

Road Trip to Excellence

Range Media Earns Statewide Honors

By Sydney Trainor

On Saturday, Sept. 26, the Nevada Press Foundation held its annual convention, where the Nevada Press Foundation Awards of Excellence Contest winners were recognized. Awards were presented during the Awards of Excellence Dinner at Springs Preserve in Las Vegas. Journalists, photographers, designers, advertising professionals, and news organizations across the state were recognized for their exceptional work.

Four colleagues from Range Media Company embarked on a road trip across the state to attend the event and represent northern Nevada. They returned with a whopping total of 19 awards for works published in The Fallon Post, the Great Basin Sun, and The Fernley Reporter.

Winners included Rachel Dahl, Leanna Lehman, Sydney Trainor, Tony Erquiaga, Allyson Ahlert, Robert Perea, and general staff at The Fallon Post.

All award recipients received a certificate of accomplishment. Additionally, first-place winners took home engraved whiskey glasses with the year and place, and sweepstakes winners received plaques.

The Fallon Post earned 14 out of the 19 total awards. Leanna Lehman contributed five total awards to this success, including three first-place wins. Not only did she win first for her story “Task Force Update: The High Cost of Drug Abuse,” but the foundation also highlighted her award, naming her the rural division sweepstakes winner for the Community Service category.

Lehman also won first place in Business Enterprise Reporting for “Nevada Stakes Its Claim in the West’s Tech Future,” and first in Political Enterprise Reporting for “Battle for the Badge, Nevada Supreme Court Orders Removal of Esmeralda County Sheriff



Left to right: Leanna Lehman, Lori Kaiser, Rachel Dahl, and Sydney Trainor at the Awards of Excellence Dinner. Photo courtesy of Dana Lee Fruend.

Nick Dondero.”

Her other two awards included second place in Explanatory Journalism for “Nevada Bound: Sex Trafficking in the Silver State,” and third place in Entertainment Spot News Story for “Fallon MFT Powwow Honors Healing, Heritage, and Tradition.”

Rachel Dahl earned three awards for her work published in The Fallon Post, showcasing her experience and expertise. She took first place in Headline Writing for three of her “Captain’s Log” headlines: “Henlightenment,” “Packing Boxes and Pushing Deadlines,” and “Words are Your Wand.” Dahl received first place in News Obituary for “Bill Kennedy Remembered as Educator, Industry Leader, and Champion of Craft.” The three “Captain’s Log” entries also placed third in the Email Newsletter category.

Allyson Ahlert placed third in the advertising Special Section or Campaign category for the paper’s Shop Small Saturday insert. Sydney

Trainor earned third in Business Feature Story for “New Hub for Opportunity Takes Shape in Fernley.” Kelli Kelly received second in Food/Dining Writing for three “What’s Cooking in Kelli’s Kitchen” entries. Nancy Chapman rounded out The Fallon Post’s results with third place in Headline Writing for “Chores and Cheers,” “Get Moo-ving,” and “A Ride Worth Taking.”

The Fallon Post staff as a whole was recognized for two separate entries. The paper’s 2025 keepsake graduation edition earned second place as a Special Project, and the 2025 Fallon Country Fair & Cantaloupe Festival guide also took second in the Special Event category.

The Great Basin Sun earned three awards, all credited to Tony Erquiaga. He won first place in Sports Spot News Story for “Comeback for the Ages.” Erquiaga also took second place in the Local Sports Column category, and third place in Sports Spot News Story for “Winnemucca to Host State Wrestling.”

Robert Perea secured two awards for The Fernley Reporter. He earned third place in Feature Writing for “Silver Stage Students Honor Friend, Teammate at Candlelight Vigil,” a story about students gathering after the loss of Alex Espinoza. He also took second place in Profile for “Celebrate, but Walk Cautiously – A Veteran, a Photographer, and a Battle With Cancer.”

“These awards reflect the critical role Nevada journalists play in keeping our communities informed, engaged, and connected,” said Brian Allfrey, executive director of the Nevada Press Association and Nevada Press Foundation.

Award-winning works were originally published any time between April 1, 2025, and March 31, 2026. Entries were submitted online, with sample requirements varying by category. Additionally, works submitted were published by regular or affiliate Nevada Press Association members in good standing.

This year, the Nevada Press Foundation added two new categories: Business Enterprise Reporting and Sports Enterprise Reporting. According to the foundation, “These categories are designed to recognize in-depth, original journalism that goes beyond daily coverage.”

The 2026 contest recognized outstanding works from 30 publications, with 365 total awards presented for first, second, and third places. Mary Hynes of the Las Vegas Review-Journal was among the honorees, receiving Story of the Year and Outstanding Journalist in the Urban Division, the same year she was inducted into the Nevada Newspaper Hall of Fame.

