

16 Barton employees take early retirement

By Kathryn Reed



Barton Health has trimmed its payroll even further, with 16 people taking early retirement packages at the end of April.

Employees with at least 10 years of service and who are 59 or older qualified for the package.

The South Lake Tahoe health care system offered the incentive in hopes of not having to issue more pink slips. In March, Barton laid off six people and in March 2009 43 people lost their jobs.

It's likely a few more employees will sign up for the retirement package, Barton officials said. The same package has been offered to people who are 55 and will have 10 years of service accrued by the end of the year. Those people have until May 14 to decide.

Barton officials said other cost-cutting measures are possible in the future, but are not likely to involve staff reductions.

"Barton, as most entities in the region, has seen decreased volumes due to the declining residential population, a decrease in tourism over the last year, and an increase in unemployment. Increased unemployment has translated into an increased number of underinsured and uninsured patients in the region as well as those putting off elective procedures," Monica Sciuto, Barton's director of public relations, told

Lake Tahoe News. "As a double-whammy, reduced reimbursements from federal and state programs have impacted the hospital as well."