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"RELEASE 2009 – 559 NEWSY STUFF"

December 28 2009



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JAPAN, SOUTHERN MIE PREFECTURE, MIHAMA, DECEMBER 20 2009. WAKING UP TO A SHIPWRECK >> IT'S NOT EVERY MORNING YOU LOOK OUT AND SEE 8,000 TONS OF STEEL ON ITS SIDE ON THE BEACH

winifred bird



Off course: The Ariake shortly after a wave knocked it over.

It's not every morning that a 169-meter-long ship gets knocked over by a giant wave and lands like a beached whale virtually outside the front door of your quiet seaside home. But that's just what happened on, of all days, Friday the 13th of November this year. The ill-fated Ariake had set out from Tokyo the previous evening bound for Okinawa. By 5 a.m. it was making its way through a storm off the shores of southern Mie Prefecture when it was blindsided by a huge rogue wave. As the boat listed from the impact of countless tons of North Pacific, its cargo — including, among more weighty items, a consignment of the latest issue of the popular manga, *Jump* — broke free, slid to one side, and dragged the starboard half of the boat underwater. The captain then maneuvered the crippled ship as close to the shore as he could. By 10 a.m. that morning, all seven passengers and 21 crew had been safely plucked from the deck by a rescue helicopter, but the vessel itself was here to stay, like a rather large nautical gnome suddenly camped out in one's rosebed. Though described as a "ferry," that word perhaps fails to convey the immensity of the broken beast that now dominated the shoreline. With its bow to the beach

and its rust-red nether-regions exposed to the sky, the Ariake looked like a humongous bath toy capsized in a puddle of water. Soon the ship — and the little citrus-farming town of Mihama on whose doorstep it had landed — were darlings of the national news networks. Television trucks flocked in, cars with exotic license plates from faraway places lined the coast road — and just about everyone in town moseyed down to the beach to reflect on the terrible power of the sea. "Give me your 7,910-ton hulks," the angry waves seemed to say. "I will topple them with a mere flick of my finger." And who could blame us for picnicking in front of the red giant, or choosing the sea wall as a venue for a romantic date? As one 90-year-old neighbor said, this was "the most exciting thing to have happened in Mihama since a Russian ship mistakenly sailed into the mouth of a nearby river and sank — a very long time ago." Meanwhile, though, a more sinister aspect of the story was surfacing on the watery horizon. The day after the shipwreck, Mihama was enveloped in a cloud of cold, oil-scented fog, as if the whole town had been turned into an open-air motorcycle repair shop. Fuel from the ship's 500,000-liter tank was pouring out of the now-horizontal smokestack and into the ocean. By the following Monday all fishing had been halted across an area far and wide — especially bad news for those who catch spiny lobster, a staple of the upcoming New Year's feast season. On the Tuesday, Nov. 17, I headed down to the Kumano fisherman's cooperative to find out more. Makoto Mabe, 57, the bronzed owner of three fishing boats, was leaning on a counter in the cozy two-cat office. He'd just finished removing a large net from the water near the ferry. "On Sunday I tried to fish," he said. "When we pulled up the catch there was just a little oil on the nets. But then we threw the fish into buckets of icy salt water, and a thin slick of oil rose to the top. I can't sell that in Tokyo. I hope they get rid of that oil spill asap," he said. But how to get rid of all that blended diesel and heavy oil spread over 3 sq. km of choppy ocean? When I put that question to Masahiro Ichijo of the Japan Coast Guard, he assured me that a three-pronged attack was already under way. As the daily crowd of beachside observers watched, Nippon Salvage Company had parked a large black barge next to the ferry, cut a hole in its side, and started sucking out the remaining fuel. Meanwhile, another company, the Maritime Disaster Prevention Center (MDPC), was sponging up some of the mess with 20-meter-long "skimming nets." ("Let's go fishing for oil" is how one company's Web site puts it.) To deal with what remained after skimming, MDPC was spraying arcs of water onto the slick and driving small boats around to break it up (think eggbeaters in a soup of oily ocean). Once it was thinned out and broken up, said Ichijo, it would evaporate and degrade over time. "There are also chemical dispersants that could be used, but the public doesn't like those," Ichijo said. "We prefer to use the power of nature to deal with this." "The power of nature" had a nice, reassuring ring, so I asked him if he was worried about the black kites (*Milvus migrans*) and seagulls I'd noticed diving for fish in the area (I also noticed a drunken fisherman casting his line directly in front of the ferry, but that's another problem altogether). He paused for a moment, then finally said, "It's probably a sign that the sea is already pretty clean." In fact, no one but me seemed too worried about the hawks. Wildlife groups told me the first concern during an oil spill is for seabirds or other animals that literally swim in the fuel and become "oiled." Thankfully, due to the relatively small quantities released, and the fact that it was not crude oil, there were no reports of black kites down. Because they dip only their feet in the water when fishing, it seems they are less at risk. In a situation like this, though, sensitive shore habitats, coral reefs, wetlands and marshes are also of concern. But here we were lucky again: Mihama is lined with pebble beaches and has little coral. In any case, currents and the wind had fortunately taken the oil away from the shore. Yet more than a month later, oil is still dribbling from the marooned ship and local fishing boats are still docked. Ichijo estimates it will be the end of the year before all the fuel is sucked out. Only then will the task of removing the ferry begin. Two options for that are under discussion, he says: either right the boat and pull it away (though it could sink), or cut it up and bring the bits to shore for disposal. Either way he estimates the job will take about a year to complete — so while the TV trucks may be long gone, it seems my neighbors and I still have plenty more ferry-watching to look forward to.

<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/fl20091220x1.html>

USA, NY, DECEMBER 20 2009. DRY-CLEANING CHEMICAL SPILLS REQUIRE CLEANUP THROUGHOUT ROCHESTER AREA

steve orr

From Brockport to Penfield, from Main Street in Rochester to Monroe Avenue in Brighton, the local map is stained with more than a dozen spots where dry cleaning went bad. The cause: A toxic chemical solvent that for decades washed clothes miraculously clean

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but escaped into the environment at the same time, leaving contaminated soil and underground plumes. Countywide, there are 13 current and former dry-cleaning sites known to be contaminated by the solvent. An additional four sites, including a potentially large one on East Main Street in the city, are currently under investigation. Special ventilation systems to safeguard against the buildup of chemical vapors in buildings have been installed in at least six locations. The known sites, most of which were contaminated decades ago, are likely just the tip of the iceberg. There could be dozens more sites in the city and suburbs where current and former dry-cleaning businesses released perchloroethylene, known as perc, into the environment. It's not clear exactly how much of a risk, if any, is posed by the low levels of vapors associated with underground pools of perc, which can spread in fingerlike plumes. But because exposure to higher levels of the solvent likely causes cancer and other health problems, health officials in New York, as in other states, seek to limit exposure to the vapors. "At the numbers we usually find, it's worrisome enough to demand action. It's not necessarily something where I would move out or pull my kids out of school," said Lenny Siegel, a California activist who helps citizens cope with contamination by chemicals such as perchloroethylene, which is also known as tetrachloroethylene. A fresh health assessment, issued in draft form last year by federal experts, concluded that the solvent was a more potent carcinogen than had been thought, and just three weeks ago a coalition of New York environmental and public health groups petitioned the state to radically tighten its perc exposure guideline. Health officials have not responded to the request for stricter guidelines, but adoption would lead to more frequent remediation of tainted sites, except for one setback — nobody knows where most of them are, and nobody's looking for them. Cleaners themselves, who know better than anyone that past practices often led to perchloroethylene releases, usually decline to search for fear of being forced to pay for an expensive cleanup. "There's a real disincentive to finding contamination," said Peter Blake, executive director of the North East Fabricare Association, a Massachusetts-based trade group that represents New York cleaners. "They need their money to run their businesses." While some states have industry-funded programs to track down and remediate dry-cleaner contamination, New York does not. "It's amazing that a big, largely liberal state like New York is not doing something like this," said Fred McCormack, a lawyer in Florida who wrote that state's dry-cleaner remediation program. In New York, which has more dry cleaners than every state but California, the discovery of historic contamination is a matter of chance. The sites are discovered when other environmental problems are being investigated, or when a bank requires testing when the property is sold. Occasionally, tipsters are involved. Statewide, 260 locations have come to light in this way and were placed in state-run remediation programs. The state Department of Environmental Conservation estimated in 2001 that there were more than 1,000 such sites. "The problem is they don't really know where all these plumes are," Siegel said. "A lot of these places are out of business." Indeed, the 2.3-mile length of Monroe Avenue in Brighton is a case in point. The area drew headlines recently with the disclosure that three dry cleaners in a three-block stretch abutting a residential neighborhood spilled or leaked solvents. The solvent spills and a contemporaneous gasoline spill, the first of which was found six years ago, had a short-term impact on property values. Vapors from contaminated groundwater remain a concern, and six residential ventilation systems were installed to protect against perc. "I hope they continue to look for any of these spots and keep tracking it," said Cindy Webb, who lives in the affected area on Hampshire Drive. There are plenty of places to look in that part of Brighton. Since 1950, records show there have been dry cleaners at 21 other addresses on Monroe Avenue. That's an average of more than one per block. So far as is known, none of those sites has been assessed for perchloroethylene.

Longtime Concern

Concern about perchloroethylene contamination has existed in New York for years, especially in New York City, where alarms were raised in the early 1990s about the threat to residents who lived in apartments above that city's multitude of dry-cleaning shops. In 1997, New York adopted tough regulations on dry cleaners that use perc. The rules require operator training, upgraded equipment, extra barriers if apartments or other businesses are nearby and annual inspections to check for leaks and proper disposal. Blake said New York's rules are the strictest in the country. "They're extremely protective, and they're doing a good job," he said. New York had 2,650 dry cleaners in 2007, according to U.S. census data — second only to California's 3,450 establishments. While perchloroethylene use has declined — hydrocarbon-based materials are a popular replacement — there still are about 1,870 users of that solvent, including about 15 in Monroe County, registered with the state. DEC and industry officials say they believe the regulations have largely eliminated environmental releases of solvents at dry cleaners. What the rules don't address, however, are historic releases — which everyone involved agrees were commonplace. These releases can threaten drinking water supplies that draw upon wells, though public water customers in Monroe County would not be affected. More often, the concern is vapors rising from contaminated groundwater. That was the issue at South Clinton Avenue and Benton Street, where spills from a dry-cleaning chemical distributor led to the demolition of two homes and the establishment of a vapor and groundwater collection system that has been operating for a decade. "Of course I'm worried. At the same time, I bought the house knowing it was there," said Brigitte Wales, who has lived across the street from the vapor extraction unit for six years. She said state officials have tested the air in her home, but "they didn't find anything alarming." Though similar spill sites can be found at a few locations, experts say most contamination likely resulted from everyday releases as wet clothes were being handled, or from chemical-soaked filters that were thrown into leaky trash cans. "The practices were different," said Neil Hellman, owner of several Rochester dry cleaners that do not use perchloroethylene. He likened the situation to people who used to change the oil in their cars and dump the waste in the sewer. "That's what people did. Today, you're a bad guy if you do it." Hellman owns the Speedy's shops, though he said the contamination found at several former Speedy's sites is attributable to previous owners. He worries that publicity over contamination unfairly taints the industry. "It kind of makes people scared of dry cleaners," he said.

