

Protesters lobby for smoke-free casinos

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – A group of non-smoking gamblers plans to spend two more days protesting in front of the Stateline casinos in an attempt to bring awareness that people would like go inside if it weren't so smoky.

“Eighty percent of the people don't smoke and they are shutting those people out,” Janet Kahler of Phoenix said.



Stephanie Steinberg, left, and Janet Kahler protest outside Harrah's on July 16.

She and Stephanie Steinberg, chairwoman of Smoke Free Gaming, were in front of Harrah's Lake Tahoe early Friday night.

About a dozen people from the Denver-based organization started protesting Thursday and will continue through Sunday – trying to get national recognition while the American Century Celebrity Golf Tournament is in town. Protesters are from Nevada, Colorado and Arizona, with some local advocates.

Steinberg said casino security was out to speak with the pickets.

“We tell them we support Harrah’s,” Steinberg said. Gaming isn’t the issue; it’s the smoke-filled environment this group has an issue with.

She said the group also advocates for casino employees who are breathing secondhand smoke.

A few people were honking as they saw the signs reading, “Smoke free casinos” and “What happens in a casino stays in your lungs.”

Then there was the passenger who offered the women a cigarette. Later a guy appearing to be in his 20s walked by and said, “That would be nice,” after reading the signs.