More Tahoe visitors = more unwanted trash



The annual dump day is sponsored by Clean Tahoe and South Tahoe Refuse as a way to give people a cheap option to get rid of junk. Photo/Provided

By Kathryn Reed

One big negative to more visitors in the area is that they leave behind garbage for Clean Tahoe crews to pick up.

“We have definitely noticed a correlation between the busiest times of year and higher amounts of litter collected,” Catherine Cecchi, who heads up the nonprofit, told *Lake Tahoe News.*

Clean Tahoe works on the California side of the South Shore

cleaning up litter. Sometimes it’s junk people leave on the curb, some of it is dumped illegally, other times critters have turned over cans or gotten into dumpsters.

The organization is necessary because people are not being responsible for their own garbage. Without Clean Tahoe, Tahoe would not be clean.

For the fiscal year that just needed, Clean Tahoe picked up 560 cubic yards of litter. The previous year 490 cubic yards were collected. This compares to 608 cubic yards in 2013-14 and 583.5 in 2012-13.

“I was honestly a little bit surprised at seeing an increase in illegal dump incidents, even though it wasn’t a huge jump – 191 in 2015-16 compared to 156 in 2014-15,” Cecchi said. “I’m not sure why that would have happened, but it is helpful for us to know so that we can consider possibly doing some outreach and education on the issue. We’d like to let people know that it is a punishable offense and also that Clean Tahoe has a program where we can haul items to the transfer station for residents.”

Animal-in-Trash Cleanups 2015-16			
	El Dorado County	City of SLT	Monthly Totals
October	2	61	63
November	7	33	40
December	3	35	38
January	1	35	36
February	0	21	21
March	2	46	48
April	5	34	39
May	11	21	32
June	4	16	20
July	13	15	28
August	7	39	46
September	4	21	25
Total	**59**	**377**	**436**

Source: *Clean Tahoe*

People still have to pay the dump fee, and Clean Tahoe adds a service fee. Seniors and disable residents can get a break on those fees.

Miscellaneous furniture, mattresses, and TVs continue to be the top three items that are abandoned.

A bright spot in the annual report is that the number of times crews responded to trash involving an animal decreased. In the city, the numbers dropped by 20 percent. There were 377 incidents in South Lake Tahoe and 59 in El Dorado County.

“It’s still higher than we’d like, but I think it’s decreasing in part because the city has been making it more of a priority for their Code Enforcement Division and because of the

county’s ordinance requiring a bear bin after repeat offenses,” Cecchi said.

Two offenses in two years triggers the bear box mandate in the county.

Cecchi is hoping when the **bear box loan program** is implemented that the animal-trash incidents will become even less of a problem.