Other States' Success

About a dozen states have created programs that offer remediation funding to qualifying dry cleaners, often with sign-up deadlines or releases from legal liability that provide further incentives to participate. The funds come from taxes or fees on the cleaners. In

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Florida, the state Legislature approved the nation's first such program in 1994. During a four-year eligibility window, 1,450 dry cleaners conducted site screening tests and joined the program. The state now is overseeing cleanup at those sites on a prioritized basis, drawing on money raised mostly through a 2 percent gross receipts tax on dry cleaners. "From a dry cleaner's standpoint, I slept much better at night once we had this passed," said Rick Miller, a dry cleaner in Fort Lauderdale who lobbied for the program. "We have close to 300 cleaners cleaned up, and we're well on the way to getting our state in great shape. We're real proud." Texas, Illinois, North Carolina, Oregon and at least seven other states adopted similar programs. New York considered starting such a program about eight years ago. The DEC estimated that 20 percent of then-current and historic cleaner sites in the state had sustained some sort of perchloroethylene release, and concluded that more than 1,000 probably were contaminated enough that some remediation would be needed. Other states have estimated that 50 percent or more of cleaner locations had some contamination. But DEC officials eventually decided not to pursue a special initiative to locate and address dry-cleaner sites. Blake and Russ Petrozzi, a Niagara Falls dry cleaner and board member of the National Cleaners Association, said they had no clear recollection of New York discussing such a program. Petrozzi, for one, said such an initiative would help. "I would definitely think so," he said. "You're going to have another tax, that's what the bottom line is, but the Florida system is working well. It's gotten the job done." Unlike other sources of contamination — old factories, dumps, chemical storage facilities — dry cleaners can be will-o'-the-wisps. Some have been in the same place for decades, but others open in a storefront in a commercial strip or suburban plaza, and then cede the space to another tenant a few years later. And as the industry declines in size, most of the dry-cleaning shops that used perchloroethylene have long since closed. In 1950, for example, city directories indicate there were about 155 dry cleaners, though some surely were drop-off spots where no cleaning was done. In 1970, there were nearly 300. Today there are roughly 85. State officials say existing programs get the job done. "We've been fairly successful at finding them," said James Harrington, chief of remediation for the DEC in Albany. Most commonly, he said, contaminated sites come to light when solvents infiltrate drinking water supplies, which are tested frequently, and when other problems such as petroleum spills are explored. Local sites are good examples. Two of the three on Monroe Avenue came to light during the investigation of a large gasoline spill. A site in Pittsford was found when an old oil tank was excavated. At least three others in the city were found during the redevelopment of property. One location on East Main Street was found this past spring during testing related to a potential sale of the property, a former Staub industrial laundry. The sale fell through after perchloroethylene was found under the property, a stone's throw from homes on Birch Crescent. The matter was reported to DEC as a spill of "high amounts of dry cleaning solvent." Action is pending. The biggest local cleanup of a dry-cleaner site probably was at the former Speedy's central plant on Court Street downtown, where the city built a parking garage adjacent to the Bausch & Lomb headquarters. The city spent \$2 million in the early 1990s dealing with contamination by a petroleum-based cleaning agent and perc. At roughly the same time, the city was spending \$900,000 to address environmental problems at the former Artco Industrial Laundry at 331-337 W. Main St. The city had purchased land next door for construction of the 911 emergency communications center and found perchloroethylene that had migrated under the property from Artco. Mark Gregor, the city's environmental quality manager, said that for years the city operated a system to pull chemical vapors from the soil under the city's property. It continues to run a ventilation system under the 911 center basement that prevents chemical fumes from accumulating inside. "People are protected," Gregor said recently. Across West Main from Nick Tahou's restaurant, the Artco site has long been an industrial laundry. DEC officials said a previous occupant likely is to blame for the contamination; the current tenant, Cintas Corp., does not use perc and is not responsible for the problem. The current property owner, Barnes/Stevens Redevelopment LLC of Buffalo, had agreed to address the site under the state brownfield program. But it failed to install a system to prevent vapors from accumulating in the laundry building, and the DEC has added the site to its Superfund program. The agency will finish studies and install a vapor ventilation system, and may seek to recover costs from Artco or others that spilled the solvent. Vapor levels at the Nick Tahou's building were so low that no action was needed there, officials said. Gregor said the Artco and Speedy's Court Street sites were the city's two biggest perc sites, but not the only ones. "We run across old dry-cleaner sites in the course of doing due diligence from time to time," he said. "There are probably dozens of them around the city."

<http://www.democratandchronicle.com/article/20091220/NEWS01/912200361/1002/NEWS>

NORTHERN IRELAND, CARRYDUFF, DECEMBER 20 2009. TWO HOMES DESTROYED IN ULSTER OIL TANK BLAZE

Two homes on the outskirts of Belfast, have been destroyed after domestic oil tanks at the rear of the property caught fire in an overnight blaze. Police are not treating the incident as suspicious. The oil tanks at the rear of two houses in Carryduff, were burning for more than five hours. A teenage boy was rescued from one of the houses, but did not require medical treatment and no injuries were reported. At one time, over 40 firefighters attended the scene of the blaze in Brackenwood Crescent. The fire was eventually extinguished at 0330GMT today.

<http://www.oilfiredup.com/site/news/item/933>

INDIA, ANDHRA PRADESH, HYDERABAD, BEGUMPET, DECEMBER 21 2009. HOLOCAUST AVERTED AT BEGUMPET

A catastrophe was averted at Begumpet here tonight when fire tenders rushed over to douse a tanker that went up in flames while unloading its consignment into the sump at the IBP petrol station. The tanker driver sustained minor burns. The fire broke out at 8:15 pm, minutes after the tanker came in from the the oil station, right behind the petrol bunk. The driver had just begun unloading the fuel into the sump, learnt to have been almost empty for the last two days, when the fire suddenly broke out from the sump. Within no time, it engulfed the tanker. Customers waiting for a fill immediately drove off in panic. Employees of the petrol bunk initially tried to put out the fire by using the emergency extinguisher but in vain. It was the timely intervention of the firemen that

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averted a major mishap which could have taken many lives as there are many residential apartments in the vicinity. "On receiving the call, we arrived within minutes. It took nearly 30 minutes to extinguish the fire. The tanker's tyres were completely burnt but the fire luckily did not reach the oil in the tanker," fire officials told reporters. IBP manager Thomas Abraham said the investigation team had started its probe.

<http://www.expressbuzz.com/edition/story.aspx?Title=Holocaust+averted+at+Begumpet&artid=0JzDO0b4zlc=&SectionID=e7uPP4%7CpSiw=&MainSectionID=fyV9T2jla4A=&SectionName=EH8HilNJ2uYAot5nqumeA==&SEO=>

RUSSIA, MOSCOW, DECEMBER 21 2009. COMMON PETROLEUM SAFETY STANDARDS

A joint Russian-Norwegian project to develop common safety standards for the petroleum industry in the Barents Sea presented a series of recommendations in Moscow this week. Since 2007 more than 100 Norwegian and Russian experts from official authorities and private industry have worked together to find common standards for environment and safety in the upcoming exploration of oil- and gas in the Barents Sea. The project, initiated by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, looked into how the two country's existing standards could be applied for High North climate challenges that characterize the Barents Sea. The initiative is a part of Norway's Barents 2020 program for knowledge-building in the north supposed to create arenas for cooperation between Norwegian and foreign experts. Det Norske Veritas (DNV) has been in charge of coordinating the project on Norwegian side. The main Russian partners are Gazprom and VNIIGAZ. When the project was initiated in August 2007, [BarentsObserver](#) quoted Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre saying: - The Russian and Norwegian authorities have different rules for the petroleum industry. The Norwegian government is pleased to support and facilitate industry efforts to take on the challenges involved and build up cross-border cooperation, as this is in line with the High North strategy. Presenting the results in Moscow on Thursday, the experts recommended standards for the design of stationary offshore unites against ice leads in the Barents Sea. Other recommendations included standards for risk management of major hazards such as fires, explosions and blow-outs from offshore drilling, production and storage unites in the Barents Sea area. The Russian experts have brought in-depth knowledge and expertise with regard to operations in cold climate, while the Norwegians have brought expertise from offshore operations, according to a [press release](#) from Det Norske Veritas. - I am confident that its public-private nature has been one of the success factors of this project. Both authorities and the industry realize the need to enforce and implement adequate rules and standards in order to safeguard petroleum activities in the Barents Sea in the years to come. And we all realize our obligation in making this happen, says CEO and President of DNV Henrik O. Madsen. The project costed NOK 27 million (€ 3,2 million) and got funding from both Norwegian and Russian authorities, in addition to funding from private industry. As reported by [BarentsObserver](#) earlier this autumn, the Norwegian Government continues to fund the Barents 2020 project with additional NOK 55 million (€ 6,5 million) for the budget year 2010 with the aim of continued knowledge-building in the north.

