

Waste complex report delayed

A report assessing the options for a federal radioactive waste repository in Lewiston will be delayed until next year, officials said yesterday. The document was scheduled for completion in December.

"April is the new target date," John Schlatter, spokesman for Bechtel National Inc., said. Bechtel is the government's caretaker at the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works site on Pletcher Road.

The U.S. Department of Energy has been reviewing a number of options for the Lewiston complex and held local public hearings on the issue in February.

The federal government has used the former ordnance plant complex for radioactive waste storage since 1944. It is now called the Niagara Falls Storage Site.

According to preliminary reports, wastes may be stored in Lewiston indefinitely or shipped elsewhere for disposal.

Earlier, energy officials considered the site as a regional facility for radioactive wastes from other locations. They later said that option has been abandoned.

Schlatter said the option report was delayed by public hearings in Oak Ridge, Tenn., one of the potential disposal sites for Lewiston wastes. The Tennessee hearings were held Oct. 19.

He said the document also was delayed while federal officials researched several technical issues relating to the long-term options for the site.

U.S. wants to change waste rules

By RAE TYSON
Niagara Gazette

The federal government has asked permission to relax portions of a discharge permit at its radioactive waste repository on Pletcher Road in Lewiston.

Treated wastewater is discharged into a tributary that flows to Lake Ontario.

In an application to the state Department of Environmental Conservation, the U.S. Department of Energy asked for a relaxation of two discharge standards, iron and strontium. Strontium is a radioactive substance.

The DEC issued a permit earlier this year to regulate all discharges from the federal complex, which is currently undergoing extensive remedial cleanup.

Most of the wastewater is related to the cleanup efforts at the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works site.

Energy officials said a wastewater treatment system at the Lewiston site is not capable of reducing iron and strontium levels sufficiently to meet the DEC permit standards.

The application seeks new standards roughly four times higher than the existing restrictions.

DEC officials said they would receive public comment on the application until Nov. 28.

The discharge permit was the subject of controversy late last year when the federal government released about 700,000 gallons of wastewater without DEC permission.

Federal officials, in justifying their actions, said storage ponds were in danger of overflowing and the DEC had been slow in processing a discharge permit application. They also said the discharge did not have a serious impact on the lake.

The DEC responded by fining the federal government \$7,500 for the incident.