

Organizers scramble to save SnowFest

TAHOE CITY – SnowFest almost wasn't going to happen this year.

The annual winter carnival that started in the early 1980s on the North Shore has been threatened because of mismanagement and diminishing sponsorship. But enthusiasts have rallied to ensure the event takes place this year – Feb. 27-March 8.

Events are staged from Homewood to Truckee to Squaw Valley to Incline Village. They include parades on the street and by torchlight on a mountain, polar bear plunge, luau, dog sled race, food and wine events and more. It's a huge fundraiser for area nonprofits.

It started as one weekend, grew to two and is now 10 days.

Ruth Schnabel, who has been brought back to organize this year's event, gave a presentation last week at the North Lake Tahoe Resort Association's Tuesday Morning Breakfast Club at Granlibakken Resort.

She gave a brief history of the event. She said in 2000 the nonprofit's board hired a man out of Los Angeles to run SnowFest. He left the organization in debt \$250,000. SnowFest has been on financially shaky ground ever since.

Last spring another executive director was hired. He resigned after four months, but did nothing during that time, according to Schnabel. Today SnowFest is operated by volunteers. The office space is probably going away soon.

Schnabel said from an outsider's perspective the event would go on as it always has – same look, feel, events. From the inside, though, it is barely functioning. She said an infusion of \$10,000 in cash would help with some basics for this year

and provide a little nest egg going forward.

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Notes:

- The event is Feb. 27-March 8.
- For more info, go online.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report