

# Tests aimed to find cause of well contamination

Soil and water samples will be taken next week on the South Shore in the **ongoing contamination case** of multiple wells.

It was summer 2014 when Tetrachloroethene (PCE) was discovered in two of Lukins Brothers wells along with some private wells in the area. Too much of it and the water is deemed undrinkable. PCE can cause eye, skin and respiratory problems on the low end, cancer on the more serious side.

Since the chemical was found Lukins has been getting some of its water from South Tahoe Public Utility District. The one well Lukins has provides most of its customers with water.

Funding from a state grant is paying for the \$125,000 worth of tests next week. It will include 20 borings and extracting eight samples from existing monitoring sites. It could take up to a month for the results.

"The goal is to determine the cause or the source of it," Jennifer Lukins, who runs the company, told *Lake Tahoe News*. The polluter is responsible for the cleanup costs.

The drought may be exacerbating a problem that has been known about since the 1990s. Two dry cleaners used to operate at the Y. PCE is a common byproduct of that process.

"We will evaluate what they are telling us. It will give us a better idea of the extent and magnitude of the contamination," Lauri Kemper, deputy executive officer with the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "It will give us information about what it will take to treat it and remove it."

Lukins will also use the information as it goes forward with

building a treatment plant. The South Lake Tahoe water company is in the process of applying for grant money from the state to build a \$1.4 million treatment plant. It will be a granulated, activated, carbon facility similar to what the Tahoe Keys uses to treat PCE in its wells. It's possible the plant would be operational next summer.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*