

South Tahoe hires recreation director from Sparks

By Kathryn Reed

Parks and recreation may be the toy department of any city, but being the leader is more than fun and games. Stan Sherer knows that reality all too well.

Sherer is leaving his job as director of the Sparks Parks and Recreation Department for the same job in South Lake Tahoe. He starts in January.

His 16 years of experience in Sparks and more than 30 years in the industry are reasons City Manager Tony O'Rourke wanted him to take the helm. (Gary Moore retired Oct. 1 after 35 years.)

"He has tremendous energy. He is similar to Gary in that he has charisma and energy," O'Rourke told *Lake Tahoe News*. "I see him as an asset for the whole city given his experience and leadership style."



The new parks and recreation director will need to deal with issues at the ice arena.

Sherer knows what he is walking into – a city with financial

troubles, a city manager who has been on the job four months, a City Council majority that will be new this month, facilities that are in need of repair, and residents who are not all thrilled with what has been going on in the department.

The 58-year-old is versed in having to work with less money and knows the pain involved in laying off employees. He also has been involved in creating parks, reducing hours at facilities, establishing partnerships with Reno and Washoe County to save on maintenance expenses and seasonal employees, being part of special events, opening a restaurant at a park, and launching a whitewater park.

Coming to a smaller department with fewer amenities than Sparks, or what he had the previous 14 years in Redding, doesn't matter to Sherer.

"You look at the potential and successes they have had in South Lake Tahoe and it is really exciting," Sherer said. "Initially, when you think about it, the area is one of the greatest recreation destinations on the West Coast."

He wants to build on that. He also recognizes the need to rehabilitate some facilities, which could mean creating partnerships to financially solve those problems.

With ice hockey parents disgruntled and leaving town in swarms because of how they have been treated and policies that point to favoritism, Sherer will need to jump into that fray immediately. (O'Rourke has another meeting with parents today.)

Chris Hawken, No. 2 under Moore and interim parks director, had applied to be director. He was unavailable for comment so it's not known if he will want to stay on. And it's too early to know if Sherer will want to make personnel changes.

Sherer and his wife plan to move to South Tahoe – having

spoken to a real estate agent Dec. 2. They have two grown sons – one of whom is trying to convince his dad to get into mountain biking. Sherer said the move to Tahoe would likely spur him to do so. For now, road bike riding is what he prefers.

Sherer told *Lake Tahoe News* he expects to be an active member of the community. Athletic-wise he is at the gym every day, and he loves to golf and hike. Skiing is out after three knee surgeries – one related to skiing, the others to football.