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Ordnance works area called safe

By BRUCE ANDRIATCH
Niagara Gazette

TOWN OF LEWISTON — U.S. Department of Energy representatives said Thursday they would be willing to issue a statement declaring the area near the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works site as safe.

Edward Delaney, director of the Office of Facility and Site Decommissioning Projects for the energy department, told the Town Board that radioactive waste buried at the site has been reduced to a normal level and it would remain at a normal level for anywhere from 200 to 1,000 years.

"We spent a lot of money cleaning that place up and we have no intention of letting it

slide to anything less than a good condition," he said.

The 190-acre site near Lutts and Pletcher roads was part of the old Manhattan Engineering District used for storing waste generated during the development of the atomic bomb in the 1940s. There are presently 25,000 cubic yards of radioactive wastes stored there.

In early September, the energy department issued a decision which stated that all material buried at the site should remain there forever.

An interim waste storage facility was built on the site to treat wastewater before being released into the Niagara River.

Councilman Joan Gipp, who has always been against the decision to keep the waste buried at the site, grudgingly accepted the energy department proposal.

"It's a letdown from having it containerized," she said.

Containerizing the waste, or storing it in drums, was an option the board proposed to the energy department earlier in the year. It was rejected in favor of leaving it in the ground.

Supervisor James Lombardi, who has maintained that the town should receive payment from the federal government for storing the waste there, said even though the area has been given a clean bill of health, the

damage has been done.

"This still has a tremendous economic impact on the growth of our community," he said. "We've gone with this plague for years and I think our community deserves some kind of monetary compensation."

Delaney had earlier said that a policy is being developed in cases such as this and although each case will be studied individually, there will be a uniform set of data to determine if a municipality deserves compensation.

Delaney estimated that \$50 million had been spent on the project up to this point and that \$500,000 will be spent yearly to maintain it.