

# U.S. Still Weighing Ordinance Site for Storing N-Wastes

By DAN MacDONALD  
News Niagara County Bureau

The U.S. Department of Energy Friday confirmed that it is still considering use of the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works in Lewiston as a storage site for nuclear waste, from New York and other states.

Federal officials said no final decision has been made on the ultimate fate of the 191-acre site, which was used as part of the atomic bomb development project in World War II. But they said the energy agency is considering a "wide range of options" from removal of wastes already at the facility to use of the property for disposal of nuclear wastes from "nearby states."

The prospect that the Lewiston facility might become a long-range nuclear waste site has drawn vehement opposition from some local leaders, who had believed that government work being performed at the property was intended only as part of a cleanup of nuclear wastes already there from the World War II era.

The Buffalo News reported Sept. 15 that local officials had learned that the government was considering other alternatives, including development of the Lewiston site as a repository for nuclear wastes from elsewhere. Local officials learned of the prospect in a briefing by Robert L. Rudolph, project manager for Bechtel National Inc., which is conducting work at Lewiston for the government.

Some local officials then expressed anger at the prospect of a regional nuclear waste site and vowed that local residents would not tolerate such a development.

"WE'LL FIGHT if we have to," Lewiston Town Supervisor James Lombardi said, suggesting that local residents would go so far as to "bear arms" to prevent location of a regional nuclear waste site in their community.

Rep. John J. LaFalce, D-Town of Tonawanda, Friday said he had contacted Department of Energy officials this week to express his strong opposition to the possible location of a nuclear waste site in Lewiston.

Mr. LaFalce said he was assured by Edward Delaney, the Energy Department's manager of surplus facilities, that a Bechtel recommendation urging government consideration of that step would be deleted from Bechtel's final report on the future of the Lewiston site. The final version of the current draft report is expected next spring.

Aides to Mr. LaFalce Friday said Energy Department officials expressed surprise that Bechtel expects had included the prospect of a nuclear waste depository in their current draft report on the property's future.

Some local officials expressed relief at those developments Friday. But the Energy Department rekindled the issue Friday evening with issuance of a policy clarification statement from the agency's Oak Ridge operations center in Oak Ridge, Tenn.

The Energy Department emphasized that it has made "no decision concerning long-range plans for the site."

**BECHTEL HAS** been conducting a detailed study on the future of the property, the government statement said, and Energy Department officials now are reviewing Bechtel's preliminary findings on the long-range options that are available for the property. The studies will be made public when they are in final form, the government statement said.

The government statement emphasized the wide range of options that are available for the site, which is now officially known as the Niagara Falls Storage Site despite its location in the Town of Lewiston.

"A wide range of options for NFSS is being evaluated extending from complete decontamination and unrestricted release of the site for other uses to permanent stabilization of those radioactive wastes now on the site, and possibly other wastes from nearby states," the Energy Department statement said.

Energy Department officials this week said that contaminated soil from other former research sites in New York, New Jersey, Ohio and Massachusetts might be disposed of at the Lewiston property.

The Lewiston site already includes about 16,000 tons of radioactive material, including uranium oxide and radium that have been there since 1944.

The Energy Department statement Friday said remedial work performed at the site in 1980 and 1982 was intended as corrective action to improve the storage of material already at the site. Further work is planned in 1983 and 1984, the statement said.

Lewiston town officials have scheduled a special Town Board meeting at 1 p.m. tomorrow with town attorneys to consider the issue.