

Two Lands Bills Await Senate Action



Coeur Rochester Mine, Photo courtesy of Nevada Mining Association

By Bridgette Williams

Two bills are waiting on the U.S. Senate's approval that would affect land rights and use for Northern Nevada counties. These bills include the Northern Nevada Economic Development and Conservation Act and the Mining Regulatory Clarity Act.

The Northern Nevada Economic Development and Conservation Act is a large land management package focusing on two issues. It would protect federal lands as wilderness areas while making other federal land available for purchase in an effort to boost economic development in the region.

On Sept. 14, the bill passed the House of Representatives and was referred to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. If passed into law, the bill would create eight wilderness areas totaling around 148,000 acres protected under the National Wilderness Preservation System. These lands would remain federal public land, but would have more protection from development.

"Now that this bill passed the House during a voice vote on Monday, it's now moving over to the Senate and there is a chance that, in the remaining months here of the year, that folks could

come together and pass some of this legislation that would really benefit Nevada," said Shaaron Netherton, executive director of Friends of Nevada Wilderness.

The Northern Nevada Economic Development and Conservation Act would also make federal land available to be purchased at fair market value, exchanged, conveyed, or disposed of. This land could be used for development, parks, flood control, fire protection, government facilities, and other public-focused purposes.

This bill would not simply give hundreds of thousands of acres away; it would create a system for that land to be sold, exchanged, transferred, and protected for public use. Moreover, the land would not automatically be transferred if the bill passes the Senate. Instead, it would become available for transfer.

In Pershing County, the act could create a solution for the checkerboard land deals that currently exist due to old railroad land grants that Netherton said were created around 150 years ago.

According to the Nevada Mining Association President Amanda Hilton, "These provisions are about economic development for Pershing County as a whole, where our checkerboard land pattern has long complicated growth.

Consolidating that land into ownership opens opportunity for cities, local governments, landowners, and mines, which would have a path to purchase and gain clear title to the ground they already work. It's a broad benefit, and mining is one part of it."

Netherton also noted potential benefits for the mining industry, stating, "If this goes through and the mining company owns those lands, after the life of the mines, they can turn that into solar fields or geothermal plants on top of that mined land."

The other bill pending in the Senate is the Mining Regulatory Clarity Act. This bill specifically addresses where mining companies are allowed to put facilities and waste needed to operate on federal lands.

The Mining Regulatory Clarity Act would allow mining companies to use as many five-acre mill sites as are 'reasonably necessary' for their operations. According to Hilton, "Mining operations need adequate space to manage and store rock removed during the mining process. 'Reasonably necessary' provides operations the flexibility to use the space they need to operate efficiently as a mine develops, not unlimited use of federal land."

This bill would allow mining companies in Nevada and around the

country to ask for a reasonable amount of federal land to operate.

"The Mining Regulatory Clarity Act provides necessary clarity for Nevada's modern mining industry," said Hilton. "For mines already operating in Nevada, it confirms they can continue operating efficiently and sustain the high-paying jobs nearly 31,000 Nevada families depend on."

John Hadder, executive director of the Great Basin Resource Watch, has concerns about the bill's potential environmental impact.

Hadder said most of the land used for these mill sites would be public land. "The state still has a permitting process for a variety of permits," Hadder said, however, "they lack the comprehensive nature of an environmental impact statement." He noted that an environmental impact statement would allow the public to formally comment on potential concerns. "Counties could impose some environmental analysis," Hadder added, "so far, we haven't seen counties take that on."

Both bills remain pending in the U.S. Senate, with proposed changes to federal land management, conservation, and mining in Nevada still under consideration.

Fallon Farm Adapts to Changing Agriculture

By Rachel Dahl

Fallon farmer Joe Frey has spent the past several years changing the way he farms, moving away from conventional tillage and chemical inputs toward regenerative agriculture - and most recently, adding more than 1,600 laying hens to the operation.

Frey discussed the transition during a recent Rotary presentation, explaining that his move into regenerative agriculture began not with environmental concerns, but with economics.

