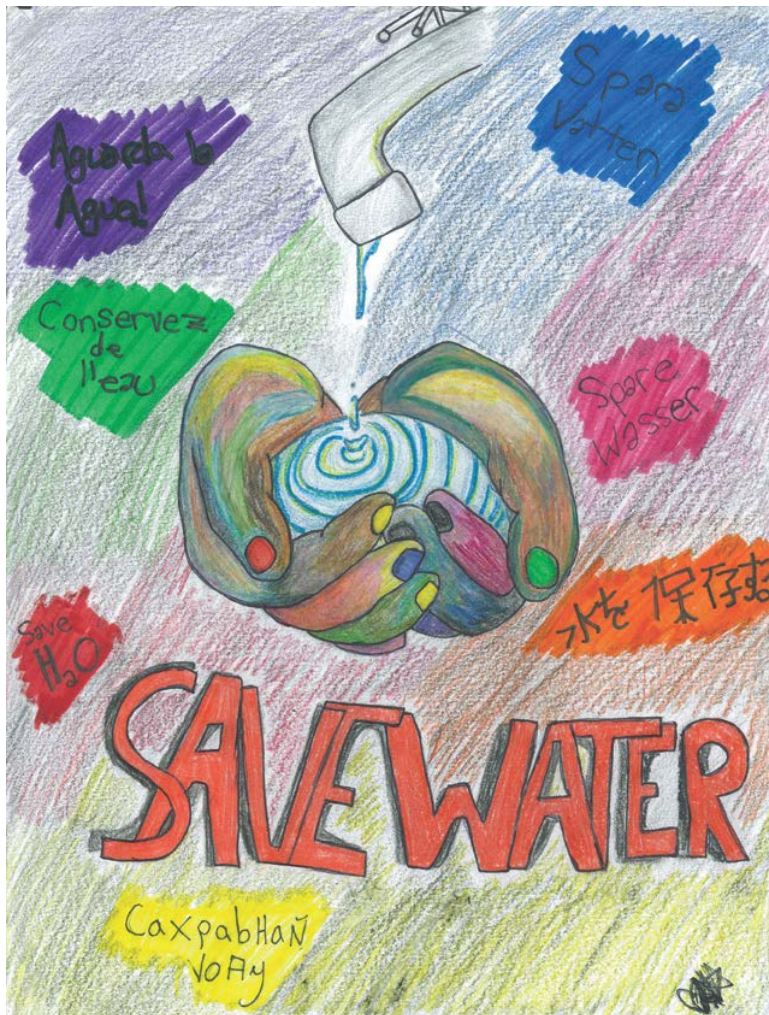


TMWA Board Meeting

Thursday, May 15, 2014

Press Clippings

April 7-May 5, 2014



*Katherine Horton (Archie Clayton Middle School)
2010 Poster Art Contest – Honorable Mention, Grades 7-8*

Drought concerns not extinguished by recent snowfall



Published: 4/07 11:35 pm

Updated: 4/07 11:42 pm

RENO, Nev. (MyNews4.com & KRNV) -- Experts say the latest Tahoe area storms will help reservoir water levels this summer, but the addition may not be enough to eliminate concerns for a third straight season of drought.

The Sierra snowpack is set to melt off next month. Recent snowfall should increase runoff by 10 percent, a statistic experts said is not enough.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service measures how much water runoff Lake Tahoe gets each year. The agency said next month, the Tahoe-Sierra region will see 60 percent less snow melt-off than that of a normal year.

"We expect a really poor runoff and a really quick run off," said Water Supply Specialist Beau Uriona.

Uriona said Tahoe will rise six inches next month, but in a normal year, the water rises over a foot. "Reservoirs are actually drawn down so much now that I would consider this a problematic year."

Uriona said northern Nevadans should start conserving water now, and if reservoirs continue to dry, the cost of living will be what rises. The NRCS said when farmers and ranchers lose water, food prices will go up across the region.

"From April 1, we expect to be melting the snow and for it to be running off into rivers and reservoirs," said Uriona. "Across the sierra, what you now see is likely what you get."

Experts say wet weather could still be in the forecast, but it's not expected. "We have had several years where we continue to see precipitation into April, May and sometimes even into June," explained Uriona. "However it is not likely, but it certainly could happen."

By June, Carson and Tahoe reservoirs are expected to hold just half of what they can take in. Without any more precipitation this season, 2014 could be the region's driest year since 1977.

Sponsored Links



Sierra snowpack mighty thin

Follow me on:

By **Standley White** April 8, 2014

[My Bio](#) | [Headlines](#) | [Forum](#) | [RSS](#)

Ads: [Reno](#) [Nevada](#) [PEHO](#) [Snow](#) [Sierra](#)

Late season snow and rain added measurably to dry conditions we've experienced through the 2013-2014 winter season. That's the good news.

The bad news is that the Sierra snowpack is still way below normal and subsequent runoff through the summer will be significantly reduced for northern Nevada. In fact, this may be the driest year on record, ever. According to water officials, runoff in area streams and rivers will be from 30 percent to 50 percent of normal. Our water company, the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) says "Supplies will be adequate from the (Truckee) river throughout the summertime."

Ads

[Emilio Pucci on Sale](#)

designerapparel.com/EmilioPucci

Save 40-70% on Emilio Pucci! All the Sales, All In One Place.

[Yosemite Cabins](#)

www.evergreenlodge.com

Yosemite's Classic Mountain Resort
Visit A Fodors & Frommers Favorite!

[Hotel Discounts: 60% Off](#)

travelzoo.com/Hotels

Find Discounts on Hotels Today.
Compare Rates at up to 60% Off!



Truckee River flowing through west, Nevada.

Photo © Stan White

Even as desert dwellers used to living in a dry place, we should be a bit more vigilant in [conserving water](#) during 2014. And be on extra alert for [wildfire danger](#) once the heat cranks up this summer. Vegetation is going to be extremely dry.

Here are the numbers at the end of March - Lake Tahoe Basin at 60 percent of normal, Truckee River watershed at 52 percent of normal. By comparison, the extra dry years of 2012 and 2013 were both 69 percent and 63 percent respectively.

Sources: Reno Gazette-Journal, National Weather Service.

Get more Reno / Tahoe information:

Shop Now	Flower Silhouette Cardigan
	\$62.65 \$80.60 Shop Now



Tips for Turning on Your Sprinkler System

Posted: Apr 08, 2014 4:29 PM PDT
Updated: Apr 08, 2014 5:58 PM PDT

Sprinkler systems all around the Truckee Meadows are coming out of hibernation following a long, cold winter. Local lawn services are scrambling to turn on sprinkler systems now that the weather has warmed up. Scott Leonard of Signature Landscapes says his crews are responding to calls from customers who are ready to start watering. "The weather changed from last week and freezing temperatures to near 80 degrees right now. It's about getting water on as fast as we can," said Leonard.

Sometimes the long winters can cause leaks, which eventually show up on your water bill. Leonard said the first thing to do is look for problems above ground. "If you're going to turn it on yourself, go through each zone. Walk your property, make sure there are no drip breaks, check your sprinklers, look for clogged valves," he said.

Another important tip is to check your water meter to make sure your system isn't leaking. "Inside the water pit is your gauge," said Leonard. "There's a small red wheel, if it's turning there's a leak," he added.

"So you want all your household water off, come out and check it. If everything's off and it's spinning, then it's time to call somebody to come out and investigate for a leak," Leonard explained.

Andy Gebhardt of the Truckee Meadows Water Authority says you can also check your water bill. "If your bill is higher than you think it should be, you might want to take a good look and see if something's going on," he said.

Once the sprinklers are on and working properly, it's important not to over water. Experts say right now about 5 minutes three times a day on your assigned watering days should do the trick. "Start it up slowly, give it a little drink. But you don't want to flood it early. It'll thrive," said Gebhardt.

The Truckee Meadows Water Authority is holding a free a workshop on Wednesday, April 9th at 5:30 to explain how to turn on your irrigation system. The address is 1355 Capital Blvd. in Reno.

Written by Jennifer Burton

Meeting the Challenge of A Difficult Job (Over \$500,000)

Dairy Farmers of America Milk
Drying Plant
Martin Iron Works



MARTIN IRON WORKS, INC.

Martin Iron Works had no qualms taking on the structural and miscellaneous steel at the \$85 million DFA Milk Drying Plant in Fallon. The fabrication and installation of 570 tons of structural steel and 43 tons of steel joists had to be built simultaneously with the installation of tanks, bins and silos for the plant that covers 90,000 square feet and will process 225,000 pounds of powdered milk

annually. Despite change orders, 140 plan revisions and access issues in the 226 foot high structure as the project progressed, Martin's team impressed General Contractor Big D Construction. "Your field foreman and his crews maintained an optimistic, can-do attitude," said Project Manager Jeff Arnold.



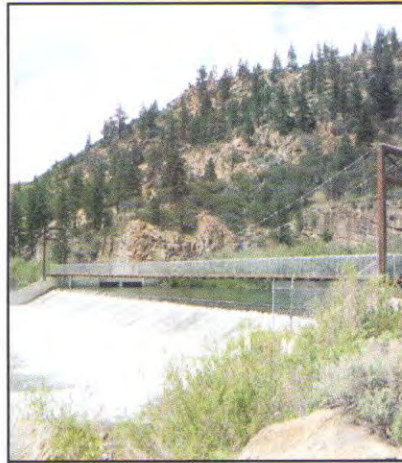
Contractors Innovation (Under \$500,000)

Fleish Pedestrian Bridge, Truckee
Meadows Water Authority
Reno Iron Works



The Tahoe-Pyramid Bikeway is one of the West's unique recreational trails. The path to completion had many hurdles including funding. Reno Iron Works' cost-saving innovation on the Fleish Pedestrian Bridge project protected the budget as well as sensitive habitat. Using snatch blocks, smaller lead cable and a tugger to pull 600 feet of suspension cable over the towers and across the river, Reno Iron Works eliminated the need for an

expensive crane. RIW also puzzled out getting the east tower into position and erect without damaging the sensitive river bank through the use of giant protective mats and a unique boom system. The innovation helped reduce the project's timeframe, despite the extensive unique safety program developed for working over the Truckee River.



GENERAL ENGINEERING CONTRACTORS

Meeting the Challenge of A Difficult Job (Under \$5 million)

Red Rock Road Rehabilitation,
Regional Transportation
Commission
Granite Construction



Granite Construction Company was awarded the \$1.7 million Red Rock Road Rehabilitation in June of 2013. The project not only came in under budget, but through internal innovation and communication took half the allotted time to ensure the road's use during the Reno Air Races. Crews utilized pulverized material from another Granite project in the vicinity for use as

shouldering, with no cost to the owner. An asphalt safety edge was required on the project and rather than purchasing an apparatus to attach to the paver, the owner and Granite were able to work together and agreed to drag a chain along the edge. These innovative tactics were instrumental in Granite being the lowest bidder and greatly contributed to overall owner satisfaction.



Highland Canal project reduces TMWA energy costs

Jessica Garcia, RGJ 11:15 p.m. PDT April 8, 2014



(Photo: BrianAJackson, Getty Images/iStockphoto)

SHARE



CONNECT



TWEET



COMMENT



EMAIL



MORE

Truckee Meadows Water Authority has announced that, with the help of NV Energy, it has reconstructed portions of the Highland Canal, a main source of water for the Chalk Bluff Water Treatment plant in Reno, to increase capacity and reduce any impediments by ice during the winter.

According to TMWA, the move will help save on energy costs and reduce the need to pump water to Chalk Bluff from the Orr Ditch pump station.

