

Residents want waste moved from Lewiston

COSTLY: *Estimates for removing radioactive wastes as high as \$100 million.*

By Betsy Spratt

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LEWISTON — Move it!

That's what residents suggested Ronald Kirk of the U.S. Department of Energy do with the radioactive waste stored at the Niagara Falls Storage Site near Lutts and Pletcher roads.

The audience of residents and environmentalists suggested the idea during a Community Alliance meeting Thursday at the Senior Center on Pletcher Road.

The site was used to manufacture explosives during World War II, said Kirk, a site manager with the energy department's Former Sites Restoration Division. In 1944, it became part of the Manhattan Engineer District, the predecessor of the energy department, and was used to store radioactive residues and wastes from uranium ore processing conducted during development of the atomic bomb.

Approximately 250,000 cubic yards of radioactive materials are stored at the site, Kirk said. But storage of K65 residue, with its unusually high level of uranium, was of particular concern to the audience.

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"Every area that has had K65 storage has had problems," said Tim Henderson, president of Residents Organized for the Lewiston-Porter Environment. "In March of 1992, residents in a 2-mile radius of Fernald, Ohio, took the energy department to court and were given \$73 million for the decreases in their property values."

Henderson said the goal of ROLE is to have the K65 residue transported to a high-level radioactive waste repository when one is built.

However, the cost of exhuming the material would be too great, Kirk said. Also, transporting the matter to another location would pose a risk. "It would cost \$100 million to exhume the material," he said.

Henderson said that not only could the matter be moved for \$30 million less than the energy department's projections, the move would eliminate the site's \$500,000 annual maintenance cost.

A 1986 energy department study concluded the wastes could be stored safely at the site until a final cap is installed, and can be left there for 200 to 1,000 years.

WHAT'S NEXT: *ROLE will present its views on the future of the radioactive waste at its meeting on Nov. 3.*