Coming out of drought, Frey said more than half of the family farm needed to be put back into production, a project he estimated would have cost about \$1.5 million using conventional methods.

"I didn't have the million and a half bucks, didn't have the equipment, didn't have the time," he said.

Frey's experience reflects a challenge facing many agricultural producers across rural Nevada, where drought, rising equipment and production costs, and limited markets can make it difficult to keep farms profitable.

He began looking at minimum-tillage and no-till farming and attended a presentation by soil health educator Ray Archuleta. What began as an effort to cut production costs quickly developed into a broader shift in how Frey thought about farming.

Today, he said, the operation has been primarily no-till or minimum-till for about seven years. The farm has

also become certified organic and incorporates principles promoted by organizations including the Savory Institute and Regenified.

Rather than growing single crops year after year, Frey now emphasizes plant diversity, reduced soil disturbance and the integration of livestock.

"You don't ever find a monocrop in nature," he said.

Frey said diverse plantings help build healthier soils and can make crops less susceptible to insects. His fields may contain alfalfa, grasses, brassicas, chicory, clover, sorghum, peas, buckwheat, and other species.

The goal is to keep living roots in the soil, protect the biological community beneath the surface and allow plants, animals, and microorganisms to work together.

Livestock are a key part of that system.

Frey began adding laying hens this year, starting with 500 birds in February. Those hens are now producing roughly 350 eggs per day. Another 500 birds are nearing laying age, and an additional 650 are expected to begin producing around the first of the year.

The chickens live in mobile shelters and are rotated through fields behind electric net fencing. The eggs provide income, while the birds provide another benefit: manure and biological activity returned directly to the soil.

"The cash crop, I guess, in that instance would be the eggs, and then the manure in the field is the benefit of

the chickens," Frey said.

The birds forage throughout the fields during the day, eating insects and whatever else they find - including, Frey said, small fish and crawdads from irrigation ditches - before returning to their shelters in the evening.

Frey farms about 1,500 acres of land, roughly 1,000 of which are irrigated and primarily alfalfa, with another 500 acres of dryland.

Changing the system has not been without challenges.

Traditional hay buyers often want pure alfalfa, making mixed grass-and-alfalfa hay harder to market, even when feed tests show strong nutritional value. Frey said organic dairies may provide a better market because their certification requires some grass and pasture in their feeding programs.

The egg business, however, has

shown promise.

Most of the farm's current egg production is being sold through Great Basin Community Food Co-op in Reno, with smaller quantities going to Fallon restaurants, including Wild Horse Cafe.

Frey said his immediate goal is to continue expanding the egg operation while strengthening the farm financially after several difficult years in the hay market.

"I think we've got the knowledge and the capability to do it," he said, "and we can provide some really healthy protein to the area."

For Frey, regenerative agriculture ultimately comes down to rebuilding a closer connection between people, food, and the land producing it.

"I think it's time to get smaller, scale it down, get closer, get more intimate with our food," he said.



Joe Frey, Photo courtesy of Great Basin Community Food Co-op.

COMMENTARY

As Treasurer, I'll Use Nevada's Mining Boom to Eliminate the State Gas Tax

Drew Johnson, Editorial

Nevada was built on booms—and scarred by busts. Gold and silver created fortunes, fueled growth, and built communities across our state. But when the ore ran out, prosperity often vanished, leaving ghost towns as reminders of how quickly a boom can fade.

Now lithium and a new generation of critical-mineral projects give us a chance to do something different: ensure this boom continues helping Nevadans long after the mines stop producing.

Thacker Pass, now under construction in Humboldt County, is poised to become the centerpiece of America's domestic lithium industry. Lithium Americas has outlined expansion potential to 160,000 tons of annual lithium carbonate production.

And Thacker Pass may only be the beginning. If other proposed lithium and critical-mineral projects move forward, Nevada could be at the start of a mining boom unlike anything the state has seen in decades.

That's on top of the hundreds of millions Nevada has collected from taxpayers in recent years beyond what the state needs to fund government.

So what should Nevada do with the

money?

