

Westinghouse will hold public meeting Jan. 6

A public meeting is scheduled for Jan. 6 to discuss Westinghouse's plans to remove radioactive soil, buildings and equipment from its facility in Hematite.

Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the meeting starts at 7 p.m. at the First Christian Church of Hematite on Hwy. P.

The Jan. 6 meeting will discuss two parts of the company's plan to clean up the plant and surrounding property.

The first part of the plan evaluates "Deul's Mountain," which is about 1,100 cubic yards of uranium-impacted soil. The soil accumulated during the more than 45 years that the plant was in operation. According to the company, the soil needs to be removed as part of the cleanup and to let officials determine what may be under the pile.

The company has identified five cleanup alternatives; officials recommend excavating the pile and sending it off-site to be disposed of.

The second proposal evaluates how to deal with buildings and equipment that are radiologically contaminated after more than 45 years of processing nuclear materials at the plant. The company recommends demolition of the buildings and off-site disposal of the debris.

Representatives from the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, the Jefferson County

Health Department and Westinghouse will be available to answer questions at the meeting.

Written comments on the proposed cleanup plan will be accepted until 5 p.m. Jan. 18.

The deadline for public comments has been extended. Originally, the deadline had been Nov. 24.

Copies of both documents are available at Westinghouse and at the Festus Public Library, 222 N. Mill St.

Westinghouse purchased the Hematite facility in 2000 from ABB and announced plans to close the site. The plant, which sits on 7 acres, manufactured nuclear fuel rods.

Westinghouse has been working with the Missouri DNR and the federal NRC to determine how best to clean up the 228 acres owned by the company.

The plant was opened in 1956 by Mallinckrodt Chemicals. The company produced nuclear fuel.

From 1956 to 1974, the fuel was made for the U.S. government and used primarily to power nuclear submarines.

In 1974, production changed to commercial contracts for nuclear power plants.

For information about the public meeting, call Kevin Hayes, 314-810-3364.