

**COURTS** Video: Suspect in judge attack spit on officer **2B** **CRIME** Police: Man tried to flee after fatal crash **2B**

# State prisoner lost out of system



Jeremy Kelly

## Convicted murderer out of custody for nearly year

By Katelyn Newberg  
Las Vegas Review-Journal

A state inmate serving a life sentence for a 1996 murder spent nearly a year out of custody until the Department of Corrections

noticed he was unaccounted for, according to court records.

Jeremy Kelly had been sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole after he and two other men were convicted of the 1996 fatal shooting of

47-year-old Terry Dixon during a robbery-turned-murder, court records show. He had been released on parole in 2016, but was picked up on a federal weapons and drug charge two years later. Kelly, now 43, was set to be

released from federal custody in June 2022. But instead of returning him to the Department of Corrections for the murder sentence he had not finished serving, the federal Bureau of Prisons released him to the streets, a prosecutor with the Ne-

See **PRISONER 3B**



Construction continues to connect the Tropicana Avenue exit ramp on Interstate 15, as part of the Interstate 15-Tropicana interchange project. The diverging diamond interchange lane system on the Tropicana bridge will return Tuesday morning.

## Bridge's quirky lanes return

### Diverging diamond interchange back as Dropicana 2.0 advances

By Mick Akers  
Las Vegas Review-Journal

When the Tropicana Avenue bridge over Interstate 15 reopens Tuesday morning, a diverging diamond interchange lane system will be back in place.

Ahead of the Super Bowl, the DDI that was in place for a year was temporarily removed, and a

standard lane setup was put in place to ensure transportation between the resort corridor and Allegiant Stadium was smooth.

Following the big game, crews shut down Tropicana over I-15 for six days to remove the Super Bowl lane configuration and return the DDI, this time on the recently finished north half of

See **TROPICANA 3B**



Diverging diamond interchange lanes are rebuilt on Tropicana Avenue following alterations to accommodate Super Bowl 58.

## Judge blocks ballot initiatives

### Bid at independent redistricting rejected

By Jessica Hill  
Las Vegas Review-Journal

A Carson City District Court judge ruled last week that two initiative petitions aiming to change how the state redraws state and federal legislative districts were legally deficient and cannot be placed on the 2024 November ballot.

Judge Robert Estes sided with the plaintiff, Clark County resident Eric Jeng, who filed lawsuits in December 2023 to block the petitions, arguing they violated the Nevada Constitution because they would require government funding. Estes agreed with Jeng — represented by Democrat-aligned law firms Bravo Schrager and Elias Law Group — denying both ballot petitions because they created an unfunded mandate, although his signed order has not yet been made available.

The Nevada Constitution prohibits any initiative that requires the expenditure of money unless it also imposes a tax to cover the costs, and Jeng argued that redistricting commissions in other states required millions of dollars in state funding. There is no reason to believe Nevada would be any different, he argued.

Fair Maps Nevada PAC filed two petitions in November that aimed to end gerrymandering — the practice of manipulating boundaries of an electoral district to favor one party or class — by establishing a seven-member

See **BALLOT 3B**

## Extremely rare weather turns desert basin into shallow lake

By Alan Halaly  
Las Vegas Review-Journal

Kayaks aren't a must-bring item when visiting Death Valley National Park.

It hasn't ever really been a boating destination; in fact, the park is the driest place in North America.

That changed this past year with the formation of Lake Manly, as it's

officially been dubbed after a lake that dried up thousands of years ago, due to a deluge of rain from what's been called California's atmospheric river and Hurricane Hilary. The storms gave the park a total of 4.9 inches over the past six months.

Badwater Basin, a salt flat at 282 feet below sea level, lies at the end of the

See **DEATH VALLEY 3B**



A visitor to Death Valley National Park in California checks out a rare lake in Badwater Basin on Oct. 25, 2023.

K.M. Cannon  
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Ongoing construction on the Tropicana Avenue bridge over Interstate 15 creates a bumper-to-bumper traffic snarl on Monday.

## ► TROPICANA

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the bridge.

The south half of the bridge where the initial DDI was in place since February 2023 was torn down over the weekend as part of Tropicana 2.0. That included the full closure last weekend of I-15 in both directions between Flamingo and Russell roads.

When Tropicana reopens Tuesday morning, the I-15 southbound off-ramp to Tropicana, both east and westbound, and the Tropicana eastbound and westbound on-ramp to I-15 northbound will be open to traffic, according to the Nevada Department of Transportation.

The Tropicana east-and-westbound on-ramp to I-15 southbound, the I-15 northbound off-ramp to Tropicana, the I-15 southbound flyover ramp to Tropicana eastbound, and I-15 northbound access to Arena Drive all will be closed to traffic.

All of the work is tied to the larger \$305 million I-15-Tropicana project, which began in 2022 and is scheduled to wrap up in 2025.

Work on the south side of the Tropicana bridge kicks off phase 3 of the four-phase project. Phase 3 is expected to last through the fall, when phase 4 will begin.

Once the south half of the Tropicana bridge is rebuilt, the stretch will be widened from three lanes to four in both directions between Las Vegas Boule-

vard and Polaris Avenue. The project also includes the reconstruction of the flyover ramp from I-15 southbound to Tropicana eastbound.

