

LTVA expanding focus beyond traditional tourist

By Kathryn Reed

Diversifying the types of people coming to the South Shore and the reasons they do so is a goal of local business owners and tourism officials.

Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority is making a concerted effort to attract more conventions/meetings to the area. This in turn will ideally put more heads in beds and get the people to spend money on other things during their stay.

To begin with the goal is to work on groups with attendees of up to 400 people.

This isn't just about getting more people into the Stateline casinos. Plenty of smaller properties have meeting rooms as well which could be good for a few dozen people. The goal is to fill these spaces on both sides of the state line.

"One of our strategic goals is to do what our partners cannot do themselves. In last year's budget, we allocated a small amount toward a consultant to evaluate our destination as it relates specifically to meetings and make recommendations on how to launch a campaign," Carol Chaplin, LTVA executive director, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Based upon those recommendations, there are things we can do that are very cost effective: build out a better meetings webpage; allocate some staff time to some regional trade shows; create a collateral piece; create a sales committee representative of our destination properties. That's where we are right now."

The Nevada Division of Tourism this month gave LTVA a \$15,000 grant to develop a marketing plan to attract meetings and conventions to this area. The money could be used on digital

display advertising, e-blasts and e-newsletters and website page redesign.

LTVA will convene a group of interested properties to devise a strategy for luring groups to the South Shore. The marketing committee will have a say, and then the proposal will be presented to the board.

This effort is separate from and in advance of anything involving the event center that is being developed in Stateline.

“As we get closer to event center reality, we’ll have the opportunity to tackle the trade show/exhibition segments as well as events. The event center will need its own strategy,” Chaplin said.