

Heavenly introduces GM; ready to make snow Tuesday

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Pete Sonntag made himself more real Friday night than most executives ever do.

At his “coming out” party of sorts at Edgewood Tahoe, he talked about how great it is to be general manager of Heavenly Mountain Resort, joked a bit with his predecessor and boss Blaise Carrig (who introduced him), and delved into the importance of living every day to the fullest. An athletic friend dying at age 40 of a heart attack and his first born nearly dying the first week of his life helped instill into Sonntag the appreciation for life.

He intends to – and according those at the Oct. 22 event already is – bringing that zest for life to work. The packed room (most of whom don’t work for Sonntag) welcomed him. He has been on the job since late summer.



Pete Sonntag

The only boos to his speech came when he admitted to being at AT&T ballpark the previous night to watch *his* Phillies beat the Giants.

Casey Blann, vice president of mountain operations, is exuberant about the two Pirnoth snowcats that will arrive next

week.

“They are more efficient, cover more acres, have less emissions and are a better quality groomer,” Blann said. The nickname for these snowcats is “The Beast.”

Sonntag said two more would join the fleet for the 2011-12 season.

At the Tamarack Lodge, which is scheduled to open in early February, construction is still ahead of schedule. That may change with snow in the forecast for the next few days.

Steve Turner, director of food and beverage at the California-Nevada resort, is eager to get his crew into that kitchen. It’s bigger and has more components, like a fryer that might be able to dish up some garlic fries (no promises) that Sonntag devoured in San Francisco.

With only 2 percent of the skiers being vegetarian, don’t expect an abundance of choices. But Turner said a salad bar and other veggie options would be on the menu at the new lodge.

For the carnivores, expect the smoker to be well used this season.

John Wagon, director of marketing, said the threat of snow in the forecast is helping sell season passes.

If weather experts are right, Sonntag may have an epic first year.

With the snowmaking guns ready to start making white stuff Tuesday in anticipation of the Nov. 19 opening day, he is eager to get the South Shore resort open for the season.