

Local contractors want to be working at STHS



Crews transform the landscape at South Tahoe High.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Local carpenters are likely to be at Tuesday's Lake Tahoe Unified School District when an update is given on the construction at South Tahoe High School.

Three members of the local carpenters union spoke before the board at the Oct. 13 meeting requesting future contracts involving the \$64.5 million Measure G bond include language guaranteeing a certain percentage of locals be hired as well as an apprentice program be added.

Joe Stewart with SMC Contractors and LTUSD Facilities Director Steve Morales will give a status report to the board at the 6pm Oct. 27 meeting at the district office in South Lake Tahoe. The facility master plan and Measure G's schedule are on the agenda.

Even though SMC, the general contractor, has said it would hire as many locals as possible, out of area subcontractors often use the guys they are used to.

Morales believes much of the problem has to do with there not being enough construction work to go around, so those in the construction trades are sitting idle.

“We are here to ask the district and the board to add unequivocal language to guarantee a percentage or certain number of locals in future contracts,” Paul Moniot said. “This is not a new idea. Other districts do it.”

Joe Imbach, a 1978 local graduate, talked about being in an apprentice program 25 years ago and how it helped him get into the industry.

“Our community is really falling downhill. Everybody is leaving because they can’t make a living here,” carpenter and 1980 STHS grad Craig Johnson told the board earlier this month.

The agenda for next week does not specifically say their concerns will be addressed.

Morales gave a brief update in his report on Oct. 13, stating the underground work for the STHS buildings is complete. Roofs are expected to be on by mid-November. The buildings will be shrink wrapped so work continues on the inside through the winter.

Any day the state is expected to release the \$6 million matching grant dollars for buildings at the high school.