

# Barton Health buying multiple properties, building cogeneration plant at hospital

By Kathryn Reed

Barton Health has been on a bit of a property buying spree as well as deep into plans to be more energy efficient.

The South Lake Tahoe health care system just closed escrow on four buildings on Emerald Bay Road, two of which the organization was renting. One is used for Barton University and the other physician billing.

“To reduce costs in the long term, Barton Health purchased the buildings as the cost of purchase was less than the rental of the buildings,” Rich Belli, director of Facilities Administration, told *Lake Tahoe News*.



Barton now owns these buildings on Emerald Bay Road. Photo/LTN

Barton has also purchased the Ponderosa Glass building that is next door on the west side. The address for that is 1119 Emerald Bay Road, while the other properties are 1111, 1113,

and 1115 Emerald Bay Road.

“It is unclear what Barton will do with the Ponderosa building once the lease is up. Barton still rents some buildings and could move other offices to those buildings or expand a new service to the community in that building,” Belli said. The lease expires in three years.

Renters in the other buildings will be able to continue to operate their businesses for the foreseeable future.

Dave Cooper had owned the 1111, 1113, 1115 properties. He is the same property owner who recently sold land and a building to South Lake Tahoe in the industrial area. The city intends to relocate its fleet of snow removal equipment there.

As part of the purchase agreement with Barton, Cooper agreed to pave the back lot so there is now adequate parking. The back of what is known as Barton University had long been just dirt. Tahoe Regional Planning Agency required erosion control measures be put in at the same time.

TRPA has also signed off on all the permits for Barton Memorial Hospital to build a utility plant that will replace the 40-year-old facility. The Governing Board approved the proposal at its October meeting.

“As part of the project, Barton will be adding a cogeneration plant that will produce roughly 75 percent of our own electricity and will enable the hospital to reuse the excess heat to provide heat to the hospital. This will save the hospital on utility costs moving forward,” Belli said.

It’s estimated the hospital will save \$200,000 on utility bills with the cogeneration plant.

Construction is expected to start next year. The Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development still needs to give its OK.

The new building will be south of the emergency room entrance. The floor area will be 6,555-square-feet, and the building will be 41-feet-tall. Even though existing buildings range from 25 to 37 feet in height, the TRPA staff report said the taller building "is consistent and compatible with these other structures and uses."

The staff report also said, "The new (central utility plant) building will incorporate several new and sustainable technologies including equipment for heating and cooling, domestic hot water, medical air and medical vacuum systems, process and humidifying steam, gas powered cogeneration equipment, and two new diesel engine-driven generators that will provide emergency power for the hospital in case of loss or interruption of utility supply."

The current plant, also located outside the hospital, will become storage.