the GREAT BASIN SUN
Looking Beyond Local
GreatBasinSun.com SECTION B The Week of November 6, 2026

From Nevada to Romania, Finding Common Ground





State agriculture director JJ Goicoechea joins historic trade mission as American and Romanian producers explore new markets and shared solutions. Photos courtesy of the NDA.

By Rachel Dahl

The distance between a Nevada cattle ranch and a Romanian farm is thousands of miles, but the challenges facing the people who work them can sound remarkably familiar.

Water is scarce when it is needed most. Production costs keep climbing. Farmers and ranchers need reliable markets, workable regulations and technology that helps them produce more without consuming more resources.

Those shared concerns brought Nevada Department of Agriculture Director JJ Goicoechea to Romania in October as part of the first agricultural trade mission to the country organized by the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture.

The Oct. 17-24 mission brought agriculture officials from six states together with Romanian farmers, processors, government representatives and business leaders to explore new opportunities for agricultural trade and cooperation.

For Nevada, where cattle, hay and dairy production remain important parts of the rural economy, the trip offered an opportunity to explore international markets while exchanging ideas with producers facing many of the same economic and environmental pressures.

Goicoechea joined representatives from New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Carolina and Tennessee for the mission, organized through NASDA's international trade program in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service.

The delegation toured Romanian farms, met with agricultural organizations and discussed opportunities to expand trade between the United States and Romania.

Among the central subjects were drought management, irrigation technology, agricultural biotechnology, livestock production, regulatory barriers and the challenge of keeping farms economically viable.

At meetings with Romania's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, American and Romanian representatives discussed how farmers can adapt to drought, modernize irrigation infrastructure and better manage risk.

Romanian agricultural news organizations reported that the discussions also addressed soil conservation, access to markets, agricultural cooperatives and the challenges facing smaller farming operations.

Those are recognizable issues in Nevada, where agricultural producers depend on limited water supplies, face substantial transportation costs and operate in a state where public lands and natural-resource management decisions directly affect rural economies.

Continue reading on page B-2.

Burgum order expands BLM grazing



Cattle grazing on the 96 Ranch in Paradise Valley. Photo courtesy William Smock / Paradise Valley Folklife Project collection.

By Doris Rodriguez

Interior Secretary Doug Burgum on Oct. 27 ordered the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and other Interior bureaus to open more federal land to livestock grazing, clear a permit-renewal backlog, and reinstate suspended Animal Unit Months (AUMs) where range conditions allow, a move that could affect Humboldt and Lander County permittees waiting on vacant allotments and long-term renewals.

Secretary's Order 3454 carries out a September executive order on supporting ranchers. Burgum's release said the national cattle herd is at a 75-year low and framed the order as a way to strengthen domestic meat production and rural economies. Nothing in the order automatically adds AUMs in Nevada; Winnemucca and Battle Mountain district offices still have to show which vacant or suspended allotments they can put back into play, and on what timeline.

"This order cuts through bureaucratic red tape to deliver certainty and flexibility for our nation's ranchers," Burgum said in the Interior release. "By promoting healthy rangelands and expanding grazing opportunities, we are strengthening our food supply, reinvigorating rural economies, and ensuring the legacy of American ranching continues for generations to come."

The practical deadlines for local operators are near. Within 45 days of the order, BLM must tell field offices how to process vacant allotments, when existing environmental reviews can be reused, and how to prefer local livestock operators under the Taylor Grazing Act. Permits that meet their terms are to be renewed for full 10-year terms, not short annual authorizations. Within 60 days, BLM must submit a plan to eliminate the renewal backlog. Within 90 days, BLM must inventory suspended AUMs, including those frozen before 1995, and map a path to put forage back on permits where the land can support it.

The order also sets up a Rangeland Health Initiative led by BLM, with deadlines to identify unused grazing land across Interior, publish a public map of available allotments, and use new technology to cut the renewal backlog. It directs reviews of policies that limit how ranchers deal with predators and ties wild horse and burro management to rangeland health goals.

Ranchers with questions should watch the Winnemucca and Battle Mountain district offices and the forthcoming vacant-allotment guidance. Key Interior deadlines from the order run from about mid-December 2026 through early 2027, depending on the 45-, 60-, and 90-day clocks that started Oct. 27.

