

Greasy dilemma at vets hall

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The new Jenny Lind Veterans Memorial District community hall was supposed to be open by now, but a greasy situation has developed.

Memorial district, Calaveras County and Valley Springs Public Utility District officials are at odds over how to handle the grease generated from the hall's kitchen.

The memorial district is seeking an exemption from the utility district regarding installation of a grease interceptor.

In the meantime, Memorial District General Manager Frank Garza said the rest of the hall is done and he would be seeking permission from the county in the near future to allow the hall to open except for use of the kitchen.

The hall has been under construction since 2010 and that seems to be part of the problem.

The building's shell was erected back then with funds the district had on hand. When work resumed several years later on the interior, and the original building permits had lapsed, the county determined the hall had a commercial-grade kitchen and that required a large-scale grease interceptor.

VSPUD general Manager Mike Fischer said the utility district requires a standard 1,000-gallon grease trap for a commercial kitchen, but memorial district officials are seeking an exemption.

The request was on the VSPUD Board of Directors agenda for May 24, but was postponed to a later date because Garza was out of town on a personal matter.

The memorial district would like VSPUD to consider the use of a less expensive "under sink" interceptor, Garza said.

A San Andreas church that serves 200 meals one night a week uses the "under sink" interceptor and that "works fine for them," Garza said.

Estimates range from \$60,000 for the standard grease trap to \$12,000 for the "under sink" interceptor, but "I have no written estimates at this time," Garza said.

Fischer said he understands the dilemma the memorial district is in, but the utility district has to protect its operating system.