“We are proud to recognize the incredible talent and dedication across all divisions of Nevada media,” said Allfrey.

Bureau of Land Management Conducts Wild Horse Gather in Humboldt County

The Bureau of Land Management plans to Collect 500 horses to reach the herd population goal for the area.

By Bridgette Williams

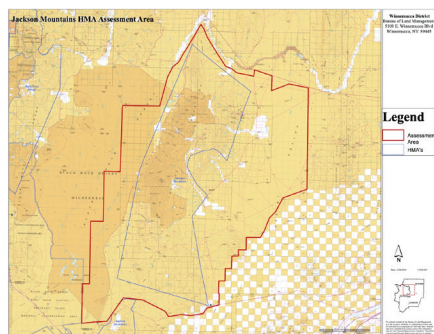
The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) began a wild horse gather in the Jackson Mountain Herd Management Area (HMA) last week.

The BLM plans to bring the wild horse population of the area from around 679 horses down to the goal of 130 to 217. According to the BLM, the southern portion of the Jackson Mountain HMA is experiencing water and forage shortages due to the large concentration of horses.

The BLM explains that demand from the current horse population exceeds available resources, and the wild horses in the area are experiencing declining health conditions. The goal of this gather is to “allow for population growth over a four- to five-year period.”

The BLM estimated the Jackson Mountain HMA’s population at 679 horses as of March 2026, before the 2026 foal crop. Now, the BLM plans to gather and remove roughly 500 horses.

Each HMA has an appropriate management level, which is determined “through the evaluation and analysis of rangeland resource and population data spanning several years, including data relating to vegetation and soil types, weather and water quality.” This determines how



Map of the Jackson Mt. Herd Management Area. Photo courtesy of the Bureau of Land Management

many wild horses can live in the area. According to the BLM, the level is set through an open, public field office planning process.

The Jackson Mountains Herd Management Area covers much of the mountain range northwest of Winnemucca in Humboldt County. It spans about 265,000 acres, including 257,395 acres of public land managed by the BLM. The remaining 7,579 acres are a mix of private property and other public land.

On Sept. 26, the BLM reported that 388 horses were gathered, including stallions, mares, and foals. Out of these, 380 horses were removed and one stallion was released. Seven fatalities were reported throughout the course of the operation so far, all of which were attributed to pre-existing or chronic conditions.

Continue reading on page B-2.

Cast Iron Cowboy Comes Home to Nevada

Kent and Shannon Rollins bring the chuck wagon to Maggie Creek Ranch for an Outdoor Channel episode rooted in cattle, cooking, and an Elko County homecoming.

By Rachel Dahl

Before Kent and Shannon Rollins built a cowboy-cooking business followed by millions of people, before the cookbooks, YouTube videos, and television show, there was Elko. And there was a misunderstanding involving a sourdough workshop and “crops” and “crockpots.”

The couple behind Outdoor Channel’s “Cast Iron Cowboy” return to northeastern Nevada in an episode airing Monday, Oct. 5, taking their 1876 Studebaker chuck wagon to Maggie Creek Ranch outside Elko.

For Shannon, who was born and raised in Elko County, it was a homecoming she had been hoping to make. “I was really gunning for a Nevada episode,” she said.

The Rollinses had previously filmed at the Spanish Ranch before heading to Maggie Creek, giving Shannon a chance to return to the country where, in many ways, their story began.

Kent and Shannon first met at the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, where Shannon was working seasonally and helping organize workshops.

Her mentor handed her the name of “this guy from Oklahoma” who was coming to teach a sourdough class.

Shannon called him but said she could barely understand his Oklahoma accent.

Then Kent told her he needed crock jars for the class.

“I show up with all these crockpots, like plugged in, ready to go,” she recalled. “He’s like, ‘No, no, no.’”

Apparently, it worked out.

Shannon later offered to help Kent with a website and photography, eventually began attending his cooking schools, and the two married 15 years ago. Kent joked during the interview that after she kept coming back to cooking school, “I finally had to marry her to get her to graduate.”



Kent Rollins on a shaggy dressed for winter cow horse at the Maggie Creek Ranch. Photo courtesy of Shannon Rollins

Today Shannon handles much of the photography, video production, editing, and business side of the Cowboy Kent Rollins operation, while Kent remains the man at the fire.

Outdoor Channel describes Kent as a lifelong cowboy who began cooking for ranches after working cattle and later feeding hunters in New Mexico’s Gila Wilderness.

Continue Reading on page B-2.

COMMENTARY

Five Myths About Medicaid Every Rural Nevadan Should Know

By Tara Burfoot, Rural Health Manager, CareSource Nevada

There are many advantages to living in rural Nevada, but access to health care can be challenging. With Medicaid open enrollment coming up in November and running through December 15, people who are eligible can review their options and learn more about what their health plan can do for them. Exploring the options now can help them make the best choice for themselves and their families.

