

Quarterly Community Issues

2013: October – December

KQNC 6:04 – 6:06 pm Weekdays

October

RANCHO

01: Today Californians can begin signing up for health coverage through the state's exchange, called "Covered California." Just moments ago, the exchange opened a large service center in Rancho Cordova. Employees will take calls from consumers hoping to sign up for a plan.

SHUTEDD

01: The federal government shutdown is posing a potential new problem for California's Employment Development Department. The E-D-D has recently dealt with sequestration cuts, computer problems and staff furloughs. Patti Roberts is with the Employment Development Department. She says unemployment benefits are funded for the next month or so, but a prolonged shutdown could be a problem.

TEACHABLE

02: The federal government shutdown has become a teachable moment for some local teachers. Casey Whalen teaches government to 16 and 17 year olds at Pleasant Grove High School in Elk Grove. She's been talking about the gridlock with her students who think lawmakers are not acting their age.

SACSHUT

02: The federal government shutdown is affecting different departments in Sacramento in different ways. Some employees from the Bureaus of Indian Affairs, Land Management, and Reclamation were at work at the government complex on Cottage Way today (Wednesday.)

FIREWIND

03: CalFire has increased staffing over the next few days due to the gusty winds expected throughout much of California. Daniel Berlant with CalFire says grass and brush are at their driest levels this year - and the forecast dramatically raises the fire danger:

USATTY

03: U.S. Attorney Ben Wagner says his office is trying to prosecute cases while investigators, support staff and federally-employed witnesses are prohibited by federal law from working.

AIRSHOW

04: You may have seen some pretty cool jets flying above the Rancho Cordova area today. That's because the California Capital Airshow is this weekend at Mather Airport. Capital Public Radio's Steve Milne reports.

SACSIGN

04: The Sacramento City Council banned the signs at the turn of this century, but many businesses have ignored the law. Joy Patterson with the city's planning department says enough businesses have complained recently that the city council and staff began work on new regulations that will allow the signs again.

CLOSURE

07: If you'll be driving through Elk Grove on Highway 99 late at night, you can expect some road closures over the next couple of weeks beginning tonight [Tuesday, October 8th]. Christine Brainerd [BRAY-nerd] is with the City of Elk Grove. She says the closures are necessary to accommodate a construction project.

JURY

07: Meanwhile, Brown has signed a measure that will change California's electricity rate structure. It will take some of the pressure off the highest energy users in the hottest parts of the state and charge all users a flat fee of up to 10 dollars.

COVERUP

08: The Covered California health insurance exchange reported today (Tuesday) that, during its first week of operation, more than 28,000 people became eligible for coverage. Capital Public Radio's Max Pringle has the story.

INIT

08: A new report suggests that although Californians strongly support the state's initiative process, they'd like to see changes to limit the power of special interests and increase the role of the legislature.

NEWSHU

09: Lawmakers on the Senate and Assembly Public Safety Committees heard from corrections officials, academics and former inmates on conditions within the Security Housing Units, or SHU's, in California prisons. About 4,000 inmates are held in the SHUs. Over half are there for alleged gang connections. At the hearing Senator Loni Hancock asked a corrections official if inmates have any legal assistance while they're being investigated for gang activity.

DMVPREP

09: The passage of a law allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain driver licenses has the California Department of Motor Vehicles planning to process a million or more new license applications in the coming year.

YOLOWATR

10: The people living in Woodland and Davis are one step closer to a system that will provide water from the Sacramento River. Capital Public Radio's Bob Moffitt reports a new water treatment plant will reduce both cities' dependence on well water.

GOVTHUR

10: Brown signed 42 bills, including 13 that focus on veterans. One sends voters a ballot measure for next June that would shift 600 million dollars in unused veterans housing bond funds to pay for apartments and low-income housing.

SUNKINGS

11: Sunday's event marks the Kings' second annual "Rhythm 'N Rims" to raise money for 14 community groups including: Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Sacramento; Society for the Blind; and Sacramento Habitat for Humanity. Debbie Gabelich [GABE-lich] is with the team.

