



PLACER COUNTY  
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**EDWARD N. BONNER**  
SHERIFF-CORONER-MARSHAL

**DEVON BELL**  
UNDERSHERIFF

**To:** The Honorable Board of Supervisors  
**From:** Edward N. Bonner, Sheriff-Coroner-Marshall  
**Date:** January 20, 2015  
**Subject:** Sheriff's Tahoe Marine Patrol Program

**Action Requested**

1. Receive an update on the Sheriff's Tahoe Marine Patrol Program.
2. Provide direction to return to your Board with potential options and recommendations for replacement of the existing Tahoe patrol boat.

**Background**

Since first being established in 1957, the California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways has developed two primary goals to meet their major objective of protecting the public's right to safe and enjoyable boating on the waterways of California:

- To provide for adequate boating law enforcement through local agencies
- To ensure that enforcement of California boating laws is uniform throughout the State

The Placer County Sheriff's Office has operated a Marine Patrol Program on Lake Tahoe since 1955. Currently, a 28 foot patrol boat provides a variety of law enforcement services within Placer County's jurisdiction on the lake, which includes approximately 78 square miles (41%) of the lake's 191 surface area miles, and approximately 21 miles (30%) of the lake's 71 miles of shoreline featuring beaches, restaurants, private residences, and water related businesses.

The patrol boat's primary functions on the lake include enforcement of boating laws, search and rescue operations, medical aid responses, boating collision investigations, and support of patrol functions during high volume tourism periods. Additionally, the boat provides support services for numerous year-round organized events on the lake, which attract thousands of visitors from around the world. During the summer months, the boat is staffed full time with two Deputy Sheriffs, and patrols the lake daily. Regular patrols are suspended during the winter months, although the boat remains in the water for emergency service calls.

The State Department of Boating and Waterways estimates the useful service life of a patrol boat to be 15 years. The current patrol boat has been in operation since 1987, a period of 27 years, and is the oldest operating patrol boat in the State of California. Over the past several

years, the structural instability and water tight integrity of the boat have degraded to the extent that water intrusion into the hull has resulted in the boat now having a permanent list to the starboard (right) side. Unfortunately, as lake related tourism and organized events have grown and evolved over time, the design and condition of the existing patrol boat have made it increasingly difficult to meet the mission and responsibilities of the Lake Tahoe Marine Patrol Program.

**Fiscal Impact**

There is no direct fiscal impact with this item. Based on Board direction, the Sheriff's Office will address potential options and recommendations for replacement of the existing patrol boat at a future Board Meeting.