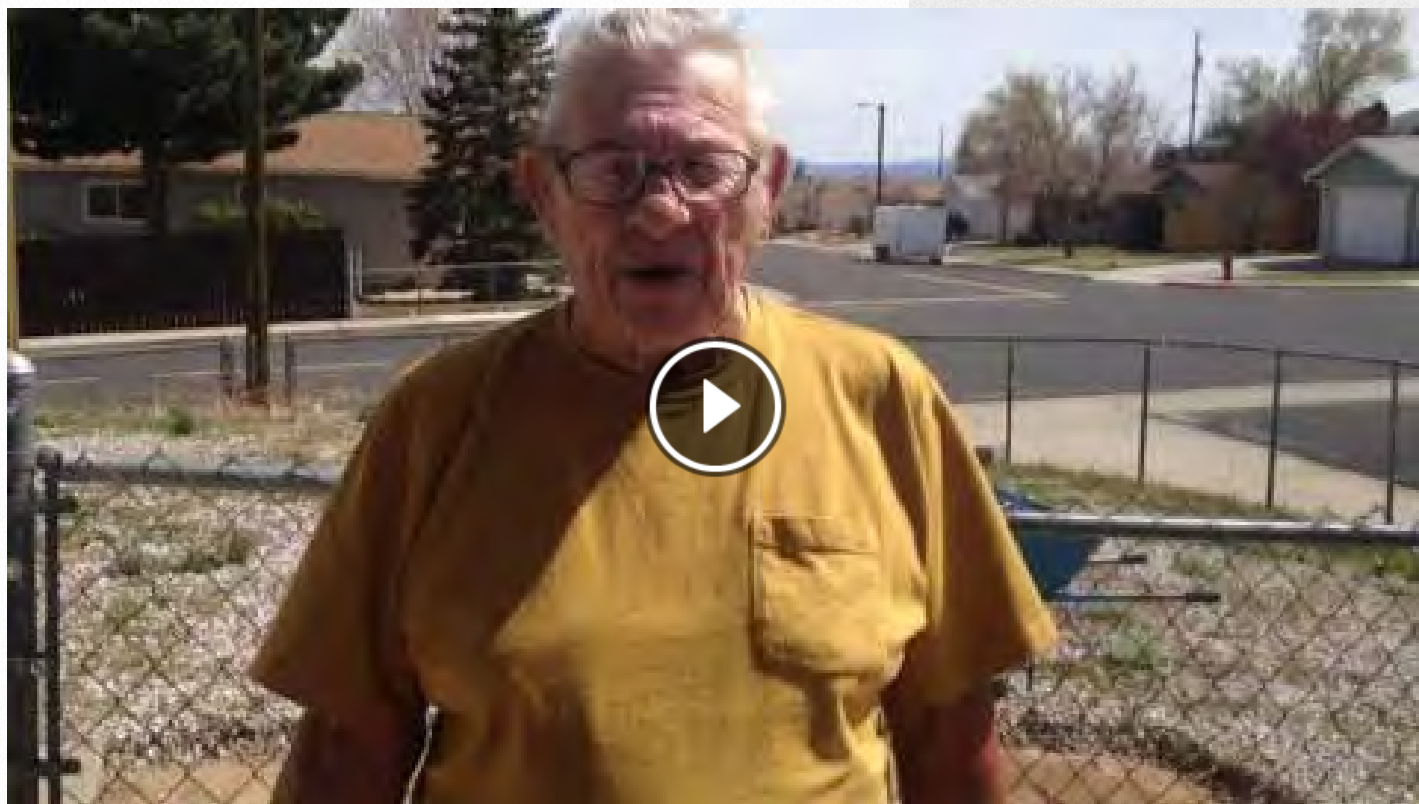
"The Highland Canal Project continues to be a great investment in the reliability of our water system," said Mark Foree, TMWA's general manager, in a statement. "Saving \$45,500 in annual power costs and getting a rebate makes this project a win-win for everyone. *Thanks to NV Energy for being a great community partner.*"

TMWA is expected to save more than 552,000 kilowatt hours of electricity and shave \$45,500 off TMWA's electric bill per year. The project that qualifies for NV Energy's Sure Bet efficiency program has given TMWA a \$32,329 rebate to offset project costs.

The combined energy savings from the projects equates to powering 379 homes in Northern Nevada for a year, and the project has reduced TMWA's annual carbon emissions by 2,560 tons, according to officials at NV Energy.

Water from the Truckee River enters the Highland Canal near Verdi and runs alongside Interstate 80 on its way to the treatment plant. The Highland Canal, built in 1875 to supply irrigation water, was extended in 1880 to provide drinking water to Reno

Reno to lay off 35 firefighters, b station



Residents fear fire danger when station No. 10 joins two others in brownout July 1.

Anjeanette Damon, RGJ 7:42 a.m. PDT April 9, 2014



(Photo: Tim Dunn/RGJ Tim Dunn)

SHARE



The city of Reno knew it was gambling when it decided in 2012 to pay for the salaries of 64 firefighters — more than a quarter of its entire department — with a federal grant that could evaporate on June 30.

But, at the time, the idea of laying off 64 people weighed heavier than the risk of relying on uncertain money to fund permanent positions.

On Tuesday, the city's bet came due.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency announced it had denied Reno's application for continued grant funding under the Staffing for Adequate Fire and

MORE NEWS STORIES

Emergency Response program.

News that Reno will not receive the \$12 million SAFER grant it had requested means the city must fall back on its worst-case scenario contingency plan:

- Effectively close three fire stations, keeping them equipped only for use in times of emergency such as high wildfire danger conditions or reduced staffing in other areas.
- Lay off 35 firefighters — those with the least seniority among the 127 firefighters on staff.
- Increase response times to residents in north Reno — those served by Station 10 on North Virginia Street — by two to four minutes.

The changes will take effect on July 1.

Because of measures the city took to incrementally reduce its dependency on the grant, the fire department will have to lay off fewer people than it would have had to in 2012. But that doesn't mean the loss won't hurt the department or affect fire service in the city.

"I'm not saying it's a minimal impact," Hernandez said at a news conference Tuesday. "Thirty-five positions is significant. Our plan calls for the browning out and closing of another station. That in and of itself is a significant position. This is our reality right now."

Reno has struggled to fund its fire department through both an economic recession that depleted city coffers as well as the wrenching deconsolidation of the Reno and Washoe County fire departments in 2011.

When the federal government came to the rescue in 2012 with a \$14 million grant, the city jumped at the chance to avoid mass layoffs and the temporary closure of a third of its fire stations.

"The wisdom of it?" City Manager Andrew Clinger said. "The city would have had to lay off 64 firefighters two years ago."

To begin saving money, the city stopped filling positions when firefighters retired and slashed overtime. But it wasn't nearly enough to eliminate the need for the grant.

Dennis Jacobsen, president of Reno Fire Fighters Local 731, said union leadership will begin working with city management to look for ways to avoid layoffs. But he wasn't incredibly optimistic.

"They're the ones who put the city in this financial crunch and they will have to answer to the public for it," Jacobsen said.

"We will do everything we can to protect our younger firefighters."

The city had already been temporarily closing two stations — Somerset and Skyline. Starting July 1, those closures will increase and a third station — Station 12 on North Virginia Street — will be added to the brown out list.

Hernandez said he is confident the fire department will be able to respond to nearly all calls for service within eight minutes.

The brownouts could also bring back the debate over how many firefighters should staff each of Reno's stations. The city's firefighter union has in the past stood firm on its position that every fire truck roll with four firefighters, which was one of the reasons for Washoe County going off on its own.



Eating News & Notes:
Great Basin IPA month
April 8, 2014, 9:18 p.m.



April 8, 2014, 1:01 p.m.

Latest news on Reno
laying off 35
firefighters, browning
out stations



Community news:
Mason Valley
April 4, 2014, 12:09 p.m.

Meanwhile, the Washoe County Commission decided after two hours of contentious public comment to table a request by Reno to begin formal negotiations on creating a new regional fire service.

Commissioners Martha Berkbigler and Dave Humke had been meeting privately with Mayor Bob Cashell and Councilwoman Neoma Jardon to discuss the possibility of erecting a new regional fire service.

But the commission as a whole felt it better to wait for an imminent report from the county's Blue Ribbon Committee tasked with studying the issue and providing an independent evaluation of the possibility.

Reno has chosen not to participate in that process.

News that Reno is laying off 35 firefighters prompted some residents of unincorporated Washoe County to complain the city is seeking a financial rescue from the county.

"They haven't planned and they haven't strategized and they're looking for you to bail them out," resident Cindy Davis, who sits on the Blue Ribbon Committee, said at the county commission meeting Tuesday.

Washoe County Commissioner Kitty Jung, who opposed the 2011 decision to deconsolidate, chastised anyone who viewed Reno's loss of the grant as an I-told-you-so moment.

"If you're gloating about that, I think you're not a very nice person," she said. "It is incumbent on us to be compassionate about this. These are human beings."

Humke declared he would no longer participate in any private meetings with the city, stating his desire to conduct any negotiations in a public forum.

Berkbigler, however, said she would likely continue informal discussions, hoping to hammer out better ways to cooperate on fire service.

"I just think we need to get out of our own way," she said. "I don't want to create a problem that looks like we're doing something in the dark. On the other side of the coin, if we declare we are going to meet publicly on every single issue we meet on, we'll spend a lot of time sitting here pontificating on things that are really unnecessary. We have a job to do."

What is a brownout?

Three stations will be subject to brown outs starting July 1: Station 19 in Somerset, Station 7 on Skyline, and Station 10 on North Virginia Street.

That means the three stations will be continue to be equipped with fire trucks, but will be staffed only when hazardous fire conditions exist, such as high winds or lightning strikes.

Stations 19 and 7 had already been subject to brownouts. Station 10 responds to an average of 100 calls a month — about 3 percent of the city's total fire calls.

What is the SAFER grant?

The grant is administered by the Federal Emergency Management Administration to assist local fire departments in maintaining and increasing the number of trained "front line" firefighters in the community.

Reno was awarded \$1.9 million in 2011 and \$13.4 million in 2012. It applied for \$12

million this year.

SHARE

 5
CONNECT

 TWEET

 COMMENT

 EMAIL

 MORE



Truckee Meadows water reclamation improvements to total \$24 million

Marcella Corona, RGJ 7:24 a.m. PDT April 8, 2014



(Photo: RGJ file photo)

SHARE



CONNECT 1



TWEET



COMMENT



EMAIL



MORE

Sparks residents will eventually pay more for sewer service as the Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility begins an upgrade to equipment.

In March, Reno and Sparks city officials approved the \$24.9 million project to make the water treatment plant more efficient, work that could save more than \$1 million in expenses a year.

Improvements include replacing aging pipes and pumps and equipping the facility to harvest phosphorus from wastewater, which will then be sold for fertilizer.

It would also allow the facility to use the methane gas released by waste to produce electricity for the facility, making it more self-sustainable, city officials and project managers said.

Overall, work done to the water plant will mean a 5 percent increase to sewer fees for Sparks residents, said Mayor Geno Martini.

"We look into the future and see how much money we're going to need, and then we try to make small increases over a five-year period to avoid inflation," he said.

The project had been put off until recently because of the expense Sparks faces, Martini said.

"But it's time to get those things finished," he said.

The facility was built in 1966, and has since undergone modifications to accommodate growth in Reno and Sparks.

It processes 28 million gallons of wastewater from Reno, Sparks, the Sun Valley General Improvement District and other parts of Washoe County. The processed water is then returned to the Truckee River.

On average, the facility uses \$7,800 worth of electricity a day, which represents 20 percent of its annual operations and maintenance costs.

"One of the improvements is a simple lighting upgrade," said plant manager Michael Drinkwater. "We have old lights here that are inefficient. By replacing them with LEDs, our lighting bill is going to go down immediately."

MORE NEWS STORIES



Eating News & Notes:
Great Basin IPA month

April 8, 2014, 9:18 p.m.



Latest news on Reno
laying off 35
firefighters, browning
out stations

April 8, 2014, 1:01 p.m.



Community news:
Mason Valley

April 4, 2014, 12:09 p.m.

"So the benefits start immediately, and it's guaranteed for 15 years," Drinkwater said of the \$1.1 million projected annual cost savings.

Work to the plant is expected to take about 22 months, Drinkwater said.

Preventing future disasters

But costs aren't the only concern for Sparks city officials.

Two 24-inch pipes, critical for pumping raw sewage into the water treatment facility, cracked last year, costing Sparks and Reno millions to repair. The pipes sat 40 feet below the facility, but had not leaked any sewage, Drinkwater said.

"Sooner or later, something is going to happen that we're not going to be able to fix," Martini said. "We were very fortunate we had caught that problem in time. It cost a couple million bucks and about eight or nine months of work to get that fixed."

"We're trying to get ahead of that stuff so nothing like that happens again," he said.

The cracks forced Sparks City Council members to issue a temporary state of emergency to authorize spending needed to fix the pipes, and that had "set our light off" for city officials, Martini said.

"Sewage is a public safety item," he said. "If sewage is backed up and flowing on the streets, then you have a major safety problem with disease and that kind of stuff. So we don't want to get to that point so that's why we're trying to stay ahead of the curb."

Ameresco Inc., which was contracted by Sparks to find ways to improve the energy and chemical use of the plant, guaranteed \$1.1 million in savings per year, Drinkwater said.

"We're either going to replace or construct new facilities to make us more efficient, and there must be a payback," Drinkwater said. "It has to result in a guarantee savings."

"There's 33-year-old equipment here that's reaching the end of its usage life anyway," he said.

The biggest updates

The two main benefits for the facility are harvesting the phosphorus and using methane gas to produce self-sustaining electricity, said Jason Geddes, project manager for the city of Reno.

Reno is paying \$18 million of the total costs, Geddes said.

Phosphorus from wastewater will be harvested and sold as fertilizer to Ostara Nutrient Recovery Technologies Inc., which designs, builds and markets nutrient recovery technology.

The company will then process phosphorus and nitrogen from wastewater to make eco-friendly fertilizer, which is then sold, Ostara business leaders said on the company's website.

"It benefits the Truckee River ... because when you discharge nutrients to the river, you could end up with low oxygen levels, which results in fish kills," Drinkwater said.

A boost to local economy

The work will lead to about 200 jobs, Geddes said.

"This project is one of many, and it's very positive for jobs," he said.

With the economy recovering from the recession, the work to the facility will help boost jobs, especially in Sparks, Martini said.

"Any time you do any kind of improvements to a public facility like this, we have to hire an outside contractor to do it, and that's what puts people back to work," he said. "It's a pretty big contract, so it will bring a couple hundred jobs."

— Brian Duggan contributed to this report.

At a glance:

- The Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility was built in 1966. It uses 2.5 megawatts of electricity a day with a peak energy usage of about 3.5 megawatts. That totals a daily cost of \$7,800, representing 20 percent of the facility's annual budget.
- The facility processes 28 million gallons of water for Reno, Sparks, Sun Valley General Improvement District and other parts of Washoe County.
- The facility's improvement project is expected to cost a max total of \$24.9 million but will save an annual of \$1.1 million in energy and chemical costs.
- The overall project is expected to be completed by November 2016.

