

country's 202nd birthday. The real Fourth of July show began after dark, though, as fireworks displays, right, lit the sky on a cool summer evening.

Pletcher Road nuclear dump 'like West Valley'

By SHIRLEY HANFORD
Gazette Staff Writer

LEWISTON — The Department of Energy's radioactive site on Pletcher Road was likened this week to the nuclear waste dump in West Valley by Dr. Marvin Resnikoff.

A theoretical physicist and lecturer at Rachel Carson College, State University at Buffalo, Resnikoff called for speedy removal of the uranium residue at the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works site and for complete decontamination and decommissioning by the energy department.

He said the estimated clean-up costs at West Valley are around \$600 million, but the company involved, Nuclear Fuel Services Inc. has set aside only \$4 million.

Resnikoff declined to estimate clean-up costs at the Lewiston site, but asked that the major share be paid by African Metals Corp., New York City, which he said, "owns the major share of radioactivity" at the site.

He suggested some of the decommissioning costs be paid for by the U.S. Department of Defense "because the uranium was used for weapons production."

Chairman of the Nuclear Subcommittee of the National Sierra Club, Resnikoff spoke to town officials and concerned residents in the Lewiston Town Hall Monday and then visited the energy department site.

In a letter sent directly to U.S. Energy Secretary James Schlesinger requesting removal and clean-up, Resnikoff called for

"positive evidence from yourself and your agency that you care as much for the health of the public as you do for the health of the nuclear industry."

Resnikoff said the uranium residues present "a clear and present danger" and will "remain toxic for hundreds of thousands of years."

He said the problems "were created by our society and should be addressed by our society."

Saying that Niagara County males are in "the highest 10 percent of the country for lung cancer incidence," Resnikoff said the high radon emissions from the site add to the lung cancer danger.

However, he said he doesn't consider the present radiation levels so dangerous that people are going to "roll over dead on the ground tomorrow."

Resnikoff called for a decommissioning plan that would not require surveillance or construction and maintenance, and would include detailed engineering cost estimates.

He chided DOE for not voluntarily supplying the information when the air monitoring results were known last year, or for the past 25 years while the material has been on the site.

He also wrote to Commissioner Peter Berle of the state Department of Environmental Conservation requesting that "homes and schools in the vicinity of the site be monitored for radon and its daughter products." He said the decay products, from polonium down to lead-206 "will interact chemically with fruits and vegetables."

Resnikoff wrote Berle that if the DEC is

not the appropriate monitoring agency, the request be transmitted to the state Department of Labor or Department of Health.

Lewiston Town Supervisor James J. Lombardi indicated at the conference that Resnikoff's letter to the energy department will be followed up by legal action against the U.S. government to elicit a rapid response.

Lombardi said the Town Board could take action Monday night to direct the town attorney to go into court with a show cause order for removal and cleanup at the site.

Former County Legislator Joseph Pillittere, a candidate for the State Assembly, suggested borrowing equipment from Bell Aerospace to monitor radioactivity near homes. "It will take 10 years to wait for the state to do it," he said.

Richard A. Jackson, a member of the Town of Lewiston Environmental Commission, asked if the town would put a meter to measure radon in his home. He lives on Pletcher Road and can see the energy department silo from his home.

Former Lewiston Town Councilman Henry Sloma said when he was on the board, the town was on "a proverbial merry-go-round between DOE in Oak Ridge, Tenn., and the Health Department."

Sloma, who is also a candidate for State Assembly, said the federal and state agencies involved "have been less than cooperative and have even attempted to cover up."

"We have 2½ years of correspondence here," he said. "It still takes three months to get an answer."

Parkway grass getting first clip this year

The state Department of Transportation crews started to cut the grass today — for the first time this year — along the Robert Moses Parkway.

Assemblyman John B. Daly, R-Lewiston, said regional DOT officials in Buffalo had assured him that crews would mow the grass on the parkway, from the north Grand Island Bridges to Four-Mile Creek campsite near Youngstown.

DOT, responsible for maintaining the parkway, has been the subject of criticism in the past several weeks for the high

grass and weeds on the parkway. A lack of manpower and equipment were cited as reasons DOT could not correct the conditions.

Donald Ketchum, regional administrator for DOT at Buffalo, told Daly that his agency has moved two huge mowers into an area near the Grand Island bridges, and the crews would begin working west and then north along the parkway toward Lewiston and Youngstown.

Daly said he has received numerous

complaints recently about tall grass and weeds on the parkway and along the LaSalle Expressway, especially in the 75th Street area.

George Briggs, equipment manager for the DOT in Albany, said today his department is hoping to press even more vehicles into service in the Niagara area.

"It's a sad state of affairs when you consider the whole county of Niagara only has eight mowers for such a task, and some of those mowers are 13 years old," Daly said.

Cutting the parkway grass means DOT will be reassigning crews from other jobs. The regional DOT also is responsible for more than 700 miles of highways and expressways. "It's a matter of priorities," one DOT official said, referring to the neglected parkway. "Now it looks like we'll have to leave some potholes go."

Previously, the parkway was maintained by the Niagara Frontier State Parks and Recreation Commission, under the state Office of Parks and Recreation. That responsibility was transferred two years ago to the DOT.

Boat adrift above falls is rescued

NIAGARA FALLS, Ont. — A 16-foot boat and its passengers were rescued early this morning with the assistance of the Chippawa Volunteer Fire Department, after going adrift above Navy Island.

Niagara Parks Police said the boat, belonging to William Carr of 448 Ninth St., Niagara Falls, N.Y., was drifting after its motor stopped running at about 1 a.m. A U.S. Coast Guard boat attempted to come to the aid of the drifting vessel, but because of shallow water in the area was unable to get close to it.

A boat belonging to the Chippawa Fire Department was successful in reaching the distressed boat and managed to tow it into a cove on the south end of Navy Island.

The passengers were then transferred to Usshers Creek, where Niagara Parks Police picked them up and arranged for transportation to take them back to the American side.

7/5/78