

Ski Run pier extension allows new passenger boats



The pier installation at Ski Run Marina was finished June 14.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

A new era in the tourism boat industry at Lake Tahoe starts today with the Safari Rose's maiden voyage from Ski Run Marina.

Marina owner Elie Alyeshmerni has paid for a new, longer dock in order to accommodate the vessel that until now had been based at the Tahoe Keys Marina.

For years he has been looking to install a pier that would be unique to Tahoe in terms of being environmentally superior, aesthetically pleasing and functional.

Work started earlier this spring, with everything being completed on June 14.

“It’s like a Lego set. You put it together and it can be changed,” Alyeshmerni told *Lake Tahoe News* of the new dock. “The nice thing about this is that it’s floating and goes where the water is.”



Arnold Finn of Global Dock Marine System approaches a finger float that was placed in the lake in May. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Global Dock Marine System designed and installed the dock. It’s a green system, as in being environmentally friendly for the water and shore. It is made from recycled material. It’s polyethylene plastic that should last 50 years. (The company had been based in Florida, but is relocating to Reno.)

Twelve steel beams were installed to accommodate the 126-foot-long, 12-foot-wide pier. A 40-foot-long bridge connects the old dock to the new floating pier. It shoots to the west at a 30-degree angle.

There are no hinges. Three-quarter-inch steel rods tie it together. It was all assembled with hand tools.



Special bollards are on the dock that are better for boats. Photo/Kathryn Reed

“Once it’s in the water it is inert. Nothing can leach out and go into the lake,” Arnold Finn, part owner of the dock company, told *Lake Tahoe News* as he started work in May.

Each vertical float can support 3,600 pounds, so it would be possible for a vehicle to drive on it. Each float is 8 feet by 4 feet.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency granted a permit for this project on a temporary, one-year basis. A one-time extension is possible for another six months.



This recycled plastic is what is floating in the water after being put together like a puzzle. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The Tahoe Queen had operated out of this South Lake Tahoe marina since 1983. During the drought when the lake level got low it could no longer dock there. Aramark, the owners of the paddle-wheeler, turned it into scrap after it caught fire last August.

When the boat no longer existed Alyeshmerni told Aramark its lease would not be renewed. That company had not honored its contract to dredge the marina nor did it operate the required number days.

“As you know, the Tahoe Queen was damaged beyond repair due to a fire last year while it was being renovated. We are in the process of looking at future vessels to replace the Tahoe Queen and hope to look at future opportunities at Ski Run Marina,” Dave Freireich of Aramark told *Lake Tahoe News*, even though he acknowledged the company no longer has a lease with Ski Run.

Steve Dunham now has a 10-year lease at Ski Run, with an option for another 10 years. He brought the Safari Rose to Tahoe in 2003. It is an 80-foot-long mahogany and teak yacht that will operate in the summer season.

Dunham will be using a steel boat year-round, which will be docked across from the Safari Rose later this summer. One can carry 70 passengers, the other 110. Both will operate during peak times.



The floating dock on June 13 before being put in its “permanent” home. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Ski Run is permitted to have 1,950 passengers a day, but does not intend to even reach half that number.

The hull of these boats is V-shaped, unlike the Queen’s.

“Basically most boats other than the Tahoe Queen (could not) operate off of the (old) Ski Run pier because it is short and the shelf is relatively shallow. The Queen was able to pull up to the existing pier head to allow for loading and unloading, where most other boats have to pull up to the side of the pier for loading and unloading and is not feasible,” Tom Lotshaw, spokesman for TRPA, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “In order to make the pier serviceable, without an extension, dredging would have been requested by the applicant.”

If dredging is required in the future, that is now the marina owner's responsibility.

The extension makes the marina as a whole less congested when it comes to boat traffic

Alyeshmerni hopes to make the pier a permanent addition to his marina.