AUTMAN

11: California's Governor recently signed into law an extension of a requirement that insurance companies cover behavioral health treatment for autistic kids. But as Capital Public Radio's Pauline Bartolone reports, the law won't benefit every family in the state.

INSHU

14: Warden Barnes says inmates can get a mental health evaluation on request. The men in SHU spend 22 and half hours a day in their cells. They get 90 minutes outside, alone, in a small exercise yard that has a pull-up bar and two small balls to bounce against the wall. They can communicate when walking past another cell and can pass notes. But there's no other interaction. The conditions may be harsh, but Barnes says he works to keep the lines of communication open.

ENVIROS

14: Environmentalists say there were only a few victories this session. They staved off major changes to the California Environmental Quality Act, but not all. And of 10 bills to regulate the oil-extraction process known as fracking, only one was signed into law that some groups say didn't go far enough.

MAYOR

15: The mayor would have veto power over legislation and then a specified timetable under which the council could override it. On the budget the mayor would have line-item, so specific item, veto power." Opponents of the strong mayor plan, such as Kerri Asbury with the Democratic Party of Sacramento County, point out that the mayor would also have the power to hire and fire a city manager.

LASTDAY

15: The Pacific Fisheries Management Council says 373,000 salmon were caught by commercial and sport fishermen through September. That was up 61,000 from the year before. Final numbers will be released next February. The council expects a similar salmon catch next year, but will not forecast beyond that.

JET

16: The blue and white Douglas VC 9 flew in from Phoenix to Castle Airport today. The plane, with the words "United States of America" emblazoned on it, was once used by Presidents Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton and several vice presidents.

SHAKE

16: Renick: "I think, probably, the most devastating event would be a major earthquake on the San Andreas fault either in Southern California or in the San Francisco Bay Area, as well as a Cascadia zone subduction earthquake and tsunami that would affect the north coast of California.

FLIPPING

17: Flipping, that's when someone buys a house and sells it again within six months. Daren Blomquist is with the research firm RealtyTrac which released its third-quarter statistics on flipping. "It was interesting in Stockton where we'd seen a lot of flipping in the past, it's been a hot spot as the market recovers there, is that flipping is actually down quite a bit from a year ago." Down 37%, one of the biggest drops in the country. Sacramento had a 13% year-over-year drop, and California as a whole saw a 9% drop. Blomquist says it's because rising home prices and fewer foreclosures are making it harder to turn a quick profit on flipping a home. Bucking the trend is Reno, where flipping increased by 9% from a year ago. "Part of the reason, the difference in Nevada versus California, is we that do have a market where foreclosures are rebounding." The average house flip in Reno earned the seller a \$52,000 profit in the third quarter.

RESIGN

17: Sacramento City Unified School District Superintendent Jonathan Raymond says a promise to family is the reason he is resigning from what he calls his "dream job."

BART

18: Such strikes are already prohibited in New York City, Chicago and Washington, DC. Workers at San Francisco's bus system, MUNI, are also not allowed to walk off the job. The California Labor Federation opposes those proposals. It says strikes are always a last resort, but they're often the only way workers can force management to negotiate in good faith.

CHANNEL

18: Lucero says closing the gates increases the amount of water flowing out to the Bay. That helps keep salinity levels below Delta limits set by the state of California. Channel access to the Mokelumne (mo KELL um nee) river from the Sacramento River will likely be closed until spring.

PRISON

21: California now has until the end of February to comply with a court order to reduce overcrowding in its prisons. This is the third extension a federal three-judge panel has granted the state. In the meantime it's ordered California to continue negotiating with plaintiffs in the case on a long-term solution to overcrowding.

SHOOTING

21: A student walked into Sparks Middle School yesterday (MONDAY) morning and opened fire, shooting a teacher dead and wounding two 12-year-old boys before killing himself.

DAYAFTER

22: Landsberry was shot in the chest by the student. He's survived by a wife and two step children. The student's name is not being released. Police say he got the semi-automatic gun he used in the shooting from his family. The family could face charges, but is fully cooperating with the investigation.