As CareSource Nevada's rural health manager, I travel across the state, where I get asked a lot of questions and hear many myths about Medicaid. As open enrollment approaches, here are five Medicaid myths rural Nevadans should know, and the facts that can help them choose the right plan.

Myth 1: Health insurance only matters when you're sick.

Using your health insurance is not limited to getting care when you're sick or treating an illness after it develops. Medicaid coverage helps members stay healthy, manage ongoing conditions, and access support through different stages of life, including preventive screenings, maternity and postpartum care, virtual visits, and programs that encourage healthier habits.

Some health plans offer rewards for completing certain healthy activities or additional resources tied to specific diagnoses, like asthma supplies, chronic pain equipment, or an online Weight Watchers platform offered through CareSource Nevada. The goal is to support a member's health before a small problem becomes a bigger one.

Myth 2: If Medicaid covers the same basic services, it doesn't matter which health plan I choose.

Every Nevada Medicaid plan covers the same essential services, such as doctor visits, prescriptions, dental care and vision. But provider networks, transportation, virtual care options, and added benefits can differ. Those differences make a big difference in rural communities.

Before choosing a plan, look beyond the basics. Check which providers are in network, what transportation options are available, and which additional benefits could make a

difference for your family.

Myth 3: If the nearest provider is miles away, my health plan can't do much about it.

Distance remains one of the biggest health care challenges in rural Nevada, but members have more options than they think. Managed care plans often provide rural members with transportation to medical appointments, dental visits, and pharmacy trips. On top of that, CareSource Nevada offers rural members five nonmedical round-trip rides a month that include rides for other essential trips, such as grocery runs, religious and community events, and even job interviews.

Virtual care can also improve access for rural residents, reducing time spent on follow-up appointments, urgent care visits and ongoing therapies. A 24/7 nurse advice line can help members figure out whether they need a primary care visit or emergency treatment before getting on the road. While they don't replace local providers, virtual care options help prevent distance from getting in the way of needed care.

Myth 4: A health plan's job stops at the doctor's office.

A routine doctor's appointment is only part of staying healthy. Employment, stable housing, and reliable access to food all shape health and wellness outcomes. Some plans offer one-on-one support with job searches, career preparation, budgeting, housing, and transportation. Through CareSource Nevada Life Services, eligible members can have access to a coach who can help them work through barriers one-on-one. In rural areas, where resources may be harder to find or farther away, connecting members to the right support can make it easier to get care and stay healthy.

Myth 5: Once I have a health plan, I'm on my own figuring out how to use it.

You don't have to figure out your health plan on your own. CareSource Nevada care managers are there to help, whether that means answering questions, helping you understand your benefits, or coordinating your care. In a state where the nearest

specialist can be hours away, having someone who knows the landscape is not a small thing.

For Nevadans who are eligible for Medicaid, open enrollment starts in the fall. Be sure to respond as soon as you can to any emails or other notices you receive from the Nevada Division of Social Services. Then, take some time to look at your health plan choices. It's a chance to review your coverage and choose the plan that fits your lifestyle. Rural Nevadans should know they don't have to figure the system out alone, and the right plan should make sure of that.

To review and renew your Medicaid coverage, visit the Access Nevada benefits portal or call the Nevada Division of Social Services at 775-684-7200 or 702-486-1646.

For more information about CareSource Nevada Medicaid and the benefits, services, and rewards available to members, please visit the QR code below:



Tara Burfoot is the Rural Health Manager of CareSource Nevada. The Rural Health Liaison team travels throughout the state serving as a resource for CareSource Nevada members, local medical providers, and community groups to improve access to health care in rural Nevada.



Tara Burfoot. Photo courtesy of The Abbi Agency

NAS Fallon Financial Training

Staff Report

Naval Air Station Fallon will host its next Command Financial Specialist training Oct. 21-23 through the Navy's Fleet and Family Support Program.

Command Financial Specialists provide financial education and counseling resources within Navy commands and help connect sailors with additional financial readiness services.

The October session is one of three Command Financial Specialist courses scheduled at NAS Fallon this year. For information, contact the Fleet and Family Support Center at 775-426-3333.

Veteran Career Fair in Reno

Staff Report

A Veteran Career and Resource Fair will be held Oct. 13 at Reno Town Mall, bringing together employers and organizations that provide services to Nevada veterans.

Participating agencies and organizations are expected to include Nevada state departments, veteran employment representatives, the Nevada Department of Veterans Services, Reno Vet Center, Truckee Meadows Community College Veterans and Family Center, University of Nevada, Reno Veterans and Military Center and the Veteran Business Outreach Center.

The free event runs from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Reno Town Mall.

Women Veterans Event Planned in Reno

Staff Report

Women veterans are invited to Empower H.E.R., a free event Oct. 15 at the Reno VA Medical Center.

