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“All development halted in Dayton for foreseeable future due to major engineering mistake”

Carson Now · November 6, 2024 · By Kelsey Penrose · Original story

Summary prepared for the DVCA archive. Read the full story at the link above.

- Lyon County learned on October 19, 2024 of a major design flaw at the Aspen Creek Rapid Infiltration Basins, and all development in the Dayton Sewer Service Area was halted, according to Taylor Allison, the county’s emergency management and government affairs director.
- The basins briefly hold treated effluent while it soaks into the ground. In warm months effluent is used for irrigation, including at the Dayton Valley Golf Course; the basins are the main disposal method the rest of the year.
- In 2022 the county contracted Reno engineering firm DOWL to design and build the basins, for 1.4 million gallons per day. Allison put the initial design and construction cost at about **$7 million**. Construction ran from October 2022 to July 2023.
- Staff saw standing water in October 2023; the ponding worsened over three months and groundwater rose by late December 2023.
- In January 2024 the county issued a task order to DOWL. In March, DOWL reported it found no design flaw and called the cause inconclusive. The county then hired AtkinsRealis, which found design flaws and estimated capacity near 350,000 gallons per day, about a quarter of the design. Allison said AtkinsRealis found the basins “unlikely to ever reach their original design capacity.”
- According to the story, AtkinsRealis attributed the problem to DOWL’s use of an outdated 1970s Arizona study based on a different soil type, and found the basins were also built smaller than designed.
- Allison said there was no risk to domestic wells or of flooding. Asked whether the county would sue DOWL, she said the county had retained Matt Addison of the McDonald Carano law firm for related legal matters.