HOMEBILL

22: Guaranteeing folks one person at the bank, so they're not passed back and forth between people. They know exactly who their point person is at the bank." (:10) Bill of Rights supporters also applaud the end of dual tracking. That's the practice of pushing people through foreclosure as they try to modify their loans. Banking groups agree those protections are helping. But Dustin Hobbs with the California Mortgage Bankers Association says the extra rules are driving up home prices.

TRAFFIC

23: The 18 million dollar Elverta Road Interchange project replaces a traffic light on State Route 99 with a bridge over the highway, as well as entry and exit ramps. The interchange is about three miles north of where I-5 splits off from 99 towards Sacramento International Airport.

SHOOTING

23: Police say releasing the shooter's name could taint their search for a motive. And under City Attorney Chet Adams interpretation of state law the entire police report may never be released because juvenile criminal records are protected.

ZEV

24: The eight states signing the agreement represent 23-percent of the U-S car market. In order to meet their goal, one in seven new car sales in those states would have to be a zero emissions vehicle.

SACHOME

24: The median price for a Sacramento area home in September was 260-thousand dollars. By comparison, the Bay Area median was more than 560-thousand dollars. And more than 30-percent of the homes that sold in Sacramento went to "cash buyers." Those are typically investors who buy property and then turn it into a rental or live in it occasionally as a second home.

MANHUNT

25: Sutter Hospital sources confirm multiple police officers have been shot during a manhunt for a suspect who allegedly shot a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer in Roseville this afternoon. Law enforcement say the suspect is named Sammy Duran.

HOMELESS

25: Groups that help homeless people in Auburn are getting a boost from a self-described conservative business lawyer. Attorney Robert Litchfield [LITCH-field] will be delivering the first of several one-thousand dollar checks to homeless charities tomorrow [Saturday].

CLEAN

28: Under the plan, all four jurisdictions commit to accounting for the costs of greenhouse gas emissions. California and British Columbia will maintain their existing clean fuel standards. Washington and Oregon will move forward with similar policies.

RAPE

28: Veteran Kate Weber was 18 and had only been in the Army for a few months when she was raped by her superior. She later reported the assault to a female officer.

U-S-A TRACK

29: SACRAMENTO State was awarded the event in part because the Sacramento Sports Commission, local hotels and the Convention and Visitors Bureau have agreed to pay for resurfacing the university's track.

BIOGAS

29: The facility generates extra methane by injecting fats, oils and grease - known as FOG- into its waste digestion system. The plant's director of operations Ruben Robles, says that creates more electricity.

WATT

30: The falsework that's going to be released over the next two nights is the supporting elements while the bridge is being constructed. And now that the new bridge structure over Highway 50 is essentially complete, that falsework can be released from the concrete bridge above.

Measure

30: Supporters of Measure A say the tax increase would raise \$280 million over 10 years. Stockton City Councilwoman Kathy Miller says the city needs the money as part of its plan to exit bankruptcy. She says if Measure A fails a plan to put more police officers on the street will be doomed.

MEASUREA

31: A measure on the ballot for a Tuesday election in Stockton proposes a sales tax increase of three-quarters of a cent. Capital Public Radio's Rich Ibarra reports that proponents say the new money will help hire more police... but critics aren't sure.

NEWCRV

31: Purchasers of beer, soft drinks and bottled water will still be able to go to state recycling centers and redeem the nominal recycling fee included in the price. Cal Recycle's Mark Oldfield says items not in the California Redemption Value, or CRV program won't be counted.

November

PROPTAX

01: If you own a home in Sacramento County, your property tax bill is payable beginning tomorrow [Friday]. But if you think the assessed value of your home is too high, you may be able to do something about it. Capital Public Radio's Steve Milne reports.

PARKING

01: The city then plans to launch a new smart phone app. The meters will relay information that allows a driver to know what spaces are available and when a meter is about to run out.

LATEGRADS

04: Fifty Sacramento teenagers who fell short of high school graduation requirements in June, but who worked over the summer to earn their diplomas, will take part in a graduation ceremony tonight in Sacramento. The Sacramento City Unified School District is one of the few in the area to honor post-June graduates with their own ceremony.