Source: City of Sparks



LVVWD and SNWA announce layoffs of 101 employees



Stacey Gualandi

[Follow Stacey on Twitter](#) | [About Stacey](#)

CREATED Apr. 9, 2014

Las Vegas, NV (KTNV) -- The Las Vegas Valley Water District and the Southern Nevada Water Authority announced on Wednesday they are laying off 101 employees.

The organization-wide reduction was announced in a statement on Wednesday.

The 101 employees represent a 7.5 percent workforce reduction. In addition, 54 currently vacant positions within the two organizations will be eliminated.

The reduction will result in more than \$14 million in payroll savings.

The statement reads, "The economic downturn that hit our community beginning in 2008 dramatically impacted important sources of revenue that were used to pay for our community's \$3 billion water treatment and distribution system. In the intervening years, LVVWD and SNWA took many interim actions to maintain service levels and complete major infrastructure projects, while adjusting to the new economic realities. These included the elimination of non-permanent and contractor staff positions, the deferment of \$801 million in major construction projects and savings of \$109 million through refinancing existing capital obligations."

The organizations stated, for the past year, they have engaged in a comprehensive process to develop a new strategic plan that recognizes the changed economic environment and transitions the focus of the organization from system expansion to the enhancement of service levels, operations and asset management.

The statement goes on to say, "This difficult but necessary action today will streamline the organizational structure, placing both LVVWD and SNWA on a sustainable financial path."



**REGION
IN
BRIEF**

**Highland Canal
Project to reduce
energy costs**

To cut energy costs, Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) has improved the water flow in the Highland Canal, one of the principal water sources for the Chalk Bluff Water Treatment Plant in west Reno.

“The Highland Canal Project

continues to be a great investment in the reliability of our water system,” said Mark Foree, TMWA’s general manager. “Saving \$45,500 in annual power costs and getting a rebate makes this project a win-win for everyone. Thanks to NV Energy for being a great community partner.”

The improvements to the canal are expected to save TMWA over 552,000 kilowatt hours of electricity annually, reducing TMWA’s electric bill by up to \$45,500 per year. Because the improvements qualified for NV Energy’s Sure Bet energy efficiency program for commercial electric customers, TMWA has received a \$32,329 rebate from NV Energy to help offset project costs.

TMWA received an \$82,556 rebate from the Sure Bet program in 2012 for previous canal improvements that reduced TMWA’s annual electricity usage by approximately 2.9 million kilowatt hours.

The combined energy savings from the projects is equivalent to the amount of electricity needed to power 379 homes in northern Nevada for a year, and has reduced TMWA’s annual carbon emissions by 2,560 tons, according to officials at NV Energy.

Water from the Truckee River enters the Highland Canal near Verdi and runs alongside Interstate 80 on its journey to the treatment plant. Originally constructed in 1875 to supply irrigation water, the Highland Canal was extended in 1880 to provide drinking water to Reno.

The recently completed improvements complete TMWA’s planned improvements to the canal system.



Contributed photo
Improved waterflow in the Highland Canal will save the Truckee Meadows Water Association \$45,500 in annual power costs.

LAS VEGAS SUN

By [Conor Shine](#) (contact) 

Wxhvgd | /#Dsub# 8 /#5 3 4 7 #;#5 #d1p 1

Recently retired water czar Pat Mulroy is bringing her expertise and reputation as an international leader on water issues to a pair of institutions with a connection to UNLV, the Sun has learned.



Mulroy will take on dual roles with Brookings Mountain West and the Desert Research Institute. Her hiring, which is expected to be announced today, provides a major dose of credibility as the two organizations look to boost their profiles on water resource policy and research. Mulroy also will be named a senior fellow at Brookings Institution's Metropolitan Policy Program, in Washington, D.C. She'll be based in Las Vegas but will travel extensively.

In her new roles, she'll be responsible for directing research, publishing reports and helping shape policy decisions on the regional, national and international levels.

"There is no greater voice in the area of water resource policy in America," UNLV acting President Don Snyder said. "It's a wonderful example of using a resource like Pat for the greater good."

Mulroy stepped down in February after 25 years leading the Las Vegas Valley Water District and the Southern Nevada Water Authority, an agency she helped form in 1991. During that time, she catapulted from a bureaucrat with little experience dealing with water issues to a widely respected water policy expert who helped shape modern-day Las Vegas.

She led the agency through the boom years — a stretch of unprecedented multibillion-dollar growth in the valley — and her work with politicians and water authorities in other Colorado River states elevated Nevada's status and helped catalyze several landmark water-sharing agreements among them. Mulroy became increasingly active in national and international water policy over the course of her career, spending much of her later years traveling around the globe to meet with foreign leaders and speak at conferences.

Mulroy said her new role at Desert Research Institute and Brookings would allow her to take the lessons learned from her time at the water authority and apply them to a bigger stage.

She'll be a senior fellow for climate adaptation and environmental policy with Brookings Mountain West. At the DRI, the environmental research arm of the Nevada System of Higher Education, she will be the program lead for water resources and technology as the Maki Distinguished Faculty Associate.

"The challenges that the Western United States are facing are being faced around the world," she said.

Continuing growth in global population and a shifting climate will increasingly stress water supplies and infrastructure unless solutions are found, a challenge Mulroy says she's excited to take on.

"How do you find strategies, how do you find management tools that will allow cities to survive and thrive in this environment?" she said.

Robert Lang, director of Brookings Mountain West, said the shrinking Colorado River is one of the most critical issues facing the Western U.S., as it threatens the water supply to Las Vegas and dozens of other cities.

Without a stable supply of water, large portions of the country's economy, including much of its agricultural sector, would be threatened, with future growth in the region crippled.

Brookings Mountain West began fundraising to hire a water expert before it knew Mulroy was available as part of a plan to direct more resources to studying water issues. When Mulroy announced she was retiring, she immediately became a perfect fit for the job, Lang said.

"She seemed like the most qualified person in the country to hire," he said.

While federal officials are quick to offer aid and support for problems caused by hurricanes or flooding, there's less available to states afflicted with a lack of water, a situation Lang said Mulroy will work to address.

"We're going to put it on the national agenda," Lang said. "The idea that too little water is as critical an issue to the country as too much water needs to be specifically asserted from this region, and Pat is the ideal candidate to make that assertion."

Mulroy will also be involved in researching and developing water conservation and management technologies with Desert Research Institute, a growing industry university leaders think would fit well into the Southern Nevada economy.

"I think we have a real opportunity to build a niche with the expertise we have," DRI President Stephen Wells said. "I can't think of anybody better (than Mulroy) to help us do a better job at building relationships with water industries and water purveyors across the country and around the world."

Mulroy is one of UNLV's highest-profile hirings in years. Her addition fits in with the school's broader goal of influencing issues of regional importance in its pursuit of Tier-1 research university status, Snyder said.

It also marks Mulroy's return to the school where she spent her senior year of college as an exchange student studying German literature.

"I like it when things go full circle. She's built this incredible career and reputation. ... It started with her education here at the university," Snyder said.

Posted April 15, 2014 - 9:58am | Updated April 15, 2014 - 3:46pm

Mulroy goes to Brookings after years at water authority



Former Southern Nevada Water Authority General Manager Pat Mulroy will become a fellow at Brookings Mountain West and a faculty associate of Desert Research Institute. (John Locher/Las Vegas Review-Journal file)

By KRISTY TOTTEN
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Former Southern Nevada Water Authority boss Pat Mulroy will join Brookings Mountain West and the Desert Research Institute, the organizations announced Tuesday.

At Brookings, she will work on local, national and international water research and policy. At DRI, she will hold the Maki Distinguished Faculty Associate position and will lead water resources and technologies programs.

Mulroy will serve as a senior fellow of climate adaptation and environmental policy at Brookings Mountain West, a partnership between the Washington-based Brookings Institution and UNLV. She will also serve as senior fellow for the Brookings Institute's Metropolitan Policy Program, which provides decision-makers with research and analysis.

In a statement, William Antholis, managing director of the Brookings Institution, said Mulroy's experience would be "a world class resource to our offices in China, India and in the Middle East, where Pat's issues are high priorities."

Mulroy will travel to D.C. to work out of the details of her duties, but said it will likely involve best water practices for cities, where 75 percent of the world's populations live.

"If you're working globally you have two major things that are on a collision course: You have an exploding population and (dwindling) natural resources," said Mulroy, who was the general manager of SNWA from 1993 to February 2014, and was general manager of the Las Vegas Valley Water District from 1989 until February 2014.

Mulroy's position is funded by Barrick Gold and MGM Resorts International, and the work is in sync with Gov. Brian Sandoval's goals of strengthening technology and manufacturing industries in Nevada.

"If Las Vegas can position itself as the entry place for emerging technologies, then entrepreneurs from around the world who are looking to enter the market (will come here)," she said.

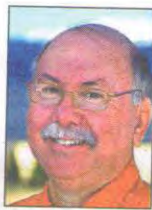
The challenge for Las Vegas is the perception of having more serious water problems than other states that draw water from the Colorado River because of the city's proximity to the river, she said.

"There has to be a path forward and there has to be a difference in message," Mulroy said. "That perception isn't a reality."

Contact reporter Kristy Totten at ktotten@reviewjournal.com or 702-477-3809. Find her on Twitter: @kristy_tea



Ashcraft



Dabner



Trumble



Chen



Romero



Foree

mining engineering from the the Pennsylvania State University.

Brian Ashcraft

Brian Ashcraft has been hired as digital product manager for KPS3 Marketing.

Ashcraft, who has 12 years experience

in digital project management and software development, previously served as vice president of new product development at The Project Management Academy in San Diego, Calif. He also worked seven years as a solution consultant in the Silicon Valley.

Ashcraft graduated from Purdue University with a degree in organizational leadership.

Becky Murway

Becky Murway has been named as head of business development at Digiman Studio.

Murway, who has more than 10 years experience in advertising and photography, most recently was advertising manager for Peppermill Hotel Resort, editor and interim editor. (The Appeal, the Tahoe Daily Tribune and Northern Nevada Business Weekly are all owned by Swift Communications.)

Before moving to Nevada, Trumble worked at the Alpena News in Michigan.

He earned a journalism degree from Central Michigan University.

Huapei "Pei" Chen

Huapei "Pei" Chen has joined the University of Nevada, Reno, as chief information officer.

Chen previously worked at the

University of Texas, Austin, where she served as senior director of systems, services and infrastructure in the IT division. She also served in IT director roles at Georgia Institute of Technology; University of California, Berkeley's College of Engineering; and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

Chen earned a master's of business degree in management of technology from Georgia Tech, a master's degree in computer science from State University of New York and a bachelor's degree in computer science from Morningside College in Iowa.

Kevin Romero

Kevin Romero has been promoted to vice president of operations for the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority

Romero, who has been with REMSA for 18 years, previously served as the emergency medical services director for Senior American Settlement Industry Professional from the American Escrow Association.

Mark Foree

Mark Foree, general manager of Truckee Meadows Water Authority, was elected to the board of directors of the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada.

Send submissions for this column to People@nnbw.biz. If you e-mail a photo, please send us a jpg of at least 300 dpi. Publication is free.

**SERVICE.
SPEED.**

the kind of printer you want

professional, reliable
and accommodating.
Everything you expect from
printer and more.
- Bill Jensen, Publisher
Squaw Valley Times

your low-cost quote!

75.283.5554
snmprinting.com



California Farmers to Get More Water

Posted: Apr 18, 2014 12:55 PM PDT
Updated: Apr 18, 2014 1:53 PM PDT

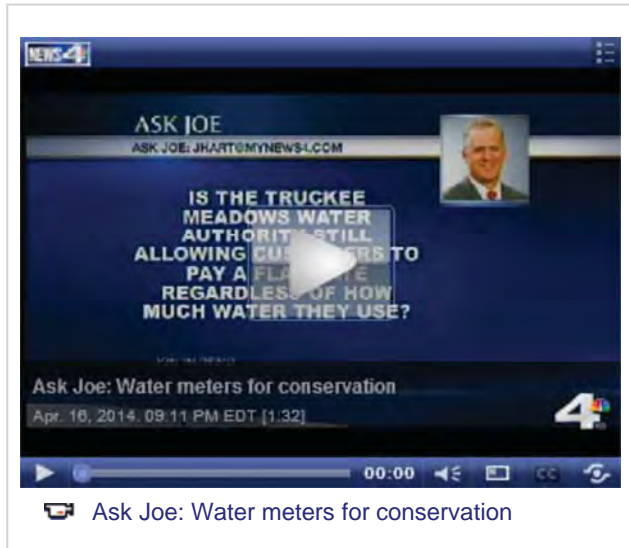
California farmers and cities are set to get more water, as state and federal officials ease drought-related water cutbacks because of recent rain and snow.

The Department of Water Resources announced on Friday that it was increasing water allotments from the State Water Project from zero to 5% of what water districts had requested. The State Water Project supplies water to 29 public agencies serving more than 25 million Californians and irrigates nearly a million acres of farmland.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation said it would supply 75% of the water requested by water agencies in the Sacramento Valley, up from the current 40%.

