

Closing S. Tahoe fire station called a success, but won't be permanent

The experiment of closing South Lake Tahoe Fire Station No. 2 "went well," according to Fire Chief Brian Uhler.



The firefighters normally assigned to the station near South Tahoe Middle School worked from one of the other two stations Aug. 27-31.

The goal is to make sure the commanding officers are covering the city's emergency needs.

With the elimination a year ago of the three battalion chiefs and the fire chief really being a police chief, the command structure has been gutted. It was the firefighters left behind, who were in a separate bargaining unit from the battalion chiefs, who thought captains could do all the work. They, city officials who make these sorts of the decisions and the council are realizing there was value to a fire command structure.

"The biggest benefit is that we've learned that there may be ways to adjust existing resources 'on the fly' so our commanders can maintain command-control," Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News* of the station closure experiment. "Another variation that we're exploring is having shift commanders move to Station 2 for the majority of the time so they can 'flex' toward wherever events occur."

At this time, Uhler said, there are no plans to close Station 2.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*