SOLAR

04: SMUD is launching a new clean energy project to help improve efficiency at its natural gas-fired power plant. As Capital Public Radio's Amy Quinton reports, the US Energy Department has given the utility 10-million dollars to test the technology.

SUTTERSETTLE

05: Sacramento-based Sutter Health has agreed to pay nearly 50 million dollars to settle allegations that its billing methods for anesthesia services were false and misleading. Capital Public Radio's Marianne Russ reports.

ELKGROW

05: City leaders in Elk Grove are pushing a plan to expand the city's boundaries, but opponents are raising concerns about traffic and environmental damage. A decision could come tomorrow [Wednesday]. Capital Public Radio's Steve Milne reports.

MEASUREA

06: The city has promised to use most of the money to hire as many as 120 police officers and use the rest to keep city services like libraries and parks in operation. Voter turnout was light...only about 25 percent of registered voters cast ballots. But voters like Kurt Skinner felt this was an important election.

STRONGVOTE

06: The initiative also calls for term limits for the Mayor and requires two city council meetings per month. The initiative is something Johnson has been pushing for since he was first elected. This time, a group of business community groups successfully pushed for the change.

DONNELLY

07: Donnelly is a tea party member whose campaign slogan is "Patriot not Politician." He says if elected, he'll work to lower taxes and reduce regulations. Brown has not officially said he's running for a record fourth term next year, but he's widely expected to do so.

CARAIL

07: The High-Speed Rail Authority has voted to support a route that goes through eastern Kings County. Board members say it will have less environmental impact than an alternate path. But following a meeting in which several residents and local elected officials voiced opposition to the plan, Authority Board Chair Dan Richard stressed this is not a final decision.

VETJOB

08: Roggow says the Guard considers employment an important part of recovery from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. The program focuses on teaching a job candidate how to turn military experience into a full-time private sector job

NEWNET

08: California health insurers say people buying coverage for themselves next year should expect a different set of doctors and hospitals than are available this year. Health Care Reporter Pauline Bartolone has more.

CVP

11: The federal Central Valley Project's reservoirs are at their lowest levels since 2009. Six key reservoirs now hold just 5-point-one million acre feet of water because of the dry weather. The 15 year average is seven million acre feet. The CVP provides water for three million acres of farmland in the Sacramento Valley, San Joaquin Valley and central coast, as well as millions of urban users. Gayle Holman with the Westlands Water District says it's telling farmers to be prepared for zero-percent allocations in 2014.

PARADE

11: Thousands of people waved flags, and cheered on Sacramento's Capitol Mall for Veteran's Day. Capital Public Radio's Bob Moffitt brings us the sights and sounds of the event.

TYPHOON

12: Sacramento area Filipino groups are coming together to arrange local relief efforts for victims of Typhoon Haiyan.

UCLABOR

12: Labor disputes loom as new University of California President Janet Napolitano presides over her first Board of Regents meeting this week. Two UC employees' unions have voted to hold one day strikes next Wednesday.

UCNAPO

13: New University of California President Janet Napolitano [nuh-paw-lih-TAN-oh] is laying out her agenda for the state's flagship public university system – starting with a tuition freeze for the 2014-15 school year.

PETITION

13: Opponents of publicly financing a downtown Sacramento arena have collected 22-thousand petitions to put the matter on next June's ballot. But, arena proponents say half of the people who signed petitions have withdrawn their signatures.

POLLUTE

14: For more than two decades the San Joaquin Valley has been trying to meet the federal clean-air standard for smog. Capital Public Radio's Rich Ibarra reports it has finally achieved that goal with "zero" violations this year.

PLANS

14: Under the original terms of the Affordable Care Act, a million Californians would lose the health plans they have. Today, President Obama proposed those plans be allowed to continue for another year. But California's health insurance industry is urging the state not to change course.

FRACK

15: California Governor Jerry Brown's administration has released new regulations for the controversial oil extracting technique known as hydraulic fracturing. The "fracking" rules were developed in response to legislation passed earlier this year that require the oil industry to obtain permits, notify nearby neighbors and disclose chemicals used in the practice.

