

LOOW concrete silo to be torn down

By RAE TYSON
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LEWISTON — An imposing concrete silo, long symbolic of the government's 38-year-old radioactive waste repository surrounding it, will be demolished next summer, U.S. Department of Energy officials said yesterday.

"It'll be an awful shock to look out and see it gone," was the response from Town Board member Joan Gipp, who can see the structure at the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works site from the kitchen of her Ridge Road home.

E. Lea Keller, director of the energy department's Oak Ridge (Tenn.) technical services division, told the Lewiston and Porter town boards yesterday about 4,000 tons of radioactive material would be stored elsewhere on the 191-acre government site.

Robert Rudolph, project manager for Bechtel National Inc., caretakers of the ordnance site, said eliminating the silo and transferring the materials to more secure storage would significantly reduce radioactive emissions.

It is the primary source of gamma radiation that is experienced on the site," Rudolph said.

Keller said after the three-hour meeting with town officials that costs to re-

move the silo "could approach \$2 million."

John E. Baublitz, director of the energy department's office of remedial projects, said the radioactive materials in the silo are owned by a Belgian firm, but stored under a 25-year lease agreement with the federal government.

Meanwhile, it was a subdued audience of several hundred residents that gathered at the Lewiston-Porter High School last night to hear a presentation by Baublitz and Rudolph and Keller.

After learning of the energy department's plan to spend \$8 million next year to slow leaking radioactive gas, Youngstown resident Chester Richardson asked, "What do we do in the meantime?"

Danielle DeGulier, president of Citizens Against Pollution, said after the 1½-hour presentation "If in fact this is true, it is wonderful. But I don't believe it."

Referring to conflicting reports of the future of the site, Ms. DeGulier said, "I'm sure you are aware you have a credibility problem in this community."

When asked by an audience member about the probability of federal budget cuts affecting additional remedial work, Baublitz said, "That is our highest priority site in the program. There is no question that that work will be completed."

Baublitz, meeting to discuss future plans for the Pletcher Road ordnance site, said the federal government, "in all likelihood," will assume responsibility for the uranium ore processing wastes when the lease expires in 1983.

Since the lease was signed in 1958, Keller said the Belgian firm, Union Minière du Haut Katanga, has paid nearly \$1 million for remedial work at the former ordnance site.

The contingent of 12 Bechtel and federal government employees attended the joint board meeting to assure council members that the ordnance site did not pose a health hazard and would not be used for the disposal of additional radioactive wastes.

Bechtel had recommended that Lewiston be considered a regional waste repository; Baublitz said that suggestion has been dropped, although the government still isn't sure what will happen to the wastes already on the site.

When asked by Lewiston board member Alvin Ogg if he would guarantee that no additional wastes would ever be shipped to Lewiston, Baublitz replied: "There are clear limitations to what I ... or Mr. (Energy Secretary Donald) Hodel or Mr. (President) Reagan can guarantee."



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The silo that is the most prominent structure at the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works in Lewiston will be razed next summer and the radioactive wastes it now contains disposed of elsewhere on the 191-acre Pletcher Road site. Energy department officials said it probably will cost \$2 million to demolish the concrete silo.

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Panel says depot no good for storing nuke wastes

LEWISTON — A citizens committee says the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works is not physically suited for long-term storage or disposal of low-level radioactive wastes.

In a prepared statement released yesterday, Rep. John J. LaFalce's citizens oversight committee said the unsuitability of the site strengthened demands for

the removal of all wastes from the U.S. Department of Energy's Pletcher Road storage depot.

"We believe that there are geological, hydrogeological, climatic and geographic characteristics of the site that mediate against its selection for the permanent disposal of radioactive materials currently being stored on the site," the committee said in its statement.

After meeting privately with federal officials Monday evening, the committee also said the former ordnance plant complex would not meet Nuclear Regulatory Commission standards for low-level waste disposal.

Energy officials are reviewing a number of options for the wastes, which were generated during the World War II production of the atomic bomb.