

Lake Tahoe Basin lags in returning Census forms

By Kathryn Reed



Census workers will be out in force in Lake Tahoe this month because the number of people who returned forms by mail is lacking.

Throughout South Lake Tahoe 40 percent of the forms were returned. From Ski Run Boulevard to the state line that figure drops to 28 percent. That area of town has a number of Hispanic residents. People here illegally may be fearful of being turned in.

However, the U.S. Census Bureau keeps all information private, assuming any incriminating information is even obtained. In fact, Census workers can be fined \$250,000 or jailed for five years if they share information with another government entity or the police.

The reason all towns want an accurate Census count is that money from the federal government for certain services is based on population. Political boundaries are also drawn based on the numbers that are gathered every 10 years. Money goes toward education, adult education, job training, and other programs.

For Californians, any federal assistance may be even more critical in the near term. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on Friday called for closing the \$20 billion deficit with cuts to most social service programs.

“Aside from possibly losing out on federal funding, California

is also in danger of losing a congressional seat because of low Census participation. The speculation as of now is that the seat will likely come from Northern California. We are about to lose a voice to fight for our rights, which is completely unacceptable,” Patty Diazm from Services, Immigrants Rights and Education Network, said in a statement.

The Census Bureau stopped receiving mailed responses at the end of April. Households that did not return their forms can expect to receive a visit from an enumerator this month. An enumerator is a Census Bureau worker who goes door-to-door to help households fill out the forms.

The enumerators will have official U.S. Census Bureau badges and may contact the households of those who did not fill out their Census forms up to six times.

The final count for the mail back response rate is: 72 percent nationally, 71 percent in California and Nevada in 69 percent.

The five counties in the Lake Tahoe Basin came in at: El Dorado 64 percent, Douglas 72 percent, Carson City 79 percent; Washoe 74 percent; and Placer 70 percent.

Nevada County, which includes Truckee, had 67 percent participation. Alpine County had 22 percent.

For more information, [click here](#).