

10 people evacuated from burning hotel



A fire Dec. 8 at the Tahoe Pines Lodge in South Lake Tahoe displaced 10 people.
Photo/Jonathan Moore

By Kathryn Reed

A South Lake Tahoe hotel fire Monday night displaced 10 people.

The 10:10pm blaze at Tahoe Pines Lodge started in a utility closet that contained a hot water heater and belongings from former guests, according to Fire Chief Jeff Meston.

“The fire investigators are going through that,” Meston said. An exact cause has not been determined.

This is a residential hotel, with many people living only on Social Security or disability checks.

“I believe most of these are an underserved population who live there, so it’s pretty devastating for those folks because they don’t have much in the first place,” Meston told *Lake Tahoe News*.

With the temperature dipping into the 20s, a Tahoe

Transportation District bus was brought in as a means to keep people warm. Red Cross arranged for them to have a three-night stay at Howard Johnson, which should protect them from the storm that is moving into the basin. Many of the occupants also had dogs and cats that needed shelter.

The fire started on the first floor, moved to the second and got into the attic space. The ladder truck was deployed to the fire. Lake Valley and Tahoe Douglas also assisted with knocking down the fire.

"The fire was in concealed spaces so it was difficult. We had to cut a hole in the roof," Meston said.

Three hotel units were damaged, with an entire wing of the Modesto Avenue hotel off limits. Part of the hotel remains open.