The sidewalks on Tropicana along the stretch will be widened to 10 feet, with improvements planned for the I-15 on-ramps and off-ramps at Tropicana. The I-15 exit to Frank Sinatra Drive, which leads to T-Mobile Arena, will be widened to two lanes.

As part of the final phase of work, Dean Martin Drive will be realigned under Tropicana to increase traffic flow when that portion of the project is completed next year.

Contact Mick Akers at [makers@reviewjournal.com](mailto:mackers@reviewjournal.com) or 702-387-2920. Follow @mickakers on X.

## ► DEATH VALLEY

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Amargosa River that flows out of Nevada.

The park, about 120 miles west of Las Vegas, normally gets about 2 inches of rain a year that doesn't exceed the evaporation rate. The lake was deep enough to kayak after Hilary, but it wasn't until recently that flooded roads were cleared to allow access to the natural wonder.

Stunning satellite images from NASA show that the lake has grown to about the size it was in August. Before 2023, the lake hadn't formed since 2005, when it lasted for roughly a week.

"This is an extremely rare event," park ranger Abby Wines said in a news release. The lake is currently about 6 miles long, 3 miles wide and 1 foot deep. Many took to social media over the weekend to share photos of their adventures in the lake.

But the magic might not stick around for long — rangers estimate that the lake will only be deep enough for boating for a few weeks, though the lake itself will be there until April.

To get to the lake, rangers suggest following the road that goes to a parking lot right near the Badwater Basin boardwalk.

Contact Alan at [ahalaly@reviewjournal.com](mailto:ahalaly@reviewjournal.com). Follow @AlanHalaly on X.

## ► PRISONER

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vada attorney general's office wrote in court documents.

It took over a year for the Department of Corrections to ask the attorney general's office to help request a warrant for Kelly's arrest. An application for a fugitive warrant was filed in District Court on Jan. 19, 11 days before Kelly was set to appear for a parole hearing, records show.

At the time the warrant was requested, prosecutors wrote that Kelly's whereabouts were "currently unknown." He was arrested again on

Feb. 16 and booked into the Clark County Detention Center, court records show.

According to court minutes from a hearing on Jan. 25, a prosecutor told District Judge Jacqueline Bluth that the Department of Corrections did not release that Kelly had not been returned to state custody until officials were "looking for the Defendant's location for his parole hearing."

The prosecutors wrote in the application for the fugitive warrant that before Kelly was released from federal custody, the Bureau of Prisons had contacted the Clark County Detention Center, which is operated by the Metropolitan Police Depart-

ment, but the jail said "they did not need him back."

"The BOP did not contact the (Department of Corrections) and the (Department of Corrections) did not place a hold with the BOP for Kelly," according to the warrant.

It was unclear why the Department of Corrections did not place the proper hold with the federal agency. Neither the Bureau of Prisons nor the Department of Corrections responded to a request for comment on Monday.

Kelly was 15 when Dixon was shot in the head during a robbery in June 1996, the Las Vegas Review-Journal has previously reported. Pros-

ecutors had argued during trial that Kelly was the likely gunman and had stolen the murder weapon from a neighbor several days before the shooting.

Following his release on parole in 2016, Kelly pleaded guilty in federal court to being a felon in possession of a firearm and for possession of heroin with the intent to sell, court records show.

It was not immediately clear on Monday when Kelly is set to appear in court again, following his arrest on the fugitive warrant.

Contact Katelyn Newberg at [knewberg@reviewjournal.com](mailto:knewberg@reviewjournal.com) or 702-383-0240.

## ► BALLOT

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ber independent redistricting commission to redraw the maps, rather than giving the responsibility to the Legislature.

The PAC submitted two different questions, one that would redraw the maps in 2027 and another that would redraw the maps in 2031.

Sondra Cosgrove, president of Fair Maps Nevada, was not surprised the judge denied the petition to redraw the maps in 2027 because of a 2022 Nevada Supreme Court ruling that interpreted the state's constitution to say constitutional amendments needed to have a funding source. That is why they made the second petition initiative just in case, she said.

"But we were surprised that the judge struck down the one that said we would redraw the map in 2031, because that's when the Nevada Constitution already says we have to redraw them," Cosgrove said.

The group will appeal his ruling on petition calling to redraw the maps in 2031.

Cosgrove said she couldn't find how much was appropriated to the Legislature to conduct its 2021 special session for redistricting, but she saw the special session regarding the A's stadium was \$100,000 a day. She does not see how the proposed volunteer redistricting commission would cost that much.

The proposed independent redistricting commission would be composed of seven members who are registered to vote in Nevada. The senate majority leader, senate minority leader, speaker of the assembly and assembly minority leader would each appoint one person to the commission.

The members would have to ensure that the districts are politically competitive, do not give an advantage or disadvantage to a political party and that equal opportunities are provided for minorities to participate in the political process. All of the commission's meetings would be open to the public and all of their materials will be public records, according to the petition.

The Princeton Gerrymandering Project gave the state an F grade in its redistricting report card for its congressional map and found the redistricting gave Democrats a significant advantage.

"Gerrymandering silences voters," said Cosgrove, who is also involved in the "Yes on 3" campaign that would implement nonpartisan primaries and ranked choice voting. "I would just like to see voters having more power in this state."

Contact Jessica Hill at [jehill@reviewjournal.com](mailto:jehill@reviewjournal.com). Follow @jess\_hillyeah on X.

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