

Tahoe Queen not damaged, may sail in a week

By Kathryn Reed

The Tahoe Queen is structurally capable of operating, but because it does not have updated U.S. Coast Guard mandated paperwork in place it is sitting idle at Ski Run Marina in South Lake Tahoe.

The Coast Guard on Aug. 6 inspected the vessel to see if had been damaged. It wasn't. The sightseeing paddle-wheeler ran aground Aug. 4 off Regan Beach with 257 passengers on board.

All were safely evacuated, mostly via small law enforcement boats.

The certificate of documentation is what's delaying the boat from operating. This is similar to registering any watercraft with the state. The difference for the Queen is that because of its tonnage it is required to have the federal certification.

Coast Guard Lt. Theo Vaughan did not know how long the Queen has been out of compliance.

The Queen cannot carry passengers without the valid documents. Vaughan estimated the paperwork should be completed within a week.

"The vessel will be allowed to operate. The only thing pending is the administrative issue," Vaughan told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The full investigation of what caused the Queen to launch itself onto the sandbar is ongoing. Vaughan said it could be two months before it is finished. The report must be signed off by folks at headquarters in Washington, D.C.

“The low level of the lake is definitely a contributing factor,” Vaughan said.

As for what might happen to the captain or any other crewmember remains to be seen.

“We will look at the report and see if any changes need to be made based on recommendations,” Dave Freirich, spokesman for Aramark – parent company of the Queen, told *Lake Tahoe News*.