

Surge in recycling on South Shore



By Jeanne Lear

While decreases in state subsidies have resulted in many state certified recycling centers throughout California closing down, or reducing hours of operation, programs are expanding in South Lake Tahoe. More and more people are recycling their beverage containers, gaining some cash while reinforcing the recycling ethic in our community.

In 2009, the number of beverage containers recycled at the STR Recycling Center increased by more than 360 tons, or 28 percent.

In order to meet the increased demand, and to lessen the wait and traffic congestion at the Recycling Center at 2192 Ruth Ave. in South Lake Tahoe, South Tahoe Refuse opened a "satellite" recycling center at 2127 Ruth Ave., designed to handle large loads by appointment and walk-ins (customers without vehicles). This facility is open Monday through Friday from 8am-2:30pm. Now recycling is available in South Lake Tahoe Monday through Saturday.

State certified buy-back recycling centers are the collection points for California Redemption Value (CRV) beverage containers. The CRV program, which is commonly called a "bottle bill", causes some confusion between California and Nevada residents. Although many residents shop at both California and Nevada stores, only California stores charge the 5 and 10 cent recycling fee for beverage containers. The recycling centers pay customers their CRV back and are

subsequently reimbursed by the state for those payments.

To add to the confusion, cans and bottles bought in Nevada stores may still have the "CA Cash" logo on them.

The California program limits Nevada residents to a \$50 per day reimbursement for CRV material. This leads to frustration by Nevada residents as the goal of recycling seems to get lost in the California regulations. Simplification of the state program would go a long way to solving this local dilemma. This seems unlikely as California's budget blues continue to grow while CRV revenues steadily decrease.

Call (530) 541.7526 for further information or go to STR's website at southtahoerefuse.com.

Jeanne Lear is director of Human Resources at South Tahoe Refuse.