

THE FALLON POST



KEEPING YOU POSTED ON LOCAL NEWS

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California Refinery Closures Threaten Nevada Fuel Prices

By Christy Lattin

The impending closure of two California refineries means Nevadans can expect higher fuel prices. Valero Energy Corporation informed the California Energy Commission that it will shut down refining operations at its Benicia refinery in the Bay Area by the end of April 2026. Meanwhile, Phillips 66 announced that it would close its Los Angeles refinery in the fourth quarter of 2025. The closures will reduce California’s refining capacity by approximately 20 percent.

State Senator Robin Titus sponsored a bill in the recent legislative session to establish an Energy Independence Task Force to explore alternatives to relying on California fuel. While the bill was hugely popular, she said, it never got a hearing. However, Governor Joe Lombardo encouraged her to form a blue-ribbon task force to pursue the issue, which she has started since the legislative session ended in June. She and Lombardo met in Las Vegas recently for preliminary discussions on Nevada’s energy independence. California supplies approximately 88 percent of Nevada’s gasoline, according to Stillwater Associates, a transportation energy consulting firm.

The Kinder Morgan SFPP North Line pipeline transports petroleum products, including gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel, from Northern California refineries and terminals to the Reno Terminal,



KM Fuel Terminal, photo courtesy of Kinder Morgan Fuel.

a facility technically located in Sparks. Kinder Morgan also operates the six-inch pipeline that carries jet fuel 63 miles from the Reno Terminal directly to NAS Fallon. In Southern Nevada, the Kinder Morgan subsidiary CALNEVA pipeline, which originates in Colton, Calif., supplies 90 percent of the fuel used in the Las Vegas area. The CALNEVA eight-inch pipeline transports jet fuel from Las Vegas to Nellis Air Force Base, branching off from the 14-inch pipeline that carries multiple products to Las Vegas.

Areas in Eastern Nevada are serviced by the UNEV pipeline out of Utah, making them less susceptible to market changes driven by California’s supply. The UNEV pipeline brings roughly 15 percent of the state’s inbound fuel and contributes to the fuel supply in Las Vegas.

“There is very little Nevada can do with the lack of current infrastructure as we are at the end of the pipe,” said Energy & Convenience Association of Nevada (ECAN) State Executive Miranda Hoover. “To stabilize volume and price, Nevada will need to look to other fuel sources to make up for the expected loss that will start to occur in the next 12–18 months.”

Several fuel terminals in Northern Nevada are supplied by rail. These include the Golden Gate Terminal in the Tahoe Regional

[California Refinery Closures continued on page 2]

Saddle Up for Fallon Junior Rodeo Labor Day Weekend

Staff Report

The Fallon Junior Rodeo returns Labor Day weekend, Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 30 and 31. The event carries forward a local tradition that began with the Fallon Lions Club Stampede and 49ers Day in the late 1940s, which continued uninterrupted, except during the COVID-19 pandemic. Early celebrations featured festival activities, a semi-pro rodeo, auto racing, country western music, a parade, and more, with groups such as the Kiwanis, Eagles, VFW, National Guard, and Boy Scouts serving as vendors. When Churchill County built the current fairgrounds, the design was influenced, and donations from the Lions Club and local rodeo associations partially funded construction. The Dry Gulch remains a holdover from the original grounds.

[Junior Rodeo continued on page 2]



Former Junior Rodeo Queen Evva Brown. Photo by Josh Lado, 52 Photography.

Cantaloupe Festival

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INSIDE THIS EDITION!**



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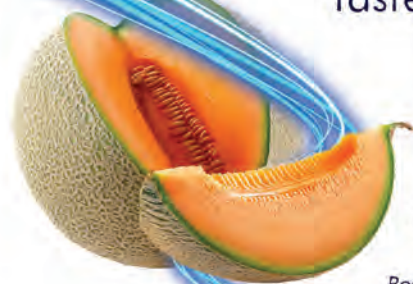
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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Captain’s Log

Words are your Wand

By Rachel Dahl

This may be way too big and important an idea to launch in the brief amount of time I’ve left for myself to jot a little ditty for page 2, but we’ll get started thinking on this and can always pick it up later if it turns out I don’t do a good job of clearing my thoughts.

A great man once said, “Words Matter.” I forget who — Rush Limbaugh or Mark Twain or Joe Dahl. You know the type.

Louie Armstrong said, “You can say anything you want on the trombone, but you gotta be careful with words.”

I feel sort of drenched in words lately. Not unreasonable for what we’re doing with the papers, the magazine, and putting together a company.

Some people deal in cars, some in cattle, some in guns. Around here, we deal in words. Even my license plate, DCLARIT, is devoted to the idea of using words and using them well. I get asked often if I’m an accountant, and what that really means on my truck.

Originally, I picked it out of a Leonard Cohen song, that great master of words himself. But what it really means is what you do when you get ready to create.

You declare your intentions. In the beginning, there was the word.

Lately, I’ve been working with my dad on a book. He’s been writing for several years, stories about all the horses he’s owned in a life of ranching and horse trading. We’re going through them all and editing now, spending time with each story, each horse, each other. It’s so fun and meaningful, and he understands so vividly how just the



right word matters as the tale unfolds. Not unlike the way each piece of equipment — the reins, the bridle, the way you sit on a horse — matters in his world.

At the shop, we’re also working on writing a company “Playbook” to coalesce and instruct our team on all that we do. In the olden days, we called this Standard Operating Procedures, but now we affectionately refer to it as the “If I Get Hit by a Bus” book. It’s a way to get all the little details of everything we do each day, out of my brain and onto the page, where it will help the team we’ve built be able to continue to build this airplane as we continue learning to fly it.

And the way we do that is with words. We figure out how to put words to all the ideas, and that’s where the magic really happens.

So, while we bathe ourselves in our craft, finding just the right words for you, we’ll always be right here...

... Keeping you Posted.

— Rach

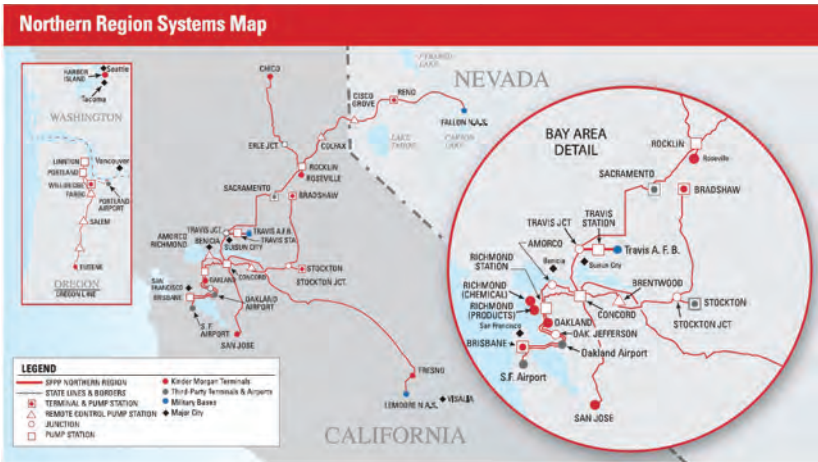
[California Refinery Closures continued from page 1]

Industrial Center, the Omega Partners Terminal in Sparks, the Teton Reno Terminal, and the ROC Terminals in Tonopah and Dunphy.

According to the Energy Information Administration (EIA), Nevada doesn’t have any significant crude oil reserves. In 2024, the state produced fewer than 140,000 barrels of oil. Nevada has one crude oil refinery, which can process approximately 2,000 barrels of oil per day; however, it only produces asphalt and road oil. The EIA noted that in 2023, Nevada had the sixth-highest average gasoline price in the nation.

Because Nevada is reliant on California for its gasoline supply, prices are vulnerable to market fluctuations. According to the California Energy Commission, the factors affecting California’s fuel prices include higher taxes on gasoline, higher production costs, environmental program costs, a shorter winter season, and the isolated nature of California’s fuel market.

Stillwater Associates summarized it best: “The closure of the Benicia refinery underscores the interconnectedness of regional energy markets. Comprehensive measures are needed to ensure energy security for Arizona and Nevada. This includes diversifying supply sources, investing in alternative energy infrastructure, and collaborating with neighboring states to develop resilient energy policies.”



Pipeline map to NAS Fallon, courtesy of KM Fuel.

[Junior Rodeo continued from page 1]

As the community’s ability to support a semi-pro rodeo on Labor Day changed, the Junior Rodeo Association partnered with the Lions Club to keep the tradition alive. The Lions have shifted their focus to other community projects in recent years, and the Fallon Junior Rodeo Association has expressed gratitude for years of support, continuing to carry the Labor Day rodeo forward.

The rodeo weekend kicks off with the queen contest on Friday, Aug. 29, starting with contestant check-in at 5 p.m., and introductions, speeches, and the horsemanship contest at 6 p.m. The coronation will be held Saturday during the rodeo’s lunch break, and the presentation ride will take place during

Sunday’s grand entry.

Junior Rodeo contestants range in age from 6 to 18, with events for both boys and girls. Events include steer daubing, team roping, pole bending, run, ride and lead, barrel racing, goat tying, calf riding, sack roping, breakaway roping, chute dogging, steer stopping, steer riding, and a second calf riding division. For littler contestants ages 0–5, they have a chance to compete in the dummy roping, figure eight run, goat un-decorating, mutton busting, and stick horse racing. The awards ceremony will take place immediately after the event concludes on Sunday.

