

Bijou Bash better than before

“It accomplished exactly what we were trying to do.”

Those are the words of Gary Moore, South Lake Tahoe Parks and Recreation director, in regards to Saturday’s Bijou Bash.

What had been an annual event that died out a few years ago was resurrected this year as an event whose focus was all about locals.

Despite a downpour late in the afternoon, all who attended seemed to be enjoying themselves.

Kids scampered up, in, on and around the massive pieces equipment brought out by the city’s Public Works Department. Daniel Hoepfner, 6, was most enthralled by the new street sweeper that has two steering wheels. His aunt had a hard time getting him to climb out of the big blue contraption.

Firefighters were giving out plastic hats – which Riley Sullivan, 5, and Dakota Thomas, 6, thought were styling.

Lots of kids were checking out the fire engines and police cars.

Marcia Sarosik (aka Miss Marcia) came prepared with a slew of dancers who enthralled the crowd.

Throughout the all-day fun fest were floor hockey demonstrations, the Tahoe Derby Dames bumping into each other, skater dudes doing tricks, dogs running around an agility course, and kids bouncing up and down.

Dog lovers brought their four-legged friends.

With the throngs of people streaming in via bike and being shuttled over from Lake Tahoe Community College, it proves events are what this town needs. Friends were catching up with

each other, families were having fun at a free event.

Tahoe roads less friendly to criminals post-Dugard



Lt. Les Lovell
-- changes
were made
after Jaycee
Lee Dugard was
kidnapped.
Photo/Lisa J.
Tolda

By Kathryn Reed

Code 50 – it was not in the vocabulary of law enforcement until after Jaycee Lee Dugard was kidnapped.

Her abduction in June 1991 soon led to the establishment of a collaborative policy that allows officers throughout the South Shore to work together to locate a suspect's vehicle.

"We can cordon off the South Shore. We do that by strategically placing patrol cars at undisclosed locations," explained Lt. Les Lovell of the El Dorado County Sheriff's

Department.

It's possible Highway 50 could be completely shutdown, with no access out of the basin. Roadblocks and searches are dependent on the nature of the crime.

No one will ever know if Code 50 had been in place June 10, 1991, if the vehicle containing then 11-year-old Dugard would have been stopped.

"In 1991, we put people out as strategically as we could with the resources we had that day. We couldn't cover everything," Lovell said.

Those outside of law enforcement said the reaction time was slow – that it took a couple hours to start searching for vehicles. (It takes three hours to get from South Tahoe to Antioch, where the suspects took Dugard.)

Joining El Dorado County in the partnership are California and Nevada highway patrols, South Lake Tahoe Police Department, and Douglas County Sheriff's Office.

Technology has changed in the last 18 years, too. This helps the perpetrators as well as law enforcement.

Amber Alerts now exist. Signs on highways throughout the basin can and have posted vehicle license plate numbers and descriptions of vehicles for other motorists to look out for.

Officers have computers and cell phones with which to communicate with each other.

GPS, MapQuest and the like are tools that can aid suspects. Those devices can help them avoid major thoroughfares.

That is one reason Lovell says officers won't be stationed just on the obvious roads.

Lovell said Code 50 has been used several times in the last 18

years. A memorable, though tragic time, was for 9-year-old Krystal Steadman in March 2000. Her body was eventually found dumped on Spooner Summit.

LTVA approves \$2.12 million budget

By Kathryn Reed

With Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority changing its fiscal year start from Oct. 1 to July 1, the bottom line is a bit skewed for the short year – October 2009-June 2010.

Jerry Bindel, who is on the South Shore tourism board, said revenues are down about 25 percent. The primary funding source for the agency is the Tourism Improvement District, which assesses a fee on South Lake Tahoe properties; and the Tahoe-Douglas Visitors Authority, through a hotel tax in Douglas County.

The \$2.12 million budget for the 10-month period was approved Sept. 10.

Cuts include reduced hours at the visitors' centers and less staffing. The agency does not intend to help sponsor as many events as it would like.

It is bringing back opening days in June. The roads will not be closed like in 2008 when it was a traffic nightmare.

The sports commission has \$5,000 to spend.

To generate a sense of community some board members want to promote lights being strung along businesses during the

holidays so the South Shore looks festive.

Some of the discussion that afternoon centered on the agency's website.

"It's in dire need of an upgrade," Bindel said after the meeting. "Some of us are pushing to make it a marketing piece and an advertising piece. We need to get them information, but we need to sell the story. We need great pictures that you can almost touch and feel that say what the community is about."

LTVA has been dragging its feet in joining the social network age. Facebook, Twitter and the like are not part of the agency's marketing component. More talk to do so was brought up last week. It was noted that it's cheaper to get the word out via the Internet than traditional media outlets.

The other thing with using the Internet is that it's a measurable resource in that the number of people who seek specific information can be tracked. This is not the case for radio, television and print media. It is not known how many people heard a particular ad, saw it or read it.

The winter ad campaign is being delayed because people are booking their travel later and later. This is why Tahoe was not prominent in the ski-snowboard magazines this month.

"Get Your Vacation On" will be the summer 2010 campaign that is being developed by Duncan/Channon, the ad firm hired earlier this year to replace the company that developed the failed Blue World campaign.

More detailed concepts should be presented at LTVA's October meeting.



Unity at the Lake fundraiser

Unity at the Lake Fundraiser at Harvey's Convention Center, Stateline. Dinner, entertainment and silent auction. Ten percent of proceeds go to the Lake Tahoe Women's Center, \$33 for adults, \$20 for ages 5-12, 4 and younger free. (530) 544.2266, (530) 577.7135, www.unityatthelake.org

Neil Sedaka, Harrah's

Neil Sedaka at Harrah's Lake Tahoe. www.southshoreroom.com

Tahoe City Oktoberfest

Tahoe City hosts its annual Oktoberfest and Harvest Festival, with Scarecrows on Parade, pumpkin patch and family carnival.

Kokanee Trail Runs

20th annual Kokanee Trail Runs in South Lake Tahoe – half marathon, 10K, 5K, sponsored by Tahoe Mountain Milers and Sagebrush Stompers. (530) 577.0700, www.tahoemtmilers.org, www.sagebrushstompers.org

Donner Party hike

Guided hike of Emigrant Trails on Donner Summer, learn the fate of the Donner Party as part of the Annual Donner Party Hike. Choose from a variety of interpretive hikes that accommodate a range of athletic abilities and interest. www.GoTahoeNorth.com

Toy run

Lake Tahoe Toy Run to benefit Christmas Cheer starting at McPac's Pub, South Lake Tahoe. (530) 541.4332

Maritime Museum open house

Tahoe Maritime Museum, Truckee Annex Open House, 10434 River Park Place, Truckee.