

Army Corps of Engineers briefs residents on waste sites

by Larry Austin *520 H P FRONT PAGE*

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had good news and bad news for Lewiston and Porter residents at a Tuesday public forum.

Ray Pilon of the Corps of Engineers Buffalo district office said the bad news is the Corps has identified chemical contamination at the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works location. The good news: "We have found no evidence contamination is migrating off-site," Pilon said.

The Corps held the public forum Tuesday night at the Lewiston Senior Center on Pletcher Road to update residents on the remediation work at the Niagara Falls Storage Site and the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works location.

The Lake Ontario Ordnance Works (LOOW) is a 7,500-acre site in the Towns of Lewiston and Porter used by the Department of

Defense during World War II. Department of Defense activities were conducted on 2,500 acres of the site with 5,000 surrounding acres as a "buffer zone," according to the Corps of Engineers. The Niagara Falls Storage Site is a 191-acre parcel on the LOOW site where radioactive waste from the Manhattan Project, the project that developed the first atomic bomb, are stored.

Pilon attributed the good news to the high concentration of clay in the area's soil. Pilon also said the Corps is on-schedule with their overall remedial efforts at the LOOW site.

Pilon cautioned, however, that the Corps must still investigate "groundwater issues." The Corps has a groundwater plan in place, he said, they have identified funding needs, and their headquarters will respond at a later date to their funding request.

Phase Two of the remediation work will include a focused sampling in areas where Department of Defense contaminants at LOOW were found in Phase One.

According to Pilon, upcoming work, in addition to Phase Two of remediation, will include:

- TNT waste pipeline and CWM Chemical Services sewer line removal from former LOOW property. The work will be completed in 1999 at cost of \$1.5 million.

- Remediation of a drum trench (\$2 million) and a burn pit (\$4 million) located on former LOOW property now owned by CWM Chemical Services.

In response to a resident's question, Pilon said the remedial investigation will determine if and where to move the radioactive waste at the Niagara Falls Storage Site. No decision has been made to move the waste at this time, Pilon said. Last fall, the Corps decontaminated a garage-type building (Building 403) because of its dilapidated condition, Pilon noted earlier in the meeting.

Sandra Chaloux of Chaloux Environmental Communications, Inc., briefed residents on the upcoming creation of a Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) that will review the progress of the restoration work and act as a forum between government and the community for discussion of restoration-related matters.

The next information session is planned for the autumn of 1999.

A Pittsburgh attorney handed out a health screening survey to residents at the meeting. Ronald L. Kuis is conducting a survey of local residents for incidents of cancer.

Results of the cancer screening survey will be provided to the law firm of Knauf Craig Koegel and Shaw, representatives of John Syms and the Somerset Group, Inc., claimants against the U.S. for alleged chemical contamination. The Somerset Group owns property connected to the LOOW site.

The Corps of Engineers also provided a number for those with health concerns to call. Residents with health questions can call Dr. Karim Rimawi of the New York State Department of Health at 1-800-458-1158, extension 6461.