

# Public transit may ease Hwy. 89 north congestion

Placer County Board of Supervisors this week provided preliminary approval for public transit in Olympic Valley and Alpine Meadows.

The approval moves forward a petition from lodging operators and ski resorts to form a tourist-based improvement district in Olympic Valley and Alpine Meadows. If approved, it would add a 1 percent assessment on gross lodging revenue within the new district and a 1 percent assessment on Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows single-day lift tickets to implement a micro mass transit system.

The system would be privately operated and offer an on-demand shuttle service within and between Olympic Valley and Alpine Meadows, transporting riders to requested destinations not served by existing transit routes while offering connections to the regional TART transit system.

Officials said two short-term pilot programs operated between Christmas and New Year's and during the World Cup Ski Races in 2017 proved successful.

Congestion on Highway 89 between the Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows ski resorts is at gridlock.

"Data shows that despite the county's increased investment into the TART Systems Plan, the North Lake Tahoe region still lags mountain resort competitors in transit frequency, hours of operation and passengers served," said Jennifer Merchant, Placer County's deputy county executive officer for Lake Tahoe.

It's expected that \$715,000 could be collected annually. This includes revenue generated by a proposed 1 percent assessment

on overnight accommodation rental revenue for stays of less than 30 days from participating lodges in Olympic Valley and a contribution from Squaw Valley Ski Holdings.

A public meeting in North Lake Tahoe is scheduled for July 24, with a public hearing and adoption of a resolution of formation planned for Aug. 28. If approved, the district could begin assessment collections on Oct. 1.