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"RELEASE 2010 – 561 NEWSY STUFF"

January 2 2010



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USA, ME, THOMASTOWN, DECEMBER 29 2009. THOMASTON TANK EXPLOSION RULED ACCIDENTAL >> NO ONE SERIOUSLY INJURED



The state fire marshal's office has concluded that the explosion in an empty storage tank in Thomaston last week was caused by a combination of unburned particles in the air, heat and oxygen. The explosion at Dragon Cement Products on Wednesday, Dec. 23 was accidental, said Sgt. Ken Grimes of the state fire marshal's office. He did not anticipate any charges being filed in the case. The elevated storage tank was in the process of being demolished at the time. It had been empty for years, Grimes said. Sparks from a cutting torch ignited a 10 foot by 10 foot debris pile that included insulation and styrofoam before the explosion. Hot gases from the fire entered through vents in the tank and filled it before the particles in the thick smoke ignited. No one was injured.

<http://www.wmtw.com/news/22073668/detail.html>

SOUTH AFRICA, JOHANNESBURG, DECEMBER 29 2009. ILLEGAL FIREWORKS DEALER BUST - AGAIN

With the festive season in full swing, the City of Tshwane continues to clamp down on the illegal trade of fireworks. According to the City, the fireworks were confiscated at a shop in Marabastad on Christmas Day. This was the same shop where a raid was conducted on Wednesday. "The fireworks were confiscated from a shop owned by the same owner of the warehouse which was raided on Wednesday, where fireworks worth around R300 000 were confiscated," said the city's executive director for communication services Console Tleane. Two tonnes of fireworks worth R200 000 were confiscated from the shop on Christmas Day. "Because he was a second offender the fireworks will be destroyed instead of being stored at the Explosives Centre. He will also be blacklisted, meaning that the Fire Brigade services will no longer consider an application from him, nor issue him with a license. Possible criminal charges will be investigated against him, including possible violation of customs control," said Tleane. Traders who want to sell fireworks must apply for a licence at the South African Police Service's Explosives Unit after which the application is considered by the Fire Brigade Services. Meanwhile 17 people were arrested on Saturday for drinking in public at city parks. They were arrested at Moroe Park in Atteridgeville after which they were taken to the Atteridgeville Police Station and issued with fines

<http://www.buanews.gov.za/news/09/09122810451001>

USA, WI, WHITEWATER, DECEMBER 29 2009. WHITEWATER FAMILY WORRIED ABOUT DRINKING WATER

kayla bunge



This former gas station on S. Janesville St. in Whitewater is allegedly the cause of nearby groundwater pollution.

The Channing family doesn't drink the water at their house. They still cook with it. They still bathe in it. But they don't dare drink it. Joe and Kathy Channing, 531 S. Clark St., learned in spring that leaking tanks at an old gas station up the street had contaminated their groundwater. But the couple was informed the problem was going away and that the state needed to close the case. They were puzzled: Why hadn't anyone told them the water they had been using was contaminated with an unsafe amount of benzene, a carcinogen, for the 10 years since the gas station closed—or longer? "We have so many questions," Kathy said. "But the part that gets me

is if they would have told us, we would have had the opportunity to move." The Channings, who moved into their house in 1983, are concerned about their long-term health and well being as a result of exposure to benzene. They also are concerned about the apparent secrecy with which state officials have handled the case. "I don't know what's true," Kathy said. "I don't know what to be afraid of. What are we supposed to do? We live here. We're caught."

'Nobody Told Us'

The Channings received a letter stating groundwater contamination that originated at the former Five Points One Stop gas station at 503 S. Janesville St. had migrated onto their property. The letter said the "groundwater contaminant plume," or area of polluted groundwater, was receding and would continue to degrade over time. It also said the state Department of Natural Resources was satisfied with cleanup at the site and wanted to close the case. Things didn't seem right from the get-go, Kathy said. "I read through it and thought, 'This is wrong,'" she said. The letter arrived via certified mail April 16, 2009, but it was dated March 16. It was typed strangely, like it was supposed to be printed on letterhead even though the paper was plain. It was signed by Elizabeth Meyer, the wife of the former gas station owner, Stan Meyer. Kathy called a DNR official whose address and phone number were listed in the letter. The official said he was going to close the case, so Kathy called other DNR officials. They routinely sent her back to the man she originally contacted. Still, she didn't stop trying to get answers. "I started calling every office I could," she said. "I didn't care who I was talking to, I was just begging for help." Kathy also started doing some research. She consulted a family friend, who is a hydrogeologist and has knowledge of groundwater contamination cases. Kathy believes the state has insufficient information to close the case. "These people think we're idiots," she said. The Five Points One Stop opened in 1932. It went out of business in the late 1990s, when Stan Meyer became ill. The gas pumps were removed in July 1998 and the gas tanks were removed in January 2000. "We didn't think anything of it," Kathy said of the gas station closing. "I thought it was because (the owner) was sick ... I didn't think anything about them closing because (the groundwater) was contaminated. Nobody told us." An environmental consultant in 1999 installed several monitoring wells and in 2003 conducted some cleanup at the site, excavating about 270 tons of

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contaminated soil, according to a bid request sent out by the Petroleum Environmental Cleanup Fund Award Bureau. The bureau is a division of the Department of Commerce, which handles gas station rehabilitation and cleanup. In late 2001, benzene concentration near the gas station site was 1,440 parts per billion. By late 2008, it was 320 ppb, according to a chart from the consultant, which monitored the area using the wells. Kathy believes the DNR cannot know for certain the contamination is dissipating—at least not near her home. The data the DNR has is outdated, she said. The monitoring wells were broken in 2006, when Clark Street was reconstructed, and they never were replaced, she said. The last known benzene concentration near the Channings' house was 776 ppb in late 2001. Kathy believes even if the contamination is going away, she and her neighbors should have been warned about it from the start.

'Not Usually a Risk'

John Feeney, a hydrogeologist at the DNR who handled the Five Points case, said the state department usually only notifies people of groundwater contamination if it poses a health risk. "Our procedure is not to go around knocking on doors to tell people there's contamination at a gas station near their house," he said. "If there's a health problem we would do that, but in this case, we didn't think there was a health problem." Feeney said environmental officials did not know until recently that chemical vapors at low concentrations were a "pathway for concern." But, he said, officials still are not as concerned about petroleum chemical vapors at low concentrations because they do not pose a real risk until they are at a high enough level to produce an odor of gas. "If there are no odor complaints, there's not usually a risk," he said. Feeney said the DNR never received complaints from people in the Five Points neighborhood about odor. Kathy told officials she never noticed a smell of petroleum near her house but was concerned the vapors could come up through the floorboards of her house. (The Channings' house does not have a basement, only a crawlspace beneath the living room. Under the floorboards is dirt.) Feeney said officials did not believe there was a risk to indoor air based on the data they had regarding the concentration of contamination in the groundwater. But Kathy asked the state health department to test the air in the house anyway. Tests of the air in the crawlspace under the Channings' house revealed "no concentration of concern," he said. The DNR on Nov. 19 closed the Five Points case. "The concentrations of contaminant showed a clear decreasing trend," Feeney said. "And natural attenuation will remediate any residual contamination in a reasonable amount of time." The houses in the Five Points neighborhood now are listed in a database of closed environmental remediation sites, which essentially lets future property owners and construction companies know there might still be some contamination in the area and that they must take caution in drilling wells or handling soil. Kathy Channing continues her crusade. She's contacted federal environmental officials for help. She's even contacted a lawyer for advice. But she's been hesitant to ask her neighbors about the issue because she doesn't want to "scare" them. "The people around here ... deserve to be told the truth," she said. "I don't think that people should be alerted 10 years later that ... their investments (homes) are gone because of a lie. I'm baffled by it. I want them (state environmental officials) to come out with the truth."

<http://gazettextra.com/news/2009/dec/28/whitewater-family-worried-about-drinking-water/>

USA, OH, ELYRIA, DECEMBER 29 2009. LAWSUIT FROM ATTORNEY GENERAL ARISES ABOUT LEAKING UNDERGROUND FUEL TANKS

The Ohio Attorney General's Office is suing a Columbus-based refining corporation for not following regulations regarding problems with leaking underground fuel tanks at three Lorain County gas stations several years ago. The complaint against states Premcor Refining Group, which owns the former Clark gas stations at 4480 Liberty Ave., Vermilion; 35600 Center Ridge Road N., North Ridgeville; and 209 E. Bridge St., Elyria; did not comply with federal regulations upon discovering underground tanks at the gas stations had leaked and damaged the environment. Because of this, Premcor violated the Bureau of Underground Storage Tank Regulations rules regarding the release of petroleum and should have come up with plans to resolve the leaks when they found out about them in 1989. The leak around the pump island at the Vermilion station was reported by workers in 1989, and according to BUSTR rules, Premcor was immediately required to submit a site investigation report within 20 days. Premcor didn't file for this site or the Elyria and North Ridgeville sites, the lawsuit stated. Reports weren't filed for the North Ridgeville and Elyria sites in 1994 after removing and closing gas pumps, and starting in 1998, each site didn't report annual evaluations. Premcor faces a \$10,000 fee for each day of each violation, according to the lawsuit.

<http://www.morningjournal.com/articles/2009/12/29/news/mj2086190.txt>

USA, TX, GALVESTON, BOLIVAR PENINSULA, DECEMBER 29 2009. STATE SAYS CRUDE OIL SPILL WAS 12 BARRELS

chris paschenko

An investigation into a pipeline leak that closed state Highway 87 near Crystal Beach concluded that 12 barrels of crude oil spilled, an official said Monday. A passer-by reported the leak Wednesday, and firefighters found oil pooling in ditches along the highway near Boyt Road. Enterprise Products, which operates the offshore pipeline, stopped the leak about an hour after its 7:20 a.m. discovery. The mechanical failure of a valve caused the oil to spray from a 1-inch service pipe into the air, and a strong Gulf breeze carried the crude across the highway. Oil covered an area of about 30,000 square yards, Ramona Nye, a spokeswoman with the Railroad Commission of Texas, said. The highway was reopened at 12:30 a.m. Thursday, after the cleanup of the release of 10 to 12 barrels of oil, Nye said. A barrel is the equivalent of 42 U.S. gallons. The commission regulates the exploration and production of oil and natural gas in the state, Nye said. The commission requires the pipeline operator to sample the soil in the area to confirm the total petroleum levels meet the commission's cleanup requirements, Nye said. "If this requirement is met, then no further cleanup actions will be required, and no enforcement actions will be requested," Nye said.