Federal and state officials said rain and snow from storms in February and March allowed them to increase their water allotments. (AP)

Ask Joe: Water meters for conservation



Published: 4/16 6:50 pm

Updated: 4/16 7:03 pm

Question:

From the Ask Joe file, a question from a viewer about water use. Jon wrote in asking if the Truckee Meadows Water Authority is still allowing customers to pay a flat rate regardless of how much water they use?

Jon said that with this severe drought we are in, we need water meters to get people to conserve.

Answer:

Joe spoke with Kim Meseres at the Truckee Meadows Water Authority. She said their board decided back in 2002 against a flat mandate, and instead only required homeowners to switch to water meters when they moved into a home. So if a home sold, a water meter is required at that point.

Back in 2002, more than 50 percent of TMWA customers were on a flat-rate system. Now, that number is down to seven percent, or about 6,200 customers.

So only a small percentage of people are still on the flat-rate

system. And it is a priority for TMWA, because conservation is so critical these days.

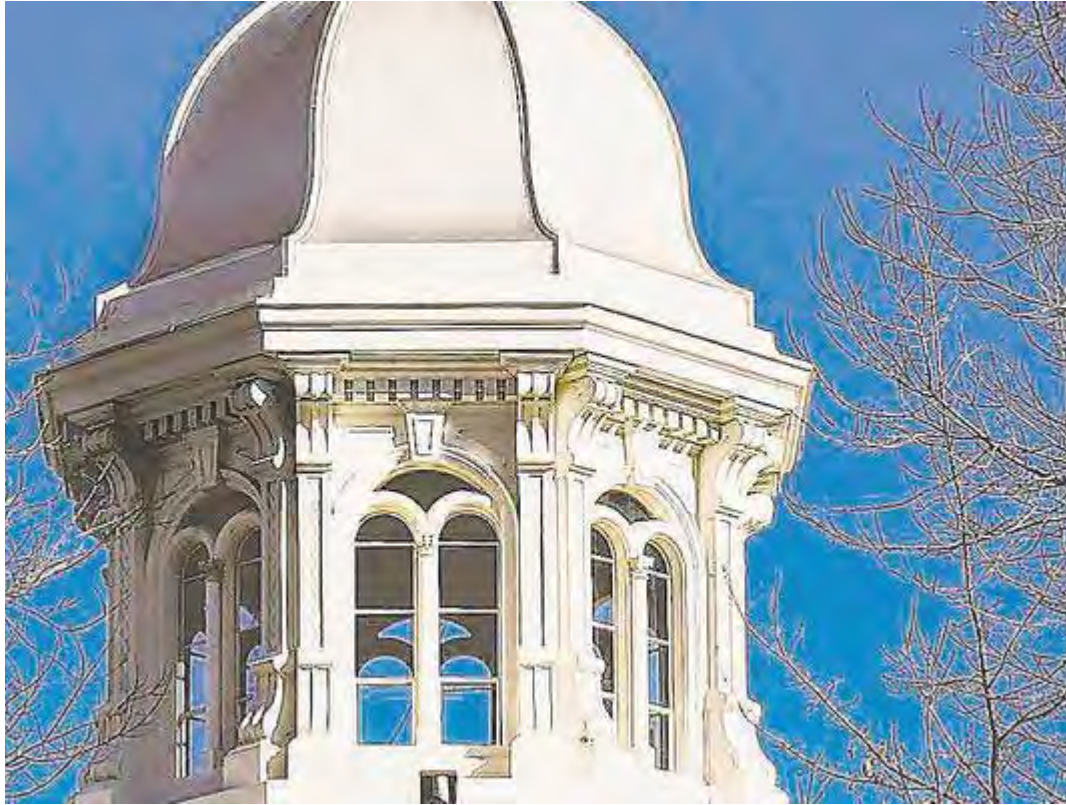
If you would like to convert to a water meter, Meseres points out there is no charge. Just call TMWA at 775-834-8080, and they will take care of scheduling it.

Sponsored Links



Growing cost of PERS raises worries

Anjeanette Damon, RGJ 12:03 p.m. PDT April 27, 2014



(Photo: RGJ file photo)

SHARE 25 CONNECT TWEET 4 COMMENT EMAIL MORE

More than 52,000 people — former teachers, firefighters, mechanics, football coaches, engineers, police officers and janitors among them — rely on Nevada's Public Employees' Retirement System for some or all of their retirement income.

Another 100,000 or so people are in the pipeline to become beneficiaries of PERS. But the financial stability of the system central to the livelihood of so many is becoming increasingly expensive for governments to maintain — largely because of the growing cost of funding benefits for existing employees as well as playing catch-up for inadequate funding in the past.

The administrators of PERS maintain the fund is actuarially sound — it is meeting its obligations, the government employers are making their mandated contribution payments, and measures are being taken to ensure the plan will become fully funded in 22 years.

"We are paying all liabilities as they come due, and we are well-positioned to pay all future liabilities as they come due," said Tina Leiss, executive officer of PERS. "We have a \$32 billion trust fund that is used solely to pay the benefits of the retirees." Independent studies have also shown that Nevada's is among the healthier plans compared to similar systems across the United States because of the conservative way in which it is managed.

But that comparative report doesn't necessarily mean the system is healthy, particularly because many of the same problems plague all similar plans across the country. According to a 2012 analysis by Pew Charitable Trusts, a national \$757 billion gap existed between states' assets and the cost of their pension obligations — a number that is growing.

Nevada's unfunded liability accounts for \$12.8 billion of that growing gap.

"It's a mathematical issue. Math doesn't play around," said Robert Chisel, the city of Reno's finance director. "If the unfunded liability is growing, something is wrong with (the actuaries') assumptions. We will very likely continue to have to increase our contributions."

To ensure enough money is in the trust fund, government employers and employees will likely have to increase the percentage of their salaries that they pay into the plan, Chisel said.

To better gauge the health of the system, the Reno Gazette-Journal has requested salary and benefit information on PERS members. On April 11, a judge ruled that the agency had to comply with previous rulings to make public the data.

Here's what troubles financial experts like Chisel:

- Since 2000, the system's funding ratio has been on a downward trend, dropping from about 84 percent funded in 2000 to 69 percent funded today. In other words, if all of the system's benefits came due today, it would only be able to pay 69 percent of them. The system is about \$12.8 billion short of being fully funded, up from a \$4.5 billion deficit in 2004.
- The amount government employers are spending to keep the plan solvent has grown by 60 percent in the past decade. Last year, Nevada taxpayers spent \$1.3 billion on employer contributions to the plan, up from \$808 million in 2004.
- The ratio of active employees to retirees continues to drop, an expected development but one that is problematic now since the plan isn't fully funded. The plan relies on contributions of active employees — as well as the investment returns on those contributions — to help fund the benefits being paid to current retirees. Fewer active employees are now funding benefits for more retirees.
- Nevada PERS is described as an employee-employer contribution plan. That means both sides should be contributing equally to the retirement plan, much like a private employer matches an employee contribution to a 401(k) plan or the way employees and employers make equal payments to the Social Security system.

But while state employees bear half their retirements costs, employees of many local governments do not. Instead, cities such as Reno pay the entire contribution, and also bear the total cost of any increases in that contribution rate. This is supposed to be in lieu of giving additional pay raises to those employees, on top of the cost of living adjustments and the automatic increases, called step increases, that public employees already get each year they are employed.

- Because of changes to the law in the 1970s, the state automatically increases the salary on which retirement benefits are based by 12 percent for regular employees and 20 percent for police and fire employees. This is meant to "true up" the salary for those employees who ostensibly make a lower salary because the employer is making the full contribution to PERS.

Addressing the concerns

Leiss said the system has taken measures to address nearly all of those concerns. Government employers and employees are paying additional money into the system to reduce the unfunded liability each year. That amount that must be paid each year is determined by an independent actuary. If their projections are correct, the unfunded liability should be erased by 2036, Leiss said.

The dropping ratio of active employees to retirees doesn't concern Leiss because investment income from the trust fund pays 80 percent of the retiree benefits, while active employees prefund their own benefits, she said.

The plan's solvency depends on the assumption of an 8 percent average return on investment — an assumption that bothers some financial experts, especially in times of economic distress. But Leiss points out that the plan has made an average of 9.3 percent since 1984.

The problem over which PERS has no say, however, is the cost to government employers for maintaining the pension benefit.

The contribution rate employers must pay is set by the Legislature every other year and is based on an actuarial determination of how much is needed to keep the plan solvent. In 1975, that rate was 15 percent of salary for regular employees and 17 percent of salary for police and fire employees. Then, the employee paid half and the employer paid half. Today, the rate is 25.72 percent of salary for regular employees and 40.54 percent for police and fire employees.

Ostensibly, employees and employers are still supposed to split that cost in half. State employees, for example, can choose between taking a lower salary and having the state pay their entire contribution, or taking the full salary and paying half the contribution rate themselves.

But decades ago, the Legislature changed the law to mandate many local employers pay the entire contribution. At the time of that change, government employers said they would pick up the contribution rate in lieu of giving a pay raise that year.

Today, government employers who pay the entire contribution are supposed to cut salaries or skip pay raises when the contribution rate increases.

That doesn't necessarily happen in practice.

Last year, for instance, the majority of cities and counties paying into PERS did not reduce salaries when they took on the increased contribution rate. Instead, they signed an affidavit saying the increased benefit was given in lieu of a salary increase.

The city of Reno has been doing this for years.

The city has interpreted a provision in state law to mean it must pay 100 percent of the contribution rate for police and fire employees. Former city manager Charles McNeely extended that to other employees out of fairness, he said in 2009. So before the economic downturn, city employees received raises and were not asked to take on their half of the increase in the PERS contribution rate.

Reno's new city manager, Andrew Clinger, is now trying to claw that practice back. The city is trying to negotiate new contracts with its employee groups that require salary cuts when the contribution rate increases.

"We think it would be more appropriate, and more in accordance with the statute, to have the increase shared between the employee and the employer," Chisel said. "That's why we are in negotiations with our associations."

By not requiring a salary cut, the city would be giving automatic salary increases — often on top of previously negotiated cost of living adjustments and step increases, Chisel said.

The cost for that cuts into other services the city provides, he said.

Hurdles for reform

Those who have sought to reform PERS have run into a host of political and legal problems.

First, the political debate often comes down to replacing PERS with a defined contribution retirement plan similar to private 401(k) plans, rather than making changes to ensure the existing system is more financially sustainable.

That raises the hackles of the Legislature's majority Democrats, many of whom are public employees and are supported by strong public employee constituencies who exist in part to protect the pension plan.

"You get here and you find everybody around you is a PERS participant," said Assemblyman Randy Kirner, a Republican who has led several unsuccessful attempts to change PERS. "The (legislative) leadership are PERS participants. The judges are PERS participants. The (legislative) lawyers are PERS participants."

The legal hurdles are also tall. Pension benefits are protected by contract law and property rights. That means most changes must apply to future employees, meaning the system wouldn't see the financial benefits of those changes until years down the road. The Legislature last made a significant change to the PERS system in 2009, when it increased the penalty for retiring early and required police officers and firefighters to work at least 30 years before retiring with full benefits. Those changes took effect only for employees hired after 2010.

Gov. Brian Sandoval, who requested the comparative study of the PERS system last year, is considering proposing some changes to the system during the next legislative session. But his staff refused to say what those changes would be, or provide any details into the particular areas he would look to provide.

"Ensuring the long-term sustainability of PERS continues to be a priority of the governor," Sandoval spokesman Tyler Klimas said in a written statement. "Last year, the governor asked the PERS Board to approve an independent comparable study of Nevada's public pension plan, and the report was largely favorable. Nonetheless, the governor is still considering options to ensure that PERS funding policy is sound and will remain so into the future."

Asked to provide more details, Klimas responded: "You have the statement."

What is the Public Employees' Retirement System?

In Nevada, government employees earn a "defined benefit" retirement, more commonly referred to as a pension. When they retire they are guaranteed a certain percentage of their pay each month until their death. A certain percentage of their salaries-- right now 25.7 percent for regular employees and 40.5 percent for police and fire employees-- is paid into a trust fund each month they work. Fund managers invest those contributions and the returns help pay for the eventual benefits.

A pension is different from a "defined contribution" plan, which is more common in the private sector. In such plans as a 401(k) an employee and employer contribute a set amount to a personal investment plan that does not guarantee a certain income on retirement.

How are benefits calculated?

Generally, the monthly retirement is based on the average of the highest 36 months of salary a public employee earns. Employees are eligible to retire at age 65 with five years of service, age 62 with 10 years of service or at any age after 30 years service. For employees hired before 2010, the years of service is multiplied by 2.5 percent and that number is multiplied by that 36-month salary average. For example, an employee who worked 30 years and the average salary of her highest paid 36 months was \$3,000, her benefit would be calculated like this: 30 years x 2.5 percent x \$3,000: \$2,250 a month.

What is the funding ratio?

Actuaries calculate how much money is in the trust fund and compare it to the amount of money the fund would need to pay all of the benefits owed to active and retired employees. Right now, the trust fund's assets are \$29.1 billion. Its liabilities are \$41.9 billion. That results in a funding ratio of 69.3 percent. The difference between the two figures, \$12.9 billion, is the unfunded liability.

What is the contribution rate?

Every two years the Legislature sets the "contribution rate"-- a certain percentage of salary-- based on an actuarial evaluation. That evaluation is based on three things: The amount needed to fund the current employees' benefits, the amount needed to pay off the unfunded liability over 20 years, and the amount needed to pay for the cost of administering the plan.

