

Runnels removes vehicles on deadline day

The cars are gone from Runnels Automotive per a judge's order that was issued last month.

Just before 10am on Sept. 8 South Lake Tahoe code enforcement and police, along with a couple tow trucks converged in the TJ Maxx parking lot across the street. By noon all of the old vehicles – most of which didn't run – were removed from the property at the Y.



John Runnels

On Aug. 6 after a four-hour hearing, El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Daniel Proud determined the vehicles were abandoned, which violates city ordinances.

Runnels was issued a dealers' license in 1979 by the DMV, the same year the city's Planning Commission approved a special use permit allowing him to store unregistered vehicles at the Emerald Bay Road business. Two of the conditions of the city permit were that Runnels had to maintain valid certification from the state to sell and repair vehicles. They both expired. That gave the city the power to revoke the special use permit.

"Although code enforcement was there to ensure those vehicles were removed, also a towing company offered to assist John and they removed the last of few vehicles John had left to remove," City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*. "The

outcome resulted in the vehicles removed, John being able to retain all those vehicles, although they are stored in other locations, and compliance with the judge's order."

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*