

Fire damage may be too great to save Queen



Flames shoot up from the Tahoe Queen on Aug. 16. Photo/LTN

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By Kathryn Reed

ZEPHYR COVE – The Tahoe Queen on Tuesday morning sustained substantial damage when a fire ripped through the paddle-wheeler.

“It is probably not salvageable, but the owners and insurance have to decide,” Tahoe Douglas Fire Marshal Eric Guevin told *Lake Tahoe News*. “It will be a very close call either way.”

Aramark, which owns the tourist boat, is self-insured.

Earlier on Aug. 16, Karen Cutler with Aramark public relations in Arizona told *Lake Tahoe News*, “We are still determining the damage so we cannot address future plans at this time.”

Aramark officials at the resort shut a door on *Lake Tahoe News*.

Two people were injured Aug. 16, but both refused to be transported to a hospital. One person sustained a sprained back and the other smoke inhalation.

Painters and welders were working on the renovation when the fire broke out after 8am.



Potentially toxic smoke spews from the Tahoe Queen. Photo/Jaymi Hardy

“When we arrived there was a large body of fire in the Tahoe Queen. It spread to the outside of the vessel,” Guevin said.

Booms were placed in the water at Zephyr Cove Marina to catch any chemicals if they spilled from the boat as well as the foam from the firefighting efforts. A sheen of what looked like oil was floating on the surface of Lake Tahoe in the morning.

The front of the boat clearly has fire damage. Flames could be seen from Highway 50, smoke from much farther away.

Normally the Tahoe Queen is docked at Ski Run Marina, but it has been moored at the Nevada marina because the lake is too low at the California site for it to reach the dock. The other reason the Queen has been at Zephyr Cove is that it is undergoing another remodel.



Firefighters on land and water work to suppress the flames on the Tahoe Queen. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The Dixie, the other paddle-wheeler operated by Aramark, had to cancel its cruises on Tuesday.

"We are awaiting additional information to determine when service can resume," Cutler said.

Aramark operates the resort on U.S. Forest Service land.

The Forest Service also wasn't available for comment, though their crews helped with the fire and a management team had arrived.



The Tahoe Queen is engulfed in flames the morning of Aug. 16.
Photo/Joe Besson

Where the fire started is not known and the cause is under investigation.

The U.S. Coast Guard will lead the investigation. A team from the Bay Area has arrived and will work with Tahoe Douglas fire officials more in the morning.