

STR tired of trash scattered in neighborhoods

By Kathryn Reed

South Tahoe Refuse is fed up with having to pick up after dozens of residents whose trash is everywhere but in a proper container.

Jeff Tillman, president of the South Lake Tahoe-based company, said consistently his crews have to deal with between 75 and 100 cleanups each of the five days they provide service on the South Shore.

“I’m tired of playing patty cake with them. It’s time to hit them hard,” Tillman told the South Lake Tahoe Basin Waste Management Authority board last week.

His crews are directed to pick up whatever garbage isn’t in a can. This takes time, and time is money.

Tillman admitted it’s possible some people don’t even know their trash has been strewn about – mostly likely by animals, with ravens being one of the biggest culprits. But he also knows that based on the repeat offenders “some of these people don’t care.”

STR changed its policy a few years ago to start trash collection at 7am. This was to stop people from putting out garbage the night before, which gave animals more opportunity to feast and make a mess. While this has helped, it has not solved all the problems.

Tillman was hoping the board would take on the enforcement arm if his company supplied evidence. His crews have cameras to document the problem, with each occurrence being date stamped.

South Lake Tahoe, El Dorado County and Douglas County are the

member agencies of the waste management authority.

At the Jan. 19 meeting the board agreed to have STR come back with a proposed fee to assess violators, and for each member agency to devise a fee and appeal process. There are ordinances on the books now that can be used through code enforcement to tackle some of the issues. This additional fee for STR's efforts would go beyond that.

Tillman made it abundantly clear that he is not looking for another revenue source, but for the problem to go away and if doesn't, then for the violators to held accountable.

The board said it wants to be part of the solution, and respective staff said they'll work to make it happen.

There was talk of mandatory bear boxes for repeat offenders.

Here are samples of trash problems provided by Clean Tahoe, which also is tasked with litter issues.