Mark your calendars and plan to cheer on the next generation of cowboys and cowgirls.

FEATURES

Churchill Arts Council Settles Lawsuit Following 2023 Art Heist

By Christy Lattin and Leanna Lehman

More than a year after discovering that over 100 pieces of art had been quietly removed from its permanent collection, the Churchill Arts Council (CAC) has reached a settlement with former Executive Director Michael Scott. The agreement closes a legal dispute that began when staff arrived at the Oats Park Art Center on the morning of May 30, 2023, and found walls bare, records missing, and decades’ worth of curated work gone without explanation.

The works, curated over three decades, represented the efforts of dozens of artists and years of community support. What began as confusion quickly turned to concern—and later, a lawsuit filed in Churchill County’s Tenth Judicial District Court, which has now been adjudicated.

Scott was hired as executive director following the death of longtime leader Valerie Serpa, who had been instrumental in establishing the Churchill Arts Council and its subsequent success. In October 2022,



Michael Scott late in 2020 while working with Valerie Serpa as the creative director at the Arts Council. The permanent collection was throughout the building at the time. Photo by Rachel Dahl.

Scott notified the board that he intended to terminate his tenure as of June 30, 2023. Instead, Scott emailed his resignation on Memorial Day weekend, a month in advance, noting he was leaving “effective immediately.”

When staff arrived at the Oats Park Art Center that Tuesday following the holiday, they discovered more than 250 pieces of art from the permanent collection were gone. The Churchill Arts Council website had also been stripped of most of its content. In the two months leading up to his departure, Scott had initiated 33 “loan agreements,” most of which involved multiple works being returned to the respective artist or collector



Oats Park Art Center gallery. Photo courtesy Churchill Arts Council.

who had loaned them, without board approval.

At the time of the incident, the CAC board and community responded with outrage. “We are shocked and devastated that this collection has been gutted by the actions of one man,” said then Board Chair Theresa Guillen. “This is a complete betrayal of the memory and hard work done by Valerie to build this collection and was completely unauthorized by the board. We are exploring all of our legal options to remedy the situation.”

And so, they did. While the financial terms of the settlement remain confidential, one provision requires the return of four pieces of artwork still in Scott’s possession. Additionally, Scott must provide a signed statement of apology and a written acknowledgment of his actions to the board.

“When somebody does something the board doesn’t know about, didn’t give permission for, under the cloak of night on a holiday weekend, and transported that art across state borders—our feeling was yeah, it was theft,” said CAC Board Chairman Ted McDonald. “Sadly, the artists were brought into it. They didn’t know that we (the board) didn’t know. They were told the arts center was going to be shutting down.”

McDonald said a total of 260 pieces of art were removed. The Desert Cross sculpture, created by Fallon native and internationally known artist John Mason, was returned to the Oats Park Art Center in June 2024. Scott had previously returned the sculpture to the University of Nevada, Reno, as part of the dismantling of the collection.

The Oats Park Art Center’s security system has since been upgraded to include interior and exterior cameras, motion detectors, and an alarm system,

according to McDonald. Operational procedures have also been updated and modernized.

McDonald expressed gratitude for the support the Churchill Arts Council has received from the City of Fallon, Churchill County, and arts council members following the incident. Board members and community supporters loaned pieces from their personal collections to the center to fill the empty gallery walls until new works could be obtained.

The Churchill Arts Council was founded in 1986 by local couple Valerie Serpa and Kirk Robertson. The Oats Park Art Center opened in 2003 following an extensive remodel, and the couple served as co-directors. When Robertson died in 2017, Serpa continued leading the organization until she died in a plane crash in December 2021.



Desert Cross by Jonn Mason, after its return to the Oats Park Art Center. Photo by Rachel Dahl.



2025
LIL' BUCKAROO
BOUNCE OFF

Sunday, August 24th
at 10am
3C Event Center
Outdoor Arena

Register at FallonCantaloupeFestival.com under Activities/Competitions
Space is limited



ELIJAH
NICHOLS

Saturday,
August 23
10AM

PLAYING ON THE
MAIN STAGE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Churchill Kids’ Choir Registration Now Open

Rehearsals Begin Sept. 16

Staff Report

Performing Arts of Churchill County announces open registration for the third season of the Churchill Kids Choir. The CKC is open to all students enrolled in grades three through eight. The choir is directed by long-time Churchill County educators Tom Fleming, Noreen Swenson, and Tina Koenig, and vocal coaches Angelina de Nigro and Cassidy Mitchell.

Churchill Kids Choir introduces students to the fundamentals of singing and ensemble performance. Students learn and rehearse techniques in pitch, timbre, and vocal control, as well as music fundamentals such as note reading, rhythm, and theory. Students also experience the benefit of performing in a group setting in front of an audience.

Rehearsals begin Sept. 16 at the Numa Elementary School Multipurpose Room and are held Tuesdays from 4:15 to 5:15 p.m. Registration is available on the PACC website, paccnv.org. Auditions are not required.

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Performing Arts of Churchill County (PACC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit serving Fallon and Churchill County.



July Births

at Banner Hospital

Hudson Atlas Gokey
born July 1 to Sara Anderson and Nicholas Gokey
weighing 8 lbs., 15 oz., measuring 21 inches.

Evelynna Nichole Cleone Kerr
born July 3 to Cynthia Pereira and Blake Davis, weighing 7 lbs., 4 oz., measuring 19 3/4 inches.

Dahlia Mae Whitaker
born July 3 to Micah Whitaker and Jordyn Dahl
weighing 8 lbs., 11 oz., measuring 20 1/2 inches.

Alondra Elizabeth Montes
born July 4 to Kassandra and Uriel Montes
weighing 7 lbs., 8 oz., measuring 20 1/2 inches.

Atlas Scott Eckert
born July 8 to Dina and Scott Eckert
weighing 6 lbs., 7 oz., measuring 19 1/2 inches.

Let us add your newborn to our birth announcements, no matter where they were born, or contact us for a special birth announcement with a photo. We would love to share the great news!



OH BABY!

Dahlia Mae Whitaker
Born July 3, 2025 to
Micah Whitaker and Jordyn Dahl,
Weighing 8 lbs., 11 oz.
Measuring 20 1/2 inches

Dahlia is welcomed by her grandparents,
Brad and Kathryn Whitaker and Jim and Kelly Dahl.



Dovee Johnson

was born May 31st, 2025
to Spencer
and Blair Johnson.
She weighed 8 lbs. 13 oz.
Dovee is welcomed by her
four sisters, Keira,
Liberty, Basiln, & Priya,
and brother, Luke.

Birth Announcement

PETS OF THE WEEK

Chunky Boy



Chunky is a 5-year-old neutered pit bull mix (D-648) who was surrendered by his previous owner, so the shelter has some helpful information about him. He is house trained, crate trained, and leash trained—though he does pull a bit on walks. Described as a cuddly couch potato, Chunky also enjoys outings to the dog park and has done well with other dogs. If you’re looking for a gentle, laid-back companion, come meet Chunky at the shelter and see if he’s the right fit for your family.

City of Fallon Animal Shelter
1255 Airport Rd, Fallon
775-423-2282

River of Love



River is a petite, three-and-a-half-year-old Domestic Short Hair with striking blue eyes. She came to CAPS off the streets, pregnant, and spent several months in a foster home raising her litter of seven kittens. Now that her babies are weaned, River has been spayed and is ready for a home of her own. This sweet, sociable, and chatty girl loves sunbathing, window watching, and soaking up attention. Despite her rough start, River is affectionate and eager for the comfort of a forever family where she can be loved.

Churchill Animal Protection Society
5894 Pasture Rd, Fallon
775-423-7500 | capsnevada.org
caps@cccomm.net

Meet Gizmo



Gizmo is a gorgeous kitten with striking blue eyes that will melt your heart. He’s already fixed, vaccinated, and ready to go—just waiting for the perfect family. Playful and curious, Gizmo loves chasing toys and pouncing around, but he’s just as happy to curl up for snuggles and pets. He gets along well with other cats and has done great with children, showing his adaptable and affectionate nature. With his sweet personality and loving spirit, Gizmo is ready to bring joy to his forever home.

Fallon Animal Welfare Group is a 501(c)(3) charity supporting the welfare of cats in Churchill County, Nevada. Questions? Call 775-217-4745 or, for barn cats, call Pat at 775-217-7248.

OBITUARIES



SCOTT ALLEN MELLO
June 15, 1972 – August 12, 2025

Scott Allen Mello was born June 15, 1972, in Reno, Nevada, to Saundra Lou Mori and Donald Allen Mello, and passed away unexpectedly on August 12, 2025, at Banner Churchill Community Hospital at the age of 53. Scott began working at Kennametal in June 1990, where he was employed for nearly 35 years. He was an avid outdoorsman—if there was a hunt to be had, Scott was there. He spent the past six years with his faithful companion and wife, Brandy, at his side. His children were the light of his life, which was made even brighter by the arrival of his grandson, Dawson, in 2023. Scott was preceded in death by his father, Donald Allen Mello. He is survived by his loving wife, Brandy Mello; his daughter, Amber (Abe); son, Cole; and grandson, Dawson; his mother, Saundra Mello; his sister, Traci Ledesma; nephew, Jacob, and niece, Mikala; and stepchildren, Kyle, Aaron (Shaylin), Colton (Celene), Gage, and Makenzee. Scott’s passing leaves an unfillable hole in all of our lives. He will be deeply missed but remembered with immense love and laughter. Services will be held Tuesday, August 26, 2025, at 11 a.m. at Smith Family Funeral Home, 505 Rio Vista Drive, Fallon. Please join us for a reception at the Eagles Hall, 7977 Reno Hwy, Fallon, immediately following the service, where we will share our favorite stories and memories.

