



James Neiss/Niagara Gazette

HARD SELL: Dick Jackson of Pletcher Road, left, says the Niagara Falls Storage Site near his home in Lewiston has made it difficult for him to find a buyer.

Falls site on list of DOE cleanups

DELAY: One resident, however, blasts federal officials for delaying the project.

By Tracy Barber

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LEWISTON — The Niagara Falls Storage Site on Pletcher Road is near the top of a federal list of dump sites to be cleaned up, but the actual cleanup hinges on the results of a feasibility study by the National Academy of Science.

The facility is near "the top of our priority list" of major sites to be cleaned up by the federal government, said Thomas Grumbly, assistant secretary for Environmental Management with the U.S. Department of Energy.

Grumbly and Rep. John J. LaFalce, D-Tonawanda, discussed the site and cleanup plans with about 15 residents Monday. The duo also toured the facility, which holds wastes from the Manhattan project and other defense

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projects.

Grumbly said there is \$75 million allocated for cleaning up the nation's waste sites. Because of limited funding, many projects and programs cannot be completed all at once, he said.



T. Grumbly

"We can't do it entirely. We actually proposed a 15 percent increase (in cleanup funding), but the Republicans cut it all back," Grumbly said.

Timothy Henderson, president of the Residents Organized for Lewiston's and Porter's Environment (ROLE), accused the DOE of being a holdout in plans to clean up the facility. He said the Environmental Protection Agency, the

New York Department of Environmental Conservation and the Niagara County Health Department already have deemed the site a high level priority for cleanup.

"The DOE is the only one holding on," Henderson told Grumbly and LaFalce. "Their the lone wolf. They called in the (National Academy of Science) for a third-party ruling."

Henderson, who represents 50 residents, said the academy study may try to prove the acceptability of the site for storage.

Residents have long complained about concerns that the wastes contained in the site pose health and safety threats. Grumbly said the DOE hopes to find a solution "acceptable to the community."

"What we want is for them to move it (safely) or use it," Henderson said of the waste.

"I find myself trapped in my home," said Dick Jackson, who owns a home on Pletcher Road. "I can't sell (it)."