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# Courthouse project remains in limbo

## Cleanup costs, extent of pollution at building site unknown

By Phaedra Haywood | The New Mexican

5/5/2009

The list of things not known about the contamination at the site of Santa Fe County's new courthouse is still longer than the list of things that are known.

Some new details about the contamination emerged Tuesday during a public presentation given by Intera, the county's new environmental advisers on the \$55 million project.

But the big questions regarding the source and extent of the gasoline contamination and how much time and money will be needed to clean up the downtown property are still unanswered.

"It's premature to talk about changes to the courthouse because there are still a lot of unknowns," County Manager Roman Abeyta told commissioners.

Intera will continue gathering data for the next few weeks and present more information to the state Environment Department by the end of May.

In a best case scenario, Intera consultants said, cleanup could begin in September.

Asked by Commissioner Liz Stefanics for a estimate of how long the cleanup would take, Intera geologist Joe Tracy said "it's unknown."

According to Intera, some of the known facts include:

- Any of five gasoline stations located in the area between the 1920s and the mid-1980s could be potential sources. Two of these underground storage sites have been monitored for years. The other three include two underground storage sites formerly on the east and west ends of a former auto dealership on land now occupied by the Design Center; and a Texaco station that stood on property now occupied by the *Albuquerque Journal's* Santa Fe office building.
- The heaviest contamination is being found in the southeast corner of the courthouse site near the *Journal* building.
- Contamination is being found in soil and water between 22 and 35 feet below street level.
- Both unleaded and leaded gasoline is being found on the site. The levels of contaminants found in the soil and water at the courthouse are many times higher than state standards. Levels of benzene for which the state standard is 10 parts per billion were measured at 12,000 parts per billion on the courthouse site.
- Gasoline vapor presents the biggest health concern for people working in the building once it is completed. Those vapors could present a problem now as well.

There was no public comment period during the meeting. County Commission Chairman Mike Anaya said he did not open the floor to the public because so much was still unknown.

"I didn't want it to turn into a big ol' thing and go off in the wrong direction," Anaya said. "If people want to come forward and talk after we have all the information, they can."

Anaya directed the public to send written comments or questions to Abeyta.

The District Courthouse project originally was expected to cost \$55 million — which included the cost of acquiring two pieces of property and \$38 million for construction.

About \$25 million of that will come from a voter-approved bond earmarked specifically for the courthouse.

The county first announced in March it had encountered contamination on the site on the corner of Montezuma Avenue and Sandoval Streets. At the time, county spokesman Stephen Ulibarri said it would be cleaned up in six days at a cost of about \$2 million. Several weeks later, when the severity of the problem began to emerge, the county announced it would eliminate one level of a planned two-level underground parking structure in order to avoid building in the polluted groundwater.

That news drew criticism from commissioners and the public. Although county officials haven't ruled out the idea of moving the project, the most recent plan presented on the county's Web site is to clean up soil and water contamination and build the project as designed.

But even that plan is in limbo now, as officials wait to learn more about the cost and time that will be involved in cleaning up the pollution.

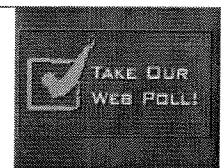
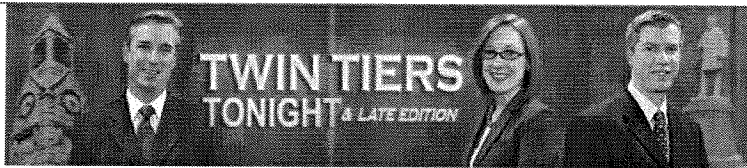
"It wasn't our problem, but we are going to clean it up," Anaya said.

Anaya said he had heard that the county may have to pay contractors on the job \$4,000 per day for any downtime while the project is on hold.

County Director of Community Projects Paul Olafson said that number isn't firm. "We have to sit down and discuss that with the contractor," Olafson said. He said some minor grading work is being performed on the site now.