Movies and More

By Kelli Perez

We’ve got another fun-filled weekend at the Fallon Theatre, plus a chance to run (or walk) for a great cause—us. Get ready for the “Cantaloupe Canter 5K” on Saturday, Aug. 23, part of the Cantaloupe Festival & Country Fair. Check-in is 7 to 7:50 a.m. at 333 Sheckler Road, with an 8 a.m. start. Early registration is \$25, or \$30 on race day. Whether you’re racing to win or taking a casual stroll, your entry helps preserve and improve our historic theatre. Register at fallontheatre.com or in person at Kent’s Supply Center. At 6 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, we’re showing “The Angry Birds Movie” (2016), a PG animated comedy where Red, Chuck, and Bomb take on a mysterious group of green pigs. Runtime: 1 hour, 37 minutes. Then at 7 p.m. both nights, settle in for the classic comedy caper “It’s a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World” (1963). An all-star cast races across California in search of buried treasure. Runtime: 2 hours, 41 minutes.

LOOKING AHEAD:
Saturday, Sept. 20, 7 p.m.: “David Hayes – Master Showman.” A family-friendly variety night with music, comedy, and surprises. Tickets: \$15 at the door.
Saturday, Sept. 27, 9 a.m.–1 p.m.: Our annual “Show ‘N’ Shine” cruises into downtown with classic cars, live music, food, and fun for all ages. Vehicle registration is open now at Fallontheatre.com.
After the cars clear, return to the Fallon Theatre at 7 p.m. for live classical music with the Toiyabe Chamber Music Society’s “The ‘Not-So-Lonely’ Illustrated Concert Series,” featuring the Toiyabe Trio: Dustin Budish (viola), Aaron Hill (oboe), and Emily Barnes (harp). Projected images accompany the performance for a multi-sensory concert experience. Suggested donation: \$5.
Friday–Saturday, Oct. 3–4: A “Pirates of the Caribbean: Curse of the Black Pearl” 4D weekend, sponsored by Huck Salt. Experience immersive effects—mist, scent, vibrations, and flashing lights—at 6 p.m., or opt for standard showings at 7 p.m. Expect live character appearances, themed treats, and swash-buckling fun. Reservations are open now on our website for a small fee.
November live shows: Friday, Nov. 14, 7 p.m.: Nashville comedian “Lee Hardin” returns with clean, relatable stand-up. Tickets: \$20. Last year’s show sold out—grab seats early.Saturday, Nov. 15, 7 p.m.: “River Rogue” in concert. A high-energy cover band blending country, rock, and blues. Free to attend; the band plays for tips.
As always, movie screenings at the Fallon Theatre are free to attend, and the concession stand is open. To rent the theatre or place a special message on our marquee, call 775-423-6210 or email thefallontheatre@gmail.com

MEETINGS
August 24–29, 2025

Churchill County School District
4th Wednesday of the Month
at 5:30 p.m.
CCSD Admin Bldg.
90 S. Maine St.
Next meetings: Aug. 27,
Sept. 4, Oct. 22, Nov. 12

Fallon City Council
1st and 3rd Tuesdays
of the Month at 9 a.m.
City Hall, 55 W. Williams Ave.
Next meeting Sept. 2

TCID Next Meetings:
Sept. 2, Oct. 7, Nov. 2 at 9 a.m.
2666 Harrigan Road

County Meetings 155 N. Taylor St.,
Commission Chambers

County Commission
Meets 1st Thursday
and 3rd Wednesday of the Month
Next meeting:
Sept. 4 at 8:15 a.m.

Planning Commission
Aug. 26 at 6:30 p.m.

Library Board
Aug. 28 at 3 p.m.

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SENIOR CENTER MENU

WILLIAM N. PENNINGTON LIFE CENTER 952 S. MAINE STREET, FALLON, NV | 775-423-7096

Lunch Served Monday - Friday 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. | Lunch is \$6 for those under 60 and a suggested donation of \$3 for those 60 and older.

Monday, Aug. 25

Baked Fish
Creamy Cole Slaw
French Fries
Garden Salad
Strawberries

Tuesday, Aug. 26

Mediterranean Chicken
Lemon Couscous
Greek Lentil Salad
Tomato Red Onion
& Cucumber Salad
Melons
WW Bread Pudding

Wednesday, Aug. 27

Beef Patty
Whipped Potatoes & Onion Gravy
Garlic Green Beans
WW Bread
Apple

Thursday, Aug.28

Swedish Meatballs
Seasoned Pasta
Roasted Asparagus
Scandinavian Vegetables
Tropical Fruit

Friday, Aug. 29

Turkey Fajitas
Spanish Rice
Ranch Beans
Chopped Spinach
FF French Dressing
Pineapple

FALLON DAILY BREAD

WOLF CENTER | 457 ESMERALDA AVE., FALLON NV | 775-423-4714

Meals are served Mondays and Thursdays from 5 - 6 p.m. We serve sandwiches on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m.

Monday, Aug. 25

Pizza
Salad & Cookies

Thursday, Aug. 28

Burgers
Fries & Ice Cream

Monday, Sept. 1

– Closed for
Labor Day –

Thursday, Sept. 4

Pancake & Eggs
Sausage or Bacon

Volunteer groups needed to
help serve once per month,
3 p.m. until 6:30 p.m.
Call for information.

COMMUNITY

Fallon Community Day Brings Out Big Crowds, Bigger Generosity

More Than 600 Children Receive Free Back-to-School Supplies



Children pick up school supplies at Fallon Community Day on August 9.



Story and photos by Anne McMillin, Churchill County

Fallon’s 14th Annual Community Day proved once again that when it comes to showing up for local kids, this town delivers. Held Aug. 9 at the Rafter 3C Arena, the event welcomed more than 1,000 attendees who came out for a day of fun, information, and support—just in time for the new school year. A total of 630 children received free school supplies, thanks to the efforts of 102 volunteers and dozens of community partners.

“This was our biggest year yet,” said organizers from Churchill County Social Services, which coordinates the annual event. “We are so grateful to everyone who donated money, supplies, or their time to make this happen.”

The arena was filled with booths and tables hosted by 34 local and state organizations offering everything from backpacks and pencils to child safety information, wellness resources, and educational programs. Families were able to connect with groups such as the Churchill County Sheriff’s Office, Fallon Police Department, University of Nevada, Reno Cooperative Extension, Nevada Rural Hospital Partners, New Frontier Treatment Center, CAPS, the Central Nevada Health District, and Churchill Community Coalition.

Also lending their support were local churches, service organizations, and youth programs including Cub Scout Pack 38, Gracie Jui-Jitsu, the Fallon Lions Club, American Legion Auxiliary, and several area churches.

Monetary donations from businesses and individuals helped make the day a success, with contributions from American Car Wash, New Millennium, the City of Fallon, Brad Stokes/State Farm Insurance, Gemini, Inc., CC Communications, Churchill County Federal Credit Union, Tedford Tire & Auto Service, Oasis Online, Mackedon, deBraga & Rowe Law, and Sheree Jensen.

Fallon Community Day is all about connecting families with the resources they need while creating a fun, welcoming environment. Organizers say the event continues to grow year after year, and the generous spirit behind it remains the same: neighbors helping neighbors.

“Seeing the smiles on the kids’ faces makes all the work worth it,” one volunteer said. “This is what community looks like.”

WNC to Launch Advanced Manufacturing Training Center

Staff Report

Western Nevada College (WNC) was awarded almost \$600,000 to help establish a state-of-the-art workforce training hub in Fernley’s Victory Logistics District — a project expected to expand career opportunities for residents in Fernley, Fallon, and surrounding rural communities. The new facility is located just 30 minutes from WNC’s Fallon campus.

The funding comes through the Governor’s Office of Economic Development’s Workforce Innovations for a New Nevada (WINN) program, which awarded roughly \$2.7 million statewide to expand industry-led training programs in mining, manufacturing, healthcare, and more.

“This investment represents a strategic partnership that directly addresses Nevada’s workforce challenges,” said Board of Regents Chair Byron Brooks. “These expanded training programs will not only help fill critical skills gaps in mining, manufacturing, and healthcare, but will also create pathways for Nevadans to access high-wage careers right here at home.”

The new WNC center will focus on advanced manufacturing and logistics training, targeting regional labor shortages and providing programs for dual enrollment high school students, adult learners, and English language learners. Participants will have the opportunity to earn certifications that lead to high-wage, high-demand jobs

in the growing manufacturing sector.

GOED’s Director of Workforce Development, Elaine Silverstone, called WINN “one of the most impactful tools we have at GOED towards economic diversification,” noting that the goal is to create more high-wage career pathways so that Nevadans can find good jobs without leaving the state.

OTHER WINN GRANT RECIPIENTS INCLUDE:

Great Basin College – NORCAT Mine Skills Training Expansion: Over \$500,000 to train 500 workers in mine safety, technical roles, and certifications to meet the needs of regional employers like KG Mining, Barrick, and Lithium Americas.

College of Southern Nevada – Westside Education & Training Center: More than \$1.5 million to provide accelerated training in manufacturing, welding, IT, healthcare, and other in-demand fields, as well as adult basic education and GED programs in one of Southern Nevada’s most underserved communities.

