

South Lake Tahoe may outsource airport management

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Airport in the near future may not be run by people on South Lake Tahoe's payroll.

"It's not so much what we save in employee costs, as it is having a more entrepreneurial approach to managing the airport," City Manager Tony O'Rourke told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We have vacancies in the hangars, we hope to have commuter service. Technically, this is an enterprise operation and it should break even."



Lake Tahoe Airport is busy one time of year -- during the celebrity golf tournament.

Photo/LTN file

Instead, the city is subsidizing the airport by about a half million dollars each year. If the airport ever evolved from being primarily a general aviation facility into a commuter hub, that figure would drop substantially.

The City Council at its Dec. 13 meeting is expected to vote on

whether a request for proposal to replace the management at the airport with private operators should go forward. A change could come in February.

Five people work for the city.

“The city needs to know what is best for the city and that is what they will find out by putting an RFP for certain services at the airport,” airport Manager Sherry Miller said. “They will find out if it’s less expensive to have their own employees or more expensive, and what kind of qualified people they can get.”

O’Rourke said instead of having the entire operation run privately, it would be the management. He wants to base it on what the Minden airport did in the last year.

If the airport were to ever get any form of commercial services, the downstairs offices used primarily by the city attorneys would need to be vacated for security and baggage claim.

“That would be a nice problem; to have to relocate them,” O’Rourke said.