

Lawsuit leads to fireworks sponsorship change

By Kathryn Reed

The Tahoe Douglas Visitors Authority is now the lead agency behind the fireworks that are shot off twice a year on the South Shore.

For several years the pyrotechnic display has come under the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority purview.

“The LTVA board received legal counsel advising that the best course of action would be to seek another sponsor, thus the TDVA. It makes sense, since the TDVA is a Nevada entity and the fireworks displays are being executed in Nevada and the oversight is being performed by a Nevada authority, the [Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District],” Carol Chaplin, who is executive director of the LTVA and TDVA, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The Nevada Legislature formed the TDVA in 1999. It is guaranteed funding through the transient occupancy tax collected by Douglas County. TDVA had been giving the LTVA money for the fireworks, so funding is not an issue.

A lawsuit filed last year by a Marla Bay couple cited the federal Clean Water Act. The suit was filed in Sacramento and settled this spring. The settlement calls for better cleanup of beaches, which is already taking place by volunteers. Changes are also being made to some of the shells and the immediate cleanup procedures.

“Yes, like any other organization, the TDVA could be sued,” Chaplin said.

What will change is that it will be harder for anyone to gain traction with a lawsuit in Nevada compared to California.

The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, a California agency, is tasked with regulating water issues in this area. But it has no power across the state line.

Nevada does not have a similar governing body. This means any future lawsuit regarding the South Shore fireworks would have to be filed in federal court in Reno, with the Environmental Protection Agency being the overseer.