

Opinion: A big thank you for a successful July 4 parade

To the community,

Golden Bear Events would like to thank the community of South Lake Tahoe for the success of the inaugural communitywide 4th of July Parade and Celebration. Parade participants and vendors came from primarily Meyers, Stateline, and South Lake Tahoe.

Several new businesses, like The Oven, the Yum Truck, and Lake Tahoe Custom Cycles were happy to be a part of something as new as they.

Golden Bear Events always arranges free giveaways for the kids with stickers and tattoos. Robert Humason, owner of our local McDonald's, gave out free gift certificates, while A Hand at Home offered a make-a-hat activity.

Honeybee Ice Cream truck sold their favorites while the Cash Only Band played all the way down the highway and then for a few hours for the adults at the Recreation Complex and Senior Center sites.

A few vendors that had never done anything like this, notably Essex Hair and Nail Salon, Noon Soroptimist Fighting Chance Car and Les Schwab Tires enjoyed the event and parade.

Repeat participants included South Tahoe Refuse, the Beachcomber Inn, Affordable Construction, Decorative Overlays, Jamba Juice, and Lake Tahoe Holidays, who had fun decorating and dressing up in the spirit of the day. Out of town vendors who came for the cool camping, saw the ads and joined in with Native Vibes and All About Signs 2.

The American Legion Post No. 795 came out in full glory with

vintage cars and a dozen or more veterans to ride "point." Veterans traveled several hours to renew their connections to our town and joined in the VFW Post No. 2627 cars. The American Legion Auxiliary, incredible supporters of our veterans and events that honor them, had three cars in the parade. Active, but off-duty, military came in a privately owned vintage Army truck. Families of our fallen heroes were honored with the families of Spec. Garrett Fant and Sgt. Timothy Smith in the parade. All the fallen were honored at the celebration. The Patriot Guard came to show their support as well.

Brooke Laine and the South Tahoe Alumni Association stepped up with vintage cars to carry the veterans, including a World War II veteran and a POW survivor.

Mayor Claire Fortier, Mayor Pro Tem Tom Davis, Councilman Hal Cole, Councilman Bruce Grego, and Councilwoman Angela Swanson joined county Supervisor Norma Santiago in this event. Their combined presence was noted and appreciated by several, who commented it was good to see these representatives support a community event in this manner.

Spectators from as far away as Missouri called to find out details and were excited to see we were doing a parade this year. All along the route, children were waving flags, families were shouting "thank you for doing this" and some of the older ones in the crowd appeared to be fighting back tears. Locals joined us to cheer, participate, and come to the celebration.

Our sponsors stepped up to help this dream become a reality. The South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce did extra email blasts and helped with the insurance. The city of South Lake Tahoe helped with advertising and made the signs for the cars carrying the veterans. The SLT Fire Department and Police Department delighted the kids while making this a safe and efficient event. The STAR volunteers helped with site and crowd control,

as well as signage. K-Tahoe radio ran ads the week before the event to heighten interest.

A parade is a lot of work, and special thanks go out to Mr. Bob Albertazzi and Sgt. Shannon Laney, who helped advise on best practices to make the event safe. Stan Sherer with the Recreation Department helped with the site for the celebration, Nancy Kerry and Tracy Franklin helped coordinate the efforts of the city's sponsorship, and Tracy recorded the event in pictures. Marilyn and Kow at Caltrans were very easy to work with as we waded through the paperwork and requirements to be on Highway 50. Krista at EDC Environmental Health is a pleasure to work with to make sure our food vendors comply with safe practices to protect the public. Every media outlet around the Lake gave us press: *Tahoe Daily Tribune*, *Tahoe Business Monitor*, *Southtahoenow.com*, the *Mountain News*, *Lake Tahoe News*, K-Tahoe and KRLT radio, RSN TV, and the City Council TV. The Substitute Personnel office was a convenient drop off location, answered questions and received applications for the event. Theresa Brown Bookkeeping volunteered at the information booth for Golden Bear Events.

We are very touched by the display of support and the level of participation. In addition to the personal thanks individuals and groups gave us at the event, Golden Bear Events has received a number of supportive emails, blog posts, and phone calls asking if we would please do this again.

Thank you, South Lake Tahoe.

We will produce this event again next 4th of July.

JoAnn Conner, Golden Bear Events