

S. Tahoe council updated on post-Angora public safety procedures

By Anne Knowles

El Dorado County is considering a cloud-based reverse 911 system to replace its seriously flawed existing system.

Brian Uhler, South Lake Tahoe Police-Fire Chief, told the South Lake Tahoe City Council on Tuesday that the new system would be paid for with federal Homeland Security monies and will soon be presented to the county for approval.

The system would be operated on the Web – in the cloud – by a private vendor and significantly improve performance from the current system, which took several hours to send out calls during the Angora Fire, Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The council suggested other ways communications could be beefed up, based on the experience of the 2007 Angora Fire.

“The best communication I saw was through the radio stations,” said Councilman Tom Davis, who suggested law enforcement coordinate with local radio stations to be sure they were kept in the communications loop.

Uhler said an extensive study on evacuation procedures was underway after an initial effort that excluded highway patrols from California and Nevada forced them to start over with input from the two states’ departments.

He also said Caltrans sign readers on Highway 50 will be critical to providing up-to-the-minute information for drivers during an emergency or evacuation.

Councilwoman Angela Swanson asked if the Caltrans signs could

be used during red flag days in the basin, to warn people of extremely dry and dangerous conditions. Uhler suggested she ask Michael Cook, Caltran's senior transportation engineer, who made a separate presentation on several Highway 50 projects. Cook said he would find the council a Caltrans contact to answer that question.

Cook provided an update on five Caltrans Highway 50 construction projects. He said two of the projects – Trout Creek to Ski Run Boulevard and west of Ski Run to Wildwood Avenue – should be completed this year. The latter project was recently awarded to Granite Construction and work should begin by July 19, he said.

Cook said the South Lake Tahoe Airport to Junction 50/89 project will go out to bid soon and be completed next year while the Junction 50/89 to Trout Creek project, originally scheduled for next year, has been pushed out to 2014.

The council also approved the 10-year contract with Tahoe Sports and Entertainment for management and operations of the ice rink.

A letter to the Tahoe Transportation District stating the council does not support the use of eminent domain for the Highway 50 South Shore Community Revitalization Project was also approved. The letter also requests the TTD conduct public workshops, using a "neutral facilitator" to discuss the most viable project alternatives; include at least three alternatives for environmental review; and consider the city's comments on the proposed Relocation Plan.