

Cleanup: Companies could be billed

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 Rand facility, where, investigators believe, the contamination originated. The state might hold other companies or parties responsible for the contamination, depending on what additional evidence turns up during the state's continuing investigation, Rodabaugh said.
 The \$18 million school was built in 1977-78 and opened in fall 1979. There is no evidence that district officials

uncovered any fuel tanks or were aware of the contamination during the school construction, Rodabaugh said.
 Soil tests done in 1977 did reveal widespread oil contamination on the property, Rodabaugh said.
 The oil is thought to have leaked from underground industrial fuel tanks. The school's pool and gymnasium were built over those former tanks, he said.

But investigators haven't been able to determine who received the soil contamination report and who knew about the contamination, Rodabaugh said.
 There also is no evidence thus far that the oil came from the long-polluted former American LaFrance industrial property next to the school, Rodabaugh said.
 State officials said in April that the LaFrance site is finally clean,

but it continues to test the soil there for more contaminants or buried fuel tanks.
 DaimlerChrysler claims it has no responsibility for the contamination because it never owned the Willys-Morrow company on the former Remington Rand site, said Ann Smith, a DaimlerChrysler spokeswoman.
 Unisys wants more information from the conservation department before it decides what, if any, responsibility it has, said Joseph Barrett, Unisys manager of corporate media relations.
 "There were many other manufacturing companies on the site before Unisys bought it," Barrett said.
 Unisys also believes the oil might have been spilled by a train on the railroad track behind the school and rail spurs onto the former Remington Rand site.
 Rodabaugh said it's possible the oil came from railroad spills, but the state hasn't yet received permission to go on railroad property and test it.
 The 50-acre fuel oil plume is about 15 feet underground. Investigators believe the contamination is at least 10 years old, but it could be 50 years old or more, Rodabaugh said.
 The state began investigating the contamination in 1988, when an oily sheen was reported on Miller Pond. The source of that oil was traced to the former Remington Rand property.
 The investigation found no surface oil contamination or a significant impact of residential areas along Willys and Morrow streets, said conservation department officials.
 Thus far, the state has spent about \$120,000 on the cleanup, but that price could climb to \$250,000 or more, Rodabaugh said.
 The state is injecting oxygen into the contaminated soil to speed up the natural decay of the oil. The decay could take two years, Rodabaugh said.
 The state also is testing soil on the school property for additional contaminants, especially heavy metals and other chemicals and substances removed from the adjacent LaFrance property.
 The school property cleanup has been paid for through the New York State Oil Spill Compensation Fund, set up in 1978 through a tax on all crude oil that comes into the state, said Bruce Finster, a conservation department spill engineer in Avon.

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The Star-Gazette needs to talk to a wide range of people to better report on cancer cases on Elmira's Southside and environmental issues there.

Please take a moment to look at the questions below and see whether you have information that could help us write stories. If you do, please answer the questions below, cut out this form and mail or fax it to the address or fax number below.

This questionnaire also will posted at www.stargazette.com this week. Check there in upcoming days if that's an easier communication medium.

Thank you in advance.

1. Did you ever work at the former Remington Rand or American LaFrance factory on South Main Street in Elmira? How long did you work there and what was your job?

2. Did you help build the new Southside High School or excavate the site where it was built? Tell us briefly about your experience.

3. For current or former Southside Elmira-Southport residents only: Have you or a member of your household developed cancer or cancer-related diseases since 1975? Please tell us briefly about the diagnosis, including the date, type of cancer and any genetic or lifestyle circumstances (smoking, etc.) that might have contributed to the development of the disease.

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