

# STR bear box loan program extended

By Kathryn Reed

The zero interest loan program for bear boxes in South Tahoe Refuse's service area has been so successful that it has been extended.

The South Lake Tahoe Waste Management Authority board last week agreed to continue the program that is less than a year old.

"It's one of the best things for long-term sustainability and reducing our animal in trash issues," Wendy David told *Lake Tahoe News*. She is South Lake Tahoe's rep on the board. Other board members are Douglas County Commissioner Nancy McDermid and El Dorado County Supervisor Sue Novasel.

In the pilot program 36 people have received bear boxes and another 39 are approved. Seventy-five boxes are what was expected in the pilot program. The JPA had budgeted \$75,000 for the initial program.

At the Aug. 4 meeting the board agreed to allocate \$300,000 to keep the program alive.

"It was determined that the loan repayments would cycle back into the restricted funds that are allocated for the loans," David explained.

STR has another 150 households ready to go. They applied for the program in the hopes it would be extended.

According to STR, it's been a mix of locals, second homeowners and vacation rental owners who have participated.

One issue with the boxes is the workers don't know if there is

actually garbage in the bins.

“Although collection workers are required to stop and check every box, it’s still less time consuming and more sanitary than cleaning up after an incident,” Jeanette Tillman with STR told *Lake Tahoe News*. “One of the dynamics of the program includes working with STR to ensure the box placement is collection friendly, meaning, if placed properly, accessibility issues should be kept to a minimum even during the winter months.”