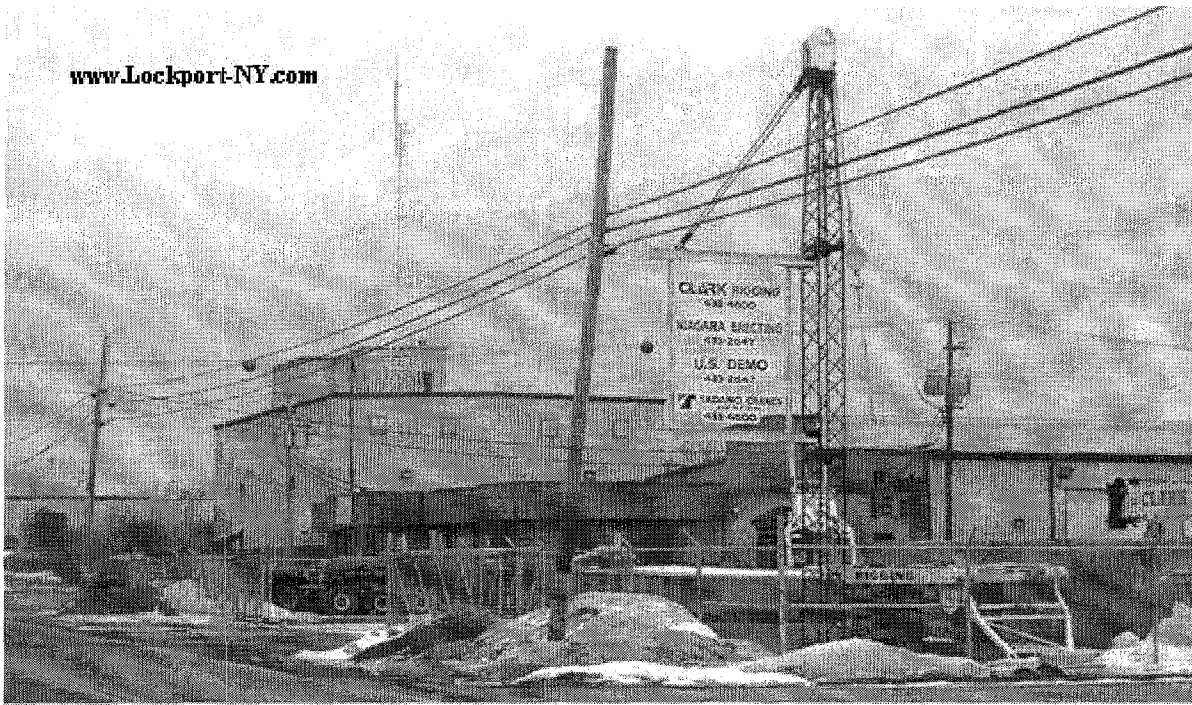


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Big Business going on along Ohio Street.

An assortment of heavy equipment business operations have moved in or expanded on the east side of Ohio Street in Lockport. Some of the property

had previously been used by a national chemical company but has been vacant for many years.

Clark Rigging and associated firms Niagara Erecting take up considerably more room along Ohio than can be seen from our photo. (2/8/01) To be filed under Lockport Lines

Hundreds Seek Info & Money At Lockport Simonds Radioactivity Meeting



Hundreds of Lockportians jammed the main ballroom at the Lockport *Best Western Inn* Tuesday, 2/6, to learn what the United States government was going to be doing about cleaning up the former Simonds Saw and Steel site off Ohio Street. And of even more interest was government policies for paying "benefits" to those who may have suffered from chronic occupational exposure to radioactive milling debris at the site.

The audience was told that the plan for decontamination of the site is a subject of extensive study by the United States Army Corps of Engineers which has taken responsibility for the cleanup. Those studies have just begun. Of more interest to the assembled audience was that the United States Department of Energy will be leading the government service of providing health benefits for those who may have been seriously impacted by chronic work exposure to radioactive uranium and thorium at the Simonds site during 1940's and 50's. Those were years fabrication work involving radioactive materials was going on there. The U.S. Government appears to be the only recourse for financial recovery since the Simonds family carefully shielded themselves financially when they sold out to Guterl Specialty Steel and Guterl eventually went bankrupt.



There were few former Simonds employees from the 40's and 50's at the Lockport forum since most have now passed on due to age. However families of those who have died were there in force, apparently hoping that they will be able to cash in on government financial settlements being made available from the recently passed Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000. Also present were many workers for Guterl who did not work with radioactive material but are still hoping to somehow get in on the benefit stream. In order to obtain the government money former employees or their families will have to demonstrate that health problems, and in some cases death, was caused by exposure to radioactivity. Such afflictions as cancer would be a prime possibility for claim under the government program since it has been previously established that certain forms of cancer can be caused by radioactive exposure. Because for the past forty years there have been few if any publicized suspicions of any radioactivity impacting worker health at Simonds or its successor company, Guterl Specialty Steel, those who seek government funds will have a difficult time establishing a connection.

That's where lawyers come in. A number of attorneys were at the forum in a not-too-veiled attempt to solicit potential clients. And they were encountering a receptive audience. One Lockport attorney has already organized a "class action" suit. Others, some from out-of-town are expected to eagerly seek "a piece of the action."

At left: A government bureaucrat from the Department of Energy's Employee's Occupational and Illness Compensation Program lectures the attentive audience on how local relatives, and any still-living former Simonds employees may be able to get as much as \$150,000 in a lump sum settlement. Also making presentations to the audience were representatives of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (from Buffalo).

(2/7/01) To be filed under Environmental News

School Board Ignores Public Pleas, Boosts Spending & Taxes, Begins Closing Neighborhood Schools

The Lockport Superintendent of Schools sent a clear message to the Lockport Community Monday night, 2/5, that she has not only control of the Lockport Schools on a day-to-day basis but will now dictate changes in way education in Lockport will proceed for at least the next decade. Christine Neal showed she could count on a solid seven members of the Board of Education to rubber-stamp her radical ideas for reconfiguration of Lockport Schools---a mission she had to back away from two years ago when more than 2,000 residents strongly protested. Monday night the Board approved of Neal's plan to close neighborhood school Charlotte Cross on the city's west side and convert it to a taxpayer-paid baby-sitting center. Neal has termed the name "Early Childhood Center" for the building.

The Board also acted to boost spending by not only starting the baby-sitting service but to begin all-day Kindergarten in September. The ambitious expansion of school services comes despite suspension of plans to begin a Charter School in Lockport this September. Neal had previously said that her plan was necessary to combat a projected enrollment drain by the Greater Niagara Charter School. When that school failed to get State approval, Neal went ahead with her program regardless.

Board of Education members Renee Knight and David Blackley had been supportive of Neal's expansion of services program but had wanted to partly off-set the increased cost by cutting back on the bloated administrative overhead of the school district and reduce the ballooning number of school psychologists.