

Tahoe Queen returns to Ski Run Marina



The Tahoe Queen was dislodged from a sandbar Aug. 5. Photo/DanThriftPhotography.com

Updated Aug. 5 10:58pm

By Kathryn Reed

The Tahoe Queen returned to Ski Run Marina more than 24 hours after hitting a sandbar on Monday.

The paddle-wheeler ran aground Aug. 4 not long after it left Ski Run Marina for an afternoon scenic tour to Emerald Bay. Instead of a leisurely sightseeing cruise, the 250-plus passengers were stuck off Regan Beach in South Lake Tahoe for several hours before rescue boats were called to ferry them back to the marina.

The U.S. Coast Guard, which has a station in Tahoe City, is in charge of the incident. The local office referred questions to an official in San Francisco who did not return a phone call.

Dave Freirich, spokesman for Aramark – the company that owns the Queen – told *Lake Tahoe News*, “We are still working with the Coast Guard to free the Queen from the sandbar. When it is

safe to transport her to the marina, we will determine if any damage needs to be repaired.” This was two hours before she was back in her home port.

It is not known if the boat sustained any damage.

People who have reservations on the Queen are being rebooked on the M.S. Dixie II, which runs out of Zephyr Cove.



Passengers of the Tahoe Queen were given life jackets to wear on rescue boats; including a child having to wear an adult jacket. Photo/Pedro Martinez

Freirich said company officials don't recall any other time when an incident like this occurred at Lake Tahoe.

He said the initial delay in calling for help was to give the boat a chance to see if "maneuvers" and other vessels could help dislodge it from the sandbar.

"It was very unorganized. No one took control of anything and no one provided any type of emergency plan and there was no one to maintain order. The crew kept working serving drinks and charging credit cards," Pedro Martinez of Los Angeles told *Lake Tahoe News*. "The elderly folks were really scared and some started to almost panic. It was a little intense since it appeared that everything was escalating into a more serious situation than what it first appeared. I began to get

concerned thinking that people were going to panic and rush and stampede the exits. I was scared for my children and almost wanted to take charge and direct the crowd since no one was taking charge.”

Aramark officials did not have information on what the official protocols are for such an emergency.