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LOCAL/NATION

Cleanup

Continued from Page 1A

In 1999, the state required that Scott Technologies Inc., the owner of the former LaFrance site, remove about 2,000 cubic yards of contaminated dirt. That soil contained high levels of metals and some petroleum-related contaminants called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, or PAHs, according to the conservation department.

Scott Technologies also removed 11 tanks of waste oil and 85 capacitors that contained polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, a synthetic chemical compound used to lubricate electrical equipment. PCBs are no longer made, the conservation department reports.

"At the American LaFrance property, we're expecting to get a submittal from the Scott Technology folks about the pond and the recreation area," Peachey said. "When we get that, we'll see if we can come to some agreement as to what the next steps are."

Those steps could include more investigation, sampling and a cleanup, Peachey said.

Residents who came to Tuesday's session asked questions that ranged

from where does the cleanup stand to what are the personal risks associated with the contamination.

"I am here getting as much information as I can gather," said Valerie Fortier of Laurentian Place. She spent a good deal of time talking with Dawn Hettrick, a sanitary engineer for the Department of Health, about her well water.

"The well waters are contaminated, so the questions are, what should we be doing?" Fortier said. "We've lived there for 15 years. We drink spring water most of the time."

The Fortiers have experienced health problems that they believe may be caused by chemicals in their water.

While Hettrick did not offer any immediate action, she planned to investigate further.

Jack Keefe of Elmira pored over a diagram of the former factory site with Manmohan Mehta, an environmental engineer with the DEC, and questioned him on the cleanup of a boiler house on the property.

"There's a shed, and they were supposed to clean out the platinum and everything else (in it)," said Keefe, a former city councilman. "I always wondered if they cleaned up that contamination, which they may have."

Keefe brought up the pond and

the recreation area too.

"It's just things that I wanted to know if they (the state) had touched upon," he said.

The officials listened with open ears to the concerns of the public, scribbling notes on maps and listening to the history of the area from longtime residents.

The session was designed to give residents the opportunity to ask the questions that they might not have been able to ask at some of the larger information sessions at Southside High School.

"We don't want to overwhelm people with information, especially if they aren't interested in it," Peachey said. "If people have specific questions, then we want to be able to have them ask us those questions without having to sit through a lengthy presentation."

"We'll take questions at our office at any time," she added.

■ What's next — The Southside Advisory Committee will meet at 6 p.m. Monday in Room 104 at Southside High School, 777 S. Main St. Topics to be discussed include an environmental report on McNaught Field, review of the state's investigation by two independent environmental firms and a presentation on the committee's newly formed technical assistance team.

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