

NORTHERN NEVADA GUIDE

LOCAL & RELOCATION



2024-2025 EDITION

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NORTHERN NEVADA **GUIDE**

LOCAL & RELOCATION  2024-2025 EDITION

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Welcome home

Welcome to the seventh edition of the Northern Nevada Guide, which was started in 2018 by the Northern Nevada Business Weekly.

This year we focus on the future (of agriculture), the past (the re-opening of the Sutro Tunnel), what we love (events and public art), and so much more.

There's more to our region than what you will see in this guide, we can only print so much; and, after all, we can't capture all the beauty the region holds. We hope you enjoy this year's publication.

The Northern Nevada Guide is a special supplement of the Nevada News Group. NNG produces publications covering Carson City, Douglas, Lyon, Storey, Washoe and Churchill counties. To learn more, go to nnbw.com/DeeplyRooted/

Adam Trumble, Editor | Annemarie Dickert, Advertising Director



Mural by Bryce Chisholm during the 2024 Murals & Music Fest.

Photo: Kayla Anderson

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Helping each other build strong communities

By Robert Bartshe

Welcome to the neighborhood! We are so glad you are here and calling Northern Nevada home.

Our area is full of vibrant communities, exciting outdoor activities, and experiences only our area can provide. From visiting beautiful Lake Tahoe year-round to enjoying family-friendly activities like the Great Reno Balloon Race, Artown, and Hot August Nights, we invite you to experience all that our area has to offer.

Northern Nevada is made of strong communities, dedicated to helping each other. Having tight bonds of community and neighborhoods where people look out for one another leads to a strong local economy. Simply put, strong communities add value to homes and

property — making our area a more desirable place to live.

As Realtors, we strive to be more than just real estate professionals — we are deeply-involved members of the community. We actively engage in charitable initiatives, dedicating our time and resources to enhancing the quality of life in our beautiful region. Our commitment goes beyond personal gain; it's about serving and bettering our communities.

This commitment is exemplified by the Sierra Nevada Realtors Foundation, which is dedicated to community giving. Through this foundation, we support various local causes and initiatives that make a meaningful impact on the lives of our neighbors.

This year, we were able to fundraise thousands of dollars through our various community events.

At our 21st annual Alyce McCracken Golf Tournament, in honor of a cherished Carson City Realtor, we managed to raise an impressive \$17,000 in scholarships for students across Northern Nevada. In 2024 so far, we've donated a grand total of \$25,000 to local high school graduates as they pursue higher education and skill training. Additionally, our Cornhole Tournament in August, in partnership with Pinocchio's Moms on the Run, saw the community come together to raise more than \$5,000 to support local women and their families being impacted by breast cancer. And finally, our Documents Destruction Days raised \$3,000 with the funds going to the Sierra Nevada Foundation, where we award micro-grants to support local nonprofits. Those nonprofits are Project 150, SARA House, Family Resource Centers, Dayton Humane Society, as well as many more — to help them complete projects and offset costs in emergencies.

You are joining a tight-knit community that cares about each other. With that, we

understand that relocating can be overwhelming, and settling into a new community can be even more challenging. Our mission is to make your transition as seamless as possible, helping you discover the comforts and amenities that will make Northern Nevada feel like home.

Like many areas across the country, Northern Nevada is seeing a dynamic housing market and Sierra Nevada Realtors is here to help you navigate your transition to the Silver State! If you want to learn more about our affiliate members and the many options that can suit your needs, our Realtor members are there for you as a true resource.

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Robert Bartshe, president of Sierra Nevada Realtors.



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Barrels O Candy | Virginia City, NV

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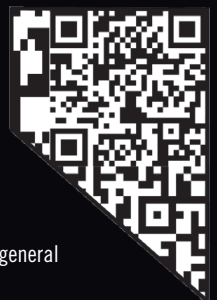


4323 Hells Bells Rd. | Carson City, NV

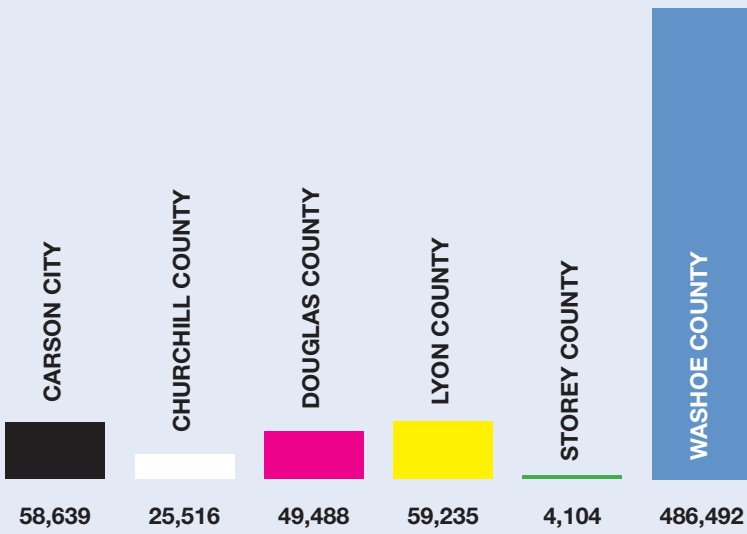
Charming Single-Level Home with Panoramic Views! Enjoy breathtaking valley views every day from the front porch of this lovely single-level home on a quiet street in East Carson City. Featuring low-maintenance landscaping, a kitchen deck that opens to a spacious backyard with mature trees, this home is perfect for gatherings, entertaining. Located close to schools, parks, and miles of scenic trails, it's ideal for outdoor enthusiasts. With a 3-car garage and ample storage, this property has it all.

Land Listings

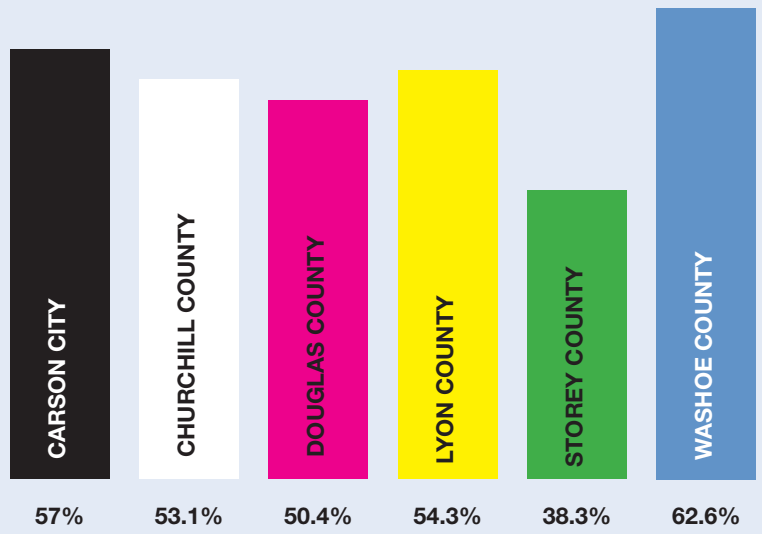
- **2180 East Valley Rd, Carson City** – Expansive 9.8 Acre lot primed for your custom build! Experience rural living at its best with sweeping views of the valley and surrounding mountains.
- **4631 Snyder, Carson City** - Versatile parcel with numerous development possibilities, from storage or small retail to a coffee shop or auto facility. Located in Nevada's capital, this site is ready to become your next business location—bring your vision! Only \$150,000.00.
- **0125 Mt. Davidson, Virginia City** - Unique opportunity Storey County and surrounded by BLM land. This mountaintop parcel offers incredible "top of the world" living, with panoramic views stretching across Virginia City and beyond. Only \$65,000.00.
- **8239 Dayton Valley Rd, Dayton** - Prime 2.83-acre parcel with exceptional visibility and easy access. Perfect for a retail strip mall, dining establishments, or office space. Dayton's growing community awaits! Owner will carry the loan on this parcel.
- **6108 Idaho St, Silver Springs** - Expansive 28.81-acre parcel zoned E-1, with subdivision potential for up to 75 lots (each 12,000 sq. ft. minimum). Level lot with public paved access, ready for residential development. \$450,000.00 in the growing Data Base area of Lyon County.
- **00 N. Goni Rd, Carson City** - Ideally located industrial lot on 0.92 acres zoned G1 in Carson City. Public paved access and scenic valley views make this an excellent site to launch your industrial venture.
- **0106 Schaad, Dayton** - Stunning 40-acre parcel with views of the Sierra Mountains, Dayton Valley, and the historic ranchland below. This is a rare opportunity to own a piece of Dayton's ranching legacy. Zoned for two acre parcels and priced to sell.
- **7805 Musgrove Creek Dr, Washoe Valley** - Nearly 100 acres of pure Nevada beauty! This property offers pristine views overlooking Washoe Valley, a natural creek, and mature trees, ideal for privacy and serene living.
- **8053 S US Highway 395, Washoe Valley** - Flexible financing with seller financing at 3.5%! Multiple parcels of 11.27 acres with water rights included, zoned for general commercial use—a unique opportunity to create your dream.



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2020 CENSUS**



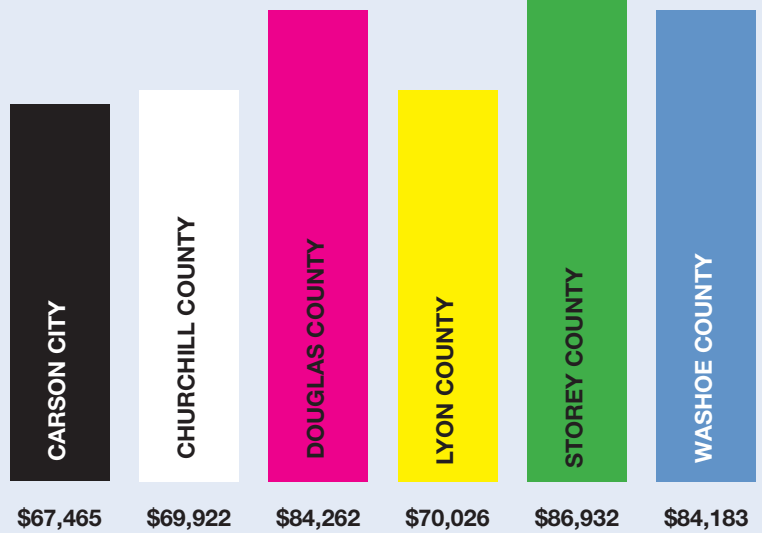
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The Reno + Sparks Chamber of Commerce has provided advocacy, education, and connections for its members for more than 100 years. As the largest business organization in Northern Nevada with 2,200 businesses that collectively employ more than 120,000 residents, the Chamber is committed to supporting free enterprise, addressing policies and issues at the local, county, state and federal level, and encouraging the growth and sustainability of commerce in our region.

