



ALPINE THREADS

Community and Family Life in the California Alps

Winter 2020

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Masthead photo courtesy of Alpine County photographer Todd Branscombe.



No Tobacco Products Sold to Minors in Alpine County!



On September 26, 2019, the Alpine County Tobacco Control Program conducted its annual local survey of retailers and their compliance with California's Tobacco 21 law. This law is meant to protect young people under the age of 21 from accessing tobacco and vaping products in retail environments.

The survey involves having a trained youth investigator attempt to purchase a tobacco product at each retail location in the county, while under the supervision of two adult chaperones. The stores are also checked for the required signs including the 1-800-5 ASK-4-ID sign posted near the register and the "No Tobacco & E-Cigs Under 21" decal on their window.

Besides displaying the proper signage, all California tobacco retailers are required to train their employees to ask for identification for any person who appears to be under the age of 27, and to refuse sale to any person under the age of 21.



Both of the currently open tobacco retailers in Alpine County, the Markleeville General Store and Lake Alpine Resort, can be congratulated for their compliance with the law that protects the health of our youth. Each clerk followed the proper procedures by asking for identification and refusing to sell to the youth investigator. Both clerks were courteous and conscientious while upholding the Tobacco 21 law.

With the current epidemic of teen vaping, it is more important than ever that retailers do their part to protect youth from tobacco products. As of 2018, the Centers for Disease Control reports 20.8% of high schoolers vape and the numbers continue to grow. With flavors like cotton candy and cinnamon breakfast cereal, vaping e-liquids are enticing to young people and can lead to a lifelong addiction to nicotine. Law-abiding tobacco retailers are pivotal in the fight against youth tobacco use.



What Do Weeds Have to Do with a Healthy Watershed?

By Kimra McAfee, Alpine Watershed Group Executive Director

There's something simple we can all do for the environment every time we walk, bike, or drive through Alpine County: Be on the lookout for invasive weeds.

The plants I am talking about aren't native to our local environment, and they tend to spread very aggressively. In doing so, they displace native and desirable plants. They can form monocultures, taking over an entire area, which decreases wildlife habitat. Some stands of invasives increase fire hazards. Some invasive species aren't good at holding the soil—the eroding soil makes the stream or lake less healthy.

The best way to keep issues with invasives as small as possible is to find the species early in its expansion, and keep it from spreading. At our November watershed group meeting, El Dorado and Alpine County Deputy Agricultural Commissioner LeeAnne Mila introduced us to a variety of these scary weeds.

Some of the species, like spotted knapweed, Canada thistle, and perennial pepperweed (tall whitetop), are already in Alpine County. Others, like purple loosestrife, haven't made it here yet, and it would be really good if we could keep it that way.



[*Perennial Pepperweed*]

These weedy species can be quite pretty. But when you learn the details—tens to hundreds of thousands of seeds per plant, and some can also regrow from shoots and roots—it's rather amazing that we have so many native plant landscapes. The aggressiveness of the invaders is mind-boggling.

Many of us aren't good at identifying plants. That's okay. LeeAnne emphasized that we should all follow our guts. If something doesn't look right in the landscape, take multiple pictures (including one with a coin or something else in the photo for scale), make sure you note the location if your camera doesn't do so, and report the weed to the Department of Agriculture at (530) 621-5520 or eldcag@edcgov.us. Early detection saves finite resources when it comes to controlling weeds.



[*Spotted Knapweed*]

For a flyer on six of the baddies already in Alpine County, please visit www.alpinewatershedgroup.org > Latest News. You can stop by our office to pick up a brochure with more details on noxious weeds in the Carson River Watershed (50 Diamond Valley Road, the green building next to Community Development). Or dive deep at www.cal-ipc.org > Plants.

Seeds can stick to your shoes or dog, become lodged between your tire treads, or be brought in with gravel or hay. So besides being a weed watcher, please think about how you might be helping weeds spread.

Thank you for helping us keep the plant and animal diversity in Alpine County by watching out for weeds and their seeds!

