

South Shore businesses seek tools for success

By Kathryn Reed

A brainstorming session of more than 70 business owners and employees on Tuesday uncovered a wealth of topics designed to make the South Shore more successful.

At the annual Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce breakfast Jan. 28 much of the focus was on tapping into what the people in the room want for the coming year.

The chamber plans to host three industry lunches in 2014, with the first being in April. It will focus on health and wellness services that complement traditional medicine. The other two lunch topics may come from ideas generated this week.



B Gorman, CEO of Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce, talks Jan. 28 about plans for this year.

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Chamber officials were also looking for ideas for Tech Tuesdays, a segment the business group introduced last year.

While the events are geared toward chamber members, most are open to non-members at a higher price.

Businesses want to know how to manage their information off-site, how to recover after a disaster, more about Excel, search engine optimization, constant social media updates, and the basics of databases.

They also want more in-depth sessions on recreation, events, how to retain good employees in the shoulder season, how to increase their business' value, low-income housing, nonprofits, how to engage other businesses in an event, aging infrastructure, federal health care regulations, how businesses can adapt to climate change, and soft skills.

The various tables were also asked to talk among themselves about challenges they overcame in 2013 and successful best management practices.

Paula Lambdin, who works for Golden Sierra, complimented Brent Truax of the Landing Resort Hotel on how well his employees are trained. They noticed her government license plate and were very attentive.

"At some properties I don't get the time of day," Lambdin told her tablemates.

Truax said his philosophy is to hire personalities as much as it is to hire people with experience.

Eric Swartz with Peak 1 Group brought up the importance of managing online reviews and that positive and negative comments deserve a response.

Truax's rule is to respond to 80 percent of the negative comments and 20 percent of the positive.

Barb Tenney at Après Wine Co. uses comments as a teaching moment with employees. The positive ones get forwarded to everyone, while a one-on-one talk occurs with the person who is the subject of a less flattering review.

B Gorman, who runs the chamber, said new this year would be

political endorsements. The group is starting with the California side. There is a South Lake Tahoe City Council race, El Dorado County Board of Supervisors, Lake Tahoe Unified, Lake Tahoe Community College, South Tahoe Public Utility District, potential local initiatives, possible tax issues and other county positions on the ballot.

As with past years, a group will make excursions to Sacramento and Carson City to lobby lawmakers.

The chamber is also planning a trip to Park City April 2-5. Promotional material says, "During our visit to Park City, we will be looking at innovative ideas and strategies in the areas of transportation, walkable main streets, mixed use redevelopment as well as affordable living and performing arts."