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# Maziarz says residue must come out

By Scott Leffler

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Radioactive waste at the vacant, abandoned Simonds Saw and Steel site in Lockport must be removed, State Sen. George D. Maziarz, R-North Tonawanda, said Tuesday.

He said he has spoken with representatives of the state Department of Conservation and that both he and the department agree on removal.

Maziarz said the Department of Energy and the Army Corps of Engineers frequently have two options for environmental remediation: on-site remediation, where the focus is to conceal and contain, and actual removal.

He said, "I let the DEC know that (on-site remediation) is unacceptable in my mind. They agree with me, and they're in constant contact with the Corps of Engineers. I'm putting pressure on the DEC to make sure the method is removal."

Maziarz also said that since the primary customer for the radioactive products was the federal government, they should be held responsible for the costs of the cleanup.

The corps announced last week that it plans to add the Simonds site to its list of 18 sites on the Formerly Utilized Sites Remediation Candy Walters, a public



Photo by Dennis Stierer, Lockport Journal

The former Simonds Saw and Steel plant on Ohio Street, ... Program (FUSRAP).

affairs specialist with the corps offices in Washington, D.C., said she does not know when the takeover will occur, when the property will be cleaned up or which remediation procedure will be followed.

Maziarz said, "I think that the federal government is stepping up to the plate" by asking the corps to assess the site.

The Simonds site was featured last week in a USA Today series dealing with federal government contract work at approximately 100 plants nationwide in the 1940s and 1950s. The work involved radioactive substances.

The series noted that

workers at the plants were sometimes not told they were handling radioactive substances and that proper safety procedures were not in place.

Between 1948 and 1956, Simonds workers processed 25 million to 35 million pounds of uranium and 30,000 to 40,000 pounds of thorium.

About 9.1 acres that is still considered contaminated is vacant.

Maziarz said that there have been chemical cleanups in his district but that the Simonds site is the first radioactive cleanup.

"I've dealt a lot with hazardous waste, but I guess I'll never get used to it," he said.