

Douglas County employees accused of theft

By Lake Tahoe News

Douglas County officials are not being very forthcoming with information about employees stealing from the public works department even though they admit they were first made aware of the thefts in March.

The Nevada Division of Investigation and Douglas County District Attorney's Office have been investigating the thefts since they were first reported more than six months ago.

"The criminal investigation will be made available once the investigation is completed and the matter is reviewed for prosecution," the county said in a press release.

The investigations involve "allegations of thefts of tires and other possible improprieties within the public works department."

County spokeswoman Melissa Blosser would not tell *Lake Tahoe News* if anyone has been placed on leave, removed from the department or fired. She also wouldn't say how long people had been stealing, how many people were involved, or the value of what was taken.

For the past several months the county said it has conducted an internal audit and inventory of purchased tires, strengthened internal financial controls to provide additional security, retained an accounting firm to conduct a complete inventory of tires and other supplies used in the operations and maintenance of county vehicles and to assist in determining the amount of the frauds committed against the county, which also should identify ways to prevent similar types of fraud in the future.

The county says it plans to use the IT department to better track inventory.

The county plans to change its policies when it comes to the public and staff being able to report suspected fraud. With the county only talking through press releases, it is not known what the policy was before or what it will be in the future. It is in the process of revamping the Whistleblower Protection Program.

All staff will be given ethics training as well.