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TOWN OF TONAWANDA

Removal of incinerator begins today

By DEIDRE WILLIAMS
News Northtowns Bureau
4/27/2002

Years ago, the incinerator that burned garbage from the Town of Tonawanda, Kenmore and the City of Tonawanda was hailed as a "state-of-the-art municipal waste disposal facility," said Town Supervisor [REDACTED]

But an alteration in state regulations in the 1970s changed all that. Rather than spend \$15 million to bring the incinerator into compliance, officials decided to close it in 1982.

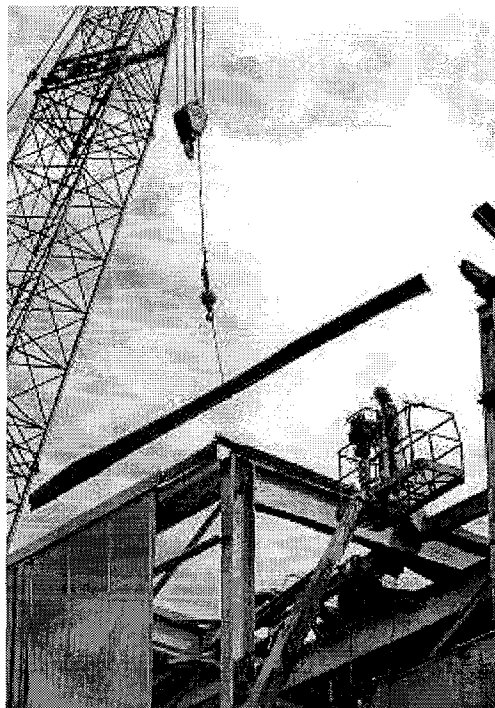
Today, demolition will begin to reduce the once-ballyhooed facility to piles of bricks, concrete and metal.

Officials from Erie County and the town converged Friday at the East Park Road site in the town to launch the two-month demolition and cleanup process. The incinerator will be dismantled with cranes, backhoes and bulldozers, instead of by a wrecking ball or implosion.

"This was a long time coming, and it was a lot of work getting things in place," said Town Board member Amy Murphy, chairwoman of the Highway and Intergovernmental Relations Committee. "I'm looking forward to new businesses. This is a huge piece of land with huge potential."

Several stories tall, the incinerator was built in 1968. After the state Department of Environmental Conservation enacted more stringent regulations in the 1970s to reduce emission levels, the town decided to close the facility.

For decades, the facility has remained vacant and fallen into disrepair. Critics call it an unsafe eyesore and say bringing it down is long overdue.



CHARLES LEWIS/Buffalo News
A worker uses a crane to lift a beam at the former Tonawanda incinerator. A two-month demolition project at the East Park Drive site was launched Friday.

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"I'm pleased to remove it," Moline said. "Now we can develop the land behind it - the mud flats."

The price tag for the demolition is \$300,000, Murphy said. The town is paying \$225,000, the county \$75,000.

This is the second eyesore in the town to undergo demolition. Two years ago, 840 pounds of explosives brought down what was left of the grain mill complex on Military Road. With cleanup and contract negotiations nearing completion, officials say that site is almost ready to be marketed.

"██████████ and I are known for knocking down buildings," joked Erie County Legislature Minority Leader ██████████ D-Kenmore, who spoke about the economic future of the 80-acre property on which the incinerator sits. Like the grain mill site, the incinerator property is within the town's Empire Zone, a state program that offers tax breaks and other incentives to businesses that locate there.

"The point of bringing (the incinerator) down is to open up more land for economic development," ██████████ said. "Most important is the potential for economic development this offers taxpayers. This is one of the last and largest tracts of land that can be developed in the town, and the incinerator sits right in the entranceway."

██████████ added that developers have been interested in the area for years and that officials hope to attract light industrial and distribution businesses to the location.

██████████ declined to name any parties that have inquired about the location, saying only that "developers are interested in coming as soon as it's ready."

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