The contribution rate generally increases each year. Today it is 25.7 percent of salary for regular employees and 40.5 percent of salary for police and fire employees. A recent study found it will increase to at least 28.7 percent and 44 percent respectively before the plan is 100 percent funded.

Rehatched fly shop by Truckee River sign of Reno revival

Benjamin Spillman, REN 9:13 p.m. PDT April 16, 2014



(Photo: Andy Barron/RGJ)

SHARE



CONNECT



TWEET



COMMENT



EMAIL



MORE

The rehatched Reno Fly Shop is supposed to open Saturday not much further than a long cast from the banks of the Truckee River. But aside from the fact some of the shelves are still empty and there are some boxes strewn about it's almost as if it never closed.

The door of the shop, located at 238 S. Arlington Avenue, has been propped open while the owners prepare for opening, prompting friends, customers and the simply curious to drop by to talk about fishing.

On a recent weekday Kenny Dallimore pulled his SUV into the small parking lot already loaded down with fishing gear and a ladder customized for fishing at Pyramid Lake, where he spent the winter in a small trailer with no heat just to be closer to the water.

He strolled through the open door and chatted with owner Jim Litchfield, while owners Joe Kulikowski and Randy Brunelli sorted merchandise and popped in and out of the conversation, which covered everything from the evolution of Pyramid Lake fishing ladders to local high school and college baseball games played decades ago.

The easygoing chitchat is part of the culture of any good fly shop, Litchfield said, and it's the type of experience he wants to broaden to include more than just experienced fishers.

"Clubhouse to me suggests exclusivity," he said. "That is the furthest from what I want. I want inclusivity, but culture."

If anyone is qualified to introduce newbies to the sport of fly fishing and the joys of the Truckee River it's Litchfield. He's a hydrologist who managed and designed the Truckee River Whitewater Park and a passionate advocate for the river and Reno's recovery from the national recession.

Although the shop will offer guide services through Truckee River Outfitters, which is owned by former Reno Fly Shop owner Dave Stanley, Litchfield is just as happy to have customers experience fishing on a more casual level.

The new location between Midtown and the river makes it easy for people to not only swing by to talk fishing but to actually go, even on workdays.

"We want people to do that on their lunch break," Litchfield said. "You can buy a burrito over here at the (Great Basin Community Food Co-op), walk down and go fishing for 25 or 30 minutes."

While the shop owners say they want to be welcoming to beginners, there's no doubt it's also a place for experts.

Kulikowski and Brunelli grew up in Reno and have fished the region since childhood. Litchfield was a customer of the former Reno Fly Shop and has fished around the world.

The selection of gear and merchandise and even the displays speak to the desire to be a shop that attracts knowledgeable and experienced fishers.

The fly displays, for example, are arranged by insect and life cycle. that means a fisher looking for a particular fly will find it in each of its life stages in one spot, similar to the way he or she might use them in the field.

Kulikowski said the expertise of the personnel is what will make the shop worth visiting, especially considering that just about any mainstream product can be found at larger sporting good stores or online.

"The fact that you have a knowledge base, a place to go when you want to pick something up and talk about it," Kulikowski said.

He picked up a green drake dry fly to demonstrate to a visitor how when the fly is dropped it always lands hood down, the better to mimic how an actual insect would behave on top of the water.

"That looks pretty good but how does it feel," he said of the sorts of questions from buyers that are more effectively answered in person than online.

Although the fly shop will be occupying a new location in a building that had been boarded for years, in many ways it is a revival of the Stanley's former shop on Moana Lane.

That shop was a community mainstay until it closed more than three years ago as the recession dragged on and competition from larger retailers and online intensified.

In addition to offering Stanley's guide service as their in house guide, they're planning to welcome many customers of the old shop to the new location.

Throughout the renovation Litchfield says customers have been stopping by to check on progress. He and the other owners view the anticipation as a sign the movement to highlight the importance of the river to Reno's success was a good one. With people fishing, kayaking and playing in the water downtown Reno is gradually building a stronger reputation as a hub for more active visitors. Reno Fly Shop hopes to tap into the movement.

"We are providing the opportunity to do something," Litchfield said. "Not watch something or look at something or yell at something on Sunday. But to do som

Go with the flow

Construction on Highland Canal reduces energy usage

By Sage Leehey

This article was published on [04.17.14](#).

Water enters the Highland Canal near Verdi from the Truckee River and then runs next to Interstate 80 until it hits the Chalk Bluff Water Treatment Plant. This canal was made back in the late 1800s and provides drinking water to the city of Reno.

There have been several different projects completed on the canal that have significantly increased the water flow through it and to the treatment plant over the last 10 to 15 years. Increasing the water flow leads to Truckee Meadows Water Authority's real goal: reducing its power bill.

"We replaced a large section of the canal with reinforced concrete box culvert where it paralleled the railroad tracks," said director of system planning and engineering Scott Estes. "And where it goes around Mogul—the subdivision there—that's been a big liability or possible liability for us for years, and we built about 7,000 feet of 69-inch siphon pipe that bypasses that entire area and carries the water underneath."

The construction done on the Highland Canal is expected to save TMWA about \$45,500 a year on their power bill. TMWA also received rebates from NV Energy's Sure Bet Incentive Program for the work done on this canal. They received \$82,556 back in 2012 from this program and received an additional check on April 16 for \$32,329. What these savings really came down to is reducing the amount of pumping needed to get water to the treatment plant.

"The capacity of that [original] canal was about 55 million gallons per day," Estes said. "We rebuilt almost the entire thing now, and we've almost doubled the capacity to about 95 million gallons per day. That's pretty much equal to the capacity of the treatment plant, so where we used to have to pump in the summertime up from the river, now we can meet 100 percent of the plant's capacity just by gravity flow through the canal."

This is part of a larger plan TMWA has to reduce their power bill, which is their largest operating cost. It was around \$7 million a year back around 2006 and 2007 and is now down to about \$4 million a year, according to Estes.

The original canal was dug by hand, giving it dirt walls and floor. Making the canal larger and reinforcing it with concrete were the most important of the improvements, but that improvement isn't the only reason TMWA was able to reduce its power bill, according to Estes.

"It's a combination of many things," Estes said. "One of the big things is that we have a great group of operators. They operate our distribution system and the treatment plants from the treatment plant locations, and these guys take energy management real seriously. They've done a great job. They really watch the pumping equipment out in the system pumping the tanks, so we're trying to operate mostly in off-peak times so we're not hit with additional charges on the electric side."



Scott Estes oversees water system planning, water system improvements and engineering design for Truckee Meadows Water Authority.

PHOTO/SAGE LEEHEY

For more information about the Highland Canal, visit <http://bit.ly/1IRdF6R>.

Advertisement




Water Secret Takes Fluoride Out
Free video reveals little secret which takes out fluoride and heavy metals out of your water. [Click here to watch this video.](#)

Like 1



Small changes to your home can save big money and water



 Small changes to your home can save big money and water

Related Links

- [Water Conservation tips from The Home Depot](#)
- [TMWA Water Conservation Info](#)

Reported by: Ashley Cullins

Email: acullins@mynews4.com

Published: 4/18 5:06 pm

Updated: 4/18 5:49 pm

RENO, Nev. (KRNV & MyNews4.com) -- Despite the continued drought, so far there are no water restrictions in the Truckee Meadows, but many people are worried about how much water we'll have this summer and the summers to come.

The good news is there are several things you can do both inside and outside your home to conserve water, and most of them are easy enough for you to do yourself.

"Water is money," said Greg Del Piero. "Water is gold in the desert. So it's essential to save water because our water bills are high."

Del Piero works for The Home Depot. He said spending a little money now on water-efficient appliances will save you in the long run.

"The showerheads are a great way we can save water," he said.

They can save you up to \$60 a year too.

Sinks can be another drain on your budget.

"Your sinks, you should only run the water when you need it," Del Piero said.

He said a high-efficiency washing machine will reduce your water load too.

"They use considerably less water and do a more effective job," Del Piero said.

He said low-use toilets will also help you avoid flushing money down the drain.

Once you have indoors taken care of, don't forget your outdoor water use. How you water your lawn and plants has a big impact.

"You're going to save about 2,700 gallons a year by switching to drip irrigation," Del Piero said.

When you water them matters too.

"[People] water at the wrong time of the day," he said. "They water at the heat of the day, and all you do is get evaporation when that happens."

So Del Piero recommends you water when it's cooler and get a few other supplies for your yard.

"[Put] in mulch around the plants to keep the moisture in the ground," he said. "We don't rain often, but when it does it rains hard. Consider putting in a rain barrel that will save up to 100 gallons of water at a time."

Del Piero said it's important to make these changes while they're optional because we don't know when the drought will end.

"Our reservoirs only last so long," he said.

Del Piero said if you're a homeowner making these changes is a no-brainer, but if you're a renter, he suggests talking to your landlord about how you can make your home more energy efficient.



Testing Our Tap Water

Updated: Thu 8:21 PM, Apr 24, 2014

By: Angela Chen - Email

RENO, NV - We [depend on](#) it to survive, but do you know exactly how your water gets from Lake Tahoe to your tap?

For the Reno-Sparks area, the Truckee Meadows Water Authority or "TMWA" supplies your water.

The [company](#) received an award from the Partnership for Safe Water for being in the top 2% of the nation for having the best water.

The water is reportedly so clean that TMWA officials claim the tap water is just as good as bottled water.

KOLO 8 News Now wanted to see if that claim was true, so we toured TMWA's treatment plant to see the six stages of how raw water from the Truckee River becomes safe to [drink](#).

As the snow melts and flows down into Lake Tahoe, it feeds into the Truckee River, part of which flows into the treatment plant.

Stage One is Pre-Settling, which filters out all the large objects, like rocks and twigs.

"We're very blessed with such a good water system upstream. You don't have a lot of [industry](#) feeding into the water system," said Will Raymond, Water Operations Supervisor for TMWA. "We don't have a lot of pollution from storm drains. This is some of the best water we're going to get out of the Truckee River."

But even though the water seems clear, parasitic micro-organisms live in the river, and experts say you should never drink straight from it. TMWA officials say they know how dirty or clean water is by using a turbidimeter.

"How a turbidimeter works is it gauges how clean or dirty the water is," said Raymond.

At the start of KOLO's tour, the raw water tested at about a 1.67 NTU, nephelometric turbidity unit. The [government](#) requires the water to be under .3 NTU before it can stream out to consumers.

After all the large objects are filtered out comes Stage Two: Rapid Mix.

"Right now, we're going to walk down into the rapid mix section of the water treatment process," said Raymond. "This is where we add the polyaluminum chloride, the very well known water treatment chemical. It's very safe, and it's certified by the NSF for water treatment chemicals."

During Stage Two, polyaluminum chloride helps dirt particles clump together so the particles are [easier](#) to filter out. They call these clumps "floc" which leads to Stage Three: Flocculation.

"The whole point of flocculation is to use the chemical that was intermixed in the rapid mix to start to get a lot of these really small particles to bind together," said Raymond. "They start getting a little bit heavier, a little bit larger, as it goes through this over under process of flocculation."

Stage Four is Sedimentation.

"Now you have the floc that came over from flocculation, and the only way to get into these troughs is to work its way against gravity through these plate settlers which is why the water is super clean after the plate settlers," said Raymond. "You can see all the floc before it's gone through."

Stages Five and Six are Filtration and Disinfection, the final stages of the water treatment. At the end of the tour, Raymond showed us the turbidimeter for the treated water. The result was a 0.02 NTU level.

"There is an assumption that bottled water is safer or cleaner or something like that because you're buying it as a [product](#) at the grocery store," said Raymond. "Tap water that comes out of your faucet is regulated by the EPA, and that's definitely more rigorously tested, and we're held to a higher standard than the FDA holds bottled water."

As for the claim that tap water is just as pure as bottled water?

We put it to the test with a turbidimeter -- a machine that analyzes how clean the water is.


First, we looked at how Arrowhead, Dasani, and Smart Water did.

Each tested around 0.06 NTU.

Then we examined the tap water, and found that it tested 0.067 NTU.



KOLO-TV 4850 Ampere Drive Reno, NV 89502

 gray - Copyright © 2002-2014 - Designed by Gray Digital Media - Powered by Clickability 256630761



Warning Over Water Main Insurance Letter

By: **Rebecca Kitchen** - Email

Updated: Thu 8:13 AM, Apr 24, 2014



Water valve

RENO, NV - It's not a scam, but it is a solicitation that warrants some scrutiny. A letter offering insurance for water main damage is making its way around the area, and it could cause people to spend money they don't need to be spending.

The solicitation is being shopped around by a [company](#) called HomeServe USA (HomeServe) and it correctly tells homeowners it is their responsibility to cover any costs from damages and repairs if a water service line breaks between their property and the street.

Patty LeFrenchi received multiple letters from the company which informed her they found that her property 'is not covered with Water Service Line Coverage' from the company. The letter also warns that a line buried underground on the property could fail at anytime.

"I was thinking because it was an older house, something could be wrong with the lines," she said.

But the warning bells rang in her head as she read the letter. LeFrenchi is a renter, not a homeowner.

"I wonder how they got my information knowing that it's owned by somebody else. They should be sending it to them directly and they shouldn't have access to those [files](#)."

The Better Business Bureau has several hundred closed complaints regarding HomeServe. Many people complaining they believed the letter was from a [local government agency](#) or utility company.

