

# College violates law

BY BLAKE SWAN

Clackamas Community College is currently under investigation by Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality for hazardous waste disposal.

DEQ would not elaborate on the investigation, saying the matter is ongoing.

But the college was required to fix a second matter: letting trash seep out of old dumpsters behind the community center and into the storm water system around the college.

Jay Collins, hazardous waste inspector, conducted a routine hazardous waste inspection at the Oregon City campus of the college on Jan. 25.

"You guys generate and collect hazardous waste ... I was at the college to oversee that," said Collins. During his inspection, Collins noticed a leak starting at the trash compactor and dumpster leading to a clogged storm drain behind the Community Center.

Collins notified Michael Kennedy, water quality specialist, about the clogged storm drain and the leak.

On Feb. 1, Kennedy visited the college and took pictures of the staining and the clogged storm drain. He confirmed that the college was violating two laws: not allowing waters to be polluted and for a commercial establishment discharging waste into waters.

Kennedy contacted Bob Cochran, dean of campus services, to let him know of the violations and notify him that a

temporary fix was needed by Feb. 3 and a permanent fix by Feb. 10.

By Feb. 3 the college cleared the debris on and around the storm drain and then sealed the drain with an absorbent barrier. In addition to properly making sure contaminants cannot enter the storm drain, the college also hired a company to clean out the debris on top of and inside the drain.

"We had been planning to move the compactor over to this yard [Niemeyer Center] for a long time because it just doesn't belong there. It's a bad place for it," said Cochran.

The dumpster has caused problems for the college before. In the summer of 2016, the college purchased a new dumpster to replace one with a crack in it. The cause of the more recent leak was a broken seal.

On Feb. 6, the compactor was removed from behind the Community Center and relocated to Niemeyer Center. It is no longer in use; instead Oregon City Garbage Company is picking up all trash directly.

"We've taken this compactor and moved it away ... and instead of us doing garbage right now we have contracted that out to our local garbage hauler," said Cochran. "Instead of us driving all over campus and compacting it, they are driving all over campus and taking it straight the landfill."

The college has not been fined for these violations.

"This was direct discharge of a prohibited material into a storm water catch basin. They corrected it almost immediately, so we allowed that to be the fix to the problem," said Kennedy.

photos contributed by Oregon DEQ



Top: The pictured dumpster was the source of waste leaking into a nearby storm drain behind the Community Center.

Bottom: The dumpster was removed, and the trash compactor was disconnected.



**"We had been planning to move the compactor over to this yard [Niemeyer Center] for a long time..."**

**—Bob Cochran**

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