The many benefits of chamber membership include the Association Health Plan for smaller businesses, along with the pooled employer retirement plan, pre-tax child care plan, and supplemental insurance for businesses of any size.

The weekly "CHAMBER BRIEFING" provides all members and their employees

with timely news and information as well as a place for promotional pieces and announcements submitted by companies and nonprofits. The Chamber's website receives more than 7 million clicks per year and its public directory enables its members to increase their reputation, products, and business platforms.

The Chamber recently announced the opening of its Center for Nonprofit Business, a division that offers hundreds of nonprofit Chamber members with training on sustainability, board development, grant compliance, strategic planning and more. U.S. citizenship classes are conducted at the Chamber as are classes that engage youth, ages 14-18 in workforce development skills.

The Reno + Sparks Chamber of Commerce offers free notary services, certificates of origin, monthly networking session in

both the morning and evening, online and in-person business-related classes, and hosts the "Biggest Business Expo" each year, featuring hundreds of business booths and access free to the public.

In 2025, the Chamber will host its 40th year of its Leadership Program, designed for emerging leaders as a means to meet key leaders, elected officials, and influencers in the community. It's a must for individuals whose careers are on a trajectory and throughout the 6-month program, life-long bonds, both professional and personal, are formed.

The Reno + Sparks Chamber of Commerce continues to grow and remains a nonprofit organization, with the help of over 61 "partners" who help with financial support to underwrite virtually all the programs and events that are free to Chamber members.

Visit the Chamber at 4065 S. Virginia St., Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., check out the website at thechambernv.org, or call 775-636-9550. We're all about good business citizenship and support. ●

chamber of commerce

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To live in Carson City is to live where Nevada was born

By Ronni Hannaman

There's not another city within our state that can rival the history of Carson City. Yes, Dayton and Genoa continue to argue which was the first "settlement" in 1851, but there is no doubt Carson City is the oldest city in Nevada still making history to which these former settlements rely on today for employment, regional medical, shopping, and politics.

Our colorful history also began in 1851 when a group of entrepreneurs opened the Eagle Station trading post to become known as Eagle Valley. Seven years later, in 1858, city founder

Abe Curry formally established Carson City, which was then to become the capital of the Nevada Territory in 1861. Thus, our role as the government seat of our state was born.

In the early 1860s, Carson City was the central location within the Nevada Territory, near major travel routes and growing. President Abraham Lincoln recognized the role of Carson City as the then major hub, declaring it the capital of the newly established territory and sent Orion Clemens to become the first and only secretary (akin to today's lieutenant governor) of the newly established territory in

1861. Accompanying his brother was Samuel Clemens who became Mark Twain while residing in Carson City and who was very involved in the first territorial legislature and the Nevada Constitutional Convention in 1863.

Nevada became a state on Oct. 31, 1864, and Carson City has remained the capital to this day. The entire Nevada constitution was sent via morse code from downtown Carson City (at the corner of Telegraph and Carson streets) to Washington, D.C. four days prior to statehood to allow President Lincoln the opportunity to read the document before granting statehood.

There were so many firsts here: The Carson City Mint (Nevada's only mint) and the Carson City Post Office were Nevada's first federal buildings. Both iconic buildings are still dominant in the historic downtown.

On June 23, 1910, Nevada's first flight flew from Carson City making national news for reaching the altitude of 4,675 feet.

Once 36 V&T trains traveled through the city daily to Virginia City at the height of the mining boom, and the Pony Express dropped off mail at the historic St. Charles Hotel which is still standing.

That's the much-shortened version of a very long and colorful history. In contrast, Reno was formally established in May 1868, 10 years after Carson City, and about 7 months before Elko. The Johnny- come-lately-Las Vegas didn't even register on Nevada consciousness until May of 1905.

At every corner of our historic downtown, there are many Nevada stories to be told, for this is truly where Nevada history was made over 166 years ago. Nevada celebrated 160 years of statehood on Oct. 31, 2024, and it is fitting that Carson City — where Nevada history truly began — hosts one of the most robust admission day parades in the United States. ●

— Ronni Hannaman is director of the Carson City Chamber of Commerce.



The Nevada Day parade at the corner of Proctor and Carson streets in 1940.

Western Nevada
Historic Photo Collection

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For more information on how to participate or become a volunteer in our programs, go to SONV.org

Did you know...



**Together we are making Nevada
a more inclusive state!**

Chambers of commerce have been around for centuries and have grown and morphed as their communities have grown and morphed.

According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce listing, Nevada has 33 known chambers, 26 of whom are local or regional chambers all serving the business needs of the community in which they are headquartered.

While there are certain expectations of how a chamber operates, each chamber is unique and serves first and foremost as the “voice of business” for its

community. Not all communities have the same needs, but all communities need a chamber of commerce, for commerce drives a community. Even in this age of social media, chambers are still relevant.

Chambers are the face of their community, and that is reflected on our website and our Facebook pages showcasing our members, special local events, and more. We have a robust web presence where information about our city is easily obtained. And, of course, there’s the membership directory online. If you are listed in this directory, the implication is that you want business.

The Carson City Chamber works closely with local government and advocates where needed. We help members navigate the potential maze of dealing with governments. We maintain good relations with our local, state, and federal elected officials and jump in whenever necessary during legislative sessions.

Yes, our chamber performs many of the same functions expected from any chamber, but we like to think we listen to what the members want from us, rather than us dictating to the members the same cookie-cutter benefits relevant 20 or more years ago. Since COVID, the need to socialize has waned as the need for information has grown. The pandemic posed a whole new set of challenges for all businesses and we stay on top of it all.

A newly launched Chamber association health plan with Hometown Health to cover those in the service and manufacturing

industries will give an edge to businesses wishing to retain or attract employees by offering affordable health care. By pooling together, there’s savings for all.

Belonging to a chamber is not an expense, it is an important tax-deductible business tool. Businesses can choose the tools they need to stay informed and be an integral part of the local economy. Chambers are much more than coordinators of social events. They always have the pulse on their community and the number one priority is a robust business community.

And, most important of all, still today, the public expects to be able to call a local chamber for any and all information.

The Carson City Chamber of Commerce offices at 1900 S. Carson St., in Carson City. To learn more, visit carsoncitychamber.com or call 775-882-1565. ●



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UNR: A leader in advancing sustainable agriculture

By Kayla Anderson

As the climate continues to change throughout the entire world, sustainable agriculture is needed more than ever. According to Stacker, Nevada is the number one fastest warming state in the U.S.; Reno alone has warmed 7.4 degrees Fahrenheit since 1970. Nevada also gets the least amount of rainfall on average of any state and experiences more evaporation out of its rivers, lakes, and reservoirs.

Despite the state's arid atmosphere, agriculture is one of Nevada's most vital industries. According to the Nevada Department of Agriculture, even though there are not many ranches in the state, an average-sized ranch is 3,500 acres and there are enough of them in the rural communities to rank third in the nation in terms of size.

University of Nevada, Reno's College of Agriculture, Biotechnology & Natural Resources (CABNR) has eight departments which provides first-hand experience to students so they can go on to make meaningful contributions to society in an everchanging world. The College was founded in 1887, and the Valley Road Field Lab was acquired in 1899.

Creating Biofuels Out of Cactus

Over in CABNR's Biochemistry & Molecular Biology department, Professor John Cushman is leading the research trials in identifying cactus pear as a new practical resource for fuels production.

Researching crassulacean acid metabolism (CAM) that cactus uses to increase water-saving resiliency for 35 years now, Cushman started this project 15 years ago researching cactus pear at UNR. In past trials, he has found in recent trials 14 varieties of cactus that are climate-resilient, water-efficient, and highly productive ... perfect for Nevada's arid conditions. The cactus that really takes off in production is a hybrid of a Texas native wild prickly pear and a spineless variety popular with commercial growers. The scientific name for cactus pear is *Opuntia ficus-indica* or *Opuntia cochenillifera* ("Opuntia" for short), and this *Opuntia* hybrid cactus plant produces



Jill Moe in the field at the Desert Farming Initiative.

Photo: Kayla Anderson



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the most cladodes, which are elongated stem segments that look like the leaves of ordinary plants. The cladodes are easy to propagate and survive by using a unique type of photosynthesis called CAM where they close their pores during the day to prevent moisture loss and then open up in the cooler nighttime hours to suck in that carbon dioxide.

Because cacti are so good at retaining water, they only need 20 percent of the irrigation that other C3 photosynthesis crops (like rice, wheat, and soybean) need to thrive. And once this plant gets going, it is easily harvested without damaging the land. As the plants grow, they increase productivity dramatically overtime, creating greater yields.

Currently we rely on corn for ethanol production but if you took biofuel production and moved it to Opuntia, then we could use corn for more food or feed production. Because cactus is a perennial plant, the plants produce year after year and can be harvested at any time of year regardless of the season. Plus, biomass production continues to increase over time as the plants grow larger and larger.

“A perennial can sit there in the field (with little irrigation) and it waits for you to harvest it when you’re ready. It’s amazingly productive,” Cushman said. Plus, the longer the plants are maintained, the more organic matter accumulates into the ground.

“Perennial crops are better at rebuilding soil than annual crops because you’re letting them grow instead of pulling them up every year and having to fertilize,” Cushman said.

Using cactus as a sustainable fuel alternative is not new — it has already been used for human and animal consumption and cooked into popular Mexican cuisines for 9,000 years. “Nopalitos”, aka the green pads of the cactus, are made

into tacos, stir fry recipes, stews, and salads (the texture is that of a bell pepper). The fruit of the cactus, also known as the tunas, are sweeter – Cushman compares it to a cross between a mango and a watermelon. They’re used in syrups, jams, candies, and vitamin waters. Cactus can also be used as a dietary supplement since there’s a lot of pectin (providing fiber) and calcium in it.

Cactus pads/cladodes have 88-90 percent water content, so it can also be a good supplement to a cow’s diet. They can have up to 40 percent of cactus in their meal plans; sheep and goats can have up to 100 percent. And there are many nutritional benefits for livestock considering its richness in calcium and phosphorus.