Despite the complaints, the BBB is stopping short of calling this solicitation a scam because as far as they can tell, HomeServe is offering a legitimate service.

At the bottom of the solicitation sent from HomeServe, the company says it "is an independent company separate from your local utility or community and offers optional service."


"It's just like anything else we receive in the mail," Tim Johnston, president of the BBB of Northern Nevada said. "We may not be getting as much as we use to in years past, but we still get solicitations and so it's just a matter of is this something that is of interest to you, that you can find useful?"

But this is where the problem shows up. The company is offering coverage for about \$5 a month, but some homeowners may already have this coverage included with their current homeowners [insurance policy](#). If they send HomeServe a check, they could just be spending money they don't need to be spending.

[Insurance agents](#) are sending out this warning; now is a good time to review your policy and make sure it covers everything you need it to.

"Many people reduced the coverage on their property back in 2008-2009 as property values fell," Mark Ashworth, president of the Reno/Sparks Association of Realtors and a licensed [insurance agent](#) said. "So it would be prudent to get an updated value on your home and check with your insurance agent to be sure that your coverage for that value is proper."

He recommends asking your agent directly if your current policy would cover damage and repair from a broken water service line. Water mains can break for several reasons, including age and extreme heat and repairs can cost several thousand dollars.

HomeServe sends out these solicitations all across the country, and that has prompted several communities to send out warnings to their residents that this is not a company they endorse. However other cities like Salt Lake City have partnered with HomeServe to offer coverage to [homeowners](#) .

"If this is something that appeals to people, we would suggest you check it out thoroughly," Johnston said.

KOLO-TV 4850 Ampere Drive Reno, NV 89502



Copyright © 2002-2014 - Designed by Gray Digital Media - Powered by Clickability

256527411

opinions > notes from the neon babylon

Like 0

LV goes against type

By Bruce Van Dyke
brucev@newsreview.com

This article was published on 04.24.14.

Notice how the Colin Kaepernick "big bad sex fiend" story just kinda dried up and blew away? That's because (1) the woman in question had previously been a bedmate of Kap's, (2) she wasn't raped or given roofies, and (3) nobody gives a dumpsy doobie about pro athletes smoking weed. Seriously, celebrities smoking pot is nowadays about as scandalous as celebrities eating doughnuts.

Of course, millions of dolts who only read headlines these days—actually, they don't read at all; they get their celebrity "news" from TMZ videos—now believe that Kap is a raging perv and a creep. So it goes. And we wonder why the guy is wary of the media ...



Advertisement

DOLAN
AUTO GROUP
TOYOTA | SCION | LEXUS | KIA | MAZDA

How much is your car worth?
Quick, hassle-free way to sell your car!

Find out instantly.

An interesting story in the L.A. Times this week about the water situation in Vegas, and how work is carrying on furiously to get a new, lower intake valve constructed at Lake Mead so if the lake level keeps dropping, as expected, LV will still be able to access its water allotment. This is the kind of news that makes the folks out in White Pine County uneasy, since Vegas still has its big hairy eyeball on that \$15 billion pipeline project that would bring thousands of acre feet of eastern Nevada and western Utah water down to Clark County so all those extremely important new tennis clubs, oil change joints, and boob job clinics can be built.

But while it's easy to portray Vegas as a huge, fat, dangerous pig, it's also true that the city is doing some very commendable things in the realm of innovative and effective water conservation. For example, water use in LV has been cut by 33 percent in the last few years while the city has grown by 400,000. That's some solid, significant work in water conservation (conserve? How dare you even mention the word!) How'd they make that happen?

The creation and administration of a \$200 million fund that paid homeowners to get rid of that thoughtless mutant lawn and replace it with plants more suitable for the harsh desert sure didn't hurt. Money talks, bullshit walks. Or in this case, money talks and bullshit becomes a thoughtful part of that brand new Xeriscape look. "Look, honey, how nice that big ole spray-painted cow chip looks next to the big cactus!"

The truth of water usage in LV is surprising. The next time smart alecks like me want to point to that giant fountain pool in front of Bellagio as proof of LV's insane attitude with water, I should remember that the Strip uses all of 3 percent of LV's water supply. That's it. Three percent. By comparison, the real water gobblers are the parks, golf courses, and lawns of LV, which soak up a stunning SEVENTY PERCENT of Vegas' H2O!

Two takeaways from this article: (1) There will never ever be another Lake Las Vegas. (2) Are you taking notes, TMWA (the Truckee Meadows Water Authority)?

local stories > news pic

Like 0

Urgent call

This article was published on [04.24.14.](#)



In the a.m. hours in downtown Sparks on April 17, residents were woken by a terrific racket. Truckee Meadows Water Authority workers were repairing an underground leak on 11th Street. By the time most people got up and were ready for showers, it was repaired. PHOTO/DENNIS MYERS

Tahoe boat inspection program faces funding challenge

Jeff DeLong, RGJ 5:43 p.m. PDT April 25, 2014



(Photo: Marilyn Newton/RGJ file)

SHARE



11

CONNECT



TWEET



1

COMMENT



EMAIL



MORE

With Lake Tahoe's busy boating season but weeks away, the program to protect a national treasure from hitchhiking aquatic invaders is gearing up for its sixth year.

And with a pot of federal money that's been key to funding boat inspections now drying up, the program will proceed this summer after officials raised a fee to decontaminate vessels, closed one inspection station on the lake's west shore and will likely reduce the hours that inspections occur.

But this year's issues are nothing compared to what could be coming next year, when the boat inspection effort faces a shortfall of up to \$750,000 — roughly half the cost of the entire program.

"We're looking under every rock to see how we're going to fund the inspection program next year," said Jeff Cowen, spokesman for the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. "We're not leaving anybody out."

A nonprofit organization formed to raise private money to finance important environmental projects around the lake, the Tahoe Fund, is kicking off a fund-raising effort to help out, with supporters saying much is at stake. One Tahoe area resort has already pledged to help.

Mandatory boat inspections, including decontamination of vessels suspected of hosting aquatic invasive species, have occurred at Tahoe since 2009, two years after quagga mussels were first discovered in the waters of Southern Nevada's Lake Mead. Quaggas have since overrun Lake Mead, numbering in the trillions, and have spread to nearby water bodies.

Keeping quaggas, as well as their cousin the zebra mussel, out of Tahoe has been the primary motivator for the boat inspection program. Were mussels to become established at the lake, they could clog water intakes, cover docks and boats and litter beaches with stinking shells. A study conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers estimates the potential hit to Tahoe's tourism economy could reach \$22 million.

Inspections are also designed to prevent invasive species already established in Tahoe's waters, including Asian clams and the water weed Eurasian watermilfoil, from spreading.

Thousands of vessels are inspected every year through the program jointly managed by TRPA and the Tahoe Resource Conservation District. Last year, some 6,800 motorboats were inspected, with 4,000 decontaminated. Fifty-five vessels were intercepted that contained invasive species, 11 with mussels and seven with another potential invader, the New Zealand mudsnail, which is already present in the Truckee

River.

Fees paid by boaters will provide about \$775,000 of the near \$1.5 million inspection program this year, with Nevada providing another \$80,000. The remainder comes from the sale of federal land in the Las Vegas area through the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act, with that money unavailable next year and making for that potential revenue shortfall of up to \$750,000, Cowen said.

To help address the funding problem, the nonprofit Tahoe Fund is seeking business sponsors to raise \$100,000 to help operate four inspection stations around the lake in 2015. The Ritz Carlton Lake Tahoe has already agreed to provide \$11,000 to aid with operation of the station located at Northstar California, said Amy Berry, the Tahoe Fund's executive director.

Other stations will be operated at Alpine Meadows, Spooner Summit, and in Meyers outside South Lake Tahoe. Stations are strategically situated to intercept vessels being towed into the Tahoe Basin.

"We're trying to get creative with how we fill some of these funding gaps," Berry said, adding that sponsorships will provide positive publicity and marketing opportunities for those businesses involved.

Continuing the boat inspection program is critically important for Tahoe's future, Berry said.

"We know that the stations are working," Berry said. "I think it would be hard to find another program as important as this. We know what could happen. We only have to look as far as Lake Mead."

Estimated annual inspections by station

Northstar California: 880, or 11 percent.

Spooner Summit: 1,777, or 23 percent.

Alpine Meadows: 2,520, or 32 percent.

Meyers: 2,629, or 34 percent.

2013 program

6,800: Motorboats inspected.

4,000: Vessels decontaminated.

55: Vessels intercepted with invasive species.

2014 fees

Boat inspection, Tahoe only: \$30.

Seven-day launch pass: \$33-\$101.

Tahoe In and Out: \$35-\$121.

Boat decontamination: \$35.

Boats by origin

24 percent local to the Tahoe Basin.

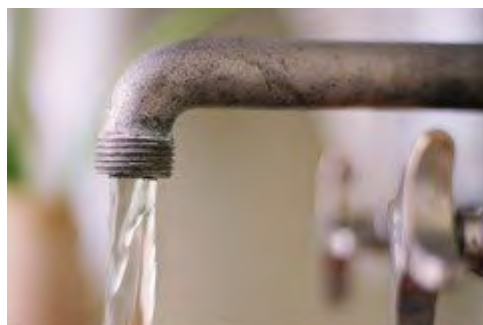
43 percent from cities within 50 miles of Lake Tahoe, including South Lake Tahoe.

10 American Cities With the Worst Drinking Water

by [Douglas McIntyre](#)  Jan 31st 2011 10:00AM

Updated Apr 29th 2014 2:50PM

Unknown to most Americans, a surprising number of U.S. cities have drinking water with unhealthy levels of



Corbis

chemicals and contaminants. In fact, some organizations and state environmental agencies that collect and analyze water data say the level of chemicals in some Americans' drinking water not only exceeds recommended health guideline but the pollutants even exceed the limits set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the national legal authority in these matters.

The website [24/7 Wall St.](#) examined the quality of water supplies in most major America cities, using data collected from multiple sources for five years (ending in 2009) by Environmental Working Group (EWG), based in Washington, D.C. The fact that the data covered a half-decade is important because it shows that the presence of certain chemicals is persistent.

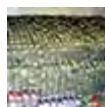
Cities in Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee and Georgia provided insufficient data to be included in EWG's database. Some other major cities outside of these states also failed to submit information, including Detroit, Salt Lake City and Washington, D.C.

Sponsored Links



Credit Card Company Breach

LifeL...
LifeLock.com



Penny Stocks Make Money!

Nevada Find out how to b...
www.invests.com



Extended Stay America

Get Fantastic Amenities, low rates! Kitchen, Am...
www.extendedstayameric...

[Buy a link here](#)

Test results from EWG's national database covered "a total of 316 contaminants in water supplied to 256 million Americans in 48,000 communities in 45 states."

According to the data, among the contaminants were 202 chemicals that aren't subject to any government regulation or safety standards for drinking water.

Based on the EWG's methodology, 24/7 Wall St. came up with its 10 worst cities list. These cities' water quality rank is based on three metrics, in order of increasing importance:

- The percentage of chemicals found based on the number that were tested for
- The total number of contaminants found
- The most dangerous average level of a single pollutant.

Here's that list, in descending order, with the city's water utility in parenthesis:

10. Jacksonville, Fla. (JEA)

Located on the northeast coast of Florida, Jacksonville

is the state's largest city. According to EWG, 23 different toxic chemicals were found in Jacksonville's water supply. The chemicals most frequently discovered in high volumes were trihalomethanes, which consist of four different cleaning byproducts -- one of which is chloroform. Many trihalomethanes are believed to be carcinogenic. Over the five-year testing period, unsafe levels of trihalomethanes were detected during each of the 32 months of testing, and levels deemed illegal by the EPA were detected in 12 of those months. During at least one testing period, trihalomethane levels were measured at nearly twice the EPA legal limit. Chemicals like arsenic and lead were also detected at levels exceeding health guidelines.

9. San Diego (San Diego Water Department)

Located on the Pacific in Southern California, San Diego is the country's eighth-largest city. According to California's Department of Public Health, San Diego's drinking water system contained eight chemicals exceeding health guidelines as well as two chemicals that exceeded the EPA's legal limit. In total, 20 contaminants have been found. One of those in excess of the EPA limit was trihalomethanes. The other was manganese, a natural element that's a byproduct of industrial manufacturing and can be poisonous to humans.

8. North Las Vegas (City of North Las Vegas Utilities Department)

North Las Vegas's water supply mostly comes from groundwater and the Colorado River, and doesn't contain chemicals exceeding legal limits. However, the water supply did contain 11 chemicals that exceeded health guidelines set by federal and state health agencies. The national average for chemicals found in cities' water exceeding health guidelines is four. North Las Vegas had a total of 26 contaminants, compared with the national average of eight. The

water contained an extremely high level of uranium, a radioactive element.

7. Omaha (Metropolitan Utilities District)

The land-locked city of Omaha gets its water from the Missouri and Platte Rivers, as well as from groundwater. Of the 148 chemicals tested for in Omaha, 42 were detected in some amount, 20 of which were above health guidelines, and four of those were detected in illegal amounts. These were atrazine, trihalomethanes, nitrate and nitrite, and manganese. Atrazine is an herbicide that has been shown to cause birth defects. Nitrate is found in fertilizer, and nitrite is used for curing meat. Manganese was detected at 40 times the legal limit during one month of testing.