<http://galvestondailynews.com/story.lasso?ewcd=ac1eb4996f488808>

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AUSTRIA, VORARLBERG, DECEMBER 29 2009. DIESEL SPILL ON VORARLBERG RAILWAY

david rogers

Hundreds of litres of diesel was spilled on a rail line in Vorarlberg last night (Sun/Mon). Police said rail workers noticed 200 to 300 litres of diesel had been lost from a locomotive during its trip from Bludenz to a freight yard in Wolfurt in Bregenz district when the train arrived in the early hours of this morning at the yard. They added a defective ball valve had allowed the diesel to leak. The remaining fuel in the locomotive was pumped out of it at the yard.

http://austriantimes.at/news/General_News/2009-12-28/19194/Diesel_spill_on_Vorarlberg_railway

USA, WASHINGTON, DECEMBER 30 2009. NEW EPA MAP SHOWS THE YEAR IN ECO-ENFORCEMENT

todd woody

'Tis the season for the annual year-in-review column, beloved by writers and editors desperate to fill pages and screens of blank space during these slow news weeks. I'm going to forgo that annual holiday journalism tradition—sort of. While perusing various year-end and year-ahead trend story pitches that had popped into my in-box since Thanksgiving, I came across one from the United States Environmental Protection Agency that caught my attention. The EPA was releasing its annual enforcement stats for 2009. Usually that's a big yawn, given that for most of the past decade prosecuting polluters was not high on the must-do list of the former administration. But in 2009 not only was there a much more enforcement-minded EPA administrator in Washington (in the person of Lisa Jackson), the agency for the first time created a [Google map mashup of its enforcement actions](#) for the year. The map lets you zoom in on your city, county, or state and see the civil and criminal cases filed by the EPA for violations of its clean air and water laws and other environmental statutes. Click on the air, water, land, and criminal buttons and colored markers start to populate the map showing you the location of various violations. When you click on a marker a link to detailed information about the case pops up. You can also review any past violations. "EPA mapped the locations of more than 90 percent of the facilities that were the subject of enforcement actions last year," the agency said in a statement. (Note that you won't find any drinking water treatment facilities hit with lawsuits or complaints; the EPA did not map them "due to potential security concerns.") Clicking around the EPA map, I learned that in Alameda County, Calif., where I live, an Oakland recycling company called California Waste Solutions paid fines totaling \$172,200 for failing to comply with storm water permits at two of its local facilities. (The Bay Area was relatively law-abiding compared to, say, greater Seattle, where the map was purple with environmental violations.) Okay, so why does this matter? Knowledge, as the saying goes, is power and the average citizen is unlikely to sift through thousands of pages of government data to find out if local companies or government facilities have been polluting their air and water in violation of environmental laws. And as metropolitan newspapers continue to gut their staffs and environmental reporters become an endangered species, you're unlikely to read about such transgressions unless they reach oil-spill proportions or involve big money. In contrast, the EPA's new map and its successors will allow a quick visual comparison of the government's enforcement actions from year to year. In fiscal 2009, the EPA said it filed 387 new criminal cases—the most in five years—and reached settlements that require polluters to spend \$5.4 billion to comply with environmental laws. Still, the new interactive map is a work in progress. First, it is not comprehensive. "While these large cases are a vital part of our work to protect public health and improve compliance, they do not reflect the totality of the annual environmental enforcement activities," the agency said. Second, the information that is available on violations is inconsistent, ranging from detailed to sketchy. Click on a big enforcement action or high-profile case, and you'll get plenty of data. But many other cases just offer cryptic references to violations of environmental statutes, making it difficult to ascertain if a company is guilty of dumping toxins into a local waterway or just bad record-keeping. I couldn't tell, for example, what that Oakland recycling company had done to violate its storm water permit. I had a similar experience when I came across an air violation by an Alameda County Trader Joe's, that Costco for the bobo set. When I tried to get details on the violation I came up short. Clicking on the map marker took me to an "Enforcement Case Report" that listed the violation as "Air Emissions Not Otherwise Specified." After a few minutes of clicking around the EPA database I found that the violation was deemed "minor" but no other information was available. (The EPA could take some cues from The New York Times' ongoing investigative series on water pollution that [features an interactive database](#) that lets readers identify polluters near their homes.) Making the map a real-time snapshot of environmental cases as they are filed rather than a static end-of-year review would make good on the EPA's promise to "increase transparency, improve access to data, and provide the public with the bigger picture of enforcement activity occurring in communities around the country." The '09 map mashup could just be the start of a new era of digital transparency. One can imagine an app that would tap the iPhone's GPS to geotag polluters or issue alerts of enforcement actions. Better yet, if the EPA really wants to tap the power of social media in the new year, let people create their own mashups. Just imagine an army of iPhone-toting citizen enforcers geotagging and reporting suspected environmental violations to a database monitored by their local EPA office.

<http://www.grist.org/article/2009-12-29-new-epa-map-shows-the-year-in-eco-enforcement/>

USA, FLA, GAINESVILLE, DECEMBER 30 2009. EPA: UF WILL PAY A \$175,000 FINE >> IMPROPER DISPOSAL OF TETRACHLOROETHYLENE IS CITED. RISK OF HUMAN EXPOSURE IS LOW.

thomas stewart

The University of Florida has agreed to pay a fine of \$175,000 for alleged environmental violations that include illegally disposing of hundreds of gallons of a toxic chemical on campus over almost two decades, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced Monday. The chemical, a solvent used to clean lawn mowers and weed eaters, has been found above levels allowed by the EPA in the soil and groundwater surrounding the UF grounds department on Radio Road east of Southwest 34th Street. UF

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and EPA officials, however, agree the level of contamination is low and the risk of human exposure minimal. UF has since stopped using the chemical. "As soon as UF learned of the EPA's concerns, we stopped using the product," said UF spokeswoman Janine Sikes. The disposal of the chemical and the other alleged violations were discovered during an unannounced EPA inspection in March 2008. Inspectors found that UF employees were spraying lawn equipment with a degreasing agent that was allowed to dry and then washed off with a hose. Though the washing occurred on a concrete pad, some of the chemical may have found its way into the soil and groundwater by seeping through cracks in the pad or making its way to a nearby stormwater drain, inspectors noted in their report. Since the inspection, UF has spent about \$67,000 determining the level of contamination, according to Sikes. Once testing is complete and a cleanup plan is in place, UF will be required to pay for its implementation. The chemical in question, tetrachloroethylene, or PCE, is often used for metal degreasing and by dry cleaners, according to the Department of Health and Human Service's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. At high levels, exposure can cause dizziness, headaches, confusion, nausea, unconsciousness and even death, according to the agency. In animals, it has been linked to kidney and liver damage as well as tumors. Health effects at low levels of exposure are not known. UF has tested for the contamination by drilling wells to monitor the groundwater and by analyzing soil samples taken from the area. In one test, conducted in May, levels of the chemical were found to be more than 25 times the allowed levels, though UF questions the validity of the results. Bill Properzio, director of UF's Environmental Health and Safety Department, said he believes the drilling methods were flawed. "There was some contamination in the upper surface in the soil," Properzio said. "As they drilled the well, they pushed that contaminant down with it." Subsequent tests seem to confirm that idea. A later test of the same well, done in August, shows the chemical is present at less than twice the allowed level. Most soil samples fall close to or below the allowed levels of the chemical, though one sample from July shows a level five times higher than the limit. Tests indicate that levels of the chemical in the water and soil are decreasing or staying about the same over time. According to UF and the EPA, there is little chance the chemical will come into contact with people. UF gets its drinking water from Gainesville Regional Utilities, not wells on campus, and the soil contamination seems to be limited to the area near the concrete wash pad at the grounds department. Properzio said employees were simply following the manufacturer's directions when using the product and did not think they were in violation of EPA regulations. "I guess the assumption had been made (that) if you followed the manufacturer's instructions, you were OK," he said. The inspection report notes that UF may have used between 275 and 412.5 gallons of the chemical over an 18-year period at that site. Properzio said not all of that was deposited in the soil. Much of it simply evaporated as it was left to dry, he said. As a result, the level of contamination isn't very serious, he said, especially when compared to a site like Cabot-Koppers, the Superfund site in north Gainesville. "This is a little leak of cleaning agent," he said. Davina Marraccini, an EPA spokeswoman, said the agency takes any improper release of toxic chemicals into the environment seriously, which is why UF received the level of fine that it did. The length of time a violation has occurred is also taken into account, she said. Since the alleged violations were discovered in 2008, UF has been accused of other violations by the EPA, though it is not clear if they will result in fines. Many of the violations noted during a July 2009 inspection included waste materials, like paint, that were unlabeled, which would mean they were being stored illegally. The EPA also took issue again with the way UF cleaned its lawn maintenance equipment. The possible violations resulted in a warning letter sent to UF in August, instructing UF to stop allowing runoff from the washing of its weed eaters, lawn mowers and dye sprayers used in the football stadium and on the practice football field to soak into the ground. Violations were also found in a 2006 inspection that resulted in a fine of about \$21,000 and a remediation cost of \$5,000.

<http://www.gainesville.com/article/20091229/ARTICLES/912291009/1002>

USA, GA, ATLANTA, DECEMBER 30 2009. GAS SPILL CLOSED ATLANTA INTERSECTION OVERNIGHT

donald buckindail

Officials say an Atlanta intersection has reopened hours after a gasoline tanker truck overturned and blocked an intersection. Fire officials say an overturned tanker carrying 7,400 gallons of gas tipped over a little after 6:30 p.m. Monday at the intersection of Fulton Industrial Boulevard and Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway in northwest Atlanta. Chris Wessels, an assistant chief with Atlanta Fire and Rescue, told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution that the accident caused some spillage. The intersection was closed through the night as crews worked to clean up the spill. No injuries were reported.

