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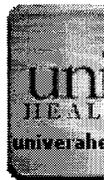
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Corps' cleanup of toxic former nuclear sites bearing fruit

By **STEPHEN WATSON**
News Northtowns Bureau
4/18/01

Anyone who has built sand castles one bucketful at a time will appreciate the milestone recently reached by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Buffalo District.

Workers have excavated and removed 250,000 tons of contaminated material from three radioactive sites in the Town of Tonawanda, Lt. Col. [REDACTED] the district commander, said.

The cleanup at the three sites, where radioactive materials from the government's World War II effort to build an atomic bomb were stored, has been controversial. Some residents say the corps is leaving behind soil contaminated with radiation.

But local officials say the milestone is a sign of the progress being made after 50 years of inaction at the dump sites.

"We've been impressed with the progress made by the Corps of Engineers from the day they came into the area, because they put a shovel into the ground almost immediately," Tonawanda Supervisor [REDACTED] said.

The corps announced that it has removed 250,000 tons of soil, construction debris and other materials from three sites since 1998.

The material most contaminated with uranium, radium and thorium is shipped to disposal facilities in Utah. The least contaminated material is sent to in-state landfills.

The corps removed 150,000 tons of material from the Ashland I site and 52,000 tons from the Ashland II site, both of which are located off River Road, and 48,000 tons from the former Linde Air Products site on East Park Drive.

The material from the three sites is loaded into 20-foot metal containers and shipped by rail. About 12,000 containers have been shipped from the three sites, the corps reported.

If placed end to end, the row of containers would stretch 45 miles.

The corps cleanup of Ashland II is complete, and Ashland I is nearly complete. An additional 35,000 tons remain to be removed from Linde, [REDACTED] said.



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An additional 35,000 tons remain to be removed from Linde, ██████ said.

The corps soon will begin testing at the former Tonawanda landfill and Mud Flats, the first step in determining what course of action to take at those sites. Testing at the Seaway sites, three parcels located between the Ashland I and II properties, has yet to be scheduled.

In the course of its cleanup efforts, the corps has hosted 13 meetings to update the public on the status of work at the Linde, Ashland, Tonawanda landfill and other sites.

The corps is committed to protecting the health of local residents and the environment, DeWillie said.

He said the cleanup has been "comprehensive and responsive to the public, and we continue to encourage that public participation and move forward together as a team."

Among the biggest fans of the Corps are executives at Praxair, the producer of industrial gases based at the former Linde site.

██████████ Praxair site manager, has complained that prior delays in the removal of contaminated soil wreaked havoc with the company's expansion plans.

"Praxair is extremely happy with the progress that has been achieved to date through the joint efforts" of government, corps and company officials, Conroy said in a statement.

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