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Yakima health board updates: DTG working through permitting process

SANTIAGO OCHOA Yakima Herald-Republic
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DTG Recycle landfill is pictured Friday, June 16, 2023, in Yakima, Wash. DTG Recycle has a material recovery facility and a limited-purpose landfill on the site. The Yakima Health District denied their permit renewal for the limited-purpose landfill and it expired at the end of June.

Evan Abell / Yakima Herald-Republic

Permit discussions are continuing for DTG Recycle operations at Rocky Top west of Yakima.

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Shawn Magee, director of environmental health for the Yakima Health District, said his staff and the Yakima Regional Clean Air Authority are working with DTG on getting the landfill's permits in order so it can resume operations.

The health district did not renew an operating permit for DTG's private, limited-purpose landfill in June. Magee said there is no specific date for when DTG will resume operations. He gave an update to the district's Board of Health on Wednesday.

An underground fire was detected inside a closed solid waste cell at DTG last April.

The soil cover operation to smother the fire, which started last summer, is almost complete. As of Dec. 18, weekly air quality readings around the area have not shown significant levels of toxic gases leaving the landfill.

Limited purpose landfills primarily accept construction and demolition waste as well as other types of waste.

DTG also operates a recycling center at Rocky Top that operates under a different permit that was in good standing.

The health district also declined to renew a limited-purpose landfill operating permit for Caton Landfill north of Naches. The health district said the company's fire suppression and prevention plan wasn't sufficient. Caton filed an appeal, and has continued to operate despite the permit denial. There was no update on Caton on Wednesday.

Other health board news

An update on other health board activity:

- **INSPECTOR DEATH:** Magee also reported that in late December, a Yakima home inspector entered a well house believed to be filled with either hydrogen sulfide or methane.

The inspector died days later from the exposure, Magee said.

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The inspector's death, Magee said, prompted state-level discussions about safety protocols for confined-space inspections.

"This very well could change the landscape of how water system inspections are conducted to ensure that there is safety for staff, system operators and residents who own these water systems," he told the board.

- **BOARD MEMBERS:** The board unanimously kept Yakima Mayor Patricia Byers as chair. County Commissioner LaDon Linde is the vice chair. Katherine Saluskin joined the board as a Yakama Nation representative. She has served as program manager at Yakama Nation Behavioral Health for more than 11 years.

- **BUILDING REMODEL:** The board received an update on plans to remodel the health district's office in Union Gap. Ryan Ibach, chief operating officer, said the health district will work with Yakima-based KDA Architecture to design the remodel over the next eight weeks.

The health district's staff has grown from 34 to 48 people from 2020 and 2023. With new staff came added services and more visitors, which raised concerns about privacy, security and office space. A cost estimate for the remodel, Ibach said, will be available after the predesign phase.

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