

Stateline event center relying on higher bed tax

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Hotel guests in Stateline are going to help fund the special events center that is going to be built on the front parking lot of MontBleu at Highway 50.

The Tahoe Douglas Visitors Authority board this week approved raising the Douglas County lodging license fee. Now the county commissioners must OK the increase. That board is likely to hear the issue in December. This does not have to go to the voters.

The current fee is 3 percent. It would increase to 4 percent. Hotel guests also pay a 10 percent transient occupancy tax. The total 14 percent, if approved, would be the same rate guests would be paying in the redevelopment area of South Lake Tahoe if Measure P passes in November.

All of the money collected in Stateline would stay at the lake specifically for the planning, construction and operation of the facility.



The parking lot at MontBleu could become an

events center. Photo/LTN

In January the county created a **redevelopment area** that basically encompasses the casino area to Kahle Drive. With Edgewood Lodge and Tahoe Beach Club being built, this will bring added revenues to the county to help raise money for the entertainment venue.

Originally the event center had been envisioned for the other side of the street and was going to be a 6,000- to 7,500-seat indoor-outdoor venue. After further study the MontBleu site was deemed best. It will be totally indoors, seating between 4,000 and 5,000 people.

The actual land is owned by Edgewood Companies.

Douglas County, Edgewood Companies and the casino properties have been talking about a performing arts center at Stateline for years. The casino showrooms cannot hold that many people and the Harveys outdoor facility is seasonal.

"The community recognized that group activities benefit tourism. And it is consistent with the transition of the economy from a gaming based model to a resort destination, recreation based model," Lew Feldman, attorney for TDVA, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

As of today, TDVA would own and operate the facility. The goal is to drive more people to Tahoe, especially in the off-season.

Also at the Oct. 12 board meeting \$12,060 was allocated for a parking analysis.

Board members Mike Bradford (representing Lakeside Inn) and Nancy McDermid (Douglas County) were appointed to the subcommittee to deal with the entertainment venue issues. They have the authority to spend up to \$100,000, though that could be multiple \$100,000 expenditures. Allocating money for a

design fee will likely be an immediate need after the parking study is done.