

Scientists tour Manhattan Project

Schedule and short notice upsets residents

Four scientists representing the National Academy of Sciences were in Lewiston Monday, May 2, as part of an information gathering mission on the radioactive dump on Pletcher Road.

The five scientists participated in a busy day, which included a two hour presentation by representatives from the Department of Energy, a public speaking period, a tour of the site, and a public discussion period on behalf of the National Research Council, the principal operating agency of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Engineering.

Area residents were aware the scientists would be coming sometime this past week, but they were not informed of the exact details of the day's activities until Friday, April 29. In addition, the resi-

dents were upset because of the timing of the presentation. Many people were not able to clear their schedule to participate in the activities, which went from 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

The scientists, Robert Catlin, Thomas Burke, James Johnson, Jr. and Raymond Wymer, were called to Lewiston to tour the 10-acre site and provide a recommendation on whether the Department of Energy's proposal to place a clay cap over the 255,000 cubic yards of materials is sufficient to keep the residues from contaminating the ground water or the immediate area.

The scientists are expected to look at the toxicity of the materials being stored at the site, how they are contained and how the health and safety of the area's residents can be best ensured.

The Department of Energy, which is overseeing the Niagara Falls Storage Site where the materials from the Manhattan Project are being stored, said the proposed final clay cap will keep the materials safely contained for 200 to 1,000 years.

However, many area residents want to see the materials removed and taken to another storage facility.

The National Academy of Science will hold several more meetings before issuing its preliminary report on the site. That report is expected to be completed sometime in September.

Once the report is completed, the Department of Energy is not obligated to follow the recommendations.