

Opinion: Football field donors recognized by LTUSD

By Angie Keil

The excitement at South Tahoe High School was palpable Thursday, as athletes, coaches, donors, and staff members poured in to celebrate the completion of the artificial turf field. The 44-year-old stadium has undergone major renovations since June and the South Tahoe Vikings will play the first game under the lights next Sept. 2 against Fallon.



“This renovation project will revitalize our programs and instill a renewed sense of community spirit,” Superintendent Jim Tarwater said. “We are so proud and appreciative of how members of this community have stepped up to help make this a reality”.

A Buy-a-Brick campaign began in May, with over 100 bricks purchased to date. The bricks will be installed at the new concession stand this fall.

Kiwanis of South Lake Tahoe has pledged \$35,000 for the lights and Tony & Diana Gooding and the Gooding Family Foundation have contributed over \$30,000.

The fundraising efforts were spurred along in July when Heavenly Mountain Resort and the South Tahoe Alliance of Resorts challenged the community to match their donations of \$10,000 each.

That match came in August, when Barton Health and John Cefalu stepped up with a match of \$10,000 apiece. John Cefalu is the secretary/treasurer of Barton Health board of directors and husband of school board member Judy Cefalu. Stephen Bannar, doctor with Tahoe Orthopedics & Sports Medicine, also

contributed \$5,000. Barton Health continues its history of supporting local schools through various health grants and now through this generous donation, which demonstrates their commitment to building a healthy community.

South Tahoe High School continues to be transformed, and the renovated stadium is a welcome addition. \$1.5 million is needed to complete Phase I of the renovation. To date, \$1,332,753 has been raised. The district earmarked \$1.1 million of developer fee funds for this project and applied for a \$92,000 tire-derived product grant from California. STHS Principal Ivone Larson is also applying for a \$50,000 grant from Field Turf, the manufacturer of the artificial turf.

ADA bathrooms, concession stand, and fencing should also be completed this building season. However, additional fundraising is needed to complete Phase II, which incorporates new bleachers and a press box.

Contact Angie Keil at (530) 541,2850, ext. 225 to contribute.

Cheer coach Lia Story invites everyone to “come out and support the Vikings under the lights on Sept. 2 and be a part of history.”

Angie Keil is the spokeswoman for Lake Tahoe Unified School District.