If I'm elected Nevada State Treasurer, I'll propose creating a Permanent Fund using a share of the new revenue generated by Nevada's mineral boom, along with half of the surplus revenues collected in good years. My plan would eliminate the state's 23-cent-per-gallon gas tax while keeping our roads fully funded.

Alaska, North Dakota, Wyoming, and New Mexico have all used natural-resource revenue to build permanent investment funds. Nevada should do the same.

The gas tax was designed for a different time. Cars are more fuel efficient, more people work from home, and electric vehicles use the roads without paying fuel taxes. Revenues from Nevada's gas tax are beginning to decline while the cost of building and maintaining roads keeps rising.

We should overhaul how we fund our roads before we're forced to choose between higher taxes and crumbling infrastructure.

The Nevadans hit hardest by the gas tax are those who have no choice but to drive—the construction worker heading to a job site, the casino employee commuting across town, or the family that can't afford a newer car.

This policy would eliminate the full 23-cent state gas tax, saving a typical family about \$230 a year. The federal gas tax and other county fuel taxes are not part of the proposal.

And the Permanent Fund would be built responsibly.

Half of future state budget surpluses would go into the fund—but only after maintaining mandatory reserves and making required Rainy Day Fund transfers.

My plan also would not raise Nevada's mining tax. The Nevada Constitution caps taxes on net mineral proceeds at 5 percent, and my proposal leaves that rate unchanged. Existing commitments to local governments and education would be protected.

The fund would receive roughly 45% of new mining-tax revenue generated by future lithium and critical-mineral development, along with half of future state budget surpluses.

We would also honor Nevada's existing highway debt. Some highway bonds are written to rely on fuel-tax revenue, so we would pay off, refinance, or restructure any affected bonds before the tax disappears.

Continue Reading on page B-4.

Mountain Warfare Training Center

Staff Report

The Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center (MWTTC) is having its 75th anniversary. A ceremony will be conducted to honor the center's history and to recognize its legacy. The ceremony will be held Sept. 25 at 9 a.m. at 4048 Highway 108, Bridgeport, California.

See stations with gear from the MWTTC. Explore equipment and capabilities used throughout the history and future of MWTTC. Enjoy a meal with fellow Marines, sailors, civilians and guests throughout the day. Visit their legacy hut, a restored USMC hut. Experience the stories, traditions and heritage that built the MWTTC.

An advance RSVP is requested. The point of contact is Staff Sgt. Seth Shubert at seth.a.shubert.mil@usmc.mil.

Veterans' Assistance

Staff Report

- Veterans Crisis Line: The confidential crisis chat has three ways to obtain help. The Veterans Crisis Line is 1-800-273-8255, press 1. Chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net or text to 838255.
- Adult health center: More to Life adult day health center is here to help families. For information go to www.adultdaycarerenoreno.com or call 775-358-1988.
- Northern Nevada Wheelchair Program: The program serves Northern Nevada by recycling serviceable medical equipment and clothing. This program is supported by the American Legion, Community 4 Veterans, Disabled American Veterans and Veterans of Foreign Wars. Call or text 760-500-0857 or email nnwcp@gmail.com.

Liberty Dogs Puppy Raisers



Sparks City Councilman Paul Anderson and his wife, Donna, welcomed Liberty Dogs puppy, Parks, into their home as volunteer puppy raisers. Photo Courtesy of Liberty Dogs

Staff Report

Liberty Dogs is currently seeking dedicated individuals interested in becoming puppy raisers to help raise, socialize and prepare future service dogs for veterans. Liberty Dogs looks forward to partnering with the community to help raise and prepare future service dogs.

Together, we're not just training dogs; we're building life-changing relationships that will bring independence, hope, and healing to our veterans. Call 775-499-0000, ext. 200 or email PuppyDepartment@LibertyDogs.org. The website can be found at LibertyDogs.org.

Nevada's Data Center Debate Is Shifting to the Deal

Members of Nevada's congressional delegation differ on the details, but increasingly return to the same questions about water, power, infrastructure, and local control.