Flu Shot Facts



AS YOUR DOCTOR, I STRONGLY SUGGEST THAT YOU

- Get a flu shot* each year if you are 6 months or older.
- Ask family and caregivers to get a flu shot.
- Ask about anti-viral drugs to treat flu illness early.

10 things to know about flu shots:

1. Flu shots do not cause the flu.
2. Side effects are small compared to how it prevents serious illness.
3. If flu vaccines do not closely match the flu virus, there is still added protection.
4. Most flu vaccines do not have mercury, although it is safe even if a vaccine has mercury. There are vaccines made without the flu virus or egg. However, vaccines made with egg are safe even with a known egg allergy. Check with your doctor if there is known egg allergy.*
5. October (just before flu season starts) is the best time to get a flu shot. However, flu shots help any time before flu season ends (April).
6. Seniors need special vaccines that give extra protection.
7. A flu shot protects a pregnant woman and her baby from very serious illness.
8. Persons with heart, lung or other diseases need a flu shot to prevent serious flu problems.
9. Check with your health plan. There is no cost or a very small cost for flu shots.
10. Many places offer flu shots. You can go to a health department, pharmacy, work, or a clinic (urgent care, school, college). Call Member Services for a list of pharmacies. The phone number is on the back of your health plan card.

*Some people should not get a flu shot. For example, if you had a severe reaction in the past, talk to your doctor. A doctor may watch you for a short time after a flu shot. For more information, go to <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/should-not-vacc.html>.

For current information about the flu, visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/index.html>

FLY035407S000 (9/19)



On September 22, 2009, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration banned the sale of flavored cigarettes in the United States under the authority of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act.^[1] This decision was based on evidence that flavored products make it easier to start smoking by masking the unpleasant flavor of tobacco, and flavors make cigarettes very appealing to young people.^[2] This law was a very important step in preventing and reducing smoking among young people, but it did not go far enough in banning flavors from all tobacco products.

While the use of flavors in cigarettes was banned, flavors in other similarly addictive and attractive tobacco products like cigars, smokeless tobacco (including dip, snuff, and snus), hookah tobacco (also called shisha), and vaping e-liquids are still allowed. Just like cigarettes, these tobacco products all contain nicotine, which makes it very difficult to quit. Nicotine is especially harmful to the developing adolescent brain, making the fact that flavors attract youth and young adults to these products exceptionally concerning. Exposure to nicotine has a long-lasting impact, impairing the parts of the brain that are involved with impulse control and weighing the consequences of an action.^[3] Nicotine exposure during adolescence also may predispose one to addictions.^[2] Vaping exposes the user and bystanders to toxic chemicals and unknown long term health effects.

The 2009 ban on the sale of flavored cigarettes made all cigarette flavors illegal except for one very important flavor—menthol, commonly used in mint flavoring to make things taste cool and fresh. Users of menthol tobacco products perceive it as less harmful because the menthol masks the harshness.^[4] Because menthol makes smoking feel less harsh, new smokers are more likely to start smoking cigarettes. Menthol not only makes it easier to start smoking, but also makes it harder to quit.^[5]

Menthol and other flavored tobacco products are very attractive to young people and new smokers because they taste good. Some flavors used in tobacco contain the same chemicals as popular treats like Jolly Rancher, Life Savers, and Kool-Aid drink mix.^[6] Even though the overall rate of cigarette smoking in the U.S. has decreased in recent years, the use of menthol cigarettes, vaping and hookah among young people and new smokers has increased.^[7, 8] Studies show that most teens that use or try tobacco choose a flavored product, and young people are much more likely than adults to use a flavored tobacco product.^[9, 10]

Although many of these products are not sold in Alpine County, our young people have easy access to these things across the border in Nevada where the tobacco purchase age remains 18. It is important to remember that even though using flavored tobacco products may taste good now; these products are addictive and can lead to cancer, heart disease, stroke, and other smoking-related diseases. Educating the younger generation of Alpine County on the dangers of these products is the first step in preventing them from starting a lifelong tobacco addiction.