<http://www.13wmaz.com/news/local/story.aspx?storyid=73000&catid=52>

KENYA, LONDIANI, DECEMBER 30 2009. THREE BURNT TO DEATH AS TANKER EXPLODES

benedict tirop, wanjiru macharia, george sayagie, ouma wanzala & anthony kitimo

Watch the Video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODvji-G5Nco>

Other Video Links: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80kwXycc2Ws&NR=1>

Three people were burnt to death when a petrol tanker exploded after a road accident on the Kericho-Nakuru highway. The accident, which involved a petrol tanker, a tipper lorry and a trailer occurred at Londiani forest. Those who died in the crash were the drivers of the tanker and the trailer and a woman who had hiked a lift on the oil transporter less than 10 kilometres from the scene of the accident. However, the driver and loader of the tipper lorry escaped unhurt. The trailer conductor escaped the flames by a whisker after jumping out of the window. The tanker, which exploded on impact, and the trailer cabin were reduced to shells while the tipper lorry had minor damage. The trailer was ferrying green tea to Nairobi while the tipper lorry had sand destined for Mau Summit. The tanker was transporting petrol to Kericho from the Nakuru depot. Kericho police boss Paterson Maelo said the tipper lorry was overtaking when it hit the tanker, which in turn collided head on with the trailer. "The driver of the tanker was trying to avoid colliding with the tipper lorry but the space was not enough," Mr Maelo said at the scene. In another accident, two people

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died at Kisoko along the Busia–Mumias road on Tuesday night. Busia police boss Micheni Muthamia said the head-on collision involved a bus belonging to Busways Company and a truck. The driver died on the spot while the other victim died at Busia District Hospital. Mr Muthamia said the accident occurred when the driver of the bus, which was headed for Nairobi from Kampala, was trying to avoid hitting a cane tractor that had been left in the middle of the road. All the passengers on the bus escaped unhurt except one woman who broke her wrist. The driver of the tractor has since been arrested. And 10 people were seriously injured Wednesday morning while more than 20 escaped with minor injuries in an accident involving a trailer and a bus at Kibarani in Mombasa. Mr Michael Irungu, the driver of the trailer, said he was trying to avoid hitting a hand cart pusher who was crossing the road. Mombasa traffic police boss Charles Koskei said among those seriously injured were the driver of the bus and the hand cart pusher.

<http://www.nation.co.ke/News/regional/-/1070/833496/-/8o85jn/-/>

CANADA, BC, VANCOUVER, DECEMBER 30 2009. AUTO SHOP BLAZE SENDS PAIR TO HOSPITAL WITH BURNS >> MECHANICS WORKING ON A FUEL PUMP

At least two people were taken to hospital suffering from burns after fire engulfed a tire store and an auto alignment shop on Kingsway near Renfrew. Battalion Chief Fred Murray said 13 fire trucks and 36 fire personnel were involved in battling the two alarm blaze that caused heavy damage to Big O Tires at 3059 Kingsway and Kingsway Alignment Shop located in the back part of the building. The fire apparently began while some mechanics were working on a fuel pump. The blaze rapidly spread to the Big O Tire store and three vehicles, including one that was in the garage, said Murray about the blaze that broke out on Monday afternoon. Witnesses said they heard several explosions and saw cars on fire. Murray said the fire was contained before it spread to offices located atop the shops. He said one office sustained smoke damage. Fire department logs indicated one person was transported by ambulance but some witnesses said they saw two people taken to hospital.

<http://www.vancouverite.com/2009/12/28/auto-shop-blaze-sends-pair-to-hospital-with-burns/>

USA, ME, ORLAND, DECEMBER 30 2009. OIL TRUCK OVERTURNS ON SLICK ROAD IN ORLAND

eric russell



A diesel delivery truck rolled over into a brook off Route 1 in Orland near the Ellsworth town line Tuesday morning. Orland Fire Dept. personnel responded to a call from State Police that came in from Bucksport Dispatch at about 1:38 am State Police requested OFD response to the scene of the crash. As of 11:21 am, OFD personnel are still at the scene. Bucksport ambulance transported the driver to EMMC. Bucksport FD brought absorbant booms to the scene where OFD used them to help control the spill of fuel into the stream near Patten Pond. Maine DEP, State Police, the trucking company and its clean-up contractors have been at the scene. Some of them are still there and said they may be there for more than one day.

An oil truck overturned on a slick stretch of Route 1 early Tuesday morning near the Orland-Ellsworth town line, spilling fuel onto the roadway and nearly threatening a nearby pond. Donna

Gormley, spokeswoman for the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, said DEP crews responded shortly before 3 a.m. and were prepared for the worst. "It could have been a disaster, but there really was only a small amount of fuel that spilled," she said. A DEP crew remained at the scene late Tuesday morning, unloading 3,800 gallons of diesel fuel and 800 gallons of kerosene to other trucks, Gormley said. By late afternoon, she said, all but 200 gallons of the fuel was accounted for. As part of the cleanup, the DEP crew removed approximately 14 yards of contaminated soil. When the driver of the truck lost control, it crashed into a guardrail and went over an embankment, she said. At that point, the fuel tank detached from the truck's cab, which Gormley said was probably a stroke of luck. "There was a small hole in the tank, but it was at the top, and the truck ended up on its wheels," she said. A small amount of fuel spilled out and into a nearby stream, according to Gormley, but it did not threaten Patten Pond, which is where that stream flows. The truck was owned by Diesel Direct, which has several locations in Massachusetts. The truck's driver was not identified, but he was not believed to have been injured, according to a Maine State Police dispatcher. A representative from Diesel Direct did not return a call Tuesday for comment. Firefighters from Orland, Bucksport and Ellsworth went to the accident scene and assisted in the cleanup.

<http://www.bangordailynews.com/detail/133709.html>

USA, OH, COLUMBUS, DECEMBER 30 2009. EPA DEMANDS DETAILS ON REFINERY LEAK THAT FORCED EAST SIDE EVACUATION

Two weeks after a gas leak at an East Side refinery forced the evacuation of nearby businesses, the company that runs the operation has yet to tell the state how much gas escaped and what was in it. An estimated 4,000 people were evacuated Dec. 14 after a blown gasket at Heartland Petroleum's used-oil refinery at 4001 E. 5th Ave. released a vapor cloud that officials feared was hydrogen sulfide, a gas that can be lethal in high concentrations. State law requires businesses to immediately report malfunctions that release air pollutants. The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency sent the company a letter on Dec. 22 reminding Heartland operators of the law. It also demanded that the company take steps to prevent any future leaks. Brad Lambert, Heartland's chief financial officer, said today that the company will soon have "quantifiable numbers" to report, likely within 10 days. On Dec. 14, Lambert had said he thought it would take a couple of days. Erin Strouse, an EPA spokeswoman, said the agency is willing to give the company time to come up with an accurate estimate. Teresa Mills, leader of the Grove City-based Buckeye Environmental

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Network, said the state should push Heartland to disclose the information sooner. "Is it too much to ask people to follow the law?" she said. The refinery was praised as a green business by state and local politicians during an Oct. 30 ribbon-cutting ceremony. It can clean as much as 20 million gallons of dirty motor oil per year for re-use. Heartland received a \$3.5 million state loan to help build the \$25 million refinery. The EPA has received 16 odor complaints about Heartland since February. In the past five years, the EPA has checked 18 reports of gas leaks, including anhydrous ammonia and xylene, at businesses and farms in Franklin, Delaware, Licking and Madison counties. Known for its rotten-egg odor, hydrogen sulfide gas can irritate the eyes, nose and throat and help trigger asthma attacks. High concentrations can cause unconsciousness and death. No injuries were reported in the Heartland incident. On Sept. 10, a worker shutting down a natural gas well in Guernsey County died after a pocket of hydrogen sulfide gas was released. Heartland officials blamed the Dec. 14 leak on a short power failure that caused the refinery to restart and the gasket to blow. American Electric Power officials said a squirrel had tripped a breaker and the blackout lasted 5 to 10 seconds. Lambert said company data will show that the cloud was almost entirely steam and was not dangerous. EPA officials also want Heartland to submit plans showing how it will prevent future leaks, before the refinery resumes operations. Lambert said Dec. 14 that the company has been working with AEP to "get on a better (power) grid." He said today that the refinery has been shut down since the leak occurred but would have been shut down over the holidays anyway.

<http://www.istockanalyst.com/article/viewiStockNews/articleid/3744017>

USA, VA, BUCHANAN CO, DECEMBER 30 2009. A TANKER TRUCK OVERTURNS ON VIRGINIA ROUTE 80

A tanker truck overturned on Route 80 at the Buchanan-Russell County line Tuesday evening, spilling 2,000 gallons of diesel fuel and 1,000 gallons of gasoline onto the roadway. The highway was shut down for hours 1.2 miles east of Route 602. According to the Virginia State Police, the spill happened in Buchanan County at 6:19 p.m., but much of the fuel ran over the Russell County line. Traffic was at a standstill four hours later, as two volunteer fire departments from neighboring communities tried to controlled the spill. Hazmat teams from Wise County and Roanoke were en route to clean up the mess. The Virginia State Police said it was a single-vehicle crash, and the cause is still under investigation.

http://www2.tricities.com/tri/news/local/article/a_tanker_truck_overtURNS_on_virginia_route_80/38050/

NETHERLANDS, AMSTERDAM, DECEMBER 31 2009. DUTCH COURT TO TAKE ON SHELL NIGERIA CASES

catherine hornby

Royal Dutch Shell and its Nigerian unit will face compensation demands in a Dutch court for alleged damage caused by oil spills in Nigeria after the court ruled on Wednesday it was competent to handle the cases. Environmental group Friends of the Earth Netherlands and four Nigerians aim to sue Shell and Nigeria-based Shell Petroleum Development Co. (SPDC) in a district court in The Hague on charges related to incidents of oil spills in Nigeria. Shell had asked for a ruling on whether the Dutch court had jurisdiction over SPDC's Nigerian activities, but the court rejected a claim of incompetence. "The court has decided that it is competent, so we will be handling the case," said a court spokeswoman. "The facts are connected and for reasons of efficiency the cases against Royal Dutch Shell and Shell Nigeria will be handled jointly." The plaintiffs, farmers and fishermen in the oil-rich Niger Delta, say that oil leaking from Shell activities has polluted their farmlands and fish ponds, and are demanding that Shell clean up the oil and compensate them. After several failed attempts to address the issue in Nigeria, the plaintiffs decided to bring the cases to the Netherlands as Shell is a partly Dutch firm, said a spokeswoman for Friends of the Earth. "For years, these people have been trying to get Shell to clean up its mess," Friends of the Earth said. "The court decision is an initial victory for all Nigerians that have been fighting for years for a cleaner habitat and justice." Shell has said the spills in question were caused by sabotage. Oil companies active in Nigeria have grappled with militant sabotage activities in recent years which have hit production in the world's eighth-biggest crude oil exporter. Shell will be able to enter a statement of reply to the claims on February 10, the court spokeswoman said. Shell said on Wednesday it was disappointed with the court's ruling, describing the issues as 'purely Nigerian matters'. Friends of the Earth's Dutch arm has said Shell has the authority and the control to ensure oil spills are prevented and are cleaned up. They argue the spills are part of a systematic pattern over decades.