Tuesday's meeting came to a dramatic end when the director of the state Environment Department's Environment Protection Division, Jim Norton, collapsed at the podium while waiting to answer questions from commissioners. Norton regained consciousness within minutes and was treated at the scene by emergency medical technicians. A police officer on the scene said Norton apparently had fainted.

*Contact Phaedra Haywood at 986-3068 or [phaywood@sfnewmexican.com](mailto:phaywood@sfnewmexican.com).*



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#### Heights Residents Hit Speed Bump in Contamination Issue (VIDEO)

Katherine Underwood

November 10, 2009

ELMIRA HEIGHTS --- Some neighbors in Elmira Heights are dealing with possible contamination in their homes that could be dangerous.

While village officials thought they were on the fast track to taking care of the problem, they've been sidelined by a government agency.

An environmental law firm held a public hearing last week on the trichloroethylene contamination in neighborhoods surrounding the Motor Components facility on Route 14.

But the next step for village officials and residents has been delayed.

The Environmental Protection Agency cancelled its plans to come to Elmira Heights next week.

It was supposed to be a four-day long trip that included a public forum to teach people about the dangers of TCE contamination.

Elmira Heights Mayor Michael Coghlin says he thinks the delay is because the EPA received an overwhelming number of calls from local residents after the public hearing.

He also says EPA representatives tell him they need to get more funding in place to test more homes near the former Facet-Purolator plant.

In 1983, the EPA started an extensive remediation effort at that site.

But in 2007 when it tested homes for vapor intrusion, the village knew nothing about the results.

"The EPA has been directly communicating with the households they tested," said Mayor Coghlin.

"As far as the village, we have really received next to nothing, so we are really concerned about that."

Coghlin says he's now talking regularly with the EPA and has made sure the village gets monthly reports from the state Health Department.

As far as filing a lawsuit against Motor Components LLC., which now owns the former Purolator property, he says that's not a concern right now.

"Our number one priority is our residents, number one, we have a safe village and the village is doing everything it can," Coghlin said.

He expects the EPA's public forum to be rescheduled within the next couple weeks.



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# More groundwater testing needed in Calverton

BY MICHAEL WHITE | EDITOR

More extensive surface water sampling.

A better definition of the contamination's eastern and southern boundaries.

The testing of two homes to ensure there are no traces of chemical vapor intrusion from soil.

Those are just some of the requests that state and county government leaders are planning to present to the U.S. Navy next week in connection with a plume of chemical-laden groundwater south of the former Northrop Grumman plant in Calverton.

In response to mounting pressure from federal lawmakers to get the Navy to re-examine its long-held position that the pollution is dissipating naturally, the officials called a meeting last week to present what was described as "a unified voice" to the Navy.

But they will stop short of demanding that the Navy act now to begin cleaning the plume, the News-Review has learned.

"More data would help us to determine where [the chemical contamination] is flowing to and from, and better track the path," said Carrie Gallagher, who heads Suffolk County's Department of Environment and Energy. "That would help us better determine what's needed."

The initial meeting was held last Tuesday at DEC offices in Stony Brook. The video conference lasted 2 1/2 hours and included DEC representatives from Albany and Long Island, as well as Ms. Gallagher and county Department of Health Services staff. It was the health department's groundwater testing efforts over the last year that helped determine the extent of volatile organic chemicals, or VOCs, in the groundwater in Calverton.

The chemicals are assumed to have originated from the Grumman plant, where for decades workers used strong compounds to clean fighter jet engines while also dumping petroleum products in the earth.

Bill Fonda, a spokesman with the DEC, which has final say over any cleanup measures at the site, called Tuesday's meeting "both positive and productive."

"State and county staff are working over the next week to refine and finalize a list of data and information needs that they will present to the Navy," Mr. Fonda said, while reiterating that more testing needs to be done before "meaningful decisions could be made."

Local residents fear that if the chemicals aren't dissipating on their own -- a process called natural attenuation -- the heart of the plume could eventually flow into the Peconic River, devastating fish larvae and wildlife.