<http://www.barentsobserver.com/common-petroleum-safety-standards.4666871-16176.html>

NEW ZEALAND, WELLINGTON, DECEMBER 21 2009. SHELL SIGNS LETTER OF INTENT FOR N.Z. ASSET SALE

gavin evans

[Royal Dutch Shell Plc](#) has signed a letter of intent to sell its New Zealand downstream assets to Infratil Ltd. and the Guardians of New Zealand Superannuation, Infratil said today. While not a binding agreement, the letter does indicate a clear intention to proceed with the sale, Wellington-based Infratil said in a statement to the New Zealand stock exchange. Shell, Europe's biggest oil company, is selling its New Zealand fuel retailing and refining interests as part of a global strategy to focus on oil and gas production in expanding markets. It agreed last month to negotiate exclusively with the Infratil-led venture on the sale of the group's 229 filling stations, port terminals and a 17 percent stake in New Zealand Refining Co. No price has been disclosed. Infratil fell 1 cent, or 0.6 percent, to NZ\$1.64 at 11:40 a.m. in Wellington. New Zealand Refining rose 5 cents, or 1.4 percent, to NZ\$3.65.

Shell has operated in [New Zealand](#) for 97 years and began exploration there in 1955. It is retaining its oil and gas assets, which include stakes in the nation's Maui, Kapuni and Pohokura gas fields.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601081&sid=aZA1rQVfUCOO>

USA, TX, GALVESTON, DECEMBER 21 2009. BP TO APPEAL AGAINST \$100M DAMAGES ORDER AFTER TEXAS REFINERY INCIDENT

david robertson

Related Links [BP fined \\$87m for Texas safety lapses](#)
[BP trial begins over fatal Texas City blast](#)

BP, which has been ordered by a court in Texas to pay \$100 million (£62 million) damages to ten workers after an incident at its refinery in the state, said yesterday that it would appeal against the ruling. It insisted that it did not believe anyone had been harmed when chemicals were released during the incident in 2007 and had originally offered only \$500 in compensation to each worker who claimed to have been affected. However, a federal jury in Texas ruled on Friday that ten workers should receive \$100 million. A further 133 workers are also seeking damages. Ronnie Chappell, a spokesman for BP, said that the company was "shocked and outraged" by the verdict and would appeal. "We believe the evidence showed that BP did not cause harm to anyone on April 19, 2007," Mr Chappell said. "The verdict, and the punitive damages award in particular, is utterly unjustified, improper and unsupportable." The workers said that they were exposed to the chemicals while repairing two units damaged in a plant-wide shutdown in 2005 before Hurricane Rita hit the Texas coast. They said BP had a poorly maintained workplace and lacked sufficient monitoring to detect toxic chemicals or warn workers of a release. BP countered that the plant did not release a toxic substance,

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and the company had no control over an "odour event" that stemmed from another unidentified party's negligence. Tony Buzbee, a lawyer representing the workers, said of BP: "They're like an ostrich with its head in the sand. They don't understand the meaning of responsibility." Mr Buzbee's clients initially asked BP for damages of \$5,000 each but went to court when BP would not budge from a \$500 settlement offer to each worker. BP's Texas City refinery, the third-largest in the United States, has cost the company dearly in recent years. An explosion at the refinery on March 23, 2005, killed 15 workers and injured 180 others, prompting extensive civil litigation and a criminal charge of violating the US Clean Air Act. BP paid more than \$2 billion to settle hundreds of blast-related lawsuits and a \$50 million fine to resolve the criminal case. In addition, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Osha) has imposed record fines for safety violations at the plant. In 2005, BP paid \$21.4 million to Osha. This year, the agency fined the company another \$87.4 million for failing to meet its 2005 agreement to make good safety violations at the refinery. BP is contesting the latest fine. Additionally, Greg Abbott, the Texas Attorney General, is trying to reach a settlement with the company over a lawsuit that could cost BP more than \$100 million for violations of pollution regulations at the refinery between 2005 and 2008.

http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/industry_sectors/natural_resources/article6963373.ec

USA, NY, ROCHESTER, DECEMBER 21 2009. DRY-CLEANER CONTAMINATION DRAWS MULTIPLE LAWSUITS IN AREA

steve orr

A lawsuit filed by Brighton residents whose homes were impacted by two releases of dry-cleaning solvent and a major gasoline leak was settled last year. But the only part of the settlement that's public is a \$15,000 payment by the town. The amount of any damages paid by six other defendants remains unknown because of a nondisclosure agreement signed by the parties. Five families who lived near the town's 12 Corners had alleged they suffered property damage and emotional distress from the environmental contamination, which began coming to light in 2003. All but one of the families have since moved. Brighton was a defendant because its sewers allegedly permitted contaminants to spread. Alan Knauf, the families' lawyer, said the suit was resolved in 2008. At least four other local lawsuits were related to perc contamination. The owner of a building that housed one of the Monroe Avenue cleaners in Brighton has sued the occupant at the time the contamination allegedly occurred, as well as other parties. That case is pending in federal court.

- The state sued to recover \$1.4 million in cleanup expenses for the Dinaburg Distributing site at 1012 S. Clinton Ave. In 2007, the company and the estate of the man that owned it agreed to pay \$400,000.
- A resident whose house was affected by the spills at that South Clinton site filed suit against Dinaburg in 2000. Records show the case was resolved two years later; details of the resolution were not available.
- Seeking to recover at least \$1.5 million it spent cleaning up the former Speedy plant on Court Street, the city of Rochester filed suit in 1998. The city recovered no money and the case was closed five years later

<http://www.democratandchronicle.com/article/20091220/NEWS01/912200360/1002/NEWS/Dry-cleaner-contamination-draws-multiple-lawsuits-in-area>

RUSSIA, SOCHI, DECEMBER 21 2009. MOLDOVAN SHIP BREAKS IN TWO IN BLACK SEA

A Russian ministry spokesman said Sunday an oil-carrying Moldovan ship broke in two in the Black Sea due to having been worn out. The ship broke during a storm near Sochi, a Russian [resort](#). The ship's 13 crew members were rescued, RIA Novosti reported. The Aras-1 ship, carrying 37 tons of diesel fuel, was tossed by waves onto a beach, the newspaper said. "There has been no oil spill from the ship so far. Now we are solving the problem of pumping diesel fuel with the help of a floating crane. The ship's hull is thin like foil. In Russia, we would not have allowed a vessel in such a condition to make a voyage," Nikolai Shustov, the spokesman, said. The ship has been in operation for an estimated 30 years, which is the reason it was shipwrecked, Shustov said.

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/International/2009/12/20/Moldovan-ship-breaks-in-two-in-Black-Sea/UPI-12251261341803/

USA, ILL, CHICAGO, DECEMBER 21 2009. FEDERAL PROBE LINGERS OVER 2005 OIL BARGE BLAST THAT KILLED DECKHAND IN CHICAGO >> RARE WORKPLACE PROBE TARGETS CHICAGO OWNER, WHO FEELS LIKE SCAPEGOAT

steve schmadeke

Authorities investigating a barge operator say in court papers they have evidence his company violated federal laws and negligently caused a 2005 explosion that killed a deckhand and released thousands of gallons of oil into the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. Coast Guard and [Environmental Protection Agency](#) investigators executed at least two search warrants against Egan Marine over the last two years in a rare criminal investigation into a workplace death. Authorities searched the Lemont company a third time after it allegedly gave counterfeit first aid and CPR records to inspectors in February. A civil case brought against Egan by federal authorities for \$1.5 million in canal cleanup costs has been put on hold by a judge until January, "pending the completion of a related criminal investigation." The statute of limitations kicks in next month. Dennis Egan is the company's prosperous, salty owner. He has imported cigars, sold elaborate model ships and searched for treasure in the Philippines. He also was once implicated in the licenses-for-bribes scandal that sent former Gov. [George Ryan](#) to prison. Egan was not charged. He is vigorously contesting the government's version of what happened on his barge, filing a lawsuit against the oil company he contends caused the blast, firing the worker who handed inspectors the fake documents and even taking over from his attorney the questioning of a witness at a Coast Guard hearing. Egan, 67, said the federal government wants to make him the fall guy to cover its own liability and that of ExxonMobil, which Egan says pumped abnormally volatile oil into his barge. "They're looking for any infraction to (blame me)," he said at an interview in his barge office, once punctuating a point by sticking a knife into his desk. "But the bomb came from

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Exxon." Exxon attorneys have said the oil met all safety requirements and that Egan negligently handled it. Experts couldn't recall another explosion on a barge carrying clarified slurry oil, which has a relatively high flash point, and said proving criminal negligence would be tough. "That's a real stretch in this industry," said Lamar Labauve, a [Louisiana](#) marine chemist, when told the case details. "It sounds more like a mistake to me. Typically somebody does something (dangerous) and they get by with it for a long time. Then one day you get the right conditions, and boom." With only a month until the statute of limitations sets in, no charges have been filed. If they are, the government's case, according to a Tribune review of thousands of pages of records and legal filings, may hinge on a 3-foot-long pipe and a fitting from the barge's heating system. On Jan. 19, 2005, the EMC-423, a steel cargo barge being pushed by the tug boat Lisa E was transporting the last of three loads of concentrated slurry oil from the ExxonMobil plant near [Joliet](#) to the Ameropan Oil facility in Chicago. Just as the barge and boat cleared the Cicero Avenue Bridge around 4:40 p.m., the captain, Egan's nephew, Dennis M. Egan, heard a sound like "sheet metal popping." A dump truck driver cleaning his vehicle nearby heard a small explosion followed by a larger one. "I blinked, and there was a -- just a big ball of orange in front of me," Dennis M. Egan testified. Security video shows an orange fireball erupting from the barge. Much of the heavy steel plating atop the EMC-423 was peeled away by the explosion and debris was thrown hundreds of feet onto the [Cicero](#) bridge, which was full of traffic. "I was in Vietnam for awhile, and it reminded me of a napalm blast," testified ship engineer [Bill Rodgers](#). After the blast, the only trace of deckhand Alexander Oliva, 29, was a burnt work boot. The [Oak Lawn](#) man's body was recovered from the Sanitary and Ship Canal five days later. Oliva's family has settled its lawsuits against Exxon and Egan, their attorney said. Egan said he directly paid the family \$100,000, half of the company's \$200,000 liability under maritime law. Agents from the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives concluded the blast most probably was caused when Egan's company "negligently" vented combustible fumes from one of the barge's four massive tanks onto its deck. The blast was likely triggered by Oliva, who they believe was illegally using a small propane torch to heat a cargo pump near the fumes. Investigators say there is evidence the circulated-heat system on the barge, which normally warms the pump, wasn't working, a finding Egan disputes. An expert who analyzed the standpipe at the ATF's National Laboratory in [Maryland](#) believes it was open at the time of the explosion, according to court records. None of the other three crew members saw Oliva using a torch, according to their sworn testimony, and no flames are visible on security video. Dennis Egan says the circulated heat system was working, and even if it wasn't, Oliva wouldn't have been able to heat the massive pump with a single torch. He believes the blast originated in a different tank not vented by the standpipe. In Egan's view, the explosion was caused when a support inside the barge broke while the tug was making a difficult maneuver to fit under the low Cicero bridge, sparking the slurry oil that hadn't been "weathered" properly by Exxon to dissipate its explosive fumes. Reports by ATF investigators and a [Chicago Fire Department](#) investigator don't mention this as a possibility. At the time of the explosion, Egan owned a number of boats, some 42 barges and had a net worth of about \$40 million, he says. Today -- after the Coast Guard sequestered and inspected every barge he owned and refineries stopped working with him since no final report had been issued -- Egan's net worth is "probably negative," and he's cutting up his last four barges to sell for scrap. His model ship gallery is closed, and a bank is suing for money it lent him. But Egan, who keeps behind his desk an enlarged security-camera photo of the barge before it exploded, is certain of his innocence. "We've had five years to study this thing," he said. "In order for the things to happen that they say happened -- it would defy the laws of physics." Last week, he left home to take his granddaughter to Disney World rather than await a decision. "It's my last hurrah," Egan said by cell phone. "I'm not going to wait to get arrested. If you want me, call and I'll take the first flight back."

