

Letter: S. Tahoe Library is a well-used resource

To the community,

At the very bottom of your sample or absentee ballot for the June 3 primary election, you will see Measure L, which provides for a parcel tax which can be used only to support the South Lake Tahoe Library. It cannot be used for any other purpose.

Some background is in order. By 1994, because of state-mandated changes in the way counties could spend general funds, the number of days our library was open had dwindled to two days a week. In 1995, voters approved a small parcel tax, renewed in 2005, to support the South Lake Tahoe Library. For almost 20 years, our library has been open five days a week with sufficient funds and staffing to purchase new books and other materials, provide research assistance and present numerous programs for community members of all ages.

Now, in the 21st century, our library offers not only print resources, but a full range of downloadable books and popular magazines in multiple formats, on-site computers with Internet, and other exciting innovations. Patrons may access free online resources, such as encyclopedias, law books, auto repair reference manuals, and business development sites. In addition, online programs to strengthen job skills, prepare for tests and learn another language are available. All of these online resources are free and may be used from home as well as the library. Strong support for the children of our community has continued. In addition to in-the-library programs for youth ranging from toddlers to teens, parents may check out a variety of kits featuring books and early learning materials.

As a result of the many resources available, our library is heavily used. Out of a total of 18,000-plus active library cards, over 14,000 belong to local residents. 130,000-plus books were checked out in 2012, a 23 percent increase over the previous 10 years. People are standing at the door when the library opens waiting for the computers and they are in use all day long.

The funding for this major community resource will soon expire. Measure L is not a new tax. Rather, for \$20 per year, it will maintain the funding that has supported this major community resource. Increases will be based on the Consumer Price Index and cannot exceed 3 percent per year. The tax will last for 12 years, at which time the voters can re-evaluate in the light of then-existing conditions.

As community members, we will be making an important choice on June 3. Do we preserve our vibrant, full-service library by voting yes on Measure L? Or will we let the opportunity pass and revert to a branch much reduced in hours and services? I hope you will join me in voting yes on Measure L.

Kay Henderson, president South Lake Tahoe Friends of the Library and chair for the Committee for South Lake Tahoe Library – Measure L

South Lake Tahoe