Although there are no residential neighborhoods in the area, one drinking water well at the Peconic River Sportsmen's Club already has been fitted with a filter, and others there are being monitored.

Ms. Gallagher said that, among other items on the list, local officials want to see further groundwater sampling south of the river.

"There have been some samples done, but we would like the Navy to re-sample just to make sure the plume is not getting across the river," she said. "If it's crossing and getting farther south, you may have [residential] receptors."

The Navy has previously found trace amounts of VOCs in the river's banks just east of Connecticut Avenue.

As first reported in the News-Review, the county health department's recent testing efforts revealed the chemicals have

spread much wider -- and run much deeper -- than the Navy had originally believed. The county began testing last summer.

The data showed that in some areas concentrations of the industrial solvents were found to run 200 times higher than state drinking water standards.

County officials were especially concerned that all 52 of their test wells turned up VOCs, meaning the workers never could mark the end of the plume.

Still, the Navy has maintained its belief that the chemicals are disappearing as they flow from its property. The Navy's seemingly strong stance resulted in a letter from Sens. Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, as well as Rep. Tim Bishop, demanding that the Navy not only re-think its policy, but reimburse Suffolk County for its testing efforts.

The possibility of recruiting the U.S. Geological Survey to better gauge the scope of the plume also was discussed last week by county and state officials.

"They kind of have a niche expertise in this area," Ms. Gallagher said of the USGS. "Since they're a sister federal agency [to the Navy] and have that expertise, it might be worthwhile."

She added that the families of sportsmen's club employees are currently living in two homes above the suspected area of the plume.

"It's a caretaker and manager, both with teenage children," she said. "So we would be concerned with soil vapor intrusion into those two buildings. We would like to monitor that."

Vapor intrusion results from small pockets of tainted soil, and could cause health problems in humans.

County, state and federal authorities, as well as concerned members of the public who make up the Navy's Restoration Advisory Board, are scheduled to meet at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 6, in Calverton to discuss the plume, as well other environmental cleanup efforts at the Navy-owned land.

mwhite@timesreview.com

**Mall put on list for cleanup**

Former site of dry cleaner in Loudonville contains pollutants, according to DEC  
By BRIAN NEARING Staff Writer  
Published: 12:00 a.m., Tuesday, January 25, 2011

LOUDONVILLE -- A strip mall has been added to the state's Superfund pollution cleanup program because of lingering chemicals in the ground from a former dry cleaner, according to the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

The former Loudon and Kem Cleaners store at 350 Northern Blvd., Loudon Plaza, left behind elevated levels of tetrachloroethene (PCE), a cleaning solvent that can damage the kidney and liver and may cause cancer, and trichloroethene (TCE), another solvent that is a probable carcinogen.

DEC reported that high levels of PCE and TCE were found in the groundwater on the site and were detected to be leaking from the soil, both outdoors and indoors. The vapors are a significant threat to public health, according to DEC.

DEC spokesman Rick Georgeson said the owner of the property, Sky Four LLC, discovered the pollution several years ago while performing a site assessment for a property transaction. Subsequent investigations required by DEC led to the property's listing on the state Superfund list.

Georgeson said DEC will contact former owners of the dry cleaner to see whether they will perform the cleanup. DEC will hire contractors if no agreements can be reached.

"The full extent of groundwater and vapor plumes still need to be defined, so additional investigation work is needed," Georgeson said.

Georgeson said the time frame for a full cleanup is unknown.

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November 10, 2008

## DEC to test Spring Valley homes, businesses for toxic chemicals

*Laura Incalcaterra  
The Journal News*

SPRING VALLEY - Chemical contamination that dates back nearly three decades has reared its head again, showing up in soil gas and prompting the state to conduct new testing.

The Department of Environmental Conservation is preparing to sample soil gas in two businesses and six homes near the former COSCO manufacturing facility at 15 West St.

The action comes after the agency revisited the COSCO site and found that the soil gas contained several contaminants, including trichloroethene, or TCE, and tetrachloroethene, or PCE.

