

LTVA's No. 1 goal – bring in overnight guests to S. Shore

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Generating room nights. That's the overall goal of the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority.

If the South Shore tourism agency can get people to spend the night, it means hotel taxes for Douglas County and South Lake Tahoe, probably sales tax for both entities, and those same people spending dollars in restaurants, on recreational activities, spa treatments, you name it.

With a budget of \$4.3 million – 43 percent of which comes from the Tahoe Douglas Visitors Authority and 41 percent from the South Lake Tahoe Tourism Improvement District – the LTVA is spending more on luring people to the area.



The celebrity
golf
tournament
each July in
Stateline
remains one of
LTVA's main
events.

Photo/LTN file

Carol Chaplin, executive director of the LTVA as well as the

TDVA, gave a presentation last week to Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe about the rebranding of the area as Tahoe South as well as an update on the agency.

She is slated to be one of the first presenters to the South Lake Tahoe City Council on March 6. The agenda for the 9am meeting at Lake Tahoe Airport says she will talk about destination marketing, the past year and current initiatives.

Tahoe South is something *Lake Tahoe News* first wrote about in December, but is something that has been in the works for a while.

In the first month of LTVA's relaunched website, the number of unique visitors has increased by 13 percent. The site gets about 300,000 page views a month.

While putting heads in beds is the ultimate goal, the other goals of the LTVA are to spur economic growth, attract visitors, and build awareness and appreciation for Lake Tahoe's natural environment.

The South Shore and North Shore work together on many levels, but when it comes to attracting the drive-up market they are competitors.

"Cross-over to the wild side" is LTVA's ad slogan to show that the South Shore is little bit more fun, is how Chaplin put it.

While the talk is about getting away from gaming as the focus and instead having the outdoors being the emphasis, the fact is gaming is still well represented in the promotional material LTVA publicizes.

LTVA is still in the event business, though they have to be of a bigger variety that generates those room nights.

It's being involved with American Century Championship which attracted nearly 40,000 people in 2011 and Iron Girl triathlon that had 600 competitors in 2011 – three times what it had the

first year in 2010 – that LTVA focuses on.

Chaplin said she is talking with Amgen officials about bringing the Tour de California back to Tahoe – ideally with cyclists actually riding – in 2013.

The area is one of five being considered for the Peace and Sport event.

More emphasis is also being placed on the wedding co-op to tout the area a destination for brides and grooms.

A facilities analysis was recently completed that will soon be put into a report that will give LTVA a definitive list of regional amenities to know what events it should or should not go after.