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Donald A. Gamble, second from right, and Jerry Blust, right, lead a tour Wednesday of the cleanup project at the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works.

## Ordnance works will pass into history

### *Cleanup to put Lewiston site back on the market*

By NEIL GRAVES  
News Niagara Bureau

LEWISTON — Nearly a half-century of radioactive-contamination will be come to an end Sept. 3 when the U.S. Department of Energy completes a remediation project at the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works.

Portions of the 191-acre site will then be sold at auction. Officials of Bechtel Inc., which is managing the cleanup, say the date of the auction and the size of the lots have not been determined.

The final phase of the cleanup began Monday and will include the burial of 3,700 cubic yards of contaminated soil and 53 barrels of waste under 18 inches of topsoil and two feet of clay.

The project, federal officials said, will solve a problem that be-

gan in 1944 when the former War Department shut down a 50-building, TNT-production facility. The site soon began receiving shipments of mysterious substances called K-65, L-30, L-50 and F-32.

In a sense, Lewiston was getting a jump on the rest of the nation — it was entering the nuclear age. The mysterious compounds were being used in the Manhattan Project which resulted in the first atomic bomb.

The main complex at the site seemed to a dairy farm, said Donald A. Gamble, site operations manager for Bechtel.

After the war the property was under the control of various private enterprises, including National Lead of Ohio, which used it into the 1950s. But by the '80s, the site was a largely deserted field of

weeds that had a 165-foot-high silo full of uranium residue. In 1981 the silo began leaking into a drainage system, stretching nearly 2 1/4 miles away.

The Department of Energy then called in Bechtel.

All the contaminated waste at the ordnance works is considered low-level.

The 10-year cleanup will cost \$40 million.

Town of Lewiston officials believe that when the government holds its auction, the town may be first in line for the bidding. Gamble said he does not know if the town has a right of first refusal, but Councilman Calvin C. Schultz said, "I think we do."

Schultz said that the town could use the land to develop a light industrial park.