By Rachel Dahl

Nevada's debate over data centers may be starting to move beyond the simple question of whether the massive computing facilities are good or bad.

In separate interviews last week on Nevada Newsmakers with Sam Shad in Washington, D.C., three members of Nevada's congressional delegation approached the issue differently but repeatedly returned to many of the same questions.

Does the project have enough water? Who pays for the electricity and grid improvements? What happens to surrounding communities? Are the jobs created worth having? And are local governments getting a say in the deal?

Those questions are becoming increasingly important as data-center development expands across Nevada and as artificial intelligence drives demand for even more computing capacity.

Lyon County is already wrestling with those questions. County commissioners held a public workshop in August on a proposed data center ordinance intended to establish development standards for future projects. Humboldt County has gone further, adopting a temporary moratorium on new data center applications in unincorporated areas through July 13, 2027, while officials update the county's Regional Master Plan and develop rules addressing water, power, noise, and other impacts. The moratorium does not apply within Winnemucca city limits.

Congressman Mark Amodei framed data centers largely as another form of economic development that should be evaluated on the fundamentals.

"You go through all the same questions," Amodei told Nevada Newsmakers host Sam Shad. "Do you have the water? What's the impact on traffic? Electricity ... all those things in

any development project."

Amodei pointed specifically to development in Lyon County, where he said access to water, nearby generation, and transmission infrastructure made the project more workable.

His larger point was that Northern Nevada has an opportunity to diversify its economy through a combination of industrial development, mining, logistics, and data centers. But even while supporting that development, Amodei acknowledged that basic infrastructure impacts still need to be addressed.

That is not particularly far from the framework Sen. Jacky Rosen laid out. Rosen, who worked as a computer programmer before entering politics, said data centers and artificial intelligence are closely connected. She argued that the technology will continue advancing and that governments cannot simply avoid dealing with it.

But she said data centers need "guardrails."

"There has to be community buy-in," Rosen said, adding that data centers should cover the costs associated with their energy and water needs. She also pointed to noise and impacts on surrounding areas as legitimate issues for communities to consider.

Rosen said local, state and federal governments each have a role, although those roles differ.

Her office has also requested federal funding for a Desert Research Institute project designed to create a cost-benefit framework for evaluating rapid data center growth in Nevada, including water, energy, economic, and community impacts.

Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto offered perhaps the clearest checklist of the three.

If a data center wants to locate in Nevada, she said, certain requirements should come first.

The project should have state and

local support. It should not pass its costs onto Nevada consumers. It should not use more water than Nevada and the West can spare. And if it creates the need for upgrades to the electrical grid, the developer should pay for those improvements.

"That should just be automatic framework," Cortez Masto said.

From there, she said, communities can begin asking additional questions, including how the facility will generate its power.

The three lawmakers are not saying exactly the same thing. Amodei places greater emphasis on economic development and whether a project has answered the traditional questions that come with growth, while Rosen stresses community involvement and safeguards as the technology expands. Cortez Masto goes further, laying out a more explicit set of conditions developers should meet before projects move forward. But the overlap among the three is significant.

All three discussions eventually return to infrastructure, water, electricity, and the relationship between a large industrial user and the community around it.

That may be where Nevada's data center debate becomes more useful. A data center is neither automatically an economic windfall nor automatically a burden. Much depends on the particulars of the project: where its water comes from, how its power is produced, who pays for new infrastructure, what jobs and tax base it creates, and what protections are negotiated before construction begins.

Those are questions county commissioners, city councils, and utility regulators can actually answer.

And as increasingly large data center proposals move into rural Nevada, those details may matter far more than whether anyone is simply "for" or "against" data centers.

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EVENTS

FALL in Love with Nevada Again!

The last weekend of September is the state’s open invitation. Take it.

By Doris Rodriguez

Howdy, neighbors!

Fall rolled in right on cue, and this is the kind of weekend that’ll make you fall in love with Nevada all over again. The calendar’s packed, so pile in the whole crew. These stops are made for families, friends, and anyone with a taste for adventure. Don’t forget to pack a jacket; Sept. 26 is National Public Lands Day. To celebrate, many national parks, forests, and Bureau of Land Management sites will offer free admission.

