

# South Tahoe seeks federal dollars for Lukins Water Co.

By Kathryn Reed



When the invitation came Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., to apply for appropriations from Congress, South Lake Tahoe fit one category.

The city asked for \$4 million that it would use to upgrade Lukins Brothers Water Company so it would be more capable to fight fires.

“You have to be very specific in those requests. They even have a code,” Mayor Kathay Lovell explained. “For us, it has that nexus for fire suppression.”

The city could hear in May if it has been awarded the money.

“If you don’t try, it’s certain what the answer is,” Lovell said.

Lukins, which has just less than 1,000 customers, delivers water to people who mostly live off of Highway 89. When the Angora Fire of 2007 hit, the inefficiencies of the company’s ability to fight a fire became public knowledge. However, how the water company was set up, it is not required by law to have firefighting capability.

Nonetheless, the city has a franchise agreement with Lukins and wants the company to upgrade its system to protect the residents and businesses of the city. But completely overhaul

the system will cost about \$20 million.