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/chi-lemont-barge-21-dec21.0.6794952.story>

AUSTRALIA, QUEENSLAND, BRISBANE, DECEMBER 22 2009. PETROL TANKER CRASHES INTO BUILDING

emma pollard

[Map: Brisbane 4000](#)

Authorities say there is no threat of a major fuel leak.



Brisbane motorists have been urged to avoid North Quay after a petrol tanker crashed into a building just before 6am AEST. It is believed the driver died from natural causes before the crash. Department of Community Safety spokesman Owen George says there is no threat of a major fuel leak. "The tanker itself, the damage is very minimal," he said. "We have had a very minor fuel leak from the tanker truck itself, from its diesel tank, which amounts to about 30 litres. "The damage to the building at this stage is being assessed by Brisbane City Council engineers."

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/12/22/2778108.htm>

USA, CA, RODEO, DECEMBER 22 2009. CONOCOPHILLIPS FINED FOR TOXIC BAY DISCHARGES

kelly zito

Regional water regulators have slapped the ConocoPhillips oil company with a \$490,000 fine for dumping toxic chemicals into San Pablo Bay from its Rodeo refinery over a five-month period last year, releases that killed thousands of tiny rainbow trout. Officials with the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board said the toxic waste spilled into the bay on seven occasions from January to May 2008 when storm runoff overwhelmed the refinery's wastewater treatment system. "The system is designed to handle a certain flow over a certain period of time - there are certain things the operator can do when there's bad weather coming," David Clegern, spokesman for the State Water Resources Control Board in Sacramento, said Monday. "Our issue was that they

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didn't seem to respond well." Local monitors said the discharges amounted to 2.5 million to 7.6 million gallons a day more than ConocoPhillips refinery was allowed to release into San Pablo Bay. The waste, which included chemical byproducts of the refining process including copper, selenium and chlorine, poured into the water from an outfall pipe located about a mile from shore. Investigators, who regularly check the area around the outfall for fish mortality, found that survival rates for rainbow trout fry ages 14 to 30 days at the time of the discharges ranged from zero to 85 percent, Clegern said. The company has several options, including paying the \$490,000 fine, contesting the complaint at a March 10 hearing, or spending the same amount of money on an environmental project aimed at offsetting the impact of the spill. Officials for ConocoPhillips said they were reviewing the complaint and expected to discuss it further with the water board.

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2009/12/21/BAK21B7NKM.DTL&type=science>

CANADA, ALTA, KITSOCOTY, DECEMBER 22 2009. TRUCK FIRE CLOSES MAJOR ALBERTA HIGHWAY >> COLLISION BETWEEN SERVICE RIG AND SEMI-TANKER CARRYING DIESEL FUEL CAUSES FIRE

A collision between a service rig and a semi-tanker carrying diesel fuel has caused a fire and closed a major Alberta highway. Police say the semi was going east on Highway 16 near Kitscoty when it struck a service rig trying to turn onto the highway. The collision caused the tanker to jack-knife and the tank containing the diesel was punctured. Both east and westbound traffic is being rerouted as fire crews work to put out the fire and clear the debris. Neither driver was seriously injured. Kitscoty is west of Lloydminster on the Alberta-Saskatchewan boundary

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/truck-fire-closes-major-alberta-highway/article1407709/>

USA, FLA, BRADENTON, DECEMBER 22 2009. TRAIN DERAILS IN BRADENTON CAUSING FUEL SPILL

robert napper



A train derailed this morning near Bradenton off U.S. 301 causing a fuel spill along a CSX railroad track, according to Manatee County Public Safety officials. Five cars on a train derailed at U.S. 301 and Ninth Street East, just north of the Red Barn flea market, causing a 150-gallon diesel fuel spill, according to CSX spokesman Gary Sease. The cars derailed on private CSX property away from traffic on U.S. 301 and on Ninth Street East, and railroad officials did not allow press access to the accident. The cause of the crash is still under investigation.

<http://www.bradenton.com/news/story/1933023.html>

CANADA, LANRADOR, SAGLEK BAY, DECEMBER 22 2009. FRAGILE LABRADOR ECOSYSTEM OVERCOMES A TOXIC PAST

martin mittelstaedt

After cleanup in late 1990s, PCB levels in Arctic wildlife in the Saglek Bay area dropped dramatically. When scientists visited Saglek Bay on the remote northern coast of Labrador in the late 1990s and conducted tests on fish and birds living in the area, they found them laced with dangerous PCBs. The finding wasn't too surprising, given that Saglek Bay was the site of an abandoned Cold War era U.S. Air Force radar station. The toxic chemicals, once widely used in electrical transformers, had been dumped onto the ground around the site, spreading contamination to the soil, the nearby seacoast for a distance of 50 kilometres, and to wildlife. But on a recent return visit, researchers were astonished at how rapidly animals in the area have been able to recuperate from their toxic exposures. The levels of PCBs in some of the fish and birds had fallen by up to 95 per cent. The discovery is heartening to the scientists, who say it provides some of the strongest evidence that fragile Arctic ecosystems are able to cleanse themselves after heavy contamination by one of the most dangerous human-made chemicals ever made. The north is dotted with dozens of other toxic hot spots at old military installations, and the finding suggests many of them should be able to revert to a more natural state, if proper cleanups are undertaken. "We are quite delighted, actually, to see this change. ... We're moving dramatically quickly in the right direction," says Ken Reimer, director of the environmental sciences group at Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston, and the lead researcher on the project. Details of the finding appeared in a study published last month in the journal *Environmental Science and Technology*. PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls, have been linked to cancer, immune suppression and reproductive problems in animals, along with decreased intelligence in exposed children, among other deleterious effects. Given their widely recognized dangers, uses were banned in Canada back in 1977. Besides its health impacts, the chemical is considered dangerous because it does not break down readily into less harmful compounds and is easily absorbed into the fatty tissues of living things, an attribute that leads to levels accumulating in wildlife, particularly those animals high on the food chain. The base on the Labrador coast was established in 1954, and abandoned in the early 1970s as advances in technology made radar obsolete. But the Saglek site provided scientists with a living laboratory to follow what would happen to PCBs in animals after the removal of the soils that initially led to the contamination problem. In the late 1990s, a total of about 22,500 cubic metres of contaminated dirt and debris were collected, and shipped to Quebec, where the PCBs were destroyed in an incinerator. In the summer of 1998, Dr. Reimer and colleagues tested marine sediment offshore from the site for traces of the chemical. They also sampled shorthorn sculpin, a bottom dwelling fish, and black guillemots, a pigeon-sized marine bird. Levels of the chemical in the animals were so high that scientists worried about their ability to reproduce and have immune systems capable of fighting off infections. In response to the heavy

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contamination, Labrador Inuit slapped advisories on sculpin and guillemots, recommending that they not be eaten. The bay became a symbol in the region for environmental degradation. The researchers returned in 2006 and 2007, and repeated their testing. Besides noting the sharp fall in wildlife levels of the chemicals, PCBs had fallen by two to 14 fold in Saglek Bay's sediments. Although the animals still contain some PCB residues, the amounts in many cases were below the thresholds causing harm. There are hopes that within a few years, all the animals will be out of danger. "The levels right now are getting really close to levels that no longer pose risks to wildlife in the area," said Tom Sheldon, director of environment for the Nunatsiavut government, which represents Inuit in the area.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/fragile-labrador-ecosystem-overcomes-a-toxic-past/article1408308/>

USA, FLORIDA, DECEMBER 22 2009. ALL MIXED UP >> HERE'S A LOOK AT THE REALITIES, MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE NEW ETHANOL-BLEND FUELS.

capt. vincent daniello

It should have been an idyllic Florida Keys vacation. With the boat loaded and lunch packed, my wife and I ventured offshore. We made it only two miles before the first engine died. While cajoling the sputtering outboards back to the dock, I identified the culprit. My brother-in-law had just filled the 30-foot Pro-Line's fuel tank, and the marina where he filled the tank had recently switched to E10 — the mixture of gasoline blended with 10 percent ethanol that has been making its way around the country. I thought I knew the issues with ethanol. Instead, I've found they don't fit into the concise paragraphs we read in magazines. Complexities of boat systems, differences in climate and even local variations in fuel all seem to harbor odd and unforeseeable obstacles when gasoline and ethanol are mixed. With sensible precautions, the vast majority of boaters experience few problems when switching to E10 fuel, but that's little comfort to those who do have issues. Instances of unusual problems deserve a closer look, particularly with the specter of E15 — 15 percent ethanol — looming on the horizon. In my case, there were no signs of phase separation or filters clogged with debris loosened from the tank by ethanol. Instead, the engines' fuel hoses had delaminated; the interior liners were flaking off in large chunks, rapidly clogging the filters. The problem occurred only in the few feet of hose supplied by Mercury with the engines, but identical fuel hoses supplied by Mercury on other new boats around the country hadn't shown problems with ethanol. Based on all I knew of E10, this shouldn't have happened on a boat built in 2000. But it did, and I quickly learned the problem bordered on epidemic in parts of South Florida and the Keys. "They mandated this ethanol fuel here [last winter], about the time we started seeing this issue," says Jim Lawrence of J & B Mobile Marine in Tavernier, Florida. "Now I see it on a weekly basis, sometimes two or three times in a week." Lawrence says many of his competitors along the island chain experienced similar hose failures. Other mechanics in southeastern Florida report significant instances of hose delamination as well, on boats built as recently as 2007, across a wide range of outboard engine brands. The problem doesn't seem to affect fuel lines within the boat, which don't have the flexibility requirements of hoses that connect to outboards and are therefore manufactured differently. Phone calls to several mechanics as far north as New England turned up other problems: corrosion-proof coatings peeling from inside vapor separator tanks, aluminum carburetor bowls deteriorating, fuel filters clogged with white paste from aluminum tanks.