Cushman was able to start the seed research on the cactus biofuels project thanks to a grant from the University’s Nevada Agricultural Experiment Station and expand the research with a grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture and wants to expand the number of places to grow Opuntia and test other climate zones.

“The work is progressing... cactus pear is an extremely important and versatile crop that deserves greater attention as a future food and for renewable fuel production.”

Desert Farming Initiative Concentrates on Growing Climate Smart Crops

Cushman’s cactus is thriving in the sunny bays of UNR’s Experiment Station, which shares the site with the Desert Farming Initiative on Valley Road in Reno. Located on the edge of UNR’s new engineering building and a couple of miles away from its main campus, the entire Station is 27 acres of fields, offices, classrooms, labs, and even a vineyard. In the center of



Greens sold at the farmers markets

Photo: Kayla Anderson



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the complex, DFI takes up five acres where they grow drought-resistant, cold-tolerant crops like carrots, corn, garlic, tomatoes, and different kinds of greens. “The melons go through phases,” DFI Director Jill Moe said.

The DFI grows around 30 crops, mostly fruits and vegetables based on what students want. The crops end up in Pack Provisions, which is a “very busy place,” Moe said. Thirty percent of students are food insecure and rely on the food pantry; DFI also sells their produce at Riverside and Sparks’ farmers markets. The farm produces over 10 tons of fruits and vegetables a year and donate most of it back to the community.

Opuntia fruit.

Photo submitted by John Cushman

This site is a certified organic farm as well as provides a platform for training and education. Although the DFI generates around \$60,000 in profits, the money is used to support the salaries of the staff that works there (which consist of five faculty members, two apprentices, and three students who work with just the DFI alone). It more so relies on donations and grants to keep its research efforts going.

“The reason this is an operational farm is because it’s realistic. By growing food, going to farmers markets, and complementing the classroom experience with hands-on training, it prepares students to start their own business,” Moe said.

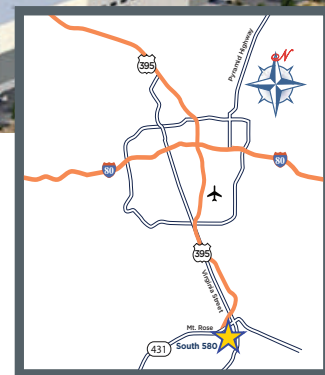
The DFI practices a year-round production cycle, following its mission to be climate smart. The hoop houses that protect certain crops have no heating or cooling elements, relying on passive



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energy managed by black shade cloths, risers, and sides that open to manage temperatures.

In one of the hoop houses full of grafted tomatoes, Moe points to a parsley plant that they let go to flower to help bring in beneficial insects. The rows of tomato plants are the result of a wild variety joined with a drought-tolerant one, producing 50 percent higher yields.

“It’s important to get as much return as possible off your investment when water is a precious resource,” Moe said.

Adapting to climate change is one of the challenges, but one of the upsides is that agriculture practices are getting more efficient. Reno is the fastest warming city in the U.S., but that could make it more suitable for certain crops, such as growing wine grapes. The DFI started experimenting with that in recent years and keeps a dedicated



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vineyard. UNR hosts a wine tasting day in June and lots of people come out.

“It’s fun to promote wine growers. Riesling grows good here, and Lemberger is delicious.” This is its third year of making wine with Nevada Sunset Winery.

“Hundreds of students in classes every year come out and are in the field, and what they do here relates directly to the classroom curriculum. We’re taking the long view and learning a lot as we go. We’re constantly getting better and more efficient while adapting to climate change. We’re never going to be done,” Moe smiles.

For more information about the CABNR, visit <https://www.unr.edu/cabnr>. ●

A parsley plant in the tomato hoop house at the Desert Farming Initiative.

Photo: Kayla Anderson

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Northern Nevada comes alive with color

By Kayla Anderson

You may have noticed a surge of street art in cities around the world, maybe even seeking it out in places like Valparaiso, Chile and Tulum, Mexico. Northern Nevada is no different, as its communities work to transform boring urban spaces into meaningful, vibrant environments that fosters a sense of belonging and connection.

In the past few years, Northern Nevada's buildings and public spaces have become a wonderland of colorful canvas, instilling inspiration in fellow artists and creatives. Communities that invest in public art seem to create a win-win for everyone — the artists, the visitors, the businesses, and the locals — because it's beautiful, thought-provoking, and/or pleasing nature makes the entirety of a place something to be proud of.

Here are some beautifications that've happened in the northern part of the Silver State in the past year:

Carson City Murals & Music Festival

Carson City is quickly coming alive with color thanks to the Murals & Music Festival. At the second annual 2024 Murals & Music, 58 points of interest were on the map, most of them in the downtown Capitol Building corridor.

At the Thursday Artist Meet & Greet at the Brewery Arts Center (BAC) on Kings Street, Reno muralist Edwin “Esco” Martinez is painting a mural of an Indigenous girl and hummingbird on the paneled wall. This is his second year taking part in Murals & Music, last year he created a mural with mustangs, a train, and the Virginia-Truckee line. With a

couple of boxes of spray paint, a ladder, and Khruangbin playing on his small speaker, he was well along on the eye-popping piece.

“I got here at 10 a.m. this morning, sketched it out, and got to work,” he says, as people stopped coming in and out of the BAC to admire all the progress he made in the past few hours. Martinez has done more than 1,000 murals mostly around Reno, Sparks, and Carson City. He's been painting professionally for five years, his art making anyone who comes near it stop and look.

On the other side of the BAC building, a Charly Malpass mural is in progress. Coming from Truckee, Malpass tends to paint animals that are so realistic it looks like they are about to fly or jump off the wall.

This is her first year participating in Murals & Music; she found out about the event through social media and applied.

“I was so excited to get in,” Malpass says. She's been painting murals and art for 15 years now and loves the wall that she's working on.

“There are lots of nice trees that provide shade, and an art studio is on this side, so a lot of people are coming in and out throughout the day taking art classes and are interested in what I'm doing,” Malpass says.

Edwin Martinez painting the side of the BAC during the 2024 Murals & Music Fest.

Photo: Kayla Anderson



Knowing that does paintings as well as murals, I ask what the difference is. “In doing murals, I’m out meeting other artists and the community, in restaurants and bars. Paintings are more intimate, I’m by myself in a studio. Murals are for my extroverted side, paintings are for the introvert,” she smiles.

Inside the BAC where Brandon Dodge is playing live music and artists are signing posters, a volunteer talks about how impressed she is about these artists coming out in all kinds of weather to make art.

“It’s either scorching hot or freezing cold,” she says. “The murals could be up for five years or 50... it all depends on the property’s owners.” She also said that some have to work on rough surfaces, recalling how she couldn’t believe how good a mural turned out on a rough popcorn stucco wall.

There are 21 new murals added this year, the others considered legacy murals that have been up since last year or longer.

Visit Carson City Arts & Culture Program Manager/BAC Gallery Curator Eric Brooks says with Visit Carson City as the destination sponsor, the Brewery Arts Center as the host sponsor, and the Nevada Arts Council as the title sponsor, it’s been a real community effort to get Murals & Music off the ground. Canine Rehabilitation & Cat Sanctuary sponsored all the music, along with a variety of grants and private donations to support the event.



Bryce Chisholm mural on the side of Nashville Social Club.

Photo: Kayla Anderson

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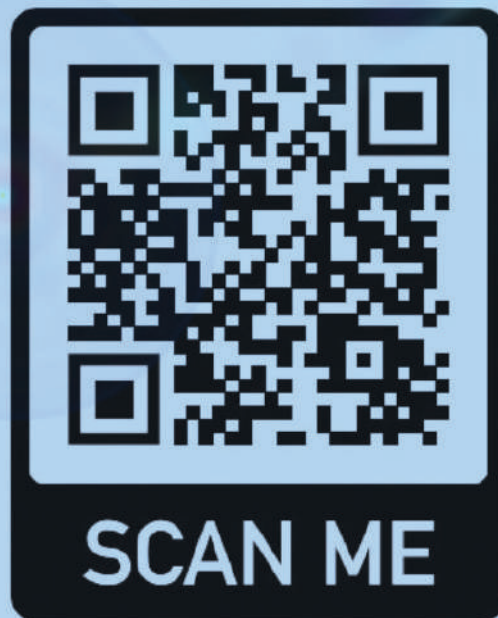
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“It has an immediate and long-lasting effect,” Brooks says of what these murals bring to Carson City. It brings beautification, a sense of pride, and proves to be a sustainable tourism driver for the region.

To try to figure out how many people engage with Murals & Music, organizers look at the number of maps handed out. In 2023, they gave out 800 maps during the weekend and another 3,000 more were picked up throughout the year. At the Thursday Meet & Greet alone to kick off the 2024 Murals & Music, 400 maps had already been dispersed.

“People check out the art and stay the night, I’ve already seen a lot of people out walking around,” Brooks adds. That Saturday they moved a 12,000-pound sculpture over to the BAC campus and another art piece would be added to Mills Park.

“We want to leverage public art in all of its aspects,” says Brooks.

As we sit outside and chat in front of Martinez’s work in progress, muralist Dave Titus chats with us. “The wall is coming along good, it’s really popping,” Titus says, looking down at his paint-stained hands. He painted a striking Lake Tahoe mountainscape on the wall of The Bike Smith on 900 N. Carson St.

When asked what his favorite part of the event is, Brooks replies, “I like how immediately walls can be transformed into artwork and the look on people’s faces when they see it.” And with the weekend’s festivities ahead, he says he’s most looking forward to, “seeing the reactions of the naysayers when they see the art.”

*Charly Malpass and
Bryce Chisholm signing posters.*

Photo: Kayla Anderson



Just then Carson City Mayor Lori Bagwell arrives. Brooks explains that she’s been a wholehearted supporter of this event, and last year she did a big campaign push which helped make the festival be at stellar quality in its second iteration.

“Can you just think of anything better for this community?” Mayor Bagwell beams. She said that when they just hosted NACO (Nevada Association of Counties), she took them outside to show off the art and said, “Prepare to be wowed.”

“Their eyes were wide,” Bagwell says. “They were wowed.”

A Charly Malpass work in progress.

