

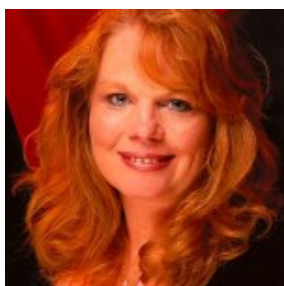
Kerry challenging people to be part of Tahoe's solution

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – It could have been the state of the city address, but in actuality was a call to action to the women in the room to get more involved and be part of the change to make South Lake Tahoe the city it can be.

South Lake Tahoe City Manager Nancy Kerry spoke to Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe on Aug. 15 about getting rid of the roadblocks that plague progress.

When asked if any of them had attended the Lake Tahoe Environmental Summit, not a single hand went up.



Nancy Kerry

She pointed out how at the summit the politicians all talked about what is wrong with Lake Tahoe and not what is right – and how no solutions were presented. Kerry wants the conversation to be about what is working, focus more on whatever that is, stop planning and start doing.

“I think the conversation, the dialogue and the change begin within each of us, and primarily among women. It is our nature to find solutions, agreement and get things done,” Kerry told the women’s organization during their lunch at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe.

To get there, Kerry said it is time to find what binds the people and agencies in Tahoe. Then focus on those similarities and find consensus.

“Capital investors don’t want to invest in a community that doesn’t know what it wants,” Kerry said.

Other locations like Livermore and Monterey – places the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce led so called community leaders to this summer to demonstrate progress – have control over their own destiny. They don’t have the regional oversight that Tahoe has; which is really state and federal regulators dictating what can and cannot be done.

Pooled leadership is unique to Tahoe.

That is why consensus needs to be found because the city and five counties that make up the Lake Tahoe Basin must bow to others and not do what they envision without others giving their stamp of approval.

Kerry spoke of the 11,000 hotel rooms in the city and how that number far exceeds the room night demand. This in turns means the average daily rate stays low. That in turn means less hotel tax revenue for the city. She pointed out, though, that while people complain about the casinos for myriad reasons, it is Embassy Suites and Marriott in the city limits with the highest ADR on the South Shore.

Kerry also explained how those hotels were environmentally sound projects – not just economic boosters for town.

She said it’s disappointing the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency’s Regional Plan update doesn’t go far enough to help the dilapidated motels that often rent rooms on a weekly or monthly basis to be able to evolve into something more than what they are.

One Soroptimist asked about South Lake Tahoe becoming a pot

capital. To this Kerry pointed out when she took office earlier this summer there were three marijuana collectives, now there is one.

“Fifteen thousand people have (medical marijuana) cards. It’s ridiculous to think that many people are sick,” Kerry said. She said the city would be keeping an eye on the remaining collective to ensure it follows the rules.

When it comes to any kind of smoking on city property, that could be resolved Aug. 21 at the City Council meeting. On the agenda will be an emergency ordinance to ban smoking of all kinds in city parks.

Another controversial item the council is expected to vote on – which was an item brought up at Wednesday’s meeting – is SnowGlobe, the three-day music festival that reverberated through the Al Tahoe area and beyond in December. Promoters are asking to bring it back Dec. 29-31. (One of the Soroptimist didn’t even know what SnowGlobe was.)

“I’ll be there at the plug. It’s easier than taking 400 phone calls,” Kerry said in case the music goes past 10pm and is louder than allowed. Those were problems with last year’s event.