We’ll start our adventure by pointing the truck east for our first stop: Battle Mountain! The Lander County Fair and Carnival kicks off Sept. 24 and keeps rolling through Saturday, Sept. 26.

Once you’ve had your fill of fair fun, keep rolling down to Ely, where the Iron Horse Symposium arrives Sept. 25 and stays through Sept. 27. On Sept. 26,

the Jordan World Glow Circus lights up the White Pine County Fairgrounds.

From Ely, turn South to the Pahrump Fall Festival at Petrack Park, running all weekend through Sept. 27. This year’s theme is “Stars, Stripes & 250 Years Strong.” Carnival hours are noon to midnight Friday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. The rodeo starts at 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday at McCullough Arena. Gates open at 6 p.m., and children get in free. Saturday’s parade starts at 9 a.m. on Highway 160, from South Dandelion Street to Boothill Drive.

After soaking up the festival spirit, it’s time to head west for a real sweet treat. The legendary Candy Dance lights up historic Genoa Sept. 26-27. Genoa’s been doing this since 1919; talk about tradition! Picture more than 400 booths, live music, and enough homemade candy to turn a sweet tooth into a sweet smile.

Gardnerville kicks off the fall season

with Corley Ranch’s Pumpkin Patch and Harvest Festival starting Sept. 26 and running daily through Oct. 31. Weekend general admission is \$12, and children 2 and under get in free. The price covers the corn maze, farm animals, miniature golf, a straw maze, pig races, and hay wagon rides.

Keep your wheels turning toward Fallon, where the Lattin Farms Fall Festival opens Saturday, Sept. 26, and continues every Friday and Saturday through Oct. 31. There’s a corn maze, hay rides, a scarecrow factory, and pumpkins piled high. Frey Ranch’s Whiskey Harvest Festival follows the next weekend on Oct. 3.

If you’re in the need for speed, steer toward Panaca for the Nevada State Racing Association (NSRA) Hot Springs Sprint Enduro. Racers will tear up the track Sept. 26 and 27 during the third leg of the 2026 Triple Crown.

If city lights are more your style, it’s time to head into Reno for the Street

Vibrations Fall Rally. The rally runs Sept. 24 through 26 across downtown Reno, Sparks, Carson City, Virginia City, and Lake Tahoe. Organizers expect more than 50,000 riders, plus vendors, poker runs, stunt shows, and live music on stage at J Resort’s Glow Plaza.

And for a heartfelt finale, cruise into Winnemucca at 5:30 p.m. Sept. 25 for the 13th annual #DoItForJosh Memorial Walk/Run at the Winnemucca Golf Course. This walk honors Joshua Rose and raises scholarship money for local students.

Then the lights come up. The Jordan World Glow Circus will be in town for one night only at 7:30 p.m. Sept. 25 at the Indoor Event Center. Tickets can be found at JordanCircus.com.

Schedules shift like desert sand, so check once more before you head out. Then load up the family, leave the driveway, and make some memories. Safe travels!

Small-game Hunting Season Returns to Nevada



Photo courtesy of the Nevada Department of Wildlife.

By Sydney Trainor

As temperatures drop and fall settles in, Nevada’s small-game seasons are starting to open. From grouse and Himalayan snowcock to chukar, quail, pheasant, and rabbits, the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) is reminding hunters that there are plenty of opportunities to get outside over the next several months.

Some seasons have already begun. Dusky, sooty, and ruffed grouse season opened Sept. 1, with hunting allowed through Dec. 31. Himalayan snowcock season also opened Sept. 1 and runs through Nov. 30 in Elko and White Pine counties. Hunters pursuing snowcock will now need a free-use permit. Himalayan snowcocks

are mountain-dwelling birds in the pheasant family, closely related to partridges and grouse.

Sage-grouse season began Sept. 19 in designated hunt units, lasting either two or nine days, depending on the

unit.

