

Perez controversy lingers; Lovell not part of decision process

By Kathryn Reed

One hour. That was the amount of time Les Lovell was given by Stan Perez before a press release was sent last week saying Perez was withdrawing as a candidate for El Dorado County sheriff.

“It was probably as shocking to me as it was anyone else,” Lovell told *Lake Tahoe News*. He said Perez and his campaign manager made the decision without any input from him. “I don’t know why he chose to withdraw at this point. I think the amount of money and some negative press coming out. It was a personal decision.”

Lovell, a lieutenant in the sheriff’s office based in South Lake Tahoe, was picked by Perez to be undersheriff. That decision by the retired California Highway Patrol chief had been met with mixed emotions in the basin. Some believe the No. 2 slot should not be named until after the election. Others saw it as a move by Perez merely to woo Tahoe voters.



Lt. Les Lovell
was not part
of team
deciding Stan

Perez should
back out of
the sheriff's
race.

Photo/Lisa J.
Tolda

None of that matters now that Perez has pulled out of the race. On Feb. 19 Perez told *Lake Tahoe News* his departure had to do with money and the difficulty in fund raising, and having spent more than \$50,000 of his own cash.

Subsequently, the *Mountain Democrat* in Placerville wrote a story stating Perez lied about his education and therefore was paid at a rate of pay he had not earned.

Perez has since written a scathing letter to that paper saying its allegations are completely false.

That letter in part says, "Had you conducted a thorough inquiry and asked for the CHP's policy by which the educational pay incentive program works – which is a public document and was given to whom we believe is 'your source' – it would have shown that eligibility for educational pay is possession of an Advanced POST certificate. On July 3, 1995, I completed the CHP Form 74, which is the application for this pay having been awarded an Advanced POST certificate. I checked the box on this form entitled, –\$200 for Advanced POST certificate or equivalent. I did not check the Associate Degree box nor the Bachelor Degree box. On July 13, 1995, the CHP approved me to receive the aforementioned pay based upon me being awarded an Advanced POST certificate, not a degree."

Perez responded to a phone inquiry from *Lake Tahoe News* on Feb. 23 regarding the education brouhaha via an email. That email said the official education pay document proves he did nothing wrong.

“What he told me is that he only accepted the pay rate of associate’s degree because his bachelor’s degree is not accredited,” Lovell said. “I talked to Stan last Saturday and he said the whole thing about education incentives is bunk and he can prove it.”

Still, though, what Lovell says about the associate’s degree and what Perez’s letter says don’t jibe.

Perez in his email said he was out of good cell phone coverage and therefore an interview on Tuesday was not possible.

To further convolute the issue, on Perez’s website under training it says:

FBI National Academy

CHP Academy

U.C. Davis Executive Leadership Program

P.O.S.T. Supervisory Leadership Institute

Criminal Justice Management, BS

Administration of Justice, AA

The California Highway Patrol could release Perez’s personnel records stating his rate of pay, the incentive pay and documentation of his education. Lovell said Perez met with the CHP commissioner on Friday. What will be disclosed to the public remains to be seen.

Lovell is not going to back any of the other six sheriff’s candidates at this point. He wants to meet with them before the June primary.

“I don’t expect any retaliation because I supported somebody who is no longer in the race. We’ll see,” Lovell said.

Lovell had considered running for the position before he met

Perez.

“Because of his concepts and ideas I joined his campaign,” Lovell said. “Clearly, I am disappointed because of his concepts and energy would be really good for us.”