

NEW YORK STATE
DEPARTMENT OF



ENVIRONMENTAL
CONSERVATION



Tompkins County Health Department

You are invited to a
**PUBLIC
INFORMATION
SESSION**
ON

Wednesday August 4, 2004
1:30-4:00 pm; 6:30-8:30 pm
Holiday Inn - Cayuga Room
222 South Cayuga Street
Ithaca, New York

For more information, call:

James E. Burke, P.E.
NYSDEC - Syracuse
(315) 426-7550

Henriette Hamel
NYSDOH - Syracuse
(315) 477-8163

Steve Maybee, P.E.
John Andersson, P.E.
Tompkins Co. Health Dept.
(607) 274-6688

Public Information Session

August 2004

You are invited to attend a public information session on August 4, 2004 at the Holiday Inn, 222 South Cayuga Street, Ithaca, New York from 1:30 to 4:00 pm and 6:30 to 8:30 pm. This session will provide information and answer questions regarding the recent environmental investigation in neighborhoods adjacent to the Emerson Power Transmission (EPT) facility in Ithaca. There will be no formal presentation; you may attend the session at any time during these hours. Representatives from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), Tompkins County Health Department and EPT will be on hand to answer questions on the recent soil gas survey and results, as well as next steps proposed for the investigation. Those living in the vicinity of the facility or survey area described below are encouraged to attend.

Background

The EPT facility, located off Route 96B in the City of Ithaca, has operated since the early 1900s and currently is a manufacturer of steel roller chain. This process includes metal stamping, heat treating, oil quenching, parts washing, and final product assembly. Waste solvents, which were used to clean equipment at various locations within the plant, and waste oil were generated from this operation.

An environmental investigation in and around the facility began in the late 1980s. Groundwater was found to contain various organic compounds including trichloroethene and tetrachloroethene, compounds commonly found in cleaning solvents. In the 1990s, EPT began extracting groundwater and treating it before discharging it to City storm sewers that discharge to a tributary of Cayuga Inlet. Approximately 1,440 cubic yards of petroleum-contaminated soil was excavated and disposed of at High Acres Landfill in Fairport, New York. In 1991, the NYSDOH conducted indoor air sampling at several area residences and found that three of the ten homes tested, those closest to EPT, may have been slightly impacted by site-related compounds. Subsequent sampling for soil gas between EPT and these residences was attempted but could not be accomplished because of high groundwater. This sampling was completed in 2004 and results indicate the need for additional sampling near EPT and inside nearby properties.

Summary of Recent Sampling Results

As noted above, the soil gas sampling was conducted in June 2004 to determine if vapors from groundwater contaminants may be migrating through air spaces in the soils. Results indicate elevated levels of several chemical compounds in soil gas which warrant further investigation both near and inside residences. Data from the survey will be discussed at the upcoming information session and have been placed in the Tompkins Public Library (see below). The sampling locations are shown on the figure below.

Next Steps

The State and County believe that additional environmental investigation is warranted. A work plan is currently being developed by

EPT for State and County for review and approval. Additional groundwater monitoring well installations, as well as a sampling program for both groundwater and surface waters both on and off-site from the EPT facility, will be part of this work plan. While the existing groundwater treatment system has reduced contaminant levels, further reduction is appropriate. Data from this investigation will assist in the design to further reduce contaminant concentrations.

In addition, the State and County believe that it is prudent to determine if there is any possibility that soil gas vapors could influence indoor air quality in buildings throughout this neighborhood. To determine this, it will be necessary to collect air samples from inside and beneath certain buildings. The first locations to be tested will be those closest to the plant and in the direction of groundwater flow. Followup sampling will be performed in the winter and expanded where warranted. EPT will be contacting property owners for permission to test indoor air and soil gas beneath (subslab) their buildings. The fact that you are asked for permission to test your property does not mean that your indoor air is impacted. Please note you are under no obligation to grant permission for this testing.

Work plans that detail the groundwater, surface water and indoor air tests are to be submitted by July 30, 2004. The resulting work will be conducted during Fall 2004 and Winter 2004-2005. Results from the residential air sampling program should be available approximately 6 weeks after sample collection.

For additional information: Copies of site-related documents are available for review at the Tompkins County Public Library, 101 East Green Street, Ithaca, NY. In addition, the State and County staff listed on page 1 may be contacted for information or with any questions.