Nevada’s small-game youth seasons open Sept. 26 and run through Oct. 4. Youth seasons are open to hunters 17 and younger. The youth season includes chukar, Hungarian partridge, California and Gambel’s quail, cottontails, and white-tailed jackrabbits. Youth hunters must be accompanied by an adult 18 or older.

Chukar and Hungarian partridge season opens Oct. 17 and runs through Feb. 7, giving hunters several months to head into Nevada’s hills and rocky country. The two species have a combined daily limit of six. Quail seasons also open Oct. 17.

Pheasant and rabbit seasons follow Nov. 1. Pheasant season, which is limited to roosters only, runs through Nov. 30. Cottontail and white-tailed jackrabbit season continues through Feb. 28, 2027.

With nearly six months of small-game hunting opportunities available in Nevada, hunters have plenty of time to get outside and enjoy the state’s wild places.

Season dates, open areas, and regulations can vary by species and hunt unit. NDOW encourages hunters to check current regulations before heading out.



Teague and Aivree Bell with a successful hunt on youth opening Day in 2024. Photo courtesy of Jesse Bell.

New Record Set at the World Human Powered Speed Challenge



Human Powered Bicycle. Photo courtesy of WordPress

By Doris Rodriguez

From Sept. 13-19, the 25th annual World Human Powered Speed Challenge (WHPSC) brought together the world’s most passionate innovators, athletes, and engineers for fierce competition, camaraderie, and record-breaking ambition. Teams from Canada and Australia joined collegiate teams from across the United States in Lander County, turning State Route 305 into a competition stage.

During the WHPSC, teams compete to achieve the highest top speed possible. Each group spent the week perfecting their craft and pushing their machines to the limit on the famous five-mile run-up. When the racing was finished, competitors and fans alike filled the Civic Center.

Riders had to build speed for miles inside fully enclosed bikes, pass through a 200-meter timing trap, and rely solely on their own power to set

times sanctioned by the International Human Powered Vehicle Association (IHPVA).

Team HPT North’s tandem vehicle, TITAN, dominated the multi-rider category. Calvin Moes and Ethan Elbaz won the men’s multi-rider class, while Moes later partnered with Jun Nogami to secure second place. On Wednesday evening, the same vehicle set a new mixed-gender, multi-rider world record when Moes and Ellen van Vugt achieved 65.06 mph in nearly still air. Officials recognized this performance as more than 10 mph faster than the previous record.

Adam Hari of Human Power Team Falcon won the men’s title on Dark Star, Ethan Todd from the University of Toronto took second on Typhoon, and Justin Strahm of Cal Poly Human Powered Vehicles took third on Woothoo! 2.

Hari’s strongest full-course run came Saturday morning at 73.94 mph,

putting him first in the field. Hari also received the sportsmanship award after he spent part of the week helping set the course and launching other riders.

Erin Price delivered a standout performance in the women’s division, piloting Eta Prime to victory with a speed of 58.60 mph. Her achievement not only secured the coveted women’s title, but also earned her a spot in the exclusive 55 mph hat club: a milestone that marks the arrival of a new generation of elite women in the world of human-powered speed.

In the fiercely contested college division, familiar powerhouses once again rose to the top, while a fresh face made its mark as well. The University of Toronto Human Powered Vehicles Design team claimed first place, while the Cal Poly San Luis Obispo team secured a well-earned

second. Université de Sherbrooke’s team, HERMUS, with Alexis Imbeault piloting Beluga One, made its debut at the event, taking home third place. Cal Poly also stood out for ingenuity, taking home the innovation award for creative engineering and design.

Weather also affected the competition, as Thursday was largely lost to wind and Saturday evening did not produce legal conditions. The meet still finished on schedule, and the banquet followed as planned. The men’s single-rider world record of 89.59 mph, set here in 2016 by Todd Reichert, was not broken.

Excitement for the future is already growing, as officials at a recent Lander County and Tourism Authority meeting reported increasing inquiries from teams interested in returning for 2027.



