

Editorial: Pierini for Douglas County sheriff

Publisher's note: Lake Tahoe News convened an editorial panel of six South Shore residents to decide on this endorsement for the June primary.

The two challengers in the Douglas County sheriff's race contend morale is not great within the department and a change in leadership is needed.

If this were true, then we wonder why the Douglas County Sheriff's Protective Association endorsed Sheriff Ron Pierini. The bargaining unit represents deputies, investigators and sergeants in the Douglas County Sheriff's Office.



Ron Pierini

We concur with the bulk of the department's employees that Pierini should continue to be sheriff, a position he was first elected to in 1997. He started with the department in 1976 – having been a captain in Tahoe, undersheriff and now sheriff.

He faces Dave Brady and Michael Gyll in the June 10 primary. The top two vote getters move onto a runoff in November.

Brady and Gyll are outsiders, even though Brady had been a reserve deputy for the department before he declared his candidacy.

While it's not always in the best interest of a department to

keep the status quo or to hire within, we also don't believe in the need to change leadership for the sake of change.

Pierini has proven he is capable of weathering many storms. We believe he will continue to do so for the next four years.

The sheriff's department's budget has been cut by \$2 million and 10 positions have been eliminated in the past few years. Despite the cutbacks, the department's arrest to prosecution rate is 38 percent. Nationwide the average is 22 percent.

He was at the helm when 9-year-old Krystal Steadman was kidnapped and killed in 2000 in Stateline. In 1980, he was a captain at the Tahoe substation when Harveys was bombed.

While we don't wish crimes like that to occur, it is reassuring to know someone with that breadth of experience will be directing the troops to find the bad guys.

By the nature of the job Pierini spends the bulk of his time in the valley. But he has a connection to Lake Tahoe that the other two candidates don't. This is another driving reason to keep Pierini in office. He works well with the other leaders at the lake – whether it is peers in other law enforcement agencies, fire personnel, casino executives or other business people.

Brady's financial background is intriguing and something often not seen in the ranks of law enforcement. But his character has been questioned. And already the voters of Douglas County ousted him out of office when he was a commissioner.

Gyll appears enthusiastic, but he presents no new ideas. He lacks the polish and gravitas to take on the top position within the Douglas County Sheriff's Office.

We need a sheriff who can reach across the aisle. We need someone who is capable of making tough decisions. We need someone who is a leader in his department as well as the

community.

That person is Ron Pierini.