

# Opinion: The need for continual training

By Brian Uhler

Like many Americans, law enforcement folks have been deeply moved by the horrific images we have seen in Oregon. A certain feeling of helplessness has become the norm when we look at these events from the prevention perspective. We may ask questions like:

- “Why do people who would do such a thing have access to a gun?”
- “Why didn’t people who knew the shooter do something to stop him before people died?”



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Post-mortem, we dig into the answers for these questions and oftentimes see the breakdowns clearly. Family and friends may have “had an idea something bad would happen,” but didn’t feel like there was enough reason to say anything, sometimes adding something like, “I thought he was just blowing-off steam like he does all the time ....” Medical professionals say they couldn’t say anything because of confidentiality requirements and the lack of any clear threat.

Perhaps, some meaningful changes will come from this latest event.

From a local perspective, law enforcement, medical responders, mental health professionals, and school officials have been proactive in providing the highest level of safety possible. We have promoted the concept of “see something – say something” among those who have contact with students and with those providing mental health support. This concept can certainly be expanded to the entire community.

Lake Tahoe Unified School District regularly undergoes lockdown procedures and has supported training for our region’s law enforcement and medical responders. In three such training exercises we practiced responding to and eliminating the threat followed by a quick medical triage and emergency transport process.

In Lake Tahoe, your police department, the FBI, El Dorado County Sheriff’s Department, and California Highway Patrol have all worked together to stay at the cutting edge of capacity. One such example included an FBI led table-top exercise where local agency leaders tested their capacity.

Just a few months ago, we had a “false alarm” shooting event at the Lake Tahoe Community College. During this event, college officials learned of the need to bolster internal control and communication infrastructure. I am pleased to report that the needed system changes are now in-place and undergoing testing to make sure college students can receive information quickly and respond properly.

Unfortunately, we have no choice but to train and prepare for the possibility in our own community. We are thankful our region’s school and college officials take such matters seriously and have been unwavering in their support to the police and fire department’s need for training.

*Brian Uhler is police chief for South Lake Tahoe.*