The Power Has to Get There

Greenlink is building a new backbone for Nevada's electric system

By Rachel Dahl

Nevada can build all the power plants it wants but that electricity still has to get somewhere to be useful.

For the past four weeks, Great Basin Sun has looked at Nevada's growing demand for electricity, the large industrial customers driving much of that growth, who may pay for the infrastructure required to serve them, and what happens when customers need power before the utility can deliver it.

The next piece is transmission.

Think of Nevada's electric system much like its highway system.

Generating plants make electricity. High-voltage transmission lines move large amounts of it over long distances. Substations act like interchanges, moving electricity onto other lines and eventually down to the distribution system that serves individual customers.

Nevada is now building a new electrical highway.

NV Energy's Greenlink Nevada project will create two major 525-kilovolt transmission lines across much of the state, along with additional 345-kV lines connecting the Yerington area with Reno.

Greenlink West runs from Southern Nevada to the Yerington area. Greenlink North will continue from Yerington east toward Ely.

Together with NV Energy's existing One Nevada Transmission Line, the projects are intended to create what the utility calls a triangle of transmission across the state.

The idea is straightforward: electricity generated in one part of Nevada can move more easily to another when it is needed.

NV Energy says that improves reliability by giving power more than one path to travel.

Greenlink West is already being built.

The Bureau of Land Management reported in October that construction was underway along portions of the corridor, including transmission structures, access roads and substation work.

NV Energy expects Greenlink West to be in service in May 2027.

One of its key pieces is the Walker River Substation near Yerington, adjacent to NV Energy's existing Fort Churchill facilities.

NV Energy describes Walker River as the largest substation project the company has undertaken.

That location is becoming increasingly important because existing generation, proposed new generation and major transmission lines all meet in the general Yerington-Fort Churchill area.

Greenlink North is the other half of the project.

The proposed 235-mile, 525-kV line will extend from the Yerington area toward Ely, crossing rural portions of Lyon, Churchill, Lander, Eureka and White Pine counties.

NV Energy plans to begin construction in 2027 and put the line into service by the end of 2028.

Greenlink North is still working through parts of the permitting process. The Bureau of Land Management lists the federal environmental review as ongoing, while the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection opened a public-comment period on a construction-related permit through Nov. 30.

The transmission question has become particularly important in Northern Nevada.

NV Energy executive Shahzad Lateef told the Northern Nevada Business Weekly earlier this year that Northern Nevada currently has no additional transmission import capacity available for new load growth.

Continue reading on page B-3.

COMMENTARY

The Size of the Newsroom Isn't the Size of the Story

By Rachel Dahl

There is something wonderfully ironic about watching two veteran newsmen discuss the future of journalism on television while the rest of us are trying to figure out how to keep newspapers alive.

Sam Shad recently welcomed Glenn Cook, executive editor of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, to *Nevada Newsmakers* for a conversation that wandered through presidential politics, the First Amendment, Harry Reid, Colorado River water negotiations, artificial intelligence and the changing habits of news consumers.

Pretty much everything except how to get somebody to renew a newspaper subscription.

Which, for those of us in the business, remains a fairly pressing question.

Cook oversees one of Nevada's most influential newsrooms. The *Review-Journal* has the institutional resources, reporting depth and audience reach that most newspapers in America can only dream about.

And yet, listening to him, I was struck by how many of the challenges facing his organization are precisely the same ones confronting the little newspapers scattered across Nevada's enormous geography.

The scale is different. The fundamental problem isn't.

How do we get people reliable information in a world increasingly flooded with information that isn't reliable at all?

Cook was particularly interesting when Shad asked about artificial intelligence.

The *Review-Journal*, he explained, is already using AI to help journalists process enormous documents, summarize previously reported material and produce certain routine information pieces. The newsroom requires disclosure when AI is used to create stories and insists on human verification.

That's a sensible approach.

I've come to think of artificial intelligence as something like the arrival of the calculator. It doesn't eliminate the need to understand mathematics. It simply changes how much time we spend doing arithmetic.

Of course, a calculator doesn't occasionally invent a Supreme Court decision or attribute a quotation to someone who never said it, but AI sometimes will.

Which brings us to Cook's most important observation.

