

S. Tahoe man going to prison in DUI fatal

By Kathryn Reed

A South Lake Tahoe man was convicted this week on several charges involving the death of another resident.

An El Dorado County Superior Court jury on Oct. 1 found Larry L. Halverson, 61, guilty of gross negligence vehicle manslaughter while intoxicated, an enhancement of fleeing the scene, and felony hit and run. The jury was hung on the murder charge.

Patrick Purnell, 51, was killed Sept. 4, 2011, when he was crossing Ski Run Boulevard near Forest Avenue. A vehicle driven by Halverson struck him. He was driving despite having his license revoked for prior DUIs.

Sentencing is set for Nov. 1. The sentence for the vehicle manslaughter charge could be 15 years to life.

Deputy District Attorney Bill Clark told *Lake Tahoe News* the case went to trial because "I wouldn't offer anything that didn't have double-digit prison time." And Halverson, who was represented by a public defender, wanted less than 10 years.

Halverson has nine prior driving under the influence convictions, of which eight were talked about before the jury in Judge Steve Bailey's court.

"He had four priors in South Lake Tahoe before the one in Nevada and never once did anyone see he that he did not sign up for the treatment programs he was supposed to," Clark said. "Would it have changed his mind? Maybe, maybe not. We have to do a better job of monitoring high-risk DUIs."