

# Lake Valley Fire at times has more ambulances in service than engines

By Kathryn Reed

About a year into a change in how engines and ambulances are staffed by Lake Valley firefighters, the chief of the department says it's working.

"We don't run out of fire engines because we have mutual aids. But frequently we run out of ambulances when things get busy," Lake Valley Fire Chief Gareth Harris told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We have ambulances at both of our stations fully equipped. We just need personnel. We can take them off an engine and get them on an ambulance without any additional money because paramedics are on the engines."

Ambulances on the South Shore on the California side are operated by a joint powers agreement that involves Lake Valley and South Lake Tahoe Fire Department. Three ambulances are always on the streets.

New ambulances were acquired last year, which has allowed two older ones to be retained at the Lake Valley stations and be added to the fleet when needed.

There are times when all three regular ambulances are in service. This is more likely to happen in ski season or during summer with car accidents, or if someone is driven to a hospital other than Barton.

"The bottom line is if someone calls 911, we need to take care of our customer whether it's a fire engine or if it's medical," Harris said. "Our engines all have advance life support. But we can't transport a patient on an engine. We are

trying to provide better value to the public.”