR permits and business licenses for the rest of 2018.

Early next year, the county anticipates transferring the permitting and licensing function to the Department of Planning and Building.

The goal is to streamline the process and provide greater

transparency.

“Between now and the end of the year, we will be making additional recommendations to the board regarding programming, staffing and funding related to VHR and code enforcement activities as we move forward with the transition process,” CAO Don Ashton said in a press release.

For general information about VHRs, go **online**. For the updated VHR ordinance that took effect July 5, click **here**.

Truckee store wars an ongoing battle

By Sage Sauerbrey, Moonshine Ink

Regardless of town planning commission approvals in the last year, three grocery chains attempting to open stores in Truckee are still working to get off the ground. Nugget appears dead in the water for now; Grocery Outlet is trying to appease nearby concerned residents as a Town Council discussion approaches; and Raley’s is tied up in a lawsuit, despite plans to break ground this summer.

The perfect storm of store proposals has people alert for what a potential 100,000 square feet of total new grocery store space means for the town. Here is a status appraisal.

“Most people in the town – certainly Town Hall – were pretty surprised that we would get three ... proposals for grocery stores literally all at once,” Truckee Town Manager Jeff Loux said. “It certainly [presented] a challenge that the town of

Truckee staff had not faced before.”

[Read the whole story](#)

Caesars Entertainment wants new licensing

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Two Las Vegas gaming companies received tentative approval Wednesday from the state Gaming Control Board to amend their corporate structures to enable them to streamline operations and refinance interest expenses.

In separate actions, the board unanimously recommended amended orders of registration for Caesars Entertainment Corp., and Golden Entertainment Inc.

The Nevada Gaming Commission will consider final approval of the recommendations on July 26.

Caesars is the parent company of Harrah's Lake Tahoe and Harveys.

[Read the whole story](#)

Public transit may ease Hwy.

89 north congestion

Placer County Board of Supervisors this week provided preliminary approval for public transit in Olympic Valley and Alpine Meadows.

The approval moves forward a petition from lodging operators and ski resorts to form a tourist-based improvement district in Olympic Valley and Alpine Meadows. If approved, it would add a 1 percent assessment on gross lodging revenue within the new district and a 1 percent assessment on Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows single-day lift tickets to implement a micro mass transit system.

The system would be privately operated and offer an on-demand shuttle service within and between Olympic Valley and Alpine Meadows, transporting riders to requested destinations not served by existing transit routes while offering connections to the regional TART transit system.

Officials said two short-term pilot programs operated between Christmas and New Year's and during the World Cup Ski Races in 2017 proved successful.

Congestion on Highway 89 between the Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows ski resorts is at gridlock.

"Data shows that despite the county's increased investment into the TART Systems Plan, the North Lake Tahoe region still lags mountain resort competitors in transit frequency, hours of operation and passengers served," said Jennifer Merchant, Placer County's deputy county executive officer for Lake Tahoe.

It's expected that \$715,000 could be collected annually. This includes revenue generated by a proposed 1 percent assessment on overnight accommodation rental revenue for stays of less than 30 days from participating lodges in Olympic Valley and a

contribution from Squaw Valley Ski Holdings.

A public meeting in North Lake Tahoe is scheduled for July 24, with a public hearing and adoption of a resolution of formation planned for Aug. 28. If approved, the district could begin assessment collections on Oct. 1.

Treating all fires alike is not working

By Stephen Pyne, *The Conversation*

So far, the 2018 fire season has produced a handful of big fires in California, Nevada, New Mexico and Colorado; conflagrations in Oklahoma and Kansas; and a fire bust in Alaska, along with garden-variety wildfires from Florida to Oregon. Some of those fires are in rural areas, some are in wildlands, and a few are in exurbs.

Even in a time of new normals, this looks pretty typical. Fire starts are a little below the 10-year running average, and the amount of burned area is running above that average. But no one can predict what may happen in the coming months. California thought it had dodged a bullet in 2017, until a swarm of wildfires in late fall blasted through Napa and Sonoma counties, followed by the Big One – the Thomas Fire, California's largest on record, in Ventura and Santa Barbara.

Every major fire rekindles another round of commentaries about "America's wildfire problem." But the fact is that our nation does not have a fire problem. It has many fire problems, and they require different strategies. Some problem fires have technical solutions, some demand cultural calls. All are

political.