Truckee Meadows Community College – Logistics Program: About \$60,000 to continue supporting logistics sector training and increase enrollment in related programs.

“These investments help to make sure Nevadans have access to the skills needed for careers that support our state’s economic growth,” said Board of Regents Workforce Committee Chair Heather Brown.

TRIS MUNSICK
AND THE INNOCENTS

SATURDAY
SEPT. 13

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DOORS OPEN AT 6 PM
PERFORMANCE AT 7 PM
TICKET PRICE \$25

CAPS Annual Spaghetti Dinner
FUNDRAISER

September 6, 2025 5:00PM

Fallon Convention Center
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TICKETS

\$15 Adults | \$10 Kids (4-12) | Kids 3 & Under Free
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salad, drinks, and dessert.
Beer and wine available for purchase

FOOD - DRINKS -
SILENT AUCTION -
RAFFLES

COURT

Tenth Judicial District Court

Tuesday, August 12 Judge Thomas Stockard presiding

By Teresa Moon

Yovani Alfredo Fernandez pleaded guilty to Attempt to Commit a Residential Burglary, a Category C Felony punishable by 1–5 years in prison and a fine up to \$10,000. Judge Stockard ordered a Pre-Sentencing Investigation (PSI) and set sentencing for October 14.

Jeremy Gabriel Villanueva, in custody, appeared for sentencing on a Wobbler charge of Attempt to Possess or Receive a Forged Instrument or Bill. A Wobbler can be sentenced as either a Gross Misdemeanor or a Category D Felony.

Chief Deputy District Attorney Lane Mills noted the Carson City and Churchill County cases arose simultaneously and should run concurrently. “They’re really part of one exceptionally stupid hair-brained enterprise,” he said. Mills recited Villanueva’s lengthy criminal history and stated, “He’s come to Nevada—this ain’t California, Your Honor.”

Churchill County Deputy Pubic Defender Hampton Young acknowledged the past of-fenses but noted his client’s family still sup-ported him. He said Villanueva was with a co-defendant who attempted to pass counterfeit bills, and while Villanueva was accused of toss-ing two bills at a drive-thru, “It was very windy that day.” The Defense requested that the charge be sentenced as a Gross Misdemeanor.

Villanueva told the Court, “I just want to change my life. I want to see my family again.”

Judge Stockard sentenced the offense as a Felony; he imposed a sentence of 12-32

months in the Nevada State Prison to run concurrently to the Carson City sentence.

Matthew David Honecker admitted to a non-technical sentencing violation involving reporting to Parole and Probation, prohib-ited associates, and conduct. The matter was continued to August 26.

Jolean Marie Boag failed to appear for an Order to Show Cause hearing. Judge Stockard noted the lengthy history of the case. Deputy District Attorney Priscilla Baker requested a bench warrant, stating Boag was aware of the hearing and owed \$29,488 in ar-rears dating back to 2023. Stockard said he would take the matter under advisement and directed the bailiff to review the entire case file. Judge Stockard said he was going to “take it under advisement.

Shelley Leanne Sonafrank, in custody, pleaded guilty to a Wobbler charge of Attempt to Commit Burglary of a Business. If sentenced as a Category D Felony, the offense is punishable by 1–4 years in prison and a fine up to \$5,000; as a Gross Misde-meanor, by 364 days and a fine up to \$2,000.

Defense attorney Charles Woodman re-quested provisional placement in drug court and a six-month sentencing delay. CDDA Mills requested \$58 in restitution. Judge Stockard granted Sonafrank provisional placement to the Western Regional Drug Court with daily check-ins and random testing. Sentencing was set for February 10, 2026.

Joseph Robert Keller, in custody, pleaded guilty to Possession of a Controlled Sub-stance (methamphetamine), a first or second offense Category E Felony, punishable by 1–4 years and a fine up to \$5,000.Senior Deputy District Attorney Chelsea Sanford requested provisional drug court placement and sentencing continued for six months. Woodman agreed. Sentencing was scheduled for October 15. Stockard ordered Keller to obtain a substance abuse evaluation and begin Court Services supervision.

Dylan Kiowa Joseph’s sentencing was continued to August 14.

Cody Oscar Meyrahn, in custody, admitted to a technical probation violation. Churchill County Alternate Public Defender Wright Noel did not oppose a 30-day sanction. Judge Stockard revoked probation for 30 days, granted 30 days of credit for time served, and ordered Meyrahn released.

Aideyn Jace Purdy-Knudson, in custody, appeared for a status hearing confirming sentencing is set for September 30.

Darrin Ray Dummer, in custody, appeared for a competency hearing. Judge Stockard said Lake’s Crossing found him competent to proceed. The case was remanded back to Justice Court, with a District Court status hearing set for August 26.

“Complicated Relationship” Leads to Reduced Charges in Sexual Assault Case

By Teresa Moon and Leanna Lehman

Brandon Jean Herrera, a 27-year-old California man initially charged with Sexual Assault and Attempted Sexual Assault, was sentenced Tuesday to probation following a plea agreement that reduced the charges to Battery with a Deadly Weapon, a Category B Felony.

Herrera had been extradited to Nevada earlier this year to face allegations stemming from incidents that occurred between January and July 2023. According to the original criminal complaint, Herrera was accused of engaging in non-consensual sexual acts with the victim while she was asleep and attempting to force a similar act on a separate occasion.

He appeared before New River Township Justice Court Judge Benjamin Trotter on March 13, where he set bail at \$200,000 following arguments by Deputy District Attorney Priscilla Baker, who cited Herrera’s prior criminal history in Ridgecrest, California, and lack of local ties. The judge called the Category A felony charge of Sexual Assault inherently high-risk and cited the seriousness of the potential penalty—10 years to life in prison—when setting bail.

Because Justice Courts in Nevada cannot adjudicate or sentence felony cases, the matter was waived to District Court following Herrera’s initial appearance.

On August 12, Tenth Judicial District Court Judge Thomas Stockard presided over Herrera’s sentencing after he pleaded guilty in June to the lesser charge of Battery with a Deadly Weapon.

Churchill County Alternate Public Defender Wright Noel told the court that the plea agreement allowed Herrera to avoid registration as a sex offender, calling the underlying relationship “complicated.” Noel emphasized Herrera’s forward progress, including his work at two jobs and his pursuit of a GED. “I think probation is the appropriate resolution,” Noel said. “I don’t think putting Mr. Herrera in prison would be a just resolution.”

Herrera told the court he is expecting a child and working to build stability. “I’ve been struggling my whole life, and I’m finally getting a chance to change,” he said, adding that he has secured a loan to buy a house and a car.

The victim, present via Zoom, chose not to speak but had her aunt read a prepared statement on her behalf. In the letter, the victim described repeated assaults during their relationship, often while she was asleep.



Brandon Jean Herrera.
Photo courtesy of CHSO.

“There are no easy words to describe the pain and lasting impact this has had on me,” the letter read. “During my relationship with the defendant, I was repeatedly violated in my sleep.” She recalled waking up to the defendant touching her and committing sexual acts without consent. “Although I said no and told the defendant to stop, he would continue.”

One incident, she said, continues to haunt her, made her feel “like I was just an object to him; not a human being with boundaries or worth.” She also explained that many of the assaults occurred while her infant daughter, whom she breastfed and co-slept with, was in bed with them. She said the assaults and growing concern for her child’s safety eventually prompted her

to leave Herrera.

She described lasting effects on her mental health, trust, sleep, and sense of safety. “I struggle with anxiety, flashbacks, and shame, even though I know what happened to me was not my fault.” Her letter concluded with a direct note to the defendant: “I would also like the defendant to know that I appreciate the coming forward and admitting he’s wrong.”

Judge Stockard imposed a suspended sentence of 36 to 110 months in the Nevada State Prison and placed Herrera on probation for 36 months. The court ordered Herrera to pay \$3,825 in extradi-tion costs, with minimum monthly payments of \$150, and imposed standard fees and assessments.

As part of his probation, Herrera must undergo a substance abuse evaluation and a Psychosexual Evaluation within 60 days and comply with any recommended treatment. He was also ordered to have no contact with the victim.

In many cases, plea agreements reduce charges as part of a plea negotiation due to a combination of legal and practical factors. In some cases, challenges with evidence—such as lack of physical proof or the emotional difficulty of securing victim testimony—can make it difficult for the prosecution to proceed to trial on more serious charges. Prosecutors may also consider the defendant’s willingness to accept responsibility, his lack of serious prior convictions, and any efforts toward rehabilitation when offering a plea agreement. In this case, Herrera’s guilty plea to Battery with a Deadly Weapon allowed the state to secure a conviction without the uncertainties of trial while sparing the victim the burden of testifying. Should he violate the terms of his probation, the court may impose the underlying prison sentence.



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LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Changes Ahead

CNHD Adds Key Health Positions, Updates Services

By Christy Lattin

The Central Nevada Health District approved new job descriptions at its Aug. 14 meeting, following the adoption of a new organizational structure in late June. The new structure necessitates the creation of several new positions and the reworking of job descriptions for other positions. This is the first reorganization since the district began offering services two years ago.

The newly created positions include Administrator/Health Officer, Health Services Officer, and Public Health Program Coordinator. The Administrator/Health Officer, who will lead the organization, will receive an annual salary and benefits package totaling \$262,215. The Health Services Officer will be paid \$142,378.01, and the Public Health Program Coordinator will earn \$85,231.69.