Full Article at:

<http://www.motorboating.com/articleHtml.jsp?ID=1000079439>

USA, MD, OCEAN PINES, DECEMBER 22 2009. BOATER WANTS TO PURGE MARINA OF ETHANOL USE

charlene polk

Next summer, local boaters may be able to fill up their tanks with pure gasoline at Ocean Pines' marina. It could mean fewer problems for boaters' watercraft and less money spent on repairs, according to the man who's been pushing the marina to use no-ethanol fuel. "Ethanol eats and corrodes very important parts of your boat," resident and 30-year boater Stan Mawyer said. Mawyer, who runs Chesapeake Yacht Services, made a lengthy presentation to Ocean Pines' board of directors regarding the harm he has seen ethanol-blended fuel wreak on boats in recent years. He believes that as a service to its many boaters, Ocean Pines' marina should carry pure gasoline instead of the ethanol blend it currently stocks. As a boat mechanic, boat hauler and boating instructor, Mawyer says he has come across a variety of engine problems caused by the ethanol additive, ranging from sludge to issues with the fuel filter, fuel pump, carburetor and fuel injector. "It's prohibited in airplanes," Mawyer said. "You cannot put this junk into an airplane. Nobody wants these things falling out of the sky." Gas sold for autos at many gas stations is blended with as much as 10 percent ethanol. Mawyer told the board ethanol does not have the same corrosive effect on cars as it does on boats because cars do not have the vented fuel tanks boats do, and because fuel in cars is used up more quickly than it can be in boats. He said that the reason he got into the boat repair business as a corporate retiree was because of the backup he saw every spring at the local marinas, where mechanics were overloaded with boats that needed new fuel filters, carburetors or other repairs because of ethanol corrosion over winter. Mawyer proposed that Ocean Pines, as a service to its boaters, should begin selling gasoline that has not been blended with ethanol at its marina. He said that in spite of what most people thought, an ethanol-gasoline mix was not mandated by the state of Maryland. He added that the marina would probably see more business, as Ocean City's Sunset Marina was currently the only other local facility that sold pure gasoline. "If we promoted ethanol-free gasoline, the Yacht Club could benefit," he said. "We could make this an attraction." Mawyer said that he and his roughly 100 customers all bought their gas at Sunset Marina now. "I'd prefer to buy our fuel" the six-year Ocean Pines resident said. While the pure gasoline would cost buyers a bit more -- in most cases about 40 cents a gallon extra -- Mawyer said it would save their engines. Following his presentation, several board members voiced their support for having the community's marina sell pure gasoline. "Primarily in my mind it's a service to our members," director Pete Gomsak said. Board president Bill Rakow agreed. "I think it'd be a great benefit to

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the membership," he said. He instructed General Manager Tom Olson to look into the logistics of switching to ethanol-free fuel before the start of the spring boating season.

<http://www.delmarvanow.com/article/20091222/OPI01/912220342>

USA, MA, WELLESLEY, DECEMBER 22 2009. CREWS DIVE INTO ACID SPILL CLEANUP AT WELLESLEY POOL

Watch the Video <http://www1.whdh.com/news/articles/local/BO132184/>

Four employees at Boston Sports Club in Wellesley were hospitalized Monday after a mix of toxic pool chemicals spilled inside the facility. No club members were injured. "We had some pool workers in the back of the building. They had 150 gallons of chlorine that is meant to feed a whirlpool that's in the building. A worker inadvertently added a gallon of muriatic acid to that 150 gallons of chlorine, and that caused some noxious fumes to enter the building," said Deputy Chief Jeff Peterson of the Wellesley Fire Department. The building was immediately evacuated. To clean up the spill and dissipate the fumes, the chlorine solution containing the muriatic acid needed to be poured into an 88,000 gallon swimming pool. Hazmat workers, fire crews and state health officials assisted at the scene. The victims, suffering from respiratory issues, were transported to either Newton-Wellesley Hospital or Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital Needham. All are expected to be treated and released. Boston Sports Club released the following statement: "Today, there was a chemical spill in the pool area at Boston Sports Clubs (BSC) in Wellesley. It was contained and no members were affected. The BSC staff worked quickly to evacuate the club for precautionary purposes. They are currently working with the local EPA, Board of Health, and Fire Department to investigate the cause and rectify the situation. Pending the outcome, the public will be alerted once the club reopens." The facility has since re-opened.

<http://www1.whdh.com/news/articles/local/BO132184/>

NORWAY, ROGALAND COUNTY, DECEMBER 22 2009. STATOIL FINED \$4.2M FOR 2007 SPILL

The Rogaland county public prosecutor has notified the Norwegian company Statoil that it has been fined NOK 25 million following the oil leak from the Staffjord A loading buoy on 12 December 2007. "We have noted the public prosecutor's decision," says Thorstein Hole, vice president for the operations west cluster in Statoil. "We'll be taking time to study the grounds for the fine." Extensive improvements have been implemented after the accident on the North Sea field, Hole says. He notes that more than 20,000 offshore loading operations have been conducted on the NCS over the past 30 years, including 7,000 on Staffjord. "The measures we've adopted have enhanced loading robustness and security even further. Monitoring of these operations has also been improved, so that such incidents can be spotted early." No identifiable harm was caused to the environment by the oil spill on Staffjord, according to a report from the Sintef research foundation, the Norwegian Institute for Marine Research and the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research.

<http://www.norwaypost.no/content/view/22946/1/>

USA, AKA, ANCHORAGE, DECEMBER 22 2009. BP FACES FEDERAL, STATE INVESTIGATIONS INTO ALASKA SPILLS

cassandra sweet



This undated photo provided by the Alaska Department of Conservation shows a failed 6-inch lateral pipeline. A new spill has occurred in Alaska's Prudhoe Bay oil field, the Department of Environmental Conservation said Tuesday, Dec. 22, 2009. The spill was discovered Monday, Dec. 21, 2009, by a BP oil field operator doing a routine inspection at a drill site. It was coming from the 6-inch pipeline carrying a mixture of oil, water and natural gas, officials said.

Federal and Alaska investigators are examining BP Plc (BP) after two recent oil spills, a new black eye for a company that pleaded guilty to a U.S. government criminal charge two years ago for its management of oil fields in the state. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is investigating a large oil spill that occurred Nov. 29 at a BP pipeline on Alaska's North Slope, and the agency is working with the FBI and state agencies to determine the circumstances that led to the spill, said EPA spokesman Mark MacIntyre. The EPA's investigation is both civil and criminal in nature, MacIntyre said. "There's a broad umbrella of investigation going on," MacIntyre told Dow Jones Tuesday. The investigation follows a spill last month that sent more than 1,000 barrels of crude oil and water pouring over 8,400 square feet (780 square meters) of snow-covered tundra. The spill, most of which has been cleaned up, occurred after a BP pipeline burst under pressure from ice that had built up inside, according to state authorities. The state Department of Environmental Conservation also has launched a civil investigation into the November spill to figure out what happened and whether BP violated state laws or regulations. The Anchorage office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation didn't immediately return a phone call seeking comment. On Monday, BP's facilities suffered another spill after a six-inch pipeline attached to an oil well broke off, releasing a mixture of crude oil, water and natural gas that covered several thousand square feet. The cause and extent of the most recent spill are still being investigated, said state Department of Environmental Conservation spokeswoman Weld Royal. BP spokesman Steve Rinehart said the company wouldn't comment on government actions or legal issues, but that its practice is "to work cooperatively with regulatory agencies." "BP is doing its own, thorough investigation," Rinehart said. The London-based oil giant has been put under the microscope by federal and state authorities since the company pleaded guilty in 2007 to a misdemeanor violation of the Clean Water Act. BP paid \$20 million and was placed on three years probation in connection with the decision, which stemmed from two 2006 oil spills of more than 200,000 gallons of oil caused by corroded pipes. An August 2006 spill led to a partial shutdown of the Prudhoe Bay oil field, the largest in the U.S., which BP operates for itself and other producers.

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The shutdown led to a brief spike in U.S. oil futures prices. Last March, the Justice Department filed a civil lawsuit against BP for breaking federal laws during the 2006 oil spills. The complaint accuses BP of failing "to prepare and implement spill prevention" and take other measures mandated by the Clean Water Act. In the lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in Anchorage, the government asked the court to order BP to pay the maximum amount allowed for civil penalties, and to order BP to take action to prevent future spills. The State of Alaska also sued BP over the 2006 oil spills, asking for penalty fees from BP for violating environmental laws, and to be compensated for lost state revenues tied to an estimated 35 million barrels of lost oil production. The state didn't include a dollar figure in its request. To date, BP hasn't violated the terms of its probation, said Mary Frances Barnes, BP's federal probation officer. She added that she is "waiting to see what the investigations reveal."