CHILDCRE

15: A new report says years of cuts to state child care and early education programs have hurt low income Californians. The California Budget Project says funding for those programs is down significantly from a few years ago. Max Pringle reports from Sacramento.

STEM

18: It's looking at how to expand "STEM" programs in California schools. "STEM" stands for science, technology, engineering and mathematics. State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson (TOAR-lick-son) says too few California students are graduating with the necessary "STEM" skills that employers are looking for.

RAIN

18: Rain is returning to Northern California as early as tonight and through Thursday. Chris Hintz is with the National Weather Service in Sacramento.

AEROJET

19: An explosion at the Aerojet Rocketdyne site in Rancho Cordova injured two people this (Tuesday) morning. One was taken to a hospital. The other was treated and released at the scene. The Rancho Cordova site is an engineering center for space and defense propulsion systems, a manufacturing site for solid rocket motors, and a propulsion test facility.

UCSTRIKE

19: A state court in Sacramento has ruled that 22,000 unionized University of California health care workers can strike as planned tomorrow (Wednesday). As Max Pringle reports from Sacramento, the UC sought to block the strike for safety reasons.

COMCTR

20: On Capital Public Radio's "Insight with Beth Ruyak" today, Richard Lewis with California Musical Theatre said upgrading the community center would bring it into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

WATER

20: The Department of Water Resources says it will only be able to initially fulfill five percent of requested water deliveries in 2014. Every year water agencies throughout California request water through the State Water Project. More than 25 million people and 700 thousand acres of farmland depend on the supply.

WINDY

21: That's Johnny Powell, a forecaster with the National Weather Service in Sacramento. He says wind gusts in the foothills could get as high as 55 miles-an-hour...and in the mountains of the Northern Sierra Nevada, as high as 80 miles an hour.

BETA

21: The Federal government has threatened to withhold at least \$15 million from California unless it continues to administer standardized tests. Richard Zeiger [ZIE-grr] with the California Department of Education says this may satisfy federal demands.

RIMRANCH

22: About a dozen ranchers in Tuolumne (too AWL um nee) County lost between a quarter-and-a-half-million dollars when the Rim Fire killed as many as 300 head of cattle. Justin Oldfield with the California Cattlemen's Association says a rancher can feel the financial effects of one lost cow for several years.

JOBS

22: Hiring in California ground to a halt in September. The state lost nearly 3-thousand jobs – the first month of negative job totals in more than two years. On the brighter side, California added 40-thousand jobs in October. And August's preliminary 29-thousand job gain was revised up to 34-thousand. Chapman University economist Esmael Adibi calls the report "mixed."

RAIL

25: In separate cases the Sacramento Superior Court has ruled the California High Speed Rail Authority may not sell \$8 billion in bonds and the project's \$68 billion funding plan must be rewritten. The Howard Jarvis Taxpayer's Association's Jon Coupal says the rulings could be the end of the project, a result he would welcome

COVEREG

25: The American Civil Liberties Union of California says the state's health care exchange is violating federal and state law by failing to provide new enrollees with adequate voter registration opportunities. Capital Public Radio's Max Pringle Reports.

LEDLITE

26: Roseville Electric is hoping to entice its customers to make the switch to L-E-D lights this holiday season by offering them a few free strands. The utility will hand out up to three strands of L-E-D lights to any customer who brings incandescent lights to be recycled.

FLYFOOD

26: You'll have some new food options this holiday season while waiting to pick up friends and family from the Sacramento International Airport.

DRY

27: The California Department of Water Resources is working again this year with researchers on an experimental winter outlook forecast. As Capital Public Radio's Amy Quinton reports, 2014 brings the possibility of another dry year.

BEARS

27: The University of California Berkeley and The California Department of Wildlife are teaming up to study black bear habitat, range and management techniques. Capital Public Radio's Ky Plaskon reports.

TDPUD

29: The Truckee-Donner Public Utilities District has reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 57 percent over the last 9 years. As Capital Public Radio's Ky Plaskon Reports, now it is being used as an example for other utilities.

