

South Shore braces for 3 days of partying



The view from the main SnowGlobe stage shows the VIP (cargo container) area to the right and a bar to the left that has thick plastic as windows to allow concert-goers to see what is going on outside. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

SnowGlobe might be the safest place to be for the next three nights – assuming you aren't a criminal.

Controlled environments where there is fencing to contain people are safer than free-for-all venues like what is found in the Stateline casino corridor on New Year's Eve. Still, law enforcement has strategies in place to make both areas safe.

"My biggest concern is terrorism," South Lake Tahoe Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*. He pointed to recent events in Europe as concerns and reasons to be on high alert.

It takes a concerted effort of all the local public safety agencies as well as hired security personnel to ensure locals and visitors are safe during these three days of festivities.

“I think the unified command between California and Nevada is very unusual,” South Lake Tahoe Fire Chief Jeff Meston told *Lake Tahoe News*. He said this degree of cooperation is unheard of anywhere else in the United State.



Crews on Dec. 28 set up the main stage of SnowGlobe.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

It's necessary for the two states to work together because the proximity of a potential threat from revelry at Stateline on Jan. 31 and during the next three nights at SnowGlobe would have reverberations into the other state if there were a large-scale incident. And while each state does things a little differently when it comes to prevention and response, the jurisdictions have an understanding of how things would

work in the event of an emergency.

For decades the South Shore has come together to ensure Stateline is safe. That used to be where the big party was until SnowGlobe came into being five years ago. Still, this is expected to be a unique year for the casino corridor.

“This year will be final test for us; it will be a watershed for us,” Douglas County Undersheriff Paul Howell told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Are we truly seeing a decline in that uncontrollable street party? It is a Saturday night, we have snow and it’s a three-day weekend.”

The past few years have been uneventful on New Years’ Eve at Stateline; to the point last year people barely came into the street.

“Even if a large crowd shows up, we can control everything,” Howell said.

Emergency personnel are positioned at various locations that night – beyond their normal headquarters. This will ensure a faster response if need be. The agencies have representatives at a command post so everyone knows what is going on and no one is acting in a silo.



Officers stand guard before Highway 50 is reopened shortly after New Year's 2016. Photo/LTN file

The cooperation includes Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District scouring the SnowGlobe venue every night for explosive devises.

Tonight begins the first of three nights for the outdoor music festival on the new play fields owned by South Lake Tahoe off Al Tahoe Boulevard. The venue is new. No longer is the festival on the field used by the Lake Tahoe Community College soccer team.

On Wednesday crews were still busy putting all the pieces together. The setup is different. The promoter actually worked with the city this year to get the necessary permits to turn cargo containers into the VIP area. **Last year it was a bust** because the fire and building departments put the hammer down and didn't allow the structure to be built.

"After the big fire in Oakland, this showed why building codes

matter, especially in temporary spaces,” City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*. “They didn’t have a certified engineer (last year) who signed off on those plans.”

Chad Donnelly, who has been the promoter of the festival these six years, no longer speaks to *Lake Tahoe News*.