

Customer protest leads STPUD to change policy

By Kathryn Reed

The Angora Fire of 2007 continues to alter how entities in the Lake Tahoe Basin do business.

No longer do owners of vacant lots where houses once stood have to pay for water and sewer when they aren't using either.



The Angora Fire continues to shape policy in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

An owner of a lot protested the continued fees. It brought about change this month by the South Tahoe Public Utility District board.

About 75 of the 254 lots that lost a house are still empty. But the owners kept getting STPUD bills. The board modified the regulation so the owner still has the water hookup and won't have to pay for that again.

In the past when a house burned down South Tahoe PUD would

suspend fees for two quarters. The thinking is in most structure fires people rebuild immediately. With something like a massive wildfire, not everyone rebuilds immediately, if ever.

It is customary for people with vacant lots that have never been built on to not pay any sewer-water fees until the connection is made. Water is turned on per fire codes when building begins. Sewer hookup is part of the final phase.

With quarterly sewer-water bills for STPUD about \$200 per residence, this change in policy affecting the burn area will save those property owners a good deal of money going forward.