

BUF. NEWS 2-10-95
**Plutonium may be stored
at Seneca Army Depot**

ROMULUS (AP) — Seneca Army Depot is one of four sites being considered as a storage base for plutonium from dismantled nuclear weapons, an assignment that could generate hundreds of jobs.

The U.S. Department of Energy confirmed this week that a 624-acre corner of the 11,000-acre depot was on a short-list of storage sites for 20,000 "plutonium pits" about the size of bowling balls.

The trigger of most atomic weapons is a hollow object made largely of plutonium 239 that is sealed with steel when a nuclear weapon is dismantled, placed in steel storage barrels and stored in aboveground bunkers.

The Department of Defense has offered to turn over a section of the depot where nuclear weapons were long believed to have been stored until 1993, said depot spokesman Jerry Whitaker.

All but 287 of the depot's 800 civilian workers were laid off that year, and 500 soldiers were transferred. Whitaker estimated that the contract could generate 300 to 500 jobs in this region 50 miles southeast of Rochester.

Three other sites in Nevada, Texas and Washington state are on the Energy Department's list.