The *Review-Journal* has the staff to verify the information its reporters produce. Most newspapers, he acknowledged, don't have that luxury.

He's right.

Across rural America, newspapers are operating with fewer reporters, smaller advertising bases, rising production costs and communities that still expect someone to show up at the school board meeting. Rightly so.

Our school board meetings are important. So is the county commission, the water district, the planning commission and the seemingly inconsequential public hearing where somebody proposes a change that will affect a community for the next 50 years.

These are not necessarily stories that attract millions of clicks, but they are the stories that determine how people live.

And here's where I think the future of journalism gets interesting.

Large newsrooms have advantages in staffing, technology and institutional reach. Small newsrooms have something else: proximity.

The reporter covering a rural county may see the county commissioners at the grocery store, know the rancher whose water rights are being challenged and understand why a proposed industrial development that looks perfectly reasonable on a map might fundamentally change the character of a community.

That familiarity is an advantage, provided the journalist remembers that knowing the people involved is not the same as knowing the facts.

Proximity can also create blind spots. Sometimes it's harder to ask an uncomfortable question when you're going to see the person you're questioning at church on Sunday.

Good journalism requires both access and independence.

Cook also offered an observation about presidential power that deserves attention well beyond the newsroom. Every incoming administration, he suggested, tries to exercise more authority than the one before it.

Regardless of party.

That's a real good reminder that the First Amendment isn't supposed to protect only the journalists whose reporting we happen to like, but it protects the ones who annoy us, too.

Perhaps especially those.

And that brings me back to newspapers. The *Review-Journal* and the smallest weekly in rural Nevada have more in common than their circulation numbers might suggest.

Both have to earn the public's trust. Both have to distinguish reporting from rumor. Both have to find ways to pay for the expensive, sometimes tedious work of establishing what actually happened.

And both operate in an environment where everybody with a smartphone can publish something, but not everybody publishing something is practicing journalism.

We can compete for readers, advertising, stories and territory. Competition, properly understood, makes us better.

But we ought to recognize that the real competition isn't necessarily the newspaper down the road. It's the growing belief that facts are optional, that verification is unnecessary and that journalism is simply another word for somebody's opinion.

Nevada needs the *Review-Journal*. It also needs the little papers in places where the nearest metropolitan newsroom may be hundreds of miles away.

And it needs journalists willing to do the difficult work of asking questions, checking answers and publishing what they find, whether the people involved appreciate it or not.

The future of journalism won't be decided solely by the size of the newsroom, the sophistication of its technology or the number of people clicking on its stories.

It will be decided by whether communities still believe the work is worth having and whether those of us doing it can continue to earn that belief, and the subscriptions and the ads that support it.

One verified fact at a time.

FALL ON THE RANGE



Where the work changes with the seasons.
As the days grow shorter and the aspens turn gold,
Nevada ranchers are horseback bringing cattle home.
Nevada ranching is a way of life, rooted in hard work,
stewardship and generations of knowledge.

EDUCATION ■ RESEARCH ■ CONSERVATION
NRRC
NEVADA RANGELAND RESOURCES COMMISSION

Continued from page B-1 - Romania.

The Nevada delegation's participation also connected the state's livestock experience with a broader conversation about animal agriculture, specialty foods, grain production and agricultural innovation.

During an Oct. 20 farm visit, the American delegation met with representatives of the Forum of Professional Farmers and Processors of Romania, known as Forum APPR.

The organization described the meeting as an opportunity for direct discussions about agricultural policy, the challenges facing producers and potential cooperation between the two countries.

The discussions extended beyond farming techniques to include the regulations and economic conditions that influence whether producers can compete in domestic and international markets.

The trade mission also comes as Nevada continues working to expand markets for agricultural products beyond its borders.

According to the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, Nevada exported an estimated $201 million in agricultural products in 2024.

Beef and veal accounted for approximately $53 million, while dairy exports totaled $28 million. Animal feeds and other feed grains contributed another $17 million, and other livestock products accounted for approximately $10 million.

Other plant products represented the state's largest agricultural export category at approximately $80 million.

Those figures illustrate the importance of international trade to Nevada agriculture, even though the state's agricultural economy is considerably smaller than those of major farming states.

Establishing new export markets can help producers diversify their customers and reduce dependence on a limited number of buyers. But opportunities also depend on transportation costs, import requirements, product demand and the ability of suppliers to compete on price.