Photo: Kayla Anderson



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Bringing Community into the Process- The IV Natural Grocers Mural

To celebrate the grand opening of the new Natural Grocers in Incline Village, North Lake Tahoe Artist Sara L. Smith painted a mural of Lake Tahoe with a “pollinators” theme on the top of the building. When Smith applied for the project, she pitched the idea of letting the community come in and add to it. Since she had done community mural projects like this before, she had a plan about how she would control the quality of the work, and liability.

On Aug. 31, Smith blocked off a section in front of the building where she had previously painted some aspens and grass. A couple of junior high and high school students who took art classes earlier with Smith were helping people safely leave their mark. Smith provided hundreds of stencils of animals, moths, bees, birds, and more, as well as spray paint in all kinds of colors.

“This lower section was part of the original plan of the mural, and I love doing things that involve the community,” Smith says. “This gives a greater sense of connection, to each other and to



Kayla paints a bunny on the wall.

Photo: Kayla Anderson

the natural world.” Everything in the mural has meaning and relates back to this, even the trees.

“Aspens represent community to me because they all look like separate trees, but their root system below is all interconnected.”

The Tahoe Institute for Natural Science (TINS) also had a table there, sharing information about Tahoe pollinators and birds.

“TINS was able to come out and join us for this and the whole mural is a theme around local ecology, pollinators in particular,” Smith says. At that, a 3-year-old kid grabs a hummingbird stencil and walks over to the wall with his mom to paint it into the trees.

“It’s great to get people involved in things like this and connect them to art as well as to the natural world. We’ve already had a lot of questions about different birds in this area,” says TINS Membership Coordinator Jennie Jones Scherbinski.

“Is that a wasp?” one man asks, holding up a stencil. Smith immediately launches into what kind of wasp it is and what does to benefit the Tahoe environment.

Another person held up a stencil and asked, “What’s this?” A white satin moth, Sara explained. Then he held up a ladybug, which she says is actually a type of bee featured on the upper part of the mural.

As locals were coming out and learning about their environment, I found a bunny stencil and a patch of grass near the bottom of the mural to paint it onto. With three cans of spray paint (black, dark brown, and gold), I was shown how to best use the paint to get the effect I wanted. In the process, I also learned how spray paint reacts to cold weather and how to clear it.

Now every time I drive by Natural Grocers in the middle of town on Highway 28, I look at the mural and think, “That’s my bunny.” ●



Sara Smith at the table (on the right).

Photo: Kayla Anderson



A young painter makes his mark during the August 31 Natural Grocers Community Mural Painting.

Photo: Kayla Anderson

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Northern Nevada: A hot spot for premier events

By Kayla Anderson

There's a lot going on in Northern Nevada all year round. Just look at some of its taglines: "It's Happening Here"- Sparks; "The Biggest Little City in the World"- Reno; "Step Back in Time"- Virginia City; "The Oasis of Nevada"- Fallon; and "Where history lives and adventure awaits"- Carson City. Its premier events have helped boost the region's reputation as a great place to live, work, and play, like these special festivals that make one feel lucky to call Nevada home (as in "Home Means Nevada").

Late June: Reno Rodeo

Touting itself as the "Wildest, Richest Rodeo in the West," the Reno Rodeo is turning 106 this year, and it's skyrocketing in popularity amongst competitors and attendees alike. General Manager George Combs remembers when University of Nevada, Reno did a study back in 2014 on the economic impact of Reno "legacy" events which included Hot August Nights, the Great Reno Balloon Race, and the Reno Air Races, and the findings showed that these events brought a total of \$600 million into the region; the Reno Rodeo alone accounted for \$54 million. Now 10 years later —and since covid — attendance has continued to grow as people appreciate Northern Nevada events now more than ever.

"There are 650 rodeos in the U.S. and Canada and since covid, it's just been a straight curve up in popularity," Combs said. He believes that the rise stems from people wanting to celebrate all things tied to the traditional Wild West — patriotism, prayer, and the western lifestyle. "The Reno Rodeo is a way to honor the flag and our country."

Tickets for the 2024 Reno Rodeo sold out within a day they went online, and it gave away close to \$750,000 in winnings. Ticket sales and participation showed that people from 14 different countries and 42 U.S. states came out for it. Out of the 650 rodeos in all North America, the Reno Rodeo ranks sixth; the combination of prize money and entry fees make it the richest (and arguably biggest) rodeo in the West.

The Reno Rodeo always takes place the last week in June, right before "Cowboy Christmas" season starts.

"The professional cowboys call this time of the year the Cowboy Christmas because it kicks off the Fourth of July run of rodeos. There are 18 rodeos in a 14-day period," Combs said.

It's when the kids are out of school and families start traveling, perhaps beginning their vacation with the Reno Rodeo.

"We're considered a destination rodeo, so people come here and stay for a week, and go up to Tahoe or Virginia City," Combs said.

The next Reno Rodeo will be held June 19-28, 2025, and people

are invited to come out for a jaw-droppin' boot-stompin' good time.

<https://renorodeo.com/>

Early September: Great Reno Balloon Race

Speaking of legacy events... the weekend after Labor Day (usually around Sept. 6-8), more than 150,000 people go to Reno's Rancho San Rafael Regional Park to watch colorful hot air balloons fill the sky.

Since the event began in 1982 until now, the Great Reno Balloon Race has grown from just 20 balloons to upward of 100, attracting balloonists from around the world. At the 2024 event, organizers brought back its staple Super Glow Show and Dawn Patrol while also adding



The next Reno Rodeo will be held June 19-28, 2025.

Photo Courtesy of The Reno Rodeo

a special Women of Aviation Mass Ascension and free tethered hot air balloon rides at the RennerVation Foundation booth.

The best part about the three-day Great Reno Balloon Race festival is that it's free to attend.

"We've been doing this now for over 40 years and it's very important to us to keep this free for the public," said Great Reno Balloon Race Board Member and Past President Pilar Aldecoaotalora.

She has been involved with the Great Reno Balloon Race since 1990 and said that the event creates a \$10 million economic impact for Northern Nevada.

"This a way for us to give back to the community. It's one of the things that people can come out and enjoy that doesn't cost anything. That was especially important during the pandemic

when people were limited to what they could do," Aldecoaotalora says. She adds that the event in 2022 was "off the charts" in attendance and just when they thought it couldn't get any better, the next year's Great Reno Balloon Race "was even more off the charts," she smiles.

There were only a couple thousand attendees who came out to Rancho San Rafael Park when the Great Reno Balloon Race first started, but now Aldecoaotalora believes there are close to a quarter-million people who come out over the course of the three days.



The 2024 Great Reno Balloon Race.

Photo: Kayla Anderson



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Night in the Country.

Photo submitted by Nick Beaton

“It’s so nice to see the love of the entire community for this event,” Aldecoaotalora adds. Kids of all ages are usually milling around the field (or wherever the hot air balloons land) asking for trading cards, and/or end up volunteering and joining a balloon crew the next year. In 2024, 1,000 fifth graders in the Washoe County School District also came out.

“They learned how to make a tissue paper balloon and fly it, and there’s no cost to the students. To watch the kids’ faces light up when their balloon hits the sky... one kid started crying he was so excited,” Aldecoaotalora recalls.

The next Great Reno Balloon Race will be held Sept. 5-7, 2025. <https://renoballoon.com/>

Late July: Night in the Country

Hosted by the Boys & Girls Clubs of Mason Valley, Night in the Country has been Yerington’s biggest event for more than 20 years, always held in the last weekend of July.

Touting itself as being “Pure Country. Pure Farmland. Pure Nevada,” this multiday country music festival has hosted big acts such as Blake Shelton, Thomas Rhett, Luke Combs and Jason Aldean since 2002. Tickets have been selling out or near-sellout the last few years now, and what started out as a single-day event has turned into a summer weekend party.

Nick Beaton, Boys & Girls Clubs director of development, has been with the club for five years now and has seen how many people it’s drawn to the area.

“We grew our artist budget significantly over the last two years to bring in headliners and what was originally a single music night is now 3-4 nights,” Beaton says. He adds that being able to bring in the best acts available are helping the festival pay for itself.

On top of that, according to an economic impact study done after the 2023 Night in the Country, the festival brings \$25.3 million

into the rural farm town. From a survey that went out, 75 percent of respondents lived outside of Lyon County and online ticket sales data showed people coming in from 27 states.

“People are coming in and buying food and gas for their campers and trailers,” Beaton said. The festival draws 10,000 people, tripling the population of Yerington over the weekend. The average festival attendee spends around \$1000 over the weekend, and the lodging options generate more than \$4 million in stays.

This past year, Peri & Sons Farms generously donated 160 acres (called The Grange) to use for the festival.

“It’s a better layout for camping, and we have a streamlined entrance and exit,” Beaton said. And now they can host more daytime activities and music.

Night in the Country already announced its music lineup for 2025 with Cole Swindell and Koe

Wetzel headlining. Passes and tickets are currently on sale, and the profits go to a good cause.

“Every penny past paying our bills goes back to the Boys & Girls Club,” Beaton says, which has 1500 members. “Sponsorship opportunities are available as well, and that’s a great way to reach people.”

The next Night in the Country will be held July 24-26, 2025. <https://nightinthecountrynv.org/>

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Step Back in Time in Virginia City with Outrageous Original Events

While most of Northern Nevada's biggest events tend to happen in the summer, Virginia City has crazy things going on in the Tombstone-like town all year long.

Virginia City kicks off the year around St. Patrick's Day when it holds the Rocky Mountain Oyster Fry. Every March, people don lots of green, enjoy live music, watch the parade, and make terrible puns as they roam about eating tasty testes cooked up by local and regional chefs. An average of 12,000 people come to the Rocky Mountain Oyster Fry, now going into its 34th year.

"People from Washington, Colorado, and Arizona come to it. It kind of marks the beginning of event season," said Virginia City Tourism Director Todd Tuttle.

When the weather gets a little warmer, Virginia City hosts another popular foodie event called Chili on the Comstock. The Great Fire Hot Chili Pepper Challenge tests the courage of attendees' tastebuds, having them reach for that glass of milk before their mouth burns off.

Then in September, Virginia City hosts the famous camel and ostrich races. This is a fun event to bet on with your friends, as it is completely unpredictable to what the camels are going to do. Ten thousand people come to this wacky event, which has been going on for 65 years.

*The 2024 Virginia City
Rocky Mountain Oyster Fry.*

Photo: Kayla Anderson






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In early October, Virginia City hosts a world-famous “looniest loo race”, aka a commode competition in which teams build pinewood-derby like outhouses and race them down C Street. Its free to attend, and Virginia City’s 188 hotel rooms tend to fill up fast.

