

ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

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MOUNTAIN MAGIC FOR BODE MILLER



CHRISTOPHE ENA, AP
A tearful Bode Miller embraces his wife, Morgan, on Sunday after medaling.

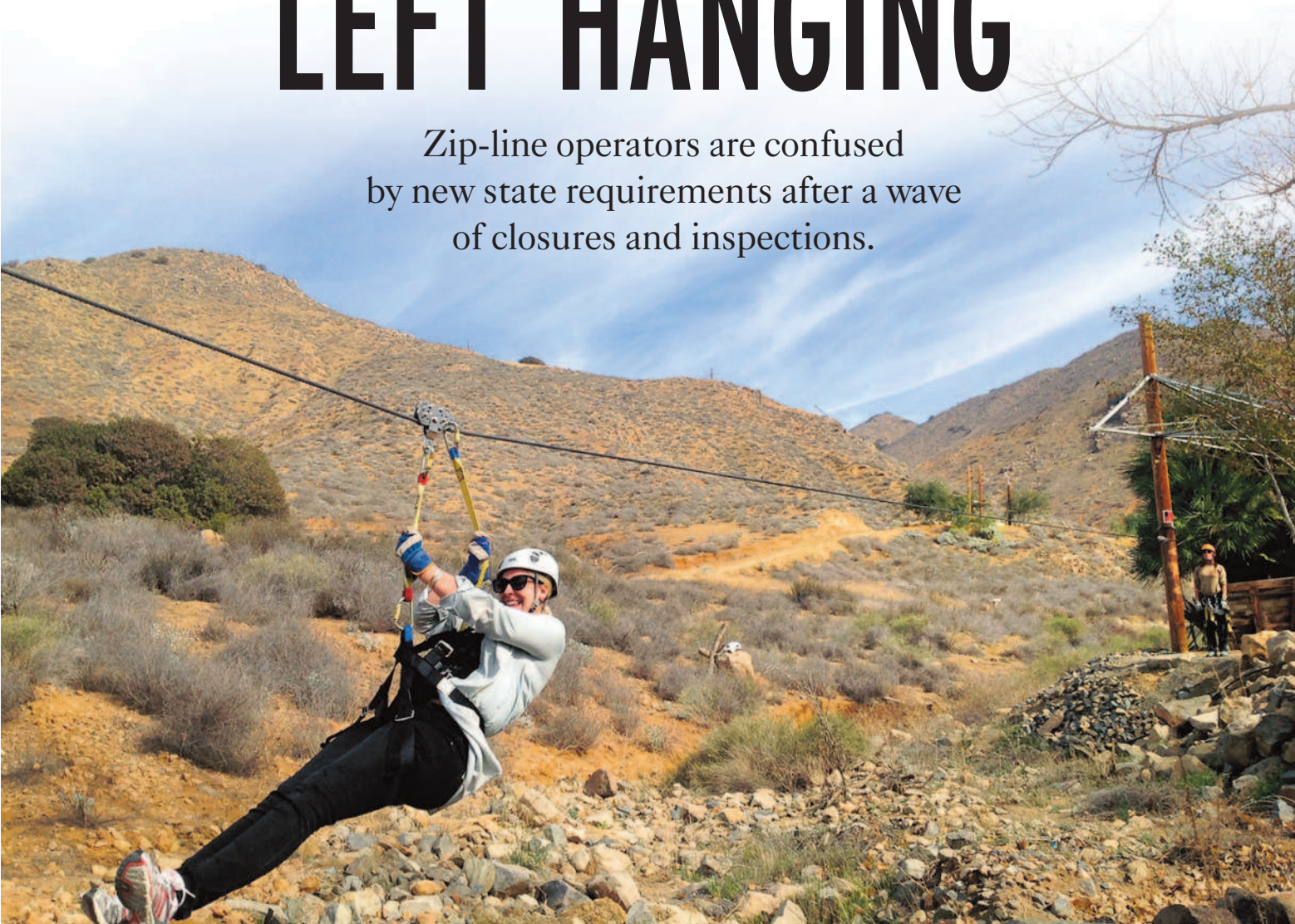
Coto de Caza’s Bode Miller finally showed his age Sunday. Miller, 36, established himself as the oldest Alpine skier to win an Olympic medal when he tied for the bronze in the super-G.

SPORTS 1

CHRISTOPHE PALLOT, GETTY IMAGES

LEFT HANGING

Zip-line operators are confused by new state requirements after a wave of closures and inspections.



Kristin McCann, 26, of Anchorage, Alaska, takes a test run on a “bunny” zip line at Skull Canyon Eco Experiences & Zipline in Corona.

PHOTO AND STORY BY SUZANNE HURT
STAFF WRITER

Snowboarder and climber Alicia McCann straps into a commercial zip line without a worry and soars over Skull Canyon.