6. Houston (City of Houston Public Works)

Houston is the fourth-largest U.S. city. It gets its water from sources such as the Trinity River, the San Jacinto Rivers and Lake Houston. Texas conducted 22,083 water quality tests between 2004 and 2007 on Houston's water supply, and found 18 chemicals that exceeded federal and state health guidelines, compared to the national average of four. Three chemicals exceeded EPA legal health standards, against the national average of 0.5 chemicals. A total of 46 pollutants were detected, compared to the national average of eight. The city water has contained illegal levels of alpha particles, a form of radiation. Similarly, haloacetic acids, from various disinfection byproducts, have been detected.

5. Reno (Truckee Meadows Water Authority)

(UPDATE, April 29, 2014): DailyFinance was recently contacted by representatives of the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, which strongly disputes the accuracy of the EWG report upon which this article was based. To quote their email:

"The data that was used originally to rank some of these utilities is wrong, namely TMWA. ... One of the many errors: the data they used was for RAW water, not finished water that people drink. ... We contacted EWG and they agreed to correct the data and re-rank us. ... It never happened.

Their full public response to the alleged errors can be found [here](#). We have contacted the EWG for comment. When they reply, we will let our readers know. In the meantime, however, with no revised data to go by, we cannot update this listing. So, read on, but with the caveat that the Reno data is contested.)

Reno gets most of its water from the Truckee River, which flows from Lake Tahoe. Of the 126 chemicals tested for in Reno over four years, 21 were discovered in the city's water supply, eight of which were detected in levels above EPA health guidelines, and three of these occurred in illegal amounts. These were manganese, tetrachloroethylene and arsenic. Tetrachloroethylene is a fluid used for dry cleaning and as an industrial solvent, and is deemed a likely carcinogenic by the International Agency for Research on Cancer. Arsenic is a byproduct of herbicides and pesticides, and is extremely poisonous to humans. During at least one month of testing, arsenic levels were detected at roughly two and a half times the legal limit.

4. Riverside County, Calif. (Eastern Municipal Water District)

Riverside county is a 7,200-square-mile area located north of San Diego, part of California's "Inland Empire." The county is primarily located in desert territory, and so the water utilities draw their supply from the Bay Delta, which is miles to the north. The water in Riverside County contained 13 chemicals that

exceeded recommended health guidelines over the four tested years, and one that exceeded legal limits. In total, 22 chemicals were detected in the district's water supply. The contaminant exceeding legal health standards was tetrachloroethylene.

3. Las Vegas (Las Vegas Valley Water District)

Located in the Mojave desert, Las Vegas gets its water from the Colorado River through miles-long intake pipes. While its water doesn't exceed the legal limits for any single type of contaminant, Las Vegas's water has a large range of pollutants. Of the 125 chemicals tested for over a five-year period, 30 were identified in some amount, and 12 were found in levels that exceeded EPA health guidelines. These chemicals included radium-226, radium-228, arsenic and lead. The two radium isotopes are commonly found around uranium deposits and are hazardous to human health, even in small quantities.

2. Riverside, Calif. (City of Riverside Public Utilities)

Riverside, with a population slightly greater than 300,000, gets most of its drinking supply from groundwater. Regulators in the city of Riverside, which has a different water-treatment facility than the rest of Riverside County, detected 15 chemicals that exceeded health guidelines and one that exceeded legal standards. In total, 30 chemicals were found. Since 2004, the water has almost consistently been riddled with alpha particle activity, traces of bromoform (a form of trihalomethane) and uranium, causing an unusually unhealthy water supply.

1. Pensacola, Fla. (Emerald Coast Water Utility)

Located on the Florida Panhandle along the Gulf of Mexico, Pensacola is Florida's westernmost major city. Analysts say it has the worst water quality in the country. Of the 101 chemicals tested for over five

years, 45 were discovered. Of them, 21 were discovered in unhealthy amounts. The worst of these were radium-228 and -226, trichloroethylene, tetrachloroethylene, alpha particles, benzene and lead. Pensacola's water was also found to contain cyanide and chloroform. The combination of these chemicals makes Pensacola's water supply America's most unhealthy.

This Is **RENO**

NEWS

OPINION

EVENTS

ENTERTAINMENT

SPORTS

ARCHIVES

RENO MUSIC

[Home](#) >> DailyFinance questions bogus Reno water quality report

DailyFinance questions bogus Reno water quality report

📅 April 29, 2014 by [TR Reno](#) [Leave a Comment](#)

👍 Like 80 [Twitter](#) [Google+](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Pinterest](#) [Reddit](#) [Facebook](#) [Vimeo](#) Share

0 Sidenotes



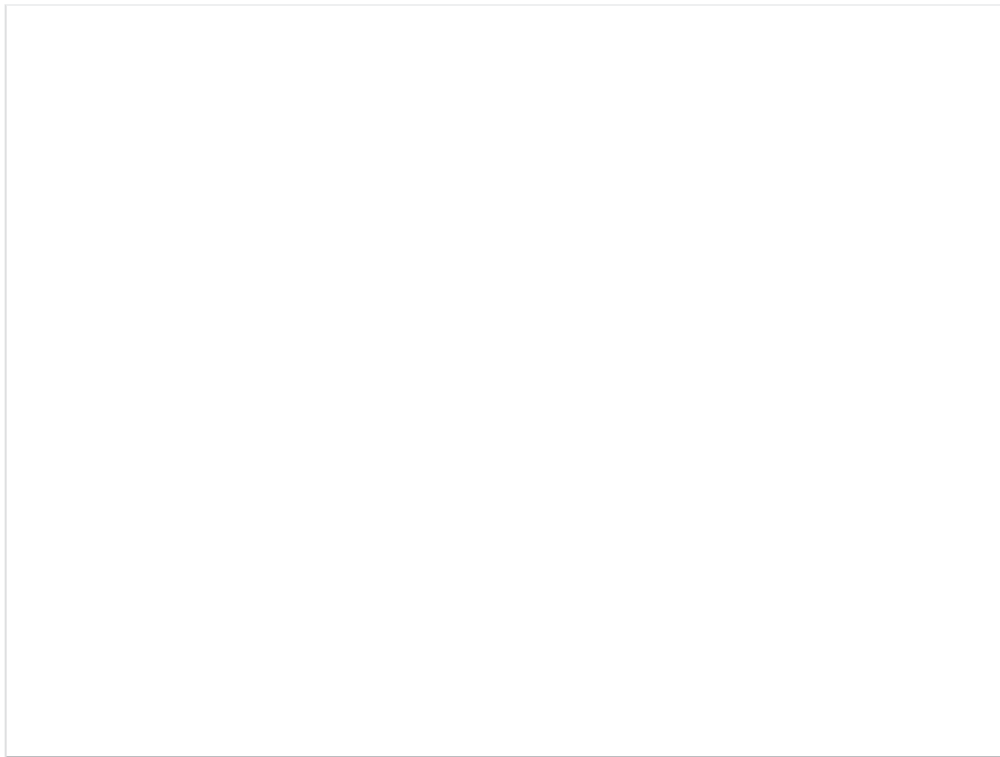
The problem with errors in the news media is not necessarily their omnipresence; it's more the susceptibility of the journalistic process – absent third party and other review, especially in the age of downsized newsrooms seeking 24-7 scoops – to mistakes

A common thread: An advocacy group releases a report critical of something, issues press statements and the news media glom it seeking, hopefully, a counter perspective. It's a dodgy yet common journalistic practice – **he said, she said** journalism – in which extreme can be pitted against a valid perspective as if the two are on equal footing.+

That was the case in 2009 when the Environmental Working Group, an environmental activist group with a media friendly name claimed Reno's water quality was among the worst in the country. There's more to the story below, but sadly for Reno and other communities falsely tarnished by misapplied data analysis, or simply false data, the story continues to surface every six months or so.+

Even though the original reporting was debunked locally and by other water purveyors across the country, the storyline is too attractive for even the more experienced reporters to ignore.+

DailyFinance fell victim to EWG's nonsense when it too recycled the story in 2011. Just as did Jon Ralston, who has "covered Ne politics for more than a quarter century," and who retweeted a headline rehashing the story, provoking rapid responses by TMWA **yours truly** after Reno was sarcastically referred to by Ralston as "pathological" in its **defense of our community's water**. Perhaps no more so than if Ralston's journalistic acumen was called into question every six months for years on end for the same thing.+



+

DailyFinance updated today its article – which was a rehash of an article by none other than the **link-bait journos at 24/7 Wall St.** reflect that the data interpretations are suspect.+

DailyFinance is even questioning whether the entire 2009 EWG report is bad science. The answer: Of course it is. Read below to **why**.+

—+

The **New York Times** and the Environmental Working Group+

(Originally written in 2011; excerpted from *Spin: How the News Media Misinform and Why Consumers Misunderstand*.)+

In late 2009, an email was sent nationwide. In it, a *New York Times* reporter (NOTE: also now a best-selling author), Charles Du asked representatives of state environmental protection agencies to submit “any and all” data pertaining to the federal Safe Drink Water Act for the years 1998 to the present. The data request would, for Nevada, amount to 1.5 to 2 million data points. The ask for deadline was November 30, eight days after Duhigg’s email request. The state told Duhigg his request was so cumbersome, would not be able to gather the millions of data points within his eight-day deadline.+

What was not indicated in Duhigg’s email was that the reporter was already working with data from both the Environmental Protection Agency and the Environmental Working Group, an environmental advocacy organization that drives public policy by stirring up environmental concerns through the news media. EWG regularly sends press releases to news media nationwide expressing concern about myriad environmental issues and issues potentially affecting human health. EWG has targeted governments and private individuals alike for presumed consumer health concerns.+

Even though the state had not been able to meet Duhigg’s deadline for submitting the data requested, he published faulty data anyway. He later went on NPR and claimed he received data from all states.+

The same day Duhigg’s drinking-water-quality story was released and published in the *New York Times*, EWG sent a solicitation email requesting donations from its supporters. It was signed and promoted by musician Bonnie Raitt and activist Erin Brockovich who both apparently had the time to read the lengthy *New York Times* story, examine its data and sidebars and also craft and design a colorfully designed message a few hours after the *Times* story was published and after EWG had released its own representative water quality data from around the country.+

In their email, Raitt and Brockovich said that the EWG’s release of information was with the *New York Times*.+

*“I’m blown away by everything EWG does. **Just this past week, they released, with The New York Times, the latest update to their National Drinking Water Database. You can use the database to look up the chemical pollutants in your tap water and learn what you can do to protect your family against them. Who would do all this research if EWG wasn’t around?”** [Emphasis in original text.]*

Actual researchers, is who. Although the EWG claims it conducts research, it turns out what EWG does is not subject to the benefits of peer-review and apparently, to its critics, has little basis in reality.+

UC Davis researchers did an analysis of EWG’s claims about food safety. The May 15, 2011, issue of the *Journal of Toxicology* published their results. Here is some of what they wrote:+

“Since 1995, the Environmental Working Group (EWG), a United States-based environmental advocacy organization, has developed an annual list of fruits and vegetables, frequently referred to as the ‘Dirty Dozen’ suspected of having the greatest potential for contamination with residues of pesticides.... The annual release of the report has traditionally generated newspaper, magazine, radio, and television coverage, and the report is considered to be quite influential in the

produce purchasing decisions of millions of Americans.”

The Davis researchers, Carl Winter and Josh Katz, took the EWG report about fruits and vegetables and researched the group's claims. Here's what they found:+

“The methodology used to create the ‘Dirty Dozen’ list does not appear to follow any established scientific procedures. Only one of the six indicators used by EWG crudely considers the amount of pesticide residue detected on the various commodities, and that indicator fails to relate exposures to such residues with established health criteria.”

The scientists concluded: “In summary, findings conclusively demonstrate that consumer exposures to the ten most frequently detected pesticides on EWG's ‘Dirty Dozen’ commodity list are at negligible levels and that the EWG methodology is insufficient to allow any meaningful rankings among commodities....”+

EWG's claims about food and pesticides are bogus in other words. Despite scientific review of EWG's work, the group has a vibrant history of inflammatory public relations tactics that are frequently well received in the popular press. (It should be noted that the group's executive editor, Nils Bruzelius, is a member of the National Association of Science Writers, which maintains as its constant principle to “foster the dissemination of accurate information regarding science and technology in keeping with the highest standards of journalism.” I am also a member of NASW.)+

The water quality story had dubious claims similar to those of EWG's annual “Dirty Dozen” list. What set apart EWG's water quality story was that the *New York Times* used the Environmental Working Group's data for its story, despite warnings from others, such as the American Council on Science and Health, about EWG's repeated scare tactics and often misleading claims.+

The *New York Times'* water quality reports said that EPA regulations are not enough to protect average consumers from what EWG called a “cocktail of contamination” and what the *Times* called “toxic waters.” To reach these conclusions, however, both EWG and the *Times* used faulty, incomplete data and misconstrued water quality reports from the water purveyors in many American cities.

