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DHEC official: Loud concrete plants should get quieter soon

By Jenny Hartley-Senior Reporter

Ron Garrett of the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control said he recently spent the night in a trailer near the Brookchase neighborhood in Indian Land.

Garrett has been acting as a mediator between Brookchase residents and the concrete plants in 521 Perimeter Commerce Park.

Residents of Brookchase and nearby Lakeview Landing say the plants generate large amounts of noise and dust.

Garrett updated County Council members on measures being taken to reach a solution between the plants and residents Monday night.

He said he and Councilman Larry Honeycutt came to the area at midnight recently to check the noise for themselves.

Garrett spent the night and heard noise from the plants at 4 a.m. and 6 a.m.

He said the noise on that particular night and early morning came from the scraping of a front-end loader. That can be solved by adding rubber tips to the loaders at the concrete plants, he said.

Blue Dot Read-Mix backs up to several homes in Brookchase, and has been the subject of many complaints from residents. Garrett said Blue Dot is scheduled to complete an enclosure around the plant in 10 weeks. Officials hope that will greatly reduce the noise bothering nearby residents.

Another plant in the park, CEMEX, should have its enclosure at the back of its plant complete by the end of August.

The concrete plants, which also include Concrete Supply Co. and McLeod Construction, have been wetting down their lots and paving them to reduce dust, Garrett said.

"Everyone's been cooperative," he said.

A monitor that will track the amount of dust particles released by the plants will likely be placed in Brookchase resident Ernest Garvin's yard soon, Garrett said.

Garvin, who says his family often endures sleepless nights because of the noise at the plants, said he would like for County Council to enforce hours of operation, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., for the concrete companies. Concrete plant officials say concrete often has to be poured very early in the morning so it will set properly.

Garvin asked council members to develop an enforceable noise ordinance.

"That's a necessity," Garvin said. "We deserve that. It (the noise) is a very hurtful thing. It does a lot to you and your family."

Garrett said after the plants fully enclose their operations, the area around Brookchase will be much quieter.

"I hope you can open your windows at night," Garrett said, as residents applauded.

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