

Extra patrols enhance VHR enforcement in SLT

By Kathryn Reed

Enforcement is what people have been calling for in regards to vacation home rentals and the city finally delivered on that request.

The South Lake Tahoe City Council on Tuesday will hear a report about the outcome of the 90-day enhanced enforcement. The council is likely to discuss the possibility of continuing the added patrols during peak tourism months in the summer and winter.

“The neighbors are clearly seeing patrol vehicles come through with the VHR patrol. They are being listened to,” Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He believes the combination of the rules the council has put in place, the storms happening on weekends, VHR owners putting pressure on tenants and the extra patrols have contributed to make vacation home rentals be less of a problem in town.

The High Sierra Patrol workers did not interact directly with people at the VHR, but instead reported back to the community service officer who made the face-to-face contact.

The security teams worked from mid-December through mid-March, daily from 4pm-2am. High Sierra Patrol personnel were tasked with checking on 120 properties with closed permits to see if they were operating illegally, houses where a complaint had been filed and residential areas outside of the tourist core.

Findings include:

- 26 properties were operating without a valid permit

- 33 properties are on a watch list because of the higher number of calls
- 85 rental signs were not visible because of snow, lighting or a sign didn't exist
- 36 VHR owners received an advisory notice
- 10 owners were issued warnings
- 3 administrative citations were given
- Dispatch during the same time frame received 68 calls for loud noise, of which 16 were from VHRs
- In addition to those 68 calls, dispatch received specific VHR complaints – 14 for noise, 20 for parking and four for trash.

Where people were cited, the city sent out bills totaling \$26,750.

The cost to the city for High Sierra Patrol for those 90 days was \$26,310.

Earlier this month the council approved the hiring of a full-time permanent community service officer who will handle VHR issues. This has been a temporary position.

Uhler said it has been difficult in the past to keep people in this CSO job. Having more consistency with staff has also made for better tracking of problem properties and getting out a consistent message.