

Rules being written to keep bears from trash

By Kathryn Reed

New regulations are designed to keep bears and other critters out of commercial and multifamily residential trash bins on the South Shore.

The Waste Management Joint Powers Authority last week voted that the lids, which can be plastic, must be shut at dusk or when the business closes. They may be opened no earlier than dawn, unless it's trash day, then the time is 5:30am.

The current ordinance does not say the lids must be closed or what hours to do so.

"We've had issues where lids are open all night and that's more attractive to bears," JoAnn Conner, South Lake Tahoe's rep on the JPA, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Plastic lids will be allowed until a bear breaks through it. At that time South Tahoe Refuse will issue the customer an estimate to get it replaced with a metal lid.

The JPA is comprised of the city, El Dorado County and Douglas County – but just in the basin. Sue Novasel (EDC supervisor) and Nancy McDermid (DC commissioner) are the other two members of the JPA.

Residential customers will not have to get a bear resistant container until there has been an issue with trash being strewn all over. On the second offense where animals have been in the trash that customer will have to pay a fine and get a container or bear box. The screw top trash cans would be permissible until those prove not to work.

A difference among the jurisdictions is whether to require

bear boxes when a new residence is built or a remodel takes place. El Dorado County requires the box under those circumstances. The city doesn't. Douglas County, which does not have mandatory trash pick up like its neighbors, also does not mandate the boxes because of new or significant construction.

Conner's belief is that mandating boxes in those instances is a punishment to people who have done nothing wrong.

It will be up to the individual jurisdictions to decide if construction triggers the need for a bear box.

The JPA is expected to vote on the final ordinance in September. The individual jurisdictions are likely to give direction or vote on the ordinance before then.