Another new position is that of Clinical Services Manager, which combines the roles of the clinical services manager and family nurse practitioner. This position requires an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) and offers a salary of \$126,412.42 per year. The final new position is Environmental Health Specialist I, with a salary and benefits package totaling \$90,642.06.

Job descriptions for some existing positions within CNHD were also updated to better reflect their role in the new structure. Those jobs include Environmental Health Specialist II, Public Health Investigator, and Public Health Preparedness Planner. While job duties were modified, pay rates for these positions remain unchanged. The CNHD board approved the new descriptions, which will be presented to Churchill County Commissioners for final approval on Aug. 20.

Interim Administrator Shannon Ernst said because the Administrator/Health Officer role is so crucial, she wants to begin advertising for the position on Aug. 21. She said three to five candidates will interview with a selection committee, with the final candidate to interview

before the CNHD board on Sept. 25 and potentially begin work around Oct. 9.

Ernst, who is also the Director of Churchill County Social Services, has served as Interim Administrator for several months, and Dr. Tedd McDonald has been the county’s Health Officer since 2013. He said he would not be applying for the new combined role of Administrator/Health Officer as he doesn’t have any grant writing experience and is looking to reduce his commitments. McDonald assured the CNHD board he will continue working with them until the new officer is in place.

The board also reviewed amended bylaws for the district. Deputy Civil District Attorney Jeff Weed said the changes were minor, focusing on board member terms and removing the requirement for a committee to review applications from physician members. Final review and approval of the amended bylaws will take place at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

The board also heard or acted on the following agenda items:

- Presentation by Dr. John Packham from the UNR School of Medicine on the Nevada Health Workforce report. The report is a snapshot of the health workforce trends in Nevada.
- Review of the media campaign produced by KPS3 advertising agency. The Nevada Association of Counties paid for the campaign.
- Approval of an agreement with Consilium to provide clinical staffing during shortages. There is no base contract amount, and CNHD will only pay hourly rates for services provided.
- Ratification of an agreement with the Department of Public and Behavioral Health for the Public Health Fund. CNHD will receive \$96,044 per year for fiscal years 2026 and 2027 to support its general functions.
- Ratification of a lease with Eureka County for space at the Eureka County Clinic. Eureka County has provided space at its existing clinic free of charge for CNHD services, including family planning, vaccines, and environmental health permits.
- Approval of a release and waiver of liability for volunteers of the Burning Man experience. CNHD will need volunteers to assist with health permit inspections and operational support during the event.



Middle School Implements New Cell Phone and Device Policy

Staff Report

Churchill County Middle School (CCMS) has implemented a new Cell Phone and Smart Device Policy, effective immediately, to support a focused and distraction-free learning environment. The change aligns with both the Churchill County School District’s administrative regulations and the CCMS Handbook.

According to the policy outlined in the CCMS Handbook, students are permitted to bring cell phones to school, but must place them in a designated phone locker at the beginning of each class period. Phones may be retrieved only after the class is dismissed. Cell phones are not allowed for use during classroom instruction or any other instructional time. Personal device usage is limited to before school, after school, during transitions between classes, and at lunch or recess. Families who need to contact their student during the school day are asked to do so through the front office.

Principal Dr. Deana Porretta explained the importance of the update, noting that while personal devices can be useful tools, they also pose significant distractions through social media, messaging, and notifications. As a 1:1 district, all students at CCMS have access to a school-issued device for academic purposes, making the need for personal devices in class unnecessary. “This updated procedure promotes responsible use and helps maintain a productive classroom environment,” Porretta stated.

Under the new guidelines, students must place their phones in a classroom phone locker at the start of every class and may retrieve them once class is over. Personal devices may only be used before and after school, between classes, and during lunch or recess. Smartwatches must have notifications turned off. If a smartwatch becomes a



Principal Dr. Deana Porretta explained the importance of the update, noting that while personal devices can be useful tools, they also pose significant distractions through social media, messaging, and notifications.

distraction, it will be treated the same as a cell phone and subject to the same consequences.

Some exceptions are made for students with medical needs or accommodations. Students who have a 504 plan, IEP, or an approved administrative reason may keep a personal device on them to monitor health-related concerns, such as insulin levels for diabetes management.

The school will enforce the new policy using the district’s 4-Step Protocol. On a first offense, the student’s device will be confiscated until the end of the school day, and the parent or guardian will be notified. A second offense will result in the device being confiscated and require the parent or guardian to retrieve it. On the third offense, the same retrieval process applies, and a meeting will be held with the student and their parent or guardian to review the policy. For a fourth offense and beyond, the device will again be confiscated and must be picked up by a parent or guardian. The incident will be considered a major offense, and disciplinary action will be taken for insubordination.

Dr. Porretta emphasized that the policy is not intended to restrict communication between students and their families, particularly in urgent situations. “In urgent situations, please contact the CCMS office, and we will ensure your student receives the message promptly,” she said.

CCMS staff and administrators expressed their appreciation for families’ support in reinforcing the expectations. The school aims to maintain classrooms that are focused, respectful, and engaging environments for all students as the new school year begins.

GARDENING

Treat Elm Beetles Early - M.D. Tree Surgery Can Help

By Marco DiGiacinto

MD Tree Surgery is an ISA Certified Arborist serving Northern Nevada—including Reno, Sparks, Fallon, Fernley, Lake Tahoe, Lovelock, Yerington, and Carson City—for over 30 years. With a focus on precision and safety, we offer expert tree pruning and shaping services to enhance the health and aesthetics of your trees. Our team provides exceptional residential and commercial care while ensuring the safety of your property and surrounding structures.

Maintaining tree health is crucial. MD Tree Surgery offers certified arborist tree health assessments to identify and address any issues affecting your trees. We provide personalized care plans that promote longevity and improve property value.

The elm leaf beetle (ELB) is a significant pest affecting elm trees. Severe infestations can cause defoliation, leaving trees weak and vulnerable to other pests and diseases. If not controlled, ELB can ultimately lead to tree death.

Larvae are very small and initially black. As they mature, they turn yellowish-olive green with two black stripes. Although free-flying, beetles are often spread by vehicles.

ELB larvae are the most damaging, causing skeletonization of leaves, leaving only the veins intact. This damage causes leaves to turn brown and fall prematurely, reducing the tree’s ability to photosynthesize and store energy for dormancy. Adult beetles create small holes in the leaves, commonly referred to as “shot holes.” If left untreated, ELB can rapidly defoliate a tree—particularly in warmer weather—and several years of infestation can cause tree death.

During winter, adult ELB take shelter and hibernate, emerging in spring to feed. Tiny eggs are laid in clumps on the underside of leaves and hatch within seven to 10 days. Larvae begin feeding immediately, then travel down the tree to pupate in cracks or soil. After one to two weeks, beetles emerge. Depending on the temperature, there are usually one to two generations per year.

Banding, which involves placing a sticky barrier around the tree trunk before larvae migrate, can help interrupt the ELB life cycle. This method has been shown to reduce leaf damage by up to 50 per-



Elm leaf beetle. Photo courtesy of University Nevada, Reno.



cent in elm trees. Timing is critical—bands must be applied during the right stage of the ELB life cycle to be effective.

Canopy foliar sprays with insecticide can help control ELB, but are practical only on small or young trees. Trunk injection is an effective and environmentally safe method, while soil injections also provide control.

During unexpected tree emergencies—such as storm damage or fallen trees—MD Tree Surgery offers prompt and reliable emergency tree care services. Our team is available to address urgent issues and ensure the safety of your property and loved ones.

ISA Certified Arborists undergo years of education and practical training and are bound by the ISA Code of Ethics. They provide clients with the most current, science-based solutions for tree care and safety. Allowing someone who is not ISA certified to prune your trees means entrusting your trees to someone who may not be qualified.

Always verify you are working with a Certified Arborist. Our ISA (International Society of Arboriculture) certifications can be confirmed at treesaregood.org.

To schedule a consultation, call MD Tree Surgery at 775-867-2944. Owner Marco DiGiacinto: ISA # WE-10213A Foreman Zakk Thomas: ISA # WE-13314A

Sponsored Content, Courtesy M.D. Tree Surgery

EDUCATION

CCSD Welcomes Leadership and Transportation Teams to New School Year

By Rachel Dahl

With the first day of school just around the corner, Churchill County School District has been buzzing with activity as teachers and staff gear up for the 2025–26 academic year.

Superintendent Derild Parsons kicked things off last week with a three-day leadership retreat, where principals, vice principals, and district administrators came together to collaborate, share ideas, and set goals for the year ahead. Parsons said the focus was on making this year the “best yet” for CCSD learners, with an emphasis on growth, learning, and success.

On August 11, district bus drivers gathered for the annual “Bid Day,” where they selected their routes for the school year. With plenty of smiles and enthusiasm, the transportation team is now using the next few weeks to refine routes and ensure smooth rides for students. “We’re so happy to see their smiling faces,” Parsons said, noting their excitement to welcome back the dedicated drivers who help start and end each student’s school day.