<http://planetark.org/wen/56156>

USA, AZ, PHOENIX, DECEMBER 31 2009. FRAUD, WASTE RAMPANT AT ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, PART THREE >> ADOT COVERS UP 10,000 GALLON WASTE DUMP

It's not unusual for ADOT employees to carpool to out of town meetings, but when three carpools happened onto a 10,000 gallon waste oil dump, created by ADOT, it changed their lives. One afternoon, in February 2008, Arizona Department of Transportation employees Diane Schatz, Tom Steinberger and Mike Porter were returning to their Kingman office from a training program in Flagstaff. Like they had done several times before, they pulled their ADOT vehicle into the Seligman ADOT maintenance yard to get gasoline. They chatted with other old hand ADOT employees who told them they had a story to tell. It was about a supervisor named Bruce Mejia who ordered them to dump thousands of gallons of waste oil on the side of Arizona highways. The crews were trying to get rid of soil, contaminated by years of trucks driving up to places and hosing off debris with diesel fuel. And sometimes, they disposed of thousands of gallons of fuel oil, all at once. The problem was reaching a boiling point and the discussion turned into a confessional. In an Office of Inspector General (OIG) report, obtained by this reporter, is testimony by ADOT staffers like ten-year veteran Michael Henry, from the Kingman office, who said Mejia ordered him to dump two truckloads or 2,000 gallons. Other employees said their loads were closer to 5,000 gallons at a time. Henry told detectives that Mejia ordered them to empty two elevated 4,000 to 6,000 gallon tanks of waste oil into vehicles that could then dump the oil at ADOT's Seligman maintenance yard.

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That chore took two trucks, working for two days, transporting 800-900 gallons per truck trip. They weren't particular where they dumped. Some employees testified they dumped in Ash Fork, Fort Rock, and an area near exit 121 off of Interstate 40 that leads to the Hualapai Indian Reservation. Investigators were told that ADOT staff dug a pit near exit 121 measuring 12 feet by 20 feet into which thousands of gallons of waste oil and fuel were dumped. One employee told investigators they had created a "La Brea Tar Pit" named after the Los Angeles site where, up through the ground came a bubblin' crude oil, claiming the lives of prehistoric animals. But the ADOT crew began getting nervous, their antics now creating a mess where the oil could "flow off the millings pile like a river needing a second containment pit," one ADOT employee testified. So, they moved it. Lock stock and barrels - Bruce Mejia and other supervisors ordering crews to bull doze down into the soil until no visible evidence of oil could be seen. Mejia's plan was to later get a road grader to scrape the area top soil clean, and then allow environmental specialist to take core samples. But before the 'gang that couldn't shoot straight' committed the conspiracy, someone was on to them. Unknown individuals in unmarked state of Arizona cars pulled up at the dump site near I-40's exit 121, erected barricades around the pit and left. Enough of the evidence of the pit was removed to satisfy consultant engineers, hired by ADOT to check the site, because by the time they got there, there "was no visible staining of native soil," according to SCS Engineers, a nationwide engineering company. Mejia went ballistic. ADOT employees Gabriel Alvarado and Dell Dodge testified to detectives that Mejia ripped their t-shirts off their bodies. Another employee backed up the oppressive style behavior by stating employees had hot coffee thrown at them by Mejia. Alvarado claims they buried 10,000 gallons of oil in the Seligman pile alone. Dodge claimed Mejia called him "scum" on nearly a daily basis and ordered him to deliver some guard rails and posts to the private residence of John Cothrun, a retired Department of Public Safety (Arizona Highway Patrol) Sergeant. Dodge did not ask if they were paid for. In every case, the employees were threatened with being written up for insubordination if they didn't follow orders. Cothrun was interviewed by detectives about the guard rails and posts and insists that a construction company, working on Interstate 40 and State Route 89, gave them to him. Alvarado was also ordered by Mejia to dump 7,000 gallons of magnesium chloride, a de-icing solution. Alvarado watched as his truck load "was flowing down the sides of the road." Other ADOT employees reported seeing Mejia supervising a bull dozer operator disposing thousands of gallons of waste oil. It's no coincidence that an Environment Department investigation began shortly after the OIG investigation. In a complaint letter to ADOT, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) stated that ADOT was allegedly mixing and burying diesel fuel, solvent wash, and asphalt millings with soil, and that it could be a risk to public health. Anonymous tips began rolling into ADEQ and the Director of ADOT, Victor Mendez, which included color and black and white photographs of dump sites. When asked about the pollution and alleged fraud, Mendez - now the head of the Federal Highway Administration - referred this reporter to ADOT. Some of the anonymous tips to both state agencies may have come from Schatz, Steinberger and Porter. At the very least, the three testified to OIG detectives. "I couldn't believe what I was hearing from my colleagues. I took a look myself and couldn't believe what I was seeing," said Schatz. Most of the dumping occurred in 2007, including two 55-gallon drums of "unidentifiable sludge" that supervisors ordered their subordinates to dispose of. Bruce Mejia was sent a letter by ADEQ in July 2008 stating the alleged piles of waste could pollute the waters of the United States pursuant to EPA regulations. Mejia was challenged by his subordinates, who did not want to dump the oil, but Mejia eagerly described to detectives how he had done it 10-15 times a year and that ADOT's environmental division knew about it. Even ADEQ suspects ADOT of conducting such practices for six years. Five detectives from the Office of Inspector General and at least three inspectors from ADEQ have been assigned to this case. Testimony in the OIG report says ADOT's Ransom Spurlock, of the Kingman office, ordered ADOT employees to continue or face insubordination charges. Tony Mascher, a former county sheriff and nine year employee of ADOT told detectives, "We dumped 8,000 gallons of oil between July and September of 2007." Mascher also said another ADOT employee told him he was ordered to dump 5,000 gallons at another site. The dumping was tacitly approved by the top man in Kingman-ADOT, Michael Kondelis, who told one employee (Dell Dodge) that the cleaning process "was not right and they shouldn't be doing it, but they had a job to do and continue what they have been doing." Dodge expressed concerns about getting into trouble for the dumping. One material they were dumping is MC-250, a hazardous chemical which helps asphalt bind together. The toxic soup ADOT was brewing also included diesel fuel, waste pieces of asphalt, and other waste oils. ADOT's environmental staff has taken a very defensive posture amid the hail of allegations, telling detectives there "could be" an environmental issue, but strongly denying culpability in its formal responses to ADEQ. Ed Green, from ADOT's environmental division admitted one pile of waste in Seligman was 320 feet long by 100 feet wide but denied it was 8,000 gallons. Green also told detectives, if 8,000 gallons were dumped, "all sorts of state and federal" rules had been violated. But it's not just an environmental concern; it's a financial concern as well. A tank full of waste oil has a value of \$9,000 to \$18,000 depending on its dilution ratio. Clarence James, an ADOT worker in the Kingman office told detectives that he witnessed Mejia ripping the shirt off Alvarado, and that he was ordered to dispose of three 55-gallon mystery tanks that he dumped in the Seligman pit, and that he suspected Mejia of wrongdoing. James told investigators he saw Mejia snooping around a double fatality auto accident scene, along a state highway, and later bragged about a new power tool and wood duck decoy he had found. ADOT policy declares it "theft" if someone "finds" something at an accident scene and does not turn it in. According to experts, the toxic stew will eventually seep deep into the soil and cover up the actions of ADOT employees, simply by the laws of science and nature. And ADOT does not appear to be in any hurry. In ADOT's reply to ADEQ's complaint, Todd Williams, head of ADOT's environmental division said, "The allegations are without merit or foundation. Incidental use of diesel fuel (to wash trucks) does not create contaminated soils." Williams also stated that ADOT had a best practices manual. But ADOT staffers' procedures for handling waste oil varies from office to office. Francis Perkins of ADOT's Holbrook District uses ZEP, instead of diesel fuel, for safety reasons, not environmental concerns. Mike Kondelis of ADOT's Kingman District, claims he is unaware of an ADOT regulation prohibiting the use of diesel as a cleaning solution, but that he is aware of bio-degradable alternatives. He also admitted to investigators that a \$9,000 - \$18,000 expenditure

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for a tank of waste oil is "significant. Mike Durnez, in ADOT's Winslow office, uses Bean E Doo to clean trucks, and was told for two years their office "would not be using diesel fuel to clean with. Irv Van Enwyck of ADOT's Wickenburg office stated he does not believe anybody would need 20-25 gallons of diesel fuel to clean a truck part, and that he's never heard of Bean E Doo. And in a follow up letter to ADOT, obtained by this reporter, Mindi Cross of ADEQ said, "ADOT does not have a facility plan to dispose of such waste and does not take measures to control storm water run-off. Mejia admitted to investigators that he was involved in some dumpings, and a t-shirt tearing incident, but denied other allegations. In the end, investigators couldn't pin the tens of thousands of gallons of illegal dumpings on Mejia but found that Mejia "wasted and/or misused ADOT resources," committed theft of found property, and lied to investigators. Mejia's boss, Kondelis, denies knowing about some of Mejia's dumpings, but stated Mejia should have used storage tanks for the disposal. Ed Green, ADOT's environmental guy, signed a letter claiming "there was no improper disposal of a large amount of oil. The Office of Inspector General closed its investigation. ADOT claims there was no environmental evidence to suggest that reporting to ADEQ or EPA was required. ADEQ's investigation continues. Mejia was asked to retire, and did. The other ADOT employees still work there. ADOT Director John Halikowski, Governor Jan Brewer, former Governor Napolitano, former Director of ADOT – Victor Mendez, and other state of Arizona legislators and employees were offered an opportunity to comment on this investigative report, but they declined.

<http://www.examiner.com/x-26090-Phoenix-Headlines-Examiner~y2009m12d30-Fraud-waste-rampant-at-Arizona-Department-of-Transportation-Part-Three>

UK, SOUTH WALES, BARRY, DECEMBER 31 2009. PENSIONER HIT WITH £670 BILL TO CLEAN UP PETROL SPILL ON FORECOURT >> A PENSIONER WHO SPILLED PETROL WHEN HE FILLED UP HIS CAR AT A SUPERMARKET WAS SENT A BILL FOR £670 TO CLEAN IT UP.

