

STHS grads tapping into craft beer craze

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe planners this month approved the change in operation permit as well as issued the building permit for the old Ace Hardware store near the Y to be turned into a brewery.

“The proposal includes a mill and grain storage room, two ADA accessible restrooms, office space, a cold box, multiple brewing storage tanks, bar and table seating, as well as an outdoor patio/seating area,” Hilary Roverude, deputy director of Development Services, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Chris and Nicole Smith, who graduated from South Tahoe High School in 2006, moved back to the area about a year ago with designs to open a brewery. They expect the doors to South Lake Brewing Company to open in February, maybe March.



The old Ace store is being gutted and transformed into a brewery. Photo/Provided

A few things that will set them apart from the other breweries in the area include having the most square-feet (6,000) and

largest capacity (10-barrel brewhouse).

Each barrel is the equivalent of 31 gallons of beer. A barrel is two kegs. Two batches of beer are needed to fill their fermenters, which is 40 kegs worth of beer.

“My favorite beers to brew are hoppy ales that are not too bitter,” Chris Smith told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We like to do easy drinking English ales and lagers in the German style.”

They plan to open with six taps, but have the ability to grow to 16. They are leaving room in the building if more tanks need to be added. The name so far are Angora IPA, Marlette Blonde, Barrett Brown and Emigrant Saison.

Food will be secondary to the beer. Packaged snacks will be for sale. However, the brewery will allow outside food to be brought in. The building has room to add a kitchen down the road if that seems appropriate.

Chris Smith is responsible for the beers, Nicole Smith handles the finances and the front of the house.

Right now the interior is being transformed into the brewery. The building on Lake Tahoe Boulevard has sat empty since Ace left in January 2011.

“We wanted to be on the west side of town. We didn’t want to go any farther than Ski Run,” said Smith, who grew up in Meyers. The goal is to add a bit of community feel to the Y area; to give people another reason be on that side of town.

Once the brewery has been operating for a bit the plan is to bottle the beer to sell and to have different ones available at other restaurants. Growlers will be the first way for people to take home South Lake Brewing Company beers. Membership is already possible in the Bär Society – the growler club – via the brewery’s **website**. (Bär is German for bear.)

The couple also plans to work closely with the community in terms of giving back via hosting fundraisers or bringing beer to an event.