

Calif. TV news disappearing from Tahoe

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By Kathryn Reed

“It is 100 percent about commercials.”

That is the reason Charter-Spectrum is telling customers Sacramento station KCRA is being removed from the lineup in the South Lake Tahoe area. Instead, people will have to get their programming from the NBC affiliate KRNV out of Reno.

“Even though you reside in the state of California, you are part of the Reno, Nev., market,” Sylvester, an employee with the cable company, said. He said because people in this region are more likely to shop in Reno instead of Sacramento this area will soon only have access to the Reno station.

It comes down to money. Advertisers are being sold on the broadcast product based on how many people the station is reaching. Businesses in the capital city region aren't going to see the Tahoe-Truckee area as having viable or potential customers. Reno and Carson City businesses, though, do consider the basin their market and therefore want to reach them.

While most of the programming is the same, the news is not. And that is what has some locals riled up.

“KCRA is where our community gets its news on issues that affects us. Political and vital California news,” South Lake Tahoe Councilman Tom Davis told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We don't get California news from Reno stations. I, as an elected official, will not let Charter censor what news we get.”

But it has nothing to do with censorship. It has to do with

Charter being a business, and like all businesses, it wants to make a profit and not give its product away for free.

Bret Picciolo, senior director of communications for Charter, didn't know if people would still be able to stream KCRA.

He also wouldn't release how many people are affected by this decision that will take effect on or after June 4.

El Dorado County Supervisor Sue Novasel plans to have a conference call with Charter officials on Friday. On that call will be county CAO Don Ashton, PIO Carla Hass, and city electeds Davis and Wendy David. Novasel said she would ask *LTN's* streaming question.

Novasel has been down this road before with Charter. When she was on the Meyers Roundtable Committee the Sacramento station was pulled in 2008. Public outcry helped restore the service. In 2003 Charter blamed the elimination of KCRA from Meyers televisions because of technology, which was then resolved.

"None of the Reno stations acknowledge us," Novasel told *Lake Tahoe News*. "This is really a public safety issue. If they are going to be our home station, that has to change."

The FCC requires Charter carry the in-market NBC affiliate, which would be the Reno station. Still, it is solely Charter's decision – not the feds', not the station's – to remove KCRA from the local offerings.

While KCRA has no say in the matter, no one from the station returned *Lake Tahoe News'* call. The station must care a little about Tahoe, it has a skycam on the South Shore.

People still have the option of tuning into the 10pm airing of KTVU to get Bay Area news, and thus California news, through this Fox affiliate.

On the North Shore it's different. Charter subscribers had KTVN Reno removed. Placer County gets Sacramento stations KOVR

and KCRA on Spectrum as well KRNV out of Reno.