

Print Date: Sunday, October 29, 2006

Last modified: Wednesday, May 17, 2006 11:39 PM PDT

Asphalt plant draws attention, controversy

By: Penne Usher, Journal Staff Writer

Asphalt is creating controversy in Meadow Vista once again.

The latest debate focuses on the Chevreux Aggregate Quarry on Combie Road that has been in operation for 46 years.

The Meadow Vista Protection group is holding a town hall meeting tonight to discuss the impact Chevreux's plant to construct a "permanent" asphalt plant at the quarry.

Chevreux officials say the asphalt-concrete plant is "mobile," and not considered a permanent structure.

"We have a seasonal plant - that's not changing," said E.J. Belding, production engineer for the Meadow Vista plant.

He was quick to point out that Chevreux is not a petrochemical company.

"We provide services to the community for (regular) cement and we also provide asphalt concrete, which is the type used in paving, and we produce, sand and rock," Belding said.

Equipment for the mobile asphalt- concrete plant began arriving a few weeks ago and some in Meadow Vista are concerned about its impact.

Cheryl Berg, a member of the Meadow Vista Protection group, said that an asphalt plant is not permitted in the area and wants Placer County officials to review Chevreux's permit.

"The county wouldn't review the permit and say one way or another if it's legal," Berg said.

She voiced concern that Chevreux is moving ahead to erect the plant.

"We want re-application for a permit," Berg said. "A new conditional use permit would trigger an environmental impact report."

Belding said the plant follows all federal, state and county requirements for licensing and permits.

"We don't have anything special we do for any community anywhere," he said.

Berg said if there is a new asphalt plant, then there is the potential for increased pollution and traffic on the town's main thoroughfare, Placer Hills Road.

"They go past the park, the elementary school and residences along Combie Road," she said.

Belding said the number of trucks varies with the demand for products.

"We produce products on the necessity of Placer County at large and some years we don't produce asphalt concrete and some years we do," he said. "We're interested in serving the community, not looking at special

interest for a special few."

Last year when Teichert Inc. proposed to place a temporary asphalt facility in Meadow Vista to supply asphalt to resurface Interstate 80 from Newcastle to Colfax, emotions ran high.

Ultimately, the company used a Sacramento site to produce the 400,00 tons of asphalt needed.

The Meadow Vista Protection group will hold a town meeting at 7 p.m. tonight at The Beda Place on the corner of Placer Hills Road and Meadow Gate Road in Meadow Vista.

"We're asking for residents to come so that we can make them aware of the issues," Berg said.

Belding said Chevreaux hasn't faced such public scrutiny before.

"You have an industrial facility near your environment and you don't know it's been there for 46 years," he said. "Voicing concern is OK with us. They all need a chance to speak."

The Journal's Penne Usher can be reached at peneu@goldcountrymedia.com.

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