When snow starts to fall, you’d think that the historic silver mining town would get quiet, but no, Virginia City goes all out in the month of December for Christmas on the Comstock.

“It’s been going on for 10 years now and is growing,” said Tuttle. “It started out with just a few merchants and now we have fireworks, Santa comes, and we have a candy cane train. There’s a play at Piper’s Opera House, Christmas tree lighting, and a drone show.”

Tuttle believes Virginia City became popular in two stages, first being the 1950s *Bonanza* era and the second is now. “[Bonanza] made Virginia City famous on TV. But now people want to

discover ghost towns and mining camps; we have all of that and is one of the only places still intact.”
<https://visitvirginiacitynv.com/>

Other Events to Put on the Calendar:

Hot August Nights,
<https://hotaugustnights.net/>

Best of the West Rib
Cook-off, <https://www.nuggetribcookoff.com/>

The Great Reno Balloon Race:
<https://renoballoon.com/>

Water Lantern Festival:
<https://www.waterlanternfestival.com/events/reno-sparks>

Nevada Day Parade:
<https://nevadaday.com/>

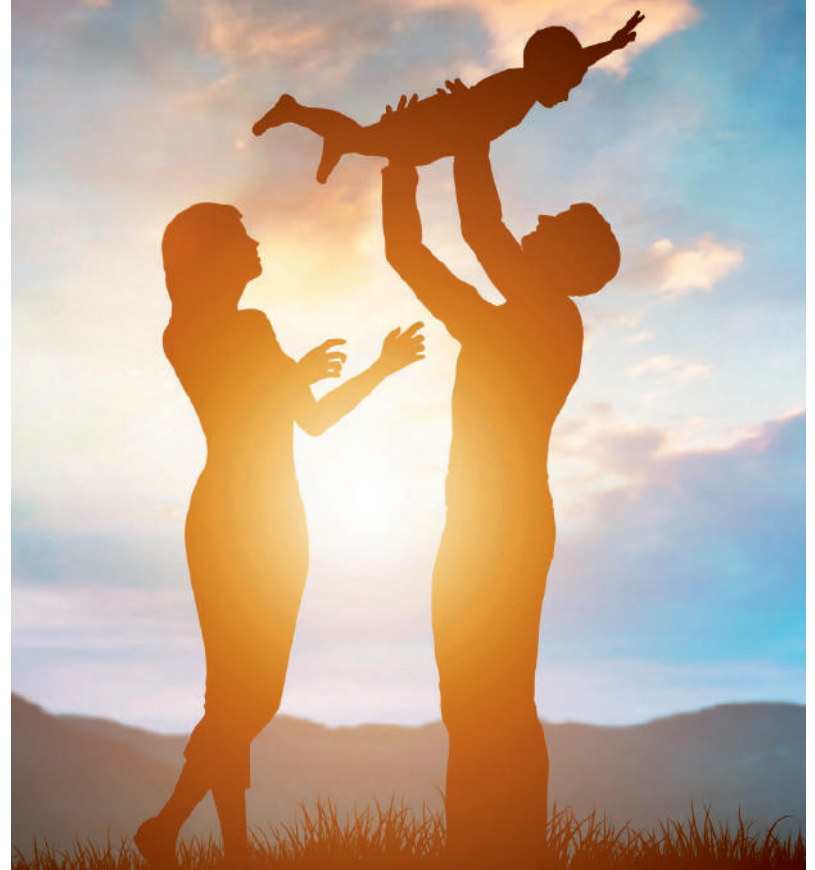
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Allison MacKenzie: A law firm rooted in community

By Scott Neuffer

Not many lawyers in Nevada can say their career included depositing Elvis Presley and arguing in front of the U.S. Supreme Court. George Allison could say that about two unrelated cases in his career.

At 86, the retired attorney who helped found the Carson City-based law firm Allison MacKenzie seemed to collapse time when reminiscing, shrinking the years between the past and present in a single recollection.

“So, we knock on the door, and he opened the door,” Allison recalled of depositing Elvis in a Lake Tahoe suite in the mid-1970s. “And he was very pleasant, very courteous — that’s one of the things I always say because he was — and I don’t know what I was expecting, actually, from a famous entertainer like that, but he was very courteous and invited us in.”

Allison was representing Sahara Tahoe (now known as Golden Nugget Lake Tahoe) as an insurance client in a case involving a California couple who’d had an altercation with Elvis’ bodyguards after a show. The case was settled for a few thousand dollars, Allison remembered, but this was how he’d come to interview “The King.”

The story is characteristic of Allison MacKenzie’s history in the Silver State. From gaming and entertainment to contentious political issues like water rights, the firm has been there at the intersection of law and Nevada communities since its establishment in 1968. Attorneys from the firm have moved on to become judges, like recently retired First Judicial District Court Judge James Todd Russell, or politicians, like U.S. Rep. Mark

Amodei and former U.S. Sen. Paul Laxalt (Peter’s brother). But talking to both George Allison and current partner Jim Cavilia, neither power nor prestige seemed particularly important to them. It was something else, something quieter, driving them.

“This law firm is here to service people, not to make money,” Allison stressed. “The money will come if we do it. To service people. And that means taking care of the client first.”

Contrary to any image of a powerhouse firm, the Allison MacKenzie origin story is scrappy, like something out of a Western. Allison said when you start a law firm, “you take any damn thing you can get.” The firm known today in its spacious, Spanish-style offices at West Telegraph and North Division streets actually sprung from a terrible accident, an explosion.

In 1966, Allison returned from Vietnam, where he was a JAG officer in the U.S. Army. It was when he was at the former Fort Ord in California waiting to be discharged that he started having conversations with Robert Berry, with whom he’d waited tables at

the Sparks Nugget when they were younger, and Peter “Mick” Laxalt who, like Allison, had grown up in Carson.

“We started it March 1, 1968,” Allison said of the firm, adding their first office was down the street before the current location became available.

The aforementioned explosion occurred in 1965 and was blamed on a leaking gas line near the West Telegraph and North Division intersection. Though no one was reported hurt, the blast destroyed a boarding school and Baptist church.

“All that was left of the church organ was the keyboard. The rest was in splinters,” reads a 1965 Nevada Appeal story about the incident.

Berry, Laxalt and Allison took the case on behalf of the property owners against Southwest Gas.

“We went to trial and actually got a jury verdict for each of them,” Allison recalled. However, neither of the clients wanted to rebuild, and seeing an opportunity, the attorneys purchased the land with the help of a \$25,000 loan.

“We had to borrow the money from a Basque sheepherder that the Laxalts knew,” Allison said.

The partners were able to move into a newly-constructed office by 1972, not long after Andy MacKenzie joined the firm, eventually lending his name to the practice. MacKenzie had grown up in Yerington. Of the four early partners including MacKenzie, George Allison is the sole surviving member, though MacKenzie’s son, Chris, is a current partner.

The 1970s was the same decade Allison found himself arguing in front of the U.S. Supreme Court. The case involved the Devil Hole’s pupfish in Nye County and whether the state of Nevada could approve groundwater rights for a nearby rancher that affected the Devil’s Hole source water and thus the habitat of the pupfish.

Because the cavernous pool had been designated as part of the Death Valley National Monument in 1952, the “appurtenant” groundwater near the pool was not Nevada’s to control, the high court found, according to the text of the 1976 decision.

“The state engineer hired me to represent the state of Nevada,” Allison remembered.

The state lost in federal court and in the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, ultimately petitioning a writ of certiorari from the high court. Allison said



George Allison, a founding partner in Allison MacKenzie, showing the firm’s original sign when the practice started in 1968. The sign hangs in his office in Carson City as pictured on Sept. 25, 2024.

Photo: Scott Neuffer

SCOTUS rejects a lot of cases that “people don’t even know about.”

“90-plus percent,” Cavilia added.

What stuck out in Allison’s mind about the experience was being questioned by then-Chief Justice Warren Burger and Justice Thurgood Marshall.

“They wanted to know the water system in Nevada, where the water came from, where it was, both surface and groundwater. And I started answering the questions,” he remembered. “For me, it was great because I didn’t have to just reiterate what I already said in the brief.”

Cavilia joked that his work was never as exciting as Allison’s. While Allison graduated from Carson High in 1956, Cavilia represented a new generation when joining the firm in 1992.

Having grown up in Reno with an Italian family, graduating from Bishop Manogue High School in 1983, Cavilia did discuss some of his clients with similar backgrounds. For instance, he represented the Ballardini family that owned Capital Sanitation in Carson City before being bought out by Waste Management.

“When they sold the business, they invested their money back in Carson City and then bought a lot of real property in Carson City and invested in real estate like old Italians used to do,” Cavilia said.

In his career, he said, it’s not the cases, but “the people stand out to me.”

The entrance to the Allison MacKenzie law office at West Telegraph and North Division streets in west Carson City.

Photo: Scott Neuffer



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“Practicing law isn’t always the most exciting thing, but doing it with good people is important to me,” he said.

Allison MacKenzie currently has seven partners, two associates and several of-counsel attorneys to pitch in when needed. They still find their proverbial bread and butter in rural jurisdictions across Northern Nevada, Allison and Cavilia explained. The firm represents the Carson City School District, for example, and works on land-use and real-property cases in Lyon and Douglas counties.

“I think our focus is still to continue as we have traditionally and continue to be Carson City’s

sort of local law firm, and, as you’ve heard, we’ve evolved in some of the things we do,” Cavilia said.

A general practice civil law firm, Allison MacKenzie has recently branched out into family law, Cavilia said. Among other areas of practice are estate planning, bankruptcy law, construction law, employment and labor law and renewable energy development.

Although Allison and Cavilia traded jokes about generational differences between them — like who wears a tie to work or which generation uses the physical books in the firm’s law library — they agreed the incoming generation of young lawyers has different expectations. Some don’t like office life in a smaller community, they said.

“It’s also Carson City,” Cavilia said. “It’s a unique place. It’s not Reno, it’s not Sacramento, it’s not Las Vegas, it’s not a big city, and

some younger people want that kind of lifestyle. The people who stay here have a connection to Northern Nevada or Carson City. Those are the people who care about this community.”

Community rootedness is what sets the firm apart — being willing to sit down with people and build relationships across a wide range of cases. Cavilia emphasized they can’t always help people, but they’re willing to listen.

