

South Tahoe working on creating functional website

By Kathryn Reed

With no discussion about why the cost of the new website for South Lake Tahoe has nearly doubled, the council OK'd the \$38,047 expenditure on a 5-0 vote.



Even though awarding the contract to CivicPlus out of Kansas was on the consent agenda Sept. 14, Councilman Hal Cole pulled it to talk about website content. He wants to ensure people landing on the current site seeking tourism information will be directed to the appropriate places in the future. As it is now, the city's website is just about government business.

Christine Vuletich, city finance director, told Cole he was a step ahead of everyone and that, yes, the appropriate links will be included in the redesign.

"All the city departments and others will be involved in designing the website," Vuletich said.

Mayor Kathay Lovell asked for staff to send out examples of websites CivicPlus has done so the economic committee of Cole and Councilman Jerry Birdwell could take a look at them. However, in the council's packet of information that day were examples of designs CivicPlus has done for Emeryville, Windsor, Mammoth Lakes, Maui and others.

South Lake Tahoe's current site is 7-years-old and has always been difficult to navigate. It is not intuitive and information is often difficult to find.

Compounding the problem is some departments have created their

own, separate site instead of having them be extensions of the city's primary site. These sites will be consolidated into the main site during the redesign so there is uniformity.

The funding is budgeted in the 2009-10 budget, with \$18,000 having been allocated from the economic development account. The \$20,047 comes from the website capital improvement project account.

City staff determined it didn't make sense to pay the \$18,000 allocated for the old "prospector" website, so that's how the design team wound up with more money.

The new site will be up and running some time in 2011.