

## Children's health is at risk at Lewiston, Tonawanda sites

Previous articles published in the Niagara Gazette should have awakened our residents and political leaders to the fact that we have been experiencing unusually high rates of cancer in the working class communities surrounding the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Linde/Praxair cleanup sites in the Town of Tonawanda and the Lew-Port High School site in Lewiston, both having remarkable toxic agent similarities.

Unfortunately, and tragically, the Defense Department's U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers Union Carbide-Linde/Praxair radioactive cleanup site, Bldg. 14, in the Town of Tonawanda, is still highly toxic and dangerous to human life. It will be so for at least 200 years, possibly for centuries more if not completely demolished, according to Corps published reports handed out at a recent public meeting.

After spending nearly \$10 million to clean up Bldg. 14 in 1996-1998 that resulted in a botched failure, we are now told that an additional taxpayer-funded \$14 million total removal razing plan is urgently needed. If approved, it will contain uncertainties involving the safety of Holmes Elementary students, teachers and construction workers, not to mention Linde workers and nearby residents.

Working to insure total safety standards, myself, local radiation experts and members of the Town of Tonawanda School Board and building and grounds are seriously considering the need for a Birdair type of enclosure to protect Holmes school before starting the demolition of Bldg. 14 so as to eliminate any air dispersal and possible inhalation of the highly toxic African-grade K-65 uranium ore residue still present in the building, surrounding soil and footers. The U.S. Army Corps, I am told, has used containment air-dome structure technology on past projects, so this is not a totally new idea or engineering concept.

Also in question are past government and corporate remediation and disposal practices performed at Linde where past health safety guidelines and soil removal procedures have been egregiously breached. Just recently in

November, appearing in full protective coverings, safeguarding their own radiation contamination, Corps personnel are reported to have been working within 300 yards of nearby residents homes and Holmes school, showing no apparent regard for spreading possible radionuclide agents which still are admittedly present on numerous ground cover areas of the Linde site.

Because of their fragile body structure and immune system, the health status of children attending Holmes Elementary is of utmost concern.

There is much evidence to support the case that low-level radioactive contamination in the form of airborne dust particles and radon gas does cause a variety of cancers, one of the primary being lung carcinoma and related gene damage, which could have adverse generation to generation consequences. Hopefully, by using human biomonitoring, the long awaited and newly formed coalition program of the New York State Health Dept. and U. S. Centers for Disease Control, it will become a life-saving priority for the Linde site.

Town of Tonawanda politicians putting votes aside need to get their heads out of the sand so they can access the humility and courage to respond to the humanitarian needs of the people they serve who are admittedly much less fortunate than they are.

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