

S. Shore chamber turning its attention to politics

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce is about to become a lot more political.



That was one of the proclamations by CEO B Gorman at Thursday's annual breakfast meeting.

"The board made a courageous and progressive decision at their retreat. They have decided to create a Government Affairs Committee," Gorman told the group assembled at Tep's restaurant on Jan. 31.

Criteria for what issues or political races are worth taking a stand on are still being developed. The framework is expected to be completed in April.

The chamber is also going to start tracking elected officials' votes primarily as they relate to decisions that affect businesses. Gorman said the chamber would then be able to share with the 643 members how politicians have voted – basically if they are business friendly or not.

In many ways the chamber is already political. In 2006 it put together a Regional Plan initiative to help direct how the TRPA's final document would look.

"We provided TRPA policymakers with information about how they impact you as a home owner, business owner and employee," Gorman said. "We were responsible for 150 people showing up at TRPA meetings."

The TahoeFuture.org website that the chamber set up to provide

people information as the bi-state planning agency went through the process to update its Regional Plan will remain active as the document begins to be implemented.

This year, the chamber is going to focus on economics and relationships.

Following up on the October economic forum will be a workshop (March 5, 5-8pm, Embassy Suites) to look at what happens next. People will talk about what they are working on – from the city's recreation master plan, to Tahoe Regional Planning Agency area plans, to Vail Resorts, to Lake Tahoe Community College. The public will help identify the gaps – what isn't being done.

Implementing the plans, ideas, goals – that's the next step.

With the wayfinding signs installed on the California side of the South Shore, the chamber is going to try to do the same in Nevada.

Another goal for 2013 is to up the 84.3 percent membership retention rate to 86 percent.

Today the chamber's new website is expected to launch.