Finish Line. Photo courtesy of Ron Harrison

LEGISLATIVE

Nevadans Reach Consensus on State Water Policy



Photo courtesy of The Nevada Forum



Photo courtesy of The Nevada Forum

By Sydney Trainor

Six water policy directives were passed to the Nevada State Legislature during The Nevada Forum's Civic Assembly, which met Aug. 28-30, 2026. The assembly consisted of 49 randomly chosen delegates from across Nevada, representing Northern, Southern, and Rural Nevada. Over the course of three days, participants had four working sessions to draft, deliberate, and vote on policy directives.

Delegates focused on three water-related themes, including shared facts, planning, and accountable water design, as well as water-intensive growth and major projects, and long-term water reliability. Only policy recommendations receiving at least 70% cross-partisan support advanced to the Nevada Legislature.

The top proposal received 90% approval to "Establish a Water Advisory Board to centralize current state-wide data into an easy-to-read, accessible public report and forecast to present to legislators before the start of each legislative session."

The goal of this proposal is to establish the Nevada Water Advisory Board in 2027, which would include regional water authorities, independent experts, elected officials, tribal leaders, environmental groups, businesses, and residents. By 2029, the board would prepare a statewide water

report and forecast for lawmakers and publish it online.

Next, with 84% approval, was a directive to "Improve accountability, transparency, and information in order to create a revised local and statewide water conservation policy." The proposal calls for a public online platform showing current water conditions, water rights records, and forecasts in plain language. It would also require the state to create and annually update an inventory of Nevada's water supply and use.

Also receiving 84% approval, a directive was proposed to "Implement creative options to ensure Nevada's growing needs for water are met now and into the future." Because the Colorado River is a major water source for Nevada, the proposal asks Nevada to work with other states and the federal government to revisit how the Colorado River's water is divided using updated information.

A proposal to "Establish a system around water-intensive projects that ensures transparency, community input, public benefit, and accountability to Nevada residents and taxpayers" received 78% approval. This would require developers seeking state building incentives to make enforceable commitments that benefit the community, such as investments in local infrastructure. Water-intensive projects would also have to disclose their expected water use before

approval and report their actual water use quarterly. The proposal calls for a formal community input process before projects are approved, and would give a state agency responsibility for imposing increasing penalties if developers do not meet their commitments.

With 73% approval, a directive to "Create statewide immediate short- and long-term action report to improve water sustainability for Nevada" was proposed. The main purpose is to give the state regularly updated information to determine where water supplies are under stress, and what short- and long-term actions are needed to address them.

It calls for twice-yearly reports, along with reports following significant weather events, that could guide changes to water-use and conservation requirements. The proposal also includes pursuing a desalination plant in Mexico as part of a water exchange that could provide Nevada with access to more water.

Additionally, receiving 71% approval was a new directive to "Require the establishment of a secondary review process, tailored to each county and initiated based on specified project types, to evaluate the cumulative economic, environmental, infrastructure, and community impacts of large-scale development on the state's long-term growth."

This proposal would require extra

review for certain large developments before they are approved, with the goal of considering their broader effects on communities and public resources. A multidisciplinary public body of experts, engineers, and representatives from Nevada agencies would determine which projects require the additional review and conduct those evaluations.

The Nevada Forum was created as a way for Nevadans to give input on issues affecting the future of the state. The Forum operates through six phases, with the Civic Assembly being phase 3. During phase 1, over 30,000 Nevadans helped identify top concerns across the state. More than 700 issues were submitted, which were narrowed to 20 top issues and then to four topics for further discussion.

During phase 2, nearly 700 Nevadans participated in online and in-person Community Conversations across the state to discuss those four issues and possible solutions. Those conversations helped determine what would move forward to the Civic Assembly.

With the Civic Assembly complete, the Nevada Forum has moved into its fourth phase: engagement and advocacy. During late 2026 and early 2027, the Forum plans to build public support for the newly developed proposals and work with lawmakers to turn them into legislation.