The event will provide information about VA benefits and services along with an opportunity for women veterans to connect with available resources. Light refreshments will be provided.

Empower H.E.R. runs from 3:30-6:30 p.m. at the Reno VA Medical Center, 975 Kirman Ave. in Reno.

Range Wild Horse and Burro Corrals in Paradise Valley, where they receive veterinary evaluations before being prepared for placement through the BLM's adoption and sales program.

Continued from page B-1 BLM.

According to the BLM, the gathering is intended to prevent further decline in the condition of wild horses in the Jackson Mountains Herd Management Area, where limited water and forage have created concerns about the number of horses the area can support.

During the gathering, the BLM records the body condition of captured horses using Henneke body

condition scores. It also documents deaths, incidents, and environmental conditions in a Daily Gather Overview. The agency states that reducing the herd should prevent further deterioration of horse health and unnecessary degradation of public lands.

The Jackson Mountains gather used helicopter-assisted drive trapping. Heather O'Hanlon, public affairs specialist at the Region 4 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Office, said this methodology was chosen partially due to budget

considerations. According to the gather protocols provided by the BLM, the helicopter is used to guide horses toward a temporary holding facility, where personnel sort and evaluate the animals. The BLM states that operations can be slowed or stopped if horses show signs of distress, and the protocols establish requirements for handling, temporary holding, and veterinary care during the operation.

Horses removed from the range are transported to the Winnemucca Off-

Continued from page B-1 Cast Iron Cowboy.



Kent and Shannon Rollins. Photo courtesy of -3

He bought his chuck wagon in 1993. Shannon now serves as videographer, photographer, and digital producer for the operation.

Their television series follows them into working ranches around the country, where the food is part of the story but not necessarily the whole story.

At Maggie Creek, the Searle family and longtime ranch manager Jon Griggs operate across roughly 198,000

acres of deeded and permitted land near Elko. The ranch has also become nationally recognized for work combining cattle production with restoration of rangeland and riparian habitat.

Maggie Creek and Griggs received national recognition through the Environmental Stewardship Award Program after decades of collaborative work with federal and state agencies. Projects have included restoration along Susie Creek and its tributaries, grazing management, weed control, and habitat work intended to benefit both livestock and wildlife.

Kent came away particularly impressed with Griggs. "I don't think they make a lot of people like him," he said. "He is special people."

The Maggie Creek episode drops the Rollinses directly into winter ranch life, with snow and freezing rain moving through northeastern

Nevada. Kent joins the ranch crew as they move roughly 500 head of cattle to winter pasture, and then it is back to the wagon.

Kent and Shannon cook breakfast burritos before daylight and later prepare upside-down pizza with homemade sourdough crust and apple dumplings over the fire.

The weather did not provide television conveniences. "If the cowboys can ride in it, we can cook in it," Kent said, which is clearly part of what makes "Cast Iron Cowboy" work.

The series is less interested in creating ranch life for television than in arriving while ranch life is already happening. Shannon said scheduling the show can be difficult precisely because they try to film around the real work of each operation.

"We're trying to go on these ranches where they're already doing

something," she said. "It's very season specific."

That means branding, shipping, gathering, feeding, and winter cattle work dictate the television schedule rather than the other way around.

After filming at Maggie Creek, Kent and Shannon took Griggs and family friend Ira Wines to dinner at The Star Hotel in Elko, along with members of the camera crew.

It didn't take long for the stories to flow. Shannon said some of the best pieces of ranching history come when people are simply gathered around a table or sitting on a porch talking.

"You never get those stories when you organize a set, it just doesn't work, it's when everyone is just sitting around," she said.

The Maggie Creek Ranch episode of "Cast Iron Cowboy" airs Monday, Oct. 5, on the Outdoor Channel.













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EVENTS

Outhouses and Coffins Are Racing, and the Scarecrows Are Jealous

This weekend offers a full lineup of events. Visit one to see a unique side of Nevada.

By Doris Rodriguez

Howdy folks,
The outhouses are racing again! Oct. 3-4, the 37th World Championship Outhouse Races take over C Street in Virginia City. Costumed teams will race decorated outhouses on wheels two at a time down the middle of town while spectators pack the boardwalks and vote for the best-looking privy. On Saturday, a parade of outhouses will leave Virginia City Jerky Co. at noon, then will race around 1 p.m. Races continue Sunday at noon and wrap up with awards. Admission is free, rain or shine.
Up the hill, Funtime Theater's Voices From the Past returns to Silver Terrace Cemetery for its 26th season. Actors in period dress will wait beside the graves of the Comstock residents they portray and share stories of mining-town life, from fighting fires to practicing medicine. Tours are offered at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Oct. 3-4, and again Oct. 10-11. Tickets are \$15 for

