

'Get your vacation on' is message to lure tourists

By Austin Fay

When Karen Frates, assistant general manager of Tahoe Seasons Resort, was asked why she was at the Tahoe Tourism Town Forum, she replied jokingly, "I'm here for encouragement."

She insinuated the 160-suite resort near Stateline is struggling, as is everyone in this recession.

The Tahoe Tourism Town Forum provided about 150 business owners primarily from the South Shore, students from Lake Tahoe Community College, and marketing and public relations professionals, a chance to collaborate with the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, and to see the new marketing campaigns.



LTSS chamber
leader B
Gorman speaks
at Thursday's
tourism
conference.

Photo/Austin
Fay

"Get your vacation on" is the slogan for the South Shore campaign that begins in May. Fingers are crossed it will bring people to the area.

Gordon Horsley, the Nevada sales manager at Amador Stage Lines, remarked on the presence of social media at Thursday's two-hour forum at LTCC.

"I think it's great that we are getting that word out to local citizens about what Tahoe has to offer," Horsley said.

A new twist on Tahoe's image

This year's South Tahoe television and webspots keep the emphasis on gaming elements, but lend themselves a little more toward the active lifestyle Tahoe supports, like mountain biking, hiking, cycling, skiing and water sports.

Fishing definitely has a large draw to the area, but seemed to be left out of the LTVA marketing campaign.

Victor Babbitt, from Tahoe Fly Fishing Outfitters, said, "I didn't see one comment or view of fishing (on the advertisements). Correct me if I'm wrong, fishing is the nation's No. 1 outdoor recreational activity, especially for families."

The \$3 per night lodging tax collected in South Lake Tahoe through the Tourism Improvement District is a major source for LTVA's advertising campaign.

This will be the first ad campaign by Duncan/Channon of San Francisco for the South Shore. They were brought in a year ago to replace Mering and Associates, the Sacramento firm that created the Blue World campaign.

Geotourism

Collaboration with National Geographic brought Bob Kingman from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and Nicole DeJonghe from the Sierra Business Council to the Tahoe Tourism Forum to showcase a geotourism. The idea of geotourism is to sustain or enhance the geographical character of a place – its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the wellbeing

of its residents.

Involvement on the local level is crucial to the website's content. The website involves people living in the communities and parks. Visitors to the website can nominate areas, historic destinations, park – everything from vineyards to artists to drive tourism to other less well-known parts of the state.

Nominations may be made at here, but will be subject to the decisions of a "Geo-council" designed to create the most original and authentic experience to tourists of the Tahoe and the Sierra Nevada Range.

Lake Tahoe Restaurant Week

Lake Tahoe Community College business student and chef Donnie Thompson was enthusiastic about the plan to make Tahoe a culinary destination for a week.

"We used to do it down in San Diego where I went to culinary school and it's phenomenal," he said. The idea is serving lunches and dinner at \$20, \$30 and \$40 per person (menu and price up to restaurant), while attracting people to the culinary scene in Tahoe. The event is planned for Sept. 5-12 – Labor Day Week.

Restaurant owners will update menus and prices in the coming months here.

Other Events Planned in Tahoe:

More than 1,000 women are expected to show up for Iron Girl, the sister event to the Iron Man, it is planned for Sept. 19.

Hot August Nights, a three-day event of classic cars, automotive exhibits and vendors, has branched out into Lake Tahoe. The Reno-based Hot August Nights attracts more than 800,000 people.