<http://online.wsj.com/article/BT-CO-20091222-713385.html>

ZAMBIA, LUSAKA, DECEMBER 23 2009. TANKER OVERTURNS, SPILLS ACID INTO C/BELT STREAM

zumani katasefa

A tanker carrying undisclosed litres of acid overturned along Sabina-Mufulira road on Sunday, spilling the acid into the Tukula Mutima stream which feeds into the Kafue River, the main source of water for Copperbelt Province residents. An eye witness, Peter Mumba, who is also a supervisor at Musonda Farms situated near the scene of the accident, narrated that minutes after the tanker, which was coming from Mopani Copper Mines plant in Mufulira overturned, the acid spilled into the stream, killing fish and burning aquatic plants. "People rushed to the accident scene and they picked up fish which died as a result of the acid spillage. But I went round to announce to people in the nearby places not to eat the fish because it was poisonous," he said. Mumba said a few hours later, officials from Mopani Copper Mines also took some preventive measures. "Mopani has provided about 70 bags of lime to neutralise the acid in the river so that it cannot spread further. Yesterday (Sunday) the PH scale was 1.5, but today it has stabilised, Mopani is constantly checking," said Mumba. "Yesterday the water was too dark but today (Monday) the colour has improved." Mufulira district commissioner Dyford Mulwa also confirmed the accident and said relevant authorities were on the ground, doing everything possible to safeguard human lives. He said people living near the river were warned not catch fish or drink water from that stream after the incident happened. Mulwa attributed the accident to the bad state of the Mufulira-Sabina road, which he said should be worked on urgently, adding that the state of the road had been a major source of concern among many residents in the area. And Mulonga Water and Sewerage Company (MWSC) managing director Manuel Mutale said the acid spillage would not affect the company's operations, saying the spillage happened away from where they drew water. "The spillage will not affect our operations, we tap our water from upstream. Even if it happened, we are not going to be affected because in the rainy season a lot of effluent are diluted naturally," said Mutale.

http://www.postzambia.com/post-read_article.php?articleId=3470

USA, GA, WOODSTOCK, DECEMBER 23 2009. STIMULUS FUNDS USED TO CLEANUP OLD GASOLINE FUEL TANKS

Contaminated groundwater in Villanow, Ga., is getting a cleanup this week and a Woodstock, Ga., contractor is getting some more work thanks to Georgia's extra stimulus money. Contractor Dean McCartney, program manager for Pangean-CMD Associates, Inc., said his workers will be removing any leftover gasoline or diesel from the four tanks that used to hold gasoline and diesel fuel for a historic Walker County grocery store. "This project helps to pay people's salaries, and it also helps to clean up the environment, Mr. McCartney said. Abandoned or leaking underground storage tanks are not that uncommon, and environmental officials across the country are battling time and rust to keep seeping petroleum products from contaminating more water lines and groundwater systems, said Lisa Lewis, a corrective action unit manager with the Georgia Underground Storage Tank Management program of the Georgia Environmental Protection Division. The Southeast has an estimated 29,000 such tanks, according to EPA estimates. The Villanow tanks, along with some in Chattooga County, are among nearly 100 leaking and abandoned underground tanks being cleaned up in Georgia this year with the help of stimulus money flowing from Washington, D.C. Georgia environmental officials have almost \$5 million from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to remove about 48 "orphan" underground storage tanks that have leaked, or are thought to be in danger of leaking leftover petroleum products. "We call them 'orphan' because there is no viable responsible party or payer to clean them up," said Ms. Lewis. "Most of them were gas stations or auto repair places." Ms. Lewis said Georgia normally has about \$1 million to \$1.5 million a year with which to clean up orphan tanks. The stimulus money -- cash from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act designed to clean up problems and put Americans back to work -- has given Southeastern regulators 4.5 times the typical annual funding for those cleanups, according to Stan Boyd, director of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation's underground storage tank regulatory division. Tennessee received an additional \$4.6 million to use toward the cleanup of 44 leaking tank sites in the Volunteer State, he said. The Villanow General Store, on the National Register of Historic Places under the name of Cavendars Store, is now a private residence. But, built in 1840, the long-time store may have had one of the first gas stations in the area, according to local history. Now monitoring wells are finding gasoline and diesel contamination in the groundwater, which flows to a nearby stream and eventually to Armuchee Creek. Mr. McCartney said the contaminants could be coming from the oldest tanks, which long predated any protective environmental regulations. The four newer tanks there now, installed 23 years ago, have tested "tight," Mr. McCartney said. But all tanks found will be removed, Mr. McCartney said. The store-turned-home's owner, Marty Vess, said the property is up for sale, and he hopes the cleanup brings closure to any environmental concerns about it once having been a gas station. He said state officials have been telling him for a decade that they planned to remove the tanks and do a cleanup. "I guess the stimulus money helped get it going," he said.

http://www.waterworld.com/index/display/news_display/139194930.html

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UK, ESSEX, DECEMBER 23 2009. FUEL TERMINAL OPERATOR FINED £50,000 AFTER PETROL SPILL IN ESSEX

jeremy owen

The operator of an Essex-based fuel storage terminal has been fined £50,000 after a large and dangerous pool of petrol leaked from a road tanker while it was loading. An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the road tanker overflowed in July 2007 when a shut-off valve failed. The valve at the West Thurrock terminal was blocked by debris, preventing it from closing so a large pool of petrol formed, putting the safety of both terminal workers and tanker drivers at risk. The terminal operator, Vopak London Terminal BV Limited, did not adequately assess and prevent the risk created by the valve failure and failed to appropriately manage the risks created by the leak. The company, based in Oliver Road, West Thurrock, appeared at Basildon Crown Court today (22 December) and admitted breaching Regulation 4 of the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1999. It was also ordered to pay £19,136 in costs. HSE Inspector John Hawkins said: "This could so easily have been a very serious incident. Gasoline is an extremely flammable material, with a flashpoint of -40 degrees Celsius, and if ignited many lives could have been lost." Vopak London Terminal BV Limited failed to take all the necessary measures required to prevent this incident and failed to control the spill once it had occurred. It even failed to follow its own written procedures for handling such an occurrence. "This case should serve as a warning to all operators of petrochemical storage sites - where there are serious failings to manage health and safety HSE will not hesitate to prosecute." Vopak London Terminal BV Limited admitted breaching Regulation 4 of the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1999 by:

- Failing to provide suitable and sufficient controls to prevent a gasoline spill
- Failing to undertake a suitable and sufficient risk assessment for large gasoline spills
- Failing to provide and manage an adequate emergency shutdown procedure
- Failing to provide suitable and sufficient controls to prevent a discharge of static electricity
- Failing to provide suitable and sufficient training and information regarding gasoline spill hazards to tanker drivers.

Notes:

Regulation 4 of the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1999 states: "Every operator shall take all measures necessary to prevent major accidents and limit their consequences to persons and the environment." Visit <http://www.hse.gov.uk/COMAH/index.htm>[1] for more information about COMAH Regulations as a whole. A HSE Publication about Safe Unloading of Petrol Tankers is available at <http://books.hse.gov.uk/hse/public/saleproduct.jsf?catalogueCode=9780717621972>[2] Costs of health and safety investigations into COMAH licence holders are borne by the licensee until summons are laid, then any future costs are decided by the court.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/press/2009/coie44vopak.htm>

USA, WI, KRONENWETTER, DECEMBER 23 2009. KRONENWETTER GAS SPILL SITE OF 1998 25,000 GALLONS GASOLINE CONTAMINATION

An estimated 25,000 gallons of gasoline contaminated soil and groundwater in Kronenwetter earlier this month when an underground pipeline ruptured, according to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The broken pipe was discovered Dec. 4 at 2007 Old Highway 51 when an inventory of gasoline by the Magellan Pipeline Co. came up short at its Kronenwetter terminal, according to a DNR news release issued this week. The gasoline reached 20 feet below the pipeline, officials said. Investigators with the state Department of Health and Family Services and the Marathon County Health Department determined there was no risk to the public, according to the news release. Gasoline vapors in the soil will be monitored, officials said. The broken pipe has since been repaired and crews are pumping out gasoline floating on the surface of the groundwater, the DNR said. Once the gasoline is removed, Magellan will work with the DNR to remove the fuel mixed with the soil and groundwater, according to the release. Groundwater samples collected from wells on Magellan's property show the contamination has not spread to other properties, according to the DNR. The pipeline was the site of a major contamination discovered in 1998 when a nearby resident detected a gas odor in the home's water. That contamination is suspected to have occurred in the 1970s when a fuel truck spilled over. The town of Kronenwetter, as the area was known at the time, installed a new water and sewer system after the groundwater contamination seeped into residents' private wells. Williams Pipe Line Co., which owned the pipeline at the time, reached a \$3 million settlement with 140 nearby homeowners.

<http://www.wausaudailyherald.com/article/20091222/WDH0101/91222041/1981/Updated-Kronenwetter-gas-spill-site-of-1998-contamination>

NIGERIA, LAGOS, DECEMBER 23 2009. FG TO INVESTIGATE MISSING 90 MILLION LITRES OF PETROL IN LAGOS

martin ayankola & dayo oketola

The Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Mr. Odein Ajumogobia, said in Lagos on Monday, that he was satisfied with the fuel stock in depots in Lagos and that the queues at filling stations in Lagos and other cities should disappear in a matter of days. He also said that the Federal Government would set up a commission of inquiry to investigate the allegation of the missing 90 million litres of petrol in Lagos. Ajumogobia said that he had reports that about 90 million litres of Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation's stock in Lagos, being handled by third parties, could not be accounted for and that the matter would be thoroughly investigated. The minister, who visited the Folawiyo, MRS and Capital oil depots in Lagos, stated after the tour that, "There is sufficient product in Lagos. There is no reason why people should panic." He added, "I am satisfied that there is supply, the problem is distribution." Ajumogobia said that the distribution problem was caused by the strike embarked upon by the Petroleum Tanker Drivers Unit of the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers in Lagos on Friday, which had since been called

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off. He expressed optimism that the scarcity would be over in a few days as Lagos had enough stock to supply the whole country for almost a week. At the Folawiyo depot in Apapa, the minister was told that there were 45 million litres of petrol in stock as at Monday. It was also gathered that a NNPC vessel, MT Orange Express, would berth at the Folawiyo facility to discharge a petrol cargo by Tuesday. When the minister also visited the MRS depot, the Chief Executive Officer of the company, Alhaji Sayyu Dantata, said the company would have not less than 30 million litres of petrol in stock by Tuesday. Earlier, the Executive Secretary, Major Oil Marketers Association of Nigeria, Mr. Obafemi Olawore, had told newsmen that the majors and NIPCO Plc had between them, five days' stock equivalent to 49 million litres of petrol in Apapa. "Apapa alone will be distributing 13 million litres of petrol daily and we will be getting additional supply from Lister Oil," he added. He also said that the majors were bringing in three to four vessels of imported petrol before the end of the year. According to Olawore, the scarcity should be over before Christmas. Our correspondents also gathered that Lister Oil, which handles product discharge and distribution for the NNPC, had as at Monday, about 20 million litres to distribute. Thus as at Monday, Lister Oil, the major marketers, MRS and Folawiyo Petroleum had between them, 144 million litres of petrol, which can cater for the country's consumption for at least four days. The nation consumes about 32 million litres of petrol daily. The volume is outside NNPC's stock at Atlas Cove, Mosimi and Satellite depot, Ejigbo, which the minister also said were robust as at Monday. Meanwhile, the scarcity persisted in Lagos on Monday with long queue lines at filling stations. But there are indications that there will be an increase in the supply of petrol to the Lagos market on Tuesday.