adults and \$10 for children, students, and seniors, with proceeds supporting cemetery restoration. The slopes may be sandy and uneven, so wear sturdy shoes.
Down in the Carson Valley, Main Street Gardnerville's Fall Festival & Coffin Races will fill Heritage Park from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Oct. 3. Teams will race coffins, kids will build scarecrows and help harvest the community gardens, and more than 60 craft and art booths will be set up alongside a food truck alley and local bands. Admission is free.
Later that morning, the smallest buckaroos take their shot at the Douglas County Fairgrounds, where the Dare to Be a Cowboy mutton bustin' series holds a jackpot. Riders ages 3-7 can participate, with check-in from 10:30 to 11 a.m. The first sheep leaves the chute at 11:30 a.m. Winners will earn buckles, and series members can compete for a \$750 rodeo scholarship.
For a slower pace, Dangberg

Home Ranch Historic Park opens its pioneer-era ranch house for free self-guided tours from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Oct. 3. Docents are on hand to answer questions, and visitors are welcome to picnic on the grounds. Music fans can also catch the Beatles Flashback concert from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. at the Douglas County Community & Senior Center. Tickets are \$25 in advance or \$30 at the door; bring cash.
In Carson City, the Carson High School Baseball Boosters host their third annual Oktoberfest from 6 to 9 p.m. Oct. 3 at the Fuji Park Pavilion. Tickets include unlimited beer and brats, a DJ, and a silent auction. Attendees must be 21 or older.
Out east near the old Lake Lahontan lakebed, Churchill County Parks & Recreation hosts the No Hill Hundred bike tour Oct. 3, and the name is a promise. Riders can choose a 30-, 60-, or 100-mile route, with check-in between 6:30 and 8 a.m. at the Rafter 3C building. Every rider gets a shirt, a gift bag, and an after-ride meal from Shijo's Grill; 60 and 100-mile riders also get lunch on the route.
Up north, ranch horses and their riders compete in the Wild Ranch Horse Association (WRHA) World Show at the Winnemucca Events Center through Oct. 4. On Oct. 2, Humboldt General Hospital will host Pink & Pearl, a free breast and lung cancer awareness event with screening information, from 1 to 3 p.m. Oct. 3 is Winnemucca's busiest day as the Grass Valley Advisory Board's \$5 Chili Cook-Off runs from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Grass Valley Community Center. From 2 to 7 p.m., the seventh annual Brian Morris Memorial Trap

Shoot fills the Winnemucca Trap Club. Entry is \$250 per two-person team or \$125 per shooter, and a \$60 non-shooter pass covers snacks, drinks, and dinner by The Martin. An auction closes out the event; proceeds fund a University of Nevada, Reno scholarship. The field is capped at 30 teams.
Winnemucca United Methodist Church marks 150 years with free celebrations on Oct. 3-4. Later Oct. 4, the Battle of the Mines Blood Drive runs from 3 to 8 p.m. in the Winnemucca Convention Center West Hall.
Out in White Pine County, the Nevada Northern Railway in Ely runs its Pumpkin Patch Caper Train Oct. 3 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. and Oct. 4 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., with more trips coming Oct. 10-11. Smokey McCinders and Dirt the Cat will come along for audio storytelling as the train rolls out to the pumpkin patch at Keystone Gulch. Children under 4 ride free.
That evening, the White Pine Public Museum holds Oktoberfest from 4 to 7 p.m. with a German dinner and specialty craft beer. Tickets are \$35 in advance at the museum, or \$40 at the door, and lederhosen and dirndls are encouraged.
Whether you come home with a pumpkin under your arm, chili on your shirt, or sheep wool on your jeans, may your boots stay dry and your spirits high. Times and dates can change, so check each organizer's page before you head out.
Happy trails, and may your outhouse or coffin cross the finish line first!



Outhouse Parade before the races. Photo courtesy of Travel Nevada.

Truck Rodeo Puts Railroad Crossing Safety to the Test

Drivers at Capurro's Carlin Truck Rodeo Worked Through Crossing Hazards and Emergency Scenarios.

By Sydney Trainor

A truck driver approaches a railroad crossing, but traffic is backed up on the other side. There is room to pull onto the tracks, though it is unclear whether the trailer will fit beyond them. The safest decision must come before the truck enters the crossing.
That was one of the situations professional drivers considered during Capurro's Carlin Truck Rodeo on Sept. 27. The Nevada Rail Aware Team brought hands-on exercises and a written test to the event, asking drivers to identify hazards and decide how they would respond while operating large commercial vehicles near railroad tracks.
The exercises went beyond recognizing crossing signs and signals. Drivers considered what could happen when traffic stops just beyond the tracks, a stoplight holds up vehicles ahead of them, or a truck does not have enough ground clearance to make it across. They also worked through emergencies involving a vehicle stuck or disabled on the tracks.
The team's central message was that a driver should enter a crossing only when there is enough room for the entire truck and trailer to clear the tracks. A tractor may fit on the far side while its trailer remains in the path of a train, so drivers must judge

