

Well near old county dump pumped sparingly

WELL, from Page 1a

landowner to the north of the old dump had a corn crop and used his irrigation well, there was a drop in the tests from the monitoring wells.

However, this year the landowner had a wheat crop in that field, Simon said, and did not pump his irrigation well except in the early spring to get the wheat up.

Hill said the city will work with the county to be sure the contamination does not become a real problem.

McMullen told the county commissioners that Dawit Tecleh-aimanot, with the landfill/dry cleaning unit of the health department, is concerned the contamination may be moving toward the well. He said the state is saying the contamination plume represents an unacceptable threat to the city water supply, and the county may need to construct a system to treat and remove the contamination.

He said other options would include treatment of the ground wa-

ter, or having the city stop using the well.

"There is nothing you can do as an interim measure," McMullen said, "except to stop the use of the well totally."

McMullen said the county has 13 monitoring wells ringed around the old dump, reaching north into the field across the county road and south to the edge of the transfer station.

About twelve years ago, the original monitoring well showed

trichloroethylene, a chemical used in dry cleaning.

In a letter to Sherman County in May 2002, Michael McNulty, an environmental geologist in the landfill section of the state health department, asked the county to present a plan for protecting the water well.

At that time, City Manager Ron Pickman said. "We test water once a month and have had no bad reports so far, but you don't know what the underground stuff is going to do.

"By reducing the amount we pump, we hope it slows down the movement. The dry weather doesn't help any."

Sherman County Clerk Janet Rumpel researched the history of the landfill, and commissioner minutes showed that in May 1975, Royal Reid and Ken Halbleib, representing the City of Goodland, asked the county to take on the expense of the landfill.

The county took over the landfill in 1975 and established the first

county solid waste fee at \$12 per year.

County Engineer Ira Hardin told the county commissioners in early 1993 that water contamination was showing in one well.

In August 1997, the state told the county it would have to install a ground water monitoring system by Oct. 9. The existing wells were tested in September, and when a second well showed contamination, the county was forced to close the landfill on Oct. 9.

City asked county to take over running dump in 1975

HISTORY, from Page 1a

expansion of the landfill in November 1984.

New Environmental Protection Agency rules dealing with the operation of the landfill were proposed in early 1993, and County Engineer Ira Hardin told the commissioners the state had gotten an extension until Oct. 1993 to have its regulations in place.

Rumpel said the minutes of the meeting said, "Hardin told the board in February they were faced with several major problems. The present landfill could apply for an exemption, provided they complied with the airport restriction (no bird problem); have rainfall less than 25

inches per year; have demonstrated there is no ground water contamination; and that there is no other practical alternative, such as an approved regional landfill within 150 miles."

Hardin felt the county could meet the airport requirement since there was no bird problem, and could meet the rainfall requirement. However, the biggest problem was going to be the ground water contamination because there was some showing in one well.

The state notified the county that small landfills would have to close in Oct. 1993, but that was extended to Oct. 1995. In June 1993, the county raised the solid waste fee to \$100 in anticipation of the extra

costs expected with the new regulations.

In October 1993, Hardin completed an application for an exemption to the state Department of Health and Environment. On Jan. 21, 1994, the commissioners agreed to close the landfill as of April 9, and discussed building the present transfer station near the site.

In February 1994, the state denied the exemption, but said the decision could be appealed. The county decided to appeal because it was felt the contamination might be coming from a source other than the landfill.

In April of that year, the county approved a bid of \$23,500 for design of a transfer station. At the

same time, Hardin was working with the state on the water contamination issue. The solid waste fee was kept at \$100 a home.

In February 1995, the commissioners accepted a bid from Rhoads Construction for \$228,000 to build the transfer station. The county considered delaying the work in June, but since the building had been ordered, they proceeded with the construction.

The county was granted a small landfill exemption, and was allowed to continue to use the landfill as long as there was no further ground water contamination. The noxious weed department used the transfer station building until 1997.

With the exemption, the commis-

sioners decided to cut the solid waste fee by half because they did not feel they would need the additional money. The fee was continued at the \$50 level in 1996 and 1997.

In August 1997, the county was notified they would have to install a ground water monitoring system by Oct. 9. The existing wells were tested in September and when a sec-

ond well showed contamination, the county was forced to close the landfill on Oct. 9.

Additional monitoring wells have been drilled to try to determine the boundaries of the contamination plume. Today, 13 wells ring the old dump. Wells on the northwest, north and west show higher-than-acceptable contamination.

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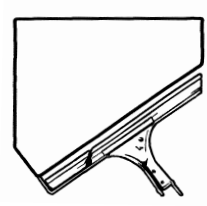
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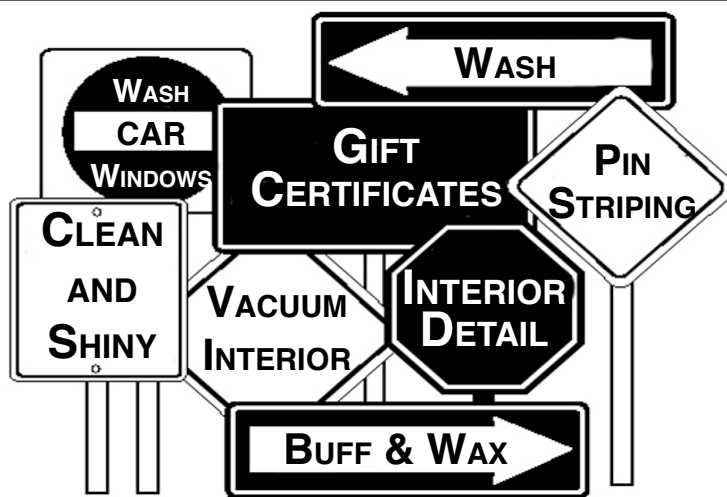
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