Here's one idea: It's time to rethink firefighting in the geekily labeled wildland-urban interface, or WUI – zones where human development intermingles with forests, grasslands and other feral vegetation.

It's a dumb name because the boundary is not really an interface but an intermix, in which houses and natural vegetation abut and scramble in an ecological omelet. It's a dumb problem because we know how to keep houses from burning – but we have had to relearn that in WUI zones, hardening houses and landscaping their communities is the best defense. This is a local task, not a federal one, though the federal agencies have a supporting role and can, and do, help build local capacity.

Two fire cultures

America is recolonizing rural landscapes everywhere, and fire in the WUI is one outcome. The concept appeared and received its name in Southern California, but has long since spread throughout the West. Some of the worst WUI risks reside in the southeastern United States, though they have mostly remained latent. Then a deadly blaze like the one that blew through Gatlinburg, Tenn., to the fringes of Dollywood in 2016 reveals the full extent of the risk.

Just as development has stirred together built and natural landscapes, it also has juxtaposed two immiscible cultures of fire. Urban and wildland fire agencies are as different as fire hydrants and drip torches.

The mantra of urban fire control is “Learn not to burn.” Every fire is an existential threat to life and property, and the core goal of fire codes is protecting lives. Urban firefighters wear turnout coats, helmets and self-contained breathing apparatus. They pummel fires with water and often operate inside structures.

For wildlands, the central code is “Learn to live with fire.” Firefighters wear hardhats, carry shovels and Pulaskis, and wear bandannas. They work in woods, prairies and chaparral, spray dirt as often as water, and secure perimeters by setting fires to remove flammable vegetation between the flaming front and their control lines. Their great challenge is to restore good fire to biotas that hunger for it.

The training that each group gets is largely worthless in the other’s setting. There are a few instances of cross-training, particularly in rural areas, but the prime example of a major agency that tries to cope with both types of threats is CalFire. Its experience shows what fusing these two purposes can mean.

Mixing the missions

CalFire began as the California Department of Forestry, a land management agency, albeit one with serious fire responsibilities. In 1974, under the pressures of postwar development, it became the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. In 2007 it collapsed that mission into CalFire, which operates like an urban fire service in the woods.

Decades ago, federal fire agencies gave up on suppression as a sole strategy. They recognized that the best way to control fire is to control the landscape, preferably through fire, and that eliminating all fires in places that have grown up with them only creates conditions that make wildfires worse. By contrast, for CalFire, the urgency of fires rolling into communities trumps all other tasks. If the last firefight fails, it has to double down for the next one.

Today the WUI is exerting a similar transformation at the national level. It threatens to become a black hole in America’s pyrogeography, drawing federal land agencies – primarily the U.S. Forest Service and the Interior

Department's Bureau of Land Management – away from managing fire as a means of managing land, and transforming them into urban fire-service surrogates and auxiliaries.

These agencies can and do help communities prepare for fires, but they do not have the tools, training or temperament to fight fire on an urban model. CalFire's template is too expensive; moreover, it sucks resources away from managing fire well on the land, so it is too ineffective to serve nationally.

Turning the U.S. Forest Service into a National Fire Service may bring some relief to the WUI, but this would undermine the other missions in the agency's charter, and ultimately weaken its ability to manage landscape fire. Already its fire mission is consuming over 50 percent of the Forest Service's annual budget.

Urban enclaves in the wild

Research repeatedly shows that the critical component in the WUI fire environment is the structure itself. Once a fire strikes the urban fringe it may morph into an urban conflagration, spreading from structure to structure, as happened in Santa Rosa, California, last fall. Clearly, the wildland fire community has to improve fire resilience in its lands, which should reduce the intensity of the threat. But the real action is in the built environment.

The fact that so many horrendous fires have started from power lines illustrates how fires mediate between the land and the ways we choose to live on it. Strengthening structures, bolstering urban fire services, treating WUI areas as built environment – this is where we will get the greatest paybacks.

In effect, we need to pick up the other end of the WUI stick. Think of these areas not as wildlands encumbered by houses, but as urban or exurban enclaves with peculiar landscaping. Defining the issue as fundamentally a wildland problem makes

fixes difficult. Defining it as an urban problem makes solutions quickly apparent. The goal should be to segregate the two fire cultures and their habitats, and let each do what it does best.

Americans learned long ago how to keep cities from burning. And then, it seems, we forgot.

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