

# Modern Landfill bid for land rejected

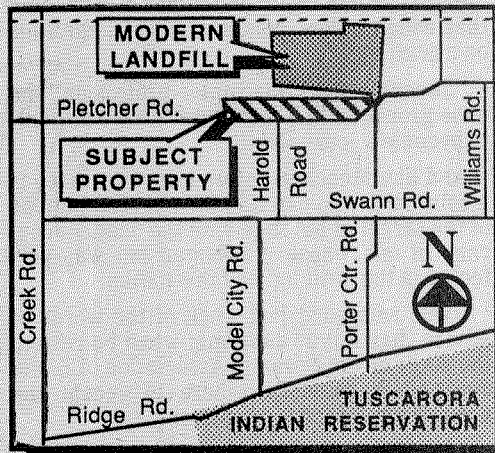
By CAROLYN KUMA  
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CHEEKTOWAGA — The owner of Modern Landfill in Lewiston was the lone bidder Wednesday for a parcel of land that once was part of the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works, where radioactive waste from the atomic bomb is stored.

Steve Washuta put in a bid for \$125,000 during a federal auction at the Holiday Inn in Cheektowaga.

The bid was rejected as too low, and Washuta has 15 days to raise his bid, said Paul F. Lee, realty specialist for the federal General Services Administration.

The site, called the Ransomville Test Annex, was most recently used by the U.S. Labor Department as a heavy equipment training site for U.S. Job Corps workers. It is not part of the 191-acre ordnance works site, but is part of the 7,500 acres originally used for the ordnance works in the 1940s by the U.S. Army in its development of the atomic



bomb.

If the bid is not raised, the government will reassess the offer, Lee said, perhaps putting the land up for another auction. He said the government was seeking fair market value

for the land based on an appraisal, but would not say what that value was.

Washuta would not comment on his plans for the 126 acres of land, which is adjacent to Modern Landfill.

Federal government officials say the annex land has been decontaminated of radioactivity. But the former ordnance works, now called the Niagara Falls Storage Site, will forever contain about 255,000 cubic yards of radioactive waste and residues.

The annex land is zoned as light industrial, but Lewiston officials have said they do not want to see a landfill developed there.

However, Lee said the federal government had no stipulation for the land's usage. He said Washuta would have to get applicable state, county and town permits if he chose to use the site for a landfill.

John Spagnoli, regional director of the state Department of Environmental Conservation, said the state Health Department would have to conduct a radiological study of

the site before landfill permits could be issued by DEC.

But he said the DEC would have no problem with the site being a landfill "from a strictly environmental point of view. DEC would follow health department restrictions, but Steve's (Washuta) a good guy. The last time the health department made recommendations about the site he's on now he followed them."

Lewiston officials, who have been wrestling with Modern over truck traffic on town roads, are less optimistic. The town board considered bidding for the site, but vetoed the idea because of potential liability, said Deputy Town Supervisor Robert E. Lee.

"The original Modern Landfill site is 200 acres, only about 15 of which have been used so far. I don't think it (the bid) has any particular bearing right now. But certainly they aren't out to buy it to put a recreational park there," Robert Lee said.

"It looks like there's no end in sight," said Councilman Joan Gipp.