“It’s harder to keep a firm like this together than it used to be,” Cavilia said. “You know firms like ours have become part of regional firms that have offices all over the West Coast. Firms that used to be like ours in Northern Nevada are now either gone or part of big regional firms.”

For information on Allison MacKenzie, visit <https://allisonmackenzie.com/>. ●

Allison MacKenzie attorneys George Allison, left, and Jim Cavilia in the firm’s law library in west Carson City.

Photo: Scott Neuffer



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Region's treasure

Puzzle pieces put in place to preserve Sutro tunnel

By Jessica Garcia

For nearly six years, a group of dedicated volunteers have rolled up their sleeves and labored away on a site in Lyon County that often doesn't bring much tourism or attention except to those who are fascinated by its lore.

The historic site, an area of land about 28 acres in size houses Dayton's Sutro Tunnel. The project is under the oversight of the nonprofit the Friends of Sutro Tunnel. The project was the vision of immigrant and engineer Adolph Sutro as a solution to help drain water from the Comstock Mines and ventilate the shafts northwest through Virginia City's Savage Mine. The site

offers curious visitors a glimpse at venerated buildings and shops, ore carts, a museum and artifacts from miners and blacksmiths of the 19th century.

Efforts to preserve and renew the tunnel as a part of Lyon County's legacy are ongoing.

Rob McFadden, a board member of the organization, calls it a "beautiful" undertaking to support.

German-American engineer and entrepreneur Adolph Sutro came to Virginia City in 1860. He saw a need to relieve the Comstock Lode's mining difficulties. Mine shafts made ore processing inaccessible to workers, and

instead of pumping water to the surface, Sutro proposed the tunnel from the Savage Mine to Gold Hill and the Carson River. His concept to help drain and ventilate the flooded mine shafts into Dayton was expensive but innovative.

Author Mark Twain described Sutro as having the "pluck and perseverance" to invest in and carry out the work.

He would secure the necessary legislative approval in 1865 even if mining companies were reluctant to give theirs, and he raised the money for it. A town was established as work began that established a school, church and local businesses. Small camps

around the tunnel were available to the miners and workers living in the proximity of the area.

It took nine years of construction, but it stretched nearly 4 miles, measured 10 feet by 12 feet wide and it was completed on Oct. 19, 1869. In 1888, the portal's classic Greek design had been changed to reflect an updated Spanish style, or brick covered with plaster.

He sold his shares in the tunnel and made \$1 million in profit and moved to San Francisco. In San Francisco, he got into real estate industry as an investor. He was elected mayor in 1894.

The Sutro Tunnel Co., as of 1887 made about \$773,000 in profit and the tunnel was draining approximately 4 million gallons of water a day. It continued to operate for about 65 years and carried ore from the Comstock mines. The tunnel closed in 1943 with its equipment rededicated to support war efforts.

McFadden said in April 1869, the Yellow Jacket Mine fire, one of the worst mining disaster fires in Nevada's history that was ignited by an unattended lamp. The fire filled the mine with poisonous gasses, causing the deaths of more than 35 people. Eleven bodies never were recovered. Completion of The Sutro Tunnel was spurred by the event, McFadden said.



Construction of the Sutro Tunnel in Dayton began Oct. 19, 1869, by Adolph Sutro. It was designed to drain up to 4 million gallons of water from the Comstock mines every day.

Photo: Jessica Garcia

“The miners union started funding by buying stocks, and that’s what really kicked this whole thing off,” he said. “So it provided a safe escape from mine fires, provided ventilation, provided drainage and then provided a better way to export the ore. So there was a lot of purpose to this in utility.”

The tunnel would fall into disrepair, and the town of Sutro that once existed gradually dissipated.

In time, due to convulsions underground, mountainous formations were formed in the valleys surrounding the tunnel. Eventually, a fissure created under earth led a collapse of Sutro, and decades later, the restoration efforts to bring it back to its natural state began.

The volunteers who have been heavily invested in helping to restore the tunnel, led by a board of directors, have donated in

various ways to the landscape around and directly to the tunnel’s revival. The tunnel’s portal and 28 acres were donated to the nonprofit in 2001. The Friends of Sutro Tunnel have kept the property clean when it became overrun or required mitigation work and upkeep on its buildings. All have been avid advocates in bringing in the materials and spreading word of the tunnel’s work and project needs.

“We’re getting a lot of community support. A lot of what we’re doing is earthwork and construction,” McFadden said. “A lot of the local builders are chipping in: Koontz Construction, Miles, Horton Supply donated a mini-excavator. Cinderlite and Simerson do technical projects. They have access to a forest, so they chop down trees, mill them and install them in the tunnel to make it safe for tourism.”

Sutro Tunnel Project Team and Supporters

- **Pam Abercrombie** - Project Visionary, Volunteer Manager and Grants Manager
- **Dan Webster** - Historian, Museum Curator and Volunteer
- **Pat Neylan** - Historian, Tour Guide and Volunteer
- **Lee Brunell** - Tour Guide and Volunteer
- **Spencer Davidson** - Caretaker, Tour Guide & Volunteer
- **Stephen Hibbs** - Volunteer
- **Doug Duvall** - Volunteer
- **Cliff Jennings** - Model Engineer, Volunteer
- **Bill Schmandle** - Volunteer
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- **Bob Thomasson** - Volunteer
- **Dave McPherson** - Volunteer
- **Kit Weaver** - Volunteer
- **Asa Gilmore** - Former Caretaker and Volunteer
- **Chris Pattison** - Past Project Manager and Volunteer
- **Taylor Hamby** - Volunteer
- **Julie Michner** - Volunteer and Photographer
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The Friends officially acquired the tunnel in 2021. Work to clear the tunnel for official exploration began in January 2022, with efforts to assist from EROCK Associates, LLC using space drone technology to investigate the site and capture data.

Simerson has helped with its “Turtle” device to provide protection in building sections and making the tunnel structurally sound, McFadden said.


“It’s like a superstructure, and from here to there is where they’ll build the next section, which is all covered by steel, and then ... they’ll dig out soil and this rotted old wood, they’ll dig that out and remove it, slide the turtle forward and do the next section,” he said. “So, when they’re reconstructing the tunnel, it’s completely safe. (The workers) are never exposed to falling rock or debris.”

The tunnel itself, which developed moisture inside, was in need of a ventilation fan to prevent the wood that had been installed from further deterioration. The fan, provided by Fantech, cost \$2,000, the type of support the Friends organization needed among a broad list of expenses.

Financing activities to keep the tunnel solvent while the work continues is a balance, McFadden said, and there are few sources of income to keep the preservation efforts going.

The beam work inside the tunnel was custom-milled with massive timbers by Simerson Construction and helps to preserve some of the original Sutro arch, which were developed with smaller beams. There have been added gaps to preserve airflow in the wood. The floor was filled with rock.

Photo: Jessica Garcia

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“We don’t have many income sources, so we sell tours,” he said. “Essentially, we’re selling access to the site whether you’re an event or a tourist or a local person that just wants to check it out. But when we host things for, like, Sutro Elementary School, we do it all at our cost and don’t charge anything. So it’s a pretty good educational resource, but we’re walking that fine line of being an educational resource but not going bankrupt.”

The Friends of Sutro Tunnel does make sure the community maintain its interest and celebrates interest at important milestones. In September, the charity and the Nevada Builders Alliance held their second

The Sutro Tunnel site is located on 28 acres of property that includes a lake, a machine shop, mule barn, woodshop, warehouse, Victorian house and more.

Photo: Jessica Garcia

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annual “Meat and Drink” soiree recognizing the cleanup and restoration work its supporters and local companies have completed. The event drew more than 400 to give guests a chance to take self-guided tours on the Sutro property, view the pond and buildings and enjoy a barbecue dinner provided by Carson City BBQ and drinks from local vendors. Local reenactment group Silent Riders, including Jason Virdman, Michelle Buckman and Katherine Gennerich, representing the history of real people of the area from the 19th century, portrayed the residents of Virginia City and shared stories in period attire.

operational stamp mill operated in Marietta Ghost Town near Hawthorne.

Jolcover said the gold mill was built by Joshua Hendy of San Francisco and was used to process gold and silver. He said Virginia City has a strong connection to the Sutro Tunnel.

“Sutro was the first place that had electricity in Nevada, if I recall correctly,” he said. “The town was a lot bigger than this. It didn’t really produce any ore. But the tunnel had burrows that were born underground and a lot of miners died underground and never saw any light of day, and it



Nevada State Historical Marker 85, maintained by the Nevada Division of State Parks, shares details about the project’s beginnings, excavation work and completion. Dedication took place on Oct. 28, 2018.

Photo: Jessica Garcia

Scott Jolcover, whose mining career started in Carson City in 1980, attended the Friends of Sutro Tunnel’s soiree in September to celebrate its accomplishments. His mill tour in Virginia City, the Comstock Gold Mill, provides an historical background of the last fully



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Sutro Tunnel Project Business Supporters

- Sutro Tunnel Company (donated the site to Friends of Sutro Tunnel)
- Comstock Inc. (owns part of Sutro Tunnel Company)
- Lucas Homes and Development
- Project One
- Simerson Construction
- Robison Engineering
- Miles Construction
- Builders Wholesale
- Quick Space
- Melody Hoover Photography
- Kaempfer Crowell, Ltd
- 1st and 10 Restaurant Sports Bar and Grill
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- Calvary Baptist Church
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- Rotary Club of Carson City
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- Banta Construction
- Cruz Construction
- Western Nevada Supply
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- Curtis Bros Construction
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was really an engineering feat to drive the tunnel from both ends.”

Among other highlights surrounding Sutro’s 28 acres is a dedicated pond that takes in the water draining from the tunnel. The pond is at least 15 feet deep, which is stocked with koi. Bill Miles, CEO of Miles Construction and a legacy board member, improved the road around it and developed the pond’s piers, McFadden said, and providing the property a tranquil character.

“Now you can walk it,” he said. “He put that water feature in. Before the water was coming in beneath the piers. By doing that, it’s really pretty and gives it character and also oxygenates the water. This pond has hundreds of fish.”

The machine shop, warehouse and mule barn also are considered “magical pieces of the puzzle,” McFadden said, and the charity is working to preserve and restore those structures as well.

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Board members also encourage local politicians or business members to visit the property for its historical significance, McFadden said. Others come from other areas outside of Nevada to view the tunnel as well.

