

Library making case for June ballot measure

By Kathryn Reed

Will the South Lake Tahoe library be able to continue to provide the resources and programs that it has been?

That is a question a group of concerned residents were discussing this week as they gathered to talk about the role of the library, what it provides and how to get voters to say “yes” in June to Measure L.

Measure L is specific to the South Lake Tahoe library. It asks resident to continue paying the \$20 year fee per parcel. This not a new tax, but would be continuing the one already in place. The amount could go up based on the Consumer Price Index of no more than 3 percent per year. It will never exceed \$28.50 per year. It would expire in 12 years. It will require two-thirds of the voters’ approval for passage.



Jeanne Amos talks March 25 about the importance of libraries and what they have to offer. Photo/Denise Haerr

Jeanne Amos, El Dorado County library director, on March 25 went over what is going on locally, in the county and beyond.

Amos pointed out how out of the current \$513,711 fiscal budget that \$420,551 – or 82 percent – is from the local tax. Other revenue sources are fines, Friends of the Library, the county's general fund, grants, and ending fund balance.

The bulk of the expenses – 74 percent – goes to salaries and benefits, then materials, utilities, and services/supplies.

While the debate of whether print books will one day be obsolete continues, the reality is books in general are still being written and published. Amos said 300,000 new titles were published in 2013.

“All the Internet has done is accelerate book reading, buying and publishing,” Amos said.

The library has traditional books to check out, but e-books may also be checked out. A nice thing about those is there won't be a late fee because the book just disappears from the user's device.

A grant has allowed the South Tahoe branch to purchase iPads that are loaned out.

“If people are closed off from the Internet, they are closed off from the world,” Amos said. “I can't emphasize enough that we are a lifeline for people.”

The second half of the meeting was more of a roundtable format where the nearly 20 people discussed two questions:

- What makes the library a vital community hub and asset?
- How can the library and Friends of the Library better serve the community?

Denise Haerr, who is active in FOL, said she saw people during SnowGlobe using the computers to buy tickets.

It was mentioned more than once that the library caters to

people of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds.

Alexis Foley, case manager for CASA, said she has witnessed the library as a refuge for those reaching out for help and as an outlet for those to give help.

This plays into how Amos said the library is a resource for people looking for work. So many jobs now require an application and supporting material be filled out online. Computers are a big part of the library.

Lee Vestal finds the library to be a quiet space to get work done away from distractions.

Bonnie Turnbull, who home schools her daughter, uses the library on a regular basis.

The only thing people wished for were more evening hours. The library is open Tuesdays-Wednesday from 10am-8pm, Thursdays-Fridays-Saturdays from 10am-5pm.