The district also celebrated the arrival of new teachers at an orientation hosted Monday in “The Pit” at the District Office. Parsons and Assistant Superintendent Summer Walker welcomed the group, who enjoyed breakfast provided by the Churchill County Education Association before diving into introductions, resources, and Chromebook distribution. The new staff also explored the district’s Profile of a Learner and Modern Learning Components,



Admin photo: Back row, from left: Shawn Purrell, Numa Principal; Tim Spencer, Churchill County High School (CCHS) Principal; Tricia Strasdin, CCHS Dean of Students; Shannon Urquhart, Student Services Coordinator; Reema Pulsifer, CCHS Vice Principal; Derild Parsons, Superintendent; Rachel Knight, CCHS Vice Principal; Trent Vass, Churchill County Middle School (CCMS) Vice Principal; Heather Alves, CCMS Vice Principal; Mike Walker, Assistant Superintendent; and Brad Barton, E.C. Best Elementary Principal. Front row, from left: Kathryn Bervin-Mueller, Director of Student Services; Kimi Melendy, Lahontan Elementary School (LES) Principal; and Dr. Deana Porretta, CCMS Principal.

with lunch provided by the district offering a chance to connect with colleagues.

“We are so grateful to have these incredible educators joining our team,” Parsons said. “Their energy and passion will make a real difference for our students and community.”

All staff will return this week for final preparations before classrooms open for the first day of school, August 25.



In the windows: from left to right, are Jeane Workman, Stacie Marsh, Amy Merritt, Elizabeth “Ely” Hernandez-Gonzalez, Nick Baglin (mechanic), Alicia Hicks, Rachel Allen, Janice Arroyo-Wright, and Nuni Castrona-Ramello. Standing in the back row: up against the bus, Dustan Drinkut (maintenance supervisor and transportation garage supervisor), Micah Pursley (mechanic), James Pritchett, Ken Bailey, Threasa Holt-Jones, Valerie Williams, Bob Summers, and Joy Lacow-Swett. In the front row: Marsha Metz, Elizabeth Ward, Scotty Grenamyre, Tina Grenamayer-Nickles, Judi Itskin, Natasha Domes (transportation supervisor), Cindy Ruhnau, Valerie Summers, and Brenda Wright.

EDUCATION

Bighorn Bulletin

Oasis Academy Welcomes New Staff

By Angela Viera

SUPATHCHA BONDS – KINDERGARTEN

A familiar face returns to Oasis Academy this year as alumna Supathcha Bonds joins the staff as a kindergarten teacher. “I have been in education for five years as an early education teacher, caring for children from six weeks old to preschool to school age,” Bonds said.



L to R: Trevor Bonds, Amara Jo Bonds, and Supatcha Bonds.

“I have always had a passion for teaching and caring for children,” she added. “As a life-long learner, I constantly seek to expand my own knowledge and skills with my love of learning.” Bonds said returning to her alma mater makes the opportunity even more meaningful. “I am very grateful to have this opportunity to come back and make an impact on the lives of future OA generations,” she said.

Outside the classroom, she enjoys spending time with her family, exploring new places, and having quality movie nights.

KIRSTEN RITCHIE – SIXTH GRADE

Kirsten Ritchie joins the middle school team this year with five years of experience in education.



Kirsten Ritchie.

“I began my teaching career in Arkansas as a middle school science teacher, where I discovered my passion for student-led, inquiry-based learning,” she said. In 2022, Ritchie received the Arkansas Grand STEM Teacher Award for creating “innovative, hands-on STEM experiences for students.” She most recently taught biology, chemistry, forensic science, and taxidermy at Churchill County High School.

At Oasis, she’ll be teaching sixth grade science and social studies. “I’m passionate about creating student-centered classrooms where curiosity drives learning and every student feels empowered to explore, question, and lead,” she said. “I chose education because I believe in the power of young minds,” Ritchie added. “There’s nothing more rewarding than watching students grow in confidence, make meaningful discoveries, and realize their potential.” Outside school, she enjoys DIY projects, the outdoors, music, and family time. “I’m expecting my first child this year, and I couldn’t be more excited,” she said.

BRIANA COOK – FIRST GRADE

Briana Cook brings eight years of experience in education to her first-grade classroom.



Briana Cook.

“While this is my first year as a classroom teacher, I’ve spent the past eight years in education, growing my passion for working with kids every step of the way,” she said. Originally planning to become a hairstylist, Cook pivoted toward education after realizing her desire to help children feel safe and confident. “I knew then my heart was being called to something different,” she explained. “My goal is to make a positive and lasting impact on every student who walks through my classroom door.” Cook looks forward to working alongside Oasis educators. “I’m also excited to learn and grow alongside a strong, dedicated team of educators,” she said. In her free time, she enjoys reading, baking, paddle boarding, snowboarding, and spending time with family. Her mother, a 17-year veteran in education, remains her role model. “She’s taught me so much about what it means to lead with kindness and commitment in this profession,” Cook said.

KAMRYN COULTER – SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Kamryn Coulter joins Oasis Academy as the counselor for kindergarten through third grade.

“I am beyond excited to start the school year at Oasis Academy,” she said. With nearly a decade of experience in the mental health field, Coulter said she’s committed to supporting students’ growth academically and emotionally. “I have been striving to bring my experience to the school setting to assist kids achieving all goals from academic to mental health,” she said. Outside of work, she enjoys gardening with her energetic corgi, Daisy, and staying involved in community service. She volunteers with The Over-watch Collective, a nonprofit that raises mental health awareness and funds therapy for veterans, military members, and first responders.



Kamryn Coulter.

Veritas Preparatory School – Classical and Christian

Veritas Greet the New School Year

By Assistant Headmaster David Ernst with photos courtesy of Veritas.

Veritas Preparatory School officially launched the 2025–2026 academic year with its annual Back to School Night and Parents Open House on August 14. The campus buzzed with energy as families, faculty, and students gathered to reconnect after summer break and prepare for the year ahead.

The day began with a festive welcome hosted by the Unite volunteer group, who provided popcorn and cheerful activities for students and families. Laughter and conversation filled the campus as students explored their new classrooms, reunited with old friends, and met their new teachers for the first time. Parents had the chance to tour the school, talk with staff, and get a first look at what their children will experience in the coming year.

Later in the evening, families gathered in the chapel for a school-wide meeting. Administrators and teachers introduced themselves and outlined important policies and expectations designed to help the year run smoothly. Parents also received updates on new initiatives and upcoming events, reinforcing the school’s commitment to fostering both academic excellence and strong community ties.



Ashley Frey and Brantley Wiberg at the popcorn table.

The event set a positive tone for the year ahead, highlighting the school’s mission of partnership between families and staff. With students eager to learn and parents engaged in supporting their children’s education, Veritas begins this new season with excitement, anticipation, and a shared sense of purpose.

SPORTS

A Ride Worth Taking: Fallon Rallies for Cody Smith at Benefit Playday and Clinic

By Nancy Chapman

The Fifty Horse Ranch outside Fallon hosted a day of horse workshops and games to benefit a local cowgirl who is battling a rare brain-stem tumor.

Clinician Vernon Lawrence, owner of Lawrence Performance Horses, put on a Ranch Riding clinic at the Fifty Horse Ranch. He was approached by Kirk Ferris and James Dexter, the owner of Fifty Horse Ranch, to hold the clinic for a good cause. The cause was a benefit play day, with proceeds going to Cody Smith, who is battling a rare, life-threatening condition.

This fundraising event brought together Kirk, James, and Monica Fairbanks, with James providing the facilities, Kirk leading the equine activities, including a Ranch Riding clinic, a reining seminar with Jenny Sherbo, and other horse-riding events, and Monica organizing vendors, food and drink trucks, and the silent auction and raffle.

“It was definitely their vision, and I came in to help make it bigger,” said Monica, who helped expand the event.

A chance meeting by an organizer also brought in professional entertainment for the benefit. Levi Coby is a Christian and country singer-songwriter; just when Levi and his wife were looking to buy a newer car, an ad appeared online. That search led Levi to the team organizing the benefit. When he bought a car from Kirk’s parents, they mentioned the fundraiser Kirk was organizing for Cody.

“I was ‘in’ the moment I found out she was a young lady dealing with some extremely serious health issues,” Levi said. Kirk and James were starting to put together ideas for the benefit when Levi offered to be a part of it.

“God puts you where you are supposed to be.” For him, it was purchasing a vehicle that forged the connection—which led to the fundraiser.



Cody Smith presenting the American flag for the National Anthem. Photo by Nancy Chapman.



Left to right, are Event Coordinator Kirk Ferris, James Dexter, owner 50 Horse Ranch, and entertainer Levi Coby. Photo courtesy James Dexter.



Riders in Vernon Lawrence Ranch Riding Clinic. Photo by Ashleigh Trapanese.

He wrote ‘#Cody Strong,’ which he plans to record in Nashville in hopes it goes viral, with proceeds to support Cody’s care and treatment.

With the combined efforts of James, Kirk, Monica, Levi, and everyone who attended, the event raised more than \$10,000.

For more information, or to support Cody, please visit gofundme.com and search Help Cody Smith Treat Her Inoperable Brain Tumor.

Churchill County Schools Announce New Expectations for Sporting Events

Staff Report

Churchill County High School and Churchill County Middle School have updated their expectations for youth attending school sporting events, with both principals emphasizing safety, supervision, and a positive game-day experience.

Going forward, all youth under high school age must be accompanied by a responsible adult (21 years or older) to attend CCHS and CCMS sporting events. Students or minors who arrive without adult supervision will not be admitted.

The change comes after several years of growing safety concerns and disruptions at events involving unsupervised children who are not CCHS students. School leaders noted that risks at public events can include exposure to prohibited items such as alcohol or



Photo courtesy of CCHS Greenwave Athletics.

vaping devices, as well as interruptions to play when children wander onto fields or distract athletes.

