



• Now in Our 61st Year Publishing • Reaching Over 100,000 Readers •

Niagara Frontier Publications

Nothing Works Like a Local Newspaper!

Niagara/Wheatfield Tribune
Grand Island PennySaver
Grand Island Dispatch
Lewiston-Porter Sentinel

• In Our Papers • About Us • Links • Advertising •




U.S. Army Corps insists Niagara County's LOOW site is safe

Porter supervisor reveals news of exploding canisters

by Bill Angus
Lewiston Porter Sentinel, June 12, 2004

On Tuesday, June 8 the Restoration Advisory Board threw open the doors of the Lewiston Senior Center to residents for an information session sponsored by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The session was to provide the latest information about clean-up work being conducted at the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works and Niagara Falls Storage Site. The session was also a chance for residents to learn and ask questions of the agencies involved at the sites and in the area. Refreshments were provided and a series of information stations were set up around the room with courteous staff and volunteers to assist residents.

Station number one for instance had information on the LOOW site. A summary of investigations by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was available free of charge. This document, which exceeded 100 pages was also available in disc format. Other stations covered the NFSS, the RAB and the history of the sites. Literature, including summaries and reports abounded. Despite the warm sunny weather, in excess of 50 residents attended.

Becky Zayatz, vice chair of the RAB, made the introductions of a panel consisting of: Michael Basile, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Paul Dicky, Niagara County Department of Health, Kent Johnson, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Judith Leithner, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, John Mitchell, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, David Romano, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Aura Weinstein, New York State Department of Health.

Mert Wiepert, Supervisor for the town of Porter, told the gathering that he was glad to see a good turnout since it demonstrates to the Army Corps of Engineers that residents are concerned about their health and environment. Wiepert then discussed his recent site visit to the Army National Guard property on the north side of Balmer Road.

Safety Issue

Wiepert and the Porter Town Board had received complaints from residents concerning metal buildings being demolished and sent to salvage companies, leaving mud along the roadways. Local residents were concerned about their safety. What were thought to be empty grenade size gas canisters were also being sent off-site for scrap. Wiepert took a tour of the site due to residents' concerns over the demolition and the removal of canisters.

Wiepert also expressed concern about asbestos in the buildings and the fact that the buildings were being removed to ground level only, leaving large cement slabs. Wiepert stated, "this concerned us, is there some reason they are not taking these cement slabs out? I don't know for sure ... can they dig in the ground? They did a radiation test ... they reported back to the town that everything was fine. They said that there was testing done all over that site and [that there was] no radiation there."

Wiepert told the Sentinel that there had been problems with the canisters. One canister had gone to a Niagara Falls salvage yard where it exploded releasing what he has been told was riot gas and causing the yard to be evacuated. According to Wiepert, the canisters also went to a smelting firm in Canada where one of the canisters exploded causing the evacuation of the building. Wiepert expressed obvious concern over what might be in the canisters.

When asked why he was at the meeting Wiepert responded, "I'm a concerned supervisor. I'm concerned about the residents of this Town. I think this is a great meeting to inform the people what's going on, on that LOOW site."

Residents Want Answers

200-1e

NFSS_08.08_0543_a

1/15/2009