

# Lab expands shared work space concept in SLT



Mountain Lab in South Lake Tahoe is bringing different businesses under one roof. Photo/LTN

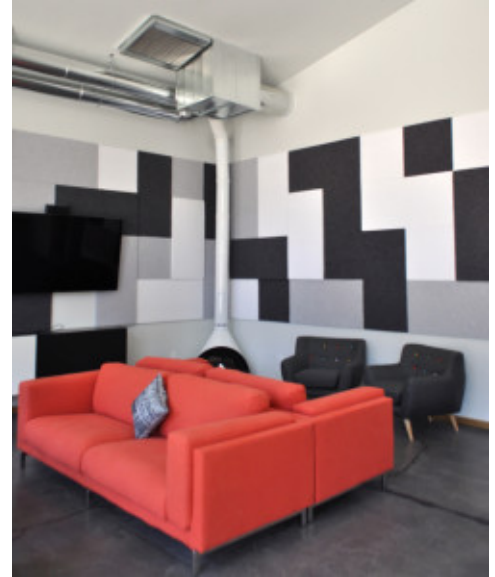
## By Kathryn Reed

Working in isolation is not always an ideal situation. But renting office space in a prime location is expensive. Then there are all the other costs – utilities, snow removal, signage. And on the South Shore parking can be a problem.

Mountain Lab is the answer. (They've let the Tahoe in the name go to give them marketing opportunities in other locations in the future.)

Ginger Nicolay-Davis of Help U-Sell Real Estate is already in her space, as is the *Tahoe Daily Tribune*.

“I love the Mountain Lab concept. I am so excited to go to work in a place surrounded by like-minded professionals,” Nicolay-Davis told *Lake Tahoe News*. “I truly feel energy begets energy and I think the Mountain Lab is going to be the business center of the community.”



**Companies renting space  
at Mountain Lab:**

Admios

Aliens From the Future

BL Friedman Creative

CB Umbrella Group

Century 21, Tahoe  
Paradise

Climate Parents

Code for America, Tahoe  
chapter

Cooperative Tahoe Inc.

Darke Marketing

Enovity

Filament

Gringos

Handelin Law

Help U Sell Lake Tahoe

Inka Direct

Lake Tahoe South Shore  
Chamber of Commerce's  
Tactical Team  
Lara Miller PR  
Level Frames  
RO Anderson  
Sage Engineering  
Satin Legal  
SMG  
Tahoe Daily Tribune  
Tahoe Heritage  
Foundation  
TCS Digital Marketing  
Waddell & Reed  
Wells Fargo  
Wildscape Engineering.

Source:

*Mountain Lab*

Nineteen of the 24 private office spaces have been rented.

David and Jamie Orr are relocating the Ski Run business they opened a couple years ago to the old *Tahoe Daily Tribune* building that they bought. It will officially open May 15.

They have partnered with Bernard and Cristi Creegan. Bernard Creegan is the general contractor. It will be Cristi Creegan and David Orr running the day-to-day-operations.

For anyone who has been in the building that fronts Highway 50 and Harrison Avenue they won't recognize the inside. The main entrance is to the left of the building when facing it, at the back end of the city owned parking lot. David Orr admits the parking lot – which the Lab's clientele may use – was a huge draw.

The old front entrance leads to where the shared work areas

are. This is for regulars and drop-ins. About 30 percent of the Lab's business on Ski Run had been people working there on an irregular basis – people on vacation, here seasonally, or needing a place to bring clients/customers.

The old back entrance on the right that the editorial staff used will be how people enter to get to the 49-person conference room. This can be used by those already in the building or rented by an outside entity.

The façade has been overhauled. The old *Tribune* sign will be going to the Lake Tahoe Historical Society. The morgue – newspaper speak for where archives are kept – had been in a dingy upstairs location. Much of the material is with the historical society. The space no longer exists, instead there are high ceilings. Some of the infrastructure of the building will remain exposed.

This old building had been renovated a few times – at least in the late 1980s and 2003. It still needed help.

Insulation has been added, more windows installed and single pane ones replaced with double pane. Large ceiling fans are on a sensor to push the warm air down. Lights are new, too. The hope is the energy efficiency will drop utility bills in half.

The drywall is quiet rock, which is designed to control sound. Floors are stained concrete.

Included in a business' rent are utilities and Internet. It's up to them to pay for a landline.

Individual offices range from 93- to 230-square-feet. The *Tribune* takes about 2,500-square-feet. That is about what the total space of the Ski Run location had. This building is about four times the size of that one.



Bernard Creegan is one of the four owners of Mountain Lab as well as the contractor on the renovation. Photo/LTN

Brenda Knox with Waddell & Reed Financial Advisors said the space and location will be great for clients. She is also “looking forward to the energy of working in a collaborative space with other business people.”

Everyone has access to shared areas. The break room, so to speak, is what the general public enters through first. The south facing entrance is bright and airy with plenty of natural sunlight. Old books from Ken Smith, one of the first doctors on the South Shore, fill one section. Wall art is more than just something to look at. It is made out of recycled cotton, which absorbs sound instead of merely deflecting it.

One thing the Orrs learned from the Ski Run site is there has to be a separation between work and social spaces.



Jose Ribera-Quinonez, Rafael Ayon-Meza and Ceja Gonzalo create a new look for an old building. Photo/LTN

When people walk through the doors toward what used to be the front of the building, it is considered a quiet zone. This doesn't mean it will be library quiet, but there will be a sense of respect that work is taking place, people are on the phone, clients may be in the building and professionalism should be the norm.

There are shared spaces in the work area too. A hallway will have white boards on it; a setting for impromptu brainstorming sessions.

Another thing the Orrs learned is people want a shower at work. This is because so many of these workers are living the Tahoe lifestyle – meaning they may bike to work, ski part of the day or play outside midday. But they want to be clean at work.

“The Mountain Lab is about selling a lifestyle and community in many ways,” Orr said.

Community is a big part of the concept – with people mentoring each other, helping and collaborating. Many also socialize together.