

BlueGo funding not coming through as budgeted

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – An ambitious budget to fund transit on the South Shore is proving to be unattainable.



“All the revenue sources are not materializing,” Carl Hasty, executive director of the Tahoe Transportation District, told his board Jan. 21. “The lawsuit is not helping.”

He was referring to MV Transportation suing the entities and individuals who made up the now bankrupt South Tahoe Area Transit Authority. A hearing on the case is scheduled for Feb. 23 in Reno.

TTD took over operation of BlueGo, the bus system on the South Shore that has routes into the Carson Valley, after STATA filed bankruptcy.

It was outlined in staff reports prepared by TTD for Friday’s meeting that:

- Anticipated transit contributions will be reduced by \$156,500 without the participation of Harrahs/Harveys;
- The district has not yet secured agreements with Lakeside Inn and MontBleu;
- Monthly fare box revenue is tracking approximately \$20,000 less than anticipated;
- Legal fees will be more than originally forecasted, mainly due to the litigation with MV Transportation.

Steve Teshara, TTD board member, recognizes the lawsuit has a chilling effect on what transit partners might want to do, but he also said it's time to get out there to tell them why they should be part of BlueGo.

"What I'm trying to avoid is BlueGo goes to TTD and BlueGo goes into the crapper," Teshara said. "We need to put this back on the right track."

Norma Santiago, El Dorado County's representative to the board, said, "There also has to be the perception by the public that TTD can deliver."

The county has been a holdout on providing funding.

Bruce Grego, South Lake Tahoe's rep on the board, had thought a subcommittee with former STATA board members was going to be formed. His concern Friday was "it seems like everyone is on their own since the litigation."

A committee of TTD will be convened of representatives of South Shore entities to talk about operations of BlueGo.

Curtis Garner, general manager of BlueGo, told the board his big issue is with the on-call service. He would like to do away with same day reservations. He anticipates better customer service and a cost savings.

Garner also questions not having a penalty for canceling a call on the same day.

The operations committee will address the on-call issues.