the available space before moving forward.
For a professional driver, that means paying attention to more than the tracks themselves. Traffic beyond the crossing can change quickly, and a vehicle's length, trailer configuration, weight, and stopping distance all affect the decision to proceed. A crossing that appears open may still be unsafe if the truck cannot make it all the way through.
The scenarios also asked drivers to consider what to do if a vehicle becomes stuck on the tracks. Railroad crossings have blue Emergency Notification System (ENS) signs with information used to report an emergency to the railroad. The Rail Aware Team emphasized finding that sign and using its information to notify the railroad immediately when an incident affects the tracks.
Knowing where to look for the sign before an emergency can save time when a disabled vehicle cannot be moved quickly. It was one of several details the team asked drivers to think through during the rodeo, along with how warning devices work and what conditions should cause them to wait before crossing.
Drivers also completed a Professional Drivers Railroad Crossing Safety Written Test. It covered crossing procedures, recognizing



Photo courtesy of Nevada Office of Emergency Management/Homeland Security

hazards, responding to emergencies, and making safe decisions. The written portion gave participants another way to check their knowledge after working through the practical situations.
Together, the exercises were meant to connect what drivers know with what they may need to do on the road. A driver might know a rule on a written test but still have to recognize a developing problem from behind the wheel, with traffic moving and limited space ahead.
"The goal isn't simply to memorize railroad crossing rules," the Rail Aware Team said. "We want professional drivers to understand the reason behind those rules, recognize hazards early and know what action to take when something doesn't look right."
The Carlin Truck Rodeo gave drivers a chance to work through those

decisions before facing them during a trip. Low-clearance concerns, a line of stopped traffic, or a disabled vehicle each calls for a different response, but all require drivers to assess what is happening around the crossing.
The Rail Aware Team urged drivers to look ahead, know their vehicle's length and clearance, and make sure the full vehicle can fit on the other side before entering a crossing. It also reminded them never to drive around lowered gates and to know how to find the blue emergency sign if they need to report a problem.
For drivers hauling long trailers, the space beyond the tracks matters as much as the tracks themselves. The rodeo's exercises brought that point into focus by making participants decide what they would do while there was still time to stop.

Inaugural Northern Nevada Bird Fest Comes to Washoe Lake

By Doris Rodriguez

On Saturday, Oct. 3, Washoe Lake State Park is inviting visitors to the inaugural Northern Nevada Bird Fest. The festival will be held at the park's Group Use Area at the southern tip in New Washoe City, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Admission is free, no entrance fee or sign-up is needed, and pets are welcome.
The event is being hosted by Nevada State Parks, along with the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW), the Northwest Nevada Bird Alliance (formerly the Lahontan Audubon Society), and Carson City Parks, Recreation & Open Space to celebrate Nevada's birds and their habitats by bringing together families, birders, artists, and outdoor enthusiasts.
Early risers can enjoy a guided bird walk at 9 a.m., open to birders of all

experience levels. For those who prefer to wander solo, self-guided walks are welcome any time throughout the event.
Starting at 10 a.m., visitors can play Bird Bingo, check out hands-on activities and live bird presentations, and browse bird-inspired art from local artists.
More than a dozen groups will set up booths, including NDOW, the Nevada Division of Forestry, Animal Ark, Friends of Nevada Wilderness, the Great Basin Institute, and Walker Basin Conservancy.
Beginning at 10:30 a.m., 15-minute talks will run every half hour covering a variety of topics. Nevada State Parks will discuss Washoe Lake's habitat at 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. NDOW will cover bird biology and feathers at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Carson City Parks will lead owl pellet dissections at 11:30 a.m.

and 1:30 p.m., and the Bird Alliance will share birding basics at noon.
NDOW will be bringing its Operation Game Thief trailer, stocked with information on hunting safety, responsible outdoor recreation, and how hunting and hunting-related funding support wildlife conservation throughout Nevada. The festival falls on the same day waterfowl season opens, offering visitors an opportunity to learn about the connection between hunting and habitats.
Additionally, hot dogs and hamburgers will be served by the Nevada State Parks Foundation throughout the event for a suggested donation. Proceeds will go directly to Nevada's state parks to help fund new restrooms, park improvements, and other upgrades to visitor areas and facilities.
Event organizers suggest bringing

water, sunscreen, a hat, comfy shoes, a chair, and binoculars (if you have them). Parking will be available at the Maze lot and the Day Use lot; only handicap accessible parking is available in the event area. Since the festival is outdoors and weather dependent, check parks.nv.gov/events before heading out.



Juvenile Great Horned Owl. Photo Courtesy of Nevada State Parks.

