Relief Canyon Mine expansion under review

New mine construction could start Oct. 1

By Debra Reid
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Last year, land was cleared for expansion of heap leach pad facilities below the gold mine’s trio of open pits but more new construction is needed before active mining begins, possibly next year. That new construction could begin Oct. 1, a Pershing Gold official said last week.

Permits are in place and Phase I has been authorized but approval for Phase II is needed before the pit can be deepened and expanded, taking it below the water table. “Minor” pit dewatering will be required and there would be a post-mining pit lake. The water will allegedly be safe for birds and other wildlife due to “benign” limestone that will not leach acid or metals.

“The lake is predicted to be a hydrologic sink with no appreciable outflow and have water quality that meets all Profile III Nevada Reference Values,” the BLM states. “Consequently, the pit lake will be safe for terrestrial and avian wildlife.”

Other modifications would be new waste rock and leach pad facilities, a third process pond, electrical power upgrades, a dewatering conveyance pipeline and Rapid Infiltration Basins.

Water removed from the pit will be used for heap leaching and other permitted consumptive uses. Left-over pit water will be re-injected into the aquifer at up to 900 gallons per minute and will be better quality than the existing groundwater, according to the BLM and Pershing Gold.

“The dewatering water is expected to be of higher quality than the receiving groundwater,” states the BLM letter calling for public input on the project. Leaching of exposed pit walls has caused long-term water quality issues at other pit lakes.

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Granath no longer on-call for OB after Jan. 6

Frable asks board for guidance in physician recruitment

By Ashley Maden
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At the Humboldt General Hospital (HGH) board of trustees special board meeting on Tuesday, Dr. Bradford Granath, MD announced he wouldn’t be taking obstetrician (OB) call shifts after Jan. 6, 2019, urging a lengthy discussion regarding physician recruitment and the future of OB services at HGH.

Granath said he is currently not retiring, closing his practice or stopping obstetrics and would love to continue delivering his own patients and not be on the OB call schedule, although he said he’s not sure how that could work with the current schedule model.

Granath said he hopes to continue care of his OB patients due in Jan. and Feb. and urged the hospital to look at alternatives to the current labor and delivery coverage model to make it less taxing on doctors, along with taking the reins in the search for his eventual replacement, which he said has mainly been his responsibility for the past few years.

“On the one hand I have very much appreciated the hospital’s support in my efforts, but in the past it’s been mainly my burden to find my replacement with the hospital playing sort of a supporting role. Now I’m at a point in my season of life that there has to be a changing of the guard,”

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Boys & Girls Club facility wins award of excellence

By Shanna Cummings
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Winnemucca’s Boys & Girls Club (BGC) building received an Award of Excellence from the Metal Building Contractors and Erectors Association (MBCEA) in the Educational and Recreation category. J&M Steel Solutions from Lehi, Utah, the company responsible for erecting the building’s steel structure, submitted the project.

BGC Executive Director Chad Peters said that from the start he didn’t want the facility to look like the typical BGC building. “Most of the time Boys & Girls Clubs are pretty plain-Jane,” he said.

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Pershing Gold Project Manager Jerod Eastman said the trio of 30-year-old pits will eventually become one big pit when gold mining continues at the Relief Canyon Mine north of Lovelock.
Granath said there is worry that HGH could lose maternity services if a plan isn’t brought forward to labor and delivery, although he doesn’t anticipate that here. He said the last 10 years have shown a trend in rural hospitals losing maternity services, correlating to deteriorating health measures following the call.

Granath has been delivering babies in Winnemucca since 2004, when he joined Dr. Richard Ingle, nine months following the departure of Dr. Kurt Krcak. He and Dr. Leonard Perkinson are currently the only two doctors providing OB services in Winnemucca, including rotating OB call schedules.

Perkinson said he is very concerned regarding Granath’s announcement.

“Prospect of being the only person covering call for any OB related specialty is not a good one,” said Perkinson. “When you’re getting two to three calls in the morning a few times a week if it’s a busy time, it gets to be very tiring and when we’re on call that’s not all we do. We have very busy practices and we see those patients during the day, too.”

He described a time last year in which he was the only one on call for three weeks in a row when Granath was on vacation.

“It’s physically and mentally demanding, whether there are calls or not. You’re constantly on the phone and waking up wondering whether you missed something,” he said.

Granath’s presentation to the board was Frable’s gateway to ask the hospital board of trustees to give the board’s support in recruiting physicians. “When you’re asking for a community this is where they have to respond,” he said. Frable asked for further clarification from Frable regarding the board’s support in recruiting physicians.

“Who is the person’s name?” he asked.

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