

Former nuclear workers should attend workshop

We encourage the former employees of the Ashland Oil, Linde Ceramics Plant and Seaway Industrial Park to make a short trip to Amherst this week to see if they're eligible for benefits.

U.S. Department of Labor officials will be available Tuesday through Friday at the Hampton Inn, 10 Flint St., Amherst, to explain the \$150,000 benefit that is available to eligible former workers or their families. They also will help with the filing of claim forms.

The money is for workers who are or were seriously ill from exposure to beryllium, silica or radiation while working for the U.S. Department of Energy or a company doing work for the department in the 1940s and 1950s.

There are 13 such sites in Western New York, including the former Simonds Saw and Steel in Lockport.

But even with so many sites, officials said that only 200 of the 12,500 claims filed nationally have come from Western New York.

That's why they're here this week.

"We want to make sure that those who are eligible to file a claim, file a claim," said Hal Glassman of the Labor Department. "We're not looking to deny people."

With that, however, is a cautionary note: Not everybody who worked at any of those places will be automatically eligible. Former workers must provide medical documentation of their disease and proof that they worked at an eligible site.

Officials will be available from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday and from 8 a.m. to noon Friday. To schedule an appointment, call toll-free, 1-866-363-6993.

If you think you're eligible, we again encourage you to check it out.