LEGISLATIVE

Farm Bill Could Benefit Rural Nevada

Broadband, water systems, meat processing and rural development are among the provisions worth watching as Congress works toward a final bill



Photo Courtesy of Senate Ag Committee Republicans
By Rachel Dahl

The latest farm bill moving through Congress contains plenty for farmers and ranchers to watch, but some of the provisions with potential consequences for rural Nevada may have little to do with commodity payments.

Broadband, drinking water, rural businesses, local meat processing, health care and community facilities, forest management, drought, and rural development financing are all part of the Agricultural Act of 2026, commonly called Farm Bill 2.0, which cleared the Senate Agriculture Committee this month and is now awaiting action by the full Senate.

The Senate Agriculture Committee approved its version of the bill Sept. 16

on a 12-11 party-line vote. The bill was formally reported to the Senate Sept. 24 and placed on the Senate calendar. The House has already approved a separate farm bill, meaning lawmakers will have to reconcile the differences between the two versions before legislation can reach the president.

Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman John Boozman, R-Ark., said he hopes to begin negotiations with the House in October and complete a bill before the end of the year.

Agricultural groups generally welcomed the Senate committee’s movement after years of delays. The American Farm Bureau Federation supported the committee’s action, while the National Farmers Union said the proposal contains genuine gains, including country-of-origin labeling and year-round sales of E15 fuel, but argued it still does not adequately address rising production costs, market concentration, and weaknesses in the farm safety net.

Democrats on the committee have also objected to provisions affecting the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), particularly increased costs that states could eventually be required to carry. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., the committee’s ranking member, has said the bill contains provisions she supports but has pushed for changes to the SNAP cost shift.

For rural Nevada, however, the Rural Development parts of the bill may have a bigger impact.

The Senate proposal calls for strengthening U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development programs as well as improving access to private capital for rural communities. It includes provisions affecting community infrastructure, drinking water, broadband connectivity, small processors, and rural businesses.

The bill would codify USDA’s ReConnect broadband program and make changes intended to streamline broadband permitting on U.S. Forest Service lands. Broadband groups supporting the proposal say that could reduce delays in bringing high-speed service into underserved rural areas.

For Nevada, where a long stretch of highway can separate a business, ranch, clinic, or school from reliable internet service, those provisions can determine whether a community can support telemedicine, remote work, modern agriculture, education, and new industry advancements.

Additionally, the Senate committee’s summary identifies financing, technical assistance, water-quality testing, and filtration as priorities intended to improve access to safe drinking water in rural communities.

The legislation also backs local and regional meat and poultry processing, including new financing opportunities and regulatory assistance for smaller processors. The proposal comes as much of the nation’s meat processing is handled by a small number of large plants, leaving cattle producers with

fewer places to sell their animals.

The USDA itself is currently operating a separate \$500 million temporary program aimed at supporting small, independent, and mid-sized beef slaughter facilities.

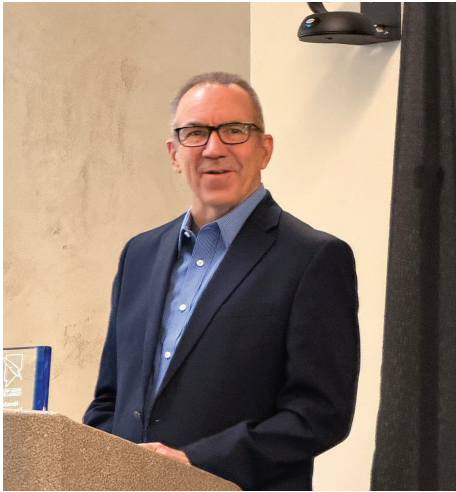
The Senate bill also changes conservation programs, adds flexibility for grazing during drought, and includes forest-management provisions designed to accelerate forest-health projects.

Those provisions have evoked competing reactions, with supporters arguing that the bill gives farmers and ranchers more workable conservation options and improves forest management. Conservation organizations have countered that the proposal does not invest enough in existing conservation programs and have called for changes before final passage.

Lucas Ingvaldstad, a former Nevada state director for USDA Rural Development, says rural communities should not wait until Congress finishes its work before beginning to think about what could come next.

“The communities that benefit most from federal policy shifts are rarely the ones that wait for funding announcements,” Ingvaldstad said. “They’re the communities, cooperatives, utilities, tribes, hospitals, economic development organizations and local governments that start planning early.”

Nevada Newspaper Hall of Fame Inducts 2026 Members



From left to right: Mary Hynes receiving her award from Brian Allfrey, Nevada Press Association Executive Director Brian Allfrey, Ron Kantowski, Mike Smith with Allfrey, Howard Stutz being introduced by Jon Ralston. Photos courtesy of Rachel Dahl.