McCann, 28, is one of thousands to check out the latest fast-growing adventure activity in Southern California. Located in forests, mountains and canyons, zip lines allow harnessed riders to glide through the air from point to point on high-wire runs.

But a state agency charged with protecting public and employee safety considers zip lines amusement park rides that need stricter regulation. State regulators shut down at least 13 commercial zip-line operators – including some in the Inland Empire – without warning last summer until

SEE ZIP LINES • PAGE 11

ZIP-LINE OVERSIGHT

The state adopted regulations for permanent amusement park rides in 2001 after a death on Disneyland’s Sailing Ship Columbia. The state’s occupational safety and health agency is now tightening its oversight of zip lines.

July-August 2013: Cal/OSHA closes 13 permanent zip-line operators and starts inspecting them.

Dec. 13: Attorney challenges state over Cal/OSHA process.

Jan. 13, 2014: Nine permanent operators, 13 portable ones are permitted.

Jan. 15: Cal/OSHA meets with zip-line industry representatives.

Sources: Cal/OSHA, staff research

Drought cause sparks debate

Some scientists say it’s not a result of climate change, as Obama asserts.

Some leading scientists suggest climate change most likely had little to do with the drought that has been ravaging California, contrary to President Barack Obama’s assertion Friday in the Central Valley town of Los Banos.

In fact, the most recent computer projections suggest the state should become wetter as the world warms.

While the president is on solid ground in making the case that the effects appear to have been worsened by climatic warming, scientists said, a ridge of high barometric pressure parked off the coast is believed to be the reason why storm systems have been driven farther north. In that respect, experts say, this drought bears a strong resemblance to previous extreme dry spells, including the crippling one in 1976 and 1977. **News 3**

INSIDE

WOMAN SAYS SHE KILLED OTHERS

A Pennsylvania woman charged with her husband in the death of a man they met through Craigslist said she has killed more than 20 other people. **NEWS 4**

RECORD SET FOR CONCRETE POUR

A project laying the foundation for the tallest building west of the Mississippi in downtown Los Angeles has broken the world record for the largest continuous concrete pour. **NEWS 11**

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Sign wavers rage against the machines

“She can’t do anything. She just stands there.”

GABRIEL CRUZ
SIGN WAYER,
ON MANNEQUIN
SIGN WAYER

Gabriel Cruz is a sign waver. A human billboard. Sign jockey. He’s been at it only a short while, but he’s developing a veteran’s savvy about his surroundings. There’s the traffic, the pedestrians ... that thing standing across the street. It looks human. It’s holding a sign. Cruz has seen its kind before, in many places. It’s the slow creep of robots and mannequins standing on sidewalks in place of humans advertising for a business. Well, it’s not an actual creep. The robot sign wavers and mannequins don’t



DAVID MONTERO
STAFF WRITER

walk. Yet. The one Cruz is looking at is across Westminister Avenue in Santa Ana. She’s the shapely plastic woman standing in front of Guero’s Auto Repair holding a bright yellow sign selling tire and brake services. Cruz is unimpressed. “She can’t do anything,” he said. “She just stands there.” But Leo Espinoza couldn’t disagree more. The owner of the auto repair shop said the mannequin cost him about \$150, takes zero breaks and



BRUCE CHAMBERS, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Rather than hire a human to wave a sign at Guero’s Auto Repair in Santa Ana, the company has a mannequin with a motor in its belly that waves a sign. The mannequin, which cost about \$150, has received an unwanted overture from a bar patron.

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ZIP LINES

FROM PAGE 1

they were inspected and permitted by the state, which began in August.

Operators and their attorneys believe the closures were unfair because they'd already passed inspections based on safety standards developed by a national industry organization. Additionally, the state didn't inspect the courses for violations before closing them. Now, they worry the closures have painted zip lines as unsafe.

Zipper's such as McCann, however, say they felt safe before the state got involved.

"I would prefer to trust people who do it as a business rather than the state of California," McCann of Truckee said before she and sister Kristin McCann, 26, of Anchorage, Alaska, put on harnesses, climbing helmets and gloves.

Some, such as Skull Canyon Eco Experiences & Zip-line in the Temescal Valley, were closed by the California Department of Industrial Relations' Division of Occupational Safety and Health for weeks or months.

"Cal/OSHA called them and told them to shut down or they'd be shut down," said Costa Mesa attorney Doug Dennington, who represented Skull Canyon owners Pete and Mike Liston in their struggle to reopen.

"We're not talking about millionaires here. We're talking about people - this is their livelihood."

A number of zip lines remain shuttered, but others remain open in the Temescal Valley south of Corona, Big Bear and Wrightwood.

Cal/OSHA spokesman Peter Melton said the agency began more rigorous oversight because "there have been deaths and injuries."

Cal/OSHA is investigating the injury of an employee who hit a platform while testing a zip line, said Melton, who wouldn't elaborate on the injury or say whether it sparked the closures.

