

Placer County, NLTRA responsibilities change

By Sage Sauerbrey, Moonshine Ink

It's been just less than one year since Placer County stunned the North Lake Tahoe Resort Association with the announcement that it was cutting the organization's duties in half, and in turn drastically reducing its funding. In truth, it was the culmination of more than a decade of cutbacks to the resort association's contract with the county, and long simmering tensions boiled over.

The latest cutbacks were staunchly opposed at first, but in the latest contract and the upcoming fiscal year, the changes are sticking. The dust has settled, and while the relationship between the resort association and the county appears by all means to be amicable, there is no doubt the county has firmly established control.

Of the association's original three departments – marketing, transportation, and capital projects – the latter two have been eliminated and the responsibilities associated with them divvied up, leaving NLTRA primarily as a marketing organization, now dubbed “tourism development.”

The entities that will fill the gap in the resort association's former duties will have a primarily advisory role in the county's allocation of its rapidly growing fund of lodging tax collections. For the county, the changes signal success in restructuring an organization it believed was incapable of handling its duties. For many locally, the newest hierarchy represents a shift of tourism-related tax funds away from the community and an unnecessary and expensive divide-and-conquer strategy to oversight.

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