For more information please contact Nora Esders at the Alpine County Tobacco Control Program at nesders@alpinecountyca.gov or (530) 694-2235 ext. 242.

Citations

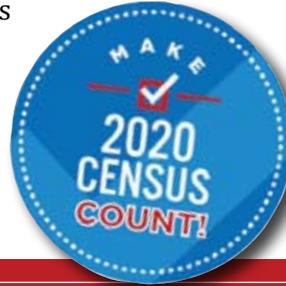
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WE COUNT: 2020 Census Message by First 5 Association of California

The Census 2020 is coming in April.

Filling out the Census form for your address is easy. You can even do it on your smartphone or at the Library on April 1st! The Census happens every 10 years, and it is the only official population count in the U.S. Your answers on the Census help decide how much money your community will receive for the next 10 years. It also decides your allotted representation in California and Washington, D.C. Remember, when it comes to the Census, everyone counts. Count ALL children living at your address. Don't forget to include babies (born on or before April 1, 2020), nieces, nephews, grandchildren, foster children, and people not related to you (like a friend and his/her child) if they are living with you on April 1, 2020.



Mission statement:

Live Violence Free is committed to promoting a violence free community through education and advocacy to address domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse and basic needs.

Services:

Advocacy, peer counseling/support, legal program, accompaniment, therapy, basic needs (food and clothing) and parenting services.

Location:

100 Foothill Rd, Suite A, Markleeville, CA 96120

Office hours:

Mon-Fri 8am-4pm

Phone number:

530-694-1853

24-hour crisis line:

530-544-4444

In 2017 over 47,000 Americans died by suicide and almost 10,000,000 adults had suicidal thoughts. Suicide is 10th leading cause of death in the U.S.

HELP BREAK THE STIGMA BY LEARNING COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT SUICIDE



myth: Talking about suicide will lead to and encourage suicide.

FACT: There is a widespread stigma associated with suicide and as a result, many people are afraid to speak about it. Talking about suicide not only reduces the stigma, but also allows individuals to seek help, rethink their opinions and share their story with others. We all need to talk more about suicide. Eliminating the stigma starts by understanding why suicide occurs and advocating for mental health awareness within our communities. There are suicide hotlines, mental health support groups, online resources and many mental health professionals who can help any individual who is struggling with unhealthy thoughts and emotions. For more information call Suicide Prevention Network at (775) 783 1510, go online to www.spnawareness.org or visit Minden office located at 1625 Highway 88, Suite 203.

myth: Once an individual is suicidal, he or she will always remain suicidal.

FACT: Active suicidal ideation is often short-term and situation-specific. The act of suicide is often an attempt to control deep, painful emotions and thoughts an individual is experiencing. Once these thoughts dissipate, so will the suicidal ideation. While suicidal thoughts can return, they are not permanent. An individual with suicidal thoughts and attempts can live a long, successful life.

myth: Most suicides happen suddenly without warning.

FACT: Warning signs—verbal or behavioral—precede most suicides. Therefore, it's important to learn and understand the warnings signs associated with suicide. Many individuals who are suicidal may only show warning signs to those closest to them. These loved ones may not recognize what's going on, which is how it may seem like the suicide was sudden or without warning.

myth: If a person is determined to kill themselves, nothing is going to stop them.

FACT: Even the most severely depressed person has mixed feelings about death, wavering until the very last moment between wanting to live and wanting to die. Most suicidal people do not want death; they want the pain to stop. The impulse to end it all, however overpowering, does not last forever.

Tips for Parents: Underage Drinking in California What Can You Do?



How Common is Drinking Among Youth? Drinking among U.S. teenagers is a serious problem.

Alcohol is the most commonly used drug among teens.

- ✘ 52% of eighth graders and 80% of high-school seniors have used alcohol at some time.
- ✘ 25% of eighth graders and 62% of high-school seniors have been drunk.