Melton acknowledged that that injury is the only serious zip-line injury Cal/OSHA knows of. He also pointed to one death - at Lake Tahoe's Heavenly ski resort in 2009.

But, according to news reports, that death was not on a zip line. A Glendora hiker fell from a chairlift when a 6,200-foot rope used to haul zip-line harnesses up the mountain broke in high wind and entangled in the lift. Cal/OSHA had inspected and certified Heavenly's zip lines in 2008.

The agency's Amusement Ride and Tramway Unit has overseen zip lines since 2007, but inspected only two permanent ones before July. The unit didn't inspect more of them sooner because officials didn't know many existed until July, Melton said.

Cal/OSHA later determined some of the newly discovered zip lines weren't built using structural stress calculations or reviewed by a licensed engineer as the state requires, Melton said. Some parts of systems hadn't been tested and certified, he said.

Platform construction and land use are subject to local regulation, but safety measures aren't - and not all zip lines use platforms.

Zip-line owners fear the agency's regulation attempts have led customers to question the zip lines' safety - though most already are certified annually by inspectors credentialed by the Association for Challenge Course Technology, as required by insurance companies.

The state's action cost businesses money and employees lost jobs, said James Borishade, the association's executive director.

A zip line near Yosemite was closed 10 days in August - its peak season - until owners flew in an engineer to certify their course and pass a state inspection.

The lost business and certification cost \$40,000 to \$50,000, said co-owner Victoria Imrie, adding they were closed even though they follow the rules.

"They told us if we didn't comply, we could face a \$25,000 fine and jail time," she said.

SAFETY AT ISSUE

Melton initially said owners voluntarily stopped operating the zip lines. Operators and their attorneys disagreed. Melton later confirmed "owners were told not to operate" until inspected and certified.

Last summer, Cal/OSHA began telling operators that zip lines with braking devices were amusement rides subject to state regulations in place for amusement rides since 2001.

The threat of shutdown led some - but not Skull Canyon - to stop using braking systems to avoid closure, attorney Dennington said.

Melton confirmed a few stopped using brakes.

That caused Cal/OSHA to announce in an Oct. 30 letter that zip lines must now meet amusement park ride regulations. The letter contained the state's first guidelines specific to zip lines.

Yet operators remain confused, Dennington said, about how to meet state requirements for safety components such as harnesses, brake systems and zip-line anchors because they haven't gotten a checklist and the requirements keep changing as Cal/OSHA learns about the industry.

ZIP-LINE RULES

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MARK J. TERRILL, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Crews pour concrete for the New Wilshire Grand building's foundation in a record attempt for the largest continuous concrete pour in history Saturday in Los Angeles.

WORKERS SET RECORD FOR LARGEST CONCRETE POUR

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES • A project laying the foundation for the tallest building west of the Mississippi has broken the world record for the largest continuous concrete pour, a Guinness World Records adjudicator said Sunday.

Round-the-clock pouring started at 4:47 p.m. Saturday with 208 trucks making more than 2,100 trips and pouring 82 million pounds of concrete during an 18 1/2-hour period, said Sean Rossall, a spokesman for the project building a skyscraper called the New Wilshire Grand. Ultimately 21,200 cubic yards of concrete was poured by 11:30 a.m. Sunday, beating the existing record of 21,000 cubic yards set by The Venetian hotel in Las Vegas in

THE NEW WILSHIRE GRAND

Once finished, the skyscraper will soar 1,100 feet, making it the tallest structure west of the Mississippi River. It will boast a 900-room hotel, convention space and offices. It's scheduled to be completed in 2016 and open in 2017.

1999, Guinness World Records adjudicator Michael Empric said.

"We just wrapped up, and we broke the world record," said Rossall excitedly by phone minutes after blaring horns officially announced the last pour.

Empric monitored the pour overnight by smartphone before meeting with contractors and engineers Sunday to check their final

numbers. Empric, who had just finished judging a successful Valentine's Day effort to set the record for the most people feeding each other simultaneously, said he has learned a lot about concrete and the challenges of such a pour.

Each truck made 10 to 14 concrete drops traveling through the night from eight concrete plants within a 20-mile radius, Rossall said.

For the past several months, crews have prepared the site by digging an 18-foot-deep pit and lining it with 7 million pounds of reinforcing steel.

The concrete now must "cure" or set and harden over the next couple weeks.

The New Wilshire Grand project, developed by Korean Air, is estimated to cost more than \$1 billion.

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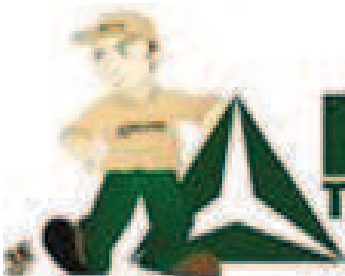


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