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NRC TO DISCUSS CLEANUP OF OHIO SITE  
AT PUBLIC MEETING ON APRIL 7

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with citizens April 7 in Newburgh Heights, Ohio, to discuss activities to be conducted in the near future to clean up radioactive contamination at the Chemetron Corporation's Bert Avenue site.

The meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. in the Newburgh Heights Town Offices, Town Meeting Room, 4000 Washington Boulevard. In addition to the NRC, the meeting will include the mayor of Newburgh Heights and representatives of the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, and Ohio Department of Health. The Cuyahoga County Board of Health will provide a facilitator for the meeting.

The company and federal, state and local regulators will brief the public on remediation activities that will take place, schedules for those activities, and the planned regulatory inspection and oversight activities.

The Bert Avenue site, located in the Newburgh Heights suburb of Cleveland, is a former uncontrolled landfill bordered by industrial property and private residences. Radiologically contaminated material from the Chemetron Corporation's Harvard Avenue site--which is located a short distance away, also in Newburgh Heights--was disposed of at the Bert Avenue site in 1975. The material consisted of building rubble contaminated with depleted uranium used in a chemical catalyst manufactured at the Harvard Avenue facility. The Bert Avenue site also has antimony oxide slag containing natural uranium and fly ash and fire brick containing natural uranium and thorium.

Until cleanup is completed, contaminated soil piles at Bert Avenue have been covered with tarps to minimize airborne releases. NRC air sampling at the fence boundary showed that radiation levels have been below the agency's limits for public radiation exposure.

Chemetron submitted a site remediation plan for the site to the NRC in October 1993 and a revision in February 1995. The NRC staff evaluated the plan and prepared a safety evaluation report and environmental assessment. In February of this year, NRC amended Chemetron's license to authorize the company to remediate the Bert Avenue site as described in the remediation plan.

The authorization requires Chemetron to sample and analyze liquid and airborne effluents during remediation to ensure that releases do not exceed NRC limits. The licensee must also provide "hold points" in the remediation schedule to give NRC staff an opportunity to take samples and conduct radiation surveys. At the completion of remediation, the licensee must conduct a final radiation survey and sampling program.

Under the NRC-approved site remediation plan, Chemetron will dispose of the radioactively contaminated material in an engineered disposal cell on site. Any contamination that exceeds NRC limits will be excavated and shipped off site to a licensed low-level waste disposal site.

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