<http://www.punchng.com/Articl.aspx?heartic=Art2009122216471775>

CANADA, OTTAWA, DECEMBER 23 2009. IKEA CANADA LAUNCHES \$8-MILLION LAWSUIT OVER ALLEGED SOIL CONTAMINATION

glen mcgregor

Ikea Canada says a section of land where it wants to build its largest store in the country has been contaminated with dry-cleaning chemicals. The furniture and housewares chain says in court documents that an environmental study found tetrachloroethylene (also referred to as PCE or "perc") in the soil under the parking lot at the east end of the Ottawa mall the retail outlet currently occupies. The company claims the contamination is affecting plans to move its location from the west side of the mall into a new, two-storey building on the east side that will become the largest Ikea in the country. Ikea has launched a suit against the owner of a small strip mall near the site, the past owner of the strip mall, and the owners of two dry-cleaning outlets that operated there until 2004. Ikea wants them to help pay for the cleanup. The lawsuit, which Ikea filed in July, claims \$1 million in damages from each of the eight defendants, plus other costs. Ikea's lawsuit has also set off third-party litigation between the defendants. Ikea alleges that PCE and other hazardous chemicals seeped into the soil and water table from the dry-cleaner formerly located in the Baxter Plaza and migrated underground to the Pinecrest Mall parking lot. Soil samples taken from the southeast corner of the property during a 2007 environmental assessment found concentrations of the chemical at 37 parts per billion, about seven times the limit for non-potable groundwater. The owners of the plaza deny there is any problem with contamination from their property. PCE is considered a probable or possible human carcinogen and in high concentrations can cause neurological problems and other health problems. "The degradation products of PCE over time is also dangerous and harmful to humans and the natural environment," Ikea says in the lawsuit. "The migration of the PCE onto the Ikea property, which contains both retail operations and restaurants, poses a hazard which Ikea cannot properly address while the migration from the Baxter property continues." However, an Ikea spokeswoman says the company believes the level of chemicals the environmental testing company found is not dangerous. "We have been told that it is contained underground and that there is no risk to the health and safety of anybody shopping," said Madeleine Lowenborg-Frick. Lowenborg-Frick said Ikea will pay to have the ground cleaned up, regardless of the outcome of the lawsuit. One of the defendants, Baxter Plaza owner John Yang, denied there was a problem with contamination. He said that testing of his property, ordered by the court last month, showed "most of the spots are OK." In a statement of defence, Yang and his company denied the dry-cleaning company contaminated the ground or groundwater and challenged Ikea to prove otherwise. None of the allegations have been proven in court.

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/news/canada/Ikea+Canada+launches+million+lawsuit+over+alleged+soil+contamination/2370338/story.html>

USA, AL, ATHENS, DECEMBER 23 2009. BP: LIGHTNING CAUSED LEAK; SITE CLEANUP CONTINUES

jean cole

Lightning has been identified as the cause of a pipeline break off Alabama 99 last December, which caused 2,000 gallons of xylene to spill into a ditch and pond, a BP official said. BP, which owns the multi-state pipeline, had the damaged pipe microscopically tested to determine the cause so the company could try to prevent it from recurring, said Ronald Rybarczyk, BP government and public affairs spokesman. The results of that study were released Friday. "The metallurgical analysis of the damaged section of pipe shows that the most likely cause of the damage was an electrical discharge, consistent with an event such as lightning striking the line at another location, and the charge exiting the line at this point in Limestone County," Rybarczyk said. To safeguard against future strikes, BP has installed more anode protection along the pipeline, he said. "BP's top priorities remain the safety of our nearby neighbors and the safe operation of the pipeline," Rybarczyk said. The xylene leak in the western Limestone County community triggered fear in many residents. One cattle owner who lives across the road from the spill site was worried about selling his livestock without a written assurance of safety from BP. Other residents, including students at West Limestone County High School, worried about inhaling xylene, which they said smelled like paint thinner. And many worried whether the chemical had contaminated the groundwater. As for water safety, testing shows the xylene levels in the pond are well within state quality

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standards — even for drinking water, Rybarczyk said. Alabama's limit for xylene in drinking water is 10 parts per million. The latest sampling at the Alabama 99 site shows the level in the pond to be 0.4 parts per million or less that 1/20th of that level, Rybarczyk said. Sampling shows there have never been traces of xylene in area drinking water wells, he said. With the cause of the pipe rupture identified, BP is now moving from the initial cleanup phase to further remediation at the site. "We are further characterizing the site to determine what cleanup measures will be most effective from this point forward," Rybarczyk said. "Trenches are still in place, but during this evaluation period we are not actively pumping water from the site. Thus, captured liquid and recovered xylene totals remain roughly where they were earlier this year — about 200,000 gallons of total liquid recovered, 99 percent of which is ground and surface water from rainfall." BP has installed two additional monitoring wells at the site, he said. "This will help us better understand the impacted area and determine what further measures to take, including the placement of further wells and evaluation of cleanup methods," Rybarczyk said. The Alabama Department of Environmental Management approved the company's work plan for the site.

http://www.enewscourier.com/local/local_story_353184604.html

USA, LA, BATON ROUGE, DECEMBER 24 2009. DEQ TO COMPLETE WORK ON RAILROAD SWITCHING SITE

Within the coming months, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality will finalize their oversight of Union Pacific Railroad's Shattuck street switching yard at the 100 block of North Railroad Avenue in Lake Charles. The property was developed as a railroad switching yard in 1885 and continues as such today. In 1983, a railroad tank car of tetrachloroethylene leaked a load of 11,770 gallons onto the ground. The immediate response of vacuuming liquids and soil excavation removed the majority of contamination (8,850 gallons). Soil was mixed with kiln dust and approximately 1,100 yards of solidified soil was removed and disposed. The remaining contamination required further corrective action and risk-based evaluation. Since remediation activities commenced in 1983, groundwater has continued to be recovered and treated on site. By 2005, Union Pacific Railroad, using DEQ's Risk Evaluation and Corrective Action Program (RECAP), determined that remaining constituents on and offsite met the regulatory standards which are protective of human health and the environment. On July 15, 2008, Union Pacific Railroad requested a No Further Action At This Time (NFA-ATT) determination from DEQ. Such a determination is granted when contamination is reduced to the extent necessary in order to achieve the established standards. Recent soil and groundwater readings do not indicate contamination above the RECAP Standards at the site. While the Final Groundwater Monitoring Report and the site summary have been approved by DEQ, Union Pacific Railroad intends to continue treating recovered groundwater. DEQ has accepted Union Pacific's well Plugging and Abandonment plan which will be implemented in early 2010. "The cleanup work at Union Pacific Railroad's switching site is an example of Union Pacific's management and personnel working together with the Department of Environmental Quality to ensure that contamination at the site is properly removed," said Tom Harris, Administrator of DEQ's Remediation Services Division. "DEQ will continue to work with Union Pacific to ensure the site gets up to the established standards." The public may view the documentation related to this site by accessing the EDMS portal at www.deq.louisiana.gov or in person at DEQ's Public Records Center, Galvez Building, 602 North 5th Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70804.

<http://www.kplctv.com/Global/story.asp?S=11723281>

USA, NY, SOUTHAMPTON, DECEMBER 24 2009. LAWS FORCE UPGRADES AT NUMEROUS EAST END GAS STATIONS

bryan finlayson

Gas stations across the East End are scrambling to install new underground tanks that are required by Suffolk County sanitary codes before the deadline to do so expires. More than 200 gas stations have yet to install double-walled fiberglass tanks, which were originally required to be in place by January 1, 2010. That deadline has been extended to May 1, 2010, to allow the county's remaining gas stations to complete the upgrades. The Suffolk County Legislature adopted the sanitary code requirement in 1989. At the time, the county required gas stations to use single-walled steel tanks, which are more susceptible to leaks. "Folks had 20 years to comply with it," Suffolk County Legislator Jay Schneiderman said. More than 1,000 gas stations have already done the work to come into compliance. According to James Meyers, Suffolk County's principal public health engineer, of the 200 remaining, about 100 have not yet filed for the permits needed to install the new tanks. He said stations without permits face a \$1,000 fine in January in addition to daily fines of \$1,000 after May 1. It can cost a gas station between \$300,000 to \$400,000 to replace one tank, Mr. Meyers said. "Some [stations] might be waiting to close up shop, some might be waiting to see what happens," Mr. Meyers said. "It is an expensive proposition. Most people are taking it very seriously." Double-walled tanks provide added protection against leaks, Mr. Meyers said. The tank consists of an inner tank surrounded by an outer wall. Space separating the inner tank from the outer wall is designed to contain leaks. In the event of a leak, an alarm system with lights and bells is triggered by a buoy at the base of the tank, he said. Pipes connecting the tank to the surface—often trouble spots for leaks—must also be double-walled, Mr. Meyers said. "You have a double layer of protection," Mr. Meyers said. "Leaks at gas stations are unfortunately not very uncommon. Usually it's not the tank itself, it's the pipes ... they can cause quite extensive problems." Kathryn Odessa, executive director of the Long Island Gasoline Retailers Association, said she expects most of LIGRA's 300 member gas stations to make the upgrade, but acknowledged that some stations cannot afford the new tanks. "If they are not upgrading they will get fined, they will get shut down," Ms. Odessa said. "Some people have been shutting down because they just cannot afford to stay in business." She said LIGRA supports the county's regulations for double-walled tanks, but said there should be financial assistance from the government to make the upgrades. "If it's for an environmental good, we're behind it," Ms. Odessa said. "I think there should be more assistance from the county and state." David Hawke, owner of Hess in Water Mill, recently opened after completing the upgrades, which began on October 26. "We took quite a bit of [money] out. The tanks and the pumps probably cost about half a