Ron Wyde, 69, was buying four-star at a Morrison's store when a pipe on his petrol tank came loose. Two litres of petrol spilled out and Mr Wyde explained the leak when he paid at the kiosk. He waited as the fire service arrived for a quick clean-up operation at the filling station in Barry, South Wales. However, a week later Mr Wyde received a letter from Morrison's demanding £670 - and a warning they would send bailiffs round if he didn't pay-up. The letter explained they sent two service engineers from Wigan, Lancashire, to make sure the petrol station was safe. The bill stated he spent six hours travelling the 440-mile round trip to Barry for the job - which took just 40 minutes using a jet wash. Mr Wyde, a retired pipefitter, said: "It would be laughable if it wasn't such a big bill. "It was a small amount of petrol - about two quids worth. "The fire service had cleaned it up in minutes and they didn't charge for that. "I was amazed to get such a huge bill - it was a complete surprise. "I was being asked to pay for someone to drive all the way from the North of England to deal with a small amount of petrol which had already been cleaned up." Mr Wyde had just dropped wife Maureen, 67, at bingo when he pulled into Morrison's to put a splash of petrol into the tank of his Vauxhall Astra. The £670 he was billed came to more than his total petrol bill for an entire year. He said: "I told Morrison's I was not paying but they threatened me with recovery agents. "I thought they were behaving like bullies - I'm sorry I accidentally spilled petrol but I paid for it and the fire service cleaned it up." Mr Wyde put the matter in the hands of his solicitors and Morrison's backed down. A spokesman said: "It was a specialist service and had to be carried out by an approved company. "However it was an error to charge the customer for the full amount. "We would like to apologise to Mr Wyde and as a result will cancel all charges to him."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/6911030/Pensioner-hit-with-670-bill-to-clean-up-petrol-spill-on-forecourt.html>

USA, PA, EAST PITTSBURGH, DECEMBER 31 2009. LOADED OIL TANKER NEARLY SPLITS IN EAST PITTSBURGH CRASH >> TRUCK MAY HAVE BEEN DAMAGED EXITING PARKWAY EAST/INTERSTATE 376

 **Watch the Video** <http://www.thepittsburghchannel.com/news/22091877/detail.html>



Allegheny Petroleum tanker truck.

An Allegheny Petroleum tanker truck loaded with about 8,000 gallons of motor oil crashed and nearly split in half in East Pittsburgh. The wreck was reported Wednesday afternoon on Electric Avenue, near Triboro Expressway. "Apparently, the truck was coming in off of the Parkway (East), out Route 30, and apparently his trailer jacks somehow lowered and started dragging on the ground, which at some point in time caused the trailer to buckle, as you can see it now," Braddock Fire Chief Tom Petrovic said. WTAE Channel 4 Action News' Jon Greiner reported that the truck did not leak, aside from a few drops, because there was a second containment tank inside the damaged tank. Traffic was re-routed while the oil was off-loaded to another tanker. No injuries were reported.

<http://www.thepittsburghchannel.com/news/22091877/detail.html>

USA, NY, ALEXANDRIA BAY, DECEMBER 31 2009. BOAT WORKS TO PAY BIG FINE >> FUEL STORAGE ISSUES: HUTCHINSON'S AGREES TO \$30,000 DEC PENALTY ON MONITORING, UPKEEP

joanna richards

Hutchinson's Boat Works Inc. has agreed to pay a \$30,000 fine after a routine inspection of its fuel storage facilities by state environmental officials in July revealed numerous violations. The fine is one of the largest on record involving petroleum bulk storage in the state Department of Environmental Conservation Region 6, spokesman Steven W. Litwhiler said. Company President Mark C. LaLonde signed a consent order agreement with the agency in November agreeing to remedy the violations and

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pay the fine in installments over the next 13 months. The agreement took effect Nov. 17. The company failed to adequately monitor, maintain and keep required records on 13 tanks with a combined capacity of 27,375 gallons, according to the agreement. The tanks are at the marina, 27 Holland St., where there were four above ground and three underground with a total capacity of 14,825 gallons, and at a separate facility on Bethune Street, where there are two above ground and four underground with a total capacity of 12,550 gallons. The business sells gasoline and diesel fuel and operates a pump-out station for boats, according to its Web site. It is closed through Jan. 4 for the holiday season; no one answered the phone or responded to e-mails seeking comment Tuesday. The violations posed "no immediate threats to public safety or the environment" that necessitated immediate remedial action, Mr. Litwhiler said. But the regulations surrounding bulk fuel storage are aimed at preventing spills, which can harm human health and the environment. Because of their proximity to the St. Lawrence River, the tanks, if left inadequately maintained and supervised, threatened a direct spill into the waterway. Among the violations cited in the consent order were unreported leaks, a lack of required inspection records and tank labeling, inadequately maintained equipment meant to prevent, detect and contain spills, leaks caused by corrosion, and accidental overfilling. Many of the violations carry a maximum penalty of \$37,500 per day. The total fine levied by the DEC Region 6 for the violations was \$70,000, with \$40,000 suspended provided the company complies with the terms of the consent order. After the July inspection — a routine, scheduled inspection required every three years for anyone operating an underground petroleum bulk storage tank — the agency would have sent several notices to the business about the violations, Mr. Litwhiler said. "If we don't see any movement, then we have to get a little more serious and develop a consent order," he said. He declined to comment specifically on the business's initial response to the notice of violation. Hutchinson's is in compliance with the terms of the consent order, Mr. Litwhiler said. The company hired Op-Tech Environmental Services, Syracuse, to do needed work on the fuel storage facilities and that work is now complete. The company has paid the first two installments of its penalty. Other remedial measures must be completed by mid-January. "They are taking it very seriously," Mr. Litwhiler said.

<http://www.watertowndailytimes.com/article/20091230/NEWS03/312309952>

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, DUBAI, DECEMBER 31 2009. PETROL FIRM SET TO MAKE ANOTHER SELF-SERVE PITCH

eugene harnan

The emirate's state oil company says it has learnt its lessons from a previous failure and is ready to have another go at persuading UAE motorists to fill up their own cars. Emirates National Oil Company (Enoc) tried a two-month pilot scheme with self-service pumps in 10 petrol stations last year. The idea was dropped after a negative response from customers. The company has since invested Dh50 million (US\$13.6m) in technology to make paying for self-service refuelling more convenient. Ease of payment was a major stumbling block last time around. "Enoc is evaluating the possible introduction of a modern self-serve concept as an option for motorists buying fuel across its network of service stations in Dubai and the northern emirates," the company said yesterday. The company's cashless payment option is expected to speed the fuelling process, said Khalid Hadi, Enoc's group brands and marketing manager. The new payment system will work like a Salik tolls account at any of the UAE's 170 Enoc and Eppco stations. Drivers with corporate accounts will not have to sign for or exchange cash for petrol. Their car will be recognised electronically and payment deducted from their account. "What we are planning is [for] the customer to park next to the [fuel] dispenser and start filling," Mr Hadi said. "There will be a link between the vehicle and the dispense machine and the total amount will be deducted from the driver's corporate account. "There are no interactions of individuals and at end of the month the customer will get a bill. This will be operational by early 2010." Mr Hadi said the system could be extended to non-corporate customers. Cash customers will still have to pay before they fill up. "We are waiting to make sure all the technologies are available before we go and introduce this concept," he said. The new technology was also introduced to prepare for making the switch from selling petrol in gallons to litres, which will come into force tomorrow. The main complaints during the self-service pilot scheme were about the payment process. Mr Hadi said Enoc's surveys had found that while Europeans and Americans were not deterred by the system, Emiratis and those from neighbouring Arab countries were not accustomed to the concept of fuelling their own cars. "The other part of the market segment, mainly the nationals and expat Arab communities, found a bit of difficulty accepting it," he said. "We wanted more education with awareness campaigns for our customers to see the benefits of self-service," such as increased speed and efficiency. Some motorists were unperturbed by the possibility of filling up their own cars. "I did it before in the UK and it's not a problem," said Ramaz Sawiri, 41, a regulatory affairs director from Egypt. "People here are spoilt and it will only really affect a few people here." He said he felt sorry for the pump attendants, as did Martin Schmidt, 41, a financial consultant from Germany. "It is hard to say where they go, but that is one of the bad things of introducing self-service," Mr Schmidt said. "Another downside is the fact it was seen as a luxury in Dubai to get somebody to fill up your car and could be seen as an attraction to living here. That will be gone now. I don't have a problem doing it even in the heat." Mr Hadi said staff would be redeployed to other Enoc service stations. "We have other facilities such as the car wash [and] oil-change facilities and they would be relocated there," he said. Eppco and Enoc workers have stopped the free service of cleaning motorists' windscreens while they topped up their tanks. Neither company would say why.

<http://www.thenational.ae/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20091231/NATIONAL/712309848/1010>

CHINA, ANHUI PROVINCE, BOZHOU & ANHUI, DECEMBER 31 2009. FEAR AND ANGER OVER TOXIC WASTE ILLEGALLY DUMPED IN ANHUI

deng jingyin

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More than 1,050 barrels of hazardous waste chemicals have been illegally dumped into a drainage ditch, abandoned alongside country roads and drained into a local river in Anhui Province. Authorities are investigating a pharmaceutical plant in neighboring Zhejiang Province, confirmed as the source of the toxic chemicals ditched in two counties in Bozhou, Anhui. "The Ministry of Environmental Protection and the local government have sent officials and experts to this factory for further investigation and to prevent the spread of these chemicals," Han Bing, an official from the Bozhou Environmental Protection Bureau, told the Global Times Tuesday. Local police said some villagers disposed of certain chemicals from the plant in exchange for keeping the metal containers, which were offered to them without charge. The incident fueled the anger of local people after the Bozhou government spent at least 2.5 million yuan (\$366,000) to curb pollution, the China National Radio reported Tuesday. Han confirmed that the Bozhou city government demanded compensation from relevant departments in Zhejiang Province and wanted people responsible for the incident brought to trial. On December 3, Woyang county reported more than 290 barrels of unknown chemicals had been abandoned. About 10 barrels of toxic liquid had been drained into a dry gully running through farmland. Three days later, several local villagers in Lixin county reported that 756 barrels of chemicals were abandoned. The chemicals contain toxicants such as dichloroethane, methanol and methane, which are categorized as hazardous waste chemicals by the nation's environmental protection authority. The toxic chemicals can cause eye diseases, blood poisoning and damage to the central nervous system in humans. No poisoning cases have been reported. In Lixin, 390 barrels of industrial waste chemicals were poured into the Fuwo River, polluting 110,000 cubic meters of water along a 10-kilometer stretch, the local environmental protection authority said. People could smell the noxious odor 2 kilometers away. On December 6 and December 11, about 390 tons of hazardous cast off and contaminated soil was sent to a treatment center in Anhui Province, for further examination. "It's hard to estimate the indirect losses but luckily it didn't cause harm to people and livestock," a Woyang county government official surnamed Zhou told the Global Times Tuesday

<http://china.globaltimes.cn/society/2009-12/495291.html>

USA, AZ, PHOENIX, DECEMBER 31 2009. NOBODY HURT IN GAS STATION VEHICLE FIRE

lauren misak

A car engine caught fire while filling up at the pump around 4:30 p.m. Tuesday at a Chevron gas station near 3rd Street and Indian School Road in Phoenix. No one was in the car at the time. Phoenix Fire Department spokesman Dorian Jackson said he believes the driver was inside the Chevron when the engine compartment caught fire. Phoenix Fire crews hit the emergency gas shut off switch to cut the gas supply to all of the pumps. Crews then put out the fire and no one was injured.

