

Stockpile creates tiring problem



Piles of tires rest at the Campbell County Landfill tire deposit site on last week. The site, which takes in nearly 6,000 tires per month, is searching for a way to dispose of the tires. It has settled on a South Dakota contractor, who will ship the tires to a recycling plant in Louisiana. But the plan comes with a price: It will cost up to \$600,000 to ship the 4,000 tons of tires that have accumulated. County officials say that's a better option than the cost of placing them in the landfill.- News-Record photo by Zach Long

By PETER GARTRELL, Gillette News-Record Writer

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Campbell County is getting close to bucking a big monkey off its back — more than 60,000 tires piled high at the landfill north of Gillette.

For more than a year now, the county's Public Works Department has been searching for someone to dispose of the black rubber mounds accumulating since a contract with a Moorcroft contractor was canceled.

Now, department officials say they are within weeks of finalizing an agreement with a Rapid City, S.D., company to bale the tires and ship them to a recycling plant in Louisiana.

The operation could be under way by spring.

"We're in such an isolated area of the United States that we don't have any markets," said Mark Swan, the county's environmental services manager.

Swan, who is in charge of the landfill, added that having the tires taken out of the county and recycled for uses such as rubber tracks, playground bases and roadwork was preferable — and cheaper — than simply burying the tires at the landfill.

"We have the opportunity to keep them but we don't want to take up valuable landfill space," he said.

If the county were to undertake the operation of disposing tires itself, it would incur a \$56 per ton expense for burying trash at the landfill, he said. If the tires were shredded, another \$100 to \$125 a ton cost would be added on top.

Burying the tires whole also presents issues, including the possibility of long-burning fires from spontaneous combustion and the possibility of the tires floating to the surface.

Still, disposing of the more than 4,000 tons of stockpiled tires won't be cheap.

The South Dakota operator — TMC Recycling — has told the county it will bale and ship the first 3,000 tons of tires at \$125 a ton and \$150 a ton thereafter. That translates to a \$500,000 to \$600,000 initial cost to dispose of what's at the landfill right now.

And it doesn't include insurance for environmental liabilities. Such insurance has yet to be secured by the company and was a concern for county commissioners, who were presented with costs last week.

"I think the issue is still unresolved because we don't know if we can get insurance," Commissioner Amir Sancher said.

Swan and Public Works Director Kevin King said they are exploring their options on the insurance front.