By Sydney Trainor

The Nevada Press Foundation inducted Mary Hynes, Ron Kantowski, Mike Smith, and Howard Stutz into the Nevada Newspaper Hall of Fame on Saturday, Sept. 26, during a luncheon at the Springs Event Center at Springs Preserve in Las Vegas. The induction was part of the foundation’s annual convention, which also included the 2026 Awards of Excellence Dinner that evening.

Hynes has reported on fires, public health emergencies, and government investigations. Kantowski has followed Las Vegas sports from the days before the city had major league teams. Smith has drawn its politics, while Stutz has explained the business of gaming.

Hynes joined the Las Vegas Review-Journal in 1988. She has worked as a reporter, assistant city editor, city editor, health reporter, and investigative reporter. As city editor from 2000 to 2012, she helped guide coverage of major events in Southern Nevada, including the region’s rapid growth, the Great Recession, the debate over Yucca Mountain, and the local connections to the Sept. 11 attacks. The luncheon program also notes her work on public corruption cases, criminal trials, and public health crises.

She returned to reporting in 2019 and helped lead the newspaper’s coverage of the Alpine Motel fire. She later covered the COVID-19 pandemic and joined the investigative team. Hynes, who was named Nevada’s Outstanding Journalist in 1994 and 2025, received two more honors this year: Story of the Year for “County Contract Scandal” and Outstanding Journalist in the urban division of the foundation’s awards contest.

Kantowski spent nearly four decades covering sports for the Las Vegas Sun and later the Review-

Journal. His career followed the city’s transformation from a place without a major league team to the home of professional franchises. He wrote about University of Nevada, Las Vegas athletics, motorsports, boxing, and community sports, as well as the Vegas Golden Knights’ run to the Stanley Cup Final in their first season.

His columns and features often focused on the people involved in those games. The National Sports Media Association named him Nevada Sportswriter of the Year in 2016.

Smith has been the Las Vegas Sun’s editorial cartoonist since 1983. His drawings have examined presidential administrations, Nevada politics, civic debates, and the growth of Southern Nevada. His work has been syndicated nationally through King Features Syndicate, and his cartoons have appeared in publications including USA Today, The New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, and The Washington Post. For more than 20 years, he also drew a weekly cartoon for USA Today.

His work has become part of the historical record. In 2023, Smith and Sun publisher Brian Greenspun donated more than 13,000 original cartoons to the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Libraries’ Special Collections and Archives. The collection preserves decades of his commentary on Nevada and national events.

Stutz began his Nevada journalism career on the sports pages in the 1980s before shifting to gaming, tourism, and business. He has reported for the Las Vegas Sun and Review-Journal, served as executive editor of CDC Gaming Reports, and, most recently, worked as a senior reporter for The Nevada Independent. His coverage has helped readers follow the decisions and economic changes affecting one of Nevada’s biggest industries.

At the Review-Journal, Stutz was part of the team that uncovered the Adelson family’s secret purchase of the newspaper. The work earned national recognition for ethics and courage in journalism. The luncheon program also describes his mentorship of younger journalists.

The four were honored on a day that

recognized journalism throughout the state. This year’s Awards of Excellence contest included work from 30 publications and presented 365 first-, second-, and third-place awards across urban, rural, magazine, and college publications.

Nevada Press Association Explained

By Sydney Trainor

The Nevada Press Association brings together newspapers, magazines, and online news outlets from across the state. Its members include daily and weekly publications, from large newsrooms to papers serving smaller communities. The association gives them a shared voice on issues that affect how they report the news.

Much of its work takes place when state lawmakers consider new legislation. The association advocates for access to government records, meetings that the public can attend, and notices that tell residents about government business. These rules affect what reporters can learn and what they can share with readers.

They matter to people outside newsrooms, too. A resident may want to look at the documents behind a county decision or attend a city council meeting before a vote. A public notice may be how someone first learns about a proposed action. The association’s goal is to keep that information within reach, so Nevadans can follow what their governments are doing.

The organization has a long history in the state. Nevada newspapers first joined together in 1865, and a

reorganization in 1924 established the Nevada State Press Association. Today, its work centers on legislation and public policy. Brian Allfrey serves as executive director. The association is governed by a board of directors representing news outlets across the state.

The similarly named Nevada Press Foundation has a different role, although Allfrey leads it as well. The foundation is a charitable organization that runs the annual journalism awards, convention, and Nevada Newspaper Hall of Fame. It took over those programs in 2021, while the association focused its work on policy affecting news publications and public access to information.

The foundation began in 2000 with financial support from the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation and newspapers belonging to the association. Its first major undertaking was restoring Carson City’s historic Rinckel Mansion, which provided space for the association, the Hall of Fame, and reporters covering state government. Today, a board of trustees oversees the foundation, and its Awards of Excellence contest draws about 1,400 entries from Nevada publications each year.