<http://www.azcentral.com/news/articles/2009/12/29/20091229abrkc-carfirechevron1229.html>

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, DUBAI, DECEMBER 31 2009. PETROL STATIONS IN UAE GO THE METRIC ROUTE >> IMPLEMENTATION OF CABINET'S DECISION TO USE LITRE RATHER THAN IMPERIAL GALLON TO BEGIN IN JANUARY

samia badih

As of January 1, 2010, around 450 service stations nationwide will implement the conversion of their measurement units from the imperial gallon to the litre. The action is said to be the first of several that will unify the measurement units used across the country. Among the other measurements to be converted to the metric system are the yard and foot and the ounce. "We are fulfilling our requirement under the World Trade Organisation by using the internationally recognised standard unit," said Dr Rashid Ahmad Bin Fahad, Minister of Environment and Water and Chairman of the Emirates Authority for Standardisation and Metrology (ESMA), the body responsible for carrying out the UAE Cabinet's decision to shift to the International System of Units.

Easier For Trade

"The oil companies are trading in litres, but they're selling in gallons inside the UAE," Bin Fahad said. "So this is going to make trade a lot easier now." The major oil companies in the country welcomed the new law, as talks to make the transition began in 2007. "I was personally very excited about the conversion," said Ziad Al Qufaidi, CEO of Emirates Petroleum Product Company (Eppco). "We're one of five countries around the world that still uses the imperial gallon — something that has been diminished a long time ago. So I think it's about time to unify the measurement units," he said. On Sunday dispenser gauges with the litre measurement were installed at one of Adu Dhabi National Oil Company's (Adnoc) service stations to test the transition, said Adullah Saleh Al Daheri, General Director of Adnoc's distribution.

Very Successful

"It was very successful and we're very confident to move on with the remaining part of this process," said Al Daheri. Disruption in service at some gas stations is to be expected, said Mohammad Badri, Deputy Director-General at ESMA. "Some of the gas stations will be closed for maybe an hour, two, three or maybe a whole day," he said. "However, we've made sure that if one the gas stations is closed, the other one within the same line will be open, so there is coordination between all of the different companies." ESMA has given the oil companies a time frame of four months to completely implement the Cabinet's decision. "A lot of the preliminary work has already been done," said Al Qufaidi. Under Emirates National Oil Company (Enoc) and Eppco, 175 stations are scheduled to be completely converted to the litre by April 1, he said.

Costs

To be fully equipped with new dispenser gauges, every service station would need about Dh50,000, said Bin Fahad. Although the government is not providing financial support to the oil companies to buy the new gauges, the companies say the unification of the measurement units in the country is worth the investment. Enoc and Eppco will invest about Dh10 million to implement the

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conversion of all its 175 stations, said Al Qufaidi. "In the end it's a mandate," said Al Daheri. "And we'll do everything we can to abide by the law."

Prices Unaffected

Oil prices will not be affected by the shift from gallon to litre. Considering that one gallon makes 4.546 litres, oil prices will be as follows: 91 Octane Dh1.26 per litre, 95 Octane Dh1.37 per litre, 98 Octane Dh1.48 per litre

<http://gulffnews.com/business/oil-gas/petrol-stations-in-uae-go-the-metric-route-1.559595>

USA, CA, SAN FRANCISCO, DECEMBER 31 2009. BAY SAFE FROM OAKLAND AIRPORT JET FUEL SPILL

Previously: [Possible Jet Fuel Leak At Oakland Airport Could Reach Bay](#)

Oakland International Airport investigators have determined that none of the jet fuel that spilled into a ditch on airport grounds on Monday reached the Bay, airport spokesman Robert Bernardo said today. An airport employee reported smelling fuel near a cluster of fuel tanks in the area of Terminal 2 Monday afternoon. "We have been investigating all night to get to the bottom of what exactly that smell was," Bernardo said. The tanks were inspected, along with nearby pipes, and no leaks were found, leading investigators to believe that the spill may have come from a truck transporting the fuel. Bernardo said it was determined that approximately 20 gallons of jet fuel spilled and ended up in a nearby ditch full of water. The ditch is part of a drainage system that pumps stormwater into the Bay during heavy rain. When airport officials learned of the spill, they shut off the pump station, he said. The Coast Guard, the Port of Oakland and the airport's environmental team investigated. "It's confirmed that nothing went into the Bay," Bernardo said. Today, the airport environmental team is skimming the water in the ditch and soaking up the fuel using absorbent boom. "It's almost like putting a sponge in there," he said. He said the cleanup was expected to be complete by the end of the day.

<http://sfappeal.com/alley/2009/12/bay-safe-from-oakland-airport-jet-fuel-spill.php>

USA, CT, WESTPORT, DECEMBER 31 2009. REPORT FINDS CONTAMINATED SOIL AT WESTPORT SITE

grant welker

Contaminated soil could delay a proposed subdivision at a gravel plant in the Head of Westport — or block it altogether — based on environmental reports that say contamination remains despite the removal of tons of soil. A recent environmental review said harmful materials still exist more than a decade after a 20,000-gallon underground diesel tank was removed and contaminated soil was found at the Westport Stone & Sand Corporation on Old County Road. "There is a potential for a risk to human health depending upon future property use and the pending site remediation activities," said the review. The 36-acre site has been a gravel pit for years. Now the owner, Cardi Corporation, has filed plans with the town for an 18-lot subdivision. The Planning Board rejected a preliminary plan on Dec. 16, citing concerns about stormwater and aesthetics — along with the contaminated soil. Contamination was discovered at the Cardi site in 1998, when a 20,000-gallon underground diesel tank was removed. Soil around the tank had been contaminated "for some period of time" because of "chronic leakage" before the tank was removed, according to an environmental report completed in October. About 600 cubic yards of soil were removed and disposed of off-site. But that didn't take away the problem. About 100 feet from where the tank sat, contaminated soil was also found 10 to 20 feet underground near the well of a house just west of the gravel plant. Today, contamination still exceeds state standards, has been found below the water table, "and continues to be a potential source of impact to the groundwater," which is also above state standards, according to the report. The report called for treating the contaminated area, about 4,800 square feet close to the entrance to the site, by injecting peroxide into the soil and using wells to monitor contamination. The soil does not constitute levels deemed to be an "imminent" or "significant" hazard, the report says. Carl Tripp, a member of the Landing Commission, said he is concerned that digging wells for homes on the site could draw some chemicals. Contamination, he said, "may never surface or may come up right away." Mary Ellen Gomes, the director of the senior center on Reed Road adjacent to the gravel plant, said the senior center has to monitor its well monthly and has never had water quality issues. Stephen Cardi, an executive for Cardi Corporation, could not be reached for comment. Cardi had considered selling the property, last assessed at \$831,000, to the town. Town Administrator Michael Coughlin said the town is "still exploring the possibility" of buying the land. Soil contamination has contributed to delays at Noquochoke Village, a housing development planned a mile north of the Cardi site. The Noquochoke Village site is contaminated in places with petroleum from an old garage, service station and oil storage facility. With a \$200,000 state grant, the site has been cleaned by removing about 1,000 cubic yards of soil and dumping a solid material that helps treat soil. The site cleanup is now in its final stage, but a request for proposals from builders to begin construction still hasn't been released. Noquochoke Village benefitted from a cleanup grant but the Cardi site may be less likely to receive such help. Brownfield redevelopment funds more often go to town-owned projects, said Mark Sternman, a spokesman for MassDevelopment. Towns and community groups get a majority of those funds "because they simply seek to get the site back into economic reuse rather than to make money on the resale of a remediated property," he said. Cardi has not applied for brownfield funding, according to Sternman.

<http://www.google.com.au/search?hl=en&source=hp&q=Westport%2C+where+is+%3F&meta=&aq=f&og=>

USA, CA, SAN BERNADINO, DECEMBER 31 2009. TWO-YEAR CLEANUP LIKELY IN UNDERGROUND FUEL TANK LEAK

joe nelson

Gasoline and petroleum constituents have seeped into soil and groundwater at a former construction company site, prompting an investigation into the extensiveness of the contamination and a cleanup effort expected to take about two years. The contamination was discovered in June during the removal of underground fuel storage tanks owned by the construction company Bonadiman-McCain, Inc., which went out of business and sold the property at 280 S. Lena Rd. to a Riverside construction company, said Carl

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Bernhardt, an engineering geologist for the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board in Riverside. Officials do not believe the contamination poses any significant threat to the public or drinking water. Former property owner Bill Bonadiman said the tanks were installed in 1976, and leakage was discovered during the removal of the tanks. "It's not that much. We might even leave everything in place," Bonadiman said. "We just have to find out how extensive it is." Marilyn Kraft, supervisor of the San Bernardino County Fire Department's underground storage tanks local oversight program, said the case was transferred to the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board because the county is opting out of its contract with the state to perform such work. Therefore, it would not likely have the time to see the case through to conclusion. A dwindling number of reported cases, a need to shift staff to other duties and the fact the county has been unable to fully recover cleanup costs in many cases prompted it to opt out of its contract with the state, Kraft said. "It doesn't have anything to do specifically with this site, but it's the kind of case we expect will take some time to work through," Kraft said. Three groundwater wells will be installed and samples taken quarterly to determine the extent of the contamination, Bernhardt said. "That information will be used to decide if additional wells are needed," he said. The Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board will be proceeding "as fast as possible" to mobilize staff and get a driller on site. It could take several months for the work to get done and the first reports to be generated, Bernhardt said. He said he plans to send a letter to Bonadiman next week approving a work plan for the site.

http://www.sbsun.com/news/ci_14093632

NETHERLANDS, AMSTERDAM. DECEMBER 31 2009. SMALL LEAK RESOLVED AT SHELL'S PERNIS REFINERY

A minor leak from a pipeline in Royal Dutch Shell's Pernis refinery in Rotterdam has been resolved and operations are running as usual, a spokesman for the oil major said on Wednesday. Shell alerted nearby residents that the leak was causing a smell in the area of the 412,000 barrels-per-day refinery, but a spokesman said the issue was resolved and no units were affected by it.

