

Opponents Still Fear Revival of LOOW

By JOANN SCELSA

LEWISTON — Two opponents of the creation of a nuclear-waste repository in Lewiston say they fear the state will want to pursue the plan discarded this week by the federal government.

Town Councilman Alvin Ogg and Steven Nathanson, spokesman for the "NO LOOW" committee, say they are concerned the state may view the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works as a made-to-order site for the disposal of radioactive wastes generated in the state — a problem the state will have to address by 1986 to meet a federal mandate.

The Buffalo News reported Wednesday that the U.S. Department of Energy has rejected plans to create a permanent regional nuclear waste repository at the 191-acre Niagara Falls Storage Site, part of the former wartime Ordnance Works.

But, Mr. Nathanson said, he was told Wednesday by R. Lea Keller, Director of Technical Services for the Energy Department, that dumping wastes from around the state at the site has not been ruled out and that if the state wants to use the site for that purpose, the Energy Department would consider it.

THE FEDERAL plan called for transfer to the site of about 20,000 tons of low-level radioactive wastes left over from wartime operations in several Northeastern states.

Mr. Nathanson said that by 1986, states must have a site designated within their borders for radioactive waste disposal or they must have entered into a compact with another state to dispose of the wastes.

He said that although Mr. Keller assured him that the Energy Department still is considering total decommissioning of the site — in addition to stabilization in place of the wastes already there — it probably would not be accomplished by 1986. Mr. Nathanson said he fears

that fact would make the site very attractive to the state.

COUNCILMAN OGG went on to ask whether the Energy Department's sudden rejection of the repository recommendation, made by its consultant Bechtel National, isn't a way of dumping the problem on the state or another means of obtaining a nuclear-waste disposal site.

Mr. Nathanson said his group is holding to its original objective of total decommissioning of the site and releasing it for unrestricted use. He believes the group can win, but for the time being, he says, "We've still got a problem."

Mr. Nathanson said Mr. Keller told him Energy Department officials plan to be in Lewiston Dec. 13 to meet with the Citizens Oversight Committee established by Rep. John J. LaFalce, D-Town of Tonawanda, and possibly with the Town Board.