

Embassy Suites proves sustainability is profitable

By Kathryn Reed

Maybe it has to do with operating next to a casino. Whatever the reason, a \$200,000 gamble, or investment as some call it, turned into a savings of \$322,000 for Embassy Suites in just seven months.

David Hansen, who runs the engineering department at the South Lake Tahoe property, convinced the owner (Hilton Corp.) to



Lighting choices are continuing to evolve.

spend the money to make the improvements. In his pitch he said it would take two years to see the return on investment. He was early by 17 months.

Hansen was one of the speakers last week at a green energy forum put on by the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce.

(Hear him talk about green energy tonight at 6 on KTHO FM-96.1/AM-590 or www.kthoradio.com.)

Hot water is no longer used to launder linens. An ozone process is used. Less electricity and fuel is used, the spin

cycle is reduced, linens are softer.

Incandescent 40-watt exit lights have been replaced with 1-watt LED lights.

Throughout the hotel, electricity usage has been cut by 30 percent and fuel by 50 percent – that's where the \$322,000 figure comes from.

Food scraps are hauled to the Carson Valley where they are composted. Recycled paper is weighed to see if it's the same tonnage as what was bought.

Barbara Waldron with LV International Brands in San Diego talked about how lighting is progressing. People could touch the LED lights that were passed without getting burned.

LED bulbs can now operate on dimming systems and are available for vehicles.

Leslie Ames of Tahoe Solar Designs gave a presentation on solar for electricity as well as hot water systems. She said Tahoe is ideal for solar because of the temperature and number of sunny days.

More businesses around the Tahoe area are using solar. Sierra-at-Tahoe didn't have power to the outlying parking lots so the ski resort installed solar systems to light those areas.

Embassy Suites is thinking about installing 60 to 70 solar panels to provide the hotel with hot water.

The chamber's next green workshop is Nov. 17 from 10-11:30am at Embassy Suites, South Lake Tahoe. Even though the title is Green Lodging, Hansen said information will be applicable to a range of businesses. The forum is free and open to anyone.

For more information, go to www.tahoechamber.org.