

SnowGlobe angst, praise keep reverberating in South Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Balancing the needs of the environment, the economy and the residents was the overriding message delivered by seven people who spoke at the Lake Tahoe Community College board meeting Tuesday night about SnowGlobe.

The three-day music festival during New Year's Eve weekend continues to be cursed by those who endured the loud music inside their homes and blessed by businesses that otherwise would have had little income without the influx of tourists.

These young professionals are a different crowd than the people who gather at Stateline New Year's Eve. SnowGlobers have money to spend. The casino crowd is a lot of college students with little money.



SnowGlobe is making noise more than a week after the musicians left town.

Photo/LTN

Jacob Hurd, president of LTCC's Associated Student Council, rattled off a list of foreign passports he saw representing

the diverse group at SnowGlobe.

"We brought a new group of tourists up here," Hurd told the board.

The ASC plans to present the board or staff with recommendations for how to get students more involved and to make the event better if it were to return.

While the college could reap about \$13,000 in cash – that goes to the general fund and not to Sacramento – this was a city event. The college made money by leasing the gym as the green room for performers and the student center/kitchen for meals to be prepared for concert workers.

The field's ownership wasn't uncovered until all the paperwork was being put together between the promoters and South Lake Tahoe. The California Tahoe Conservancy still has title to the multiuse ball field. The deed was never filed for the city to take possession of the property. That should be rectified soon.

The CTC did turn over operations of the field to the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Facilities Joint Powers Authority because it was money from Measure S that paid for the ball field. The JPA then turned over operations and maintenance of the field to South Lake Tahoe.

The city has controlled use of that field since it opened a few years ago. That is why the city is the one who had the permit with the promoters.

While the promoters would like to come back, no one has come to the city or college asking to do so. As of today, there is no August concert on the calendar – nor any other concert planned in the city for 2012 by anyone, according to city spokeswoman Nancy Kerry.

College President Kindred Murillo told the board if SnowGlobe

or something like it were to come back to the field, she would like LTCC to be more of a partner. But she also said because the college doesn't own the property, the city could do whatever it wants.

"When you are a partner in the process, you have more control," Murillo said. "I feel we need more of a say in things."

The three key things Murillo wants to be part of are transportation, noise and trash.

The latter two issues are what most of the people who spoke Jan. 10 complained about. Six people who live in the area mostly gave the board an earful about the noise they experienced, the vibrating walls and inability to escape the thumping bass.

Catherine Whelan let the board know people are talking with an attorney with the intent of filing a class action lawsuit against the city and college to cover damages from items that were broken when they fell off shelves or walls because of reverberation from the music produced at SnowGlobe.

"The entire inside of my house was vibrating," Whelan said.

Murillo after the meeting told *Lake Tahoe News* this was the first she had heard of a lawsuit.

Kerry said, "SnowGlobe producers took out an insurance policy protecting the city, county, the college, CTC, and JPA. If there is any damage or problem, they would have to take it up with SnowGlobe."

The college board members were a bit restrained in their comments about SnowGlobe at the end of the meeting. Fritz Wenck said the the closest he got was driving by. Others, though, praised the college staff for a job well done.

Murillo said if the city is going to do this again, she hopes

they come asking for assistance soon so appropriate planning can begin.

Kerry said the council is not likely to have anything about SnowGlobe on a future agenda. When someone proposes an event, that's when the ball gets rolling.

But the city is not waiting for the next event to even reach the idea stage before it makes changes. Staff met Tuesday to discuss amending its special use permit for events like SnowGlobe. Revisions would have to be approved by the City Council, which is likely to occur in March or April.

Noise and time elements, with specified penalties/fines will be part of that revised permit.

"The other thing is there will be an agreement between the city and producer, not just a permit," Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*. It will be a binding contract.

The South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce took a survey with the results showing SnowGlobe being a moneymaker as the overwhelming sentiment of business owners.

Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce this week put up a survey on its site that anyone may take.

"The positive impacts to businesses are indisputable," Kerry said.

However, Tom Wendell told the LTCC board, "The short-term benefits do not outweigh the long-term detriments."