No specific Nevada export agreement or new sale resulting from the Romania mission has been announced.

The trip was designed to establish relationships, identify opportunities and improve understanding of the barriers that can make agricultural trade difficult.

The mission was part of NASDA's participation in the USDA Regional Agricultural Promotion Program, which supports efforts to develop international markets for American agricultural products.

NASDA has organized or scheduled other missions during 2026, including visits to Africa, Spain, Morocco and Chile.

For Nevada producers, the value of the Romania visit will ultimately depend on what follows: whether the relationships lead to trade opportunities, useful technology exchanges or cooperation that helps agricultural businesses remain competitive.

For now, the mission represents an early step in building connections between Nevada's agricultural economy and potential partners in Eastern Europe.

The countries may be separated by an ocean, but farmers and ranchers on both sides face a familiar question: How do they continue producing food, protect their resources and earn a living in an increasingly complicated world?

SUBSCRIBE

Never miss a single word!

RANGE Media Company

THE FALLON POST
THE FERNLEY REPORTER
LOVELOCK REVIEW MINER
THE HUMBOLDT SUN
BATTLE MOUNTAIN BUGLE
EUREKA COUNTY STAR

EVENTS

Worth The Drive

By Doris Rodriguez

Roads to Native Nevada

Aho, fellow Nevadans!

November is Native American Heritage Month, and Nevada's tribal communities are helping make this a weekend worth the gas money. From Pyramid Lake to the Moapa River Valley, there's music, food, art and gatherings open to neighbors who show up with good manners and an open mind.

And along the way, there's plenty more happening across the Silver State. So fill the tank, grab your calendar and let's hit the road!

Winnemucca and Humboldt County

Northern Nevada Native Seed Forum, Nov. 5 at the Humboldt County Library in Winnemucca. Sessions begin at 9 a.m., with in-person and online participation available.

Winnemucca Archers Club Coyote Calling Contest, Nov. 6-7. Entry fee is $75.

Age- and Dementia-Friendly Winnemucca offers free respite care from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Pleasant Senior Center. Lunch, music and games.

"Grateful for the Great Basin" gathering, Nov. 5 at the Sonoma Creek Wildlife Viewing Area.

Basque Mus Dinner, Nov. 7-8 at the Winnemucca Convention Center's West Hall.

Battle Mountain and Beowawe

Battle Mountain Chukar Tournament and Feed, Nov. 6-7. Check-in is Nov. 6, with the hunt and feed Nov. 7 at the Civic Center.

Nevada Department of Wildlife's free Youth Pheasant Hunt near Beowawe, Nov. 6-7. Hunter education and a current hunting license are required.

West Wendover and Jackpot

Bellamy Brothers perform at the Peppermill Concert Hall in West Wendover, 8 p.m. Nov. 5-6.

Fenix Flexin performs at The Taphouse Event Center in Jackpot, 8 p.m. Nov. 6.

Elko and Spring Creek

California Trail Interpretive Center's Explore & Create: Bald Eagles, 10-11 a.m. Nov. 6 in Elko.

Studio B Elko Quilt Retreat, Nov. 6-8 at the Elko Convention Center.

Nevada Outdoor School's Celebrate the Great Basin walk, 10 a.m. Nov. 6 at Elko Peace Park.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeastern Nevada's 10th anniversary fundraiser, Nov. 7 at the Elko Convention Center.

"Giving Thanks: A Fall Storybook Hike," 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Nov. 7 at Talbot Trailhead in Lamoille Canyon.

Spring Creek Ladies Craft Day, 9-11:30 a.m. Nov. 7 at Calvary Chapel Spring Creek. Cost is $6 to make two Christmas ornaments.

Ely

Fine Art Auction at Nancy Riedell Fine Arts Studio & Gallery, Nov. 7. Meet-and-greet begins at 4 p.m., with bidding at 5 p.m.

Chapter C of P.E.O. auction, 6-8 p.m. Nov. 7 at the Bristlecone Convention Center.

Pyramid Lake and Fallon

Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe's first annual Pyramid Lake 3K Color Run, 9 a.m. Nov. 7 at the Food Distribution Building.



Photo courtesy of V Hanging Heart Media.

Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe's Toi Ticutta Health Fair, 1-4 p.m. Nov. 6 at the 3C Event Complex.

St. John's Lutheran Church Holiday Craft Fair in Fallon, 3-7 p.m. Nov. 6 and 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Nov. 7.

Fernley

The Fern 45, Nov. 5-7 at Reno-Fernley Raceway. Off-roading, camping and live music in celebration of Nevada veterans.

Virginia City and Dayton

St. Mary's Art Center paranormal investigation in Virginia City, 8-10 p.m. Nov. 7. Registration required.

Dayton Veterans Appreciation Dinner, Nov. 8 at Dayton Valley Golf Club. Doors open at 4 p.m., with the program beginning at 4:30 p.m.

Gardnerville and Minden

Young at Heart Holiday Craft Fair, Nov. 6-7 at the Douglas County Community & Senior Center in Gardnerville. More than 100 vendors. Free admission.

Fifth annual Día de los Muertos Festival, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Nov. 7 at Heritage Park in Gardnerville. Free admission.

Heavenly Holiday Market, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Nov. 7 at Carson Valley United Methodist Church.

Ferris 50 Endurance Run, Nov. 7, featuring 50-mile, 50K, 15K and 1.5K kids races, starting at the Douglas County Fairgrounds and finishing at TJ's Corral in Minden.

The road home

Native American Heritage Month runs throughout November, and this weekend is a fine place to start.

When you visit a reservation or colony, be a good guest. Ask before taking photos. Follow the emcee's lead at a powwow. Buy something from a local artist if you can. The best souvenirs come with a story and a handshake.

Plans change, weather shifts and schedules slide, so call ahead or check the website before you go.

Safe Travels!

Silver State Horse Expo Brings Clinics, Demonstrations to Reno



Sean Coleman, founder of Applied Horsemanship, is scheduled to lead clinics during the Silver State Horse Expo Nov. 14-15 in Reno. Photo courtesy of Wendy Papero.

By Nancy Chapman

Horse enthusiasts can watch mounted shooting, see equestrian demonstrations, and learn about riding and horse training during the Silver State Horse Expo, scheduled for Nov. 14-15 at the Nevada State Fairgrounds in Reno.

The Nevada Quarter Horse Association and Stable Pros are organizing the two-day event, according to information provided by event representatives. Their announced program features horsemanship clinics led by Sean Coleman, mounted law enforcement demonstrations, a versatility ranch horse competition, and equestrian performances.

Coleman, founder of Applied Horsemanship, was named the United Kingdom's Horseman of the Year in 2025 after winning the Horsemanship Challenge. Road to the Horse announced Oct. 15 that Coleman had been selected as a Wild Card competitor for its 2027 competition in Lexington, Kentucky. He has more than 15 years of experience working with horses and riders across English and Western disciplines, according to the competition's official biography.

The expo organizers' schedule lists Coleman's clinic sessions from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. The sessions are intended to address communication between horse and rider, riding fundamentals, and ranch horse skills. The organizers also list a versatility ranch horse competition following the afternoon clinic.

At midday, organizers plan a cowboy mounted shooting demonstration featuring Janet Freeland. In biographical material provided for the event, Freeland says she and her horse have competed in mounted shooting for 12 years. The sport involves riders firing blank ammunition at balloon targets while riding a timed course.

The program also lists demonstrations by mounted law enforcement personnel, Bridget Fitzpatrick Performance Horses, Northern Nevada Academy of Riding, and the Comstock Arabian Horse Association. Organizers say the event will include vendors offering Cowboy Christmas shopping.

Event materials describe public demonstrations as free, with separate arrangements for paid clinic participation and vendor purchases. Visitors interested in taking part in the clinics should confirm registration details and the final schedule with event organizers before attending.

Continued from page B-1 - Power.

He said Greenlink West should provide additional capacity into Northern Nevada, with Greenlink North adding further reliability and flexibility once completed.

That helps explain something we have encountered repeatedly during this series.

A power plant can exist somewhere on NV Energy's system without enough transmission capacity being available to deliver hundreds of additional megawatts to a new industrial customer in Fernley, Storey County or elsewhere.

The transmission line has to have room, and the electricity still has to reach the correct substation.