The *Times*, using EWG's data for only two years, claimed that Northern Nevada's Truckee Meadows Water Authority had exceeded legal limits of both arsenic and tetrachloroethylene. Yet, records clearly show TMWA had never exceeded legal limits nor has it had health-based violations, “especially for arsenic,” according to TMWA's Paul Miller.+

Miller said that the *New York Times* data are incorrect. He explained that he spoke directly with the *Times* reporter, Duhigg, about arsenic numbers.+

Prior to 2006, TMWA's system-wide average was just over 3 ppb (parts per billion) when the arsenic regulations were at a limit of 50 ppb. The regulations were later changed to the current standard of 10 ppb. Miller said the system-wide average was most recently just under 3 ppb, but the *New York Times* reported that TMWA's “average result” was 7.09 ppb, while the EWG claimed it was 7 ppb.+

The *Times* also only showed data from 2004 and 2005, when the limit was 50 ppb, even though the legal limit listed by the *Times* was the current limit of 10 ppb.+

It was journalistic sleight-of-hand. The *Times* showed one figure, which was incorrect, but placed it under current limits, not the limit that existed during the time period being reported. Simply, both the EWG and the *Times* were wrong.+

More surprisingly, Duhigg had been directly told the data were wrong prior to his story being published, and TMWA has, since the news stories appeared, repeatedly tried to get the EWG to correct its data. TMWA letters to EWG go unanswered, and its concerns remain unaddressed by EWG at the time of this writing.+

Despite information provided by TMWA to the *Times*, it did not stop the *Times* from making the claim that “communities where the drinking water has contained chemicals that are associated with health risks include Scottsdale, Ariz.; El Paso, Tex., and Reno, N. Test results analyzed by the *Times* show their drinking water has contained arsenic at concentrations that have been associated with cancer.”+

The *New York Times*' use of data supplied by an advocacy group that has a well-documented history for misusing scientific information, and which has an obvious agenda, contributed to a firestorm of media coverage not just in the Reno, Nevada area at the time the stories were published, but all around the country as water purveyors scrambled to counter the misinformation reported by EWG and the news media.+

This is exactly what the Environmental Working Group wants. Bonnie Raitt and Erin Brockovich spelled out the intent: “(EWG is) afraid to shake things up if that’s what it takes to give people the information they need to make this world a better place.”+

Even if it means using scare tactics and the peddling of misinformation. An EWG representative was even more specific: “We’re trying to move Congress and the EPA to set tougher standards for drinking water across the country so we don’t end up with situations where people drink water with 10, 20 or 30 different contaminants in it, and have the authorities say that that’s safe.”+

Meanwhile, scientists and regulators were forced to counter a glut of misleading claims in news reports while consumers watched perplexed, wondering if in fact their water is safe to drink.+

After publication of the *New York Times* article and EWG’s media blitz, dozens of water purveyors around the country issued public statements that contradicted claims made by the *Times* and EWG. The impact was likely less dramatic than the original news stories.+

Despite protests as to accuracy, Charles Duhigg and the *Times* won a number of journalism awards for his water quality stories, including one from the National Association of Science Writers

[print](#)

Drought spawns water conservation in Spanish Springs

by [Garrett E. Valenzuela](#)

04.17.14 - 02:21 am

The National Drought Mitigation Center classified Washoe County as an area of “extreme drought” in its most recent study on April 8, but the arrival of warmer temperatures has sparked many to slide open the patio door and begin preparing their plants and lawns for summer.

The drought does not mean you have to sacrifice your summer gardening, however, as there are several ways northern Nevadans can conserve water during the dry summer conditions.

On Saturday April 26, The Home Depot on Galleria Parkway in Spanish Springs will host a workshop from 10 to 11:30 a.m. discussing water conservation techniques and gardening tips that will help your yard—and your wallet—survive the summer drought. While all Home Depots nationwide will be hosting these seminars, Spanish Springs Store Manager William Ewer said Wednesday that Sparks residents endure seasons very differently from other parts of the country.

“We have to play the season, and it is kind of a guessing game,” Ewer said. “The store is so weather-driven. We had a record-breaking sales week last week because we had about 10 days of nice weather in a row, and that was just amazing.”

Ewer said the April 26 workshop will target four main components to water conservation, including 1) choosing the right plants, 2) knowing when and how to water plants, 3) successfully bringing plants indoors and 4) making adjustments inside the home.

Jill Sixberry, a garden sales associate at Home Depot, said she has not heard much talk about the drought in the garden department, but she constantly fields questions about smarter ways to water northern Nevada’s plants.

“I do get new people coming in from California who don’t know the watering schedule and they are not familiar with how often they need to have their sprinklers on,” Sixberry said. “Some of those people aren’t quite used to the high desert so I will get more questions along those lines more than anything.

“We also have a lot of customers that we talk to about overwatering issues because we have a lot of desert plants that we sell. Even with vegetables they think ‘it is so hot and dry I need to water my plants,’ but there are a lot of plants here that you can really overwater and do great damage.”

Ewer agreed saying some first-time homeowners may be preparing for their first backyard planting or landscaping and are not sure which plants will survive best in local conditions, or how to give them the water needed without breaking the bank with the bill.

“Our workshop will cover simple things like which plants will work best in your homes or outdoors, the right type of water heads and drip systems that won’t overwater your plants and ways to keep your plants healthy if you decide to bring them indoors or onto a deck,” Ewer said. “We will also cover easy ways to make the rest of your home like your yard with flow controls on faucets, toilets and other appliances to make sure you’re operating as efficient as possible.”

Ewer said “how to water” will be a major portion of the workshop, which covers times of day that are best for sprinklers, and when water is being wasted rather than being absorbed by plants and flowers. This month’s workshop will not be the first held by The Home Depot in Spanish Springs leading Ewer to believe there will be plenty of Q-and-A with customers.

“We have a lot of people who will come in with a specific idea and when the workshop gets through its key points we are always answering questions about a wide variety of topics,” Ewer said. “The workshops are a great way to break the ice and really get some topics out to the public that maybe they weren’t thinking about or didn’t quite know how to ask about. They are great for newer customers and people adapting to our climate and soil, in this case.”

Ewer said his associates don’t mind answering the ice-breaking questions with newcomers because it helps build a relationship with a customer that could potentially blossom. He said customers he sees every day or every couple of days know they can come in for supplies or advice.

“The more we can build that rapport with the customer to let them know we are here to help them, the better chance that we will see them again,” he said. “Frequent customers don’t wait for workshops they just come right in and ask us, and we love that. We do not look at the customer service aspect as going to try to make a sale every time. We actually think we can teach them something or answer a question for them—that’s our job. If that turns into a sale, that’s fantastic.

“We want to create those partnerships with customers so they view us as a valuable resource for information. We are actively learning new things here every day and I have personally learned that if I have a problem at home someone here will know how to help.”

The Home Depot is located at 4655 Galleria Pkwy. in Sparks. For more information or to register for the Water Conservation Workshop, visit workshops.homedepot.com. More gardening tips can also be found at homedepot.com/gardenclub.

© dailysparkstribune.com 2014

TAHOE FUND SEEKS CORPORATE SPONSORS FOR WATERCRAFT INSPECTION STATIONS

The Ritz-Carlton, Lake Tahoe Signs on to Support the Northstar Station

LAKE TAHOE, Calif. and Nev. – May 5th, 2014 – The [Tahoe Fund](#) is seeking corporate sponsors for the four aquatic invasive species [watercraft inspection stations](#) located around the Basin that inspect approximately 8,000 boats a summer. The stations are a critical component of a nationally recognized basin-wide effort to prevent the spread and introduction of aquatic invasive species (AIS) into Lake Tahoe that have wreaked havoc on other clear lakes around the nation.

Sponsorships offer brands the opportunity to connect with the boat owners who visit the inspection stations while helping to close a funding gap in the current inspection program. The Ritz-Carlton, Lake Tahoe has agreed to sponsor the inspection station at Northstar, with three station sponsorships still available.

“This is one of those win-win situations we love to see,” said Amy Berry, CEO of the Tahoe Fund. “This is an opportunity for businesses to get wonderful exposure to a highly desirable demographic and for the Lake to get the help it needs to prevent the introduction of AIS that will forever change the Tahoe we all know and love.”

“In order to maintain the clean, clear waters of Lake Tahoe that both local residents and visitors enjoy year-round, watercraft inspection stations are critical,” said Joseph Mattioli, general manager of The Ritz-Carlton, Lake Tahoe. “As stewards of the environment, we have to do what we can as a community to assist in supporting the continuation of these inspection stations. Currently, this is the only way to ensure the lake remains free of invasive species that could dramatically alter the way so many people experience Lake Tahoe.”

The Lake Tahoe Region Aquatic Invasive Species Program (AIS Program) is implemented by more than 40 federal, state, and local partners that are committed to preventing the introduction or spread of aquatic invasive species in Lake Tahoe. Recreational activities involving watercraft (i.e. motorized vessels, personal watercraft, kayaks, canoes, inflatables) and/or fishing are the most likely sources of the introduction of AIS into Lake Tahoe. The Watercraft Inspection Program is led by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the Tahoe Resource Conservation District, in partnership with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and myriad other public and private partners.

The combined economic impacts from invasive species to recreation value, tourism spending, property values, and increased boat/pier maintenance,

when evaluated over a 50-year period, is estimated at \$417.5 million (present value), with an average annual equivalent value of \$22.4 million per year, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The largest estimated impacts would be to property values and lost tourism spending. Investments in prevention and early eradication produce a higher benefit-to-cost ratio than post-infestation control programs such that maximum benefits are realized through early and preemptive action.

The inspection stations are located in Meyers, Spooner Summit, Northstar and Alpine Meadows. Sponsorships, ranging from \$11,000 to \$34,000 based on traffic estimates at each station, include signage, literature distribution, sampling opportunities, and custom promotions.

For more information on the AIS Watercraft Inspection Stations Corporate Sponsorship program, please visit the [Tahoe Fund site](#) or contact Amy Berry at aberry@tahoefund.org.



About the Tahoe Fund

The mission of Tahoe Fund is to restore and enhance the extraordinary natural environment of the Lake Tahoe Basin by building broad support and funding for projects and programs that increase the enjoyment of the region for current and future generations. The Fund focuses grants on the core areas of conservation, recreation and education/stewardship.

Together Creating a Legacy



TMWA to Hold Tahoe to Tap Workshop on Wednesday

Posted: May 05, 2014 10:49 AM PDT
Updated: May 05, 2014 10:49 AM PDT

From TWMA:

Join Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) for "From Tahoe To Tap—Understanding Your Drinking Water." The plant tour and workshop is scheduled for Wednesday, May 7th at 5:30 p.m.

TMWA's water quality experts will present the rigorous regulations and treatment procedures your water goes through prior to reaching your tap. This workshop includes a tour of the Chalk Bluff Water Treatment Plant where staff will explain the water treatment and distribution process, as well as answer your questions. TMWA's Chalk Bluff Water Treatment Plant has been recognized by the Partnership for Safe Water as being among the highest performing water treatment plants in the country.

TMWA's event recognizes, and coincides with, National Drinking Water Week, May 4 through May 10, which celebrates the value of water by highlighting the critical role it plays in the quality of our daily lives. The workshop will take place at Chalk Bluff Water Treatment Plant at 9605 McCarran Blvd. in Reno. It is free and open to TMWA customers. Space is limited, so please RSVP by emailing rsvp@tmwa.com or call 834-8290. For more information about TMWA's workshop series please visit www.tmwa.com.

From TMWA

Legal Menu

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Copyright Infringements](#)

CDPH Submits Final Regulation Package Regarding Hexavalent Chromium (Cr VI) and Drinking Water

Created on Tuesday, 15 April 2014 21:26
Written by IVN

Sacramento, California - The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) today submitted to the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) its final proposed regulation establishing the first ever drinking water Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for hexavalent chromium (Cr VI).

More than 18,000 comments were received by CDPH regarding the proposed regulation. The proposed final regulation documents include the Summary and Response to comments received.

The proposed final regulation will take effect after it has been reviewed and approved by OAL in compliance with the Administrative Procedures Act. This review can take up to 30 working days to complete. Once approved, the regulation is then filed with the Secretary of State and will become effective the first day of the following quarter.

“The drinking water standard for hexavalent chromium of 10 parts per billion will protect public health while taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility as required by law,” said Dr. Ron Chapman, CDPH director and state health officer.

If the regulation is approved as expected, implementation of the new drinking water standard for hexavalent chromium will begin July 1, 2014.

Today’s filing also complies with timelines imposed by the Alameda Superior Court in Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc. v. California Department of Public Health.

The [department’s submission](#) to OAL can be found on the CDPH website.

- [< Prev](#)
- [Next >](#)

Search...

Rives, Cara

Subject: FW: Customer Service

From: WilTurner@charter.net [<mailto:wiltturnersend@gmail.com>] **On Behalf Of** William Turner
Sent: Monday, April 21, 2014 11:38 AM
To: tmwaboard@tmwa.com
Subject: Customer Service

Gentlemen-

I had the pleasure of talking to one of your customer service people today.
Her name was Nessie, I hope I've spelled that correctly ?

She had responded to a water waste report I made about a near by neighbor here in Sparks.
This remarkable woman took the time to call me and explain what turned out to be valuable information and to explain the circumstances of a neighbors water usage.
Her personable nature and her obvious knowledge was very impressive.
She answered all of my questions and she had additional information that I thought was very valuable.

Management should be proud to have such informed and professional people in their employ.

Thank You from a nine year customer of the TMWA

Wil-

Wil Turner
High Desert Photography
1061 Turnberry Drive
Sparks, NV 89436
Home 775-626-5553
wilturner@charter.net