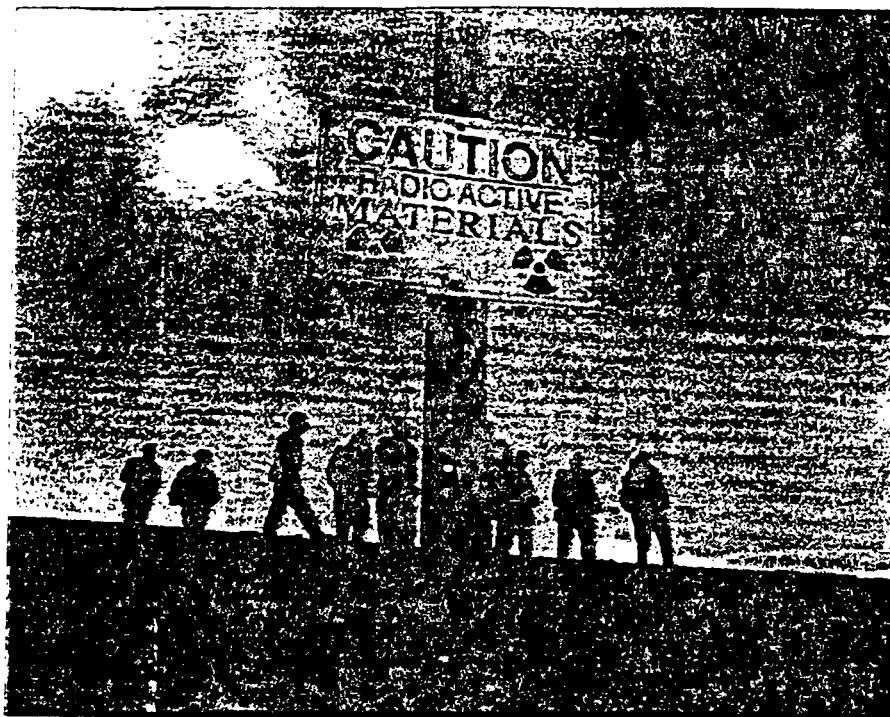


Radioactive walk



David McLain/Niagara Gazette

A group of people toured the Niagara Falls Storage Site on Monday, walking over a mound that covers radioactive wastes and residues.

Rad site gets fresh look

HOT TIME: A subcommittee of scientists begins its investigation of a Lewiston radioactive site.

By Mary Wozniak
Niagara Gazette

A breath of fresh air blew into Lewiston on Monday.

It came in the form of five scientists who flew in on behalf of the National Research Council, the principal operating agency of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Engineering.

They came to take a look, in the flesh, at what has become a sore point for residents concerned about the environmental health and safety of their community: the Niagara Falls Storage Site, and

the Department of Energy's plan to put a final cap on the 255,000 cubic yards of radioactive waste and residue buried there.

They heard the energy department give a two-hour presentation on what has been done to contain the site during a morning session at the Holiday Inn on Grand Island. They took a tour of the Lewiston site, located on Fletcher Road near Lutts Road.

They even climbed to the top of the 35-foot-high, grass-covered mound that houses the radioactive material, which lies beneath an interim clay cap covering the 10-acre site. It's a cap that the energy department wants to add several more feet of clay to, which, it claims, will contain the material safely for 200 to 1,000 years.

Other agencies, such as the federal Environmental Protection

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Agency, the state Department of Health and state Department of Environmental Conservation, disagree. They say that the 4,000 cubic yards of high-level radioactive residues there can only be safely contained at a storage site that will be safe for 10,000 years. However, none currently exists.

"What you're providing is a fresh look on an old topic," Timothy Henderson, president of Residents Organized for Lewiston and Porter Environments, told the group with a detectable note of hope in his voice.

"We hope it's fresh," said Robert Catlin of the University of Texas.

DETAILS: More on yesterday's session, 3A.

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