That is why large customers such as Microsoft have been involved in separate proceedings for new high-voltage substations, and why some industrial developers are looking at their own generation while permanent utility infrastructure is built.

Greenlink is frequently discussed alongside Nevada's recent growth in proposed data-center development, but the project predates the current data-center boom.

NV Energy first proposed Greenlink in 2020 and says it was designed to improve statewide reliability, connect renewable-energy areas and create additional transmission capacity.

Data centers and other large industrial customers may use that capacity, but they are not the sole reason the project exists.

Greenlink also affects mines, geothermal and solar projects, utilities and communities throughout rural Nevada.

Greenlink is one of the largest infrastructure investments in Nevada.

When the Public Utilities Commission approved the projects in 2021, the estimated cost was about $2.5 billion.

By NV Energy's 2024 resource-plan filing, the estimate had risen to approximately $4.2 billion.

Company testimony attributed the increase to expanded project scope, higher labor and material costs, sales taxes and escalation between the original estimate and construction.

Those costs are part of Nevada's broader discussion about how much transmission is needed, who benefits from it and how those costs should be recovered.

For rural Nevada, Greenlink is more than a line on a utility map.

Transmission towers, substations, access roads and construction activity are being placed across rural counties.

At the same time, those lines can provide access to new generating resources and additional electrical capacity that could support mines, manufacturers and other industrial development.

Nevada's electricity challenge is not simply producing more power.

It is producing enough electricity, at the right time, and building a system capable of moving it where it needs to go.

Next in the Powering Nevada series: What happens when the grid reaches the customer — substations, connection agreements and the last mile of delivering industrial power.

MADE HERE

Nevada Businesses Help Build Thacker Pass Lithium Project

More than 50 companies are contributing materials and services as construction drives demand across northern Nevada

By Rachel Dahl

From industrial fabrication shops in Winnemucca to tire dealers in Battle Mountain and manufacturers in Fernley, Nevada businesses are helping build one of the state's largest industrial projects.

Lithium Americas, developer of the Thacker Pass lithium project in northern Humboldt County, reports that more than 50 companies are working on the mine and its associated Workforce Hub in Winnemucca. The contractors provide everything from fabricated steel and construction aggregate to specialized liners, concrete foundations, tires and industrial supplies.



Thacker Pass job site. Photo courtesy of Lithium Americas.

In a Nevada Day newsletter distributed in late October, the company highlighted six Nevada businesses contributing to the project, underscoring the economic activity extending well beyond the mine's construction site.

Among them is CarWil, a Winnemucca industrial fabrication company manufacturing pipe racks used in the mine's processing facilities. The massive prefabricated structures carry piping and related equipment through the plant.

Approximately 100 pipe-rack modules were scheduled for transport from CarWil's fabrication facility to Thacker Pass during 2026. Some of the oversized loads measure approximately 90 feet long and 24 feet wide, requiring specialized transportation arrangements, highway escorts and coordination with state transportation officials.

In Fernley, AGRU America will manufacture high-density polyethylene liners covering 68 acres of the project's Clay Tailings Filter Stack area. The liners are part of the infrastructure used to manage processed mining material.

Hunewill Construction supplies aggregate, while Jensen Infrastructure in Reno manufactures precast foundations for the project.

Point S Battle Mountain Tire helps maintain the tires needed to keep construction equipment operating, and Western Nevada Supply in Winnemucca provides construction materials.

Together, the businesses illustrate the range of supporting industries involved in constructing a major mining operation, from specialized manufacturing to the everyday supplies that keep a construction site running.

Thacker Pass is being developed to produce lithium carbonate, a material used in rechargeable batteries for electric vehicles, energy storage systems and other applications.

Lithium Americas has described the project as the only U.S. lithium operation currently undergoing major construction and the second-largest capital project in Nevada.

The project's first phase carries a previously published construction capital estimate of approximately $2.93 billion, although the company has cautioned that inflation, tariffs, transportation costs and labor conditions could affect the final amount.

In its August financial update, Lithium Americas reported more than 1,600 personnel at the construction site and more than 1,500 workers living at the Workforce Hub in Winnemucca as of June 30.

The company projected that the on-site workforce would exceed 2,000 during the second half of 2026, as construction shifted toward additional piping, electrical and equipment installation.