The TCE was used by COSCO, which shut in the late 1990s, as a vapor degreaser and discharged in rinse water into a stream, the DEC said.

TCE and PCE was pumped by the Continental Plastics Co. into the ground, the DEC said. Continental was on the same property as COSCO. PCE is also used as a degreaser and as an ingredient to dry-clean clothes.

The DEC revisited the site as part of a comprehensive evaluation of about 400 Superfund sites that had been closed or are in the process of being closed to check soil gas for TCE, agency spokeswoman Maureen Wren said.

Newer scientific modeling has shown that exposure to TCE can pose risks to human health and the environment at levels lower than previously known, she said.

"The soil vapor levels were checked because the facility had used trichloroethene, or TCE, in a vapor degreasing process and discharged the rinse water into a receiving stream," Wren said.

As a result, more investigation was required by the DEC and the state Department of Health, she said.

"TCE is known to be among the chemicals that, when introduced to groundwater, can later pass through soils back up to the surface," Wren said. "When known past uses at a site include these types of chemicals, the DEC and the DOH conduct investigations to determine if the historical contamination is causing vapor issues."

The two businesses and six homes to be investigated were chosen based on the flow of groundwater, and the testing is expected to include indoor and outdoor air sampling.

"The sampling itself may take just a few days, once permission is secured with the property owners," Wren said. "But the final results may take a few months before they are returned to DEC and DOH for analysis."

The COSCO site is on a 2.5-acre triangle-shaped parcel that is bounded by West Central Avenue, West Street and the NJ Transit railroad line. The contamination was found near the tip of the triangle.

Soil vapor, or soil gas, is found in the spaces between soil particles. It can enter buildings through cracks in slabs or basement floors and walls, and through openings around sump pumps or where pipes and electrical wiring go through the foundation, the DEC said.

Soil vapor can become contaminated when chemicals evaporate from subsurface sources and enter the soil vapor.

Spring Valley Mayor George Darden said the COSCO site had long been one of concern, and that he was supportive of the DEC's new testing to make sure people were protected.

"I'm happy they're going back," Darden said. "If there's anything we can do to help, we'd be glad to do it."

The COSCO and Continental Plastics Co. sites had been blamed since 1979 for contaminating wells owned by United Water New York, then called Spring Valley Water Co.

The sites were not officially targeted for cleanup by the DEC until 1990, when they were also placed on the state's list of most hazardous waste sites.

United Water relied on the wells to provide about 10 percent of the daily water it provided to 200,000 customers.

They were taken off line but were later returned to service after filters were installed.

The DEC oversaw a cleanup at COSCO that included the extraction and treatment of groundwater, and follow-up monitoring showed that contamination levels were steadily declining.

It wasn't until the soil vapor was checked that additional potential health and environmental risks became evident.

Before any testing begins, a health and safety plan will be developed and approved by the state Health Department to protect workers and residents.

A professional environmental engineering company will be hired to perform the investigation, with the DEC and the Health Department overseeing all work.

Wren said the DEC was working to determine who the responsible party might be in terms of paying for any testing and cleanup or other mitigation efforts if they are needed.

But even if no such party can be identified, the state will tap its Superfund to cover any costs so the work can proceed, she said.

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# GardenCityPatch

GOVERNMENT

## Groundwater Contamination Lawsuits Costing Village Millions

Village Counsel Gary Fishberg said Garden City is dealing with very "sophisticated" issues.

By Carisa Giardino May 11, 2010

After trustees approved a \$110,056.03 payment to Sive, Paget & Riesel, PC, an environmental law firm retained to fight parties believed to be responsible for village groundwater contamination, Grove Street resident Bob Orosz questioned whether or not a light was at the end of the tunnel.

"Are we any closer to an ending here?" he asked. "If you're paying somebody by the hour it seems to me that there's no real rush involved."

Village counsel Gary Fishberg said the village is dealing with very "sophisticated" issues and remediation efforts have cost Garden City millions.

