

Iron Girl tri tops list of first-time events in Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Sorry guys, but you aren't invited – at least not as a competitor.

Iron Girl is rolling into the South Shore on Sept. 19. This women's only triathlon will have participants swimming in Lake Tahoe (wetsuits OK) near Lakeside Beach for 800 meters, then riding their bike 24 kilometers to Cave Rock and back to the casino corridor, and then running through the streets of Nevada and California at the state line for a 5K.



“We have been talking to Iron Man and Iron Girl for a couple years,” said Mike Frye, events coordinator for Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority. “We signed a three-year contract. If we make this thing rock, we will get an Iron Man out of this.”

Iron Girl events is part of the larger, better known Iron Man. The women's division was launched six years ago.

“Iron Girl's mission is to empower women toward a healthy lifestyle,” according to their website. No one from their Florida offices returned phone calls.

Their events are growing in size at a rate of more than 20 percent a year, with the average age being 35, according to Frye.

The goal is to have 500 participants the first year, with that translating into an infusion of \$200,000 into the South Shore economy.

Who the local competitors might be remains to be seen. Nancy Harrison of South Lake Tahoe won her age group and placed second overall in last summer's Xterra event in Incline Village. It's running on asphalt that has her questioning the Iron Girl.

"I might consider a team. I would love to be the cyclist," Harrison said. "Lately I really don't enjoy running, especially when it's on the road."

But she hasn't ruled out doing it solo and not as a team.

"I'm very excited the event is coming to Tahoe. Because it's in town I may have to come out of retirement," Harrison said.

Erika Mathews who runs Moxy Fitness on the South Shore often uses events as training for her clients. She is still weighing her options before committing to the Iron Girl being one of the goals she sets.

One of the things LTVA has been trying to do is lure event promoters to the South Shore. The tourism agency then helps streamline the permitting process. Hoteliers and retailers point to events being the difference between cash registers ringing and them being silent.

Other events in the works

Another athletic event coming to the South Shore is Thin Air Distance Festival Aug. 12-15.

It's possible to run a marathon in four days, or a half in two days.

"It speaks to a lot of people. Not everyone has time to train to run a marathon," Frye said.

John DuCray out of Sacramento is putting on the event. Part of the proceeds will benefit local high school running programs and recreational teams in the area.

Events include a 10K, 12K, 21K, 5K, free 1 mile for those 14 and younger, and family-stroller fun walk. Individuals and teams are invited.

Courses are throughout the South Shore, with one being at Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course.

About 400 people are expected the first year.

Also on the books for this summer is Hot August Nights. It is expanding from Reno to the South Shore July 30-Aug. 1.

Hot rods will cruise down Highway 50 from Lakeside Inn and Casino to Ski Run Boulevard and back.

The first week of registration 250 people signed up their vehicles.

Another event the LTVA wants to tap into is Street Vibrations, the annual motorcycle event in Nevada.