

LOOW meeting features cleanup concerns of residents

By Steve Trask

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YOUNGSTOWN — Concerns were raised by residents Wednesday night about clean up efforts and the current status of the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works and Niagara Falls Storage sites during a meeting of the LOOW Restoration Advisory Board.

Officials from the Army Corps of Engineers, the Towns of Lewiston and Porter and the Lewiston-Porter Central School District were among those who heard questions about potential radioactive and chemical contaminants on property in the two towns.

Thomas Freck, a community member of the RAB, asked Judith S. Leithner, project manager of the NFSS, if any off-site investigations would be made for radioactive waste.

"If there is an area that is suspected of being contaminated, I

have to have the site declared a vicinity site and then we could do a study," she said. "Otherwise, I am restricted to the area that is designated to the Niagara Falls Storage Site."

At one point, RAB community member John Symms insisted there was more waste out there than is being disclosed. Leithner said she was going by the data she had compiled thus far.

"We are still completing studies on the site," she said. "Some of them won't be completed until next March. One thing I don't want to do is give you incomplete data."

Resident Marn Wells said she was grateful for the way the Corps was conducting its studies.

"The fact you are trying to be more careful leaves me more reassured you are trying to do your best," she said.

Leithner said one of the big

differences between studies of the past and today is better analytical techniques to investigate such sites.

Bill Kowalewski, the project manager of the LOOW site, was questioned by Freck about possible radioactive contamination on that portion of the project.

"We have reason to believe that plutonium and cesium, two of the most dangerous elements, are on that site," he said.

Kowalewski said his project is currently working on TNT contamination in 3,750 feet of pipeline at the site.

"It was reported that nitroglycerine was on the site; it is TNT," he said. "We are looking at alternatives for cleaning up and containing the TNT on the site."

Dr. John E. Vena, professor and director of Social and Preventive Medicine at the

University at Buffalo, explained to the audience different types of health studies. He said they may want to consider looking at the general and specific health of people living in the area.

The RAB set its next meeting for 7 p.m. Nov. 7, in the board room of the Primary Building at the Lewiston-Porter Central School Complex, 4061 Creek Road, Youngstown.