"Basically this is pointing a finger at the companies which we believe caused the contaminants to go into the water," he said. "They are very complicated issues. It's in federal court. It's also a matter before the [Environmental Protection Agency] so we're really working two parallel pieces of this."

Fishberg said decisions in the case have been "by and large" favorable for the village so far. "There's a lot of work involved and because of that these things take a long time to resolve. You're looking at millions of dollars here," he added.

There are several Superfund sites in question, including Fulton Avenue, Jackson Steel and Roosevelt Field Airfield.

According to Public Works director Robert Mangan, the only lawsuit that is current is the Fulton Avenue Superfund site. The EPA is handling the other two sites and the village has not filed on either as of yet, he said.

The Fulton Avenue Superfund site is located in Garden City Park and is the former location of a cutting mill and dry cleaning facility. The EPA is investigating a groundwater plume of VOCs mainly composed of the dry cleaning solvent PCE migrating both horizontally and vertically. Public supply wells, according to the EPA, may have been or may currently be impacted by this plume.

VOCs, especially PCE, were detected in both on-site and off-site groundwater monitoring wells and have impacted at least one public supply well and possibly others. These wells have either been taken out of service or are being treated in order to meet drinking water standards. The Nassau County Department of Health and the Garden City Water District are managing the site contamination, which is migrating into Garden City's wells, according to the EPA.

Mayor Robert Rothschild said Garden City water is safe to drink and the ongoing payments have been budgeted for.

"We knew this lawsuit was in place and in process and we have allowed for that. This is a groundwater lawsuit so any recovery goes back into the water district fund base," the mayor said.

Village auditor Jim Olivo confirmed the same: "That is our intention, yes."

The mayor didn't want to speculate when the lawsuits would be resolved but did say progress has been made.

"I really don't want to guess at it but I think we have gotten closer," he said. "I would hope within the next 18 months we'll hopefully be at the end of the road on some of these."

Mayor Rothschild explained the complexity of the situation: "As far as the board is concerned, we have made great progress we think in several of these lawsuits. These are large lawsuits with international companies. These are not things that can be settled easily. A lot of these lawsuits end up with a lot of parties in them and it's not easy to get them completed."

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## New Windsor taking firm to court in pollution dispute

By Michael Randall  
Times Herald-Record  
Published: 2:00 AM - 02/05/11

NY

NEW WINDSOR — The town is going to federal court to force a company to clean up ground water contamination allegedly from a manufacturing plant the firm sold 20 years ago.

The parties have a court date Feb. 17.

The alleged contamination is in Little Falls Park in the Ducktown area — site of one of a number of former town wells and other water sources New Windsor hopes to reactivate to supplement its main supply, New York City's Catskill Aqueduct.

Town Attorney Michael Blythe said there are two volatile organic compounds in the ground water there — trichloroethylene and trichloroethane.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the compounds are used in degreasing and other manufacturing processes. Both can cause liver problems, and trichloroethylene is also a suspected cancer-causing agent.

The town says the contamination came from the former Dennison Monarch Systems plant, which made computer workstations, filing cabinets and color-coded filing systems. Its parent company, Avery Dennison, sold the plant on MacArthur Avenue in July of 1991, and the new owner closed it for good about two years later.

Blythe said negotiations with the company have been unsuccessful.

"We're relatively confident at some point (the company) will accept responsibility for the pollution," Blythe said.

Avery Dennison spokesman David Frail said the company does not comment on pending litigation, but it does take such matters seriously and "has a policy of promptly addressing any environmental issues of which it is made aware."

"The company has been working with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation for a number of years to address possible concerns at the New Windsor site," Frail added.

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# Newsday.com

## Owner of Superfund site gets a year in prison

BY JENNIFER SMITH

jennifer.smith@newsday.com

8:23 PM EDT, May 29, 2009

The owner of a former Port Jefferson Station aeronautics company was sentenced to serve a year and a day in prison for dumping tons of hazardous chemicals at what is now one of Long Island's most notorious toxic waste sites, federal court officials said Friday.