How Do Underage Drinkers Obtain Alcohol?

Most underage drinkers report it is "very easy" to obtain alcohol. Most get it from two sources:

- Third parties (e.g., legal-age friends, siblings, and strangers); and
- Commercial outlets, such as stores, bars, and restaurants (often by using a fake ID)

Home is the primary source of alcohol among the youngest drinkers, either stolen from parents' supplies, or given willingly by some parents.

Alcopops are the newest trend in underage drinking. These fruit-flavored malt beverages come in colorful packaging similar in design to many teen-friendly soft drinks. They are called "flavored malt beverages" or "low-alcohol refreshers" by the alcohol industry, even though their alcohol content rivals most beers.

Risk Factors: *Some teens are more likely to drink than others: although teenage girls are almost as likely to drink as boys, teenage boys are much more likely to regularly drink heavily.*

Is Your Teenager Using Drugs or Alcohol? It is difficult to know when your teen is using alcohol, but look for these signs:

- ☑ **Mood swings** *Mood swings are normal for teens, but look for extreme changes—your child acting happy and upbeat one minute followed by withdrawal or fits of anger or rage.*
- ☑ **Secrecy** *If your child begins to act with increased secrecy about possessions or activities it may be a sign for concern.*
- ☑ **New friends** *If your child is using, chances are he or she will be spending time with others who have similar interests. Is your child suddenly hanging around with new friends?*
- ☑ **Changed school habits** *Is your child skipping classes? Suddenly getting bad grades?*



Common Myths About Alcohol

Myth: What parents say or do won't make any difference; teens only listen to their friends. **Fact:** Parents can be very influential. A

study of adolescents and their families conducted by the Research Institute on Addictions revealed that adolescent girls and boys, regardless of race or income level, whose parents supervise their friendships and activities, are less likely to engage in problem behaviors, including drinking.

Talk With Your Teen About Alcohol

LISTEN. The key to effective communicating is being a good listener. With teens, it is important to make the time to listen to them, especially when they're ready to talk. **KNOW WHAT TO SAY.** Find your own words, times and places that are comfortable for you to talk. **MAKE TIME.** Establishing regular "together time" with your child does a lot to encourage talking. **TALK ONE ON ONE.** If you have more than one child, try to talk to each one separately, even when it's about the same topic.



As a parent or caregiver, you have vital influence on the life of your child. You serve as a role model on the use of alcohol, control the availability of alcohol in your home, and help set your child's expectations concerning drinking behaviors. Use the information described here, and in the full Tips for Parents: Underage Drinking in California publication, to help prevent the youth you know from drinking underage.

Developed by the California Governor's Prevention Advisory Council's Underage Drinking Prevention Workgroup, the full publication "Tips for Parents: Underage Drinking In California...What Can You Do?" can be downloaded at www.safestate.org/underagedrinking. If you would like a hard copy of "Tips for Parents..." or to inquire about making the booklet state specific, contact Wendy Tully of the California Attorney General's Office at wendy.tully@doj.ca.gov.

Please contact Alpine County Behavioral Health Services for additional Prevention information.
Misty Dee- AOD Program Specialist (530) 694-1816



Screen Time might be physically changing Kids' Brains

A study published in JAMA Pediatrics warns that kids' literacy and language skills suffer with screen use, and MRI scans of their brains appear to back up the findings.

The study: Forty-seven 3- to 5-year-olds took a test to measure their cognitive abilities, and their parents were asked to answer a detailed survey about screen time habits. Questions included: How frequently do they use that screen? What type of content are they viewing? And is there an adult sitting with the child talking about what they're watching? The answers were scored against a set of screen time guidelines put out by the American Academy of Pediatrics. The kids also had their brains scanned in an MRI machine.

Brain changes: The scans revealed that kids who spent more time in front of screens had what the authors call lower "white matter integrity." White matter can be roughly thought of as the brain's internal communications network—its long nerve fibers are sheathed in fatty insulation that allows electrical signals to move from one area of the brain to another without interruption. The integrity of that structure—how well organized the nerve fibers are, and how well developed the myelin sheath is—is associated with cognitive function, and it develops as kids learn language.

