

Block owner arrested in Vegas; Tahoe wants him extradited

By Kathryn Reed

Eneliko "Sean" Smith, former owner of the boarded up Block Hotel in South Lake Tahoe, was arrested June 2 in Las Vegas on driving under the influence charges.

Smith, 40, was being held without bail at Clark County Detention Facility. He is also being held on a warrant out of El Dorado County for a probation violation. South Lake Tahoe officials plan to extradite Smith back to El Dorado County to face charges.



Eneliko
"Sean" Smith

Even though it has been well documented Smith was living in Las Vegas and attempting to start an airline there, local officials never had him picked up. And it was in Las Vegas where Smith was arrested in September 2008 on the initial charges out of South Lake Tahoe.

He owes the city more than \$100,000 in unpaid taxes.

In March 2008 the South Lake Tahoe Police Department began an investigation into Smith's failure to pay the transient occupancy tax for the hotel on Cedar Avenue. During the

investigation, which also involved other city staff, Smith's Cedar Lodge was also found to be in arrears in paying the hotel tax.

A lien was eventually placed on the properties and Smith was charged with felony embezzlement of public funds.

Both properties were closed by the city in 2008.

Smith pleaded guilty to one count of grand theft and was placed on probation with a condition to reimburse the city the money it was owed. Smith violated probation by failing to keep his probation officer up to date as to where he lived and he never paid a dime. Thus the reasons for the current warrant.

The Block opened in the mid-1990s as a hotel designed for snowboarders. Pro snowboarder Marc Franc Montoya opened it with his brother-in-law Smith.



The Block in
South Lake
Tahoe on June
3, 2011.
Photo/LTN

"All of our rooms include items like cordless phones, CD players, PS2/XBOX, board up racks and free Wi-Fi. Other amenities include free beer, energy drinks, gift bags, popcorn, Internet cafe, and rooftop hot tub," the promotions said.

The Block was happening in its brief heyday. The parking lot

was full. The parties were legendary among the younger snowboarding crowd. A reality TV show on G4 was launched in 2007.

Now the hotel is boarded up, with a chain link fence around the perimeter and graffiti in some locations. It sits behind the bankrupt would-have, could-have been convention center property.