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million dollars," Mr. Hawke said. Because of the costs of the upgrades and tough economy, Mr. Hawke said he is closing an eight-pump station on Route 58 in Riverhead that he built in 1981. "It just doesn't make sense to make the investment," Mr. Hawke said. "I'm taking the tanks out and I'm going to sell the property. You just can't sell gasoline and cigarettes anymore and make money. "I think you'll see a lot of stations close. It's a tremendous amount of money. The further east, the more rural you get, the harder it gets." Ali Yuzbasioglu, owner of Empire gas station in East Hampton and three others on the East End, said it cost him \$450,000 apiece to replace three tanks at his East Hampton station in 2006. He said he is still waiting for permits to do work at the other stations. He paid for the upgrades with bank loans. "It is a lot of money," Mr. Yuzbasioglu said. "I have four more stations to change the tanks. I haven't gotten the permits yet." Shahzad Ahmed, a manager of 7-Eleven on County Road 111 in Manorville, said work to install three new double-walled tanks there will be completed by the end of the month. Though it is costing the business about \$1 million to install the tanks, no additional gas pumps will be installed for motorists, he said. "That's what I don't like: you pay \$1 million and you have the same number of pumps," Mr. Ahmed said. Suffolk County Health Department spokeswoman Grace McGovern said about 1,000 gas stations are expected to be in compliance with the regulations by January 1. Sanitary permits can take as long as nine months to be issued.

http://www.27east.com/story_detail.cfm?id=251297&town=&n=Laws%20force%20upgrades%20at%20numerous%20East%20End%20gas%20stations

JAPAN, OSAKA, DECEMBER 24 2009. BLAST IN JAPANESE CHEMICAL PLANT KILLS FOUR



Four men died in an explosion Thursday at a chemical plant in Japan's Osaka, Kyodo News reported. The blast occurred at around 8:50 a.m. at a fluorine compound production plant operated by Morita Chemical Industries Co. in Osaka's Yodogawa Ward. The explosion occurred when the four workers were cutting away the top of a chemical tank as part of efforts to clean it. The tank stores a toxic chemical material called borontrifluoride. The firefighters said part of the plant's roof was blown off in the blast. Two of the four victims were found collapsed on the roof of the third floor while the remaining two were found lying on the ground, the report said. Morita Chemical Industries, an unlisted chemical maker based in Osaka's Chuo Ward, said it produces fluorine compounds for industrial use at the plant. The chemicals are used in

semiconductor production and as electrolytic solutions for lithium batteries, it said. Usually, fluorine compounds are unlikely to explode, the company said. Founded in 1935, Morita Chemical Industries produces and sells hydrofluoric acids, fluorine compounds and various other chemicals as well as pharmaceutical products, the company said on its website.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-12/24/content_12698312.htm

RUSSIA, SVERDLOVSK REGION, NIZHNY TAGIL, DECEMBER 24 2009. NIZHNY TAGIL ORE MINE BLAST TOLL RISES TO 8



Eight people died in the explosion at the Yevstyuninskaya mine, and another person is missing, the press service of the Ural regional emergency situations centre told Itar-Tass. "The explosion occurred at 13:35 (11:35, Moscow time), on Wednesday. There were 123 people underground at the moment of the blast. One hundred and fourteen were promptly evacuated. "Rescuers believe the explosion occurred due to violations of the rules of explosives transportation. "The rescue effort involves 65 people and 15 units of equipment," the emergency situations centre's press service said. "Sverdlovsk region governor Alexander Misharin ordered to set up a crisis headquarters. It is led by chairman of the regional government Anatoly Gredin. Misharin cut short his visit to Moscow and flew to the scene of the accident," the press service of the regional governor's office told Tass. Regional prosecutor Yuri Ponomaryov, regional police chief Mikhail Nikitin and senior officials went to the scene as well. On January 22, 2009, 18 miners were

injured in an accident at the same mine. According to the regional department of the Federal Service for Supervision of Environment, Technology and Nuclear Management (Rostekhnadzor), the ore pass where a fire started, had not been used since the middle of 1980s, and therefore was not part of the ventilation system. It was not properly sealed, and as a result the litter that had piled up there, caught fire. The large number of casualties occurred because the rescuers arrived at the scene too late due to a late phone call. A cigarette end thrown into the litter started the fire, Rostekhnadzor said. After the fire, 146 miners were evacuated, but 18 of them were poisoned by carbon monoxide. Six had to be hospitalised. The Vysokogorsky ore dressing works (VGOK) which runs several mines for ore processing, is located near Nizhny Tagil, 180 kilometers north of Yekaterinburg. VGOK mines the Vysokogorsky, Yevstyuninskaya, and Mednorudnyanskoye iron ore deposits. It is one of the largest mining companies in the Ural region. It mines iron ore and produces refined ore, agglomerate, limestone and other products. Yevraz Group controls 100 percent of VGOK shares.

<http://www.itar-tass.com/eng/level2.html?NewsID=14670482&PageNum=0>

SOUTH AFRICA, TSHWANE, DECEMBER 24 2009. FIREWORKS CONFISCATED IN TSHWANE

Four tons of fireworks worth R500 000 have been confiscated from a wholesale store in Atteridgeville on Wednesday, the Tshwane community safety department said. Spokesman Console Tleane said the fireworks, which filled a medium-sized truck and three bakkies, were confiscated following a raid by the multi-disciplinary task team of the Tshwane Metro Police. He said the raid was

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**Associate Member
ISCO**

<http://www.spillcontrol.org>



part of an ongoing operation to ensure that fire safety issues were adhered to. The confiscation was the second after the city's metro police also confiscated a truck-load of fireworks in Marabastad on Tuesday. During the raid on Wednesday, fireworks were found all over the shop, which was a violation of the certificate that the store owners had.

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=nw20091223162034369C727850

USA, ME, THOMASTOWN, DECEMBER 24 2009. THOMASTON TANK EXPLOSION ROCKS CEMENT PLANT

Watch the Video <http://www.wcsh6.com/news/local/story.aspx?storyid=112618&catid=2>

People all over the midcoast felt a big blast Wednesday afternoon; it was the result of an explosion at the Dragon Cement plant. The State Fire Marshal's Office says just after noon, four workers were dismantling an old building at the plant when it caught fire. A short time later, there was an explosion in the building that was felt for miles around. The Fire Marshal's Office says the workers were not using explosives to take down the building. The workers were using cutting torches to remove large pieces of steel and fiberglass tanks. Investigators are looking into whether one of those torches might have started the fire. It's unclear what material was inside the abandoned building that would have created that large of an explosion, though. The blast sent debris flying about 500 feet, and blew out windows in one of the company's office buildings. People as far away as Damariscotta reported feeling the ground shake from the blast. Luckily, no one was hurt. The Dragon Cement staff was having a Christmas party on the other side of its property at the time. The cause is still under investigation.

<http://www.wcsh6.com/news/local/story.aspx?storyid=112618&catid=2>

USA, ID, TERRETON, DECEMBER 24 2009. STATION REOPENS AFTER BIG EXPLOSION

Shown here are the exploded remains of the tanker truck on Thursday night at Ike's Tesoro in Terreton.



Ike's Tesoro service station has reopened in Terreton, but cleanup is still underway following the gas tanker explosion on Dec. 17. According to owner Ike Tomlinson, the area is still under investigation by several insurance companies, after which it will be subject to an investigation and cleanup operation by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality. Steve Heaton, a DEQ representative, said that following the removal of the gas tanker wreckage by the insurance companies, the DEQ will begin to oversee cleanup of both the fuel spill and chemical foam used to fight the fire. "We are providing in the field oversight of the cleanup activity," said Heaton. "Our primary concern is the fuel that was released." The DEQ will be

excavating several layers of soil to look for ground contamination. In a phone interview, Tomlinson expressed some frustration that the cleanup was not already under way. "Its still under investigation -- we can't do anything as far as cleanup until after," said Tomlinson. At the moment, the station is offering all of its services except for the sale of fuel, although it has been delivering bulk fuel to customers via trucks from Idaho Falls. Tomlinson said he is unsure when the investigations will be complete or when he will once again be able to sell fuel. The monetary costs of the damages caused by the explosion have not yet been assessed. Last Thursday, three above-ground fuel tanks and a gas tanker truck exploded during a scheduled refueling of the above-ground tanks. The cause of the explosion was due to an apparent overfilling of one of the tanks. Observers at the gas station reported that the series of explosions could be seen in the night sky as far away as Rexburg, which is more than 30 miles away. Residents who lived a far as 5 miles away reported hearing and feeling the series of blasts. Seven fire districts and close to 100 emergency personnel responded to the accident. The explosion also temporarily knocked out phone service for Terreton residents. The service has since been restored.

<http://www.rexburgstandardjournal.com/articles/2009/12/23/news/47.txt>

CANADA, ONT, SEVERN TWP, DECEMBER 24 2009. ONE PERSON DEAD IN TRUCK CRASH

An investigation continues into a fatal collision involving two tractor-trailers in Severn Township early Tuesday morning. "It is going to take some time," said OPP Const. Gerry Dwyer. "The road was closed for sixteen-and-a-half hours." A tractor-trailer hauling fuel was parked on the northbound side of Highway 400, north of Vasey Road, when it was struck from behind by another tractor-trailer shortly before 7:30 a.m. Both drivers were taken to hospital with what police said appeared to be non-life-threatening injuries. A passenger in the truck that slammed into the parked vehicle was pronounced dead at the scene by the coroner. The driver of the parked truck, a 49-year-old man, was taken to hospital where he was treated and released. The driver of the second vehicle, a 25-year-old male, was taken to St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto. "The weather conditions didn't seem to be a factor in the crash," said Dwyer. he accident led police to close a section of Highway 400 northbound and divert traffic as crews worked to untangle the trucks and transfer fuel from the tanker that was hit from behind. Anything to do with fuel, we can't take any chances," Dwyer added. A technical traffic collision investigator and a collision reconstruction officer were called to the scene. Police are asking that anyone who witnessed the crash contact OPP Const. Ken Williams at 326-3536, or 1-888-310-1122.

<http://www.orilliatoday.com/orilliatoday/article/152744>

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