Lead author John Hutton of Cincinnati Children's Hospital told MIT Technology Review there's a clear link between higher screen use and lower white matter integrity in the children his team studied. That structural change appears to be reflected in the results of the cognitive test the kids took as well, which showed high screen time associated with lower levels of language and literacy skills. "The effect size is substantial, as these findings also rigorously controlled for multiple comparisons across the brain," Hutton says.

The big caveats: It's a small and preliminary study. "It's absolutely not clear that screen time causes differences in brain development and there are many factors that could explain the association found here," Signe Lauren Bray, a researcher at the University of Calgary who was not involved in the study, said via email. Bray has done fMRI studies on kids brains, and pointed to other work that suggested kids who spent more time in front of screen tended to display more symptoms of ADHD. But that study also suggested that the symptoms could be the very reason why kids were spending time in front of screens in the first place. Socioeconomics could also play a role, she said, and screen time effects could disappear if those factors were taken into account.

Just tell me how much screen time is okay for my kid already. Unfortunately, that's not so easy. "It's hard to say what the 'safe' age or amount of screen time is," Hutton says. "My motto is 'Screen-free until three'—this at least gets kids to preschool with a solid anchor in the real world, where their basic sense of connection with caregivers and early language skills have solidified."

It's a small study, but also big. "While relatively small for a behavioral study, this is actually a fairly large MRI study, especially involving young children, [and] the first to explore associations between screen time and brain structure," Hutton says. Next steps include more tests on kids and efforts to figure out how parents' screen use might influence their children.

The take-home message: "Caution is warranted," Hutton says. "Children are not small grown-ups, and their needs change with development."

Source: MIT Technology Review, Humans and Technology, vol. 4 Author: Tanya Basu



Alpine County Public Health is now on Facebook & Twitter

Like us and follow us for up to date information and tips about healthy living and emergency preparedness in beautiful Alpine County!



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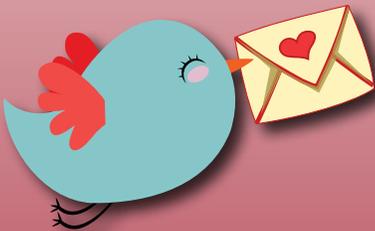
Website Links

- www.alpinecountyca.gov/calendar
- www.first5alpine.com
- www.alpinecounty.com
- www.alpinewatershedgroup.org
- www.alpinebiomasscommittee.wordpress.com
- www.spnawareness.org/

ATTENTION LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS & AGENCIES

If you'd like to share your website link send it to Gina at gina@originalmatteoni.com and we'll add it to our column.

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Disclaimer: This wellness-focused publication is not intended to provide timely news and/or personal, political or discriminatory statements. Alpine Threads Editorial Board reviews all content.



ALPINE THREADS

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Addressing the needs of the
Alpine County Community

Healthy Eating, in a SNAP!

Beef and Potato Stew

~ Serves 6 ~

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons Oil
- 1 Onion chopped
- 1 pound Beef stew meat cut into 1-inch pieces
- 3 Cloves garlic minced
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander seed
- ½ chili pepper finely chopped
- 2 cups low-sodium chicken stock
- 2 small red potatoes chopped
- 1 Green bell pepper chopped
- ½ teaspoon Salt
- Black pepper to taste
- ¼ cup Cilantro chopped



Directions

1. In a large pot, heat oil. Add onion and cook until tender, about 4 minutes.
2. Add beef, garlic, cumin, coriander, and chile. Stir and cook over high heat for 3 minutes.
3. Add stock, potatoes, carrots, and bell pepper. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer gently until beef is tender, 30 to 40 minutes. If needed, add a small amount of water to keep stew moist.
4. Season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with cilantro just before serving.

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For more recipes, borrow SNAP-Ed cookbooks from the Library and the Woodfords Indian Education Center.



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