Gerald Cohen, chief executive of Lawrence Aviation Industries, was ordered to pay \$105,816 in restitution. He may also face fines, a matter to be decided next month when the company is sentenced for its role in the dumping.

The sentence handed down in federal court in Central Islip will serve as a lesson to those who refuse to comply with environmental laws, officials said.

Cohen, 75, of St. James, pleaded guilty last year to illegally storing highly corrosive hazardous waste at the company's 125-acre property, now a federal Superfund site. More than 1,300 drums of industrial solvents, acid waste and sludge have been found over the years at the site, a former turkey farm where the defense subcontractor made metal components between 1959 and the 1990s.

"For years, this company illegally stored hazardous waste in blatant violation of environmental laws meant to protect the public," state environmental commissioner Pete Grannis said in a statement. "Forcing the company and its chief executive to pay a stiff price for their actions not only holds them accountable but also serves as a strong deterrent to others."

Cohen's attorney did not return a call seeking comment.

The federal government has sued Cohen for more than \$8 million in cleanup costs already spent on the site. The total cost is estimated at more than \$20 million.

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## Schnapf, Lawrence

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**From:** Schnapf, Lawrence  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 03, 2010 11:52 PM  
**To:** 'lsiegel@cpeo.org'  
**Subject:** DEC: Treat pollution in place at Ithaca plaza

<http://www.theithacajournal.com/article/20100302/NEWS01/3020372>

By Krisy Gashler • kgashler@gannett.com • March 2, 2010, 9:10 pm

The state Department of Environmental Conservation is proposing that the same cleanup method used at South Hill Business Campus and proposed at Emerson Power Transmission be used to fight contamination at Clinton West Plaza.

Contamination was discovered at the plaza in 2005, and a full investigation in 2008 and 2009 found groundwater contamination from seven volatile organic compounds, including tetrachloroethene, also known as PCE or PERC, and its breakdown components: trichloroethene, or TCE, cis-1,2-Dichloroethene, and vinyl chloride. All are considered likely carcinogens.

The cleanup plan recommended by the DEC would involve injecting a chemical oxidant into the ground around the plaza in 24 places twice over 30 days. Approximately one month later, a carbon source would be applied subsurface to help speed biodegradation. The carbon source would be applied again two years later. In addition, the DEC is requiring property owner Bart Ingersoll to install a system to remove contamination in indoor air vapor in the Clinton West Laundry, the suspected source of the pollution. PCE concentrations inside the laundry were 113 micrograms per cubic meter. The state Department of Health guideline for mitigating for PCE is 5 micrograms.

Six other plaza tenants and one nearby home had readings low enough that the state isn't requiring vapor systems, but is requiring monitoring to see if they will be needed in the future. Five nearby homes were tested. Alderman Eric Rosario, I-2nd, who represents the area that includes Southside, said he's disappointed the DEC's proposal only calls for meeting the lower cleanup standards required for industrial or commercial use.

"Given how densely residential the area is -- there are homes within 100 feet of the former dry cleaning facility where the spills originated -- I strongly feel the remedy needs to meet the stricter standard for residential use," he said. "Besides, this site could feasibly become residential one day, just as the former Tanana Gas Station site across the street on South Corn and West Clinton has."

"In which case the property would have to be re-zoned," responded Neil Gingold, attorney for plaza owner Bart Ingersoll. "And in order for it to be re-zoned, the party looking for the re-zoning would have to address that situation. The property is properly being addressed based on the use and foreseeable use of that property."

Rosario argued the DEC should also require that the contamination be removed, not treated in place. "The type of contaminants we have on this site, like PCE and vinyl chloride, are very persistent, dangerous compounds that don't break down easily; we can have them hang around for decades," Rosario said.

DEC Spokeswoman Stephanie Harrington responded that because of site geology, "pumping and treating the groundwater would have limited success and wasn't even considered a viable alternative."