Principals Tim Spencer (CCHS) and Dr. Deana Porretta (CCMS) stressed that these measures are designed to safeguard students, ensure uninterrupted play, and maintain a welcoming, family-friendly atmosphere. They also reminded families

that school rules and district policies remain in effect at all school-sponsored activities, with violations subject to school disciplinary action in addition to any consequences at the event.

Both schools thanked families for their cooperation in helping maintain safe, enjoyable environments for students, athletes, and the community.

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COLUMNS

What’s Cooking in Kelli’s Kitchen:
Tacos al Pastor—Simplified

By Kelli Kelly

I intentionally overscheduled myself last weekend. Not only did Erik and I cater at the Churchill Arts Council for Della Mae before their performance at the Community-wide Reunion Concert, but I also did double duty with a backyard barbecue on Sunday for the winners of a “Cook with Kelli” charitable donation. At least I had the foresight to align the menus as much as possible.

The best part was that our menu necessitated the purchase of a new piece of cooking gear—a “housewife” trompo. A trompo is the vertical rotisserie used in Mexican cuisine to cook towers of meat. The most familiar dish prepared with a trompo is tacos al pastor, but the device can be used for a variety of foods, including shawarma. I appreciate any opportunity to buy a new piece of cooking equipment, especially when it is a “necessity.” Thanks to the magic of Amazon, I had a new trompo in my hands in less than 24 hours.

With my new kitchen tool, I’m equipped to make dishes (mostly) in the way they were intended—stacked vertically and shaved onto a tortilla or pita. The best part is that my trompo can be used in an oven, on a grill, or in a smoker, so I can enjoy meat towers year-round. After my experience this weekend, I think everyone needs to own a trompo to up their Mexican and Mediterranean cuisine game.

Serious Eats’ Tacos al Pastor—Simplified Ingredients

For the pork:

- 2Whole ancho chiles, seeds and stems removed
- 2Whole pasilla or guajillo chiles, seeds and stems removed
- 1/2 cupChicken stock
- 2 tsp.Vegetable oil
- 1 tsp.Dried Mexican oregano
- 1 tsp.Ground cumin seed
- 1 tbsp.Achiote powder or paste
- 1Chipotle chile in adobo sauce, plus 2 tsp. sauce from can
- 1/4 cupDistilled white vinegar
- 2 1/2 tsp.Kosher salt
- 2 tsp.Sugar
- 3 clovesGarlic
- 2 poundsBoneless thin-sliced pork shoulder
- 1/2 poundSliced bacon
- 1Pineapple, peeled and cut into thick slices



Kelli Kelly, Slinger of Produce.
Slurper of Dumplings.
Person of the Bean.

To finish and serve:

- Corn or flour tortillas
- 1White onion, finely diced
- 1Bunch cilantro, minced leaves and tender stems
- Salsa verde
- 3 to 4Limes, cut into 8 wedges each

DIRECTIONS:

1. Place chiles in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Cook, turning occasionally, until puffed, pliable, lightly browned in spots and aromatic, about 5 minutes. Add chicken stock (it should boil immediately), then pour contents into a small bowl. Cover loosely and set aside.
2. Wipe out saucepan, add oil, and return to medium-high heat until shimmering. Add cumin, oregano and achiote; cook, stirring frequently, until aromatic but not browned, about 30 seconds. Add chipotle chile and sauce; cook until aromatic, about 30 seconds longer. Add vinegar, salt and sugar; remove from heat.
3. Scrape contents into a blender along with garlic and chiles with their soaking liquid. Blend on high until smooth, about 1 minute, scraping sides as needed. Set aside to cool slightly.
4. Combine bacon with about one-fourth of the marinade and toss well. Place in a resealable plastic bag and refrigerate 4 hours or overnight. Combine the remaining marinade with the pork, transfer to another bag and refrigerate.
5. To cook: impale one slice of pineapple on the trompo. Layer marinated pork and bacon on top to form a tower. Top with another slice of pineapple.
6. Cook in oven, smoker or grill (indirect heat) at 275–350 degrees for 2 to 4 hours (depending on tower size) until tender. Periodically brush exterior with juices that collect at the bottom.
7. To serve, shave off outside of tower, pile onto tortillas, and top with garnishes.

Tip: To prepare without a trompo, layer the bacon and pork in a disposable aluminum bread pan.

Allison’s Book Report:
“Lovers and Liars”
by Amanda Eyre Ward

By Allison Diegel

There’s still a few weeks of summer left, and that means we still have a few weeks to squeeze in all of those perfect summertime reads before we move into books with a cozier vibe. This week’s book is a juicy family drama that you’ll want to devour in one sitting—whether you read it in a hammock or by the pool, definitely add this one to your end-of-summer reading list!

In Amanda Eyre Ward’s “Lovers and Liars,” the Peacock sisters—Sylvie, Cleo, and Emma—are thrown together for a spectacularly dramatic destination wedding at a sprawling English castle. The catch? The sisters have been living separate lives, each one harboring their own pile of secrets. The wedding is for Sylvie, a newly widowed librarian who has found a new, mysterious, and very wealthy love in Simon Rampling. Her older sister, Cleo, a no-nonsense criminal defense lawyer, immediately suspects Simon isn’t who he claims to be. Armed with her lawyer instincts and a stack of files, she’s determined to protect Sylvie from another heart-break—but she’s also wrestling with her own trust issues.



Meanwhile, their youngest sister, Emma, is caught in a lie of her own. She can’t afford the lavish trip and has been hiding a desperate financial situation from her family. This reunion forces her to confront the silence that’s been suffocating

her. As the sisters navigate the castle’s grand halls, medieval meals, and falconry lessons, their long-held secrets begin to unravel. The situation is made even more complicated by the arrival of their toxic mother, who brings all the old, painful childhood dynamics to the surface.

Over the course of the weekend, the sisters are forced to confront the lies they’ve been telling themselves and each other. The wedding, which was meant to be a celebration, becomes a catalyst for truth. “Lovers and Liars” is a witty, heartwarming story about the complexities of family and the messy, beautiful bonds of sisterhood. It’s about finding the courage to make new choices, forgiving past mistakes, and discovering that even after decades of secrets, a family can find joy and genuine connection once again. It’s a tale that proves that sometimes the biggest deceptions are the ones we tell ourselves—and the best way to move forward is to embrace the truth, together.

Whatever books you have left to squeeze in before summer ends, I hope there’s room on your list for “Lovers and Liars”—and don’t forget to pop over to my Instagram @allison.the.reader for more recommendations and book talk.

Allison Diegel is the Executive Chaos Coordinator at the Diegel Home for Wayward Girls. She has been reading since before she could talk, and now she likes doing lots of both.

Crossword

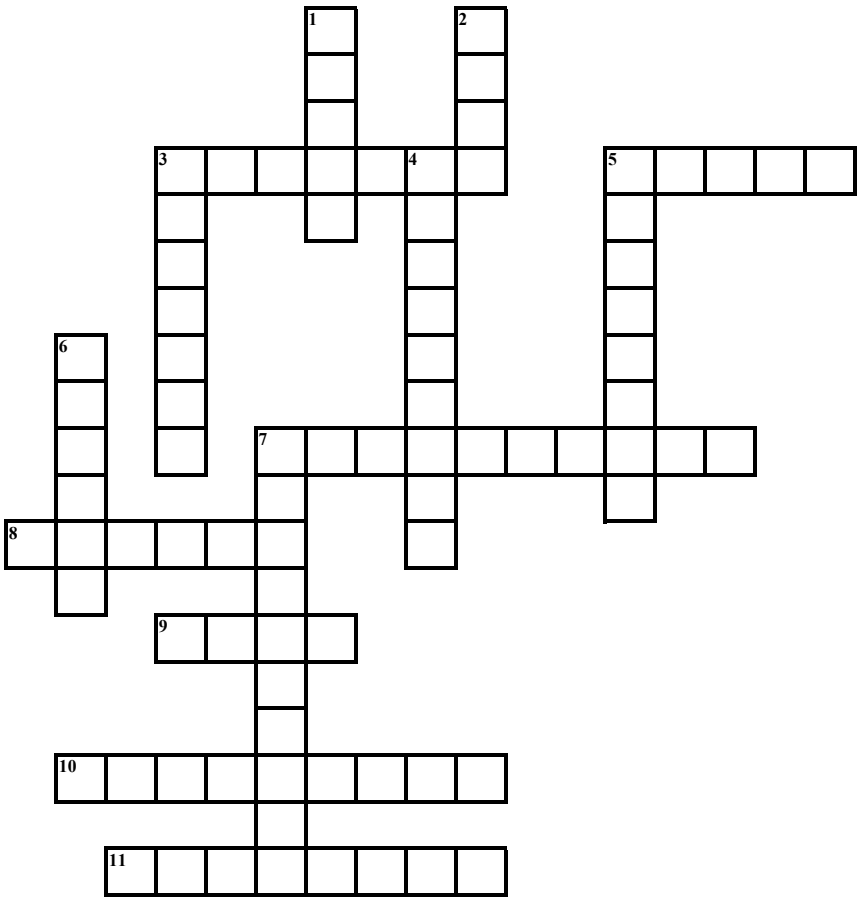
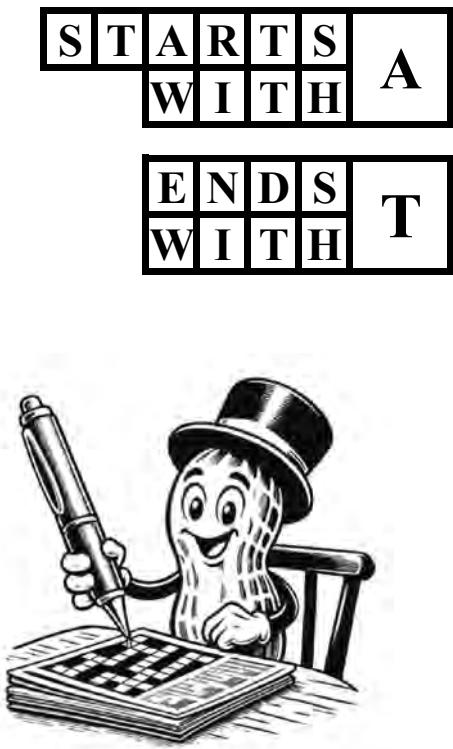
By Peanut

Across

3. Gymnast
5. Monk
7. Property tax basis
8. Climb
9. Passageway
10. Medieval scientist
11. Art style

Down

1. Cravat
2. Relative
3. Fruit
4. Tire maintenance
5. ABCs
6. Month
7. Witch hazel use



[Crossword answers found on page 13]

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In Remembrance

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

HVAC Removal / Replacement Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe Indian Reservation

Scope of work: The FPST Housing Department is soliciting bids from qualified contractors to perform the removal and replacement of HVAC systems in 49 occupied residential housing units.

