



Date: August 13, 2024

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

Author and title: Jen Callaway, Town Manager

Title: **Fiscal Year 2024/25 Dark Skies Awareness Campaign**

Jen Callaway, Town Manager

Recommended Action: The Town Council authorize the Town Manager to execute a contract with Nevada County Arts Council, DBA Truckee Cultural District, for an amount not to exceed \$80,000, for the Truckee Cultural District to continue and manage the Dark Skies Awareness Campaign for Fiscal Year 2024/25.

Discussion:

In Fall 2023 the Town partnered with East River PR, Court Leve Productions and Tahoe Adventure Company to launch a fall Night Sky Awareness Campaign entitled "Don't Be Afraid of the Dark." 16 people participated in our sponsored full moon hikes and over 150 magnets and 200 stickers (both in English and Spanish) were distributed to community partners to help raise awareness of the benefits of the night sky. This is in alignment with the Truckee 2040 General Plan Community Character Element Goal CC-2: Night Sky.

In early 2024, the Town entered the second phase of the awareness campaign, partnering with East River PR, the Truckee Cultural District, the Public Art Commission, Nevada City, Grass Valley and Nevada County, to launch the "Don't Be Afraid of the Dark" Night Sky Photo competition. This competition was very successful with 88-night sky photos entered into the competition. Troy Corliss and Kellie Cutler from the Town's Public Art Commission selected the finalists, and the community voted on the top entries in each category. The photos are currently on display at the Steven Randall Community Center through Labor Day weekend, with an opening reception to announce the winning photos held on July 26, 2024. Over 50 people attended the reception and celebrated Truckee's Dark skies. Nevada County, Grass Valley and Nevada City also held a photo competition, administered by Nevada County Arts Council, and hosted their photo exhibit at the Rood Center in Nevada City on July 31, 2024. The celebration of night skies and awareness campaign has been designed to be interactive and engaging for all members of our community, raising awareness of the benefits of the night sky.

Coupled with the Spring 2024 Phase II launch, the Town partnered with Sierra Business Council, through the Climate Transformation Alliance, to launch the Dark Sky Outdoor Lighting Rebate Program: [Town of Truckee Dark Sky Outdoor Lighting Rebate Program \(climatealliance.org\)](https://www.climatealliance.org/town-of-truckee-dark-sky-outdoor-lighting-rebate-program). The rebate program launched in April 2024 and to date has funded rebates for 60 light fixture replacements and received great feedback regarding the ease of the program and benefits. Also, the program has

CC-2.1

Night Sky Preservation

Preserve views of the night sky as an important natural and scenic resource in Truckee.



Views of the night sky at Donner Lake.

Source: Grant Katy.

gained national attention with communities in Texas and Minnesota reaching out to express how impressed they are with the program and interest in launching their own program.

Both the Phase I and Phase II Dark Skies Awareness efforts have been well received, positive and gained significant interest and media attention, helping to spread awareness within Truckee, but also within the county and region. As such, during the FY 2024/25 budget workshops, Council directed staff to continue the campaign into FY 2024/25. With limited staff capacity, staff contacted Truckee Cultural District to solicit proposals for carrying forward the awareness campaign into a second year. Truckee Cultural District’s proposal is provided as Attachment 1 and includes the following:

- Dark Skies Poetry events
- Night sky paintings and poetry inspired public art exhibits, including the second annual Dark Skies Photo Contest awards and reception
- Dance performances and special theatre events during International Dark Skies Week
- Stargazing events, night hikes and Earth Day gallery exhibits
- Continued marketing for the Lighting Rebate Program, funded through December 2024

Truckee Cultural District would support the campaign and ensure all materials are available in English and Spanish.

As proposed, the total cost for this year-long, interactive engagement and awareness campaign is \$80,000. It should be noted that the Truckee 2040 General Plan, Community Character Element Goal CC-5: Public Art and Policy CC-5.5 specifically speaks to continuing to support the Truckee Cultural District. Partnership with Truckee Cultural District to continue to the night sky awareness campaign and promotion of the Lighting Rebate program is in alignment with Truckee 2040 General Plan policies and actions, as well as the Town Council’s strategic priorities and workplan action items, supporting community events that foster community cohesion

CC-5.5
Cultural District
Continue to support the Truckee Cultural District partnership in highlighting public art and promotion of Truckee and cultural assets.

Priority:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enhanced Communication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate and Greenhouse Gas Reduction	<input type="checkbox"/> Housing
<input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure Investment	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency and Wildfire Preparedness	<input type="checkbox"/> Core Service

Fiscal Impact: \$80,000 funded in Capital Improvement Project 2414 Dark Skies.

Public Communication: Publication of this staff report and Budget Workshop Discussions in April and May 2024.

Attachments:

1. Truckee Cultural District Dark Skies Awareness Campaign Extension Proposal