

County unlikely spot for radioactive waste dump

By CAROLYN KUMA
Niagara Gazette

Although the decision rests with a state commission, Niagara County is not likely to be chosen for New York's radioactive waste disposal site.

That's because radioactive wastes left in Lewiston by the federal government during development of the atomic bomb and other radioactive wastes found elsewhere in the county could affect monitoring of a new site, said Barbara Youngberg, an environmental radiation specialist with the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

New York seeks to establish a low-level radioactive waste disposal facility by 1993. Regulations governing site selection will be the subject of an informational meeting at 7 p.m. today and public hearing Sept. 30, both in Hamburg Town Hall.

Federal law was amended last year to require each state to either establish its own site or join with other states to develop a joint site. New York responded by enacting the state's Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Act, to establish a state site.

Under federal law, low-level radioactive waste includes most radioactive wastes, but not spent nuclear fuel. Radioactive materials

are widely used in electric power generation, medicine, industry and research.

Currently, most of the state's waste is sent elsewhere for disposal. Waste also has been disposed of at West Valley, where there is a nuclear plant. Because of the plant, West Valley is excluded from consideration as a state site, Ms. Youngberg said.

"You wouldn't want to store the wastes somewhere that already has radioactivity, because it would affect your ability to monitor. It would give you conflicting information," she said.

That would seem to rule out Niagara Coun-

ty, where there are 255,000 cubic yards of radioactive wastes and residues. The federal government has decided to leave those wastes forever at the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works in Lewiston, now the Niagara Falls Storage Site.

And 126 acres of that property — land used by the U.S. Army in the 1940s for the ordnance works — is set to be auctioned at 11 a.m. Wednesday in the Holiday Inn in Cheektowaga. Federal officials say all radioactive waste has been cleaned from that land.

Also in Niagara County, radioactive waste has been found on land now owned by CECOS International and near the company's 56th Street hazardous waste complex.

or 433-1028 if you have a Gazette delivery problem. Monday-Friday 5 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; weekends 6 a.m.-1 p.m.

047466