

LOOW CAC to further discuss latest IWCS documents

by Terry Duffy

Look for more discussion of interest on the future of the Interim Waste Containment Structure at the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works Community Action Council meeting, Wednesday, Feb. 15, on the Lewiston-Porter campus.

That session, taking place from 6:30 to 9 p.m. in the Alumni Room of the Lew-Port Community Resource Center, will continue on discussions heard last month regarding radon concentrations at the IWCS. (See a recap of the January CAC session on www.wnypapers.com.)

Chief topic will be the recently issued U.S. Army Corps of Engineers technical memoranda and reports covering radon assessments and meteorological data at the IWCS. Also there will be discussion on the effects of hypothetical exposures to radon contaminants at the site.

For decades, it seems, IWCS, the 1980s-era, temporary 10-acre disposal cell housing high-level radioactive waste, located within the U.S. government-owned Niagara Falls Storage Site on Pletcher

Road, has piqued the community's interest. The cordoned-off, isolated property, however, remains secretive to most with regards to its wartime links, the complexities of its stored radioactive contents, the extent and its dangers.

Last fall, the Corps unveiled a detailed, months-long feasibility study process it is embarking on en route to anticipated remediation of the IWCS. At the leadoff Sept. 28 session, Corps reps introduced the community to a successful \$4 billion-plus remediation project it completed in Fernald, Ohio. The Corps compared that site to the IWCS, discussed its cleanup performed there, the possibilities for Lewiston and followed with various alternative options for cleanup in Lewiston. (See the report from *Sentinel*, Oct. 1, 2011, on www.wnypapers.com.)

From that have come in-depth discussions locally on the IWCS. They have come both by CAC, and also by the LOOW Restoration Advisory Board, another area group, which, like CAC, is very much

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concerned with the IWCS and its future. Both continue to analyze the site's problems, promote the need for greater transparency with respect to its contents and dangers to residents, and urge the Corps to pursue a desired path of full remediation/cleanup of the cell.

Much of that transparency involves educating the community when it comes to understanding the realities of the IWCS and its very complicated cleanup. And that's where CAC has its focus, both for this coming Wednesday's session, and for a session on March 15. At both, CAC aims to further engage the community to better understand the

actual situation at IWCS, as it plans for a more productive session with the Corps March 28 at the Lewiston Senior Center. "We need to understand the protections of what the Corps has to do (with the IWCS)," said Corps contracted technical facilitator Doug Sarno at last month's CAC session on Corps future plans at the site and its impact on the community. "That's what these documents do."

Both the Radon Assessment Technical Memorandum (issued January 2012) and the Meteorological Data Evaluation technical report (issued December 2011) are available online at the CAC website, loowcac.org and can be accessed via the

Corps at <http://www.lrb.usace.army.mil/fusrap/nfss/index.htm#Documents>.

At the CAC discussion Wednesday, issues such as cap removal, radon concentrations within the IWCS cell, radon releases and exposure, the impact to off-site receptors such as neighboring residences and the community at large, as well as the needed safeguards involved will all be discussed, should a scenario of fully opening up the IWCS ever become reality. "You have to consider all the costs and risks involved," said Sarno, of the potential \$4 billion IWCS cleanup in Lewiston.

Sarno said that Fernald residents ultimately had to consider

all the factors, including cost in determining its best approach: "You have to look at the big picture."

Fernald residents, however, did end up with the presence of an onsite disposal landfill, 90 acres in size that contains 3 million cubic yards of left-over radioactive waste from the cleanup that was placed there for permanent burial.

Lewiston area residents have staunchly opposed any contents of the IWCS remaining. In fact, many have called for complete remediation and cleanup of the site, returning the property to its original form as farmland and residential areas.

"The difficulty here is what

you're going to have to go through to make it safe," commented Lewiston-Porter Superintendent of Schools Chris Roser at last month's CAC session.

These issues, plus the importance of better community understanding of the problems, the solutions, the project cleanup practicalities, and engaging in better constructive input with the Corps will all be discussed on Wednesday, as CAC prepares for the March 28 Corps session at the Lewiston Senior Center to discuss the documents.

The Wednesday session is open to the public and residents are encouraged to stop by.