Both proposed treatments are common and have been used successfully across the state, including at the Axiohm site, now South Hill Business Campus, and is also planned for part of the remedy for the Emerson Power Transmission site she said

# Gates chemical leak to be cleaned

Steve Orr • Staff writer • January 4, 2011

Nearly a quarter-century after a major release of industrial solvents came to light in Gates, New York state officials have come to a decision on a \$3.2 million cleanup plan.

The cleanup work will address extensive groundwater and soil contamination by trichloroethene, or TCE, and other potentially dangerous solvents that leaked years ago from Erdle Perforating, a sheet-metal company at 100 Pixley Industrial Parkway in southern Gates.

The solvents have spread through groundwater more than 1,500 feet to the south of Erdle, passing under the Hidden Valley condominium complex and raising concerns about toxic vapors rising through the soil and affecting residents. State officials tested the air in homes there in each of the last four winters, and 10 units were outfitted with special ventilation units to prevent any buildup of vapors.

In a report released Dec. 28, the Department of Environmental Conservation said it intends to minimize the possibility of toxic vapor intrusion by extracting solvent vapors from under the soil in as many as 50 locations near Erdle.

Electrodes will be placed underground at those locations to heat contaminated groundwater and generate more vapors for recovery. If that approach doesn't reduce solvent levels sufficiently, groundwater will be treated with agents to hasten chemical degradation, the DEC report said.

Construction isn't likely to begin before 2012, the report said.

Installation of the vapor-extraction system will cost \$2.5 million, with an estimated \$44,000 needed to operate the system annually for as many as 30 years, according to the DEC document.

The state Superfund, which is supported by tax money and industry fees, is paying for the work. Erdle Perforating, which has been at that site since 1968, paid for environmental studies on the property until the mid-2000s.

An Erdle company official did not return a call for comment on Monday.

DEC spokeswoman Lori Severino said the agency has not sought to recover any of its costs from Erdle and another firm, Falcon Industries, a Syracuse-area firm that owns the 9.2-acre property. The state reserves the right to seek cost recovery, she said.

The DEC document said an unknown quantity of TCE and other chemicals escaped from a leaking underground waste solvent tank at the corner of Erdle's building. The leak was discovered in early 1987.

The company paid to remove that tank and several others and to remove grossly contaminated soil. But solvents continue to be found in high concentrations in groundwater near the location of the leaking tank, including one 2008 measurement of TCE at 1,200 parts per million — a figure about 240,000 times greater than the state guideline.

TCE, a common industrial solvent, has been linked to several forms of cancer and numerous other health problems in people exposed to high enough levels. It is unclear what health effects, if any, can result from exposure to the very low levels of TCE found in the air inside a few Hidden Valley homes before the ventilation systems were installed.

Severino said the DEC has had no reports of any illnesses linked to the solvents there.

SORR@DemocratandChronicle.com

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## Community

# Water worries Bullville residents

## DEC reps hear, but can't answer, many questions

By Steve Israel

Times Herald-Record

August 22, 2009 2:00 AM

BULLVILLE — The Department of Environmental Conservation knew of gas station spills that would pollute the water of a firehouse and taint the wells of residents since 1994.

The gas station's water even tested high for the contaminating gas additive MTBE in 2001. But the DEC didn't tell neighbors of the contamination from the Hit or Miss Mobil until 2008, after two more spills and a truck accident at the Bullville firehouse well.

Now the firehouse water contains so much MTBE, the DEC has mandated filters on its wells. Firefighters in this Orange County hamlet fear they can't build a desperately needed new headquarters. The neighbors — who have installed their own filters — fear they can't sell their homes. Their MTBE levels aren't high enough for the state to mandate action, but they're too high to trust the water, especially for families with babies.

All of which makes neighbor George Larsen ask:

"I'm wondering why it took so long for anyone to find out? I came down with Hodgkin's lymphoma in 1998 and I had no idea the spill took place. I'm wondering if there's any connection."

That was just one of the questions the DEC couldn't answer at an informational meeting Thursday night at the firehouse on Route 17K that now serves bottled water. It was a meeting that came nearly a year after one was first promised and only after Orange County Legislator Dan Depew pressured the DEC.

