

Serene Lakes explosion prompts officials to evacuate area

By Barbara Barte Osborn, Sacramento Bee

SERENE LAKES – Emergency services officials on Sunday ordered an indefinite evacuation of a Tahoe area community after a propane gas explosion leveled a three-story house Friday and officials confirmed nearly two dozen more propane leaks in the area.

“We’ll notify homeowners through the media and by reverse 9-1-1 calls when the order’s lifted,” said Richard Simmons, program manager for Placer County’s Office of Emergency Services. “But we don’t expect that to be anytime soon – weeks at the earliest.”

The order affects Serene Lakes, a community of 850 homes near Donner Summit in Placer County. Only about 20 of those houses, however, are occupied by permanent residents. The others are ski rentals or are used occasionally by the owners for skiing, said Steve Lieberman, Truckee Fire Protection District Battalion Chief.

A shelter has not been set up during the voluntary evacuation, Simmons said, as “most are vacationers and they can leave; others can contact their insurance companies and go to a hotel.”

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