

Despite objections, recycling center expected to reopen

By KAREN CLARK
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FELTON — The town's only recycling center is expected to reopen on Aug. 1 in its new location at the county Public Works yard on Gushee Street.

An attempt by neighbors to scuttle the project for fear of litter, noise and traffic failed when county planners denied their appeal of the permit granted to the recycling center.

"The process was very painful because I felt many of the complaints were unjustified," said Nancy Macy, director of the recycling program run by the Valley Women's Club. "But the ones that were (valid) helped us improve things not only at the Felton site, but all the sites."

The club also has operates recycling operations in Ben Lomond and Boulder Creek.

Pete Parkinson, a principal planner

for the county, said the neighbors' appeal was denied by the planning director because:

- The land-use zoning for the site is appropriate for a recycling center.

- The center will be separated from its nearest residential neighbor by several 100 feet, which we think is a pretty good buffer."

- Improvements planned by operators will make the center more attractive than it was at its former site.

Macy estimated the club will spend about \$25,000 to relocate the recycling center, which was forced to move from the parking lot of the old Vista Foods market when Grocery Outlet opened there in mid-June.

Because the new site is not close enough to a full-service market, said Macy, a \$2,400 monthly grant from the state has been lost. The state pays a premium for recycling centers located near markets because officials believe

that close proximity encourages recycling.

"A year ago, the impact (of losing that money) would have been horrendous," said Macy, but recent increases in the prices of scrap aluminum and newsprint have eased the budget shortfall. "I think we're going to be OK ... and we will be able to maintain our same level of service."

A county-ordered drainage plan was completed for the Felton site Wednesday by retired engineer Dexter Ahlgren of Boulder Creek, who did the work for free to help the recycling center. Macy said she expects to submit that plan to the county today, and, if approved, work to pour cement and lay asphalt could begin late next week.

The Felton recycling center will be open Monday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday from noon to 4 p.m.

County planners ordered shorter

Sunday hours to ease neighbor concerns. They also promised to review the operation in one year to make sure there are no problems.

Macy plans to mail letters to neighbors inviting them to be part of a "watch" program that will encourage them to tell recycling center employees when there is a problem. If that doesn't work, Macy said, they can call her at 338-1728.

"We want to make sure neighbors have a way to make their concerns known," said Macy.

She said three-sided fence will be built to keep trash from blowing into the neighborhood. The one open side will be at the street so people can deposit their recyclables when the center is closed. Up to seven cars should be able to line up along the side of the road, she said, "with ample room for drivers to get by them."