

# Collaboration touted as key to Tahoe's success



Gov. Brian Sandoval talks June 25 about collaboration as other Western governors listen. Photo/Kathryn Reed

**By Kathryn Reed**

INCLINE VILLAGE – Collaboration. That is what has allowed public and private entities in the Lake Tahoe Basin to get things done.

Various speakers pointed this out last week at the annual Western Governors' Association confab.

Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval, the outgoing chair of the group, said how collaboration is necessary for the economic and environmental survival of Lake Tahoe. With Lake Tahoe the backdrop, the governors had a front row seat at Sand Harbor. Gov. Jerry Brown was not in attendance.

"We have to work together in a time of catastrophic drought," Sandoval said. This ties into the need to work on water and fire issues as a region and not in isolated jurisdictions.

John Laird, California secretary of Natural Resources, spoke of the time when both states were hashing out details regarding the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Regional Plan update and legislation that threatened the states participation. He said it wasn't easy, but the end result was worth the angst.

Joanne Marchetta, TRPA executive director, said keeping aquatic invasive species out of Lake Tahoe has brought together a number of agencies. With the lack of funding nearly wiping out the inspection program, she credits both states with coming forward to rescue the program from a "fiscal cliff."

"Nothing we do here follows neat political boundaries," Marchetta said. "Collaboration is the way to protect the lake and getting things done."

For Pete Sonntag, chief operating officer at Heavenly Mountain Resort, he said a new mindset has developed in the last five years since he has been at the helm.

"It's less of what can we get. It's evolved into what is possible if we partner together early on," Sonntag said. "We wouldn't be able to operate our business without collaboration."