The company continues to target mechanical completion of the project's first phase in late 2027.

The construction activity also creates demand for transportation, equipment maintenance, industrial services and infrastructure across the region.

A rail-connected transload facility west of Winnemucca is being developed to support the mine's future operations. The facility is intended to receive and transfer materials needed for lithium processing, with completion targeted for 2027.

The project represents an opportunity for northern Nevada suppliers to participate in a major industrial development without necessarily being located at the mine itself.

However, the longer-term economic impact remains to be determined. Construction contracts can provide substantial short-term business, while sustained benefits will depend on the mine's transition to production and the extent to which its operating needs continue to be met by regional suppliers.

The project has also generated controversy over environmental impacts, water resources and Native American cultural concerns. State regulators approved key environmental permits in 2022, subject to operating requirements and restrictions.

For businesses across northern Nevada, the current construction phase is already demonstrating how a major natural-resource project can generate demand throughout a regional supply chain.

From Fernley to Winnemucca and Battle Mountain, the work of building Thacker Pass extends far beyond the boundaries of the mine.

School Cannabis Tax Falls 40% as Lawmakers Weigh Overhaul

By Doris Rodriguez

Cannabis tax dollars earmarked for Nevada schools have fallen sharply since their high point four years ago. Revenue directed to the State Education Fund from cannabis excise taxes peaked in 2021 and was about 40% lower by 2025, a legislative subcommittee told the Interim Legislative Committee on Revenue.

The drop tracks declining wholesale and retail prices as the market has matured. Cannabis flower that averaged $9.02 a gram in 2019 fell to $4.46 by 2025. Infused edibles dropped from roughly $19.77 per unit to $11.81 over the same period.

The State Education Fund, which receives most cannabis excise tax revenue, has directed nearly $716 million to K-12 schools since 2018, according to a Guinn Center analysis. That equals roughly $1,500 per student over seven years, though the revenue represents only about 2% of the state's overall education budget.

"Overall, the annual price trends indicate that Nevada's cannabis market became less expensive for many of the product categories analyzed," said Erica Scott, a Nevada Department of Taxation economist who led the subcommittee.

Scott said lower prices could stem from several factors: a more mature market, increased competition, production efficiencies, technological improvements, or cheaper unlicensed products and intoxicating hemp.

Adult-use sales have been legal since 2017. The state levies a 15% tax on the fair-market value of wholesale cannabis and a 10% excise tax on recreational retail sales. State and local sales taxes, ranging from about 6.85% to 8.375%, are added. Cultivators have argued that the fair-market-value formula has not kept pace with falling prices, leaving them overtaxed.

During the 2025 session, Assemblywoman Danielle Gallant, R-Henderson, proposed eliminating the wholesale tax and raising the retail excise tax to replace the lost revenue. The bill did not advance, but lawmakers directed a study. The subcommittee stressed it was measuring impacts, not endorsing legislation. It concluded the state would need to raise the retail excise tax to between 12% and 15% to offset eliminating the wholesale levy.

Any shift would also need to protect current recipients of wholesale tax revenue: local governments, cannabis regulators, and the State Education Fund.

Recreational buyers now face a combined retail tax burden of nearly 18% when the wholesale tax is factored into shelf prices. Modeling for Clark County showed the combined rate could rise to about 23% under the proposal, with smaller increases in counties with lower local sales taxes. Medical patients, exempt from the state retail excise tax, would likely see little near-term change.

"We are getting rid of one big tax, a 15% excise tax on wholesale, and increasing retail tax anywhere from 2 to 5%," Cannabis Compliance Board Executive Director Michael Miles said. "It's not guaranteed it's going to even out, but the idea is that it should even out." He added that Nevada's cannabis tax rates are at or below the national average.

The Interim Legislative Committee on Revenue took no vote. Members requested more data on consumer responses to tax changes and outcomes in other states that raised retail excise rates. The issue could return during the 2027 session.

Separately, the subcommittee estimated Nevada's unregulated intoxicating-hemp market, which includes THC edibles and drinks sold outside the licensed system under a federal Farm Bill loophole, at roughly $45 million annually, while cautioning that reliable data are scarce. If those products remain legal, the panel said the state should consider matching their tax treatment to licensed cannabis. Congress is expected to consider a ban later this year.

