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Radioactive silo won't come down this year

Budget cuts postpone work at storage site

By RAE TYSON
Gazette Staff Writer

Budget reductions will delay until next year the removal of a concrete storage silo at the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works in Lewiston. The silo has held radioactive materials since 1944.

"The tower won't come down this year, it won't come down until 1984," Lowell Campbell, project manager for the U.S. Department of Energy, said yesterday.

The 191-acre federal site on Pletcher Road has been used for the storage and disposal of radioactive materials — mostly residues from the development of the atomic bomb — since World War II.

Campbell said the department's 1983 budget for the Lewiston site was reduced by an estimated \$800,000, forcing a delay in the planned demolition project.

An estimated 4,300 tons of radioactive material in the silo will eventually be transferred to another building on the site, Campbell said.

The radioactive residues are owned by a Belgian firm and stored under contract

with the federal government. The contract expires this year, but is likely to be extended, federal officials said.

Campbell said the federal government still plans to do about \$11 million in remedial construction work this summer and has tentatively scheduled a June 10 meeting to explain the program to the Lewiston Town Board.

Officials from Bechtel National Inc., caretaker of the storage site for the federal government, also are expected to attend the meeting, a Bechtel spokesman said.

The Department of Energy met with the Lewiston and Porter town boards last December to detail plans for removing the silo. Federal officials have said the silo is the single largest source of radioactive emissions at the site.

Over the past three years, the federal government has financed extensive remedial work at the former ordnance plant complex in an attempt to reduce radioactive emissions and prepare the wastes for long-term storage.