

Concord's Tahoe camp expected to be repaired before summer



By David DeBolt, Contra Costa Times

The Concord City Council voted unanimously Tuesday to support emergency repairs at Camp Concord, avoiding a possible delay in the opening of the city-operated camp.

The 5-0 vote declared an emergency at the Lake Tahoe facility and allowed interim City Manager Valerie Barone to execute a no-bid construction contract to speed up repairs.

The camp opens in May each year and runs until September, but copper thefts threatened to delay the opening.

During a security check Dec. 20, a camp seasonal employee found that all the copper pipe plumbing had been removed from the family camp bathhouse, and that more copper was stolen from a maintenance shed, according to a city staff report.

A subsequent visit on Jan. 15 revealed that copper piping had been stripped from six additional buildings.

The camp is closed during the winter months, and is patrolled by security checks. The thefts are now under investigation by the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department.

In a city report, interim City Engineer Jon Crawford said the usual bidding process, which can take up to three months, could mean a delay in opening the spring and summer programs

at the camp. Any delay, he told the council Tuesday, could result in the loss of customers, and, in turn, revenue.

The city has already rented out the site to two groups in May, and some 60 families have registered to attend during the family camp season, according to the report.

City officials initially estimated the total damage at \$70,000 to \$80,000.

The city has leased the 29-acre site in the Lake Tahoe Basin from the federal government since 1967. Concord's permit to run the camp expires in 2025.

The camp faced closure during the 2012 city budget talks, but was saved by overwhelming community support.

Earlier in Tuesday's meeting, Public Works Director Justin Ezell said more than \$1 million has been spent since 2007 to replace stolen copper wiring on city properties.