

Officers not tolerating parking violators

By Kathryn Reed

With two part-time employees needing to make their job pay for itself, more parking tickets are being issued in South Lake Tahoe.

“Absolutely, we are writing more tickets because we are going from nonexistent to a full blown program,” Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The city has parking restrictions in various locations that go beyond the rule of not parking on the street during snowy conditions so plows can clear the road. And those “no parking” signs are now the law.



Parking meters are new to South Lake Tahoe and more are coming.

Photo/LTN

No warnings are issued. No outreach to residents or businesses in affected areas is part of the program. Enforcement – that’s the new rule of the road, so to speak.

“I can understand how some people feel this is a crackdown

because this is something where there wasn't any (enforcement) before," Uhler said.

The idea is the employees working 30 hours a week will enforce parking to pay for their jobs and then some. South Tahoe for years has lost money on its parking program – which includes the garage at Heavenly Village. The loss was an anomaly among cities across the country.

Mike Keck is one of those people who has gotten a ticket. Ironically, he and neighbors lobbied for the city to post signs along their streets a few years ago so the overflow from Heavenly Mountain Resort would not be a problem.

"The point is no one can stop by the house without getting a ticket at this point," Keck said. "It has now made our neighborhood unusable."

He understands rules are rules, but he doesn't understand why the city wouldn't work with residents.

The city is using parking as a revenue source – with \$300,000 expected to be collected in 2011-12. Tickets will add to that figure.

Earlier this year parking meters were installed near Heavenly Village. Nearly \$14,000 was collected from them from June 24-Sept. 30.

More meters are expected to up in the beach areas – Venice Drive, the Al Tahoe neighborhood. A residential permit program is still being developed. It might need to be expanded to areas with no parking signs like the Heavenly neighborhood.

From June 1-Sept. 30 there were 857 citations issued in the city, with 61 being disabled parking violations and 173 paid parking infractions. Basic parking violations are \$55.