CRAZYHORSE

29: The holiday season shows are taking over at local theatre stages, but audiences still have a few weeks to see a provocative new play, imagining a conversation in the afterlife between two famous figures at the Battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876. Jeff Hudson reviews "Crazy Horse and Custer

December

CIMONEY

02: December is typically a slow month for the hotel industry in Sacramento, so the CIM comes at a good time. Brenda Kirian is with the Hyatt Regency in Downtown Sacramento, across the street from the state Capitol on L Street. The hotel is located near the CIM finish line.

GAMING

02: An Indian tribe located near Yosemite has state and federal approvals to build a casino off of its reservation. But a referendum on the California ballot next year might kill the project. Capital Public Radio's Katie Orr reports.

FIELD

03: A new survey finds more Californians are growing critical of the work President Barack Obama is doing. Capital Public Radio's Marianne Russ reports.

PLANTS

03: There's a hard freeze warning in effect for the Sacramento area. Plant experts warn about the consequences of temperatures dropping to 28-degrees and staying there for several hours.

SILVA

04: The Stockton City Council has publicly reprimanded Mayor Anthony Silva for disclosing the name of a candidate for the City Manager job against confidentiality rules. The Council voted 5-2 last night for a "resolution of admonishment" against the Mayor.

CALPARKS

04: The California State Parks system is marking its 150th anniversary. To celebrate the department is showing off its new Museum Collections Center. The sprawling Sacramento warehouse contains over a million artifacts from various state parks.

SLOWSPD

05: The California High-Speed Rail Authority is moving forward with construction on the project's opening phase – despite major legal and regulatory setbacks in recent days. Board Chair Dan Richard says the contractor has already begun the design work, and the physical construction will get under way in January or February.

BRRR

05: With these low pressure systems that have these very low snow levels, they pose huge problems in terms of travel across the sierra. Research has shown that these low pressures oftentimes can just completely shut down highway 80

TATREES

06: There will be 25-hundred fewer trees in the Lake Tahoe area this month as a result of a popular public christmas tree cutting program. As Capital Public Radio's Ky Plaskon reports, it has sold out earlier than usual and fewer permits available as a result of more intense forest thinning efforts at Lake Tahoe.

NOJAILS

06: Advocates for overhauling the corrections system are asking California officials to look at alternatives to incarceration as they consider how best to use bond revenue meant to reduce prison overcrowding. About 500 million dollars in bond money will come available in the New Year to counties for jail facility upgrades and expansion. Mary Sutton with Californians United for a Responsible Budget says counties should focus on crime prevention.

CEILING

09: An annual report that takes a look at the status of California women business leaders shows only incremental improvement in the number of female company executives. Max Pringle reports from Sacramento.

DELTEIR

09: The proposal to build two tunnels to carry water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to central and southern California has reached a significant milestone. As Capital Public Radio's Amy Quinton reports, the state has released the Bay Delta Conservation Plan for formal public review.

NOVMON

10: The State Controller's office says California took in \$6 billion in November, about \$376 million below budget projections. The office blames the shortfall on the lateness of "Black Friday" weekend. About \$440 million in sales tax revenue generated over the busy shopping weekend won't be accounted for until the December update.

CLMATEPLN

10: California Governor Jerry Brown's administration today released a draft of its action plan on preparations for the impacts of climate change over the next century. The plan addresses the effects of extreme weather, rising sea levels and other issues. Capital Public Radio's Max Pringle reports

PSYCHVOTE

11: A controversial plan to build a private psychiatric hospital near Cal Expo is moving ahead, despite objections from nearby neighbors.

CAPBUX

11: A coalition of environmental and business groups says California Governor Jerry Brown must repay a 500-million dollar loan from the state's cap-and-trade auction proceeds. As Capital Public Radio's Amy Quinton reports, it says the money should go to programs that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

PENALTY

12: Kent Scheidegger with the Criminal Justice Legal Foundation says the initiative would eliminate automatic appeals to the State Supreme Court in death penalty cases.

COLDAPPS

12: You may be glad the cold snap we had last week is over. But apple growers in the El Dorado County town of Camino say they wouldn't mind more freezing temperatures. Capital Public Radio's Steve Milne explains.

