Marriott increasing number of rooms in South Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Marriott Timber Lodge will break ground on its fourth and final phase this week.

When the property opened in 2002 it was to have three phases totaling 264 units. Those three phases have been completed.

The second-floor sales office of the South Lake Tahoe complex in the Heavenly Village will be transformed into 14 villas. The sales staff was disbanded 1.5 years ago, which allows for the additional units. Marriott had the tourist accommodation units, so no haggling for them had to be done.

Each of the units being built will be two bedrooms. Sales will not begin until they are finished in January. Pricing has not been disclosed.

SMC Contracting, the company doing the work in Lake Tahoe Unified School District and who built the Tamarack Lodge at Heavenly, will be the lead on the project.

With Marriott Vacation Club going from selling traditional time-share weeks to a points program last year, there is demand for more inventory, according to Marriott officials.

The neighboring Marriott Grand Residence is already fully built out. The Heavenly gondola separates the properties.

Marriott Grand Residence Club, according to minutes from the January meeting, finished 2010 with occupancy of 52 percent.

This was higher than anticipated. Forecasts were for a 49 percent rate.

Greg Campbell, general manager of the Grand Residence, at a meeting last week said occupancy is up from prior years, but not reaching the level of 2006-07 – the pre-recession years.

When it comes to sales, he said, “There is activity in the fractional sector.” This is because the financial market is loosening its hold on money and not just the cash customer can be looking to buy.

Although his board, with the exception of Robert Perez, agreed to put in a $58,800 fire pit, Campbell told *Lake Tahoe News* he isn’t sure it will be built this summer.