“It’s a valuable treasure our region holds and it’s in Lyon County, which, in my mind, doesn’t hold lot of tourist attractions,” McFadden said. “This is a big, little piece to the puzzle for Lyon County, but it ties back to the Comstock Lode and it’s so intriguing for everybody. It’s definitely an amazing thing to be a part of.” ●



The Silent Riders, including Katherine Gennerich, left, Michelle Buckman and Jason Virdman, are a reenactment group who appeared during the Sept. 12 “Meat and Greet” fundraiser for the Friends of Sutro Tunnel who portray real people of the area from the 19th century and share their stories wearing period attire.

Photo: Jessica Garcia

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Salsa company has ‘killer’ roots in Northern Nevada

By Rob Sabo

Tanya McCaffery admits she’s not a big fan of chips and salsa.

McCaffery is not shy about championing her love of Killer Salsa, however, especially the chipotle-flavored salsa on eggs for her morning breakfast. McCaffery, chief executive officer of Killer Salsa, is working to increase sales and make Killer Salsa as well-known across the U.S. as it is in Northern Nevada.

The beloved Killer Salsa brand, which is a staple on the shelves of Raley’s, Scolari’s, Safeway and Costco in Nevada and California, was founded in 1992 by entrepreneur Fran Pritchard, who started making “killer” salsa for breakfast customers at the Old Deli Stop in Minden. Pritchard turned those initial efforts into a business that spanned more than two decades. In 2019, Pritchard sold Killer Salsa to Local Food Group. She died in 2022 at the age of 78.

McCaffery is a partner in Reno Local Food Group, a restaurant and brewery ownership group that owns Great Basin Brewing Co., Liberty Food & Wine Exchange in Reno, Overland Restaurant & Pub in Gardnerville, and Cucina Lupo in Carson City. McCaffery is also the founder and CEO of Vast, a public accounting firm that caters to restaurants, wineries, breweries and specialty retailers within the food and beverage industry. Customers are primarily in the western U.S.

McCaffery said she jumped at the chance to buy Killer Salsa – she’d been eating it since her college days.

“Fran did an amazing job growing this company and getting her foot in the door at Raleys, Safeway, Costco and Scolaris,” McCaffery said. “The foundation she built was really incredible.”

“When I heard Killer Salsa was for sale, I thought, ‘Of course I want to look into this.’”

McCaffery and Local Food Group partner Mark Estee went to Gardnerville to meet with Pritchard and the Killer Salsa team. At the time, production was an entirely handmade process, and salsa was produced to order each week.

“It was very lean manufacturing,” McCaffery said.

Soon after acquiring the brand, McCaffery moved Killer Salsa to

Reno. What seemed like a fairly straightforward transition was anything but, she said.

“The food manufacturing industry is not for the faint of heart,” McCaffery said. “We had to learn everything from manufacturing to distribution, logistics, and food safety. It’s definitely a complex industry.”

McCaffery originally planned for a product relaunch from its new Reno headquarters in May 2020, but the COVID-19 pandemic scuttled those plans.

“We were supposed to get our health permit in March of 2020, but the health department wasn’t Issuing permits to anybody for anything, so it got delayed,” she said.

“I underestimated how difficult it would be to move the facility and the work that would take,” McCaffery added. “I thought we would just move from

Gardnerville to Reno, increase production, scale and grow the brand.”

Major pain points included obtaining a plethora of certifications, staffing, and spoilage issues – the climate in Reno differed from that of Gardnerville, McCaffery said. And just nine short months into running the operations from its new Reno location, along with significant capital investment in equipment and facilities, production would still be capped. The facility simply could not produce enough volume to greatly scale the business.

McCaffery in 2021 made the difficult decision to close the Reno production facility and move operations to a co-packer in Fresno, Calif., where it remains today. The silver lining, though, is that the startup venture and subsequent move to a co-packing operation allowed her to learn every aspect of large-scale production for Killer Salsa.

“It really beat me up,” McCaffery said. “It was definitely a learning curve. But I don’t regret it, because after working through the processes with a co-packer, I became certified in food safety manufacturing, I can drive a forklift and all these other crazy things. I can speak intelligently with the co-packers.

“Now we are working with 10,000-pound production runs instead of the smaller runs that we could do in-house,” she added.

Moving operations to a co-packer required slight tweaks to recipes — it’s a different manufacturing process when you are using full totes and pallets of produce and 55-gallon drums of ingredients rather than 10-pound bags and small jars



Fran Pritchard founded Killer Salsa in Minden in 1992.

Photo Courtesy of Killer Salsa

of ingredients, McCaffery said. Converting recipes was akin to the math problems posed on the whiteboard outside of Professor Lambeau's office in the movie "Good Will Hunting."

"That was more complex than I anticipated," McCaffery said. "We whiteboarded it with the co-packer, and it was fascinating to watch that math come together, the percentages and the algebra that went into it. It was really fun to be a part of."

Leaning on the experience of a well-established co-packer also helps future expansion efforts, she added – she now knows what "scale" truly looks like. Killer Salsa's co-packer also is British Retail Consortium-certified, a high level of food safety standards that would have been unobtainable in the Reno production facility, McCaffery said.

"It's one of the highest grades you can get, and it's one of the things we looked for in a co-packing partner," McCaffery said. "Some retailers don't require that gold standard of certification, but having BRC certification means we can go to any retailer, like a Whole Foods or Sprouts and others that require that highest level of food safety standards."

Efficiency is another key benefit that came from moving to a large co-packing facility. The massive production plant allows Killer Salsa to keep its prices competitive – McCaffery said Killer Salsa's wholesale cost has only increased by \$1 in the last five years.

Fran Pritchard, founder of Killer Salsa, sold to Local Food Group in 2019.

File Photo



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“I’m super proud of the fact that in the entire time I’ve owned the company we have only done one price increase even with food prices going through the roof like they have,” she said. “Retailers may raise their prices on the shelf, but we’ve only done one.”

“We’ve really had to sharpen our pencils,” she added. “This business is about pennies – you are not going to make one broad stroke and take 35 percent out of your price.”

While Killer Salsa’s fresh salsa flavors have long been regional favorites, the company’s jarred salsas are beginning to gain a foothold on the East Coast and Midwest, McCaffery said. Killer Salsa recently signed an agreement with a broker for

Costco and expects to be in more locations headed into 2025, she added.

“We are super happy about our relationship with Costco,” she said. “All our products are gluten free, and all of our jars are non-GMO and certified kosher. We also are working on the non-GMO verified project for all of our products.”

The company is on the trajectory toward profitability, but McCaffery said it’s currently still in an investment phase.

“I believe in the brand and I believe in what we can do with it,” she said. “It has a strong local following, and it can have a much broader following. It’s delicious and unique, and there’s so much opportunity that I am comfortable making those investments. I look forward to being able to tell the story of the next chapter of Killer Salsa.” ●

A Killer Salsa display is seen in a Northern Nevada Costco.

Photo: Adam Trumble

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The health impacts of Northern Nevada's water system

By Sy Bruch

In Northern Nevada, the quality of your water is not something that can be guaranteed. Depending on where you live, your water could be at risk for having harmful contaminants. While most people living in municipalities such as Reno and Sparks get their water from surface water bodies, residents who live outside of these cities largely depend on the groundwater. This can pose a dangerous threat as household wells are not regulated for drinking purposes, putting you and your family at risk for naturally occurring contaminants. Even surface bodies of water can be contaminated by runoff from activities like mining or agriculture. This is why understanding the pollutants that can be found in our water and what you can do to mitigate them, is crucial for the health and safety of all Nevadans.

Nitrates

Nitrates are a common issue in Northern Nevada's water system. These compounds, primarily originating from agricultural runoff and septic systems, can lead to a condition known as methemoglobinemia or "blue baby syndrome." This condition reduces the blood's ability to carry oxygen, which is particularly dangerous for infants. Long-term exposure to high nitrate levels has also been linked to an increased risk of certain cancers and thyroid problems.

Fluoride

Fluoride, added to municipal water supplies to prevent tooth decay, can have mixed effects on health depending on the amount of it. While it can help reduce dental cavities, excessive fluoride can lead to dental fluorosis, a condition that affects the appearance of teeth. In severe cases, it can cause skeletal fluorosis, which affects bones and joints. This is especially problematic when the fluoride is naturally occurring and contaminating the groundwater.

Arsenic

Arsenic is a naturally occurring element that can contaminate groundwater in northern Nevada. Long-term exposure to arsenic has been linked to various health issues, including skin lesions, bladder cancer, and lung cancer. Arsenic can also affect cardiovascular health and neurological development in children. Without intervention arsenic can even lead to death.

Radon and Radionuclides

Radon, a radioactive gas that can dissolve into groundwater, is another concern. It emanates from the natural decay of uranium in the earth's crust, of which there is a good supply of in Nevada. Long-term exposure to radon, particularly through inhalation of radon-laden air, is a known risk factor for lung

cancer. Radionuclides, which are radioactive elements that can also contaminate water supplies, pose similar risks.

Mercury

Mercury contamination in water is less common but still a concern in Northern Nevada. Mercury can enter water sources through industrial activities, mining operations, and atmospheric deposition. It is highly toxic and can accumulate in the food chain, leading to serious health issues such as neurological damage and developmental problems in children.

While water may look, smell, and taste fine, it could be hiding harmful pollutants. With long-term exposure, the health ramifications could not be discovered until they become a serious matter. In order to prevent these negative health impacts, start by testing your water. Knowing what you may be dealing with is the first step to knowing how to treat the problem. From there, you can decide the best way to mitigate these potential contaminants. Here are several ways that you can protect yourself, your family, and your house from your water:

Drinking Water Systems: These systems can filter out chemicals,

bacteria, and metals to improve the quality and taste of your drinking water. If the quality of your drinking water is your primary concern, these could be the perfect fit for you. With various ranges and options possible, finding the perfect drinking water solution for your needs is easier than ever.

Water Filters: For a more comprehensive solution, a whole house water filtration system can remove contaminants for safer and more beneficial water throughout the whole house. From disinfecting your water with UV light to membranes designed to capture both physical and intangible contaminants, there is a water filtration system for everyone.

Water Softeners: Just because your water is safe to drink, doesn't mean it still can't have negative impacts on your home and health. Hard water can cause all kinds of issues for your skin, your hair, your appliances, and your plumbing. Water softeners come in all shapes and sizes to fit every need from commercial to residential.

