Then and now: Urban environment changes



Photo No. 1: Highway 50 circa 1967. Photo/Don Lane



Photo No. 2: Highway 50 in 2014. Photo/Bill Kingman

Ogden Nash wrote this parody of Alfred Joyce Kilmer's 1914 classic poem "Trees":

I think that I shall never see

A billboard lovely as a tree.

Indeed, unless the billboards fall,

I'll never see a tree at all.

South Lake Tahoe had many billboards until they were banned in the last half of the 1960s, as was all off-premise signage with few exceptions.

Photo No. 1, circa 1967, shows the landmark Outdoorsman (now Grocery Outlet) with a Harvey's billboard just beyond it.



Photo No. 3: Highway 50 approaching Al Tahoe Boulevard in 1967. Photo/Don Lane



Photo No. 4: Highway 50 approaching Al Tahoe Boulevard in 2014. Photo/Bill Kingman

Across the street, a large vacant lot (now Motel 6 and a restaurant, photo No. 2) had billboards for Sahara-Tahoe (now Horizon) and Harrah's Lake Tahoe. Notice the old telephone poles and overhead wires before the new city mandated underground replacement.

Photo No. 3 shows another Harrah's billboard on Highway 50 approaching Al Tahoe Boulevard; 1967 at the earliest. That same meadow also contained a short-lived narrow-gauge railroad.

Behind the billboard at the Al Tahoe Boulevard intersection (no stoplight then) on the corner was the wood-frame Al Tahoe Post Office where Denny's now stands. That post office building was moved and now serves as the Tahoe Art League Gallery on Highway 50 next door to the Lake Tahoe Historical Society Museum, across from the Sno-Flake Drive-In.

The rest of that Al Tahoe Boulevard corner was a large empty lot which became the Tahoe Center (although then we called it the Lucky-Payless Center for its two largest, best-known businesses) starting in 1970.

— Bill Kingman