The 30 frustrated residents peppered DEC spills expert John O'Mara and regional director Willie Janeway with a barrage of questions over what Janeway said is "an extremely serious situation."

Why wasn't anyone notified of the high test levels of the now banned MTBE at the gas station in 2001?

"I don't have the information for that," said O'Mara, who later added, "there were mistakes made."

What will the DEC do to protect people if the recent removal of contaminated soil from the gas station property spreads the MTBE and increases its levels? asked neighbor Danny Childress. Will you shut down the pumps?

Filters would be installed on neighbors' wells, O'Mara said, but as for shutting down the station?

"We don't have the authority," he said.

O'Mara agreed to come to Bullville next week, to test the dirt for contamination. But no one knew what would happen if the pollution levels remain high — or spike.

All of which led one resident, Danny's wife, Annie Childress, to characterize the meeting this way:

"A big runaround. Absolutely no answers."



# Environmental Site Remediation Database Search Details

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## Site Record

### Administrative Information

**Site Name:** Former Majestic Garment Cleaners

**Site Code:** 224035

**Program:** State Superfund Program

**Classification:** 02

**EPA ID Number:**

### Location

**DEC Region:** 2

**Address:** 740 Pine Street

**City:** Brooklyn **Zip:** 11235

**County:** Kings

**Latitude:** 40.667570590

**Longitude:** -73.869289420

**Site Type:**

**Estimated Size:** 0.470 Acres

## Institutional And Engineering Controls

### Site Owner(s) and Operator(s)

**Current Owner Name:** JODAVE REALY, INC.

**Current Owner(s) Address:** 740 PINE STREET  
BROOKLYN,NY, 11235

**Current Owner Name:** MAJ REALTY, INC.

**Current Owner(s) Address:** 3179 EMMONS AVENUE  
BROOKLYN,NY, 11235

**Owner(s) during disposal:** Information not available

**Operator during disposal:** WORLD CLEANERS, INC.

**Stated Operator(s) Address:** 740 PINE STREET  
BROOKLYN,NY 11235

**Operator during disposal:** Information not available

## Site Document Repository

**Name:** BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

**Address:** 1197 SUTTER AVENUE

1197 SUTTER AVENUE

BROOKLYN,NY 11208

## Hazardous Waste Disposal Period

## Site Description



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October 7, 1997

## Studies Note Pervasiveness of Chemical

By ANDREW C. REVKIN

For more than 60 years, cleaners have dipped delicate garments in a powerful solvent, perchloroethylene, to lift stains without damaging fabric. It is this pungent chemical that one smells when a plastic-sheathed suit or dress is unwrapped. The waterless process is "dry" cleaning.

In recent years, a variety of studies on laboratory animals have shown that perc, as the chemical is often known, can harm the liver, kidneys and nervous system and, in high concentrations, possibly cause cancer. Other studies have also shown that the chemical, used in more than 3,000 dry cleaning shops in New York City and thousands more across the United States, gives off vapors that often fill not only these establishments, but also adjacent shops or apartments.

A 1995 study checked perchloroethylene levels in 12 New York City apartment buildings with dry cleaners on the ground floor. Eleven buildings had apartments in which perc vapors exceeded New York State guidelines. The study was conducted by the Consumers Union, a nonprofit group that assesses health and safety hazards of various products and publishes Consumer Reports magazine.

The same study found that the air in eight apartments had levels of perc that were more than 10 times the state guideline of 15 parts per billion. (At Public School 141, the most recent tests showed levels of as much as 36 parts per billion in one room, and levels exceeding 15 parts per billion in others.)

Despite the studies, there is still no firm link between exposure to the chemical and the development of cancer or disease in people, according to Federal and New York State health officials. As a result, New York State still issues only a recommended limit, not an enforceable limit set in law.

Even though the levels found in the Harlem school were relatively low, the risk could be significant because children are particularly vulnerable to chemicals affecting the nervous system, said Barbara Warren, an author of the Consumers Union study.