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKTRE5BT2BK20091230>

USA, IND, WAYNE DALE, DECEMBER 31 2009. 'PYROMANIACS' STORE DESTROYED BY FIRE >> FIREFIGHTERS FACE EXPLODING FIREWORKS

 **Watch the Video** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Of09XHVQbS0>

Watch the Video http://www2.wnct.com/nct/news/national/article/caught_on_tape_fireworks_store_up_in_flames/90731/

A fire at Pyromaniacs fireworks store near Fort Wayne burned for hours Wednesday. The store located in Waynedale finally died down but crews planned to stay on the scene for much of Wednesday afternoon. Heavy smoke and flames were coming from the building when crews arrived on the scene. Because of the nature of the fire, crews could only fight the fire from outside the structure. Their main concern was to protect buildings in the immediate area. Firefighters also had to stay farther away from the building than they might normally because of detonating fireworks. Fire Chief Pete Kelly said the cause has yet to be determined. The fire broke out at around 10 a.m. The store hours are listed as 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. so it's not believed anyone was inside when the fire broke out.

<http://www.wishtv.com/dpp/news/indiana/Fire-destroys-store-named-Pyromaniacs->

USA, CT, PRESTON, DECEMBER 31 2009. ENVIRONMENTAL CREWS CLEAN UP HEATING OIL SPILL AT PRESTON SCHOOL >> STUDENTS WILL BE DRINKING BOTTLED WATER AS A PRECAUTION MONDAY

greg smith

 **Watch the Video:**

<http://www.norwichbulletin.com/news/x1689187174/Environmental-crews-clean-up-heating-oil-spill-at-Preston-school>

Environmental cleanup crews continued excavation Wednesday at Preston Veterans Memorial School in search of contaminated water and soil from a leak that sent hundreds of gallons of heating oil into the ground. School Superintendent John Welch said he expects school to reopen as scheduled Monday, but students will be drinking bottled water while the state Department of Environmental Protection continues testing wells in the area and works to remove oil from the septic system. Welch said cooking will be done with bottled water and students will eat off of paper plates to avoid using the dishwashers. As of Wednesday, tests on all area wells had come up clean of any oil contamination, said Jeff Chandler, DEP emergency response supervisor. It remains unclear how much oil leaked. The "catastrophic failure of the fuel oil system that feeds the boiler," was discovered by a custodian Monday morning, Preston Fire Marshal Thomas Casey said. School is not in session this week because of the holidays. Oil had been leaking for an unknown length of time from a fuel line and spilling into a drain. While the drain helped contain the spill to the boiler room, all of the oil went directly into the septic system. As part of the cleanup, excavators dug up the area of the septic system and leaching field, tearing through pavement in the school playground, and dumped mounds of dirt into the nearby parking lot. As of Wednesday, about 120 tons of soil, 590 gallons of oil and 1, 200 gallons of contaminated water had been removed from the site by Kropp Environmental Contractors, of Franklin, Chandler said. The DEP has remained at the site to monitor the work and continue to drill holes to test for soil contamination and get a better handle on the scope of the issue. "We're trying to find the edges of it, so to speak," said Neil Torres, DEP emergency response coordinator. One of the ways to remove the oil was to dig a hole to the depth of the water line, let it fill with water and allow the oil to float to the top, he said. He said the threat was minimal that the oil

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would leak beyond school property. In a proactive move, Casey said the nearby day care center, Play and Learn Child Development, was also provided with bottled water. Aside from the water issue, Welch said the school just needs to be aired out before Monday to get rid of the ubiquitous smell of oil. The boiler room already has been professionally cleaned. Welch said he planned to notify parents of the situation through a Web-based notification system. The DEP will conduct tests on neighboring wells that include several businesses, two homes across the street and an abutting farm. Casey said the main focus now is containing the spill. Casey said the leak has been fixed, but investigation into its cause is ongoing.

<http://www.norwichbulletin.com/news/x1689187174/Environmental-crews-clean-up-heating-oil-spill-at-Preston-school>

USA, PA, LEBANON, DECEMBER 31 2009. CONTAMINATED FUEL CREATES MINOR HEADACHE FOR LEBANON

john latimer

he city has stopped using its gasoline supply after a suspected contaminant started causing problems in some vehicles, Lebanon Mayor Trish Ward said Wednesday. It could be several days until the problem is fixed, said the mayor. In the meantime, the city will obtain its gasoline from the City of Lebanon Authority's reserves. "There is no cause for panic," said Ward. "We'll still have plenty of fuel for our police and fire vehicles. I'm just taking precautions so we don't have any more problems." A problem was first detected about a week ago when the fuel injectors on some of the city's newer vehicles started clogging, said Ward. Use of both diesel and gasoline supplies were suspended on Tuesday, but the problem was narrowed down to the gasoline supply, and the diesel fuel was back in use late Wednesday. The city bids out its contract for a fuel provider each year and gets regular deliveries to its 10,000 gallon tank. It currently contracts with Montour Oil Service Co., which has a branch in Williamsport, said Ward. "We've been in contact with the vendor, and they are doing lab work to determine what the problem is," she said. "It is not a leak in the tank. There is no problem with the tank." The city is working to determine when it received the contaminated batch of gasoline, said Ward. It's last two deliveries were Dec. 15 and Dec. 21, she said. The city had begun making arrangements to use gasoline from a private supplier, but by obtaining gasoline from the authority, the city saves money because it won't have to pay taxes on it, said Ward. "I'm very thankful for their (the authority's) cooperation," she said. The city's gasoline supply is also used by a few other municipalities and First Aid and Safety Patrol, said Ward. They are making their own arrangements to get gasoline, she said. A spokesman for FASP said the ambulance company was notified about the problem on Tuesday and is purchasing gasoline from private stations at a discount, said Battalion Chief Justin Kettering. "It was a brief headache for about 10 seconds until we got everyone notified, and everything's been working fine since," he said.

http://www.ldnews.com/news/ci_14096469

USA, LA, MEREAX, DECEMBER 31 2009. MURPHY OIL REFINERY IN ST. BERNARD PARISH CITED FOR SAFETY VIOLATIONS

chris kirkham

The [Murphy Oil](#) refinery in Meraux was cited this week for numerous health and safety violations found during a federal inspection this summer that could have resulted in fatal injuries to workers. The citations from the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) included a failure to regularly inspect piping at the refinery and problems with relief valves that are designed to prevent fires or explosions on site. In addition, OSHA inspectors found that the Murphy refinery often did not respond to deficiencies that had been pointed out during internal safety audits. According to the citation from OSHA, Murphy did not correct 43 percent of the deficiencies found in a previous audit from 2007. OSHA inspectors documented 18 serious violations at the Meraux refinery, with fines totaling more than \$85,000. A serious violation means that "there is a substantial probability that death or serious physical harm could result from a hazard about which the employer knew or should have known," according to an OSHA news release. Nearly all of the safety problems exposed employees to fire and explosion hazards, according to the citation documents. The [Meraux](#) refinery employs about 315 workers. The investigation at the Murphy Oil refinery began July 7, as part of a national refinery inspection program meant to reduce the number of catastrophic incidents at oil refineries. The issue has garnered more awareness after a major 2005 explosion at the BP refinery in Texas City, Texas. The citations were issued on Tuesday. Murphy Oil has 15 business days to either pay the fines and get in compliance, request an informal conference with OSHA's Baton Rouge director or contest the citations before an independent review commission. A spokesman for Murphy, Carl Zornes, declined to comment on the matter, saying the company just received the citations and is still determining how to proceed. Murphy Oil is also being investigated by the state Department of Environmental Quality after the refinery discharged storm water laden with oil into a neighborhood canal during heavy rains earlier this month.

http://www.nola.com/business/index.ssf/2009/12/murphy_oil_refinery_in_st_bern.html

INDIA, MUMBAI, DECEMBER 31 2009. BENZENE VAPOURS IN BARC LAB COULD HAVE CAUSED BLAST

A day after two research scientists in the Radiation and Photochemistry Department of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) were killed in a fire in their laboratory, the postmortem report concluded that the bodies had 100 per cent burns due to a chemical explosion, followed by a fire. The lab was full of vapours and the open chemical bottles could have reacted, leading to the explosion and fire. Preliminary inquiries indicate that the explosion could have been triggered by chemicals like benzene and acetone, bottles of which may have been kept open in the lab. Additional Commissioner of Police (East Region) Ritesh Kumar said that samples are being sent for forensic tests. Lab staff and eyewitnesses who reported the fire have recorded their statements. A dog squad was also brought in to check for any explosive material. According to the postmortem report, the bodies bore no other injury marks. Blood, DNA and viscera samples have been sent for forensics. Bone marrow samples of victims were preserved to

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match with the DNA of the parents to make a confirmed identification. The bodies were handed over to the families on Wednesday night. Said Director of Forensic Science Laboratories, Kalina, M V Garad: "We will analyse the debris to trace whether any explosive or inflammable substance or petroleum hydrocarbon was present that could have led to the fire." BARC sources said the two PhD students, Umang Singh and Partho Pratim Bag, were "tidying up" the laboratory, not conducting any experiment, when the fire broke out. There would normally have been five researchers in the laboratory which had been recently repainted — the others were on leave. Police officers said the room housed a refrigerator, an oven, a fuming chamber and a mass spectrometer. A short circuit in any of these is not ruled out. The initial probe has also found that one of the window panes had been smashed and that one of the bodies was lying close to the door of the lab, suggesting that the scientists were trying to exit the room in a hurry. Policemen who entered the charred room said almost everything had been burnt badly, including the overhead lights and appliances. The only cylinder in the laboratory, a nitrogen cylinder, was not affected.