HIGHERED

13: The leaders also talked about increasing enrollment for minority and disadvantaged students. And they said they'll start lobbying state and federal leaders in the New Year for help in reducing student debt by increasing grant funding.

STEM

13: The agency was created by ballot measure in 2004, and was allotted three billion dollars in bonds for ten years. Kevin McCarthy from the agency says it will be able to award grants until 2017, but will need alternative funding beyond that.

IRSCALL

16: The computerized voice warns people that they must call back to deal with a time sensitive issue. The District Attorney says con artists often try to trick people into giving away personal information like a social security number or credit card number.

TRANSBOX

16: Transgender athletes may one day be allowed to compete in boxing, kickboxing and mixed martial arts in California. The state's Athletic Commission, which oversees the sports' professional and amateur events, was presented with regulations today [Monday] that would allow transgender athletes to fight.

TICKOFF

17: There's been an increase in the number of ticks, as well as in ticks infected with the organism that causes Lyme disease in Placer County.

BADAIR

17: If you live in Sacramento or San Joaquin counties where overnight temperatures are dipping into the upper 30s, or the Reno area where it's even colder, you may be tempted to use your fireplace. But you could be fined if you do.

REHOSP

18: Hospital Employee Maria Romero said she was scared because she was inside the building at 2:05 when the shooting started and a emergency "Code Blue" was issued. One hundred officers including SWAT, bomb squad and even parole and probation officers responded within five minutes. But Deputy Chief Tom Robinson says the shooter had already killed himself.

CONFAIR

18: A Sacramento County program for prison parolees claims a significantly lower recidivism rate than the state average. Capital Public Radio's Bob Moffitt reports from a resource fair held in an effort to lower that number further.

EIROPEN

19: A crucial document needed for the Downtown Sacramento arena project is now up for public review. Last night, about 80 people attended an open house at City Hall to ask questions and comment about the environmental impact report.

GOAWAY

19: More Californians will leave home to celebrate the holidays this year, and as Capital Public Radio's Marianne Russ reports, they'll benefit from lower gas prices.

TEXTEEN

20: Today we begin a series of reports on new state laws taking effect in California on January 1st. We begin with a law intended to keep people safe on the roads. If you're using a voice-activated hands-free device to text while driving, you're not doing anything illegal. That'll change for teenagers in the New Year. Capital Public Radio's Steve Milne reports.

NEWGUN

20: New gun laws will take effect January first in California. Some gun owners are confused about what will be legal or illegal next year.

WATERS

26: Many water sources around the state are getting low. Folsom Lake is at a near record low of 21 percent capacity. Earlier this month, Governor Jerry Brown put together a task force to determine whether there's justification for a statewide declaration of drought.

RETAIL

26: The Westfield Galleria at Roseville says it, too, had a good holiday season. It saw increases in both sales and the number of people who stopped by the mall - despite the fact that a late Thanksgiving shortened the shopping season by nine days this year.

CALFRESH

27: Come New Year's Day, close to 230- thousand low income Californians may become eligible for the state's food stamp program. As Capital Public Radio's Max Pringle reports, a new state law matches food stamp income eligibility requirements to those of Medi-Cal.

BLOOD

27: The holidays are traditionally the time of highest demand for California blood banks...at a time when many donors are unable to donate.

STAFFING

30: A survey of Sacramento employment hiring trends shows that a healthy majority of local employers are feeling confident about the region's economy and many plan to add positions over the next few months. Rick Reed is a market researcher for the local staffing agency that commissions the quarterly regional employment poll. He says compared to recent years things are looking up.

OLDSAC

30: Old Sacramento is preparing for its fourteenth-annual New Year's Eve party. It's the first since a shooting marred the event a year ago.

COUNT

31: County Registrar Jill LaVine (la VYNE) says more than 9500 petition withdrawal forms have been verified as belonging to Sacramento County voters. The next step is to verify the signatures on petitions supporting the measure

COUNT

31: The Sacramento County Registrar of Voters' office is making progress in the effort to determine whether there will be a vote in June on a new Sacramento arena. Capital Public Radio's Bob Moffitt reports.