New Medicaid Work Rules Start in 2027



File Photo

By Doris Rodriguez

During a recent Nevada Health Authority meeting, Nevada Medicaid Administrator Ann Jensen outlined new changes to Medicaid coverage eligibility. Changes are scheduled to take effect Jan. 1, 2027. These rules apply to adults ages 19 to 64 in the expansion group, which includes people with incomes at or below 138% of the federal poverty level.

The first change is the new work hour requirement. Individuals in the expansion group must complete 80 hours per month of work, job training, volunteering, education, self-employment, or a combination of these activities – roughly 20 hours per week. Those who qualify for an exemption are not required to meet this total.

The second change is the frequency of eligibility reviews. Instead of annual reviews, the state will conduct them every six months. Jensen noted this change is intended to keep records current.

The third change, scheduled for October 2028, introduces small copays for certain members and services.

The specific amounts and exemption criteria are still under review.

Jensen emphasized the categories of individuals automatically exempt from the 80-hour requirement, including parents, guardians, or caregivers of a child under 14. Also exempt are caregivers for people with disabilities who require daily help, pregnant individuals and those within 12 months postpartum, former foster youth up to age 26, veterans with total disabilities, American Indians and Alaska Natives, individuals already meeting Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) work requirements, those in substance use treatment, and people classified by the state as medically frail.

Short-term exceptions may be granted after a hospital or nursing-home stay, medical travel outside the community, a federally declared disaster, or residence in a high-unemployment county. While Nevada is seeking federal approval for these hardship exceptions, Jensen noted that the state cannot guarantee all temporary cases will be excused until approval is received.

The Nevada Health Authority will begin compliance checks using existing records. Staff will review work, school, benefits, and medical information already on file to automatically qualify members when possible. Those not cleared through this process may attest to their eligibility using a screening tool, with documentation required only if the first two steps are unsuccessful.

"We're doing everything we can not

to have to ask for more information," Jensen said.

Officials noted that the new rules could have a greater impact in rural and frontier counties than in urban areas. Churchill, Humboldt, Lander, and Pershing counties were identified as areas where meeting the hour requirement could be more challenging due to limited local jobs, long travel distances to training sites and clinics, higher rates of chronic illness, and more households with full-time caregivers.

Jensen advised that the first practical step for Medicaid members is to ensure their contact information is current. Members should update their mailing address, phone number, and email address online or at a local Medicaid office. Beginning in September, the Nevada Health Authority plans to send emails, texts, and letters to nearly 280,000 Medicaid members. These notices will explain the new rules, list exemptions, and provide instructions for confirming renewal dates.

Jensen also recommended that caregivers, people with health limitations, and those who travel long distances for care ask their provider whether an exemption applies rather than wait for a letter.

Nevada Medicaid can be reached at 1-800-992-0900 or through a local office. The website is NevadaMedicaid.nv.gov.

The work-hour requirement and six-month reviews will take effect Jan. 1, 2027. Copays, as described by Jensen, are scheduled to start in October 2028.

Continued from B-2 - State Gas Tax.

At current revenue levels, replacing the full state gas tax means replacing roughly \$270 million a year for state and local roads.

The goal is to build roughly \$6 billion in Permanent Fund and reserve assets—enough, at a 5% annual return, to replace that revenue while maintaining a cushion for lean years.

That won't happen overnight. If Nevada continues producing substantial budget surpluses, planned mineral projects come online, and long-term investments perform as expected, building the fund will take about 10 to 12 years.

Then the gas tax goes away.

The result would be a permanent tax cut for Nevada drivers and a more reliable way to fund our roads and highways.

As Treasurer, I will safeguard Nevada's money, manage investments responsibly, return unclaimed property faster, save our nearly bankrupt Millennium Scholarship program, and serve as a watchdog for taxpayers.

But I will also fight to do something government almost never does: turn a temporary windfall into a permanent benefit.

The minerals will eventually run out.

But the benefits they create for Nevada don't have to.

Drew Johnson is a fiscal policy expert and government watchdog who is the Republican nominee for Nevada State Treasurer. To learn more about Drew's plan to eliminate the Nevada gas tax, visit DrewforNevada.com.