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/Benzene-vapours-in-BARC-lab-could-have-caused-blast/561737>

USA, TX, CORPUS CHRISTI, DECEMBER 31 2009. SMALL FIRE AT CITGO REFINERY CONFINED IN MINUTES >> REFINERY SPOKESMAN: 'THERE WAS NEVER ANY THREAT TO THE COMMUNITY'

katherine rosenberg

A small fire was contained within minutes of igniting at Citgo Refinery's West Plant, a company representative said. The fire began at 3:30 p.m. Wednesday and was confined to the unit it began in, Citgo spokesman Jesse Garcia said. There were no injuries, he said. "There was never any threat to the community," he added. Once the fire was extinguished, air sampling was done around the plant to check for toxins in the air. "We do that as a precaution. There were no detectable limits of any toxic gases found," Garcia said. The Refinery Terminal Fire Department also was called to the fire, but it had been contained before arrival of that agency, Garcia said. He added that the cause of the fire was unknown Wednesday, but it is under investigation.

<http://www.caller.com/news/2009/dec/30/small-fire-at-citgo-refinery-is-confined-in/>

USA, NH, EXETER, DECEMBER 31 2009. FLYNN'S OIL CUSTOMERS TELL OF PREVIOUS ISSUES

leslie modica

Wendy Collins has become fairly accustomed to Flynn's Oil's automatic delivery not arriving on time. In fact, over the past few years, she has spent hundreds of dollars on new nozzles for her fuel tank that needed to be replaced after her tank ran dry, including the \$112 she just spent in November when her delivery to her Rye home didn't arrive on time. So when she knew she was approaching the bottom of her tank right before Christmas, she decided to be proactive. During that week before the holiday, she e-mailed and called the Exeter-based oil company several times, but never heard back. On Dec. 26, she ran out. When she called again that day, the voice mail box was full. "I didn't know at that point that they had any problems," Collins said. "Then I started reading all these articles." Those news articles were about the Christmas Eve announcement by the state Attorney General that the state had filed, and the court granted, a petition for injunctive relief against the heating oil company. In that petition, the state alleges that Flynn's Oil entered into prebuy agreements with customers but has failed to comply with the contracts and has not delivered the correct amount, or any, oil to many of those customers. Bob Cooke, of Nottingham, found himself in a similar situation to Collins when he ran out of oil on Dec. 21. Like Collins, it wasn't the first time it had happened. He ran out once this summer, when the oil is used to run his hot water tank, but at that point he chalked the incident up to an honest error. But this time, running out of heating oil was more disruptive. "The first time we ran out was prior to the winter. It wasn't during heating season, so we could go a day," Cooke said. Fortunately, unlike Collins, Cooke was able to get in touch with Flynn's Oil on Dec. 21 at 8 p.m. when he discovered that he was out. By the time they came to his house at 10 p.m., when he was about ready to go buy diesel to put in his tank, the upstairs of his house was down to 58 degrees, he said. When the delivery driver did arrive that night, they only put 40 gallons of oil in his tank. But the next day, the company did send another truck to deliver 200 gallons. In both cases, Collins and Cooke should not have had to call Flynn's Oil to tell them they were low on oil. According to the automatic delivery contract posted on Flynn's Oil's website, the company would use a "computer degree day system" to track usage and determine when the next delivery was needed, before the tank was less than one-third full "at any time during the contract." "No need to monitor oil usage, Flynn's will do this for you!" the contract boasts. For Collins, it wasn't until Monday that she was able to find a different oil company that was willing to deliver to her without charging her an emergency delivery fee, and that took quite a few tries, she said. "I don't think they should punish all those people that ran out of oil for no reason of their own," Collins said. Hometown Oil of Portsmouth has taken that same stance, publicly stating they are staffing up and waiving emergency fees to help Flynn's Oil customers who have been left in the cold. "All week we have been hearing horror stories from customers who have lost as much as \$3,000," Hometown Oil General Manager Julieanne Estes said. For the past week, Estes said hundreds of Flynn's Oil customers have called Hometown Oil for deliveries. "We are probably doing between 10 and 20 same-day deliveries for people who are desperate because they are so empty," Estes said. Estes said in addition to waiving their emergency delivery fee, the company is also working with Flynn's Oil prebuy customers to sell them a tank of oil at cost, and then subsequent deliveries at a discount. "These people are out hundreds and thousands of dollars," Estes said. Estes said that many of the former Flynn's Oil customers who have been calling recently are actually former Hometown Oil customers who were drawn by Flynn's Oil's promise of low prebuy rates earlier this year. "At the time, it was hard, because we couldn't match a price like that," Estes said. Simply Green Biofuels has also publicly offered to assist some Flynn's Oil prebuy customers. Both Collins and Cooke are frustrated with their ordeal, but they also know that they are still better off than the customers who have lost money on prebuy contracts. "Oh yeah, I'm very happy I didn't do a prebuy," Cooke said. "I don't know what is happening to those people. That's a bad situation." Collins said

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she used to always prebuy oil, but didn't last year after companies were selling for inflated prices based on summer markets. This year, she decided to take the gamble again, and she said she is really glad she did. After receiving a delivery from another company, Collins said she has moved on from Flynn's Oil, but Cooke is still waiting to see what happens before making a decision. "I don't want to abandon them if they are able to still do business," Cooke said. Technically, Cooke said he would have to break his prebuy contract to go somewhere else, but he isn't worried about that. "They have already broken the contract as far as I'm concerned," he said. Flynn's Oil customers who have complaints can file them with the state electronically by logging onto www.doi.nh.gov/consumer and clicking "Filing a Consumer Complaint," or by calling the Consumer Protection Hotline at 1-888-468-4454 and request a complaint form to be mailed to them. A voice-mail message at Flynn's Oil Wednesday said the company is "temporarily closed." The machine then directs oil customers to a voice mail box that is full.

http://www.fosters.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20091231/GJNEWS_01/712319824/-1/FosNEWS

USA, AK, FAIRBANKS, DECEMBER 31 2009. TAINTED WATER WELLS STILL UNDER INVESTIGATION IN NORTH POLE

As the confirmed number of chemically tainted wells in North Pole continues to grow, public health officials say they're still about a month away from determining the safety of water near the Flint Hills refinery. Monitoring wells have found various levels of sulfolane, an industrial chemical used as part of the fuel refining process, in area wells since November. Flint Hills officials believe a spill sometime before 2000 introduced it into groundwater near the refinery. Tests have detected sulfolane-tainted water about 2.5 miles north of the refinery, said Ann Farris, a contaminated sites project manager for the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation. She said 33 private wells were confirmed with detectable amounts of sulfolane when the last round of testing was reported on Dec. 23. Sulfolane isn't regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and a safe level in drinking water hasn't been established. Routine water tests don't usually look for the presence of sulfolane, but testing by Flint Hills detected the tainted groundwater this fall. Researchers affiliated with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services are expected to release a report on safe levels of sulfolane in drinking water by the end of January. Flint Hills is providing bottled water to homeowners whose wells are tainted or are in the process of being tested. Lori Verbrugge, a toxicologist with the Alaska Division of Public Health, said researchers are reviewing existing scientific literature and toxicology tests to try to determine acceptable sulfolane levels for human consumption. Verbrugge said her office also plans to issue a report in the next few months that addresses questions specific to the situation in North Pole. Flint Hills spokesman Jeff Cook said the company continues to collect samples north of the refinery to determine the footprint of the sulfolane-tainted groundwater. He said the outline of the contaminated underground plume still hasn't been defined. Tests have also been done on well water east of the refinery, but Cook said no tainted water has been detected in that area. Farris said she expects that testing to determine how far the tainted water has traveled from the refinery will be completed within a few weeks. At that point, vertical tests will be started to find out what concentrations of sulfolane are found at various well depths. An update on the Department of Environmental Conservation's summary of the case, including maps of the affected areas, should be available online by Monday at www.dec.state.ak.us/SPAR/csp/sites/npolerefinery.htm

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USA, OH, COLUMBUS, DECEMBER 31 2009. EPA PUSHES REFINERY FOR LEAK DETAILS

Two weeks after a gas leak at an East Side refinery forced the evacuation of nearby businesses, the company that runs the operation has yet to tell the state how much gas escaped and what was in it. An estimated 4,000 people were evacuated Dec. 14 after a blown gasket at Heartland Petroleum's used-oil refinery at 4001 E. 5th Ave. released a vapor cloud that officials feared was hydrogen sulfide, a gas that can be lethal in high concentrations. State law requires businesses to immediately report malfunctions that release air pollutants. The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency sent the company a letter on Dec. 22 reminding Heartland operators of the law. It also demanded that the company take steps to prevent any future leaks. Brad Lambert, Heartland's chief financial officer, said yesterday that the company will soon have "quantifiable numbers" to report, likely within 10 days. On Dec. 14, Lambert had said he thought it would take a couple of days. Erin Strouse, an EPA spokeswoman, said the agency is willing to give the company time to come up with an accurate estimate. Teresa Mills, leader of the Grove City-based Buckeye Environmental Network, said the state should push Heartland to disclose the information sooner. "Is it too much to ask people to follow the law?" she said. The refinery was praised as a green business by state and local politicians during an Oct. 30 ribbon-cutting ceremony. It can clean as much as 20 million gallons of dirty motor oil per year for re-use. Heartland received a \$3.5 million state loan to help build the \$25 million refinery. The EPA has received 16 odor complaints about Heartland since February. In the past five years, the EPA has checked 18 reports of gas leaks, including anhydrous ammonia and xylene, at businesses and farms in Franklin, Delaware, Licking and Madison counties. Known for its rotten-egg odor, hydrogen sulfide gas can irritate the eyes, nose and throat and help trigger asthma attacks. High concentrations can cause unconsciousness and death. No injuries were reported in the Heartland incident. On Sept. 10, a worker shutting down a natural gas well in Guernsey County died after a pocket of hydrogen sulfide gas was released. Heartland officials blamed the Dec. 14 leak on a short power failure that caused the refinery to restart and the gasket to blow. American Electric Power officials said a squirrel had tripped a breaker and the blackout lasted 5 to 10 seconds. Lambert said company data will show that the cloud was almost entirely steam and was not dangerous. EPA officials also want Heartland to submit plans showing how it will prevent future leaks, before the refinery resumes operations. Lambert said Dec. 14 that the company has been working with AEP to "get on a better (power) grid." He said yesterday that the refinery has been shut

http://www.dispatch.com/live/content/local_news/stories/2009/12/30/Heartland.ART_ART_12-30-09_A1_AUG586N.html?sid=101

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