This project is funded by Indian Housing Block Grant and is subject to Davis-Bacon prevailing wage requirements, Tribal Employment Rights Ordinance (TERO), and tribal tax policies.

Key Dates: Pre Bid Meeting:
Aug. 14, 2025, at 10 a.m.
(FPST Housing Department)
Bid Deadline: Sept. 2, 2025, by 5 p.m.

A full RFP packet is available upon request by contacting:
Housingdevelopment@fpst.org
775-423-3321

Published in
The Fallon Post
Aug. 8, 15, 22, 29 and Sept. 5, 2025
Ad #6356

IMPORTANT TAX NOTICE

The First (1st) Installment of the 2025-2026 FISCAL YEAR taxes will be due and payable on or before August 18, 2025. If not paid on or before August 28, 2025, delinquent charges will be applied in accordance with NRS 361.483. Failure to receive a tax bill does not excuse the taxpayer from the timely payment of taxes in accordance with NRS 361.480. If you have recently refinanced, purchased, paid off your mortgage, moved, or not yet received your property tax bill, please contact the Clerk/Treasurer's office or visit our website at: www.churchillcountynv.gov for current tax information and/or online payment options.


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Published in
The Fallon Post
August 22, 2025
Ad #6362

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

Crossword found on page 12

ABBOT	ALIGNMENT	ASSESSMENT
ABSTRACT	ALPHABET	ASTRINGENT
ACROBAT	APRICOT	AUGUST
ADIT	ASCENT	AUNT
ALCHEMIST	ASCOT	



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C O L U M N S

Postcards: Fallon’s National Sandwich Queen

By Michon Mackedon

In September 1961, Fallon was abuzz with the news that one of its own had just won a national contest, receiving a prize most could only fantasize about. Helen Millward, who, along with her mother, Minnie Blair, and her husband, Bill Millward, owned and operated the local Spudnut Shop, had just become the National Sandwich Queen. The prize: a two-week, all expenses paid trip to Europe for two, plus \$500.00 in cash (which went a lot farther in 1961 than it does today). Those who knew Helen were not entirely surprised that she had captured the national award. From her childhood on, she had been interested in cooking and had won a state-wide culinary contest while she was still in high school.

Millward (1910-2007), in an Oral History recorded at the Churchill County Museum in 1990, described how she developed her winning sandwich recipe: “I took a vacation in 1959 to Chicago and really it was just a chance to get away for three or four days but the shop could pay for it. I joined a restaurant association and went to the convention.... it was quite wonderful. I went by this display, and this was the fourth year of the national sandwich contest, and here was this dismal looking creation that had been sitting there for a day or two. One prize winner had slashed a hot dog, threw it in the fryer and it curled into a circle. It was served on a bun – a something dog. The lady that won used the famous sandwich that has corned beef and thousand island dressing and Swiss cheese on rye bread [Reuben]. I looked at all of them and thought I could do something better than that. I came home and I wrote for the entry blanks, I was going to make a

sandwich that was cut like a cake and very fancy. I made it, but I also had a new oven and I wanted to try out my oven, I cooked a roast beef prime rib and I invited the teachers to come out. In Chicago I had had a roast beef cocktail made of thin sliced roast beef and sour cream and horseradish and I took my idea from that. I made it into a sandwich on rye bread. The teachers just loved it and they said it was better than that other one -- send them both in. So I sent them both in and at five o'clock it was time for the mail and it had to be mailed, it was the last day. I said to my mother, ‘I’ve got the recipe typed, what’ll I call the damn thing?’ and she said ‘Atlasta Good Beef.’ I’m sure the name had a great deal of influence on the prize, but that was quite an experience.”

The name did not just spring from a moment’s inspiration. It had a history connecting it to Helen, her mother, and the Spudnut Shop. When Minne Blair moved from Tonopah to Fallon in 1924, she dreamed of purchasing a place to raise turkeys and a garden. She and her husband, Ernie Blair, decided to buy a parcel known as the Ferguson Ranch, roughly located between what is now the abandoned Cock and Bull restaurant on South Taylor Street (once the Spudnut Shop) and the canal, then extending west to include what is now Churchill County High School. When the purchase was finalized, Minnie was said to have exclaimed, “At last, a ranch!” And so, the land became the Atlasta Ranch, and her world-famous turkeys became Atlasta Ranch Turkeys. Helen’s sandwich carried the name forward and helped capture the attention of the judges.

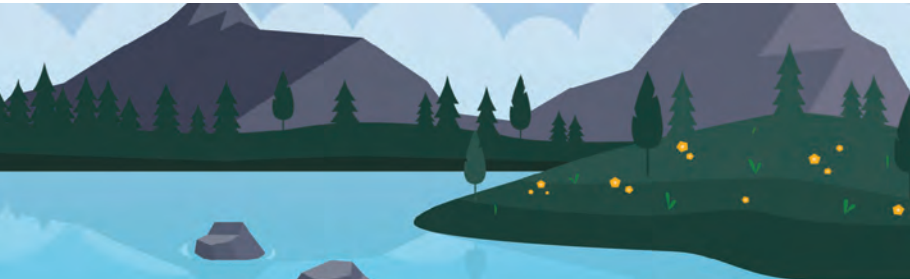
Helen and her husband Bill embarked on a whirlwind of a trip, which they embraced with intelligence and gusto. Her itinerary included Copenhagen, London, Paris, Zurich, Lucerne, Venice, and Munich.

“I had a wonderful trip and I was treated just royally. We met some Millwards going from Copenhagen to London and by chance they had made their reservations for their seat in May and we had made ours in September and I appeared at the airport first and they (the airline) gave us their seats. When they (the other Millwards) came they just raised holy heck, they wanted these particular seats. So we got to meet them and he was very snooty and we said we’d like to meet them, our name was Millward and their name was Millward but they were very disdainful. When we got to the airport in London they (the restaurant association members) met me with a Rolls Royce with a chauffeur. I was to be met everywhere with a chauffeur and an American Express man. They had brought me a bouquet of flowers that was this long (twenty-four inches). I had all this attention, I had a Rolls Royce with a chauffeur, all these flowers and I’m sure they (the other Millwards) must have wondered who in the heck I was.”

Here are the ingredients for making Helen’s Atlasta Good Beef Sandwich, thanks to Karen Sustacha. I don’t know the exact proportions, so taste away: rye sandwich bread; sliced deli roast beef (Helen used prime rib); dressing (sour cream, Lipton’s’ onion soup mix, horseradish, Worcestershire sauce, salt, and pepper). Bon Appetit.

Please send your stories and ideas for stories to mackedon@phonewave.net.

Michon Mackedon is a native of Fallon and a retired professor of English and Humanities (WNC). She loves her family, her home, her dog, reading, writing, making good food, and sipping a glass of fine white wine. Beyond that, she refuses to be categorized.



WATER LEVELS

Measurements Taken August 19, 2025, at 8:30 a.m.

Lahontan Reservoir	109,100 af
Carson River Below Lahontan	687 cfs
Truckee Canal at Wadsworth	115 cfs
Truckee Canal at Hazen	45.7 cfs
Carson River at Ft. Churchill	0.72 cfs

August 19, 2024	August 19, 2023	August 19, 2022
196,939 acre feet	264,766 acre feet	60,632 acre feet

Cfs - Cubic Feet per Second | Af - Acre Feet | [TCID.org](https://www.tcid.org) & [Water Data.USGS.gov](https://www.waterdata.usgs.gov)

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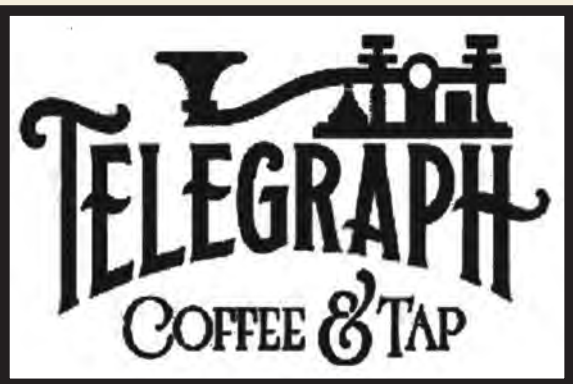
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