When it comes to water, few things are more important to health and safety. Don't wait until it's too late. Ensure your family is kept safe with the proper water treatment solution for you and your home. ●



Sy Bruch is the vice president of Water Unlimited and a Certified Water Specialist. With 27 years of experience working in water treatment systems, Bruch is a trusted water expert in the Reno/Sparks area.



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WEATHER SERVICE

U.S. National Weather Service Reno
2350 Raggio Parkway
Reno, NV 89512
775-673-8100
weather.gov

LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

Washoe County
1001 E. 9th St.
Reno, NV 89512
775-328-2003
washoecounty.us

Churchill County
155 N. Taylor St., Ste. 153
Fallon, NV 89406
775-423-2266
churchillcountynv.gov

City of Reno
1 E. 1st St.
Reno, NV 89501
775-334-INFO (4636)
reno.gov

City of Sparks
431 Prater Way
Sparks, NV 89431
775-353-5555
cityofsparks.us

Carson City
201 N. Carson St.
Carson City, NV 89701
775-887-2000
carson.org

City of Fallon
55 W. Williams Ave.
Fallon, NV 89406
775-423-8816
fallonnevada.gov

Lyon County
27 S. Main St.
Yerington, NV 89447
775-463-6531
lyon-county.org/100/Dayton

Nevada Governor's Office
gov.nv.gov

Nevada Dept. of Agriculture
agri.nv.gov

Nevada Dept. of Business & Industry
business.nv.gov

Nevada Dept. of Conservation & Natural Resources
dnr.nv.gov

Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED)
diversifynevada.com

Nevada Dept. of Education
doe.nv.gov

Nevada Dept. of Employment, Training & Rehabilitation
nvdestr.org

Nevada Gaming Control Board
gaming.nv.gov

Nevada Dept. of Health & Human Services
dhhs.nv.gov
Nevada Dept. of Higher Education
nshe.nevada.edu

Nevada Indian Commission
nvculture.org

Nevada Legislature
leg.state.nv.us

Nevada Dept. of Public Safety
dps.nv.gov

Nevada Public Utilities Commission
puc.nv.gov

Nevada Dept. of Taxation
tax.nv.gov

Nevada Dept. of Tourism & Cultural Affairs
nvculture.org

Nevada Dept. of Transportation
dot.nv.gov

Nevada Dept. of Wildlife
ndow.org

EDUCATION

Washoe County School District
425 E. 9th St.
Reno, NV 89512
775-348-0200
washoeschools.net

Carson City School District
1402 W. King St.
Carson City, NV 89703
775-283-2000
carsoncityschools.com

Churchill County School District
690 S. Maine St.
Fallon, NV 89406
775-423-5184
churchilled.com

Lyon County School District
25 E. Goldfield Ave.
Yerington, NV 89447
775-463-6800
lyonscd.org

Truckee Meadows Community College
7000 Dandini Blvd.
Reno, NV 89512
775-673-7111
tmcc.edu

University of Nevada, Reno
1664 N. Virginia St.
Reno, NV 89557
775-784-1110
unr.edu

Western Nevada College – Carson City
2201 W. College Parkway
Carson City, NV 89703
775-445-3000
wnc.edu

Western Nevada College - Fallon
160 Campus Way
Fallon, NV 89406
775-423-7565
wnc.edu/fallon

LIBRARIES

Churchill County Library
553 S. Maine St.
Fallon, NV 89406
775-423-7581
churchillcountylibrary.org

Carson City Library
900 N. Roop St.
Carson City, NV 89701
775-887-2244
carsoncitylibrary.org

Lyon County Library System
20 Nevin Way
Yerington, NV 89447
775-463-6645
lyon-county.org/238/Library

Downtown Reno Library
301 S. Center St.
Reno, NV 89501
775-327-8300
washoecountylibrary.us/libraries/downtown-reno.php

Sparks Library
1125 12th St.
Sparks, NV 89431
775-352-3200

Go to washoecountylibrary.us for a full list of library branches in Washoe County.

PUBLIC SAFETY

In case of emergency, dial 9-1-1

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District
3663 Barron Way
Reno, NV 89511
775-326-6000
tmfpd.us

Reno Fire Department
1 E. 1st St., 4th Floor
Reno, NV 89501
775-334-2300
bit.ly/2LGUs9j

Sparks Fire Department
1605 Victorian Ave.
Sparks, NV 89431
775-353-2231
bit.ly/2C3prx7

Carson City Fire Department
777 S. Stewart St.
Carson City, NV 89701
775-887-2210
bit.ly/2Qv0hf8

Fallon Churchill Volunteer Fire Department
20 N. Carson St.
Fallon, NV 89406
775-423-6521
bit.ly/3gxeGOU

Washoe County Sheriff's Office
911 E. Parr Blvd.
Reno, NV 89512
775-328-3001
washoesheriff.com

Churchill County Sheriff's Office
180 W. A St.
Fallon, NV 89406
775-423-3116
bit.ly/3msbtmG

Reno Police Department
455 E. 2nd St.
Reno, NV 89502
775-334-2121
renopd.com

City of Sparks Police Department
1701 E. Prater Way
Sparks, NV 89434
775-353-2231
sparksdpd.com

City of Fallon Police Department
55 W. Williams Ave.
Fallon, NV 89406
775-423-2111
bit.ly/3gxeGOU

Carson City Sheriff's Office
911 E. Musser St.
Carson City, NV 89701
775-887-2500
bit.ly/32DVkX7

Lyon County Sheriff's Office
911 Harvey Way, No. 1
Yerington, NV 89447
775-463-6600
lyon-county.org/17/Sheriff

Nevada State Police – Carson City
555 Wright Way
Carson City, NV 89701
775-687-5300
nbp.nv.gov

Nevada State Police – Reno
357 Hammill Lane
Reno, NV 89511
775-687-9600
nbp.nv.gov

Nevada State Police – Fallon
975 W. Williams Ave.
Fallon, NV 89406
775-423-7946
nbp.nv.gov

VOTER REGISTRATION

Washoe County Registrar of Voters
1001 E. 9th St., Building A
Reno, NV 89512
775-328-3670
washoecounty.us/voters

Carson City Clerk's Office
885 E. Musser St., No. 1028
Carson City, NV 89701
775-887-2260
bit.ly/2EsZCtP

Churchill County Clerk/Treasurer
155 N. Taylor St., Ste. 110
Fallon, NV 89406
775-423-6028
bit.ly/3mxc7fJ

Lyon County Clerk/Treasurer
27 S. Main St.
Yerington, NV 89447
775-463-6501
lyon-county.org/16/Clerk-Treasurer

Nevada Secretary of State
sosos.gov/sos

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES

9155 Double Diamond Parkway
Reno, NV 89521
775-684-4368

6795 S. Virginia St., Ste. D
Reno, NV 89511
775-326-2000

1360 Scheels Drive, Ste. 120
Sparks, NV 89434
775-356-3000

555 Wright Way
Carson City, NV 89711
775-684-4368

2147 W. Williams Ave.
Fallon, NV 89406
775-684-4368

Go to dmvnev.com for a full list of DMV branches in Northern Nevada.

BUSINESS SERVICES

Reno + Sparks Chamber of Commerce
4065 S. Virginia St., No. 101
Reno, NV 89502
775-636-9550
thechambernv.org

**Reno-Sparks Convention
& Visitors Authority**
4065 S. Virginia St., Ste. 100
Reno, NV 89502
775-827-7600
rscva.com

**Economic Development Authority
of Western Nevada**
50 W. Liberty St., Ste. 108
Reno, NV 89501
775-829-3700
edawn.org

Carson City Chamber of Commerce
1900 S. Carson St.
Carson City, NV 89701
775-882-1565
carsoncitychamber.com

Dayton Chamber of Commerce
Inside Greater Nevada Credit Union
P.O. Box 2408
555 US Hwy 50 East
Dayton, NV 89403
775-246-7909
daytonnvchamber.com

Northern Nevada Development Authority
308 N. Curry St., No. 101
Carson City, NV 89703
775-883-4413
nnda.org

**Churchill Entrepreneur
Development Association**
290 W. Williams Ave.
Fallon, NV 89406
775-423-8587
cedaattracts.com

Fallon Chamber of Commerce
448 W. Williams Ave., No. 103
Fallon, NV 89406
775-423-2544
fallonchamber.com

Better Business Bureau
4894 Sparks Blvd., Ste. 103
Sparks, NV 89436
775-322-0657
BBB.org

UTILITIES
NV Energy – Reno
6100 Neil Road
Reno, NV 89511
775-834-4444
nvenergy.com

Truckee Meadows Water Authority
1355 Capital Blvd.
Reno, NV 89502
775-834-8080
tmwa.com

Waste Management – Reno
100 Vassar St.
Reno, NV 89502
775-329-8822
wm.com

Waste Management – Carson City
5560 Sheep Drive
Carson City, NV 89701
775-343-7596
wm.com

Carson City Landfill
3600 Flint Road
Carson City, NV 89701
775-882-6066
carson.org

Lockwood Regional Landfill
2700 E. Mustang Road
Sparks, NV 89434
775-329-8822
lockwoodlandfill.wm.com

WM – Reno Recycling Facility
1100 E. Commercial Row
Reno, NV 89512
775-329-8822
wm.com

WM – Sparks Recycling Center
1455 E. Greg St.
Sparks, NV 89431
775-329-8822
wm.com

NV Energy - Carson City
875 E. Long St.
Carson City, NV 89706
775-687-2962
nvenergy.com

Southwest Gas Corporation
400 Eagle Station Lane
Carson City, NV 89701
877-860-6020
swgas.com

City of Fallon Utilities
55 W. Williams Ave.
Fallon, NV 89406
775-423-5104
bit.ly/3yigdF5

TOURISM
Visit Carson City Visitors Center
716 N. Carson St., Ste. 100
Carson City, NV 89701
775-687-7410
visitcarsoncity.com

Virginia City Visitor Center
86 S. C. St.
Virginia City, NV 89440
775-847-7500
visitvirginiacitynv.com


**Reno-Sparks Convention
& Visitors Authority**
4065 S. Virginia St., Ste. 100
Reno, NV 89502
775-827-7600
visitrenotaboe.com


Travel Nevada
401 N. Carson St.
Carson City, NV 89701
travelnevada.com

Tahoe Visitor Center
4114 Lake Tahoe Blvd.
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150
530-542-4637
visitlaketahoe.com

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